The national parks preceded the National Park Service, but the first great natural park was a state park. California’s Yosemite State Park was established in 1864, by a federal cession approved by President Abraham Lincoln, and on October 21, 1880, President Rutherford B. Hayes toured California’s Yosemite in...
an open carriage. On March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant had approved the establishment of Yellowstone National Park “as a public park or pleasing-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”1 Yellowstone was the first “national” park. Learn about national park history from NPF, a charitable partner of the National Park Service. See where it all began with the signing of the Yosemite Grant by President Abraham Lincoln in 1864, the first parkland to be set aside by the federal government for preservation and public use. The official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service. As the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, the National Park Foundation generates private support and builds strategic partnerships to protect and enhance America’s national parks for present and future generations.