Soda Butte—a case of mistaken identity. Thinking the peculiar protruding formation nearby in Yellowstone National Park was sodium bicarbonate, Horn Miller’s 1870 prospecting party assigned it the moniker Soda Butte. The adjacent creek likewise became Soda Butte Creek, and the campground here, on its banks, acquired the name, as well. It was later learned, however, that the geologic feature was not soda, but actually calcium carbonate. Perhaps some name changes are in order?

Remnants of the colorful and vigorous mining era here in the New World Mining District are all around you. Scars on the landscape, parts and pieces of the old smelting furnace and stamping mill, and occasional scraps of rusted mining paraphernalia bear witness to the chaotic century of mining that occurred here in the 1800s.

As hopeful prospectors first began poking around these mountains, they were quickly rewarded as they revealed deposits of gold, silver, and lead. Names like Shoo-fly, Daisy, Elkhorn and War Eagle were bantered among residents in excited tones and the full gamut of mining activities sprang to life. As time went on, ventures to build a railroad repeatedly met with disappointment and failure, and contributed to the end of these glamorous years. The hustle and frenzy of mining slowly subsided, and Cooke City faded back into its wild landscape.