Denali area timeline

11000-12000 BP – Early man Hunting Sites at Dry Creek and Carlo Creek

1842-1844 Lt. L.A. Zagoskin explores Interior Alaska for the Russian American Company and creates a written account of his findings. His information indicates that Athabascan natives were already familiar with Russian trade goods. Most of the natives traded furs for luxury items such as exotic clothing, beads and tobacco. There was not yet a trade in this area for powder or shot, which indicates that the native populations had not yet begun using guns for hunting.

1867 Alaska is purchased from Russia for seven million dollars or two cents an acre.

1896 William Dickey, a gold prospector, names Mt. McKinley after Governor William McKinley of Ohio who had just been nominated to run for U.S. president. He said that was the first news he heard after leaving the wilderness. He also admitted that he was tired of listening to Interior residents who were pro-silver and McKinley was a staunch supporter of the gold standard.

1898 The United States Geological Survey send the first of five expeditions to map and chart the Interior regions of Alaska. The first expedition was led by Josiah Spurr and they explored the Kuskokwim River.

1899 An expedition led by Lt. Joseph Herron seeks to find a route from Cook Inlet to the Yukon. The expedition becomes lost in the lowlands of the upper Kuskokwim River. This nearly disastrous expedition left Susitna Station in June with 15 pack horses and 3300 pounds of supplies. By September they were reduced to carrying 15 days of supplies on their backs and had no horses. Without the help of Chief Seseui, who found them they most surely would have perished as they had no winter clothing, had lost most of their gear and were constantly wet from the increasing snowfall.

1903 Judge James Wickersham makes the first unsuccessful attempt to climb Mt. McKinley and stakes four gold claims on Chitsia Creek in Kantishna.

1905 Joe Dalton and Joe Quigley discover gold on Eureka and Glacier Creeks. This news brings thousands of prospectors to the Kantishna area. The towns of Diamond, Glacier City and Roosevelt were established as supply points along the rivers leading to the mining district. The town of Eureka became the hub of the Kantishna mining district.

1906 The only claims showing any profit were on Glacier and Eureka Creeks. Thousands of miners leave in spring of 1906 when their claims show little or no gold. Eureka and Glacier City survive but the other towns disappear as everyone leaves.

1906 Charles Sheldon visits the region to study Dall sheep. He becomes worried about the survival of the sheep with all the mining activity in the area. The protection of the wildlife and spectacular scenery becomes his passion and he works to make the area a national park.

- **1907-1908** Charles Sheldon and Harry Karstens develop the concept for Mt. McKinley National Park.
- **1910** Three local miners (the Sourdough Expedition) climb Mt. McKinley and two of them reach the north peak at 19,470. Nobody believes them until a future expedition sees the pole they planted when they reached the summit.
- **1913** Harry Karstens, Hudson Stuck and Walter Harper reach the south peak of Mt. McKinley the true summit (20,320) and see the pole planted on the North peak by the "Sourdough Expedition" of 1910.
- **1915-1918** Pat Lynch and Maurice Morino open the first roadhouses in the McKinley station area. They cater to the railroad workers and miners.
- **1917** Mt. McKinley National Park is created by Congress.
- **1921** Harry Karstens is hired as the first park superintendent. He constructs the first park headquarters near Riley Creek.
- **1922** Congress extends the park boundaries ten miles to the east of the original boundaries to protect prime Dall sheep and caribou habitat.
- **1923** Maurice Morino, an Italian immigrant, builds a new roadhouse in the "Alaskan-Italian" style. His new roadhouse becomes the center of the community in the McKinley Station area. He runs this roadhouse which caters to tourists and railroad workers until his death in 1937.
- **1923** The Alaska Railroad is completed from Seward to Fairbanks. Visitors arrive at McKinley Park Station for the pack train to Savage River Tourist Camp run by Dan Kennedy. The camp consisted of tent cabins and a mess hall. Construction begins on the park road. Wildlife studies of caribou, sheep, wolves moose and bear are begun by researchers such as Olaus and Adolph Murie.
- **1932** Park Boundaries are expanded slightly to the North and East to allow for a more natural border at the Nenana river on the east and to include Wonder Lake on the North.
- **1935** Bradford Washington begins mapping Mt. McKinley
- **1938** The park road is finished from Savage river to Kantishna. The McKinley Park Station Hotel is finished.
- **1941-1946** during World War II the park becomes a military recreation camp for troops stationed in Alaska. The army also uses it as a site to test cold-weather clothing, equipment, food and supplies.
- **1957** Denali Highway opens, allowing automobiles and buses to drive to the park for the first time. (Note: the Denali Highway is a state highway, outside of the park; it is not the same as the Denali Park Road, which is the sole road within Denali National Park and Preserve)

1959 Alaska becomes a state. Eielson Visitor Center opens. The park road is upgraded because of increased vehicle traffic. An outcry in 1966, led by Adolph Murie, halts the road upgrades and the final eighteen miles are left in their original state with only bridges being replaced.

1960 The Bradford Washington map of Mt. McKinley is published after fifteen years of exploration, surveying and cartography. This map is still used by climber today.

1972 Parks highway opens between Fairbanks and Anchorage causing a tremendous growth in automobile traffic in the park. A shuttle bus system and restrictions on private vehicles is begun to relieve the congestion.

1980 Congress passes the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). This act enlarged the park to 6.6 million acres and renames it Denali national Park and Preserve. Subsitence use is allowed in the park and preserve areas for traditional users but not the wilderness area.

1990's Visitors increase to about 500,000 a year. Planners look to the north and south ends of the park to provide possible additional access routes and accommodations for the increased number of tourists.