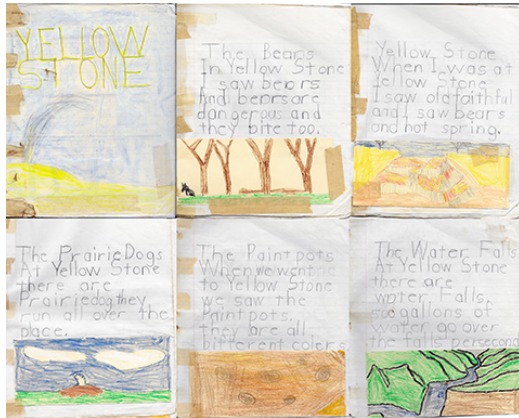


# My First Field Trip Guidebook: Yellowstone, 1964

## by Phil Stoffer



I prepared this document at the age of 6 after a family trip to Yellowstone National Park in the summer of 1964. I remember putting this guide together, and being possibly assisted by my twin brother, Jeff (he still can't spell), but I am left handed, and he is right handed, so a writing specialist might be able to distinguish (or blame) for the text errors.

As I recall from my ancient memories (now in fall of 2020), my parents (Lewis and Ruth) loaded their four sons into an old blue station wagon and headed west. Most of the trip we camped out in a large, yellow canvas tent. I don't remember much of the early part of the trip other than corn and wheat fields on the rolling prairie. On the way, we camped in Badlands National Park (where I remember seeing fossils and lots of prairie dogs). We also visited Mount Rushmore and did a tour of Wind Cave. We visited Devils Tower and we swam in the hot pools in Thermopolis. I remember being confused by how the dipping rock layers in Tensleep and Wind River Canyons made it look like the rivers were flowing uphill. We camped at Brooks Lake in the Absaroka Mountains. It was so beautiful, and I was so jealous of Jeff because he found a beautiful obsidian arrowhead (which he immediately lost). Later, we had to flea the campground when we were all nearly eaten alive by clouds of mosquitos.

We visited all the main attractions in Yellowstone National parks. I remember the beautiful blue of Morning Glory Pool, the bubbling mud pots, the amazing waterfalls, and the wooden boardwalks in all the geyser basins, and the strong strong smell of sulfur almost everywhere we stopped.. My favorite were the amazing travertine terraces and Devils Thumb at Mammoth Hot Springs. I also remember being confused by a prank played by a ranger turning a large squeaky wheel valve on the side of a building just before Old Faithful erupted (they don't do that anymore). I don't remember the trip back to Cincinnati, Ohio. I must have slept most of the way most of way home in the back of the old, hot station wagon.



**Cover (page 1):** The title text simply says "YELLOW STONE." The drawing is of Old Faithful Geyser erupting.



The Bears  
In Yellow Stone  
I saw bears  
And bears are  
dangerous and  
they bite too.



**Page 2:** The text says:

“The Bears”

“In Yellow Stone I saw bears An bears are dangerous and they bite too.”

We saw several bears with cubs near Mammoth Hot Springs.

Yellow Stone  
When I was at  
Yellow Stone  
I saw old faithful  
and I saw bears  
and hot spring.



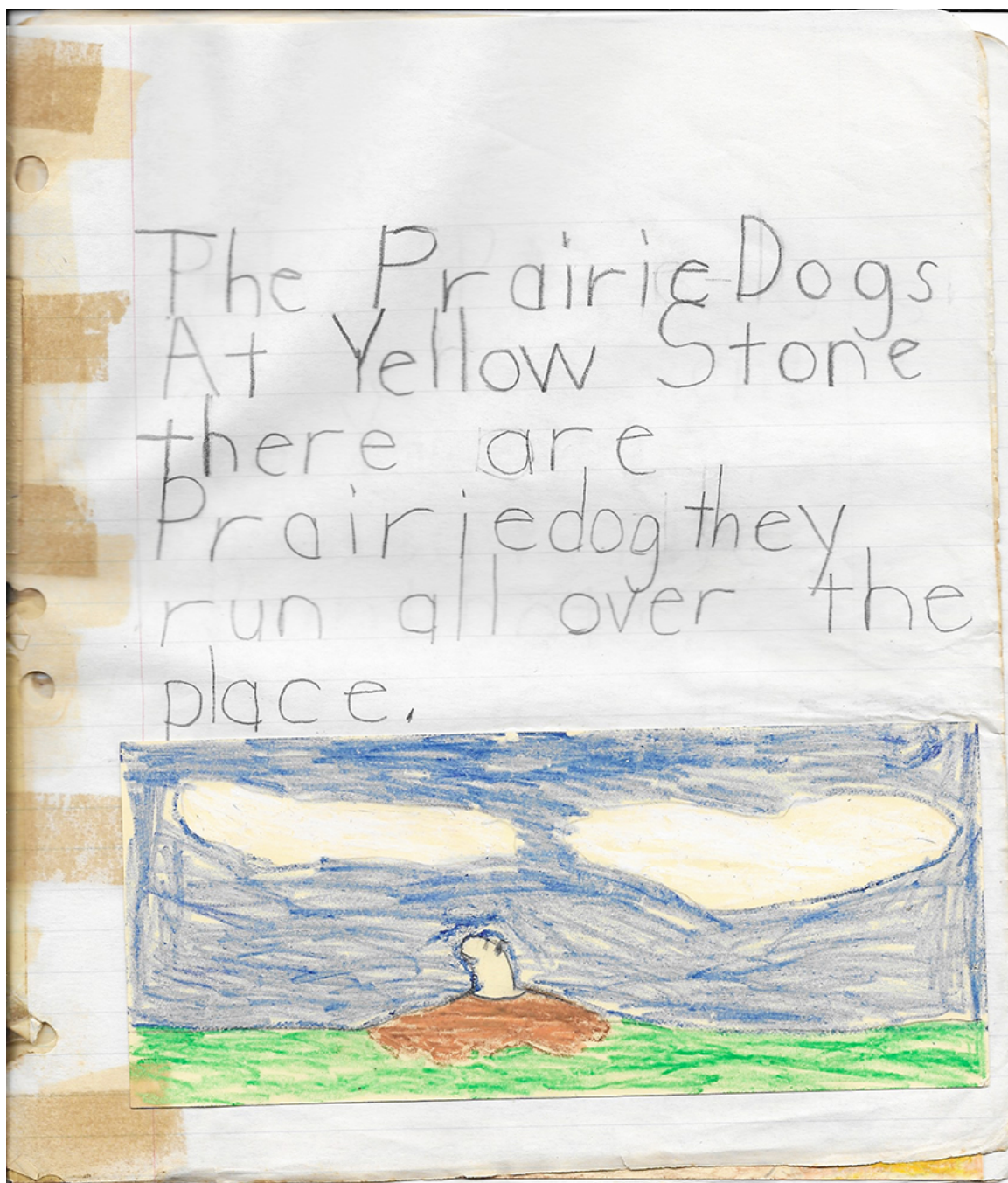
**Page 3:** The text says:

“Yellow Stone”

“When I was at Yellow Stone I was old faithful and I saw bears, and hot spring.”

I remember walking on all the trails around Mammoth Hot Springs, Old Faithful, Midway, and Lower geyser basins.



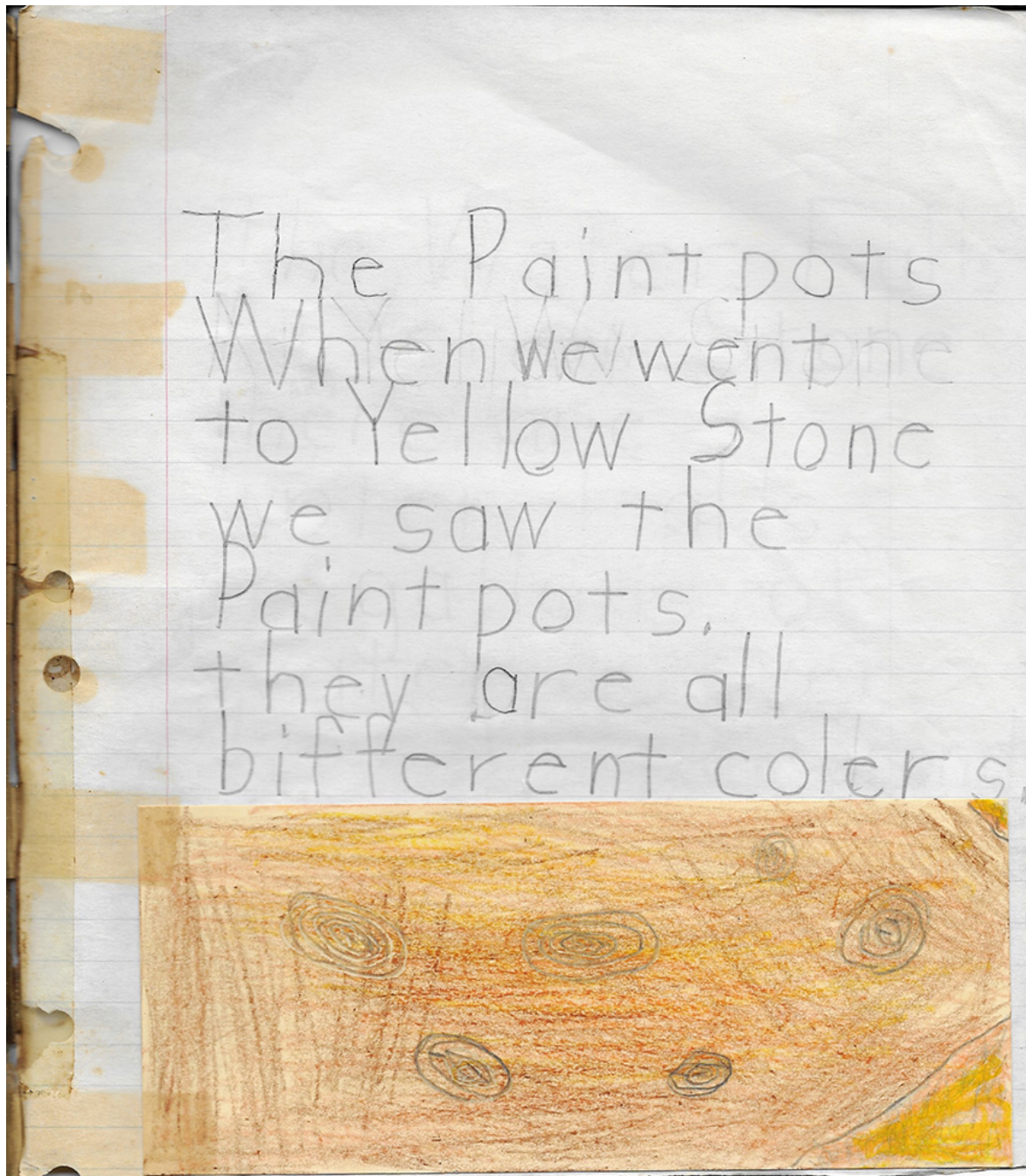


**Page 4:** The text says:

"The Prairie Dogs At Yellow Stone"

"there are prairie dog they run all over the place."

Note: we definitely saw prairie dogs in Badlands National Park, but what we saw in Yellowstone were lots of chubby, snack-fed, ground squirrels, (locally called 'picket-pins') that were similar in size and color.



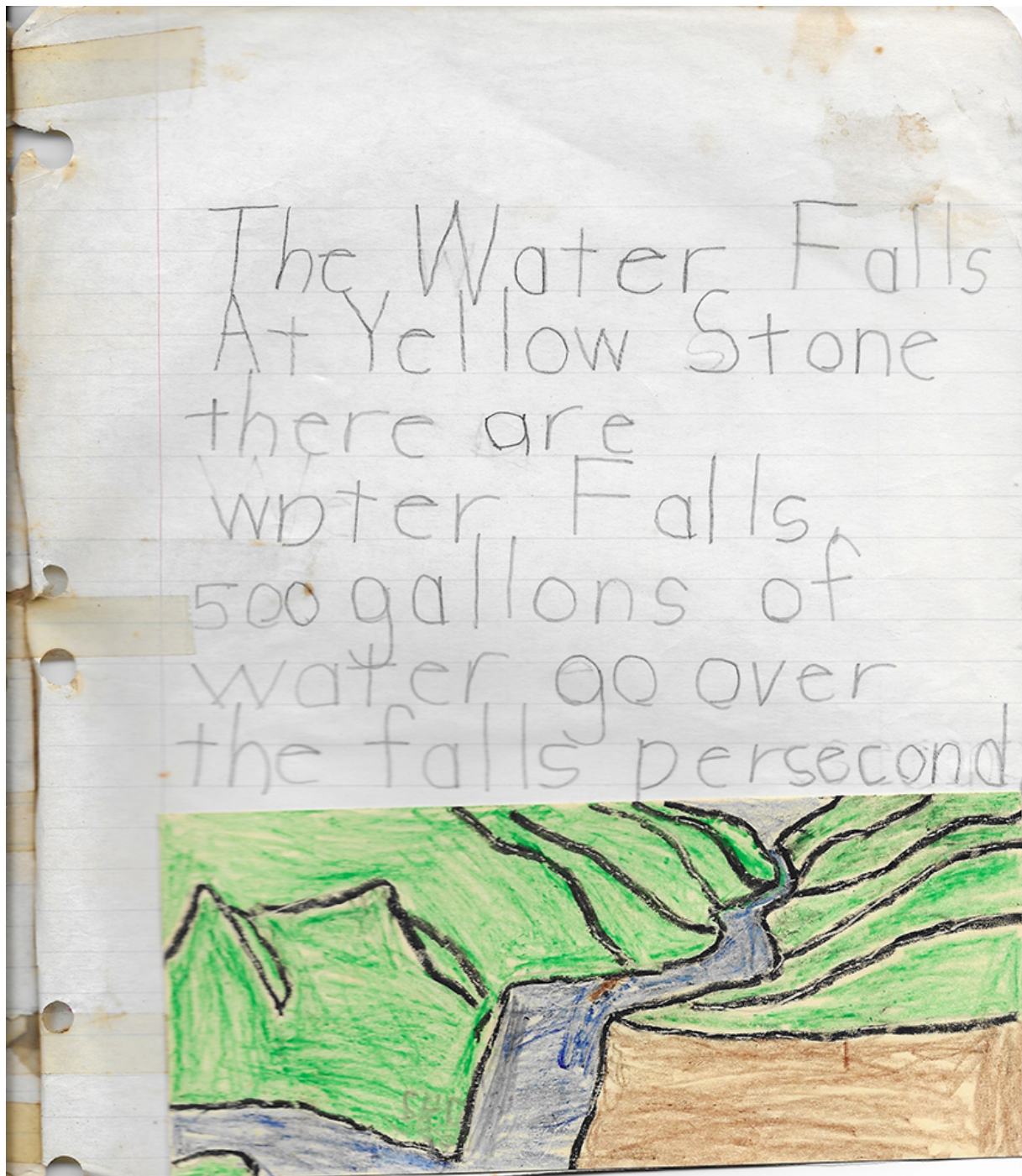
**Page 5:** The text says:

"The Paint pots"

"When we went to Yellow Stone we saw the Paint pots. They are all bifferent colers."

We didn't have spell or grammar checking software back then...





**Page 6:** The text says:

"The Water Falls At Yellow Stone"

"there are water Falls. 500 gallons of water go over the falls per second."

I remember being awed and terrified by the high cliffs and thundering water at both Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River.

## Yellowstone trips are part of our family legacy.



My father told me that his grandparents, **John** and **Emma Sanor** (from Minerva, Ohio) took a train ride west in 1916. From the end of the train line in Montana, they rode horseback around Yellowstone. When they returned to Ohio Emma had brought back a stereograph and a collection of stereograph “cabinet cards” (they were very popular before motion pictures came along). We have kept the cards now going on 6 generations. They are what got me involved in making stereo photography of the national parks. Those images are posted on the Geology of National Parks website: <https://gotbooks.miracosta.edu/gonp/yell/index.html>

I also remember my father told me the story that my grandfather, Virgil Stoffer, drove his family out to Yellowstone in 1946 in an old Model T. That must have been an amazing journey!

Our family trip in 1964 had a huge impact on me, and was a primary reason why I chose to get a degree in geology from Miami University because it required spending a month at field camp in Dubois, Wyoming. I ended up doing a Masters in the Wind River Mountains, and then co-teaching a geology field camp there for three summers (including when much of Yellowstone burned in 1988). I have been back many times since then.

Gratefully, this guide book was saved and given back to me in 2017 by my mother, Ruth Stoffer.