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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

# Crown Jewel of the North:

## An Administrative History of Denali National Park and Preserve, Volume 1




Frank Norris

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Denali National Park and Preserve
Post Office Box 9
Denali Park, Alaska 99755

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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November 1, 2006

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed is a copy of *Crown Jewel of the North: An Administrative History of Denali National Park & Preserve, Volume 1*. This study examines how the park was conceived, established, and managed up to the passage of ANILCA. Included in this volume is the legislative history of the park and important issues in planning, land acquisition, development, public relations, wildlife management, and other topics of management concern.

Volume 2 of the administrative history will cover park management from ANILCA to the present. It will also provide some in-depth chapters addressing specific management issues such as interpretation, natural and cultural resource management, mountaineering, and mining. The second volume will be published in 2007.

I hope you will find the book to be of interest. If you need more copies or have questions about the book, please contact Ann Kain, Cultural Resource Manager, Denali National Park & Preserve at (907) 683-9607.

Sincerely,

Paul R. Anderson

Paul R. Anderson
Superintendent

Enclosure

Ak:pa:mc:110106

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# Crown Jewel of the North:

## An Administrative History of Denali National Park and Preserve

## Volume 1 – General Park History to 1980

Produced by the Alaska Regional Office
National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior
Anchorage, Alaska

Author: Frank Norris

2006

Front cover: This rustic arch, erected by the Alaska Railroad in 1926, was located just a few yards away from the McKinley Park Station railroad depot. Situated at the beginning of the park road, it welcomed thousands of tourists to Mount McKinley National Park during the years prior to World War II. DENA 39-1, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Back cover: Skinner Collection, 44-5-117, Alaska State Library

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# Preface

By any definition, the area surrounding North America's highest peak is vast. Between 1917 and the late 1970s, Mount McKinley National Park was America's second largest national park (only Yellowstone was bigger), and since 1980, Denali National Park and Preserve—at more than 6,000,000 acres—has been almost twice as large as any "Lower 48" national park unit and it is exceeded in size by only the Gates of the Arctic and Wrangell-St. Elias park units, both located in Alaska. These two Alaska park units, however, are fairly young; both were born during a tumultuous 1970s-era statewide planning effort, and they were not established until President Jimmy Carter, in December 1980, signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The area that began as Mount McKinley National Park, by contrast, is almost 90 years old. It was Alaska's first national park, and for much of its history, the staff headquartered near McKinley Park Station represented virtually the only National Park Service presence in America's northernmost territory.

Given the park's enormous size, its long history, and its statewide importance, records related to Mount McKinley National Park and its successor, Denali National Park and Preserve, are far more numerous than those associated with any other Alaska park unit. The historian hoping to write the management history for most Alaska park units has a reasonable expectation of incorporating most of the pertinent records about that unit into a single-volume study. But such is not the case as it relates to the Mount McKinley/Denali park unit. Because an administrative history is the designated bureaucratic vehicle that melds together a broad variety of historical themes in a single work, the obvious question presents itself: should this history attempt to offer the same level of detail as other Alaska park histories, or should completeness be sacrificed for brevity's sake? Depending on various circumstances, NPS historians have had wildly differing interpretations of their mandate; a recently-published Grand Canyon National Park administrative history, for example, is just 116 pages long, while an administrative history of tiny Pipe Spring National Monument, also in Arizona, runs a daunting 847 pages.

The author of this study has attempted to steer a middle course between these two extremes. It was felt important to compile a broad range of the essential details relating to this park's historical development, but it was also recognized that too much detail would make the study unwieldy and largely unusable. Given that middle course, the history of the Mt. McKinley/Denali unit is longer than most park histories, and for that reason it is being printed in two separate volumes. Volume 1, containing eight chapters, is a general park history for years up until 1980; it is thus a history of Mount McKinley National Park, although four specific historical themes—interpretation, resources management, mountaineering, and minerals management—have been omitted. Volume 2, containing the remaining six chapters, will be a general history of Denali National Park and Preserve (for the years 1980 to the present), plus a detailed look at the four themes noted above. It is anticipated that Volume 2 will be published in 2007.

Despite the greater-than-average length of this study, it is readily admitted that hundreds if not thousands of key documents were overlooked during its preparation. Given those omissions, many key events have certainly, if inadvertently, been discussed only briefly or have been altogether ignored. The sheer volume of these bypassed records—some known, others as-yet-unearthed—is naturally an open invitation for future researchers who, it is fervently hoped, will continue the process of providing a comprehensive, dispassionate view of the park's history. To assist tomorrow's historians, a brief guide to potential research avenues has been included in a bibliographic note near the end of this volume.

# Acknowledgements

History, by necessity, is a highly collaborative effort. And in the case of this study, I have been singularly fortunate to have gained information from, and worked with, a superb group of committed people—some in the Park Service, some not—who have gone to great lengths to supply the author with information in order to ensure that this story would be told, and told well. Among those to whom I am most indebted are William E. Brown, the author of the park's historic resource study; Kristen Griffin, who collected scores of park historical files before the research for this study began; Jane Bryant, a longtime park employee who knows the answer to virtually any park-related question; Steve Carwile, a park employee since the pre-ANILCA days who is somehow able to unearth seemingly lost source materials; and William Nancarrow, a Denali-area legend who started working at the park in 1948 and has stories about the park's staff, concessioners and visitors that truly connect the park's challenging past with its equally challenging present. I have heavily relied on the source materials, opinions, anecdotes, and critical observations that all five of these individuals have offered (though many of these contributions are not reflected in the endnotes), and the present study would have been far poorer without their help.

I am indebted to two park employees for the graphics contained in this report. GIS specialist Jon Paynter has laboriously, and cheerfully, prepared all maps for the report; the sole exception was the Native languages map, prepared by Judy Kesler in the Alaska Regional Office. Ms. Bryant, noted above, is also single-handedly responsible for selecting, placing, and captioning the volume's photographs. I gratefully appreciate her efforts.

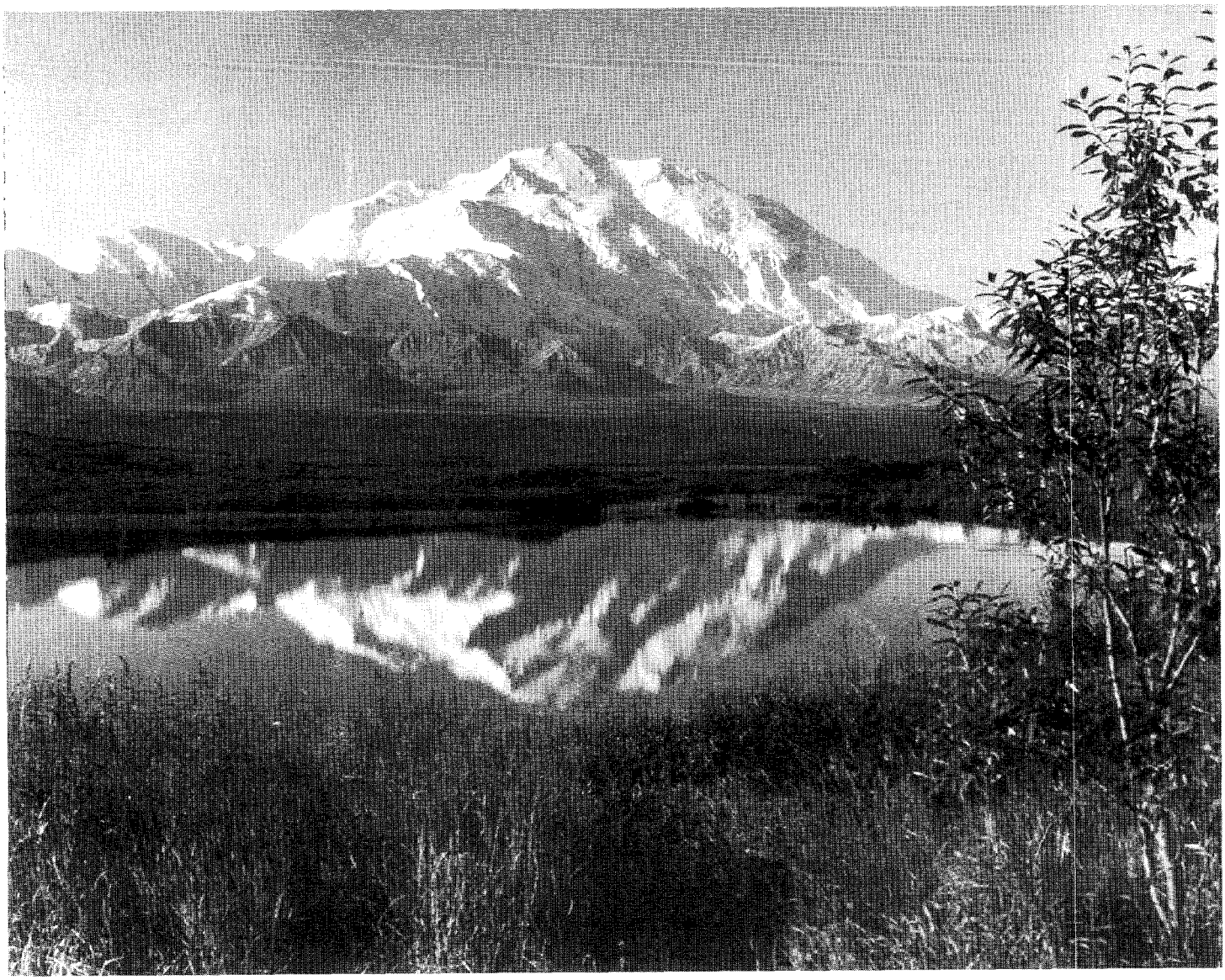
Many others have helped along the way. One was longtime Denali-area resident Tom Walker, who has written a number of books and articles about the park's cultural and natural history. Ann Kain, the park's cultural resource manager, has patiently steered me through more than one bureaucratic thicket and is thoroughly conversant with the park's history. The staff at Loussac Library (particularly Bruce Merrell), the Alaska Resource Library and Information Services, and the Anchorage Daily News library (both Sharon Palmisano and Lynn Hallstrom) have taken a keen interest in the study and guided me to a passel of little-known sources. The staff at the National Archives and Records Administration facilities in Anchorage, San Bruno, and College Park have freely aided and abetted me in my quest for obscure memos and files. Michelle Curran graciously allowed me to use portions of her dissertation pertaining to the work of the Board on Geographic Names. And a broad range of NPS personnel—at the park, in Washington, and in the regional office—have provided answers to questions and supplied key bibliographic materials.

I wish to single out for praise the cooperation I have received from a number of park superintendents: all the way from George Hall, who served at the helm during the 1960s, to the present chief, Paul Anderson. All of these gentlemen gave freely of their time for interviews, and I'm thankful for the forthright, honest explanations that they provided to the many questions pitched in their direction. I'm likewise thankful for the observations of two superintendents' sons, Jan Dick and Scott Ruesch; their comments provided a window into the accomplishments of their fathers and, in addition, they provided a refreshing view of the park from an adolescent's point of view. I greatly appreciate the assistance of my two supervisors, Sande McDermott (now in the Intermountain Region office in Denver) and Ted Birkedal, who provided major managerial guidance, and I'd also like to thank my editorial advisors: Paul Anderson, Joe Van Horn, Ann Kain, Jane Bryant, and Steve Carwile, all at Denali National Park and Preserve. These five experts, taken together, have more than a hundred years of on-the-ground experience at the park; they graciously shared that experience with their innumerable suggestions and much- needed course corrections, and for that I am grateful.

# Abbreviations

AD – Assistant Director
AEC – Alaska Engineering Commission
AHC – Alaska Historical Commission
AKF – Alaska, Fairbanks Land Office
AKRO – Alaska Regional Office (NPS)
AKSO – Alaska Support Office (NPS)
ANC – Anchorage (National Archives facility)
ANCSA – Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
ANILCA – Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
APG – Alaska Planning Group
ARA – Automatic Retailers of America
ARC – Alaska Road Commission
ARCC – Alaska Region Curatorial Center
ARLIS – Alaska Resources Library and Information Services
ARR – Alaska Railroad
ASA – Alaska State Archives
ATCO – Alberta Trailer Company
BLM – Bureau of Land Management
BP – Before Present
BPR – Bureau of Public Roads
CAA – Civil Aeronautics Authority/Administration
CCC – Civilian Conservation Corps
CCF – Central Classified Files
CP – College Park, Md. (National Archives facility)
CR&NW – Copper River and North Western (railroad)
D&C – Design and Construction
DCP – Development Concept Plan
DENA – Denali National Park and Preserve
DES – Draft Environmental Statement
DNC – Domestic Names Committee
DNR – Department of Natural Resources
DOI – Department of the Interior
DSC – Denver Service Center (NPS)
ECW – Emergency Conservation Work
EIS – Environmental Impact Statement
E.O. – Executive Order
ERA/FMC – Economic Research Associates/Fawcett, McDermott, Cavanagh, Inc.
FAA – Federal Aviation Administration
FB&M – Fairbanks Base and Meridian
FES – Final Environmental Statement
FY – Fiscal Year
GLO – General Land Office
GPO – Government Publications Office
GVEA – Golden Valley Electric Association
HB – House Bill (state)
HFC – Harpers Ferry Center (NPS)
H.R. – House of Representatives Bill (federal)
HRS – Historic Resource Study
ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites
JFSLUPC – Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission
MOA – Memorandum of Agreement
MOMC – Mount McKinley National Park
NARA – National Archives and Records Administration
NPCI – National Park Concessions, Inc.
NPS – National Park Service

NR – Natural Resources
NRHP – National Register of Historic Places
OHA – Office of History and Archaeology
ONPS – Operations/National Park Service
PCP – Project Construction Program
PLO – Public Land Order
PNRO – Pacific Northwest Regional Office (NPS)
R4 – Region IV (NPS's western region, 1937 -1962)
RCR – Cultural Resources Division (in the NPS's Alaska Regional Office)
RD – Regional Director
RG – Record Group
S – Senate Bill (federal)
SAR – Superintendent's Annual Report
SB – San Bruno, Calif. (National Archives facility)
SB – Senate Bill (state)
SCR – Senate Concurrent Resolution
SMR – Superintendent's Monthly Report
SOI – Secretary of the Interior
TAC – The Architects Collaborative
TIC – Technical Information Center (NPS)
TVRR – Tanana Valley Railroad
UAF – University of Alaska Fairbanks
UBC – University of British Columbia
U.C. – University of California
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USGS – U.S. Geological Survey
USNR – U.S. Natural Resources, Inc.
USO – United Service Organizations
WODC – Western Office of Design and Construction (NPS)
WR – Western Region (NPS)
YCC – Youth Conservation Corps



# Chapter One: The Roof of the Continent

On a clear day in south-central or interior Alaska, the sight is inescapable – and breathtaking. For more than a hundred miles in every direction, it looms over everything and dominates the scene. The Mountain, the Big One, the Tall One. The Koyukon called it *Deenaalee*, the Lower Tanana named it *Deenaadheet* or *Deennadhee*, the Dena'ina called it *Dghelay Ka'a*, and at least six other Native groups had their own names for it.[1] In the late 18th century various Europeans came calling, and virtually everyone who passed by was moved to comment on it. The Russians called it *Bulshaia* or *Tenada*, and though explorers from other nations were less specific, even the most hard-bitten adventurers were in awe of its height and majesty. No American gave it a name until Densmore's Mountain appeared in the late 1880s, and the name that eventually stuck—Mount McKinley—was not applied until the waning days of the nineteenth century.[2] Government geologists soon recognized that the mountain was higher than any other in North America; thus it is not at all surprising that visitors, of all stripes, would forever be attracted to take in its view, rhapsodize about its ethereal beauty, record it in silver nitrate and celluloid, and hike on its flanks.

Mount McKinley, highest point on the North American Continent, viewed from the north. Charles Ott Photo, DENA 3557, Denali National Park & Preserve Museum Collection.

### A Land of Rugged Contrasts

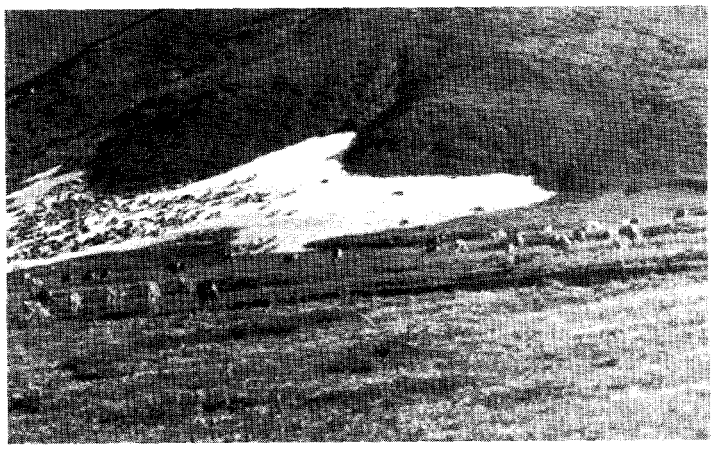
As outstanding as it is on its own, Mount McKinley is merely the highest point in the long, sinuous cordillera that winds from the Aleutian Islands to the Alaska-Yukon border. The Alaska Range, which forms the highest and northernmost portion of that cordillera, extends from the Lake Clark country, 160 miles southwest of McKinley, to the Tok-Tetlin area, 250 miles to the east. Within this range are a number of majestic mountains: more than a dozen reach at least 12,000 feet above sea level, and peaks exceeding 10,000 feet high are so numerous that several are as yet unnamed. Towering over the rest are Mount McKinley—which has two peaks, each more than 19,000 feet high—and Mount Foraker, with an elevation of 17,400 feet. The high country surrounding these peaks is so extensive that one can fly for more than 90 miles in a straight line and see almost nothing but glaciers and snowfields. Because most of the range above the 7,000 foot level is covered by snow and ice all year long, some 17 percent of Denali National Park and Preserve is perpetually snowbound.[3]

Mountains and snowfields, however, are just one element in the remarkable high country of the central Alaska Range. Much of the range, to be sure, is snow-clad only in winter, and many Alaska Range peaks beyond the immediate vicinity of Mount McKinley top out at 9,000 feet elevation or less. To the south of the mountain's backbone lies a broad band of rugged foothills incised by glacial tongues that reach 30 miles or more beyond the high ramparts. Beyond the glaciers' termini lies the great Susitna Lowland, which drains the entire area south of the Alaska Range crest and occupies the entire broad area south to Knik Arm and Cook Inlet.

North of the Alaska Range and northeast of the McKinley River, the mountain fastness gives way to a discontinuous series of highlands—the Outer Range, the Kantishna Hills and adjacent high country—with elevations reaching 4,500 to 6,000 feet above sea level. Between these peaks are located various low, rolling valleys that are between two and ten miles wide. West of these highlands, and north of the Alaska Range at the western end of the park and preserve, is a broad, high plain, dotted with lakes and wetlands, that stretches out into the Tanana and Kuskokwim River drainages.[4]

Because of the huge differences in altitude between the Alaska Range and the adjacent country to the north and south, a stark contrast in life forms is evident to even the most casual observer. In the higher elevations, and particularly in glaciated areas, resident plants and animals are either scarce or nonexistent. Below that zone is a hundred-mile-long oval of sparse dry tundra. On the north side of the Alaska Range, a broad, pockmarked band beyond the dry tundra is dominated by moist tundra. Interspersed within the moist tundra, however are various river valleys and lower slopes where a mixed evergreen and deciduous forest (of white and black spruce, poplars, white birches, and various willow varieties) holds sway. Other areas more distant from the mountain heights, both to the north and south, are also composed of mixed-forest species. And several areas north of the Alaska Range, including much of the land in the vicinity of Lake Minchumina, is dominated by brush muskeg.[5]

The area's animal life is similarly diverse. The region is justifiably well known for its so-called charismatic megafauna, and Denali's bus drivers



Denali caribou frequently rest on snow patches during the summer. DENA 3861, Denali National Park & Preserve Museum Collection

are quick to note that many visitors equate a successful trip along the park road with their ability to spot five major mammals: barren ground caribou, Dall sheep, moose, wolves, and grizzly bear. Those same bus drivers, however, are quick to point out that the area offers excellent habitat for many other large animals, such as coyotes, lynx, red foxes, and black bear. They might also note that other species of mammals inhabit the park (for a total of 25), along with one amphibian species, 15 species of fish, and 166 bird species.[6] These animal species occupy a variety of habitats, and regarding most of the large mammal species, the areas that they inhabit may vary considerably from one year to the next.

The Denali caribou herd, which inhabits the park and preserve, graze in many areas outside of the high country. Of other major mammal species, Dall sheep inhabit the Outer Range foothills and the lower slopes of the Alaska Range, and moose may be seen throughout the area below the 3,000-foot isopleths. Wolves, in several packs, inhabit many areas in the northern half of the "old park" as well as in certain areas in the so-called "northern additions" and in drainages south of the high peaks; and grizzlies are found both north and south of the Alaska Range, primarily in tundra and in adjacent riparian taiga vegetation. Only the higher, glaciated slopes are bereft of large mammals. Although most of the large mammalian species are found on both sides of the range, these animals (according to a recent management plan) "occur within the park in greater concentrations north of the Alaska Range than south of the range." Furthermore, viewing opportunities are excellent on the northern slopes; by contrast, "most areas to the south of the range are not expansive and open and thus do not afford a comparable viewing experience."[7]

### Early Residents and Visitors

Although the present park and preserve supports a broad spectrum of plant and animal species, conditions in most of this area are fairly marginal for year-round human subsistence. Factors contributing to this marginality, all of which are a function of the area's relatively high elevations, include a preponderance of tundra vegetation (and thus a lack of firewood) and relatively severe winters (with poor hunting prospects and periodic high winds). Thus it is perhaps no surprise that the earliest known sites in the area—Dry Creek, Walker Road, and Moose Creek, each more than 11,000 years old—



Archeological excavation at the Teklanika West site, Teklanika River, 1961. DENA 19-17, Denali National Park & Preserve Museum Collection

are located outside of the park. The Carlo Creek and Panguingue Creek sites, which date from at least 8,000 years B.P., are also located just outside of the park boundaries.[8]

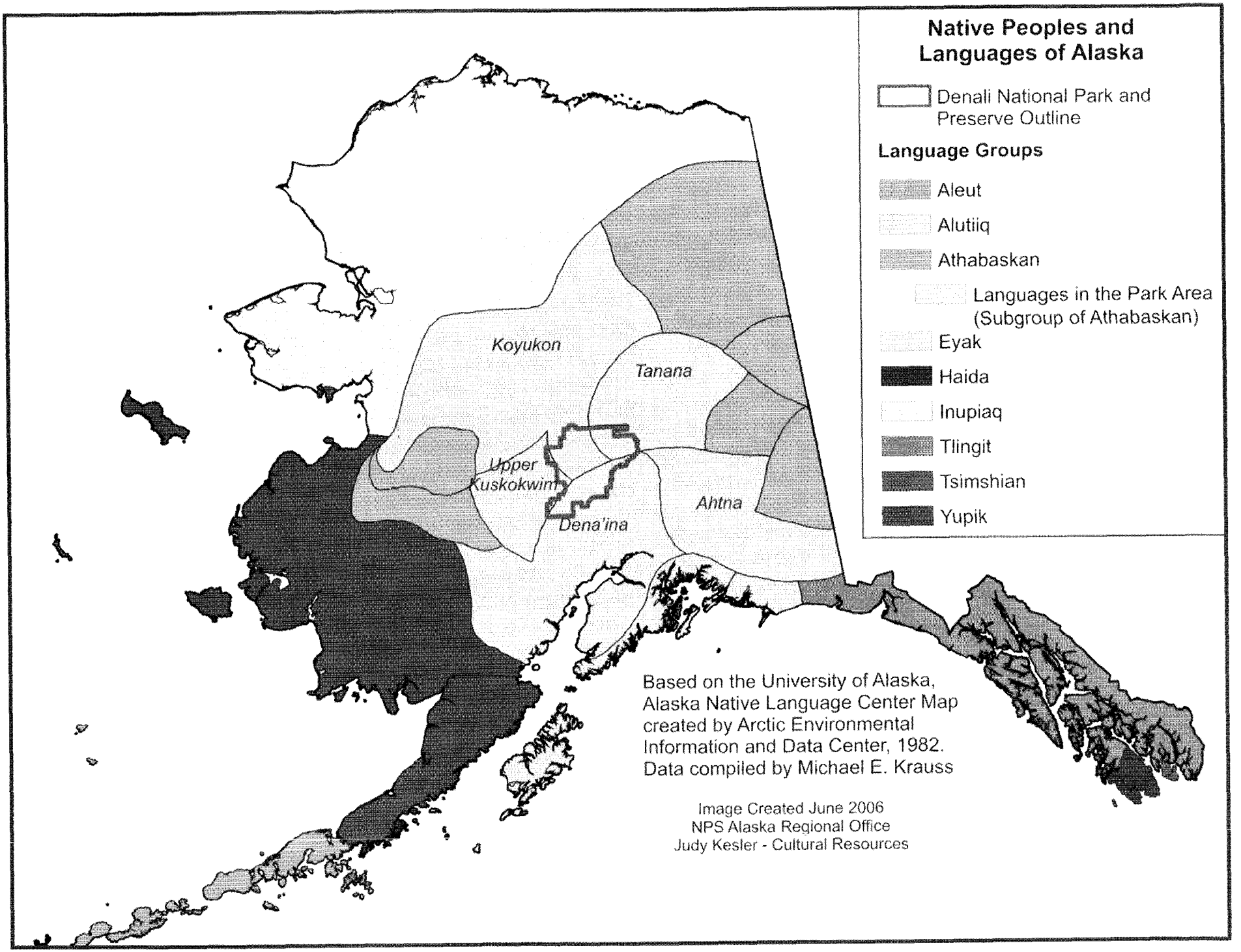
Based on the archeological record, human populations appear to have existed within the present-day park boundaries for more than 7,000 years. The first known evidence of human occupation, a piece of charcoal from a bluff near the Teklanika River, has been radiocarbon dated to 7,130 ± 98 B.P.[9] Humans appear to have stayed at that site, off and on, for more than 5,500 years. More recent prehistoric sites are found at Lake Minchumina, just northwest of the park, which are between 1,000 and 2,600 years old.[10] Archeologists thus far have recorded 84 prehistoric or protohistoric sites in the park and preserve. Most of these sites consist of one or more lithic artifacts, and it is hypothesized that they are related to former hunting camps, overlooks, or butchering locations. Because of their lack of cultural context, however, archeologists can only guess at the age of most of these artifacts and at the functions they served.[11]

Because of the lack of broadly applicable evidence, there is considerable dispute about the cultural tradition of these early peoples. Some researchers consider the development of a recognizable Athabaskan cultural pattern began roughly 6,000 years ago. Others, however, feel that the earliest peoples were called Amerinds, while the separate Athabaskan tradition represents a later migration. And still others consider that people representing the Athabaskan tradition began living in Alaska as early as 11,000 B.P.[12] Regardless of when they began, Athabaskan culture and ethnic identity has been traced back 1,500 years or more according to linguistic evidence, and about 1,000 years through their material culture.

For the past several hundred years, five groups of Athabaskan-speaking Indians have lived in the park and surrounding areas. (See Map 1.) These groups include the Ahtna, the Dena'ina, the Upper Kuskokwim (Kolchan), the Lower Tanana, and the Koyukon.[13] The Ahtna, whose culture was centered on the Copper River valley, includes the southeastern part of the present park and preserve within its territory. The Dena'ina, a coastal group of Athabaskans centered along upper Cook Inlet, includes the southcentral part of the park and preserve. The Upper Kuskokwim culture, based on several villages along the Kuskokwim River, utilized lands near the western end of the park and preserve. The Lower Tanana people, based on various villages along the Tanana River, has long been centered on the present-day vicinity of Fairbanks and includes the northeastern corner of the park and preserve. And the Koyukon Athabaskan culture encompassed a vast stretch of the Yukon, Koyukuk, and Tanana River drainages, including the northern and western end of the park and preserve.[14]

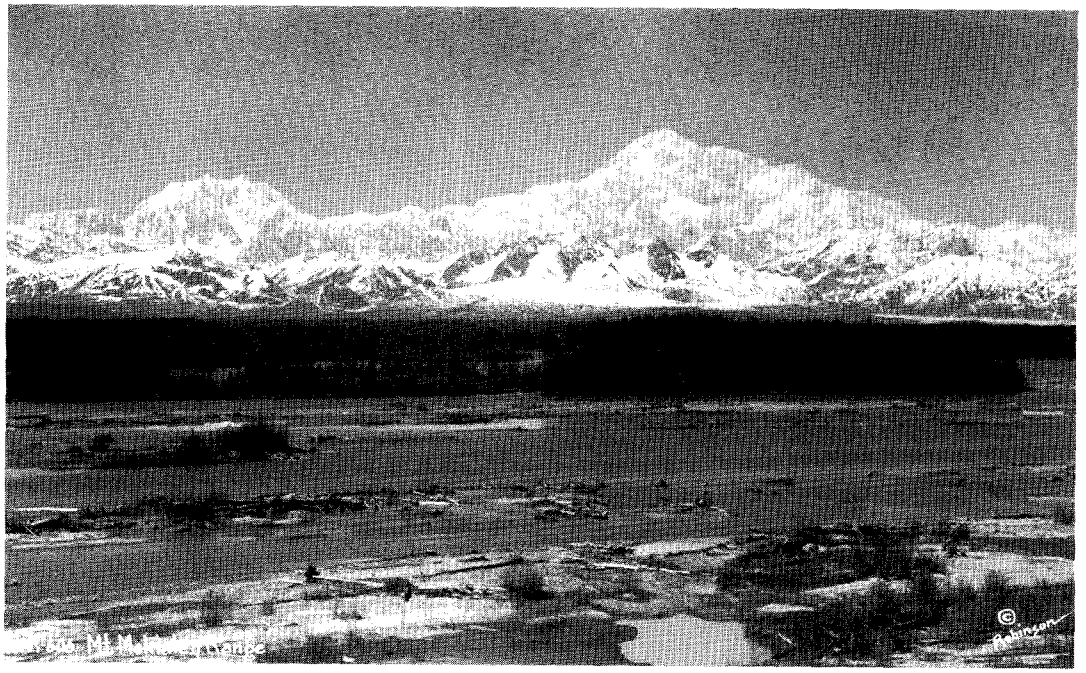
Non-native exploration of the area surrounding the present-day park unit was slow in coming, primarily because it was distant from the coast and remote from easily navigable rivers. The Russians, who held a nominal jurisdiction over present-day Alaska from 1741 to 1867, never penetrated within 50 miles of the park unit. And while it is indisputable that virtually all of Alaska was being either directly or indirectly influenced by European-based explorers—indirect influences being trading networks and disease transmission vectors—the reality is that non-Natives, during this period, impacted the lives of those who either occupied or used the lands in Denali's shadow less than other groups who lived along the coast or along major inland trading routes.[15] By all accounts, non-Natives' only direct influence on the area during this time was a series of uncoordinated attempts to apply names to the area's mountains: Russian Creole explorer Andrei Glazunov, in 1834, applied the Ingalik name "Tenada" to the "great mountain" that loomed more than 100 miles northeast of his route along the Stony River, and William Dall, who took part in the ill-fated Western Union Telegraph Expedition of 1865-67, proposed that the mountain chain that divided the Yukon River from the coastal country to the south be named the "Alaskan Range." Locals, over time, shortened his suggestion to the Alaska Range, a name that still stands.[16]

The purchase of Russian America by the U.S. government, at first, had few immediate impacts on Alaska outside of Sitka, and for more than a decade afterward, few Americans ventured north. But in 1880, a major gold strike took place along Gastineau Channel, and Juneau erupted into life. Soon afterward, more gold was discovered at nearby Douglas, and before long, an increasing number of prospectors headed north and began fanning across the north country. Gold was discovered along the Fortymile River, near the U.S.-Canada border, in 1886; and in 1892-95, additional discoveries took place along Birch Creek (which caused Circle City to spring into existence) and along Resurrection Creek (which created the Hope and Sunrise boom towns, on the shores of Turnagain Arm).[17]


Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska
Denali National Park and Preserve Outline
Language Groups
Aleut
Alutiiq
Athabaskan
Languages in the Park Area (Subgroup of Athabaskan)
Eyak
Haida
Inupiaq
Tlingit
Tsimshian
Yupik
Koyukon
Tanana
Upper Kuskokwim
Dena'ina
Ahtna
Based on the University of Alaska, Alaska Native Language Center Map created by Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, 1982. Data compiled by Michael E. Krauss
Image Created June 2006
NPS Alaska Regional Office
Judy Kesler - Cultural Resources

Most prospectors were far less fortunate. As a group, however, they were willing to go virtually anywhere in search of the elusive yellow metal. A party led by Frank Densmore, for example, crossed from the Tanana to the Kuskokwim drainage in 1889; though he found no Eldorado along the way, his enthusiasm over the huge, unnamed peak to the southeast prompted his peers to call it "Densmore's Mountain." Densmore, or perhaps other prospectors during this period, may have entered the boundaries of the present park unit.[18]

Seven years after Densmore's trek, another prospector, William A. Dickey, was one of several who approached the mountain from the south.



Mt. McKinley, from the south side, as William Dickey viewed it. The Chulitna River, near Talkeetna, is in the foreground. Candy Waugaman Collection

Confronted at first by torrential rains and cloudy skies, Dickey was not able to get a clear view of the Alaska Range until he reached the so-called "great forks" of the Susitna River, near present-day Talkeetna. Although he and his fellow prospectors continued to ascend the Susitna until they reached "an impassable canon, whose upper end was blocked by a high waterfall," they probably got no closer to the present-day park than Densmore. Unlike his predecessor, however, Dickey decided to publicize his trip in an influential Eastern newspaper. In the January 24, 1897 issue of the *New York Sun*, he gave an avid, detailed description of the mountain he had encountered. In addition, he gave the mountain a new name—Mount McKinley—and justified it because both he and McKinley were avowed proponents of a gold standard, and McKinley's nomination as the 1896 Republican presidential candidate "was the first news we received on our way out of that wonderful wilderness." Dickey's contention that the mountain was the highest in North America—soon corroborated by others—gave additional credence to his verbiage, and a short time later the U.S. government accepted Mount McKinley as an official designation.[19]

Dickey's sojourn up the Susitna River took place the same year as a huge gold strike took place along a tributary of the Klondike River, and although that discovery took place more than 300 miles to the east, the impacts of the Klondike gold discovery soon reverberated throughout the north country. Individual prospectors were first to respond to the promise of riches, but before long, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Army began to play strong supporting roles; the two agencies engaged in various expeditions into Alaska's unexplored hinterlands and searched for viable routes between the coast and various Interior prospecting areas.[20]

The fervor surrounding the Klondike strike resulted in the two agencies conducting five different expeditions into the countryside surrounding Mount McKinley in 1898 and 1899. In 1898, a USGS party headed by Josiah Edward Spurr and William Schuyler Post ascended the Yentna and Skwentna rivers, crossed over Rainy Pass, and left the area via the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River. That same year two other parties ascended the Susitna drainage, much as William Dickey had done two years earlier: George H. Eldridge and Robert Muldrow of the USGS, and Sgt. William Yanert of the U.S. Army. Both of these expeditions went farther inland than Dickey; both traversed the Broad Pass area and reached the north-flowing Nenana River before retreating back to Cook Inlet.

Facing page: Map 1. Five different Athabaskan-speaking Indian groups have utilized the area now contained in Denali National Park and Preserve.



In the words of photographer Stephen Foster: "Chief Dearfan and his tribe of about 50 Indians –chief fourth from the left. Sesui second from right and wife who saved Lieut. Herron and 8 soldiers on first Govt. expedition in this section. March 10, 1919." Stephen Foster Collection, 69-92-330, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archive

The following year, two more Army parties entered the area. The first, led by Pvt. George Van Schoonhoven, ascended the Susitna drainage and reached the Broad Pass area before reversing course, much as the other exploring parties had done a year earlier. The other expedition, led by Lt. Joseph Herron, began by following in the footsteps of the 1898 Spurr- Post expedition; it ascended the Yentna River. This party, however, ventured north to the Kichatna River, crossed the Alaska Range via Simpson Pass, then made its way to the Kuskokwim River's South Fork. Herron's group differed from the Spurr-Post expedition in that its goal was a route to the interior. As a result, Herron and his men nearly starved in the area's swamps until rescued by the Natives of Telida village. Chief Sesui of the village accommodated the men until freeze-up that fall, after which villagers led the party to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim's North Fork, near Lake Minchumina. Guides then led the party down the Cosna River to Fort Gibbon, the Army camp that had recently been built at the Yukon - Tanana river confluence.[21] As a result of these combined efforts, military authorities were now familiar with the southern, eastern, and western margins of the present park unit, and at least one of these groups may have been the first to tread within the boundaries of Denali National Park and Preserve.[22]

By the fall of 1899, the Klondike rush was over; interest moved on to the beaches of Nome, and in 1902, a gold strike near the Tanana brought a new rush and prospectors began flocking to Fairbanks. During this same period, a flurry of new interest was shown in the Mount McKinley region; at least four unrelated expeditions were launched to the area in either 1902 or 1903. In the spring of 1902, the USGS dispatched Alfred H. Brooks, along with topographer De Witt Lee Reaburn, to explore "the largest unexplored area in southern Alaska and [run] a traverse to the Yukon which should connect the previous surveys of the Susitna, Kuskokwim, and Tanana rivers." The Brooks-Reaburn party responded by ascending the Yentna River drainage to Rainy Pass, after which it dropped down to the northern flank of the Alaska Range and skirted



Alfred H. Brooks led the first U.S. Geological Survey expedition exploring along the north slope of the Alaska Range in 1902, through what is now Denali National Park and Preserve. Portraits, #246, U.S. Geological Survey



A prospector's camp on Eureka Creek typifies camps on the creeks of the Kantishna Mining District during the gold rush. Prindle Collection, #526, U.S. Geological Survey

it—first to the northeast and then to the east—all the way to the Nenana River, near present-day McKinley Park Station. The party then crossed the river, ascended the Yanert Fork for several miles, headed north over the Alaska Range and descended the Nenana River to the Tanana.[23] And that same year, engineers working for the Alaska Central Railroad began a two-year survey effort that brought them from the Susitna Valley up to Broad Pass and on to the Tanana Valley.[24]

The following year—1903—witnessed the first attempt to climb Mt. McKinley. James Wickersham, the U.S. District Judge for Alaska, left the Fairbanks gold camp with four others. They floated down the Tanana River, then began ascending the Kantishna River. Upon reaching its confluence with the Toklat River, the party climbed Chitsia Peak, then headed southwest along the margin of the Kantishna Hills. They decided to ascend the mountain via Peters Glacier. They continued on to Jeffrey Glacier but were stopped cold by a "tremendous precipice," now known as Wickersham Wall, that separated them from McKinley's North Peak. The disappointed party had no choice but to descend from the mountain and return to Fairbanks. Just a few weeks later, another party came to the area with similar intentions. Led by Dr. Frederick Cook, a recent medical school graduate, the 18-man party followed a route much like Brooks and Reaburn's the year before. They made several unsuccessful attempts to approach the mountain from the west; and they, like Wickersham, tried to climb McKinley via the Peters Glacier. The party then meandered along the base of the Alaska Range, probably as far east as the Easy Pass area; it then surmounted the ridge, rafted down the Chulitna, and descended the Susitna to Cook Inlet.[25]

Wickersham's party, during its 1903 sojourn, stumbled across some "colors" along Chitsia Creek and filed mining claims that were recorded at Rampart.[26] Spurred by the news, prospectors soon filtered into the area. The following year, Joe Dalton spotted gold along Crooked Creek in the nearby Toklat River drainage, and after Jack Horn and Joe Quigley struck pay dirt along Glacier Creek in early 1905 and returned to Fairbanks with the news, the Kantishna gold rush ensued. In July and August of that year, hundreds if not thousands of prospectors flocked to the hills and staked their length and breadth, and several instant towns sprang up: Roosevelt along the Kantishna River, Diamond City at the Moose Creek-Bearpaw River confluence, Glacier City near the Bearpaw River-Glacier Creek confluence, and Eureka (later Kantishna), where Moose Creek and Eureka Creek meet.[27]

Up until this time, the area surrounding Mount McKinley was being explored and developed in a way similar to most of the rest of Alaska. Because of its isolation from navigable waterways, European-based peoples had filtered into the area somewhat later than many other areas

in Alaska. The recent gold rush, however, suggested that this area might soon develop to an even greater degree. The possibilities seemed limitless. New visitors, however, would soon intrude upon the scene. These visitors are discussed in the following chapter.

## Notes - Chapter 1

[1] James Kari, *Native Place Names Mapping in Denali National Park and Preserve*, draft final report (Fairbanks, UAF Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., December 1999), 7-8. Earlier sources, such as Donald Orth's *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, USGS Professional Paper 567 (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1967, pp. 266-67, 610) stated that the primary Native names for the peak were "Denali," used by the Tanana, and "Doleika" or "Traleika," used by the Dena'ina (Tanaina).

[2] Orth, *Dictionary*, 610; Gail E. H. Evans, *From Myth to Reality: Travel Experiences and Landscape Perceptions in the Shadow of Mount McKinley, Alaska, 1876-1938* (unpublished M.A. Thesis, U.C. Santa Barbara, February 1987), 57.

[3] Alaska Planning Group, *Final Environmental Statement, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions* (Washington?, U.S. Interior Department, October 1974), 67; Phil Brease interview, June 6-7, 2004.

[4] Alfred H. Brooks, *The Mount McKinley Region, Alaska*, USGS Professional Paper 70 (Washington, GPO, 1911), 43-48; APG, *FES*, 66-67; Clyde Wahrhaftig, *Physiographic Divisions of Alaska,* USGS Professional Paper 482 (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1965), 29, 35-36, plate 1. The "Outer Range" is of local usage and is not a recognized place name.

[5] Brooks, *Mt. McKinley Region*, 201; APL, *FES*, 79-81.

[6] Carol McIntyre to author, email, June 20 and June 22, 2006.

[7] APG, *FES*, 81-104, 577-81; NPS, *General Management Plan, Land Protection Plan [and] Wilderness Suitability Review [for] Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska* [Denver, the author, November 1986], 131, 135.

[8] Kristen Griffin, *An Overview and Assessment of Archeological Resources, Denali National Park and Preserve* (Anchorage, NPS, September 1990), 19, 22.

[9] Ted Goebel, "Recent Research at Teklanika West: Site Stratigraphy and Dating," in Frederick Hadleigh West, *American Beginnings; the Prehistory and Paleoecology of Beringia* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996), 341-43; Frederick H. West, "Teklanika West," in same volume, pp. 332-41. West, the University of Alaska archeologist who first investigated the Teklanika site, originally estimated that earliest human activity there dated back to 8,000-12,000 B.P., but due to methodological advances, that date has since been revised several times. Ted Goebel to Research Coordinator, DENA, April 10, 1991; Griffin, *Overview and Assessment*, 22.

[10] Griffin, *Overview and Assessment*, 26-28.

[11] *Ibid.*, 81-82, 179-98, 235-70.

[12] *Ibid.*, 28-29.

[13] *Ibid.*, 34-36. Dena'ina Natives were formerly known as the Tanaina.

[14] *Ibid.*, 37; James Kari, *Native Place Names Mapping in Denali National Park and Preserve*, draft final report (December 1999), Figure 1; Michael E. Krauss, comp., *Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska* (map), revised edition, 1982.

[15] William E. Brown, *A History of the Denali-Mount McKinley Region, Alaska* (Santa Fe, NPS, 1991), 11, 13.

[16] Brown, *A History*, 14; Evans, *From Myth to Reality*, 58.

[17] Michael Gates, *Gold at Fortymile Creek; Early Days in the Yukon* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1994), 32, 35-37, 65-67; Virginia Doyle Heiner, *Alaska Mining History, A Source Document* (OHA Series #17, July 1977, 263-64, 405; Mary J. Barry, *A History of Mining on the Kenai Peninsula* (Anchorage, Alaska Northwest, 1973), 37-45.

[18] Evans, *From Myth to Reality*, 59, 61.

[19] Brown, *A History*, 16-18; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 9, 1971, 9.

[20] Brown (*A History*, p. 18) noted that in 1898, Congress asked the USGS to "become the Nation's chief trailblazer in Alaska," and as a result, the agency sent out several exploring parties that year. But other expeditions were the sole responsibility of the U.S. Army.

[21] Brown, *A History*, 19-20; Evans, *From Myth to Reality*, 64-68, 382-85; Alfred Hulse Brooks, *Blazing Alaska's Trails*, second edition (Fairbanks, Univ. of Alaska Press, 1973), 285-90; Morgan Sherwood, *The Exploration of Alaska, 1865-1900* (New Haven, Yale, 1965), 160, 164-67, 174-76.

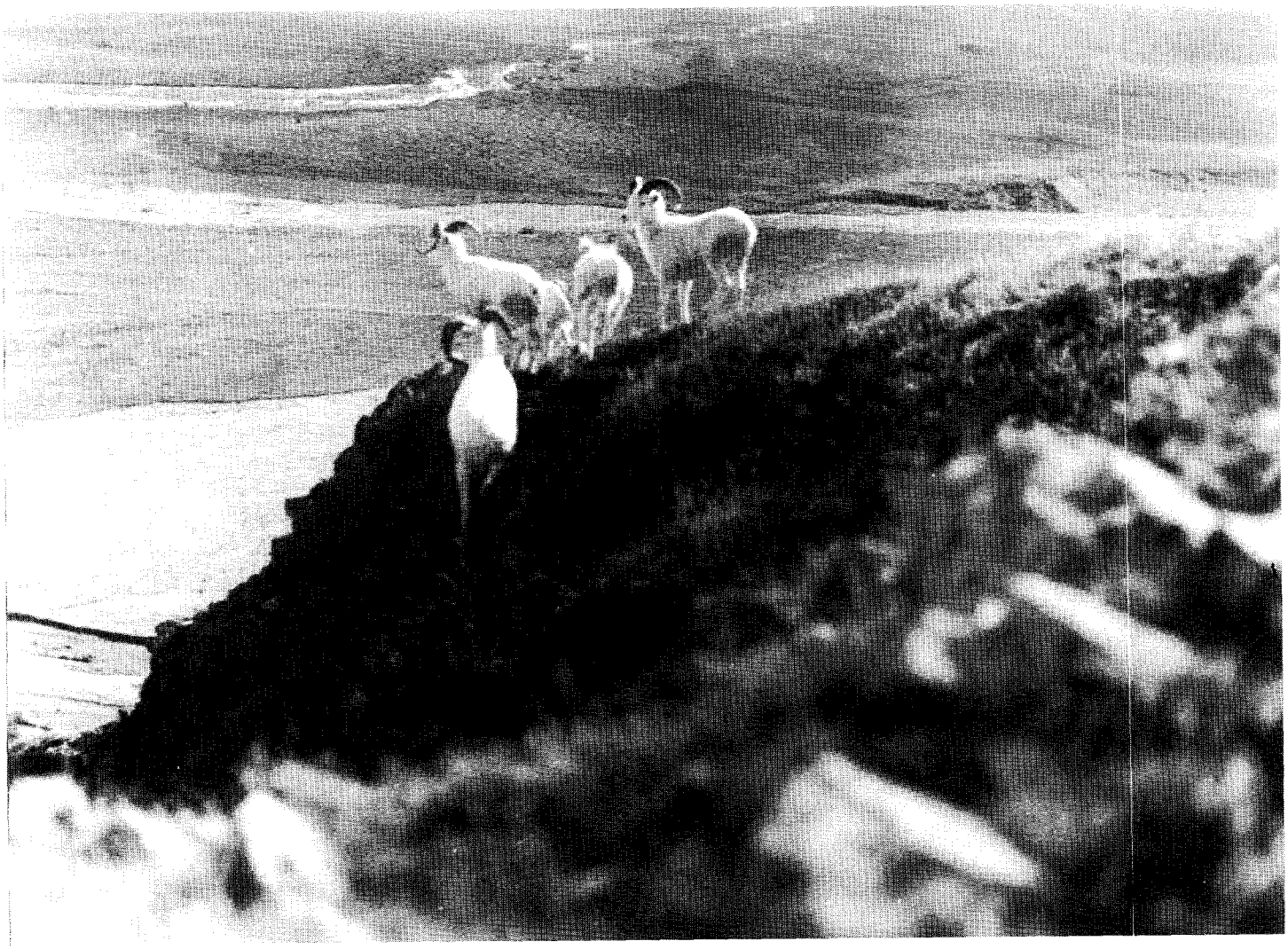
[22] Lt. Herron's 1899 expedition entered the present-day national preserve when it crossed Simpson Pass, and either the Eldridge-Muldrow or Yanert expeditions (both in 1898) may have entered the present-day national park when they crossed Broad Pass and arrived at the Nenana River. As noted above, Frank Densmore or another prospector may have entered the park earlier, in the late 1880s to mid-1890s.

[23] Evans, *From Myth to Reality*, 71-74, 386-87; Brown, *A History*, 23-27; Brooks, *The Mount McKinley Region, Alaska*, 169-80.

[24] Brown, *A History*, 19; Mary J. Barry, *Seward, Alaska; A History of the Gateway City, Vol. I: Prehistory to 1914* (Anchorage, the author, 1986), 35-36.

[25] Evans, *From Myth to Reality*, 75-80, 388-89; Brown, *A History*, 32-38, 55. Two excellent accounts of the Wickersham and later Mount McKinley expeditions are Terris Moore, *Mt. McKinley: The Pioneer Climbs* (Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press, 1967) and Tom Walker, *Kantishna: Mushers, Miners, and Mountaineers* (Missoula, MT, Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 2005).

[26] Brown, *A History*, 34. Gold miners had established Rampart, along the Yukon River, in 1896.
[27] *Ibid.*, 62-64.



# Chapter Two: Charles Sheldon's Vision

As noted in Chapter 1, few non-Natives visited the Mount McKinley region—either north or south of the Alaska Range—before the 1890s. The first visitors were prospectors, followed by both civilian and military exploration parties. After the turn of the century, outsiders ventured closer to the mountain massif than they had previously, and in 1903 two parties—one from Fairbanks and another from outside of Alaska—made the first attempts to climb Mount McKinley. While both attempts were unsuccessful, the leaders of these parties left the area duly impressed by its scenic majesty, and one party found gold particles in a Kantishna Hills streambed. That discovery brought others into the area, and in 1905 a gold rush brought thousands of prospectors, primarily from Fairbanks and nearby points.

### The First Park Advocates

Virtually everyone who visited the north side of the Alaska Range during this period were on practical missions; the U.S. Geological Survey crews, for example, were asked to describe the area's topography and geology for a government publication, the Army expeditions were making a general reconnaissance, and the two parties that arrived in 1903 were there to climb Mount McKinley, nothing more. Despite the pragmatism of these men, however, the reports that they wrote effusively described two remarkable qualities about the area: its scenery and its wildlife. The magnificence of the overall scenery by close-up observers, coupled with praise of the mountain massif, was first recorded by Muldrow, Eldridge, and Herron in the late 1890s, and virtually everyone who came thereafter was similarly impressed.

Early visitors to the north side of the Alaska Range were impressed with the area's abundant wildlife, referring to it as "the best game country in America." DENA 3812, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Beginning in 1902, the area's remarkable wildlife—diverse and plentiful—was lauded as well. Alfred Brooks, for example, noted that "On the north slopes of the mountains, moose, caribou, and mountain sheep, or big horns, were unusually plentiful ... the party was never without fresh meat." Wickersham, in 1903, wrote that "the beautiful rolling grass-lands and moss covered hills make it a favorite feeding ground for caribou, and the sharp crags to the east are the home of Tebay, the white sheep. ... We kill ptarmigan on the hills and ducks on the lakes – it is a hunter's paradise." And Dr. Cook and his party were profoundly impressed; "Here along the northern slope of the McKinley ground," he wrote, we crossed the best game country in America. Caribou, moose, mountain sheep, and grizzly bears were constantly in evidence."[1] Cook's superlative—"the best game country in America"—would be repeated, in later years as a rallying cry. And Wickersham, too, saw some - thing of the superlative as he traveled through the area; between Wonder Lake and the McKinley River, his party was delighted to discover a large spruce forest. Wickersham, obviously impressed, noted that "This forest ought to be withdrawn from disposal and preserved for the use of those who shall come after us to explore the highest and most royal of American mountains."[2]

For Wickersham, or any other Alaska official, to suggest a scenic land withdrawal in 1903 was a highly unusual move. This is because conservation, as we know it today, was still in its embry - onic stages. The United States, at this time, had established a ragtag series of forest reserves. These designations were only marginally effective, however, in stopping the ongoing desecration of the country's forested lands, and the U.S. Forest Service had not yet been estab - lished.[3] The first federal bird reservation, on tiny Pelican Island in Florida—which was the initial element in what would later evolve into a nationwide network of national wildlife refuges—had been established only a few months earlier.[4] And as far as national parks were concerned, the first had been established more than 30 years earlier, but by 1903, only eight had been established – and those few were being nominally administered by the U.S. Army, if at all. The Antiquities Act, and the national monuments established by that act, were still years in the future.[5]

Conservation was even less of a concern in remote Alaska. Virtually the only lands in the District that were reserved for conservation purposes at the time were the Afognak Forest and Fish Culture Reserve, established in 1892; the small Alexander Archipelago Forest Reserve, which was a forerunner of what would become the Tongass National Forest; and Indian River Park, a tiny reservation on the outskirts of Sitka.[6] Pragmatic Alaskans, driven by the potential riches of the quickly-developing area, were in no mood to tolerate new federal land withdrawals, and the widespread protests that greeted President Roosevelt's closure of Alaska's coal lands, in November 1906, merely confirmed that notion.[7]



Charles Sheldon made an expedition to the north slopes of the Mount McKinley region to hunt and study the little-known Dall sheep in the summer of 1906. Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

In the midst of this antagonistic atmosphere, a visitor from Vermont came to Alaska in search of the gamelands north of the Alaska Range. Charles Sheldon was financially comfortable, politically savvy, and moved with ease among members of the Eastern elite. Because of his wealth—gained from the supervision of various railroad construction projects and lucrative shares in a Mexican silver mine—he could well have retired and enjoyed a life of ease and idleness. But Sheldon was a hunter-naturalist, in the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt; he enjoyed "roughing it" and the accomplishments that came through physical hardship. And he also had a strong altruistic streak. Given those passions, he developed a deep interest in the study and preservation of mountain sheep, and upon advice from biologists Edward W. Nelson and C. Hart Merriam, he decided to travel to Alaska to observe the relatively little-known Dall sheep in its natural habitat.[8]

Sheldon, then 38 years old[9], ventured down the Yukon River in the early summer of 1906. Along the way, in Dawson, he hired Jack Haydon, and after arriving in Fairbanks, he brought on Harry Karstens, another veteran of the Klondike stampede. Sheldon and the two packers approached the Mt. McKinley area much as Wickersham's party had done three years earlier. To judge by his diary, which was published two years after his death, Sheldon thoroughly enjoyed the trip; he waxed ecstatically when he first saw Mount McKinley (in mid-July) from a hilltop near Wonder Lake, and he remained captivated by the area for the remainder of the summer as he wound through the area observing—and occasionally harvesting—the area's sheep, caribou, bears, and other megafauna. He stayed as long as he could, knowing that if he delayed any further, he would miss the last Yukon River steamboat of the season. But when he left, he did so with two overriding convictions. First, he knew that the Dall sheep's life history "could not be learned without a much longer stay among them and [he] determined to return and devote a year to their study. With this in view I planned to revisit the region..." He also was struck by both the usefulness and intelligence of one of his packers, Harry Karstens; he noted that the man was "brimful of good nature" and was fully supportive of Sheldon's work.[10]

Just as he had promised, Sheldon returned to Fairbanks the following year for a longer sojourn in the shadow of Mt. McKinley. He and Karstens trekked south and entered the upper gamelands on or about August 1, 1907, and they immediately set to work building a cabin on the right bank of the Toklat River, opposite the mouth of present-day Sheldon Creek and just upriver from its confluence with present-day Cabin Creek. Sheldon's primary purpose, it will be recalled, was to study the area's Dall sheep populations and to collect a few specimens of them for study and display Outside. But he did far more. A man of catholic interests, he immersed himself in the studies of other mammal populations as well as on birds, vegetation, and other items of interest.[11]

And the more he learned, the more he grew to appreciate the area. In the middle of that winter, he first wrote in his journal about an idea that he had first discussed with Karstens back in the summer of 1906. Because of the "beauties of the country and of the variety of the game," he wrote, the area "would make an ideal park and game preserve." Tourists, too, would be an important part of the equation, and he easily anticipated the area's "enjoyment and inspiration [that] visitors will receive." The idea of a "Denali National Park," which was broached in the January 12 diary entry, remained a fixture for Sheldon throughout the rest of his stay. He and Karstens, after that date, paid keen attention to the meandering wildlife in order to create park boundaries that might best protect them. And just prior to returning to Fairbanks, Sheldon noted that the sorrow he felt upon leaving the game country was tempered by his commitment to seeing the area become a designated game preserve.[12]

As noted above, the promulgation of a large national park in Alaska, at this early date, would



Charles Sheldon is pictured here at his 1906 camp at the Forks of the Toklat River where he collected specimens of the Dall sheep and other wildlife for the American Museum of Natural History. Karstens Library Collection



This group of Alaskan miners, the "Sourdough Expedition," made the first ascent of Mt. McKinley's north peak in 1910. DENA 4003, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

have been a startling departure from the norm. But to Sheldon, such a proposition was not altogether surprising. The Boone and Crockett Club, of which he was a member, had gone on record as being interested in the establishment of game refuges. And as the longtime chair of the club's Game Conservation Committee, the club's position "inspired in him the thought of preserving this area after personally studying the situation in that land." Another factor that underscored his interest was a darkening cloud on the horizon: market hunters. During his time in the gamelands, he had met several of these men at camps in the Savage, Teklanika, Toklat and Sanctuary river valleys. These camps helped supply meat to Fairbanks and adjacent mining camps. But their work worried him, and he was particularly appalled that half or more of the meat that they harvested was fed to their dogs before it was delivered to its destination.[13]

Shortly after he returned to New York, in January 1909, Sheldon pitched the idea of a game preserve in a speech at the Boone and Crockett club's annual dinner. Club members responded with unmitigated enthusiasm. Politically, however, members recognized that Congress had a waning interest in conservation—Roosevelt was about to be succeeded by William Howard Taft—and Sheldon recognized that the idea would have to wait. For the next several years, the park idea remained in an embryonic stage, but as time went on, Sheldon and other like-minded individuals continued to refine the idea that had first erupted during Sheldon and Karstens' winter sojourn. In the meantime, Sheldon gained a key Alaskan ally. James Wickersham, the former district judge in Fairbanks, became Alaska's non -voting delegate to Congress in 1909. Wickersham, by good fortune, was a friend of Sheldon's. He had been an occasional guest at Boone and Crockett Club dinners, and because of his 1903 adventure on Mount McKinley and in the Kantishna area, he was familiar with the country and he admired both its scenery and its remarkable animal life.[14]

Wickersham, as it turned out, was the first of several parties to attempt a Mount McKinley ascent. Just two months later, Dr. Frederick Cook and Robert Dunn made it as far the 11,000-foot level on Peters Glacier before turning back. Cook, obviously smitten by the mountain's lure, returned in 1906 with Belmore Browne, Herschel Parker and Robert Barrill; he loudly claimed to have reached the top, but many were skeptical, and in 1910 Browne and Parker made another trek into the area and refuted much of what Cook had proclaimed as gospel. Cook's claims, and the counter- claims of many others, made headlines for months afterwards, among both explorer's groups and the general public.[15]

A 1910 trek up the slopes of Mount McKinley, by the so-called "sourdough expedition," resulted in four Fairbanks men hauling a 14- foot-long spruce flagpole to the top of the mountain's North Peak (19,470 feet). But McKinley's South Peak—two miles to the southeast and 850 feet higher in elevation—remained elusive. So two years later, Browne and Parker returned to the



Belmore Browne's 1912 expedition traveled by dog team north to the Alaska Range, across it, and to the beginning of their climbing route on the north side of Mt. McKinley. Farquhar Collection, 81-208-17, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archives

mountain yet again, this time accompanied by Merle La Voy. Following another route up McKinley's northern flanks, they muscled their way up past the 19,000-foot level. Once there, however, a clear day turned into a snow- laden gale, and less than 200 yards from the summit, they were forced to retreat down the ridge and back to a base camp on upper Cache Creek. While there, on July 6, they felt a major earthquake, most likely from the Denali Fault; the quake had a significant impact on their camp, and it launched major avalanches on the surrounding mountains. Low on food, the expedition returned to Fairbanks.[16]

A year later, a new expedition—headed by Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, accompanied by Harry Karstens, Walter Harper, and Robert Tatum—attacked the mountain once again. Once on the mountain, the party learned that the previous summer's earthquake had strewn ice and boulders asunder and made the ascent, of present-day Karstens Ridge, far more difficult. Despite those impediments, the four men climbed up to the 17,500-foot level and camped. Then, at 4 a.m. on June 7, they set off toward the summit. Hiking in full sun, a keen wind, and a temperature of -4° F., the group—first Harper, then the others—reached the top. Ninety minutes later, they headed back down, and less than two weeks later, all four safely reached the Tanana River. The party's conquest of Mt. McKinley, North America's tallest peak, captured the imagination of thousands. Among Alaskans, the men's efforts were duly respected, but each soon returned to their previous lives with nary a look back.[17]

### Congress Opts for a Railroad

In 1912, toward the end of Taft's term, Congress showed more interest in Alaska than it had since the Klondike days of the late 1890s. In August of that year, it passed Alaska's second Organic Act. This act changed Alaska from a district to a full-fledged territory, and it established a territorial legislature. More important from Sheldon's point of view, however, the act established an Alaska Railroad Commission, which was asked to report on the most viable route for a government railroad between Alaska's southern coast and the interior. In short order, the commission recommended several routes, including one that followed the Copper River and Northwestern Railway (CR&NW) and the Valdez- Fairbanks wagon road,[18] and another that followed the old Alaska Central line from Seward to Turnagain Arm, continued north to the Matanuska (Chickaloon) coal fields, then northwest into the Kuskokwim drainage and the Iditarod River.

Congress passed the Alaska Railroad Act on March 12, 1914, which provided funding to build the rail line. The legislation, however, did not bind the government to the previously-completed survey recommendations, and at one time, routes with five different warm-water termini were being considered. The three members of the newly-established Alaska Engineering Commission soon began surveying these routes, and in time, just two routes were under serious consideration: the CR&NW-based route noted above, and a new, Seward-based route that wound north up the Susitna River valley to Broad Pass, from where it descended to the Tanana River via the Nenana River and continued on to Fairbanks. Given the certainty that one of these two routes would be

constructed, opportunists flocked to the mouth of Ship Creek (present-day Anchorage) and to Seward in hopes that President Woodrow Wilson would choose the Seward-based route. Those opportunists, evidently thinking that the government was unlikely to purchase the CR&NW from the powerful (and widely despised) Guggenheim-Morgan Syndicate, proved visionary; on April 10, 1915, Wilson signed an executive order choosing a route that would run from Seward to Fairbanks.[19]



Based at cabins such as this one, market hunters harvested sheep, caribou and moose to sell in the mining camps and railroad construction camps. Charles Porter Collection, 79G-11F-44, National Archives

Alaskans in general, and particularly the residents of towns along the proposed railroad route, were overjoyed to know that a major railroad was on the verge of construction in their territory. Charles Sheldon, however, had decidedly mixed feelings about Wilson's action. On the one hand, he knew that the new railroad—which would be built along the Nenana River—would make it far easier for tourists and nature-lovers of all stripes to visit the gamelands he knew so well. But he was also concerned because that same railroad would ease access for market hunters whom, he feared, might easily wipe out the area's sheep, caribou, and other large game. These hunters, he knew all too well, would now have the responsibility to feed thousands of railroad construction workers in addition to Fairbanks and other Interior residents.[20] Sadly, Sheldon's concern had considerable justification; between 1913 and 1916, market hunters harvested between 1,500 and 2,000 Dall sheep each winter from the Toklat and Teklanika river basins alone.[21]

Given that challenge, Sheldon and his colleagues knew that they had to act quickly. In order to protect the cherished wildlife, they needed to convince Congress to pass a park bill, and in addition they needed to convince Congress to expend funds on park enforcement staff. And all of this needed to be done before railroad construction neared the boundaries of the newly-established park. Sheldon's first response to the impending challenge was to secure passage, by the Boone and Crockett Club, of a resolution that endorsed the idea of a Mount McKinley National Park.[22] This was accomplished on September 21, 1915. Sheldon and Madison Grant—the latter a historian and fellow Club member—then organized as an ad hoc lobbying committee.

At the time that the Club's lobbying campaign began, Alaskans were just as dead-set against federal regulations and reservations as they had ever been. They resented the 1908 Game Law, which had been passed over their objections. They resented President Taft's 1910 withdrawal of Alaska's oil-bearing tracts. And because the onset of World War I (in Europe) diverted some ships away from the Alaskan trade, they were particularly resentful of any actions that might prevent them from gaining access to locally available meat supplies. Sheldon, Grant, and other conservationists were firm in their desire to have a park established that would allow no commercial hunting. They knew, however, that many Alaskans might fight such a bill; and more important, they knew that any bill passing Congress would need to be completely acceptable to the state's non -voting delegate, James Wickersham. Sheldon therefore began his campaign by writing his old friend and asking for his thoughts on the matter.[23] Wickersham soon responded. Sheldon, as a result of that interaction, noted that any park in this area "should be created under provisions which will protect local interests in mining." More specifically, any park bill would need to contain provisions protecting both existing and future mining claims.[24]

In the next few months, Sheldon contacted others for support, both inside and outside of government. That December, the Boone and Crockett Club Preservation Committee chief wrote to Stephen T. Mather, who at that time was Interior Secretary Franklin Lane's assistant in charge of the national parks. (Congress did not establish the National Park Service until August 1916, after which Mather became the new agency's director.)

Sheldon told Mather that, with the possible exception of the Grand Canyon, nothing could compare to that "region of the Alaska Range for the grandeur of the scenery and the topographical interest...," and because of the area's "vast reservoir of game," he had long "believed that someday this region must be made a national park." In his letter, Sheldon was careful to note political realities regarding existing and future mining activity. Mather, at first, was less than enthusiastic. His primary focus was on additions to Yosemite, Sequoia, and Rocky Mountain national parks, along with establishing Grand Canyon; as a result, he would "temporarily forget" pushing for any other new park areas. But perhaps in response to the objections of

Horace Albright, Mather's assistant, Mather soon became fully supportive of Sheldon's plan; in fact, he went so far as to speak with Boone and Crockett members on that subject at the club's January 6, 1916 meeting.[25]

Over the next few months, word spread about the Boone and Crockett proposal, and leaders both inside and outside Alaska voiced their support. On a national level, Sheldon soon learned that Belmore Browne of the Camp Fire Club of America had been formulating his own proposal for preserving the Denali landscape. (Browne, like Sheldon, was thoroughly familiar with the beauties of the Alaska Range; he was a veteran of three previous attempts to climb Mount McKinley, in 1906, 1910, and 1912.[26]) Browne quickly joined Sheldon's effort, and soon afterward the American Game Protective and Propagation Association, headed by John B. Burnham, was included as well. Within Alaska, delegate Wickersham voiced his strong support for a park bill, recognizing that it would stimulate tourism to Alaska. Thomas B. Riggs, head of the Alaska Engineering Commission—which was then constructing the railroad between Seward and Fairbanks—also saw the bill's benefits, noting that a national park would boost tourist travel along the line.[27]

Because Sheldon, Riggs, and Browne all knew the country well, and because all three men supported a park bill, they were the primary determinants of the park's boundaries. Sheldon, in mid-January 1916, sent Riggs a description of the park's boundaries as he envisioned them. That boundary included much of the magnificent gamelands located north of the Alaska Range; it also included the spine of the range itself, along with additional thousands of acres south of the Alaska Range. (See Map 2.) But it did not include the Kantishna area; in fact, it completely avoided the Kantishna Hills because of the preponderance of mineral claims and the potential for continued mining-related activity. Two weeks later, Thomas Riggs replied to Sheldon. He fully agreed with the general concept that Sheldon had presented, but it differed in several particulars. He told Sheldon that he was offering a new boundary

> which, I think, suits our conditions a little better than yours. I have so drawn the boundary as to be largely controlled by natural features; I have also eliminated about 700 square miles to the south of Mt. McKinley which would be of no use to anybody but which, when added to a withdrawal, makes the size of the park appear very formidable.

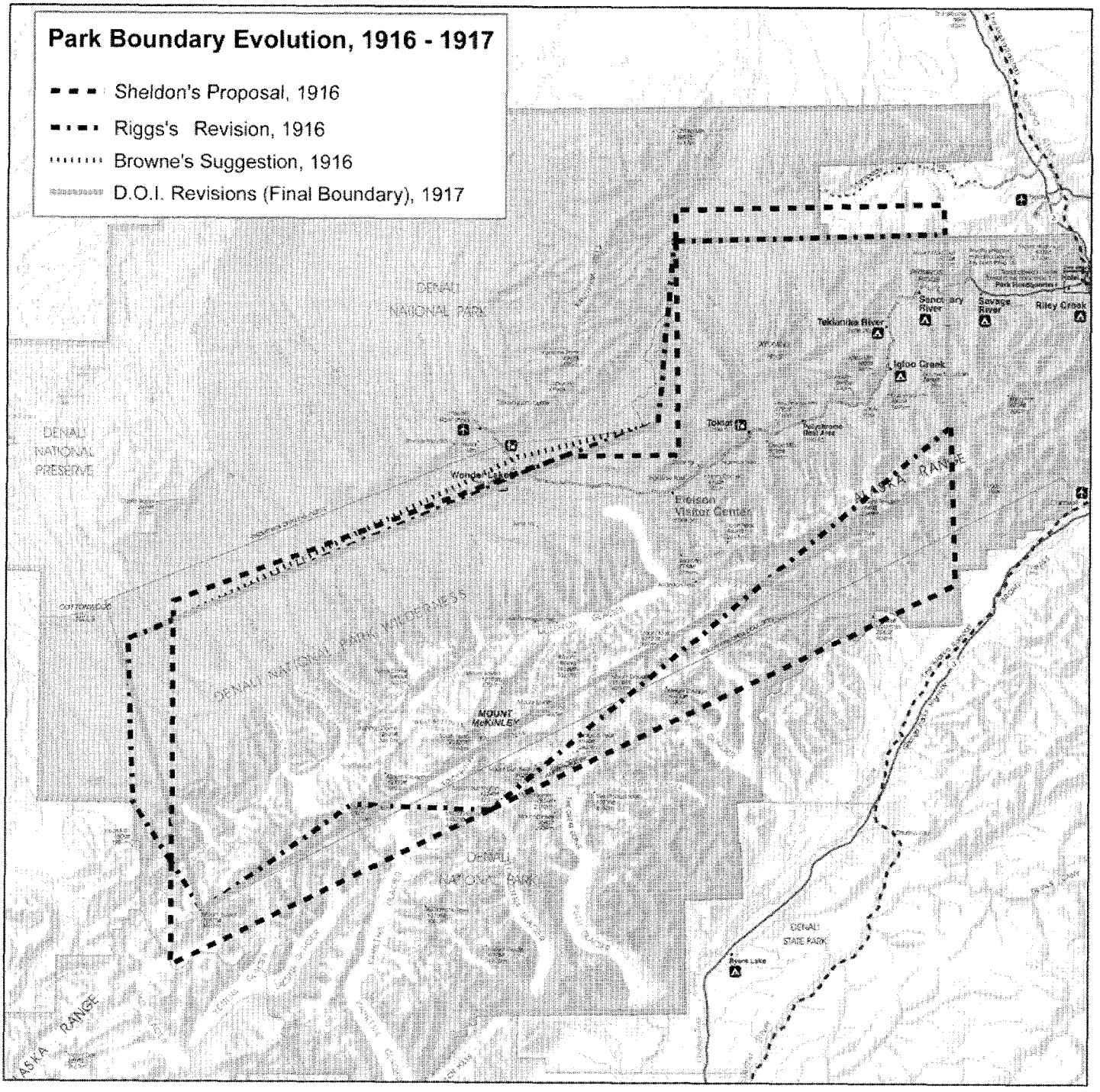
Browne then weighed in with a suggestion to include additional acreage in a broad band south of Wonder Lake. Then, at some point between January and April 1916, someone—perhaps Mather or Albright, who were the only two Interior Department employees advocating for what would become the National Park Service—responded by agreeing to Riggs's general notions but by simplifying his boundary recommendations. Those revised boundaries were never again modified during the Congressional debate over the park bill.[28]

#### A Park Bill Becomes Law

Attention next moved to Congress. Wickersham, Browne, and Sheldon collaborated on the drafting of a park bill (H.R. 14775), which Wickersham submitted to the House of Representatives on April 18, 1916. An identical bill, S. 5716, was introduced by Senator Key Pittman of Nevada four days later. The two bills, as suggested by Sheldon's earlier communications with Wickersham, broke rank with previous park bills in that they allowed hunting, but only for subsistence purposes. The bills specifically stated that

> Prospectors and miners engaged in prospecting or mining in said park may take and kill therein so much game or birds as may be needed for their actual necessities when short of food; but in no case shall animals or birds be killed in said park for sale or removal therefrom, or wantonly.[29]

Movement on the park bill first took place in the Senate. The Committee on Territories recommended passage of the bill on May 15, and a report to accompany the bill appeared the same day. No changes were recommended by the committee. The Senate Committee Report gave three reasons for the park: "first, the stimulating of travel by tourists and sight-seers to Alaska; second, the preservation of the natural scenery, the facilitating of travel to the park, and the accommodation of tourists; third, the protection of game." Backers stated that the bill was "heartily supported by the residents of Alaska and by various hunting, camping, and outing clubs." The report noted that "the game in this vicinity is more abundant than anywhere in the United States," but it also stated that "prospectors and miners engaged ... in the park may take and kill game therein for their actual necessities when short of food." Animals or birds thus killed, however, could not be sold or wasted.[30]




**Map 2. Park Boundary Evolution, 1916-1917**

The bill then moved on to the full Senate for consideration.

The Senate debated S. 5716 on September 8, where it was shepherded through by Sen. Key Pittman, a Nevada Democrat who headed the Committee on Territories. Pittman, back in 1897, had stampeded north as part of the Klondike gold rush, and he had remained in Alaska, as a miner and attorney, until 1902; he thus knew northern conditions.[31] He was able to steer Wickersham's bill through with just one amendment. Reed Smoot, a Utah Republican, objected to a provision stating that the violation of any rule or regulation promulgated by the Interior Secretary might be charged with a misdemeanor. Pittman, in response, said that this "is largely the same rule that obtains with regard to other national parks," and he further stated that he had lived in Alaska "too long to think that [harsh punishment for the violation of such rules] would be possible." The Senate, however, agreed to Smoot's amendment.[32]

Advocates of a park bill, both in the House and Senate, made it plain that if the area's game were to be preserved, quick passage of a park bill was necessary. Their efforts were temporarily stymied, however, by an informal rule of the House Committee on Public Lands stating that it



Dall sheep in Mt. McKinley National Park. DENA 3889, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

could consider just two park bills in a calendar year. The Committee, for whatever reason, bypassed consideration of a Mount McKinley bill in 1916 in favor of Hawaii and Lassen Volcanic national parks. Therefore, the committee did not debate the bill—still known as S. 5716—until January 10 of the following year. Committee passage was swift, and it was forwarded on to the full House. The committee urged that the full House act swiftly on the bill; as its report noted, "the new railroad now under consideration will pass within a few miles of this section, and unless this park is created and this protection furnished it will mean that in a very short time the greatest game supply we have will be exterminated."[33] Also urging quick action on the bill was geologist Stephen Capps, who published a major article in *National Geographic Magazine* about Mount McKinley's potentially endangered game populations. A group of enthusiastic Congressmen, who had recently returned from the Fourth National Park Conference in Washington, D.C., also pleaded for quick passage.[34]

On February 19, S. 5716 was brought before the House, where it was the subject of detailed debate. Rep. James V. McClintic (D-Oklahoma) was asked to oversee debate related to the bill, and at the suggestion of Rep. Irvine Lenroot (R-Wisconsin), McClintic recommended that no more than $10,000 annually should be allotted "for the maintenance of said park ... unless the sum shall be first expressly authorized by law."[35] McClintic stated that "in offering this amendment we are only following a precedent that has been established in the creation of all the late parks." (Indeed, bills establishing each of the three previous national parks, beginning with Rocky Mountain in 1915, had included the $10,000 annual budgetary limitation.) Rep. James R. Mann (R-Illinois) denounced the budget cap, and stated "I doubt very much whether in the course of a year or two $10,000 will be enough." Rep. Lenroot, however, tried to ameliorate the differences between the two sides. He stated that

> I am in favor of the creation at this time of national parks containing great scenic beauty or natural curiosities. [However,] I am opposed to the expenditure of any large sums of money on new national parks in the present condition of the Federal Treasury. ... In the very nature of things the amount that Congress will annually appropriate for the development of parks is limited. If you strike out all limitation ... it will amount to nothing so far as actual utility is concerned, and that money should be confined to four or five national parks until they are developed, and begin to gain some revenue... [A park bill] ought to be adopted, and so far as Alaska is concerned, by the time the Alaskan Railway is completed, by the time that tourist travel shall go there in any large numbers, that will be time enough for Congress to remove the limitation that ought to be adopted by this amendment.

Shortly after Rep. Lenroot's statement, James Wickersham was asked if "$10,000 a year for the protection of game in one single park is a fairly liberal appropriation." The delegate, obviously skeptical, stated that "such a limitation in this bill is a mistake" because it would "leave open to spoliation the herds of wild game which are now within its boundaries." But he later took a more conciliatory tone, noting that the sum "may be sufficient. ... The park itself is very large, and it is approached by game upon all sides, so that considerable money will have to be spent in protecting the game if you want it protected."[36]

A second amendment, offered by Rep. William Stafford (R-Wisconsin) suggested another austerity measure: that any funds "derived from leases or other privileges" should be "turned into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts" rather than "utilized for the continuous use of the park." Stafford's amendment, which involved the removal of a single sentence from Section 7 of the Senate bill, generated little debate and was agreed to by voice vote. This amendment, as the one above, appears to have passed in light of the "present condition of the Federal treasury," and the inclusion of both amendments may well have been underscored by the growing war clouds on the horizon and the fiscal implications of the U.S. getting involved in a foreign war.[37]

A third amendment, potentially explosive, dealt with the issue of hunting by prospectors and miners. As noted above, both the House and



Snowshoe hare in winter. Charles Ott Photo, DENA 3467, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Senate bills had consistently included a provision allowing hunting by "prospectors and miners engaged in prospecting or mining in said park." What provoked discussion, however, was whether the hunting privilege "should be under such regulations as the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe." Rep. Stafford advocated that such language be included in the bill, arguing that the "occasion may arise when the Secretary of the Interior may think it necessary to proscribe the shooting of game ad libitum by prospectors there." By so doing, he was following the lead of many leading conservationists, who hoped that this provision might limit or even eliminate hunting in the park. Another representative, however, had sought the views of Interior Secretary Lane, who felt that "under the provisions of this act that the provision was sufficiently safeguarded [without such language, and the Secretary] would have sufficient jurisdiction to take care of game in the Territory." Delegate Wickersham, asked to weigh in on the debate, stated that "there were good reasons why [the provision] should not be put in," and he further noted, to the best of his knowledge, that "there is a general park law which gives [the Secretary] that right without putting it in here." Implied in Wickersham's "good reasons" is that the battle over whether hunting should be allowed in the park had first been fought a year or more earlier. Conservationists, while not happy with the outcome, recognized that establishing a large park with a subsistence hunting provision was far better than no park at all. The outcome of Rep. Stafford's effort was thus a foregone conclusion, and by voice vote, the provision was not included in the park bill.[38]

A final provision dealt with mining. Because prospecting had been active in the area for more than a decade, and because the small amount of prospecting within the proposed park's boundaries was not perceived to be detrimental to the park's primary purposes, both the House and the Senate bills proposed "that the mineral-land laws of the United States are hereby extended to the lands included within the park." But Rep. Franklin W. Mondell (R-Wyoming) worried that "the mineral laws of the United States, some of them, do not apply to any part of Alaska," so he recommended that the original sentence be replaced by one more appropriate: "Nothing in this act shall in any way modify or affect the mineral laws now applicable to the lands in said park." Rep. McClintic, the floor leader, was "very glad to accept" Mondell's substitution, and the House agreed to the amendment by voice vote.[39]

The House then passed the entire bill by voice vote and sent it back to the Senate. But the House bill now differed from the Senate-passed bill in several aspects. So to reconcile those differences and to ensure a quick passage of the bill, Key Pittman, on February 20, stood up on the Senate floor and asked the Senate to concur in the amendments that the House had agreed to two days earlier. The Senate agreed to these changes by voice vote, and the bill was now ready to be signed by President Wilson.[40] Charles Sheldon, who had been closely following the bill's progress for more than a year (in fact, he had moved from his Vermont home to Washington in order to help move the bill through Congress), was given the honor of delivering the bill to the president. Wilson, at the moment, had other matters to consider; he had just two weeks left before being sworn in for a second term, the end of the 64th Congress brought a host of other bills to his desk, and the sinking of Allied ships by German submarines was forcing the U.S. ever closer to declaring war on the Central Powers. But Sheldon, for his part, visited the White House each day to see if Wilson was ready to sign the McKinley park bill. On February 26, perhaps frustrated that the bill had not yet been signed, Sheldon took the day off. But in an ironic footnote, Wilson chose that day to sign the park bill.[41] The following day, Horace Albright congratulated Sheldon for his part in the creation of a great national park. Sheldon, unaware of Wilson's action, was dumbstruck. As Albright recounted it many years later, "He kicked himself the rest of his life

that that was the one day he didn't go up there."[42]

What emerged from the legislative battle was a park that largely reflected the vision that Charles Sheldon and Harry Karstens had first developed almost a decade earlier. The new national park, the first to be established after Congress had created the National Park Service, encompassed an area of almost 1.6 million acres (see Appendix A);[43] it stretched more than 100 miles from northeast to southwest, and it was between 20 and 35 miles wide. Within those protected acres was North America's highest peak, a remarkable array of plant and animal habitat, and perhaps most important, it gave legal protection to vast expanses of habitat where various large mammals thrived. Given those remarkable resources, Congress stated that its primary intent in establishing the park was "the freest use of the said park for recreation purposes by the public and for the preservation of animals, birds, and fish and for the preservation of the natural curiosities and scenic beauties thereof." It further stated that "said park shall be, and is hereby established as a game refuge" although, as noted above, an exception was provided in order to allow subsistence hunting by prospectors and miners.[44]

Thanks to the persuasiveness of Charles Sheldon and other visionaries,[45] Congress and the President had established a large park that provided federal protection to the magnificent game herds located north of the Alaska Range. It was now up to the newly-minted National Park Service, along with such partners whom they could enlist in its behalf, to carry out the various goals that Congress had set forth.

## Notes - Chapter 2

[1] Evans, Gail E. H., *From Myth to Reality: Travel Experiences and Landscape Perceptions in the Shadow of Mount McKinley, Alaska, 1876-1938*, unpublished N.A. Thesis, U.C. Santa Barbara, February 1987, 72-79.
[2] *Ibid.*, 76-77.
[3] Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, revised edition (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967), 133-38.
[4] James B. Trefethen, *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (Alexandria, Va., Boone and Crockett Club, 1975), 122.
[5] Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks; A History* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997), 11-14, 25-26.
[6] Lawrence W. Rakestraw, *A History of the United States Forest Service in Alaska* (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Commission, 1981), 8-10, 16-21; Joan M. Antonson and William S. Hanable, *Administrative History of Sitka National Historical Park* (Anchorage, NPS, December 1987), 5-6.
[7] Clarence Hulley, *Alaska: Past and Present*, third edition (Portland, Binfords and Mort, 1970), 303; Walter R. Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land* (New York, HarperCollins, 2003), 240.
[8] William E. Brown, *A History of the Denali-Mount McKinley Region*, 75; Evans, *From Myth to Reality*, 149-50; Timothy Rawson, *Changing Tracks; Predators and Politics in Mt. McKinley National Park* (Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press, 2001), 21.
[9] Sheldon was born on October 17, 1867. See "Charles Sheldon," *Who Was Who in America; Vol. 1, 1897-1942* (Chicago, A. N. Marquis, 1943), 1113.
[10] Brown, *A History*, 77-83; Evans, *From Myth to Reality*, 150-51; Sheldon, *The Wilderness of Denali* (New York, Charles Scribner's, 1930), 3. The quotes are from Sheldon, pp. 65 and 103.
[11] Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 22-23.
[12] Sheldon, *Wilderness of Denali*, 261, 272, 385; Brown, *A History*, 85.
[13] Brown, *A History*, 84-85; Tom Walker, "The Battle for McKinley Park," *Anchorage Daily News*, December 15, 1991, C-6; Sheldon, *Wilderness of Denali*, xvi, 288, 293.
[14] Brown, *A History*, 85; Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 24.
[15] Brown, *A History*, 35-43.
[16] *Ibid.*, 43-48; Belmore Browne, "Hitting the Home Trail from Mount McKinley," *Outing* 62 (July 1913), 387-404; Jane Bryant emails, November 23 and December 5, 2005.
[17] Brown, *A History*, 48-54.
[18] This route was known as the Valdez Trail until 1919, when it was known as the Valdez-Fairbanks Road, and by 1923 it was known as the Richardson Road. Frank Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun; The Tourist in Early Alaska*, Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 170 (Anchorage, the Commission, June 1985), 42; Alaska Road Commission, *Annual Report* for 1919 (Part I, p. 2092) and 1923 (Part I, p. 2095).
[19] Lone Janson, *The Copper Strike* (Anchorage, Alaska Northwest, 1975), 139-41, 144; Mary Barry, *Seward, Alaska; a History of the Gateway City; Volume II, the Alaska Railroad Construction Years, 1914-1923* (Anchorage, the author, 1993), 5-7, 13-15.
[20] Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 26; Brown, *A History*, 86.
[21] Tom Walker, "The Battle for McKinley Park," C-6; Stephen R. Capps, "A Game Country Without Rival in America; the Proposed Mount McKinley National Park," *National Geographic Magazine* 31 (January 1917), 81.
[22] Sheldon, as noted above, deferred to Native usage and consistently preferred "Denali," and Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, an Episcopal prelate who organized the first successful summit climb in 1913, was also an advocate of this term. Most others, however, recognized that "Mount McKinley" was the official name of the mountain; thus they were unwilling to consider another name for the proposed national park.
[23] Brown, *A History*, 86. Sheldon sent his letter to Wickersham in October 1915.
[24] John M. Kauffmann, *Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska; A History of its Establishment and Revision of its Boundaries* (Washington, D.C., NPS, July 1954), 7-8. The verbiage Sheldon used in his December letter to Mather indicates that Wickersham had already weighed in on the subject.
[25] Brown, *A History*, 89, 91; Horace Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service; the Missing Years* (Norman, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 110.
[26] Brown, *A History*, 38-41, 44-45.
[27] Brown, *A History*, 91.
[28] Kauffmann, *Mount McKinley National Park*, 6, 9-10, Map 1. Sheldon had no qualms with Riggs' proposed removal of the countryside south of the high peaks. As he stated, "I do not feel that the south lines are so important," and his colleague Belmore Browne noted that the area was "not a game country" and was "a region which protects itself."
[29] 64th Congress, 1st Session; H.R. 14775 (April 18, 1916) and S. 5716 (April 22, 1916).
[30] 64th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 440*, May 15, 1916.

[31] Despite that familiarity, Pittman was apparently uninformed about where the proposed boundaries lay; he stated that the park was a "proposed 25-mile square" and that the north side of Mount McKinley had "a slope to the base which just about reaches to the [park's] border line." *Congressional Record* 64 (September 8, 1916), 14133.

[32] *Congressional Record* 64 (September 8, 1916), 14133-34.

[33] 64th Congress, 2nd Session, *House Report No. 1273*, January 10, 1917; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 12.

[34] Capps, "A Game Country Without Rival in America," 69-84; Brown, *A History*, 92; Janet McDonnell (NPS), email to the author, June 7, 2005.

[35] Horace Albright, in his *Creating the National Park Service; the Missing Years*, p. 126, noted that Lenroot was "deeply opposed to more bureaucracy."

[36] *Congressional Record* 64 (February 19, 1917), 3628-30.

[37] *Ibid.*, 3628, 3630.

[38] *Ibid.*, 3628; Brown, *A History*, 93.

[39] *Congressional Record* 64 (February 19, 1917), 3628, 3630.

[40] *Ibid.* (February 20, 1917), 3662-63.

[41] *Ibid.* (February 26, 1917), 4271.

[42] Horace Albright interview (December 1986) in *Boone and Crockett News* 4 (Spring 1987), 4, as noted in Brown, *A History*, 92.

[43] Just a few days after the park bill became law, Interior Secretary Lane noted that the park "embraces an area of approximately 2,200 square miles or 1,408,000 acres." (64th Congress, 2rd Session, *Senate Document No. 742*, p. 2, March 2, 1917). These figures, which were gross estimates based on the lack of survey work that had been conducted in the area at that time, was widely quoted as accurate for years afterward. By the 1930s, cartographers had acquired the ability to make a far more accurate estimate. Despite that scientific progress, however, the NPS—as late as the 1970s—continued to use the old figures as the basis for the park's area. In recent years, cartographers recalculated that the area within the original park boundaries was 1,591,897 acres – more than 183,000 acres larger than Lane had stated. DENA Ownership Map, Segment 01, AKRO-L Working Files.

[44] *United States Statutes at Large* 39 (February 26, 1917), p. 938.

[45] NPS founder Horace Albright, many years later, stated that "To Congress, the whole Territory of Alaska was some far-off place like Mars. It was really only the forceful work of the Boone and Crockett Club members (one of whom was Theodore Roosevelt) that brought McKinley enough recognition to make it a park. McKinley was ... a long, hard pull." Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service: the Missing Years*, 300-01.



# Chapter Three: Park Management Begins, 1917-1924

Once President Wilson signed the Mount McKinley park bill, those who had pushed for the bill—Charles Sheldon, John B. Burnham, George Bird Grinnell, and others—were finally able to breathe a sigh of relief and congratulate each other for their role in protecting a large, valuable section of some of Alaska's (and America's) greatest gamelands. Thanks to their efforts, the magnificent foothills of the Alaska Range—which, remarkably, were immediately adjacent to North America's highest peak—were now enclosed within the boundaries of a national park and would be managed by the newly-established National Park Service.

### Funding the New Park

Once one and all had offered their congratulations, however, a sober reality sunk in; while Congress and the President had provided a template for the area's protection, that template meant little because no funds had been appropriated; thus there was no staff to patrol the park boundaries, educate visitors and residents, and manage the park's numerous resources.[1] One and all were aware that the Alaska Engineering Commission's railroad was already complete as far north as the farm town of Matanuska, with further progress sure to follow.[2]

Park advocates, therefore, dug in their heels and fought to provide an operations budget. Just one day after the park bill was signed, Interior Secretary Franklin Lane sent a letter to Treasury Secretary William G. McAdoo, asking for a $10,000 supplemental appropriation to protect the park's wildlife. "There is no intention of immediately improving this park or making it accessible to the public," Lane wrote, "our deep concern is for the immediate protection of the wild animals and their preservation for the enjoyment of the people in future years."[3] Lane's message was soon forwarded to the Senate, and Senator Key Pittman agreeably submitted an amendment in the sundry civil appropriation act to obtain the $10,000 startup funds. But perhaps because the bill had been pushed through "as an emergency measure in order, that the large herds of wild animals ... might be protected from slaughter by hunters engaged in supplying the railroad camps...", Congress was not immediately inclined to fund the park, particularly while war clouds were on the horizon.[4] An equally important reason, however, was related to the new agency's gaunt budget; as Rep. Lenroot's testimony had made clear, the amount of funds allotted to the National Park Service—less than $800,000 per year—was insufficient to fund the long-established parks, let alone any new additions. Given the fact that the nearest rail line, at that time, was fifty miles or more from the park boundary, Congress bypassed McKinley in favor of parks that had more pressing concerns.[5]

The bleak budget outlook, however, did not prevent the park's proponents from making annual attempts to create a funding base. Charles Sheldon, John Burnham, and others representing various game protection organizations repeatedly contacted Interior Department and NPS officials; they, in turn, sent letters to House and Senate leaders. But for four years, those entreaties went unheeded. Alaska's Governor, Thomas Riggs, did what he could in the meantime to protect the park's game. But inasmuch as the entire Territory had only two game wardens, all parties recognized that NPS funding was the only practical way to provide game protection.[6]

In November 1920, John Burnham once again suggested that the NPS undertake an effort to obtain a park appropriation, and this time, budgetary conditions seemed more favorable. But the area's game conditions were deteriorating; as Bureau of Biological Survey chief E.W. Nelson noted after returning from Alaska, "unless something is done promptly to protect the game in this park there will be no game to protect. ... At present the park lines are absolutely ignored and during the past two years there has been great destruction of game and fur-bearing animals within its limits." Given the looming crisis, James Good (R-Iowa) of the House Appropriations Committee invited several of the park's principal advocates—including Charles Sheldon, Madison Grant, and George Bird Grinnell—to present testimony on December 16.[7] At that hearing, Sheldon sounded an ominous tone, noting that "Since the Park was created it has received no protection. Market hunting has continued, railroad construction has brought numerous people into the region, the game has been slaughtered recklessly." He further stated that "Next summer [1921] large numbers of men will be working on the railroad line next to the Park. The rails will soon be laid there, and unless protection shall be granted, excessive slaughter of the game will take place."[8]

Henry (Harry) P. Karstens, first superintendent of Mt. McKinley National Park. Karstens Library Collection




The Alaska Railroad provided access to Mt. McKinley National Park. Charles Sheldon Collection, 75-146-02, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archive

Indeed, by this time, railroad building south from Fairbanks had already reached the Healy construction camp, not far from the park's northeastern corner, and trackage north from Seward extended all the way to Gold Creek, which was just south of Chulitna Pass and less than 40 miles from the park's southern boundary.[9]

The speakers at the House hearing proved convincing, and by early the following February, the NPS was optimistic that funds would be available to operate Mount McKinley National Park for the 1922 fiscal year.[10] That optimism proved well-founded; the Sundry Civil Bill that Congress passed on March 4, 1921 (H.R. 15422) included $8,000 for park operations in the NPS budget.[11] (See Appendix B.) Given the assurance of a budget, agency officials were then able to undertake two remaining key tasks: the writing of park rules and regulations and the selection of a superintendent. Another activity that took place at much the same time, aided by the ease of access fostered by railroad construction, was the survey and marking of the park boundary; this was performed by the General Land Office, another Interior Department agency.

The park's first rules and regulations, which were largely an outgrowth of language in the recently-passed Congressional act, were written in early 1921 by park advocate John Burnham at Mather's request. After an agency edit of Burnham's rough draft, they were forwarded on to Mather, who issued the three-page screed and arranged for its distribution. Assistant Interior Secretary Francis M. Goodwin approved the regulations on June 21.[12]

The momentum to survey the park's boundary began in early 1920, when Congress allocated funds to the General Land Office for that purpose. No work took place that summer, however, so in December, representatives of various game protection organizations offered to underwrite "the printing of the notices in protection of the Mt. McKinley Park" and by February 1921, 400 wildlife-protection warning signs had been delivered to Mather's office. That summer, a party headed by the GLO's Woodbury Abbey marked the park's northern boundary from the Wonder Lake area all the way to the northeastern corner. GLO officials promised additional boundary survey work in 1922.[13]

### Harry Karstens's Appointment

During this same period, NPS officials appointed Henry P. (Harry) Karstens as the fledgling park's first superintendent. Karstens, in many ways, was an ideal choice; he had been a north country resident since 1897 (he had long been known as "The Seventy Mile Kid" because he mined gold in the Seventymile Mining District), and he was also thoroughly familiar with the new park, having spent almost a year (between August 1907 and June 1908) camping with Charles Sheldon in the upper Toklat River basin. In addition, he had played a major role in the June 1913 expedition that had resulted in the first successful ascent of Mount McKinley. On the basis of those trips, Sheldon held the highest regard for Karstens, and perhaps as a result, John Burnham and other park promoters also recommended his appointment.[14] Karstens himself—perhaps at

Sheldon's instigation—had broached the subject with NPS officials as early as 1918. But Thomas Riggs, who was appointed as Alaska's governor that year, favored another candidate: W.B. Reaburn, who had worked with Riggs on the Alaska-Canada Boundary Survey. For the next three years, a number of others emerged as prospective superintendents. No applicant, however, could be selected until funding was in place. In February 1921, Mather asked Riggs to rank the various candidates; as expected, Riggs chose Reaburn, though he made it plain that he would have picked Karstens had Reaburn not been in the running. Of Karstens, he made the following keen observations:

> Harry Karstens is an excellent man.... He is a good woodsman and thoroughly energetic, [but] he is very independent and would be apt to tangle up with the authorities the first time there should come a little disagreement. ... [I]f Karstens should be appointed there might at times be friction not only with your office but with visitors to the park.[15]

Riggs, a realist, knew that Mather, and Mather alone, would make the final selection. The NPS Director fully recognized that Karstens might, some day, cause problems for the park and the agency. He had long ago promised Sheldon, however, that he favored Karstens for the job, and as soon as the agency was sure that the park appropriation had gone through, Mather offered Karstens the superintendency. In mid-April 1921, Mather sent Karstens (who was then in Seattle) a long letter detailing the park's rules and regulations along with his expectations of his conduct in the new position. The letter was part pep talk, part recitation of the recently-passed park bill, and part bureaucratic primer, and Mather left little doubt that as the chief of a remote park, he would have enormous flexibility and independence in his new position. He noted that "It is my purpose ... to contribute as much as I possibly can to making your administration a success. [But] the rest is up to you."[16]

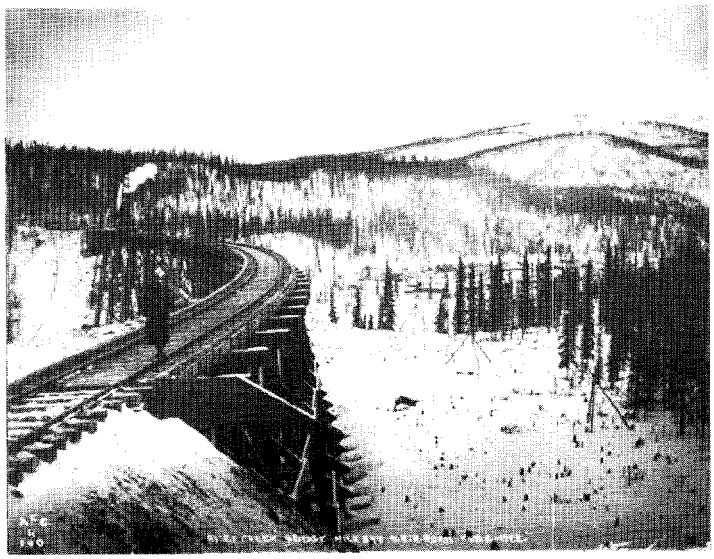
In that letter, Karstens was informed that while his role as superintendent would not take effect until July 1, he had already been "designated as Chief Ranger in the National Park Service at large, with salary at $10.00 per annum." And, courtesy of two benefactors, Karstens was sent $300 for "personal expenses for the three months to July 1st." Given that head start, Karstens soon boarded an Alaska-bound steamship, and by June he was already hard at work in his new position.[17] At that time, rails from tidewater had gotten as far north as the Hurricane Gulch, twenty miles by air from the park boundary, where a massive bridge was then under construction. From there, it was more than 70 miles before the "end of track" which was then just south of the "temporary construction camp" at Healy. Given the logistics of the situation, Karstens, in June 1921, established his first headquarters in Nenana. Although it was more than 60 miles north of the park boundary, Karstens chose Nenana because of its relative ease of park access and because it offered both a post office and telegraph station.

Upon arrival back in Alaska, one of Karstens's first two tasks was to reconnoiter the right-of-way for the future railroad in order to ascertain a future headquarters location; the other was to take a trip along the park's northern boundary line in order to size up the game situation. Regarding a park headquarters site, there was little doubt; by mid- July, he wrote that "I firmly believe Riley Creek to be the most logical entrance to the park," in large part because the site "is beautifully situated for an entrance."[18] (The bottomlands of Riley Creek, at that time, had attracted little settlement, inasmuch as railroad work crews had not yet arrived; the only improvements were several small roadhouses and nearby residences.[19]) Later that summer, AEC Chairman Frederick Mears visited the area and backed Karstens's choice. As for the park's game prospects, he found two "trapper outfits" along the boundary between Savage and Sushana rivers. Karstens had cordial conversations with both groups of trappers, and noted that "they can hardly realize that provision has been made for the protection of the park and the game there in."[20]

During the summer and fall of 1921, work crews made considerable progress on the government railroad; the Hurricane Gulch bridge was completed on August 8, and tracks thereafter moved quickly northward. During this same period, crews laboring south from Healy were faced with the daunting challenge of the Nenana River canyon. As historian Ann Kain notes, "The steep walls of the canyon required considerable rockwork, including blasting to construct three tunnels and chiseling a level roadbed along the canyon wall. [But] by the end of 1921, the government railroad clung to the canyon wall two hundred feet above the rushing Nenana River."[21]

During September 1921, the AEC's Frederick Mears selected the site for a depot near the Riley Creek crossing. Recognizing that the site, in all likelihood, would be the home base for most

trips into the new park, the site was named McKinley Park Station. Bridge-building crews began to filter into the area soon afterward, and by November, the construction of the massive, 900-foot-long Riley Creek bridge was underway. Concrete foundations for the bridge were poured during the brief, frigid days of December, and the bridge was complete by February 1, 1922. Inasmuch as work crews from the south, by this time, had laid tracks to the bridge's southern edge, the completion of the Riley Creek bridge meant that the entire, 470-mile railroad from Seward to Fairbanks was now essentially complete. All that remained was the construction of a bridge over the Tanana River at Nenana.[22]



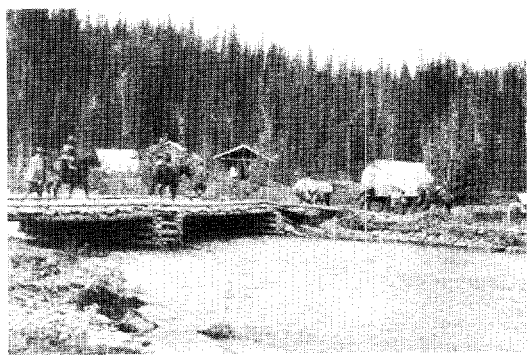
The Riley Creek railroad bridge was completed in February 1922. The Alaska Engineering Commission railroad construction camp can be seen on the right of the photo. AEC G 140, Anchorage Museum of History & Art

As noted above, Harry Karstens had decided in the early summer of 1921 that the Riley Creek area would be the major entrance area into the park, and by August, he had further decided that he would construct a park headquarters in the McKinley Park Station area.[23] He "selected a sunny and sheltered spot on Riley Creek, for my Home Camp and Office near the Rail Road." But soon afterward, he was informed that this parcel was on land that had already been selected by Maurice Morino, an Italian immigrant who had previously lived in Nome, Fairbanks, and Nenana. Sources have variously estimated that Morino located his site in 1910 or during the 1913-1915 period; he did not file for his parcel, however, until August 8, 1921. In September 1921, anticipating the coming of the railroad, he was "building a large road house or hotel of logs to accommodate local travel."[24]

Morino, moreover, was not the only area claimant. The railroad claimed a broad band of land—100 feet in some places, 200 feet in others—on either side of the newly-laid railroad tracks.[25] In addition, two individuals had claims: Pat Lynch, whose land was just south of Morino's, and Mary Thompson, whose small parcel was located along Riley Creek east of the railroad. Neither of the private parties, however, was a threat to the NPS; Lynch, by 1922, had already moved on to Healy River, where he was operating a roadhouse, and Thompson, who had moved onto a portion of Morino's original claim, was a temporary presence and was never a hindrance to any NPS land claims.[26]

### Laying Out a Headquarters Site

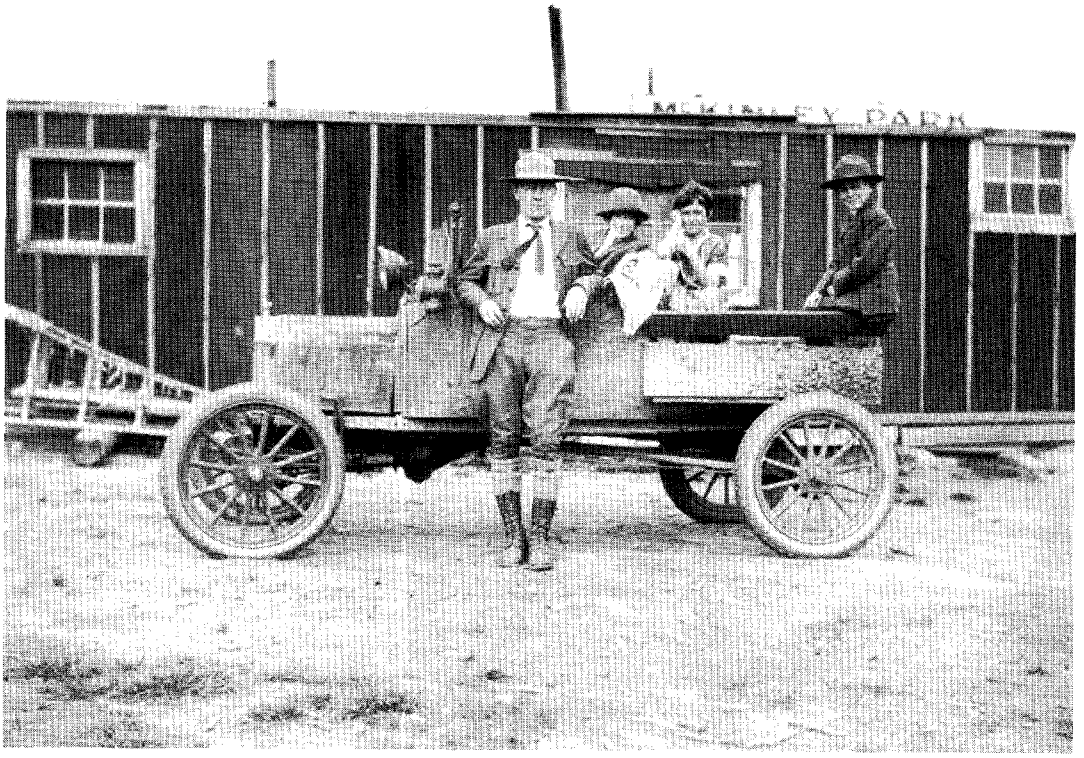
Given these claims, Karstens sought out an unencumbered site and chose one on Lynch's abandoned claim; it was along Riley Creek, just upstream from the Hines Creek confluence. He liked the site because it was "sheltered from the winter storms" and because water was easily available.[27] In September 1921, he set to work on his "home cabin" just northwest of the creek; that cabin was "very nearly completed" by the end of November. Using materials that had been scrounged from recently-abandoned AEC construction camps, and little else,[28] he then began work on a ranger cabin, followed by an



The first Mt. McKinley National Park headquarters was located on Riley Creek, just upstream from the Hines Creek confluence. It was used from 1921 to 1925. Karstens Library Collection

office. By the following April, he proudly noted that his "base camp is in pretty good shape and fairly comfortable." He noted, however, that due to a lack of funds for building construction, "everything is crude and frontier style," and "such furniture we have is home made." Base camp, by this time, consisted of three wooden buildings, a large tent, a partially-completed corral and "the necessary outbuilding."[29] These improvements were located along both banks of Riley Creek, just upstream from its confluence with Hines Creek (then called Morris Creek).[30]

Throughout the summer of 1921 and on into the fall, Karstens was the park's sole employee. The

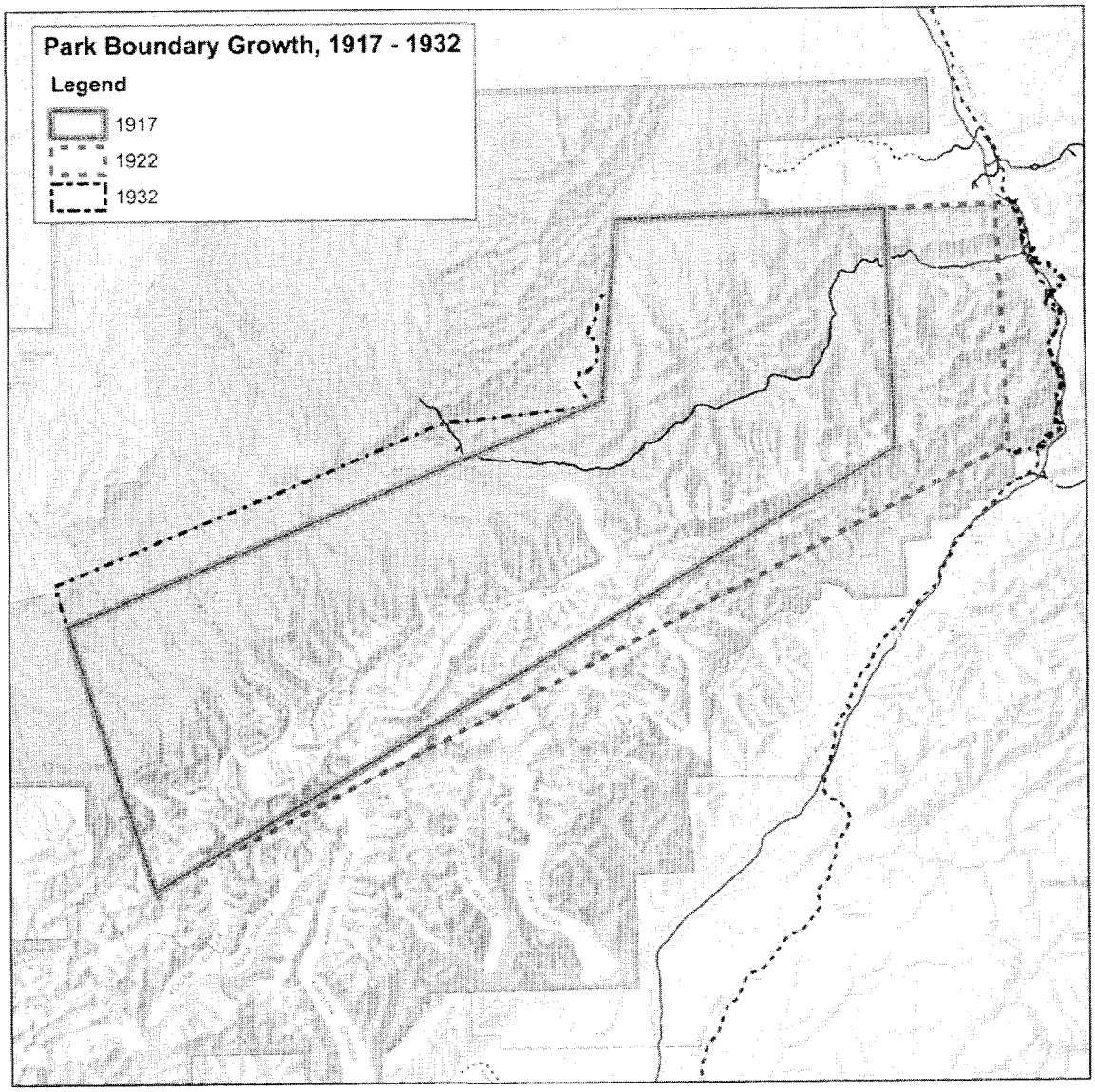


Superintendent Karstens was joined by his family at the first headquarters in late 1921. Harry Karstens, his wife Frieda Louise, a friend of the family, Helen Livingston, and their son Eugene are pictured here by the McKinley Park depot. Karstens Library Collection

park budget, however, encompassed funds for a second employee, and Mather had instructed Karstens to "look around for a suitable man to act as your assistant."[31] In late October, Karstens finally found "a man of sufficient capacity, ability, and experience, whom he felt he could trust as ranger to assist him in his patrol work."[32] That man, Marcus V. Tyler, entered the park payroll on November 1. (See Appendix C.) He remained on the job, however, only until late December. Tyler's brief tenure, unfortunately, set an all-too-familiar pattern for rangers to come; during the next few years, almost all of the newly-hired rangers remained for less than a year, and many left after just two or three months on the job. The reasons for the high turnover varied, but for all too many, the job was too dangerous, too isolating, and demanding of too much physical effort in comparison to other jobs with similar salaries.

During his first few months on the job, Karstens became aware that one of the major shortcomings of the new park was the poor placement of its eastern boundary. Park proponent Charles Sheldon was also aware of this problem and worried aloud that if a permanent population resided just east of the park entrance, they might soon lay waste to the plentiful wildlife populations that lay east of the existing boundary. To reduce that threat, Sheldon in April 1921 discussed the idea of extending the boundary several miles to the east with Alaska Delegate Dan Sutherland, NPS officials Stephen Mather and Arthur Demaray, and various General Land Office representatives. Sheldon first suggested that the boundary line be moved east to the railroad right-of-way; Demaray, however, noted that such an attempt "would result in bringing local opposition which might defeat the extension then proposed." He thus scaled his plan back several miles to the 149th meridian, a point to which all parties agreed. A month later, Sutherland submitted a House bill to effect the extension. The House passed the so-called "Sutherland Bill" on August 1 and sent it on to the Senate; almost six months later it eased through the Senate, and on January 30, 1922, President Warren Harding signed the bill into law (see Map 3 and Appendix A.)[33]

Sheldon and his colleagues felt that the boundary extension would preserve the animal populations at the eastern edge of the park because the 149th meridian "could be effectively patrolled by guarding the few passes through which hunters would naturally pursue game." Also, the erecting of a series of eastern-boundary survey posts, which had taken place in 1921 in anticipation of the bill's passage, meant that "hunters could not plead ignorance as to the park boundary."[34] As was hoped, Woodbury Abbey of the GLO returned to the park in June 1922, and he surveyed much of the park's boundary (both old and new) that summer.[35] It remained to be seen, however, whether the newly-established eastern boundary would prove effective in preserving area wildlife stocks. As noted above, the January 1922 boundary extension was largely the product of a series of




**Map 3. Park Boundary Growth, 1917-1932**

discussions that had taken place in Washington in the spring of 1921, and the legislative process thereafter proved uncontroversial. In anticipation of that boundary extension, and recognizing that the park needed a substantial land base in the McKinley Park Station area, Interior Department officials prepared an executive order that withdrew portions of eight sections—a total of 2,440 acres—"for use in connection with the administration of the Mount McKinley National Park and to protect a right of way for a proposed road into the park." On January 13, 1922—less than three weeks before he approved the park extension bill—President Warren Harding signed the executive order into law (see Map 4).[36]

### Park Road Planning

Virtually everyone involved with the park—including Sheldon, Karstens, territorial officials, and the NPS's Washington brass—recognized that for Mount McKinley to be a viable park unit, a road needed to be built west from the railroad into the park. (The 1916 Congressional report that accompanied the various park bills, in fact, had noted that "The construction of wagon and automobile roads in such country would be very simple and economical," and in his first monthly report, Karstens declared that "a main artery road through the upper passes is the park's most urgent need."[37]

NPS officials in 1921 recognized that while the park itself was bereft of maintained roads or trails, the area surrounding the park offered several well-established routes. They also recognized that the primary task of the Alaska Road Commission—at that time an arm of the U.S. War Department—was providing access for Alaska's miners, prospectors, traders, and other permanent residents. To cater to the needs of those who lived and worked in the Kantishna Hills, the ARC maintained a "dog trail" (i.e., pack trail) that connected the railroad to Eureka Creek (Kantishna post office). And because mining in that area was undergoing a postwar revival, the ARC was also converting a sled road between the village of Roosevelt (at the head of

navigation along the Kantishna River) and Kantishna from a winter-only route to one that "is gradually being improved to summer standard."[38]

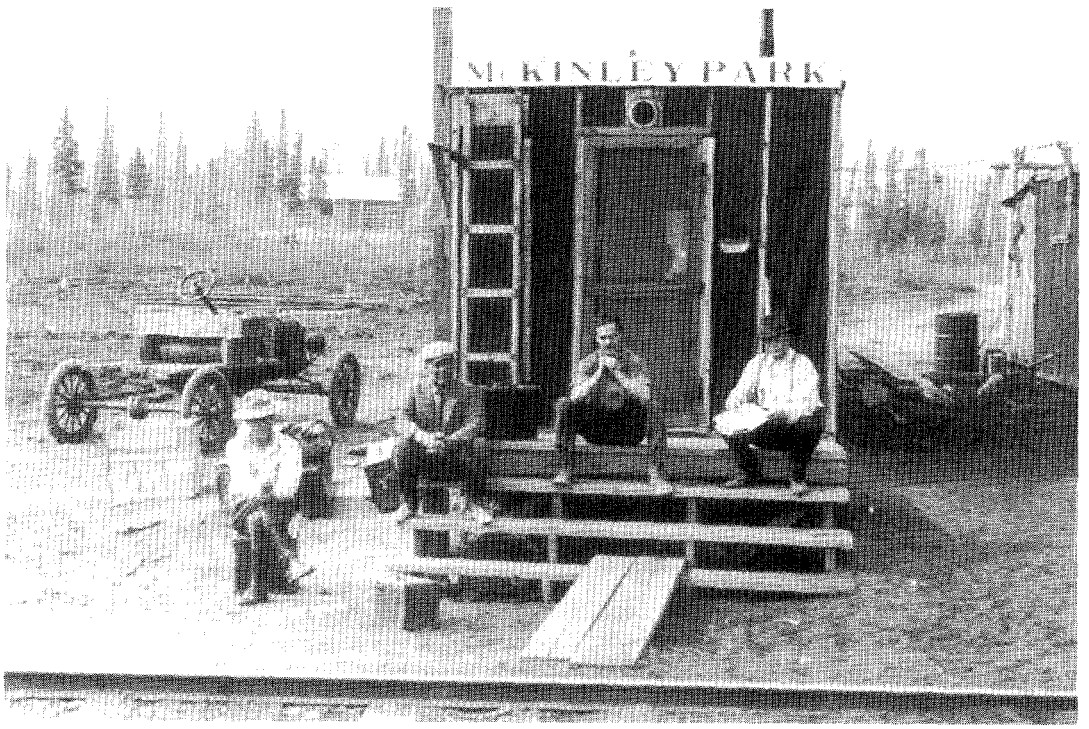


Superintendent Karstens and his National Park Service dog team at the first headquarters, 1923. *Karstens Library Collection*

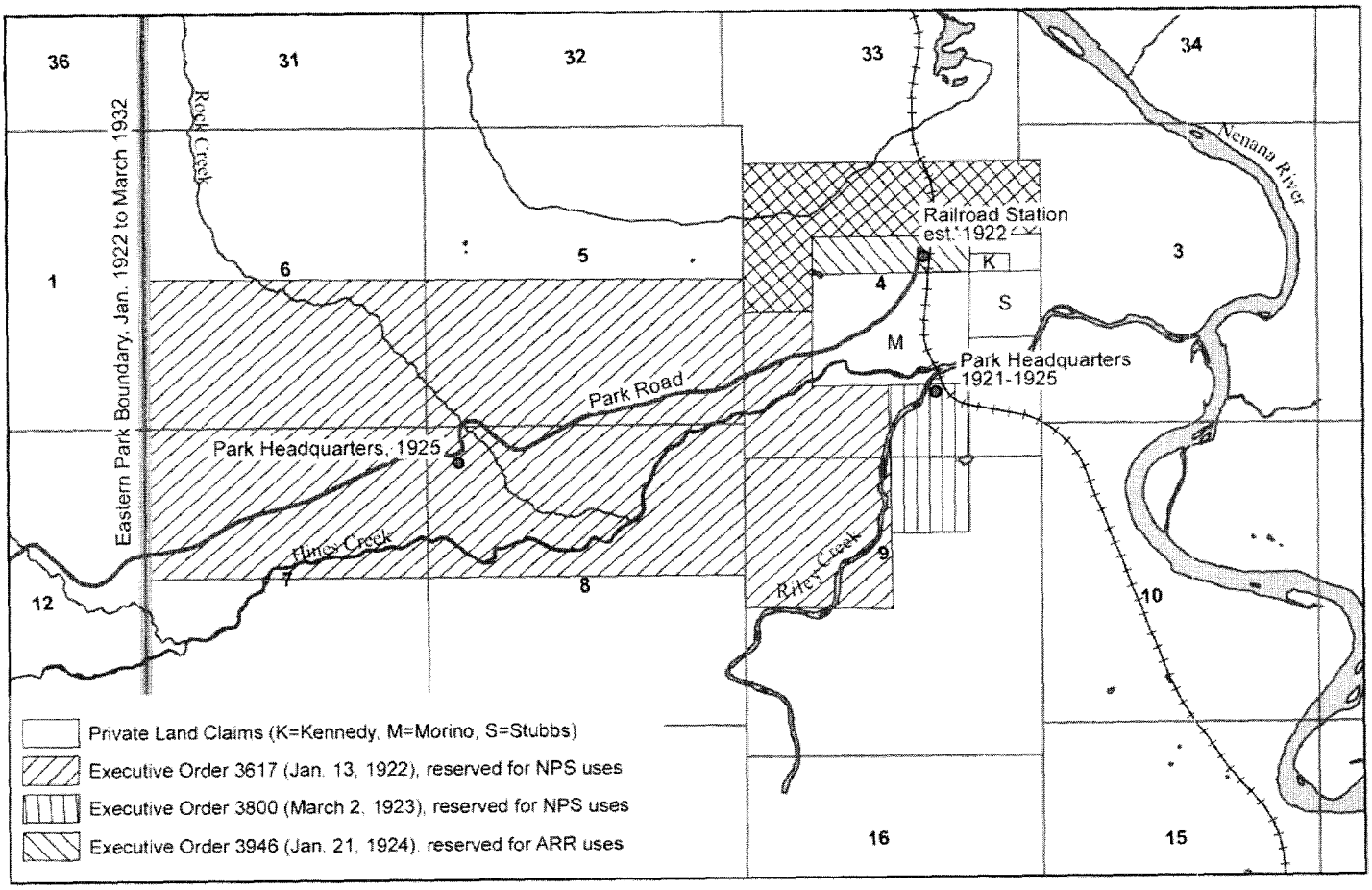
During the early fall of 1921, Supt. Karstens wrote to his superiors in Washington and, based on his considerable knowledge of the new park, laid out his vision for the "good road" that would be needed to serve the new park's visitors. Karstens felt that the road should begin at the soon-to-be-built Riley Creek train depot and would head west along the drainages of Morris Creek [Hines Creek] and Jenny Creek; it would cross Savage River, Sanctuary River, Teklanika River, Igloo Creek, Sable Pass, East Fork, the Polychrome Pass, the "main Toklat," and Highway Pass. The road would then proceed to "the mouth of Thoroughfare Creek" and on "to the meadows at the foot of Muldrow Glacier." It would then cross the McKinley River on two bridges, "head southeast for a ways," and then cross "the numerous tributaries of Clear [Clearwater] Creek" until it ended "about four or five miles from the base of the mountain [Mount McKinley]" at timber line along the "Muddy Fork" [Muddy River]. He declared this to be "a natural and interesting route for a purely park road."[39]

ARC personnel, however, had other mandates. In September 1920, in response to a petition from several Kantishna-area miners, engineer Hawley Sterling (who headed the ARC's Yukon District) made a reconnaissance for a wagon road to Kantishna; he left the railroad from Lignite via a "lower route" that skirted the park's northern boundary and returned to lower Riley Creek via the "upper route" through the high passes. In addition, Major John C. Gotwals made a preliminary survey for an auto road during the winter of 1920-21. That survey, which mirrored that of Sterling's eastbound reconnaissance, followed much the same route that Karstens had described to his superiors, but toward the western end of the route—beginning in the Thorofare Pass area—Gotwals's route continued west rather than southwest, and it terminated at Kantishna post office rather than at the base of Mount McKinley.[40]

In a letter that fall, Gotwals explained that the Board of Road Commissioners had two mandates: first, to fund improvements for routes that could be used both in winter and summer; and




*The first depot at McKinley Park Station was a converted box car. Superintendent Harry Karstens is seated on the left. Charles Porter Collection, 79G-11F-69, National Archives*




**Map 4. Major Land Actions, McKinley Park Station Area, 1922-1925**

second, funds should be spent on routes that were "the shortest possible distance from the center of the mining district to the Government Railroad." (This was in line with the ARC's general philosophy during the 1920s and 1930s, which was to construct road and trail feeders directly tributary to the railroad.) He noted that the route through the park was "admittedly the best natural mid-summer route to this mining district." But he also noted that "the cost of construction of a wagon road upon this route would be very high due to the absence of timber and the consequent handicap upon winter freighting..." Therefore, for all-year purposes, "all of the extensive reconnaissances made to date indicate as most favorable" the 85-mile-long "lower route" that started at the Lignite rail stop (just north of Healy) and continued to Kantishna via Savage, Crooked Creek, and Glacier City. (And based on that recommendation, the ARC in the spring of 1922 marked a trail along that route and established shelter tents along the way.) Gotwals, trying to address the NPS's concerns, said that "there is every hope that at some time interest ... will be such as to justify wagon road construction. In the meantime," however, he suggested that a pack trail be constructed "from Lynch's Roadhouse at the mouth of Morris Creek to McKinley River, south of Wonder Lake." This project would cost an estimated $26,000. He also suggested, at some later date, that the ARC might build "a wagon road from Lynch's Roadhouse [at the future site of McKinley Park Station] to Middle River [Teklanika River] and from Kantishna Postoffice to Muldrow Glacier. ... No further stages of the development of this route are included as they are believed to be premature at this time."[41]

After Washington officials received the news of the ARC's preferred route, they passed it on to Karstens. They noted that

> This road, if built, would not only service as a commercial road but would also give access by a short extension into the park to the Wonder Lake and Muldrow Glacier section. If Congress provides funds for the construction of this road, it will be an extremely difficult matter to secure Congressional appropriations for a road through Mount McKinley Park which will be purely a scenic one. Perhaps the largest park development that we can look forward to in the near future would be the construction of an outlook

with rest cabins within easy walking distance of one another over the route you have in mind.[42]

Although the ARC was reluctant to commit to a wagon road through the park, NPS officials pursued the idea in face-to-face discussions. During those discussions the two parties made two major decisions; first, they agreed to cooperate on various trail and road construction projects in the McKinley Park area, and second, they agreed on a right-of-way for any proposed route into the park. On April 16, 1922, NPS Director Mather asked the ARC to prepare estimates for both a 110-mile marked trail between McKinley Park Station and the Kantishna Post Office, and a 39-mile upgrading of the trail to a road, designed "to automobile standard," between the same two points. Four days later, the ARC's James Steese replied that the pack trail—completed with bridges and shelter cabins—could be built for $30,000, while the 39 miles of automobile road would cost an estimated $390,000. Mather agreed to Steese's proposal. By forging this "informal agreement," the ARC and the NPS agreed to spend funds together on a road from McKinley Park Station to Kantishna. The ARC thus agreed to de-emphasize its interest in competing routes outside of the park boundaries, while the NPS agreed to abandon the plan—pushed by Supt. Karstens—that would have resulted in a road to the base of Mount McKinley. This agreement did not immediately obligate the NPS to underwrite road costs, nor did it set up a specific formula on how road construction expenses would be divided, but it did set the gears in motion.[43]

Mather soon submitted the roadbuilding estimate to Congress. In the meantime, the ARC went full-steam-ahead on interim plans. It announced that during the summer of 1922, the 86-mile "Mt. McKinley Park Trail ... will be brushed out and tripoded [sic] at confusing points, eight tents with small stoves will be erected at about ten mile intervals for shelter, mileposts will be erected and sign boards placed at the principal points." As far as future plans were concerned, the ARC further noted that, once the initial funds had been spent on the 39-mile road upgrade, the NPS would submit estimates "for the improvement of successive sections to automobile standard as traffic conditions may demand."[44]

Supt. Karstens, having been apprised of the April 1922 agreement between ARC and the agency's Washington officials, knew soon afterward that ARC crews would be marking a trail route through the park during the summer season. And he may well have intuited that a road would soon be built along the trail's right-of-way. The can-do superintendent, however, was apparently not a man to wait, and—not knowing what route the ARC crews might take—had his own ideas on where a road west from McKinley Park Station toward Savage River might go. As early as the fall of 1921, he had noted that "in the spring ... it will be a good time to cut a road up Morris Creek Bench to its head ... which will make it possible for a team and wagon to go Fourteen or fifteen miles with very little trouble."[45] The following June, he vowed "to brush out and construct some semblance of a wagon road from base camp to Savage River," so he "took horses and ... cruised the upper and lower benches and found the lower easier for [a] temporary road." Park staff apparently roughed out the road later that summer; in his August report, Karstens proudly noted that "our pioneer road into Savage River, though rough, is serving a good purpose."[46]

That summer, as expected, ARC work crews forged the first routes into the park. Following the agreement between Steese and Mather, the ARC had an outfit in the park in July "erecting 7 by 8 [foot] tents with a stove in each, at 12 to 15 mile intervals, also putting up sign boards and blazing the trail." By September, Karstens noted that "the trail leads along the higher benches, is well brushed out and blazed so it can be readily followed. ... The balance of the trail through the



Superintendent Karstens roughed out a wagon road up Morris Creek (now Hines Creek) toward Savage River. Charles Porter Collection, 79G-11F-68, National Archives




This tent at Stony Creek was typical of those that the Alaska Road Commission erected in 1922 at 12- to 15- mile intervals along the newly-blazed park trail. Charles Porter Collection, 79G-11F-65, National Archives

park to Wonder Lake is blazed where it goes through short stretches of timber but very little of it is tripoded in the open." The tents, "which are very well put up," had "a sign telling the distance to the tent on either side of it, also the distance to Kantishna or McKinley Park Station."[47] Karstens was doubtless disappointed that the ARC had not adopted the routes he had chosen—the ARC crew, for example, had shied away from his low-bench route west from McKinley Park Station, and it had also rejected his suggested route between the East Fork and Polychrome Pass in favor of one that clung high above the valley floor—but in his reports to Washington, Karstens remained a loyal soldier.[48]

If, in Karstens's opinion, building "a main artery road through the upper passes was the park's most urgent need," then active steps toward protecting the park's game ranked not far behind. In his first forays into the park after his appointment, Karstens "noticed well beaten horse and dog sled tracks on the old snow drifts" along the northern boundary, and he soon learned that "there had been two horses and several dog teams hauling game out of the hills very near all winter." That discovery, along with earlier encounters with the two trapping parties (noted above), gave him the resolve "to build as many of the six or eight ranger cabins [in this year's budget] as necessary for ranger night camps on their winter rounds." Later that summer, Karstens repeated his interest in having "six cabins with barns and caches along the Northern Boundary."[49] But the wherewithal to build the cabins was not immediately available, and for the next three years, rangers patrolling the park's northern boundary were forced to bunk in a cabin at the mouth of Savage Canyon that was variously described as old, badly decayed, and with "ground squirrels [that were] becoming a nuisance."[50] As late as the fall of 1925, Karstens ruefully noted that "the lack of sufficient ranger cabins, along the boundaries, makes it almost impossible for patrol."[51]

Throughout 1921 and 1922, Karstens and other park staff had been able to work on the park's most critical infrastructure needs, knowing that there would be few if any visitors interested in venturing into the park. In 1921, as noted above, the tracks of the government railroad were not yet complete, inasmuch as the Riley Creek bridge had not yet been completed. And the following year, tourists heading into the interior were forced to cross the Tanana River (at Nenana) on the ice in wintertime and by ferry during the summer, then shuttle over to equipment from the narrow- gauge Tanana Valley Railroad (TVRR).[52]

### Concessioner Headaches

Because access to and through the area remained difficult, the park staff recorded no tourist visits in 1921 and just seven in 1922. But in anticipation of growth that was yet to come, the NPS was already considering solicitations from potential tourism developers.[53] By January 1922, Karstens had already received three inquiries about "operating saddle trains into the park," and by May of that year the agency was entertaining three serious proposals. Casey

McDannel, the contractor of the Dining Car Department for the government railroad, applied for a permit to "hotels and roadhouses" in the park, including "a hotel as near to the base of Mt. McKinley as possible." Woodbury Abbey, the GLO's cadastral surveyor currently in the midst of the park's boundary-marking project, proposed constructing six "log cabin hotels" between Savage River and the Clearwater Creek-McKinley River confluence, and for transport he planned to supply a string of riding horses. A final applicant was I.E. Van Kirk, a Healy freighter. Van Kirk hoped to obtain a permit primarily "for operating a freight outfit through the park to the Copper Mountain Mining properties on the west side of the park." However, he also hoped to handle "saddle trains into the park for taking visitors who wish to go on either long or short trips," and for this purpose he planned to erect "shelter tent stopping places at regular intervals for the accommodation of these visitors."[54] But as the summer wore on, interest in these proposals began to lag. McDannel abandoned his scheme, and Van Kirk "sold his packtrain and ... is not attempting to do any freighting." As for Abbey's plans, Alaska's GLO chief, George Parks, was openly skeptical of them. Parks noted that Abbey had made no plans for "a good modern hotel" at the entrance of the park; his plan "fails to provide a stopping place near the base of Mt. McKinley;" he was vague on his sources of financial backing; his estimates for hotel construction were far too low; he "has never had any experience that would qualify him to take charge of a proposition of this kind;" and he was openly antagonistic to Supt. Karstens, based on the conduct of the recently completed boundary survey. Abbey, in Parks's opinion, had evidently "expected to get the concession without question," but after he discussed the matter with Parks, Karstens took no action on Abbey's application.[55] The park was therefore no closer to having a concessioner than it had been in May of that year.

During the course of these negotiations, the railroad was moving ever closer to completion, and beginning in the winter of 1922-23, the remaining hurdles to access were cleared away. Specifically, the Tanana River bridge was completed by February 1923, and the TVRR tracks were converted from narrow gauge to standard gauge in June 1923.[56] That summer, as a result, the park began to attract its first tourist groups. There to meet them was Dan Kennedy, a horse packer and game guide from Nenana, who had stepped into the vacuum created by the problems in Abbey's application. Kennedy was by no means a stranger; his acquaintance with Karstens went back twenty years, and in the summer of 1922, he had taken Karstens and visitor W.F. Chandler of Fresno, California on a two-week pack trip into the park. He also had connections in Washington. Alaska Delegate Dan Sutherland, who apparently knew him, spoke to NPS officials about "pack and saddle train privileges in this park" in mid-December 1922.[57] Karstens sought Kennedy out and finally located him a month later. Kennedy promised to provide "35 first class saddle horses" and "[as] much camp equipment as necessary to handle [the] tourist trade." But he demanded a ten-year permit, and he also proposed that Woodbury Abbey be his business partner. (Abbey was now residing in the McKinley Park Station area "pending the awarding of [the] hotel and transportation permit which he has applied for.") Interior Department officials were willing to give him a three year permit—later raised to five years after Sutherland's intervention—but they eschewed any partnership between Kennedy and Abbey. Kennedy, in response, dragged his feet in the matter, but on May 4, 1923, he finally agreed to the agency's stipulations and signed the permit. He thus became the park's first concessioner.[58] (See Appendix D.)

Kennedy had a good reason to hesitate before signing Mount McKinley's first concessions permit, because he recognized that the NPS was under increasing pressure to have some sort of access and lodging arrangements for the waves of visitors who were expected to arrive that summer. The railroad, in 1923, had not yet begun widespread advertising and promotion campaigns to attract garden-variety tourists.[59] There were, however, three groups who had announced upcoming visits, and all three had a great potential to affect tourism to the park for years afterward. These were a Congressional party, which arrived on June 7; the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* party, which arrived on July 8-9; and the Presidential party, which arrived on July 15.

Once he signed the permit, Kennedy headed south to Washington state to stock his operation. But Karstens and others soon recognized that he was either incapable or unwilling to mount a reputable concessions service. For example, he returned to Alaska with just 15 horses, and in Anchorage he purchased second-hand equipment to round out his operation. And as the summer wore on, Karstens found that Kennedy was habitually underfinanced, he was unwilling to delegate responsibility to his hired help, and he was constantly trying to borrow the NPS's tools and equipment. At one point, Kennedy—sensing that Karstens was losing patience with him—accused the superintendent of "trying to

run him out."[60] Kennedy established a small, rude (and perhaps temporary) camp in the park that summer; perhaps as a result, only 32 recorded visitors entered the park out of some 217 that detrained at McKinley Park Station.[61]

Despite Kennedy's failings, Karstens was forced to rely on the horse packer on more than one occasion that summer. When the 65-person Congressional party arrived, it made just a 90-minute stay at McKinley Park Station, but Karstens' comments to the assembled crowd were so well received that James Steese (who was temporarily heading both the Alaska Railroad and the ARC) told the superintendent that because of "the many pleasant comments we have received concerning your [speech,] we may safely count upon receiving increased consideration at the hands of Congress next winter."[62]

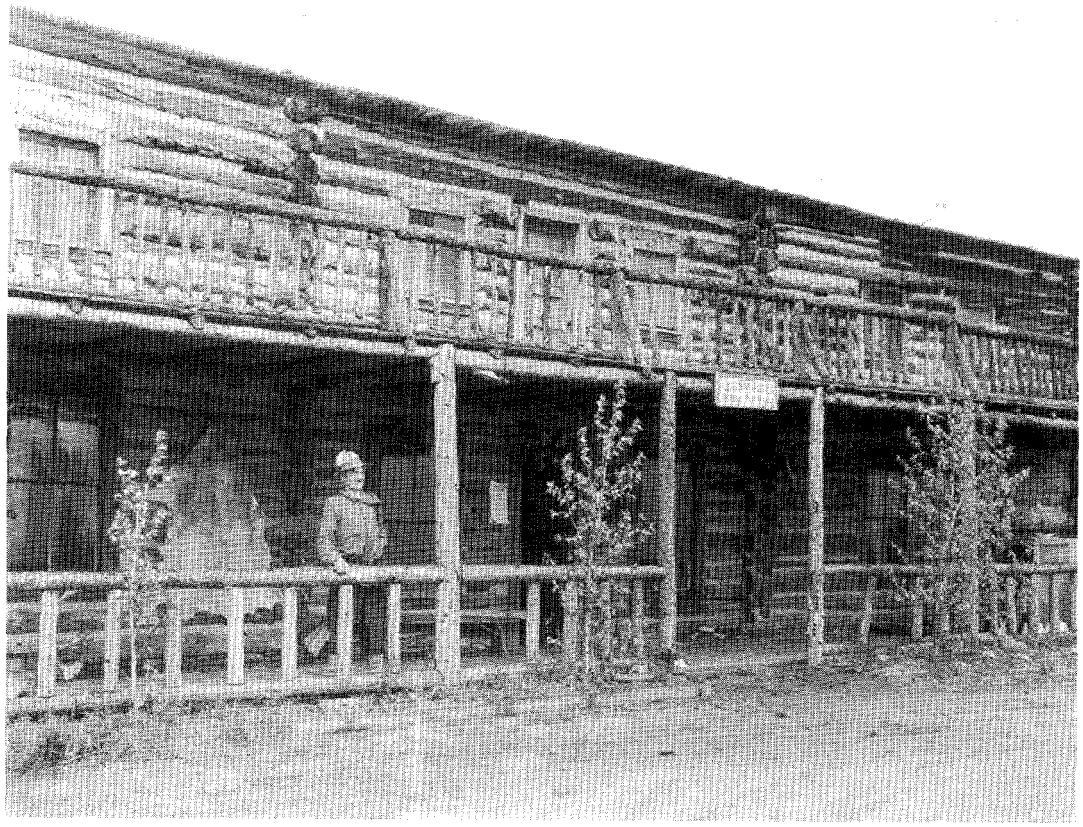
Plans called for the 70-person *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* party to ride on horseback from McKinley Park Station to the Savage River area in order to dedicate the park; in cooperation with the Interior Department and the NPS, representatives of this newspaper had dedicated several other western parks in recent years. In anticipation of that July 8 event, Kennedy and his men took a four-horse team to Savage "loaded with tents and horse feed." Karstens and his ranger also hauled many goods to Savage, and by the evening of July 7, final preparations were commencing for the party's arrival. Try as he may, however, Karstens had only a vague idea when the party could be expected. On the evening of the 7th, the head of the *Eagle* party, citing a late-arriving train, sent a telegram announcing that the group would be unable to ride up to Savage River. Karstens and Kennedy, in response, spent an exhausting night hauling the assembled goods back to McKinley Park Station. The train bearing the *Eagle* party arrived the following evening, and many visitors detrained to a "tents and shelter" that had been hurriedly erected near the train depot. The park dedication was held nearby at 11 a.m. on July 9. A barbecue followed, and at 6 that evening the party headed north to Fairbanks.[63]

Less than a week later, President Warren G. Harding's 70-person party visited McKinley Park Station as part of a month-long Alaska tour. At 10:30 on the morning of July 15, the train pulled in, and for the next twenty minutes, "the President and party mingled with the local people" while Karstens spoke to various press representatives about the park and its needs. Karstens headed north with the party and continued to extol the park's virtues. He was therefore at the north end of the Nenana River bridge that afternoon when President Harding drove home the "golden spike" that symbolically completed the Alaska Railroad. He continued on to Fairbanks and remained with the party until the presidential train, on its way back to Seward, passed the park headquarters in the wee hours of July 17.[64]

The "local people" with whom the Presidential party mingled were the residents at McKinley Park Station, and at that time, only two local residents—Karstens and Ranger Gustavus S.



**Mount McKinley National Park was formally dedicated on July 9, 1923. Most of the people attending were tourists in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* Party. DENA 11407, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**



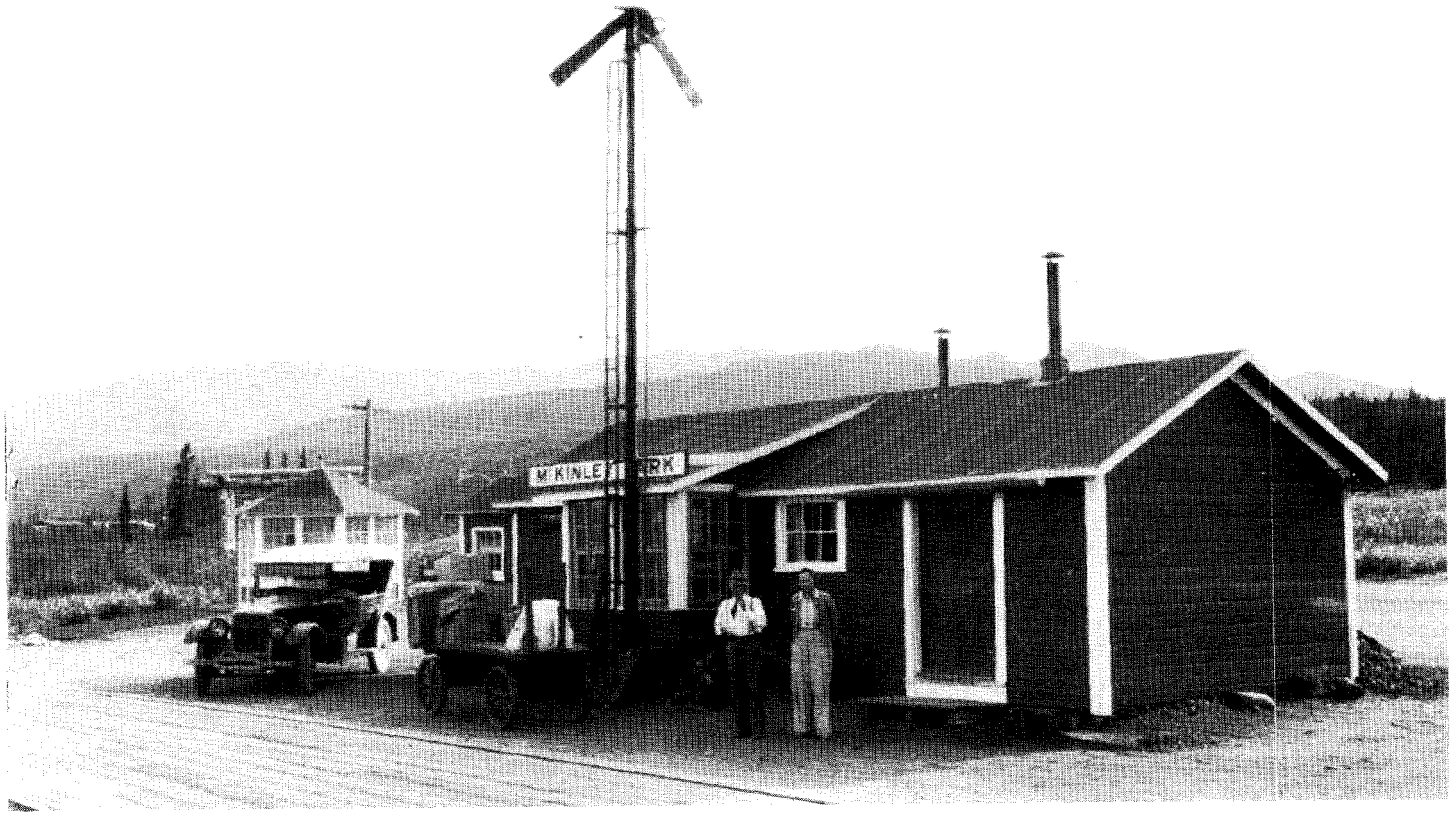
Maurice Morino, pictured here, operated a roadhouse, store, post office, cabins for rent and gardens on his patented homestead at McKinley Station. Frances Erickson Collection, *Denali National Park and Preserve* Museum Collection

Buhmann—were NPS employees.[65] Most of the remainder were railroad workers or miners. As noted above, the first area residents had been roadhouse owners Maurice Morino and Pat Lynch, and the area was a bevy of activity during the winter of 1921-22, when the Riley Creek bridge was being constructed. (See Appendix E.) Lynch soon moved on, but Morino remained, operating out of a new, larger roadhouse just north and west of the newly-constructed bridge. The residents were a diverse lot; on the one hand, Morino's roadhouse was a "center for the rough and drunken element in this section," and during these initial days of Prohibition, the proprietor made no secret of both manufacturing and selling home brew.[66] But the civilized element was there, too; in the fall of 1922, a school opened up in a building that Karstens and others had constructed—with Mrs. Dave Firburn as the first teacher—and by 1924, meetings and dances were being held in a newly-renovated community hall.[67] Throughout this period, the AEC (later the Alaska Railroad) had been relying on a converted Tanana Valley Railroad box car to serve as its ad hoc depot, but in 1925 it was finally replaced with a "very attractive rustic depot."[68]

### Initial Road Construction

Another element in town that summer, just beginning to make its presence known, was the Alaska Road Commission. As noted above, the ARC had been working with the NPS on a possible route into Kantishna since the spring of 1921; in April 1922 the two parties had signed an "informal agreement" that encompassed financing and route selection, and later that year a route was roughed out and tents were erected at several points along the way. By the spring of 1923, the ARC was getting ready to start construction work toward Savage River with "a small amount of money." And thanks to a generous, $700 donation from W.F. Chandler, who had been the park's "first tourist" the previous summer, the NPS was able to share in the expenses. (See Appendix F.) NPS staff did the initial work that year, but in late June an ARC crew arrived. By September the road had been built to "first creek" (today's Rock Creek), and a 126-foot-long "native timber bridge" had been completed across the creek. (See Appendix G.) The cost of the season's work—both federal and private funds—totaled slightly less than $5,000. Just $500 of the $4261 in federal funds came from NPS coffers; most if not all of the remaining funds came from the Alaska Road Commission.[69]

Road construction received a considerable boost when Congress passed the Act of April 9, 1924 (H.R. 3682), which provided for a three-year road program for the nation's national parks. As it pertained to Mount McKinley, it authorized the expenditure of $272,700 in NPS funds, which was judged sufficient to build 33 miles of road and 70 miles of trail. The passage



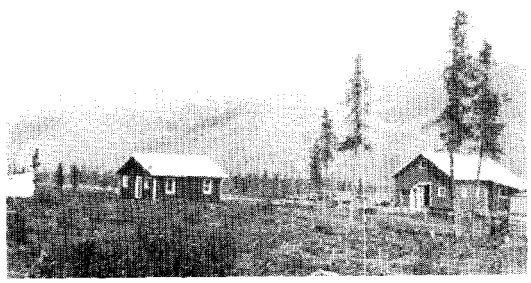
This was the second McKinley Park depot. In the background is a small octagonal structure that housed an interpretive display. The gateway arch and Morino's homestead can be seen in the left background. DENA 25-2.5, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

of that act implied a promise that the NPS would underwrite the lion's share of road- construction funding. But until Congress provided a specific appropriation, it was unable to provide financial help. To allow for construction during the interim, Steese agreed to appropriate ARC funds, to be repaid under the NPS authorization noted above.[70]

Because the road between McKinley Park Station and Kantishna would be located on NPS land, and because the NPS agreed to be the primary funding source, agency officials moved to ensure that the road would be located and designed to standards demanded by the NPS, not the Alaska Road Commission. As H.R. 3682 (above) wound its way through Congress, officials of the two agencies broached this subject to some extent, but on April 9, 1924, Acting Director Arno Cammerer specified the agency's philosophy in a letter to Col. Steese of the ARC. Cammerer asked ARC engineers, in their route choice, to allow

> the visitor going over the road the best possible views and vistas of the country, avoiding a straight line in road location and consequent cutting through hillside and forest growth merely to constitute it the shortest way between two points. [We believe] that the easy-curved roadways are particularly charming and pleasing in national park work. [We also ask that] care ... be taken in clearing for the roadbed by protecting the trees and shrubbery, springs, or beautiful rock formations; it is often possible, by switching the line of the road a few feet to preserve the particularly interesting bits of shrubbery, a spring, or even rock formations.[71]

Now that the two agencies were working together, and with a full recognition that work would continue on the road for several years to come, the ARC began to plan for a base of operations at McKinley Park Station. In May 1924, Hawley Sterling told Karstens that a warehouse and an office building were in the offing, and both buildings were completed by the end of June.[72] Meanwhile, two crews of ARC workers, totaling some 80 or 90 men, were extending the road to the west. By September 19, Karstens was able to report that the road had been "graded for 10 miles ... Savage Camp



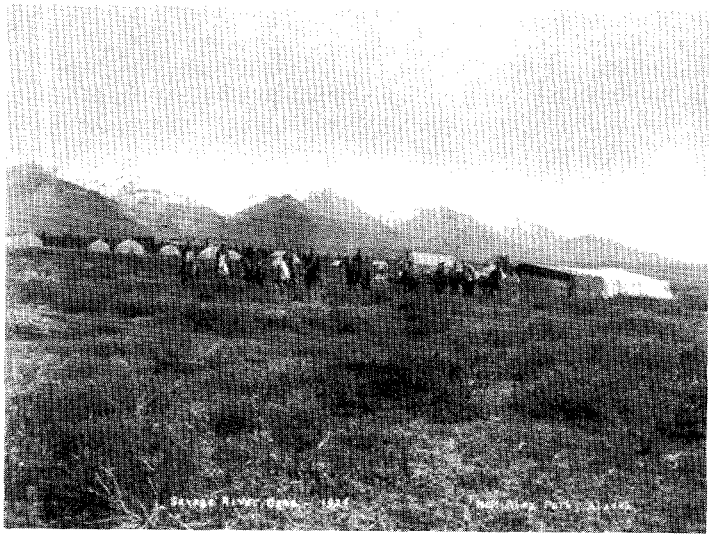
The Alaska Road Commission (ARC) established their base of operations at McKinley Station by constructing an office and a warehouse adjacent to the Alaska Railroad track near the McKinley Station depot. The photo looks northeast. Charles Porter Collection, 79G-11F-43, National Archives

should be reached with autos next summer, having the horses working from there on." The last of the road crew did not quit work until November.[73]

In 1924, the Alaska Railroad orchestrated its first tourism campaign, of which the lure of Mount McKinley played a major role. Brochures published that year extolled the railroad as "the Mount McKinley Route," a slogan that, for years afterward, was repeated on company letterhead and the line's box cars. And in addition, tourists who arrived in 1924 were the first to benefit from a "gentleman's agreement" that had been worked out between Alaska's major transportation companies. Such companies as the White Pass and Yukon Route, the Alaska Steamship Company, and the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad as well as the Alaska Railroad were becoming increasingly aware that tourists were an important part of their business. But until 1924, they had never coordinated their pricing structures or schedules to cater to the package-tour traveler, who constituted the large majority of Alaska visitors.[74] All of these improvements, however, had a scant effect on tourism to Mount McKinley. The poor condition of roads and trails, the necessity for park visitors to ride on packhorses for several miles, and the poor quality of accommodations all militated against park visitation.

Dan Kennedy continued to run the park's concession operation in 1924, as he had the previous year. The NPS, disappointed at his inability to live up to the concessions permit—which called for the operation of three camps, not just the Savage operation—demanded greater compliance. In addition, the agency wanted "a better grade of saddle horses, and a reduction of rates as last year's rates were too high for [the] general public to stand." To these Kennedy reluctantly agreed.[75] And NPS officials, seeing that he now had an advisor (Fairbanks mayor Thomas Marquam) and a company name (Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Co.), were hopeful for greater success.[76] But Kennedy and Marquam soon learned that Alaska's steamship companies were refusing to sell many tickets to Interior destinations, and also that passenger trains stopped at McKinley Park Station late at night.[77] As a result, the men refused to set up their camps until clients showed up. Thus it was not until late June that they finally got their Savage Camp into operation. The camp consisted of a 20' x 60' cooking and dining room, plus eight small (10' x 12') brown canvas tents, each equipped with "two iron cots, small stove, and a home made washstand."[78] Kennedy, however, was able to entice only 62 visitors into the park that summer.[79] Trying to salvage a money-losing season, the fledgling company began to arrange for guided hunting trips out of the nearby community of Cantwell (see Appendix E); this caused Karstens considerable consternation, inasmuch as "the only good hunting country within a reasonable distance is along the Park boundary" and because the park had no easy way to patrol that area. Kennedy, at one point, even threatened to abandon his McKinley Park Station headquarters and relocate to Cantwell.[80]

By the close of 1924, Karstens had been on the job for three and a half years. He had accomplished much during that period, but he had done virtually everything by the sweat of his brow, with little help from others. He had established a headquarters, he had made a broad range of local residents aware of the park's purposes and goals, he had coordinated road planning and construction, he had established a visitor program by selecting a park concessioner, and he had done his best to inform both residents and visitors what was allowed (and prohibited) within the park's boundaries. The logistics of his job, however, were so daunting that anyone but a self-sufficient Alaskan would have resigned under the strain, and those same difficulties brought a high turnover to the one or two rangers that worked for him. The park headquarters, moreover, was poorly located and poorly constructed, and due to poor railroad scheduling and a balky concessioner, park



The Savage Camp tourist facility had grown significantly by the 1924 season. B88-52-50, Anchorage Museum of History & Art

visitation was virtually nonexistent. It had been a hard, disheartening three and a half years. But a new era of optimism, stability, and development—both in infrastructure and tourism—was on the horizon. This era is described in more detail in Chapter 4.

## Notes - Chapter 3

[1] Horace Albright, in his *Creating the National Park Service*, p. 205, noted that "Sadly, McKinley was treated like our other new parks, Lassen and Hawaii. No money was made available to staff, operate, or improve them. Not a red cent to hire a superintendent and rangers. Nothing for protection of the wild animals [and] nothing to make it possible for visitors to enjoy ... the magnificent Alaskan wilderness."

[2] The railroad's progress, to be fair, was more illusory than real. In order to gain access to the Matanuska coal fields, the line from Anchorage to the Matanuska coal fields was completed in August 1916. But due to the absence, or poor quality, of track south of Anchorage, and because of a labor shortage brought on by World War I, the first train did not run from Seward (the line's southern terminus) to Matanuska until September 1918. Walter R. Borneman, *Alaska; Saga of a Bold Land*, 264-65.

[3] Franklin K. Lane to Secretary of the Treasury, February 27, 1917, in 64th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Document 742, pp. 1-2.

[4] Alexander T. Vogelsang to Sen. Thomas S. Martin, June 19, 1918, in "Appropriations, estimates" file, Box 109 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; John Ise, *Our National Park Policy* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1961), 227.

[5] *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, Fiscal Year 1937, Table 4. From 1917 through 1919 inclusively, NPS funds came from the War Department as well as the Interior Department; beginning in fiscal year 1920, all NPS funds were funneled through the Interior Department.

[6] Vogelsang to Martin, June 19, 1918, see above; Arno B. Cammerer to John Burnham, in "Wild Animals, Part 1 & 2" file, Box 112 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; Brown, *A History*, 94.

[7] Nelson to Stephen T. Mather, December 9, 1920, in "Wild Animals, Part 1 & 2" file, Box 112 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; John Burnham to Mather, December 10, 1920, in "Rules and Regulations" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[8] Charles Sheldon, "To the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives," in "Appropriations, estimates" file, Box 109 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[9] Borneman, *Alaska; Saga of a Bold Land*, 266.

[10] Mather to William J. Rogers, February 1, 1921; John B. Burnham to Mather, February 10, 1921; both in "Rules and Regulations" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP. Late in 1921, an NPS official stated that "it was only last year, after the most insistent and combined efforts on the park of the Park Service and the friends of the Alaskan game" that an appropriation was obtained. Arno Cammerer to Dan Beard, November 1, 1921, in "Wild Animals, Part 1 & 2" file, Box 112 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[11] Carl C. Tousley to Mather, February 12, 1921, and Horace M. Albright to Dan Beard, October 27, 1921, both in "Wild Animals, Part 1 & 2" file, noted above. Congress, in its FY 1922 allotment, was quite generous with the NPS; it granted $1.43 million to an agency that had never before received more than $1.06 million. Funding for Mount McKinley was one fortunate by-product of the additional funding allotment. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, Fiscal Year 1937, Table 4.

[12] Various items in "Rules and Regulations" file, Box 111, noted above.

[13] Various items in "Rules and Regulations" file, Box 111, noted above; Arno Cammerer to Dan Beard, November 1, 1921, in "Wild Animals, Part 1 & 2" file, noted above; Mather to Karstens, April 12, 1921, in "Instructions" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; A. E. Demaray to Mr. Cammerer, June 20, 1922, in "Inspection" file, Box 110, noted above; SMR, August 1921, 2, 4; September 1921, 2.

[14] Grant Pearson, *The Seventy Mile Kid; Wilderness Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park* (Los Altos, Calif., 1957), 1; Sheldon, *Wilderness of the Upper Yukon; a Hunter's Exploration for Wild Sheep in Sub-Arctic Mountains* (New York, C. Scribner's Sons), 1911; Albright to Beard, October 27, 1921, noted above.

[15] William E. Brown, *A History of the Mount McKinley-Denali Region*, 135.

[16] Brown, *A History*, 135-37; Mather to Karstens, April 12, 1921, in "Instructions" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[17] Mather to Karstens, April 12, 1921, in "Instructions" file, noted above; Cammerer to Beard, November 1, 1921, in "Wild Animals, Part 1 & 2" file, noted above.

[18] Superintendent's Monthly Report (hereafter SMR), Mount McKinley National Park, June 1921, *passim.*

[19] Brown, *A History*, 138-39.

[20] SMR, June 1921, 2; September 1921, 2.

[21] Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 266; Ann Bischoff Kain, *Cultural Resource Management in Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska*, unpublished M.A. Thesis, Antioch University, March 2001, 162-63.

[22] Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 266; SMR, September 1921, 2; March 1922, 2; Frank Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun; the Tourist in Early Alaska*, Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 170 (Anchorage, the Commission, June 1985), 46; Brown, *A History*, 104. The Tanana River bridge was completed a year later, in February 1923, and in June of that year, the completion of a track-widening project between

Nenana and Fairbanks (inasmuch as the Tanana Valley Railroad had been a narrow-gauge line) allowed the first through trains to travel from Seward to Fairbanks.

[23] In the October 1921 SMR, p. 2, Karstens noted that the decision for the headquarters location was made "after considerable study" ... seeing as the park boundary was 15 miles west of the railroad at this time, "building in the Park would necessarily make it very hard to be prompt with reports and correspondence."

[24] SMR, August 1921, 3; September 1921, 3-4; Karstens to Director NPS, January 25, 1923, in "Lands-General" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, March 12, 1937, 9.

[25] Alaska Railroad, *Map of S4–T14S–R7W-FM Showing ARR Reserve-at McKinley Park Station* (1935/1951), drawing R-1082-134, AKRO Lands Division files; Brown, *A History*, 154.

[26] SMR for October 1922, 2; December 1922, 1, 6; and January 1923, 5.

[27] Brown, *A History*, 138, 140; SMR for October 1921, 6.

[28] In a story that appeared almost 30 years later (Harold E. Booth's "Discovery of Mount McKinley," *National Parks Magazine* 23 (January-March 1949), 23), Karstens once told the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce that except for salary costs, his total expenditures during 1921 amounted to $35. According to Booth—who served as a park ranger during the mid-1940s—Karstens "had succumbed to the lure of a highly colored mail order catalog describing a wood-burning stove particularly suitable for the new cabin, and priced at $34.00. Then, having gone that far, he decided to buy two hinges for the cabin door."

[29] SMR for September 1921, 4; November 1921, 2; December 1921, 2; January 1922, 3; February 1922, 2; March 1922, 2; and April 1922, 2, 6.

[30] Brown, *A History*, 140; Jane Bryant, in a December 7, 2005 telephone call, suggests that "Morris" was a variant of "Maurice," which was Morino's first name.

[31] Mather to Karstens, April 12, 1921, in "Instructions" file, noted above

[32] Cammerer to Beard, November 1, 1921, in "Wild Animals, Part 1 & 2" file, noted above.

[33] *Congressional Record* 67:1 (1921), 504; *Congressional Record* 67:2 (1922), 364. The term "Sutherland Bill" was quoted in SMR, June 1921, 2.

[34] A. E. Demaray to Mr. Cammerer, June 20, 1922, in "Inspection" file, Box 110 noted above.

[35] SMR, September 1921, 2; June 1922, 2; September 1922, 1.

[36] Executive Order 3617, January 13, 1922. A year later, on March 2, 1923, Harding signed another directive (Executive Order 3800) that granted—for the same purposes—an additional 80 acres of land just south of the Riley Creek railroad bridge.

[37] 64th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 440, p. 2; SMR, June 1921, 1-2.

[38] Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska, *Annual Report of the Alaska Road Commission, Fiscal Year 1921*, Part II, 39; John C. Gotwals (Engineer Officer of the Board of Road Commissioners) to President of the Board, November 9, 1921, in Box 371 (General Files), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[39] Superintendent to "Sir," October 3, 1921, in Box 379 (General Files), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[40] Brown, *A History*, 107-08; SMR, June 1921, 3; Gotwals to President of the Board, November 9, 1921.

[41] ARC, *Annual Report, Part II*, for 1922 (p. 56), 1924 (pp. 104-05), and 1926 (p. 73); Gotwals to President of the Board, November 9, 1921.

[42] Arno Cammerer to Karstens, March 30, 1922, in Box 379 (General Files), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[43] James G. Steese (ARC) to Stephen Mather, April 20, 1922, in DENA Historical File.

[44] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1922, Part II, 56-57.

[45] SMR, October 1921, 6.

[46] SMR, June 1922, 2-3; August 1922, 2, 6.

[47] SMR, September 1922, 4.

[48] Karstens' letter to his superiors (Superintendent to "Sir," October 3, 1921, p. 2 in Box 379 [General Files], Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP) suggests a low-elevation road, inasmuch as his proposed route "offers numerous ways from the East fork to the summit of Polychrome Pass (6 miles) it is a good hard bottom and easy road building; the numerous streams to cross will give very little trouble."

[49] SMR, June 1921, 1-3; August 1921, 3.

[50] SMR, September 1924, 3; December 1924, 2; September 1925, 2.

[51] SMR, November 1925, 9.

[52] Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 266; Brown, *A History*, 103-04, 118-19; Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 46.

[53] NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1904-1940* (Washington, the author, 1963), 5.

[54] Arno Cammerer to Edward C. Finney, June 20, 1922, in "Inspection" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; Woodbury Abbey to Stephen Mather, May 9, 1922, in "Privileges" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[55] George A. Parks to Secretary of the Interior, November 10, 1922, 11-20 in "Inspection" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[56] Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 267; Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 46. Borneman, somewhat quixotically, noted that "The first train chugged across the [Tanana River bridge] on November 23, 1922, and it was hailed as complete on February 27, 1923."

[57] Cammerer to Karstens, December 11, 1922 and January 2, 1923, in "Privileges" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; SMR, July 1922, 5; December 1922, 4; June 1923, 5. Karstens, in his July 1922 report, noted that Chandler "has the distinction of being the park's first real visitor."

[58] Karstens to Director NPS (telegram), January 4, 1923; Edward C. Finney to Cammerer, January 22, 1923; B.L. Vipond to Karstens, February 20, 1923, all in "Privileges" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; SMR, January 1923, 2, 4; April 1923, 2, 4; May 1923, 2, 3; George S. Stroud, *History of the Concession at Denali National Park*, unpub. mss. (Anchorage, NPS, March 1985), 1.

[59] Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 48-49; SMR, January 1923, 6-7; April 1923, 2; May 1923, 1-2; Brown, *A History*, 155-56.

[60] SMR, May 1923, 3-4; June 1923, 5, 6, 8; July 1923, 4, 7, 8, 10; *Seward Gateway*, June 27, 1923, 4.

[61] Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 106. The DENA historical collection contains a 1923 Savage Camp photo, courtesy of the Candy Waugaman Collection.

[62] Brown, *A History*, 155.

[63] SMR, July 1923, 2-6.

[64] SMR, July 1923, 7; Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 268-69; Brown, *A History*, 156.

[65] SMR, April 1923, 3; July 1923, 7.

[66] SMR, January 1922, 2; February 1922, 2; Brown, *A History*, 154.

[67] SMR, October 1922, 3; November 1922, 4; January 1923, 4; March 1924, 3, 5; April 1924, 3, 7; May 1924, 6; July 1924, 2; November 1924, 6; Grant Pearson, *A History of Mt. McKinley National Park* (n.p., NPS, 1953), 56. The community hall was a reconverted cabin; it opened in April 1924 for "dances and other meetings" and continued to function in that capacity until July 4 of that year. The school apparently operated only through the 1924-25 school year.

[68] SMR, April 1922, 2; September 1924, 4; Brown, *A History*, 118-19 (photos).

[69] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1924, Part II, 116; SMR, April 1923, 3; June 1923, 6; September 1923, 2.

[70] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1925, Part II, 88-89.

[71] Cammerer to Steese, April 9, 1924, in File 630 (Roads), in Box 1412 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP. The NPS's early attitude toward roads is set forth in Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service: the Missing Years* (Norman, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 298-99.

[72] SMR, May 1924, 2, 3, 5, 6; June 1924, 3, 4.

[73] SMR, April 1924, 6; May 1924, 4-7, 9; September 1924, 7; November 1924, 5; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1925, Part II, 89.

[74] Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 48-49, 51.

[75] SMR, January 1924, 2; March 1924, 3.

[76] The company was organized beginning in December 1923 and was a reality by mid-March 1924. SMR December 1923, 3; March 1924, 2.

[77] SMR, May 1924, 8; June 1924, 3, 6. The southbound train arrived at 1:15 a.m., while the northbound train arrived at 2:40 a.m.

[78] SMR, June 1924, 3, 6; July 1924, 2; November 1924, 2.

[79] NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1904-1940*, 5. Not all who entered the park traveled by horseback, however. As noted earlier, miners going to and from the Copper Mountain and Kantishna areas often walked or traveled by dogsled; ARC crews entered on construction vehicles; and the first passenger cars entered the park. Karstens noted that on July 20, 1924, he and ranger Ernest McFarland "took the auto and drove out the park road [and] before we realized it we were at Savage Camp, the first auto to go into the park." The following month, the superintendent drove several ladies to the head of Savage River; they thus had "the distinction of being the first visitors to go into the Park by auto." SMR, July 1924, 4; August 1924, 3.

[80] SMR, August 1924, 4; September 1924, 8.



# Chapter Four: The Cabins-and-Snowshoes Era, 1925-1936

### Moving Up to a New Headquarters

During the waning days of the 1924 tourist season, Superintendent Harry Karstens was understandably frustrated with several major elements related to park operations. He had been unable to resolve the long-festering problem of where to locate the park's headquarters, the park concessioner often complained about existing conditions and demanded unrealistic actions from Park Service staff, and railroad officials dampened prospects for tourism by serving McKinley Park Station in the dead of night. Karstens had no way of knowing it, but within a year each of these problems would be overcome and, as shall be seen, prospects for both visitors and for park resources would considerably improve.

One major problem dealt with land ownership and the logistics of park administration. As noted in the previous chapter, Karstens had arrived in the area in the early summer of 1921. Soon afterward he wrote, "I firmly believe Riley Creek to be the most logical entrance to the park," inasmuch as the area was "beautifully situated for an entrance."[1] He then went to Fairbanks to claim land for a headquarters just west of the railroad right-of-way and just north of the bridge site, but General Land Office (GLO) personnel told him that roadhouse proprietor Maurice Morino had already staked out virtually all of the land in that area between the railroad right-of-way and the adjacent bluffs.[2] He therefore established his headquarters south of Morino's claim, in the bottomland near the confluence of Riley and Morris [Hines] creeks.

This 1931 Kantishna photograph shows Joe Quigley (left), Betty Edmunds, wife of ARC Foreman Chris Edmunds, Fannie Quigley, and Harry Liek. DENA 38-31, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Despite that rebuff, however, he told Washington officials—in the fall of 1921 and again a year later—that the park's headquarters should be "on the high bench" north of the bridge. "I have always had in mind," he wrote, "the erection of permanent buildings ... immediately west of the railroad station, from this point the road into the park will begin. The idea is to build ... a large rustic gateway for [an] entrance. ... Within the gate there will be a main thoroughfare, on either side of which will be park buildings located with an eye to efficiency and beauty." Karstens hoped "to induce Mr. Moreno [sic] to relinquish such portions of his claim as this park needs," and at a January 1923 community meeting, he was successful in getting him to do just that. Morino, however, soon reneged on that offer.[3]

Later that year, the picture became even more complicated when the Alaska Railroad intervened. Col. Lee Landis, the general manager of the newly-completed line, asked Karstens to relinquish a large parcel just north of the Morino tract that "would be used in connection with the railroad hotel to be constructed at McKinley Park." (Karstens had effective control over the parcel at that time because a January 1922 presidential proclamation, noted in Chapter 3, withdrew the land for park administration and for a proposed road.) Landis also lobbied other Interior Department officials, and in early 1924 he succeeded; on January 21, President Calvin Coolidge issued an executive order that was "reserved for use in connection with the construction and operation of railroad lines" (see Map 4). The hotel, as it turned out, was not built for more than a decade, but the railroad now had jurisdiction over a 240-acre tract that represented approximately the northern half of the McKinley Park Station area.[4]

Recognizing that he had few other options, Karstens began to look at areas along the park road away from McKinley Park Station. In mid-February 1924, less than month after Coolidge issued the executive order, he had told Washington officials that "I believe it is time to take up the question of moving our headquarters from its present location to ... a beautiful spot ... one and two-thirds miles from the railroad." A month later, Acting Director Arno Cammerer authorized Karstens to move the park headquarters to that spot.[5] The site, just west of "First Creek" [Rock Creek], was "beautifully located and will give full control of those going into or out of the park." Soon afterward, he dispatched a ranger and horse team to the site "to clear a portion of it for lumber yard and buildings."[6] The eastern park boundary, then at the 149th parallel, was less than two miles west of the newly-selected site.

Karstens, however, recognized that "as a matter of expediency and economy in many ways park headquarters should be near the railroad," and in April 1924, he told Washington that he was delaying action on the move because of a "sudden change of heart in Mr. Morino." Shortly afterward, he and a ranger "accompanied Morino over his homestead to look over land he is willing to relinquish for Park use." But Morino later recanted his interest in that proposition. Karstens, in response, tried to get the GLO's George Parks to work with railroad

officials to be able to use part of their newly-acquired land near the depot.[7] The matter of a park headquarters location was not resolved until September 7, at an Anchorage meeting attended by Parks, Karstens, and the Alaska Railroad's Noel Smith. At that meeting, Karstens was disappointed to hear that "Mr. Parks would not agree that I should get land at the railroad at McKinley Park for a headquarters," primarily because "the Alaska Railroad wish[es] to hold this land for a hotel site, a railroad wye which runs up to it, and for other purposes."[8]

By good fortune, a major fire that had swept through the area in July 1924 had missed the bench just west of Rock Creek,[9] so by October of that year, rangers were hard at work "clearing land out at the new headquarters" and they began hauling cabin logs to the site. Karstens hoped "to begin construction very early in the spring" so that the buildings would be ready before summer. In February 1925, Washington gave him permission to locate there; pending a supplemental appropriation for building construction, however, Karstens was cautioned to erect only "temporary structures which have to be dismantled, and without loss to the United States except for the labor put in."[10] Karstens followed orders to the letter, according to Grant Pearson: "There were no funds for the moving project. He salvaged three one-room cabins at the old Headquarters, tore them down, and rebuilt them at the new site. All the work was done by himself, the Chief Ranger, the Park Clerk, and two other Rangers." Construction then commenced at the new site. By August 1925, the only building completed was the park office. (The sign "Superintendent's Office" was emblazoned above this cabin's front porch.) The Superintendent's living quarters was erected a month later, and the clerk's cabin began soon afterward. (Although the components that went into these structures were often recycled materials that had been hauled up from the former headquarters site, the buildings were by no means "temporary," although the minimal level of funds that were invested in them may have suggested otherwise.) By the time winter arrived, the camp was by no means complete, and some staff endured the winter of 1925-26 in less-than-adequate accommodations.[11]

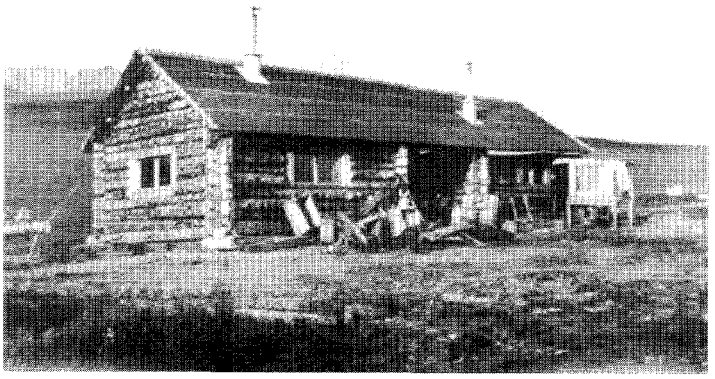
Locating and building a viable headquarters area was a major accomplishment that had long-term consequences for park development. The staking of this area, which was outside of park boundaries but was deeded "for use in connection with the administration of the Mount McKinley National Park" (as noted in the language of the 1922 executive order), meant that park personnel would know about, and would be able to control, the comings and goings of traffic along the park road. It also meant that park personnel—for better or worse—would be divorced from the goings-on at McKinley Park Station; they also would be two miles from the railroad tracks and, given the sheltered location 350 feet higher in elevation, they would experience warmer winter temperatures and less windy conditions than those prevailing in the area surrounding the railroad depot. As future events would prove, living at the new headquarters site would prove to be a double-edged sword, with strong drawbacks as well as notable advantages.

Another major change that took place during the winter of 1924-25 was the transformation of the park's concessioner. As noted in the previous chapter, a horse-packer named Dan Kennedy had been the only viable way for most visitors to



The two cabins were built from materials salvaged from the first headquarters and were used as ranger quarters. The weather station (right) was moved up from the first headquarters in 1925 and continues to record daily weather observations near this location. The Superintendent's Office is on the left. Candy Waugaman Collection

see the park during the summers of 1923 and 1924. His orneriness, however, proved grating to both park visitors and NPS officials. (See Appendix D.) But in June 1925, things changed for the better when Dan Kennedy sold his interest in the company, supposedly because he "positively refuse[d] to do business in the park as long as [Karstens was] the superintendent." James L. Galen, who purchased Kennedy's stake, also headed the Richardson Highway Transportation Company, which was a major passenger carrier along the 370-mile route connecting Valdez with Fairbanks. Beginning in 1925, the team of President Galen and Vice-President Thomas Marquam was well on the way into transforming the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company into an economically-viable operation that would host thousands of satisfied visitors during its 17-year tenure as the park concessioner.[12]



The Alaska Road Commission built a two-part cabin as the center of its Savage River road construction camp. This was the only cabin built by the Alaska Road Commission that connected two 14'X16' cabins facing each other, with an 8 foot "dog-trot" between them with a common roof. Herbert Heller Collection, 79-44-1341, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archive

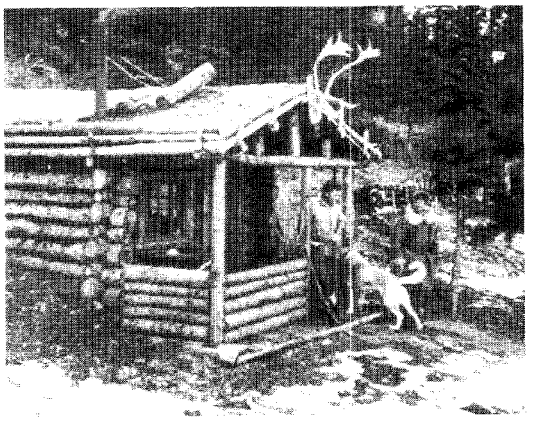
The Galen-Marquam partnership resulted in what was widely considered to be a progressive concessioner – and one that generally worked well with NPS staff. That partnership, in a larger sense, ushered in a period in which four partners—the concessioner, the National Park Service, the Alaska Railroad, and the Alaska Road Commission—were jointly responsible for park tourism development. Few of these organizations had many staff, and the budgets allotted to McKinley-area projects were often meager indeed. (See Appendix B.) These entities, however, were able to successfully work together on many matters during the period between the mid-1920s and the eve of World War II. These partnerships were fostered because the area was geographically isolated, because of informal relationships among the leaders involved, because of a "can-do" spirit, and because the parties involved shared many of the same overall goals.

One of the major roadblocks that was cleared away during the 1924-25 period was a financing arrangement for the construction of the park road. As noted earlier, the ARC and the NPS had established an "informal agreement" in 1922 on road construction, and in April 1924 Congress had authorized a three-year NPS road-construction program. But the NPS could not spend money on the road until it received a specific appropriation. The lack of such an appropriation meant that construction undertaken in 1924—some $80,000 in total—was paid for by the ARC, with the expectation that the NPS would eventually provide reimbursement. That expectation was finally fulfilled when Congress passed the Act of March 3, 1925 (H.R. 10020). That act provided funds sufficient for 33 miles of road and additional trail mileage. These funds, expended on an annual basis, funded road construction through the 1927 season. Congress then passed the Act of March 7, 1928 (H.R. 9136), which provided sufficient funds to complete the road an additional 33 miles, to Copper Mountain.[13]

As a result of the two congressional acts, Alaska Road Commission crews—using primarily if not exclusively NPS funds—constructed many miles of the park road during the mid- to late 1920s. (See Appendix F.) By the close of the 1924 season, as has been noted, crews had graded the park road just ten miles west of McKinley Park Station, "with very little gravel on it as yet."[14] As a result, most visitors traveled via horseback to the newly-constructed Savage Camp. But during the 1925 season, the road crews were able to extend the road all the way to the Sanctuary River (mile 22). A lack of funding prevented further construction the following year, but in 1927 the road was extended to Igloo Creek (mile 34); in 1928, road crews pushed west another 4½ miles to the crest of Sable Pass; and by the close of the 1929 season, vehicles could drive all the way to the brink of the Toklat River's East Fork (mile 43½).[15]

In order to construct the road, ARC crews erected a series of camps that served as temporary bases of operation. The initial tents along the route were the line of small tents that crews, in 1922, had erected at 12-15 mile intervals between McKinley Park Station and Wonder Lake.[16] Beginning in 1924, ARC road construction crews began erecting small tent camps every few miles (and not necessarily at sites where they

had previously erected tents). Perhaps twenty of these ephemeral construction camps were thrown up altogether, and little obvious evidence marks those sites today.[17] But at five sites along the way (at Savage River, Sanctuary River, Igloo Creek, East Fork, and Toklat River), ARC crews constructed log structures between 1924 and 1931. These cabins, which typically anchored an ARC tent camp, served two practical purposes; they served as sturdy, bear-proof cook houses for ARC crews during the summer and as shelters for ranger patrols during the winter. As construction progressed, these cabins gradually replaced the tents that the ARC had erected back in 1922 when the new route to Kantishna had first been laid out.[18]

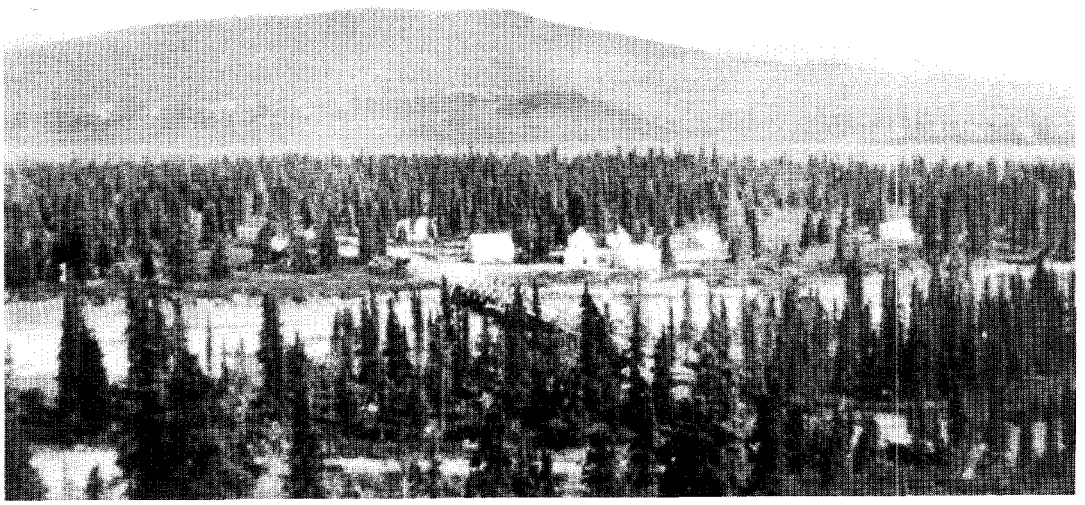


The Toklat Patrol Cabin was built by rangers Grant Pearson and Lee Swisher a few years before the park road reached this location. It was a valuable 'relief' cabin for rangers on winter patrols. Dan Wilder Collection, Courtesy of the Wilder Family

NPS rangers, who had begun to patrol the park well before the ARC began road construction, had at first been forced to bunk in abandoned cabins along the way. Given the Commission's cabin building, rangers were only too glad to use these substantial new structures once the brief construction flurry had passed at a given camp. But as shall be seen below, the NPS had created its own network of ranger cabins in the central park corridor, some of which were along the general road right-of-way. Cabins along the future road right-of-way included an Igloo Camp cabin, originally made by "California mountain men," which Fritz Nyberg and Grant Pearson improved in the summer of 1926, and the Toklat Patrol Cabin, which Pearson and Lee Swisher built in the summer of 1927.[19]

The various log cabins along the road corridor were similar but by no means identical. The first ARC cabin, built just east of Savage River in 1924, was a so-called "double log cabin" that consisted of two adjacent cabins bridged by a sheltered "dogtrot" walkway. Cabins built during the next three years, whether by the NPS or ARC, typically consisted of a single room, sometimes with a substantial entrance porch. Rangers at each of these cabins added additional nearby improvements such dog houses, an outhouse, and a storage cache.[20]

The ARC's construction of the park to the Savage River considerably eased access for the Mount McKinley park visitor because it allowed the concessioner to provide comfortable, if rustic, amenities. In 1925, Savage Camp was finally accessible by road, and that same year Alaska Railroad officials jiggered their schedules to allow daytime stops at McKinley Park Station in both directions.[21] As a result, traffic into the park increased from 62 (in 1924) to 206 (in 1925). In order to accommodate the new influx, the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation



The Sanctuary ARC camp had a 1-room cabin on the north side of the park road and the wall-tent living quarters arranged around a circle drive on the south side. This original ARC footprint has become the present Sanctuary Campground. The Sanctuary cabin has not moved, but the road and new bridge were moved north of the cabin. Herbert Heller Collection, 79-44-1385, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archive




**In 1926, the Alaska Railroad erected this rustic arch over the park road just beyond the McKinley Park depot. It was intended to give the visitor a sense of arrival at the park, although the park boundary was several miles to the west. Lingo Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

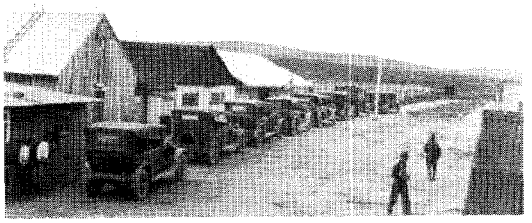
Company (see Appendix D) had four touring cars at its disposal; even so, late-summer tourists were so numerous that "the four cars had difficulty handling all who wished to go into the park."[22] That fall, concessions officials announced plans to make a substantial investment (between $25,000 and $30,000) in facilities and transport conveyances. They couched such an investment in hopes that the NPS would grant them a long-term contract; the agency, however, made it clear that because two years remained on the contract, it had little interest in amending it.[23] The company also decided that its main camp would remain at Savage Camp, regardless of how far road construction progressed; it did so because of the camp's nearness to the railroad, the spectacular Mount McKinley view, and the plethora of nearby points of interest.

During this same period, the Alaska Railroad also stepped in to help. Recognizing the increasing importance of tourism, and endeavoring to satisfy the growing clientele, the Alaska Railroad decided to erect "a fine large rustic-type arch -way, over the park highway, about 500 feet south of the railroad depot." Supt. Karstens also favored the idea, even though the park boundary was several miles to the west, because there was "nothing present which is indicative of Mount McKinley National Park...". The arch was erected in May 1926. On a broader level, the railroad was also hard at work incorporating the park into its tourist image. Its advertising brochures and its boxcars soon began to proclaim that the Alaska Railroad was "the Mount McKinley Route," and for years afterward, the railroad prominently mentioned both the park's beauty and the rewards of a park visit.[24]

Anxious to reap rewards from the increasing numbers of tourists, the concessioner purchased 26 10' x 12' "tent-houses" for their Savage Camp guests, each of which was supplied with "two beds, washstands and other features." For communal purposes, they also built a cook-house, garage, social hall, dining room, store tent, two barns and a feed and harness cache. The cook-house was of frame construction, but all of the other improvements were built of canvas with a rough wood frame. The newly-improved camp buildings, which constituted the company's base camp, were erected in May and June 1926. That fall, the canvas component of each building was packed away. Each spring, a camp of a similar size and complexity was rebuilt there.[25] Given that arrangement, park visitation continued to rise. For the remainder of the decade the park attracted more than 500 visitors each summer, and in 1929 visitation topped 1,000 for the first time (see Appendix B). Times were good for the park concessioner, and in January

1929 the NPS renewed the company's contract at the park; that contract was good for another ten years.[26]

Life among the Savage Camp tourists during this period is perhaps best summed up by the reminiscences of Lena Howard, who worked at the camp most of the summers between 1927 and 1941. In excerpts from a 1972 interview, she noted that



The concession company's touring car fleet. Candy Waugaman Collection

> We had camps, tents, and they enjoyed the frontier life, and others didn't, just like today. So many people said "Oh, when you get the hotel



Savage Camp – tents and horse corral. Candy Waugaman Collection

> built, we'll be back" and others would say "Don't ever build the hotel, that'll spoil it all." People would be disap - pointed because there was no snow. "Oh, we expected to get lines of dog teams!" I said, "in the summertime?" (laughs) We had the horses at the camp, but [the company also] had cars, open cars. Studebakers, Dodges, Pierce Arrows.
>
> And then they said "Do we get the same kind of food here that we get at home?" and they thought everything should be different. I think we had pork for one meal (they were 24-hour people) and roast beef for the other meal. (laughs) They thought they were eating sheep meat. We usually had ham and bacon for breakfast. And they always enjoyed sourdough hotcakes in the morning, that was a must.
>
> Most of the [visitors] were from New York and California. They were the most traveled people. Mostly elderly people. At that time there were retired people and schoolteachers and doctors and very few young people at that time, because the young people couldn't afford it. Most of them were 24-hour people and [there were also] some 48-hour people. And the main thing was to see Mount McKinley and sometimes they would blame us for the mountain not being out! (laughs)
>
> We had animals around the camp. We had foxes that would come to be fed and birds and ptarmigan. Different kinds of birds that would come around. Sometime from camp we could see caribou, sometimes moose.



Guests boarding the stage for a day trip. Lingo Collection



Many guests enjoyed horseback riding.
Candy Waugaman Collection

> [Camp manager Bobby Sheldon was] a great entertainer. He had a knack of keeping people happy. He was in Skagway at the time when Soapy Smith was killed [so] he used to entertain them at night with the account of "The Shooting of Soapy Smith." And Harry Karstens, the Superintendent at the time, he gave talks about climbing the mountain.[27]

Some park visitors were interested in traveling to places beyond Savage Camp. While the tightly-controlled schedules that most visitors followed during their Alaska tour ruled out longer trips, the company catered to more long-term visitors by hastening to construct sufficient improvements in the more far-flung areas of the park. One of the first areas to be developed, with the Alaska Road Commission's concurrence, was the Savage River basin, in areas both north and south of the main concessions camp. Park records show that Supt. Karstens drove the first automobile to "the head of Savage River" in the summer of 1924. Then, in 1927, the ARC improved the "coach road" for nine miles up the west side of Savage River valley to a tent complex dubbed Caribou Camp. (In 1922, Olaus Murie of the U.S. Biological Survey had erected a corral in that area to capture caribou.)[28] Over that route, the concessioner operated horse-drawn stages and, later, automobiles; the trip was called "the Big Game Drive," along which could be seen sheep, caribou, bears, and foxes. This tour commenced in 1926 and continued through the early 1930s.[29] To provide park visitors a further diversion, the ARC in 1928 constructed a two-mile pack trail down the west side of the Savage River north from the bridge crossing. Over this route, the concessioner provided pack-saddle trips during the late 1920s and early 1930s.[30]

For those tourists who had the time and means to head farther into the park, the park concessioner offered a variety of extended trips. One two-day saddle-horse trip took the visitor to the head of Savage River, then back to camp via Sanctuary River; another trip headed out to Igloo Creek; while the most expensive trip, played out over eight days, took the visitor all the way to Copper Mountain. In order to support those trips, the concessioner, by 1928, built tent camps at Igloo Creek, Toklat River, and Copper Mountain; the Igloo facility was 5 tents and a cache, while the others consisted of three tents and a cache. The company also erected a tent at Polychrome Pass, presumably as a mid-day rest stop.[31]

#### Park Patrols and Game Protection

As noted above, the ARC in 1924 began to construct a series of patrol cabins along the park road, in 1927 the NPS built one of its own (at Toklat), and by 1931 there were six cabins scattered along the park road where rangers could either stay en route to more distant points or use as long-term bases of operations. The primary reason for the rangers' patrols was to keep on the lookout for poachers, and extant records show that poaching was a constant menace during the park's early years. Inasmuch as Congress, goaded by Sheldon, had established the park as a game refuge in order to protect the magnificent caribou, sheep, bear, moose, and other large animals, Karstens recognized that the



The present Igloo Campground occupies the footprint of the earlier Mt. McKinley Tourist & Transportation Company's Igloo Camp. Lingo Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

prevention of poaching had to be a top priority. And because most potential poachers lived near the park's northern and eastern boundaries, early enforcement efforts were concentrated in those areas. As late as the winter of 1927-28, rangers were forced to bunk in substandard "ranger stations" at Savage River, Boundary Creek, Ewe Creek, Toklat River, East Fork, Riley Creek, and Windy Creek. These structures were abandoned cabins that hunters or trappers had built before the park had been established.[32]

Toward the western end of the park, rangers had few if any cabins upon which they could rely. To overcome this lack of cabins, rangers in 1926 began building their own. That April, the Stony Creek Ranger Station (near the Stony Creek-Boundary Creek confluence) was completed, and later that year rangers constructed a second cabin, on the northern forested edge of McKinley Bar (a few miles south of Wonder Lake), which was dubbed the Kantishna Ranger Station.[33] And beginning in March 1927, rangers erected a cabin at McLeod Creek, twelve miles west of the McKinley Bar station.[34] No cabins were built west of McLeod Creek because poaching in that isolated area was not perceived to be a problem.

By the late spring of 1927, rangers could count on a rough assemblage of cabins—built by either the NPS, the ARC, or by prospectors—along both the northern boundary and along the right-of-way of the park road. But for rangers mushing west from headquarters to either the McKinley Bar or McLeod Creek cabins, there were few if any shelters west of the Toklat River's East Fork. (One ranger report stated that "rangers must stop where night overtakes them. A spruce tree is the best shelter to be found, while in some barren sections it is difficult to find enough willows for fire -wood.") To help bridge that gap, rangers built the Toklat Relief Cabin in the summer of 1927. That December, however, ranger Grant Pearson nearly died during a December 1927 blizzard while on patrol near Muldrow Glacier. In response, the park superintendent vowed that there had to "be enough cabins along the main trail through the park to enable the rangers to reach one in one day's travel." To fulfill that goal, Pearson began gathering logs for the Copper Mountain relief cabin. That cabin, which was located on the south side of the broad Thorofare River at Grant Creek, was erected in 1928.[35] Depending on the circumstances, rangers stayed in some of these cabins for overnight protection or for short layovers; cabins at the western end of the park, however—specifically the Toklat, Copper Mountain, and McKinley Bar cabins—served as ranger bases of operation for extended winter-time periods.

The rangers, in the park's early days, had good reason to carry on their boundary patrols because poaching was a constant threat. In his first foray into the park, in the spring of 1921,



The McKinley Bar cabin was built by ranger Grant Pearson in 1926, located on the McKinley River close to the original (1917) park boundary. Also referred to as the Kantishna Ranger Station, it burned to the ground in 1956. B67-23-47, Anchorage Museum of History & Art



The Copper Mountain Cabin was located just south of Thorofare River, about halfway between the McKinley Bar Cabin and the Toklat Ranger Cabin. It provided welcome shelter in this treeless area. DENA 3975, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Karstens had encountered two trapping parties along the northern boundary and also "noticed well beaten horse and dog sled tracks on the old snow drifts." The following March, he made a repeat reconnaissance; he found two hunting camps (one on the Savage River, one on Sanctuary); during the same period, he learned that there were "several parties camped just outside the line" at the park's southeastern corner "who have brought in sheep to sell to the roadhouses." To both groups, he could find nothing to prove poaching in the park, and he wistfully opined that there would have been more, except "beef shipped in from the States is fairly cheap, causing a poor market for those hunting game."[36] Karstens felt that "most of the people in and around the park are well disposed ... to observe the rules and regulations, except a certain element who do not recognize any authority and take advantage of the small force for patrol to poach when ever possible." That summer of 1922, he readily admitted that hard evidence of poaching was "negligible" in the park, but as the head of a severely understaffed park, he often received rumors of rampant poaching going on in the Cantwell area, along the Toklat and Stony rivers, and elsewhere.[37]

For the next two years, protecting the park's animal life proved a thankless, endlessly frustrating chore. Although Karstens and other park staff had few personal encounters with poachers, evidence found while on patrol underscored the fact that the practice was continuing.[38] Trapping was also a problem, particularly at the remote western end of the park, where Slim Carlson on Clearwater Creek, Gus Bench on Birch Creek, and Slim Avery on Foraker River were "doing pretty much as they please."[39] Exacerbating the problem was the local residents' laissez faire attitude toward hunting in the park; as Karstens noted, "People here deem it a crime to give evidence against illegal hunting; they admit it should be stopped, but are reluctant to give evidence," and park personnel trying to enforce the game laws were called "informers and stool pigeons."[40]

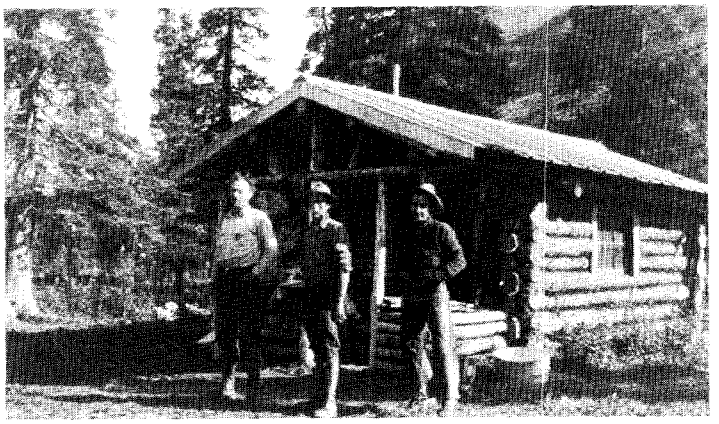
This attitude was painfully obvious in the prosecution of two poaching incidents. In February 1923, Karstens found a hunting camp that Jack Donnelly had built inside the park boundary; he told Donnelly to leave but chose not to prosecute. Later that year, however, park staff found evidence of Donnelly hunting inside the park boundary, but despite the "clear case" against him, Karstens discovered a serious "lack of cooperation on the part of the territorial game warden," a man by the name of Burrows.[41] And after a February 12 trial in nearby Healy (see Appendix E), he ruefully noted that "the prosecution failed because of the reluctance of the people, as represented by an average jury in this instance, to convict anyone for illegal hunting." He recognized that changing public attitudes in this area "promises to be a slow and tedious" process "requiring much missionary work."[42]

The other case, more insidious, involved William N. Beach, a well-known and wealthy outdoors big-game hunter, writer, and filmmaker. In August 1922, Beach told NPS officials that he and fellow New Yorker George Godley planned to visit the park. Agency officials, wanting to disabuse Beach of the widely-held myth that "this Reservation was created for the benefit of big Game Hunters from the states," told him that hunting was not allowed in the park. Beach was obviously disappointed, but decided to visit the park to film its wildlife. At the end of their trip into the park, the men told Karstens that they had "managed to get some very good moving pictures of game" during their visit.[43] But unbeknownst to Karstens, Beach had shot a Dall sheep near his Igloo Creek camp; an Alaska game warden passing through the camp saw the trophy but had made no move to report it. After returning to New York, Beach sent Karstens a new Mauser; the superintendent, perhaps perplexed by the gift, accepted the German-made rifle but didn't use it. The entire incident may have been forgotten, but in the coming months, Beach attended a society dinner back east and bragged to his table companion that he had killed a sheep in Mount McKinley National Park. That companion was the NPS's assistant field director. The agency soon obtained a signed statement from the flustered New Yorker acknowledging the illegal sheep kill. Karstens,

once informed of the incident, returned the rifle, which was still in mint condition. Beach's case was adjudicated in Fairbanks in September 1923. After some legal wrangling, Beach pled guilty, claiming that a lack of provisions forced him to act. A sympathetic U.S. Commissioner fined him just $10 and court costs. Karstens was somewhat miffed at the modest fine, but he observed that convicting anyone for illegal hunting in Alaska—let alone levying a fine—was "quite a feat."[44]

The publicity engendered by these two cases, plus the park staff's quiet proselytizing while on their intermittent treks along the park boundary, made it clear to area residents and any potential market hunters that the park was a game preserve in which the hunting laws were enforced. Given that state of affairs, enforcement problems tapered off beginning in the summer of 1924. By October 1924, two months into the fall hunting season, Karstens reported that there "has been no hunting within the park boundaries," and by December, he noted that "attempts at hunting within the boundaries are few, the people living close to the park, are as a general rule, showing more interest and better feeling regarding the park."[45] The only known case of poaching that fall had been perpetrated by two Nenana-area Natives. Karstens soon learned that the two men were nearly destitute due to a poor fish run that year. In addition, they mistakenly thought that the kill site was outside of park boundaries, and Karstens saw that they were "pretty well scared and repentant." Given those conditions, Karstens chose not to prosecute, and neither they nor other Natives were suspected in future poaching incidents.[46] The "better feeling" that Karstens had noted in 1924 continued into the following year; that September, the superintendent optimistically told his superiors that "several patrol trips were made by the rangers on which they found no hunting on the boundaries or in the park."[47] The problem of illegal hunting, of course, did not disappear; miscreants along the park borders, primarily trappers southwest of Kantishna, would continue to make illegal kills for the remainder of the decade. By the mid-1920s, however, park staff had successfully halted the widespread depredation of park wildlife by those market hunters and local residents who lived near the northern and eastern park boundaries.[48]

Complicating the problem of enforcing the park's hunting laws during the mid- to late 1920s was the arbitrary location of the park's eastern boundary. As noted in Chapter 3, the eastern boundary had been extended east as a result of discussions that Charles Sheldon had begun in April 1921. Sheldon had initially suggested that the boundary line be moved east to the railroad right-of-way; Demaray, however, noted that such an attempt "would result in bringing local opposition which might defeat the extension then proposed." Given that opposition—real or perceived—Alaska delegate Dan Sutherland submitted a bill to move the boundary to the 149th meridian. That bill encountered little opposition and was signed by President Harding on January 30, 1922.[49]



The Stony Creek Ranger Station provided shelter for rangers patrolling the park's northern boundary. Pictured here are rangers Wallace Anderson and Lee Swisher along with Arch Sisley, packer for J.C. Reed's 1931 USGS party. *J. C. Reed, U.S. Geological Survey*

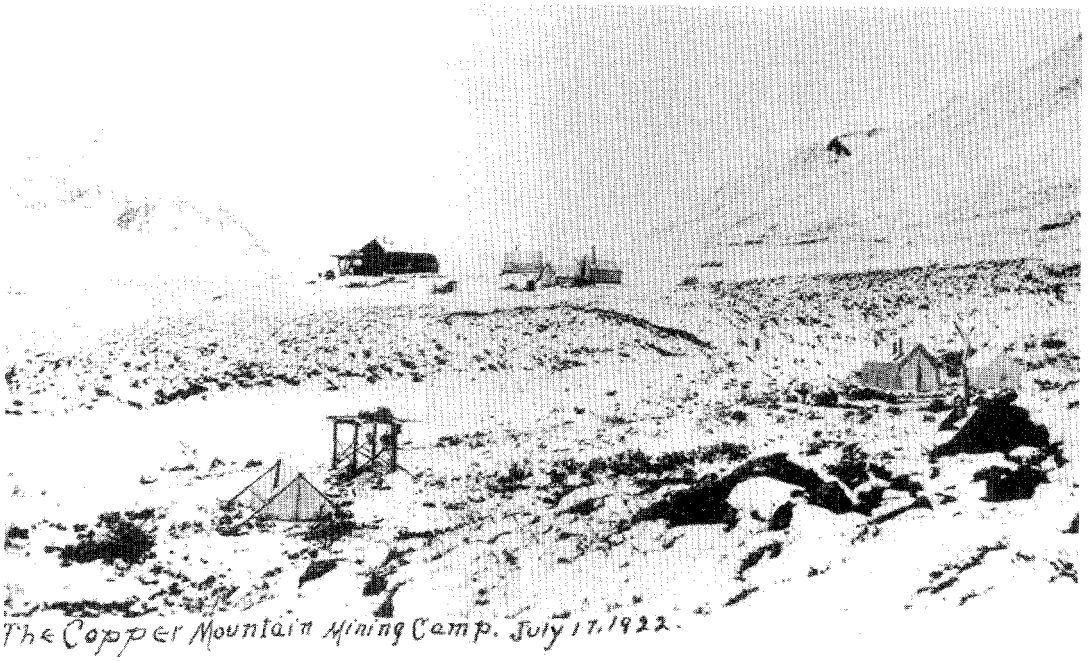
The ink from his signature was hardly dry, however, before NPS officials began to lobby for the boundary to be moved farther to the east. On February 3, 1922, Karstens—perhaps unaware of Washington activities in the matter—wrote that "if the park eastern boundary is not run down to the railroad ... opportunities ... to poach park sheep ...are going to cause great temptation to any one owning a gun, and will require a large force of rangers to patrol the eastern boundary." That May, he further stated that the three-mile section between the new boundary and the railroad "should be taken into the park" because "it will be a source of trouble as long as it is open ... the head of Riley creek and the head of Windy creek sections are really wonderful game countries and it is a crime to leave that small stretch of country out of the park."[50] AEC official Frederick Mears concurred with that recommendation, and on May 29 he wrote a formal proposal to Interior Secretary Albert B. Fall "to extend the eastern boundary of the park to the Railroad." He wanted to include, in the southeastern end of the park, all of the Cantwell and Windy creek drainages, and he also hoped to add a five-mile strip north of the park between the railroad and

the Toklat River. The "wild game" located beyond the park's northern boundary, he claimed, was "probably the greatest attraction which the Park Service will have," and the eastern and southeastern sections contained "a good deal of game." In addition, an extension was needed because it was difficult to enforce or monitor hunting access into the existing park.[51]

Mears's proposal was forwarded to George A. Parks of the General Land Office, who made a thorough investigation and issued a final report in November 1922. It was not encouraging. Parks obtained statements from Olaus Murie, Maurice Morino, and even Harry Karstens that debunked the notion that the eastern strip was laden with game; he noted, in fact, that it "contains no game of any kind other than birds." In addition, Murie—according to Parks—stated that the caribou that often grazed north of the park boundaries were indicators of a particularly large herd and "that unless the surplus caribou are killed, the range within the park will soon be overstocked." And in response to Mears's ease-of-patrol argument, Parks stated that virtually all hunters hoping to enter the park would use either Riley Creek or Windy Creek, and to him, "efficient rangers can patrol these places just as easily as they can forty miles of railroad."[52] Interior Department officials in Washington lost further interest in the idea. But for the remainder of the decade, Karstens and his staff made repeated recommendations to have the boundary moved eastward: either to the railroad, to the Nenana River, or merely to have the mile-wide strip that had been the subject of the January 13, 1922 executive order included in the park.[53] The problem remained unresolved.

An even murkier problem related to the protection of the park's game was a clause in the park bill related to subsistence hunting by miners and prospectors. As noted in Chapter 2, such a clause had been insisted upon by Alaska Delegate James Wickersham, and as a result, Section 6 of the park bill—which stated that "no person shall kill any game in said park ..." had an express provision "that prospectors and miners engaged in prospecting or mining in said park may take and kill therein so much game or birds as may be needed for their actual necessities when short of food; but in no case shall animals or birds be killed in said park for sale or removal therefrom, or wantonly."[54] The area in and around the park, at the time, was ripe for prospecting; and as reports throughout the 1920s show, prospecting (which was legal because of Section 4 in the park bill) took place in many drainages within the park.[55] Karstens, mindful of Section 6 and its rationality, soon developed misgivings about it. First, he found the section unenforceable, inasmuch it allowed virtually all nearby residents to claim that they were prospecting. In addition, however, the fact that prospectors often killed numerous park animals for their dog teams (whether or not the meat was "for their actual necessities when short of food") seemed to be a flagrant flouting of the section's intent.

His inability to distinguish between prospectors, miners, and other hunters led him to suggest, as




By 1921, prospectors had begun staking claims in the Copper Mountain area, deep inside the original boundaries of Mt. McKinley National Park. Because of this camp's remoteness and difficulty of access, prospectors relied on hunting to supply their dietary needs. Brooks Collection, 68-32-313, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archive

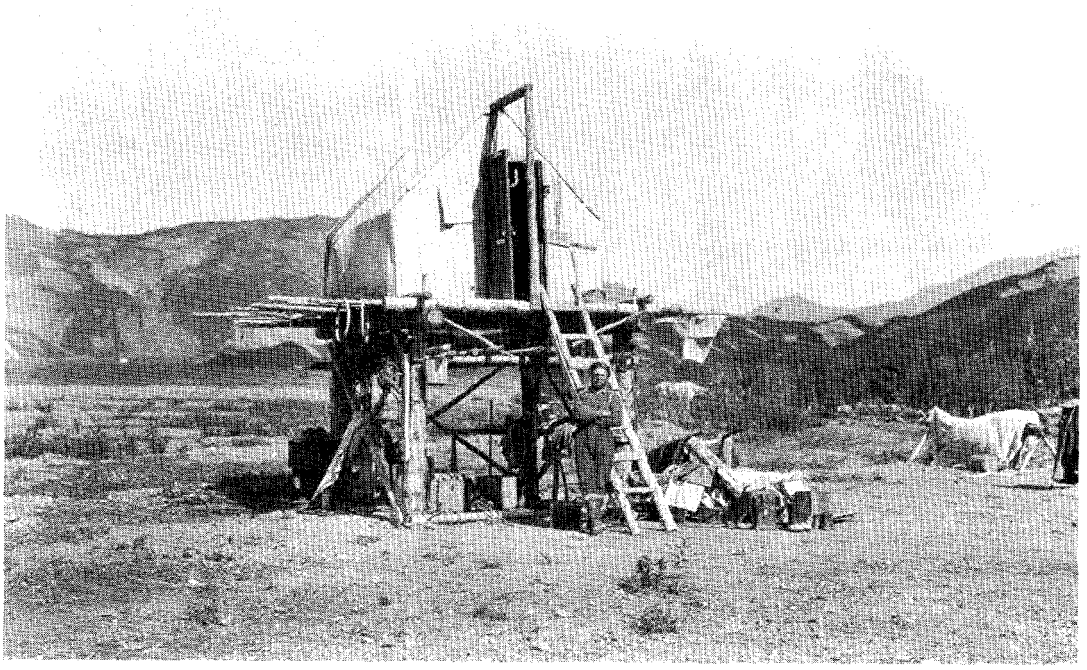
early as February 1923, that "a regulation should be inserted ... making it compulsory for prospectors and visitors to any one mine, when practical, to get a permit to enter the park, and to report when coming out and show entrance permit...", and two months later, he noted that "game ... is getting thinned out around Copper Mountain where quite a number of prospectors and miners have been located". At year's end, Interior Secretary Hubert Work charged in his annual report (after his July visit) that "few prospectors observe the rules; the majority wantonly kill game for themselves and dogs. ... if the present rate of destruction continues the object for which the park was created will be defeated."[56] Park staff was well aware that the farther reaches of the park—in the Toklat River drainage and beyond—was "where promiscuous hunting [was] done very extensively." In order to deal with the problem, therefore, Karstens dispatched rangers into those areas beginning in the winter of 1925-26; given that presence, they were able to document the extent of the problem and discuss the park's regulations with miners and prospectors from Copper Mountain, Kantishna, and nearby areas.[57]

Meanwhile park staff and advocacy groups searched for ways to lessen the harvest level. Efforts began back in the spring of 1923 when, in response to the rumored establishment of a corporate mine in the Copper Mountain area, the National Parks Committee (an NPS "friends" group chaired by George Bird Grinnell) passed a resolution asking the NPS director to prohibit mining-company employees from killing game "for community food service." Instead, they advocated the killing of game only "by bona fide prospectors for their own use." Acting Director Arno Cammerer responded to those actions by recommending "that certain zones be established within the park where hunting will be prohibited."[58] Superintendent Karstens broached Cammerer's idea with the park's prospectors; he suggested "closing the eastern portion of the Park between the Stony and the railroad [where prospecting possibilities were acknowledged to be poor] to all hunting. ... The prospectors I have talked with on the subject are in favor of this and will sign a petition to that effect."[59] During the same period, Karstens broached the same subject more broadly; at an Anchorage speaking engagement that May, he "brought up the question of illegal hunting and the fallacy of allowing so-called prospectors to hunt promiscuously. ... I asked their assistance to, if not possible to eliminate hunting altogether, at least give a hand toward regulating it for the ultimate benefit of all concerned."[60]

Little activity took place on this issue during the next couple of years, but in the meantime, a seemingly unrelated issue—the park's budgetary ceiling—gathered steam. As noted in Chapter 2, Section 7 of the park act noted "that no appropriation for the maintenance of said park in excess of $10,000 annually shall be made unless the same shall have first been expressly authorized by law." The agency's first appropriations for the park, in the 1922 through 1924 fiscal years, were just $8,000.[61] (See Appendix B.) But by March of 1924, with Congress on the verge of authorizing a three-year roadbuilding program for the park, Alaska Delegate Dan Sutherland submitted a bill (H.R. 8020) that would have eliminated that proviso within Section 7.[62] That bill went nowhere, and the NPS continued to fight an uphill battle with Congress to provide minimal park funding.[63] Then, in 1927, the subject arose again in a bill submitted by Sen.



**Before 1928, prospectors traveling through the park could lawfully hunt inside the park for their own needs, but not to feed dog teams. Alaska Road Commission Collection, PCA61-77-1187, Alaska State Library**



This prospector's cache at Copper Mountain represents considerable effort in transporting materials to this remote location. Dog teams were a primary means of travel for prospectors in the park. Nyberg Collection, DENA 1500p31, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Frank B. Willis (R-Ohio), the chair of the Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions, after a favorable recommendation by Interior Secretary Work. S. 5006 was deemed necessary because the park road, by now, was some 22 miles long. (See Appendix F.) It was further anticipated that "maintenance will be fairly heavy" on the road and that estimates for 1929 maintenance work on the park road, then being prepared, "will probably exceed $10,000." Given the broad support in Congress for the park road, S. 5006 emerged from its committee on February 15 and it passed the Senate on February 28.[64]

The House did not submit its own version of the bill (H.R. 8126) until the December of that year; Rep. Charles Curry (R-Calif.) steered it through a January 4 committee vote, and it reached the House floor in mid-January. But the person who spoke on behalf of the bill, Rep. Louis Cramton (R-Mich.), supported not only the repeal of the budget limitation, but he further stated that "if there is prospecting, the prospector should not be permitted to kill game." Cramton knew that conditions for prospecting in the park had dramatically changed in recent years, to the point that "there is no prospecting at the present time in the park area."[65] But he may also have been tipped off that several poaching incidents had taken place in the last two years and that there were "about 35 or 40 trappers" along the park's northern and eastern boundaries, "practically all" of whom had "from 5 to 9 dogs which are fed principally on caribou and sheep."[66] Alaska Delegate Sutherland admitted to a "reluctance about making a change in the status quo," but he also remarked that "I feel I have to yield to the inevitable, to the onward trend of conservation, which is extending all over the Territory." Cramton then moved to amend H.R. 8126 to include the repeal of the last provision in Section 6, and the full House accepted the amendment and passed the entire bill.[67] Unanimous votes on March 27 and May 14 brought the language in the Senate and House votes together, and on May 21, President Herbert Hoover signed H.R. 8126 into law.[68] This law eliminated the park's $10,000 budgetary ceiling (which had been a provision of the original park bill), and it also prohibited prospectors from killing game, for any reason, within the park boundaries.

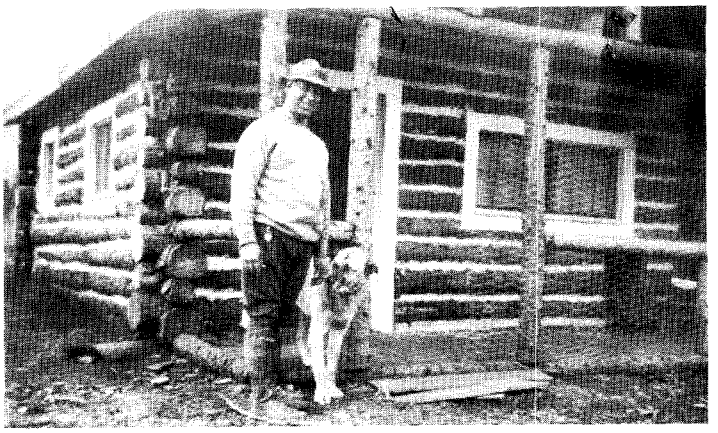
### Staff Changes and Headquarters Growth

As noted above, the key to the NPS being able to protect its wildlife—and to put a human face behind the laws and regulations under which it operated—was having a viable staff. As noted in the previous chapter, Superintendent Karstens was the park's only staff member from July 1921 until the following November. (See Appendix C.) From then until July 1924, a single ranger worked with Karstens. Due to the stress of both working and living conditions, however, five men served in that role during that 30-month period. The first ranger to serve more than a year, Ernest McFarland, left in a cloud of acrimony in

September 1924. But during that same period, Karstens hired Fritz A. Nyberg, who had been part of that summer's ARC crew, and shortly afterward he brought on Robert H. Degen.[69] Karstens was pleasantly surprised with both men; in his October report, he noted that "the two young huskie rangers are doing excellent work, they are both very much interested in the park and their work and deserve much credit for their willingness under all conditions." Two months later, Degen left for personal reasons—it was "a case of either the Girl or the Job and the Girl won"—but Nyberg stayed on. A year later, the Superintendent recognized Nyberg as a cut above the other rangers, and the two men were openly weary of training rangers for what turned out to be short-term assignments. In January 1926, Karstens noted that "men who can stand the isolation and the hardships of the trail, are very hard to find and after a few weeks' trial, do not always show up as well as might be and their resignations are then requested."[70] But just when he seemed to be most despairing of his staff, a 25-year-old from Michigan, Grant Pearson, landed a job as temporary ranger. Pearson, who had been in Alaska less than a year, enjoyed working at the park so much that he remained there—as a ranger, chief ranger, or superintendent—for most of the next thirty years. Pearson, along with Nyberg, became two of the best known rangers at the park, and no further complaints were voiced about the quality of the park's ranger staff.[71]

To work at the park during this period was not merely to have a job; to a far greater extent, it was an immersion in a lifestyle. All park personnel during this period—be they rangers, laborers, the park clerk, or the superintendent—served as jack-of-all-trades. And depending on the circumstances, virtually everyone played a hand at building and maintaining cabins, loading and hauling coal, carrying water and sewage, hitching up the horse team[72], feeding the dogs, entertaining dignitaries, maintaining the weather station[73], interacting with concession employees, and answering visitors' questions. Then as now, weather and snow conditions could be extreme, and the sun did not directly shine on the headquarters area for more than a month during December and January.[74] Staff sometimes endured long periods of isolation, even at headquarters,[75] and the staff was so small (and often so dispersed) that there were few opportunities for community social activities, either among themselves or with McKinley Park Station residents. A ranger's salary was often significantly less than the prevailing Alaska wage rate—a fact that Karstens often grumbled about—and training opportunities were practically nonexistent.[76] Thus it was little wonder that park jobs had a high turnover. But, as noted above, a few rangers loved the rugged, raw lifestyle and the freedoms it offered.

A common theme in Karstens's reports to Washington was a plea for more staff and a higher budget, and as the years rolled by, both grew. In July 1924 the staff increased to three with the addition of a new ranger, and a year later, Karstens was able to hire his first clerk, Ralph Mackie. By 1926 the staff had risen to six, and by the end of the decade eight men were on the payroll. The budget, during this period grew from the $8,000 that had been allotted in fiscal years 1922-1924 up to $35,000-plus in fiscal years 1929 and 1930. (See Appendix B.) These increases did not stop the superintendent from clamoring for more employees and a higher budget; despite the fact that Mount McKinley was almost as large as Yellowstone, the country's largest national park,[77] Mount McKinley's budget and staff were still skeletal in comparison to most other national parks. A glance at national park budgets from the 1925-1930 period shows that Mount McKinley National Park consumed less than one-half of one percent of the agency's budget; by contrast, both Yosemite and Yellowstone accounted for more than ten percent of the 1925 budget and five percent of the 1930 budget. Of ten sampled parks, only two—Hawaii and Lassen Volcanic—were funded more poorly than Mount McKinley.[78]



**Fritz Nyberg is pictured in July 1928 at a headquarters cabin. Supt. Karstens noted that on *Nyberg's first day of work*, August 29, 1924, he fitted Nyberg out "and sent him [by railroad] to Cantwell with instructions to go up Windy into the park, cross over and come down the Cantwell [Nenana] River." *Nyberg Collection*, DENA 1502p52, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

Aside from game protection, one of the most important tasks that park rangers performed was the construction and maintenance of park buildings. As noted above, rangers played an



Ranger Grant Pearson at the McLeod Creek cabin, which in 1927 was under construction. Pearson began work at the park in February 1926 and retired as superintendent in November, 1956. DENA 6-1, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

important role (along with the Alaska Road Commission) in building and caring for a series of cabins along the park road. Just as important, however, was the rangers' role in constructing a new, functional base of operations. In the summer of 1925, it will be recalled, park staff moved the park headquarters up to a new site that was south of the park road and west of Rock Creek. That year, park personnel were able to complete only the superintendent's residence and the nearby clerk's cabin before winter set in. These buildings, moreover, were slapped together so quickly that both men spent most of November working on their quarters during their off hours.[79]

The following year, construction continued. In April 1926, work began on a new park office or administration building, and two months later rangers began to erect a chief ranger's cabin for Fritz Nyberg, who was selected for that newly-established position. Both of those buildings were completed in late July.[80] Later that summer, construction began on a combination cookhouse for dog feed and a cache for dog-food storage; that work was supplemented the following summer by the construction of new dog kennels. Also constructed in 1927 was the park's first garage; this wood- sided affair was a vast improvement over a "temporary shelter of poles and canvas" that had been hurriedly constructed in late 1925 in hopes that staff would be able to start the park's "auto truck," which was its sole motor vehicle at the time.[81] All of these buildings were constructed by park rangers using locally-available tools at almost no cost to the taxpayer, and the layout of the camp squarely separated the residential and work areas from the dog kennels. Regarding utilities, coal for the park was delivered once a year to McKinley Park Station by the Healy River Coal Company.[82] Outhouses were the norm at first, but in the summer of 1927 the park ordered chemical toilets for each of the park residences.[83] Water had to be obtained, bucket by bucket, from Rock Creek, and garbage disposal (at a newly-established dump site on the edge of the headquarters area) was also each employee's responsibility.[84] Evidence of this early lifestyle, as it turned out, was fleeting indeed; most of the headquarters' first-generation buildings were demolished during the 1930s and 1940s, and all traces of both the first dog kennel site (1927 - 1938) and dump site have been obliterated.[85]

Refinements came to the headquarters area in the summer of 1927 when an ARC crew graded out the ramrod-straight "main street" that has visually defined the headquarters area ever since. Karstens noted that the work would be "the first step towards the construction of a well-defined system of streets. This street ... leads due south toward the dog-kennels and other outhouses [outbuildings]. Tourists, who greatly enjoy viewing the dogs, now have the benefit of a good walking place for the 'pilgrimage.'"[86] Dogs, in fact, had long been an integral part of park operations. Karstens had purchased the park's first dogs—a team of seven "good, young dogs"—in February 1922. He built



Harry Karstens at the new headquarters sled dog kennel. Nyberg Album, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

the first dog houses that fall, and by the close of 1923 there were thirteen dogs in the park's care, a number that would more than double in the next few years.[87] Each year through 1925, Karstens had the park's dogs spend each summer at Hadley's Camp, a fish camp 25 miles down the Tanana River from Fairbanks.[88] But by 1926, he had grown to recognize that "the Alaskan sled-dogs are always a source of interest to our park visitors here." As a result, he decided to clear ground in the newly-established headquarters area ("about 200 to 250 feet further south than where formerly located" and near present-day residences 26 and 34) and have the dogs live year-round at the park.[89] His provision of a large area specifically allotted to the park's dog teams may have marked the first time that NPS staff constructed facilities with park visitors' needs in mind. Neither Karstens nor other park employees, however, were particularly sentimental about dogs; their primary purpose was to conduct wintertime patrols, and park employees often culled animals that were either "worthless through old age" or simply too numerous for their needs.[90]

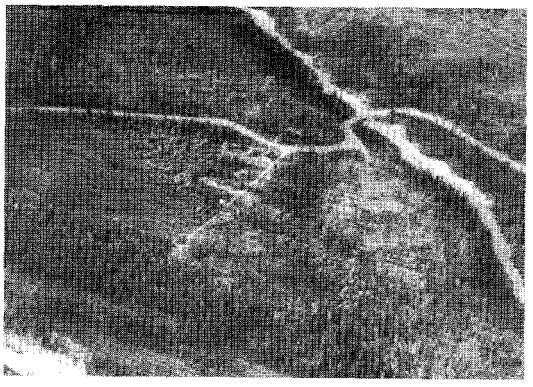
In March 1928, an increase in the park's budget promised further refinements to the headquarters area. Karstens, noting that the recent allotment "is the first amount that has ever been allotted to this park for new construction," stated that "all future development about headquarters will be influenced by the proper spacing of these buildings and the space reserved for future construction." He then invited the participation of Thomas C. Vint, the agency's Chief Landscape Architect, to help plan new construction.[91] But Vint, who arrived in the summer of 1929, recommended that the headquarters be moved back to McKinley Park Station. Vint's recommendation, however, was later overruled. Because of his stance, he played no role in the headquarters planning process.[92]

Karstens, as noted above, was looking forward to working with Vint on a variety of park projects, both at headquarters and elsewhere. Such a working relationship, however, never took place because the superintendent resigned his position in September 1928. What brought about his resignation—an argument with a stubborn ranger that got out of hand—was unremarkable enough;[93] for over thirty years as a gold miner, mail carrier, guide, freighter, and superintendent, he had had no qualms about arguing, shouting, or fighting as the occasion demanded, and he had little patience for slackers or bureaucratic niceties.[94] NPS officials were well aware of his volcanic temperament when they hired him; but they also knew that no one knew the country better, no one could work so hard and so effectively under such trying conditions, and no one could represent the new park better than he. He was thus eminently

qualified to pioneer the new park, and because he was consistently supported by Charles Sheldon, agency officials gave him the benefit of the doubt. Over the years, he earned his fair share of critics, and the Interior Department held at least one full-blown investigation of his conduct.[95] Karstens persevered through it all, but as the 1920s wore on, it became increasingly obvious that the park was changing. By the summer of 1928, the park had emerged from its most rustic phase; increasing attention was being paid to tourists, the staff and physical plant had increased beyond the bare-bones level, and the demands of a growing bureaucracy were turning him from a woodsman and dog-musher into a desk jockey and program manager. He gradually came to realize that it was time to move on, and on September 19, he told Washington, "I have had enough."[96] Karstens rued his resignation for the rest of his life, and more than once he petitioned agency officials to be rehired.[97] But it was not meant to be. When he died in November 1955, he was lauded by thousands of Alaskans, and Outside conservationists, as the irreplaceable human face behind the early exploration of the park area, the taming of the mountain, the pioneering of the park, and the guiding of the park unit, from scratch, into a position of both visibility and broad respectability.[98]

### A New Superintendent Takes Over

The man tabbed to replace Karstens was Harry Liek, who was then serving as the assistant chief ranger at Yellowstone National Park. Horace Albright, who drove the selection process, was



Taken in 1935, this photograph still shows the early configuration of the new park headquarters. Note that the park kennels were located in what is now the residential area. Lincoln Washburn Photo, DENA 3906, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

serving as Yellowstone's superintendent, and the agency's first director, Stephen Mather, was still on the job; but within months, illness forced Mather to step aside, and Albright took over the agency's reins. Albright picked Liek, in part, because of his dependability, his administrative skills, and his leadership qualities. Both the Washington office and the park staff looked forward to a changing of the guard. Here was a chance to start afresh, free of the personality conflicts that had surfaced all too often during the Karstens superintendency.[99]

Liek arrived at the park in early December 1928 and immediately undertook "a general survey of conditions," including "several trips ... by dog team to nearby points."[100] Despite the predominant cold and dark, he soon learned that park activity at the headquarters area centered on construction and improvement activities. During that winter, rangers were hard at work on the warehouse and the horse barn, and they also repaired the interior of the administrative office and the superintendent's residence. By June 1929 these projects were completed. That summer, work commenced on a new superintendent's residence and a new dog-feed cache and sled storage building, both of which were completed the following spring. Then, in short order, came an electric light plant (1931), a garage (1931), a comfort station (1932), and a boiler house (1932).[101] Most of these structures were built by NPS rangers, along with laborers who were hired on an as-needed basis; only occasionally, as with the superintendent's house, did the agency hire outside contractors.[102]

The completion of these buildings portended two major developments. First, it signaled that the agency fully intended to supply basic amenities—water, sewage, light, and heat—to the isolated, rustic headquarters complex. In February 1927, the park had requested funds for a "water supply and drainage system." That project was approved, and in the spring and summer of 1929, a 27,000-gallon reservoir was excavated, a pump and gasoline engine was installed, water and sewer mains were laid, and "fifteen inches of dry moss put on [to] keep it from freezing." The system was completed that September.[103] Just a month later, Liek purchased a Kohler lighting system, and soon afterward the lighting plant was installed in the basement of the park's office building. At first, wires were simply strung via the "roof-to-roof method," but in 1931 a series of light poles were erected throughout the headquarters complex.[104] Because the water and sewer lines were vulnerable to freezing, park staff in 1932 decided to open up the trenches again and lay a steam line adjacent to them, to be powered by a second-hand, wood-fired boiler. That project was completed in 1933 and proved satisfactory, for the most part, for the remainder of the decade.[105] But throughout this period, there was no attempt to provide central heating to homes and offices; instead, coal was the predominant fuel source.[106]

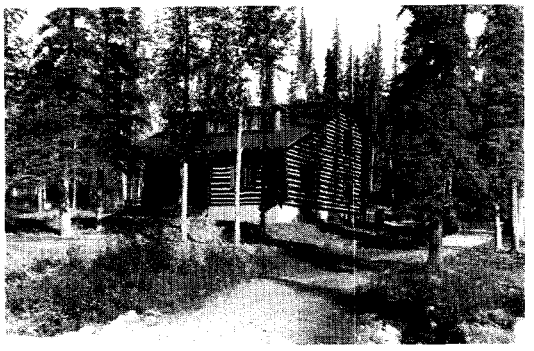
The other major development during this period was that trucks and automobiles were taking



Superintendent Harry Liek, right, was photographed here with National Park Service Director Horace Albright and Mrs. Grace Albright who visited Mt. McKinley National Park in 1931. DENA 27-76, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

over many of the duties previously assigned to horse teams. As noted in Chapter 3, Karstens had purchased the park's first car (a Ford) back in the spring of 1922; he had done so, using his own funds, to power a wood saw. Three years later, he bought an "auto truck." He was so convinced of the truck's usefulness that he looked forward to getting rid of the park's horses and, instead, purchasing a small tractor to pull stumps, haul logs, maintain headquarters-area roads, and similar tasks.[107] No such tractor was purchased, however, and the park continued to keep a team of horses; they were used primarily during the winter and came in especially handy in mid-winter, after the ARC crew had left, to make the two-mile trip between headquarters and McKinley Park Station. They also hauled supplies to the park's cabins. They were useless, however, in deep snow conditions.[108] In 1932, park personnel bought "a new Ford Model B runabout with pick-up body,"[109] and three years later—a decade after the idea was first floated—they finally purchased a Caterpillar tractor. As a result, horses were used only sporadically after 1934, and they apparently disappeared entirely from the park by the end of the decade.[110]

Aside from their work at headquarters, NPS rangers were also busy constructing a series of patrol cabins along the park's northern border during this period. As noted above, patrol rangers during the late 1920s used a series of cabins—some built by rangers, others holdovers from prospecting days—along that portion of the boundary between the Nenana and Toklat rivers. But at least one of those cabins was in "very dilapidated condition," and by 1929, Liek stated that two or more "shelter cabins will have to be erected along the [northern boundary] line so rangers can make patrols from there instead of patrolling farther back in the interior."[111] In 1930, rangers erected a boundary-line patrol



The new superintendent's house, across the park road from the main headquarters, was completed in early summer 1930. It was destroyed by fire in October 1939. DENA 4-6.5, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

cabin along the East Fork of the Toklat, followed by similar structures at the mouth of Sunday Creek[112] in the Savage River drainage (1931), lower Toklat River (1931), and "Shushana Creek" (Sushana River, 1932).[113] Cabins were also built in the park's southeastern corner. A new Upper Windy cabin, near Cantwell, was built in 1931 to replace a 1924 NPS-built cabin, and the Riley Creek cabin, located halfway between the Upper Windy cabin and headquarters, was erected the same year.[114]

The ARC, by the time of Liek's arrival, had completed the park road almost as far as Sable Pass, about 39 miles west of McKinley Park Station (see Appendix F). Given a reliable funding stream thanks to annual NPS appropriations, Commission crews made remarkable strides during the next several field seasons. In 1929, the road was pushed ahead to the eastern bank of the Toklat River's East Fork, and the following year, crews pushed ahead and con - quered a masterful, if dizzying, route up to Polychrome Pass and beyond. In 1931, the road was extended eight miles, including the half-mile-long double bridge across the Toklat River (see Appendix G). And in 1932, the ARC had perhaps its most productive year ever when it built 11½ miles of new road and surmounted Highway Pass, Stony Hill Overlook, and Thorofare Pass to Mile 66; this latter point had a commanding view of Mount McKinley, the Thorofare River gorge, and many other areas in the central and western portions of the park. The ARC built more than 27 miles of road during the summers of 1929 through 1932. Construction costs during those years totaled approximately $425,000, which was about $16,000 per mile.

Park officials, hoping to keep in touch with their far-flung staff, decided to install a telephone line that paralleled the park road. The park had built its first telephone line in 1924 between McKinley Park Station and the Savage River area, in the midst of road construction. The line was constructed by park staff using materials furnished by the Alaska Road Commission; the wires were "temporarily laid on trees and brush," although "occasional fastenings and insulators have been used where necessary."[115] That line, which was used only by the NPS, the ARC, and the concessioner, was overhauled in 1926 and extended to Sanctuary River. It remained a ground line, however, until the summer of 1930, when an Anchorage contractor won a bid to string an overhead line, using tripods, all the way from the McKinley Park Station to the Copper Mountain relief cabin. The contract was completed on December 1 of that year, and it worked "just fine" for awhile.[116] Wind, however, played havoc on the line, and in the years to follow the line was strengthened by the liberal use of guy wires, "dead men," and—on the river bars—vertical poles as a replacement to tripods. Line maintenance, however, remained an ongoing headache.[117]

In the midst of all this activity, NPS officials at long last began to plan for the park's future. This effort may have begun in late August 1926, when NPS Director Stephen Mather visited the park. Mather, along with Superintendent Karstens, had spent nine days in the park, primarily on horseback, and went as far west as the upper Moose Creek and Copper Mountain areas. Karstens recalled that during their many conversations, there were "many ideas conceived for the future development of this large game preserve."[118] Eighteen months later (see above), Karstens remarked that "this park has reached a period in its development where the services of the landscape engineer [Thomas C. Vint] are very necessary." Vint, in fact, visited the park in August 1929, and although some of his recommendations dealt with the headquarters area, others pertained to more remote areas.[119]

A primary decision, as it turned out, centered on whether the agency should support the construction of a hotel toward the west end of the park road. This notion was admittedly fairly fanciful at the time, inasmuch as the road that year had been built less than half the distance between McKinley Park Station and Kantishna. (See Appendix F.) Vint, however, had three potential hotel sites from which to choose. One, near the foot of Peters Glacier, had first been suggested back in 1908 by Charles Sheldon, and in 1927 Superintendent Karstens (who had accompanied Sheldon on his earlier expedition) had reiterated the advantages of that site.[120] A second site, on "the high bench on the west face of Copper Mountain," was touted by Major D. H. Gillette of the Alaska Road Commission. And the park concessioner, James L. Galen, touted a site high above the confluence of Glacier Creek and the broad Thorofare River bar.[121] Vint, asked to choose, steered clear of all three sites; instead, he selected a location just west of Thorofare Pass, at Mile 66 of the trail that connected the road terminus with Kantishna. The site was chosen, in part, because (according to one article) it was "the first point ... from which an unobstructed view of Mt. McKinley may be obtained."[122] Vint's choice, however, was tentative at best. First, Vint in 1929 was also planning a hotel in the vicinity of McKinley Park Station; this site, which was also favored by the park concessioner, was far more marketable

than a west-end location. Both sites, moreover, had problems: the Mile 66 site would not be accessible by the park road for several more construction seasons, and the McKinley Park Station was a difficult choice because it was located outside the park boundaries.

The agency, as part of its park plans, tolerated and even encouraged aviation access to the park. During the late 1920 and early 1930s, the air age was in its infancy in the park vicinity, as indeed it was throughout Alaska Territory. Pioneering aviator Carl Ben Eielson had landed the first airplane in the park during the spring of 1924 as part of an experimental airmail contract between Fairbanks and McGrath; according to one source, he had landed "a number of occasions ... upon the slopes of ... Copper Mountain."[123] The area, at that time, supported "quite a number of prospectors and miners."[124] Later that year, pilot Noel Wien landed on a "short gravel bar" along the Bearpaw River; he and his party were headed for Kantishna, another active mining area.[125] Between 1925 and 1927, the Alaska Road Commission bladed out its first two airfields in the vicinity: a 1500-foot strip near Lake Minchumina, built as an emergency landing area for flights between Fairbanks and Tokotna, followed by the 600-foot-long Kantishna Aviation Field, "on the left limit of Moose Creek between the creek and Wonder Lake," which was used by area miners along with an occasional tourist.[126] In 1926 the park's concessions chief, James L. Galen, applied to the NPS "for permission to operate airplanes in the park, using some of the gravel bars of our rivers as landing fields." But Galen soon had second thoughts and the "airplane sight seeing service" was indefinitely delayed.[127]

As the 1920s gave way to the 1930s, a long-running, nationally-publicized aviation rescue operation brought an unexpected change to Mount McKinley National Park. Carl Ben Eielson, the young flier who had pioneered air service into the park, was famous because he took part in several historic flights: one from Point Barrow to Spitzbergen, Norway, another to the Antarctic, and many others "to remote regions of Alaska, carrying medical supplies to sick and injured" (according to a Congressional report). In the fall of 1929, word reached the outside world that the vessel *Nanuk*, with a full complement of both furs and passengers, was icebound off the coast of northeastern Russia. The intrepid Eielson flew west from Teller, Alaska toward the ship, but tragically, he got caught in a blizzard and died in a crash on Siberia's Wrangell Island. Rescue parties were sent out to search for both Eielson and the stranded freighter, but it wasn't until late January 1930 that Eielson's body was located among the wreckage. Joe Crosson, another young Alaska pilot, recovered Eielson's remains a month later, and by early March, Fairbanks business interests were seeking a way to honor the former Fairbanks resident. In recognition of his pioneer role with Alaskan air-mail service back in 1924, they contacted Congressional friends seeking a way to enshrine Eielson's name on the territory's maps. On March 19, a U.S. Senate resolution (S. J. Res. 155) was submitted to change the name of Copper Mountain to Mount Eielson. The resolution, which had no organized opposition, moved quickly through Congress and on June 14, President Hoover signed the measure into law.[128]

Even before Eielson's death, the air industry was beginning to make dramatic new inroads into the park. On April 13, 1928, pilot Matt Nieminen of Alaskan Airways, Inc., based in Anchorage, attempted to fly over the top of Mt. McKinley while an assistant took photographs. He didn't make it; instead, the plane ascended to the 19,000-foot level but then had to turn back. Nieminen eventually succeeded in his quest, in August 1930. But during the intervening two years, a small but active tourist-flight industry had taken root in Fairbanks, and one of the most popular destinations was Mount McKinley. According to one account, "flying tourists to Mount McKinley was big business out of Fairbanks" in 1930.[129]

Recognizing flightseeing's economic potential, the park concessioner moved to provide aviation-related services. In May 1930, after obtaining the NPS's permission, it arranged with Alaskan Airways to "provide airplane transportation for their patrons flying from Savage Camp to points of interest in the park, including trips to Mt. McKinley." Meanwhile, an airline representative checked out the Savage Camp and Mt. Eielson areas for specific landing sites. In early July of that year, the concessioner "cleared away a large landing field near Savage Camp" which was considered to be "one of the best landing fields in Alaska at the present time," and on July 7, company pilot Joe Crosson inaugurated service from the field. Accompanying him in the Fairchild 71 was Governor George Parks and other dignitaries. This service continued from the airstrip for the remainder of the summer and for years thereafter; the trip was expensive ($35) but deeply gratifying. The concessioner, rethinking its earlier plans, apparently felt that the Savage Camp airstrip was sufficient for its needs, because—after pondering the matter for several years—it opted to not



Airplanes servicing Savage Camp landed on a graded section of gravel bar until a landing strip was built by the Mt. McKinley Tourist & Transportation Company in 1930. Frances Erickson Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

establish another landing field in the Mt. Eielson area.[130] The concessioner's use of the Savage River area marked a milestone in NPS history. It marked the first time that the agency had granted a park concessioner the privilege of landing a plane in a national park, and for several years thereafter, Mount McKinley was the only park to allow the practice.[131]

### The 1932 Boundary Expansion: Its Causes and Effects

As noted above, Congress had extended the park's eastern boundary to within three miles of McKinley Park Station in early 1922, and ever since that time, park personnel recognized that the linear, arbitrary nature of the boundary line made game protection difficult. Interior Department officials, however, were satisfied with the status quo, and Washington-based NPS officials felt likewise. Chief landscape engineer Thomas Vint, for example, wrote in January 1930—after his visit to the park the previous summer—that the area between the eastern boundary and the Nenana River "has little scenic value and is not important as a part of the park areas except in the protection of game." For this reason, he did not recommend a park boundary extension to the Nenana; instead, he opted for "a game preserve subject to the protection of the Park Service and its regulations." But in early 1931, NPS Director Horace Albright changed the agency's stance when he stated unequivocally that "I want to see the park boundary extended east at least to the Alaska Railroad." Vint, in response, repeated his previous suggestion, to which Albright, in a June 1931 letter to George Parks (who was now Alaska's governor) reached out even farther, stating that the park boundary should be extended to the river. Parks, reprising some of his 1922 arguments, did not favor any extension that would include the railroad corridor. But Albright conversed with Parks during his visit to Alaska that August; perhaps as a result of that talk, Parks wrote that if the NPS "must move the east park line out to the railroad, he would not oppose our [draft] bill." As the extension idea gained momentum, it appeared that the only real point of contention was whether the boundary line would be the railroad or the river; prominent proponents espoused each of these points of view.[132] To some extent, advocates of both positions based their arguments on the detrimental impacts of existing settlement patterns. Governor Parks, not normally a conservationist, recommended an extension to the river—and NPS control of much of the land near the McKinley Park railroad station—in order to avoid "administrative problems that may be exceedingly difficult to control" – specifically, "undesirable citizens [who] have squatted on the lower reaches of Riley Creek and conducted bootlegging establishments to the detriment of the railroad employees and others." But Director Albright, who favored a smaller extension, felt that the conditions seen at the Morino homestead and along the railroad were problems that were best avoided. Parks's viewpoint eventually won out.[133]

Meanwhile, other voices were urging the northward expansion of the park toward its western end. The primary reason for the proposed expansion was the provision of a hotel site near Wonder Lake. As noted above, Thomas Vint in 1929 had selected a hotel site at Mile 66 of the park road. However, rangers who patrolled the area, along with U.S. Geological



These posts, shown in this 1930 photo, marked the original (1917) park boundary between Wonder Lake and the McKinley River. DENA 39-37, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Survey field personnel, were quick to trumpet Wonder Lake—then just outside of the park—as a site superior to that at Mile 66. As noted in an Interior Department report, "Wonder Lake has an excellent view and many advantages for a hotel that do not exist elsewhere in the park." And because clouds in this area often obscured tourists' views of Mount McKinley, a visitor's time at a Wonder Lake hotel "could be well spent fishing as well as enjoying the scenery nearby." Fred Moffit, a USGS field geologist who spent the summer of 1930 in the area, believed that the "boundary should be extended so that Wonder Lake would be within the park." He assured NPS officials that the boundary line thus proposed would avoid "any mining interest within the proposed extension area;" he further noted that the "abundance of pasture on the lowlands" surrounding the lake "attract the wild animals of the park" along with "a large number of beaver in this area which would be protected from trappers." Vint, in early March 1931, agreed with the plan; he promised that "I believe we will regret not having Wonder Lake in the Park if there is any possibility of us getting it." NPS Director Horace Albright, who flew over the area that August, also agreed; he asked that the boundary line in this area be "moved northward to a point one half mile north of Wonder Lake and this extension should be uniform in width clear to the west line or rather the northwest corner." Governor Parks, asked to comment, urged just one small modification; that the straight, generally north-south boundary line at the east end of the Kantishna Hills be replaced by a sinuous line that would follow ridgelines and other topographic features. Parks's proposal for this area was readily adopted.[134]

Finally, two boundary-change proposals along the southern boundary were put forth. One from Thomas Vint of the NPS would have moved the boundary south "to include some of the land beyond the terminals of the Glaciers," while one from Stephen Capps of the USGS would "throw out the watersheds and streams flowing south toward the Cook Inlet, as well as creeks like Cantwell which are inaccessible from the real park, and on which there are no big game animals." Both of these proposals were discarded at the agency level.[135]

By the time the agency's recommendations had moved to the legislative arena, the ensuing bill (H.R. 6485) was relatively noncontroversial. Introduced by Alaska Delegate James Wickersham on December 21, 1931, it was debated in the Committee on the Public Lands a month later; thanks in part to the support of Interior Secretary Ray Wilbur, it was passed on to the full House, where it was debated on February 1 and passed two weeks later. Two minor amendments were added: one ensured that all land between the railroad and the river would be part of the park, while the other guaranteed that "any valid existing claim, location, or entry under the land laws of the United States" would not be affected by the park expansion.[136] A day after the bill passed the House, it was referred to the Senate's Public

Lands and Surveys Committee, which passed it without amendment on March 3. Less than two weeks later, the full Senate passed the House bill, and on March 19, President Hoover signed the bill into law (see Map 3 and Appendix A.)[137] The boundaries thus agreed to would remain in place for the next 46 years.

The NPS, at long last, had its headquarters site within the park boundaries, rather than in a withdrawn strip such as had existed since 1922. It was also able to prevent a proliferation of private landowners in the vicinity of McKinley Park Station. Finally, the park extension ensured greater control over future accommodations in that area. As Horace Albright noted, "A new hotel will sooner or later be erected near the railroad and this park road. This hotel should be on park land and built under park policies regarding architecture."[138]

The park expansion, however, was not without its negative aspects, most of which had been foreshadowed by the railroad-versus-river discussions of 1931, noted above. As the bill wended its way through Congress, park superintendent Harry Liek noted that the bill "is not going to be so popular, as far as the sportsmen of the interior are concerned. The mountains lying adjacent to the ARR has [sic] always been a happy hunting grounds for many hunters and trappers...". Once the bill became law, the superintendent spread the word about it by putting up a sign on the post office wall, and he also promised to put up signs "along the Nenana River and at the north and south entrances" along the railroad right-of-way. Fortunately, park personnel had few problems with game-related enforcement; in December 1932, Liek was able to report that "the settlers and railroad employees along the right-of-way are obeying the law regarding hunting, trapping ect. and with one exception, we are having no trouble with any one."[139]

But he was even more concerned about how to deal with various McKinley Park Station-area residents. Some had clear title to their land, and others were on their way toward qualifying for a patent, and still others had filed for a homestead "but failed to conform to the requirements and let their land slip by default." Particularly aggravating was a fourth category, namely "an element living close to the depot who have just squatters' rights, and living in any old cabin that has a roof on it." Liek acerbically noted that "they realize about 30 gallons to the acre and have no scruples as to whom they sell it to. Fights and drunken brawls are a common occurrence in this district, and these men are a detriment to any community."[140]

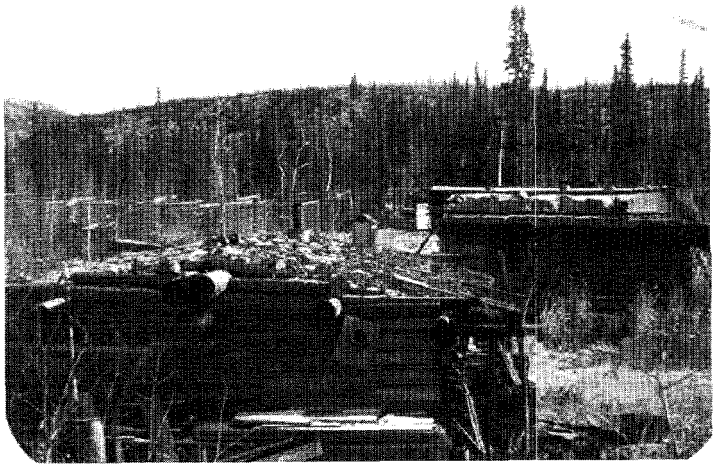
Once the Congressional act had been signed, the Park Service officials' first move was to rid the Station area of squatters and any residences that remained on the public lands. In August 1932, Superintendent Harry Liek told his superiors in Washington "of certain dilapidated and decayed cabins ... in the vicinity of Riley and Hines Creek, which were inhabited ...by various individuals ... who had never declared their intention of filing for homestead or trading rights but preferred to live as squatters upon the public domain." Later that month, Washington informed Liek "that if the cabins were on public land and the occupants were given proper notice to vacate and remove their property, that they should be torn down." According to Duke E. Stubbs, a disgruntled local resident, park staff supposedly "ordered all who were living in the



**With the 1932 park boundary extension, many squatters' cabins such as this one south of Morino's Roadhouse, were now within the national park. Transient residents who lived in these cabins were asked to leave. DENA 4-47.6, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

area and had both possessory claims and valid entries under the General Land Office, to vacate their homes, the dead line being set for December 1, 1932...".[141] Stubbs, however, protested the agency's action to the Interior Secretary, inasmuch as the 1932 act had seemingly protected "any valid existing claim, location, or entry under the land laws of the United States, whether for homestead, mineral right of way, or any other purpose whatsoever, or shall affect the rights of any such claimant, locator, or entryman to the full use and enjoyment of his land."[142]

In response to Stubbs' protest, the General Land Office dispatched examiner H. K. Carlisle, who visited the area and provided a report, dated May 18, 1933, on the legitimacy of the various marginal land claims. (He did not address three other claims that were being adjudicated prior to the 1932 expansion.)[143] Carlisle's report identified twelve people within the newly-expanded park boundary that fit within his criteria; "in almost every case," he noted, "the rights or claims of these persons are of a possessory nature only." The GLO, meanwhile, asked park staff to "refrain from ejecting any of the claimants" until the investigation was complete.



Duke and Elizabeth Stubbs owned and operated this fox farm near Riley Creek, just east of the railroad depot. Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

That summer and fall, the GLO attempted to contact each of the twelve and establish their rights to the land in question; Alaska Delegate Anthony Dimond, meanwhile, urged NPS chief Arno Cammerer to be patient, stating that "bonafide locators and claimants [should] be permitted to remain in undisturbed possession of their claims." The claims' varying degree of legitimacy soon became apparent; five of the twelve claimants did not respond to the GLO notice that was sent to them and thus lost their opportunity to file for a parcel. One other claimant discovered that his claim was on land owned by the Alaska Railroad, not by the National Park Service; and local fox farmer Duke Stubbs was awarded a patent for his 35-acre parcel and was thus no longer a claimant. None of the five remaining marginalized claimants—of those who responded to the GLO notice—received land as a result of the process begun in the wake of the 1932 expansion.[144] The three claims that were already being adjudicated prior to the boundary expansion were successfully transferred to private parties. Two of the claims were settled even before Carlisle turned in his report; John Stephens, who had a 133.76-acre parcel that surrounded the Windy railroad station, was awarded a patent on February 9, 1933, and Duke Stubbs, as noted above, received his patent on April 4. Maurice Morino, the roadhouse owner and McKinley Park Station postmaster, was the last to receive a patent; he obtained his 120-acre parcel on August 1, 1934.

Beyond the issue of ownership, however, Duke Stubbs was also angry at the Federal government because actions following the 1932 park expansion caused damage to his cabins. During the fall of 1932, as noted above, Stubbs had not yet gained a patent for his 35-acre parcel, which included a store and fox farm; Stubbs did, however, own the "Canyon Road House Cabins," which were the former Allred Roadhouse just east of the railroad at Moody. In October of that year (according to his own account) he received "notice to vacate and remove his personal property from the park area by the park authorities." Apparently park staff then removed his property from his cabins, caused damage to the cabins, and unlawfully occupied them. In response, Stubbs complained to the Interior Department, and between October 1932 and October 1933 he made several requests for damage compensation totaling more than $2,000; in addition, he wrote two other 1933 letters in which he claimed that park staff had "almost daily" trespassed on his land and thus "resulted in the ruination of his fox-farming industry." Superintendent Liek, asked to comment on the allegation, repeatedly denied "any trespass upon the lands of Mr. Stubbs by himself or any of his employees;" the "Canyon Road House Cabins" at Moody, he asserted, had been built by the Alaska Railroad and were currently on park land.[145]

In October 1933, Stubbs went to Washington to press his case, but NPS officials "explicitly explained to him that there was no authority of law under which his claims for damages and rent

may be considered by this Department with a view to their adjudication and settlement, and it was suggested to him that any relief in that connection must come through congressional enactment." Stubbs, in response, sought out Delegate Tony Dimond, who on January 3, 1934 submitted a bill (H.R. 6177) "to provide for payment of damages to certain residents of Alaska caused by reason of extending the boundaries of Mount McKinley National Park." An identical companion bill, S. 2238, was submitted a week later by Senator Clarence Dill (D-Wash.), Chairman of the Committee on Claims. H.R. 6177 was considered on May 4 by the House Committee on Claims; it passed, though not without a strongly-worded dissent from Interior Secretary Harold Ickes. Two weeks later, the Senate took up action; it adopted the House's committee bill, added one small amendment, and passed it on to the full Senate, which passed it on June 13. Five days later, the House passed the same bill and presented it to President Roosevelt. On June 28, however, Roosevelt vetoed the bill because he agreed with the assertions that Interior Secretary Ickes had made earlier to the House Committee on Claims.[146]

Stubbs, however, would not give up. At the beginning of the next Congressional session, Delegate Dimond introduced a private relief bill on their behalf (H.R. 1635); three weeks later, the head of the Senate Committee on Claims, Lewis Schwellenbach (D-Wash.), introduced a bill (S. 1386) to "confer jurisdiction on the Court of Claims" to hear their case. Ickes, who was asked to comment to the Congressional committee chairs, recommended "that the proposed legislation, in its present form, be not favorably considered by the Congress." As a response to Mr. Stubbs's complaints, however, he felt "that the matter would be more appropriate for consideration by judicial authority.... The Department, therefore would have no objection to the consideration of Mr. Stubbs' claims by the Court of Claims, should the Congress see fit to amend the proposed legislation to limit the consideration of this matter by that body."[147] Given that opinion, both houses of Congress passed the Senate's version of the bill, and on June 14, 1935, President Roosevelt passed the "special jurisdictional act," dubbed Private No. 81. The Act asked the Court of Claims "to hear, determine, and render judgment upon the claim, or claims, of Duke E. Stubbs and Elizabeth S. Stubbs ... for any losses and damages sustained by [them] in the silver fox farming and trading post business, or other business and occupation, conducted by them ... at McKinley Park, Alaska." After the passage of that bill, attorney Horace S. Whitman filed suit in the Court of Claims (in the case *Duke E. Stubbs and Elizabeth S. Stubbs vs. the United States*, No. 43093) to recover damages. On December 6, 1937, the court awarded the Stubbs $50,000 in damages, a figure that the Interior Department felt was "excessive" and "conjectural." The Department considered appealing the case to the Supreme Court; that process went nowhere, however, and on July 26, 1938, the Stubbs were paid "to satisfy the judgment issued by the Court of Claims in Stubbs' behalf."[148]

**Park Developments, 1933-1937**

During the mid-1930s, roadbuilding was the major park development activity. As noted above, the park road had been bladed out to Mile 66 during the 1932 construction season; the last few miles of that road, however, were in poor condition, essentially impassible to passenger vehicles. The following year, Alaska Road Commission construction crews pushed farther westward. (See Appendix F.) In 1933,



**The Alaska Road Commission, in 1933 and 1934, had challenging work building the road across Eielson Bluffs, just west of present-day Eielson Visitor Center. DENA 25-0.5, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

crews battled their way through the treacherous Eielson Bluffs, but given their smallest construction budget since 1926, they extended the road just one and one-half miles. The remainder of the park road, however, was over flatter, more undulating countryside; as a result, crews opened up approximately five miles of new road during each of the next three years. By the end of the 1936 construction, crews had completed the park road all the way to the Reflection Pond area, just east of Wonder Lake.[149]

The extension of the park road all the way to Wonder Lake paved the way for new developments to take place at the western end of the park. And chief among the anticipated developments was a planning effort for a new hotel. As noted above, planning during the late 1920s had focused on a consideration of several sites in the Thorofare Pass-Glacier Creek area; in 1929, in fact, NPS landscape architect Thomas Vint had decided on a hotel site at Mile 66 along the route between McKinley Park Station and Kantishna.

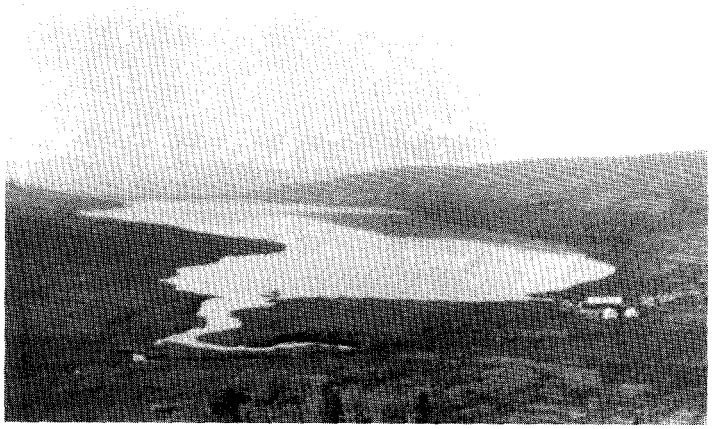


During NPS Director Horace Albright's 1931 visit to Mt. McKinley National Park, he stayed at Savage Camp and attempted a horseback trip to Wonder Lake with Superintendent Harry Liek. After Albright (second from left) developed abdominal pains, they turned back and summoned a doctor and airplane to Savage Camp. Albright was flown to Fairbanks where his appendix was removed. DENA 3847, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

This site was just north of Copper Mountain, which, as noted above, would soon be renamed Mt. Eielson. Just three years after Vint made his choice, however, Congress's decision to expand the park diminished the agency's interest in the site, at least for the time being. By acting to expand the park's boundaries eastward to the Nenana River, Congress was now able—at long last—to more actively consider the construction of a federally-funded hotel adjacent to the railroad at McKinley Park Station. Given the limited amount of time that most visitors spent at the park, economics dictated that a site near the railroad was far more likely for hotel construction than one located at the far western end of the park. In addition, the expansion of the park boundary northward was specifically crafted to ensure the inclusion of a Wonder Lake hotel site in the park; that way, the agency would be free to build a hotel near Wonder Lake (which was just 27 miles by air from Mt. McKinley's summit) instead of being limited to the Mile 66 area (located 35 miles from the summit).[150]

Wonder Lake had been under consideration as a hotel site for some time prior to the 1932 expansion. Park rangers had been familiar with the area at least since 1926, when they had constructed a patrol cabin at McKinley Bar, a few miles south of Wonder Lake, which they dubbed the Kantishna Ranger Station. During this period, homesteaders John and Paula Anderson lived at the north end of Wonder Lake, and ranger Grant Pearson fondly recalls stopping at the cabin and enjoying the Andersons' hospitality. The Andersons left their homestead in 1929.[151] But as has been recounted above, the 1930 visit of a U.S. Geological Survey crew to the area started a process to add a 4-mile-wide strip north of the existing park boundaries in the Kantishna area; that strip—which was expressly created to provide for a hotel site—had won broad bureaucratic approval by March 1931. That July, NPS Director Horace Albright arrived at McKinley Park Station for an inspection trip into the park. Intrigued by Wonder Lake's potential as a hotel site, he planned to take a horseback trip out to Vint's site at Mile 66 and continue on to Wonder Lake. No sooner had Albright arrived at the park, however, than he fell victim to appendicitis, and he had to be flown to a Fairbanks hospital. Despite that setback, the agency still backed a Wonder Lake hotel site; as the *New York Times* noted in 1933, Wonder Lake was "where a hotel will probably be built, the view of the great mountain being especially fine from the lake shore."[152]

The NPS's hotel selection process during this period made no inclusion for the park's concessioner, so once the agency had made it clear that it was not interested in the Mile 66 site, the company proposed improvements there of its own. In July 1932, with the park road still miles away, park concessioner James Galen joined Superintendent Liek and the local Alaska Road Commission leader on "a trip to the Vint Site at Mile 66 for the purpose of selecting [a] camp site and choosing [a] location for the new road." Later that year, Albright gave Galen permission "to establish a temporary camp at



Paula Anderson filed for a 160 acre homestead on the shores of Wonder Lake. She and John Anderson prospected and mined in the Kantishna and Copper Mountain areas, raised foxes and sled dogs, and provided accommodations for travelers in the area. Stephen R. Capps Collection, 83-149-2381, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archive

Mile 66 this coming season," to be called Camp Denali and to be located on a spur road 500 yards away from the main highway.[153] But in March 1933, Albright reneged on his promise, citing a lack of road-improvement funds for the spur road. The following spring, Galen "made arrangements for the construction of a new camp ... to be built 66 miles from McKinley Park Station."[154] The company placed orders for camp construction materials in May, but a long shipping strike that began that month forced the company to cancel those orders. "Considerable activity" took place at the site later that summer. In October 1934, Galen asked the agency for (and soon received) permission to establish a permanent camp at the site, and the following spring, the company erected a "lunch station ... to serve the visitors who visit that point and return the same day." In 1936, the company replaced its building with two tents: "one large for a dining room and one small for the kitchen." These were "used by the tourists who stay in the park for 48 hours" and were thus able to take an all-day excursion toward the western end of the park road.[155]

Meanwhile, the federal government exhibited an interest in hotels in several park areas. In the summer of 1934, it corroborated Albright's 1932 statement—that a new hotel would "sooner or later be erected near the railroad"—when it stated that railroad officials, park operators and steamship officials were trumpeting the idea of "a first class hotel [to] be built by the Alaska Railroad at McKinley Park Station." The plan's main backer may have been Col. Otto Ohlson, the railroad's general manager, who was "enthusiastic over this proposed plan and is making every possible effort to have it formulated."[156] By mid-winter, even bolder plans had surfaced; after meetings with Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, NPS Director Arno Cammerer, and park concessioner James Galen, "considerable interest" was being shown in two new hostelries: a lodge at the Camp Denali site as well as a hotel near the railroad. By the spring of 1935, the idea of the McKinley Park Station hotel had lost steam, but plans for a lodge at Mile 66 continued until midsummer.[157] In September of that year, however, NPS landscape architect Ernest A. Davidson was dispatched to the park and asked to survey the various hotel sites. Davidson, after an extensive on-the-ground investigation, decided that the best hotel site would be on a knoll just southwest of Wonder Lake. That choice, during the next year, was backed by Washington officials as well as a Congressional party that visited the site. The Alaska Road Commission, apprised of the decision, carved out a two-mile spur road connecting the proposed hotel site to the main park road.[158]

What was particularly surprising about these developments was that they were proposed at a time of low visitation and poor economic prospects. In both 1932 and 1933, at the depth of the Great Depression, fewer than 400 tourists visited Mount McKinley National Park; this total was lower than in any year since 1925. Each year thereafter saw healthy increases in visitation, but the 1936 total of 1,073 tourists—though larger than that of any previous year—was still far smaller than at any other national park. And because of that poor visitation, the park's concessioner consistently lost money during this period.[159]

The company's poor economic performance, however, did not prevent it from offering a diversity of services. In late 1933, for example, it issued a brochure offering the "big game drive" to the head of Savage River; auto trips to Sable Pass, Stony Hill, and "Mt. Eielson" (Mile 66); horseback trips from Mt. Eielson south to McGonagall Pass and Muldrow Glacier; fishing trips to either Wonder Lake or the so-called "Clearwater Lakes;" scenic flights across the park from the Savage Camp airstrip; or hunting trips, to either the Mt. Dall country (west of the park) or the Wood River country (east of the park). For the next several years, it continued to offer much the same program; the only changes were based on the location of the road terminus.[160]

A key to growth at the park was access, and during this period, new airstrips were roughed out to improve that access. The idea of a landing field at McKinley Park Station had first surfaced in 1923 by a Fairbanks company interested in serving the area. Nothing was done, however,

# Park Trips

All rates approved by the National Park Service

### BY AUTOMOBILE

1. **McKinley Park Station to Savage Camp,** view of Mt. McKinley, round trip fare..... $ 7.50
2. **Savage Camp to head of Savage River,** big game drive, round trip fare..... 5.00
3. **Savage Camp to Sable Pass and Polychrome Pass,** round trip fare..... 10.00
4. **24-hour All Expense Trip.** McKinley Park Station to Savage Camp, Savage Camp to Polychrome Pass, three meals and lodging at Savage Camp and return to railroad..... 25.00
5. **One-day All Expense Trip.** McKinley Park Station to Savage Camp, Savage Camp to Stony Hill, three meals and lodging and return to railroad..... 35.00
6. **Two-day All Expense Trip.** McKinley Park Station to Savage Camp, Savage Camp to head of Savage River, Savage Camp to Mt. Eielson, close-up of Mt. McKinley and return to railroad, 154 miles round trip, including six meals and two nights' lodging..... 42.50

### SPECIAL TRIPS

7. **Horseback Trip from Mt. Eielson to McGonogall Pass, three-day trip:**
   - 1 person ..... 82.50
   - 2 persons, each..... 67.50
   - 3 persons, each..... 62.50
   - 4 persons, or more, each..... 52.50
8. **Horseback Trip from Mt. Eielson to McGonogall Pass. 4-day round trip.** Same as above except spending first afternoon at the snout of Muldrow Glacier, exploring moraine, ice caves, etc., at a cost of $7.50 per person additional to 3-day trip.
9. **Fishing Trips,** for trout and grayling, from Mt. Eielson to Wonder Lake or Clearwater Lakes, of three or more days, may be taken at rates comparable to those to McGonogall Pass.
10. **Special Trips** from Mt. Eielson to Mt. McKinley, Mt. Foraker, and to other interesting points in the Park may be arranged.

### AIRPLANE SERVICE

11. **Scenic Flight** from Savage Camp to Mt. Eielson and Muldrow Glacier, near the base of Mt. McKinley, passing over Sable, Polychrome, Highway and Thorofare Passes, fare, each person..... 35.00

**CAMPS. Base Camps, (American Plan)**

Tents occupied by two persons, per person, per day, $2.00. Exclusive use of tent by one person, per day, $3.00.

Note—During periods of heavy travel, tent houses at base camps will not be reserved for exclusive use of one person. The Company reserves the right to allocate these lodgings.

| MEALS | Base Camps | Field Camps |
|---|---|---|
| Breakfast | $1.50 | $2.00 |
| Luncheon | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| Dinner | 2.00 | 2.00 |

**Weekly Rates to all Guests:**

| | |
|---|---|
| All Meals, each | $1.50 |
| Lodgings, per night | 1.00 |

(Full Rates on all Transportation)

### RATES FOR CHILDREN

Under 5 years (unless occupying individual bed, in which case one-half adult rate will be charged), no charge.

From 5 to 12 years, One-Half Adult Rate.

Twelve years and over, Full Adult Rate.

(Above rates for children apply to both camp accomodations and automobile transportation, but not to horseback trips or airplane flights.)

### OTHER RATES

| | |
|---|---|
| Saddle horse, per hour | $ 2.00 |
| Saddle horse, one-half day | 3.50 |
| Saddle horse, per day | 5.00 |
| Pack horses, per day | 5.00 |
| Guide service, per day | 10.00 |



# Hunting and Fishing

While hunting or shooting is not permitted in McKinley Park, grayling and trout fishing may be found and freely enjoyed in practically all clearwater streams and lakes of the Park. However, we specialize in taking hunting parties to areas adjacent to the Park, namely the Mount Dall country, west of the Park, and to the Wood River country, lying just east of the Park boundary, continuing eastward, following the north slope of the Alaska Range to the Richardson Trail.

Excellent hunting for caribou, mountain sheep (ovis dalli), moose, grizzly, and black bear may be had in either of these areas.

The Wood River country is easily accessible, the heart of the game country being reached the second day's travel from McKinley Park Station or from our Savage River Camp.

For hunting trips we furnish everything—guides, packers, horses, grub, all camp and other equipment, except hunter's guns, ammunition and his hunting license.

Detailed information and rates will be furnished upon application. Reservations should be made early for fall hunting trips.

**A diversity of park activities were advertised in this 1935 Mt. McKinley Tourist & Transportation Company brochure. Candy Waugaman Collection**

until the early 1930s. In September 1932, just a few months after the park's boundaries were expanded to include the area, Superintendent Liek reported that local roadhouse owner Maurice Morino had "leveled off the ground on the other side of the track so that a plane can land there in case of emergency." This airstrip, just 700 feet long, was located entirely on the parcel that Morino had claimed. A year later, Liek noted that "the airport at McKinley Park Station" was "in excellent condition." The so-called "Morino field" continued to be used, on an occasional or emergency basis, for the remainder of the decade.[61] During this period, the concessioner continued to use the Savage River airstrip for scenic flights, and individuals

visiting the park in their own craft were also free to use it; the Alaska Railroad, however, intervened when, in 1936, the concessioner tried to begin commercial flights between Fairbanks and Savage River Camp.[162]

During the same period, aircraft explored other parts of the park area. At Kantishna, the 800-foot aviation field on the "left limit of Moose Creek" near Wonder Lake was still used occasionally, after having been improved, with Territorial funds, during the 1931 fiscal year. But the field was not always usable, and late one fall, a Kantishna-area miner reached the area by landing with skis "on the river bar at Copper Mountain." In a similar case in 1933, the wife of a prospector along Crooked Creek, near Stampede Creek, had a medical emergency; the pilot, flying into the area from the Savage River airstrip, landed on a river bar ten miles from the claim. He walked in, performed an operation "by candle light" and thus saved the woman's life. The pilot returned to the plane and flew on to Fairbanks.[163] Not long after that incident, the nearby Stampede Mine kicked into operation after years of dormancy, and by the eve of World War II, operator Earl Pilgrim had bladed out an airstrip 2½ miles downstream from the mine, at the Stampede Creek-Clearwater Fork confluence.[164]

Given the increasing length of the park road, an array of patrol cabins scattered along the park boundaries, and the extension of the park boundaries to the Nenana River, rangers during the mid-1930s were able to patrol the park's boundaries, and thus protect the park's large animal populations, more effectively than ever before. During the early 1930s, as noted above, rangers reported a severe shortage of furbearers on the park's margins, and "extreme low prices on furs" exacerbated the trappers' plight.[165] Throughout this period, local trappers could count on at least some assistance from the territorial legislature; since 1915, it had instituted a bounty on wolves, and in 1929, a similar bounty was in place for coyotes. But in early 1933, territorial authorities announced that due to lack of funds, no bounties would be awarded for either species after March 31 of that year. The combined effect of these factors forced a number of trappers to move elsewhere or to move into other lines of work.[166] But those who stayed posed virtually no threat to the park's small or large game. Both before and after the expansion of the park boundary, rangers who patrolled the park's perimeter consistently reported no signs of trapping or poaching. Instead, rangers typically reported that the game was "in excellent condition," and they sensed a cooperative attitude from those who lived and worked adjacent to the park.[167]

In order to ensure that hunters, trappers, and other park neighbors paid attention to the boundary that Congress had changed in March 1932, the NPS established two patrol cabins in the newly-expanded park area. The Lower Windy cabin, five miles east of the year- old Upper Windy cabin, was erected between July and September 1932. Soon afterward, rangers began work on a cabin at Moody, at the north-eastern corner of the new park. That work was not completed until the following year.[168] The final ranger cabin established in the wake of the boundary expansion was located along Moose Creek, north of mile 75 on the park road, in either 1935 or 1936. All three of these were two-room cabins, and thus roomier than almost all of the ARC cabins as well as the previously-built NPS cabins.[169]



The Lower Windy Creek cabin was one of the 2-room ranger patrol cabins built during the early 1930s to provide a base for patrolling the new eastern park boundary. DENA 6-7, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



Located in the Nenana River canyon, between the Alaska Railroad and the river, the Moody cabin provided patrol rangers with a shelter along the new 1932 boundary. DENA 6-49, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

In order to make the new boundary visually recognizable, the General Land Office sent out a party in 1933 "to commence a survey and to establish the new park boundary line." That party, which consisted of Cadastral Engineer Floyd G. Betts, Surveyor Leonard M. Berlin, and six men from the agency's Juneau office, arrived at the park on April 17. Beginning near the Upper Windy Creek Ranger Cabin at the southeastern end of the park, the party moved northward down the Nenana River's left bank, placing monuments—iron posts, three feet long and two inches in diameter—at one-mile intervals.[170] After reaching Moody Station at the park's northeastern corner, it then turned west and made similar monuments on its way to the Toklat River. By June the group was meandering down the ridgelines toward the corner in the Moose Creek-Boundary Creek area; it then headed toward the north end of Wonder Lake and continued on to the southwest. By August the men had marked the boundary all the way to the right limit of the McKinley River. But by that time, the group had exhausted its funds. The rest of the boundary survey would have to wait.[171]

In 1936, the Juneau GLO office organized a party to complete the boundary survey. Given the predominant terrain at the park's western end, it was decided to conduct this survey in late winter. A six-man crew—which again was commanded by Floyd Betts and Leonard Berlin—left Juneau on February 25. The crew arrived at the park shortly afterward, and after conferring with NPS officials, it headed west on March 12. Support problems for the GLO crew were eased considerably by NPS rangers, who ferried freight to their base camp by dog team; an airplane, which twice landed near the McKinley Bar ranger station, brought additional goods. Soon work began on the survey itself: first to complete the northwest boundary line, then generally southward toward the summit of Mount Russell, at the southwestern corner of the park. As related by Ray Cruden, one of the survey crew, the men endured "temperatures averaging 26 below zero," which complicated the task of setting the various monument markers. These posts were employed throughout the lowlands, but as the party "left the timber and began ascending the barren slopes of the Alaska Range," posts were replaced by rock cairns and tripods. Cruden noted that "at every high point along the line, rock cairns about seven feet high were built by piling rocks as high as a man could reach. They can be seen for miles." The party completed its survey on April 27; after that, however, a harrowing 12-day snowshoe trip to the Igloo ARC camp lay ahead. Cruden, reflecting back on the 550-mile trek, was effusive in his praise of the ARC and the NPS; their "splendid cooperation was one of the highlights of the trip," in his opinion.[172]

During the early- to mid-1930s, the park supported a small staff, each of whom did a remarkable diversity of tasks (see Appendices B and C).[173] Officially, each employee worked eight hours per day, six days a week; the superintendent admitted, however, that rangers did far more.[174] Throughout most of this period, the staff consisted of just seven men: a superintendent, five rangers, and a clerk. (The only deviation from this constant was a fourteen-month period in 1933 and 1934 when funding restrictions prevented the hiring of a clerk.) The superintendent, Harry Liek, remained in charge throughout this period; he served more than ten years, from the late 1920s through the late 1930s.

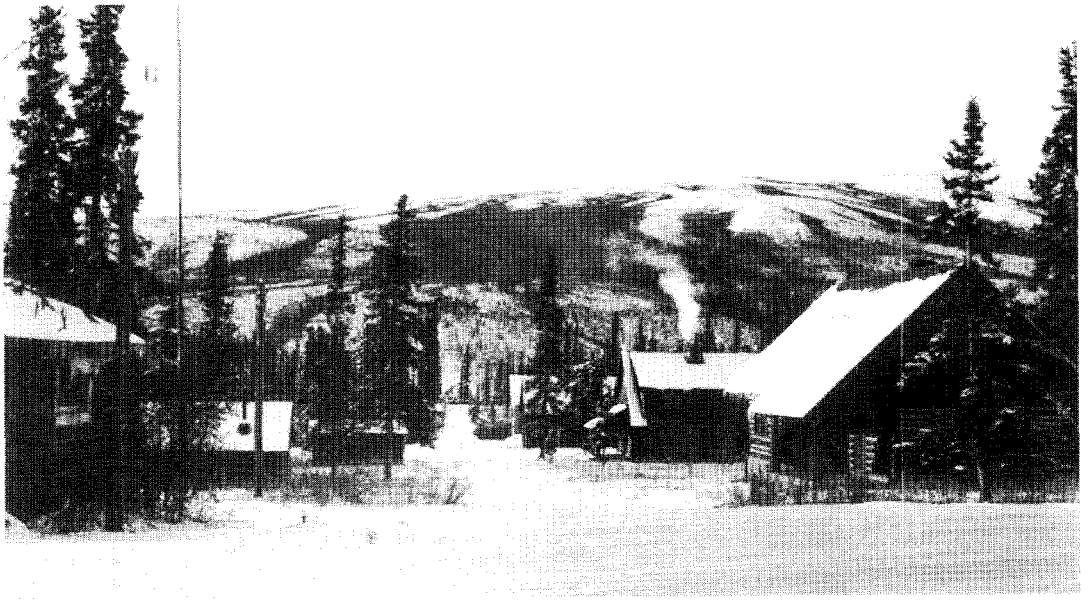
Stability, moreover, was a hallmark of the ranger crew as well: Grant Pearson, first hired in 1926, remained on the staff until the late 1930s; John Rumohr, hired in 1930, stayed for more than twenty years, and Louis Corbley, hired in 1931, became chief ranger and worked at the park until the outbreak of World War II. Other rangers—Wallace Anderson, Aubrey Houston, and Edward (Ted) Ogston—worked there for several years before moving on. The park's clerks remained, too: C.E. Richmond was on the park payroll for more than two years, while his successor, Carl Lottsfeldt, stayed at the park for 3½ years. Mount McKinley, in short, offered a sense of permanence to many on the park staff; it offered rustic comforts and, because of its isolation and the shared nature of park responsibilities, it offered employees a strong sense of community. Most headquarters residents were single men, who enjoyed the park's unencumbered lifestyle and the hard-working, can-do attitudes of their compatriots.

As noted above, headquarters-area construction activities during the late 1920s and early 1930s were primarily aimed at improving the park's infrastructure: utilities development along with a power house, garage, and stable. By the mid-1930s, park management recognized that ranger housing needed to be upgraded. As a result, the two major construction projects during this period involved residences for the clerk and rangers. In September 1933—just weeks after the park's clerk vacated his job—funds were allotted for a new employee's residence. The following month, the clerk's old quarters were demolished, and the following spring, construction began on a replacement. This building, with five rooms and a basement, was designed in the agency's San Francisco office and was said to be "far superior to the general run of residences in the interior of Alaska."[175] Toward the end of the 1934 summer season, a new clerk was hired, and work was stepped up to have it ready for him. Crews, however, ran low on supplies, and the building—still unfinished—was not occupied until January 1, 1935.[176] Meanwhile, work was proceeding apace on a "ranger's club"–i.e., a residence for single rangers–that had been in the works since the spring of 1934. The eight-room residence, constructed to much the same standards as the clerk's residence, was com - pleted in the spring of 1935. It saw little immediate use, however, because of its high heating demands.[177]

During the winter of 1936-37, Mount McKinley National Park turned twenty years old, and NPS employees were able to look back on more than fifteen years of active park management. During that period, which has since been characterized as the "cabins and snowshoes era,"[178] two superintendents and a smattering of rangers, clerks and allied personnel had done wonders. They had built two different headquarters areas; the newer one, now more than ten years old, was a handsome, rustic work complex that was fully able to support the multitudinous activities of the small park staff. The staff, during that period, had constructed a long string of patrol cabins that stretched along the park's boundaries. Working in concert with the Alaska Road Commission, a scenic road had been bladed out more than 80 miles toward the west end of the park, and a series of patrol cabins were scattered at intermittent points along that route. The park had also successfully worked with two other partners, the Alaska Railroad and the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company, to develop the park's tourist potential. The Alaska Railroad, dubbed the "McKinley Park Route," did what it could to stimulate visitation



**The "Ranger's Club," completed in 1935, was built specifically as a residence for single rangers. It now serves as the park headquarters building. The arrow at left shows the location of ranger Harold Herning's room in late 1939. Beatrice Herning Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**



This late-1930s winter view of the main street at park headquarters shows much change since Karstens began building there in 1925. DENA 3-7.7, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

to the park, and it also did its best to encourage the construction of a tourist infrastructure within the park. The park's concessioner, meanwhile, did its best to make the tourist's experience a satisfying one by constructing and maintaining a series of tent camps, auto tours, and horseback excursions.

By the winter of 1936-37, there was every reason to believe that these patterns were beginning to mature and that the park would enjoy an extended period of continuity and slow growth. As Chapter 5 notes, however, the next few years would prove anything but placid. The prevailing sense of order would be destabilized first by a stronger hand of government intervention, which would be quickly followed by even more destabilizing actions brought on by world events. These events, in combination, brought this nostalgic period to an abrupt halt.

## Notes - Chapter 4

[1] SMR, June 1921, 2.

[2] SMR, September 1921, 3-4.

[3] SMR, October 1921, 6; October 1922, 6; January 1923, 4-5.

[4] SMR, January 1924, 3; Executive Order 3946, January 21, 1924. By December 1924, the railroad had dropped all plans for a hotel at the site; the idea was not considered again for more than a decade. Dan T. Kennedy to Director NPS, December 29, 1924, in "Privileges" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[5] Karstens to the Director, February 15, 1924; Cammerer to Karstens, March 21, 1924; both in "Quarters" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; SMR, March 1924, 5; April 1924, 5.

[6] SMR, June 1924, 4; September 1924, 4.

[7] SMR, April 1924, 5-6; June 1924, 3-4; Karstens to the Director, April 25, 1924, in "Quarters" file, Box 111, cited above.

[8] SMR, September 1924, 3-4.

[9] SMR, July 1924, 1, 3, 4.

[10] SMR, October 1924, 1, 4, 6; Cammerer to Karstens, February 5, 1925, in "Instructions" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[11] SMR, September 1925, 1, 4, 5; November 1925, 3, 6, 8; December 1925, 1, 3, 4; Grant Pearson, *The Seventy Mile Kid; Wilderness Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park* (Los Altos, Calif., Signal Press, 1957), 9.

[12] ARC, *Annual Report, 1925, Part II*, 15; SMR, September 1925, 2; Kennedy to "Gentlemen," June 17, 1925, in "Employment-General" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[13] ARC, *Annual Report, Part II*, for 1925 (p. 89) and 1928 (p. 66). H.R. 10020, passed during the 68th Congress, 2nd Session, and H.R. 9136, passed during the 70th Congress, 1st Session, were the annual Interior Department appropriations bills.

[14] SMR, September 1924, 7.

[15] ARC, *Annual Report, Part II* for 1925 (pp. 86-88), 1926 (pp. 73-76), 1927 (pp. 61-66), 1928 (pp. 61-67), 1929 (98, 105-06), and 1930 (pp. 61-64); SMR for November 1925, 1; April 1926, 2; September 1927, 1; October 1927, 3; September 1928, 2; October 1929, 1.

[16] SMR, July 1922, 9; January 1923, 6.

[17] SMR, June 1924, 4-5.

[18] Gail Evans, "Patrol Cabins, Mount McKinley National Park" National Register of Historic Places nomination, December 1985, in park NRHP files, ARO-RCR; Harold A. LaFleur, *Classified Structure Field Inventory Reports* for these five structures, December 29, 1975, in List of Classified Structures files, AKRO-RCR. Scattered references suggest that ARC crews built four cabins (at Savage [1924-25], Sanctuary [1925-26], Igloo Creek [1927], East Fork [1928], and Toklat River [circa 1930-31]). See SMR for November 1924, 5; September 1925, 7; May 1930, 2; LaFleur, and Grant Pearson, with Philip Newill, *My Life of High Adventure*, (New York, Ballantine Books, 1962), 35; Jane Bryant, email to author, January 18 and 19, 2006. Because no date is readily available for the construction of the ARC Toklat River cabin, the above dates are estimates based on the February-to-October 1931 completion date of the Toklat River bridges.

[19] NPS rangers built or improved both the Igloo Cabin and the Toklat Patrol Cabin (Pearson Cabin) at least three years before park road construction reached those points. Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 44; A. Lewis Koue and Robert V. Simmonds, *Historic Structure Report, Part I, Toklat Patrol Cabin Complex, Building Number 4 and Supporting Structures, Class CC* (San Francisco, NPS), June 1970.

[20] SMR, November 1924, 5; Jane Bryant email, July 14, 2006.

[21] A daytime arrival was possible because, beginning in 1925, passengers overnighted at the railroad hotel at Curry, 99 miles to the south. Mather to Dan Kennedy, January 21, 1925, in "Privileges" file, Box 111 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 47.

[22] George S. Stroud, *History of the Concession at Denali National Park (formerly Mount McKinley National Park)*, unpub. mss., ARO Concession Division, p. 3.

[23] SMR, September 1925, 5; February 1926, 4.

[24] SMR, April 1926, 3; May 1926, 3; Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 49.

[25] SMR, September 1925, 4; May 1926, 3; June 1926, 2, 4.

[26] NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1904-1940* (Washington, the author, 1963), 5; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 5.

[27] Lena Howard interview, August 4, 1972, Tape #506, DENA Archives.

[28] SMR, August 1922, 2; August 1924, 3; ARC, *Annual Report, Part II*, 1928 (p. 66) and 1929 (p. 105).

[29] SMR, June 1926, 4; Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 107; Gail E. H. Evans, *From Myth to Reality: Travel Experiences and Landscape Perceptions in the Shadow of Mount McKinley, Alaska, 1876-1938* (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, February 1987), 260.

[30] ARC, *Annual Report, Part II*, 1929 (p. 105); Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 107.

[31] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 3. According to longtime park employee Jane Bryant (email to author, August 29, 2005), the concessioner's Igloo Camp was located east of the park road, at the east end of the old ARC camp and just north of Igloo Creek. The company's Toklat Camp was on the east side of the Toklat River bridge, across the river from the ranger station and the ARC camp. The Copper Mountain Camp was originally placed within a few yards of the NPS's Copper Mountain Ranger Station, on the south side of Thorofare River. But when the road reached that area, the Copper Mountain Camp was abandoned in favor of Camp Denali, located two miles to the northeast.

[32] SMR, December 1924, 2, 7; January 1926, 2; February 1926, 1; March 1926, 1, 6; November 1926, 5; February 1927, 5; January 1928, 4.

[33] SMR, March 1926, 3; April 1926, 3; July 1926, 3; August 1926, 3; October 1926, 3.

[34] This cabin was completed that summer, and finishing touches were applied during the winter of 1927-28. SMR, March 1927, 5; August 1927, 2; September 1927, 2; January 1928, 2.

[35] SMR, December 1927, 6; February 1928, 3; June 1928, 6.

[36] SMR, June 1921, 2; February 1922, 3; March 1922, 1-3.

[37] SMR, October 1921, 5, 7; July 1922, 9; September 1922, 4; January 1923, 2.

[38] Evidence of poaching activity was reported in the following SMRs: February 1923, 4, 5; March 1923, 1, 5; and January 1924, 4.

[39] SMR, March 1923, 5; May 1923, 5; September 1923, 5.

[40] SMR, January 1924, 4, 7.

[41] Historian Morgan Sherwood noted that game wardens during this period were less than professional; wardens "were selected and retained for political reasons ... that they were often unqualified—sometimes barely literate—and reluctant to arrest violators." Sherwood, *Big Game in Alaska; a History of Wildlife and People* (New Haven, Yale, 1981), 48.

[42] SMR, December 1923, 3; January 1924, 4; February 1924, 2.

[43] SMR, November 1921, 3; August 1922, 4; September 1922, 2.

[44] Brown, *A History*, 156-57; SMR, September 1923, 2-3, 6.

[45] SMR, October 1924, 4, 6, 8; December 1924, 1.

[46] Frank Norris, *Alaska Subsistence; a National Park Service Management History* (Anchorage, NPS, September 2002), 35-36.

[47] SMR, September 1925, 7.

[48] Poaching did not disappear, however, and at least one incident was recorded each year between 1926 and 1929. See the following SMRs: March 1926, 6; April 1927, 4; January 1928, 2-3; November 1928, 3; and October 1929, 3.

[49] *Congressional Record* 67:1 (1921), 504; *Congressional Record* 67:2 (1922), 364. The term "Sutherland Bill" was quoted in SMR, June 1921, 2.

[50] SMR, January 1922, 5; May 1922, 2, 4; June 1922, 2; Karstens letter, May 15, 1922, in "Boundaries" file, Box 109 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; A. E. Demaray to Arno Cammerer, June 20, 1922, in "Inspection" file, Box 110 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[51] John Kauffmann, *Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska; a History of its Establishment and Revision of its Boundaries* (Washington, NPS, July 1954), 12-14.

[52] *Ibid.*, 14-19.

[53] A boundary extension to the railroad was included in SMRs of October 1924 (pp. 7-8) and January 1928 (p. 5); to the Nenana River in SMRs of August 1922 (p. 5) and October 1927 (p. 2); and the mile-wide "proclamation strip" in SMRs of October 1922 (p. 6), April 1924 (pp. 5-6), May 1924 (p. 3) and December 1925, 3.

[54] *United States Statutes* 39 (February 26, 1917), p. 938, Section 6.

[55] Between 1921 and 1926, numerous superintendent's reports mentioned prospecting activity in the park. Most of the early reports centered on Copper Mountain and on Sanctuary, Savage, and Sushana rivers, although others continued to prospect lesser-known drainages. By 1924, it was generally agreed—by USGS investigators as well as by prospectors themselves—that "there are no mineral deposits east of ... the Stony Fork district", and as the decade wore on, Copper Mountain area remained the only area of sustained mining interest. SMR, September 1921 to August 1926, *passim*.

[56] SMR, February 1923, 4; April 1923, 5; January 1924, 6-7; *Cordova Times*, December 24, 1923.

[57] SMR, December 1925, 7; May 1927, 5; January 1928, 5.

[58] Various documents, April to June 1923, in "Appropriations – General" file, Box 109 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[59] SMR, May 1924, 5; October 1924, 8.

[60] SMR, May 1924, 3.

[61] Horace Albright, in his *Creation of the National Park Service*, p. 90, stated that "When a new park was created ... congressmen inclined to get the cart before the horse. An amendment would get tacked on limiting annual expenditures to tiny amounts. Of course, we'd have to go back and ask for more."

[62] *Congressional Record* 65 (March 18, 1924), p. 4474; John Ise, *Our National Park Policy* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), 229.

[63] As noted in 1926, for example (*Congressional Record* 67 [January 11, 1926], 1843-46), Rep. Allen Treadway (R-Mass.) advocated the elimination of all park funding inasmuch as "no tourists visit Mount McKinley" and "nothing we can do can remove that wonderful peak."

[64] *Congressional Record* 68, pp. 965, 3817, 5061-62; 70th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 552*, March 16, 1928, pp. 1-2.

[65] *Congressional Record* 69, pp. 1539-40.

[66] SMR, March 1926, 6; April 1927, 4; December 1927, 6; January 1928, 2-3.

[67] *Congressional Record* 69, pp. 1539-40.

[68] *Congressional Record* 69, pp. 5047, 5434, 8672, 9787.

[69] SMR, August 1924, 6; September 1924, 3, 5.

[70] SMR, October 1924, 8; December 1924, 4; December 1925, 2-3; January 1926, 1, 5.

[71] Pearson with Newill, *My Life of High Adventure*, vii-xi, 4, 23-25. Karsten complimented his rangers in the following SMRs: February 1926, 6; February 1927, 5; December 1928, 3.

[72] The park owned and used horses for a wide variety of tasks from the early 1920s until about 1940; to house them, the stable was constructed in 1928 and 1929. SMR, *passim.*; Dave Snow, et al., *Historic Structure Report, Mt. McKinley Park Headquarters Historic District and Wonder Lake, Vol. 2* (Anchorage?, NPS-ARO, January 1, 1987), 23-24.

[73] SMR, October 1927, 1; May 1928, 2; October 1929, 3.

[74] SMR, April 1927, 3; November 1929, 2; December 1929, 1.

[75] SMR, December 1926, 1.

[76] SMR, June 1923, 7. Karstens attended three superintendents' conferences (in 1923, 1926, and 1928) during his seven years on the job, but no one on his staff had any formal training during that period. SMR, September 1923, 2; December 1923, 2; October 1926, 1; February 1928, 1.

[77] SMR, October 1924, 4; November 1926, 3; NPS, Land Status Map, DENA, ARO-L; NPS, *Index, National Park System and Related Areas, 1982* (Washington, the author, 1982), 61.

[78] U.S. Bureau of the Budget, *Budget of the United States* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office), 1925 and 1930 editions.

[79] SMR, November 1925, 2-6.

[80] SMR, November 1925, 6; April 1926, 3; June 1926, 3; July 1926, 1, 3

[81] SMR, August 1926, 3; July 1927, 5; September 1927, 3.

[82] SMR, January 1926, 3; November 1926, 3.

[83] SMR, July 1927, 2.

[84] SMR, December 1927, 5.

[85] One of the two remaining buildings from this early period is the old office (administration) building, which was moved in 1950 from its original location—just south of the park road and just east of the headquarters' "main street"—to a new location north of the park road. This building was then used as the park's first museum building and now serves as an employee quarters. The other building, the generator (boiler) building, is still in its original location and configuration; it presently houses the Cultural Resource Division office. Harold A. LaFleur, Jr., "Classified Structure Field Inventory Report" for DENA-22, January 2, 1976, LCS Files, AKRO; Jane Bryant email, July 5, 2006.

[86] SMR, July 1927, 3.

[87] SMR, February 1922, 1, 3; October 1922, 4; December 1923, 2; November 1927, 2; December 1927, 4.

[88] SMR, May 1922, 4; November 1922, 2; May 1923, 4; May 1924, 8; November 1924, 1; November 1925, 2, 3.

[89] SMR, May 1926, 2. The 1926-38 location of the dog kennels is shown on the park's January 1937 master plan map, which is located in the "HQ HSR" folder, DENA HQ NRHP files, AKRO-RCR.

[90] SMR, April 1927, 2; November 1929, 2; December 1929, 2.

[91] SMR, March 1928, 2.

[92] Brown, *A History*, 145.

[93] SMR, August 1928, 2; October 1928, 1.

[94] Grant H. Pearson, *The Seventy Mile Kid*, 1-7, 9.

[95] Charles Sheldon to Horace Albright, Jan. 10, 1923, in "Wild Animals, Parts 1 & 2" file, Box 112; Dan Kennedy to Richardson Highway Transportation Co., June 17, 1925, along with various other letters, all in "Employment – General" file, Box 110; Woodbury Abbey to Cammerer, July 27, 1923, in "Privileges" file, Box 111; all in Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP.

[96] Pearson, *The Seventy Mile Kid*, 9, 13; Karstens to the Director, September 19, 1928, in "Karstens Resignation" file, Ann Kain Collection, DENA. Several sources have suggested that the death of Charles Sheldon, who had lent him so much support over the years, played a role in his resignation. But Sheldon's death was on

September 21, two days after Karsten resigned. *Who Was Who in America; Vol. 1, 1897-1942* (Chicago, A. N. Marquis, 1943), 1113.

[97] Brown, *A History*, 164.

[98] *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, November 29, 1955, 1; SMR, December 1955, 1.

[99] Brown, *A History*, 173-74; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 87.

[100] SMR, December 1928, 1.

[101] Dave Snow, et al., *Historic Structure Report, Mt. McKinley Park Headquarters Historic District and Wonder Lake, Vol. 1* (Anchorage?, NPS, January 1, 1987), 3; SMR, June 1929, 3; July 1929, 2; April 1930, 2; May 1930, 2; January 1931, 2; June 1931, 2; June 1932, 2; October 1932, 3.

[102] SMR, April 1930, 2; May 1931, 2; May 1932, 2.

[103] SMR, April-September 1929, *passim*.

[104] SMR, October 1929, 1-2; November 1929, 2; July 1931, 3; October 1931, 3.

[105] SMR, March 1932, 2; July-November 1932, p. 3; May-July 1933, 2-3; November 1933, 1-2; January 1934, 3; September 1934, 4; December 1938, 2, 4.

[106] SMR, October 1933, 3; November 1933, 2; June 1938, 3; September 1938, 3.

[107] SMR, April 1922, 2; March 1924, 4; November 1925, 1, 2, 9.

[108] SMR, February 1927, 3; August 1930, 2; March 1931, 2; December 1931, 3; July 1933, 2; August 1933, 2, 4, 5; November 1933, 2.

[109] SMR, August 1932, 2. The Ford Motor Company manufactured the Model B, a variant of the Model A, between 1932 and 1934.

[110] SMR, July 1934, 7; August 1934, 6; October 1935, 5; October 1938, 3; July 1939, 2.

[111] SMR, February 1927, 5; March 1929, 2.

[112] SMR, December 1924, 2; March 1926, 6; October 1929, 3; April 1931, 1; May 1931, 2. The new Sunday Creek cabin was referred to as the "Ewe Creek" cabin because it replaced a 1925 NPS-built cabin at the Ewe Creek mouth.

[113] Harold A. LaFleur, "Building Inventory for Mt. McKinley National Park," September 12, 1975, in "HQ Building Development" file, DENA archives; SMR, April 1930, 2; May 1930, 2; September 1931, 3; February 1932, 2; June 1932, 2.

[114] SMR, January 1931, 2; June 1931, 3; July 1931, 4; August 1931, 3; January 1932; H. David Evans and Gail E. H. Evans, *Historic Structure Report, Upper Windy Creek Patrol Cabin* (Anchorage, NPS, February 1992), 9.

[115] Henry Karstens to Director NPS, August 1, 1924, in "Telephone and Telegraph Service" file, Box 112 (MOMC), Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP; January 1924, 5; May 1924, 4; June 1924, 6; July 1924, 3.

[116] SMR, May 1926, 2; June 1928, 3; July 1930, 2; August 1930, 3; December 1930, 3.

[117] SMR, June 1931, 2; September 1931, 3; June 1932, 1-2; September 1932, 2; June 1933, 2.

[118] SMR, August 1926, 1-2.

[119] SMR, March 1928, 2; August 1929, 1.

[120] Brown, *A History*, 179, 181.

[121] SMR, August 1927, 1; June 1928, 1-2.

[122] SMR, September 1929, 3; July 1932, 2; *Alaska Weekly*, September 20, 1929, 7; Brown, *A History*, 176, 181-82; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 3, 1934, 5.

[123] 71st Congress, 2nd Session, *House Report No. 1387* (May 6, 1930), p. 2; Donald Morgan, "Above the Northern Trail," *Farthest North Collegian* III:1 (1925), 7-8; Robert W. Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, vol. 1, 1897-1928 (Des Moines, Wash., Polynyas Press, 1990), 153-54.

[124] SMR, April 1923, 3, 5; September 1923, 2; December 1924, 8.

[125] Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, vol. 1, 176-77.

[126] ARC, *Annual Report, Part II*, for fiscal years 1926 (p. 71) and 1927 (p. 58), and 1929 (p. 94); SMR, July 1927, 5; Charles Caldwell Hawley, *Wesley Earl Dunkle; Alaska's Flying Miner* (Boulder, University Press of Colorado, 2003), 148. The Kantishna field, which is near the present-day North Face Lodge, was extended 200 additional feet in 1929.

[127] SMR, July 1926, 4; *Daily Alaska Empire* (Juneau), June 30, 1926, 1.

[128] 71st Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 385* (April 11, 1930); *House Report No. 1387* (May 6, 1930); *New York Times*, March 23, 1930, II, 1; Walter Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 294-95.

[129] Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, vol. 2 (1929-1930), 907.

[130] SMR, May 1930, 3; July 1930, 2-3; September 1932, 1; September 1933, 6; Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, vol. 2, 1002-04; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 7.

[131] Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, vol. 2, 1002; Janet McDonnell email, June 2, 2005.

[132] Kauffmann, *Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska; a History of its Establishment*, 20-27.

[133] *Ibid.*, 24; Brown, *A History*, 187.

[134] Kauffmann, *Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska; a History of its Establishment*, 27-33; Albright, "Memorandum for the Washington Office," August 18, 1931, in informational file cabinet, top drawer, DENA Archives.

[135] Kauffmann, *Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska; a History of its Establishment*, 33-35.

[136] *Congressional Record* 75, pp. 3051-52 (February 1, 1932) and pp. 3952-53 (February 15, 1932). Homesteader Duke Stubbs, in 1934, wrote a letter that was later included in a House report, stating that "on January 25, 1932, and unknown to Mr. Wickersham ... the Park Service slipped in an amendment changing the east line of the park to the west bank of the Nenana River." Congressional testimony, however, clearly indicates that Wickersham was fully aware of, and approved, the suggested action. 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, *Senate Report No. 1019* (May 17, 1934), 5.

[137] *Congressional Record* 75, p. 5969 (March 14, 1932) and p. 7122 (March 30, 1932).

[138] Brown, *A History*, 189. Albright's prophecy, as shall be seen, was only partly correct; a hotel was indeed built before the end of the decade, but "park policies" played little or no role in determining the hotel's architecture.

[139] SMR February 1932, 2; April 1932, 2; December 1932, 2.

[140] SMR, March 1932, 2.

[141] SMR, September 1932, 3; Anthony J. Dimond to Arno B. Cammerer, October 18, 1933, in File 605 ("Stubbs/General Entries"), Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, *Senate Report No. 1019*, pp. 2, 5.

[142] 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, *Senate Report No. 1019*, pp. 1-2.

[143] SMR, February 1933, 2; April 1933, 2.

[144] Horace M. Albright to Supt. MOMC, May 5, 1933; Arno Cammerer to Commissioner GLO, June 1, 1933; Dimond to Cammerer, October 18, 1933; and Frederick W. Johnson (GLO) to Cammerer, January 27, 1934; all in File 605 ("Stubbs/General Entries"), Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, *Senate Report No. 1019*, 3. According to Supt. Karstens (ltr. to Director NPS, January 10, 1925, in "Lands-General" folder, Box 110 [MOMC], Entry 6, RG 79, NARA CP), Stubbs had resided in the McKinley Park Station area since July 1924, when he was looking for a fox farm site, but according to GLO records, he had not applied for his parcel until 1931.

[145] 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, *Senate Report No. 1019*, pp. 1-3; *Nenana Daily News*, January 29, 1920, 3.

[146] *Congressional Record* 78 (1934), pp. 409, 8982, 11821, 12537, 12447, 12450, and 12458; SMR, July 1934, 5.

[147] Ickes to Ambrose J. Kennedy, February 15, 1935, in File 120-01 (House Bills), Box 1404 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[148] "In the Court of Claims of the United States," No. 43093, Decided Dec. 6, 1937; Oscar L. Chapman (Acting Interior Secretary) to "the Honorable Attorney General," January 4, 1938; George S. Sweeney to Interior Secretary, July 22, 1935; Frank T. Been to Regional Director, May 1, 1941; all in File 605 (Stubbs), Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; *Washington Times*, December 6, 1937.

[149] As an ironic footnote to the mid-1930s road construction, Harold Ickes was the Interior Secretary throughout this period. It was Ickes who stated in a public speech that "If I had my way about national parks, I would create one without a road in it. I would have it impenetrable forever to automobiles, a place where man would not try to improve upon God." And a *New York Times* article (May 14, 1933, p. 4) stated that "there is one park in the empire over which Mr. Ickes holds sway—Mount McKinley National Park in Alaska—where corduroy still rules over silk stockings and his dream is all but an actuality today. ... There is a gravel road that runs in forty miles or so ... but what is a narrow ribbon like that in an area of 2,645 square miles? The territory all about is still set down on the official maps as 'unexplored area'."

[150] Purists note that the view south from the Wonder Lake site almost completely obscures McKinley's higher south peak, while the view from Mile 66 includes clear views of both the north and south peaks.

[151] Morgan Sherwood, "Polly's Denali," *Alaska History* 8 (Fall 1993), 38-39; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 48-49, 67.

[152] SMR, July 1931, 2; August 1931, 2; Brown, *A History*, 164; *New York Times*, January 4, 1933.

[153] SMR, July 1932, 2, 3; December 1932, 2.

[154] Albright to Liek, March 24, 1933, in File 900-05 (Misc. Correspondence, Alaska Railroad), Box 1420 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 3, 1934, 5.

[155] SMR, June 1934, 5; August 1934, 5; October 1934, 4; June 1935, 4; June 1936, 5; June 1937, 1.

[156] SMR, August 1934, 5; October 1934, 5.

[157] SMR, December 1934, 3; February 1935, 1, 4; March 1935, 1; July 1935, 2; August 1935, 2.

[158] SMR, September 1935, 3, 4; December 1935, 3; June 1936, 1, 4; July 1936, 1; August 1936, 2; Ernest A. Davidson, *Report to the Chief Architect and to the Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park*, September 1935, in file D-18, DENA Archives.

[159] NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1904-1940* (Washington, the author, 1963), 7; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 7. Mount McKinley, in 1936, attracted less than one-fifteenth the number of tourists that visited Wind Cave in South Dakota, which was the second-least-visited national park.

[160] The "Clearwater Lakes" are approximately seven miles south of Wonder Lake and just north of the Carlson Creek-Clearwater Creek confluence. Mt. McKinley Tourist and Transportation Co., "Mt. McKinley, Alaska" (brochure), attached to SMR, December 1933; same author, "A Friendly Map of Mt. McKinley National Park,

Alaska's Crowning Glory," 1937, in Mt. McKinley Tourist and Transportation Co. Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Archives, UAF.

[161] SMR, March 1923, 3; September 1932, 3; September 1933, 4; July 1934, 8; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 7, 1934, 2; Civil Aeronautics Agency, "Information on Aircraft Landing Facility," March 1940, in "McKinley Park 50470" folder, FAA Airports Division Collection.

[162] Wiley Post and Will Rogers stopped at the airfield on August 14, 1935, just one day before their fatal crash near Barrow. SMR, August 1934, 2; August 1935, 1; June 1936, 5; Otto Ohlson (ARR) to Gruening, radiogram, July 15, 1936; Arthur Demaray to Supt. MOMC, telegram, July 15, 1936; both in File 900-05 (Misc. Correspondence), Box 1420 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[163] SMR, August 1933, 5; November 1933, 4; February 1936, 4.

[164] G. O. Kempton to Earl Pilgrim, May 12, 1952, in "Stampede Airport" folder, FAA Airports Division historical files; Brown, *A History*, 207; Donald E. White, *Antimony Deposits of the Stampede Creek Area, Kantishna District, Alaska*, U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 936-N (Washington, GPO, 1942), 332-34.

[165] SMR, January 1930, 3; January 1931, 2; February 1931, 2; February 1932, 3.

[166] Calvin J. Lensink, "Predator Control with the Bounty System," in Alaska Department of Fish and Game, *Annual Report for 1958* (Juneau, the author), 94; SMR, March 1933, 3; December 1934, 3; February 1935, 3.

[167] SMR, February 1931, 2; December 1932, 2; February 1933, 3; September 1934, 5; February 1935, 3; October 1935, 3.

[168] SMR, July 1932, 3; August 1932, 2; September 1932, 3; October 1932, 2; January 1934, 2.

[169] SMR, September 1933, 2; August 1934, 2; September 1934, 3; July 1936, 4; September 1936, 2; Jane Bryant email, June 24, 2005 and July 5, 2006. The Moose Creek cabin, ironically, was located along the park's old (1917) boundary rather than along the boundary that Congress moved in 1932.

[170] "Field Notes, U.S. Survey 2177, MOMC" folder, AKRO Lands Collection; SMR, April 1933, 2; *Alaska Daily Press* (Juneau), June 25, 1937, 3.

[171] SMR, May 1933, 2; June 1933, 2; July 1933, 3; August 1933, 3; Antoinette Funk (BLM) to NPS Director, October 25, 1933, in File 602-1, Box 1410 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[172] SMR, March 1936, 1; May 1936, 4; *Alaska Daily Press* (Juneau), June 25, 1937, 3.

[173] Superintendent Liek wrote to his superiors that "due to the limited number of employees in the park, long hours and arduous labor are performed by all personnel. 'Jack of all trades' applies to each employee of the park." This note was written in early December 1933, but it applied equally to almost any time between the early 1920s and the late 1940s. SMR, November 1933, 1.

[174] Liek, in April 1934 (SMR, 7), noted that "rangers are often compelled to work 10 or 12 hours a day while on patrol. All rangers are supposed to work Sundays and holidays if their work demands it."

[175] SMR, September 1933, 3; October 1933, 3; June 1934, 4; August 1934, 3-5; September 1934, 4-7.

[176] SMR, November 1934, 4; December 1934, 3; January 1935, 3.

[177] SMR, June 1934, 4; July 1934, 5; August 1934, 3-5; September 1934, 4-7; December 1934, 3; March 1935, 2.

[178] The term is quoted from Timothy Rawson in his *Changing Tracks; Predators and Politics in Mt. McKinley National Park* (Fairbanks, Univ. of Alaska Press, 2001), 174.



# Chapter Five: A Diversified Federal Presence, 1937-1945

During the first few months of 1937, the area surrounding McKinley Park Station was relatively quiet. Five years had passed since the area had been absorbed into Mount McKinley National Park, and as a result, few people remained who were unconnected with government service in one form or another. Nine of the 25 local residents were National Park Service employees or family members, and half of the remainder were part-time Alaska Road Commission employees. There were only three private property owners: Maurice Morino (120 acres), Duke Stubbs (35 acres), and Dan Kennedy (5 acres). Morino ran a roadhouse, grocery, and post office; Stubbs had an abandoned fox farm; and Kennedy's parcel housed the former headquarters of a guiding business.

This area had recently undergone a visual transformation. Prior to the 1932 expansion, the area (as noted in Chapter 4) had been the scene of several squatters' residences, within which an undetermined number of residents "jungled in" each winter.[1] But shortly after the area was absorbed into the park, Morino tore down several "unsightly" buildings on his property—including the school house that operated from 1922 through 1924—and moved others farther away from the entrance sign that the Alaska Railroad had installed back in the spring of 1926.[2] Morino made other improvements as well; he got rid of the existing stumps, brush and debris on his property and replaced it with fields of oats and hay. The improvements, to be sure, were intended to allow him to obtain a patent to his property, and were thus temporary; for the time being, however, these fields caused "much comment among the travelers" to the McKinley Station area.[3]

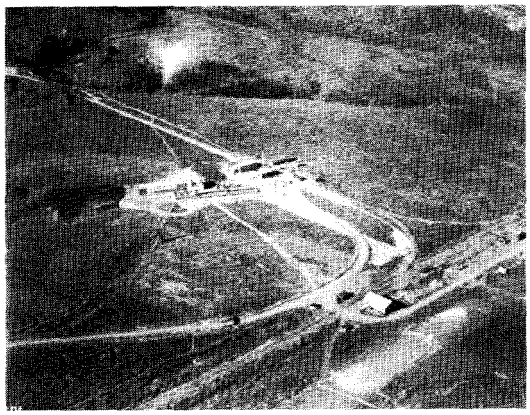
The McKinley Park Hotel offered the troops some luxury for their furloughs. Candy Waugaman Collection

### The McKinley Park Hotel

The quiet that prevailed in and around McKinley Park Station in early 1937, however, was illusive, because events taking place among Washington bureaucrats portented dramatic, immediate changes to the area. Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, working together with Territorial Chief Ernest Gruening,[4] recognized that tourism would need to be a major element of any Alaska economic development strategy. As noted in Chapter 4, Department plans dating back to the mid-1920s had consistently noted the need for a park hotel in the McKinley Station area, and during the winter of 1934-35 Ickes had shown an interest in the site. In 1936, Gruening visited the park and recognized that the provision of adequate tourist accommodations was the park's most pressing need. He afterward worked with NPS personnel and was able to persuade Ickes to appropriate $350,000 in Works Progress Administration funds to build a hotel.[5] (The Works Progress Administration, headed by Harry Hopkins, had been established in 1935 to provide relief to the unemployed; it was in its heyday during the late 1930s.) Because Secretary Ickes fervently believed that the public-sector should own and manage facilities in the national parks, he had decided early in the planning process that the Alaska Railroad would be given control of the hotel project (see Appendix D). On that basis, Ickes directed the railroad to use the WPA funds on hotel construction; the NPS would be the railroad's agent for design and construction. Given those expectations, a site was surveyed in mid-May 1937 for the hotel and a power house, both of which would be located approximately 300 yards from the McKinley Park train station.[6] Ickes and Gruening had expected that the hotel would be built according to a rustic design, following preliminary plans that had been drawn up by Thomas Vint. By the time construction began, however, budget cutbacks had forced the hotel to conform to a more functional, Spartan design.[7]

The Interior Department announced the hotel project on June 20, 1937, and on-the-ground activity commenced less than three weeks later. Under the de facto direction of Alston Gutterson, an architect from the NPS's Washington office, ground was broken on July 12; hotel plans, however, did not arrive until July 31.[8] By the end of August, 78 were on hand to help with the project; they began by constructing a bunkhouse, powerhouse, underground reservoir, and septic tank, but in September crews began on the hotel building itself. Aided by good fall weather, work continued on the project until November 28, by which time "all framing, roofing, siding, sash, entrance doors and exterior trim [had been] accomplished." Project leaders were hopeful that the hotel would be completed by July 15, 1938.[9] Some visionaries were predicting even more; an article in *Collier's*, a top-selling periodical, noted that

> Heretofore the park has closed officially for visitors every September. ... Now the government is building a hotel at the gate beside the railroad



This aerial view shows the McKinley Park Hotel under construction, as well as the depot area and the railroad wye which allowed delivery of materials and supplies right to the hotel site. In the lower center of the photo, the park's gateway arch and its long shadow are visible on the park road. Bradford Washburn Collection, #2393, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

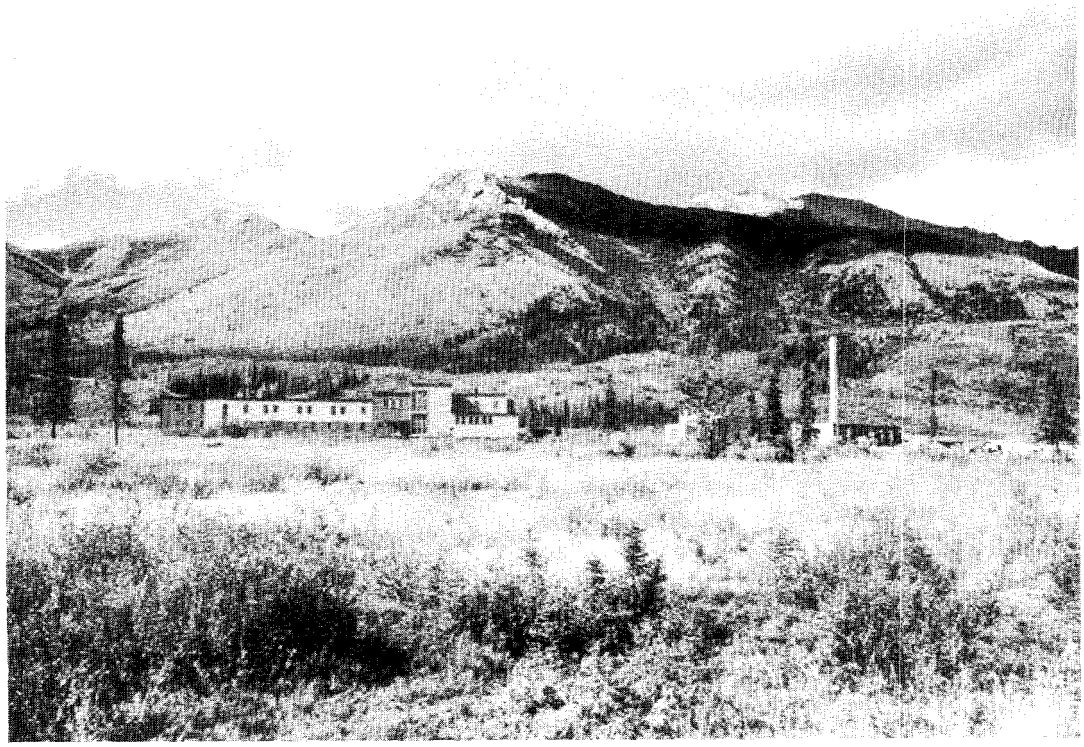
> [and] McKinley will be open for winter sports—with authentic facilities unsurpassed elsewhere in the world.[10]

A 25-person crew under Gutterson's direction returned to the site on April 4, 1938, and continued for the next several months with a crew that numbered between 64 and 75. The hoped-for completion date announced earlier proved overly optimistic, however.[11] On July 19, Ernest Gruening stopped by to inspect the project, and less than a month later, Secretary Ickes visited the site. Ickes, who was accompanied by both Gruening and Thomas Vint, the NPS architect, did not like what he saw. His wife Jane, who kept a diary during the trip, noted that as the train was

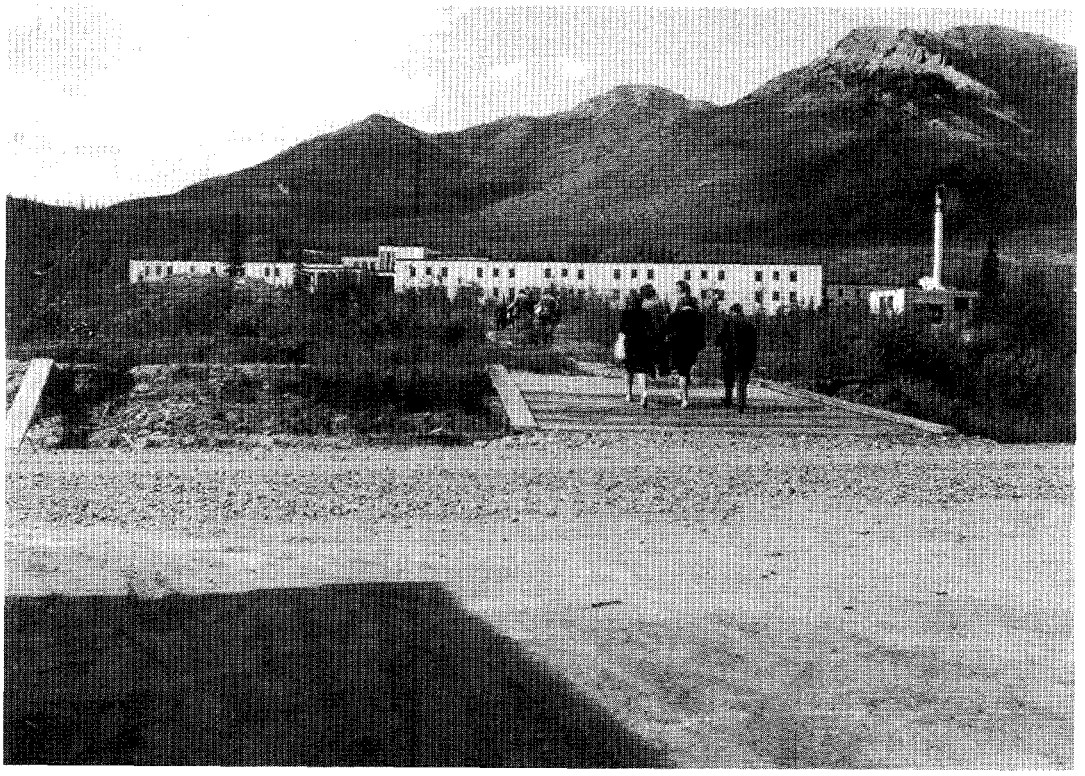
> rolling into the park siding, an atrocious sight greeted us – an elongated pile of bastard-modern, dun-colored boards, pierced by niggardly slits of windows.... Without exception, it is an appalling monstrosity. Tiny cells of rooms; no view; no sitting space; a power plant blocking the approach.... A typical example of criminal inefficiency on the part of bureaucrats. Harold was simply frantic.[12]

Judging the original hotel as being too small and the architects too parsimonious, he demanded the construction of an enlarged dining room along with a new, 46-room wing that would be funded from the Alaska Railroad account. Ickes was so disappointed with Gutterson's project management that he replaced him with Vint, effective immediately; Vint, however, would remain on the job only until a railroad representative could succeed him.[13]

By late October, construction had been pushed to the point where the hotel was fully enclosed. Work could therefore continue throughout the following winter, with crews numbering between 30 and 45. On December 8, Vint was replaced by the first of a series of Alaska Railroad foremen. By the end of February 1939, Superintendent Liek reported that "work on the new McKinley Park Hotel is rapidly nearing completion," and two months later he noted that the job was "practically completed."[14] The hotel, which cost between $300,000 and $450,000,[15] opened with a maximum capacity for 200 guests on June



This photograph documents what Interior Secretary Harold Ickes saw when he visited Mt. McKinley National Park in August, 1938. The hotel powerhouse and dormitory are to the right of the hotel. Secretary Ickes ordered the addition of an enlarged dining room and a new wing of rooms. Ickes Collection, B75-175-287, Anchorage Museum of History & Art



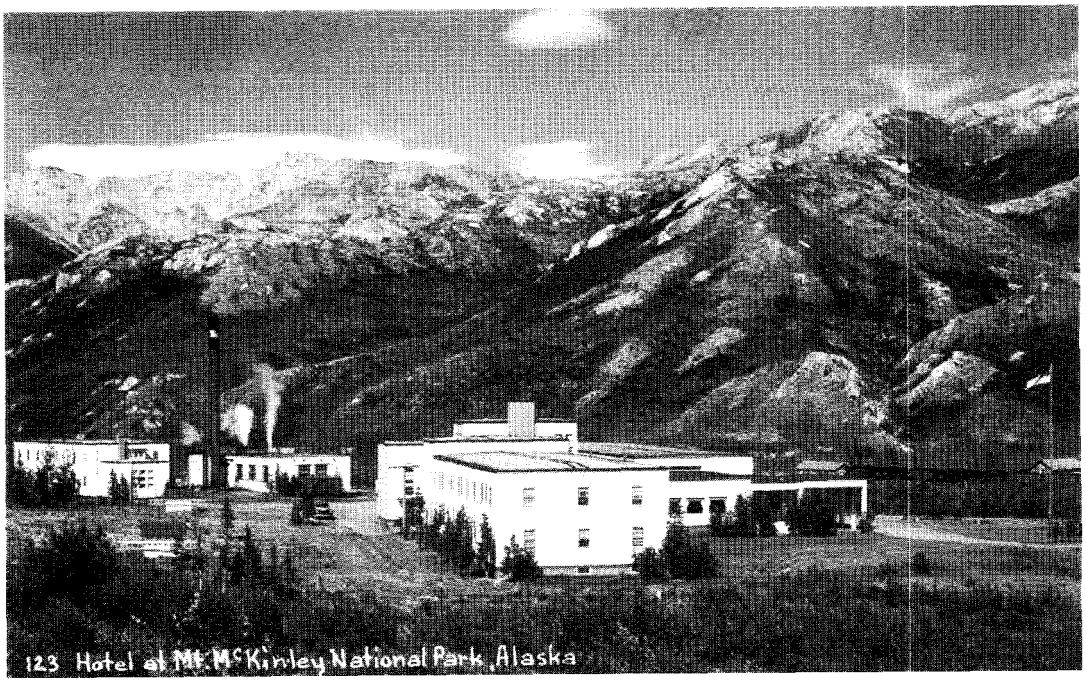
The completed McKinley Park Hotel, with its additional 46-room wing, was opened for business on June 1, 1939. DENA 12-19, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

1, 1939; it contained "98 rooms, 54 with private baths, dining rooms, lounges, game rooms, and other facilities and accommodations for guests." A cocktail lounge in the hotel served liquor by the drink and also did business as a package store. Reviews of the hotel were mixed; while both visitors and development advocates were glad to see and use the new facility, a number of park visitors told the park superintendent "that the new hotel should be within view of Mount McKinley and that a luxury hotel is questionably appropriate."[16] Some government planners felt, during the hotel's construction phase, that the railroad would move its overnight stop on the Anchorage-Fairbanks run from Curry to McKinley Park. No such move was made, however; the hotel at Curry (which had been built in 1923) continued to be used for years after the new hotel opened, and the railroad's summertime schedule continued to include one daily midday stop in each direction at McKinley Park Station.[17]

Secretary Ickes's belief that the public sector—and more specifically the Alaska Railroad—should operate the McKinley Park Hotel rankled the railroad's general manager, Col. Otto Ohlson. Ohlson had spent his ten years on the job trying to stanch the annual flow of red ink, primarily by paring expenses, and he—along with the NPS and park's longtime concessioner—were all aware that the hotel would likely be a money-losing operation, at least in the foreseeable future. Ohlson, a pragmatist, knew that the park's short season and light visitation would most assuredly result in financial losses to the railroad, and he further explained that "whatever satisfactions or benefits derived thereof would not justify the deficit the railroad would incur through hotel operation." As a result, both the NPS and the park's longtime concessioner were relieved that the hotel was not theirs. But the Colonel had little choice in the matter. Conceding defeat, he assigned M. J. McDonald to be the hotel's first manager, a position he retained for the next several years.[18]

### Impacts of Hotel Construction on the Park Concessioner

The government's decision to build a hotel at McKinley Park Station upset the park's longstanding relationship to its concessioner, the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company. This Fairbanks-based company, in 1937, had been taking care of the park's tourists for thirteen years; it had a successful operation at Savage River Camp, where they had built a new social hall and four new tent cabins the previous year, and it also had a two-tent complex (called Camp Denali at the time) at Mile 66 along with even smaller camps at other park destinations. (See Appendix D.) Camp officials recognized that the presence of the new hotel might ruin the company. Despite the obvious handwriting on the wall, however, the concessioner continued to run its camps as it always had, and company officials gleefully declared that both 1937 and 1938 were the most successful years in its history.[19] During the early months of construction, when government




Virtually all park visitors arrived by train and could get to the McKinley Park Hotel by a short walk. This view of the hotel shows the west side. The hotel dormitory and powerhouse are to the left. Candy Waugaman Collection

officials were predicting a hotel completion date during the summer of 1938, concessions officials probably thought—given that their ten-year concessions contract was due to expire in January 1939—that their contract would not be renewed. Given the ongoing delays, however, NPS officials recognized the obvious and renewed the concessioner's contract for another year.[20]

NPS officials reacted to the anticipated June 1939 hotel opening by telling the concessioner to not run its Savage Camp operation; instead, the agency ordered the company to move its main camp out to Mile 66. That spring, company officials moved some of its Savage Camp buildings to the new site, now called Camp Eielson. They were justifiably worried that few park visitors would want to spend the night so far out the park road. In actuality, the results were mixed. When visitors learned that they would be charged to stay at Camp Eielson as well as to ride the bus, some opted to cancel their bus trip west and instead remained in the vicinity of the new hotel. These cancellations were more likely if the day was cloudy. Others, however, preferred Camp Eielson's less elaborate accommodations.[21] For awhile in June, concessions officials were uncertain as to how their bus and camp services would be marketed. Soon, however, Alaska Railroad representatives provided the company with desk space in the new hotel's lobby. At the end of July, the park superintendent reported that the concessioner was holding its own; he noted that "receipts from the long bus trip compensates for diminished hotel demands of this operation. Although the McKinley Park Hotel has the first appeal for visitors, enough people prefer ... Camp Eielson [that] a measure of competition is felt by the hotel." But by the end of the summer, it was clear that although the summer's visitation (2,262) was exceedingly high by historical standards, it was still clearly insufficient to profitably sustain two tourist operations.[22] The hotel, bleeding red ink, closed for lack of business on August 31, two weeks before the park's season officially ended. And the concessioner—despite staying open for the full season, and re-opening Savage Camp to accommodate late-season visitors—reaped just $25,000 in gross revenues (a 30 percent drop-off compared with 1938) and incurred higher-than-usual expenses associated with moving its camp buildings out to Camp Eielson.[23]

The Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company, which had full control over tourist movements into and within the park prior to 1939, was understandably upset that they were forced into a marginal position due to the new hotel's presence. In light of Secretary Ickes's opposition to the NPS's concession system, and in recognition of the fact that a hotel at McKinley Park Station was an important part of a territorial development strategy, even if operated at a loss, Rep. Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.) submitted a bill (H.R. 4868) on March 8, 1939 that amended the Alaska Railroad Act of March 12, 1914 by authorizing the U.S. government, at Mount McKinley National Park, "to construct, reconstruct, maintain, and operate hotels, lodges, and other structures and appurtenances," and also "to purchase ... the personal property, structures, and buildings of the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company"




Camp Eielson, at Mile 66 of the park road, offered overnight accommodations. Candy Waugaman Collection

along with "motor-propelled passenger-carrying vehicles and all necessary fixtures and equipment." Senator Homer Bone (D-Wash.) submitted an identical bill (S. 1785) less than a week later.[24] Both bills were referred to their respective territorial committees, and in April, Interior Secretary Ickes wrote to the two committee chairs, explaining the bills and recommending that each be passed. Ickes noted that

> It has not been possible, after years of experimenting, to secure under present conditions that close cooperation in transportation facilities which is essential in encouraging travel to the park. Furthermore, it has been impossible for the National Park Service to interest sufficient capital in the development of satisfactory hotel and lodge facilities.... The enactment of this proposed legislation will, it is believed, result in additional revenues to the Government-owned Alaska Railroad, as well as the park, and will go far toward making Mount McKinley National Park one of increased travel by tourists...[25]

In early May, both committees passed the measures on to the full House and Senate, respectively. The only variation between the two measures, at this point, was a two-word amendment added to the House bill. Later that month, the full Senate considered S. 1785; when it got to the Senate floor, Senator Carl Hayden (D-Ariz.) stated that "The Alaska Railroad Co. [does] not have authority to take care of buildings off the right-of-way. This permits that to be done." Given that explanation, the full Senate passed the bill and referred it back to the House.[26] Later that year, however, dissident voices began to emerge. On July 6, Rep. Jesse Wolcott (R-Mich.) stated on the House floor that H.R. 4868 was "designed primarily to bail out the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company, which has made a failure of operating these services," and he also noted that the bill offered no estimate of what it might cost to purchase the concessioner's assets. Less than two weeks later, Rep. Robert Jones (R-Ohio) also debunked the notion that the bill (as suggested by Ickes' letter) was "an effort to correlate train schedules with bus schedules;" instead, it was "for the obvious purpose of buying out the concessionaire's equipment and goodwill after the United States has fulfilled its obligations under the terms of the contract."[27]

The House refused to consider H.R. 4868 again until March 6, 1940. Recognizing that the bill was potentially contentious, the House leadership allowed several hours to discuss it. The leading advocate for the bill was Rep. Robert Green (D-Fla), while Rep. Robert Jones (R-Ohio) marshaled those who were militating against it. It was soon generally recognized that certain parts of the bill were vaguely worded or perhaps poorly written; in addition, the few House members who were familiar with the park area, and with Alaska more generally, quickly recognized that most Congressmen had wildly inaccurate notions about the territory and its problems.[28] Those who advocated for the bill—most of whom, like Territorial Delegate Tony Dimond, were New Deal Democrats—recognized that the operation of a hotel, even if run at



The Mt. McKinley Tourist & Transportation Company owned a fleet of buses which provided visitor transportation into the park. DENA 12-13, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

a deficit, was an important element in Alaska's economic development. The purchase of the concession, moreover, was necessary in order to ensure a seamless, low-cost way to promote visitation to and through the park. But those who fought the bill—most of whom were Republicans—made it clear that the government should not be in the hotel business, and they further demanded that both the Alaska Railroad and the newly-opened hotel should either be run profitably or they should be discarded. Schuyler Bland (D-Va.) stated that "it is our duty to the people in that Territory to help build up and maintain and make that Territory which we have taken over," and on a more specific level, Delegate Dimond noted that "it seems absurd that the Government should not operate the park facilities, particularly when it can do so at a profit." But on the opposite side, Frederick Smith (R-Ohio) said, "For the life of me, I cannot understand, when our national finances today are threatening the well-being of our whole Nation, how men can stand in this House and defend an appropriation of this kind. I think it is a crime." And Robert Rich (R-Pa.) stated that "I do not know of a hotel that the Government operates that is not going in the red and going in the red fast."[29]

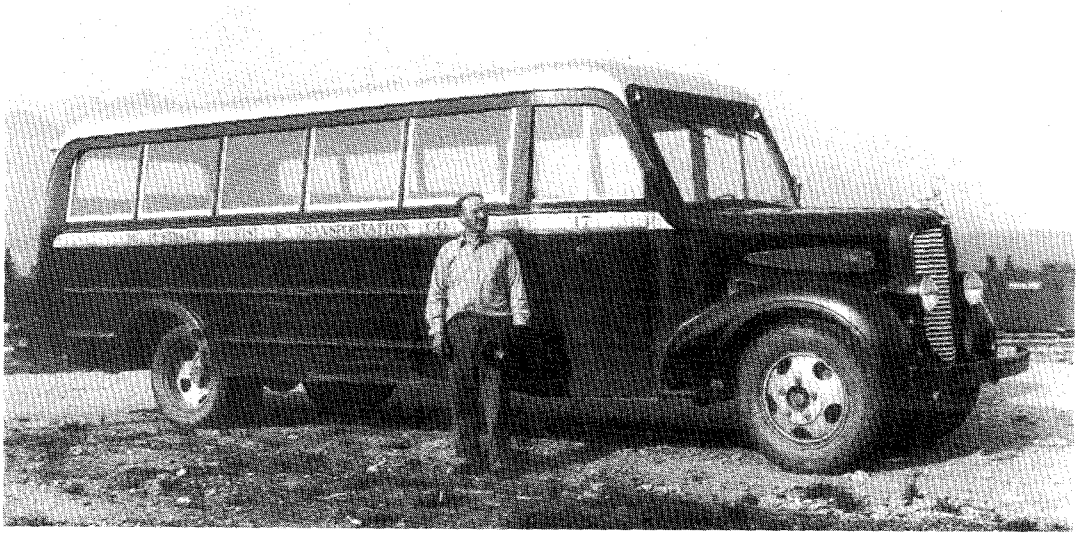
As to specific objections with the bill, it was generally recognized that there were two prime reasons for the proposed concessions purchase. One was that "the hotel and transportation should be under one management," and because both the railroad and the hotel were operated by the Alaska Railroad, therefore the transportation and west-end lodging operations should be run by the government, too. Congressmen were particularly perturbed about the high cost of the existing bus trip: $25 to Camp Eielson and $35 to Wonder Lake.[30] Several representatives also expressed a general worry—given the opening of the McKinley Park Hotel less than a year earlier—that the government was in no position to support the construction of another hotel. (The original House bill, introduced in March 1939, effectively sought permission for the Federal government to build a hotel in the park, but by March 1940 this argument was moot.) Rep. Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.), the bill's sponsor, parried that the government had no interest in a second park hotel, only a "lodge" or "shelter" to upgrade the existing tents. His response, however, led various fiscally-conservative Congressmen to question whether there was an easily-defined difference between a hotel, lodge, and shelter.[31] In addition, Delegate Dimond and Rep. Magnuson noted that the concessioner's assets totaled approximately $30,000 to $40,000. However, the bill provided no limit regarding the level of funds the government might pay to purchase those assets, and various bill opponents worried that this provision would provide a back-door avenue for a sky-is-the-limit government bailout of a marginally successful operation which was operating on a temporary basis after the expiration of its concessions contract.[32]

Given the nature of the debate and certain representatives' obvious misgivings, Rep. Green offered an amendment that replaced the original bill with a one that omitted the term "hotels" and also omitted any reference to specific funds being obligated for the government's purchase of the park concession. Rep. Jones then offered a new amendment that eliminated any reference to the construction and maintenance of "lodges and other structures." That amendment was defeated, 70 to 59. Rep. Frank Keene (R-Wis.)

then proposed an amendment that prevented the U.S. Treasury from spending more than $30,000 to purchase the park concession. That amendment passed, 81 to 54. The House next voted 95 to 43 to use Rep. Green's amended bill—not the original bill—as the primary vehicle to advance this legislation. Finally, on the overall House vote on whether to pass the overall legislation, an initial vote showed that the bill passed, 106 to 81. The closeness of the vote, however, prompted Rep. Henry Dworshak (R-Idaho) to "object to the vote on the ground there is not a quorum present." A few minutes later, therefore, a roll call vote was taken, and Rep. Green's bill passed, 173 to 170. This razor-thin margin was all the more remarkable considering that the Democratic party, at that time, held a commanding 262 to 169 majority in the House of Representatives.[33]

concessions activities in Mount McKinley National Park. To effect the purchase, however, the government needed to appropriate the necessary $30,000, and the Interior Department appropriations bill for 1941—which was approved in May 1940—failed to include funds for this purpose. A year later, the Department was similarly negligent. Lacking any other recourse, agency officials reacted by providing the concessioner with two more one-year contract extensions.[36]

Park officials were clearly pleased with the "spirit of service" maintained by the longtime park concessioner and were hopeful that it would continue until such time as Congress appropriated the necessary buyout funds. The public, to even a greater extent than it had in 1939, showed a preference to board buses



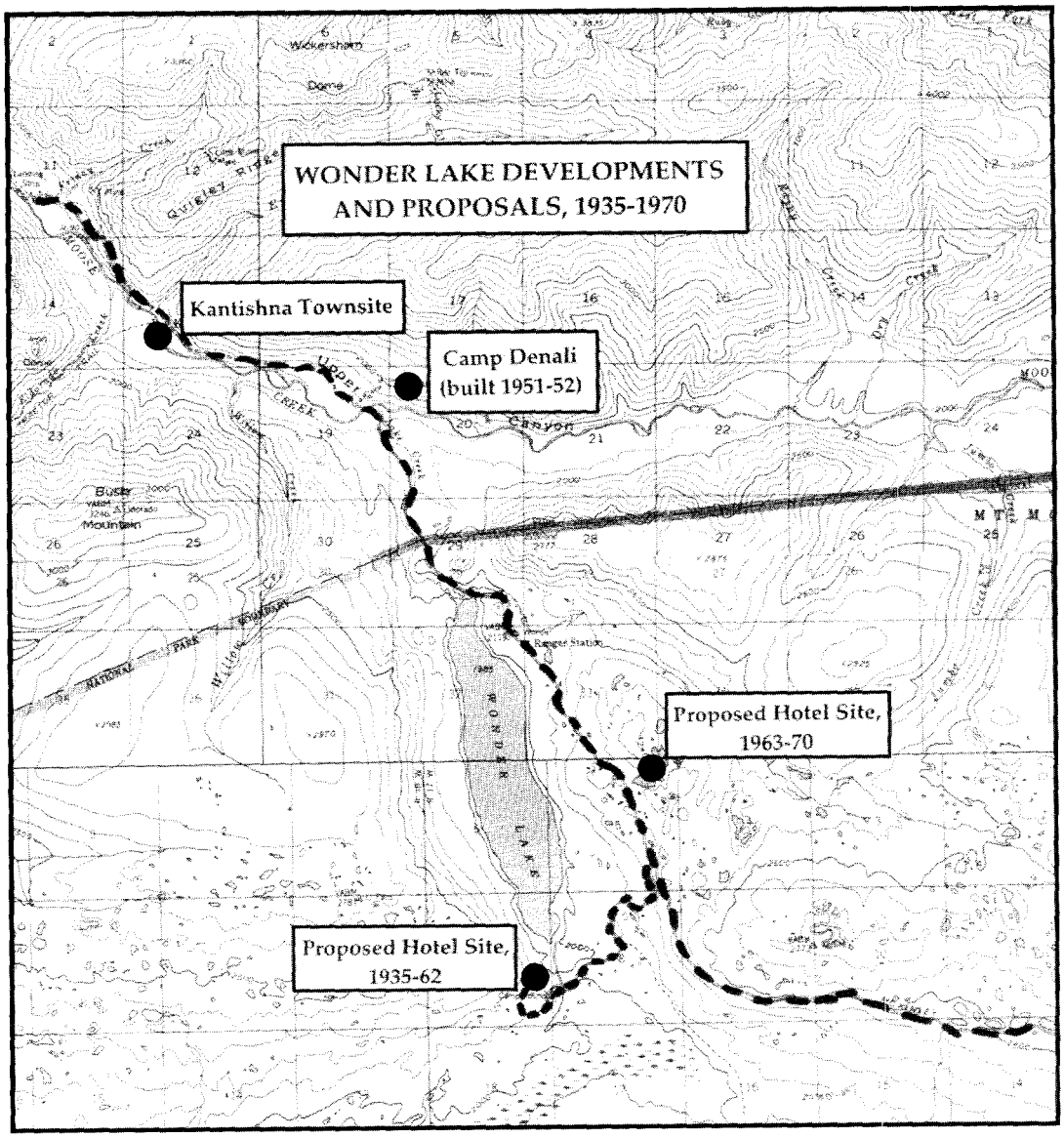
Robert E. (Bobbie) Sheldon built the first automobile in Alaska in 1905, at Skagway. He drove the first auto over the Richardson Highway in 1913 and operated a transportation line over that route. From 1925 to 1941 he was a key figure as the manager of the Mt. McKinley Tourist & Transportation Company, accomplished at everything from entertaining park visitors to mending canvas tents. DENA 14-49, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Eight days after the House passed H.R. 4868 in its revised form, the Senate considered the matter. Millard Tydings (D-Md.), the head of the Committee of Territories and Insular Affairs, noted that the bill was "a very mild local measure for Alaska," and he further stated that there was "practically no difference" between the recently-passed House bill and the S. 1785, which had passed the Senate in May 1939. Because "we have been urged to pass the bill at an early date ... I ask unanimous consent that the House bill be taken up and passed at this time." The Senate complied.[34] The bill was then sent on to President Roosevelt, who signed it on March 29, 1940.[35]

The passage of H.R. 4868 paved the way for the Interior Department to purchase the concessioner's assets and thus take over all

toward the western end of the park and to stay at Camp Eielson, and on "several occasions the accommodations at that camp were taxed to the limit, and not all visitors could secure accommodations there for the periods desired." The railroad, as in 1939, closed the hotel in late August. As a result, the concessioner re-opened its dormant Savage Camp facility for a short-term period. Camp Eielson closed in early September, and Savage Camp a few days later.[37]

Operations in 1941 played out much as they had the previous year, with one exception. The park concessioner, sensing that there was an untapped market for Anchorage and Fairbanks residents "who would like to remain in the park but are unable to pay hotel rates," offered "housekeeping accommodations" at Savage Camp throughout the summer. That June,




In 1936, the Alaska Road Commission established a spur road from the main park road to a knoll south of Wonder Lake to access the site selected for hotel construction. Today that road provides access to the Wonder Lake Campground. Illustration by the author

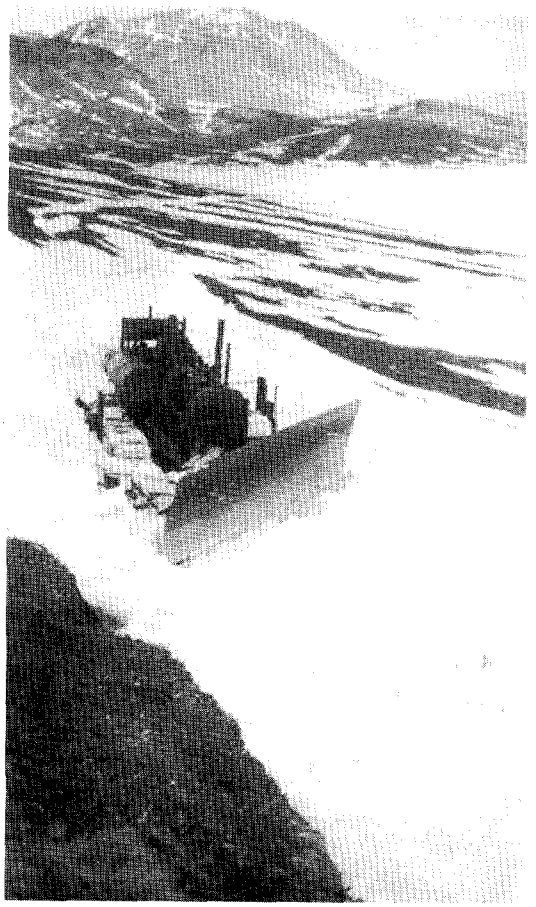
however, the concessioner was informed that Congress had finally decided to purchase the company's assets. During the season that followed, there were "overflow crowds" at Camp Eielson, as in previous years. But company officials, knowing that it was their last year, were in no mood to spend more than was absolutely necessary at the camp; as they noted in a letter to Supt. Been that April, they "agreed to operate this year ... on a cautious basis." They would, moreover, "keep expenses down and ... be prepared to reduce operating expense whenever the outlook for business warrants." So they skimped on many services; horses, for example, were not available to explore the more distant parts of the park. Although the concessioner's contract extension continued until January 31, 1942, its presence was effectively terminated on December 31, 1941, when the Alaska Railroad bought nearly all of the concessioner's personal property for $22,044.99. (See Appendix D.) All that remained was for the purchase of the company's Camp Eielson property; the government bought these items in the summer of 1942 for $2000.[38]

A key point of discussion during the Congressional debate over the government's purchase of the park concession was the role of the Federal government in building and operating hotels, both within national parks in general and at Mount McKinley more specifically. As the March 1940 Congressional debate made clear, the Federal government had built and operated hotels in West Virginia, Florida, Virgin Islands, and Panama, but its only other NPS hotel property was the Longmire Springs property in Mount Rainier National Park.[39] Many in the Congress, primarily Republicans, were decidedly uncomfortable with the government being in the hotel business at Mount McKinley, and several noted that the bill held the door open for the construction of a second government-run hotel. As noted above, however, the House voted down an amendment that would have prevented any future hotel-building at the park.[40]

During this period, Ernest Davidson of the NPS went ahead and developed detailed plans for a Wonder Lake hotel.[41] The government's decision to build the hotel at McKinley Park put any serious consideration of a west-end hotel on the back burner for several years, and the June 1939 arrival of a new park superintendent, Frank Been, further slowed momentum. (In 1940, Been noted that the park's greatest need was for "moderate accommodations and camp grounds," not a "high priced hostelry ... planned for imminent construction with government funds."[42]) That same year, however, the hotel gained a new champion, Governor Ernest Gruening, a frequent visitor who was clearly enthusiastic about the park's economic potential.[43] Working in concert with Alaska Railroad officials, who were on the verge of taking over the park concession, Gruening worked to obtain Congressional funding for a hotel, and during the summer and fall of 1941, park officials were led to believe that the agency would build a lodge near Wonder Lake the following summer.[44]

The idea of a Wonder Lake hotel during this period was spotlighted, in part, because the park road had recently brought easy access to the west end of the park. As noted in Chapter 4, the Alaska Road Commission in 1936 had reacted to the NPS's decision to build its west-end hotel on the knoll south of Wonder Lake by blading out a two-mile spur road to the proposed hotel site. Meanwhile, the ARC pushed forward with its overall road construction program. In 1937, crews opened up three more miles, to the park's northern boundary, and by June 1938 a four-mile extension to the park road had been bladed out and graded as far as the old Eureka site, now known as Kantishna. (This last road segment was located on General Land Office land and thus not paid for by the NPS.) Finally, sixteen years after officials from the ARC and NPS had first proposed it, the road between McKinley Park Station and the Kantishna mining district was a reality. Building the road had cost the NPS some $1.1 million (see Appendix F), but everyone concerned felt that the money had been well spent. It had made major parts of the park accessible to the visiting public, and it also revivified the Kantishna mining district by making the area accessible to motor vehicles. Spurred on by impending road access, area miners roughed out a small airstrip on the right bank of Moose Creek just north of its confluence with Friday Creek. By the summer of 1939, park officials noted that there were ongoing improvements to "the Kantishna landing field and the construction of a spur road to it," and the following year, ARC crews graded and widened the road terminus at the so-called "Moose Creek landing field."[45] This 1,750-foot airfield was later known as the Quigley Airstrip because longtime miners Joe and Fannie Quigley owned the nearby Banjo gold mine, the Kantishna District's largest producers during this period.[46]

Recognizing that road construction was over, ARC and NPS officials worked together to clean up the old ARC camps and cabins, to get rid of upturned tree stumps and similar roadside debris, and to smooth over various abandoned borrow pits. The completion of the road also meant that Road Commission officials were free to spend their annual allotments (funded by the NPS, as noted in Chapter 4) on post-construction work (widening and small realignments), regular maintenance (grading, clearing ditches, bridge and culvert work), and minor improvements (resurfacing and guard rail installation).[47] One of the Road Commission's biggest jobs was opening the road each spring. Because the park did not officially open until June 10 from the 1920s through the early 1940s, ARC crews were not under great pressure to clear off the road as early as possible each spring. This was especially true during the early years, when the park's road mileage was small and the road did not cross the



By spring major snow drifts in certain places along the park road needed clearing, in order to provide access early in the summer. This was a top priority for the Alaska Road Commission crews. Hosler Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



For two summers, 1938 and 1939, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp at Mt. McKinley National Park housed a contingent of 200 enrollees and 12 supervisors. Ickes Collection, B75-175-294, Anchorage Museum of History & Art

high passes. Even so, problems were often unavoidable. In 1924, when the road was built from Rock Creek up to the Hines Creek-Jenny Creek divide, road crews bladed out a section of road four miles west of McKinley Park Station only to discover that it was "too low and that the glaciering of the stream in winter will cover the road with ice." In May 1927, the problem—caused by a series of small, all-weather springs—reasserted itself; as reported in the *Seward Gateway*, "some aggressive measures have been taken against the few glaciers which were blocking auto traffic on the park highway. At mile posts 3, 5 ½ and 6 the Road Commission have had a gang of men with steam-points and dynamite for the last week...". Karstens, in a report that month, further noted that "it is unanimously agreed that the only solution to this problem [of glacial mud and schist slides in this area] is to construct a log cribbing on the hillside and thereby retard the slow but steady movement of that soft material in rainy weather and in the spring."[48] Beginning in 1930, Superintendent Liek's monthly reports suggest that springtime glacier removal—which was at its worst just west of park headquarters but was also a problem elsewhere—was a concern almost every year until World War II. To contain the problem, ARC officials once suggested (but later rejected) "running the road up and around the glaciers at mile 3." They later dug ditches on the north side of the road, tried to divert the water elsewhere, blasted away at the glaciers, and removed accumulating snow with a "snogo" or bulldozer. Despite these measures, none of which were entirely satisfactory, park officials were often skeptical in January or February that the glaciers would disappear before the tourists arrived. In almost all cases, however, their skepticism proved unfounded, and virtually no early-season tourists during this period—except perhaps in 1931 and 1933—were prevented from traveling the full length of the park road.[49]

### The Civilian Conservation Corps and its Contributions

In the spring of 1937, even before the official announcement that the government would build a hotel at McKinley Park Station, park Superintendent Harry Liek received a visit from Robert Fechner, the head of the Civilian Conservation Corps.[50] This organization—which was officially known for its first few years as the Emergency Conservation Work Organization (ECW), though popularly called the CCC—was one of President Roosevelt's most popular New Deal relief-work programs, and at the time of Fechner's visit, the four- year- old organization was a seemingly ubiquitous part of American life. It was also a boon to the National Park Service, which employed a broad range of technical experts that planned and helped execute various projects. Each year between 1933 and 1937, the CCC had operated several hundred camps in scattered locations across the country; many of these were based in NPS units, while others were located in state parks and other reserved areas. Under that arrangement, the program had been extended to the territories as well; by 1934 there were two ECW camps in Hawaii, and by 1936 there were two additional camps in the Virgin Islands.[51]

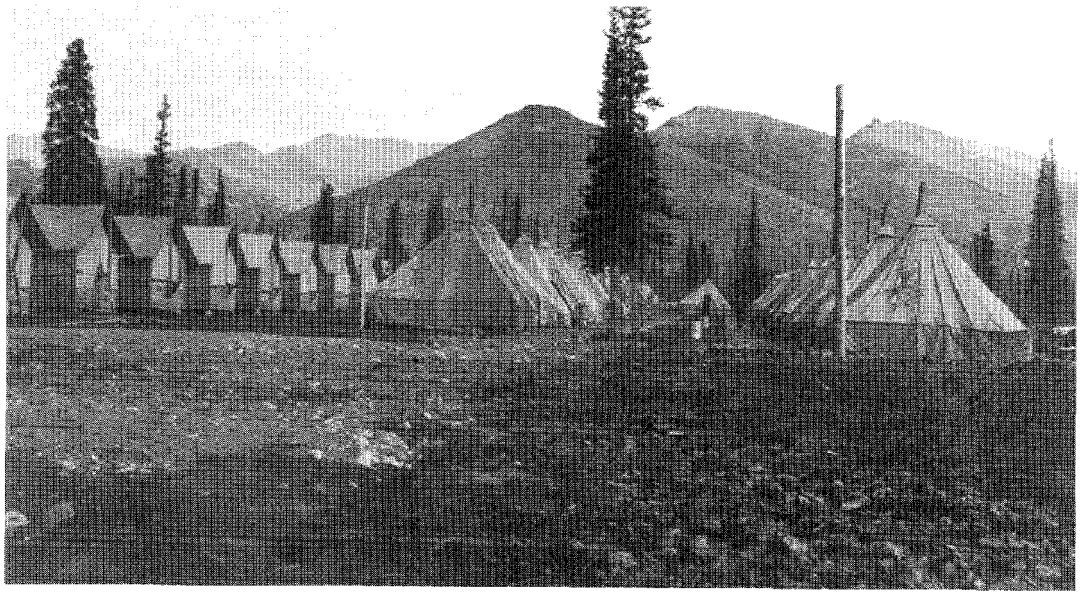
Alaska, however, was out of step because CCC camps were normally operated by the War Department, and Alaska during the 1930s had a painfully small military contingent. To overcome that obstacle, the U.S. Forest Service's Regional

Forester for Alaska, Charles Flory, convinced President Roosevelt, in May 1933, to have the Forest Service take charge of all CCC activity in the territory including enrolling, clothing, housing, transportation, and project supervision. Under those conditions, Flory asked forester Charles F. Burdick to head the CCC program in Alaska, and by the end of 1934 the Forest Service had several camps in operation, with 325 men enrolled. Most of the camps were in Southeast Alaska, but small camps were also located in the Prince William Sound and Kenai Peninsula areas. Most of the Alaska projects, during this period, appear to have taken place on either the Tongass or Chugach national forests. As the decade wore on, the CCC got involved in work projects outside of the forest boundaries, and later in the decade the Corps got involved in projects in such diverse locations as Kotzebue, Nunivak Island, Galena, and Fairbanks.[52]

NPS Assistant Director Conrad Wirth, who had headed the agency's CCC work since early 1936, contacted regional officials and park authorities in early 1937 about the possibility of establishing a camp at McKinley Park that summer. Supt. Liek, in response, prepared a list of proposed projects, and it was initially hoped that there would be a camp established by May 15. That deadline, however, proved unrealistic. When Fechner, accompanied by Burdick, visited the park that June, an attempt was made to lay out a proposed program. The Corps, however, was unable to establish a camp that year because they were unable to secure enough Alaskans to staff the facility. Alaska, during this period, suffered an acute unemployment problem along with the rest of the country; the problem in Alaska, however, was a seasonal one, and few young Alaskan men were idle during the summertime.[53]

NPS officials redoubled their efforts and hoped that a CCC camp could be established the following spring. Those efforts proved successful. On April 24, 1938, the NPS's Washington office announced that a 200-man CCC contingent would be arriving at the park in slightly over a month. The men were being recruited from Washington and Oregon, and their proposed tasks included "building two employee residences, moving dog kennels, telephone maintenance, trails and roads in the headquarters area, roadside cleanup, and cleanup and planting at the hotel project." In response, Liek asked his chief ranger, Lou Corbley, to "supervise the clearing of a camp site for the CCC camp and building tent platforms." Meanwhile, the contingent of men, which was headed by Project Manager Franklin G. Fox and 11 other supervisors, assembled near Seattle and boarded the *North Star*, which was chartered for the occasion. It left Seattle on May 21. When the ship arrived in Seward five days later it was met by a special train, which brought the men to the park on May 29. They wasted no time in getting to work; Liek noted that "a tent camp was established immediately and the work of erecting knock-down buildings and establishing a permanent CCC camp was well under way within 48 hours after arrival of the company at the Park." Owing to its location in the park, the camp was dubbed Company NP-1.[54]

During June camp construction continued, and by the end of the month a number of prefabricated "knock down buildings" were completed, including headquarters buildings, infirmary, mess hall, enrollees' bath house and recreation hall. Throughout the process, Supt. Liek gave the contingent "very fine cooperation and extended the use of all the facilities at this disposal in getting the camp organized." The ARC was



The CCC arrived at McKinley Park with their own camp, including several hard-sided buildings, tents for sleeping quarters, and materials for utility systems. DENA 4685, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



In the park headquarters area, the CCC constructed two single-family employee dwellings, now duplex apartments known as buildings 12 and 13. Beatrice Herning Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

similarly helpful. Given the short lag time for the planning and construction process, inevitable problems surfaced: initial paychecks were delayed, and many construction materials and supplies arrived so late that camp leaders had to borrow them from the NPS or ARC until the CCC could replenish their stocks.[55] But the camp ran smoothly; the Project Manager reported that it "had no accidents involving automotive equipment, exceptionally few lost time accidents to enrollees, ... the general health of the company has been good, camp discipline was maintained without company punishment [and] the majority of enrollees in key positions gave excellent work performances."[56] Toward the end of summer, camp activities began to wind down. Almost half of the camp headed south in September, and most of the remaining personnel left on October 9. The last contingent, 30 enrollees and 5 supervisors, vacated the park on November 3.[57]

During their extended summer in the park, the men had accomplished a great deal. Major projects included the construction of two employee residential buildings, now known as buildings 12 and 13. In addition, CCC crews moved the site of the dog kennels from the camp's eastern edge to its present-day location; as part of that project, it moved the various buildings comprising the park's dog kennels. The men also did minor road work in the headquarters area, constructed water and sewer lines, did landscaping work around the park hotel (which was under construction at the time), and wrote an educational guide for the park. Because "there is need of development work here which will keep a 200-man CCC Company busy for several years," both NPS and CCC officials agreed that the camp should operate again the following summer, and "to expedite the completion to needed development," the CCC camp chief hopefully noted that "arrangements should be made for an additional company" [i.e., a second CCC facility in the park] as soon as feasible." Supt. Liek admitted that the CCC was an excellent way to underwrite park development projects, inasmuch as "we have found it difficult to secure appropriations for construction through the regular appropriations." The goal of the CCC's park development program, Liek averred, was to "provide facilities here at Mount McKinley that will compare favorably with the standards of the Service as represented in our parks in the States."[58]

Liek, hopeful that the camp would return the following year, visited the agency's regional office in December to discuss plans for the continuing construction program. On February 15, 1939, agency officials in Washington announced that Company NP-1 would again operate "on the same general basis as last summer," and in order to avoid the supply problems encountered in 1938, regional and park officials were advised to act quickly. Plans called for the CCC contingent to leave Seattle on the *North Star* in early April—two months earlier than the previous year.[59] Liek spent most of March "completing plans for the CCC summer program" in conjunction with regional-office staff. A month later, knowing that Franklin Fox would not be part of the group that left Seattle, Liek accompanied the men on the way north to the park. The contingent—193 men and 12 supervisors—arrived at McKinley Park Station on April 14. Initial work centered on camp repairs and gearing up for the summer's operation.[60]

Fox arrived in mid- May, and the CCC program, according to park officials, was "well under way by the end of the month." Major projects that summer included the construction of a garage for the superintendent's residence, a reinforced-concrete machine shop and garage in the headquarters area, and a ranger station near the park boundary at the west end of the park road. Crews also erected 41 miles of new "metallic telephone line" between the railroad and Sable Pass, on single vertical poles, to replace the tripod-based line built nine years earlier. Minor projects included work on a hotel-area road, landscaping at the hotel, and work on drainage ditches, sewer and water lines, and underground utility lines.[61] The camp that year was enlivened by at least one dance, and several editions of a camp newspaper, called *The Gold Pan*, were published in June and July. But the camp that summer had its dark side, too; several supervisors complained that the personal appearance of the enrollees was not satisfactory, the camp was unclean, and the tents were in poor condition. Camp management also came in for its share of criticism; in August, park superintendent Been investigated "certain alleged irregularities in the operation of the CCC camp."[62] Been was also alarmed to hear, in mid- summer, of the "abandonment of the camp earlier than planned due to possible lack of funds." The camp, in fact, closed earlier than in 1938; the last enrollees left the park on September 29.[63]

During the summer of 1939, NPS personnel bravely began the process of preparing justification statements for CCC work to take place in 1940. It was hoped that "we shall make the NPS appear in material aspect entitled to be the guardian of the grandest mountain spectacle in North America;" more specifically, their efforts would "be used to improve facilities for visitors and provide civilized living and working conditions for Park Service employees." (This was consistent with the park's six- year plan, approved in 1938, that called for $568,000 to be spent on "a museum, hospital, shops, employees' residences, ranger stations, trails, and highway improvement.")[64] That November, Superintendent Been applied to his superiors to fund the camp for a third consecutive year. The following March, however, his application was rejected due to "the high cost of sending a camp to McKinley."[65] In September 1940, Franklin Fox arrived at the park and shipped most of the CCC's equipment off to Fairbanks and Anchorage; all that remained were "two trucks, a pick-up and an unusable tractor" along with an abandoned camp area. Governor Gruening, who visited the park a month later, urged NPS staff to try again for a CCC contingent. Authorities, however, responded that "operation costs in Alaska are too high," a factor that was aggravated by the need to bring in Outside labor.[66] By January 1942, it was obvious that the CCC era at the park had come to a close, and given that state of affairs, all remaining equipment that had once belonged to the CCC was given to the park. That July, Congress announced the CCC's liquidation, and in the months to follow, the NPS closed up its books related to the McKinley park



The CCC crews relocated the park's dog kennels and associated feed and equipment storage building. Ickes Collection, B75-175-295, Anchorage Museum of History & Art

operation. All that remained of the once-bustling CCC camp was just five widely-spaced wooden buildings: a mess hall along with a garage, storage building, bath house and photography lab.[67]



The CCC Mess Hall was one of those wooden buildings which became park property after the CCC camp closed. It remains in use today as a recreation facility in the NPS seasonal housing area. DENA 4-24, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

### Inholding Consolidations

As noted in Chapter 4, the 1932 extension of the park boundaries brought with it a large number of parcels for which the federal government did not have a clear title. Some acreage had already been deeded to private individuals, while in other cases, claimants were only part of the way through the land acquisition process or had little more than squatters' rights. In order to clear up the confusion, particularly as it applied to the McKinley Park Station area, the General Land Office brought in a special agent to investigate the veracity of the various questionable or unresolved claims. The agent quickly eliminated the legal basis for several of these claims, and only one of the twelve claims investigated—that of fox farmer Duke E. Stubbs—resulted in a land patent. (Stubbs received his patent in April 1933, before the GLO investigator completed his report.) One other claimant—John Stephens, who had a 133.76-acre parcel that surrounded the Windy railroad station—was also awarded a land patent during the same period, on February 9, 1933.[68]

When the park took an inventory of its property in the fall of 1938, there were still eight parcels in the park that were either owned by private parties or were still in the adjudication process. Three of those parcels—Edward Shannon's 160-acre tract, Logan Varnell's 15-acre tract, and W. A. Baker's 5-acre tract—were never patented.[69] But private citizens owned the other five. Three of those parcels—Maurice Morino's 120-acre tract, Duke Stubbs's 35-acre tract, and Dan Kennedy's 5-acre tract—were in the McKinley Park Station area. John Stephens, as noted above, owned a large parcel at the southeastern corner of the park, and Paula Anderson owned a 160-acre tract just north of Wonder Lake. The NPS's regional director, as part of his request for the property inventory, admitted that "I do not know that there is any possibility of obtaining funds for the acquiring of these holdings." Agency policy, however, had long called for the acquisition of private lands in the parks, so



Paula Anderson received a patent to her Wonder Lake-area land claim in 1930. Ten year after her homestead was included in the 1932 park boundary extension, her land claims were finally settled. B00-7-39, Anchorage Museum of History & Art

officials did what they could to induce landowners to either donate or sell their parcels to the Park Service.[70]

As a result, NPS officials carried on intermittent correspondence with each of the five landowners or their designees.[71] The correspondence files show that most of the inholders threw roadblocks into the appraisal process by claiming that the park had impinged on either current or potential commercial activities. As a result, the owners claimed that the government owed them money, and several petitioned to Delegate Tony Dimond for Congressional bills that authorized compensation.[72] To complicate matters, at least one of those owners refused to sell at any price. As a result, some of these cases dragged on for more than 20 years.

The first to be resolved involved Paula Anderson's Wonder Lake property, which had been patented on August 1, 1930. In early 1938, Mrs. Anderson asked the government to buy her out, noting that the "new addition to Mt. McKinley National Park ... deprived us of our livelihood [as fox farmers] and trap line, and we were compelled to move from there." She further noted that "our home is destroyed" and there had been "the annihilation of all my personal property under the mismanagement of Mr. Leak [sic]."[73] Anderson hoped to reap a windfall similar to that which had been awarded to the Stubbs in the recent Court of Claims ruling, and in April 1940, Delegate Dimond submitted a bill (H.R. 9353) to advance her case to that court. The Interior Department, however, opposed Dimond's bill. During this period, it was revealed that the Andersons had moved from the park well in advance of any activity related to the 1932 park extension, and that they had also broken territorial game laws by feeding wild game to their foxes. Mrs. Anderson then signed an option to sell the property for $3120. That option expired, however.

Not long afterward, the Public Works Administration proposed an unidentified project in the vicinity of Anderson's property; $10,000 was allotted for this project, and the property was considered sufficiently important to institute condemnation proceedings (a "declaration of taking") against the property. By April of 1941 that declaration had been completed and a U.S. Attorney in Fairbanks petitioned to condemn the tract. Meanwhile, Dimond—based on guidance provided by Interior Department officials—submitted a new bill asking that the government provide Anderson a direct $3000 payment. That bill (H.R. 327) was introduced in January 1941, and on April 1 the House passed it. A month later, a Senate committee reduced the award to $2,500. The full Senate passed the bill on May 15, the House quickly agreed to the Senate's changes, and President Roosevelt signed the bill on May 28.[74] Nine months later, in February 1942, a Fairbanks federal court jury awarded $1600 in conjunction with the taking. Two months after that, on April 9, the court in Fairbanks completed its condemnation proceeding; it awarded Anderson $800 for her parcel, and title transferred to the U.S. government.[75]

**Other Park Operations, 1937-1941**

Although construction related to the hotel, the park road, and CCC activities were major park activities during the late 1930s and early 1940s, park officials also did their best to carry out a broad range of more traditional duties: protecting the park's wildlife, building and maintaining cabins and ancillary structures, purchasing relevant inholding properties, and improving visitor services. As shall be seen, life at the park during this period proved topsy-turvy for virtually everyone, and in the midst of this change, the traditional "cabins and snowshoes" atmosphere was largely subsumed by lifeways considered more modern and experimental.

First, the completion of the park road meant that officials needed to maintain a presence just inside the park boundary in the Wonder Lake area. Back in the fall of 1933, they had chosen a site for a ranger station at the "north or Kantishna entrance," but recognizing that road construction was several years off, NPS officials (as noted in Chapter 4) erected a cabin along Moose Creek in either 1935 or 1936.[76] In June 1939, shortly after the road was completed, agency staff revisited the area and concluded,



The Civilian Conservation Corps built the five-room, frame construction Wonder Lake Ranger Station during the summer of 1939. Beginning the next season, there were many structural problems with the building and it was difficult to heat in the winter, but the view, looking out over Wonder Lake to Mt. McKinley, was superb. DENA 6-6.5, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

regretfully, that the optimum site for the ranger station was on land still owned by Paula Anderson.[77] Soon afterward, they picked out a site on high ground east of Wonder Lake, and in mid-July, a CCC crew established a "stub camp" and started excavating a basement. After a whirlwind summer of construction, Been reported in September that "this fine, thoroughly insulated house" was complete except for exterior painting. Been later reported that "the house stood up well" that winter, but "as soon as the surface thawed and allowed the building to settle, defects and weaknesses" such as leaning, sagging, and curling became apparent. The first ranger lived there in the winters of 1939-40 and 1940-41, but no one used it as a summertime residence during this period.[78]

Meanwhile, previously-established cabins toward the western end of the park were utilized during this period to combat game violators. Trapping in this area, in all probability, had been going on for quite some time, but the NPS's new awareness of the problem was due to the rangers' easier access to the area, and also because Alaska Game Commission agents, who occasionally flew along the park boundary and spotted questionable activities, cooperated with NPS authorities.[79] Trapping in the area may also have increased because more people now lived in the newly-accessible Kantishna area. Evidence of trapping was discovered in early 1938 when rangers located a series of traplines inside the park boundary as they trekked west from Wonder Lake to Slippery Creek. These traplines, which harvested marten, were laid out, in all probability, by longtime Slippery Creek resident Hjalmar "Slim" Carlson. In response, NPS rangers fixed up an old cabin on Birch Creek and used it as an ad hoc base camp for patrols; this action caused Carlson to move his traplines north to areas outside of the park.[80] In both 1938 and 1939, rangers patrolled the boundary between Wonder Lake and Moose Creek in response to the Game Commission's decision to have an open season on beaver in the Kantishna area.[81] At Horseshoe Lake, near McKinley Park Station, rangers nabbed Carl Rozansky of Ferry in the midst of a beaver-harvesting operation. NPS officials were pleased to note that when the case was tried by C. C. Heid, the U.S. Commissioner in Nenana, Rozansky was assessed both a $100 fine and a 30-day jail sentence. This was an obvious indication that territorial authorities were willing to clamp down on wildlife violators.[82]

Symptomatic of the park's changing conditions was the introduction of new communications technologies. As noted above, park personnel had built a telephone line along the park road starting in the mid-1920s, and the line was extended west along with the road to allow communications between NPS, concessions, and ARC personnel. By the early 1930s the line reached all the way to the Mount Eielson area, and in 1939, CCC crews built a new, vertical-pole line between McKinley Park Station and Sable Pass. Due to the lack of a CCC camp in 1940, the line west of Sable Pass remained a tripod-based affair.[83] Meanwhile, however, the NPS opted to use radio telephones as well. In early 1938 the park received two 50-watt sets and installed one in the superintendent's office. It was originally intended to have the other hauled out to the Moose Creek Ranger Station, but given the flurry of CCC construction, the second 50-watt set was instead installed at the new Wonder Lake Ranger Station in the fall of 1939. A third, portable set, also in place in 1939, was

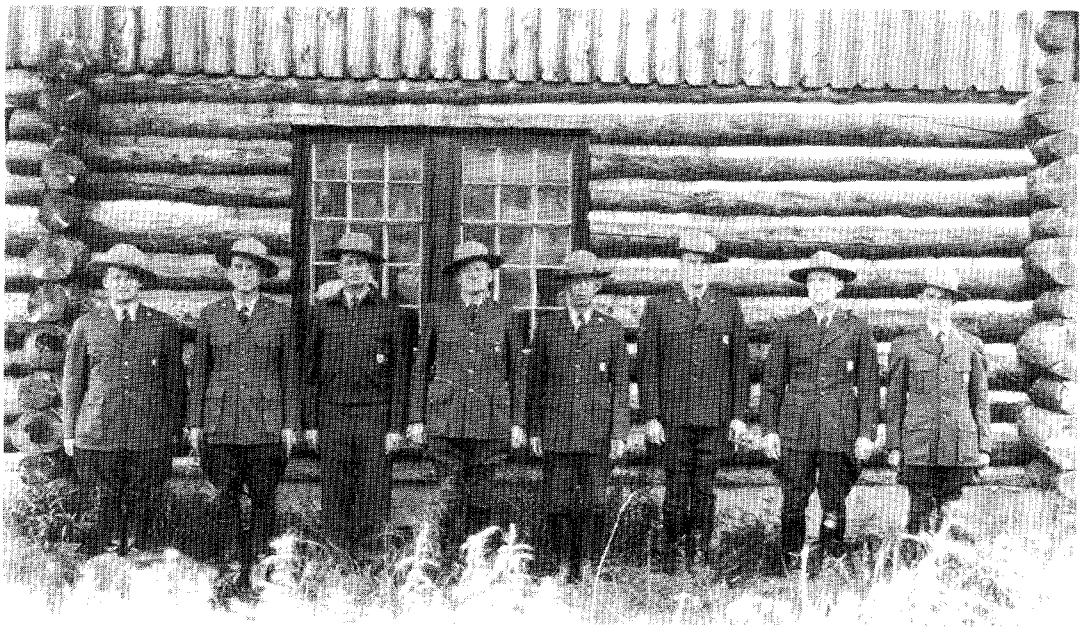


District Ranger John Rumohr, seen here using his portable radio telephone, was stationed at the newly completed Wonder Lake Ranger Station for 2 winters beginning in 1939-40. Beatrice Herning Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

for use on dog-sled ranger patrols. Park officials hoped, of course, that the three sets would considerably ease communications between headquarters and the field.[84] Reality, however, proved problematic; the superintendent often complained about the "almost total uselessness of the park radios," and in the spring of 1941 the park saw fit to augment its radio-system capabilities by purchasing a new receiver.[85]

A more obvious and visible change at the park centered on its dog teams. Throughout the 1930s, dog teams had been virtually the only way in which rangers, in wintertime, reached the more distant parts of the park; they were a proven lifeline in emergency situations and were consistently popular with park visitors. Elsewhere in Alaska, however, dog teams were quickly being replaced by airplanes and motor vehicles, and by 1936, Superintendent Liek admitted that because "the mail delivery by dogteam in most sections have been discontinued, ... dogs have become scarce and difficult to purchase." Superintendent Been, shortly after his arrival in June 1939, noted that "dog sleds typify McKinley winter travel. The method is exhilarating, interesting and romantic but practically obsolete in Alaska" and further noted that snowshoes—not dog teams—were the "conventional mode for winter patrol in most national parks."[86] Late in 1940, Been stated that "consideration is being given to the elimination of dog team patrols except to the most remote places of the park. Perhaps there airplane [travel] will be more economical, certainly more effective, than dog team travel. ... The money and time given to dog care may thereby be devoted to foot patrolling." As the winter wore on, Been's position became more entrenched; he noted that "dog teams are not necessary for patrols where cabins are reasonably close" and "that the sled dogs may be more liability than asset for patrol work except on extended trips." He recommended foot patrols in most cases. By April of 1941, Been remarked that "reduction of kennels is being made by culling the dark dogs, leaving about 2 teams of the light colored animals which are beautiful dogs weighing 100 pounds or more." A follow-up letter that July noted that the park had "kept those of light colors, rounded heads, erect ears, masked, and plume tails." Been decided to keep only sufficient dogs for longer patrols and for interpretive demonstration purposes.[87] Within the next year or two, the remaining park dogs were taken away; longtime employee Bill Nancarrow noted that the military used them as part of various troop deployments.[88]

The change of superintendents, from Harry Liek to Frank Been, had significant impacts on the other park staff. As was suggested earlier, Liek had a fairly *laissez faire* management style; he gave considerable independence to his rangers, and there was by all accounts an easygoing camaraderie among the park staff. Liek, however, was ousted in the spring of 1939 following reports—dating from the previous August—of gambling, drinking, and a lack of discipline among park supervisors.[89] He was transferred to Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. Been, by contrast, was totally different. Although his last posting was in San Francisco, where he had served as an assistant to Regional Director Frank Kittredge, he had previously worked at Sequoia National Park, where he was a disciple of Col. John White, the longtime superintendent and former Army officer.[90] But



Frank Been, fourth from left, arrived at Mt. McKinley National Park as Superintendent in 1939. Chief Ranger Lou Corbley, fifth from left, and Ranger John Rumohr, second from right, had been rangers for at least a decade. DENA 27-11.2, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

unlike his predecessors, who came from the traditional ranger ranks, Been was a naturalist and a forestry-school graduate. The park, by this time, had hired several short-term or seasonal ranger-naturalists, and interpretation was considered part of a jack-of-all-trades ranger's duties. Been's style, however, set him apart from the other park staff—he issued frequent memos to his staff as "a guide to the Superintendent's practices and methods of administration"—and several tragic gaffes during the early part of his superintendency did little to endear him to his subordinates.[91] Moreover, Been—who was the NPS's primary Alaska representative[92]—was gone from the park for much of the summer in 1939, 1940 and 1941 on inspection trips related to proposed or existing parks. These long absences were necessary because Washington officials demanded them; even so, they rankled park employees because it resulted in an increased workload for the remaining park staff.[93] Longtime park employee Grant Pearson, who briefly served as his chief ranger, found him authoritarian, exacting, humorless, and rigid; after months of trying, he concluded that "I guess there are some people you just can't seem to get along with." Been, in turn, thought that Pearson was a "good man" but "requires a helluvalot of development for administrative work," and he fought against promoting him.[94] Soon after arriving, Been recognized that low morale was a problem. He felt that the problem, in part, was due to difficult employees ("the transfer of families or individuals that do not fit into the community may be necessary"), but he also felt that families fit into the isolated environment better than bachelors. He was hampered, however, because there were no available quarters for married employees.[95]

The problem of low morale was aggravated by a fire that destroyed Superintendent Been's house on the morning of October 23, 1939. An investigation showed that the fire began in the nine-year-old house because of a faulty chimney flue; it spread quickly because the house was "tinder dry" from constant heating, and it consumed the entire house because the nearest fire-fighting equipment was two miles away at McKinley Park Station. The adjacent garage, which had been completed just a month earlier, was also damaged, though not seriously. Frank and Lorraine Been, who lost most of their possessions, moved into the rangers' dormitory for the time being; soon afterward, Mrs. Been moved to Anchorage. Meanwhile, Delegate Dimond agreed to petition Congress for about $6,000 in loss-related compensation, but the claim was unsuccessful.[96]

During the following months, the remaining women living in the headquarters area sought to bolster morale by forming the nucleus of the park's first-ever women's club; the five-member club socialized on a weekly basis.[97] But Lacie Janes, the wife of the park clerk Gerald Janes, broke the peace when she accused the Beens of a variety of charges including arson, insurance fraud, and narcotics possession. The following March, two Interior Department special agents, Robert O'Brien and John Mealy, visited the park and investigated these charges. In mid-April the two men concluded that friction between Lacie Janes and Lorraine Been, and between Gerald Janes and the Superintendent, had probably led to the Janes' allegations, and that the Beens "in no way acted improperly." Both the fire and the subsequent investigation, however, took a heavy toll at the park, both on park staff and their families.[98]

In response to the fire, Been requested funds for the construction of a new superintendent's house. That request was disapproved. Sufficient funds existed, however, to erect an employee's residence and to repair the damage to the superintendent's garage. Despite the lack of a CCC contingent (which had built two other headquarters residences in 1938) and the difficulty of procuring other labor due to military construction projects elsewhere in Alaska, work on the structure—located well away from the former superintendent's residence—was "proceeding satisfactorily" during the summer of 1940. The exterior of the structure was completed in June 1941. That summer, Been decided that he and his family would occupy the new structure; due to staff and budgetary cutbacks, however, Been's family did not move in until late March 1943.[99] Superintendents and their



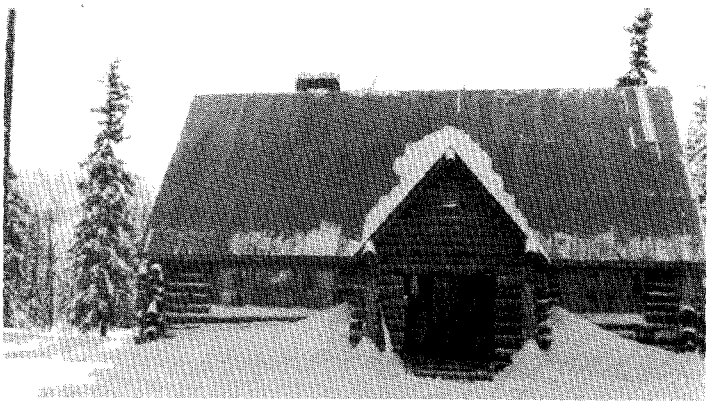
Due to a faulty chimney flue, the superintendent's house was destroyed by fire on October 23, 1939. To the left of the burning house can be seen the superintendent's garage, which had been completed by the CCC just a month before. DENA 8-27, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

families continued to live there on a year-round basis for another fifty years.[100]

Also under construction during this period were the first park trails. In the summer of 1940, just a year after the hotel threw open its doors, an ARC crew carved out a 1.5-mile trail from the hotel to Horseshoe Lake. The following summer, rangers commenced work on a 6-mile trail leading from the hotel to "Yanert Lakes" (later known as Triple Lakes). By the close of the 1941 season, however, the trail was only about half done, and not until 1944 was it reported to be completed and in good condition.[101]

**World War II: the Army Gets Involved**

The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 had a jarring effect on the national parks, as it did on virtually all aspects of national life. Virtually overnight, funds from domestic agencies were funneled into the war effort, and employees from throughout the civil service joined the armed forces. At the National Park Service, the overall budget dropped from $14.6 million in fiscal year 1942 down to just $5.5 million a year later, and the parks, in the words of Director Newton Drury, operated on a "protection and maintenance basis." The fall in the agency's human capital was just as precipitous; the number of permanent full-time employees dropped more than two-thirds in just 19 months, from 5,963 just before Pearl Harbor to just 1,974 in June 1943. The number of visitors fell, too; overall visitation to NPS units plummeted from 21.2 million in 1941 to 6.8 million two years later. As part of the overall war effort, the Washington offices of the NPS, along with those of other non-defense agencies, moved to Chicago's Merchandise Mart.[102]



No federal funds were available to reconstruct the superintendent's house in its former location, but an employee residence in another location had been funded. The funded building has been the home of park superintendents ever since. DENA 7-40, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

These national trends had varying degrees of impact on Mount McKinley National Park. The park budget, for example, was reduced by only about one-third, from $29,970 in fiscal year 1940 to $20,450. (See Appendices B and C.) The lack of a greater cut was primarily because the park served several valuable wartime functions, as will be seen below. As was true in many parks, Mount McKinley lost a number of employees to military service; the overall permanent staff dropped from eight to five. Staff reductions were felt most keenly in the spring of 1942, when Been commented that "Indications point to a nearly denuded organization." Indeed, during June and July of that year, Superintendent Been and ranger John Rumohr constituted the entire park staff.[103] Anticipating the loss of men, Been stated in March 1942 that "an innovation at McKinley appears destined to occur as women will probably have to be employed." His hunch soon became reality, because that July the first woman began working at the park: clerk-stenographer Raye Ann Ayers. Ms. Ayers later rose to the principal clerk's position and remained at the park, off and on, for most of the decade.[104]

The war's most dramatic impact on the park was in visitation; the number of recreational visitors dropped from 1,688 in 1941 to virtually nothing. Because of Alaska's strategic location (and because of its defense vulnerabilities), General John L. DeWitt of the War Department's Western Defense Command declared Alaska off-limits to tourist travel in mid-December 1941, and all travel to and from the territory was placed under military control for the duration of the war. During this period, Alaska residents were welcome to visit Mount McKinley National Park, but all park facilities were either closed or were open on a do-it-yourself basis. Given those conditions, and the strict rationing that prevailed on the residents of Alaska (as well as elsewhere), fewer than forty recorded non-military visitors entered the park between 1942 and 1945, inclusive.[105]

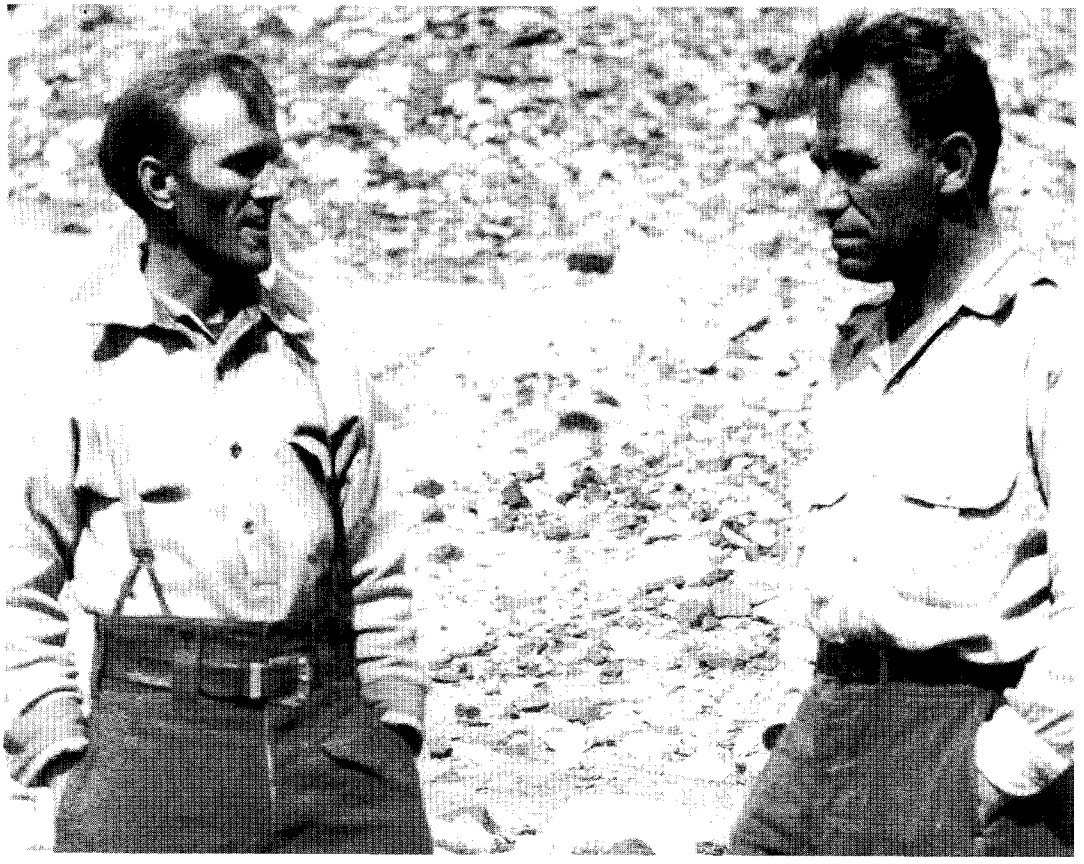
At Mount McKinley, the staff reacted to Pearl Harbor much as others did throughout the country; it instituted a blackout at the park headquarters and posted round-the-clock guards on various railroad bridges. Those measures lasted only until January 1942. That same month, park staff made perhaps an obvious decision, "not to open the ... hotel nor to operate the bus service and other visitors' accommodations." Given that choice, the park was cast adrift from many of its usual roles and duties.[106]

The military, meanwhile, recognized that the park could provide two major ways to aid the country's overall war effort: as a site to test equipment for winter use, particularly in mountainous areas, and as a recreation site for soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Both ideas had been broached well before the U.S. entered the war. In January 1941, U.S. Air Corps Lt. Jack Marks was the first to use the park to test winter clothing for soldiers. Marks, a former Yosemite ranger who was stationed at newly-established Ladd Field, took dog teams into the park as part of his testing regimen.[107]

Just a month later, in February 1941, military officials first broached the idea of the park as a recreation site. Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., who headed the Alaska Defense Force (and was thus in charge of Alaska's entire military effort), arrived at park headquarters with Colonel John Hood, who commanded the newly-established Fort Richardson in Anchorage, and Lt. Col. William Bray. The three officers discussed with Been various locations for soldiers' recreation camps, noting that "lack of recreation for soldiers in Alaska contributes to the seriousness of the morale problem." The officers showed an obvious interest in establishing a camp at the park, but because the camps were intended to be permanent, Been suggested other locations, and more specifically Iliamna Lake.[108] That June, Bray and Hood showed a specific interest in having the Alaska Defense Command use the recently-abandoned Savage River Camp concessions facility for the summer. A lack of appropriations nixed that idea for the time being.[109]

That fall, Buckner spent three days in the park with Been, and together they worked out a massive recreation-camp scheme which proposed sufficient recreation facilities to care for a large contingent of soldiers. The two men's plans, however, differed significantly. Been envisioned 200 men in the park each ten days, and to accommodate them he recommended the construction of a large, year-round central camp at Savage River; 30 well-stocked cabins, to be built along the park road; 50 Adirondack-style log shelters, to be scattered in the backcountry; a 15-mile road between Wonder Lake and the Clearwater Creek-McGonagall Pass area; 55 miles of new telephone line; a new landing field at McKinley Park Station; plus horses, busses, and camp equipment. Developing the scheme would cost $531,500, to be paid through the Defense Public Works office.[110] Buckner, however, wanted a camp for 500 men, most of whom would stay in a large camp located "in the valley south of the McKinley River and commanding a view of the foothills of Mt. McKinley."[111] Been, apparently uncomfortable with Buckner's idea, "inspected the south side of Mount McKinley to the extent that was accessible by automobile from Talkeetna" in search of military recreational sites. Buckner, along with Alaska Governor Ernest Gruening, held fast to having a camp within the park boundaries; agency officials in Washington, however, turned that request down.[112] The Pearl Harbor bombing, not surprisingly, caused Been to look more favorably toward hosting a military presence; in February 1942, for instance, he said that "there must be an opportunity for the NPS to freshen peoples' lives and offer a relief from the satiation of war." But in an ironic role reversal, Buckner lost interest; that April, he notified Been that the park would not be used for soldier recreation during the war because it was too distant from the various military bases. For the time being, Bucker indicated that the military would concentrate its recreational development within and near existing bases. NPS officials in Washington also were cool to the idea; they had no problem with development at McKinley Park Station, Savage Camp, and Wonder Lake, but they advised against extending "our existing road westward or beyond Wonder Lake."[113]

No sooner had the recreation-center idea been discarded, however, than the Army announced that it would be conducting an extended expedition in the park. The U.S. Army Alaskan Testing Expedition, organized at Ladd Field, arrived at the park on June 12; though organized by the Army's Quartermaster's Corps, supporters and coordinators included the Army Air Forces, the Medical Corps and Signal Corps, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force. Included in the group was Bradford Washburn, a Bostonian who, six years earlier, had become familiar with the high Alaska Range during an extended aerial reconnaissance; he was now a civilian consultant assigned to Office of the Quartermaster General as an expert on cold-weather clothing and survival.[114] NPS staff drove the 17-member contingent, led by Lt. Col. Frank Marchman and guided by Washburn, out to Camp Eielson. The group then headed south, ascended Muldrow Glacier, and eventually encamped on the edge of the glacier, at the 5,600-foot level near McGonagall Pass. From there they conducted lengthy testing of cold-weather food, tents, and clothing: anything "from tents and parachutes to food rations, stoves, boots and socks." As noted in a *Life Magazine* pictorial, "the purpose of the expedition was not to determine what equipment is



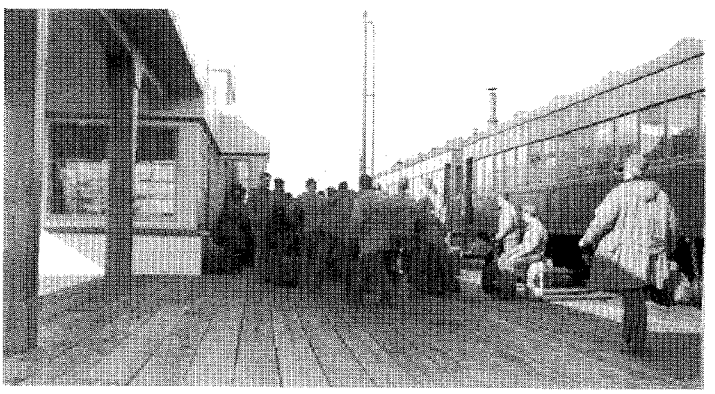
Bradford Washburn, left, came to the park in 1942 with the U.S. Army *Alaskan Testing Expedition to conduct* extended high-altitude testing of cold-weather equipment. NPS ranger Grant Pearson, right, assisted with the expedition. DENA 28-20, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

best for expert mountain and ski troops, but what is best for ordinary American soldiers forced to fight in cold weather."

Aided and supplied by Grant Pearson and other rangers—sometimes on foot, sometimes via horseback—the expedition remained at its camp for some six weeks, finally returning to the park headquarters on August 5. A highlight of their stay was a Mount McKinley climb; on July 23 and 24, a seven-man group, which included Washburn and future University of Alaska President Terris Moore, successfully reached the summit. As a result of the expedition, which was completed in early August, the military predictably approved some of the items it tested, it rejected others, and demanded severe modifications to still others. The NPS benefited, too; it received a major equipment "donation" by salvaging what the Army left behind at its base camp.[115]

Late in 1942, the Army reconsidered its earlier decision regarding the usability of park land as a recreation site. In November, Been reported "indications that the army will utilize the McKinley Park Hotel," although soldiers would not be arriving before spring. A month later, representatives of the Army, Navy, NPS, and various concessions groups attended a meeting, in which "the matter of national park concession facilities [throughout the country] being made available as rest camps" was discussed. Shortly afterward, the Army followed the Navy's lead and assumed control over concessions facilities in seven park units; Mount McKinley, however, was the only park nationwide in which the concessions facilities were used for recreational purposes. Major General Simon Buckner, U.S.A. worked together with Major General William O. Butler of the Air Force to lease the facility from Col. Otto Ohlson of the Alaska Railroad.[116]

On-the-ground activity began in late December 1942, when Capt. George Hall of the Army's Special Services Division arrived in the park "to study the situation and to formulate plans." He



In April 1943, soldiers began arriving to make use of the Mount McKinley U.S. Army Recreation Camp. The railroad station, at left, opened in 1940. DENA 30-26, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

stated that between 150 and 200 men would "be in constant attendance" and would be at the park on seven-day furloughs. Initial predictions called for the first men to arrive in February. Inevitable delays ensued, however; the 30-man opening crew did not arrive until March 27, and the Mount McKinley U.S. Army Recreation Camp did not officially open until April 10.[117] Thirty-three staff officers from Fort Richardson, along with Governor Gruening, attended an opening dinner that night, after which Acting Superintendent Pearson read a welcoming speech from NPS Director Drury and rangers showed motion pictures of the park's wildlife. The following day the officers toured the park headquarters. Pearson later wrote that the military brass were "well pleased with the park in general and thought it an ideal place for the boys to spend their vacations after duty in the Aleutians and other Alaskan outposts."[118]



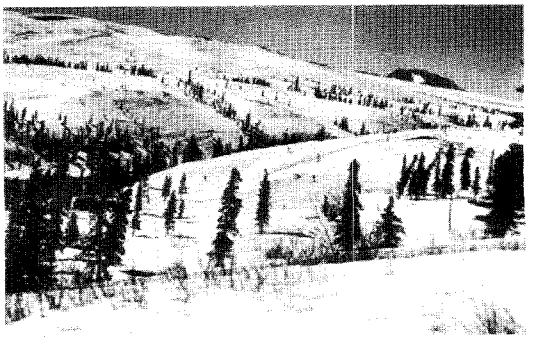
Soldiers in the 'Tap Room' at the McKinley Park Hotel Recreation Camp. Candy Waugaman Collection

The soldiers who opened the camp prepared a "Special Service Bulletin" that extolled the virtues of a McKinley furlough. In one article, for example, an enlisted man wrote that the 87-room hotel was

> made to order for soldier vacations. ... The glass enclosed lobby is strictly Fifth Avenue. It is beautifully de - signed, with modern furniture, big, thick rugs, comfortable easy chairs, oil paintings,, shining chrome, and a hotel desk of Ritz Carlton caliber. ... The game room is a knockout. It is one of the most completely equipped you ever saw. And the bedrooms will really slay you. Each has brand new twin beds and inner spring mattresses.

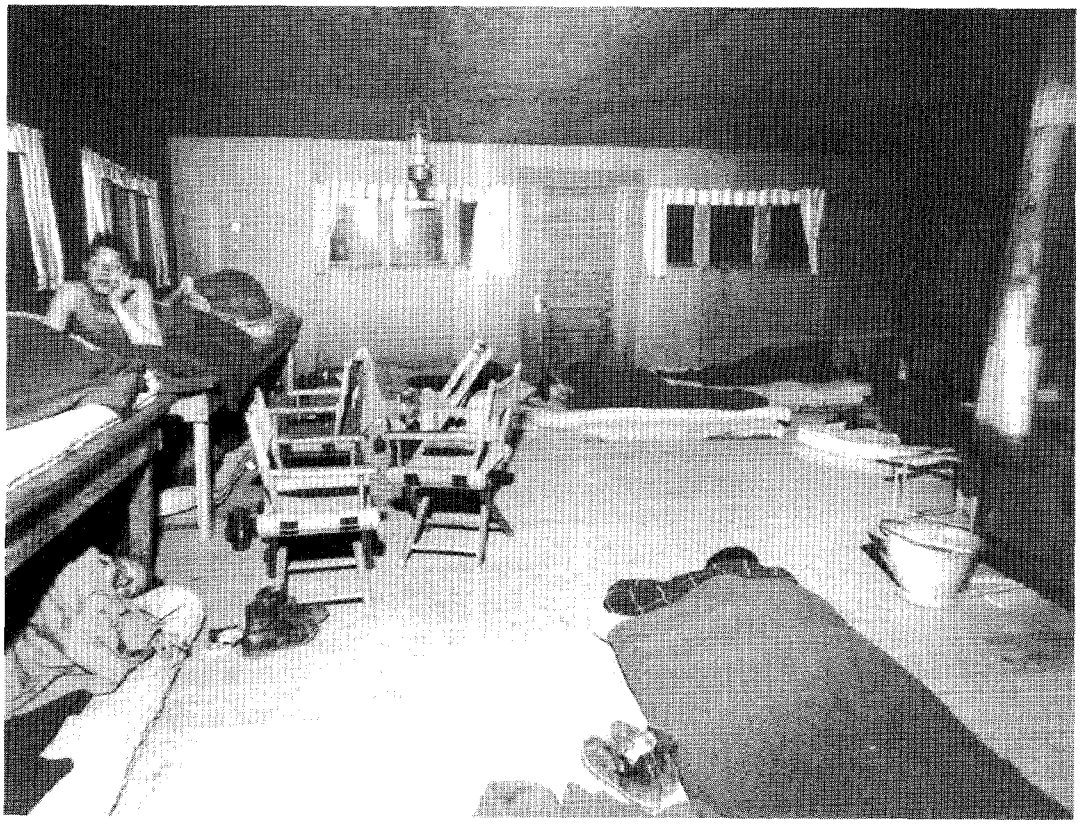
He also noted that the hotel also offered a tap room (which was a soda fountain; guests were asked not to bring whiskey, which was prohibited), a barber shop, a recreation room, movie hall, library, lounge, and dining room. Other parts of the bulletin noted that soldiers were hurriedly preparing facilities for winter sports (ski runs, toboggan slides, and ice skating rinks), and come summer time, courts would be laid out for softball, volleyball, and tennis. A Park Service dog team would be available for both "mushing" and picture-taking; both Camp Savage and Camp Eielson would be open for camping opportunities, and there were chances galore for hiking, swimming ("if you're really tough"), and fishing.[119]

Despite the bulletin's promotionally-induced optimism, the Army did in fact offer most of these activities (though not all were opened as soon as the bulletin had predicted), and the following year new pastimes were added: archery, miniature golf, horseback riding from Savage River Camp, bicycling, horseshoe throwing, golfing from a short-range tee, ping pong, billiards, and dancing.[120] Skating was offered at such far-flung venues as Horseshoe Lake and the Teklanika area, and during the winter of 1943-44, Army personnel rigged up a ski tow and warming hut at Mile 6 of the park road and offered skiing from December through April.[121] Entertainers from the U.S.O. performed, and by 1944 there were weekly stage shows at the McKinley Little Theatre. The park's first-ever religious services were held on Easter Sunday in 1943, and there were even wedding bells to ring, in February 1945, when an Army Corporal and a Recreation Camp hostess (one of "five capable women hostesses" on duty) tied the knot.[122]



A ski tow was set up at Mile 6 of the park road for downhill skiing. Soldiers were transported by bus to the site, pictured here in March, 1944. DENA 30-1, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Large numbers of soldiers began arriving soon after the opening festivities, and by the end of April 1943 the camp was an obvious success. As Acting Superintendent Pearson noted in a letter to Interior Secretary Ickes,



On the soldiers' trips into the park they could use the inactive Camp Eielson facilities for overnight accommodations. Allan J. deLay Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

> you will be pleased to learn that [the hotel] is being used for a splendid purpose. If you could see the soldiers as they enjoy the comforts of the hotel after a day's jaunt in the Park you would realize that your efforts [in 1938 to improve the hotel] have not been in vain. They have only words of praise for those who made it possible for them to enjoy a respite from the fogs of the Aleutians, the damp cold of the Pacific and the chilling winds of interior Alaska.[123]

The hotel, indeed, proved its worth to thousands of furloughed men. At first, it was open only to white uniformed personnel, but in July 1943 it opened its doors to the first civilian War Department workers, and in February 1944 the first black troops visited the park.[124] During the Recreation Camp's two-year existence, the park played host to 11,324 visitors: 90 percent were members of the armed services, the remaining 10 percent civilian defense workers.[125] Park Service rangers, who had had years of experience speaking primarily to "teachers and people over 60 years old" (as noted in a *Jessen's Weekly* editorial), did their best to ensure a memorable stay for the young men by giving illustrated talks and dog sled demonstrations, showing motion pictures, conducting guided walks, and answering thousands of questions; and beginning in June 1943, they even had a "little log cabin museum" at headquarters that proved highly popular. Those who stayed at the hotel during the winter months spent most if not all of their time within a mile or two of the hotel, but virtually all summertime visitors took trips out into the park in soldier-driven truck convoys. In 1943 a popular destination was Wonder Lake, where the Army set up a tent camp; those shelters deteriorated over the winter, however, so in 1944 military authorities repaired the "old tourist camp at Mount Eielson" (at Mile 66) for the soldiers' use that summer.[126]

From the NPS's point of view, hosting the thousands of soldiers was successful for several reasons. Not only did the visitors' experiences provide "praise and good will" to the agency (according to Pearson), but the military helped in more tangible ways as well. Recognizing that the existing ranger staff was overtaxed trying to keep up their patrols and public contact work, the military approached the agency and asked what might be accomplished if four soldiers were assigned to assist with park duties. Pearson quickly replied and noted that they be assigned to do various critical construction jobs: repairing the telephone line from headquarters to Camp Eielson, constructing a first-ever telephone line from the headquarters to the hotel, improving the "ranger cabin at Savage,"[127] overhauling the headquarters utility system, tearing down two abandoned log cabins at headquarters (which were in a "sad state of repair"), moving a small garage at headquarters, and various miscellaneous tasks. The Alaska Defense Command

granted the request "in a decidedly satisfactory manner" (in Pearson's words), and during the summer of 1943 it assigned Company F of the 176th Engineers to the task. The company, commanded by Captain Childress and Lieutenant Schaid, spent the next several months on the job; they did the work "promptly and efficiently, in fact more was accomplished than was originally contemplated."[128] Army officials also offered to have soldiers take part in public contact work. Experienced proved, however, that the rigid hierarchy between officers and enlisted men prevented the NPS from allowing the military men to assume broader park management responsibilities.[129]

The Army also helped access to the McKinley Station area by improving the old Morino airstrip at McKinley Park Station. As noted in Chapter 4, local landowner Maurice Morino had cleared out a 700-foot airstrip in the summer of 1932, and it was used for emergency purposes for the remainder of the decade. In 1939, new superintendent Frank Been recognized the value of aviation by offering a contract to various Anchorage and Fairbanks aviation firms interested in assisting the agency with "park patrols and administration." Pollock Flying Service won that contract, and in February 1940, Been and Chief Ranger Lou Corbley took a 3½-hour flight over "the entire length of the park north of the Alaska Range."[130] That summer, however, there were two airplane accidents at the airstrip, and after that it was deemed so inadequate that many pilots—including an Alaska Game Commission pilot—refused to use it, and by early 1941 the airfield was no longer on the "Civil Airways landing field list." The Alaska Road Commission, in response, examined the site and made a cost estimate to improve the airstrip.[131] Nothing was done, however, until the Army occupied the hotel in early 1943. By July of that year, Acting Superintendent Pearson noted that "the enlargement and improvement of the landing field ... can be expected at any time." On August 26, Army engineers arrived, moved into the old CCC camp, and improved the old Morino field by blading out a 3400-foot strip, deemed "large enough to permit the land of any type commercial land plane."[132] For the next 18 months, the airfield was used frequently; in August 1944, a record 105 passengers landed there, and beginning in January 1945, Alaska Airlines used the airstrip as a flag stop on its regular run between Anchorage and Fairbanks.[133]

The military assumed other roles at the park during the war years as well. As noted above, the park had conducted a cold-weather testing expedition in the summer of 1942, and during the winter of 1943-44 three new expeditions were outfitted. Beginning on December 15, 1943, 310 Army officers and men participated in a month-long exercise "in the Talkeetna- Mount McKinley area" called the Alaskan Department Winter Maneuver. The exercise, which was tactical in nature, was also to determine the adequacy and limitations of certain standard Arctic clothing and equipment. An officer in that exercise reluctantly concluded that the Department was not in a position to conduct satisfactory Arctic or sub-Arctic operations.[134] On January 20, various soldiers from the medical corps headed out into the park to test "heating and lighting equipment suitable for field use during extreme cold weather conditions." They remained in the park until March 2. A month later more than 500 soldiers, led by Lt. Col. Walthers, arrived in the park on winter maneuvers, some on dog teams. Entering the park from the Cantwell area, it remained for several weeks before leaving on March 1. Acting Supt. Pearson, who mushed out to the second group, found the men "a rugged bunch capable of taking care of themselves most any place in the mountains."[135]

That August, Army officials prepared for a new round of equipment field testing. Plans called for a party of six men, based at Wright Field in Ohio, to spend six weeks in "the terrain near Wonder Lake" beginning on September 10 testing food and clothing for the Air Force. The party—which included Bradford Washington, now Assistant to the Chief of the Army's Flying Clothes Branch, along with several military officers—did not arrive at Wonder Lake (in a pontoon plane) until approximately October 15.[136]

But by this time, the Army had far larger concerns. On September 18, an Army Transport Command C-47 with 19 aboard had crashed on the southern slopes of Mount Deception,[137] 16 miles east of Mt. McKinley. An aerial reconnaissance taken a few days later confirmed that all aboard had immediately perished. The Army Air Corps' Col. Ivan Palmer, however, demanded to know more details about the crash, so he asked Supt. Pearson to fly over the area. After that October 2 reconnaissance, the Army asked Pearson if he could head a rescue party to the crash site. Pearson demurred, stating that it would be too risky to descend a 50-degree, icy slope for a body-recovery operation. Palmer and his higher-ups, however, explained that the son of a Congressman had died in the crash, making a trip to the site virtually mandatory; and furthermore, the military could draft Pearson for the purpose if he chose not to volunteer.

Under those circumstances, Pearson dropped everything and organized a 44-man rescue expedition. On October 10, he and others boarded two military "snow tractors" and drove through a blizzard to Wonder Lake; they then headed south to McGonagall Pass and on to the upper Muldrow Glacier. Recognizing that most of his expedition members had little winter expedition experience, Pearson asked Bradford Washburn, camped at nearby Wonder Lake, to lend a hand, and on November 1 the snow tractor brought Washburn up to Pearson's camp. Nine days later the two men led a party of twelve over the Alaska Range and, clinging onto ropes, down to the crash site. The men found undisputable evidence from the crash—blood on the fuselage, a canvas suitcase, a whiskey bottle, and other items—but a recent ten-foot snowfall frustrated all attempts to locate any of the victims' bodies. The men then retraced their steps to Muldrow Glacier, where the remainder of the test expedition crew was camped. They then continued on to Wonder Lake. After that, Pearson and his team were flown back to Elmendorf Field. The last of the expedition arrived there on November 24, almost two months after the rescue effort began.[138]

Washburn and his party, meanwhile, continued their cold weather gear testing, largely unfazed by the two -week detour. For several days they moved down Muldrow Glacier, after which they ascended Anderson Pass. They then descended West Fork Glacier and the Chulitna River's West Fork. On December 6 they reached Colorado Station along the Alaska Railroad, almost two months after arriving at Wonder Lake.[139]

The Army's Cold Weather Test Section, based at Wright Field, soon let it be known that they were interested in yet another testing expedition, and in March 1945 a five-man party flew into the park on a ski-equipped airplane and camped on a glacier[140] at the 6,100-foot level. Decked out in "the latest type mountain equipment," the men spent the next two months testing cold weather equipment and food; they also did some surveying and mapping in the area and made a first-ever climb of a 13,220-foot peak that they named Mt. Silverthrone because of its "stately appearance at the head of Brooks Glacier."[141]



The Army Air Corps and Ranger Grant Pearson organized a 44-man rescue expedition to locate the Army Transport Command C-47 that had crashed on September 18, 1944. The expedition left park headquarters on October 10, 1944 for the trip to Wonder Lake Ranger Station, the operations base. DENA 1550, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

By the time the Army's springtime cold weather expedition was underway, conditions in the McKinley Park Station area had undergone severe changes. On February 2, military



The crash site was located on a steep slope, shown here on November 11, 1944, with the rescuers' camp below. This mountain was later named Mt. Deception. DENA 1586, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

authorities told local officials that the Army Recreation Camp had to cease operations on March 1. This was "in accordance with general orders that all unnecessary activities of the army be discontinued at once." This should have come as no surprise to those who were in charge of the camp; by this time, it had been almost 18 months since Alaska military forces had seen combat, and as a result, troop strength in Alaska had fallen from more than 150,000 in 1943 to just 60,000 in 1945. Authorities decided to close the camp because too many soldiers had been shipped out of Alaska to warrant its continued operation. On March 1, all members of the camp staff and part of its detachment departed for Anchorage. Twenty members of the detachment stayed behind to close the hotel, but they too were soon gone.[142]

Although the hotel was no longer operating as a military recreation camp, World War II was still raging in both the Pacific and European theatres. As a result, access to and from Alaska was still closely monitored, and recreational tourism to the park—except by civilians residing in the territory—was still prohibited. Those conditions would not change until well after V-J Day in August 1945. As a result, visitation to Mount McKinley National Park during the summer of 1945 was largely a repeat of what the park had experienced in 1942. Summertime visitors in 1945, therefore, included groups of military officers, Anchorage business men, and scattered Alaska-based tourists. That number was augmented by two groups of Congressmen who visited in August and made trips out the park road. (They overnighted either at park headquarters or at the Wonder Lake Ranger Station and were served meals prepared by the superintendent and his staff.) In addition, railroad and steamship-company officials made periodic visits to the park "to study tourist travel to McKinley Park after the war."[143]

Otto Ohlson, the Alaska Railroad's general manager, released an optimistic statement to the newspapers regarding the carrier's postwar plans, which included "one-day train service between the coast and Fairbanks ... an addition to the McKinley Park Hotel and the erection of a lodge and cabins at Wonder Lake to care for the inevitable tourist traffic; and most important of all, a reduction in rail rates." Both he and others, however, knew that all of those plans depended on a strong upsurge in visitation and, just as important, on a Congress willing to loosen its

purse strings for Alaska projects.[144] In the meantime, all they could do was wait.

Just how tourism would look during the postwar years, and how the NPS managers would respond to these and other challenges, are discussed in Chapter 6.

## Notes - Chapter 5

[1] The quoted term hearkens back to the SMR for October 1939, 1.

[2] SMR, September 1932, 3; May 1933, 3. In the spring of 1936, NPS employees repainted the entrance sign "with a white background and green letters, regular Park Service standard." SMR, May 1936, 5.

[3] SMR, July 1932, 2; May 1933, 3. Morino obtained a patent to his 120-acre parcel on August 1, 1934.

[4] Gruening's official title was Director of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions, an Interior Department post created in May 1934; Gruening was its first occupant. Evangeline Atwood and Robert N. DeArmond, comp., *Who's Who in Alaskan Politics* (Portland, Binford & Mort, 1977), 37-38; Sherwood Ross, *Gruening of Alaska* (New York, Best Books, 1968), 90-92.

[5] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 8.

[6] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 9.

[7] Brown, *A History*, 200-01. Don Hummel, who wrote about the event fifty years later, said that "There was no time to design a proper structure for Alaskan conditions, so Vint rummaged around and found some old hotel blueprints that looked adequate for overnight accommodations and took them to McKinley Park. The hotel was hurriedly built according to these plans along with a more or less standard powerhouse." Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 174.

[8] *New York Times*, June 21, 1937, 7; SMR, July 1937, 1, 3, 4; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 9. Inasmuch as the NPS was in charge of design and construction, Supt. Liek was the nominal chief of construction, but because of his inexperience with large-building construction, Gutterson was in charge of day-to-day project management.

[9] SMR, August 1937, 1, 4; September 1937, 4-5; October 1937, 1; November 1937, 3.

[10] W. B. Courtney, "Christmas Zoo," *Collier's* 100 (December 25, 1937), 13. This level of optimism has been found in no other source; by contrast, the federal government's National Resources Committee, in a December 1937 report (*Regional Planning, Part VII, Alaska—Its Resources and Development* (Washington, GPO, 1938), p. 135) stated that "Winter sports demand both accessibility and population. These conditions make the development of winter sports within the park unimportant at the present time."

[11] SMR, April 1938, 1, 3; May 1938, 3; June 1938, 4.

[12] T.H. Watkins, *Righteous Pilgrim: the Life and Times of Harold L. Ickes, 1874-1952* (New York, Henry Holt, 1990), 610-16.

[13] SMR, July 1938, 3-4; August 1938, 4-5; Brown, *A History*, 201; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 9. The agency announced the hotel expansion in a September 15, 1938 press release. The original hotel would have had 52 bedrooms, 8 with private baths; Ickes' expansion, however, added 38 bedrooms, all with private baths. File 501-03 ("Newspaper Articles"), Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[14] SMR, October 1938, 3; December 1938, 2, 3; February 1939, 3; March 1939, 3; April 1939, 2.

[15] *Congressional Record* 86 (March 6, 1940), 2449; *New York Times*, November 20, 1938, X3. William H. Hackett (in *Alaska's Vanishing Frontier; a Progress Report*, prepared for the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives [Washington, GPO], 1951, p. 46) notes that the hotel "was built with Public Works Funds allocated to the Alaska Railroad ... an additional sum of $450,000 was later provided for a warehouse, employee quarters, a powerhouse, a 100,000 gallon reservoir, and a sewer system."

[16] SMR, May 1939, 2; June 1939, 2; Brown, *A History*, 201-02; Albert H. Good (Acting Chief of Planning, NPS) to H.A. Bauer, Alaska Planning Council, June 14, 1939, in Jane Bryant Collection, DENA; Been to RD/R4, November 4, 1947, in File 208-08 ("Liquor Traffic"), Box 1407, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA CP.

[17] National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning, Part VII*, 134.

[18] Stroud (*History of the Concession*, 9-10) noted that the NPS "was not eager to operate the hotel but agreed to undertake the task if it was assigned to them," while the park concessioner believed that the hotel "would not prove profitable" and "wanted a guarantee against losses." Brown, *A History*, 201-02; SMR, April 1939, 2; August 1942, 3; William H. Wilson, *Railroad in the Clouds; the Alaska Railroad in the Age of Steam, 1914-1945* (Boulder, Colo., Pruett Publishing, 1977), 195-96, 203.

[19] SMR, May 1936, 5; June 1936, 4-5; September 1937, 5; September 1938, 3.

[20] Tony Dimond testimony in *Congressional Record* 86 (76th Congress, 3rd Session), March 6, 1940, 2443.

[21] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 10.

[22] SMR, June 1939, 3; July 1939, 3.

[23] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 10; SMR, August 1939, 2; September 1939, 4; May 1940, 1. In a 1940 hearing, Rep. John Taber (R-N.Y.) suggested that "hotel revenues last year amounted to something like $56,000, and the expenses, as near as I can figure them from the hearings on the Interior Department bill, amounted to $146,000." *Congressional Record* 86 (March 6, 1940), 2447.

[24] 76th Congress, 1st Session, *House Report No. 567*, May 8, 1939; 76th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 448*, May 18, 1939; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 12.

[25] See, for example, Ickes to Hon. Millard E. Tydings, in 76th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 448*, May 18, 1939.

[26] *Congressional Record* 84 (76th Congress, 1st Session), May 19, 1939, p. 5796.

[27] *Congressional Record* 84 (76th Congress, 1st Session), July 6, 1939, 8708; July 17, 1939, 9283.

[28] *Congressional Record* 86 (76th Congress, 3rd Session), March 6, 1940, 2443, 2447-49. Mistaken ideas about Alaska that were brought up in debate, all by the bill's opponents, included John Schafer's (R-WI) statement that the "several hundred strawberry growers" that had moved to the Matanuska Valley "had all graduated to the relief rolls," the assertion of John Rankin (D-MS) that "there is nothing in McKinley Park except Mount McKinley," and a statement from John Taber (R-NY) that there were "six visitors to this park who might be available as customers at [the McKinley Park] hotel."

[29] *Ibid.*, 2443-2460.

[30] *Ibid.*, 2449, 2454. The price for the two bus trips, equated to 2005 dollars, was $360 and $500, respectively.

[31] *Ibid.*, 2445, 2447, 2452, 2454-55, 2458.

[32] *Ibid.*, 2443, 2445, 2447, 2455-56.

[33] *Ibid.*, 2457-60; *New York Times*, March 11, 1940, 9; World *Almanac and Book of Facts*, 2002 edition, 92.

[34] *Congressional Record*, March 6, 1940, 2851-52.

[35] *Ibid.*, 3883. The bill became Public Law No. 445 of the 76th Congress.

[36] SMR, May 1940, 1, 4; April 1941, 3.

[37] SMR, June 1940, 4; July 1940, 3; August 1940, 3; September 1940, 3.

[38] SMR, November 1940, 3; January 1941, 3; May 1941, 2; June 1941, 3; July 1941, 2-3; August 1941, 2; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 12; R. E. Sheldon to Been, April 29, 1941, in File 910, Collection 5969, DENA Archives.

[39] *Congressional Record*, March 6, 1940, 2447, 2451; Theodore Catton, *Wonderland; An Administrative History of Mount Rainier National Park* (Seattle, NPS, May 1996), 322-26.

[40] *Congressional Record*, March 6, 1940, 2444, 2449, 2459.

[41] SMR, September 1938, 2; January 1939, 3; August 1939, 2; NPS, "Wonder Lake Lodge Area, Part of the Master Plan for MOMC" (drawing 2004a, sheet 11), January 1942.

[42] Brown, *A History*, 201; Supt. To the Director, March 11, 1930, in "620-037" file, Box 1412 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; Been to the Director, June 25, 1941, in File 501-3, Part 1, "Newspaper Articles," Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[43] SMR, May 1936, 1; July 1938, 1; August 1938, 1, 7; December 1939, 1; October 1940, 1.

[44] SMR, March 1941, photo; June 1941, 3; July 1941, 2; September 1941, 1, 2; October 1941, 3.

[45] SMR, February 1936, 4; July 1939, 3; August 1940, 3.

[46] Brown, *A History*, 112; "Kantishna 50399" file, Airports Division historical files, FAA Collection, Anchorage.

[47] Although the ARC was given broad approval to install "guard rails," none were knowingly installed. Instead, guard posts were installed east of Polychrome Pass, along the bluffs west of Thorofare Pass, and perhaps elsewhere along the park road. Frank T. Been to Director NPS, October 6, 1939; Been to Ike Taylor, October 7, 1939; both in File 630, Box 1413 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[48] SMR, June 1924, 4; May 1927, 2-3; *Seward Daily Gateway*, May 26, 1927, 4.

[49] SMR, May 1931, 2; September 1931, 3; January 1933, 3; May 1933, 2; May 1936, 1-2; June 1937, 4.

[50] SMR, June 1937, 1.

[51] Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Denver, NPS, September 1983), 76-86. The CCC's establishment is chronicled in John C. Paige's *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942; An Administrative History* (Washington, NPS, 1985), 8-10.

[52] Lawrence W. Rakestraw, *A History of the United States Forest Service in Alaska* (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Commission, 1981), 95-98; *Daily Alaska Empire*, May 8, 1933; W. Conner Sorensen, "The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alaska (1933-1942) and Military Preparedness," in Fern Chandonnet, ed., *Alaska at War, 1941-1945, the Forgotten War Remembered* (Anchorage, Alaska at War Committee, 1995), 235-36.

[53] Wirth to Regional Officer, Region Four, April 26, 1937, in File 600, "Jobs, Part 1 (4/16/37-12/11/37)," Box 78, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; Unrau and Williss, *Administrative History*, 86; Rakestraw, *A History*, 96; SMR, June 1937, 1; August 1937, 1; September 1937, 1-2.

[54] SMR, April 1938, 1; May 1938, 1, 4; Paul Gallagher to NPS Director, August 10, 1938, in File 204, Part 1, "Inspection and Investigation," Box 1404 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; *Daily Alaska Empire*, April 26, 1938.

[55] Grant D. Ross to Regional Director, Region Four, August 8, 1938, in File 600, Part 2, "Jobs, Part 2 (1/19/38-12/20/39)," Box 78, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; Gallagher to NPS Director, August 10, 1938, in File 204, Part 1, noted above.

[56] Franklin G. Fox to Harry J. Liek, November 1, 1938; Liek to the Director, November 18, 1938; both in File 600, Part 2, noted above. Fox's statement about good "camp discipline" was apparently overoptimistic; Liek noted that "due to the fact that enrollees could not be conveniently discharged as an extreme disciplinary measure, it was difficult to maintain the proper discipline among the enrollees." And Fox himself admitted that alcohol was

a problem; he proudly noted that "no drinking or gambling was permitted after the camp was well organized," but conceded that two of his supervisors "were unwilling to set an example of sobriety."

[57] SMR, September 1938, 3; October 1938, 1; November 1938, 1.

[58] Franklin G. Fox to Regional Director, Region IV, July 3, 1938; Fox to Liek, November 1, 1938; Liek to the Director, November 18, 1938; all in File 600, Part 2, noted above; SMR, October 1938, 2. The educational guide (Job #14), although completed, was apparently not adopted by park personnel, inasmuch as there are no references to such a guide being used or reproduced.

[59] Fred T. Johnston to Regional Director, Region IV, February 24, 1939, in File 600, Part 2, noted above; SMR, December 1938, 1; February 1939, 1.

[60] SMR, March 1939, 1; April 1939, 1, 2.

[61] SMR, May 1939, 1-2; June 1939, 2; September 1939, 1, 3. Crews who built the telephone line lived in a "side camp" at Mile 29 of the park road, near present-day Teklanika Campground. Edward E. Ogston to Supt. Been, July 17, 1939, in uncatalogued "CCC History" file folder, DENA Archives.

[62] John C. Bunce, "Minutes of Supervisory Personnel Meeting, Camp NP-1, July 3, 1939," in File 600, Part 2, noted above; Marlys Rudeen, comp., *The Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Papers: a Guide* (Chicago, Center for Research Libraries, 1991), 193.

[63] SMR, July 1939, 3; September 1939, 1.

[64] SMR, July 1939, 3; September 1939, 1-3; National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning, Part VII, Alaska – Its Resources and Development* (Washington, GPO, 1938), 135.

[65] SMR, November 1939, 3; March 1940, 1-3; Assistant Regional Director to Supt. Been, January 2, "1939" [1940], in File 600, Part 2, noted above.

[66] SMR, August 1940, 3; September 1940, 2-3; October 1940, 1, 4; December 1940, 3; January 1941, 3; B.F. Manbey to Supt. Been, February 28, 1941, in File 600, Part 3 (1/1/40-12/31/41), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[67] SMR, January 1942, 2; Unrau and Williss, *Administrative History*, 92; Herbert Maier to Director NPS, August 20, 1942, in File 600, Part 4, "Development" (1/1/42-1/1/51), in Box 78, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; NPS, Drawing MOMC-5317 (January 1947), TIC Aperture Card Collection.

[68] Horace M. Albright to Supt. MOMC, May 5, 1933, in "General Entries, 605, Stubbs" file, Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[69] F. A. Kittredge to Supt. Liek, October 18, 1938, in File 610 ("Mt. McKinley NP Private Lands"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB. Grant Pearson, asked to follow up on the three claimants six years later, caustically noted that "these properties ... have been abandoned, Varnell and Baker have departed for parts unknown, and Shannon long ago discovered that homesteading was too arduous for anyone so devoid of ambition and so gave up his idea and his homestead entry." Pearson to RD/R4, March 18, 1944, in "File 610: John Stephens: 1941-May 19, 1953," Box 79, noted above.

[70] Kittredge to Liek, October 18, 1938, noted above; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 65-66; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 318, 338, 482-84.

[71] Stubbs, Kennedy, and Anderson were still living landowners at this time. But Maurice Morino, as noted in Chapter 4, had died in 1937 and was buried on high ground at the western end of his parce ; the administrator of his estate was Mary Liek, wife of the former superintendent. John Stephens, owner of the Windy parcel, had died in 1934, and H. Stephen Simpson was designated as the administrator of his estate.

[72] Dimond submitted bills on behalf of the Stephens estate in 1937 and 1941; Anderson in 1940 and 1941; and Kennedy in 1941. As shall be seen, only Anderson was successful in this process.

[73] It was later shown that government surveyors—ostensibly the 1936 boundary-survey crew—had burned down the Andersons' cabin, and a year later, ARC crews had bladed the park road across her property without permission. Regional Director to Director, November 2, 1939, in File 610, "Paula Liebau Anderson, 1938-5/19/53", Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[74] *Congressional Record* 87 (1941), pp. 2800, 4120; 77th Congress, 1st Session, *House Report No. 189* (March 10, 1941), 1-2; 77th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 265* (May 8, 1941), 1-2; Albert L. Johnson to Mrs. Paula Liebau Anderson, April 14, 1941, in File 610, "Mt. McKinley N.P. Private Lands" file, Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[75] Mrs. Paula Anderson to SOI, January 28, 1938; Anderson to Joseph E. Taylor, November 2, 1939; Been to RD/R4, November 21, 1939; Herman Maier to Director NPS, January 24, 1941; Arthur E. Demaray to Supt. MOMC, February 27, 1941; Hillory A. Tolson to RD/R4, May 1, 1942, all in File 610, "Paula Liebau Anderson," noted above; U.S. District Court, 4th Judicial Division of Alaska, *USA v. Paula Liebau Anderson*, No. 4681, "Petition for Condemnation," April 8, 1941, and "Final Judgement of Condemnation," June 5, 1942; both in "DENA Deeds to USA" file, AKRO Lands Division.

[76] SMR, September 1933, 2; August 1934, 2; September 1934, 3; July 1936, 4; September 1936, 2; Jane Bryant email, June 24, 2005.

[77] SMR, June 1939, 2. As noted in Chapter 4, John and Paula Anderson had abandoned this 160-acre parcel in 1929, but Paula had obtained title to it in August 1930 and it remained in her name throughout the 1930s.

[78] SMR, July 1939, 2; September 1939, 1, 3; September 1940, 2; June 1943, 2.
[79] These flights apparently began in 1940. See SMR, November 1940, 5; December 1940, 4; December 1941, 3.
[80] SMR, February 1938, 4; August 1938, 5; September 1938, 3; Brown, *A History*, 122-25.
[81] SMR, April 1938, 4; May 1938, 4; April 1939, 3.
[82] SMR, May 1939, 3.
[83] Document 5 (1933-52), dated December 20, 1939, in File #40-10 (National Park Service #1), RG 101, ASA.
[84] SMR, March 1938, 2; April 1938, 4; October 1939, 4.
[85] SMR, November 1939, 3; December 1939, 3; April 1940, 3; November 1940, 2-3; March 1941, 3. The new equipment was a Skyrider Marine receiver, Model S28R.
[86] SMR, December 1935, 2; November 1936, 5; April 1940, 8.
[87] SMR, November 1940, 5; January 1941, 4; April 1941, photo; June 1941, photo; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 187; Been to Eva Seeley, July 9, 1941, in "Outgoing Park Correspondence" file, Box 2, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[88] William J. Nancarrow, interview by Jane Bryant, October 8, 2002; Jane Bryant email, May 12, 2006.
[89] Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 152. Alcohol consumption had been legal in Alaska since April 1934, but it remained illegal within NPS units. (See SMR, April 1934, 6.) The change in superintendents was announced to the press on April 28, 1939.
[90] Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 152; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 55-56.
[91] Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 152; Supt. to Park Personnel, November 28, 1939, in Jane Bryant Collection, DENA. See Appendix C for a list of the early park naturalists. Been badly damaged the park sedan within days of arriving at the park, and in December 1939, while out on a practice run with one of the park's dog teams, Been shot at a wolf but hit and wounded one of the park dogs instead. SMR, June 1939, 5; December 1939, 4.
[92] The adoption of a centralized function suggested the need for an off-site work location. This had first been manifested in 1934, when the NPS was given space in the new Federal Building in Fairbanks. That arrangement apparently lasted just a few months. Then, in 1940, Been was provided a small office in Anchorage shortly after its Federal Building was completed. That office remained until early 1942, when it was turned over to the Army. In late 1941, an NPS official had recommended that park headquarters be moved to "a city such as Anchorage for the winter months." NPS Director Newton Drury approved the request, but the onset of World War II prevented the move from taking place. SMR, April 1934, 5; May 1934, 2; June 1940, 3; January 1942, 1-2; R. O. Jennings to Supt. MOMC, November 27, 1941, in Collection 000-099, DENA Archives.
[93] SMR, July 1939, 1; September 1939, 1-2; July 1940, 1; August 1940, 2; September 1940, 2; July 1941, 2.
[94] Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 186-89; Been to Tomlinson, February 2, 1943; Been to Director NPS, February 2, 1943, in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[95] SMR, October 1939, 1, 4.
[96] SMR, October 1939, 1; 76th Congress, 2nd Session, H.R. 8336 was introduced on February 6, 1940.
[97] *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 22, 1940. The women's club consisted of "every woman now living in McKinley Park" and included the postmaster (Mrs. Elmer Hosler) and the wives of Fred Shumaker (Alaska R.R.), Chief Ranger Louis Corbley, and Senior Clerk Gerald Janes.
[98] SMR, March 1940, 1; File #40-10 (National Park Service #1), Documents #84-92 (1933-52), RG 101, ASA. Supt. Been fired his clerk shortly after the investigators completed their work.
[99] Been left for military service in January 1943, so he did not occupy the house until his return to the park in early 1947. SMR, May 1940, 3, 4; June 1940, 3; July 1940, 1-2; August 1940, 1-2; September 1940, 1, 3; April 1941, 2-3; June 1941, 3; July 1941, 3; March 1943, 1.
[100] Beginning with Steve Martin, who became superintendent in October 1994, the building has alternated between housing the superintendent and hosting less-than-full-time personnel.
[101] SMR, June 1940, 2, 4; July 1940, 2; July 1941, 2; August 1941, 1; October 1941, 3; July 1943, 2; June 1944, 2. A. E. Demaray to Ike P. Taylor, April 17, 1940; Supt. MOMC to Director NPS, June 5, 1941; both in File 640 (Trails), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[102] USDI, *Budget Estimates/NPS, Fiscal Year 1966*, NPS Budget/Files Room, WASO; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 150-51; NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1941-1953* (the author, ca. 1954), 1.
[103] SMR, March 1942, 1; April 1942, 1; May 1942, 1; July 1942, 4.
[104] SMR, March 1942, 1; July 1942, 4.
[105] Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 73; Brown, *A History*, 203; *Jessen's Weekly*, February 20, 1942; NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks, 1941-1953*, 2; S. B. Buckner, Jr., Headquarters Alaska Defense Command, *Public Proclamation No. 1*, April 7, 1942, in Bill Brown files, DENA Archives; Lyman L. Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest; The U.S. Army in Alaska and Western Canada, 1867-1987; Volume Two, 1918-1945* (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Society, 1997), 122-23; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 8, 1941, 1.
[106] SMR, January 1942, 2; *Nome Nugget*, March 20, 1942, 4.
[107] SMR, January 1941, 1-2.

[108] SMR, February 1941, 1, 4. Been's response was consistent with a memo from NPS Director Drury which asked military authorities to consider "alternative plans" before using NPS areas for defense purposes. Drury to "Washington Office and all Field Offices," November 27, 1940, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[109] SMR, June 1941, 1; July 1941, 1. Been recalled that Col. Hood took a dim view of the military utilizing the existing Savage Camp facility, believing "there should be log or frame buildings in a camp adequate for 200 men. He considers tents unsatisfactory, particularly for winter use.... Because a soldier is 'roughing it' as part of his business, he is not likely to find relaxation by roughing it for a vacation. He should therefore be made comfortable so that he can loaf if he wants to." Been diary entry, August 27, 1941, in RG 09, 1936-48, DENA Archives.

[110] Been to RD/R4, September 18, 1941, in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[111] Buckner to Been, September 28, 1941, in File 201, noted above. This "valley," in all likelihood, was that of Clearwater Creek or one of its feeder streams.

[112] SMR, September 1941, 1; October 1941, 1; November 1941, 1. When Been visited "the foothill country south of Mt. McKinley ... the region impressed [him] favorably for recreation. ... In addition to recreation from hiking, swimming, fishing, etc., the country is well mineralized so that soldiers could become quite excited about placer mining." Been to Gruening, November 15, 1941, in "World War II/Army Rec Camp" files, Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.

[113] SMR, December 1941, 3; February 1942, 1; April 1942, 2; Newton Drury to Ernest Gruening, April 2, 1942, and Buckner to Been, April 22, 1942; both in "World War II" file, Box 3, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[114] SMR, May-July 1942, 1; Barbara Washburn with Lew Freedman, *The Accidental Adventurer* (Fairbanks, Epicenter Press, 2001), 77. As noted in one contemporary article ("The Army's Expedition to Mount McKinley," *Quartermaster Review* 22 (January-February 1943), p. 29), Washburn--a veteran of ten previous Alaska expeditions—was often referred to as "knowing the mountains of Alaska perhaps better than any other person."

[115] "Mt. McKinley Quartermaster Corps Expedition Tests Winter Equipment Here," *Life* 14 (March 22, 1943), 69-73; SMR, August 1942, 1-2; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 186-88, 226-27; Brown, *A History*, 191-92; Lyman Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest; Vol. Two*, 240.

[116] SMR, November 1942, 2; Charles W. Porter III, ed., *National Park Service War Work, December 7, 1941 to June 30, 1944*, May 27, 1946, pp. 22-23, in "Miscellaneous Files," Box 3009H, non-central classified files, RG 79, NARA SB; *Alaska Defense Command, Special Service Bulletin* 1 (April 1943), 1, in File 504 ("Army Rec Camp"), Box 77, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; NPS Press Release, July 4, 1943, in File 501-03 ("Newspaper Articles"), Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[117] SMR, December 1942, 2; January 1943, 2; February 1943, 1; March 1943, 2; *Jessen's Weekly*, March 12, 1943, 11.

[118] SMR, April 1943, 1; *Jessen's Weekly*, April 23, 1943, 15; Drury to Supt. MOMC, February 2. 1943, in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[119] Alaska Defense Command, *Special Service Bulletin*, vol. I:1 (April 1943), 1-2, in File 504, noted above.

[120] Alaska Defense Command, *Special Service Bulletin*, vol. II:8 (April 1944), in File 504, noted above; Grant H. Pearson, *A History of Mt. McKinley National Park* (n.p., NPS, 1953), 53.

[121] SMR, October 1943, 2; November 1943, 1-2; December 1943, 1; March 1944, 1; April 1944, 1.

[122] Pearson, *A History*, 55; SMR, February 1944, 1; Alaskan Department, *Special Service Bulletin* II (April 1944), 1; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 2, 1971, 3.

[123] Pearson to Ickes, April 30, 1943, in File 504, "Publications, General," Box 1409 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[124] SMR, June 1943, 1; July 1943, 1; February 1944, 1.

[125] Pearson, *A History*, 53. A total of 11,519 people visited the park for recreational purposes during World War II, including 63 in 1942; 3,674 in 1943; 5,770 in 1944; and 2,012 in 1945. The huge disparity between the total number of park visitors and the number reported in the NPS visitor use statistics—that is, the difference between *all* visitors and *unaffiliated civilian* visitors—can perhaps be explained by 1943 correspondence between Pearson and his Washington superiors, which is located in File 501-03 ("Newspaper Articles"), Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP. Acting Director Hillory Tolson, in an August 7 memo, noted "We would like very much to use this figure" (i.e., total park visitation) "since military use of the national parks is one of the strongest justification for personnel funds, etc." But Pearson, prodded by an Alaska Defense Command censor, had to remind his boss on July 28 that "we are in a war zone and that information as to the number of men in our armed forces within any definite area is not proper publicity material." The underscoring is from Pearson's memo. By the spring of 1944, the military no longer felt the need to keep park visitation a secret (see the Alaskan Department, *Special Service Bulletin* II (April 1944), 1, which announced that "over 5,000 soldiers on furlough had checked into the palatial vacation resort ..."), but the NPS never included military visitation in its official visitor use figures.

[126] SMR, May 1943, 1; June 1943, 2; July 1943, 3; December 1943, 1; July 1944, 1; March 1945, 1. Grant Pearson to RD/R4, June 30, 1943, and Pearson to RD/R4, January 21, 1944, both in File 201, noted above; *Jessen's Weekly*, July 14, 1944, 2. In addition to Capt. Hall, recreation camp leaders included Lt. Richard Dunn and Captain Peck.

[127] The "dogtrot style" two-building Upper Savage Ranger Station, which soldiers improved during this period, had been moved in 1940 from the river's east bank to a new location, two miles to the southeast and closer to the Savage River Campground. As noted in Chapter 7, one of the two cabins is still standing at that site; the other was torn down in the mid-1960s. Jane Bryant email, July 14, 2006.

[128] Pearson to Ickes, April 30, 1943, noted above; Pearson to RD/R4, June 30, 1943; Pearson to Commanding General, Alaskan Department, U.S. Army, January 17, 1944; both in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[129] Pearson to RD/R4, January 21, 1944 in File 201, noted above.

[130] SMR, December 1939, 3; January 1940, 2; February 1940, 1, 3; April 1940, 9. Been finally made a summer-time flight over the park in June 1941 (SMR, June 1941, 1), but otherwise, the agency apparently used its Pollock Flying Service contract very infrequently.

[131] SMR, November 1940, 2; March 1941, 2, 5; April 1941, 2; December 1941, 3; April 1942, 2; Been to Director NPS, March 26, 1941, in "General Entries" file, Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

[132] SMR, July 1943, 1; August 1943, 2; September 1943, 1; October 1943, 1.

[133] SMR, November 1943, 2; April 1944, 2; August 1944, 3; January 1945, 1; February 1945, 1.

[134] Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest; Vol. Three* (1945-87), 20-21.

[135] SMR, January 1944, 1; February 1944, 1; March 1944, 1; Pearson, *A History*, 53.

[136] L. S. Hall to Director NPS, August 26, 1944, in File 201, Part 1, noted above; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 195; Pearson, *A History*, 54; SMR, October 1944, 2; Michael Sfraga, *Bradford Washburn: A Life of Exploration* (Corvallis, Oregon State University, 2004), 126-44.

[137] Contemporary news reports noted that the crash took place on an unknown mountain between Mount Brooks and Mount Mather. Pearson, in a February 12, 1945 crash report (in File 201, Part 2, noted above), stated that "Washburn suggested the name Mt. Deception." See Orth, *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, 262.

[138] Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 190-99; SMR, November 1944, 1; Pearson, *A History*, 50-52; Sfraga, *Bradford Washburn*, 130-38; Brown, *A History*, 205-06; various memoranda, File 201 ("National Defense," Part 1 and Part 2), Box 91, noted above. In January 1945, the Army memorialized the crash victims with a Ladd Field service, after which it flew a plane over the crash site and dropped three floral wreaths onto the snowbound landscape. Pearson was later lauded for his exemplary efforts in leading the dangerous expedition; the NPS gave him an "especially meritorious promotion" in mid-March 1945, and in April 1947, the Army awarded him a Medal of Freedom. NPS Press Release, March 15, 1945; *Inside Interior* 5 (April 1947), 3.

[139] SMR, December 1944, 1; January 1945, 1; Sfraga, *Bradford Washburn*, 143.

[140] This camp, "near the south boundary of the park," was probably on Brooks Glacier.

[141] Pearson, *A History*, 54; SMR, March 1945, 1; May 1945, 3; October 1945, 1; February 1946, 1; Orth, *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, 875.

[142] SMR, February 1945, 1; March 1945, 1; Claus-M. Naske and Herman E. Slotnick, *Alaska, A History of the 49th State* (Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1979), 123.

[143] SMR, June 1945, 1; July 1945, 1; August 1945, 1-2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 17, 1945, 4; July 21, 1945, 1. The scarcity of Stateside tourists was underscored in an August 23, 1945 *Anchorage Daily Times* article (p. 1) which noted that "the first party of commercial tourists in many years"—a party of 19 Californians—had just arrived in Anchorage.

[144] SMR, May 1945, 2.



# Chapter Six: Postwar McKinley, 1946-1956

The decade that followed World War II brought numerous changes to Mount McKinley National Park. Visitation moved from virtually nothing during the last wartime year to a new high of 6,672 just five years later. The Korean War then intervened, bringing with it major changes to the operation of the McKinley Park Hotel. The end of that war brought on a crisis at the park hotel, the impacts of which had a marked effect on park visitation. During this decade, almost all visitors accessed the park via the Alaska Railroad; at the same time, however, a park access road (the Denali Highway) was planned and built. NPS officials, in response to road construction, prepared for a sharp increase in automobile-based tourists.

### A Challenging Transition to Peacetime

To some extent, Alaska began to de-emphasize its strong military role soon after Allied troops drove Japanese forces from the Aleutian Islands in the spring and summer of 1943. Not long thereafter, total U.S. troop strength began to fall as part of transfers to other theaters of war, and by 1945 the number of active-duty troops in Alaska had fallen from 152,000 to about 60,000.[1] Beginning in 1944, various civilian government agencies—the Alaska Railroad and the National Park Service included—reacted to the increasingly optimistic war news by making postwar plans.

After the McKinley Park Hotel reopened to the public in 1946, it provided year-round accommodations and recreational activities. One of the ski runs is seen here overlooking the hotel complex. Charles Ott Photo, DENA 3548, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Americans throughout the country rejoiced on August 15, 1945 (V-J Day) when the U.S. government accepted Japan's surrender terms, and on September 2 Japanese officials officially ended the war with the signing of a treaty on the U.S.S. *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.[2] On October 4, officials with the U.S. Army's Alaskan Department declared that emergency wartime travel restrictions were being relaxed.[3]

Given those developments, the NPS and various development interests looked forward to seeing a full resumption of tourism in the summer of 1946. But major structural problems remained. The 16-ship fleet of the Alaska Steamship Company, for example, had been requisitioned during the war by the U.S. Maritime Commission, and by August 1945 two-thirds of those vessels had been sold or lost. Many of those vessels remained in government hands after the war ended, and it was not until late 1948 that the company regained full control of its fleet.[4] Compounding these difficulties was a series of maritime strikes—either in Alaska ports or on the Seattle waterfront—that crippled commerce for portions of the 1946, 1947, and 1948 tourist seasons.[5]

The volume of Alaska's maritime business during this period was so limited that the number of Alaskan steamship companies decreased from four in 1947 to just one (the Alaska Steamship Company) in 1950; this reduction, in turn, brought higher maritime passenger rates.[6] This period, to be sure, offered new, alternative ways to get to and from Alaska; commercial air transportation between Alaska and the U.S. had begun in June 1940, and the Alcan (Alaska) Highway had been open between Fairbanks and the main North American road network since November 1942.[7] Both of these newfangled travel methods, however, had yet to prove themselves; although three different airlines during the late 1940s connected Alaska to the U.S., few tourists used these services, and the long, challenging Alcan route was closed to civilian traffic until 1948.[8]

Despite those impediments, officials with the Alaska Railroad (which had operated the hotel since it opened in June 1939 and had held the park's concession since December 1941) did what they could to attract tourists to Mount McKinley National Park. (See Appendix D.) Anticipating a substantial increase in tourist volume, the railroad in May 1945 announced plans for a 72-room addition—each room with a separate bath—that would provide for a total of 320 guests. NPS landscape architect Alfred Kuehl, from the agency's regional office in San Francisco, assisted by providing preliminary drawings and lay-out plans. The following March, the railroad issued bid proposals for the expansion project. Perhaps due to the bevy of other territorial construction projects, however, all of the submitted bids were rejected as "way over budget," and shortly afterward, funds for the project were deleted because of a Presidential directive to reduce non-essential expenditures.[9]

Railroad officials, meanwhile, showed mixed feelings about the upcoming visitor season. In early 1946 the line's general manager, Col. John P. Johnson, "indicated a strong possibility" that the tourist facilities would not open that summer due to a rate squabble with the Alaska Steamship Company. Soon afterward, however, the




The McKinley Park Hotel lobby in the 1940s. Candy Waugaman Collection

railroad reversed its position and stated that the hotel would open after all. When a maintenance crew arrived at the hotel on May 1, it was dismayed to discover $8,000 in damages caused by frozen pipes.[10] Despite that setback, the hotel opened as scheduled on June 10 and continued to operate until September 30; during that time, the park received 1,145 visitors. Beginning in August, railroad officials discussed with Fort Richardson's commander the possibility of keeping the hotel open that winter for both military and civilian use. The idea of a ski area development was broached during those discussions. The ski-area idea, however, was abandoned as being too costly, and the hotel closed down that winter.[11]

By the time the hotel opened the following spring, Johnson was well aware that the hotel was a financial albatross; Supt. Been recalls that Johnson was "frank in expressing desirability for the railroad to get out of the hotel business" and hoped that the hotel could be taken over by a private concessioner. Ickes's decisions of a decade earlier were now irreversible, however, so the railroad soldiered on.[12] During the summer of 1947, the rail carrier raised hotel rates by 20 percent and found "local and college people" to staff the facility. To further improve the bottom line, it pushed for a year-round hotel operation, hoping to gain enough Army patronage to cover winter operating expenses. Officials also hoped that the introduction of a new, streamlined train—the *Aurora*, which connected Anchorage with Fairbanks in one day instead of the previous two—would boost visitation. To dedicate the new train, they held a highly popular 1898-style costume ball at the hotel on Alaska Day, October 18.[13] For the remainder of the winter, Alaska residents descended on the hotel for holiday weekends, and both newlyweds and convention-eers flocked there as well. Otherwise, however, crowds were sparse, primarily because the military chose not to be involved. By the following May, railroad officials gamely declared that wintertime operations had been "satisfactory." Hotel operations, however, remained a losing proposition; they resulted in about $150,000 of red ink to be spilled each year.[14] Railroad officials, trying to be optimistic, planned to keep the hotel open during coming winters as well, stating that it was "reasonable to expect an uptrend of winter patronage from the



The McKinley Park Hotel Dining Room. Candy Waugaman Collection

States, particularly if winter sports are provided." No such sport facilities were provided, however, until the winter of 1948-49, when the hotel management installed a ski tow and a "fine little ice rink" nearby. The skating rink was resurrected the following year as well. But despite those amenities, and despite reduced room rates and discount "excursion fares" on railroad travel—the hotel continued to lose money throughout this period.[15] Spurred on by year-round visitation, the number of annual park visitors reached unprecedented heights during this period; the 1947 total of 3,466 was far higher than in any previous year, and during the next three years the number of visitors almost doubled, to 6,672. The high cost of staffing and heating the hotel, however, plus the lack of wintertime visitation accounted for its negative cash flow.[16]

### Korean War Impacts

In 1950, events half a world away reverberated across Alaska and, in time, brought changes to Mount McKinley National Park. On June 25, North Koreans troops made a surprise attack across the 38th parallel, and three days later U.S. President Harry Truman ordered American troops to assist South Korean Army troops. The Korean War was on.[17]

Alaskan troops, whose primary purpose was to guard against a Soviet threat to North America, played a marginal role during the three-year war. Nevertheless, troops throughout the U.S.—Alaska included—were placed on a state of high alert and were constantly ready for battle.[18]

Given the country's commitment to its military obligations, the Army showed a renewed interest in using the park hotel during the off-season, and in the early fall of 1950 it formally decided—in a report to the NPS's regional office—to take over the hotel on December 1 for use as a rest camp. "High ranking military personnel" briefed NPS staff about the plan in late October—and visitation to the hotel—described as "negligible" during most of October—increased significantly as Army officials prepared for wintertime management.[19]

On December 1, as scheduled, the Army inaugurated the McKinley Park Recreational Rest Camp under a joint operation agreement with the Alaska Railroad, and for the remainder of the winter the hotel was filled—often to capacity—with armed services personnel. Just who filled the hotel, however, changed abruptly in January, when the Air Force replaced the Army; and perhaps because of that change, the military's last occupancy date was moved back from April 1 to May 1.[20] Upon leaving, the Air Force brass declared their intention to return again that fall. They kept that promise, and from 1951 to 1953 the hotel was typically booked nearly all year round with either civilian tourists from early June through late September, or Alaska Air Command (i.e., Air Force) personnel from November 1 through April 30. May and October were the only slack months except during the winter of 1951-52, when the military operated the hotel all the way from early October through late May.[21]



During the years the McKinley Park Hotel operated year-round, ice skating was one of the recreational activities available to visitors. DENA 30-13, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

By all accounts, the hotel was a lively place, summer and winter, during the three-year Korean War period. Year- round activities included the NPS's interpretive films, shown at the hotel, and visits to the dog kennels and the agency's small museum, both located at headquarters. Summertime activities included sightseeing out the park road, hiking, and camping.[22] Wintertime guests, on the other hand, were able to take advantage of the skating rink that was laid out near the hotel and, beginning in the winter of 1950-51, the military offered a ski run and toboggan slide on the slope just west of the hotel. The skating rink apparently remained for several years, but the military's "skiing activities," in the spring of 1951, temporarily shifted to Mile 6 on the park road due to the lack of snow at McKinley Park Station.[23] Folk and square dancing, conducted by the NPS staff and their wives, was also a wintertime staple during this period.[24] The hotel was enlivened by several major conventions; of particular interest was the Alaska Science Conference, which was held there for the second time in September 1951 and the third time a year later.[25]

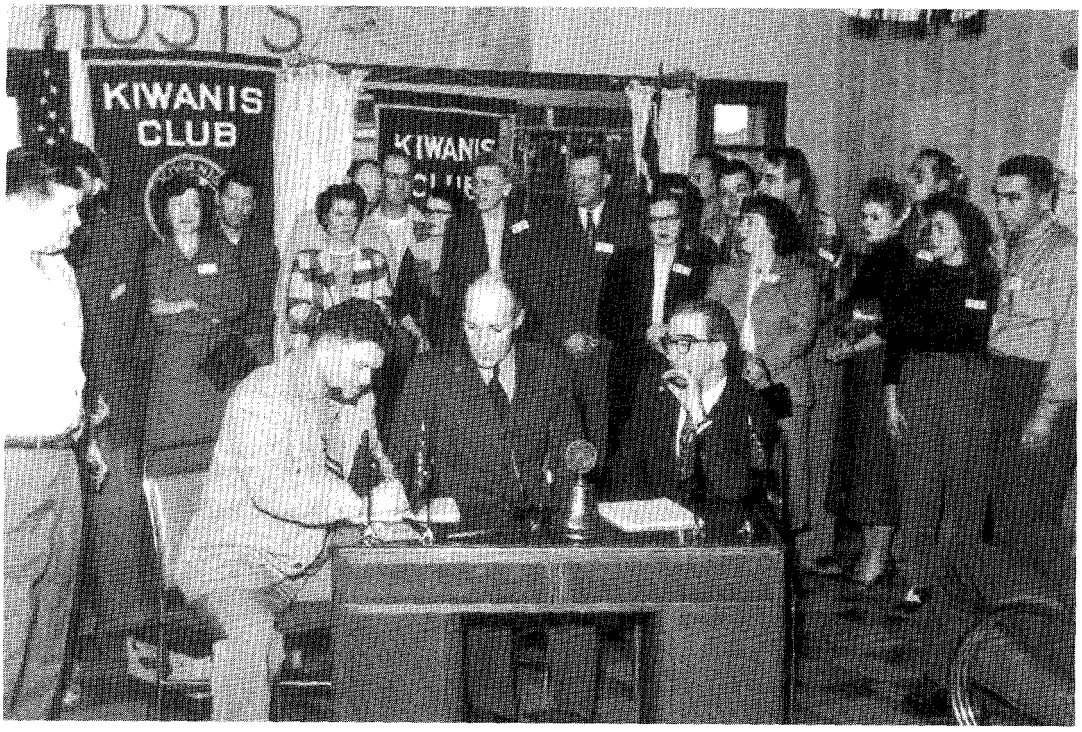


This rope tow pulled skiers up the slope just west of the McKinley Park Hotel, seen in the background. DENA 30-8, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Despite the relatively high, year-round tourist levels at the hotel during this period (in 1950, in fact, the hotel was booked "almost to capacity for the summer"), the railroad continued to lose money. According to a contemporary report, the reasons for the red ink were simple:

> The hotel season is very brief ... there have been days during the [summer] season when the number of guests registered at the hotel dropped to as low as one person. Nevertheless it is necessary to maintain the full staff day in and day out during the season as it is not possible to estimate the number of guests.[26]

As a consequence, the railroad raised its hotel prices but skimped on maintenance. In 1950, therefore, visitors intending to go out into the park could "not do so in a satisfactory manner because transportation means and other accommodations out in the park are practically non-existent." In 1951, in a similar fashion, the railroad ran bus and passenger-car trips out into the park "on a demand basis only." Camp Eielson, which had not operated since the summer of 1948, continued in its mothballed state.[27] The following year matters got considerably worse when Congress slashed its annual railroad appropriation from $16 million to $4 million, and as a complement to that action, it recommended that the hotel, for the first time ever, be placed under a concession contract. As a result, the railroad on June 12 issued an Invitation for Bid Proposals, asking for bid submittals to be completed by September 10. Meanwhile, the railroad continued to run the hotel, but it asked the Matanuska Bus Lines to provide a bus for service out the park road; that bus seldom went past Camp Eielson.[28] That August, E.W. Lauesen, who represented certain "interested parties in Anchorage," visited the park with an eye to its economic possibilities; later that year, he incorporated McKinley Park Services, Inc. for the purpose of submitting a bid for the concession contract.[29] Lauesen's outfit and three other companies submitted bids by the September 10 deadline, but by December, Lauesen had emerged as the only serious bidder. Park staff, in response, met repeatedly with the group and learned what it could about its finances. The investigation revealed that Lauesen's group was severely undercapitalized, and it also discovered that the bidders had precious little hotel management experience. On the basis of those findings, the NPS's regional director recommended against awarding Lauesen's group the hotel contract; if granted, he asked that the bidders secure $200,000 in additional financing. But the Interior Department, fully aware of the railroad's ardent interest in divesting its burden, soft-pedaled those suggestions, and on June 13, 1953, the agency awarded McKinley Park Services a 20-year contract to operate the hotel and ancillary services (see Appendix D). The contract, significantly, went into effect even though an important signatory, Interior Secretary Douglas McKay, did not approve it.[30]



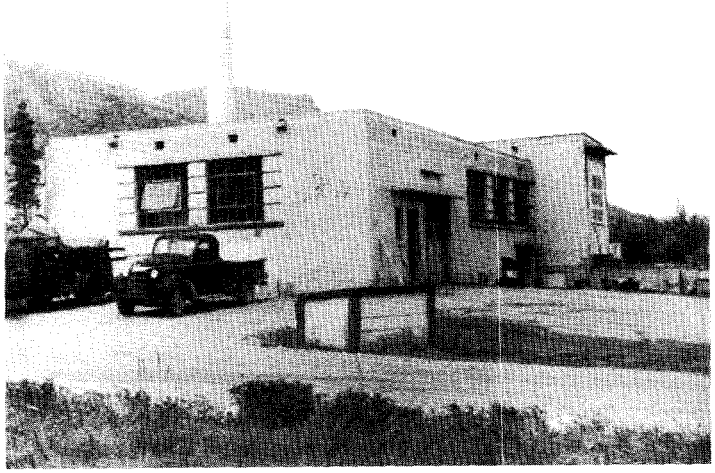

On November 7, 1953, ownership of the McKinley Park Hotel was transferred from the Alaska Railroad to the National Park Service. Signatories were, from the left, E.W. Lauesen of McKinley Park Services, Inc., Acting Park Superintendent Oscar Dick, and Elroy F. Hinman of the Alaska Railroad. DENA 12-28, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

**Concessioner Difficulties**

During the summer of 1953, military officials approached the new concessioner and discussed the idea of operating the hotel during the upcoming winter. Perhaps due to the end of the Korean War, however, they decided not to exercise that option. The railroad, hoping not to repeat the money-losing winters experienced during the late 1940s, orchestrated a "vigorous advertising campaign, via radio and news papers" in Fairbanks and Anchorage "in hope of stimulating winter travel." And as an added inducement to attract visitors to the hotel, the railroad offered a room free to any person staying over between December 1 and December 22; guests merely needed to pay for their meals and any other services obtained. Despite that incentive, however, business at the hotel during the winter of 1953-54 was fairly quiet; monthly visitation ranged from just 117 to 423, or between four and fourteen guests per night. Given such a sparse visitor count, financial losses were again heavy that winter.[31]

During the fall of 1953, the National Park Service—which up to this point had been just an interested observer in hotel operations—became the owner of the hotel and more than 200 acres of surrounding land. (See below.) Based on that reality, and given the fact that the contract signed in June had never been consummated, the NPS and the new concessioner worked out a new contract regarding the operation of the hotel facilities. But as the fall wore on, the financial difficulties of the concessioner became increasingly obvious, and the contract that the House Interior Committee chair approved on February 2, 1954 had just a five-year time frame. And as the contract wound again through the administrative channels within the Interior Department, a stipulation was inserted giving the Secretary the ability to terminate the contract in 90 days "if the company became involved in financial difficulties to the extent that it would be in the public interest to do so." The Department finalized the new contract on July 6, 1954, but by this time, the concessioner's plight was so desperate—and complaints about that summer's hotel operation were so numerous—that Secretary McKay decided to not sign the contract.[32]

Instead, he vowed that the facility should be transferred to its (new) owner, the National Park Service. Acting on those orders, NPS Director Conrad Wirth requested that a company called National Park Concessions, Inc. (NPCI) begin managing the hotel. (According to Don Hummel, a longtime concessioner at several national parks, NPCI was "a non-profit-distributing membership corporation," founded in 1941, whose purpose it was "to furnish adequate accommodations for the public at reasonable rates and to develop these facilities solely in the interest of the public welfare." According to NPCI's president, the company served "at the request of the National Park Service" and "was asked to go" into various parks after the NPS had been "unsuccessful in interesting others to provide the concessioner services.")[33] On August 4, just a week after Wirth's request, NPCI official Garner Hansen



Fuel for the hotel's power plant, shown here, was delivered by the Alaska Railroad on a wye from the depot. DENA 12-52, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

arrived at the hotel along with NPS officials, Justice Department representatives and U.S. District Attorneys. Park Superintendent Grant Pearson then gave E. W. Lauesen a letter stating that McKinley Park Services was no longer managing the hotel and other concessions operations. Lauesen responded by bringing his attorney into the discussion, and a legal wrangle then ensued. Finally, on August 25, Lauesen's company ceded its control over the concessions operation (see Appendix D.) NPCI, operating on a contract effective July 28, managed the hotel until the end of the season. That season was soon coming to a close. Hansen, in his brief time at the hotel, quickly recognized the economic limitations of operating the hotel in the wintertime, so he closed it on September 12 and left the area after placing it in a "caretaker status under the direction of the NPS." By October, the hotel was "closed and locked to prevent unauthorized use," but the hotel continued to be heated and otherwise maintained.[34]

Because NPCI was the designated entity to rescue fiscally-challenged concessions operations, its role was to cut costs, increase operations efficiency, and prepare a transition to a new, private concessioner. In order to speed that transition, however, it had a special relationship with both the NPS and with Congress. That relationship enabled the company to tap into government funding if continued losses were incurred (although it likewise had to reimburse the government if profits were incurred), and it also meant that the government lent a kind ear to the company's request for any infrastructural improvements that were necessary to ensure concessioner profitability.[35]

Given that relationship, the NPS added $20,000 to the park's budget for hotel maintenance (see Appendices B and C); this figure allowed the superintendent to hire a power plant engineer, maintenance men, and firemen as needed to minimize winter hotel maintenance costs. At first, this maintenance was provided by existing NPS staff, along with much-needed help from Alaska Railroad personnel; in time, however, the NPS hired a full-time power plant operator (or "operating engineer") named Claude Sanders, along with a maintenance man, Charles Ott.[36] A maintenance crew remained until early May 1955; meanwhile, the agency called in regional-office personnel to assess the hotel's infrastructure needs.[37]

The hotel's financial viability during this period was clearly tenuous, and reports surfaced in the spring of 1955 that the hotel might not open that summer. The hotel, in fact, opened later than usual (on June 15), and perhaps because its reputation was "still smarting from the 1954 operation," visitation was low through the summer of 1955. Nevertheless, Hansen did what he could. Recognizing that the park's busses were in deplorable shape, he tried to either rent busses or obtain surplus military busses. Rebuffed in these attempts, he received a chorus of visitor complaints because the "wornout busses were continuously breaking down and on most occasions had to be towed into the hotel area to be repaired." Finally, in August, he was able to rent a bus in Fairbanks that served until Labor Day, when bus tours stopped for the year. The combination of bad publicity, poor bus service, bad weather, and washouts (which stopped railroad service during August) meant for a poor visitor season; just 3,400 people visited the park in 1955, the fewest number since 1946, and despite its cost-cutting measures, NPCI lost money that year.[38] Given the hotel's rocky finances, reports again surfaced that the hotel would close down for good. Matters were brought to a head in mid-September 1955, when several members of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs, headed by Rep. Leo O'Brien (D-NY), visited McKinley Park Station as part of an Alaska-wide tour; the subcommittee held an impromptu hearing in the hotel lobby "on the merits of continued operation and needs of accommodations for the visiting public." Those who spoke at the hearing included Assistant Superintendent Duane D. Jacobs, Park Naturalist Richard G. Prasil, and Garner Hansen of NPCI. Sufficient financial

progress had been made by this date that the hotel would remain open the following year, if only on a seasonal basis.[39]

During the winter of 1955-56, as it had the previous winter, the Interior Department made a pro forma exercise of advertising for bidders to operate the hotel.[40] (Given the hotel's poor financial track record, apparently no qualified bidders stepped forward.) After 1955, however, prospects for the hotel began to improve. A post-season report on the hotel's management recommended a rehabilitation and restoration program, and in response, the federal government authorized $147,000 to modernize the hotel's power and heating systems. In November 1955, a Fairbanks firm contracted for the job, and by the end of the following February, Superintendent Pearson proudly noted that "ample heat is now evident throughout the building under a full hot water hookup."[41] That spring, the hotel's grounds were regraded and drained, and the old hotel garbage dump was cleaned up; as a result, Pearson proudly noted in June 1956 that the hotel area was "gradually beginning to take on an air of respectability."[42] Visitors, fortunately, began to return to the park. More than 5,200 arrived in 1956; that total was the most since 1953, when the hotel had been open all year long.[43]

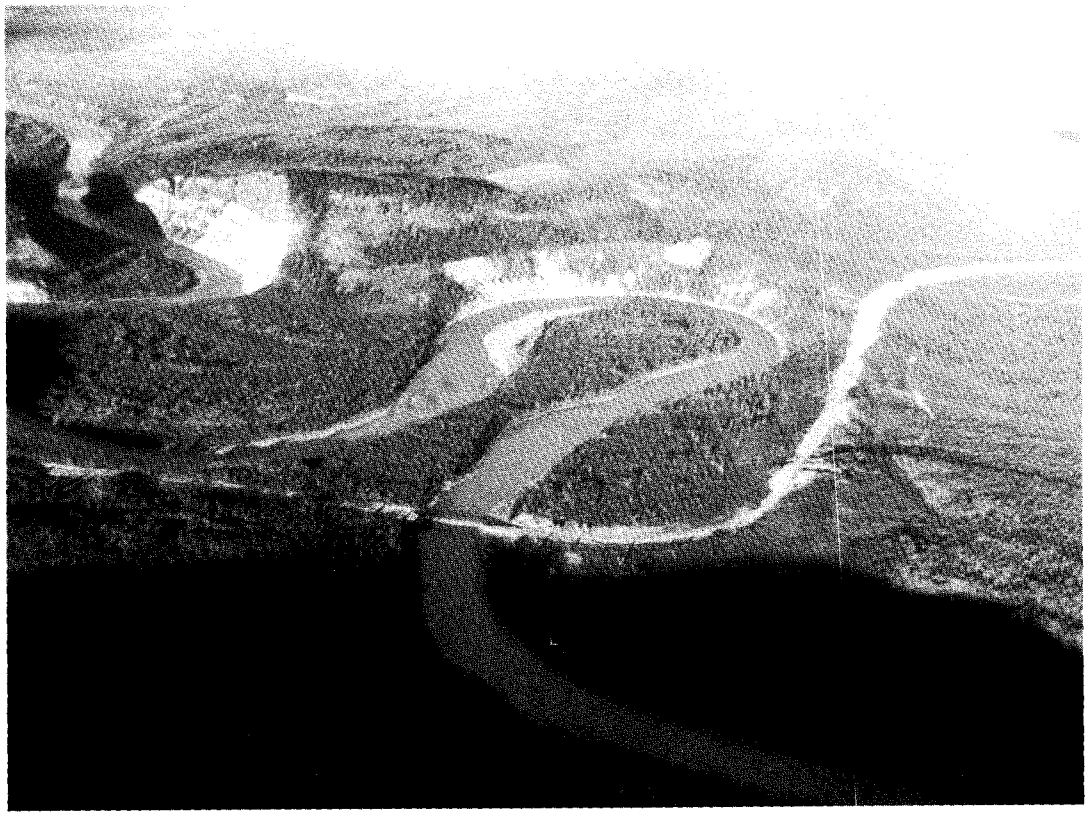
During the midst of the 1956 season, further improvements to the hotel began when the NPS let a contract for a "general rehabilitation of the hotel" to an Anchorage construction company. That contract began in July and was completed in mid-October. The following year, the agency tendered a bid for a hotel fire alarm system, which was completed just two months later. And to replace the old worn-out buses that had caused so much grief to both concessioners and visitors, two new 12-passenger buses were finally acquired during the winter of 1956-57.[44]

NPCI, during this period, continued to manage the park concession, and thanks to an improved visitor count, the company made its first profit—about $3,200—in 1956. The company, however, had no long-term interest in the concession, so the agency began casting about for a new concessioner. The first to show an interest were Charles "Chuck" West of Arctic Alaska Travel Service in Fairbanks, and Stanley Chinn, who currently operated the Healy Hotel under an Alaska Railroad contract. And in the summer of 1956, two new parties showed an interest in the contract and visited the park to learn more details about its operations. None of these consummated a contract, however, so in February 1957, NPCI signed a contract to operate the hotel and the park transportation system for the upcoming summer.[45]

Congress, recognizing the difficulties under which NPCI was forced to operate at the Mount McKinley facility, provided some fiscal relief to the company during this period. In previous years, there had been no guarantee that revenues gained through the hotel's operation could be kept and used to offset operating expenses. That changed, however, in June 1956, when Congress included a provision in the 1957



The two new buses for the hotel concession arrived on Alaska Railroad flatcars in February, 1957, at -40 degrees. DENA 12-41, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



This photo shows a portion of the new Cantwell to McKinley Park road and the Nenana #2 Bridge, in August 1952 (near the present Crabbie's Crossing). The Nenana River is the park boundary, making all lands to the left of the river within the park. Harpers Ferry Center, #1348, National Park Service

Interior Department appropriations bill stating that "all receipts for the fiscal year 1957" for the hotel "may be applied to, or offset against, costs of managing, operating, and maintaining the hotel and related facilities...". This provision was renewed for the following two years; as shall be seen, the hotel's return to profitability in later years made a continuation of this clause unnecessary.[46]

### Constructing the Denali Highway

A major factor that affected the decisions of both park personnel and concessioners during the postwar decade was the Denali Highway. This road, which was intended to connect Mount McKinley National Park to the larger road system, held great promise because of its potential to boost park visitation. Ever since the idea had first been suggested during the 1930s, the Territory of Alaska had showed great interest in the highway's potential to boost Alaska tourism. Despite efforts to the contrary, little more than planning and surveying took place during the 1940s. Thereafter, however, the road benefited from a consistent funding stream that provided for new road construction each year until the project was completed.

So far as is known, the idea of this highway was first broached in the early 1930s. In 1929, boosters in both Fairbanks, Alaska, and Dawson, Yukon Territory had formed twin chapters of the International Highway Association, with a mutual goal of connecting interior Alaska to Prince George, B.C. via a 1,350-mile gravel road. Development groups continued to hawk the idea for the next several years, and in 1933, Superintendent Harry Liek noted that the park "would surely come into its own in the event that the highway is constructed, although it would require a feeder running from the Richardson Highway to McKinley Park Station in order to make connections...".[47] Four years later, the need for such a highway was reiterated as part of a congressional report related to Alaska resource planning. That report was written while the park hotel was still being constructed, before the park road was completed all the way to Kantishna, and just before a rough route between Cantwell and the Valdez Creek (Denali) mining district was laid out. The report noted that

> at some future date a connecting highway may be built between the park road system and the Richardson Highway. The construction of such a connecting link will undoubtedly stimulate traffic to the park. A recommendation that this approach highway be constructed is made in this report. These future demands can be met by an increase in the size and variety of the tourist facilities at McKinley Park Station and at Wonder Lake.[48]

Between 1938 and 1941, the gathering war clouds forced both the U.S. and Canada to talk more seriously about an international highway, and talk about a connecting road to McKinley Park Station was often a byproduct of those discussions. The appointment of Ernest Gruening, an avowed McKinley booster, as Alaska's governor in December 1939 kept the idea alive, and during the following year the first maps, plans, and field inspections of possible routes took place. Those who surveyed the route between Paxsons Roadhouse[49] (on the Richardson Highway) and the Cantwell area noted that there was already a "well known trail" used by Valdez Creek -area gold miners for much of this route, and that the Alaska Road Commission, in 1938, had improved the route between Cantwell and Valdez Creek from a trail to a tractor road. Between Cantwell and the park hotel, however, there were "two reasonable entrances into the park;" one paralleled the Nenana River and the railroad right-of- way, while the other ascended Windy Creek and reached the park hotel via the Riley Creek watershed.[50] Frank Been, the park superintendent at the time, clamored for the road because road access would guarantee freedom from the "high railroad fares and hotel rates" then in force. The looming war, however, meant that scant attention was paid to a park connecting road between 1941 and 1945, inclusive; during that period, however, both the Alcan (Alaska) Highway was built as well as a road connecting Palmer (and thus Anchorage) with the Richardson Highway.[51]

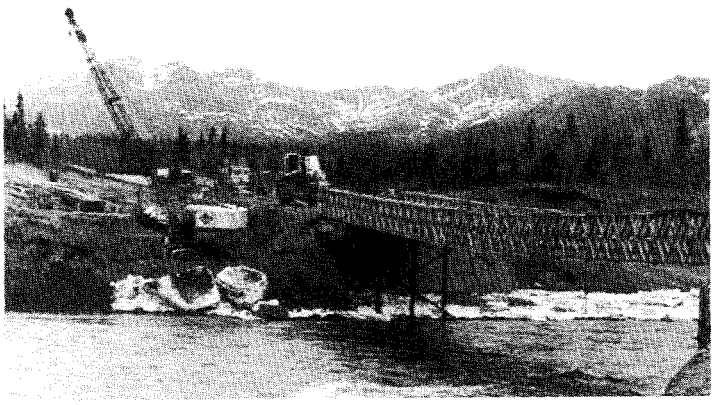
Once the war was over, however, interest in the road returned. In its annual report for fiscal year 1945, which was prepared before V-J Day, the Alaska Road Commission recommended three new road construction projects "should the war terminate before the beginning of fiscal year 1947." One of those three projects was the 155-mile-long, $3,875,000 Paxsons-McKinley Park road. The ARC recommended that $1 million be spent on that project during fiscal year 1947.[52] Road construction was not funded that year, so it was again recommended the following year, with similar results. When the ARC wrote its 1947 annual report, the road's projected cost had risen to $4,650,000, and it requested $1,800,000 for the 1949 fiscal year.[53] The NPS was fully supportive of this project; as it noted in the park's November 1946 *Development Outline* (master plan), "By constructing an approach road connecting [the park] with the Alaska road system, it will become accessible to many Alaskans and also help solve transportation difficulties of visiting tourists from the States." The agency, at that time, anticipated that the road would be built through the Windy Creek and Riley Creek watersheds, so it planned for "suitable quarters" for a ranger "at the Cantwell entrance of the proposed approach road."[54]

The ARC finally began survey work on the 155-mile road in September 1947. About 45 miles of survey work was completed, including the segment between Cantwell and the park hotel via Windy and Riley creeks. The following September, an inspection was made of the alternate route between Cantwell and the park hotel. Also in 1948, the ARC authorized the construction of a road between Paxsons and Cantwell. After Commission personnel conducted additional survey work at the eastern end of the proposed road, the Anchorage firm of Smith, Brown and Root, Inc.—under contract to the commission for construction of the road project—was ready to proceed as soon as funds could be allotted.[55]

The year 1949 began with high hopes; in March, park staff heard that an ARC survey crew "will work out from Cantwell toward Valdez Creek" and the Commission "will probably begin construction work later in the summer from Cantwell. ... Construction work would start this spring from the Richardson Highway toward Valdez Creek." But the Commission ran into problems, and "in June a decision was reached to suspend work on the east end of the ... Road until further surveys could be made. ... Construction had not been planned for the west end of this project during 1949 because of [its] inaccessibility [by road] and the lack of base camp facilities on that end." The ARC, meanwhile, continued to mull over the best route for an approach road between Cantwell and the park hotel, but no decision was reached that year.[56] Part of the reason for the lack of progress in 1949 was that the ARC considered an alternate route at the proposed route's eastern end; that route would have headed west from the Richardson Highway at Meiers' Roadhouse (16 miles southeast of Paxsons) until it angled north at the Susitna River. In the fall of 1948, the Commission had briefly flirted with another alternate route—of accessing the national park via a route south from Fairbanks that paralleled the Alaska Railroad. That idea was quickly discarded in favor of an east-west route, although it was revived less than a decade later (see Chapter 7).[57]

By early 1950, the ARC had made a final decision on the Paxsons-Cantwell portion of the route, and construction that year began at each end. In Cantwell, the Commission constructed an equipment depot, and from that base it built 20 miles of road toward Valdez Creek; at Paxson, it

worked westbound and opened 14 miles of road to traffic. Between Cantwell and the park hotel, the ARC continued to dither over the best route, and early in the year it surveyed two routes between Carlo and the park hotel: one via "Carlo Pass" (three miles north of Carlo) and Riley Creek, the other paralleling the Alaska Railroad right-of-way. A final route decision, which (according to the ARC) was "coordinated with plans of the National Park Service," was made in the late summer of 1950, and in October, a six-mile segment of this "alternate approach road" was constructed between Cantwell and the Nenana River crossing near Windy.[58]



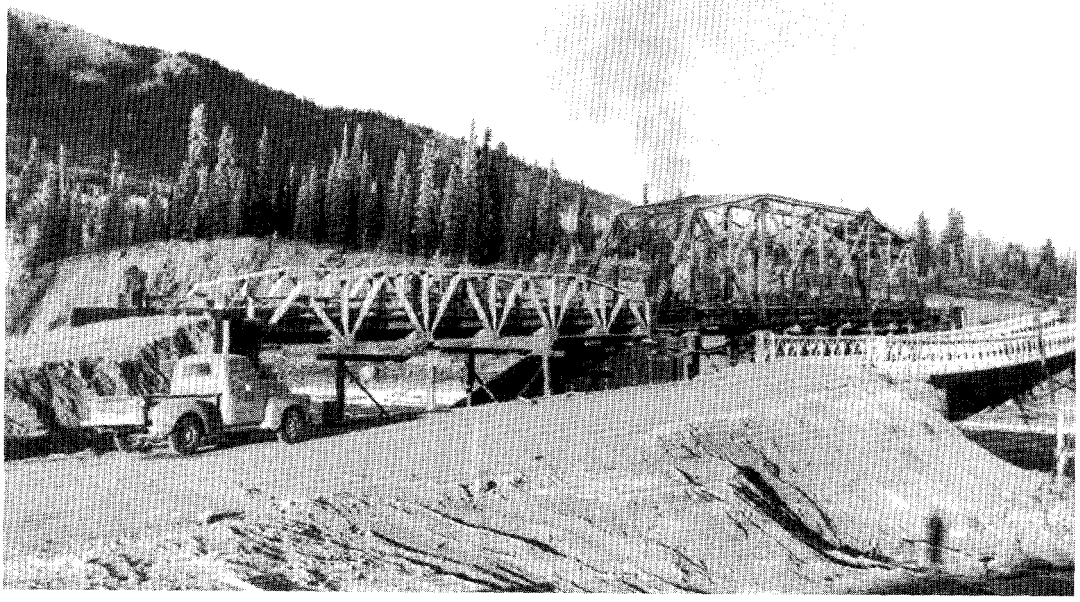
The Nenana River #2 bridge at Yanert Crossing has been replaced several times. This photo shows serious damage by ice during spring breakup in May, 1954. DENA 2-9, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

In 1951, construction crews concentrated their efforts at the road's western end. East of Cantwell, crews pushed east and graded 13½ miles of new road, four of which were opened to traffic. North of Cantwell, ARC officials hoped to complete the approach road that summer. Work began in April. By the end of May a wooden bridge had been completed over the Nenana River near Windy, and work was "progressing rapidly" between Cantwell and the park boundary (at the so-called Yanert Crossing). By August, construction had proceeded to the point that the ARC started moving equipment to the Yanert Crossing bridge site. Work also progressed in the McKinley Park Station area, although more slowly. The ARC worked with an architect from the NPS's regional office on where to locate the park road, and in June, that office approved the route and construction commenced. As the summer wore on, both agencies were hopeful that the Yanert Crossing bridge would be completed that year and that trucks would be able to travel between Cantwell and McKinley Park Station. High water on the Nenana River and ARC budget cutbacks, however, forced all bridge work to be postponed until the following year.[59]

In 1952, the 29-mile road segment between Cantwell and McKinley Park Station was completed and opened to traffic. The work, however, proved challenging. In March, the ARC began work on the pile bridge at Yanert Crossing; a month later, it completed the bridge and began work on the smaller bridge across Riley Creek. The latter bridge was completed in late May. Disaster, however, struck on May 21, when the ice-choked Nenana River washed away both of the newly-constructed Nenana River bridges during breakup. The ARC, forced to improvise, installed a 180-foot-long Bailey Bridge at Yanert Crossing beginning in July and made similarly improvised repairs on the bridge near Cantwell. The road was finally completed in September and was kept open most if not all of the following winter. Also in 1952, the road—previously known as the Paxsons-Cantwell-McKinley Park Road—was renamed the Denali Highway.[60]

In 1953, work picked up again at the Paxson end of the road after two years of relative quiet; at the western end, sufficient new road was constructed that the road terminus, at the end of season, was 34 miles east of Cantwell. The Commission that spring completed another road project—a nine-mile segment from Cantwell southwest to Summit Airfield—that was important to park residents. This airfield, located in the Broad Pass area, had been built before World War II, and ever since, it had served as a flight service station and had been staffed on a 24-hour basis by Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) personnel. The airfield, which had a runway almost 5,000 feet long—some 2,000 feet longer than the McKinley Park Station airstrip—was midway between Anchorage and Fairbanks and had long served a valuable emergency function. Given its road access to the park, Summit Airfield offered many advantages that both park staff and park visitors utilized in the years to come.[61]

Beginning in the winter of 1953-54, the ARC crews in Cantwell decided to stop plowing the road north of town each fall; they kept it closed until the following spring. (This closure affected relatively few drivers, inasmuch as the road was accessible to fewer than 200 area residents during this period.)[62] The road between Cantwell and the park gradually improved; in late 1954, the ARC replaced its original Nenana



The damaged Nenana River #2 bridge was replaced by fall of 1954. The present bridge is slightly upstream of the earlier bridges, and is the fifth bridge built at this general location. DENA 2-10, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

River bridge near Cantwell with an improved structure, and in early 1955, the Bailey Bridge at Yanert Crossing was removed in favor of a new, more permanent span.[63]

Meanwhile, construction proceeded on the remaining mileage needed to complete the Denali Highway. Peter Bagoy, the government foreman on the project, noted that construction in one area west of the Susitna River slowed because of one particularly obstinate hill that held out for three years despite the continual thawing and scraping process. At one time, the mud was so bad that six of the crew's eighteen large D-8 "cats" were put out of commission, buried above their tracks.[64]

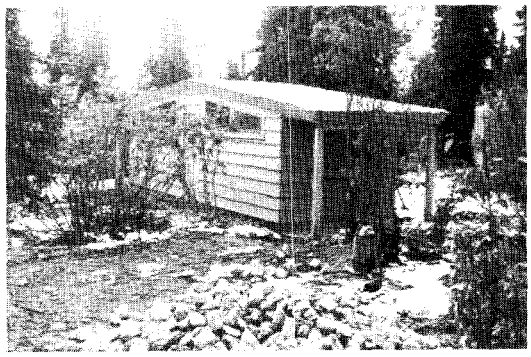
The major remaining obstacles were four bridges. They included the Rock Creek Bridge, 25 miles west of Paxson; the Maclaren River Bridge, 42 miles west of Paxson; the Canyon Creek Bridge, 41½ miles east of Cantwell, and the Susitna River Bridge, 58 miles east of Cantwell. Of these, a 1000-foot bridge over the Susitna River promised to be most challenging, so test drilling for the bridge pilings began during the winter of 1953-54. During the summer of 1954, road construction had been completed as far as the Rock Creek Bridge (from Paxson) and the Canyon Creek Bridge (from Cantwell), halting further work until these bridges could be completed. Operating under two different contracts—a $156,000 contract for the two Paxson-area bridges and a $524,000 contract for the two Cantwell-area bridges—work began on all four structures in the spring of 1955.[65] By the end of June of that year, the Canyon Creek Bridge was sufficiently complete that the road was "under construction but passable" all the way from Cantwell to the Susitna River Bridge. Work then focused on the Susitna River Bridge, which was finished in May 1956; and by the end of June, the two bridges closest to Paxson were also complete.[66] Anticipating the completion of these bridges, the Commission in late 1955 prepared a contract for the construction of the last 37½ road miles between the Susitna and Maclaren rivers.[67] That contract, totaling $1.86 million, was awarded in mid-May 1956. All signs now pointed toward a speedy completion of the Denali Highway; in March 1956, the ARC predicted that the road would be "open for public use" on June 1, 1957.[68]

### The Park Plans for New Visitors

As noted above, the Alaska Road Commission had kept NPS officials abreast of all developments during the Denali Highway construction period, and the ARC and NPS had worked together on all phases of road construction within the park boundaries. Because of those information exchanges, NPS staff had ten years or more to prepare for the increased visitation that the highway would bring.

The agency made a series of responses during the postwar decade on how they would exercise their development options. Its November 1946 *Development Outline* stated that no new roads should be built except for the proposed park approach road. It did, however, recommend that "development should ultimately include

designated camp or picnic grounds at Savage River, Igloo Creek and Toklat River and possibly one near the approach road entrance." In addition, "adequate rest room facilities should be built at the approximate half-way point on the highway [between] McKinley Station and Wonder Lake." A Project Construction Program (PCP) request to fund the rest room project, in fact, had already been submitted to the agency's regional office.[69]



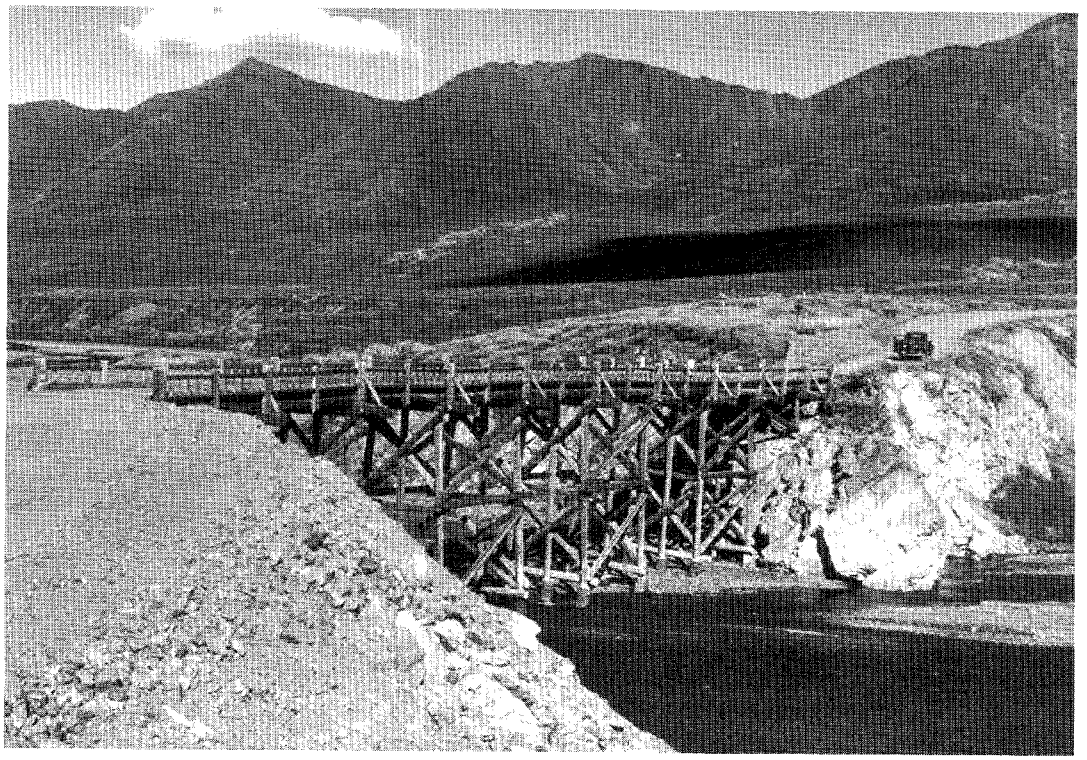
In September, 1955, fourteen concrete fireplaces were installed in the Savage River campground, along with this comfort station, which was still under construction. DENA 41-49, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

So far as is known, the 1946 *Development Outline* was the first NPS document that specifically planned for a series of automobile camps along the park road. Camps, of course, had been a staple in the park since its earliest days; the major camps had been Savage Camp and Camp Eielson, but the pre-war concessioner had also established other, smaller camps, both along the park road and up the Savage River valley. During World War II, the military had also provided for camping at selected points along the park road. None of these, however, had been planned with the individual traveler in mind. The reason, of course, was that automobile traffic within the park had always been miniscule in comparison to those who traveled by the concessioner's guide-driven "passenger car" or bus. Before World War II, only the wealthiest tourists brought their automobiles to Alaska, and those who wanted to drive on the McKinley park road had to load their auto onto a railroad flat car at either Anchorage or Fairbanks.

Despite those hurdles, a few intrepid souls came by car. As noted in Chapter 3, Supt. Karstens had driven the first tourists by auto into the park in August 1924, and in July 1935, Mr. C.E. Long of Mariposa, California earned the distinction of "being the first tourist to drive a car bearing a license from the United States" within the park. Few others were seen prior to World War II, but by 1947 the park superintendent was noting that "private cars [were] becoming more common" on the park road, and the following summer, 30 private cars—a new record—were offloaded at McKinley Park Station. (Particularly notable was a July day that year in which six private cars were in the park at the same time.) Given the increasing number of these cars, and recognizing that large numbers of autos would be arriving with the Denali Highway's completion, NPS staff began to plan accordingly. As early as 1951, a visiting consultant noted that "the Alaska traveler does not expect the same high type tourist facilities in Alaska as in the States, especially if the trip to Alaska has been made over the route of the Alaska Highway." He therefore hoped that "tourist accommodations in McKinley Park could be developed on a more modest scale" than was currently available at the McKinley Park Hotel.[70]

To accommodate the new demand, the NPS moved in early 1948 to have "its first public campground" in place by summer. That June, rangers tidied up an area along the Teklanika River, repaired an existing "frame hut,"[71] and opened Teklanika Camp to the public. Amenities were few; fire places and tables were noticeable by their absence, and the water supply was a small, nearby brook. Some visitors, however, camped at ranger stations, at abandoned ARC construction camps, or wherever else they chose to pitch a tent.[72] During 1950 and 1951, regional office personnel inspected future campground sites. Those inspections bore fruit in early 1952, when a "temporary" site was chosen for a Wonder Lake campground. (This is not surprising, inasmuch as most early automobile tourists liked to camp where—given good weather—the best views of Mount McKinley could be found.)[73] NPS personnel spent much of that summer improving that site; that summer also saw the first, small improvements at Igloo Campground and Morino campgrounds.[74] A number of these improvements were salvaged from Camp Eielson, which was finally being disassembled after years of neglect.[75] In 1954, the agency decided to establish improved park campgrounds at Savage River and Wonder Lake; those improvements, which included tables, fireplaces, water lines, and septic tanks, were completed in the late summer of 1955. Given these developments, the NPS was able to boast two major campgrounds plus three smaller ones by the time the Denali Highway neared completion.[76] Because there were never more than 200 cars per year in the park during this period, automobile campers in the early- to mid-1950s had no worries about traffic along the park road, and the various park campgrounds were seldom crowded.[77]

The Alaska Road Commission did its part during this period to prepare for the increased traffic by maintaining the park road and the accompany-



The original East Fork bridge, built by the Alaska Road Commission in 1929-30. DENA 2-73, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

ing bridges. The park road, which was completed to Kantishna in the late 1930s, demanded a high degree of maintenance, and most years brought washouts that closed portions of the road for several days; to quickly respond to those emergencies, and to carry on all of their other tasks, the ARC stationed a crew at Toklat (Mile 54) beginning in 1944.[78] The commission's major springtime challenge remained the huge snow-removal operation in order to clear the road in time for the park's June 10 opening; in some years conditions were cooperative, and traffic could move to Wonder Lake as early as April 28, but in other years the road opening was delayed until late June.[79] An ice layer covering the road at Mile 3 remained a periodic springtime headache; in 1949, 1950, and 1954, for example, crews scattered a thin layer of cinders, ashes or coal dust on the ice, which "hastened the melting of this glacier."[80] But in other years, ice on the roadway was not a problem. By the spring of 1956, the ash-and-cinder treatment had been abandoned in favor of earlier ice-removal methods.[81]

Beyond the day-to-day problems caused by weather and the seasons, however, engineers recognized that the roadway needed help. This problem first came to light in the spring of 1948, when Supt. Been noted that the park's road and bridges were in "critical condition" because they had been "inadequately maintained for several years." Later that year, Been helped prepare a proposal to modernize the road infrastructure.[82] Perhaps in response to that proposal, most of the park's bridges were replaced between 1950 and 1957. Some of these bridges, over small unnamed creeks, were timber-stringer replacements of the originals, but a few old bridges were replaced by corrugated metal culverts. Major projects during this period (see Appendix G) included steel bridges over Savage River (1950-51), East Fork (1952-54), Toklat River (1953-56), Teklanika River (1955), Sanctuary River (1956), Upper Igloo Creek (1956), and Stony Creek (1956-57).[83] There were no road paving projects during this period, but the highway was widened and straightened between Mile 53 and Mile 69 during the summer of 1946; it was widened between Mile 66 and Mile 69 during the summer of 1951; and also in 1951, a new right-of-way was bladed out for a short distance at Mile 6.[84]

### Wonder Lake Lodge: Further Considerations

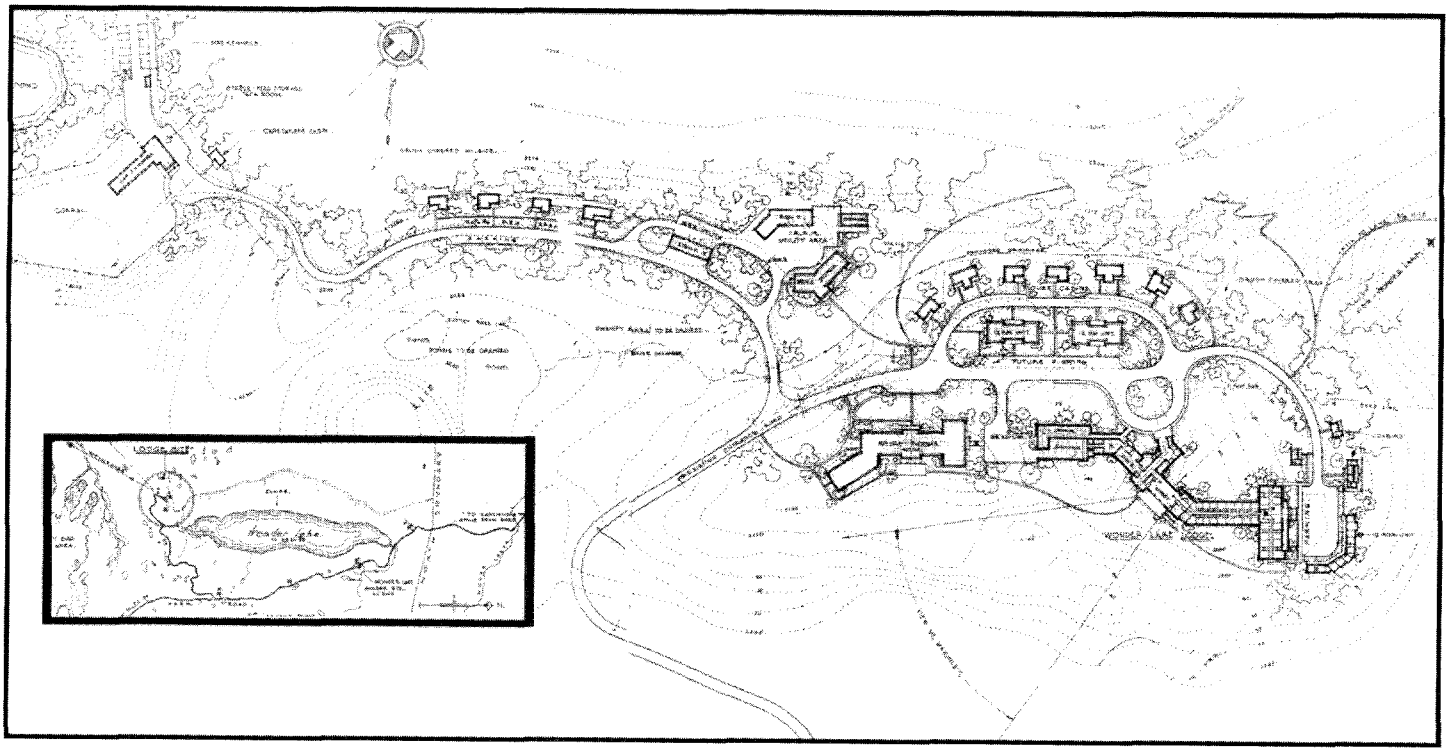
While some observers, as noted above, recognized the need to develop tourist accommodations at the park on a "modest scale," many development advocates clearly remained enthusiastic about a hotel or lodge at the western end of the park road. As noted in Chapter 5, several sites had been considered for hostelries in that area during the early to mid-1930s, but an August 1938 trip out the park road by Interior Secretary Harold Ickes and Territorial Chief Ernest Gruening had resulted in a firm decision to back a site on a knoll just south of Wonder Lake, and other sites were discarded after that time. Funding of the hotel seemed increasingly certain during 1940 and 1941, but the Pearl Harbor bombing put the project on hold for the duration of the war.

In early 1945, as the war was winding down, the Alaska Railroad—now the park's concessioner—and the NPS dusted off their prewar plans for a "lodge and cabins" at Wonder Lake. Col. Otto Ohlson, the railroad's general manager, stated his intention "to construct a comfortable lodge camp" where "we'll build several log cabins, capable of housing from two to eight persons apiece, located in a semi-circle around the main lodge."[85] Survey parties were sent out, Congressional parties visited the site, NPS architects collaborated with railroad engineers on design elements, and hotel advocates pressed their case within the Interior Department.[86] Revised plans called for a much larger lodge complex, with over a hundred rooms within various-sized buildings.[87] Alaska newspapers soon got wind of the project. Even Alaska Airlines—which, at the time, flew only in Alaska except for charter business—did its part to publicize the area; it erected a display showing the proposed lodge at the National Aviation Show in New York City.[88] Funding stalled, however, because funds were scarce for many Interior Department agencies during the postwar years. In September 1946, acting Superintendent Grant Pearson glumly noted that Wonder Lake lodge construction had been "deleted from the Railroad program for [the] 1948 fiscal year in compliance with the President's directive to reduce non-essential expenditures." The following year, railroad officials held out some hope for a construction allocation in the 1949 budget, but no such funding came forth.[89]

Bradford Washburn then entered the fray by suggesting a new development idea. By this time, Washburn was well-known for his mountaineering expertise; he had climbed Mount McKinley several times, his most recent summit effort (in the spring of 1947) being a well-publicized expedition in which his wife Barbara had climbed to the top. Washburn, in 1942, had been part of the Army Test Expedition, whose leaders had been so enthralled with the "Clearwater River country" that they had convinced Superintendent Been that the area "should be accessible by a branch road from the park highway." The beauty of this area, located south and west of Wonder Lake, had first been publicized by Charles Sheldon, and in 1927 Harry Karstens—who had tramped through the area with Sheldon—had recommended a site in this area for a hotel.[90] Given the agency's extensive postwar planning for a Wonder Lake hotel, therefore, it should have come as no surprise that Washburn would again advocate access to the Clearwater country south of Wonder Lake; he did so in a meeting with NPS Associate Director Demaray in June 1944 (Washburn, according to Demaray, stated that "visitors to the park should be entitled to get close to the mountain") and again, to Superintendent Been, before his 1947 climb. After he returned, he expressed a similar sentiment to Interior Department officials in Washington, noting that "the building of a road over to the bottom of McKinley should be considered as an integral part of the recreational development program necessary to the construction of a Lodge at Wonder Lake." Agency officials, however, threw cold water on the idea; they had little interest in new roadbuilding in the park, they were concerned about the high cost of a bridge across



**The original East Fork bridge was replaced by this concrete and steel structure, shown under construction in July 1954. DENA 2-81, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**



This 1947 architectural drawing of the proposed Wonder Lake hotel development was one of several plans for the site on a knoll south and west of Wonder Lake. NPS, Drawing McK-2018, TIC Aperture Card Collection

the McKinley River, and there were "several hundred projects which we feel are more urgent and will benefit greater numbers of park visitors." Ernest Gruening, who was a friend of Washburn, initially backed the climber's stand. Later, however, Gruening went along with the NPS's explanation that it "was not opposed to the road as a project but public use pressure in other parks compelled preference to those areas so long as funds had to spread out to do the most good."[91]

Between 1947 and 1950, the idea of a Wonder Lake lodge remained high on the priority list of railroad and Park Service officials, and these officials did what they could to court potential developers.[92] But Congressional authorizing committees had little interest in the project.[93] Given that change of heart, other ideas were considered. Alaska Airlines briefly proposed Wonder Lake as a site for a tourist camp, and Superintendent Pearson unsuccessfully urged NPS officials to reconsider the construction of a lodge on the western flank of Mt. Eielson, much as Major Gillette of the ARC had suggested back in 1927.[94]

In December 1951, Conrad Wirth became the new NPS Director. His appointment signaled a major new direction for the agency; inasmuch as the man who had directed the agency throughout the 1940s, Newton Drury, "came nearest to the purist attitude" of all the park directors," Wirth by contrast was a landscape architect who had long been involved in the construction of roads, visitor centers, and other park development projects.[95] Perhaps in response to that appointment, the agency made new attempts to promote the idea of funding a lodge on park land near Wonder Lake. In 1952, for example, both Superintendent Pearson and San Francisco-based agency officials hoped that an impending change in the park's concessioner (from the Alaska Railroad to the privately-financed McKinley Park Services) might result in a lodge that would be jointly financed by the concessioner and the NPS; in response to the Congressional report issued the previous year, however (for tourist accommodations to "be developed on a more modest scale"), a small, eight-cabin lodge was proposed.[96] Two years later, the NPS repackaged the lodge idea and presented plans for a Wonder Lake Roadhouse Development. Unfortunately, however, development funds during the Korean War era and its aftermath were no easier to obtain than they had been during the late 1940s, and concessioners during this period were similarly in no position to finance anything beyond their own bare-bones operations. The lodge idea, therefore, never got beyond the planning stage during this period.[97]

### Camp Denali Opens for Business

That is not to say, however, that no accommodations were built in the Wonder Lake area. Just north of Wonder Lake, and less than two miles north of the park boundary, three Alaskans decided to homestead a bench, partway up a ridge, that had a commanding view of the central Alaska Range. As Ginny Hill Wood, one of the trio noted, "it all started in ... 1951 when Celia



Ginny Wood, Morton "Woody" Wood, and Celia Hunter began building Camp Denali by hand in 1951. In this September 1953 photograph, the large canvas tent frame at center is where the lodge building currently stands. The cache beside Nugget Pond, left, is a feature of Camp Denali today. National Park Service, #2307, Harpers Ferry Center

Hunter came down from Fairbanks to visit Woody [Morton Wood, an NPS ranger] and me at McKinley Park." Hunter and the Woods flew out to the Kantishna Airstrip and soon hiked up to a ridge just north of Moose Creek. The three were well aware that "on the drawing boards was a ... hotel to be constructed near Wonder Lake which ... would specialize in attractions designed to isolate guests from the genuine delights of nature and its wildlife...". But recognizing that "many people came to McKinley Park to see its glaciers, mountains, and wildlife," they decided to "build our own resort," based on the notion that "there are those who seek experiences genuinely Alaskan ... and catch the spirit of the bush country – even if it means living without running water and electric lights, and taking the mosquitoes with the scenery."[98]

Based on those ideas, the trio went to work. By early July 1951, Ms. Hunter had decided to stake the site with the Bureau of Land Management, and on October 29 she applied for a trade and manufacturing site.[99] Before the snow closed the road that fall, they had "a miner bulldoze a road within 400 yards of our campsite." They also cut and hauled timbers for two tent foundations and built a cache to store their tools and a tent. Their eventual goal was to offer "both sleeping and housekeeping tents with wooden floors and walls, and a mess-hall tent of similar construction where family-style meals will be served...".[100] Early in 1952, Hunter asked the NPS for permission to transport guests along the park road; hoping that the Alaska Railroad would haul visitors as far west as Camp Eielson or Wonder Lake, Hunter's initial request was only for permission to conduct "excursions from my camp ... for hiking, camping, game photography, etc." The railroad, however, stated that it would not be handling transportation in the park during the upcoming season; therefore, Hunter had to amend her earlier request and ask for permission to carry guests to her camp all the way from McKinley Park Station. Inasmuch as the park superintendent was "certain that Miss Hunter's place of business will be a decided asset to the park," NPS officials looked favorably on her request. Superintendent Pearson initiated the request for a special use permit to transport passengers and freight on the park road. That permit was not approved until after the summer season was over; meanwhile, however, Pearson allowed the three to use the park road on an informal basis that year.[101]

The following spring, Morton Wood resigned from the NPS to devote his efforts to the new business venture, and the trio redoubled their efforts to open their rustic tent assemblage—to be called Camp Denali—as soon as possible. All three were at the site and hard at work on June 13, just one day after the road opened. Less than a week later, the camp received its first custom -

ers. That summer they built "four 10 x 12 housekeeping tent-cabins and a 14 by 16 lodge - tent," along with various "plain white wall tents on the ground." Just prior to the end of that first (1952) season, they completed an aluminum warehouse for equipment storage. Looking back on their shared experience, Hunter noted that "we had over 150 visitors to our camp;" they included climbers, University of Alaska students, scientists, Sierra Club members, and other lovers of the outdoors. Hunter candidly noted that "we didn't make much money – didn't expect to, because we realize that this is going to be a long-range proposition." Wood noted, "We can't tell now what coming seasons will bring," but proudly stated that "we had demonstrated to our own satisfaction that Camp Denali filled a need," and she was happy to say "that we are helping appreciative visitors to enjoy the park."[102] The camp, indeed, proved increasingly popular in future years, and it has remained a fixture along the western end of the park road.

### Consolidating Park Ownership

By the time World War II was over, the vast majority of Mount McKinley National Park was in public lands; the NPS, in fact, had clear and undisputed ownership of more than 99.9 percent of the 2,193,765 acres within the park boundaries. Since the boundaries had been expanded in March of 1932, the agency had made some progress in clearing up title difficulties in the McKinley Park Station area, and it had also purchased a key inholding toward the western end of the park road. The only parcels that remained in non-NPS were four private claims, which totaled almost 295 acres, along with various Alaska Railroad properties (away from the right-of-way corridor) which totaled slightly over 205 acres. Most, although not all, of both private and railroad lands were located in the McKinley Park Station area. During the next decade, actions by both the NPS and the various landowners would result in more than two-thirds of that acreage being transferred to NPS jurisdiction.

The largest private claim at McKinley Park Station was that of Maurice Morino, who had been in the area prior to the establishment of the park and prior to railroad construction. Morino, who had run a rustic roadhouse along with a trading post and post office, had gained title to his land on August 1, 1934. Three years later, on March 6, 1937, he had died in Everett, Washington. After that date, his estate was left to his nephew, also named Maurice Morino; perhaps because the younger Morino was a minor, the estate was administered by Mary Liek, wife of the park superintendent, Harry Liek.[103] Soon after the elder Morino's death, the NPS canvassed his 120-acre tract and identified "1 large log building used as roadhouse and trading post, 1 log building used as bunkhouse and store room," and 7 log cabins. Supt. Liek, at that time, estimated that the land and improvements were worth $5,000.[104]

A year later Liek's replacement, Frank Been, wrote to Director Arno Cammerer urging the agency to purchase the Morino property and describing the many virtues of completing that purchase. The following March, Been again urged action, and during the next year he made two additional pleas to have the agency purchase the property. The financially-strapped agency, however, could offer little encouragement; its leadership could only promise that his correspondence would "be held for consideration in the event an opportunity to obtain additional ... funds is presented."[105] A further complication was that the younger Morino, who was living in Canada, "wanted to comply with his uncle's wishes as stated in the will that he carry on the road house under the name of Morino."[106]

Shortly after World War II, Been's fusillade of memos finally brought action, and by the spring of 1946, the Morino property was considered "one of the highest in priority in our proposed land acquisition program." Based on actions begun in the fall of 1944, an opportunity arose in 1946 to purchase this property. On May 24 the NPS, "through unusually favorable circumstances," secured a 90-day option from the Morino estate to sell the property to the NPS for just $3,800.[107] NPS Director Newton Drury, who also served as the secretary of the National Park Trust Fund Board, recommended that the Trust Fund Board authorize that expenditure. (The National Park Trust Fund Board, which was

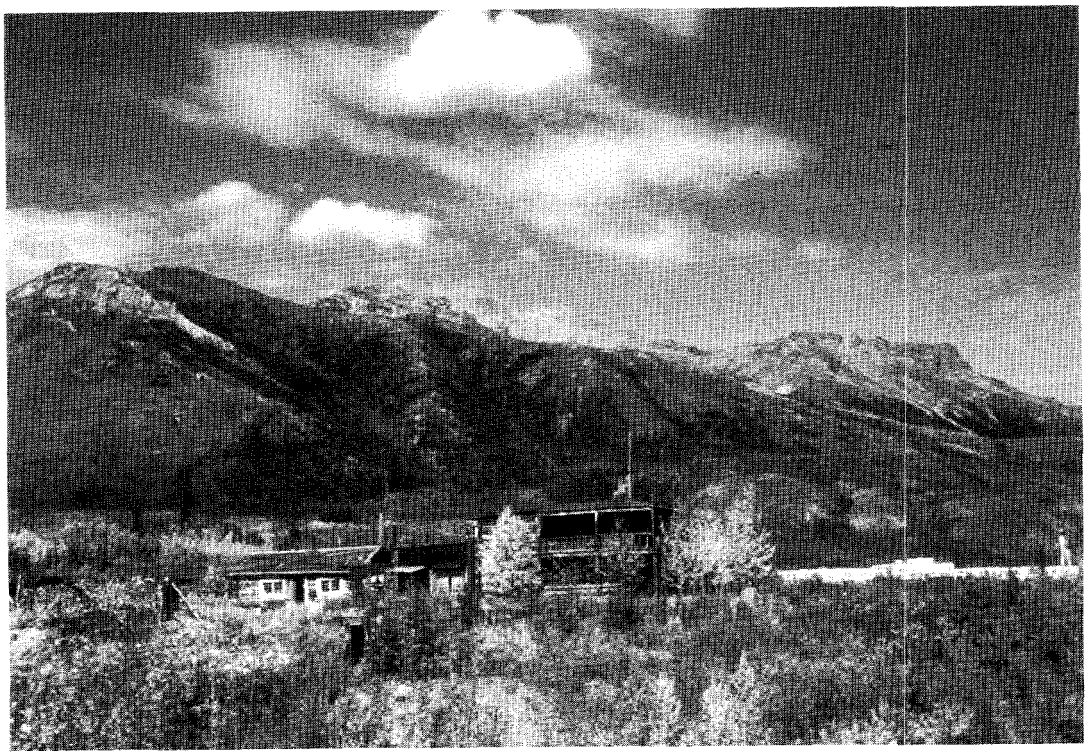


Mary Liek and Maurice Morino appear here in front of the McKinley Park Post Office, a log cabin attached to the back of the Morino Roadhouse. DENA 3947, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

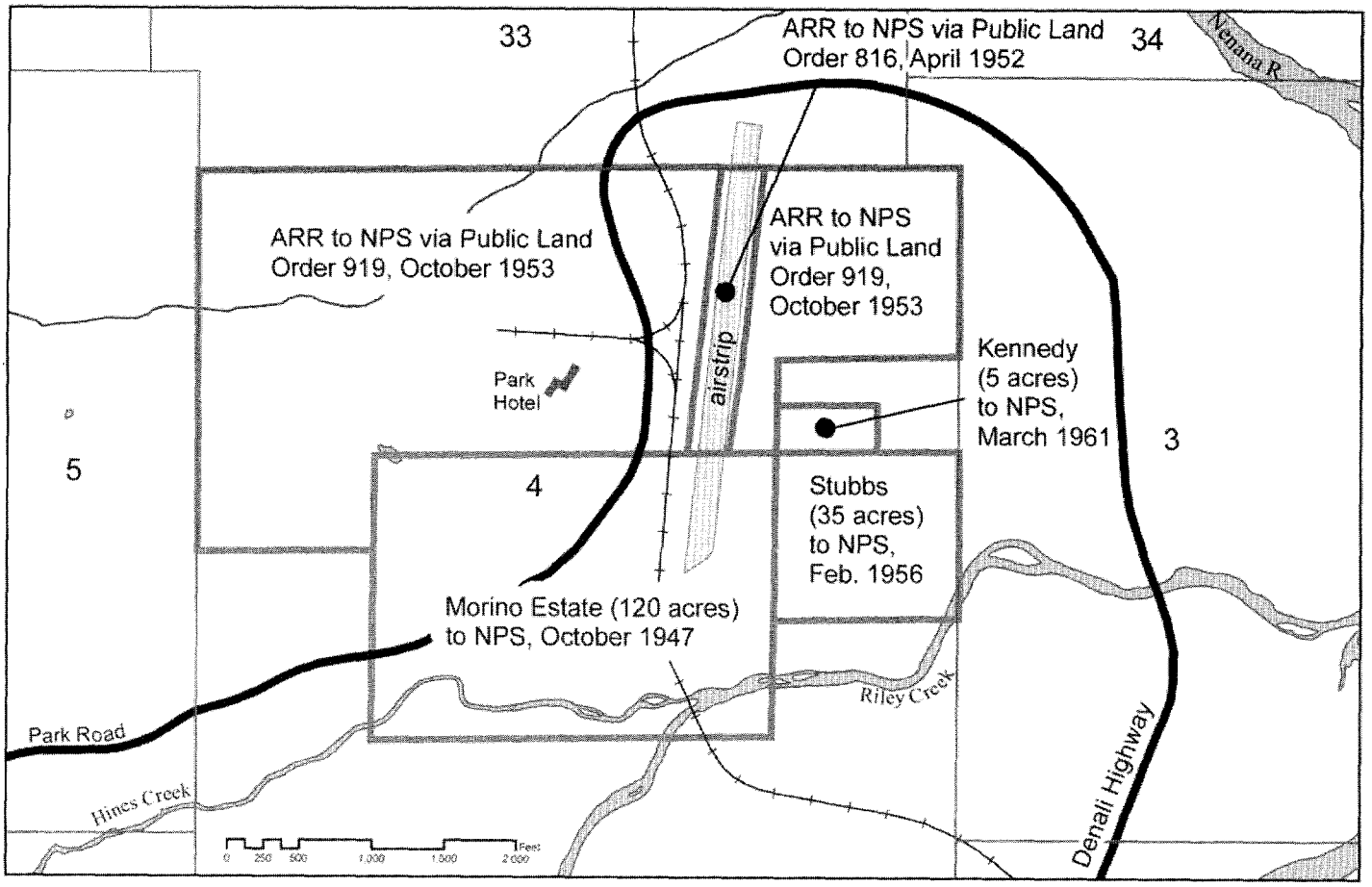
signed into law by President Roosevelt in July 1935, was "authorized to accept gifts and bequests for the Park Service." It was thus a small-scale predecessor to today's National Park Foundation, which Congress established in December 1967.)[108] By July—midway through the option period—the need to purchase the property became even more apparent when Superintendent Pearson wrote that "a private interest with substantial backing ($200,000) is going to try to purchase the Morino Homestead and develop tourist facilities. Plans call for building utilities, a store and cabins, and lots would be advertised for sale." Perhaps because of that extra incentive, the Trust Fund Board, "by a majority vote of its membership," authorized the expenditure of up to $3,800 for this purpose. Given the availability of those funds, Acting NPS Director Hillory Tolson approved the option and sent it on to Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman for final approval. Chapman approved the action on August 14, just eight days before the option was set to expire.[109]

Securing the option, however, did not complete the sale because of title complications. Most of these complications were procedural rather than substantive, and by May 1947 the Acting NPS Director wrote that "all requirements ... concerning the title to this land, have been met except the furnishing of the customary department report on possessory rights." In order to clear up this issue, NPS staff conducted a brief field investigation and obtained statements from the tract's tenants and informal residents that they had no possessory interest in the land or its improvements. The agency still had a few small items to clear up—related to graves and the legal rights to cabins on the property—and by August 1947 was well on the way toward resolving those issues.[110] But by this time, Mary Liek (the estate's administratrix) was clearly losing patience, and in early September she curtly informed the NPS Director that she had sold the property to someone else because Maurice Morino was "pressed for money." Tolson, in a response the very next day, stated that the attempted resale was invalid (because it was in violation of the option contract) and "should not be consummated." Meanwhile the last problems related to property title were finally resolved, and on October 24, 1947 the Interior Secretary accepted title to the Morino tract.[111] (See Map 5.)

Once the transaction took place, the NPS recognized that it needed to deal with the scattered collection of improvements on the Morino property. The large, ramshackle roadhouse was the major feature; it was more than 25 years old (and had once been featured in Cap Lathrop's 1924 motion picture *The Cheechakos*) but had been abandoned since Morino's death in 1937. But the post office, trading post and an assemblage of cabins also stood, most of which were in woeful shape. During the late 1930s, at least one visiting official, Rep. James M. Fitzpatrick (D-N.Y.) hoped that the NPS could buy the parcel so that the buildings could "be preserved as an exhibit of Alaskan settlement ... an excellent exhibit ... of early Alaskan development and building construction."[112] Most, however, regarded the



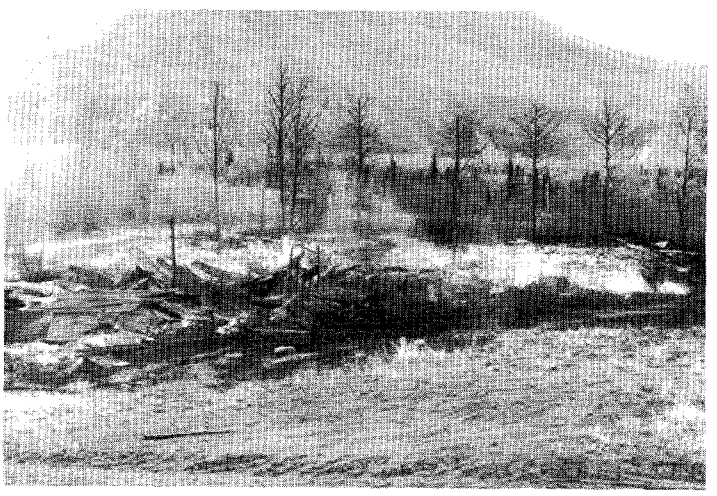
**The Morino Roadhouse and the McKinley Park Hotel are both visible in this photograph taken during the 1940s. DeArmond Collection, B98.7, Anchorage Museum of History & Art**




**Map 5. Major Land Actions, McKinley Park Station Area, 1947-1961**

buildings as a potential nuisance. Indeed, drifters continued to live in them, and in August 1940, one such passer- by lit a lamp that exploded and burned a cabin down.[113] Shortly after the NPS acquired the property in 1947, rangers sealed the buildings and installed signs warning the public to stay clear. Those measures, however, did not prevent further incursions. On the evening of May 30, 1950, a transient named Jessie Shelton dropped a lit cigarette on the Morino Roadhouse floor, which set off a blaze that turned the old landmark to a charred ruin. The following May, another cabin on the property also caught fire.[114] In the years that followed, the NPS completed the job that chance and circumstance had begun; rangers tore down two Morino cabins in 1952, they burned down two more in early 1953, and in the fall of 1953 they dismantled most of the remaining improvements on the Morino property.[115] By this time, the newly-cleared area—located as it was in a scenic clearing near the hotel and train station—had become an informal campground and picnic ground. The area was subject to an additional cleanup and improvement in 1957, just prior to the Denali Highway's completion, but it was not until February 1959 that the parcel's last cabin—which had once belonged to Maud Hosler, the former McKinley Park Station postmaster—was finally burned and cleared away.[116]

The other major landowner to work out an agreement with the NPS during this period was the Alaska Railroad. As noted above, the railroad had been active to some extent in park affairs ever since the 1920s, but in June 1939 the line assumed management over the McKinley Park Hotel, and in December 1941 the agency became even more prominent in park affairs

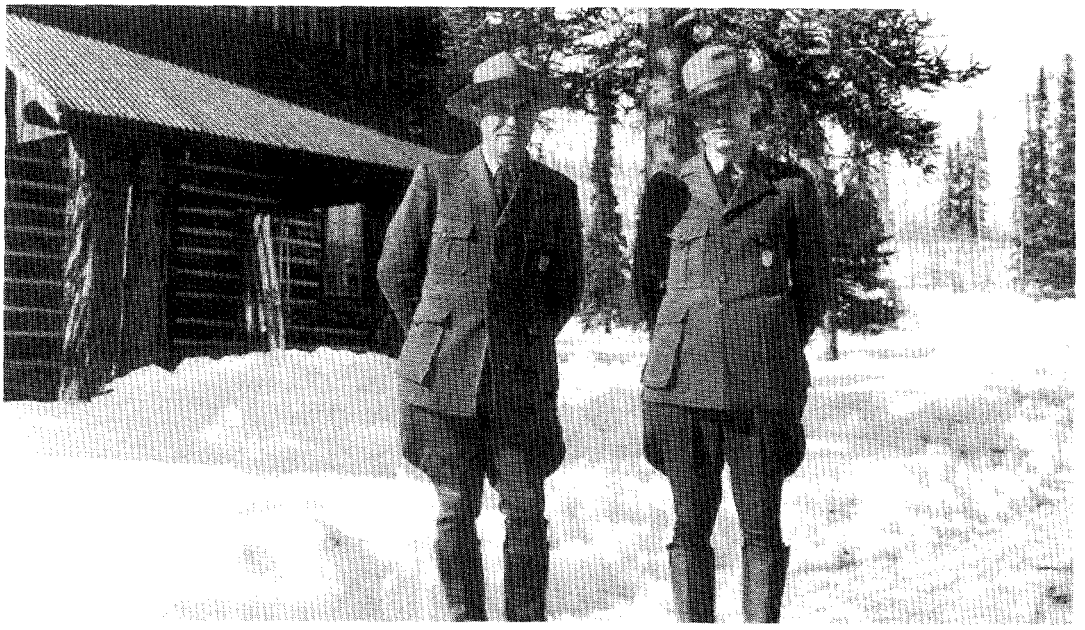


**By the morning of May 31, 1950, the aging Morino Roadhouse had burned to the ground. DENA 8-8, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

when it became the park's sole concessioner. Since January 1924, when President Coolidge had signed Executive Order 3946, the railroad had also been a substantial landowner in the McKinley Park Station area; it owned more than 220 acres in the area which included most of the land north of the Morino, Kennedy, and Stubbs tracts. For the next quarter-century, the railroad showed no interest in letting go of those properties. In 1946 the Alaska Railroad, as noted in an NPS report, was seen as "very cooperative regarding park administration and there appears no reason why they should not so continue." But for the next several years a minor source of irritation complicated matters between the two agencies; NPS staff, hoping to enforce agency rules and regulations on railroad properties, repeatedly tried to work out a cooperative interbureau agreement with railroad officials. That effort failed. The extensive correspondence on the subject, however, doubtless forced railroad officials to reconsider their need to own and manage properties that were located well away from their rights-of-way.[117]

The Civil Aeronautics Administration, ironically, started the process that resulted in these property transfers. During the summer of 1950, an Anchorage-based CAA employee visited the airport at McKinley Park Station and spoke about its operations with Col. John P. Johnson, the Alaska Railroad's general manager. The two men recognized that the airport was then under a split jurisdiction; the north end was railroad land, while the south end was NPS land (which had, until recently, been owned by the Morino estate). Johnson then averred that "he did not consider the airport particularly important to the functions of the Railroad and would be pleased to dispose of it for any reason whatsoever." The CAA official then wrote the NPS's Washington office and asked the agency "to take the necessary action to have the ownership of the entire facility transferred to the Park Service."[118] Six months later, that office announced that "the Alaska Railroad, at the McKinley Park Station, was ready to transfer to this Service the adjacent airstrip consisting of 16.40 acres." That recommendation was sent on to the office of Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman, who on April 14, 1952 issued Public Land Order 816, which partially revoked E.O. 3946 by transferring the 16.40 acres at the airstrip from the railroad to the Park Service.[119] Throughout this period, the airstrip remained the same length (about 3000 feet); inasmuch as the Alaska Flight Information Manual (the basic pilot's guide at the time) designated the field for "emergency" use, operations at the field were limited to necessary NPS, concessioner, and military use. NPS Architect Thomas Vint, in a May 1956 memo, advocated discontinuing the airstrip, inasmuch as Summit Airfield (southwest of Cantwell) was now accessible by road. But Supt. Pearson curtly replied that "we do not favor the removal of the airstrip," and the NPS continued to use and manage it, at least until such time as a better-quality airstrip could be built close to McKinley Park Station.[120]

By the time Chapman had signed that public land order, others were beginning to pressure the railroad to divest the remainder of the holdings that the railroad had received via the 1924 executive order. As noted above, the hotel operation had been bleeding considerable red ink during the late 1940s and early 1950s, and the economics of that operation had been a particular embarrassment during annual hearings before Congressional appropriations committees.[121] Given those losses, discussions began in the fall of 1951 to have the NPS assume ownership over the hotel property as part of the same process in which a private concessioner (and not the Alaska Railroad) would operate the hotel and the park transportation system. As noted above, the government moved to establish a private concessioner when it began soliciting bid proposals in mid- June 1952; it took a full year, however, before that concessioner (McKinley Park Services, Inc.) became the park concessioner. But it was not until late 1952—shortly after the Alaska Railroad announced that it had lost almost $800,000 in the recently-completed fiscal year, compared with a small profit a year earlier—that the government's General Accounting Office moved to recommend an immediate land transfer. The GAO's report, completed in early 1953, soon found its way to the office of the Interior Secretary, and on October 12 of that year, Assistant Secretary Orme Lewis issued Public Land Order 919, which transferred some 205.20 acres of land within the 1924 withdrawal from the railroad to the Park Service. The order included the transfer of "all improvements thereon" (including the hotel, other buildings, equipment, and vehicles); it was redundant, moreover, because the above acreage included the 16.40 acres that had already been part of Public Land Order 816. All that was not included was a narrow right-of-way strip (18 acres) along with an additional 0.4 acres for the railroad wye and the side track leading to the hotel's power plant. Less than a month later, railroad official Elroy F. Hinman arrived at McKinley Park Station and turned over the hotel, along with all railroad-owned equipment and vehicles, to Chief Ranger Oscar Dick. The railroad's 29-year ownership of



Superintendent Grant Pearson, left, started as a ranger in the park in 1926. Harold Booth, right, was a wildlife ranger from 1944 to 1947. DENA 4844, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

McKinley Park Station land, and its 14-year management of the hotel, had come to a close.[122]

By the end of 1953, therefore, the NPS had made major strides in consolidating the ownership of the property within its boundaries. At this time, there were only three remaining non-NPS parcels in the park, all privately-owned; these were tracts owned by Duke Stubbs (35 acres), Dan Kennedy (5 acres), and the estate of John Stephens (133.76 acres). Agency officials, by this time, had made numerous entreaties to the various landowners, but land transfers had not yet taken place. Actions taken by both the government and landowners that resulted in the properties being acquired by the government are described in Chapter 7.

### Changes at Headquarters

During the closing months of World War II, just six people worked at Mount McKinley National Park; they included Superintendent Grant Pearson (who doubled as the chief ranger); rangers John Rumohr, Harold Rapp, and Harold Booth; Principal Clerk Louis Maupin; and Clerk-Stenographer Faith Cushman. Under that setup, housing was not a problem. But during the next two years, the park added four new positions.[123] To create room for the new staff, empty cabins were occupied and a storage shed was converted into a residential cabin, but by late 1947, the superintendent noted that "hopes [were] high that a residence at headquarters might be built."[124] Such hopes were dashed, however, so the agency did what it could; it spent $2000 to convert an old CCC building at headquarters into a "family dwelling," although it was soon afterward designated for use by "single men and seasonals." (This is the present-day Administration Building office.) In the summer of 1949, space was so tight that four tent frames were brought in from the old Savage River concessions camp; after a quick repair, two were made available to visiting government employees. Another six tent frames were brought down to headquarters the following spring.[125]



This new employee residence was the first of two modern frame homes at park headquarters, completed in late fall of 1950. DENA 7-21, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Finally, in the fall of 1949, Congress appropriated funds for two new residences. Excavation on basements for the houses began immediately. Contractors began work the following May, and that November they completed them. Because they were modern frame homes—and thus a distinct departure from the usual log structures that had dominated headquarters for the past 25 years—they drew a mixed reaction from park staff. As Superintendent Pearson noted, "The new quarters are very comfortable, roomy and light. Unfortunately from the outside they look very much like tool sheds on a construction job. They are squat, ugly and look as foreign in the scenery of Mount McKinley as would the Empire State Building."[126] Like it or not, however, more were on the way; two additional residences, which looked much like the first two, were begun in the 1950 and 1951, respectively, and each were completed a year later.[127]



Frozen water and sewer lines were a constant problem at park headquarters. Here the ground is being thawed in order to dig up and repair a leaking water line, March 1955. DENA 41-41, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

These buildings were completed none too soon because on November 3, 1950, the residence occupied by Chief Clerk Marvin Nelson and his family burned to the ground, perhaps because of defective wiring.[128] The fire, similar to the one that engulfed Supt. Been's residence in November 1939, forced park personnel to institute a fire protection program; they obtained a fire truck from the Alaska Railroad, they purchased new fire extinguishers for all headquarters-area buildings, and they instituted a program of fire drills, fire planning meetings, and annual fire hazard inspections.[129]

Recognizing that the new Denali Highway would bring even more growth to the park, a new "Residential Loop Road" was bladed out at headquarters during the fall of 1953; this road angled away from the existing road between the two new residences completed in 1950 and rejoined the existing road near the old plumbing shop. Shortly afterward, they converted the old rangers' dormitory into an office building.[130] Given the shortage of seasonal housing space, the Alaska Road Commission offered—and the park gladly accepted—six small house trailers that had previously been used at various local road camps. These trailers were installed at headquarters and were used beginning in 1954. Trailers remained a fixture at headquarters up to the mid-1960s, and at "C-Camp" (the former CCC camp) several trailers—of a more modern vintage—can still be seen.[131]

The park also made necessary upgrades to its infrastructure. As noted in Chapter 5, the Civilian Conservation Corps had installed water and sewer lines around the headquarters area in 1938 and 1939; then, in the summer of 1943, a company of military engineers had overhauled the utility system. When it worked properly, the system relied on a pump at Rock Creek which connected to the park's 20,000-gallon reservoir via a 2-inch steel pipe; between the reservoir and the various headquarters buildings ran a series of utilidors—i.e., wooden tunnels dug several feet underground—which contained the water and sewer lines. The sewer lines, in turn, led down to a large septic tank located several hundred yards southeast of the headquarters buildings.[132] In order to keep the lines from freezing the utilidors also contained steam lines that were warmed by a steam boiler, which typically ran from October to April. But the severity of McKinley's winters, plus the increasing age of the system's components, meant that keeping the system in operation was a seemingly constant struggle, and park reports dating from the postwar years include a long series of complaints about breakdowns in the system—usually during an unusually severe cold snap—and of frustration at being forced to resuscitate the system with poorly-trained staff and an inadequate funding base.[133] Typical problems included the freezing of the water line between the creek and the reservoir, which soon depleted the reservoir; frozen water and sewer lines; leaks or ruptures in the water and sewer lines; and a frozen septic-tank intake.[134] Under such

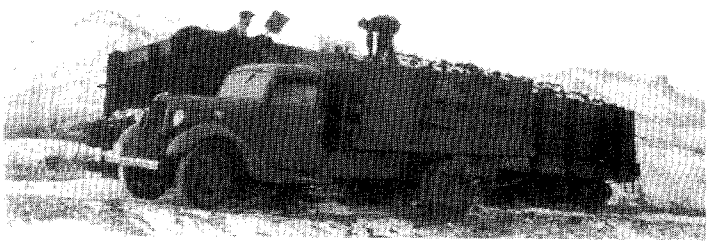
conditions, which seemed to manifest themselves for several days or weeks each winter, park staff was forced to melt snow for household use, carry drinking water in from Rock Creek, and use outdoor toilets.[135]

To keep the system functioning, park staff repaired and replaced critical items from time to time. In January 1946, Pearson lamented that "all utilities and motor driven equipment are in need of repair," and he particularly noted the woeful condition of the 39-year-old steam boiler. Eight months later, Lou Corbley—the now-retired chief ranger—returned to the park staff and installed a new one.[136] Some utilidor rehabilitation took place in 1948, and a new 50,000-gallon reservoir and septic tank were built in 1950 and 1951.[137] In 1952, the 2-inch pipe from Rock Creek to the reservoir was replaced by a 3-inch pipe, and a year later, the Rock Creek pump house was replaced.[138] In late 1954 "electric immersion and space heaters" were installed to keep the septic tanks from freezing, and in 1955 the main 16-year-old wood-stave water line running down from the reservoir was finally replaced with insulated steel pipe.[139] Despite those improvements, there were just two winters during this period—of 1950-51 and 1954-55—in which no major freezeups were noted in the water and sewer system.[140]

Regarding electricity, military renovations during World War II had left the headquarters area with both DC and AC-powered systems. But in 1948, the park was advised that the headquarters distribution system "should be completely overhauled and converted to AC throughout," so the following spring, AC motors were shipped in and soon all utility machines operated on AC current. Throughout this period, electricity had been available at headquarters on a less than full-time basis, but beginning in August 1950, it was available around the clock; as Pearson proudly noted, "this is the first time we have had power available on a 24-hour basis."[141]

At the close of World War II the primary heating source for the headquarters buildings remained coal; the Alaska Railroad periodically left gondola cars with coal on the McKinley Park Station wye, and rangers then shoveled coal onto a pickup and hauled it up to headquarters. Wood was also used at headquarters, primarily for the steam boiler, and each fall rangers were asked to cut and stack enough wood for the upcoming winter. This arrangement remained until September 1950, when the headquarters building switched over from coal to oil heat, and a year later—perhaps in reaction to the recent fire that destroyed the Nelson residence—the park announced its intention "to install oil burning equipment in all our residences as soon as funds are available."[142] The use of firewood was drastically curtailed after the early 1950s, and so far as is known, coal was last used at the headquarters residences during the winter of 1953-54.[143]

Garbage, during the postwar period, was initially hauled to an isolated area east of the park hotel; this dump was adjacent to the hotel's cesspool and septic tank, and just north of the 5-acre Kennedy tract.[144] This area was accessed by an east-west cul-de-sac that, in the early 1940s, was just north of the old airstrip; but after the Army lengthened the strip in 1943, the road remained, much to the annoyance of pilots and park officials.[145] Inasmuch as the dump remained small during this period, the only downside related to dump operation was an occasional grizzly or coyote attracted by food odors. Most of these sightings had no impact, either on visitor safety or bear behavior.[146] But in August 1952, a "black bear was observed fighting with a mother grizzly" at the dump, and perhaps in response, rangers—hoping to capture a wolf—placed snares there. The following spring, two adult grizzlies and a yearling appeared at the dump and "fed for several nights until a weekly program of burning the dump was inaugurated." A "burning cage" for papers and light boxes was also put into use. The NPS, worried about visitor safety, closed the dump to the public; park officials "hoped that this [action] may have some effect in persuading park visitors to view bears along the park highway."[147] Bears, however, continued to return from time to time; in April 1953, for example, grizzlies were seen there "quite frequently." In 1956, the agency bulldozed over its old dump, cleaned up the area, and opened up a new dump immediately adjacent to the old one. That "temporary" dump would remain until the fall of 1964, when the agency would open a new site, located just



**Coal, which arrived on the railroad from Healy, was the main source of heat in the park headquarters area *until after* 1950. Shoveling coal was one of the park rangers' duties. DENA 15-5, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**



In March 1952, Superintendent Grant Pearson (right) presented former Chief Ranger John C. Rumohr with a citation for Commendable Service. Mr. Rumohr retired on July 13, 1951, after serving in Mt. McKinley National Park for over twenty-one years. Mrs. Luella Rumohr is seated on the left. DENA 27-23, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

east of the Denali Highway (now the Parks Highway) and two miles south of Riley Creek.[148]

The decade following World War II was singular at Mount McKinley National Park because it marked major changes to its staff. Two of the best-known, iconic figures associated with the park's pioneer days—John Rumohr, who had served as a ranger since 1930, and Grant Pearson, who had served as a ranger since 1926 and as the superintendent or acting superintendent since 1943—stepped down during this period; Rumohr retired in July 1951 and opened a trading business in Cantwell, and Pearson retired in November 1956 and moved to his home in Los Altos, California. And on a sad note, the park's guiding light—its first superintendent, Harry Karstens—passed away in Fairbanks in November 1955. Other important figures, however, were just beginning their careers during this period; Oscar Dick, who served at the park off and on from 1942 to 1967, served two of his four job stints during this period, and in June 1948 William Nancarrow began a career at the park that would continue, off and on, until his retirement in April 1981. Many others remained at McKinley for shorter periods. During the postwar decade the size of the permanent staff roughly doubled, and beginning in 1950, the park began a sustained seasonal employment program which, by 1956, included two rangers, a ranger-naturalist, and a maintenance man.[149]

The superintendency during this period was relatively stable; from 1939 to 1956, in fact, just two men held that position, Frank Been for six years and Grant Pearson for eleven. In the spring of 1948, higher-ups decided to transfer Been to Crater Lake National Park in light of his paucity of skills "in all phases of administrative work, including fiscal and administrative procedure." Been, feeling slighted and fearing a loss of rank and pay, fought the transfer in a series of actions that involved the Civil Service Commission and the General Accounting Office as well as the NPS's Washington office. Recognizing that he was on the verge of insubordination, Been agreed to the transfer in early 1949 after a meeting with Director Drury. The matter was not settled, however, for several months after his move to Oregon.[150]

### Boundary Revision Proposals

During the years that followed World War II, NPS officials were thoroughly occupied with managing the 2.2 million acre expanse that Congress had entrusted to their care via legislation that had passed in 1917, 1922, and 1932. So far as they could tell, park employees were unaware of any particular ecological threats outside the park that brought forth the need for new acreage, and few if any outside advocacy groups clamored to have the park's boundaries either expanded or reduced.

That is not to say, however, that no boundary-change proposals were ever seriously considered. A number of proposals came to the fore, perhaps the most worrisome being related to a long-running proposal to develop a limestone mine in the Windy Creek drainage in the southeastern corner of the park. As is noted in

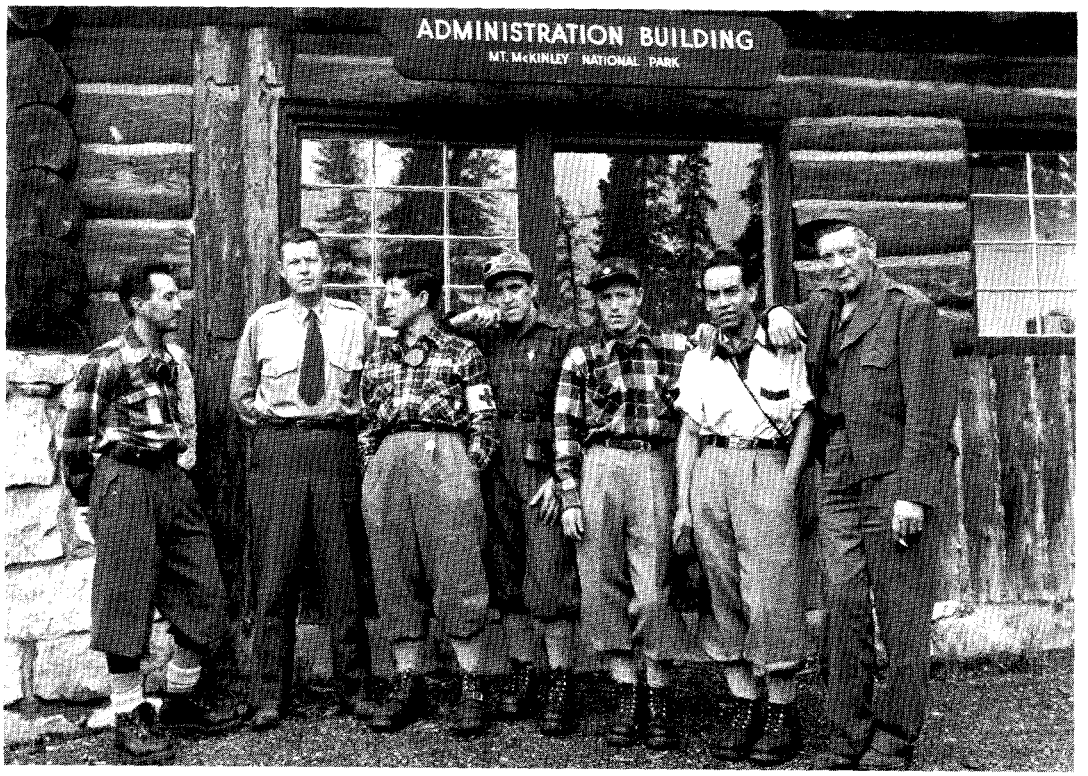
greater detail in Chapter 14, advocates of this mineral development pressed their case primarily between 1947 and 1952, although it resurfaced from time to time in later years. In the midst of the process by which the NPS weighed the mine's prospects, Interior Secretary Oscar L. Chapman issued two different public land orders—dated December 16, 1948 and February 2, 1951—withdrawing thousands of acres in and around Mount McKinley National Park. At one time or another during this five-year period, NPS officials recognized that, if the mineral development was to proceed, they should seriously consider the idea of removing from the park one or both of the areas that Secretary Chapman had withdrawn. As shall be seen, however, the Interior Department never gave the go-ahead to develop the Windy Creek limestone deposits, so the park boundary in this area remained unchanged.[151]

The other area that received some discussion during this period was a possible expansion of the park to the south. NPS officials, both at the park and elsewhere, recognized that the park's southern boundary—located as it was near the crest of the Alaska Range—made little ecological sense. As a result, the idea of a boundary shift surfaced from time to time. As far back as July 1931, for example, landscape architect Thomas Vint wrote the director,

> It appears that the boundary should be moved to the south to include some of the land beyond the terminals of the Glaciers. This would put the south side on a similar basis as the north side, so far as park lands are concerned. ... I recommend that a field study of it be made. If such an extension is found advisable McKinley Park would ultimately have two systems of tourist facilities, one north of the range the other south.[152]

Others arrived at much the same conclusion as Vint. Governor Ernest Gruening, for example, expressed his support for the idea in October 1940, and a year later, Supt. Frank Been had similar thoughts after reconnoitering the area in search of a soldier-recreation area. Been noted that "the impressiveness of Mount McKinley and the Alaska Range rivals the view in the park and aroused the desire to consider the practicability for extending the south park boundary to the south base of the mountains rather than having the crests as the south limit." He further noted, somewhat ironically, that "several years ago ... the Alaska Railroad [had] planned a publicity campaign for the south side of McKinley but was instructed by the then Secretary of the Interior to abandon the scheme."[153]

Gruening's interest in a southern extension remained active, and because he remained as Alaska's governor until the early 1950s, NPS Director Conrad Wirth knew of Gruening's viewpoints when he visited the park in late June 1952. During that visit, Wirth asked Supt. Pearson to "show on a map a line which would




On June 29, 1951, Park Ranger William Nancarrow, second from left, was promoted to park naturalist, the first permanent naturalist appointed in Mt. McKinley National Park. In this 1952 photograph, Bill is posed with the Mexican Red Cross Mountain Climbing Expedition at park headquarters. DENA 4687, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection




Park Staff on October 15, 1956 included, left to right, back row: Thomas Adams, William Funk, John Galvond, Superintendent Grant Pearson, and Duane Jacobs; front row: Charles Ott, Warren Steenbergh, Richard Prasil, James Corson, Rosalie Friesen, Arthur Hehr, and Robert Branges. The Administration Offices were moved into the former 'Ranger Club' in 1954. DENA 27-40, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

include more of the glacial area south of Mt. McKinley." That line, which was slightly modified by others, would have increased the park by some 574,000 acres. Pearson's proposal—which also would have deleted appropriate areas for the pending limestone-mine project—was broadly considered by NPS officials, but it was not forwarded either to DOI officials or to Congress.[154]

Three other boundary-change proposals—two deletions and one expansion—emerged between 1952 and 1954. The expansion proposal, which was brought up during Wirth's visit in 1952, would have added a small triangle of parkland adjacent to the Kantishna Hills; specifically, it would include within the park all land southeast of the Clearwater Fork, Myrtle Creek, Willow Creek, and Moose Creek. Adding the area would allow park rangers to follow a more easily-definable boundary during their patrols between the Toklat River-Stampede Creek area and Wonder Lake, it would provide additional protection for the area's caribou population, and it would also "prevent the possible construction of an undesirable resort immediately adjacent to the park entrance." NPS officials, who had just witnessed the beginnings of Camp Denali, had only words of praise for "this camp [which] is entirely in keeping with park ideals." They cautioned, however, that "the 'average' resort, as operated in Alaska, falls considerably short of this standard." Expanding the boundaries north to Moose Creek would prevent the establishment of any such resort.[155]

By the summer of 1953 another boundary-deletion proposal had come to light, that of eliminating most of the park's acreage east of 149 degrees of longitude. That area included much of the Little Windy Creek and Riley Creek drainages; as may be recalled, these drainages, along with adjacent acreage, had been added to the park in March 1932. Some critics, in the wake of that earlier expansion, had been dissatisfied that the park's eastern boundary had been extended to the Nenana River and not to the Alaska Railroad right-of-way. It may have been unsurprising, therefore, that those who advocated an acreage deletion during the 1950s did so in the belief that "it would solve troublesome administrative problems as well as eliminate a prominent intrusion—the railroad—from the park." (The "troublesome administrative problems" were not identified; it may have been related to either the battle over the Stubbs and Kennedy inholdings at McKinley Park Station or the long-running wolf-sheep controversy, as is described in greater detail in Chapter 12.) Plans called for this acreage to change from parkland to wildlife refuge.[156]

A far larger boundary proposal emerged on January 21, 1954, during Senate Interior Committee deliberations of an Alaska statehood bill. A series of hearings were held that quizzed the directors of various land management agencies on what lands might be available for selection by the new state government. Sen. Clinton P. Anderson (D-N.M.), therefore, asked NPS Director Conrad Wirth to separate, if he could,




**The park entrance sign near the depot is shown here in January 1956. DENA 39-7, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

genuine parklands from "ordinary western country." Initially, Wirth stated that "I think all of it is park, sir." But when asked if "there was any section of park that might be eliminated for Mount McKinley," Wirth pointed on a map to the park's northwestern corner and said that "there might be some up in here." (Wirth may have made this statement because both park staff and park visitors had seldom visited the area and because the area had few known resource values.) In response, Anderson upped the ante and stated that "I know of no reason why you cannot start just beyond Wonder Lake and take all that triangle" of lowlands away from the park. Wirth, thereafter, fought back; he openly worried about "what effect that [action would have] on the last stands of the Dall sheep," but he also argued that officials of the future state would have little interest in the area because it had no agricultural potential and poor timber resources, and because hard-rock mining had never been prohibited in the park. Given that information, committee members showed no further interest in the area because it had little taxable potential.[157]

In mid-August 1954, NPS Acting Director Ronald Lee responded to Congress's interest in the proposed deletion of the park's northwestern corner by asking agency biologist Victor Cahalane (who had made a similar boundary-proposal foray at Katmai National Monument a year earlier) to examine whether a large triangle of land—bounded by Wonder Lake, the northern base of the Alaska Range, and the corner of the park near Wolf Creek[158]—had "important scenic, wildlife, or other qualities." But Cahalane, also recognizing that other boundary-change proposals were being considered, decided to also visit and critique two other proposal areas. (He made no attempt to report on a fourth proposal area, a large swath south of the Alaska Range crest, because that area was not perceived to have strong wildlife values.) The biologist, in response, arrived at the park on September 10 and spent a week there, operating primarily from a Wonder Lake base camp.[159]

After flying over all three of the proposed sites and walking the ground several times at the western end of the park, Cahalane came away singularly impressed with the both the scenery and wildlife at the park's western extremities. "The views of Mt. McKinley from Mile 66 on the park highway and from Wonder Lake are justly famed," he noted. "One is hardly prepared, however, for the magnificence of the spectacle from many points in the western area of the park." He called it a "magnificent region for wilderness trips" and "essential as a foreground for the culminating feature of the Alaska Range, Mt. McKinley." He further stated that the proposal area "has significant wildlife assets which are well worth preserving in conjunction with the natural environment." He saw these assets to be of increasing value, because with the Denali Highway's construction, the "slaughter of caribou, moose and the other game has increased to considerable proportions." Regarding the proposed deletion at the park's eastern end,

he saw little purpose in it; because of its shift in status from park to wildlife refuge, park rangers would still be patrolling the area, except as deputy game wardens. "What would be gained?" he asked rhetorically. Cahalane was more agreeable, however, to the proposal to expand the park near the Kantishna Hills; he felt that all of the reasons that had been advanced for the boundary change appeared "logical" and that the proposed expansion helped protect park values.[160]

Despite all this activity, and perhaps because of the lack of strong, consistent pressure either inside or outside the agency, there was little sustained momentum to either expand or constrict the park boundaries. As a result, none of the above proposals were ever formalized into a Congressional bill during this period, and no boundary lines were changed. As shall be seen, however, the data gathered during this period proved helpful in future years, when boundary-change efforts were again considered.

## Notes - Chapter 6

[1] Naske and Slotnick, *Alaska, a History*, 123.

[2] James A. Henretta, et al., *America's History*, third edition (New York, Worth Publishers, 1997), 854-55; Harry A. Butowsky, *Warships Associated with World War II in the Pacific*, National Historic Landmark Theme Study (Washington, NPS, May 1985), Chapter 6, Section 8.

[3] Lyman L. Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest; the U.S. Army in Alaska and Western Canada, 1867-1987; Vol. Three, 1945-1987* (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Society, 1997), 25.

[4] Lucile McDonald, "Alaska Steam; a Pictorial History of the Alaska Steamship Company," *Alaska Geographic* 11:4 (1984), 92, 94, 97, 103.

[5] McDonald, "Alaska Steam," 102-03; SMR, April-December 1946; September 1947, 2; October 1948, 1.

[6] McDonald, "Alaska Steam," 105-06.

[7] Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 340; SMR, June 1940, 2.

[8] Clarence C. Hulley, *Alaska, Past and Present* (Portland, Binfords and Mort, 1953), 344, 352-53.

[9] SMR, May 1945, 2; September 1945, 2; October 1945, 2; November 1945, 2; March 1946, 2; April 1946, 2; September 1946, 3.

[10] SMR, January 1946, 2; February 1946, 1-2; May 1946, 2.

[11] SMR, June 1946, 1; August 1946, 1; September 1946, 1-2; NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1941-1953*, 2.

[12] SMR, September 1946, 1-3; April 1947, 2.

[13] SMR, April 1947, 2; May 1947, 2; October 1947, 1. Alaska Day celebrations were held at the hotel until October 1950, when a "grand masquerade ball" attended by 200 people (including "many notables") was held there. SMR, October 1950, 2, 4. The Army's initial plans called for soldiers to stay at the hotel "on a tourist basis," presumably in the winter, and the rehabilitation of the "remnants" of Savage Camp in the summertime. Been to RD/R4, May 9, 1947, in File 201 ("National Defense, Part II"), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[14] SMR, October 1947, 2; November 1947, 1; December 1947, 1, 3; February 1948, 1; May 1948, 4; August 1948, 3.

[15] SMR, February 1948, 2, 4; September 1948, 4-5; October 1948, 3; November 1948, 3; February 1949, 3; March 1949, 3; February 1950, 3.

[16] NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1941-1953*, 2.

[17] Henretta, et al., *America's History*, 871.

[18] Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest, Vol. Three*, 65-66.

[19] SMR, October 1950, 2, 4; November 1950, 2.

[20] SMR, December 1950, 2; January 1951, 3; April 1951, 2; August 1951, 3.

[21] SMR, May 1951, 1, 2; June 1951, 1; August 1951, 3; November 1951, 2; May 1952, 2; November 1952, 3; April 1953, 2-3; May 1953, 2; Frank L. Yates, *Report on Survey and Review of the Operations of the Alaska Railroad for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1952*, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, House Document No. 95 (Washington, GPO, 1953), 19.

[22] As noted elsewhere, ranger-accompanied bus trips and ranger-conducted films had been a staple since the 1930s, and the park had had a museum since 1943, but the dog-sled demonstrations—which had been abandoned after World War II—were reinstituted during the winter of 1950-51.

[23] SMR, February 1950, 3; December 1950, 1; April 1951, 3.

[24] SMR, November 1951, 2; January 1952, 2; March 1952, 2; November 1952, 4.

[25] SMR, Sept 1951, 1; September 1952, 1; Kirk H. Stone, "Geographical Record," *Geographical Review* 42 (January 1952), 151. The first Alaska Science Conference had been in Washington, D.C. in November 1950. These annual conferences continued until the mid-1980s, when they were gradually superseded by the Arctic Science Conference and other, more specialized scientific meetings.

[26] SMR, April 1950, 4; William H. Hackett, *Alaska's Vanishing Frontier, A Progress Report* (Washington, GPO, 1951), 46.

[27] SMR, February 1949, 3; July 1949, 4; January 1951, 3, 4; March 1951, 4; April 1951, 2; May 1951, 3; June 1951, 3; George L. Collins, "Memorandum for the Files," June 19, 1950, in File 600 ("Alaska Development, Part IV"), Box 237, CCF, RG 79, NARA SB.

[28] Alaska Railroad, "Invitation for Bid Proposals," June 12, 1952, in File 900 (Concessions, Part IV), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; Celia M. Hunter to Regional Office NPS, December 10, 1952, in File 900 (Celia M. Hunter), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[29] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 16; SMR, August 1952, 1.

[30] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 16; January 1953, 2; March 1953, 1; April 1953, 1; June 1953, 4; RD/R4 to Director NPS, December 11, 1952, in File 900 (Celia M. Hunter), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[31] SMR, July 1953, 3; September 1953, 4; November 1953, 3; December 1953, 3; January 1954, 3; March 1954, 4.

[32] SMR, October 1953, 3-4; November 1953, 3; June 1955, 1; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 17-18;

*Congressional Record* 100 (February 3, 1954), 1290. An audit of McKinley Park Services' operations, completed after the company was no longer active at the park, showed numerous instances of slipshod accounting and poor if not shady management practices. But the audit also showed that these practices served only to exacerbate an already difficult situation, because given the worn-out facilities at the park, the concessioner could not have operated at a profit even if it had been able to operate with 100% occupancy during the tourist season.

[33] Stroud, *History of the Concessions*, 17; Don Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks; the Destruction of Concessions and Park* Access (Bellevue, Wash., Free Enterprise Press, 1987), 117-18; 96th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, *National Park Service Concessions Policy; Hearings on Oversight – Concessions Policy Act of 1965*, conducted March 29 to April 27, 1979, Senate Publication 96-33 (Washington, GPO, 1979), 382-83.

[34] Stroud, *History of the Concessions*, 17; SMR, August 1954, 1, 4; September 1954, 1, 3; October 1954, 4; November 1954, 4. In August, Supt. Pearson visited Anchorage and asked military officials about using the hotel, once again, as a rest and recreation center that winter; the military, however, was not interested. The hotel's seizure made front-page headlines in the August 25 *Anchorage Times*; other *Times* articles detailing the change in operation were on August 24 (p. 9), August 27 (p. 9), September 9 (p. 5), September 10 (p. 1), and September 13 (p. 5).

[35] Stroud, *History of the Concessions*, 19.

[36] SMR, September 1954, 5; November 1954, 4. Both of these employees remained with the NPS for extended periods; Sanders worked at the park until his untimely death in the summer of 1961, and Ott—hired first on a "temporary intermittent" basis and later as a permanent employee—remained until he retired in 1974. Ott, who loved the park's wildlife, was a well-known photographer and local "character;" he remained in the area until his death in October 1999. Kent Brandley, "Charles J. Ott, McKinley's Personal Cameraman," *Alaska Sportsman* 30 (August 1964), 30-31, 45; Tom Walker, "Affair of the Heart," *Alaska Magazine* 70 (July 2004), 31-35.

[37] SMR, January 1955, 2; May 1955, 1, 3.

[38] SMR, June 1955, 1; July 1955, 2; August 1955, 4; September 1955, 3; Stroud, *History of the Concessions*, 19.

[39] SMR, July 1955, 2; September 1955, 2; 84th Congress, 1st Session, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Alaska, 1955, Part 2; Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs Pursuant to H. Res. 30...*, conducted September 20 to September 23, 1955 (Washington, GPO, 1956), 1-15.

[40] NPS Press Release, "Proposals Invited for Operation of Visitor Facilities in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska," December 29, 1954, in John Wise Collection, Box 1, HFC; *Anchorage Times*, April 2, 1956, 14. Don Hummel, in his book *Stealing the National Parks*, p. 170, notes that in 1954, George Collins wrote to him and "tried to entice me up to Alaska to run the McKinley concession." Thinking that "Alaska was sled dogs and year-around snow," he declined, but three years later, he changed his mind (see below).

[41] SMR, November 1955, 3-4; December 1955, 3; January 1956, 3-5; February 1956, 3-4; March 1956, 1-2. When the job was done, the contractor's plumber-foreman noted, "I have worked on Alaska plumbing jobs for 15 years now, and this was the hardest, meanest job I have ever tackled."

[42] SMR, May 1956, 4; June 1956, 5.

[43] NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1941-1953*, 2.

[44] SMR, July 1956, 6; October 1956, 5; July 1957, 5; August 1957, photo; September 1957, 7; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 19.

[45] SMR, July 1955, 1; January 1956, 1; May 1956, 1; August 1956, 1; February 1957, 5.

[46] Alaska Planning Group, *Final Environmental Statement, Proposed Mount McKinley National Park Additions* (Washington, U.S. Interior Department, October 1974), 564-65.

[47] Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 333; SMR, July 1933, 3; September 1933, 6. The distance to the park from Fairbanks is approximately 120 miles, which is about 35 miles shorter than the distance between the park and the Richardson Highway. During the Territorial period, however, both the Alaska Road Commission and the Alaska Railroad were Interior Department agencies, and the railroad's tenuous finances mandated that all new roads be built perpendicular to the railroad, to serve as feeder roads. Interior Department officials refused to fund roads that paralleled the railroad. See Alaska Road Commission, *Report to the Board of Road Commissioners*, Part II, 1925, 86.

[48] National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning, Part VII, Alaska—Its Resources and Development* (Washington, GPO, 1938), pp. 134-35, 139, at ARLIS; 75th Congress, 3rd Session, House Document 485, *Alaska, Its Resources and Development*, January 20, 1938; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1938, 9.

[49] According to Donald Orth's *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, p. 744, an individual named Paxson, by 1906, had established a roadhouse several miles south of the present roadhouse. Paxson's Roadhouse, by 1940, had become known as Paxsons Roadhouse or simply Paxsons, but by the early 1950s the "s" had been eliminated and the site was known simply as Paxson.

[50] Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 333-36; Sherwood Ross, *Gruening of Alaska* (New York, Best Books), 112-14; SMR, December 1939, 1; January 1940, 2; June 1940, 2-3; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1936, 9; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1938, 9.

[51] Been to Director NPS, June 25, 1941, in File 501-3 ("Newspaper Articles"), Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 337-40; William R. Hunt, *Mountain Wilderness; Historic Resource Study for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve* (Anchorage, NPS, 1991), 148.

[52] Alaska Road Commission, *Annual Report*, 1945, 9. In early 1946, park staff heard that the ARC was "organizing two construction camps for work on the approach road from the Richardson Highway to Cantwell," and soon afterward, it was told that a road survey would commence that spring. Neither rumor was true, however. SMR, January 1946, 2; March 1946, 1, 3.

[53] Alaska Road Commission, *Annual Report*, 1946, 10; 1947, 10.

[54] Charles L. Peterson, *Mount McKinley National Park Development Outline*, November 15, 1946, 8-9, in Box 3, Bill Brown Collection, DENA.

[55] SMR, September 1947, 2; September 1948, 3-4; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1948, 8; ARC, *Report of Operations for the Fiscal Years 1949, 1950, and 1951*, 10. The contractor's role is noted in Bill Prochnau, "The Home of the Sun," *Americas* 11 (February 1959), 20.

[56] SMR, March 1949, 1; July 1949, 3-4; August 1949, 2; ARC, *Report of Operations, 1949-1951*, 11.

[57] ARC, *Report of Operations, 1949-1951*, 14; SMR, October 1948, 3.

[58] ARC, *Report of Operations, 1949-1951*, 20, 24-25; SMR, March 1950, 3; May 1950, 2; June 1950, 1, 3; July 1950, 5; October 1950, 3.

[59] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1952, "Construction in Progress by Government Forces" section; SMR, February 1951, 4; April 1951, 3; May 1951, 3; June 1951, 3; July 1951, 3; August 1951, 3; September 1951, 3; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 31, 1951, 4.

[60] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1952, "Preparation of Plans" section; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1953, 14, 22-23; SMR, March 1952, 4; April 1952, 5; May 1952, 5; July 1952, photo; September 1952, 1; October 1952, 3; December 1952, 2; January 1953, 3; Prochnau, "Home of the Sun," 20.

[61] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1953, 16, 23; SMR, August 1953, 2; September 1953, 4; "Summit FAA 50725" folder, historical files, FAA Airports Division, Anchorage.

[62] SMR, March 1954, 3; January 1955, 3; April 1956, 2; U.S. Census, *Census of Population, 1950, Number of Inhabitants – Alaska* (Washington, GPO, 1952), Table 4, as noted in Alden M. Rollins, *Census Alaska; Number of Inhabitants, 1792-1970* (Anchorage, UAA Library, 1978), p. 1950-8.

[63] SMR, October 1954, 3; March 1955, 4.

[64] Prochnau, "Home of the Sun," 20.

[65] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1954, 16, 24; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1955, 22.

[66] SMR, June 1955, 4; May 1956, 4; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1956, 21.

[67] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1955, 25, 32, 34.

[68] SMR, March 1956, 1; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1956, 20-21.

[69] Peterson, *Mount McKinley National Park Development Outline* (1946), 8-9.

[70] SMR, July 1935, 1; July 1939, 5; September 1947, 2; July 1948, 1, 5; September 1948, 6; Hackett, *Alaska's Vanishing Frontier*, 45-47.

[71] Longtime park employee Jane Bryant (email to the author, August 29, 2005) postulates that this hut was either part of a short-lived ARC camp that dated from the late 1920s, or part of a CCC "spike camp" or "side camp" dating from 1939.

[72] SMR, February 1948, 3; June 1948, 4; July 1948, 2.

[73] SMR, September 1950, 2; August 1951, 2; March 1952, 4. All evidence suggests that this "temporary" site grew into the present-day Wonder Lake campground.

[74] SMR, July 1952, 6, 7. The Morino "campground" during this period was apparently very informal; as noted below, the NPS burned or tore down several buildings in this area during 1952 and 1953, and as late as 1956, amenities at the "Marino picnic area" were limited to two tables, a fireplace or two, and a pit toilet. Further improvements were made in June 1957, just before the Denali Highway was completed. SMR, June 1957, 4.

[75] SMR, July 1952, 7; August 1954, photo. NPS made an additional cleanup at Camp Eielson in 1954, and by the end of August, the recreation hall was the only building still standing. That building was disassembled soon afterward.

[76] SMR, April 1954, 2; May 1954, 2; August 1954, 2; May 1955, 3; June 1955, 3; August 1955, 3; September 1955, 3.

[77] SMR, June 1955, 5; July 1956, 3.

[78] SMR, June 1944, 2; September 1945, 2; June 1949, 2.

[79] SMR, May 1948, 4; April 1953, 2, 4; June 1955, 3.

[80] SMR, April 1949, 3; April 1950, 3; March 1954, photo.

[81] SMR, April 1951, 4; March 1953, 4; April 1956, 4.

[82] SMR, September 1947, 2; May 1948, 3; September 1948, 2.
[83] As noted in Appendix G, the last bridges in this replacement program were Rock Creek (1959), Ghiglione Creek (1959-60), and Igloo Creek (1966).
[84] SMR, August 1946, 3; September 1946, 3; May 1951, 4; June 1951, 4.
[85] *Jessen's Weekly*, February 9, 1945, 27.
[86] SMR, March 1945, 2; August 1945, 1, 3; September 1945, 3; October 1945, 2; November 1945, 2; June 1946, 4; September 1946, 1.
[87] NPS, "Concessioner's Initial Development Program" (drawing #2018), 1946-47, NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[88] SMR, September 1945, 2; May 1946, 3; August 1946, 2.
[89] SMR, September 1946, 3.
[90] SMR, July 1942, 3; Brown, *A History*, 179, 181.
[91] A. E. Demaray to Director NPS, June 6, 1944, in File 503 ("Pictures, General"), Box 1409 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; SMR, April 1947, 5; February 1948, 2; Washburn to J.A. Krug, September 23, 1947, in File 600-03 ("Development Outline"), Box 1410 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.
[92] SMR, September 1947, 3; July 1950, 1; September 1950, 3; August 1952, 1.
[93] SMR, January 1951, 2.
[94] SMR, February 1948, 2, 4; March 1950, 4.
[95] Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 3; Dwight F. Rettie, *Our National Park System* (Urbana, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1995), 7, 116.
[96] [Sanford] Hill to Lawrence Merriam (RD/R4), June 18, 1952, File 600-02, Box 1410 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; SMR, August 1952, 1; Hackett, *Alaska's Vanishing Frontier*, 47.
[97] SMR, July 1953, 1; July 1954, 2; July 1955, 1; NPS, "The Wonder Lake Roadhouse Development – A Preliminary Study" (drawings 2103, 2018A, and 3101), 1954-55, NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[98] Ginny Hill Wood, "Wilderness Camp," *Alaska Sportsman* 19 (November 1953), 20-24. Wood wrote a revised article, "The Building of Camp Denali," for the *Sierra Club Bulletin* 39 (June 1954), 39-44.
[99] Pearson to Sanford Hill, July 7, 1951, in File 900 (Celia M. Hunter), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB. More than twelve years after she applied for the land, on January 31, 1964, Ms. Hunter received a patent to 67.306 acres surrounding her camp. BLM, "Case Abstract for AKF 009215" for U.S. Survey 4003, from BLM Alaska State Office, Anchorage.
[100] Wood, "Wilderness Camp," 21-22; Wood, "The Building of Camp Denali," 40-41; Hunter to Grant H. Pearson, January 8, 1952, in File 900, noted above. Hunter had originally hoped to build her camp by moving the abandoned buildings at Camp Eielson to her homesteading site. That plan fell through, however. Pearson to Hill, July 7, 1951; Pearson to Hunter, November 24, 1952; both in File 900, noted above.
[101] Hunter to Pearson, January 8, 1952; Pearson to RD/R4, January 11, 1952; Hunter to Pearson, February 1, 1952; Herbert Maier to Director NPS, May 20, 1952; Lawrence C. Merriam to Director NPS, November 4, 1952; all in File 900, noted above.
[102] Wood, "The Building of Camp Denali," 23-24; Hunter to Pearson, November 7, 1952; Hunter to Regional Office, NPS, December 10, 1952; both in File 900, noted above.
[103] *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, March 12, 1937. In May 1939, Mary Liek (along with her husband) moved to Wind Cave National Park near Hot Springs, South Dakota (see Chapter 5), so all correspondence regarding the estate went to and from that location.
[104] Harry J. Liek to F.A. Kittredge, November 16, 1938, in File 610 ("Mt. McKinley Public Lands"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[105] Been to Director, October 17, 1939; A.E. Demaray to Been, June 12, 1940; Been to Director, January 22, 1941; Been to Director, March 26, 1941; Demaray to Been, April 23, 1941, all in File 610 ("Mt. McKinley, Morino Tract, 1939-1953"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; SMR, March 1940, 2; December 1940, photos.
[106] Harry J. Liek to Director NPS, July 22, 1940, in "Entries, General" file, Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.
[107] Drury to the [Interior] Secretary, June 24, 1946, in File 610, above; Conrad L. Wirth to Supt. WICA, October 10, 1944, in "Entries, General" file, Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP. The $3,800 offer was a bargain inasmuch as the property was valued at $4,800 in January 1944 and $6,000 in November 1946. Hillary Tolson to [Interior] Secretary, August 14, 1946, in File 610, above; Peterson, *Mount McKinley National Park Development Outline* (1946), 6.
[108] Drury to the [Interior] Secretary, June 24, 1946, in File 610, above; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 268-69; Frank Norris, *Legacy of the Gold Rush; An Administrative History of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park* (Anchorage, NPS, 1996), 93.
[109] Pearson to Director NPS, radiogram, July 29, 1946; Pearson to RD/R4, August 13, 1946; Hillary Tolson to [Interior] Secretary, August 14, 1946; Theodore Spector to Director NPS, November 20, 1946; all in File 610, above.

[110] Theodore Spector to Director NPS, November 20, 1946; Hugh M. Miller to Mary Wahl Liek, May 15, 1947; Elmer Hosler to Frank Been, June 9 and September 12, 1947; Tolson to Supt. MOMC, August 5, 1947; all in File 610, above.

[111] Mary Wahl Liek to Director NPS, August 18, 1947; Liek to Director, telegram, September 2, 1947; Tolson to Liek, September 3, 1947; Conrad L. Wirth to RD/R4, November 3, 1947; all in File 610, above; SMR, September 1947, 3; October 1947, 1.

[112] SMR, July 1939, 2, photo; September 1939, 4; March 1940, 2.

[113] SMR, August 1940, 5.

[114] SMR, December 1947, 2; May 1950, 3; May 1951, 3; Brown, *A History*, 190-91.

[115] SMR, May 1952, 4; November 1952, 4; March 1953, 2; October 1953, 4; November 1953, 5; December 1953, 2.

[116] SMR, July 1939, photo; June 1957, 4; February 1959, 4.

[117] Peterson, *Mount McKinley National Park Development Outline* (1946), 6; Grant Pearson to RD/R4, May 23, 1952, in File 857.08 ("Railroads"), Box 84, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[118] Joseph W. Johnson (CAA) to Conrad Wirth, February 16, 1951, in "McKinley Park 50470" folder, FAA Airports Division historical files.

[119] Lawrence C. Merriam (RD/R4) to Director NPS, July 14, 1952, in File 610, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; *Federal Register* 17 (April 19, 1952), p. 3495.

[120] "McKinley Park 50470" folder, FAA Airports Division historical files; Vint to Chief WODC, May 18, 1956; Pearson to Chief WODC, July 5, 1956; Sanford Hill to Supt. MOMC; all in File D18 ("Master Plans"), Box 2, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

[121] Hackett, *Alaska's Vanishing Frontier*, 1951, 46-47; Yates, *Report on Survey and Review ... of the Alaska Railroad*, 18-20.

[122] *Federal Register* 18 (October 16, 1953), 6592; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 17; SMR, October 1953, 4; November 1953, 3.

[123] These included an additional ranger position, an equipment operator, and an auto mechanic; in addition, the superintendent and chief ranger's positions were separated.

[124] SMR, September 1946, 3; December 1946, 2; May 1947, 2; December 1947, 2.

[125] SMR, March 1948, 3; May 1948, 4; August 1948, 3; March 1949, 2; May 1950, 3.

[126] SMR, October 1949, 3; May 1950, 3; November 1950, 2.

[127] SMR, July 1950, photo; September 1951, photo; October 1952, 3.

[128] SMR, November 1950, 2-3.

[129] SMR, December 1950, 2; March 1951, 3; April 1951, 3; May 1952, 4.

[130] SMR, September 1953, 2; June 1954, 2. The old rangers' dormitory has served as an office since 1954. It now serves as a workplace for the superintendent and other park managers.

[131] SMR, July 1953, 3; May 1954, 2; June 1954, 2; May 1965, 4. The present C-Camp trailers were brought to the site from Toklat Camp in 1982. Steve Carwile interview, January 12, 2006.

[132] NPS, "Headquarters Area Fluid Systems," chart MOMC-5316A, January 1951, in NPS Aperture Card Collection; SMR, November 1948, 2.

[133] Ranger William Clemons, called on to thaw a frozen water pipe in November 1948, caustically noted, "Welcome will be the day to the skeleton force of field men here when the higher echelons see fit to furnish this park with a maintenance crew as is customary in other national parks. The maintenance problem must be more severe here per unit than in any other park due to the long and cold winters." SMR, November 1948, 2.

[134] SMR, February 1947, 2; March 1948, 2; February 1949, 2; February 1950, 2.

[135] SMR, January 1947, 1; February 1947, 2; February 1948, 3.

[136] SMR, January 1946, 1; September 1946, 2; October 1946, 2.

[137] SMR, May 1948, 3; August 1948, 3; July 1950, 2; October 1950, 2; May 1951, 4; August 1951, 3.

[138] SMR, August 1952, 2; August 1953, 2; September 1953, 2.

[139] SMR, February 1955, 2; September 1955, 2; January 1956, 2.

[140] SMR, January 1951, 4; April 1955, 3.

[141] SMR, December 1945, 1; February 1946, 2; September 1948, 3; April 1949, 3; August 1950, 3.

[142] SMR, September 1950, 2; September 1951, 4.

[143] SMR, September 1951, 4; December 1953, 2; March 1954, 2. After 1954, coal was used to heat the headquarters garage; that practice continued until the winter of 1956-57. SMR, December 1956, photo.

[144] Before World War II, the CCC and NPS had also dumped garbage near the park headquarters, but in May 1940, Supt. Been decided to eliminate the dump; he burned what he could and "buried ... or hauled away" the remainder. SMR, May 1940, 3.

[145] SMR, April 1948, 2; Joseph W. Johnson to Conrad Wirth, February 16, 1951, in "McKinley Park 50470" folder, FAA Airports Division historical files.

[146] SMR, June 1941, 3; October 1946, 4.

[147] SMR, August 1951, 2; January 1952, 5; February 1952, 3, 5; May 1952, 3, 5, 6.
[148] SMR, April 1953, 3; June 1956, 5; August 1959, 7; September 1964, 5; October 1964, 5; Jane Bryant email, August 29, 2005. The new (1964) dump site was located just south of the road-railroad crossing near Milepost 345 of the Alaska Railroad.
[149] SMR, June 1948, 5; May 1951, 5; January 1953, 4; December 1955, 1; October 1956, 1; Jane Bryant to author, August 29, 2005.
[150] File 206.06 (Been), Box 1404 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.
[151] Kauffmann, *Mount McKinley National Park*, 35-41; SMR, August 1953, 2.
[152] Kauffmann, *Mt. McKinley National Park*, 33.
[153] SMR, October 1940, 3; October 1941, 1.
[154] Kauffmann, *Mt. McKinley National Park*, 41-42.
[155] Kauffmann, *Mt. McKinley National Park*, 42; Victor H. Cahalane, *A Boundary Study of Mount McKinley National Park*, unpublished manuscript, December 30, 1954, pp. 7, 23-24; NPS-TIC Fiche Collection #184/D155.
[156] SMR, August 1953, 2; Cahalane, *A Boundary Study*, 6, 22.
[157] Kauffmann, *Mt. McKinley National Park*, 43; Cahalane, *A Boundary Study*, 7, 12; 83rd Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Alaska Statehood: Hearings ... on S. 50, a Bill to Provide for the Admission of Alaska into the Union*, conducted January 20 to February 24, 1954 (Washington, GPO, 1954), 37, 42-46.
[158] As noted on page 7 of Cahalane's study, the proposed deletion would have totaled nearly 430 square miles, which was almost one-sixth of the park's acreage at that time. Cahalane's 1953 work at Katmai is detailed in Frank Norris, *Isolated Paradise: An Administrative History of the Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units* (Anchorage, NPS, 1996), 92-94.
[159] Cahalane, *A Boundary Study*, 1-5; SMR, September 1954, 4.
[160] Cahalane, *A Boundary Study*, 7-26.



# Chapter Seven: Rubber-Tired Tourism, 1957-1971

### The Denali Highway Opens

As noted in Chapter 6, the staff at Mount McKinley National Park was well aware during the postwar years of a planned road that would connect the McKinley Park road with the continental road network. The road between Paxsons Roadhouse (on the Richardson Highway) and McKinley Park Station, which came to be called the Denali Highway, was begun in 1950, and each year thereafter new construction took place that brought the two ends of the highway ever closer. In May 1956, the completion of the road was assured when the Alaska Road Commission awarded contracts for the construction of four bridges over the intervening distance. Predictions at that time called for the road to be opened on June 1, 1957.

Bridge work continued throughout the summer and fall of 1956. Contractors, however, fell behind schedule, and by the spring of 1957 the highway's opening date had been pushed back to August. A number of motorists, however, had apparently not been apprised of the delay; they headed down the Richardson Highway toward the park and did not hear the disappointing news until they arrived at Paxson. Park superintendent Duane Jacobs, curious about the ongoing construction, headed out the still-unfinished road in July and noted that the Susitna River bridge was the last remaining obstacle; he gazed east from the bridge's western approach and observed "road equipment ... working on two or three cuts about two miles from the east end of the bridge."[1]

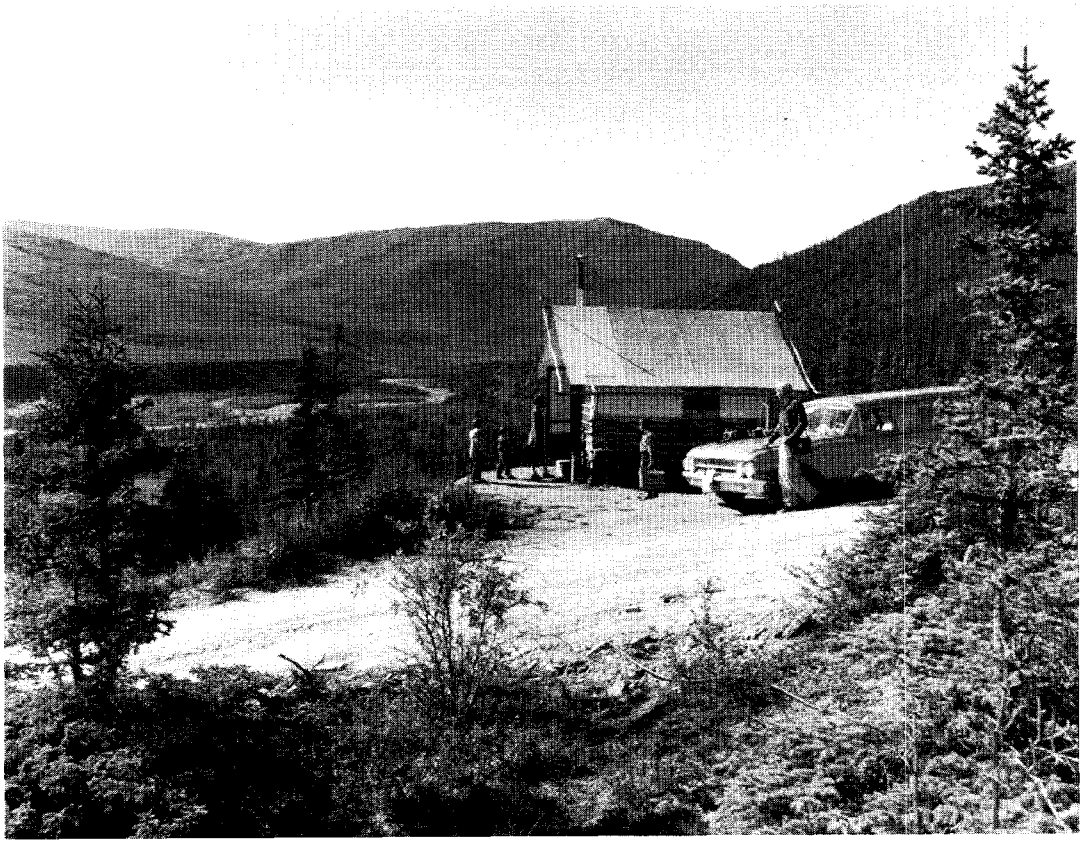
After the Denali Highway opened, motorists could drive their private cars to McKinley Park. Flat tires were a common occurrence on the gravel roads. Bob & Ira Spring Photo, Courtesy of Wallace A. Cole Collection, Camp Denali

The two ends of the road were finally linked in early August 1957. The bridge was officially opened on August 5. The first motorists drove the length of the highway, however, on August 2, and the first auto arrived at the park on August 4; it was a 1957 Ford sedan owned by Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Johem of Los Angeles. The opening of the road brought forth a minor flood of automobile traffic; 438 people—most of them Alaska residents—drove into the park in August alone. Hundreds of others, however, continued to arrive by railroad; and despite the highway being open, scores of others continued to bring their cars to the park on railroad flat cars from either Anchorage or Fairbanks.[2]

The road opening brought forth a strong, positive press response. Reporter John Lenferink of the *Anchorage Daily Times* offered the following puff piece in early August:

> For the tourist who loves his scenes as yet unspoiled, for the multitudes of camera fans in search of lures to woo their lens, for the hunting and fishing fraternity in everlasting search of virgin soil, and for the motoring public in general, a new and vast area of interest will be opened soon with the completion of the new Denali Highway. ...
>
> With this newest addition to Alaska's fast growing network of roads, another region of the territory's vast hinterlands, both rich in wildlife and scenic beauties, has been thrown open to public gaze. Through this wild and rugged land new horizons of scenic grandeur and breathtaking beauty greet the visitor on every side.
>
> Beginning at Paxson, on the Richardson Highway, the new road extends for more than 250 miles to Wonder Lake in the Mt. McKinley National Park area, and slightly beyond to Katisna [sic], an old ghost town. Running east [sic] from Paxson, the road travels through a landscape interspersed with towering mountains, rolling hills, sleepy dales, wandering rivers, and shimmering lakes.[3]

Shortly afterward, Jack DeYonge of the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* wrote a similar story. He noted that the new highway had "opened the heart of Alaska's mountain high-lands to hunter, fishermen, tourists and to ma, pa, and the kids off on a weekend trip." He noted that most of the highway was "in good condition and motorists can average about 30 miles an hour on the gravel." He warned, however, that for a 25-mile stretch between the Maclaren River and the Susitna River, "the road rumbles with heavy construction equipment in two or three short stretches. But this stretch is passable to all types of vehicles, including passenger cars, if it is taken slowly." DeYonge cautioned readers to carry five gallons of extra gas; in addition, "a spare tire or two, a tire



Nunatak tent cabin was one of the housekeeping units at Camp Denali, 1958. Bob & Ira Spring Photo, Courtesy of Wallace A. Cole, Camp Denali

patching kit and an air pump are almost necessary for the rest of the road." He further noted that the cost of gas for the round trip from Fairbanks would cost between $30 and $50.[4]

Finally, *Sunset Magazine* spread the word about the new highway to its large, western-U.S. readership. Its verbiage was more pragmatic, with details on accommodation options, viewpoints, and fishing possibilities. It noted that visitors were likely to be surprised by the park's hotel "which, although it looks like a barracks from the outside, offers unusual conveniences for a place so remote." It also mentioned that "many people spend at least a night at Camp Denali," where rates were $7 for one person or $15 for four in the housekeeping cabins and $1 per day per person in a "bedrock tent." Visitors to the west end of the park road were also encouraged to "visit the ghost town of Kantishna or pull yourself across rushing Moose Creek in a hand cable car to visit the only remaining prospector," Johnny Busia.[5]

Predictably, the completion of the Denali Highway caused a significant spike in park visitation. In 1956, the last year before the road's completion, about 5,200 people had visited the park, but a year later—with the new road open for only about a month before the season closed—visitation more than doubled, to about 10,700. In 1958, the first full year after the road was completed, visitation again doubled, to more than 25,900; it remained at that same high level the following year, the first summer following the declaration of Alaska's statehood. Visitation dipped somewhat thereafter; never again, however, would visitation return to the numbers that had been tallied in the pre-road days.[6] (See Appendix B.)

### The Mission 66 Program

Concurrent with the completion of the final legs of the Denali Highway was the unveiling and initial implementation of the Mission 66 program at Mount McKinley National Park. Mission 66 was a long-range development effort for parks throughout the country; its name was derived from 1966, the NPS's 50th anniversary, when most of these efforts were scheduled to be completed. NPS Director Conrad Wirth created the program in 1955. The following January, he garnered the enthusiastic approval of both President Dwight Eisenhower and Interior Secretary Douglas McKay. Wirth announced the program to the public on February 8, 1956.[7] The program, patterned on the success of similar programs in the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Public Roads, and Bureau of Reclamation, was the agency's response to the huge increase in postwar tourism; visitation to the parks had more than tripled between 1940 and 1954. Most of the money spent on Mission 66 projects, which eventually totaled over $1 billion, went to park construction projects, but staffing, maintenance, and protection work was also

included. Projects were to be funded through the usual Interior Department appropriations process.[8]

The announcement of this program was no surprise to Mount McKinley staff. They had attended a special meeting on the subject in July 1955, and once the tourist season began to wind down, staff threw themselves into a concerted effort to compile an initial development plan. Several versions of the park's program prospectus were prepared; they were then revised after review and input from park staff. The final park prospectus, more than 50 pages long, was completed on April 20, 1956.[9]

Just one day later, Interior Department official Carl Junge traveled from Washington, D.C. to an Alaska Chamber of Commerce meeting, in Ketchikan, and announced details of the Mission 66 program in Alaska. The initial budget, which had been developed by staff at Alaska's two independently-managed units (Mount McKinley and Sitka), called for $9.25 million to be spent on Alaskan projects. The majority of this funding—$6.9 million—was intended for Mount McKinley, the only national park in the territory.[10] Most of the Mount McKinley funds—$4.3 million—would go toward park road improvements, while the remaining $2.6 million would go toward buildings and utilities.

Duane Jacobs, who served as Mount McKinley's Assistant Superintendent in 1955 and 1956 and as Superintendent from late 1956 through late 1959, explained that the park, in 1956, was still "adapted to the package-type train and bus tour, which [is] characterized by large hotels close to the railhead and heavy reliance placed upon hotel operators for furnishing accommodations and transportation within the area. The opening of the roads," however, "will bring a mobile visitor who will require campgrounds, lunchrooms and installations for active enjoyment of the area." To "alleviate crowded road conditions expected with the opening of the approach road ... visitor centers with exhibit rooms and turnouts and wayside exhibits will provide means for such dispersal." In addition, both short and long hiking trails would lure visitors away from the road. Regarding accommodations, "the hotel will remain the main point of concentration for the visitor who enters by means of commercial transportation and to a lesser extent by those entering in [a] private automobile. Later proposed developments would be of the motel type with central lodge or gathering place, lunch counter and housekeeping type cabins." As initially announced, "the principal development" in the park's Mission 66 program would be in "the Savage River area, where a large new public use building will be erected. New campground facilities will be constructed in [this] area and existing campsites will be expanded." No overnight accommodations were planned in the Wonder Lake area.[11]

The Savage River area seemed, at first, to be an illogical location for the park's primary development site. It needs to be recalled, however, that this area—which offers an excellent if distant view of Mount McKinley on clear days—was the primary park visitor node for the 15-year period between 1924 and 1938, inclusive. More to the point, however, the NPS made its initial Mission 66 plans based on plans being formulated by the Alaska Road Commission. As early as 1948, when a host of routes were being considered to access the park, one alternative route would have connected Fairbanks with the park along a path that would have roughly paralleled the Alaska Railroad.[12] That route was soon discarded in favor of the Paxson-to-Cantwell route, but two years later the road was still in the discussion stage, and in September 1953, the announcement that the ARC would build a road that winter from Fairbanks to Nenana reignited the idea of a possible extension of that road to the park.[13]



On July 29, 1958, Mrs. Henry P. Karstens placed a wreath by the Harry Karstens Memorial Plaque at the Toklat River bridge. She is assisted by Grant Pearson, Robert E. (Bob) Sheldon, and Superintendent Duane Jacobs, on the right. DENA 28-97, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Road construction between Fairbanks and Nenana, as it turned out, did not take place until the 1955-56 period.[14] But as early as the spring of 1953, ARC staff had submitted budget requests for a preliminary survey of a route between Nenana and the park, and during the summer of 1954, two ARC engineers conducted

a survey along the proposed route. Later that year, they told park superintendent Grant Pearson that the Commission's favored route paralleled the Alaska Railroad from Nenana to Lignite; this route was chosen, in part, to provide a road access to the Healy River coal fields. South of Lignite, however, the commission favored angling the road southwest to the Savage River drainage and then south through Savage River Canyon to its intersection with the park road. (They decided on the Savage River route because "the terrain through the Nenana River Canyon is not stable and is continually moving. The Alaska Railroad has experienced much difficulty to hold the railroad track in that section.") This decision, plus an ARC assertion that "funds may be made available in the 1955 [fiscal year] to start work on that portion of the road," brought forth a concerned note from Pearson to regional NPS officials.[15] The NPS, for the moment, could do little but monitor the situation. An apparent lack of funds prevented the promised road construction project from taking place; even so, road authorities in the spring of 1956 still favored the Savage River route.[16]

The prospectus, issued in April 1956, gave additional details about proposed Mission 66 developments. At Savage River, the "proposed supplementary development" would consist of a "lodge, dining room, lunch counter and facilities for the preparation and handling of food. In close proximity to the lodge a number of cabins of housekeeping type and otherwise would be constructed." The NPS also planned to con - struct a Main Visitor Center adjacent to the lodge, which would include an exhibit room, a 300- to 400-person auditorium, a library, information office, and office space, and the agency also planned to double the 20-space campground. "It is from this point," the pro - spectus read, "that the bus trips of the concessioner will originate, and here visitors will be oriented and prepared to enjoy the park to the utmost."

Developments, however, would not be limited to the Savage River area. Near the east entrance to the park, "a small orientation-comfort station with a five-unit picnic ground close by" was planned. In the vicinity of Ewe Creek (Lower Savage) Ranger Station, near where the pro- posed highway would enter the park, another five-unit picnic ground was envisioned. Plans also called for two new campgrounds: a 100-unit development at "the present Teklanika camp- site" and a 20-unit campground, in due time, in the Toklat area. Self-guiding nature trails were planned at Savage River and Polychrome Pass, and staff also decided that a series of interpretive panels should be installed at various points along the park road. At headquarters, the agency planned to build a new administrative facility near the present structure; the existing adminis- tration building, which was "by no means fireproof," would "be converted into a much - needed multi-purpose structure and will be used as a school house for employees children, recreation hall for employees and as a general meeting place for community functions."[17]

At Wonder Lake, several improvements were in the offing. A five-unit picnic area was planned at the lake's northern end, and toward the later stages of the program a significant expansion of the Wonder Lake campground (to 50 spaces, with space for "house trailers") was envisioned. The agency also made tentative plans for a larger development. "When travel increases," the document noted, "it may be deemed necessary to construct a small day-use lunch counter- lodge building in the vicinity of the Wonder Lake visitor center." This center would contain a 100- seat auditorium, an exhibit room, and an information office. "In addition, a small service station would be desirable. The structure would be utilized by campers in that area, and, with the advent of paved roads, this visitor center will probably become the half-way point on the concessioner's bus tours."[18]

Roads and trails were the other major planned developments. Agency officials frankly stated that the current park road was

> an 88.3 mile sub-standard gravel road of a type that is not desirable as the main park road. Realignment and improvements which will bring it up to modern standards, including paving, has been scheduled for the ensuing ten year program and work will progress in ten mile sections, or greater lengths if funds permit more rapid construction.

Improvements on the park road, moreover, were scheduled to begin immediately; $500,000 would be spent during the current fiscal year, and an additional $400,000 the following year. Park staff recognized that "glaciering or road icing" was a major seasonal problem. In the Sanctuary River area, the agency planned to add "extensive road fill to place the road above ice level," and at Igloo Creek it planned a road realignment to "place the road beyond the level of ice forma- tion." Officials recognized, however, that the glaciering problem could not be circumvented everywhere along the park road, so glacier



The former Camp Eielson site became the focus for Eielson Visitor Center, a Mission 66 project. This site was located at the midpoint of the park bus tours and provided a world-class view, making it a logical site for visitors to take a long, interesting pause. DENA 39-8, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

removal would continue to incur high maintenance costs.[19]

As to trails, park officials were quick to admit that "the average visitor to the park is an elderly person who is content to view the park in relative comfort via bus tours and automobile, and usually shows but little interest or desire, or has the capability of walking any distance." They felt, however, that the new, auto-borne visitor population would be "younger and more able," so the agency planned to construct and mark five new trails: 1) an eight-mile trail from the new Savage River development to the river's headwaters, 2) the twenty-mile Double Mountain Trail, between the Teklanika and Sanctuary drainages, 3) a "ten-mile trail to the source of the left fork of the Toklat River, terminating at the Toklat Glacier," 4) a four-mile trail down the Toklat River to the site of the Sheldon Cabin, and 5) a 24-mile trail from the proposed Wonder Lake lodge site to McGonagall Pass and the upper Muldrow Glacier, with a side trail from the Clearwater Creek-Cache Creek area east to the Mile 66-Camp Eielson area. Along most of these trails, one or more "three-quarter shelters" were planned. In addition, the agency planned to stabilize and reconstruct the Sheldon Cabin, which was then in ruinous condition.[20]

Once the park's prospectus became public, regional and Washington officials looked it over, and in late July a regional Mission 66 team traveled out the park road to Wonder Lake.[21] Apparently as a result of that visit, a decision was made to augment the two previously-proposed visitor centers (at Savage River and Wonder Lake) with two new ones. One such center (at Polychrome Pass) proved of transient interest, perhaps because it lacked a dependable water source, and plans there were downsized in favor of a small visitor node with rest rooms and a few exhibits. But a second visitor center, at the site of former Camp Eielson, quickly became "first in priority because of its urgent need." The location offered a host of advantages; as a revised edition of the prospectus noted, "The superlative view of Mount McKinley and other features of the area merit orientational and interpretational exhibits, and as the location is the midpoint of the concessioner bus tours, the area and building will be utilized heavily." The agency apparently recognized that many bus-tour patrons as well as automobile travelers would not venture all the way to Wonder Lake, so in early 1957 it quickly cobbled together architectural and interpretive plans for the new visitor center. By July, the agency was getting ready to issue a bid for the building's construction.[22]



Constructed during the summers of 1958 and 1959, Eielson Visitor Center opened to the public in July, 1960. DENA 5-17, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Another major change that took place during the 12-month period following the issuance of the park prospectus was that road authorities—who now worked for the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) rather than the Alaska Road Commission—began to reconsider their earlier decision to route the Fairbanks-McKinley Park road through Savage River Canyon. A BPR official, quoted in the spring of 1957, was careful to note that "no recommendations will be forthcoming on either of the approach roads from the north until a reconnaissance survey has been completed on the Nenana River route."[23] In response to that change of direction, the Mission 66 prospectus backpedaled. "Due to the present uncertainty of where the northern approach road will enter the park, a fixed location for [the main visitor center and lodge complex] cannot be determined at this time. If

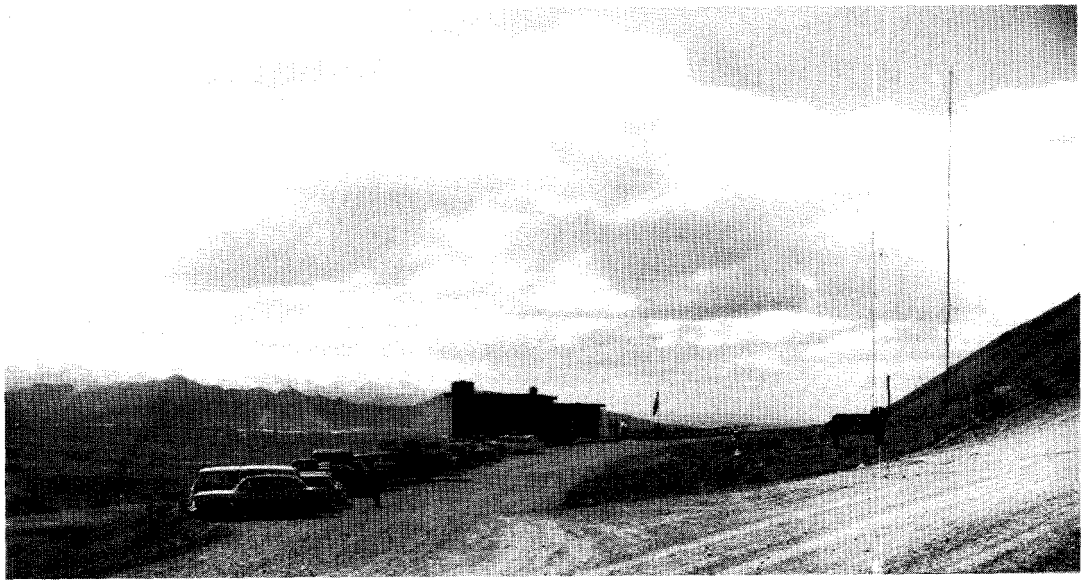
this road enters via Savage River Canyon, then Savage River appears as the logical location, but if on the other hand the road enters via the Nenana River Canyon the present hotel area would lend itself to further development of cabin type accommodations."[24]

As noted in the final Mission 66 prospectus, which was issued in late May 1957, the NPS planned to spend more than $9.7 million on specific Mount McKinley development projects by 1966. Almost three-fourths of that money—some $7.2 million—was to be allotted for the improvement of the park road and the construction of new trails. Most of the remaining funds—some $2.5 million—was to be spent on the McKinley Park Hotel and on visitors centers, administrative structures, utilities, and so forth. (No funds, however, had been allotted for housekeeping cabins, lunch rooms, and similar facilities; these investments, it was assumed, would be borne by concessioners.) Less than $100,000 was to be spent on exhibits, signs, picnic areas, and campgrounds.[25] Now, more than ever before, the park had forged a bold, specific blueprint on how future development should take place.

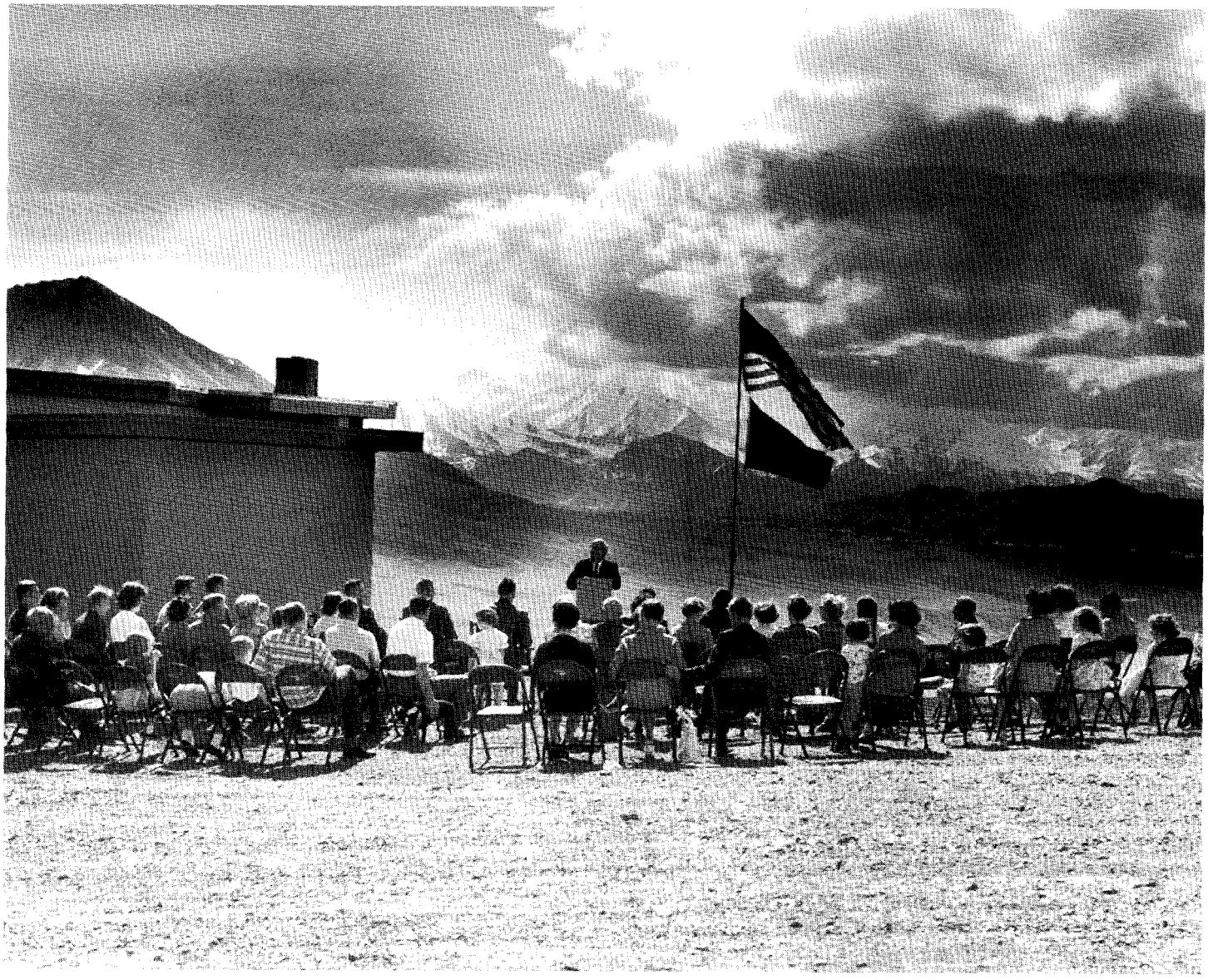
**The Fate of Mission 66: Successes and Failures**

Given the bold plans that were put forth during the early years of the Mission 66 program and the broad Congressional support for funding these projects during the program's ten-year lifecycle, it is perhaps surprising that only a smattering of the plans for Mount McKinley National Park that were sketched out during this period were ever realized. Most, by contrast, never got beyond the proposal stage. In general, it appears that the plans most likely to be acted upon were those with the highest priority, the lowest level of controversy, and those which were actively backed by a broad range of agency officials. Regarding road improvements, for example, contracts for the first several segments were easily approved, but by the mid-1960s, as shall be seen later in this chapter, the issuance of contracts for the central and western portions of the park road got mired in controversy, forcing funds to be redirected to other projects. The construction of trails, as shall be seen, was predicated on the notion that such trails were both necessary and environmentally sound. But a heightened consciousness toward wilderness values militated against the building and marking of trails, and these plans remained uncompleted. Regarding building-construction projects, the various concessions developments (such as motels, day lodges, lunch counters, etc.) never got off the ground, apparently because of a lack of interest on the part of both the NPS and the park concessioner; campgrounds, however, were built largely as planned (see below). The Eielson Visitor Center—which was not part of the original Mission 66 plans but came to life during the winter of 1956-57—was perhaps the most visible element to remember the Mission 66 planning period; a construction contract was let in March 1958 (to J. B. Warrack, an Anchorage construction firm), it was opened to the public in July 1960, and it was formally dedicated on July 15, 1961.[26]

As noted above, the planned Savage River developments—a key part of the Mission 66 prospectus—were predicated on the assumption that the road from Nenana would enter the park via the Savage River Canyon. Just a few months after the Mission 66 plans were released, however, those plans were upended when a BPR reconnaissance survey concluded that a north-south route through Nenana Canyon was more



**Eielson Visitor Center was formally dedicated in July. During the month of July, Eielson Visitor Center hosted 4142 visitors. DENA 5-29, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**



**The formal dedication of Eielson Visitor Center, July 15, 1961, was attended by about sixty people. NPS Associate Director Eivind Scoyen gave the principal address. W.V. Watson Collection, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

practical and cost effective than the Savage River Canyon alignment. (The choice was made "due to factors of geology and terrain, plus permafrost, which led people conducting surveys to judge the route as being impracticable if not entirely impossible.")[27] On the basis of that decision, the need for visitor services shifted from Savage River to the area surrounding the McKinley Park Hotel, where both the NPS and the concessioner already had support facilities. As the Mission 66 prospectus had correctly noted, park staff found it difficult to conduct a long-range plan for a park where visitor numbers and visitor characteristics would soon dramatically change. But as various parts of this chapter have suggested, changes in the NPS and in society as a whole forced the adoption of other changes that park staff during the 1955-56 planning period could never have anticipated.

### The Park Hotel: Success at Last

During most of the 1950s, the park hotel had been a perennial source of red ink and a continuing headache to its operator. During the early part of the decade, Alaska Railroad officials were able to lessen their losses by opening the hotel each winter to soldiers and airmen on leave. After 1953, however, they cast about for a private concessioner. That firm, based in Anchorage, was unable to survive for long, and in August 1954 a company called National Park Concessions, Inc. took over. NPCI, which had government connections and was specifically arranged to revive foundering concessions operations, ran the hotel in 1955 (incurring a small loss) and in 1956 (gaining a small profit). Throughout this period, the government continued to invite bids from independent concessioners. Finding none, however, they prepared to operate the hotel during the summer of 1957. NPCI personnel opened the hotel on June 2—just prior to the three-day Alaska Bankers' Convention. By the time it closed that year, on September 8, it proudly

noted that 1957 had been the company's best year to date; because (or in spite of) the mid-season completion of the Denali Highway), the hotel enjoyed a record number of guests and meals and its highest profit yet. NPS staff agreeably noted that there had been "very few complaints on the part of visitors relative to the operation of the hotel and the transportation system."[28]

over the concession operation. This offer, which was based on frank discussions between Hummel and Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam in San Francisco, included a three-year waiver of winter hotel heating costs.[29] His offer was discussed by a variety of NPS officials, and in January 1958 it was submitted to Congress for the 60-day waiting period required by law. On February 6, Hummel and NPS officials officially




**Don Hummel and Al Donau visited the park and met with Superintendent Jacobs regarding their proposed Mount McKinley National Park Company assuming operation of the park's concession facilities. They are pictured here in front of the McKinley Park railroad depot. DENA 28-51, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

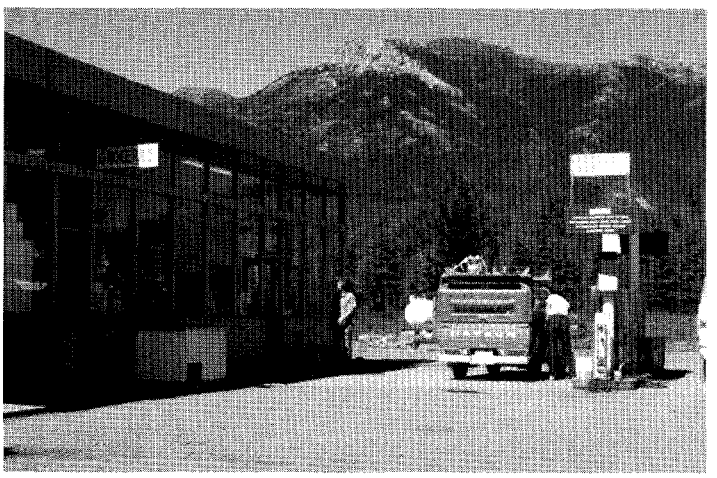
In September 1957, just a month after the new road opened, two visitors from California arrived at the park to evaluate the park concession. Don Hummel and his nephew Al Donau, the respective owner and manager of the Lassen Volcanic National Park concession, had been invited there by Supt. Jacobs, who encouraged them to assume control over the park's concessions. After touring the hotel and ancillary buildings, park staff concluded that the two "appeared quite interested in the possibility of operating the hotel and allied concession facilities." Within weeks, Hummel—operating as the proposed Mount McKinley National Park Company—submitted an offer to assume control

agreed to a 10-year contract to run the McKinley Park concession (see Appendix D). Before long, Hummel chose Arthur Hansen as his on-site manager. The new concessioner agreed to keep the hotel officially open from June 14 to September 7, with the understanding that informal accommodations would be available both a week before the opening date and a week after the closing date.[30]

Under the new concession contract, the NPS stipulated the need for a general store and gasoline station to serve the anticipated automobile traffic. Plans for a service station had first been aired in July 1956 when Standard Oil of

California officials inspected the proposed site. At the time, NPS officials had not yet decided whether there should be an on-site railroad crossing near the hotel or an overpass bridge, and discussions about the proper road alignment in that area occupied much of the summer of 1957. It was not until February 1958—the same month that Hummel signed the concessions contract—that the NPS finally decided where the service station would go. Hummel, using the Standard Oil connections he had gained during his years at Lassen, decided to arrange for the construction of a new building that would offer a small grocery store as well as a service station; Standard Oil agreed to build the service station in exchange for the exclusive right to sell its products there. The concessioner opened the store in what would have been the grease rack; it was the only grocery for miles around. The new building opened just before September 1, the deadline stated in the recently-completed concessions contract.[31]

All known evidence indicates that Hummel, perhaps because of his 20-plus years of experience at Lassen Volcanic National Park, ran a successful, profitable operation of the Mount McKinley concession. The hotel's 1958 receipts, for example, exceeded those for the previous year, and its July 1959 revenue was a "substantial increase over the corresponding period for 1958."[32] Thereafter, Hummel's Mount McKinley operation remained profitable.[33] Of enormous help to the concessioner, of course, were the large expenditures that the NPS had made during the mid-1950s to improve the hotel's decaying infrastructure; also helpful was that during the wintertime, staff from the NPS—the agency that owned the hotel—were assigned (at government expense) to maintain and repair the hotel and power plant.[34] Also of enormous help was Hummel's ability, by installing high/low temperature recorders and rerouting the hot water pipes through the coldest part of the hotel first, to decrease the hotel's heating bill, during both summer and winter.[35] During this period, the concessioner and the NPS worked well together—NPS staff, for example, held an annual orientation for concession employees—and the concessioner periodically modernized and improved its facilities and rolling stock.[36] Throughout this period, the concession was controlled by Hummel and Donau, who made occasional summit visits; on-site managers such as Harold Franklin (1959-60), Robert Vaughan (1961-64), Dave O'Hara (1965), and Wallace Cole (1966-70) supervised day-to-day operations.[37]



The park concessioner, Mount McKinley National Park Company, operated a gas station and small store, near the park hotel, for the new class of independent auto travelers. NPS Interp. Collection, #500, Denali National Park and Preserve

Because of the renewed success of the park hotel, entrepreneurs hoped that the construction of new airstrips would attract additional visitors to the park. As noted in Chapter 6, an airstrip had existed at the Summit railroad stop since prewar days. And by the spring of 1953, when a road was extended to the Broad Pass area that allowed a road connection to McKinley Park Station, the strip offered an expanded runway and a fully-staffed Civil Aeronautics Authority station. The site, however, was 34 miles away from the park hotel. To further ease park access, the territory's Director of Aviation, along with various airline representatives, visited the area in March 1954 and inspected a potential landing strip site located just east of the Denali Highway and just south of the bridge demarcating the park's eastern boundary. Later that spring, a territorial engineer surveyed a 5,000-foot runway and declared that "they expect this strip to be built this summer."[38] Little took place at the site, however, until the summer of 1957, when Anchorage resident George Lingo—whose roots at Mount McKinley extended all the way back to 1933-35, when he was the assistant general manager of the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company—informed Civil Aeronautics Administration officials that he and Jack Farley planned to develop a private airport at this site.[39]

By the spring of 1961, all was ready at the so-called Lingo Airstrip. Alaska Airlines showed an interest in using the strip, and on June 18, the carrier made its inaugural flights to the strip from both Anchorage and Fairbanks. Approximately a hundred people that day "arrived at the park via this facility and were afforded bus trips as far as Savage River by the park concessioner."




Laurence Rockefeller and his family arrived on Alaska Airlines at the McKinley Park airport where they were met by Superintendent Samuel A. King, right. The group enjoyed a tour on the park road and an inspection of the proposed Wonder Lake Visitor Center site. DENA 28-66, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Supt. King, moreover, predicted that "a good percentage of tour groups may arrive at [the park] via the Alaska Airlines in the future."[40] Daily service—one flight in each direction—finally began on August 16 and continued until September 9; during that time, shuttle service was available to the McKinley Park Hotel, and a Hertz rental-car facility was also available. Traffic, however, was "not substantial"; only 69 people utilized the service during the 3½-week trial run. Based on that traffic volume, Lingo pulled out, and thereafter the field was seldom used commercially.[41]

Other airports were developed and proposed during this period, in support of either mining, exploration, and hunting-guide activities. By 1953, an 1,800-foot airstrip had been built on a flat ridge above Crooked Creek (in the Kantishna Hills) near the Hunter and Burkett Mine.[42] A 2,200-foot airstrip was constructed in Cantwell, and five miles east of town an airstrip variously known as the Drashner Airport and Golden North Airfield was built during the late 1960s.[43] Finally, the summer of 1966 witnessed the construction of a 1,300-foot airstrip along Glen Creek as well as a widening and lengthening of the nearby Kantishna Airstrip.[44] All of these improvements were outside of the park boundaries. Within the park, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey proposed a "temporary landing strip for small planes" in 1953 near the Teklanika River. This airstrip, however, never got beyond the planning stage.[45]

**At Wonder Lake, the Dream Fades Away**

While the fortunes of the existing park hotel, at the park's eastern edge, shined bright, prospects remained murky for those who hoped for some sort of overnight accommodation off to the west in the Wonder Lake area. As noted in Chapter 6, Alaska Railroad management had strongly supported the idea of a lodge or hotel at Wonder Lake during the immediate postwar period. But Congress's tightening of the railroad's purse strings—along with a concomitant reduction of support for a host of Alaska-related programs—put the hotel on the back burner for the time being. Then, in the early 1950s, the transfer of the park concession from the government-funded railroad to a group of poorly-capitalized independent investors made any hopes of hotel construction ever more distant. Another issue that clouded development prospects was the preference, stated boldly by Interior Secretary Ickes during his tenure, to prevent new concessions developments in the parks if alternatives could be developed outside of park boundaries.[46]

As noted above, park staff in the initial (April 1956) Mission 66 prospectus recommended that Wonder Lake—which until that time had only a small campground—become a significant visitor node; a picnic area would be laid out along the north shore, and just south of the lake there would be a "small day-use lunch counter-lodge building," a visitor center, a small service station, and an expanded campground. No overnight

accommodations were planned, however. This reticence was apparently driven by economics; there was little if any support during this period for governmentally-funded accommodations in the national parks, and the McKinley Park Hotel, at the time, was limping along only because of agency-provided financial support.

The notion of a Wonder Lake lodge, however, refused to die. The advent of Alaska statehood, in 1959, brought with it an increased interest in tourism as a development vehicle. In addition, the high visitor volume at the park in 1958 and 1959, and the increasing profits being gained at the independently-operated park hotel during the same period, offered a further rationale for future development. Perhaps in light of that interest, NPS officials from both the San Francisco and Washington offices toured the park road in June 1960 and discussed, among other topics, a "campground, visitor center and concessioner facilities at Wonder Lake."[47] These plans may have initially been a mere revival of what had first been offered in the Mission 66 prospectus. But based on the energy (and money) which was then being poured into Eielson Visitor Center, which was a day-use facility, the planned Wonder Lake "concessioner facilities" were soon morphed into a reincarnated plan for a Wonder Lake Lodge. This lodge would be sited on the same location that had been considered, off and on, since the mid-1930s.[48]

In 1962, NPS officials began to consider a new lodging site in the Wonder Lake area. Traffic along the park road east of the lake, predictably, had substantially increased since the opening of the Denali Highway, and concerns arose that the long-planned hotel site, on a knoll south of the lake, would mar the view of Mt. McKinley for travelers along the north and east sides of the lake.[49] In response, park planners proposed a new site on a ridgeline east of Wonder Lake. This new proposal, finalized in August 1963, had a commanding view of Mt. McKinley, Wonder Lake, the Moose Creek drainage, and the Kantishna Hills.[50] Planners envisioned a $3.3 million development that included a lodge building, ten cabins, a service station, and a campground, along with supporting NPS facilities for park personnel and maintenance functions.[51]

Prior to the 1960s, virtually the only factor preventing the Park Service from constructing a hotel at the west end of the park road was the lack of money. The various early hotel plans in this area were generally uncontroversial, because almost no one opposed them.[52] During the early 1960s, agency officials such as park superintendent Samuel A. King continued to support the hotel idea, and the agency's principal Alaska planner, Al Kuehl, was also a strong hotel backer.[53] The agency was aware, however, that such support was not unanimous. The region's construction chief, for example, cautioned that hotel construction would "create a black storm with the conservation people, since they are opposed to development at Wonder Lake."[54] The agency's regional director, Lawrence Merriam, knew that the area was "a fragile biological complex which can easily be damaged by concentrated use." For that reason, Merriam steered a cautious middle course; he urged further study before a decision could be made. NPS Director Wirth, meanwhile, assured Howard Zahniser, the Wilderness Society's executive director, that "we have no funds programmed" at Wonder Lake aside from improvements to the existing campground.[55]

In late 1964 a new park superintendent, Oscar T. Dick, recommended that the NPS, at Wonder Lake, should scale back the plans that had been propounded just a year earlier. He advocated "some sort of motel type unit with food and other service facilities. A more pretentious development is not needed...".[56] But when that proposal reached Washington, newly-appointed Director George Hartzog recommended that new accommodations be located outside of the park.[57]

Some people in the agency, however, still hoped to see a hotel built at Wonder Lake, and in 1966 an NPS master plan team concluded that "a fine hotel is ... needed in the Wonder Lake area near the terminus of the present road with a capacity of 200 guests supplemented by an adequate campground complex nearby." The team chose a site "on a high plateau east of Wonder Lake."[58] The master plan stated that facilities were programmed for construction by the NPS in 1970. Momentum for a new lodge remained the following year, when the agency issued a prospectus for a 20-year concessions contract. That contract demanded that the concessioner expend the necessary funds to equip the proposed NPS facilities and place them in operation.[59] But elsewhere, new voices of opposition were being heard. During the summer of 1967, Sierra Club President Edgar Wayburn visited the park, and when he and park superintendent George Hall headed out the road, they went to Wonder Lake and viewed the proposed hotel site. Wayburn, who was visiting Alaska for the first time, was alarmed by the idea. Before long he related his concerns about the site to NPS Director Hartzog, who knew the



This 1965 NPS master planning team visited the Wonder Lake area and supported the construction of facilities east of the lake. Gathered on a knoll near the Wonder Lake Ranger Station, the planning team members are, left to right, Park Superintendent Oscar Dick, head of the master planning team Paul Thomas, Linn Spaulding, Mr. Caballero, Park Engineer Donald McLane, Wallace McCaw, and Charles Stoddard. DENA 28-81, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Sierra Club chief from previous legislative work related to a proposed Redwood National Park. Hartzog assured Wayburn that the Park Service had no intention of building any new hotels within Mount McKinley National Park.[60]

Alaskan development interests, meanwhile, did everything they could to prod the government into building a Wonder Lake hotel. The *Anchorage Times*, in particular, orchestrated a campaign during the summer of 1967, calling the Park Service "woefully remiss in its duty" and unwilling to make "the wonders of Mt. McKinley National Park ... accessible."[61] In September of that year, *Times* reporters sensed a change in the wind and announced, in a banner front-page headline, that the Park Service would construct a "lodge-type structure" at Wonder Lake in 1970 that "will accommodate 200 persons and include facilities for food service and relaxation." (A follow-up editorial exulted in the decision and stated that "a third [park] hotel should be planned immediately.") A few days later, however, NPS Regional Director John Rutter threw cold water on the newspaper's optimism. He announced in Anchorage that the hotel project, which was extracted from the 1966 park master plan, would be built "as the need exists and the money is available." And because the high costs of the Vietnam War were forcing cuts to the NPS budget, a 1970 construction date was just "somebody's wishful thinking."[62]

The *Times*, undaunted, continued to tout a Wonder Lake hotel for more than a year afterward.[63] In 1968, park superintendent George Hall supported "a hostel type instead of a hotel. Meals to be served family style, dress casual and interpretation on a high level of orientation to ecology should be featured."[64] NPS planners, in fact, spent "several weeks" that summer "in an attempt to find a site for a second hotel." But in their 1968 master plan study, they concluded, for several reasons, that a "Wonder Lake Lodge is not now recommended." The agency further noted that a Wonder Lake hotel "would have had a beautiful view but [it had] a short season because of weather conditions."[65] Alaska Governor Walter Hickel, who became the U.S. Interior Secretary in 1969, continued to push for the idea, and many years later he noted that "I got approval for a hotel that would cost $8 million at Wonder Lake ... George Hartzog, who was chief of the park service, saw the need for it." But the project died when Hickel left office.[66] By late 1970 the idea was effectively dead, inasmuch as agency plans issued that year, and thereafter, omitted any mention of it. That same year, Interior Department officials notified the concessioner that it was no longer required to abide by the Wonder Lake provisions in the 1967 contract renewal.[67] Those hoping to construct a hotel with a McKinley view soon shifted their enthusiasm to a new location, south of the Alaska Range.[68] That was the first of a series of south-side hotel proposals that have been bandied about ever since (see chapters 8, 9, and 10).

### Park Road Improvements: Controversy and Resolution

As noted above, a strong undercurrent in the controversy over a Wonder Lake hotel was a larger debate over whether development should be encouraged at the western end of the park road. Prior to the opening of the Denali Highway, virtually all parties supported the idea of a major development at either Mile 66 (Camp Eielson) or at Wonder Lake; and to encourage travel along the park road, a major plank of the Mission 66 program had been a plan to widen it, add safety features (such as guard rails), and pave it. The completion of the Denali Highway promised that a large and increasing number of motorists would use the road and, at long last, the park would develop according to models that had proven so successful in other large Western U.S. national parks. But not all people welcomed the prospect of new road development, and the growing opposition to new road construction resulted in the first major battle between conservation and development in an Alaska park unit.

As noted in previous chapters, the Alaska Road Commission had been in charge of constructing and improving the park road during the 1920s and 1930s,[69] and its personnel were still maintaining the road during the spring of 1956, when the park's Mission 66 program was completed by park staff. Shortly afterward, on June 29, 1956, President Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act (H.R. 10660), which discontinued the ARC and transferred its functions to the Bureau of Public Roads, which was part of the Commerce Department. Given the dictates of that act, the ARC ceased to exist on September 16, 1956. The BPR managed road maintenance in the park for only a short time, because on July 1, 1960, the NPS took over park road maintenance operations. The BPR, however, continued to be involved in planning and designing park road improvements.[70]

Because the improvement of the park road was a top Mission 66 priority, and because there was near-unanimity that improvements were needed, work on the road began shortly after the prospectus was approved. BPR officials divided the proposed road program into a series of short segments, beginning in the hotel area and heading west. In 1958 and 1959, for instance, the Miller Brothers Construction Co. reconstructed a 14-mile road segment between McKinley Park Station and Savage River.[71] In late 1959, Peter Kiewit Sons Construction Co. of Seattle won the contract to improve an eight-mile stretch of road from Savage River to Sanctuary River with a $425,000 bid. Work began in May 1960 and the job was completed in August 1961.[72] The reconstruction of the third park road segment, west of Sanctuary River, was awarded to Green Construction Co. of Des Moines, Iowa in late 1960. But because of complications in the second-phase job, Green workers—who arrived at the park in early 1961—had to work east of Sanctuary River until August. And by August 1962, when NPS officials declared that the contractor's work had been satisfactorily



This October 1962 photograph of a section of park road between Savage River and Sanctuary River, approximately 19 miles from headquarters, shows the Mission 66 road upgrade and a large parking pullout delineated by posts. DENA 39-36, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



The newly completed Mission 66 park road improvements were evident here on Teklanika Flat, September 1962. DENA 34-23, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

completed, sections of newly-improved road extended only to Mile 26, slightly more than three miles west of Sanctuary River.[73]

During the improvement program's first year, conservationists were generally nonplussed at the new developments. But after the 1959 season, conservationists became alarmed as construction progressed on the new Eielson Visitor Center (critics called it a "monstrosity" and a "Dairy Queen").[74] During the same period, an increasing chorus of dissent—voiced primarily through the pages of *National Parks Magazine*—rose about the engineering standards associated with the park road; these protests were sounded, in large part, because BPR roads had higher technical standards than ARC roads had demanded. The first volley in what turned out to be a six- year war was launched in December 1959, when Olaus Murie (a National Parks Association board member) noted that the park's main road "is to be 'modernized' with curves taken out, apparently another hurry-up speedway." Murie spoke warmly of the relaxed pace of the old park road and noted that "the national park will not serve its purpose if we encourage the visitor to hurry as fast as possible for a mere glimpse of scenery from a car, and a few snapshots. Rather there is an obligation inherent in a national park, to help the visitor get some understanding, the esthetic meaning of what is in the place."[75] NPS officials reacted with grace to the criticism, but their policy did not change; Regional Director Lawrence Merriam noted in a "frank" letter to Murie that "making a smooth speedway out of the park road would certainly be incompatible with the park, and you may be sure it is not the intention of the Service to create such a condition," but "we have concluded that the road must be widened to minimum safety standards ... out as far as Camp Eielson [sic]" because concessioner buses turned around at that point. Washington official A. Clark Stratton agreed; he stated that "a high-speed highway would be detrimental to the best uses of the Park's wilderness, and we have no intention of constructing such a road in Mount McKinley. We have been forced, however, by increased use to improve the substandard existing Park road to make it safe for today's travel needs. The cross section consists of two 10-foot lanes with 3-foot shoulders which is a minimum for safety."[76]

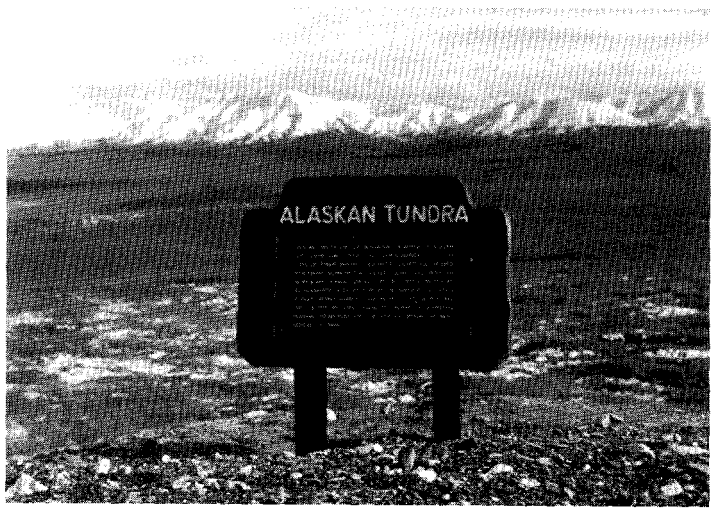
Conservationists, however, watched further road improvements with an increasing sense of alarm, and in the early spring of 1963—by which time road improvements had been extended to Mile 26—*National Parks Magazine* issued several articles about Mt. McKinley National Park, two of which criticized the "speedway" that encouraged visitors to "get in fast and get out fast" rather than "savor their park and get full enjoyment and inspiration" as called for in the park's planning guidelines.[77] These articles featured three photos showing the broad gravel swath created by the newly-filled road sections, and an accompanying editorial comment pointedly noted that "this kind of road building violates the National Parks Act; it ought to be

stopped."[78] These articles evidently brought a strong message to Washington officials, because by mid-June 1963 the NPS's top Design and Construction official, A. Clark Stratton, apparently reconsidered his position. In a letter to Director Wirth, Stratton noted that "recently there has been considerable criticism" of the agency's road reconstruction efforts at the park, suggesting "that unnecessary destruction of wilderness values is being perpetrated by the Service." To counter that criticism, he felt it necessary to "reiterate the basic design and construction criteria" being applied to the road; specifically that the agency would "continue to follow the practice of using what can be described as telescoping standards" for the road. As part of that "telescoping," the first 30 miles would have "a 20-foot driving surface with three-foot shoulders. The next 40 miles, from Mile 26 to Camp Eielson, would have "a 20-foot driving surface with minimum shoulders varying from no shoulders to a maximum of three feet where available within the existing roadbed." And the final 18 road miles would not be widened except for passing and parking pullouts. Stratton's letter, despite its reference to "reiteration" and continuation of standards, appears to have been the first agency recognition of a three-part telescoping process, with standards for the middle section that were slighter (if only in a minor way) than the eastern section.[79]

Despite this minor concession, the NPS and BPR had no interest in abandoning the Mission 66 goal of upgrading the park road, at least that portion between McKinley Park Station and the Eielson Visitor Center. In June 1964, the NPS awarded a $263,000 contract to Ghemm Construction Co. of Fairbanks. This contract did not involve the improvement of additional road mileage; instead, it primarily involved drainage work in various areas east of Sanctuary River in preparation for paving. Crews for this project began their work in July 1964 and finished up in August 1965.[80] No sooner had this project been completed, however, than a contractor—A & G Construction of Fairbanks—was chosen to reconstruct five miles of park road, from Mile 26 to the Teklanika River bridge. This contract was awarded in October 1965, and the work was carried out between May and August 1966.[81]

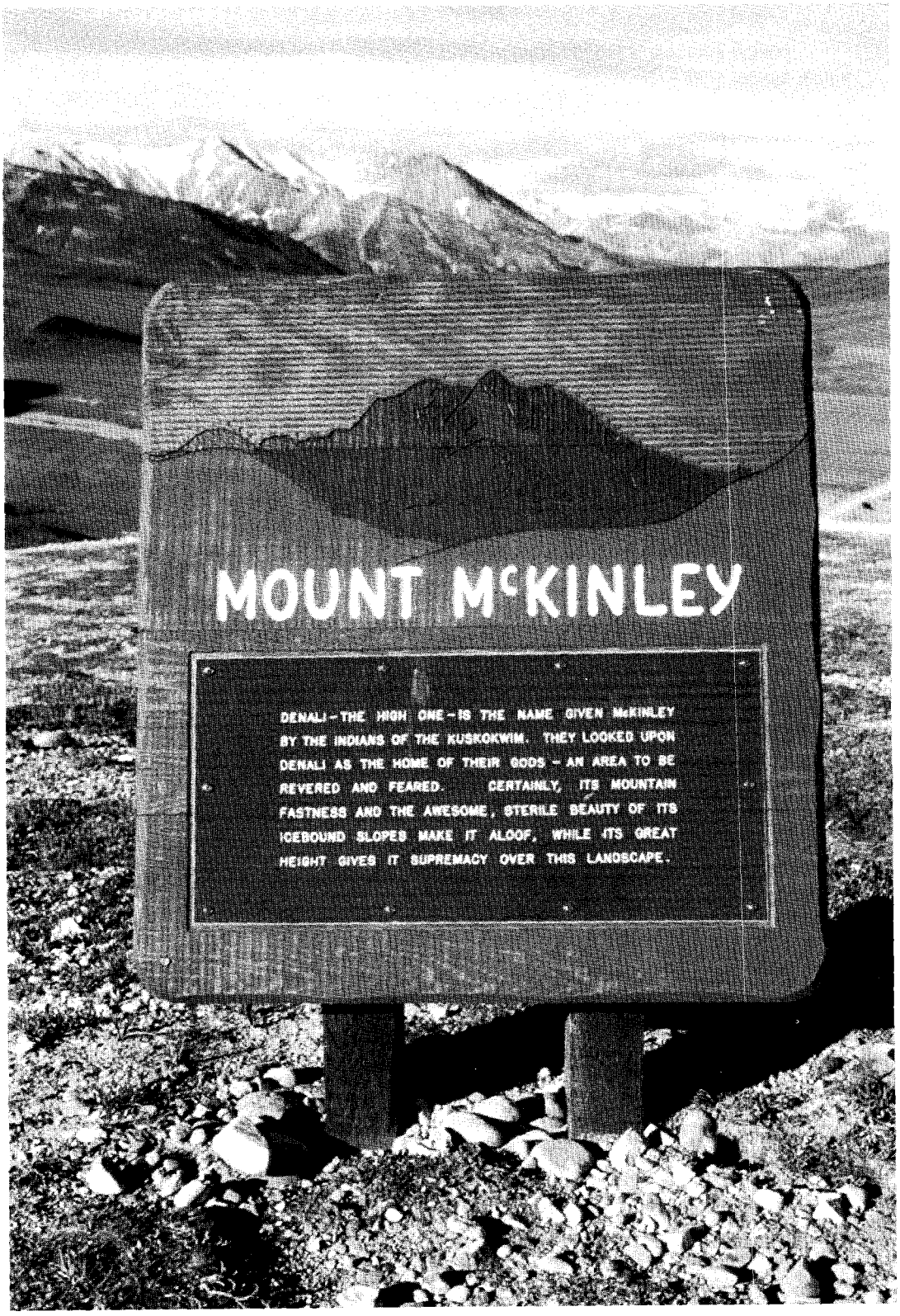
In the meantime, Bureau of Public Roads officials geared up for future park road construction projects. In January 1964, for example, a BPR official told park superintendent Oscar Dick that "At present, that portion from Teklanika to the North Boundary [near Wonder Lake] is unsafe for general public use," so he proposed a $1.2 million reconstruction project between Teklanika and East Fork, to be constructed in Fiscal Year 1968. The NPS, in March 1965, fully agreed with the BPR; on its Project Construction Program priority list for the park, a $720,000 contract for reconstructing the park road west of Teklanika was a Priority 1 request. And during the summer of 1965, the BPR recommended two new road alignments in a "hazardous" part of the Stony Hill area.[82]

In the midst of this construction and planning work, conservationists lashed out yet again in the pages of *National Parks Magazine*. In July 1965, Adolph Murie (Olaus's brother) penned an acidic article that restated earlier arguments. But in addition, Murie recounted his comfort with the old park road during his earlier years at the park, plus his growing alarm at the havoc caused by road contractors since 1958. He averred that most park visitors liked the "charm" of the old road, that only minor improvements to it had been necessary, and that a wide range of observers—even including a few BPR officials—




As part of the Mission 66 plan for the park, a series of interpretive signs such as this one were installed along the park road. DENA 39-23, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

felt that overzealous engineering standards had been applied. The NPS, he averred, had been less than honest with conservationists regarding financial and engineering data related to upcoming projects; and he also stated—despite its "telescoping" comments to the contrary, that "the National Park Service wishes to continue using the highest-standard road construction all the way to "Wonder Lake."[83]




Another of the numerous Mission 66 interpretive signs was placed at the scenic overlook on the west side of Stony Hill. Wallace A. Cole Collection

Murie's article, as had previous *National Parks Magazine* entries, caused higher-echelon NPS officials to pay attention. In response to readers who complained to agency brass about road-construction methods in the park, Washington and regional Design and Construction officials carried on a spirited dialogue during September 1965.[84] By the end of the month, the agency had agreed to significantly lower the road-construction standard west of Teklanika. Assistant Director Johannes (Joe) Jensen's reply to the complainants defended the agency's earlier moves, stating that "it is our goal to [provide access] with as little impact on the natural scene as possible", and "the stretches of wider road construction built recently [in 1961-62] were dictated by the condition of permafrost" which made significant road elevation necessary. But in

an abrupt about-face, Jensen noted that "this type of construction is being held to a minimum, and it is our intention to use progressively lower standards the farther the road penetrates into the wilderness. Beyond the present [1965-66] reconstruction, the remainder of the road is to receive only minor repairs."[85]

Within weeks of its change of heart on the overall road improvement program, the NPS also backpedaled on another BPR initiative. In mid-September, Park Service official Charles Krueger candidly remarked that "public pressure compels us to re-evaluate our scheduled cross-section for [the Stony Hill] area to determine if a reduction in scope is necessary."[86] As for the agency's overall road stance, Krueger noted in February 1966 that the NPS planned to "expend the bulk of funds upon the completion of the new construction from McKinley Park Station toward the Teklanika River." (As noted above, a construction project had just been let to improve five miles of road surface east of the Teklanika River Bridge.) "The work beyond Teklanika [will be] limited to grading only the worst curves on Stony Hill and the narrowest spot sections of road that are difficult for the bus operations out of Eielson."[87] Plans for improving the central and western portions of the road were not cast aside; they were, however, ostensibly put on hold until future traffic increases—anticipated when the Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway was com-pleted—would demand higher standards.[88]

During the late 1960s, construction work on the Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway was well underway (see below), and it was generally recognized that the highway—due to be completed in 1971—would greatly ease park access. By this time, however, the agency's new stance was clear: there would be no major road improvements west of the Teklanika River bridge. It did, however, proceed to add new improvements at the road's eastern end. In July 1966, plans were forwarded to pave approximately seven miles west of the railroad crossing near the park hotel. Bids were issued that winter, and in May 1967, Rogers Construction Co. and Babler Brothers, both from Anchorage, were awarded the paving contract with a $494,000 bid. The firms completed the job later that summer.[89] Even this project, however, was not without its controversy; BPR personnel recommended either a 22-foot or 24-foot road width for the entire project, but NPS officials, noting that "we are criticised [sic] quite severely for permitting as high a standard for this road as we do," approved a 22-foot road east of the park headquarters (due to "quite heavy traffic of a mixed kind") but a 20-foot width west of park headquarters.[90] NPS officials also quibbled with the BPR over whether centerline striping and highway signs belonged in "one of Alaska's most remarkable natural areas."[91]

Shortly after this paving job was completed, plans were formulated to continue this work to the west, and in May 1968, Braund Inc. of Anchorage was awarded a $466,000 contract to pave the remaining 6½ miles to the Savage River Bridge, plus additional segments near the headquarters and railroad station. The project was completed later that summer.[92] Additional paving contracts, however, were put on hold. A September 5, 1968 letter from a BPR official stated that "because of the present Government budget situation, in a program meeting yesterday the Park Service had eliminated the subject project [paving a segment west of Savage River] from the program in connection with a nation-wide reduction in fiscal year 1969 funding." And by the following spring, this temporary halt had been made permanent; due to a cancellation of NPS program funds, the BPR announced that "no further paving projects on the road are anticipated in the near future."[93]

**The Growing Value of Wilderness**

The battle over the park road, of course, was just one manifestation of a larger battle that was being fought over wilderness, both in the park and nationally. It was perhaps ironic that Mount McKinley should be one of the first Alaska places in which wilderness issues were openly discussed and debated, because Alaska—at least in the popular imagination—contained hundreds of millions of acres of wilderness, and because the park was largely defined by the 90-mile-long road that threaded its way between a large hotel and an old mining camp. But the road was also the avenue that provided tens of thousands of visitors the opportunity to see one of the prime byproducts of wilderness: large, relatively untouched herds of sheep, caribou, moose, bears, and wolves. And the mountain, too, was to many visitors Alaska's major wilderness symbol.

Wilderness preservation was an old idea; it had been championed since the nineteenth century (Henry David Thoreau had stated "In wildness is the preservation of the world" in 1862), and between the two world wars two major steps toward a broader recognition of wilderness had been taken: the U.S. Forest Service, in 1924, established the first wilderness area, the Gila Primitive Area in New Mexico's Gila National Forest, and in 1935 a small band of outdoor advocates founded the Wilderness Society.[94] During the 1930s several high-profile conserva-



Back country camping in Mt. McKinley National Park was a trail-less experience in 1967. DENA 42-33, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

tionists, including Interior Secretary Harold Ickes and wilderness advocate Robert Marshall, made the first calls for a nationwide, Congressionally-protected wilderness system. But the National Park Service during this period, guided by its early leaders Stephen Mather and Horace Albright, were firm believers in "recreational tourism management" that allowed both the agency and its concessioners a wide variety of development opportunities. This philosophy deviated at times for specific parks—Kings Canyon National Park, for example, was established in 1940 in full recognition of its role as a wilderness reserve—but otherwise, the NPS held little regard for wilderness. It instead concentrated on increased visitation and facilities built in response to those visitors.[95]

In 1955, as noted above, the NPS began planning Mission 66, a program that emphasized new visitor centers, roads and interpretive projects and gave scant attention to wilderness values and wilderness management. Both Congress and the traveling public backed the basic tenets of that program, and by the time of its 1966 conclusion, more than $1 billion had been spent on Mission 66 projects.[96] The planning phase for Mission 66, however, coincided with strong debate over one of the most bitterly-fought western development projects. Echo Park Dam, a proposed hydroelectric site near the confluence of the Green and Yampa rivers in Dinosaur National Monument, pitted wilderness conservationists against the Bureau of Reclamation and its development-oriented allies. That battle, which had raged in Congress since the 1940s, was finally resolved on April 11, 1956 when the Colorado River Storage Project bill passed Congress with the proviso that "no dam or reservoir constructed under the authorization of the Act shall be within any National Park or Monument."[97]

Wilderness advocates were jubilant over the Echo Park decision, and within days of the bill's passage Howard Zahniser, the Wilderness Society's executive secretary, "dashed off" a new plan for a national system of wilderness preservation. This plan was no doubt similar to those that had been promulgated for the last twenty years; preservationists, however, were able to convince two conservation-leaning legislators—Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D-Minn.) and Rep. John P. Saylor (R-Pa.)—to introduce bills that were largely the product of Zahniser's handiwork.[98] These bills, admittedly, were flawed and were submitted perhaps too soon after the Echo Park controversy to be seriously considered. And for strictly political reasons, they stood little chance of passage because Wayne Aspinall (D-Colo.), the powerful chair of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, saw land as a source of capital and hence did not understand the nation's growing need to preserve areas as wilderness.[99] They were, however, an opening volley in what would be a long, drawn-out battle.

The Humphrey-Saylor bills went so far as to itemize more than 160 areas within national forests, national parks and monuments, national wildlife refuges and ranges, and Indian reservations that would constitute the founding units of the wilderness system.[100] Those units, moreover,

included eight wilderness areas in Alaska (five U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service areas and three NPS areas), including one at Mount McKinley National Park.[101] Up until that time, wilderness—and the need to preserve wilderness character—had been rarely mentioned by NPS officials; indeed, even wilderness advocates were generally comfortable with park management so long as west-end hotels were not built, no new roads were constructed, and the existing park road retained its traditional appearance and engineering standards.[102]

When the Mount McKinley park staff issued its initial Mission 66 prospectus in April 1956, it clearly noted the priority it placed on wilderness values. The document [clarified for spelling] noted that

> Highest ranking among the intangible values of the park is its distinct wilderness feel. To gaze across a vast expanse of tundra towards nameless rugged mountains, or upon the fastness of ever-imposing Denali, and to have one's meditations interrupted by a migrating band of caribou is an experience which cannot be duplicated elsewhere. The maintenance of the integrity of this wilderness is the key to the development theme of the park. Second to wilderness maintenance is the provision of accommodations for visitor needs, and third, is furnishing the means for fullest appreciation and enjoyment of park values.[103]

Despite the nobility of that statement, and the statement that the visitor accommodations and interpretive improvements would be subservient to wilderness values, several critics protested that the various proposed improvements would impinge upon the park's wilderness values. Foremost among those critics was well-known biologist Adolph Murie, who had been working at the park fairly consistently since 1939. Noting that the park and the surrounding region were "in many respects virgin," Murie worried that the park's new plans had the potential to "mar, and for some, even destroy the spirit of the region." Noting that "there is a wilderness spirit that concerns us," he drew a line in the sand when he stated,

> Some will seek ends that are destructive to the wilderness feeling, believing that their ends justify the additional intrusion. Some will think that the highway should be intensively labeled like a museum, even though each label will detract from the wilderness. Some will want to bring accommodations into the midst of the scenery, instead of a simple and delicate approach from the edge of things. Some will want to have structures on a prominence, rather than tucked away unobtrusively.

By contrast, Murie stated that "my point of view will stress intruding and injuring the spirit of wilderness as little as possible," and he further added that "the wilderness standards in McKinley must be maintained on a higher level than anything we have attempted in the States." "Since wilderness is recognized as one of the foremost values in the Park," he noted, "it must be given special consideration in order to maintain its purity. ... I would urge all planners to strive for quality in this Alaska wilderness. The people expect it." He further "hasten[ed] to add that I am not alone in this point of view."[104]

Superintendent Duane Jacobs, to whom the letter was directed, responded to Murie's missive, noted that "I can sympathize with your over-all view point concerning the future development of Mount McKinley from the biologist viewpoint" and that the agency was "vitally concerned in preserving and keeping the park in all its natural charm in so far as possible." Jacobs, however, disagreed with the biologist, noting that McKinley was "a great national park set aside for the use and enjoyment of the people," and because the Denali Highway was nearly completed, the park was "soon to receive this intended use and enjoyment." Park officials, he noted, had to "make [the park] available to future visitors with reasonable assurance of their comfort and safety."[105]

The park's final Mission 66 plan, issued in May 1957, continued to provide lofty wilderness rhetoric. It noted, for example, that "It is the combination of superlative mountain scenery and wildlife along with the palpable wilderness aspect of McKinley Park that make it deserving of preservation for this and future generations of Americans," and it further noted that "McKinley Park [is] a wilderness on the perimeter of the last remaining frontier of the Nation. By virtue of National Park Service preservation and remote location of the park it remains the epitome of wilderness areas. Thus it is of greatest value to those who seek the solitude and inspiration offered only by an area such as McKinley." The revised plan discarded the three-tiered priority system noted in the earlier prospectus; it did, however, note that all Mission 66 developments



During the late 1950s, the Corps of Engineers considered the idea of damming the Teklanika River near the park's northern boundary. DENA Herkenham Photo, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

"must be accomplished in such a fashion as well provide assurance of the maintenance of wilderness integrity of the park and still provide ways and means for the visitors' inspirational and physical enjoyment." Several long-distance trails were planned to remote points, as noted above; however, the plan noted that "trails shall be installed to not only insure enjoyment of the area but to divert traffic from fragile areas where entry would disrupt natural functions, and all development required within the wilderness shall be appropriate to the wilderness environment."[106]

Once the Mission 66 plans were distributed, however, the hubbub over park wilderness issues (both at Mount McKinley and the remainder of Alaska's park units) died down. And, in fact, park officials had to contend with a new, potentially ominous threat to the park's wilderness: dam construction. In February 1958, the U.S. Geological Survey filed for a power-site withdrawal, to encompass 21,500 acres, along the Teklanika River. A proposed dam, projected to be 300 feet high, would be located more than ten miles north of the park boundary, but the proposed reservoir behind the dam had the potential to back up all the way into the park in both the Teklanika and Sanctuary river drainages.[107] The Teklanika project, moreover, was only one aspect of a much larger hydroelectric scheme. Beginning in 1948, the Bureau of Reclamation had eyed the Nenana River's power generating potential, and its initial plans included two major dams along the river (near Windy and near Ferry), four power plants within the river corridor (these included the above two sites plus additional plants near Carlo and McKinley Park Station), many miles of tunnels along the Nenana River, a proposed tunnel from the Teklanika and East Fork systems to the Nenana River basin, along with many miles of new roads and transmission lines.[108] In 1960, officials with Fairbanks' Golden Valley Electric Association trumpeted the advantages of a large dam near the Nenana River-Jack River confluence to U.S. Senate Interior Committee members; this dam, they stated, was needed to supply Interior Alaska's energy needs until either the Susitna Dam or Rampart Dam projects were completed. NPS officials were apparently not involved in any of these discussions. Talk about these projects eventually faded away, and by 1972 the federal Alaska Power Administration had given up on both the Teklanika and Nenana River proposals.[109]

The process to establish a nationwide wilderness system turned out to be an eight-year effort, one that was primarily played out in the halls of Congress and among various conservation and development groups. That effort, however, virtually never involved NPS officials in Alaska nor did it affect park operations, because it was the Park Service's stance throughout this period that the agency—acting through the master

planning process—could more effectively determine roadless areas than Congress.[110] Only occasionally, moreover, did Alaska residents weigh in on wilderness issues. One such instance took place in 1960, when a diverse band of Alaskans gathered together and established the Alaska Conservation Society. The group formed, in part, to work toward preserving a huge expanse of wildlife-rich habitat in northeastern Alaska; this effort paid off on December 6, 1960, when President Eisenhower, at Interior Secretary Fred Seaton's urging, established the 8.9 million -acre Arctic National Wildlife Range. And in July 1963, the Wilderness Society's governing council met at Camp Denali, just north of Wonder Lake.[111] Otherwise, publicity on wilderness issues in Alaska was limited to occasional discussions about the ongoing Congressional process; these were sometimes accompanied by a conservationist's letter and a contrasting, often caustic editorial voice. During this period, some of the wilderness bills debated in Congress listed specific wilderness areas; other bills, however, did not.[112]

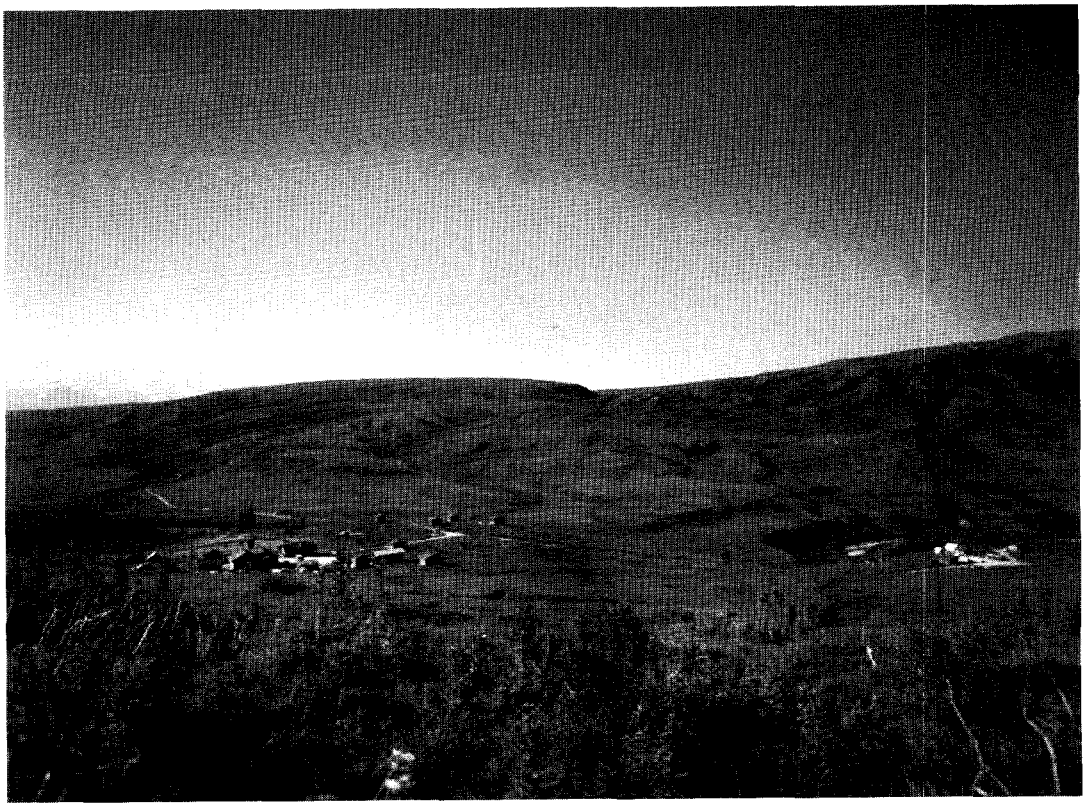
On September 3, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed a bill—which had passed both houses of Congress on a lopsided vote—that established a National Wilderness Preservation System. Within the bill, the only areas included as "instant wilderness" were some nine million acres in various Forest Service-designated wilderness areas, wild areas, and canoe areas. The bill's conference report, however, also spelled out an orderly ten-year timetable for review of roadless areas, national parks and wildlife refuges—totaling as many as 50 million additional acres—for possible inclusion in the Wilderness system.[113] Given that Congressional mandate, Park Service officials—who had been reluctant to support wilderness legislation—launched into a process evaluating all roadless areas of at least 5,000 acres for their wilderness potential. Wilderness potential was investigated in 49 park areas. In Alaska, studies were made at Mount McKinley, Glacier Bay, and Katmai, plus at seven Fish and Wildlife Service units.[114] Various Alaska interests worried out loud that these reviews would slow proposed development projects; Congressional staff, however, let it be known that the ten-year process, and the need to hold hearings and notify a broad range of stakeholders, would give everyone the chance to weigh in on the process.[115]

The Wilderness Act required that reviews of one-third of identified roadless areas had to be completed within three years, and the first to be reviewed would be those areas for which the most information was available.[116] Because more was known about Mount McKinley than roadless areas elsewhere, the NPS decided to investigate the park's wilderness potential during its 1965 master planning process. After a Master Plan Team Field Study visited the park in late August and early September 1965, the team's report stated that almost 90 percent of the park would be recommended as wilderness. Two wilderness areas were proposed: a 334,000-acre Toklat Wilderness Area north of the park road and a 1,396,000-acre Denali Wilderness Area south of the road. Regional and Washington officials concurred with these recommendations. Congress made no immediate move to designate either of these areas. The NPS, however, began to show an increased pride in the park's de facto wilderness; as a nationally-syndicated newspaper article noted in 1966, "Alaska's Mount McKinley National Park is virtually free of man-made facilities, and that's the way the park service wants to keep it."[117]

**Park Expansion Proposals**

Another idea of interest to conservationists during this period was whether the park boundaries should be expanded. As noted in the previous chapter, the question of the park's boundaries had surfaced in early 1954; this was because of a growing Congressional interest in Alaska statehood, and a concomitant concern that the new state would need viable lands to establish a viable revenue stream. During this same period, park biologist Adolph Murie (in response to a request from Washington officials) began to recommend "a local extension of park boundaries" in the Wonder Lake-Moose Creek area. Duane Jacobs, the park's new superintendent, responded that "much thought and study has been given this particular item by various Service people and I can assure you that it has not been cast lightly aside." But no boundary-change proposals were forwarded to Congress.[118] Nothing in the final (July 1958) statehood act, moreover, had any direct effects on park land. The bill did, however, contain a provision (Section 11a) that gave the federal government exclusive jurisdiction of all park land, either as presently constituted or as modified by subsequent federal actions:

> Nothing in this Act shall affect the establishment, or the right, ownership, and authority of the United States in Mount McKinley National Park, as now or hereafter constituted; but exclusive jurisdiction, in all cases, shall be exercised by the United States for the national park, as now or hereafter constituted ....[119]



In 1966, when this photograph was taken, Camp Denali and vicinity was the focus of the Kantishna withdrawal issue. Seen here, left to right, are Upper and Lower Camp Denali. **DENA Herkenham #35, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

The status quo regarding the appropriate size of the park continued after statehood; for example, when the NPS prepared a boundary status report in February 1961, it recommended no changes to the boundaries that the park had had since 1932.[120]

The 1960s, however, witnessed an explosion of nationwide interest in conservation matters, and perhaps for that reason, a number of proposals were advanced to expand the park's acreage. The first such proposals were put forth internally, in January 1963. Adolph Murie, the longtime park biologist (and brother of Wilderness Society president Olaus Murie), recommended that, in order to protect more wolves and the caribou's winter range, the northern park boundary should be moved "about 15 miles north." In addition, Wonder Lake District Ranger Richard Stenmark broached the idea of an extension west to the "McKinley Fork" (Swift Fork) of the Kuskokwim River; a boundary alteration in the Wonder Lake area north to Moose Creek; and a southern boundary expansion that "should go to the lowlands along the Chulitna River." In his memo to the superintendent, he noted that "while this is a sizeable area for consideration, it is not supporting any commercial enterprises to my knowledge" except for "a few bush pilots." Furthermore, "these are all public lands," and "most of this country is just plainly unsuited" for non-park uses.[121] So far as is known, no specific action resulted from Stenmark's proposals.

In 1962, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall hired Sigurd F. Olson as a consultant. Olson, the well-known Minnesota conservationist, served as the Wilderness Society's vice president and also sat on the highly-respected Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments. The following summer, Udall dispatched Olson to Alaska, where he visited Mount McKinley and several other park areas. As part of his duties, Olson compiled a report stating that the present park was

> a rather elongated rectangle whose boundaries cut across normal game habitats irrespective of migration patterns or breeding requirements. Ecologically, therefore, the park is too small and should be enlarged substantially if native species are to be adequately protected. If no additions are possible, a cooperative agreement should be sought with the Bureau of Land Management as well as the State of Alaska to assure protection on the basis of the ecological needs of species involved.

No specific new boundaries were suggested, although he did repeat Adolph Murie's long-held concern about the "area north of Wonder Lake, known as the Camp Denali region." The report's general conclusions were soon passed on to Bureau of Land Management officials, and before long state officials also learned about the

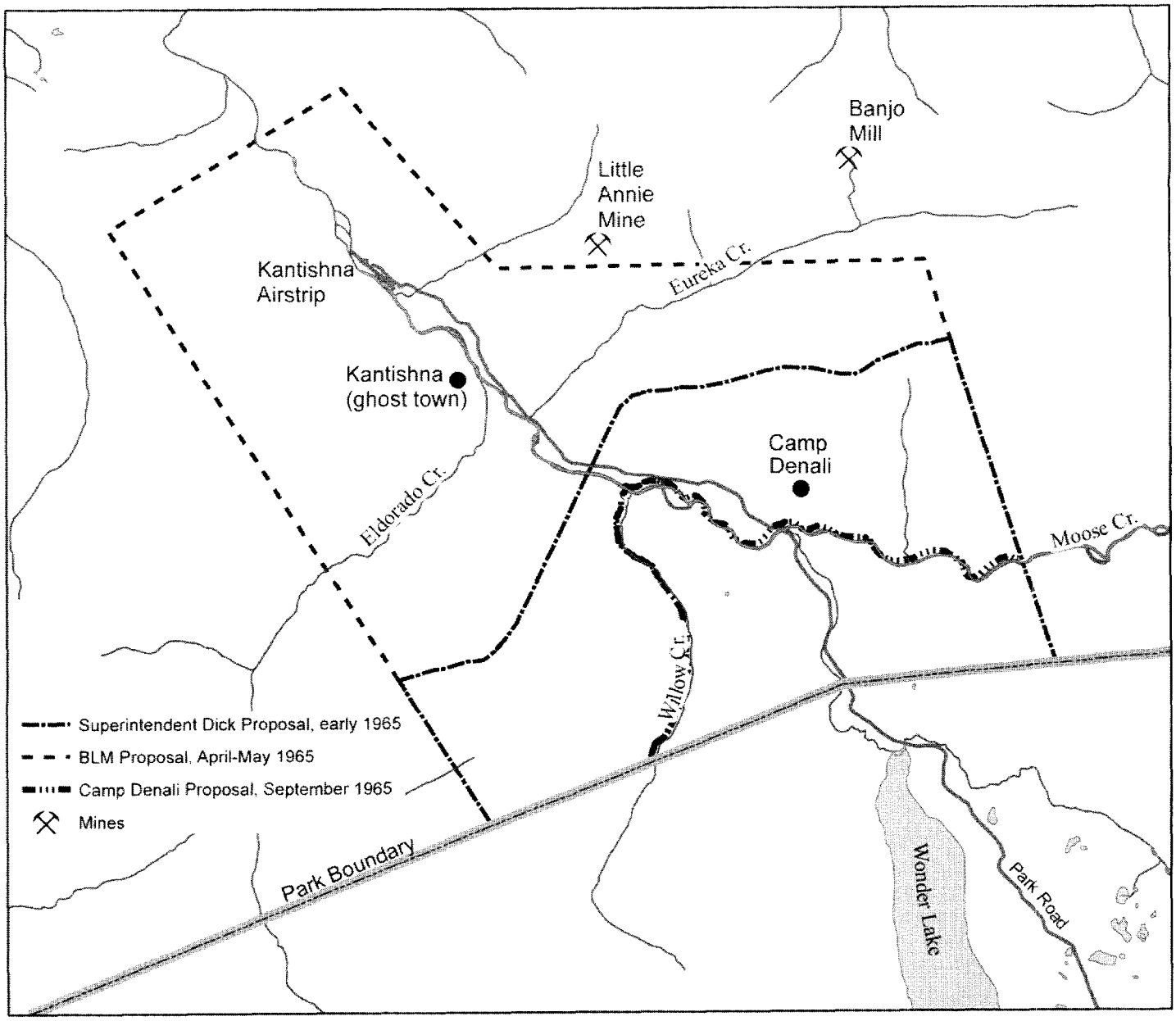
"mysterious" report. They were clearly alarmed at its implications but could do little for the time being.[122]

Just a year later, Mount McKinley was included in a statewide study of proposed parklands. George Hartzog, who succeeded Conrad Wirth as NPS director in January 1964, decided that protecting the "surviving landmarks of our national heritage" would be a primary goal of his administration, and he further recognized that Alaska would be a key part of any future growth in the National Park System. To further that goal, Hartzog brought together a series of experienced Alaska hands in November 1964 and asked them to prepare an analysis of the "best remaining possibilities for the Service in Alaska." The result of their analysis was a January 1965 report entitled *Operation Great Land*. That report was critical of what the agency had thus far accomplished in Alaska, and among its recommendations was a comprehensive evaluation of areas that had high natural, recreational, or historic values. One of the 39 recommended "zones and sites" was the Mount McKinley National Park boundary study zone. This area, like the others included in the report, had deliberately vague geographical boundaries. Instead, it was a general zone, "some 125 miles long and 50 miles wide," located north and northwest of the park. The proposed expansion apparently reflected additional concerns that Adolph Murie had expressed, because the study zone's purpose was to "include all of the range used by the Park herd of caribou. The herd migrates westward and northward outside the Park in a clockwise manner and the caribou, wolves and associated species are, therefore, not protected during a portion of their migration." Hartzog, after receiving the final report, chose to not publicize it or distribute it outside of the agency; the report's conclusions, however, served as a basis for future Park Service planning efforts.[123]

During the same period in which *Operation Great Land* was being prepared, efforts at the park level brought forth an attempt to plan for facilities construction that was broadly perceived as a park expansion attempt. In November 1964, park superintendent Oscar Dick, asked to weigh in on the long-running Wonder Lake lodge question (see above), decided not to push for a large, privately-financed facility; instead, he hoped to see "some sort of motel type unit with food and other service facilities."[124] But NPS Director Hartzog saw things differently; because he was a staunch supporter of the recently-released Leopold Report—an agencywide blueprint that called for a "potent infusion of science into national park management"—he recommended that no new accommodations be located in the park. Given the preponderance of Bureau of Land Management land north of the park boundary, and upon hearing that the "Government lands administered by the BLM may be opened to the public soon for small tract purposes," Hartzog contacted BLM Chief Charles H. Stoddard and asked him to withdraw lands that might be utilized "for the development of overnight accommodations."[125] At the time, several people had already staked small tracts just north of the park boundary, so Hartzog requested the withdrawal from his fellow agency chief due to worries of what was characterized as "an urban sprawl type of development" with "unsightly shacks just outside of the park." (As a BLM official later noted, the agency was "asked by the NPS to make a protective withdrawal in the area to protect land values until a study is completed to determine whether the land will be added to the park.")[126] The BLM, in response, delineated a proposed 9,118-acre withdrawal area which centered along the northern extension of the park road; it began at the park boundary and continued north to (and slightly beyond) the "Quigley Airstrip." The BLM filed for the proposed withdrawal on April 30, 1965; it issued a press release on May 7, and a *Federal Register* announcement appeared on May 13 (see Map 6).[127]

Soon after the proposed withdrawal was made public, it was widely denounced for reasons that were largely unrelated to Hartzog's original intention. Kantishna mining interests, for example, protested the action because it prevented the filing of new claims in the area; some state officials saw it as a back-door Park Service land grab; and there was a widespread insinuation that the government was favoring the conservation-oriented Camp Denali management at the expense of miners and homesite owners. Alaska Governor William A. Egan, speaking on the behalf of both miners and departmental officials, filed a protest on May 18 and again on May 26, and the entire Congressional delegation vigorously decried the proposed action.[128]

The BLM had announced, early in the process, that a public hearing would be held on the matter "if circumstances warrant it," so on December 3, agency held a public meeting in Fairbanks. More than 30 "miners and other interested parties" attended. Park superintendent Oscar Dick told the crowd, somewhat apologetically, that he had originally proposed a withdrawal that was "about half" the final size, but "as it went through various hands it just got




**Map 6. Kantishna Withdrawal, 1965**

bigger." Dick further noted that his smaller-sized withdrawal was needed as a buffer to protect that side of the park because "the park service plans a future investment [in the Wonder Lake area] of several million dollars," and "these plans cannot be carried out unless we are assured of adequate development sites and protection or zoning from adverse outside uses." Because the proposal as issued in the *Federal Register* included portions of Eldorado Creek, a "large hunk" of Red Top Mine's holdings, and the airstrip—and because Dick's revised proposal avoided all of those areas—the assembled group "indicated there would be no serious opposition" to Dick's amended withdrawal.[129]

By this time, Park Service officials were hard at work on a larger, more comprehensive boundary-expansion effort (see below), the results of which would accomplish some of the same goals as the BLM's proposed withdrawal. So neither the BLM nor the NPS took further action on the matter until June 6, 1966, when NPS Director Hartzog informed Senator E. L. Bartlett that "no further action should be taken to effect a formal withdrawal of these or any lands at Mount McKinley until more extensive field studies are completed this summer in the Wonder Lake area and on the public lands adjacent to the park in this vicinity."[130] The proposed withdrawal, therefore, was dead. But as shall be discussed further in Chapter 14, a significant by-product of the withdrawal proposal was that the 9,118 acres within the proposal's boundaries remained "segregated ... from settlement location, sale, selection, entry, lease and other forms of disposal under the public land laws, including the mining laws." The NPS, at various times, apparently indicated to BLM officials that it

"would eliminate certain mining areas from the withdrawal." But it never did, and this failure proved a continuing point of contention to BLM officials and Kantishna-area mining interests.[131]

The question of an expanded boundary was a key topic when Director Hartzog, along with the Advisory Board on National Parks, Buildings, Historic Sites and Monuments, visited the park in early August 1965. Stanley Cain, an Assistant Secretary who accompanied the party, noted that the group's bus trip to Wonder Lake

> naturally led to speculations about the boundary of the park and ideas for development within it. ... The problem lies to the north and the lower-lying lands that form winter range for caribou and their wildlife managers, the wolves. [Adolph] Murie suggested the inclusion of the hills of the Outer Range behind Denali and the flats to the west and north up to perhaps fifteen miles beyond the present boundary as being necessary to give adequate room for caribou and wolves without including their entire migratory range....
>
> To return to the matter of the inadequate size of the Park, it was not thought necessary that land to the north be added to the Park. It would perhaps be desirable (there is little mining to interfere), but the need would be adequately served by the Bureau of Land Management's classification of the needed habitat for wildlife and wilderness purposes.[132]

The NPS's next consideration of expanded boundaries came during the park's master planning process, which unfolded in 1965 as a direct response to the agency's need "to determine just what facilities are needed," particularly in the Wonder Lake-Kantishna withdrawal area, "and what they would cost."[133] A master planning team visited the park just a week later than the advisory group, and the master plan process brought forth a plethora of suggestions on what the park's boundaries might be (see Map 7).

- Biologist Adolph Murie's plan, an outgrowth of his 1956 suggestions, was to expand the park's northern boundary by approximately 15 miles, primarily to protect the winter range of the caribou and to protect moose and wolf habitat.

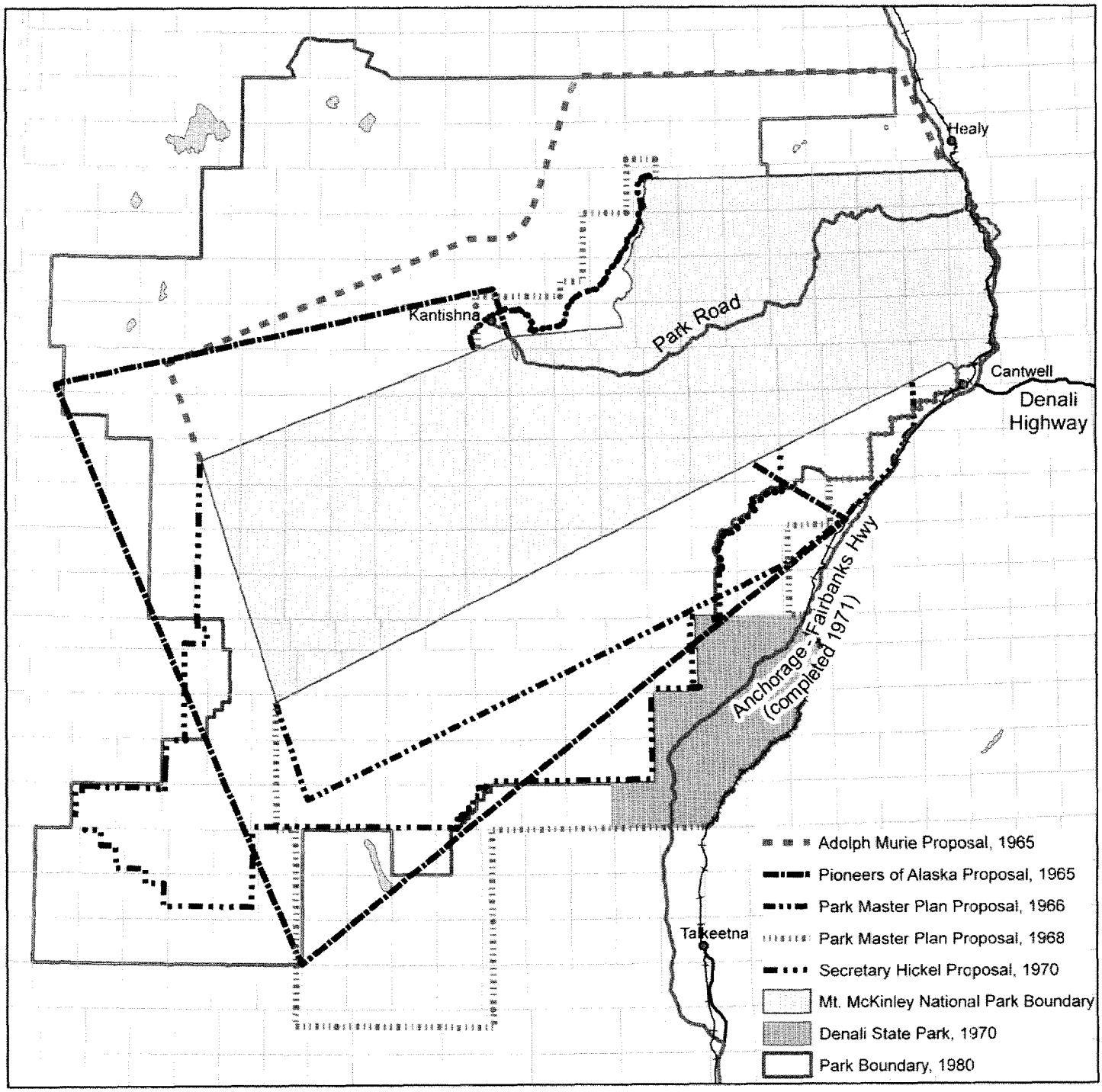
- Victor Cahalane, an NPS employee who had been working at the Alaska parks off and on for more than 20 years, had suggested in 1964 a more modest proposal: the addition of all lands south of a rough line between Wonder Lake and the park's northern boundary just west of the Toklat River. The new boundary would follow the Clearwater Fork along with Myrtle, Willow and Moose creeks. Cahalane made the proposal "to facilitate patrol," "protection of wildlife," and "to prevent construction of [an] undesirable resort" just north of the park boundary.

- Former superintendent Grant Pearson, in 1964, suggested a plan similar to Cahalane. But Pearson, who had filed on a small parcel just north of the park boundary, made it clear that his plan would not prevent further development along the road between Wonder Lake and Moose Creek.[134]

- Under current consideration in August 1965 was the 9,118 acres included in the Kantishna protective withdrawal (see Map 6). The land, at that time, was merely being withheld for study purposes, but as a BLM official noted, adding this area to the park would have been one possible outcome of an area study.

- The Fairbanks Igloo of the Pioneers of Alaska, however, weighed in with a September 1965 proposal that would have added several hundred thousand acres in a U-shaped wedge north, west, and south of the park. They did so to protect both wildlife and scenic values, and stated that "if this enlargement is not made very shortly, the commercial development of the state will preclude any alterations of the boundaries in the future."[135]

- The Camp Denali management, upon hearing the other proposals put forth, denounced the Kantishna withdrawal and showed little enthusiasm for the two large expansion plans. Instead, they hoped that the area immediately north of the park boundary at Wonder Lake would "not be cluttered up either with commercial developments or campgrounds," so they recommended that the park boundary be extended north only to Moose Creek (see Map 6).[136]

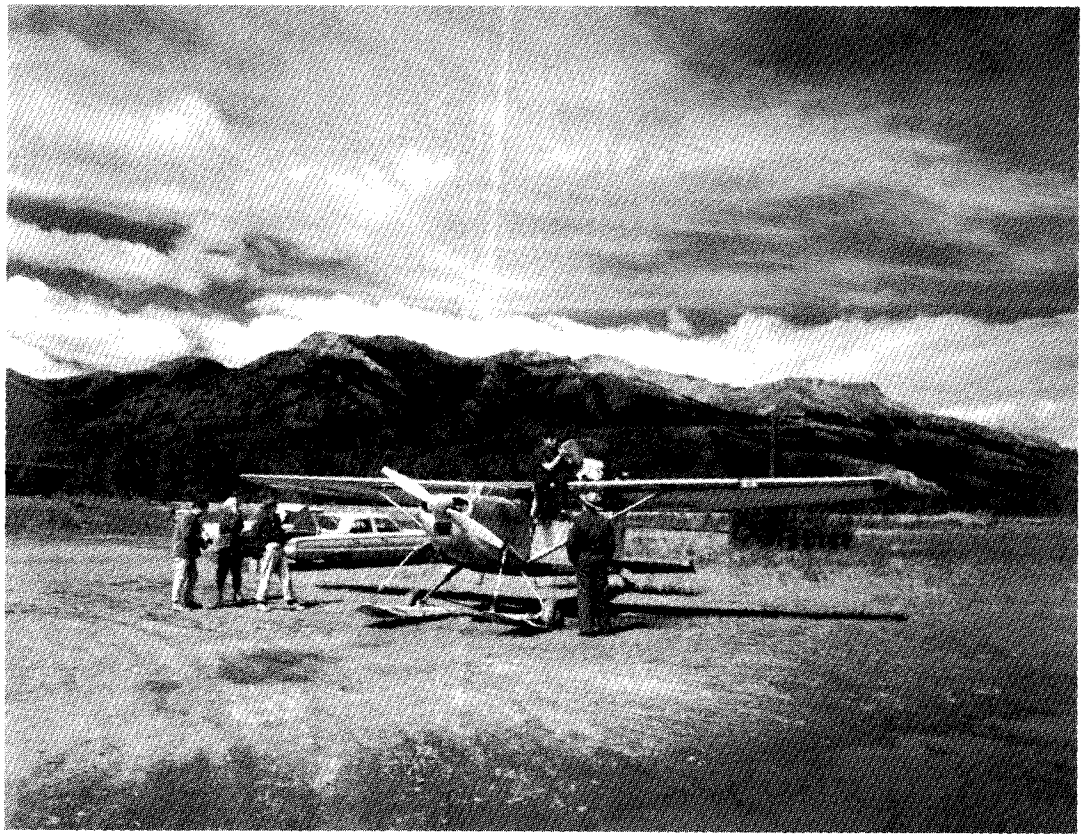



**Map 7. Boundary Expansion Proposals, 1965-1970**

Given such a diversity of expansion plans, the Park Service's master plan team responded with a recommendation that, while tentative, showed Murie's influence:

> The National Park Service should develop an agreement with BLM and the State Fish and Game to provide additional protection to the caribou, wolf, and other forms of wildlife which leave the park during seasonal migration; particularly in the area north of the Kantishna entrance. If an agreement cannot be reached, steps should be taken to adjust the boundary northward 15 to 20 miles to provide proper range so vital to the welfare of the caribou and the wolf.[137]

By mid-June 1966, the agency had decided not to press ahead with any further studies related to the Kantishna withdrawal, and the master planning process that had begun a year earlier had also come to a close. Recognizing that the summer season was upon them, and also recognizing the agency's continuing interest in areas outside of the existing park boundaries,



Members of the 1966 NPS master planning team, shown here at the McKinley Park airstrip, prepare to fly over the park with pilot Don Sheldon. From left to right, they are Richard Prasil, Adolph Murie, Sigurd Olson, and park superintendent Oscar Dick. DENA Herkenham #198, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Assistant NPS Director Theodor Swem asked the newly-established San Francisco Service Center to dispatch a three-person team to the park. That trio, along with Superintendent Dick and three others, spent two weeks during July on the master plan assignment. Swem felt that most of the park plan completed in early 1966 "appears to be acceptable." The team needed to study, however, "the entire boundary of the park," with particular emphasis on "planning in the Wonder Lake-Kantishna area and the unresolved situation at Windy Creek." In addition, as a follow-up to both the Pioneers of Alaska proposal and to others proffered over the previous 30 years, the team took the first agency-wide look at areas south of the park, and they went so far as to conduct "an aerial search for the ideal location for a new development site."[138]

On July 30, the team completed and signed a report of its investigations. It called for the acquisition of the rough triangle of land that Cahalane and Pearson had recommended for inclusion in 1964; that area, however, should also include "the Kantishna including Wickersham Mountain [Wickersham Dome] and the bowl of the proposed mining interpretation area." As a logical follow-up to the master plan work, the team recommended an agreement between the NPS, the BLM, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources "to provide protection scenically and ecologically for a minimal fifteen mile strip north of the present border, until such time as further studies indicate exact boundary descriptions for acquisition." Regarding its work south of the park, the team urged "that serious consideration also be given to similar agreements relative to the protection of the southern boundary," because "an extension of the southern boundary of perhaps ten to fifteen miles ... is necessary to give this part of the park the area it needs and to fulfill the protective and interpretive role of the Service in administering the area." South of that strip, their search for a development site "led the team to the 30-mile ridge (Curry Lookout Ridge) ... between the Chulitna and Susitna Rivers." But because the state had recently applied for selection rights in that area, they were loath to include that area in the park expansion proposal (see Map 7).[139]

The recommendations of this study were never approved by Washington officials, but even so, it "represented our thinking" for the next two years.[140] By the spring of 1967, its recommendations had become a two-part proposal; as noted in a contemporary press release, they included 1) "the addition of certain lands along the north boundary to provide an opportunity to interpret the mining story of Alaska and to protect the scenic and natural values in this area," and 2) "an extension of the park to the south to include the contorted lesser peaks and glaciers of the southern foreground to Mount McKinley without which the national park cannot be



Members of the 1966 NPS Master Planning team are shown here near Don Sheldon's Mountain House, located south of the Alaska Range crest. Team members, top to bottom, are Adolph Murie, Sigurd Olson, Frank Collins, and Norm Herkenham. DENA Herkenham #210, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

considered geologically complete." In mid-April 1967, this proposal was considered by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments at its Washington, D.C. meeting. The Advisory Board recommended the NPS's proposal and suggested "that action be initiated soon to accomplish this desired objective." In addition, the Board also recommended "that an agreement be formulated with the Bureau of Land Management and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to provide protection to scenery and wildlife, including caribou and wolf, in a minimal 15-mile strip along the entire northern boundary of the park."[141]

The NPS, by this time, had been studying other areas in Alaska, either for establishing new parks or expanding existing units. But because, at the time, there was no broad national basis of support for new Alaska parks, it was critical that the NPS obtain State of Alaska support before it present any proposals in the legislative arena. In order to obtain that support, both NPS Director George Hartzog and Assistant Director Theodor Swem flew to Juneau and met with Alaska Governor Walter Hickel on October 10, 1967.

At that meeting, Hartzog discussed a wide variety of NPS proposals, including new park proposals in the Alatna- Kobuk, Wood- Tikchik, and Skagway areas and proposed expansions of Mount McKinley National Park as well as Katmai National Monument.[142] The Mount McKinley expansion under discussion was of the same two areas that the Advisory Board had approved six months earlier. The "briefing book" that the NPS prepared for Hickel stated the following:

> Addition of some 63,000 acres beyond the Wonder Lake area would complete the scenic bowl-like setting of the area, provide the opportunity for interpreting the story of mining in Alaska, and establish a more easily administered boundary. Addition of some 385,000 acres along the south boundary would incorporate in the park, portions of Mt. McKinley that are now excluded.[143]

Hickel gave an enthusiastic response to the Park Service's interest in the Skagway area, and within months, the NPS was hard at work on an alternatives study regarding the agency's options in that area. But as Swem noted years later, Hickel "made no further commitments to help us out" regarding the other park proposals, perhaps because they involved relatively large amounts of acreage.[144] The McKinley park expansion proposal, for the moment, was dead.

The agency, however, apparently wanted to keep momentum going toward a boundary expansion, so in June 1968 the Washington office selected a

new eight-man master plan team, headed by Merrill Mattes, to "study some new proposals and to conclude studies on a few proposals only partially completed in prior years." (Mattes further noted that "the thinking of the 1964 and 1966 Master Plan teams has not been ignored. ... In those instances where we part company, it is because in 1968 we worked with a more expansive set of premises.") Recognizing that a road connecting Anchorage and Fairbanks would be completed within a few years, the team tried to compile a master plan that would "reflect the relationship of the park to the surrounding region and provide for the continuing enjoyment of the park by the visiting public, yet preserve the basic values of the park." And as part of that plan, the team promised to investigate the possibility of a "hotel or lodge development site on the south side of the park, relatively near to the railroad and the proposed highway location and also close to Mount McKinley." State officials had first expressed an interest in such a development in the fall of 1967; conservationists had as well, because developing the site "would be far cheaper" than alternative sites within the park, such as Wonder Lake.[145]

Planning for the possibility of a new south-side unit was apparently high in the team's plans, because of its three field weeks (from late June through mid-July), one-third was spent working out of Talkeetna. Mattes, who compiled an informal report of the team's findings, noted that "we are just now waking up to the realization" that those who established the park "failed to include the south half of the main mountain mass, thus omitting some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. The time to remedy this oversight is now." The team recommended a three-phase plan of development, of which Phase I included the need to "seek legislation to extend south boundaries, giving a new dimension to Mount McKinley National Park." Mattes estimated that approximately 2,928 square miles (almost 1.9 million acres) needed to be added south of the park; this area was more than five times the size recommended in the 1966 master plan study, and within this vast acreage park planners included several hundred thousand acres that the State of Alaska had already obtained via tentative approval (see Map 7). The plan also called for "minor adjustments to the north boundary."[146] (By the time the new master plan was complete, it called for a two-part park expansion: a newly-drawn 132,000-acre North Unit, located north and northeast of Wonder Lake, and a 2,070,000-acre South Unit.[147]) And in response to the interest shown by state officials in a south side development node, the study called for the construction—7 to 15 years in the future—of a "first-class lodge or hotel-type facility ... big enough to anticipate travel for a decade or more," to be located along the ridgeline just west of the Curry railroad stop.[148]



Pilot Don Sheldon opened his "Mountain House," near the Ruth Glacier, in May 1966. This was one of the few structures ever built in the Alaska Range high country. DENA Herkenham #84, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

### The Udall Expansion Proposal

In the midst of the 1968 Master Plan team's work, a process began within the Lyndon Johnson administration that held the potential to legally establish new acreage at Mount McKinley National Park and to either establish new units or add to existing units elsewhere in the National Park System. In July 1968, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall met with Philip S. Hughes of the Bureau of the Budget and asked him whether he had the authority to set aside lands under the Antiquities Act. Hughes approved Udall's request. Udall then passed the idea along to NPS Director George Hartzog, who in turn met with Assistant Director Theodor Swem. Recognizing that less than six months remained in Johnson's presidency, the two men hoped to have appropriate additional areas added, as national monuments, to the National Park System.[149]



Seen here is the view toward Mount McKinley from the south end of Curry Ridge, where the State of Alaska offered various hotel development proposals beginning in the late 1960s. DENA Herkenham #73, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

The idea was then passed on to other NPS personnel and other agency heads, and by mid-September 1968 an initial list had been assembled of 15 potential national monuments. Thanks to Edgar Wayburn of the Sierra Club, who had already lobbied Udall on the subject, an enlargement of Mount McKinley National Park was included on the list. In addition, there were five other Alaska areas: Wrangell Mountains, Saint Elias Range, Lake Clark Pass, Gates of the Arctic, and St. Lawrence Island. Each of these had been a subject of a previous NPS study. The only proposals to have been discussed outside of the agency had been for Mount McKinley and Gates of the Arctic, inasmuch as these proposals had been presented to Alaska Governor Hickel the previous October; these earlier proposals, however, had been more modest in their acreage than they were in their current incarnation.[150]

Shortly after this list was compiled, Hartzog asked for the assistance of Merrill Mattes, who had been the Team Captain on the various Alaska master plan studies during the summer of 1968. By early October, therefore, Katmai National Monument (both a 94,500-acre western unit and a 447,400-acre northern unit) had been added to the list. In addition, the NPS had prioritized its interest in the various Alaska areas. The two-unit Mount McKinley addition topped that list. But as noted in a justification sheet for the boundary expansion, "both North and South Units [covering 132,000 acres and 2,070,000 acres, respectively] should be included in one overall proclamation, if possible. However, if there is a question of priorities, then first priority should be given to the larger South Unit because it will provide opportunity for earlier development to benefit the maximum number of visitors."[151]

By late October, another Alaska unit—the Wood- Tikchik Lakes area—had been added to the Alaska list, which Hartzog and other NPS officials presented to Secretary Udall in a slide talk. Udall, in response, stated that only three or four Alaska areas should be included on the proposed proclamation list, and Udall himself selected four areas—Mount McKinley, Katmai, Gates of the Arctic, and St. Lawrence Island—for further consideration. By mid- November, further areas had been dropped from consider-



In 1968, NPS planners considered building a tramway near this site in the Tokosha Mountains. DENA Herkenham #89, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

ation, and the resulting list continued to include all four Alaska proposals; both McKinley units were still included, but of the two Katmai units, only the smaller western unit was retained. Later that month, the St. Lawrence Island proposal was dropped. A large amount of staff work then ensued: background material, graphics presentation, the preparation of proclamation language, and so forth.[152]

On December 10, Secretary Udall, Director Hartzog, and other Interior Department officials presented the Department's plans to President Johnson and several top advisors regarding seven presidential proclamations for new or expanded park units: three in Alaska and two each in Arizona and Utah. The President, in response, commended the Secretary on his presentation, although several advisors objected to the proposed action. Johnson, as he had earlier, asked Udall to "touch all bases on the Hill," and specifically asked him to contact Rep. Wayne Aspinall, the powerful Chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. Udall responded by contacting—and gaining approval from—the head of the Senate Interior Committee and from the ranking minority member of the House Interior Committee. Aspinall, however, was out of town. Udall was fairly certain that Aspinall would probably not be happy about the proposals; however, he did not contact him directly about them, and Aspinall did not hear about them until Johnson made a fleeting reference to them in his State of the Union speech on January 14, 1969. Within 24 hours, Aspinall learned about the proclamations (though not from Udall or other Department staff), and he quickly telephoned his vigorous opposition to the Department. Two days later, Udall finally contacted Aspinall personally, and he also informed the Alaska congressional delegation about the impending proclamations.[153]

On Saturday, January 18, Udall told NPS officials that he had received word from the White House that the President would sign all seven proclamations. Given that perceived approval, the Interior Department issued a news release entitled "Mount McKinley National Monument Established in Alaska," and later that day, Alaska newspapers reported that the new, 2.2-million-acre monument "would serve as a companion piece to McKinley National Park.... Part of the monument land is north of the park and protects the migration route of the park's caribou. The southern part includes a string of impressive glaciers and the area around Chalatna [Chelatna] Lake."[154] But when Johnson, while working in his office, saw the wire-service ticker announcing the story, he called Udall and asked him to call back the news releases. Based on Johnson's deference to Rep. Aspinall in his role as Interior Committee chair, and in apparent anger over Udall's decision to unilaterally issue the news releases, the president decided—at the very last moment—to not sign all of the proclamations that had been prepared on his behalf. On the morning of January 20, 1969, just two

hours before President Nixon's inauguration, Johnson decided to sign the proclamations for the four smallest areas, one of which was the 94,547-acre Katmai National Monument addition. But he refused to sign the three other proclamations, which included the 2,202,328-acre Mount McKinley National Park addition.[155]

In a press release issued after he took his action, Johnson explained his motives for not signing the proclamations for the three large parks. He stated that

> After a careful review of these proposals, I have concluded that it would not be desirable to take Executive action.... The proposals include over 7 million acres—an enormous increase in our total park holdings. I believe the taking of this land—without any opportunity for congressional study—would strain the Antiquities Act far beyond its intent and would be poor public policy. Understandably, such action, I am informed, would be opposed by leading Members of Congress having authority in this field who have not had the opportunity to review or pass judgment on the desirability of the taking.
>
> Under these circumstances, I have directed the Secretary of the Interior to submit these additional proposals to the Interior Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives for their consideration as new national parks. I hope the committees will see fit to give the proposed areas careful study at the earliest possible time.[156]

Aspinall, who was widely considered to have applied the pressure that scuttled the deal, "was said" (according to one news report) "to have argued vehemently that Congress must have a voice in a federal land-taking of such tremendous proportions." But in full agreement with Johnson, Aspinall promised that his committee would hold early hearings on the Mount McKinley boundary expansion plan.[157]

Given that promise of cooperation, Rep. John Saylor (R-Pa.)—who served as the ranking minority member on the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee—introduced a bill (H.R. 11424) on May 19, 1969 "to provide for the addition of certain lands to the Mount McKinley National Park." Saylor's bill, following on the work of the 1968 master plan team, called for a 132,000-acre North Unit addition and a 2,070,000-acre South Unit addition. The NPS, throughout the 1969 and 1970 Congressional sessions, also continued to support these acreage additions. But given the change of administrations and the tenor of the new Interior Secretary (see below), Saylor's bill was never reported out of committee.[158]

### The Alaska Legislature Establishes Denali State Park

Within the new Nixon administration, a key to any McKinley bill was the position of former Alaska Governor Walter Hickel, who now headed the Interior Department. Hickel, who contended that the State of Alaska had first claim on all unreserved public lands in Alaska, asked the NPS to negotiate any future park-addition proposals with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The two entities worked on a plan for almost two years.

In the midst of that planning effort, the State of Alaska moved to establish its own protected reserve south of the Alaska Range. It did so in part to provide a recreational outlet to those traveling along the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway (which was not yet completed; see section below) and in part to fend off federal attempts to incorporate state-selected lands within an expanded Mount McKinley National Park. The first inkling that a park might be necessary took place in September 1968, shortly after the NPS had made its master-plan study that would have established a 2,070,000-acre expansion south of the existing park (see section above). Ken Sheppard, a Republican running for a State House seat, publicly warned of a Park Service "land grab" in the area. "It would be preferable," he noted, "for the state to take this valuable land of rugged mountains, glaciers, and spectacular valleys to prevent the park service from putting it into the deep freeze." He noted that the NPS's plan to extend its southern boundary would be sound if the action were coupled with a development program. But he was apparently skeptical that the NPS would produce such a program. He added,

> the park service has proven efficient in Alaska only in its ability to put the best real estate in a deep freeze—inaccessible and useless except to the elite few. ... The people of Anchorage and the Matanuska Valley have a direct interest in seeing that the park is opened up for more people to



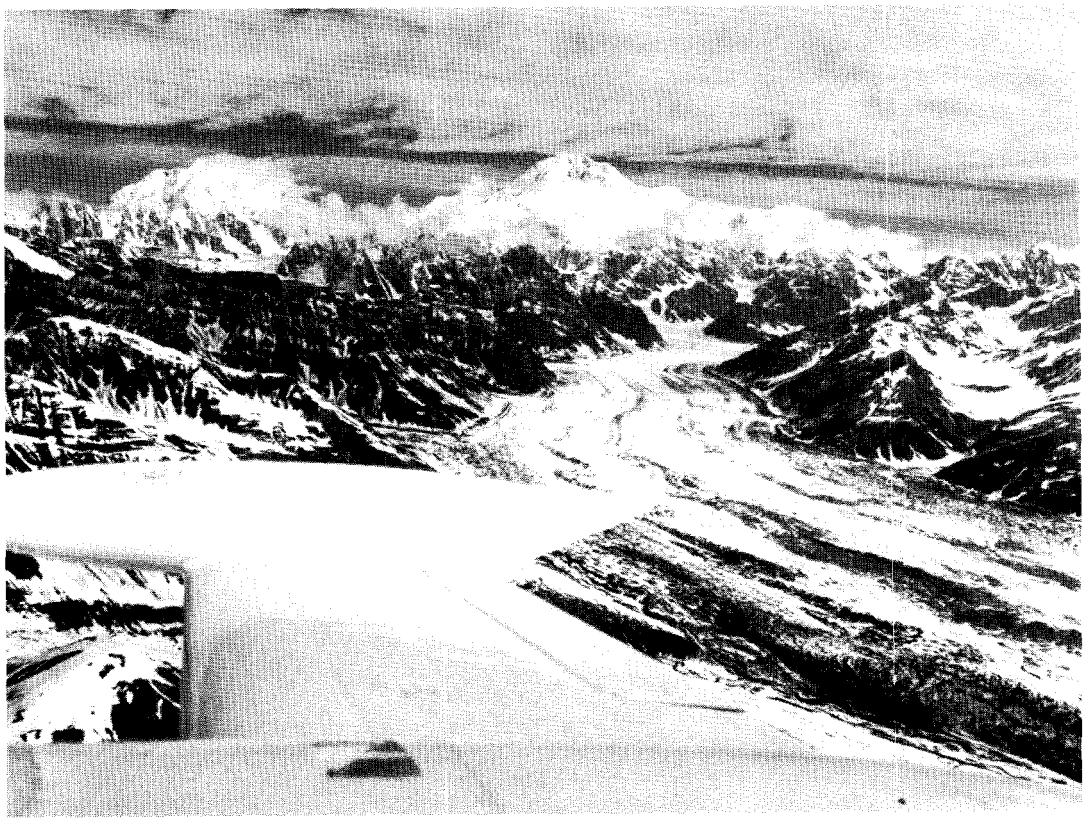
This view toward Mount McKinley from the Chulitna Pass area shows where the Department of Commerce, in 1968, recommended a hotel development site. DENA Herkenham #68, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

> enjoy. We can't develop the tourist industry if we don't have places for visitors to go and stay overnight.[159]

Sheppard lost his House race, but many shared his ideas about the need to develop overnight accommodations south of the Alaska Range. To forward that concept, the Economic Development Administration (part of the U.S. Department of Commerce) sponsored a report on ways to develop the state's tourism economy. That report, completed in December 1968, noted that the national park was the state's most important tourist attraction and that "if visitor travel is to continue to increase in proportion to Alaska's potential, a major hotel must be built in the vicinity of Mount McKinley." It also averred that "this hotel must have a significant commanding view of the mountain," so it recommended the construction of a 300-room, $17.5 million lodge, located near the new highway right-of-way in the vicinity of Chulitna Pass.[160] It proposed that the federal government would build and operate the lodge; this recommendation was made even though the lodge site, although technically on federal land, had been tentatively approved for transfer to the State of Alaska in July 1967. The report cautiously noted that the lodge property should "be acquired as a part of Mt. McKinley National Park," but it would a noncontiguous satellite unit.[161] The study's results, which were widely reported in the Alaska press, were a shot in the arm to tourism development advocates.[162] But not everyone agreed with the report's conclusions—explorer Bradford Washburn, for instance—and before long Washburn was advocating a hotel near Tokositna Glacier, which was only about half the distance from Mount McKinley compared to the Chulitna Pass site.[163] The Interior Department, moreover, had other ideas. As noted above, Department officials—unbeknownst to most Alaskans—were then in the midst of preparing a proclamation to establish a 2.2-million-acre Mount McKinley National Monument; if President Johnson had approved the proclamation in the waning days of his administration, the proposed lodge site would have been included in the new monument.

Given the federal government's threats—real or perceived—to the state's interests on land south of the national park, state officials seized on the idea of establishing a state park. The state, at that time, had no other state parks, so on January 15, 1970, Governor Keith Miller requested the State Senate's Rules Committee to introduce a bill (SB 375) that "relates to state parks and establishes the Denali State Park." He told the Senate that

> This legislation sets aside approximately 300,000 acres of accessible State lands to complement Mount McKinley [National] Park. The location offers the most exceptional vantage point of North America's highest mountain. Enactment of this legislation will facilitate development of facilities demanded by Alaska's



Mount McKinley viewed from the site of the proposed Tokositna hotel development. DENA Herkenham #28, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

> outdoor-loving public and the increasing number of visitors attracted to our state.[164]

The Rules Committee's bill moved quickly through the Alaska legislature. It passed the Senate Resources Committee on February 9, and on April 13 it passed the full Senate on an 18-1 vote. It then passed the House Resources and House Finance committees, and on June 6 it passed the full House, 28-9. The bill was then sent on to Governor Miller, who signed the measure into law on June 23.[165] The bill gave few specifics regarding how the park should be managed. It did, however, establish "rules and regulations governing the use and designating incompatible uses within the boundaries of [all Alaska] state park and recreational areas to protect the property and preserve the peace," and that the lands within the 282,000-acre Denali State Park were "reserved from all uses incompatible with the primary function as park area."[166]

As noted above, Interior Secretary Hickel, in early 1969, had asked NPS and the state Department of Natural Resources to work together toward a mutually-supportable park addition. Midway through this process Denali State Park had been established, and by the fall of 1970 the two sides had worked out (and Hickel himself had approved) a 1,560,000-acre McKinley addition, all of which was south of the national park and west of the state park (see Map 7). A key aspect of the agreement was that the state would not oppose the addition if the federal government would agree not to withdraw several thousand acres the state wanted because of its mineral potential. But in November 1970, two events took place that had the potential to unravel the progress made thus far. On November 25, Nixon fired Hickel over remarks he had made months earlier pertaining to the Vietnam War, and on November 3, Republican Governor Keith Miller—who backed Hickel's plan because it "more accurately reflect[ed] the geologic unit for which the park is noted"—was defeated in the general election by William A. Egan.[167]

A month later, the Interior Department moved to assert its interests over a large swath of acreage south of the existing park. Recognizing that a long-imposed Public Land Order withdrawing all unreserved lands in Alaska was scheduled to expire on June 30, 1971, and also recognizing that any Congressional action related to a Mount McKinley park expansion could probably not be completed by that time, the Department announced its intention to withdraw most of the acreage south of the park that had not already been selected by the State of Alaska. Interior Department official Fred Russell knew that the order "would preclude entry or appropriation of any of the lands for any uses, including mineral, homestead, or State selection after June 30, 1971," but the action was necessary to prevent "an

accretion of problems" while Congress considered the park-expansion proposal.[168] Alaskans, upon hearing of the plans, cried foul, claiming that the federal government had backed out of the "park land deal" made in late 1970 and that the "park pact" had been violated because the land proposed for withdrawal contained potentially valuable mineral land.[169] Governor Egan, upon hearing of the Interior Department action, called Russell and explained the pact; Russell, in response, backed down and agreed to honor the previously-made agreement.[170]

Just two weeks later, on January 22, 1971, Rep. John Saylor again submitted a bill (H.R. 1128) to expand the park's boundaries. That bill called for the acreage included in the fall 1970 state-federal agreement, plus additional areas to the east and south as well as the 132,000-acre North Unit proposal of 1968-69. Perhaps because of the state's vociferous objections to the added lands, Saylor's bill never made it out of committee.[171] During the fall of 1971, NPS staff—perhaps recognizing that the expansion issue was due to flare up again in early 1972—began to dicker among themselves over the optimal locations of future park boundary lines. None of this discussion rose above the regional-office level, however.[172]

**Completing the Land-Consolidation Process**

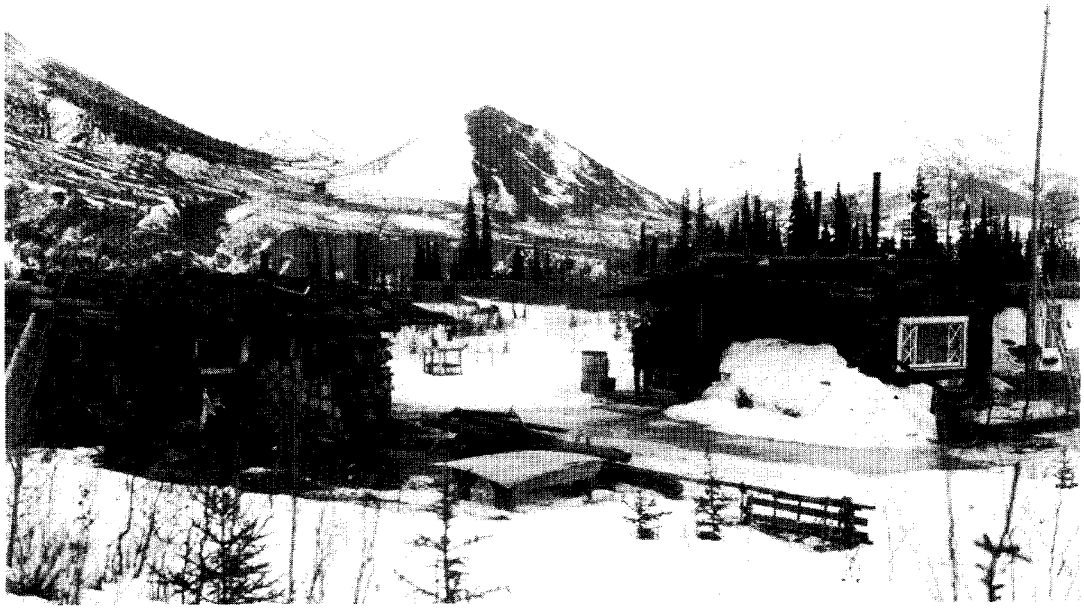
As noted in previous chapters, the expansion of the park boundaries in 1932 had incorporated the lands of several local residents and business people. The Interior Department had responded to these local interests by dispatching a General Land Office investigator to the McKinley Park Station area in early 1933; his primary purpose was to distinguish those who were legitimate land claimants from those whose ties to the land were either informal or transitory. By 1935, five separate parcels in the newly-expanded area had been patented. The first two of those parcels had been purchased from the landowner in 1941 and 1947, respectively, and during early 1950s, the Alaska Railroad had also agreed to turn over most of its McKinley Park Station land to the NPS. That left three remaining holdouts: Duke Stubbs, who owned a 35-acre parcel just east of the McKinley Park Hotel; Dan Kennedy, who owned a 5-acre parcel just north of the Stubbs parcel, and the 133.76-acre parcel owned by the John Stephens estate, which surrounded the old Windy railroad station at the park's southeastern corner.

As thick files in government offices show, none of these three landowners lived on their parcels after the mid-1930s, but all three argued that the government, via the 1932 park expansion, had ruined actual or potential business opportunities. As a result, all three felt that their lands should be valued for their economic potential. The government, by contrast, saw these properties as isolated, abandoned properties with dilapidated, decaying improvements. Given these varying perceptions, it is unsurprising that these landowners held on to their properties as long as they did.

*The Kennedy and Stubbs Tracts*

As Chapter 4 notes, Stubbs and his wife spent most of the mid-1930s trying to extract payment from the government, on the basis that the park's expansion had ruined their fox farm and trading post business. In 1937 the Court of Claims agreed with them, and the Stubbs collected $50,000 in damages the following year. Perhaps because of the court's award, Dan Kennedy—then living in Everett, Washington—made similar moves for compensation because the park, due to its boundary extension, interfered with his business. (He later modified that claim by stating that he "was preparing to establish myself in the business of taking out hunting parties from my headquarters," which was a single log cabin, "and was about ready to proceed when ... the territory surrounding my five acres of land was taken within the Park area.") Delegate Dimond urged the NPS to help. Director Arno Cammerer, however, told Kennedy that there was "no authority of law" for claims adjudication and settlement and, furthermore, there were no funds available to purchase his parcel; he later confided to Dimond that if Kennedy had been paid under such circumstances, "this Service would be flooded with similar demands in connection with other parks and monuments."[173] Kennedy next made it known that he wanted to run a guiding business from his property, but NPS regulations prevented him from doing so. He therefore asked Cammerer to be relieved of the "intolerable burdens" of his situation by having several square miles in the McKinley Park Station area excised from the park. That August, however, the Washington office stated that the 1932 boundary-extension act "adequately protected all valid existing claims" and that "this Service is not in a position to consider favorably any legislation authorizing the withdrawal ... as desired by Mr. Kennedy."[174] The NPS, during this period, appraised the Kennedy parcel, with improvements, as being worth $200.[175]

Having been rebuffed by the NPS, Kennedy next turned to Congress, and in January 1941, Delegate Dimond submitted a bill (H.R. 321) to authorize the Court of Claims to consider his



These were Duke Stubbs' buildings at his fox farm. Stubbs' fox pens can be seen beyond the two buildings. DENA 11-119, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

case and determine an appropriate level of damages. The House Committee on Claims, however, did not move Dimond's bill. NPS Associate Director Arthur E. Demaray, however, met with Dimond and assured him that "arrangements could be made whereby Mr. Kennedy could satisfactorily carry out his plans without undue inconvenience."[176] What those "arrangements" were, however, is not known; in all probability, Kennedy made no attempt to start up his business, either in 1941 or in later years.

Also in 1941, park superintendent Frank Been learned that Duke Stubbs, the owner of the adjacent property, had died. Inasmuch as his widow, Elizabeth Stubbs, was "not living on her property" (she was a Seattle resident), Been suggested that she be contacted in hopes that "she may turn her land over to the government, or release it for a nominal amount." Other NPS officials—who had no funds to offer for land purchase—were unenthusiastic about the idea, but suggested that an agency lands-acquisition coordinator speak with her.[177] The property, at the time, was estimated to be worth either $1000 or $1750, but when an NPS official finally spoke to her about the property, she indicated that "her husband had valued the property at $10,000, but she would very much like to have an offer for it."[178] Given that answer, the NPS was unable to move further.

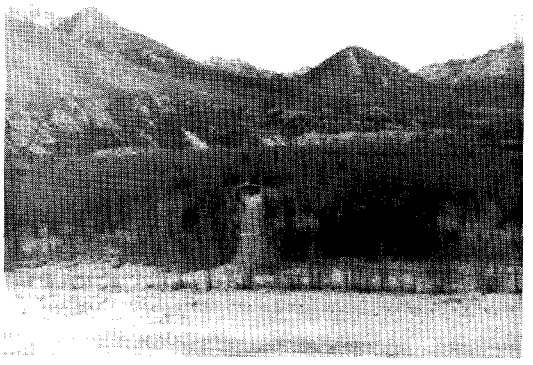
Interest in the government's purchase of both properties surfaced soon after World War II. Goaded by the Washington office, a park employee talked with Col. Johnson of the Alaska Railroad, who stated that the carrier could secure funds for purchasing both the Kennedy and Stubbs properties. The parcels, at this time, were appraised at $2500 and $1750, respectively. Despite that jump in price, other NPS employees felt that the quoted figures were too low.[179] Eventually a railroad employee was able to track down the two landowners, and the report was not encouraging; Mrs. Stubbs wanted $10,000 for her property, while Kennedy made a personal visit to the railroad company "to reiterate his refusal to sell at any price."[180] Railroad and NPS employees responded by compiling a series of four independently-derived appraisals: they indicated that the Kennedy parcel was worth $2,000 to $2,500 (of which $1,000 was deemed to be "of nuisance value"), while the Stubbs parcel was valued at $5,000 to $6,500.[181]

Following upon those estimates, and well aware that the road being built to the park might drastically inflate the parcels' property values, the Interior Department's Solicitor, Mastin White, asked U.S. Attorney General J. Howard McGrath in June 1951 to begin condemnation proceedings in order to acquire the two parcels.[182] On September 6, Justice Department attorneys responded by filing the necessary complaint that instituted the legal process. Regarding Mrs. Stubbs, the court tried to contact her, first via a notice in a Fairbanks newspaper, and later via a letter to her last known address, in New York City. But she never responded to the complaint.[183] However, Kennedy and his partner, A. M. Glassberg[184]—having been told that the parcel was worth $2,500—responded to the summons and fought back through their congressman, Henry M. Jackson. Based on the property's $5000 assessed valuation, which was "less than the fair

purchase price of the property," they told NPS officials that the agency's offer was "very inadequate." But the NPS countered that the government's appraisal was fair, inasmuch as the one cabin on the property was "very unsightly and in poor condition ... [it] afford[s] shelter to tramps and other undesirables."[185] The government, for the time being, postponed its condemnation case; meanwhile, it pressed Kennedy and Glassberg for an offer. Glassberg, in response, suggested $27,500 and further stated that Kennedy's plans "call for the development as a base of operations for prospecting and as a tourist facility." But the NPS considered the figure "wholly unacceptable" and urged that the partners reconsider their quoted figure.[186] In response, Kennedy's lawyer—in a letter to Rep. Jackson—accused park officials of acting maliciously toward his client, and he also tried to justify the $27,500 asking price. But NPS Director Conrad Wirth, who received a copy of that letter, shot back with a point-by-point defense. He cited the "unsightly, dilapidated" cabin on the property as adequate justification for the $2,500 appraisal figure. He further stated the agency's rationale for the condemnation:

> It was with extreme reluctance that negotiations with the aged pioneering explorer were terminated and condemnation proceedings instituted. However, for nearly three years we have attempted to purchase the property at a price consistent with appraisals made by reputable employees of the Alaska Railroad. ... This Service feels impelled to administer and develop the Park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people who visit it. To accomplish this objective, it is necessary to acquire private holdings such as the Kennedy property and to devote the lands to public purposes. It is unfortunate that the Kennedy and Stubbs tracts are plainly visible from the railroad, the Park highway, and the accommodations provided for the visiting public. ... You may rest assured that the Service, working as it does on a small budget must, of necessity, confine its purchases to lands vitally important to the development and maintenance of the various parks.

No known action took place regarding either of these tracts until early 1956. By this time, Elizabeth Stubbs had died, leaving Mary E. Weiss as the sole owner of the 35-acre Stubbs tract. Weiss apparently had little interest in holding onto the property, and although the parcel had been appraised at $6,000 in 1951, she appeared in a Fairbanks court and agreed to $4,000 as "just compensation" in a judgment rendered on February 24, 1956.[187]



Dan Kennedy's log cabin was located east of the McKinley Park airstrip, on his privately-owned 5-acre site. The airstrip is the foreground of this picture. DENA 4-16, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Kennedy, however, had no intention of being cooperative. In late December 1957, a trial on the condemnation was held in an Anchorage District Court. Assistant U.S. Attorney Donald Burr, unsurprisingly, asked for the legal right to condemn the property. But the Anchorage law firm of Davis, Hughes, and Thorsness, representing Kennedy, alleged that the government had "no authority for such a condemnation" because "there was no showing of any specific legislative sanction or authority for condemning the land in question." The government's amended complaint stated that its action stemmed from Mastin White's June 1951 letter to the Attorney General, and that White was "duly authorized to institute the proceeding...". But the defendant moved to dismiss the case because the amended complaint "does not state a claim upon which relief may be granted." Judge Walter H. Hodge, asked to rule in the case, issued his decision on March 10, 1958. Hodge noted that neither the 1917 act establishing the park nor "the amendments thereto contain any specific authorization ... relating to the acquisition by condemnation or otherwise of private lands within the boundaries of the Park; and no such provision is found in the general statutes relative to the jurisdiction and powers of the National Park Service." He further noted that there were several such authorizations that pertained to other NPS units, but none for Mount McKinley, and "if it was the intention of Congress to make similar provision as to Mount McKinley National Park, surely it would have done so. ... It must be concluded," Hodge noted, "that the [plaintiff's] amended complaint fails to state a claim upon which the relief sought may be had. The motion to dismiss is therefore granted."[188] Government attorneys, chagrined at the trial's outcome, asked the judge to reconsider his opinion, and they soon submitted four additional previous court decisions that were intended to buttress their



This photograph of Dan Kennedy's cabin was taken on February 1, 1961, just days before the final settlement of Kennedy's property claims. DENA 4-23, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

case. But in a case that was heard in Nome on June 13, 1958, Hodge reiterated his earlier opinion.[189] Without the legal ability to condemn the property, the NPS was unable to obtain Kennedy's parcel unless it could meet Kennedy's $27,500 asking price.

After reading Judge Hodge's opinion, the Justice Department felt that "the District Court was in error in holding that the ... authority for the taking would not support a condemnation action." It therefore filed a protective notice of appeal, asking the Interior Department Solicitor's Office "whether an appeal would be in the best interest of the United States." Shortly afterward, DOI responded positively, and on October 18, 1958, Justice lawyers decided to file an appeal with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.[190] The appeals court gave no immediate indication as to when it would consider this case; in the meantime, Kennedy declared his intention to build a "modern motel" which was "vitally needed in the Park." Kennedy's attorney offered to sell the parcel in question for $25,000, a figure that the NPS rejected.[191]

The appeals court heard the case beginning January 14, 1960. A. Donald Mileur, along with three other Justice Department attorneys, represented the federal government, while Kennedy's attorneys remained the law firm of Davis, Hughes, and Thorsness. A three-judge panel—Frederick G. Hamley, Gilbert H. Jertberg, and Montgomery O. Koelsch—heard oral arguments in the case. The government argued that its ability to condemn the property rested on Chapter VII of the general appropriation act for Fiscal Year 1951 which called for the expenditure of $19,667,000 for, among other things, "the acquisition of lands, interests therein, improvements, and water rights." And more specifically, that act authorized $275,000 for the NPS to acquire private properties within the various national parks. The defendant, however, argued that inasmuch as Mount McKinley was not mentioned in the appropriation bill, Congress did not authorize land-purchasing rights there. The defendant further argued that even if the $275,000 could be applied to Mount McKinley, then such funds could be used only on parcels with a willing seller. Three months later, Hamley issued the Court's opinion. The Court held "that nothing in the legislative history of the 1951 appropriation act limits the broad language of the acquisition item in such a way that funds therefrom may not be expended in acquiring land within the exterior boundaries of Mount McKinley National Park." And it further held that "if there was authority to acquire them by purchase, they could be condemned." It therefore concluded that "the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the National Park Service, has authority under the 1951 appropriation act to acquire the Kennedy tract. He may therefore do so by condemnation...."[192] The appeals court thus reversed the district court's opinion. There is no evidence that Kennedy appealed the Court's decision, so all that remained to be settled was the sale price.

On Friday, February 3, 1961, attorneys for Kennedy and the government gathered for a pre-trial conference in the Anchorage office of District Judge Walter Hodge. All parties agreed that "the sole issue of fact ... was the matter of just compensation to be paid to the defendant Dan T. Kennedy...". The defendant claimed "the highest and best use of said property as a

homestead and claim[ed] a value of between $30,000 and $50,000 and the government [claimed] an appraisal of only $1,625.00."[193] The trial, before a jury, began just three days later. After a two-day trial, the jury ruled on February 8 that $16,506.57 was "just compensation" to settle the case; that figure was the sum of a $10,500 award, plus another $6,006.57 for the interest that had accrued (at six percent per annum) since September 6, 1951, when the government had filed for condemnation. NPS officials felt that the amount was excessive, but based on Justice Department advice that an appeal might result in an even larger award, the NPS decided that the jury's award should stand. A month later, the NPS prepared a voucher, and by the end of March the NPS owned Kennedy's 5-acre parcel.[194] It had been a long, hard battle by both sides.

*The Stephens Tract*

During this period, the NPS also acquired a tract at the southeastern corner of the park that had belonged to John Stephens. Stephens had patented this 133.96-acre homestead, which surrounded the Windy railroad station, on February 9, 1933; this was less than a year after the passage of the Congressional bill that expanded the park boundaries to include his land. After that date, Stephens continued to run a roadhouse, trading post, and the Windy City post office—all of which surrounded the rail stop—until his death in 1934. Windy City (and the parcel in question) was inhabited for a short period after Stephens's death, but by the late 1930s the parcel was uninhabited. The parcel thereafter was administered by his grandson, H. Stephen Simpson of Peoria, Illinois.[195]

Soon after Stephens' death, his heirs began to petition Congress "seeking a settlement ... for the lands of the deceased that were taken and made a part of a Federal Park." On March 23, 1936, less than a year after Congress passed a bill on behalf of McKinley Park Station residents Duke and Elizabeth Stubbs, Alaska Delegate Tony Dimond introduced H.R. 11955. This bill would have given authority for the Court of Claims to award damages to Stephens's heirs, who at the time were Nettie Stephens, Minnie Simpson, and Luro M. Holmes. A few days later a similar bill (S. 4403) was introduced in the Senate by Alva B. Adams, the head of the Committee on Claims.[196] The latter bill brought forth an investigation and a report from the Senate Committee on Claims, dated May 14, 1936. Perhaps on the basis of that report, both bills died in committee.[197] On the opening day of Congress in January 1937, Alaska Delegate Tony Dimond introduced a new bill in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1746) "authorizing reimbursement to the estate of John Stephens ... for the loss of certain lands and improvements in Alaska." The bill would have paid Stephens's estate $26,000 to settle all outstanding claims. But the Interior Department was not requested to make a report on the issue, so Congress did not act on it.[198]

Stephens's heirs again sought financial restitution from Congress in 1941, perhaps in response to news reports emanating from the government's purchase of the Anderson tract near Wonder Lake. That spring, Delegate Dimond—perhaps in response to a request from the Stephens heirs—asked Interior Secretary Ickes if funds were available to purchase the Stephens tract. But no such money was available.[199] The family then prevailed upon Dimond to submit a bill asking the Court of Claims to hear their case and render judgment. Dimond introduced that bill (H.R. 5585) on August 14, after which it was considered by the House Committee on Claims, chaired by Rep. Daniel McGehee (D-Miss.). E. K. Burlew, an Interior Department official tasked to review the case, concluded that "I am unable to discover any grounds which would justify a favorable report on the pending bill." He therefore recommended against the enactment of H.R. 5585, and perhaps because of that opinion—which was largely based on his perusal of the Senate's 1936 report—the bill did not get voted out of committee.[200]

After the war, Simpson tried yet again to press his case before Congress. In July 1946, perhaps in response to news reports about the possible purchase of the Morino tract, he wrote to the Alaska Delegate E. L. Bartlett; stating that "the heirs of this estate have been rather shabbily treated," he sought a government settlement "for the lands of the deceased that were taken and made a part of a Federal Park." NPS Director Drury, asked to comment on the matter, assured Bartlett "that this property has not been taken over as Federal property." He further explained, however, that "there are no funds available for its purchase;" in fact, his request for $350,000 for purchase of privately-owned lands in the National Park System had recently been stricken from the 1947 Interior Department appropriation bill. The parcel, at this time, had an appraised value of $4,000.[201]

Simpson recognized—as did other park inholders during this period, both in Alaska and elsewhere—that he had few options regarding the sale of his property. So in the spring of 1947, he contacted park superintendent Grant



Superintendent Oscar Dick, right, presented Park Ranger Wayne Merry, left, with an Incentive Award on August 25, 1966. Oscar Dick had served at the park in the 1940s and 1950s before returning as superintendent in December 1962. DENA 27-66, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Pearson and asked him to estimate the value of Stephens' trading-post business and also asked him to estimate the "present value of the improvements" there. Pearson, at the time, was in the midst of a climbing expedition up Mount McKinley. By radio, however, Pearson relayed that he "was well acquainted" with John Stephens, and he estimated "the present value of the property, including roadhouse, trading post and cabins which are mostly rotted away and not occupied, at $10.00 per acre."[202] This correspondence was passed on to the Washington office, who noted the possibility of land acquisition funds being available; the quoted per-acre value, however, was "subject to change by an official appraisal by disinterested parties." Tolson wrote Simpson and asked for a six-months' option to purchase the property at that appraised value. Simpson, however, had little interest in such an option; instead, he responded by citing the large ($50,000) award that the Stubbs had received from the Court of Claims back in 1937, and he also threatened to reopen a business on the property.[203]

As noted in Chapter 6, early plans for building the road from Paxson Roadhouse to the existing park road called for it to be constructed from Cantwell up Windy Creek to the drainage divide, then a descent within the Riley Creek watershed to McKinley Park Station. This alternative was considered until late 1950. Because the construction of such a road would have made Simpson's property relatively accessible, NPS planner George Collins worried that the agency needed to purchase the property in order to prevent it from being used for commercial purposes.[204] The decision to build the road within the Nenana River corridor, however, isolated the inholding from the new road corridor. As a result, NPS officials did not feel the need to condemn this property as they had the Stubbs and Kennedy tracts, as noted above.

No further action took place for more than a decade. During this period, the landowner had little interest in selling the land to the government at its appraised value, and the NPS—because of the tract's location, which was difficult to reach by road and well away from the McKinley Park Station area—was not particularly hard pressed to purchase it. In July 1961, the NPS—evidently interested in consolidating its remaining inholdings—gained authorization to have the tract appraised. Soon afterward, the appraiser visited the property and submitted his report, in which he ascertained the tract's value at $6,700. In September, the agency forwarded option papers to H. S. Simpson.[205] Soon a familiar litany emerged; according to contemporary agency reports, "Mr. Simpson seems to feel that this property would lend itself to commercial development," while to the NPS, "such a development would be economically unfeasible since it would require construction of a costly bridge across the Nenana River to provide access." Simpson, however, was willing to sell; he signed and returned the option papers in February 1962, and on March 15 the agency received a signed contract to purchase the tract

for $6,700.[206] Park staff then began the process to obtain a clear title. That process dragged on for months; during this period, Simpson apparently died. Finally, on November 6, a federal attorney in Fairbanks filed a complaint against Stephens's heirs, hoping to complete the land transaction. Four months later, on March 25, 1963, the government and the two identified property owners—Minnie J. Simpson and Loren G. Holmes—agreed to complete the land transaction. On April 18 the U.S. Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy, issued a final judgment in the matter and reconfirmed the award amount. Soon afterward, the defendants received $3350 each.[207]

**Operational Realities: Staff and Infrastructure**

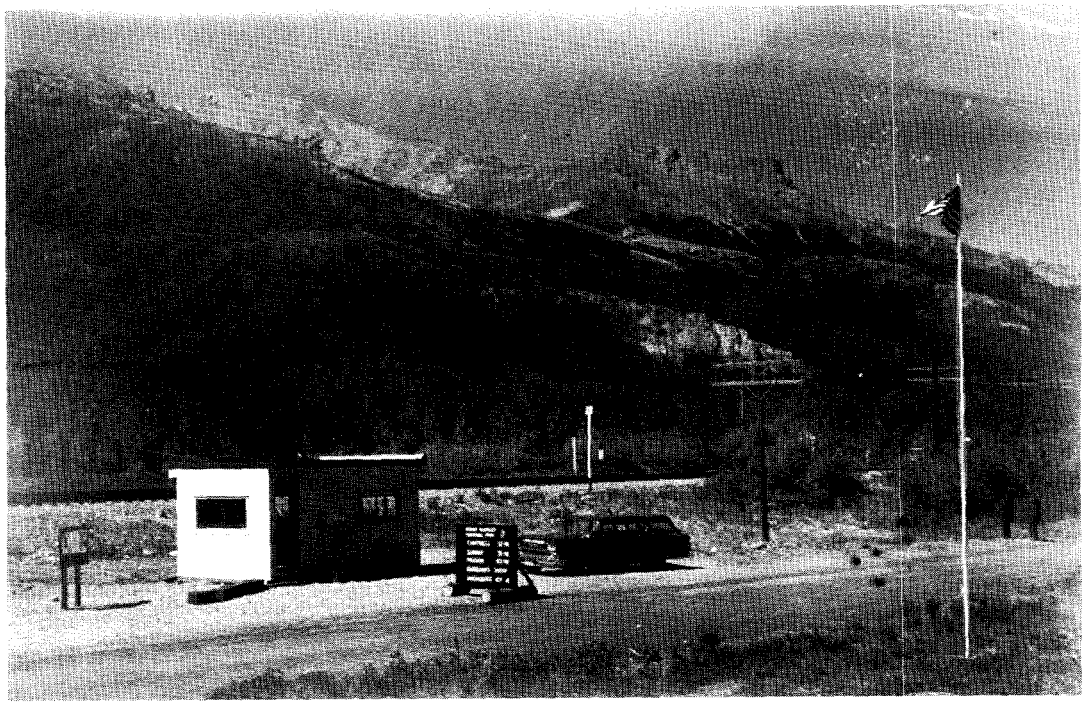
Until the fall of 1956, Mount McKinley National Park had enjoyed a long period of staff stability; as noted in Chapter 6, there had been just two superintendents during the previous seventeen years, and the number of permanent staff had risen from just eight to ten (see Appendix B). But in November 1956, that period of quietude ended when 30-year veteran Grant Pearson retired and moved to the San Francisco Bay area,[208] and between then and 1971 the park had five superintendents: Duane Jacobs, Samuel King, Oscar Dick, George Hall, and Vernon Ruesch. Jacobs, who served from November 1956 to November 1959, and King, who served another three-year stint immediately following Jacobs, each served apprentices as assistant superintendents. Dick, who transferred to the park after serving as Yellowstone's chief ranger, had previously worked at McKinley during the 1940s and 1950s.[209] Hall, who moved to McKinley from a posting in Washington, D.C., had previously served at Sitka National Monument,[210] and Ruesch, the son of legendary Zion superintendent Walter Ruesch, had long served as a Grand Canyon ranger (see Appendix C).[211]

During this period, Mount McKinley's pre-eminence among Alaska units forced its superintendent to assume roles unrelated to the park, much as Supt. Been had had to do during the late 1930s and early 1940s (see Chapter 5). As noted above, one of the first tasks undertaken by new NPS Director George Hartzog, in 1964, was his establishment of the Alaska Task Force. This ad hoc group undertook an intensive effort to identify and evaluate areas that would be of particular interest as potential national parks and monuments. The task force's January 1965 report, called *Operation Great Land*, identified 39 zones and sites that had high natural, recreational, or historic values. By August 1965 Hartzog, hoping to orchestrate a series of individual study proposals, had decided that an Alaska Field Office, in Anchorage, was necessary for central planning purposes.[212] The office was established on November 8, 1965, and by May 1967 the office boasted a park planner (Craig Breedlove), a biologist (Richard Prasil), and a secretary (Marguerite Bedour). The leader of this office, however, was Supt. Dick, and this additional role forced him to rent an apartment in Anchorage and remain there for extended periods during the wintertime.[213] George Hall, who replaced Dick in early 1967, carried on the same hectic seasonal schedule as had his predecessor. But when Hall retired in 1969, higher-ups finally recognized the obvious logistical difficulties of one person running a central office as well as a major national park located more than six hours away by railroad. That October, when Ernest Borgman began work as the first Alaska Group Office leader, he was based year-round in Anchorage.[214] As shall be noted in Chapter 8, this tension between park and central-office affairs did not end with Borgman's appointment; during much of the 1970s, a number of park personnel were relocated to Anchorage to carry out studies for proposals unrelated to the Mount McKinley area.[215]



From 1967 to 1969 George Hall served as park superintendent and leader of the Alaska Field Office in Anchorage. DENA 27-99, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

The agency's budget increased dramatically between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s, and the park budget handsomely benefited as a result; it rose from approximately $85,500 in fiscal year 1955 to $717,500 in 1970, more than a 700 percent increase (see Appendix B). Thanks to these additional funds, the park was able to double its permanent staff, primarily in the maintenance and administrative occupations. In addition, officials were able to establish a substantial—and growing—seasonal workforce. A park that had fewer than five seasonal positions in 1956 was, by the late 1960s, able to offer seasonal jobs to laborers, mechanics, carpenters, motor grader operators, truck



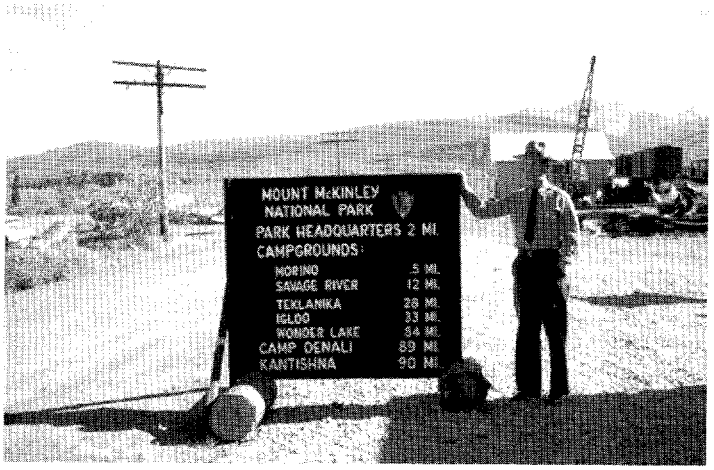
By 1959 the first entrance station in the park was established just north of the depot. DENA 34-22, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

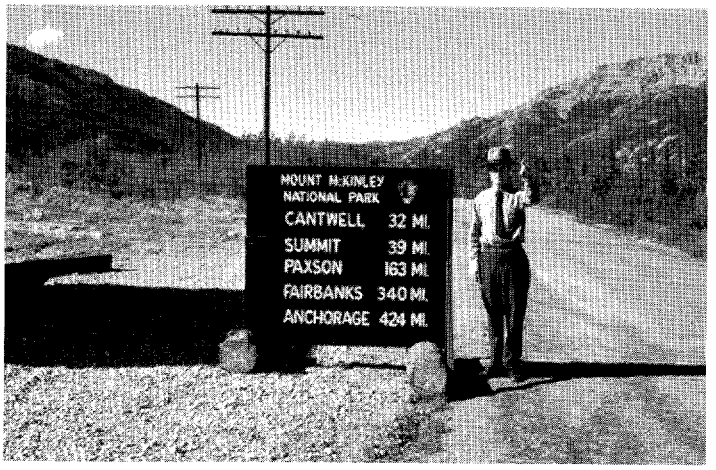
drivers, clerk typists and fire control aids as well as rangers, naturalists, and maintenance personnel (see Appendix C).

Given that new budget, the headquarters area was able to accommodate the growing need for housing. In March 1958, as part of the same contract that funded Eielson Visitor Center (see above), the J. B. Warrack Construction Company of Anchorage agreed to build a six-unit apartment building—complete with a common recreation room—plus an adjacent six-unit garage. These buildings were "essentially completed and accepted" by NPS officials on December 10, and employees were able to move into the apartment building before Christmas. Because it provided both housing and a much-needed indoor recreation area, employees rejoiced at its completion, and before the end of the year the new facility had held its first religious services, had its first all-employees party, and witnessed the publication of a short-lived newspaper, the *Wreck Room Ramble*.[216] These units, however, did little to slake the need for seasonal housing. To fulfill that growing need, the park continued to utilize trailer units, and in 1960 it converted the old museum/exhibit building (near the main park road) into seasonal housing. Three years later, the park construction crew completed work on "ten tent houses, wash room and laundry facilities" at "the seasonal camp" [the old CCC camp] to satisfy the additional need for seasonal living space.[217] And by the spring of 1967, it was obvious that even more would be needed to "relieve the critical shortage of housing."[218] Aside from Eielson Visitor Center, no new construction took place west of the headquarters area during this period. One building was demolished, however; during the summer of 1964, half of the two-part Savage River Cabin was "cut up for firewood." Both of the Savage River cabins, prior to the demolition, were located just northwest of today's Savage River Campground; the remaining cabin still stands and presently serves as a spot for historical interpretation.[219]

The park also moved to accommodate the needs of hundreds of inquisitive, curious motorists. When the new Denali Highway opened in August 1957, it established a Park Information Center in the combination naturalist's office and ranger station, located north of the park road at headquarters.[220] That arrangement sufficed for a short time, but in May 1959, road construction in that area blocked access to the center. The NPS reacted to the situation by installing a prefabricated entrance station on the park road just north of the McKinley Park Station airstrip. This small station, which was initially staffed 16 hours per day all summer long, was intended to be temporary pending the construction of a standalone visitor center in the area.[221] As noted in Chapter 11, however, the visitor-center idea never came to fruition, and the entrance station—supplemented in late 1962 with an adjacent exhibit building—remained for years afterward.[222]

The park significantly upgraded its utilities during this period. As noted in Chapter 6, the park fully converted over to AC power generation in 1948, when a 75 kilowatt generator was installed at headquarters. Given the agency's



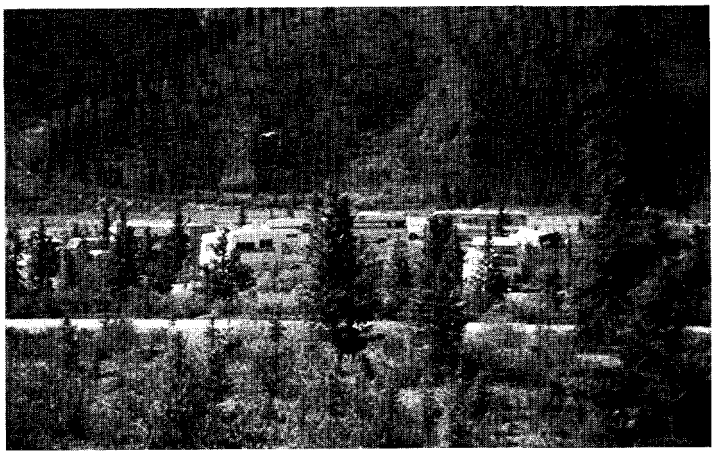

**Above left: Mount McKinley National Park entrance sign, located at the entrance station, 1959. Wallace A. Cole Collection**
**Above right: The opposite side of the park entrance sign, showing mileages to points outside the park, 1959. Wallace A. Cole Collection**

acquisition of the hotel (in October 1953) and the growth at headquarters, the NPS decided to centralize and upgrade its power generating capabilities, and in June 1958 it awarded a contract to Northern Electric Co. of Anchorage to furnish two diesel electric generators at the hotel—with a combined 150 kilowatt generating capacity—as well as a transmission line connecting the hotel and headquarters areas. That work was "essentially complete" by September, and in June 1959 NPS officials approved the job.[223]

Also in 1958, planning work began for a utility system upgrade; this included a new utilidor, a new boiler house at headquarters, and the provision of steam heating in all headquarters-area buildings. In July 1959, the NPS awarded the job to a Seattle consortium of Promacs, Inc. and Western Equipment and Supply Co. for $433,000. Just a month later, however, the steam-heating provision was dropped from the contract and the bid award amount was shaved to $385,000.[224] Work on the project began during the summer of 1960, but because of "lack of organization, men and equipment," the pace of work fell behind because a sub-contractor failed to come through. Indeed, for several weeks in mid- summer, NPS officials openly worried that the tardiness would jeopardize the operation of all park utility systems during the coming winter. Work pressed on, however; workers remained on-site until mid- November, by which time the system, though still not completed, was operational. The new utilidor, in fact, never failed that winter, though technical adjustments were periodically required.[225] Promacs personnel returned in the spring to complete the job. Problems continued to plague the project, however, and the crews left that fall with the job still unfinished. The job was finally declared complete in September 1962, though NPS officials continued to complain about heat leakage problems.[226]

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1960, NPS officials prepared documents for the discarded portion of its July 1959 contract: the installation of steam heating in the headquarters buildings. By the time that job was put out for bid, in February 1961, the agency also included a provision for a headquarters-area sewage disposal system.[227] That April, the agency awarded the contract to Gordon Johnson Plumbing and Heating Co. of Fairbanks. Work, which included the excavation of a septic tank, began in June. "Good progress" was made that summer, and the company essentially completed the job on October 23.[228] Smaller projects completed during this period included a new, enlarged water pump at the park's Rock Creek intake in the fall of 1965; a new, larger generator for the hotel in the summer of 1967; and a rehabilitation of the hotel's water system, heating system, and power plant in 1968.[229]

Because the years between 1957 and 1971 were the only period in which motorists from the contiguous road system were able to drive to and through the park, this period was also the heyday of car camping at the park. As noted in the previous chapter, there were just two established campgrounds in 1957—Savage River and Wonder Lake—while Teklanika River, Igloo Creek, and the old Morino homestead area served as more informal camp locations. As noted above, the Mission 66 prospectus called for 100-space campground at Teklanika along with a 20-space campground at Toklat River. Given that directive, plus the increasing number of cars coursing up and down the park road, the agency worked quickly to expand campground facilities. During the summer of 1958, the NPS installed tables, fireplaces, and pit toilets at Teklanika and the newly-established Toklat Campground, and the following year upgrades were made to facilities at Wonder Lake, Teklanika and Igloo Creek.[230] Sanctuary Campground appears to have been a recognized



Teklanika Campground was, and still is, suitable for camping trailers and truck campers due to its location on flat terrain and could be reached without going over the narrower parts of the road. DENA Interpretation Coll. #492, Denali National Park and Preserve

(if informal) campsite throughout the 1950s and 1960s; beginning in 1963 NPS rangers made efforts to clean up and improve the area, but they installed no specific camp facilities. Until the late 1960s, and perhaps later, the 20-space Teklanika Campground did not offer dedicated pull-in slots; even so, the campground attracted many motorists with trailers, inasmuch as the NPS discouraged the carriage of trailers west of that point.[231]

Meanwhile, the Morino area—which had vacillated during the 1950s between a picnic ground and an informal campground—was more fully established as a campground in the early 1960s. The agency made yet another attempt in 1961 to clean up "ancient debris" in the area, and it made plans to expand the area in 1962.[232] But the space limitations at Morino were all too clear. By June 1964, park officials were already complaining that the site "has been filled to capacity during a large part of the month and that future expansion in this area is necessary." Just a month later, however, a quick site survey revealed that "any monies spent in expanding this area would offer only a temporary solution to the camping facilities in this area." By March 1965, park officials had concluded that the campground had to be obliterated, and that July—at the height of the visitor season—Supt. Dick told Regional Director Edward Hummel that "we must again stress the need for including in the 1967 program the construction of the new Morino Campground" inasmuch as "the existing Morino Campground ... is very primitive and totally inadequate." Almost $240,000 was needed in this context for the development of campground roads, trails, utility system, comfort stations, and 75 campsites.[233] In November 1967 the NPS issued a contract to Yukon Services, Inc. of Fairbanks to construct a new, 75-unit campground. The two-loop Riley Creek Campground was completed under the terms of that contract during the summer of 1968; it opened the following spring as a 100-site facility.

Given the completion of the Riley Creek campground, the NPS closed the 15-space Morino campground, apparently after the 1969 season.[234]

During the late 1960s, moreover, NPS officials deemed other park locations—not just Morino—to be phased out as campgrounds. A January 1967 master plan study, for example, noted that both the Igloo Creek and Toklat campgrounds were "small unsuitable facilit[ies] to be obliterated or converted to other use." That study similarly recommended the phasing out of the Savage River campground. But the Teklanika and Wonder Lake campgrounds were both slated for a large-scale expansion. None of these actions ever came to pass, at least not in the short term; these recommendations did, however, offer a template for future agency actions.[235]

**Park Patrols: the Invasion of the Snow Tractor**

Rangers, during this period, continued to patrol the park as they had since the 1920s. The methods used for patrol, however, changed over the years to fit contemporary needs and technology. As noted in previous chapters, for example, dog teams (and foot reconnaissance for shorter trips) had been the primary patrol methods during the 1920s and 1930s. But in November 1944, the Army had brought in seven late-model M-7 snow tractors (also called snow jeeps, Snow Tracs, or "Sno-Cats") to assist with the Air Transport Command C-47 crash rescue effort, and Grant Pearson—who drove one of the vehicles—was so convinced of its utility that, by 1945, he "believe[d] the dog team is a thing of the past, except for use in connection with winter sports."[236] In September 1946, the park obtained two surplus snow tractors, and after a winter's patrol experience, park staff declared that "used with discretion, the snow jeep should supplant the dog team and last for a number of years."[237] That prophecy proved correct, because the park used snow tractors for its long-distance winter patrols until 1960, then again for a number of additional years beginning in 1964.[238] Starting in the fall of 1960, the rangers temporarily abandoned the snow tractor in favor of a new Bombardier snowmachine. But by early 1962, the machine was proving unequal to the tasks asked of it, and by early 1963 it was considered "not dependable nor designed for our needs." Late that year the Bombardier was declared surplus, and the park reverted back to snow tractors.[239]

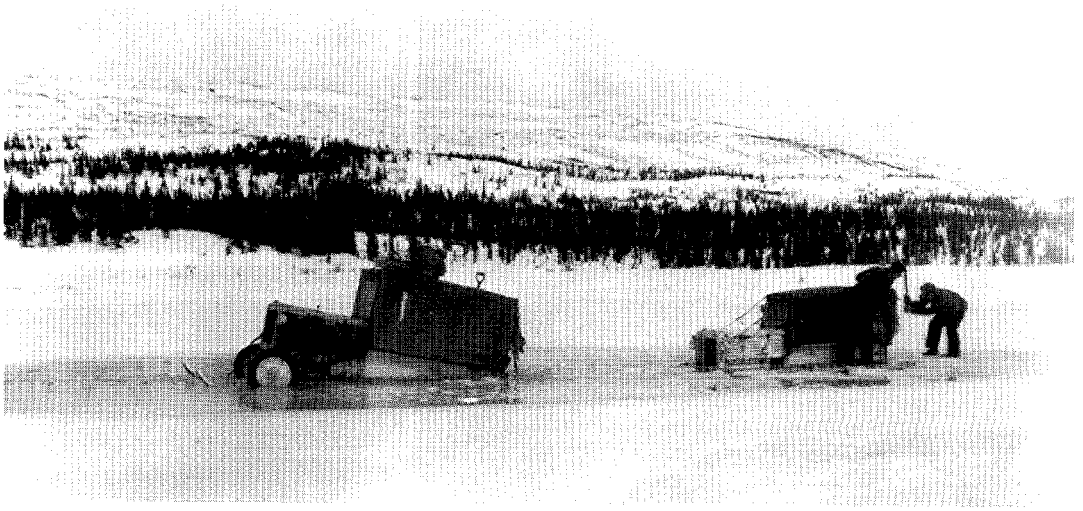


The snow jeeps parked in front of the Administration Building at park headquarters are ready for the start of a six-day patrol to the Wonder Lake area and northern boundary. Left to right, Superintendent Grant Pearson, Chief Ranger Frank Hirst, and Park Naturalist Bill Nancarrow, March 1952. DENA 29-13, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Other patrol methods, however, were not abandoned. Points as far away as the Lower Toklat Cabin were patrolled on foot during the summer and fall, and in midwinter such diverse points as Upper Riley Creek, Sable Pass, and the Moody Cabin were patrolled by foot or on snowshoe.[240] In addition, rangers—primarily during the 1940s—conducted ski patrols to points as distant as the Teklanika River.[241] As early as 1940, park staff envisioned that the airplane would make most other patrol methods obsolete. The high cost of airplane travel, however, prevented its widespread adoption until the mid- to late 1960s.[242]

As noted both above and in Chapter 5, NPS staff between 1939 and 1946 predicted several times that the era of dog team patrols at the park was over, except perhaps for interpretive and exhibition purposes.[243] Such predictions, however, proved premature. To be sure, dogs were apparently not used for park patrols between the early 1940s and the early 1950s, and the park had no dog teams between 1945 and 1947 and between 1948 and 1950.[244] In April 1952, however, park naturalist William J. Nancarrow took a dog team on a 13-day patrol after the park's snow tractor was immobilized.[245] Annual dog patrols continued until 1960, when the Bombardier was introduced.[246] Three years later, however, the snowmachine was discarded and dogs were re-instituted on park patrols.[247]

During this extended period, changes were noted in the nature and scope of park patrols. Consistent needs included stocking the patrol cabins and hauling firewood to them, and rangers also tried to patrol the park's southeast - ern corner and the eastern end of the northern boundary during the big game hunting season,



During a six-day park patrol the snow jeeps encountered one of the hazards of winter travel. The ice failed to support the weight of the jeeps on a small, shallow pond near Wonder Lake, March 1952. DENA 29-12, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



Rangers Bogart and Coe traveled via dog sled to inspect cabins and boundaries on the west side of the park in March 1964. Their route here was on the river bar below Polychrome Pass. DENA 29-49, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

which typically began on August 20 and continued until October 15.[248] During a few years, there was also some concern at the beginning of the trapping season (on October 16).[249] From time to time, rangers raised alarms when they heard about real or rumored poaching activity.[250] Actual incidents of wildlife harvesting in the park, however, were rare.[251] The relative ease of patrolling along the park road (due to a reliance on the snow tractor), and the relative lack of hunting pressure away from the park's eastern margins, meant that rangers seldom visited the more remote patrol cabins, such as those at Copper Mountain, McKinley Bar, and McLeod Creek.

Because of a recurrent icing problem along short segments of the park road, the annual spring snow-removal process continued to cause headaches to maintenance crews. As noted in Chapter 6, Alaska Road Commission crews had tried, beginning in the late 1940s, to reduce glaciation by periodically sprinkling layers of cinders, ash, or coal dust on the ice. But by the mid-1950s, that experiment had been abandoned. In the fall of 1959, Bureau of Public Roads crews reacted to the aufeis problem[252] by erecting a 2500-foot-long fence, made of three-foot-high roofing felt, just west of the park headquarters. The mild weather that winter, however, was "conducive to an abnormal amount of aufeis build up," and by the following March three additional layers—some of which were made from rolls of sisal kraft paper—had been added to the original three-foot-wide strip. These measures, which required "a considerable amount of time [to be] expended by the Ranger Division," kept the road open in this area all winter, although at one point park staff had to pour "a pickup load of slacked coal" on the ice layer. Difficulties along other portions of the park road, however, delayed the road opening until June 1, and substantial damage took place at the Mile 3 aufeis area because of high springtime runoff volume.[253] NPS crews, which took over the maintenance of the park road in July 1960, continued to use an aufeis barrier (or "ice fence") through the winter of 1964-65.[254] Thereafter, park crews used a D-8 Caterpillar tractor in combination with a rotary snow plow (which was later replaced by a D-7 bulldozer) to clear snow from the park roads, and ice cleats welded to the grousers of the "cats" allowed them to surmount the aufeis areas, both at Mile 3 and elsewhere in the park.[255] During most of the years after the Denali Highway allowed increased road traffic into the park, crews had the road open (at least to Eielson) sometime between May 24 and June 4, but in 1960 the road was open by May 16. For several years during the mid-1960s, it was mid-June or later before visitors could drive to Eielson or beyond.[256]



The aufeis, or overflow ice, problem just west of park headquarters was partly kept in check with the barrier fencing seen on the right in this March 28, 1969 photo. Also shown is the late spring technique of blasting aufeis prior to clearing the road for spring opening. DENA 15-32, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

**Concessions: U.S. Natural Resources Comes and Goes**

As noted earlier, Don Hummel and Al Donau, representing the Mount McKinley National Park Company, assumed control over the park concessions operation in February 1958. Hummel, at that time, already operated the Lassen Volcanic NP concession, and in late 1960, he also took over the Glacier NP concession.[257]

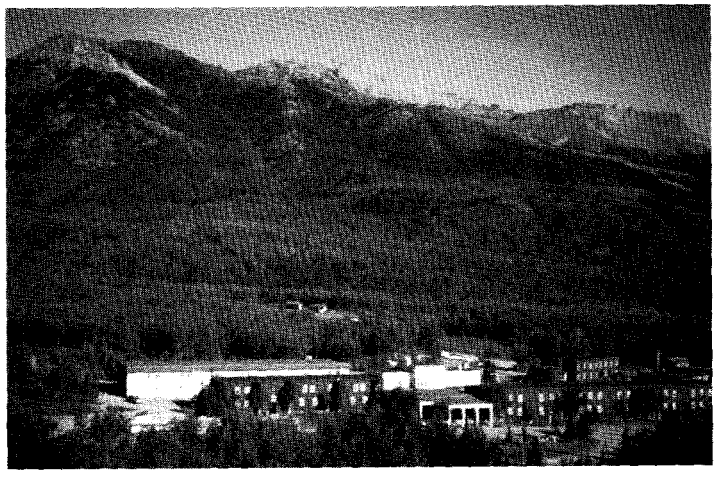
Hummel, by all accounts, oversaw an operation at McKinley that was profitable, satisfactory to park visitors, and satisfactory to NPS officials. In the spring of 1966, the company responded to signs of aging at the hotel by initiating a betterment program; this included new paint, furniture, and floor covering, along with dining room service for the main lobby, upper lounge, dining room and bar. No sooner had the project begun than Hummel headed off to Washington to be an Assistant Secretary in the newly-created Department of Housing and Urban Development. He remained there until the closing days of the Johnson administration, in January 1969; throughout this period, the McKinley operation was ably operated by Wallace Cole.[258] While Hummel was gone, in May 1967, the NPS decided to float a new park concessions contract, inasmuch as Hummel's previous contract was due to expire at the end of December. Because it was apparently pleased with Mount McKinley National Park Company's operation, and because there were no other bidders, the NPS provided the company a new 20-year contract on September 21, 1967.[259]

In late August 1969, Hummel—now back in the private sector—began to consider an offer from George Fleharty, an old friend. Fleharty, a northern California business executive, had long been involved with the Redding (Calif.) Chamber of Commerce. He had also chaired the California State Parks Commission. More recently, Fleharty had emerged as the head of the Recreation Resources Division of an up-and-coming company called U.S. Natural Resources, Inc., and in that role he suggested that Hummel merge his three-park operation into USNR's recreation wing. Hummel seriously considered the offer for several reasons; he was enticed by the company's prospects, he was anxious to obtain its stock for its long-term value, and he needed USNR's assets to underwrite upcoming facility upgrades in the three parks.[260]

While Hummel was considering the offer, USNR dropped its interest in the Glacier concession, although Hummel continued to manage that concession as he had for years. In December 1969, however, the company landed a major new acquisition when it assumed control over Yosemite Park and Curry Company, Yosemite's main concessioner. Given that shift in responsibilities, Hummel in early March 1970 formally agreed to Fleharty's revised proposal—that the Mount McKinley National Park Company and

the Lassen National Park Company be transferred to U.S. Natural Resources. Shortly afterward, the deal was consummated; USNR purchased all of the stock in the two smaller companies, and a newly-named Mt. McKinley-Lassen National Parks Company became a wholly owned subsidiary of USNR (see Appendix D). The deal called for Hummel to work for Fleharty under a five-year employment agreement; he would continue to manage the concessions operations at both McKinley and Lassen. Working under Hummel's direction, Wallace Cole continued to provide on-site management at Mount McKinley National Park.[261]

Soon after the ink dried from the new management arrangement, the park concessioner announced plans to expand the existing McKinley Park Hotel. Interior Secretary Wally Hickel was aware that the new Anchorage - Fairbanks Highway would soon be bringing new throngs of people to the park and that mid-season room availability had been a serious concern since the mid-1960s.[262] Knowing the problem was getting worse, he had approved the design for the new wing in December 1969. The 48-room west wing, unlike the remainder of the hotel, was financed by the concessioner; it was composed of 48 modular units, all built in Spokane and brought to the park via freight car and barge.[263] Construction on the $500,000 addition began in early April 1970, and the prefabricated sections shortly after mid- May. The new rooms, each of which had two double beds, were open to the public on June 30, 1970.[264]



In 1970 the new west wing, with 48 rooms, was added to the McKinley Park Hotel, visible here as the light-colored building in the upper left. Wallace A. Cole Collection

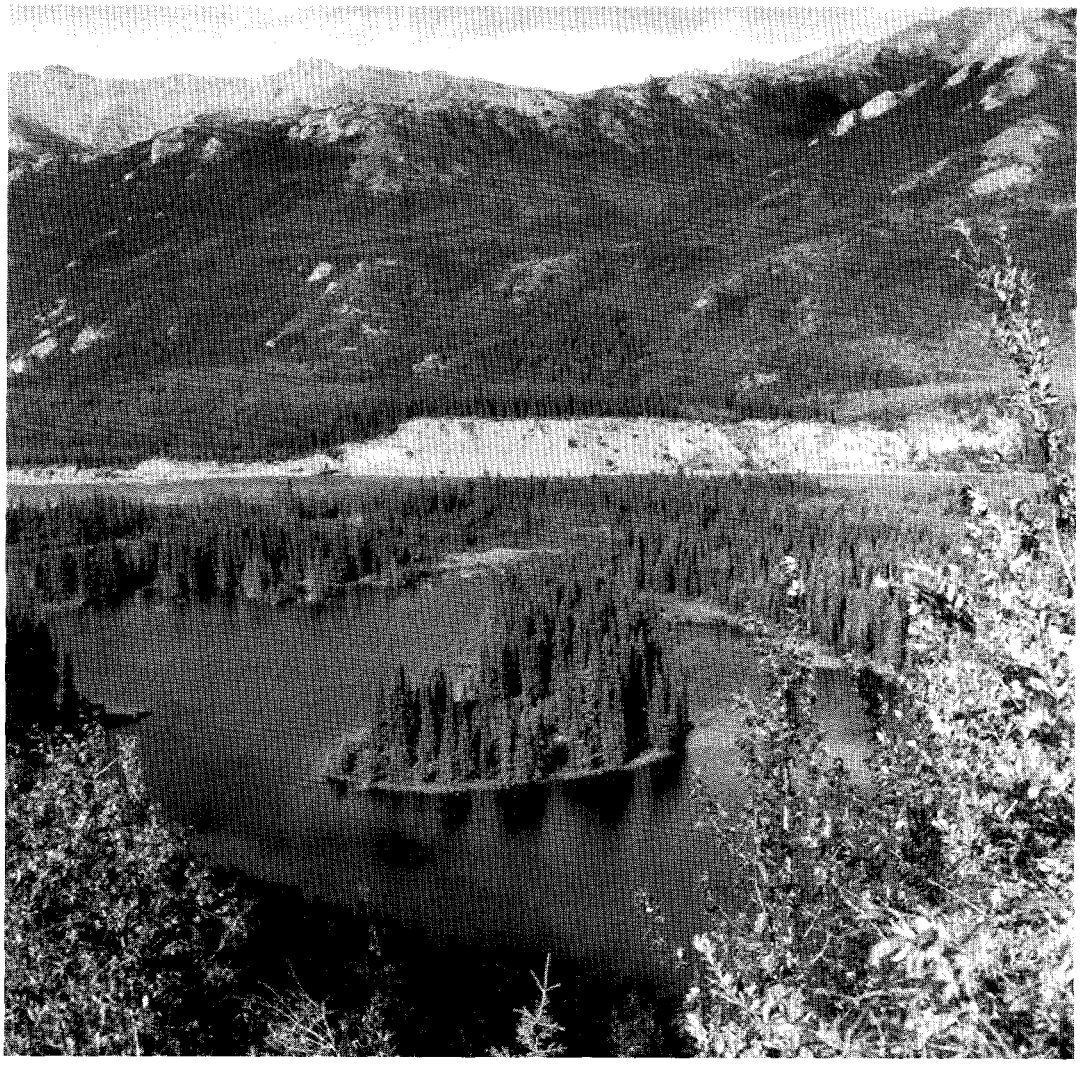
During 1970 and 1971, U.S. Natural Resources continued to be a highly profitable company. In late 1971, in the midst of that prosperity, company vice-president George Fleharty—perhaps recognizing that the company's fortunes were beginning to slide—decided to voluntarily retire from USNR. Using his company stock as an asset base, he purchased the Mt. McKinley concession (that is, half of the Mt. McKinley-Lassen National Parks Company) for $1.25 million and established a new company, called Outdoor World, Limited, and in so doing acquired the remainder of the 20-year concession contract that the Mount McKinley National Park Company had obtained in September 1967. Outdoor World, which was jointly owned by Fleharty and three others, began operating the Mt. McKinley National Park concession on January 1, 1972 (see Appendix D). Fleharty, as it turned out, was fortunate indeed, because not long afterward, USNR's fortunes (according to Don Hummel) "began a serious decline" and was soon "one of the more spectacular failures in American business annals." This failure affected operations at USNR's other concessions (Yosemite and Lassen), but not those at Mt. McKinley.[265]

### The Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway

The so-called "rubber-tired tourism" era at Mount McKinley National Park, though distinct, was relatively brief. This was because throughout this period there was a general recognition that a highway would be built between Anchorage and Fairbanks that would be far shorter than the circuitous 441-mile route (via Glennallen and Delta Junction) that was then in effect. Such a route promised to drastically shorten the distance to the park from Alaska's major population centers; during this period, Anchorage residents were 423 miles by (a primarily dirt) road from McKinley Park Station, while Fairbanks residents were 349 miles away.

Inklings that such a route might be built were in evidence even during the territorial period; beginning in the late 1940s (see Chapter 6), some thought was given to building a highway from Fairbanks to the park on a route that paralleled the Alaska Railroad; and south of the park, a survey during the mid-1950s recommended road construction from Wasilla to Willow.[266] Real progress on an interconnecting road, however, could not take place until statehood forced the abandonment of Interior Department rules favoring the Alaska Railroad at the expense of road development.

Recognizing the importance of the road connection for both tourism and other forms of economic development, state authorities



Horseshoe Lake is pictured here, with the Nenana River and its north bank just beyond, in 1961. Ten years later the Parks Highway would be built through the area in the background. Wallace A. Cole Collection

announced soon after statehood that they intended to link Anchorage and Fairbanks via a new road that roughly paralleled the Alaska Railroad. Work began in 1959.[267] By September 1962, the new Alaska Division of Highways had completed a road from Matanuska Valley as far north as Montana Creek, with an extension as far as the Sunshine area promised by year's end; roadbuilding from Nenana had been completed as far as Rex, 20 miles to the south, with additional mileage under construction to Lignite, near Healy.[268] By 1963, road crews had pushed north all the way to the Susitna River, and crews that year began work on a half-mile-long bridge which promised to open up the Trapper Creek area and points to the north. But the Good Friday Earthquake in March 1964 forced a delay in new road construction; the $2 million Susitna River Bridge was completed later that year, but elsewhere, highway crews in 1964 and 1965 were totally consumed with bridge reconstructions and repairing existing roadway sections.[269]

For two years or more, the Anchorage-Fairbanks road stopped at the western end of the Susitna River bridge. But the completion of earthquake-related repairs, plus publicity from local booster groups, brought about a resurgence of road construction. By the summer of 1968, the road had been extended north to the Chulitna River's west bank, and in both 1968 and 1969 crews erected temporary bridges across the river, only to have them wash away. A permanent span across the Chulitna was finally completed in late 1970. Meanwhile, crews had already pushed north beyond the bridge, and by the fall of 1971, there was nothing left to be done except the completion of the high bridge over Hurricane Gulch.[270]

Meanwhile, highway construction crews were working their way south, and road planning in and near the park demanded cooperation between state highway officials and the Park Service. As early as the winter of 1960-61, the state had roughed out a proposed right-of-way through the park; that route would have roughly overlain the existing highway right-of-way between the second[271] Nenana River crossing (located 7 miles south of the hotel) and Riley Creek. North of Riley Creek, the proposed and existing roads would remain collinear as far

north as the railroad crossing near the hotel. The proposed road would then continue north, paralleling the railroad tracks for a mile or so; it would then proceed northeast to the Nenana River (in the vicinity of Hornet Creek) and cross it a third time, after which it would follow the right-of-way that was later adopted as the constructed highway route.[272] During the spring of 1961, agency officials made a joint inspection of the proposed route and drafted an interagency Memorandum of Understanding that permitted the state to locate and design a highway link through the park.[273] That August, however, highway engineers who visited the site concluded that a "possible change in road alignment" was in order. Engineers returned that November and mulled the matter over for a week, and by the following May, the state's newly-released alignment study recommended that the proposed third Nenana River crossing be located southeast of Horseshoe Lake instead of near Hornet Creek. That route promised to be less noisy than the previous route; it obviated the need for a road interchange in the hotel vicinity; and it allowed the state to avoid the construction of a long retaining wall paralleling the railroad north of the hotel. That route was adopted.[274]

A year later, in July 1963, a new dustup occurred in the route selection process, in the Moody area; NPS and state officials differed on where the so-called fourth crossing of the Nenana River should be located.[275] By the summer of 1964, however, that problem had been surmounted and the right-of-way had been finalized. Due to earthquake-related reconstruction needs, work on this portion of the Anchorage-Fairbanks road was limited to surveys for several years. But in the fall of 1966, highway and park officials conducted a plans-in-hand review of project work along the park's eastern boundary, and in the spring of 1967 the state geared up to let a contract for a five-mile stretch just east of McKinley Park Station. That contract, which was to include the construction of the 500-foot Third Crossing bridge, a smaller bridge over Riley Creek, and a railroad underpass, called for construction of that segment to be complete by the end of the 1968 construction season.[276]

Throughout this period, local residents—both park staff and those living outside the park—were well aware that the new road, when completed, would result in significant new traffic levels; this traffic, in turn, would bring new business opportunities. For the moment, however, traffic levels remained low, and the lack of economic opportunity meant that only a rugged few chose to settle outside of the park boundaries. Before the Denali Highway opened between Cantwell and the park in August 1957, only six people had filed for land along this stretch of road,[277] and the only area business that catered to travelers' needs was the Cantwell store, located near the Alaska Railroad tracks (see Appendix E). But the highway brought with it a renewed interest in the road corridor; by 1965, there had been 24 additional filings along the road corridor north of Cantwell, and by the end of the decade four tourist-related businesses had opened: Carlo Creek Lodge (1961), followed by a short-lived drive-in (1962), the Jere-A-Tad Lodge (1966), and Toklat Village (1967).[278]

Because a good road already existed from the eastern park entrance (at the Nenana River's second crossing bridge) south to Summit, in the Broad Pass area, highway crews working out of Cantwell had a relatively short distance—only about thirty miles—of roadless country to cross before completing the road as far as Hurricane Gulch. But there was also a short but difficult stretch of road to complete between Lignite and the Nenana River's third crossing bridge. By 1969, the road had been extended from Lignite to a point four miles south of Healy. South of there, however, progress stalled due to construction work on the spectacular Moody Bridge, also known as the fourth crossing bridge, which when completed would soar 174 feet over the Nenana River. Crews spent more than a year completing this bridge, and the final roadway link between Healy and the third crossing bridge (and thus between Fairbanks and Cantwell) was not completed until late 1970 or early 1971.[279] Meanwhile, in the area between the second crossing bridge and Summit, crews rebuilt bridges and widened the road surface. By 1971, crews from both ends of the road had reached Hurricane Gulch, located near the halfway point between Anchorage and Fairbanks. Crews working at that site finally completed the 550-foot-long, $1.2 million bridge late that year, and on October 14, 1971, dedication ceremonies were held at the bridge. The Anchorage-Fairbanks highway was officially open, and Anchorage-based buses that day carried dignitaries the full length of the new road. But because state highway crews did not plow the newly-completed portion of the road that winter, the coming snows soon closed the highway until springtime.[280]

NPS officials, who had been anticipating the road's completion for years, knew that the spring of 1972 would bring major changes to the park. The following chapter highlights the nature and extent of those changes.

[1] SMR, June 1957, 4; July 1957, 1-3.
[2] SMR, August 1957, 1-2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 7, 1957, 13.
[3] *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 7, 1957, 13.
[4] *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 19, 1957, 1, 9.
[5] "A New Road to Mount McKinley," *Sunset* 118 (June 1957), 52.
[6] NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1954-1964* (Washington?, the author, February 1966), 9; NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1960-1970* (Washington?, the author, January 1972), 9.
[7] *Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior*, 1955 (Washington, GPO?, 1955?), 334-36; *Annual Report* for 1956, p. 307; Carleton Knight III, "The Park Service as Client: II," *Architecture* 73 (December 1984), 48.
[8] G. Frank Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time:" The National Park Service and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980* (Denver, NPS, September 1985), 31; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 182.
[9] SMR, July 1955, 2; October 1955, 2; November 1955, 4; February 1956, 2; March 1956, 2; April 1956, 2.
[10] USDI press release, April 21, 1956, in NPS/Box 1, Bartlett Collection, UAF.
[11] *Jessen's Weekly*, March 28, 1957, 1, 8; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 21, 1956, 3.
[12] SMR, October 1948, 3.
[13] George L. Collins to "the Files," June 19, 1950, in "File 600: Alaska Development, Part IV," Box 237, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; SMR, September 1953, 4.
[14] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1956, 31; NPS, *Mission 66 Prospectus* for Mount McKinley NP, April 1956, 15, in NPS-TIC Microfiche Collection #184/MPNAR.
[15] ARC, *Annual Report*, 1953, 36, 40; 1954, 45; Grant Pearson to RD/R4, December 8, 1954, in "D18 (Master Plans) 1953-57" file, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[16] SMR, April 1955, photo; *Mission 66 Prospectus*, April 1956, 9; ARC, *Annual Report*, 1956, 12, 32.
[17] *Mission 66 Prospectus*, April 1956, 9-12, 15, 20.
[18] *Mission 66 Prospectus*, April 1956, 9-10, 12.
[19] *Mission 66*, April 1956 (with insert dated September 1956), 3a, 15; USDI press release, April 21, 1956, in NPS/Box 1, Bartlett Collection, UAF.
[20] *Mission 66 Prospectus*, April 1956, 16; NPS, Drawing McK-2024-B, May 1954, in TIC Aperture Card Collection. No known maps show where "Toklat Glacier" is located, and Guy Adema, the park's current glacier specialist, is unaware of it. Jane Bryant email, May 12, 2006.
[21] SMR, April 1956, 2; June 1956, 2; July 1956, 2.
[22] SMR, December 1956, 2, 4; June 1957, 3; July 1957, 3, 5; *Mission 66 Prospectus*, April 1956, 12 (insert dated April 12, 1957).
[23] SMR, May 1957, 6.
[24] *Mission 66 Prospectus*, April 1956, 11 (insert dated April 12, 1957).
[25] NPS, *Mission 66 for Mount McKinley National Park*, May 23, 1957.
[26] SMR, February 1958, 5; March 1958, 5; April 1958, 4; July 1960, 5; July 1961, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, April 11, 1958, 12; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 12, 1958, 16.
[27] See E. T. Scoyen to Tony Smith, August 12, 1958, in File D30, "Mission 66 Road Issues" folder, DENA Archives; SMR, March 1961, 5.
[28] SMR, May 1957, 5; June 1957, 6; September 1957, 5-6.
[29] SMR, September 1957, 2, 6; October 1957, 5; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 172-75.
[30] SMR, October 1957, 2; December 1957, 3; January 1958, 4; February 1958, 4; June 1958, 5; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 18, 1958, 5.
[31] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 175-76; SMR, July 1956, 1; March 1957, 6; May 1957, 2; July 1957, 2; September 1957, 2, 7; February 1958, 5; August 1958, 5.
[32] SMR, September 1958, 5; July 1959, 6; February 1960, 5.
[33] SMR, September 1960, 5; August 1964, 8; September 1966,4.
[34] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 19; SMR, January 1959, 4; March 1959, 3; April 1959, 4; August 1959, 7.
[35] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 177-78.
[36] SMR, May 1959, 3; June 1965, 2; April 1966, 4.
[37] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 179; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 20.
[38] SMR, March 1954, 2; May 1954, 1.
[39] SMR, May 1933, 1, 3; May 1934, 3; May 1935, 2; May 1936, 1; August 1959, 3.
[40] SMR, May 1961, 7; June 1961, 3.
[41] SMR, September 1961, 2, 5; July 1963, 5; "Denali Airstrip" folder, FAA Airports Division historical files, Anchorage.
[42] "Crooked Creek (Kantishna)" folder, FAA, see above.

[43] "Golden North Airfield" folder, FAA, see above.
[44] SMR, August 1966, 4. The "Kantishna" FAA file, paradoxically, makes no mention of Kantishna Airport improvements; by contrast, periodic reports during the 1964-68 period describe the runway as being either 476 feet or 630 feet long and "not recommended for use."
[45] SMR, June 1953, 2; July 1953, 5.
[46] Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 547-49; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 117.
[47] SMR, June 1960, 8.
[48] SMR, February 1962, 5; March 1962, 6; NPS, "Lodge Development" (drawing 3139), March 1962, NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[49] Harvey Benson to Supervisory Landscape Architect, WODC, July 9-15, 1957, in Misc. File., Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[50] NPS, "Proposed Wonder Lake Lodge, MOMC" (drawing 3145, August 1963, and drawing 3145A, February 1967), NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[51] Supt. to RD, December 7, 1961; Chief, WODC to RD, December 11, 1961, both in Folder 5837, Bill Brown Collection, DENA. This location had first been suggested by NPS architect Harvey Benson in July 1957; see Benson to Supervisory Landscape Architect, WODC, July 9-15, 1957, noted above.
[52] In a 1951 exchange of letters with NPS Director Conrad Wirth, even Wilderness Society President Olaus Murie supported the idea of a small hostelry in the Wonder Lake area, although the NPS had also "received several letters objecting to the building of any lodge at Wonder Lake." Wirth to Murie, November 28, 1951, in File 715.02, "Bears, 1941-5/1953," Box 82, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[53] Chief, WODC to RD/R4, December 11, 1961, in "Wonder Lake Hotel Issue" folder, DENA Administrative History Collection; Stroud, *History of the Concessions*, 24.
[54] See, for example, the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, June 1962, 16, which argued that the park's unique "wilderness mood" would be shattered by developments at either "Camp Eielson" or Wonder Lake. The NPS official in the December 11 memo did not name the "conservation people" who were opposed to Wonder Lake development. In all likelihood, however, they included Camp Denali founders Ginny Hill Wood and Celia Hunter. These women helped establish the Alaska Conservation Society in 1960, and because Wonder Lake was squarely in the line of sight between Camp Denali and the central Alaska Range, it would have been surprising had they not fought against a competing, visually-intrusive hotel development.
[55] RD to Director, December 20, 1961; Conrad Wirth to Howard Zahniser, April 3, 1962; all in "Wonder Lake Hotel Issue" folder, DENA Admin History Collection.
[56] Supt. to RD/R4, November 24, 1964, in "Wonder Lake Hotel Issue" folder.
[57] Henry S. Francis, Jr., "Some Views Concerning the Development of Mount McKinley National Park," *National Parks Magazine* 37 (September 1963), 18; Director NPS to Director BLM (Charles H. Stoddard), December 31, 1964, in "Wonder Lake Hotel Issue" folder. Hartzog may have based his decision on the so-called Leopold Report, an agencywide blueprint issued in 1963, which had recommended an increased role for natural resource values in park management.
[58] SMR, July 1966, 6; NPS, "Proposed Boundary and Development Sites, Wonder Lake and Vicinity, MOMC" (drawing 184/40098), August 1966, NPS-TIC Aperture Card Collection; San Francisco Service Center (NPS), "Conclusions and Recommendations, McKinley National Park Study," in "MOMC Study, Alaska, August 1966" folder, MOMC Box 2, National Parks and Monuments Collection, HFC.
[59] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 22.
[60] Edgar Wayburn, interview by the author, July 29, 2003, author's collection; Edgar Wayburn, with Allison Alsup, *Your Land and Mine; Evolution of a Conservationist* (San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 2004), 176, 185.
[61] *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 28, 1967, 4; September 2, 1967, 4; September 6, 1967, 1.
[62] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 8, 1967, 1-2; September 12, 1967, 4; September 15, 1967, 1.
[63] *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 13, 1968, 4; December 20, 1968, 4.
[64] Supt. MOMC to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, August 26, 1968, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[65] Robert B. Weeden to George A. Hall, October 8, 1967, in File 882, 1967-68, Series 41, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 3, 1968, 1; July 24, 1968, 1; Merrill Mattes, "Field Notes by Mount McKinley Master Plan Team, 1968," 17, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[66] *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 16, 1981, A-3; Michael Frome, "Why Not 'Denali National Wilderness'?" *Defenders* 61 (July/August 1986), 18.
[67] NPS, "Schematic, Wonder Lake, MOMC" (drawing #40096), ca. July 1, 1970, NPS-TIC Aperture Card Collection; Thomas Flynn (NPS) to Don Hummel, January 10, 1970, in Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 24-25, endnote 63.
[68] *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 18, 1968, 1.
[69] As noted in Claus-M. Naske's *Paving Alaska's Trails: The Work of the Alaska Road Commission*, Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 152 (Anchorage, AHC, ca. 1985, p. 320), the ARC was first administered by the

War Department, and after July 1932 by the Interior Department.

[70] Naske, *Paving Alaska's Trails*, 550; SMR, September 1959, 6; January 1960, 3; July 1960, 5.

[71] SMR, May 1958, 5; July 1958, 6; September 1958, 5-6, October 1958, 4; June 1959, 7; September 1959, 2; October 1959, 5.

[72] SMR, September 1959, 7; May 1960, 7; September 1960, 6; May 1961, 7; August 1961, 8.

[73] SMR, October 1960, 6; August 1961, 8; September 1961, 6; August 1962, 2.

[74] Olaus J. Murie, "Mount McKinley: Wilderness Park of the North Country," *National Parks Magazine* 37 (April 1963), 7; Adoph Murie, "Roadbuilding in Mount McKinley National Park," *National Parks Magazine* 39 (July 1965), 7.

[75] Olaus J. Murie, "Our Farthest North National Park," *National Parks Magazine* 33 (December 1959), 8-10, 12.

[76] Merriam to Murie, October 14, 1960, in File D18; A. Clark Stratton to Verne Samuelson, August 21, 1962, in File D30; both in "Mission 66 Road Issues" folder, DENA Admin History Collection. Stratton was the NPS's Assistant Director for Design and Construction.

[77] Murie, "Mount McKinley; Wilderness Park," 5; Paul M. Tilden and Nancy L. Machler, "The Development of Mount McKinley National Park," *National Parks Magazine* 37 (May 1963), 13.

[78] Tilden and Machler, "The Development of Mount McKinley National Park," 14; Anthony Wayne Smith, "Implications of McKinley," *National Parks Magazine* 37 (June 1963), 2.

[79] A. Clark Stratton to Director NPS, June 17, 1963, in File D30, in "Mission 66 Road Issues" folder, DENA Admin History Collection. Compare this with Thomas E. Carpenter to Regional Chief of Operations, Region Four, July 6, 1961, in File D30, above.

[80] SMR, June 1964, 8; July 1964, 9; May 1965, 6; August 1965, 5; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 1, 1964, 4; July 3, 1964, 5.

[81] SMR, October 1965, 4; May 1966,5; July 1966, 8; August 1966, 7; *Anchorage Daily News*, August 14, 1965, 16.

[82] William Niemi to Oscar Dick, January 10, 1964; Niemi to Dick, August 26, 1965; both in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1950 to 1965" folder, DENA Archives; NPS, MOMC "Priority List, Project Construction Program, Fiscal Year 1969," March 17, 1965, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[83] Murie, "Roadbuilding in Mount McKinley National Park," 4-8.

[84] Acting Chief, Western Office of Design and Construction to Assistant Director, Design and Construction, September 17, 1965; Acting AD, D&C to Chief, WODC, September 27, 1965 and October 4, 1965; both in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1950 to 1965" folder, DENA Archives.

[85] Jensen to Thomas Braden, October 11, 1965, and Jensen to Mr. and Mrs. Bob Knox, November 3, 1965; both in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1950 to 1965" folder, DENA Archives.

[86] Krueger to William Niemi, September 16, 1965, in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1950 to 1965" folder, DENA Archives.

[87] Krueger to E. R. Walter, February 2, 1966, in"D30 Roads and Trails, 1950 to 1965" folder, DENA Archives.

[88] Acting Chief, WODC to Assistant Director, Design and Construction, January 21, 1966; Supt. Dick to Peter Doyle III, September 1, 1966; Acting Supt. Robert T. Hafferman to RD/WR, August 16, 1967; all in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1950 to 1965" folder, DENA Archives.

[89] SMR, July 1966, 8; August 1966, 7; April 1967, 5; May 1967, 7; July 1967, 2; SAR, 1967, 1; *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 17, 1967, 2; May 29, 1967, 12; June 3, 1967, 7.

[90] Charles E. Krueger to G. M. Williams, September 16, 1966; Williams to W. J. Niemi, September 22, 1966, in "S7217 Roads and Trails Project NP1A6-C" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[91] George Hall to Ed Walters, August 22, 1968; H. G. Tipton to Hall, August 27, 1968; Hall to Tipton, September 9, 1968; Tipton to Hall, September 13, 1968; all in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1966 to 1969" folder, DENA Archives.

[92] *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 28, 1968.

[93] Edward Walter to H. G. Tipton, September 5, 1968; BPR, "Notice to Prospective Bidders," March 10, 1969; both in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1966 to 1969" folder, DENA Archives.

[94] John Bartlett, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, fifteenth edition (Boston, Little Brown, 1980), 560; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, revised edition (1967), 187, 207.

[95] Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 56-58, 142-45; John C. Hendee, George H. Stankey, and Robert C. Lucas, *Wilderness Management*, second edition (Golden, Colo., North American Press, 1990), 32-33, 39, 102.

[96] Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 201-02; Hendee, et al., 39.

[97] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 209-19, 228. The victory was precedent-setting in that it was the first time in which conservationists had stopped a major dam project. But the bill's passage was also a sober compromise, because the same legislation set the wheels in motion for the construction of the huge (and controversial) Glen Canyon Dam. Construction of the dam began on October 15, 1956; on January 21, 1963, the gates closed on the newly-completed dam closed and Lake Powell began to form.

[98] On June 7, Humphrey and nine other senators introduced S. 4103, while four days later, Saylor introduced H.R. 11703. *Congressional Record* 102, pp. 9749, 9772-77, 10076.

[99] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 221; Steven C. Schulte, *Wayne Aspinall and the Shaping of the American West* (Boulder, Univ. Press of Colorado, 2002), 116-17; John P. Saylor, "Wilderness: The Outlook from Capitol Hill," in David Brower, ed., *Wilderness, America's Living Heritage* (San Francisco, Sierra Club, 1961), 147-51.

[100] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 221.

[101] *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 31, 1956, 9; Hubert H. Humphrey, "The Wilderness Bill," *Living Wilderness* 21 (Winter 1956-Spring 1957), 22, 29-31. The bills introduced in 1956 and 1957 stated that the new wilderness preservation system "shall include" areas within Mount McKinley and the other delineated public land areas. The specific wilderness areas within these units, however, would be delineated during the 10-year period that followed the act's passage.

[102] Olaus J. Murie, "Return to Denali," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 38 (October 1953), 29-34. The only known instance prior to 1956 when NPS officials weighed in on a wilderness-related issue was in 1949, when Bradford Washburn urged Acting Superintendent Grant Pearson to approve the recommendation of naming a previously-unnamed Alaska Range peak after Joe Crosson, the pioneer pilot who had recently died. Pearson, in response, "object[ed] to naming any more mountains in this park unless there is an excellent reason. This is one of the few NPS areas that are really wilderness areas." SMR, September 1949, 3.

[103] NPS, *Mission 66 Prospectus*, April 1956, 2.

[104] Adolph Murie, "Comments on Mission 66 Plans, and on Policies Pertaining to Mount McKinley National Park," November 8, 1956, in "H14 Historical Notes, 1964-70" folder, Box 7, ARCC-00183, AKRO.

[105] Supt. MOMC to Biologist Adolph Murie, November 15, 1956, in "H14 Historical Notes" folder, above.

[106] NPS, *Mission 66 for Mount McKinley National Park*, May 13, 1957, 2-3.

[107] USGS Power Site Classification 443, February 13, 1958, in *Federal* Register 23 (February 21, 1958), 1124. This order was withdrawn many years later; see Public Land Order 7033, March 2, 1994, as noted in *Federal Register* 59 (March 10, 1994), 11196.

[108] U.S. Dept. of the Interior, *Alaska; A Reconnaissance Report on the Potential Development of Water Resources in the Territory of Alaska for Irrigation, Power Production and Other Beneficial Uses*, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, House Document 197 (January 1952), p. 18a, 171.

[109] *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, November 19, 1953, 126; March 30, 1957, 1; August 27, 1960, 4; September 13, 1960, 1, 9; U.S. Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Hydroelectric Requirements and Resources in Alaska* (Washington, GPO, 1961), 51-53; APG, *Mt. McKinley Park Additions FES*, October 1974, 111-15.

[110] Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 192-93.

[111] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 30, 70.

[112] Schulte, *Wayne Aspinall*, 116-61; also see, for example, the following *Anchorage Times* articles; July 30, 1962, 4; July 31, 6; August 4, 1962, 8.

[113] Schulte, *Wayne Aspinall*, 146, 158, 160-61.

[114] Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 194, 211-14; *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 21, 1964, 24.

[115] *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 16, 1964, 1.

[116] *Ibid*.

[117] NPS, *Wilderness Act Implementation, Report of Recommendations, Mount McKinley National Park* (part of NPS, *Master Plan Brief for Mount McKinley National Park)*, October 1965; Sigurd F. Olson to George Hartzog, January 24, 1966, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily News*, July 13, 1966, 5.

[118] Adolph Murie, "A McKinley Park Boundary Adjustment" (typescript), ca. 1966, pp. 7-8; Jacobs to Olaus J. Murie, January 15, 1957; both in top drawer, informational file cabinet, DENA Archives.

[119] *United States Statutes at Large* 72 (July 7, 1958), pp. 339, 347. The remainder of Section 11(a) addressed the State of Alaska's rights at the park regarding civil or criminal processes, taxation, and voting.

[120] [Richard] Stenmark to Supt. MOMC, January 17, 1963, in File L1417 (Acquisition of Lands; Boundary Adjustments), Box 12, Alaska Task Force Collection, RG 79, NARA ANC.

[121] *Ibid*.

[122] Sigurd F. Olson to Secretary of the Interior and Director NPS, ca. March 2, 1964, in "Miscellaneous" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; William A. Egan to E. L. Bartlett, December 4, 1963, in File 382 (1959-66), Series 41, RG 01, ASA.

[123] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time"*, 35-41; NPS, *Operation Great Land; Alaska Task Force Report* (Washington, the author, January 1965), 37. The lead author was George L. Collins; other members of the task force included Sigurd F. Olson, Robert S. Luntey, Doris F. Leonard and John M. Kauffmann.

[124] Supt. to RD, November 24, 1964, in "Wonder Lake Hotel Issue" folder, DENA Administrative History Collection.

[125] Frances, "Some Views Concerning the Development of Mount McKinley National Park," 18; Edward A. Hummel to Director NPS, December 1, 1964, and Director NPS to Director BLM, December 31, 1964, both in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 201.

[126] Ross A. Youngblood to Gov. William A. Egan, May 21, 1965, in File 311.1 (1964-65), Series 41, RG 01, ASA; James A. McWilliams to Rep. Ralph J. Rivers, September 13, 1965, in File 311.1 (1965-68), Series 41, RG 01, ASA; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 4, 1965, 7.

[127] BLM Application, April 30, 1965, in File F-034575, BLM Alaska State Office, Anchorage; BLM, Fairbanks District and Land Office, "Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Reservation of Lands," May 7, 1965, in File 311.1 (1964-65), Series 41, RG 01, ASA; *Federal Register* 30 (May 13, 1965), p. 6593.

[128] See William A. Egan to Frank P. Bonnell, October 15, 1965, and other letters, all in File 311.1 (1964-65 and 1965-68), Series 41, RG 01, ASA.

[129] BLM, "Notice of Proposed Withdrawal," May 7, 1965; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 4, 1965, 7; SMR, December 1965, 2; March 1966, 2.

[130] George Hartzog to E. L. Bartlett, June 6, 1966, in File F-034575, BLM Alaska State Office, Anchorage; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 8, 1966, 1-2; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, June 13, 1966, 4.

[131] Ernest D. Black (BLM) to Wayne Merry (MOMC), May 21, 1969, in File F-034575 (see above).

[132] "Trip Report by Stanley A. Cain, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Accompanying the Advisory Board on National Parks, Buildings, Historic Sites and Monuments on its Annual Field Trip – July 30 to August 10, 1965, in Alaska," pp. 6-8, in NPS Box 2 (1965-68), E. L. Bartlett Collection, UAF.

[133] George B. Hartzog to RD/WR and Chief, WODC, March 22, 1965, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[134] A discussion of Pearson's, Cahalane's, and the other plans are included in a document that Headquarters district ranger Eldon Reyer compiled in July 1966; see Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives. Also see Adolph Murie, "A McKinley Park Boundary Adjustment," October 18, 1965, in top drawer, informational file cabinet, DENA Archives.

[135] Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo #4 to Stewart L. Udall, September 20, 1965, in File 881 (State Parks, 1964-68), Series 41, RG 01, ASA.

[136] Celia M. Hunter and Ginny Hill Wood to BLM and NPS, September 27, 1965, in File 311.1 (1964-65), Series 41, RG 01, ASA.

[137] Western Office, Design and Construction, NPS, "Management Programs: Land, part of the Master Plan, Mount McKinley National Park" (Drawing NP-McK 3202), January 1966, in NPS Aperture Card Collection.

[138] SMR, July 1966, 6; Theodor R. Swem to Chief, Resource Planning, SSC, June 24, 1966, in "Windy Creek Area" file, Box 3, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; NPS, "Mount McKinley National Monument (South Unit-Development Plan)," 1968, in "Mt. McKinley – Briefing Book Proclamations, 1968-69" folder, DENA Archives.

[139] San Francisco Service Center, "Mount McKinley National Park Study, Alaska, August 1966," in MOMC Box 2, HFC; NPS, "Mount McKinley National Monument (South Unit-Development Plan)," 1968, see above; Alaska Department of Natural Resources, "Land Administration System" (website). These records show that the State of Alaska applied for most of the land within present-day Denali State Park in August 1965 and gained tentative approval (i.e., de facto ownership) for it in 1966 or 1967.

[140] Supt. MOMC to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, August 26, 1968, File D18, DENA Archives.

[141] Melville B. Grosvenor (Chairman, Advisory Board) to Secretary of the Interior, April 19, 1967, in MOMC Box 1, HFC. Anchorage newspapers carried only vaguely-worded summations of the Advisory Board's recommendations; see *Anchorage Daily News*, May 8, 1967, 1, and *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 9, 1967, 16.

[142] *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 9, 1967, 2; George B. Hartzog to Walter J. Hickel, December 7, 1967, in File 882.1 (1967-68), Series 41, RG 01, ASA

[143] NPS, "The National Park Service Program in Alaska," October 10, 1967, in "NPS Interest in Alaska – Pre-ANILCA," Box B', Frank Williss Collection, HFC.

[144] Frank Norris, *Legacy of the Gold Rush: An Administrative History of Klondike Gold National Historical Park* (Anchorage, NPS, 1996), 84.

[145] C. Gordon Fredine to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, June 17, 1968; Merrill Mattes, "Field Notes by Mount McKinley Master Plan Team, 1968," ii; both in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; George B. Hartzog to Walter J. Hickel, December 7, 1967, in File 882.1 (1967-68), Series 41, RG 01, ASA; Robert B. Weeden (Alaska Conservation Society) to George A. Hall, October 8, 1967, also in File 882.1, above.

[146] Mattes, "Field Notes by Mount McKinley Master Plan Team, 1968," ii, 1-2, 18, 21. Outside interests were also interested in a park expansion; see Kenneth A. Chambers, "Mount McKinley National Park," *National Parks Magazine* 42 (September 1968), 9.

[147] The first acreage figures attached to the planned expansions did not appear until December 1968, when it appeared as part of a planned Antiquities Act expansion proposal (see following section). Inasmuch as these acreages are the direct result of the master planning process, it appears that the South Unit's new acreage was a more fine-tuned calculation of the master plan acreage than any new acreage added after the completion of

the master plan. "Mount McKinley National Monument, Alaska," December 1968, in "Mt. McKinley – Briefing Book Proclamations, 1968-69" file, DENA Archives.

[148] Mattes, "Field Notes by Mount McKinley Master Plan Team, 1968," 2, 23.

[149] James H. Husted, *History of the Johnson Proclamations, 1968-69*, September 21, 1970, 1, in "Johnson Proclamations" file, Box B', Williss Collection, HFC.

[150] Husted, *History of the Johnson Proclamations*, 2.

[151] "Priority of Alaska Areas," October 2, 1968, in "NPS Interest in Alaska – Pre-ANILCA" folder, Box B', Williss Collection, HFC; "Mount McKinley National Monument, Alaska, Special Considerations," October 2, 1968, in "Mt. McKinley – Briefing Book Proclamations, 1968-69" file, DENA Archives; Husted, *History of the Johnson Proclamations*, 3; Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 121, 138-39.

[152] Husted, *History of the Johnson Proclamations*, 4-10.

[153] *Ibid.*, 10-14.

[154] Department of the Interior, "Mount McKinley National Monument Established in Alaska" (news release), January 18, 1969; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 18, 1969, 1.

[155] Husted, *History of the Johnson Proclamations*, 14-15; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 20, 1969, 1.

[156] "707 Statement by the President Upon Signing Five Proclamations Adding Lands to the National Park System, January 20, 1969," in *Public Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson*, in American Reference Library, located in MasterFile Premier database, Ebsco Host.

[157] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 20, 1969, 1.

[158] *Congressional Record* 115 (May 19, 1969), 12957; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 5, 1969, 26; Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 44, footnote 114; "National Park Service Proposals in Alaska" [1970], in "NPS Interest in Alaska – Pre-ANILCA" folder, Box B', Williss Collection, HFC. The *Times* article noted that there were 2,334,397 acres in the two proposed park units, which was approximately 130,000 acres greater than noted in the 1968 master plan.

[159] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 12, 1968, 7; September 14, 1967, 4.

[160] Cresap, McCormick and Paget, *A Program for Increasing the Contribution of Tourism to the Alaskan Economy*, December 1968, "Planning Considerations" and "Contributions to the Alaskan Economy" sections.

[161] Alaska Department of Natural Resources, "Land Administration System" (website) records for T33N, 2W, Seward Meridian; Cresap, McCormick and Paget, *A Program*, December 1968, "Planning Considerations" section.

[162] *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 18, 1968, 1-2; December 20, 1968, 4; Leonard J. Hansen to Walter J. Hickel, December 20, 1968, in File NR 1-2, Series 88 (1969), RG 01, ASA.

[163] Bradford Washburn to Leonard J. Hansen, July 18, 1968, in File NR 1-2 (1969), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily News*, April 19, 1980, A-1. According to a study written by HKS Associates (*Tokositna, A Development Study for the State of Alaska*, February 1981, p. 1), Washburn had first conceived of the idea of a recreational and cultural facility at the site in 1951.

[164] Legislative Reporting Service, *Report for the Sixth Alaska Legislature, 2nd Session*, 1970, p. 161; *Alaska Senate Journal*, January 15, 1970, 26-27.

[165] Legislative Reporting Service, *Report for the Sixth Alaska Legislature*, 1970, pp. 302, 468, 545, 580, 593.

[166] *Session Laws of Alaska*, 1970, Chapter No. 233.

[167] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 20, 1969, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, December 2, 1970, 1; *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 2, 1970, 2; December 5, 1970, 42; *Anchorage Daily News*, January 7, 1971, 1; Director, Pacific Northwest Region [NPS] to State Director, BLM, November 17, 1970 (Stenmark draft), in "McKinley Land Additions (South)" folder, Stenmark Collection, HFC.

[168] Fred J. Russell to Governor Egan, December 31, 1970, in File NR 1-2 (1971), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

[169] *Anchorage Daily News*, January 6, 1971, 1-2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 6, 1971, 13.

[170] *Anchorage Daily News*, January 7, 1971, 1-2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 14, 1971, 16.

[171] *Congressional Record* 117 (January 22, 1971), 197; William Egan to Rogers C. B. Morton, February 2, 1971; Charles F. Herbert to Rep. Nick Begich, March 18, 1971, both in File NR 1-2 (1971), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

[172] Richard G. Prasil to Director, Pacific Northwest Region, October 7, 1971; Richard J. Stenmark to Gerald Patton, October 29, 1971, both in "McKinley Land Additions (South)" folder; "Mount McKinley National Park and Proposed Extension, Alaska" (map), in "Mount McKinley Maps" folder; all in Stenmark Collection, HFC.

[173] Anthony Dimond to Arno Cammerer, March 14, 1938; Cammerer to Dan Kennedy, April 19, 1938; Cammerer to Dimond, April 19, 1938; all in Folder 303-13 ("Claims-Kennedy"), Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; "Affidavit of Dan T. Kennedy in Support of His Claim vs. U.S. Government, Mt. McKinley National Park," April 1939, in File 06-113 ("DT-3, DENA, Dan Kennedy"), AKRO Lands Division.

[174] Kennedy to Cammerer, March 9, 1939; Cammerer to Kennedy, March 21, 1939; Kennedy to Cammerer, April 3, 1939; Dimond to Cammerer, August 14, 1939; John R. White to Dimond, August 26, 1939; all in Folder 303-13, noted above.

[175] Harry J. Liek to "Regional Director Kittredge," November 16, 1938, in File 610 ("Mt. McKinley NP Private Lands"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[176] *Congressional Record* 87 (January 3, 1941), 23; Frank Been to Director NPS, March 27, 1941; A. E. Demaray to Supt. MOMC, April 21, 1941; all in Folder 303-13, noted above.
[177] Been to RD/R4, May 1, 1941; B. F. Manbey to Director NPS, June 2, 1941; Herbert Maier to Joseph E. Taylor, June 27, 1941; all in File 610 ("Stubbs and Kennedy, Part 1"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[178] Liek to Kittredge, November 16, 1938, in File 610 ("Mt. McKinley NP Private Lands"), noted above; Manbey to Director NPS, June 2, 1941, in File 610 ("Stubbs and Kennedy, Part 1"), noted above; Francis S. Ronalds to RD/R1, September 5, 1945, in Box 1, John Wise Alaska Collection, HFC.
[179] Charles L. Peterson to Director NPS, September 30, 1946, in File 610 ("Stubbs and Kennedy, Part 1"), noted above; SMR, September 1946, 1.
[180] SMR, May 1948, 3; July 1948, 2-3.
[181] J. P. Johnson to O. A. Tomlinson, August 15, 1950, in File 610 ("Stubbs and Kennedy, Part 1"), noted above; Conrad Wirth to Rep. Henry M. Jackson, July 10, 1953, in File 06-113, noted above.
[182] Mastin G. White to The Attorney General, June 26, 1951, in File 06-113, noted above.
[183] A. Devitt Vanech to Mastin G. White, September 17, 1951, in File 610 ("Stubbs and Kennedy, Part 1"), noted above; Francis S. Ronalds to RD/R1, September 5, 1945, in Box 1, John Wise Alaska Collection, HFC; U.S. District Court, 4th Judicial Division, *USA v. 40 Acres of Land* ... (No. 6885 Civil), "Judgment as to Tract 'B'," February 24, 1956, in File 06-113, noted above.
[184] By late 1951, Kennedy and Glassberg—the latter the managing editor of the *Everett Daily Herald*—shared half-interests in the property; Kennedy, however, remained the owner of record.
[185] Henry M. Jackson to Conrad Wirth, November 21, 1951; Wirth to Jackson, December 4, 1951; all in File 610 ("Stubbs and Kennedy, Part 1"), noted above.
[186] Wirth to Attorney General, March 7, 1952; Glassberg to Wirth, February 16, 1953; Wirth to Glassberg, February 27, 1953; all in File 610 ("Stubbs and Kennedy, Part II"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; SMR, December 1952, 1; April 1953, 1.
[187] "Judgment as to Tract 'B'," February 24, 1956; Wirth to Jackson, July 10, 1953; both in File 06-113, noted above.
[188] U.S. District Court, 3rd Judicial Division, *USA v. 40 acres of Land*... (No. A-12,883 Civil), "Opinion," March 6, 1958, in File 06-113, noted above; SMR, January 1958, 2; February 1958, 3; *Federal Supplement* 160 (1958), pp. 30-34.
[189] *Federal Supplement* 162 (1958), pp. 939-42.
[190] Perry W. Morton to Elmer F. Bennett, September 18, 1958; Jackson E. Price to Assistant Solicitor, National Parks, October 2, 1958; Elmer T. Fritz, October 8, 1958; Morton to Fritz, October 14, 1958; all in File 06-113, noted above.
[191] Herbert Maier to Director NPS, February 19, 1960; Maier to Director, February 29, 1960; both in File 06-113, noted above; SMR, August 1959, 6.
[192] U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, *USA v. Dan T. Kennedy* (No. 16,179), April 13, 1960, in File 06-113, noted above, and in *Federal Reporter*, 2nd Series, vol. 278, pp. 121-27.
[193] U.S. District Court, District of Alaska, *USA v. 40 Acres of Land*... (No. 12,883 Civil), February 3, 1961, in File 06-113, noted above.
[194] Samuel A. King to RD/R4, February 9, 1961; Harry K. Sanders to Finance Officer, March 10, 1961; both in File 06-113, noted above; SMR, January 1961, 4; February 1961, 2, 4; March 1961, 4.
[195] H.S. Simpson to E.L. Bartlett, July 1, 1946; Newton Drury to Bartlett, July 13, 1946; both in File 610 ("John Stephens: 1941-5/19/53"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.
[196] *Congressional Record* 79 (1936), pp. 4146, 4643.
[197] E.K. Burlew to Dan R. McGehee, October 13, 1941; H.S. Simpson to E.L. Bartlett, July 1, 1946; both in File 610 (Stephens), noted above.
[198] Drury to Bartlett, July 13, 1946, in File 610 (Stephens), noted above; *Congressional Record* 81 (January 5, 1937), 57.
[199] Oscar L. Chapman to Anthony J. Dimond, May 27, 1941, in File 610 (Stephens), noted above.
[200] Burlew to McGehee, October 13, 1941, in File 610 (Stephens), noted above.
[201] Drury to Bartlett, July 13, 1946, in File 610 (Stephens), noted above; Peterson, *Mount McKinley National Park Development Outline* (1946), 7.
[202] Simpson to Pearson, May 6, 1947; Charles L. Peterson to Simpson, June 3, 1947; both in File 610 (Stephens), noted above.
[203] Hillory Tolson to Simpson, July 25, 1947; Tolson to Simpson, August 11, 1947; both in File 610 (Stephens), noted above.
[204] George L. Collins to Files, June 19, 1950, in File 600 ("Alaska Development," Part IV), Box 237, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA CP.

[205] SMR, July 1961, 7; August 1961, 7; September 1961, 5.
[206] SMR, November 1961, 4; February 1962, 3; March 1962, 4.
[207] SMR, March 1962, 2; November 1962, 2; May 1963, 4. *U.S.A. v. 133.76 Acres of Land...* (Civil No. F-45-62), Stipulation, March 25, 1963; Attorney General to Stewart L. Udall, May 29, 1963; both in File "01-101, DT-5, Minnie J. Simpson, et al.," AKRO Lands Division files.
[208] SMR, October 1956, 1; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 213-15.
[209] Jan Dick, telephone interview with the author, October 27, 2004.
[210] George Hall, interview with the author, Anchorage, December 13, 1996.
[211] Scott Ruesch, telephone interview with the author, October 21, 2004; Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenk, *Creating the National Park Service; the Missing Years* (Norman, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 241-44.
[212] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time"*, 42.
[213] SMR, December 1965, 2; January 1966, 2; April 1966, 2, 4; July 1966, 2; October 1966, 2; January 1967, 1; Supt. MOMC to RD/WR, August 3, 1966, in Jane Bryant (DENA) files. Harry Smith preceded Breedlove as park planner; he served in Anchorage from February through June 1966.
[214] George Hall, interview with the author, February 4, 1997; NPS, *Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials* (Washington, D.C., the author, May 1991), 56.
[215] Scott Ruesch interview, October 21, 2004; Daniel Kuehn, interview with the author, October 11, 2004.
[216] SMR, March 1958, 5; June 1958, 6; December 1958, 5; January 1959, photo.
[217] SMR, November 1959, 3; February 1960, 5; April 1960, 4; May 1963, 4; May 1964, 4.
[218] SMR, May 1967, 7.
[219] SMR, March 1965, 4.
[220] SMR, August 1957, photo; October 1957, 4; January 1958, 1.
[221] SMR, May 1959, 5; June 1959, 5; July 1959, 4, photo; June 1960, 3, 6; October 1960, 3; May 1961, 6.
[222] SMR, October 1962, 2; August 1965, 2.
[223] SMR, June 1958, 6; September 1958, 6; June 1959, 7; City of Anchorage and Vicinity, *Telephone Directory*, March 1960, 43.
[224] SMR, October 1958, 2; May 1959, 6; July 1959, 7; August 1959, 8; September 1959, 7.
[225] SMR, May 1960, 2, 7; June 1960, 9; July 1960, 7; August 1960, 2, 8; September 1960, 6-7; October 1960, 6; November 1960, 4; December 1960, 5; January 1961, 6.
[226] SMR, May 1961, 7; July 1961, 8; August 1961, 8; September 1961, 3; October 1961, 4; September 1962, 7.
[227] SMR, November 1960, 4; December 1960, 2; February 1961, 5.
[228] SMR, April 1961, 5; May 1961, 7; June 1961, 9; July 1961, 8; August 1961, 8; October 1961, 4; November 1961, 6; December 1961, 4.
[229] SMR, October 1965, 2-3; December 1965, 3; September 1966, 6; November 1966, 4; May 1967, 7; *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 9, 1967, 12.
[230] SMR, October 1957, 6; July 1958, 5; July 1959, 7; August 1959, 7.
[231] SMR, July 1963, 5; June 1964, 6; NPS Map 2024-B (September 1953), Map 2024-D (December 1959), and Map 2013-B (January 1967), NPS Aperture Card Collection; *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 9, 1967, 12; May 20, 1971, 70.
[232] SMR, June 1961, 5-6; August 1961, 6; September 1962, 7.
[233] SMR, June 1964, 6; July 1964, 9; NPS, MOMC "Priority List, Project Construction Program, Fiscal Year 1969," March 17, 1965; Dick to Regional Director, July 26, 1965; Raymond O. Mulvany to Superintendents, Western Region, January 12, 1966, all in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 14, 1966, 16.
[234] *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 9, 1967, 12; SAR, 1967, 1; NPS Drawing 41098, February 1967; NPS Drawing 40002, July 1, 1970, both in NPS Aperture Card Collection; *Milepost*, issues of 1968 (p. 305), 1969 (p. 317), 1970 (p. 347), and 1971 (p. 407); Jane Bryant email, November 4, 2005.
[235] NPS, Drawing MOMC-2013-B, January 1967, in NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[236] SMR, May 1945, 2; Grant Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 192.
[237] SMR, September 1946, 3; March 1947, 3.
[238] See, for example, the following SMRs: November 1951, 4; March 1958, 3; March 1960, 3; October 1961, 2; December 1964, 3; December 1966, 2.
[239] SMR, October 1960, 5; November 1960, 3; January 1962, 4; March 1963, 2; October 1963, 3.
[240] SMR, December 1942, 2; December 1958, 3; August 1959, 6; October 1962, 3; January 1967, 2.
[241] SMR, April 1944, 2; December 1945, 2; January 1946, 2.
[242] SMR, November 1940, 5; August 1956, 1; June 1961, 5; May 1966, 3; July 1966, 4; January 1967, 1; May 1967, 3.
[243] SMR, November 1940, 5; January 1941, 4.
[244] Park staff kept several dogs at the park hotel during the years in which there were dog teams, but in September 1949 the last sled dog died, a 13-year-old named "Buck." SMR, May 1945, 2; April 1947, 3;

December 1947, 3; November 1948, 3; March 1949, 3; September 1949, 4; September 1950, 2; October 1950, 5.

[245] SMR, April 1952, 2.

[246] See the following SMRs: February 1953, 2, 4; April 1953, 2; December 1953, 3; March 1955, 2; March 1956, 3; October 1956, 3; February 1958, 3; November 1958, 3; January 1960, 3.

[247] See the following SMRs: December 1963, 3; January 1965, 3; October 1966, 2.

[248] See the following SMRs: August 1949, 3; October 1949, 4; August 1950, 4; September 1950, 4.

[249] SMR, October 1949, 3.

[250] SMR, August 1950, 4; February 1952, 1; May 1966, 3.

[251] SMR, January 1953, 3; September 1953, 5; August 1954, 4.

[252] As noted previously in this chapter, the BPR had assumed all ARC functions, both in the park and elsewhere in Alaska, during the summer of 1956. In the fall of 1959, road crews began to use the term "aufeis" rather than "glaciers," "overflow ice," and "spring-fed ice masses" which were used earlier.

[253] SMR, October 1959, 3-4; November 1959, 3; December 1959, 4; February 1960, 5; March 1960, 4; April 1960, 4-5; May 1960, 6-7.

[254] SMR, February 1961, 3; January 1962, 4; September 1963, 5; October 1964, 4.

[255] SMR, February 1966, 3; April 1966, 3; May 1967, 4.

[256] SMR, May 1960, 6; June 1964, 6; May 1966, 3; May 1967, 4.

[257] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 185, 191-92.

[258] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 245, 257-58; SMR, April 1966, 4; May 1966, 4; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 21; *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 13, 1966, 17.

[259] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 22.

[260] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 259-60; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 4, 1972, 2.

[261] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 260-61; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 26; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 22, 1970, 9; *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 18, 1970, 21.

[262] Ernest G. Scheuplein to Hickel, January 5, 1967; Hickel to Kenneth Wendel, June 1, 1967; H. J. Musiel to George Hartzog, April 2, 1968; all in File 882.1 (1967-68), Series 41, RG 01, ASA. Scheuplein, a hotel cook in 1966, noted that "there were times when the guests had to sleep in the lounge."

[263] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 26; *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 3, 1969, 2; December 5, 1969, 13; December 6, 1969, 24.

[264] *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 17, 1970, 13; May 15, 1970, 2; June 19, 1970, 4; July 9, 1970, 3; September 3, 1970, 8.

[265] Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 272-73, 289; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 27; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 4, 1972, 1.

[266] Alaska Road Commission, *Annual Report*, 1956, 12.

[267] Alaska Northwest, *The Milepost*, 1972 edition, 355; *Anchorage Daily News*, October 15, 1971, 2.

[268] *Anchorage Daily News*, September 4, 1962, 7; *Fairbanks News-Miner*, September 13, 1960, 9; SMR, May 1962, 6. In 1961, the U.S. Air Force had established Clear, a ballistic early warning site, just west of the newly-opened Nenana-Rex segment. Mary Carey, *An Auto Trip to Alaska's Shangri-La* (n.p., Tex-Alaska Press, 1989), 172.

[269] Carey, *An Auto Trip to Alaska's Shangri-La*, 59, 111, 116, 118, 125. The road connection to Talkeetna, located 14 miles from the main highway, was completed in 1965.

[270] Carey, *An Auto Trip to Alaska's Shangri-La*, 125, 127, 132, 133, 141; Carol Sik, "The '59'ers Prove Up!" *Alaska Sportsman* 33 (September 1967), 6-7; Alaska Northwest, *The Milepost*,(Anchorage, the author), 1970 edition, p. 338; 1971 edition, p. 416.

[271] As used in this section and elsewhere, the first Nenana River crossing is near Mile 216 of the Parks Highway, 6 miles north of the Denali Highway junction; the second crossing is at Mile 231, six miles south of the present-day park road junction; the third crossing is at Mile 238, less than one mile north of the park road junction; and the fourth crossing is at Mile 243, near the northeast corner of the "old park."

[272] NPS Drawing NP-McK-2024-D, approved October 20, 1961, in NPS Aperture Card Collection.

[273] SMR, February 1961, 5; March 1961, 2; May 1961, 7; July 1961, 8.

[274] SMR, August 1961, 3, 8; November 1961, 6; June 1962, 10.

[275] SMR, June 1963, 5; July 1963, 2, 5-7; November 1963, 4.

[276] SMR, September 1964, 6; September 1966, 5; April 1967, 5; SAR, 1965, 2.

[277] According to BLM land records, the six who filed were Morton Wood (July 1953), James Walper (August 1954), Willis Hardy (June 1955), William Nancarrow (April 1957), John Farleigh (July 1957), and Forest Hills, Inc. (July 1957). All but Wood and Walper later patented their claims; Wood, Hardy, and Nancarrow were NPS employees.

[278] The Carlo Creek Lodge, at Mile 223.9, had been homesteaded in May 1961 by Otto A. and Billie Stoepler, Jr.; the drive-in, at Mile 231.1, was located on land homesteaded by Forest Hills, Inc. in 1957; the Jere-A-Tad Lodge at Mile 224 had been homesteaded by Gerald L. Pollock in June 1963; and Toklat Village, also at Mile 231.1, was

on land that Gary and Linda Crabb had homesteaded in June 1959. The drive-in apparently operated for a single season, and Toklat Village shut down for several years before being replaced by the Mount McKinley Village development, but the Carlo Creek and Jere-A-Tad lodges remained open and are still active businesses. *Milepost*, issues of 1960 through 1969; BLM, Case Abstracts for AKF 023539, AKF 027673, and AKF 031373.

[279] Alaska Northwest, *The Milepost*, editions of 1970 (p. 398) and 1971 (p. 356).

[280] Carey, *An Auto Trip to Alaska's Shangri-La*, 141-42; *Anchorage Daily News*, October 14, 1971, 2; October 15, 1971, 2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 15, 1971, 2. Much of the Anchorage-Fairbanks road at this time was not paved; road crews finished paving all but 20 miles of the road in 1972; the remaining mileage, however, was not paved until several years later. *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 26, 1973, 21; APG, *Final Environmental Statement, Mount McKinley National Park Additions*, October 1974, 38.



# Chapter Eight: New Highway Impacts and the Park Expansion Process, 1972-1980

As noted in Chapter 7, the long-awaited highway between Anchorage and Fairbanks was completed and dedicated in October 1971. One and all recognized that the opening of the highway would not only shorten the trip between the two cities by more than 120 miles, but it would drastically cut the mileage from either of these cities to Mount McKinley National Park. It was widely anticipated, both within the NPS ranks and among tourism officials, that the road opening would dramatically increase car traffic to the park. The NPS, however, did not make any immediate public statement on how it would handle the expected new crowds.

### Improved Access and its Ramifications

It was not until mid-January 1972 that the agency announced how it would respond to the new tourist influx. In a *U.S. News and World Report* interview, Director George Hartzog stated that because of "a great surge of automobile traffic" predicted for that summer, "we're planning to stop the cars at Savage River. One of the great charms of Mount McKinley National Park," he continued, "is its fantastic wildlife displays." But, he added, "Our ecologists tell us that with heavy automobile traffic along the single road into Wonder Lake, wildlife will leave the road." Closing most of the park road, Hartzog reasoned, was the only way to both preserve park values and to provide for public enjoyment; and as a practical matter, Hartzog chose this course because the road was in no position to support increased traffic volumes. On a note that applied to a number of NPS areas, he said that "We're trying to avoid more cars. I think we have about reached the end of this cycle of more roads and more trails, more roads and more trails. And I think we have got to look to other means of access." He suggested that a free shuttle service was being proposed to carry passengers to points of interest beyond Savage River.[1]

Tour buses were owned and operated by the concessioner. They specialized in a narrated tour and provided lunch for their paying passengers. DENA 11459, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Hartzog's announcement, though surprising to many, was a logical extension of problems that had been increasingly manifested since the mid-1960s. As noted in Chapter 7, for instance, growing numbers of campers had forced the construction of a "new Morino Campground" (i.e., Riley Creek Campground) in 1968. And that same year, park superintendent George Hall had told agency planners that because of projected new traffic levels—estimated at three times the present volume—the agency needed to 1) offer buses or some other common carrier to encourage motorists to leave their cars, and 2) restrict oversize vehicles beyond the Teklanika River bridge because of reduced road width.[2] And a year or more before Hartzog announced his decision, he and Regional Director John Rutter had weighed the pros and cons of three park-road traffic scenarios: restricting private automobiles west of park headquarters, west of Savage River (where the pavement ended), and west of Teklanika. Park staff, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, were increasingly aware that the increased traffic was having a visibly negative effect on the park wildlife.[3] A broad recognition that Mount McKinley and other national park areas had "carrying capacity" problems, and the successful institution of a shuttle-bus system in Yosemite Valley beginning in July 1970, doubtless suggested to Hartzog that a similar system would work at Mount McKinley, too.[4] And indeed, NPS officials soon established similar shuttle systems both at Everglades and Grand Canyon national parks.[5]

Alaskans, who had been free to drive all the way to Wonder Lake and Kantishna for the past 15 years, were split in their opinions. The *Anchorage Daily News* editorialized that the plan "seems moderate and reasonable to us," and the pro-development *Anchorage Daily Times*, surprisingly, did not protest the Park Service's decision.[6] But Alaska House member Leslie "Red" Swanson (D-Nenana), whose district included the park, called the action "undesirable and unnecessary" because visitors needed to explore the park "at their own pace" and because traffic problems were not "expected in the foreseeable future." Recognizing "the resentment of the people of Alaska at the federal bureaucracy telling us what to do," Swanson introduced House Joint Resolution 113 on February 14 that called on the U.S. government to immediately fund an upgrading of the park road; he did so because the NPS had announced the road-closure plan, in part, based on the road's unimproved condition and its potential as a safety hazard. On March 1, the resolution passed the House on a 37-1 vote; two weeks later it passed the Senate on a 17-1 vote, and Governor William Egan signed it on March 20.[7] Some Alaskans—both inside and outside the halls of the Alaska legislature—were chagrined that the NPS's decision had been made at the eleventh hour or that there had not been prior public discussion and comment.[8]



A 1968 'bear jam' on Sable Pass was indicative of the gradually increasing traffic on the park road. DENA 11607, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Other groups also protested the Park Service's decision. The Alaska Visitor Association, worried about tourist-industry impacts, asked the NPS to delay the road closure for a year while further studies took place. A Fairbanks resident claimed that the action would "deprive low income families ... a visit to the park" and would deny access by the twelve active Kantishna-area miners to their claims. And a Palmer resident openly worried that the action would turn McKinley into a "rich man's" park ... "Are [NPS officials] like the librarian who hates to see anyone check a book out of the library?"[9]

Sen. Ted Stevens responded to Alaskans' complaints with a volley of his own; he stated that the proposed plan would deprive many Alaskans of "personal acquaintance with the park's scenic wonders," and he threatened to block a proposed 2,000,000-acre boundary expansion proposal (which was then being considered in Congress) if the NPS persisted with its plan.[10] Stevens then contacted Hartzog in hopes of a compromise. The two men worked out a mutually-acceptable alternative, which Hartzog announced in early March 1972 during a U.S. Senate hearing. Recognizing that his original plan would have closed most of the park's campgrounds to all but tent campers, Hartzog provided for a "compromise plan" that allowed motorists, after obtaining permits, to access specifically-allotted spaces in the various campgrounds west of Savage River. The compromise, according to press reports, would also keep the road open on a permit basis for those requiring transportation to or from Kantishna (for miners, prospectors, and Camp Denali staff). It was intended to insure that visitors, in Hartzog's words, would "never [be] disappointed in not seeing wildlife as caribou, wolves, bears and foxes frolic near the road."[11] The *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* lauded the plan as a "good compromise," but Sen. Ed Merdes (D-Fairbanks) lambasted the NPS's "ridiculous" plan. "Why," he asked, "can't they improve the roads in the park instead of being so short-sighted as to discriminate against Alaskans who have been waiting for the new road?" "Serious amateur photographers" also fought the plan; as one noted, "must they share their hobby with a bus load of people that will surely 'spook' the wildlife more than a car quietly stopping?" NPS Regional Director John Rutter noted that the "letters the Park Service has been receiving are running about 50-50" regarding the road-closure plan.[12]

On March 30, Rutter announced details regarding the new system. Beginning June 1, the park road would be restricted beyond a "closure point" at Savage River. Free shuttle buses would be provided to all western points along the park road; most buses would go as far as Eielson Visitor Center, though "special transportation beyond Eielson to Wonder Lake will also be provided on a separate schedule." The agency



In 1972 the park transportation system began with restricting private traffic at the Savage River Check Station located near the Savage River Campground entrance. DENA 10588, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

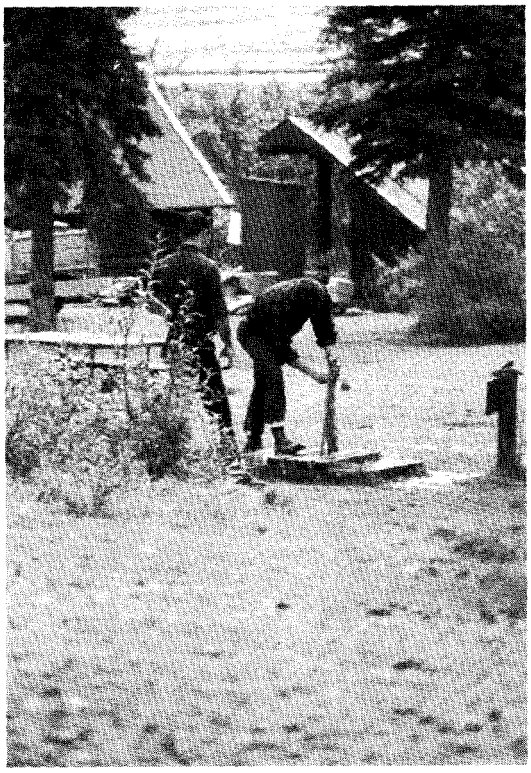
would establish a staging area in the vicinity of Riley Creek Campground; that area would include an information station, a parking area, a trailer-camper sanitary dump station and rest rooms. Reservations to the various west-end campgrounds, available on a first-come, first-served basis, could be obtained by either writing to the park superintendent or by telephoning the park. (Most of the available spaces would be allotted to Teklanika, Toklat, and Wonder Lake campgrounds. Sanctuary and Igloo campgrounds were "very small," and Igloo was "designed for tent camping only.") The agency, recognizing that its plan limited campground choices for those in "camper type vehicles," also announced plans to upgrade Riley Creek and Savage River campgrounds to accommodate this type of campers. It did not, however, plan to build "a large amount of new facilities" in response to the anticipated new traffic levels. Rutter, in explaining the agency's rationale, stated that at other parks, "the cars have always gotten ahead of us before and now we have the opportunity to get ahead of the cars for a change. ... It happens every place where there are people. When you start to hand feed animals it destroys them because they get on a false diet. ... There isn't any way we can stop this domestication process."[13] The new system also allowed "professional wildlife photographers" to circumvent the road-closure rules by obtaining a use permit from park rangers. The new rules were potentially open for abuse because they did not specify who would qualify for a permit; the issuance of the permit was based on the ranger's evaluation of the applicant's qualifications. The agency, in these circumstances, doubtless issued a number of permits to those who did not narrowly qualify. The number of these permits, however, was sufficiently small that the agency, during this period, did not artificially cap how many would be issued.[14]

As predicted, the NPS began its new shuttle bus system when the park opened on June 1, and rangers began patrolling the park road to ensure compliance with the new permit system. The bus system was operated by the park concessioner, Outdoor World, Ltd., via a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to provide the exclusive right for a transportation service within the park through the 1987 season. Within the scope of that MOA, Outdoor World and the NPS worked out an annual contract whereby the contractor leased four cramped school buses and three vans—which came from Cantwell and the Anchorage area—and the NPS reimbursed all applicable costs plus a 10 percent profit.[15] The system, as implemented, resembled the one described two months earlier except for three minor changes. First, officials decided to stop most (though not all) casual westbound traffic near the Savage River Campground. To help manage the new system, the agency erected a small kiosk just west of the campground turnoff



The Riley Creek Information Center, which opened in the late summer of 1972, was the starting point for the new shuttle bus trips. It also provided visitor use information and, beginning in 1974, staff here issued backcountry use permits. DENA 10507, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

that was staffed by uniformed NPS personnel on a round-the-clock basis.[16] Second, the agency decided that Sanctuary as well as Igloo Campground would be limited to tent campers. Finally, Toklat Campground (which had just six sites) would be closed in 1972 because, according to Chief Ranger Ivan Miller, "we had a lot of bear trouble there and we wanted to reduce the confrontations between man and bear." There were typically 10 to 15 bus round trips each day.[17]



The Toklat Campground, containing six sites, was established on the footprint of the Alaska Road Commission Toklat road construction camp. Ginger Burley Collection

During the summer of 1972, park visitation doubled from 44,000 to 88,000,[18] and given the new throngs, the new bus system underwent some unexpected growing pains. The primary problem was related to bus overcapacity; visitors at Riley Creek (where the bus routes began) had no problem finding bus seats, but by mid-season, many of these buses were filled to capacity, leaving no room for those who stayed at the various campgrounds along the way. Campground occupants, particularly those at Sanctuary and Teklanika, often spent hours trying to find a bus with an empty seat. Events reached an ugly climax over the July 4 weekend, when visitors so overwhelmed the system that rangers were forced to issue special permits that allowed motorists to freely access the park road. There were also difficulties with the campsite reservation system; because some people who reserved spaces never showed up, some motorists were denied the chance to access park campsites even though the campgrounds were not full.[19]

The NPS did what it could to respond to these difficulties. Its first solution—which it implemented shortly after the July 4 weekend—was to put additional buses and vans onto the park road. By early August, there were fourteen shuttle buses in service. As a result, the need to issue permits to garden-variety motorists did not recur, and waiting times along the park road were reduced or eliminated. Suggestions to other difficulties were also considered, but none were implemented until the following year.[20]

Meanwhile, efforts were made to study the impacts of the new system. At the insistence of Sen. Stevens, the University of Alaska obtained an $18,200 Interior Department grant to study the public's reaction to the system. That two-part study, released in June 1973, found that 84 percent of an 1,100-person sample of park visitors (which included both bus riders and car drivers) approved of the park's new shuttle bus policy, while slightly more than half of a 450-person sample of Alaska residents approved of the policy.[21] In addition, the University of Alaska and the National Park Service—working through the newly-formed Cooperative Park Studies Unit—began to study the effect of human activity on the park's animals and vegetation. This turned out to be a three-year study, conducted by University of Alaska Fairbanks graduate assistant Diane M. Tracy, that focused on the dynamics of several animal species at a number of specific spots along the road corridor. As noted in Chapter 12, Tracy's efforts resulted in several temporary closures of areas for wildlife protection purposes. Less directly, it led toward the first parkwide backcountry management plan (see below) which resulted in administrative control over, and rationing of, camping in areas away from the road corridor.[22]

As noted in Chapter 7, the park had gained a new concessioner on January 1, 1972, when Outdoor World, Ltd. took over from U.S. Natural Resources. George Fleharty had first become interested in the Mount McKinley concession when Don Hummel—who also had the Lassen and Glacier concessions—expressed an interest in becoming part of the USNR's Recreation Resources Division. Hummel eventually joined USNR, but not before the larger company took over the Yosemite concession and decided it was not interested in the Glacier concession. Given those moves, Fleharty (and USNR) began a controlling interest in the McKinley (and Lassen) concession in March 1970. By late 1971, however, Fleharty—apparently pleased with the McKinley operation, both financially and personally—decided to retire from USNR. He then formed Outdoor World, Ltd. along with three partners. The 47-year-old Fleharty, in an *Anchorage Times* interview, reportedly paid the NPS $1.25 million for the remaining 15 years of the park concession contract; as part of that deal, the "expatriate Californian" gave up his interests in the Oakland Seals hockey team and a traveling ice-follies show as well as his Yosemite and Lassen interests "to live a slower-paced life in Alaska."[23]

As a practical matter, Outdoor World operated the park concession much as USNR had. At the

NPS's insistence, however, hotel upgrades were in order. Don Hummel, it may be recalled, had conducted substantial renovations in 1966, and under USNR management a new wing had been added in 1970. Three months after Outdoor World assumed control of the park concession, in March 1972, Regional Director John Rutter announced that numerous improvements were on tap in the near future, including a new kitchen, expanded dining facilities, and a new lounge area. Continued modernization or replacement of the older north and south wings was planned for the next several years.[24]

That modernization program began immediately. The hotel opened on May 14, a week ahead of time, and by early September a new dining room had been completed and a new kitchen nearly so.[25] Meanwhile, the concessioner had its hands full opening up the hotel and operating two transportation systems: the "wildlife tour," which concessioners had operated since the 1940s, plus the new shuttle bus system which was operated under contract to the Park Service. The twice-a-day wildlife tour was designed to meet the needs of park visitors who arrived by train; the newly-instituted 3 p.m. tour worked well for south-bound visitors who typically arrived at the park at about 1 p.m., while the 6 a.m. tour (moved back from 4 a.m.) fit more easily into the schedule of northbound tourists who had arrived at 4:30 the previous afternoon. Although the two bus systems covered the same geography, they were operationally quite distinct; the wildlife tours, for which a fee was charged, featured relatively high-quality buses, had the same passengers throughout the trip, and paid considerable attention to park interpretation, while the free shuttle buses supplied more basic transportation that catered to backpackers as well as more passive visitors.[26]

The NPS, as the season wound down, recognized that it would soon need to deal with a new problem: that of traffic management of the park road once the bus tours had ended. Given the lessening crowds, Outdoor World planned to stop its shuttle-bus tours on September 10. Given the need for access after that date, however, the NPS had little choice but to open



**The shuttle bus system, instituted in 1972, was designed as basic transportation along the park road. There was no fee, and riders brought their own lunches. DENA 11439, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

up the road to auto traffic. Allowing late-season auto traffic, during this period, was not a controversial decision, for several reasons: the NPS planned to stop road maintenance on September 10, there were few late-season visitors interested in heading out the park road, ecological impacts did not appear to be significant, and the season's first snowfall (usually by mid-October) closed the road west of the park headquarters.[27]

**The Park Hotel: Tragedy and a Spirited Response**

On the eve of the Labor Day weekend of 1972, officials with both the NPS and the park concessioner had every reason to be proud that they had successfully weathered the first summer under the new road-management plan. Outdoor World, the new concessioner, was just days away from closing up shop for the season, and many among the Park Service's seasonal crew were preparing to leave the park, either for school or other wintertime pursuits. In 1972, as in previous years, daily train service and park road maintenance were both scheduled to stop on September 10, and the hotel itself was scheduled to close on September 18, so the season's end was just days away.

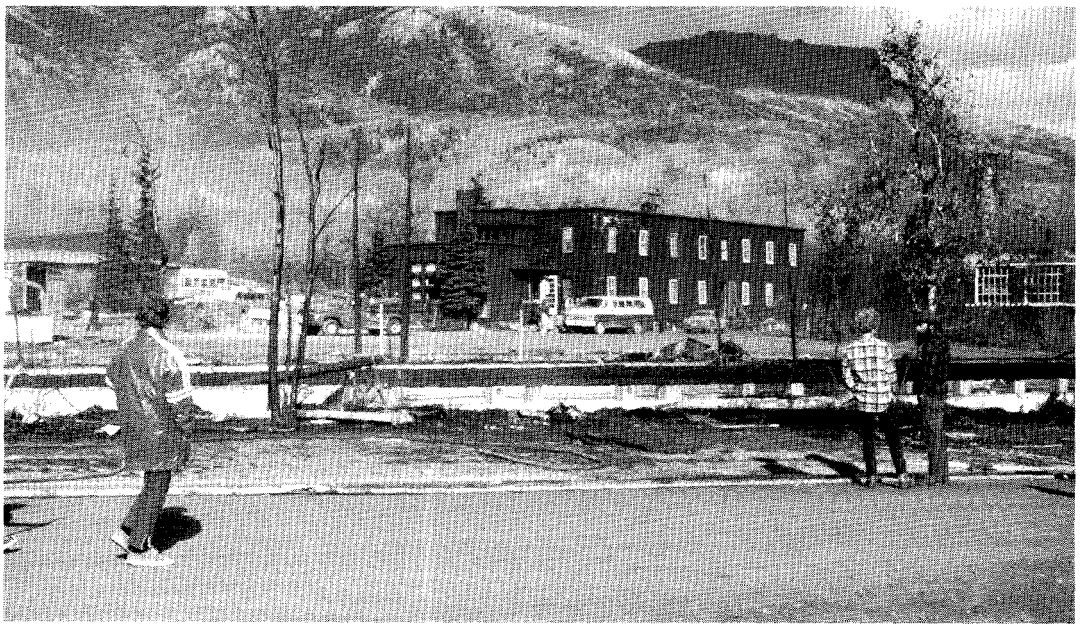


The McKinley Park Hotel burned on the evening of September 3, 1972. There were no injuries to the more than 400 hotel guests. Wallace A. Cole Collection

But during the early evening of Sunday, September 3, tragedy struck. At 7:00 p.m., employees of the McKinley Park Hotel rang the fire alarm when they discovered smoke and flames erupting from the hotel basement. Acting quickly, they were able to evacuate some 265 hotel guests, plus more than 200 others then inside, within 10 minutes. NPS officials, called to the scene, brought down a fire truck from headquarters and dispatched other trucks from Healy and other nearby communities. It was no use, however; by the time the trucks arrived the hotel's main building—which contained 80 of the hotel's 130 rooms—was totally consumed by flames. Surprisingly, there were no deaths or injuries in the fire, and thanks to the well-trained efforts of the hotel staff, the evacuation was orderly and almost no one panicked. To assist hotel guests, and anyone else who needed shelter away from the park, a special, 14-car railroad train soon arrived on scene and headed to Fairbanks, while buses took others to Healy and Anchorage.[28]

When officials surveyed the scene the following morning, the only remaining part of the main hotel building was two huge stone chimneys; all else was smoking rubble. The new (1970) west wing of the hotel—which was just 50 feet away from the main hotel's south wing—still stood, though it had sustained extensive smoke and water damage. Likewise, the hotel's power house (75 feet away), garage shed (100 feet away), and employee dormitory (150 feet away) also remained standing.[29]

Before the remains of the 34-year-old hotel were removed, officials immediately sought answers to what caused the disastrous fire. Early press reports stated that "the fire started, apparently, in old wiring in the commissary room in the basement of the hotel."[30] But to gain a more comprehensive idea, the Park Service hired a Seattle fire investigator, Robert Timlin, who



After the hotel fire the remaining buildings included the dormitory (center), the power house (right) and the new west wing (not in picture). Wallace A. Cole Collection

arrived at the site on September 5. In addition to on-scene technical work, Timlin interviewed more than twenty witnesses, mostly hotel and NPS staff. Timlin's report concluded that the fire had begun in a false ceiling above the "Bottom of the Barrel," a basement tavern. At 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, an alarm had gone off in this area, but false alarms had previously been recorded there, and hotel personnel were unable to locate a fire that afternoon. Investigators concluded, however, that fire—begun by faulty wiring—slowly spread in the basement's ceiling area until 7:00, when a female hotel guest noticed that a portion of the dining room floor, located just above the southeast corner of the bar, felt hot. Smoke was noticed soon afterward, and under George Fleharty's direction, employees began to evacuate guests from the hotel.[31]

Concession officials and NPS staff, reflecting on the catastrophe, were saddened by the fire but not altogether surprised. Back in October 1968, the park's chief ranger had recommended a sprinkler system for the hotel. He noted that the system "is a controversial item ... there is no question that the building is not fire safe, and that something must be done immediately." But other priorities intervened, and the system was never installed.[32] And shortly after the fire, Fleharty philosophically noted that the hotel "was so old and so dry, it was going to burn sometime; I had that feeling." And the speed of the fire—according to one guest, "there was a great cloud of smoke and then, whoosh, it went up in flames"—seemed to reflect the wisdom of Fleharty's remarks.[33]

The biggest question remaining after the fire, of course, was what should be done to provide overnight accommodations to park visitors. A newly-emergent environmentalist faction urged a go-slow approach.[34] But NPS State Director Stanley Albright said that there "is not much question" that a new hotel was needed; "the need for the hotel has been demonstrated," he noted, and regional officials echoed Albright's sentiments.[35] But there was little agreement—at least at first—regarding what should be built. It was initially estimated that "from $1.5 million upward" would be needed to replace the building. Fleharty was unsure, however, whether a similar hotel or "an entirely new hotel complex" would be built. Fleharty fully recognized that many "changes have taken place since the first hotel was built." But the most pressing problem, however, was time. Albright recognized that "what we must do now is prepare something for people to use next summer," and given the lateness of the season, there was little possibility of any new construction before the spring of 1973, which was just before the next tourist season began.[36]

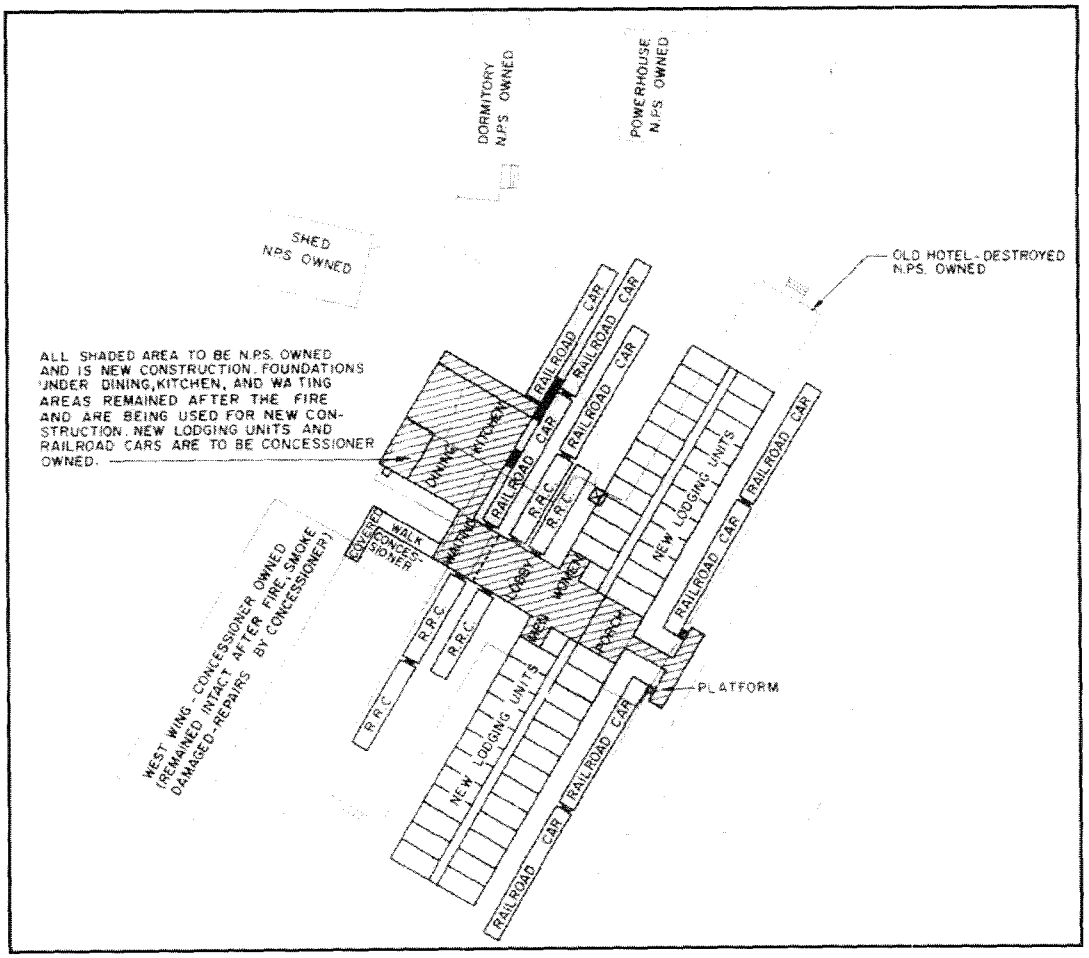
In advance of any decisions regarding a rebuilding effort, Alaskans first took stock of the hotel's most attractive qualities. One guest stated that "it sort of looked like an old plantation type home. It had a very homey atmosphere." The *Anchorage Times*, in an editorial, called it "a comfortable structure of considerable charm. There was a touch of rustic, roadhouse atmosphere with enough modern attachments to make a stopover there an enjoyable and pleasant experience." Others, however, found the hotel unattractive and outdated.[37]

Meanwhile, NPS officials wasted no time on organizing a rebuilding effort. On September 7, while the fire investigator was still combing through the ashes, a phalanx of officials from

Seattle and Anchorage converged on the scene and met with Fleharty.[38] A week later, Albright flew south and met both with NPS Director George Hartzog and Denver Service Center officials. At the meeting, Albright assured the public that the agency would be able to rebuild to the point where "business as usual" would prevail in 1973. He cautioned, however, that the agency was seeking "an interim plan to provide facilities for next summer that wouldn't interfere with any long range plans."[39]

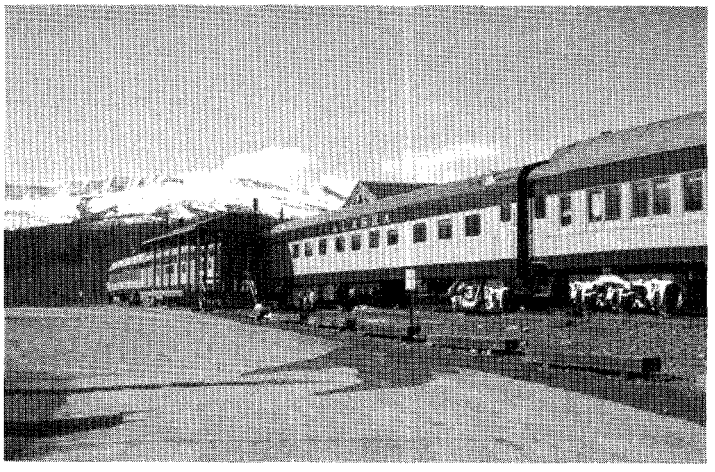
The decision on what to build, and where, forced NPS officials to take a renewed look at a variety of potential hotel sites. The Wonder Lake area, because of the wondrous view it offered of Mount McKinley, was once again considered, and in a September 28 editorial, the *Anchorage Times*, once again, came out solidly in favor of a new hotel there; "Let's just get building," it urged. George Fleharty, in a newspaper interview, said that the on -again, off-again plans for a hotel there had been on the back burner for the past five years or so; there had been renewed talk of a "smaller overnight lodge near Wonder Lake ... but now everyone seems to feel that Wonder Lake is not the site." Providing power to the facility, for example, would be a problem ("Would people like to see power lines strung along the road to reach it?") and all garbage would also have to be trucked away. Also being considered was a site south of the park. As noted in Chapter 7, two sites with an outstanding McKinley view—a site atop 2,900-foot-high Curry Ridge and another near Chulitna Pass—had been advanced in 1966 and 1968, respectively. And as noted later in this chapter, other alternatives had emerged in the flurry of planning activity that followed ANCSA's passage. Fleharty was well aware, however, that the most important factor to be considered was access by road and railroad (which suggested a McKinley Park Station site), and he further noted that "the trend of national parks is to keep the facilities near the entrance." He predicted (or perhaps hoped) that the agency would build a hotel and cabin complex at the park entrance, with buildings spaced far apart in order to avoid the appearance of a cityscape.[40] Given the diversity of site options, both Senator Stevens and Alaska's member of the House of Representatives, Nick Begich, called for Congressionally-sponsored studies to determine the best location for future park facilities.[41]

Fleharty's intuition regarding the site for the new hotel proved accurate. On October 3, he met with both Rutter and a Washington NPS official




**Because of the lateness of the season, there was a pressing need to implement a plan to provide visitor accommodations for the 1973 tourist season. The hotel plans noted in this February 1973 drawing were designed as a temporary facility. Credit: McK 41009, NPS Aperture Card Collection**

to discuss hotel replacement options. At that meeting, there was a general agreement "that there was a need for a modest facility at the site of the old McKinley Hotel." Ten days later, Fleharty announced (at an Alaska Visitors Association convention) that the new hotel would be ready in time for the 1973 season. As part of the agreement between the NPS, the Alaska Railroad, and the Outdoor World, Ltd., the new hotel would be composed primarily of railroad cars, in a style consistent with the then-popular Victoria Station restaurant chain. Rooms at the new hotel would consist of "five Pullman compartmented sleepers" and new modular units in addition to the 50-room west wing which survived the fire. Ten additional rail cars would be used for dining space, a coffee shop, a two-car bar, and other facilities. The NPS also planned to build new dining facilities (away from the cars) and enclosed walkways that would link up the various rail cars with other parts of the hotel. Fleharty's plan called for the concessioner to pay $400,000 for the non-rail facilities, while an additional $250,000 would come from federal funds which Sen. Stevens (and later Begich) had recently inserted into appropriations bills. Construction costs, not coincidentally, neatly matched the $650,000 for which Outdoor World had insured the hotel property.[42]



The McKinley Park Station Hotel opened on May 25 for the 1973 season and advertised a railroad station theme. NPS Interp. Collection, #457, Denali National Park and Preserve

One and all, at the time, felt that the new setup would be temporary. A letter reporting on the results of the October 3 meeting noted the need for an interim hotel at McKinley Park Station was immediate, "even though the ultimate developments may be located elsewhere." Albright, interviewed in mid-October, averred that the facility would be used "for two or three years, anyway." NPS officials were pleased that the agreement allowed the park to meet its 1973 tourist commitments "without locking ourselves into something we'll have to live with forever." To guide future development, Senator Stevens was able to secure an additional $100,000 appropriation for long-range planning for a permanent facility at the park entrance.[43] Stevens, in particular, wanted to ensure a public process; as far back as mid- September, he had stated that he would "earnestly welcome the suggestions of Alaskans for the expansion and improvement of our park's visitor accommodations." Given the extra funds, NPS officials held public meetings in late October and early November at Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and McKinley Park Station where they solicited suggestions regarding road and campground developments as well as permanent hotel facilities. At one of those meetings, held at Anchorage on October 31, NPS State Director Stanley Albright stated—despite previous publicity to the contrary—that no commitments had been made regarding where the new hotel would be located or what type of structure it would be. The NPS offered four sites for the new hotel: the concessioner-backed site at McKinley Park Station plus Wonder Lake, Curry Ridge, and near the east bank of Savage River.[44]

After the public hearings had run their course, comments from the public and agency officials were forwarded to Interior Secretary Rogers Morton, who on December 15 announced a decision regarding the future hotel site. Morton that day approved Fleharty's "novel temporary solution" and approved a $600,000 plan to rebuild a new facility on almost the same footprint as the old hotel. Building the hotel, which would involve $200,000 in federal funds, was approved under the condition that the new facility would be "extremely temporary" and would be eventually replaced by a permanent structure. The architect for the new hotel would be the John Graham Company of Seattle, while hotel construction (including the construction of the lobby, kitchen and dining room) would be performed by Irvin and Company of Anchorage. The Interior Secretary's office noted that the federal government was purchasing 50 prefabricated housing modules from Olympic Prefab Inc. of Seattle (at $7,000 apiece), while the various railroad cars needed for the project were being purchased or leased from the Alaska Railroad and renovated in Anchorage by the Interior Design and Structures firm. Irvin construction workers, meanwhile, would renovate the hotel's west wing, which had survived the fire, though with extensive smoke and water damage.[45]

As noted in a park concessions history, "the entire atmosphere of planning and negotiations [for the new hotel] was of expediency and economics. ... The primary considerations under which the National Park Service, Outdoor World Ltd. and Irvin and Company were guided were that the facility should be open by the start of the tourist season." Because of the urgency to replace the hotel complex, Irvin and Company started working on the project well before March 7, 1973, when it signed a contract with the Park Service. The company, working in the midst of an Alaskan winter, encountered many difficulties with the frozen soil; once the ground thawed, many new problems cropped up. Many of these problems were glossed over, inasmuch as there was a general recognition that the hotel would be temporary. The company, in its zeal to complete the job on time, racked up thousands of dollars of expenses in excess of contract costs, and for awhile both Irwin and Company and its subcontractors were on the verge of insolvency. The contractor, however, was somehow able to complete the job on time, and the Alaska Railroad, using a series of temporary tracks, similarly fulfilled its part of the bargain by shunting 11 strategically-placed railroad cars[46] onto the property.

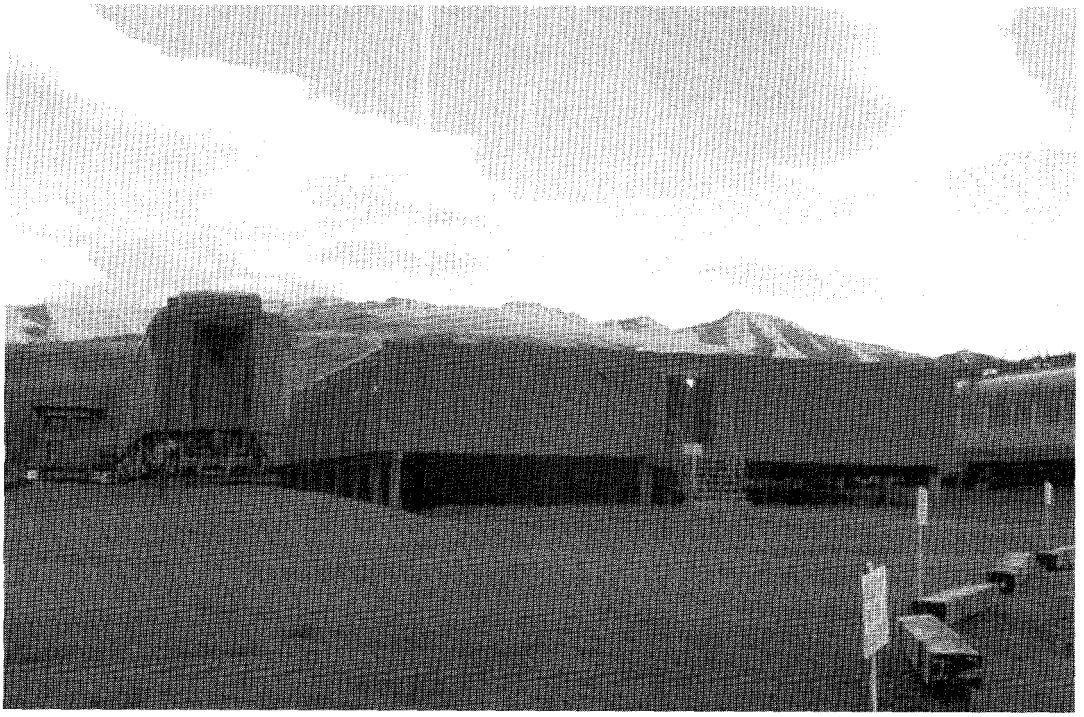
The new hotel, called the McKinley Park Station Hotel to reflect the train-station theme, opened on schedule on May 25. It had the same capacity as the former facility (250 to 300 people), but portions of the hotel remained under construction throughout the summer. On one weekend in early June, for instance, the lack of a working kitchen meant that "meals were cooked on a tiny, three-burner apartment range in the employees' dormitory and carried by hand to the coffee shop." The lobby and dining room were not finished until late June, while landscaping and parking-lot improvements were completed in July and August. The new hotel accommodated 25,600 people that summer and averaged a 95 percent occupancy rate.[47]

Meanwhile, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation officials acted to provide a wider range of accommodations to park visitors. In order to offer something midway between the hotel and the campgrounds, they worked with the Alaska Railroad to establish a youth hostel. The facility would be the first in central Alaska and just the third in the state. In mid-May, the Bureau purchased three railroad bunk cars and placed them on a side track at the McKinley Park Station depot. The hostel, operated by Outdoor World, opened on July 15 and took in 975 people during that abbreviated season; the charge was 50 cents per night.[48] The hostel proved highly popular in later years; it typically remained open through Labor Day weekend and housed between 1,000 and 1,800 people each year.[49]



The Youth Hostel consisted of these railroad cars and was located between the Alaska Railroad tracks and the McKinley airstrip. DENA 12-78, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Meanwhile, the NPS again tried to grapple with the question of the hotel's long-term viability. Since the fall 1972 hearings, it had broadcast mixed messages; in February 1973, regional officials had stated that the permanent location of the park hotel would be decided in the upcoming (December 1973) master plan, and just two months later, those same officials told NPS Director Ron Walker that no permanent hotel plans could be finalized until the seven year post-ANCSA planning process had run its course. The realities of the summer of 1973, however, brought an immediate, de facto answer to this question. Both the concessioner and NPS officials were surprised to see that guests were quite happy with the new facility; it was highly popular and also quite profitable. Given that positive news, Fleharty backed off on any plans he may have had to replace the hotel. Instead, he "decided to see if [the existing hotel] will work out permanently."[50] During the winter of 1973-1974, the agency addressed the issue of the hotel's long-term viability in a Denver Service Center planning directive. The report, authored by Team Leader Carl Stoddard, recognized that if a hotel in the park was indeed necessary, it should be located in one of three sites: the McKinley Park Station area, Wonder Lake, and along the Anchorage-Fairbanks road in "the so called Southern Addition." It noted that during the various public meetings in the fall of 1972 "there was not [a] predominance of opinion as to where the hotel should be located." Weighing the pros and cons of the three sites, it noted that it was impossible to provide both easy access and a mountain view at any of them. After some discussion, the report recommended that "the present hotel remain in operation ... and maintain the present pillow count," that the NPS commence both landscaping and facilities improvements at the site, that the agency "support the development of a major lodge ... in the southern area," and that any effort to



The McKinley Park Station Hotel incorporated modular units providing hotel rooms with baths in addition to the rail car units. Note the landscaping activities in the foreground. DENA 5747, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

develop any new overnight facilities along the park road should be blocked. Given the report's conclusions and Fleharty's happiness with the new hotel's operations, it appeared that the "temporary" McKinley Park Station hotel was well on the way toward becoming permanent.[51]

A key new element in the Stoddard study that had not been previously considered by the NPS was the presence of accommodations along the park's eastern margin as an alternative to the park hotel. As noted in Chapter 7, three lodges had opened along the road north of Cantwell during the 1960s,[52] and beginning in 1972, two larger businesses opened just south of the Nenana River bridge: Mount McKinley Village, owned by Gary Crabb, and the Grizzly Bear Camper Park, just across the road and owned by Jack Reisland (see Appendix E).[53] Prior to the completion of the Parks Highway in 1971, the newly-opened stretch of roadway north of the third Nenana River crossing had been empty except for a few homesteaded parcels,[54] but in 1972 the Tenada Campground opened; the short-lived business was the first along that stretch of highway.[55] And the highway's completion also made Healy easily accessible by road; at Otto Lake, just southwest of town, the Otto Lake Lodge had housed travelers in 1971 and 1972.[56] Given that level of local tourism development, Stoddard wrote that, "private motel facilities exist outside the park that are within a reasonable distance from McKinley Station and the potential for other similar sites is very good. It is unlikely however that the private interests outside of the park near McKinley Station are capable of satisfying the total needs of the travelling public because of the tremendous cost involved in providing building and necessary utilities in interior Alaska."

Stoddard, recognizing the value of these businesses in providing accommodations alternatives, recommended that the NPS

> fully support those private interests outside of the park ..., and if the private sector demonstrates their ability to provide those quality visitor facilities, service and opportunities to meet park standards that the present McKinley Park Hotel and appurtenant structure be phased out in such a way as to maintain a continuous visitor service area in the vicinity of McKinley Park Station.[57]

### Planning Begins for an Expanded Park

As noted in Chapter 7, the NPS had put forth a series of master plans during the mid-to-late 1960s that each addressed a possible expansion of the park's boundaries. In 1965, a master planning effort concluded, tentatively, that protection for various large mammal populations living north of the park boundary could best be effected by working out management agreements with the State of Alaska and with the Bureau of Land Management. This plan did not address areas south of the park. But a 1968 master plan called for a 132,000-acre expansion north of the park and a much larger 2,070,000-acre expansion south of the Alaska Range. The 1968 proposals very nearly became law in

January 1969, during the closing days of the Johnson administration. Later that year, Rep. John Saylor submitted a House bill that would also have put into law the acreage recommendations put forth in the 1968 master plan. Alaskans, however, worked to protect their own interests shortly afterward, and in the spring of 1970, the Alaska legislature established Denali State Park, which included some of the acreage in the park's proposed southern expansion. Interior Secretary Hickel and other Department officials then worked out a more modest 1,560,000-acre expansion proposal; that idea died away, however, when Hickel stepped down from his post in November 1970. Rep. Saylor submitted a bill to that effect in early 1971, but the bill was never reported out of committee.



The majestic Cathedral Spires were a key area of interest when park expansion proposals were considered during the late 1960s and 1970s. NPS, DENA #9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Beginning in early 1970, the question of the proposed Mount McKinley expansion began to be subsumed within a much larger issue – one that would dominate discussion among Alaskans for the remainder of the decade. This issue, regarding the so-called "national interest lands," had been considered off and on by government planners since the mid-1960s. But only recently, as efforts to reach a settlement of Alaska's Native claims reached a serious stage, had it entered the legislative arena. In July 1970, the full Senate had passed a Native claims bill that contained a provision calling on the Interior Secretary "to review all public lands in Alaska and ... recommend to Congress areas appropriate for inclusion in the National Park System and National Wildlife Refuge System." That bill, however, died at the conclusion of the 91st Congress.[58] The following summer, Sen. Alan Bible—after a trip to Mount McKinley and other Alaska scenic areas with NPS Director Hartzog and their wives—agreed to include a new national interest lands provision in the Native claims bill. This time the provision remained, and on December 18, 1971, President Nixon signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, or ANCSA (P.L. 92-203) into law. Included in the new legislation was Section 17(d)(2), which authorized the Interior Secretary to withdraw up to 80 million acres of unreserved public lands for either national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, or wild and scenic rivers.[59]

Given the fact that various Mount McKinley expansion proposals had been exhaustively considered at both the administrative and legislative levels, chances were high that any bill that addressed the national interest lands question would include new lands for Mount McKinley. But the new, Congressionally-imposed demand that new parkland questions be solved on a statewide level also deemed it highly unlikely that Mount McKinley's boundaries would be expanded any time soon. Section 17(d)(2) of ANCSA had provided a seven-year timetable for decisions regarding Alaska's unreserved public lands. Because of Mount McKinley's relatively high profile among Alaska's existing or proposed parklands, and more specifically because Rep. Saylor had submitted two previous park expansion bills, the Pennsylvania congressman filed a similar bill in January 1973 that addressed Mount McKinley to the exclusion of other parks. His bill, however, got

no further than his previous efforts.[60] Congress, it appeared, would decide Mount McKinley's new boundaries only in concert with a host of other issues relating to Alaska's federal lands.

The provisions in Section 17(d) demanded that the NPS and other land-management agencies act quickly. Specifically, these agencies had only 90 days to provide to the Interior Secretary a list of those lands in which it had a continuing interest, and it had just nine months to withdraw specific lands for proposed parks, refuges, and the like. Given those deadlines—and in full recognition that Alaska offered a relatively short field season in which staff could gather pertinent data—agencies plunged into a wild scramble in which they resurrected any and all previously-gathered information about proposed areas of interest.[61]

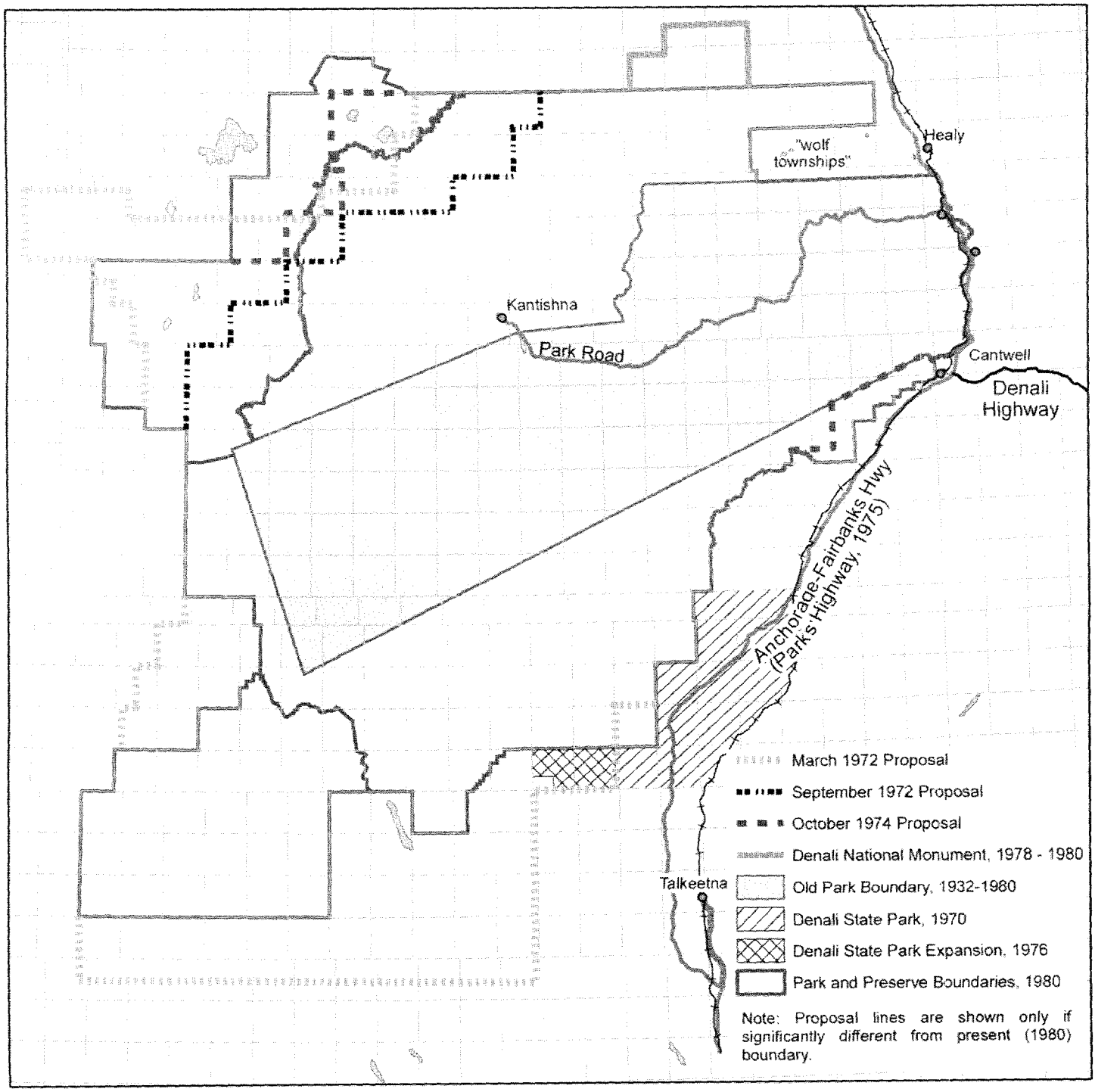
NPS officials, operating under the guidance of Assistant Director Theodor (Ted) Swem, started working on national interest lands issues just two weeks after ANCSA's passage, and by January 4, 1972, Richard Stenmark—an Alaska Group Office employee now working in Washington—had identified a 4,000,000-acre addition to Mount McKinley as one of 21 areas (12 natural, 9 historical or archeological) in which the NPS had an interest.[62] Between then and the 90-day deadline, the NPS did its best, within the 80-million-acre limitation imposed by ANCSA, to include a large acreage for national park areas.[63]

Given the seven-year track record of previous proposals, answers to many Mount McKinley-related questions were easier to unearth than those for newly-identified areas. What emerged from this process were preliminary proposals, announced on March 15, 1972, for 14 NPS areas comprising a total of 33.4 million acres. Perhaps because of the Mount McKinley area's broad public recognition, these proposals included a generous 4,019,251-acre park addition (see Map 8).[64] Included in this proposal was a large swath of rich megafauna habitat—along the same lines that Adolph Murie had recommended, only larger—that extended from 12 to 40 miles north of the existing park boundary. A narrow corridor was included west of the park, and to the south of the park boundary, the proposal included much of the acreage in both the Udall-Johnson proposals of 1968-69 and the Hickel - Saylor proposals of 1970-71. The proposal, to some extent, was shaped by the availability of unreserved federal land (both "d-1" and "d-2" land). But not always: portions of the proposal contained state land selections, either pending or tentatively approved.[65]

Between March and September 1972, NPS and other agency staff needed to move from preliminary to final determinations regarding the acreage they wanted to withdraw as proposed conservation units. Swem appointed NPS Planner Albert Henson to head the newly-created Alaska Task Force, which consisted of 33 agency personnel brought to Alaska on short-term appointments. It was a time of brief field excursions and hurried report writing, all for the purpose of gaining a well-justified series of boundaries for proposed park units—either new parks or expansion of existing units. By July 1972 the task force gave an interim recommendation to Secretary Morton. These recommendations, for 48.9 million acres of new parklands within 11 proposal areas, included a 3,687,600-acre McKinley expansion, in areas both north and south of the existing park. The July proposal, more than 300,000 acres less than the plan put forth in March, eliminated much of the low- elevation caribou habitat in the Lake Minchumina area (due to it "not being absolutely critical to the well-being of the major animal park populations") and a long, 6-mile-wide strip at the south end of the proposal area (due to it "not being necessary for retention or protection on primary park values"), but it added valuable acreage southwest of Broad Pass (because it had "potential access and interpretive areas ... and important caribou summer range"). It otherwise retained most of the March 1972 proposal acreage.[66]

On September 13, 1972, Interior Secretary Morton announced the final withdrawal areas. As part of an overall 41.7-million -acre Alaska-wide NPS package, the proposed park expansion had been pared down to just 2,996,640 acres (see Map 8). The major reason for the reduced proposal was the elimination of important access routes into the Chelatna Lakes and Sunflower Basin areas south of the park. (These areas were lost because of the ramifications of a September 2, 1972 agreement over a federal-state lawsuit related to overlapping selection areas.) More than a million acres of the proposal area had been lost between March and September; as NPS planner John Reynolds tartly observed, "we got all the rock and ice we asked for."[67]

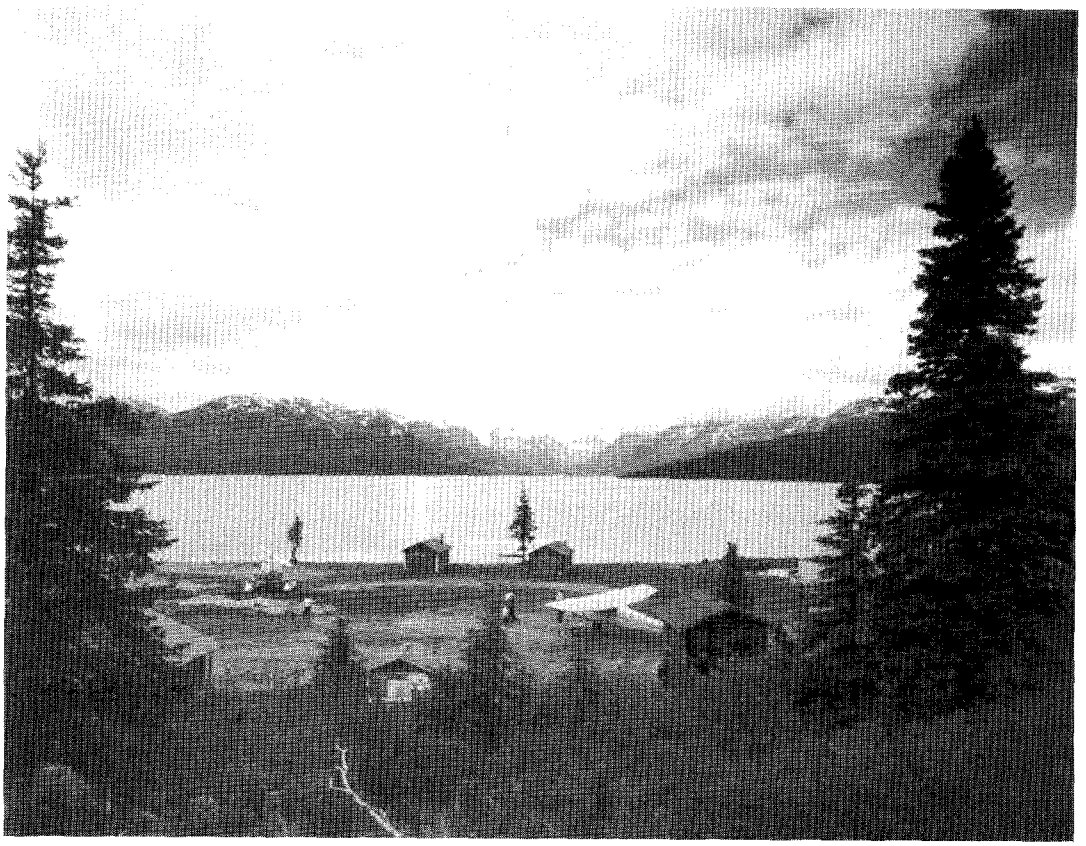
The ANCSA-mandated federal planning effort, however, was still in its opening stages. Section 17(d)(2), paragraph C noted that the Interior Secretary would "continue to advise the Congress of the location, size and values" of proposed parklands until two years had elapsed after ANCSA's passage. The Alaska Task Force, therefore, undertook the completion of a




**Map 8. Boundary Proposals and Changes, 1972-1980**

massive series of draft environmental statements (DES's) and master plans for the proposed parklands, all of which had to be completed by December 1973. Working in cooperation with the Alaska Planning Group—an ad hoc Interior Department group organized to resolve interest areas between the various agencies—the Alaska Task Force fleshed out its proposals for Mount McKinley and the other ten park proposals.

Recognizing that one of the major areas lost between March and September had been the large block of state-selected land in and around Chelatna Lake, and also recognizing a general concern about the lack of zoning along the newly-completed highway north of Denali State Park, planners for the NPS and the State of Alaska met in late September 1972 to discuss these and other issues. State planners, at first, pushed for a cooperative management system; this philosophy was consistent with the state's efforts in other proposed park areas as well. As noted in Chapter 7, however, the 1958 Statehood Act's statement that the NPS had exclusive jurisdiction over both the present park and any proposed expansions prevented the agency from developing this concept. Federal planners emerged from the meeting espousing the idea of



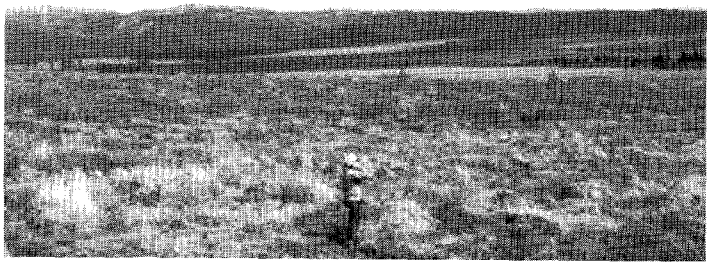
During the 1960s and 1970s the NPS considered, then rejected, various proposals that would have placed Chelatna Lake within an expanded park unit. DENA Herkenham #14, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

a Denali Region National Recreational Complex that would include Denali State Park, the Chelatna Lake area, and lands along the road corridor between Chulitna Pass and McKinley Park Station.[68]

Central to the process that resulted in the DES's for Mount McKinley and the other proposed park areas was a well-publicized series of public meetings that were held under the auspices of the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission. Between late April and early June 1973, more than forty public meetings were held in Washington, in various Lower 48 cities, and in cities and villages throughout Alaska. Those most relevant to the Mount McKinley proposal were held in Anchorage and McGrath. NPS representatives attended many of these meetings.[69]

In July 1973, two proposals were released that reflected dramatically different visions of the area's future. The Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission—an advisory body established by ANCSA—released a plan for a 3.05-million acre expansion. Though the Commission's boundaries were largely similar to those in the September 1972 Morton agreement, the Commission's plan called for virtually all of the southern addition to be open to both hunting and mining.[70] That same month, the Alaska Planning Group presented an interim package for departmental review; more protective in its emphasis than the JFSLUPC proposal, it included a 3.6-million acre Mount McKinley expansion as part of an overall 49.1 million acre package. That fall, the Sierra Club chimed in with its own recommendations; that organization called for 62 million acres of new national parklands, including a 4.2 million acre Mount McKinley expansion.[71]

Given those prior figures, the Interior Department's final (December 1973) administrative recommendations were a sobering disappointment to park advocates, because the scope of NPS recommendations—both for Mount McKinley and elsewhere—had



Areas, such as this one, north of the park boundary, were considered for inclusion in park expansion proposals due to their excellent wildlife habitat. NPS, DENA 9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



Lands important for caribou and moose populations north of the existing park boundary were proposed for inclusion in a newly-expanded park. NPS, DENA 9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

been considerably reduced. Of a total 83.5 million acre package forwarded to Congress, lands proposed for inclusion in National Park Service units totaled just 32.3 million acres, and the master plan and draft EIS for Mount McKinley recommended that just 3,210,000 acres be added to the park.[72] This acreage was in many ways similar to the September 1972 proposal recommendations. The new proposal, however, included much of the area that had been lost in the Lake Minchumina area between March and July 1972, though it did not include much of the areas southwest of Broad Pass that had been added to the proposal area between March and July 1972. The proposal also called for a large Cooperative Planning and Management Zone south and east of the proposed park boundaries; this area would be jointly managed by the federal, state and private entities and would attempt to fulfill the goals that state and federal planners had recognized during their September 1972 discussions.[73]

After Secretary Morton issued its recommendations for Mount McKinley and the other proposed park areas, the Interior Department still needed to finalize its environmental statements before its recommendations were ready to be considered by Congress. The Joint Federal - State Land Use Planning Commission, as it had a year earlier, held an extensive series of meetings to gauge public opinion regarding the adequacy and scope of the various DES's. The deadline for comments was March 20, 1974, which was later extended to July 22. During the seven-month comment period, the public submitted more than 6,000 comments. Of those, 230 specifically responded to the December 1973 Mount McKinley DES; one of these, the State of Alaska, weighed in with more than twenty pages of Mount McKinley-related comments.[74]

In late April 1974, in the midst of the public hearings process, a group of 30 Alaskans who were "honestly concerned and interested in protecting the unique values of McKinley Park and region surrounding it" met at Cantwell and organized themselves as the Denali Citizens Council. Directors, who were chosen at the meeting, included residents of Cantwell, Lake Minchumina, Deneki Lakes and Hurricane as well as the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas. Pete Martin, elected as acting chair, noted that because the area was "on the verge of major development," a locally-based organization was needed that would "create a flow of information which will ... help shape the destiny of this outstanding national park."[75] The Council did not make an organizational statement during the comment period noted above; it did, however, make contact with a variety of NPS and other Interior Department officials. The group, which quickly grew to a membership of 150, made numerous comments during the remainder of the "d-2" process. It remains an active organization today, more than thirty years after its founding.[76]

In October 1974, the Alaska Planning Group (APG) issued its final environmental statement for the proposed Mount McKinley park additions; that document recommended that 3,210,000 acres be added to the park (see Map 8). This area was just 30,000 acres larger than

the December 1973 proposal; virtually the only changed boundaries were in the Heart Mountain-Little Mountain area, just west of Mount Russell at the southwestern end of the "old park," and an area just north of the Cache Creek mining district. The Cooperative Planning and Management Zone, first propounded a year earlier, remained in place.[77]

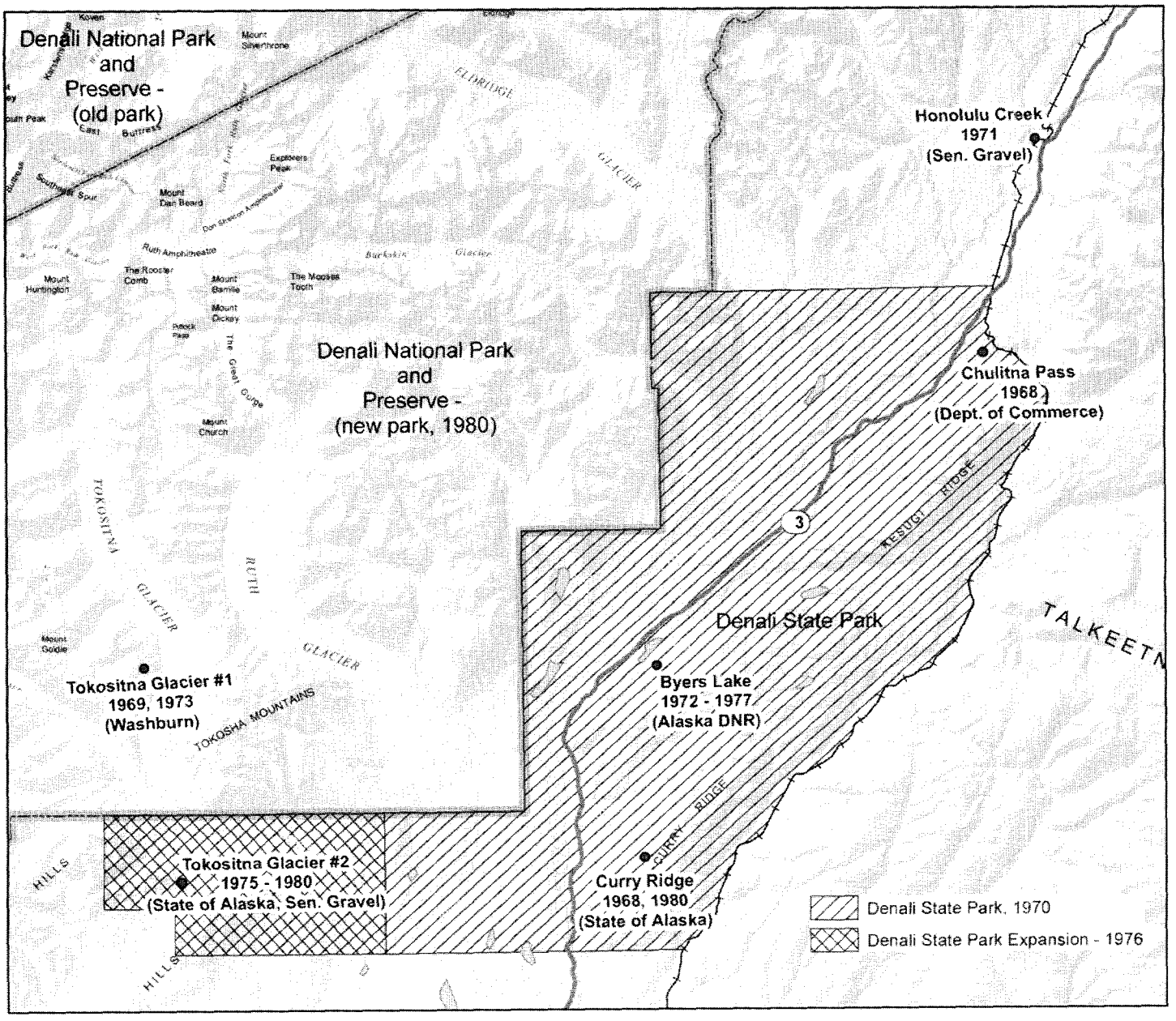
One area of consideration that did not change during this period was the fourteen-mile-wide strip north of the park and west of Healy. An NPS map of potential parklands, dated November 1971, indicated that the entire strip should be included in an expanded Mount McKinley National Park.[78] But once planners, during the post-ANCSA period, began to scrutinize the area more closely, they learned that 92,000 acres in six key townships, locally known as the "wolf townships," had been selected by the State of Alaska back in July 1965. By the following May, the BLM had tentatively approved the transfer of most of those lands to the state, and small portions of the township closest to Healy had been subdivided beginning in October 1970.[79] The land that was both north and west of these townships, however, remained in federal hands. As a result, the initial (March 1972) proposal included the federal lands—but not the state or private lands—in the proposed park area. The remaining plans released that year remained consistent with the March 1972 plan, and both the DEIS (in December 1973) and the FES (in October 1974) also retained the same proposal boundaries. The FES noted that "this area constitutes extremely critical range for the wolf packs" and was thus identified as an "area of environmental concern." But because the state "recognized the wolf packs as an important resource," because it had agreed on August 15, 1973 to close the area to further homesite entry, and because it "also excluded future transportation developments within this area," Alaska Task Force planners excluded these townships from the expanded park area.[80]

During the summer of 1974, while the APG was still formulating its Mount McKinley FES, an ad hoc park planning group was formed under the aegis of the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission. This group was called the Mt. McKinley Cooperative Planning and Management Zone Committee, later known as the Mt. McKinley Management Overview Committee. Primarily composed of state officials, its purpose was to investigate issues in the 100-square-mile cooperative zone located south and east of the proposed park-expansion area and to produce a land use plan for the area. It was intended that this committee would be a model for other cooperative efforts in other park areas. Given that direction, the committee met for the first time in late August 1974, and in February 1975, the committee held public hearings in Cantwell, Healy, Trapper Creek, and Anchorage. Committee members, at these meetings, hoped to get management direction, but most were disappointed; as one member noted, "many persons at the Anchorage meeting never heard of the management zone idea, and rural people who came intended to defend themselves from what we were supposedly going to do to them." And there were organizational difficulties, too; member George Hall admitted that the various members "must develop a more explicit statement of what this group is trying to do." To address those concerns, several subcommittee meetings were held in mid-March. But by the end of the month, neither the group's goals nor purposes had yet been finalized. It was hoped that the committee would have completed a series of draft plans by July; then, following another round of public hearings, a final plan would emerge by September. The onset of summer, however, apparently slowed further work on the plans, and after late August 1975 the committee apparently stopped functioning.[81]

### Southside Development Plans and Denali State Park Expansion

Key to the proposed park boundary changes south of the Alaska Range during the 1971-1974 period was tourism development: where, what, how big, and by whom. As noted above, the NPS had broached the idea of a lodge on top of Curry Ridge as early as 1966, and the Department of Commerce had funded a 1968 study recommending a large hotel at Chulitna Pass. Both of those sites were located on land that had been selected by the State of Alaska, and in 1970 these sites were included in the newly-established Denali State Park. Another site, above the toe of Tokositna Glacier, had been favored by Bradford Washburn since 1969. Not everyone was happy with these sites, however, and they remained on the drawing boards until late 1971, when the Anchorage-Fairbanks road was completed. That fall a new proposal came to light, when Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) floated the idea of "a year-round lodge and indigenous sports center" on state land near Honolulu Creek, on the railroad just north of Hurricane Gulch. Few others, however, appeared interested in the idea.[82]

The following spring, state officials issued an internal report suggesting development at a new site: Byers Lake (see Map 9). Officials touted a plan, to be financed by the private sector, for a year-round hotel-resort complex just southeast




**Map 9. Proposed Southside Development Sites, 1968-1980**

of the lake that would offer skiing (with a 2,000-foot drop), an enclosed aerial tramway or gondola to the top of Curry Ridge and an observation tower with food service, along with hiking trails, shops, and other amenities. Byers Lake, they argued, offered an "exceptional" view of Mount McKinley, and a timbered site protected from the wind. It also allowed access by floatplane as well as by road; rail patrons, according to the plan, would detrain at Chulitna Pass and take a shuttle bus to the resort.[83] By September of 1972, state officials were preparing to "request bids very shortly for its proposed developments" at Byers Lake, and in late October the Alaska Division of Parks solicited proposals for the first phase of a three-phase hotel and ski-resort development.[84]

This proposed development, however, quickly receded into the background due to Alaska Senator Gravel's efforts to erect a new tourist development. Gravel recognized that the NPS was actively searching for a hotel site due to the September 3 fire at McKinley Park Station and that Mt. McKinley could not be seen from the former hotel site. Gravel also felt that inasmuch as "we have the highest mountain in the world and we haven't capitalized on it," the state's plans at Byers Lake were too modest. So in November 1972, a year after airing his Honolulu Creek proposal, Gravel—a former real estate developer—pitched the idea of a $50-$100 million "world recreation center," a combined Alpine-style village and ski area, which would be similar to Stowe, Vermont or Davos, Switzerland.

During his speech, Gravel admitted that he was "really only at the conceptual point on this thing right now." Perhaps for that reason, he was unspecific about where the development would

be located. He was certain that it would be "outside the [national] Park or any extensions which may come to pass"; even without that caveat, however, a news report stated that "neither federal or state park officials are quite certain whether there is an area south of Mt. McKinley which would be feasible or available for such a plan." Gravel hoped to finance the project "through federal funds and grants." But to gain funds for a feasibility study, he hoped to obtain funds from the state and federal governments as well as from Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The following January, he asked the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission to conceptually endorse his project. Commission staff said "they might be able to assist in site-survey studies and planning," but no general endorsement was forthcoming.[85]

Gravel, however, did not give up. In January 1973, he spoke to Interior Secretary Rogers Morton about "Mt. McKinley City ... a top resort attraction that would catch the imagination of the entire world." Morton's decision to fund a replacement hotel at McKinley Park Station undercut part of Gravel's rationale for his resort idea, but rising park visitation and the proposed resort's year-round aspect provided independent impetus for justifying its construction, despite a muted public response. In late August that year, Gravel obtained promises from the NPS to fund a $1 million feasibility study for the "recreation city of 10,000 to 40,000 persons near the south base of Mt. McKinley." Agency officials, at the time, expressed their support for Gravel's ideas; they stated that "places on the south side should be developed for recreation" and that such a resort community would not conflict with other land uses in the area proposed for the expanded park. Gravel, at this point, was still reticent regarding where to locate the resort; the study, ostensibly, would investigate optimal sites. But so far as is known, the NPS conducted no such study, and it made no allowances for such a resort in any of its post-ANCSA planning documents.[86]

Gravel's ideas, however, were soon challenged by those of Bradford Washburn, the "foremost expert on Mt. McKinley" who touted a tourist development site just west of the Tokositna Glacier and less than 25 miles south of Mt. McKinley (see Map 9). As he had first noted in 1969, he liked the area—which Sydney Laurence had used for several of his well-known canvases—because the Tokositna was a "white glacier" and thus more attractive to tourists than dirt-covered glaciers; in addition, the glacier's lower end was "perfectly safe" because it was free of crevasses. Washburn hoped to see a lodge with "simple accommodations" built on the top of a glacial moraine beside the glacier; from that point, trails could access not only Tokositna Glacier but also Ruth Glacier, which he described as being "like the Grand Canyon with a glacier in it." He envisioned the lodge as a year-round facility which would offer "breathtaking" winter views and unlimited cross-country skiing opportunities. The site, winter and summer, would be accessed by a 35-mile road which would leave the main highway near the Chulitna River Bridge and, for the most part, parallel the ridge south of the Tokositna River.[87] But NPS officials quashed his idea; the agency's December 1973 and October 1974 planning documents concluded that Washburn's pro-



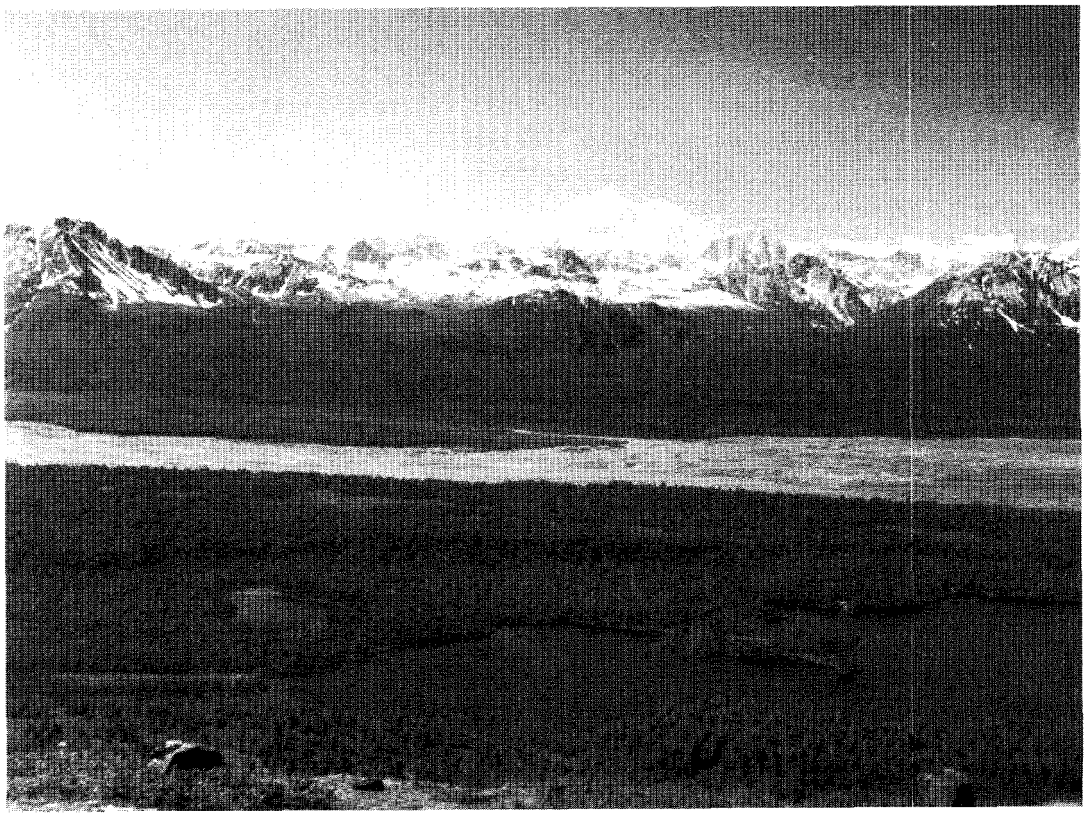
Between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, the state and federal governments showed considerable interest in a hotel near the Tokositna Glacier terminus. This 1977 photo, from the proposed hotel site, looks north to Mount McKinley. NPS, DENA 9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

posed lodge site would be well within the expanded Mount McKinley National Park. Within the proposed park areas south of the Alaska Range, moreover, the NPS envisioned interpretation and tent camping, not roads or large-scale visitor services.[88]

Meanwhile, in the midst of the Gravel and Washburn proposals, the state continued to solicit bids for hotel development at Byers Lake. Apparently only one firm responded to the bid requests that had been announced in October 1972.[89] That firm, moreover, was apparently unable to successfully meet the state's development expectations, because more than a year later (in June 1974), the state's Department of Natural Resources was "currently reviewing bids for funding of more elaborate future development plans" in the park such as the Byers Lake lodge and the land-based air strip. In August 1974, DNR officials awarded a 55-year contract for the construction of park tourist facilities to an Anchorage firm, Denali Development Corporation. Now that a private-sector partner was in place, the park's 1975 master plan continued to promote a major development site at Byers Lake.[90]

sions made by Interior Department officials in the nine months after ANCSA's passage had the net effect of settling considerable overlapping land claims between the state and federal governments, and state officials—hoping "to prevent any hodge-podge development that often mars the boundaries of our national parks"—hoped to add some of these newly-awarded lands to Denali State Park. In October 1972, for example, Governor William Egan noted that the state "will" add to the park four townships in the Chelatna Lake area "together with approximately 13,000 acres directly west of Denali State Park."[91]

This proposal, however, was not acted upon, and no further action regarding state park expansion took place until early 1975, shortly after the election of Jay Hammond as governor. In early 1975, the Division of Parks completed a park master plan which, among other provisions, "identified a 66 square mile area [with] outstanding recreational values ... near the terminus of the Tokositna Glacier" as a proposed park addition. The plan noted that "the major attribute of this proposed addition," which had been recommended by the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission, "is its commanding view of 20,320 foot Mt. McKinley, particularly from Point Long [sic], which faces the gorge of the Tokositna Glacier." Near the Long Creek-Canyon Creek confluence, which was just 12 miles south of the site that Brad



**Beginning in 1972, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources trumpeted the idea of a hotel development in the Byers Lake vicinity. DENA Herkenham #72, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

Meanwhile, the post-ANCSA land selection process—which was taking place at a meteoric pace throughout the state—was creating new opportunities for tourism development in areas south of the Alaska Range. The various deci-

Washburn had touted in September 1973, the state hoped to construct a "rustic and comfortable lodge" along with a visitor center, trails, picnic areas and campgrounds. The plan noted that "certain portions of this development, including the lodge structure, [would] be accomplished with private capital on a concession basis." But other costs would be borne by the state, including the construction of an improved ten-mile road from Petersville to the site.[92]

The plan was admittedly in its early conceptual stage, but given the plan's impetus, Rep. Theodore G. Smith—who had until recently been the State Parks Division director—introduced a bill (HB 185) to add 66 square miles (42,240 acres) to Denali State Park.[93] The bill was referred to the House Resources Committee, which held two hearings on the bill (in Palmer and in Anchorage) on April 5. A meeting participant noted that

> testimony on this proposal was light and about equally divided between pro and con. Those in favor pointed out the value and suitability of the area for development of public facilities and an excellent view. Opposition favored no expansion; that private enterprise be allowed to provide the public facilities.[94]

Given the results of the meeting, legislators slowly moved ahead with expansion plans. The Resources Committee passed the park expansion bill in late April, but further action awaited the beginning of the 1976 legislative season. The House bill passed the Finance Committee on March 24 and the entire House (with a 32-3 vote) on March 29. It then went to the Senate, where the Resources Committee passed the bill on May 7. HB 185 passed the full Senate on May 11, and again on a May 19 reconsideration vote. It was then sent on to Governor Hammond, who signed it into law on July 2, 1976. The bill became effective on September 6.[95]

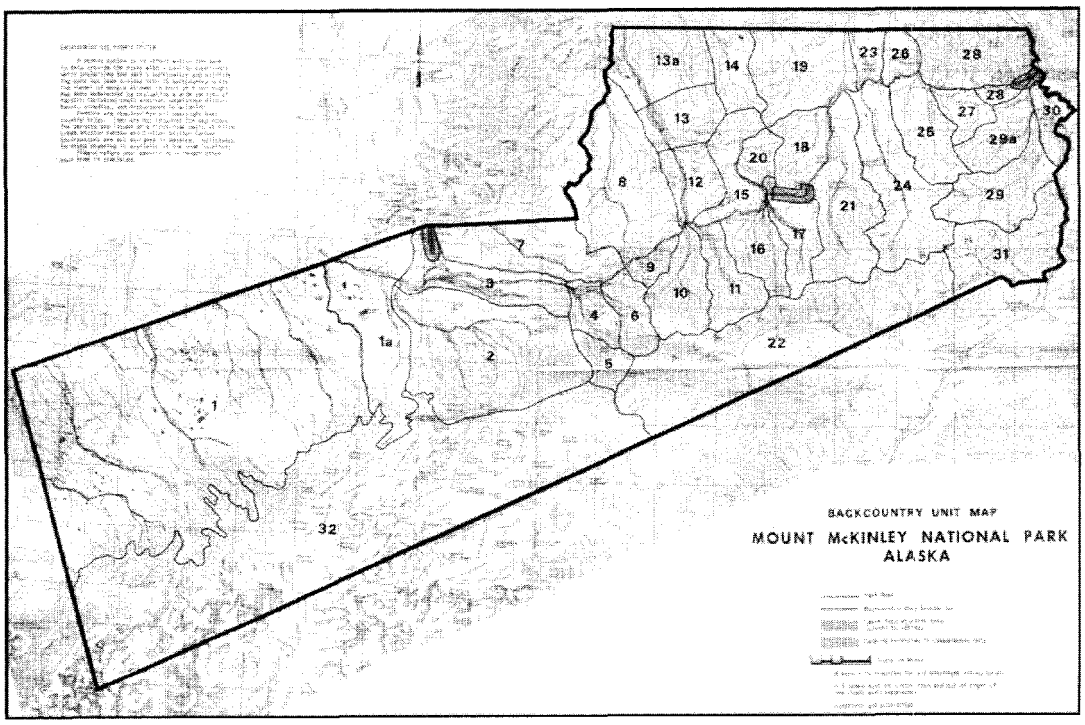
### The Backcountry Use Plan

In the midst of ongoing plans for both an expanded national park and an enlarged Denali State Park, plans were also being formulated and carried out within the existing Mount McKinley National Park. The completion of the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, as noted above, brought thousands of additional visitors to the park each year, and the nation's growing penchant for rugged outdoor education meant that many of those visitors sought challenging adventure away from the park road corridor.

To some extent, the park had long been a haven for hikers. Since early days, the Outer Range hills and the broad valleys south of the park road had beckoned visitors. As far back as the 1920s, rangers had proposed trails that would take visitors as well as park staff to Anderson Pass, Clearwater Creek, McGonagall Pass, Foggy Pass, and the head of Savage River.[96] None of those trails were built, however. As noted in Chapter 5, several short trails were begun during the CCC days of the late 1930s, mostly in the McKinley Park Station area; a new trail, from the hotel area to the park headquarters, was added in 1952.[97] A few visitors during this period decried the lack of suitable trails, but the advanced age of most park visitors put off serious trail planning for the time being.[98] But park personnel recognized that the new Denali Highway would attract "younger and more able individuals ... and to prepare for this type, hiking trails ... are proposed for construction in the very near future." Beginning in 1954, plans were made for trails "to the snout of the Toklat River Glacier" and for a bridge across the McKinley Bar that would have allowed trail access to the Clearwater Creek country. Then, in 1956, the *Mission 66 Prospectus* recommended several new trails: up the Savage River valley and to Double Mountain, the old Sheldon Cabin, and McGonagall Pass.[99] The park's final Mission 66 plan, approved in 1957, called for four short self-guiding nature trails (to be located near stopping points along the park road) along with "five backcountry hiking trails," each with "shelters constructed in needed locations."[100] During the Mission 66 period, several of the short nature trails were constructed—at Eielson Visitor Center and Polychrome Pass, for example—but



Backcountry hiking and camping in the park nearly doubled between 1971 and 1973. NPS Interp. Collection #763, Denali National Park and Preserve




**The 1977 Backcountry Unit Map shows how the park was divided into areas for the purpose of regulating backcountry use, thereby protecting the hikers' wilderness experience. Backcountry Management Plan Unit Map, 1977, Resource Library, Denali National Park and Preserve**

the park's long-distance trails never got off the drawing board. As late as the mid-1960s, trails-related funding continued to lag, perhaps because few visitors demanded either new trails or maintenance on existing trails.[101]

By the early 1970s, an interest in long-distance hiking finally began to make itself known. Beginning in 1971, the NPS required that all overnight backcountry users obtain a campfire permit, and later that summer, the park concessioner began to make a special provision for hikers (both day hikers and backpackers) traveling to various "trail points" on the tour buses. The 1972 completion of the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, plus the implementation of a bus system that, for the first time, allowed backpackers to travel for free to distant points along the park road, brought a dramatic increase in backcountry activity. The number of visitor-days by hikers and backpackers, for example, ballooned from 5,419 in 1971 to 10,437 in 1973, a 92 percent increase.[102] This mushrooming of activity was immediately felt, and after the 1972 season, park officials recognized that "there is a need for direct onsite management" in the backcountry.[103]

Beginning in 1973, park officials—searching for a long-term solution—sought "to determine how many backpackers the park can take without damaging these natural scenic areas." Both rangers and backpackers began to recognize, for instance, that open campfires degraded the tundra environment; these fire-blackened sites also attracted future campers to stay at the same spot. To avoid these concentrated impacts, rangers asked that backpackers bring their own camp stoves, and they also recommended that backcountry users hike and camp in generally undisturbed areas, thus distributing their individual impacts over a broad area rather than at a few concentrated locations.[104] That same year, park officials—at the behest of biologist Gordon Haber—announced that three backcountry areas would be closed to hiking and camping in order to protect wolf dens and denning areas. From June 15 to the first of September, 28,672 acres were closed along the Sanctuary River, 12,544 acres along the Toklat River, and 1,240 acres along Moose Creek.[105] Haber's suggestion proved to be of long-lasting value, and in the years to come, park officials continued to close key areas on an as-needed basis, either to protect wildlife denning areas or to protect visitors from kill sites or other potentially dangerous locations.[106]

During the winter of 1973-74, the NPS began to investigate new ways of managing the park's backcountry. Dan Kuehn, who had recently been hired as Mount McKinley's superintendent, hired ranger Steve Buskirk as the park's first resource management specialist, and Buskirk spent most of that winter cobbling together a park Backcountry Use Plan. By the following March Buskirk had largely completed the plan, and the park issued a press release announcing that it would implement the plan that summer. It was one of a large number of similar plans that the agency was writing for national park areas throughout the country.[107] The press release stated, "Faced with this [usage] increase and consequent overcrowding of some backcountry

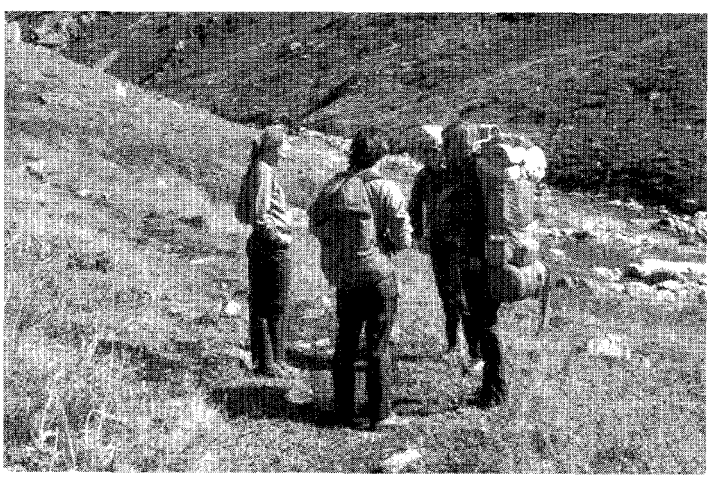
areas, the National Park Service will moderate the pressure on the backcountry resource and maintain the quality of experience for backcountry visitors." Because campers had consistently noted that isolation was an important part of a park backcountry experience, the plan laid out a mechanism—through the issuance of its backcountry use permits—whereby the park was divided into 31 backcountry use zones (25 of which were adjacent to the park road), and not more than two backpacking parties would be allowed in each zone. Additional elements of the backcountry plan, unrelated to hiking activity, included a *laissez faire* attitude toward fire management, a refusal to stock fish within the park's lakes, transplant game, control predators, or enhance vegetation. Many of these practices, which reflected "a change in the thinking of wildlife management personnel across the country," had long been practiced at the park, but it was the first time that they had been codified in a planning document.[108]

In order to implement these policies, Chief Ranger Gary Brown hired the first-ever backcountry rangers in the spring of 1974: Jack and Beth Hebert. The husband-and-wife team was stationed at headquarters that summer but spent most of its time in the backcountry. As Beth recently noted,

> We wrote reports on backcountry conditions, ... we replaced the floors of several of the backcountry cabins, we ... hauled to the road wire from the old telegraph line that ran to Eielson. ... We also cleaned up campfire rings, hauled out trash, checked permits, and informed hikers about the backcountry management plan. We were occasionally involved in search-and-rescue operations and bear management issues.[109]

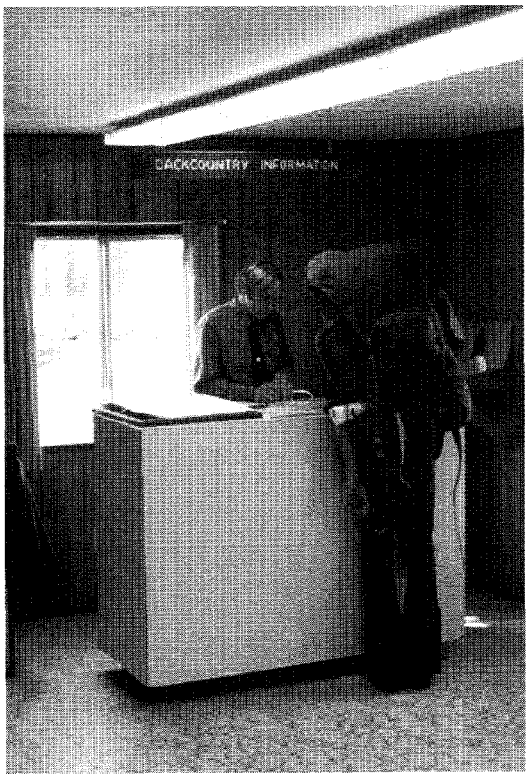
The park released its final *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan*, along with the park's first hiking brochure, in June 1975. Before it did so, however, Buskirk and other park staff addressed several issues that had arisen the previous summer. First, staff recognized that the 1974 use limitations were too strict, so significant increases in visitation per unit were approved. Second, staff took a new look at the park's backcountry use zones and decided to bisect four of them into smaller units, thus creating a new total of 35 zones.[110] Finally, backcountry campfire use remained a problem. In 1973 and 1974, the agency had encouraged backpackers to bring portable stoves in hopes of reducing the ecological damage brought on by campfires—both from firewood gathering as well as fire-caused tundra damage. Perhaps as a result of those suggestions, only 23 percent of all 1974 backpacking parties built open fires. Buskirk, recognizing that Mount McKinley, with its rain and mosquitoes, was less than ideally suited for campfires, and also recognizing the ecological factors cited above, recommended in a January 1975 memo that "permission to build fires no longer be issued [to backpackers] and that the use of fire, except in cases of emergencies, be terminated." Buskirk's superiors—Chief Ranger Gary Brown and Superintendent Dan Kuehn—were understandably wary about the public's reaction to the proposed policy. Both men approved Buskirk's recommendation, however, and beginning in the summer of 1976, open fires were prohibited in all backcountry units.[111] Meanwhile, the park had expanded its backcountry ranger force from two to four: Jack and Beth Hebert continued to serve during the 1975 to 1977 seasons, while the other ranger pair was Melinda Frison and Donna Pritchett in 1975 followed by Pete and Gretchen Pederson in 1976-77.[112]

During the summers of 1977 and 1978, staff under the guidance of the Regional Chief Scientist (in Seattle) conducted an extensive survey of the park's backcountry users. More than 4,000 backcountry visitors were asked about the park's backcountry management policies and, in particular, whether overcrowding was a concern.[113] (The number of overnight hikers, by 1978, had risen to 5,187, from just 2,469 four years earlier.) The survey showed that users, by and large, were "overwhelmingly supportive of the Park Service's regulations governing use of the backcountry."[114] NPS



Backcountry rangers Beth and Jack Hebert, left, contact hikers in the park, 1975. Buskirk Photo, DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve

officials, however, made minor changes to the zoning system. They decided to broaden a restriction on public off-road access in the Sable Pass area that had been established in 1956 (see Chapter 12) by implementing a five-mile-long "closed to hiking" zone for one-half mile on either side of the park road. In addition, they designated fairly extensive areas surrounding the park headquarters, the park hotel, East Fork just north of the park road, and the Wonder Lake area where camping would be permitted only in designated areas.[115] The expansion of the park boundaries, and later management actions, would bring new refinements to the system (see Chapter 9), but the basic system would remain largely unchanged.




**In 1975 this Backcountry Information desk was located in the Riley Creek Information Center and was the main contact point for implementation of the park's Backcountry Management Plan. Buskirk Photo, DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve**

The park's attitude toward its backcountry, as evidenced by the *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan*, was a recognition that wilderness, as the public perceived it, was well worth keeping. But wilderness, as a legal concept, remained elusive, at least for the time being. As noted in Chapter 7, a 1965 master planning study had noted that the park contained two de facto wilderness areas: a 334,000-acre Toklat Wilderness Area north of the park road, and a 1,396,000-acre Denali Wilderness Area south of the road. Regional and Washington officials concurred with these master-plan recommendations. Within months of the issuance of that master plan, however, the first of a series of new planning efforts brought dynamism—if not total unpredictability—to a determination of what the park's future boundaries should be. Because of that dynamism, the agency deferred its Mount McKinley wilderness study for the time being, even though it had authorized such studies for its other large Alaska units, Katmai and Glacier Bay. After ANCSA was signed into law in late 1971, the commencement of the 17(d)(2) process added yet another element of unpredictability to the equation. Congress, as part of the 1964 Wilderness Act, had mandated that all NPS units with major roadless areas had to be inventoried and evaluated within a ten-year time frame. But because both Congress and the NPS knew that the post-ANCSA process would not be decided until well after the 1974 deadline, all wilderness planning efforts were deferred until Congress had settled the 17(d)(2) question.[116]

### The 1976 Development Concept Plan

While Steve Buskirk and his co-workers were in the midst of writing the park's first backcountry plan, other park staff recognized that the crush of new park visitors since 1972 demanded that a new plan be developed regarding operations and facilities in the hotel area, the headquarters area, and along the park road. As noted above, recreational visitation to the park had more than tripled in just two years; in 1971 there had been 44,500 visitors, while in 1973 visitation had ballooned to 137,300. Visitation continued to skyrocket in 1974, when 161,400 visits were recorded. (See Appendix B.) Because most visitors spent their time in the headquarters and hotel-railroad station areas, facilities designed for more modest visitation were clearly being overwhelmed. Specific problem areas included a lack of parking in the hotel-Riley Creek area, an absence of shower and laundry facilities for the increasing number of campers and backpackers, and the poor quality of seasonal housing for both NPS and concessions staff. Park officials, recognizing that the heightened crowds were having a negative impact on many visitors' park experience, expressed these concerns to regional officials in Seattle; they, in turn, requested the assistance of the agency's Denver Service Center (DSC) in the matter. DSC officials decided to address these problems by compiling a development concept plan (DCP) to address a broad spectrum of development-related issues.[117]

Doug Cornell directed the DCP effort; his involvement began on August 27-29, 1975, when public workshops on the plan were held in Anchorage, in Fairbanks, and at the park. Workshop attendees, who numbered between 40 and 50, first broached questions with long-term impacts ("Should the existing hotel be removed?" Or, conversely, "Should additional hotels be built in the park – and if so, where?").

Both participants and staff recognized that the state and NPS, at that time, were in the midst of a separate planning effort for the Cooperative Planning and Management Zone (see above), and they also recognized that the park's master plan, which had been put forth in December 1973 as part of the larger 17(d)(2) issue, had not yet been adopted. Given those larger issues, there was a broad awareness that a full DCP was premature; instead, the planning document would be called an Interim DCP, the goal of which would be limited to specific problems in the hotel, Riley Creek, and headquarters areas. As the planning team itself noted, "the team will consider only those [planning alternatives] which could be implemented within the present developed area, at minimum expense, and with minimum environmental impact."[118]



During the summer season park interpretive staff provided dog sled demonstrations at the park kennels for the visiting public. NPS Interp. Collection #704, Denali National Park and Preserve

Given the public input at the three meetings, DSC personnel completed an *Analysis of Alternatives* in December 1975, which provided five contrasting development scenarios. The document was then let out for public comment; planners, however, received only twelve responses. Based on comments generated both during the August 1975 workshops and during the early-1976 public comment period, DSC staff compiled the *Interim Development Concept Plan* and released it in early March 1976. The plan called for the NPS to make a large number of changes to interpretive facilities, residential areas, and parking lots; none of these changes, however, were particularly costly. Specific recommendations included a small addition to the park hotel, enlarging area parking lots, adding a shower-restroom building near the youth hostel, adding interpretive space at the hotel, improving signage and lighting, rehabilitating concessioner employee quarters, and the additional of new housing units at the former CCC camp. Alaska officials broadly approved many of the plan's recommendations but urged modifications in others, but perhaps because of other funding priorities, few of the recommended changes were ever implemented.[119]

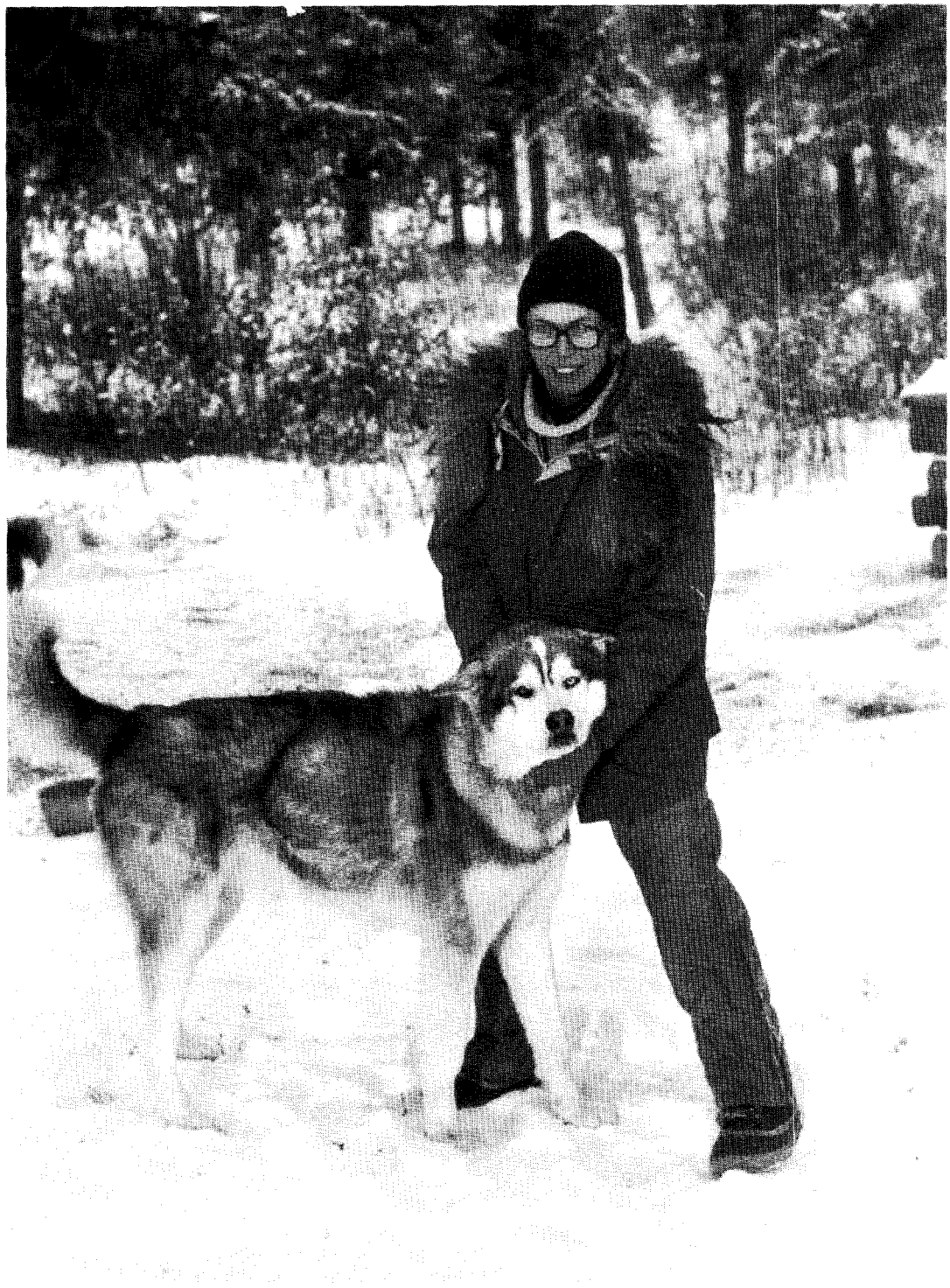
### The Resurgence of Dog Patrols

As noted in Chapters 5 through 7, Supt. Frank Been removed most of the park's working sled dogs from the park in the early 1940s and kept only enough dogs for longer patrols and for demonstration purposes. During most of the mid-to-late 1940s, the park had no dogs whatsoever, and annual dog patrols since 1950 had been a hit-or-miss affair; they took place between 1952 and 1960, and again beginning in 1963. Throughout this period, however, the dogs' primary and most visible purpose was for summertime interpretive demonstrations. Until the late 1960s, the park continued to keep sled dogs; their care was typically entrusted to a headquarters-based ranger as a collateral duty.[120]

Shortly after Ivan Miller became the park's chief ranger in 1969, however, the park began to adopt a different attitude toward its sled dogs. He and others realized that "dog sledding was a cultural, historic, and prehistoric resource worth preserving and it provided a means of transportation compatible with the Alaskan wilderness that the park was set aside to protect."[121] (Alaska, during this period, was experiencing a revival in dog mushing; in early 1967, Dorothy Page of Wasilla had organized a 50-mile race—the first long-distance race held in decades—and soon afterward, she and Joe Redington were raising statewide interest in even longer races. This interest, in 1973, would be manifested in the first Anchorage-to-Nome Iditarod Sled Dog Race.[122]) Recognizing that the park's early operations were largely dependent upon working dogs, but well aware that the few remaining park dogs were sparsely used during the long winter months, an unnamed staffer suggested in an internal memo that November,

> How about employing a park "Dog musher" to work with and develop ... [the park dogs?]. The perpetuation of actually working dog teams should have an intrinsic value well worth the investment and would add a lot in authenticity for demonstration purposes.

A key remaining question, however, was who would train the ranger corps? As the November 1969 memo noted, "I realize it may be difficult to



During Sandra Kogl's years as the park's dog handler and kennels manager, she revamped the kennels' sled dog breeding program resulting in far superior working sled dog bloodlines. DENA 11-155, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

find an experienced hand in this all but extinct profession."[123] But as a follow-up source noted, "experienced people were found, old timers passed on what they knew, and Denali Park Kennels became a vital part of park operations, summer and winter."[124] More specifically, the park kennels were entrusted to ranger Roy Sanborn, who later in the winter of 1969-70 added several malamutes. The revamped dog assemblage was first exhibited to the public the following summer, and by 1971 Sanborn had written an informational pamphlet about the park's dog teams, entitled *Malamutes of Mount McKinley National Park.* Sanborn remained in charge of the kennels until he left the park in 1972; during that period, he took increasingly long patrols with the team and continued to add more malamutes.[125]

Park staff gradually came to recognize, however, that malamutes—as attractive and iconic as they were to tourists—fared relatively poorly during wintertime patrols, and they also came to realize what Alaskans during an earlier period had long known: that the dogs most appropriate for long-distance hauling (or racing) were relatively small,

they were not purebreds, and in the eyes of many visitors they were not particularly handsome. In 1973, the arrival of Superintendent Dan Kuehn and Chief Ranger Gary Brown signaled changes at the kennel, because soon afterward the park began to obtain strong, adaptable sled dogs—"whatever their breed or mixed breed," as Superintendent Kuehn has noted.[126]

The change in attitude toward the kennels—as reflected by the dogs' appearance and breed—soon had new impacts. First, the park hired staff with specific expertise in dog-handling capabilities: in early 1973 it asked Ford Reeves, a member of the park's maintenance staff, to become the park's first "animal caretaker" in more than 30 years, and in November 1974 the park hired Sandra L. Kogl—who was already experienced with dog teams—to take over the park kennels. Kogl kept the job for more than a decade, and in 1981 she wrote a book about the park dogs, entitled *Sled Dogs of Denali.* An increasing number of volunteers, over the years, ably assisted Reeves and Kogl.[127] Also in 1974, park staff tried to restore the kennels area to its historical appearance; as noted in the park's annual report, "The kennel building floor was covered with 2" spruce planks and dowelled. The ceiling was paneled. A new 'old' stove was acquired [and] construction began on 15 new, three sided log dog houses to replace old plywood houses."[128] Finally, and perhaps of greatest importance, the park began to use dogs for regular winter patrols for the first time since the late 1930s or early 1940s. As late as the winter of 1972-73, rangers had recorded only 210 miles of dog sled patrol. But by 1974, this mileage had increased to 1,700, and in 1978 there were some 4,000 miles of dog sled patrols.[129] The dog teams were used to check winter recreation use, trail conditions, to haul backcountry trash (including trash left by mountaineers), and to protect park wildlife. During this period, rangers did not rely solely on dog teams for their wintertime patrols; they also used snowmachines to patrol just beyond the northern border and conducted occasional ski patrols as well.[130] Airplanes were also occasionally used to patrol the park during this period, but because park officials did not have regular access to government aircraft, the only air patrols took place during the late 1970s, inasmuch as Supt. Betts, a pilot, had his own plane and parked it at the McKinley Park airstrip.[131]

Dog teams also entered into the commercial sphere during this period. In 1973, veteran dog musher Dennis Kogl requested, and received, a Special Use Permit to take the public on sled dog trips into the park.[132] Kogl operated his tours until 1976 but then encountered problems insuring his patrons. Thereafter, he retooled his operation and ran a dog-sled freight-service operation, both to supply skiers on long-distance trips in the park and for mountaineers attempting to climb Alaska Range peaks from the north side. The operation, originally called Denali Dog Tours, became known as Denali Dog Tours and Wilderness Freighters beginning in the winter of 1977-78. Kogl remained active until 1984, operating with either a special use permit, a concessions permit, or a commercial use license; he then sold the business to Will Forsburg and Linda Johnson, who kept it going into the 1990s. Two operators currently operate dog sled services: one handles passenger tours, while the other conducts commercial freight hauling.[133]

**Concessions and Business Development**

As noted earlier in this chapter, Outdoor World, Ltd. had become the park's sole concessioner beginning in January 1972. Beginning that summer George Fleharty, the company's major stockholder, was the on-site manager of the park's concessions operation. Fleharty and Outdoor World remained in those positions for the next five years. In mid-1977, however, change was in the offing. Outdoor World, apparently in search of capital for new construction projects, prepared a prospectus to sell the company's assets to a larger company. ARA Services, Inc.—a New Jersey-based corporation which also ran concessions operations at Mesa Verde and Shenandoah national parks—responded to the prospectus, and on June 1, 1978 the deal was finalized; Outdoor World became a division of ARA Services (see Appendix D). Based on the company's satisfactory operations elsewhere, the NPS quickly approved the contract; the agency was unwilling, however, to



In the 1970s park dog teams were used to remove old bridge timbers that had washed downstream on the Toklat River. The dog teams also hauled cabin repair materials to cabins along the park's northern boundary. NPS Interp. Collection #2763, Denali National Park and Preserve

include a 20-year contract extension (which would have extended the final year of the contract from 1987 to 1998).[134] Despite the corporate-level changes, on-site operations continued much as they had before, with George Fleharty still managing the park concession from his offices in the McKinley Park community.[135]

A key clause in a June 1972 Memorandum of Agreement between Outdoor World and the NPS—which continued under the 1978 ARA contract—was that the concessioner was given the exclusive right to operate the park's transportation services. This meant that the concessioner controlled not only the park's tour busses (which had been a concessioner function ever since the 1920s) but the new shuttle bus system as well.[136] Given that authority, the concessioner was responsible for procuring the necessary buses for both systems. In response, the concessioner purchased a small fleet of "Bluebird" blue-colored tour buses. But to obtain shuttle buses, it typically negotiated annual agreements with various Alaska school districts. As noted above, the large number of park visitors in 1972 overtaxed the initial shuttle bus fleet to such an extent that officials were forced to add new buses in midsummer.



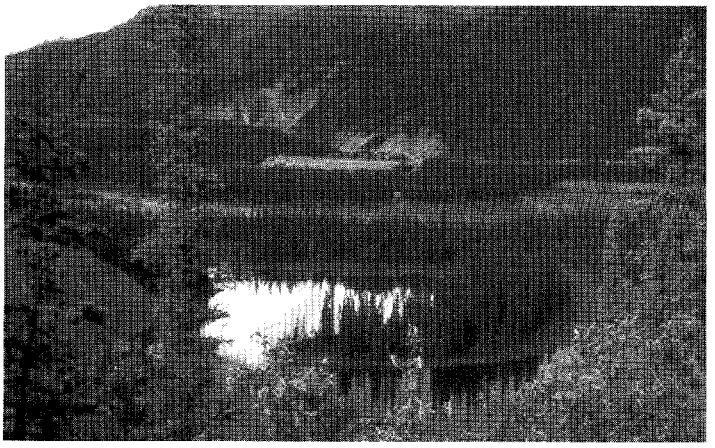
**This 1974 bus maintenance facility served vehicles in the park visitor transportation system. DENA 5753, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection**

In order to avoid repeating the mistakes of 1972, NPS officials vowed to add more buses to the shuttle fleet; in March 1973, Alaska State Office Director Stan Albright announced that "we will have 22 buses that will run throughout the park."[137] Despite those promises, only 17 were placed into service – a number that again proved insufficient for the record number of park visitors. Once again, those who fared worst were mid-season day hikers, plus campers at Savage, Teklanika, and other campgrounds. All too many times, these visitors were unable to venture farther west along the park road because the passing buses were full to capacity. As a result, they complained long and loud to both concessions and NPS officials, and in one particularly memorable incident, an obviously distraught camper waited so long for a bus that he flagged one down, took the driver's keys and was cited for disorderly conduct. The park superintendent, frustrated that his agency could not afford to fund more shuttle buses, decided to open up the park road to all motorists who had reservations for campgrounds west of Savage River. Regional officials quickly got the message; they quickly provided the park with additional funds, and within a week, 14 more shuttle buses had been added to the fleet.[138]

Given two years of inadequate bus service, and an expectation for even higher visitor totals in the future, NPS and concessions officials prepared for upcoming seasons by supplying even more buses. That strategy ultimately worked, and for the remainder of the decade visitors voiced few complaints about the number of park shuttle buses. The U.S. government had to pay all costs related to procuring and operating the additional buses. This "cost-plus" system took an increasing bite out of the park budget, inasmuch as the concessioner had little incentive to trim costs.[139]

Another bus-related worry—one borne entirely by the concessioner—was passenger safety. Over the years there had been few vehicle accidents along the park road, primarily because both buses and private automobiles were rarely seen in the park prior to the war and were still an uncommon sight until the mid-1950s.[140] After the Denali Highway opened in 1957, however, an increasing number of rollovers and other accidents were recorded.[141] The first of these involved privately-owned automobiles, but two accidents involving a concessions bus—one of which injured a park visitor—took place during the summer of 1962.[142] More significant was a July 30, 1969 rollover involving a westbound tour bus, just west of Igloo Campground, which resulted in a total loss to the bus and injuries to most of the forty passengers, nine of whom required hospitalization.[143] Although the agency's actions during the winter of 1971-72 resulted in the removal of most private vehicle traffic from the park road, accidents continued. In July 1974 a wildlife tour bus rolled down an embankment just east of Eielson Visitor Center, killing one passenger (Katherine McFadden) and injuring most of the remaining 39 passengers, and in August 1978 an Omaha woman "suffered a slight head injury" when an eastbound shuttle

bus rolled over midway between Wonder Lake and Eielson. Drivers, in all three cases, were deemed negligent for venturing too close to the road edge.[144]



During the Parks Highway road construction, material from the Nenana canyon was deposited on Chalon Harris's trade & manufacturing site to form a large pad visible in this photo, above Horseshoe Lake. The first lodging establishment in Nenana Canyon, the McKinley Chalets, was constructed on this pad. NPS Interp. Collection #5537, Denali National Park and Preserve

As noted above, the primary reason that Outdoor World became an ARA Services subsidiary was to obtain capital for new hotel construction. The boom in park visitation during the 1970s meant that the McKinley Park Hotel often had a season-long 99 percent occupancy rate, and many visitors who hoped to stay for two days or more had to leave after just a single night's stay. Based on these factors, on projections of a long-term boom in Alaska tourism, and the fact that a much larger-sized park (which was then being debated in Congress) would make the area even more attractive to visitors, Fleharty and other concessions-company officials recognized that a new hotel was needed. But he may have also recognized that NPS officials would fight any attempt to build a new hotel within the park boundary or substantially expand the existing hotel. As a result, neither Fleharty nor any other tourist developer tried to build additional hotel space within the existing or proposed park.[145]

Instead, Fleharty looked east, to an area just outside the park boundary which was then called Windy Pass. That mile-long sliver of land, which was sandwiched between the Nenana River and an adjacent cliff face, had been claimed by three men (Chalon Harris, Stephen E. Jones, and Charles M. Travers) since 1965 and had been in their ownership since 1974. Near the north end of that sliver, concession company officials decided (for $3 million) to purchase 46 acres of Harris's 70-acre parcel. The deal was apparently finalized in 1977. Within months, the concessioner began two major construction projects on its newly-acquired parcel. Looking for a way to supply much-needed seasonal employee housing, it began constructing four-plex housing units that fall on the former site of Tenada Campground. Then, in the early spring of 1978, construction began on the first "hotel unit" at the newly-christened McKinley Chalets. By the spring of 1980 three of these hotel units were open for tourist accommodations, and before the end of that year the construction of a gift shop, lobby, restaurant, and lounge had begun on the same property.[146] These improvements, in the coming years, would be followed by many others in the mile-long Windy Pass area. The developments above, plus many others which followed in later years, were collectively called "the canyon" during the 1980s; today the area is known as Glitter Gulch.[147]

Changes in the commercial scene were also taking place at the west end of the park road. The primary commercial destination in that area, as it had been since the early 1950s, was Camp Denali. Begun as a rustic getaway, the camp reflected the environmental sentiments of its longtime owners, Celia Hunter and Ginny Hill Wood, and much of its early clientele was affiliated with conservation groups such as the Wilderness Society, the National Parks Association, and the Sierra Club. (Hunter, in fact, was a member of the Wilderness Society's governing board, and the Society had held its 1963 annual meeting at the camp.) By the mid-1970s the small, informal cabin camp had gained a loyal following under Hunter and Wood's long-term guidance.[148] But in 1975, the two women came to the realization "that we could not forever put out the physical energy that operating Camp Denali demands," and Hunter's role as the Alaska Conservation Society president and as a member of the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission forced her to spend an increasing number of summer days away from camp. Casting about for "someone special" to operate the camp in their stead, they agreed to sell the camp to Wallace Cole and his wife Jerryne. The new owners were thoroughly familiar with the camp and its operations, having worked together on the camp staff, and they had both spent several summers working for the park concessioner. Wally, for example, had first worked at the hotel in 1959 and had spent six years there, including several years as its on-site manager, while Jerri also worked in a variety of positions, both at the hotel and as a tour bus driver. The Coles were concerned, year-round residents who lived just outside of the park's eastern boundary.[149]



After more than twenty years of developing and operating Camp Denali, Celia Hunter and Ginny Wood (right) entrusted the wilderness lodge to Wallace and Jerryne Cole, pictured here with their two children, Land (left) and Jenna (right). Wallace A. Cole Collection, Courtesy of Camp Denali

Less than a mile from Camp Denali, and just south of Moose Creek, a new hostelry called the North Face Lodge opened in the spring of 1973. Gary Crabb, who owned the Mt. McKinley Village development just south of the park entrance along the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, bought a five-acre small-tract site from former park superintendent Grant Pearson, who had staked out the parcel in September 1955 and secured title to it in March 1963.[150] Crabb, the new owner, installed several ATCO trailer units on the property—sufficient for six or seven tourist rooms—and sold tour packages to park visitors; these packages included one-night stays at both of Crabb's lodges. The new tour arrangement rankled NPS officials (who wanted to keep any new traffic off the park road) as well as the park concessioner (who felt that the tours violated contract terms that gave the company an exclusive commercial use of the road). Crabb, however, explained that he needed to operate over the road in order to access his business, and under that stipulation he obtained a new Special Use Permit that allowed him to run one daily bus each way between the McKinley Park railroad station and North Face Lodge. At first, Crabb used the permit only occasionally; in 1973, in fact, he brought tourists out to the lodge just twice. His use of the lodge, however, gradually increased, and he continued to run the operation out of his trailer units for more than a decade.[151]

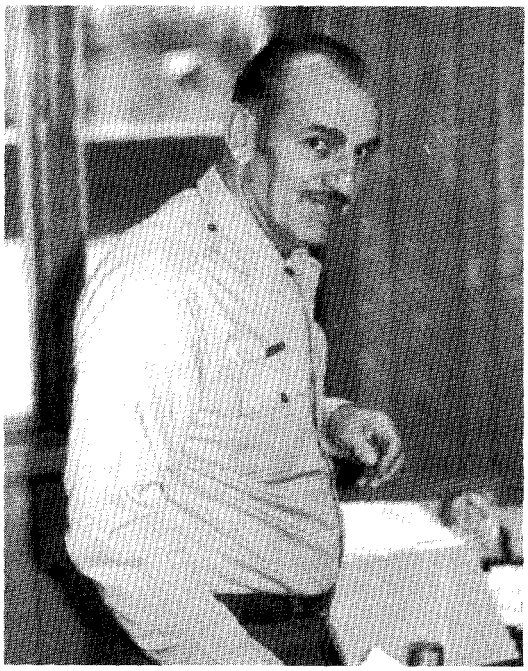
**Staff, Campgrounds, and Facilities**

During the 1970s there were three superintendents at Mount McKinley National Park: Vernon Ruesch, Daniel Kuehn, and Frank Betts. Vernon Ruesch, as noted in Chapter 7, was the first park superintendent who had not also been in charge of other Alaska NPS units. Ruesch, a former ranger, served from July 1969 until June 1973, when he was transferred to Sitka National Historical Park. Ruesch was replaced by Sitka Superintendent Daniel Kuehn, a historian who had previously served at Salem Maritime National Historical Park (in Massachusetts), Manassas National Battlefield Park (in Virginia), and Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (in Georgia and Tennessee). Kuehn served until September 1978, when he transferred to the Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Seattle; he was replaced by Frank Betts, a former ranger who had previously served at Rocky Mountain, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Grand Teton and Crater Lake national parks. (He had been an eight-year chief ranger at Grand Teton and a three-year Crater Lake superintendent.) Betts served in his job for just eighteen months when he retired from the agency. He, in turn, was replaced on an interim basis by Charles A. Budge, a ranger who had served on the ad hoc "ranger task force" that had been deployed the previous summer to protect the millions of acres of newly-designated national monuments. Budge served as the park and monument superintendent from early March until late August 1980, when Robert C.

Cunningham assumed the superintendent's position (and Budge became the first superintendent at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve). As noted in Chapter 9, Cunningham would fill the superintendent's shoes for most of the ensuing decade.[152]

During the 1970s the park's budget dramatically increased; it tripled from $543,000 in 1971, the year that the post-ANCSA planning process began, to $1.6 million in 1979, the year following Carter's proclamations, and it increased another $1 million (to $2.61 million) during the next fiscal year (see Appendix B).[153] Given those consistent, ample budget increases, the park was able to considerably bolster its staff: to some extent with permanent staff, but to an even greater degree with seasonal workers. As noted in Chapter 7, the role of seasonals at the park had been decidedly modest during the 1950s and was still fairly minor through most of the 1960s, but by the mid-1970s the park was hiring 75 seasonals each year. Supt. Kuehn, moreover, recalls that these men and women were "the cream of the crop." The park would "get something like 3,000 applications" each year, and those that were hired "were wonderful ... I mean, we had people with master's degrees."[154]

Because seasonals were becoming such a major part of the park's work force, the role of the park's chief ranger became increasingly important, and perhaps because interpretive seasonals were a major component of the swelling seasonal work force, the park established a new, full-time position to oversee their activities (see Appendix C). The chief rangers during this period included Ivan Miller (1969-73) and Gary Brown (1973-81), while the interpretive program was managed by Henry Warren (on a half-time basis in 1973), William Garry (who, as park naturalist, directed interpretation activities in 1974 and part of the 1975 season), and William Truesdell (who served as Chief Naturalist from July 1975 through 1980).[155] Another new element in the overall staffing picture—and a very welcome one—was the role of volunteers. During the early 1970s, the number of volunteers was fairly modest; in 1972 there were two, for example, and the following year they numbered four. But by the summer of 1980, 25 so-called VIPs ("volunteers in parks" had contributed more than 1,000 hours of time to assist with living history—the park kennels were consistently popular with volunteers—interpretation, resource management, and mountaineering operations. The park also benefited from the occasional involvement of a Youth Conservation Corps work crew; in 1980, for example, YCC enrollees completed 30 work projects, including road and trail brushing, water line installation and the backcountry cabin rehabilitation.[156]



Vernon Ruesch served as park superintendent from July 1969 until June 1973. DENA 27-109, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

One aspect that complicated staff matters during this period—particularly during the early to mid-1970s—was that the line between park employees and the NPS's Anchorage office was often fuzzy. As noted in Chapter 7, there had been an NPS central office in Anchorage since 1965, and ever since that time, employees working for the park—because it had the only major NPS presence in the state—were often "borrowed" by the central office to perform statewide planning functions. The confusion over the superintendent's role, begun in 1965, finally ended in the summer of 1969, but during the early to mid-1970s, that confusion was repeated at the interpretive, planning, and resource management levels. The demand for immediate information about Alaska resources—often imposed upon Alaska by the Washington office—sometimes resulted in a park employee begin temporarily deployed in Anchorage for a week or two, but in several instances, agency officials found it necessary to have employees relocate to Anchorage for the winter. It was an exciting, if nerve-wracking, period.[157]

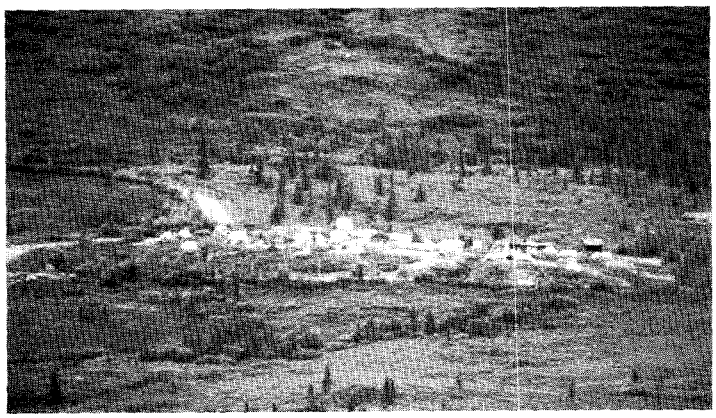
As noted above, the agency's decision to restrict traffic on the park road beginning in the summer of 1972 brought changes to several of the park's campgrounds. Prior to that year, park visitors could freely drive to any one of eight designated campgrounds: Riley Creek, Morino, Savage River, Sanctuary, Teklanika, Igloo, Toklat, and Wonder Lake. The NPS's first road management decision recommended that all campgrounds west of Savage River would be open only to tent campers. But Sen. Ted Stevens, who was firmly



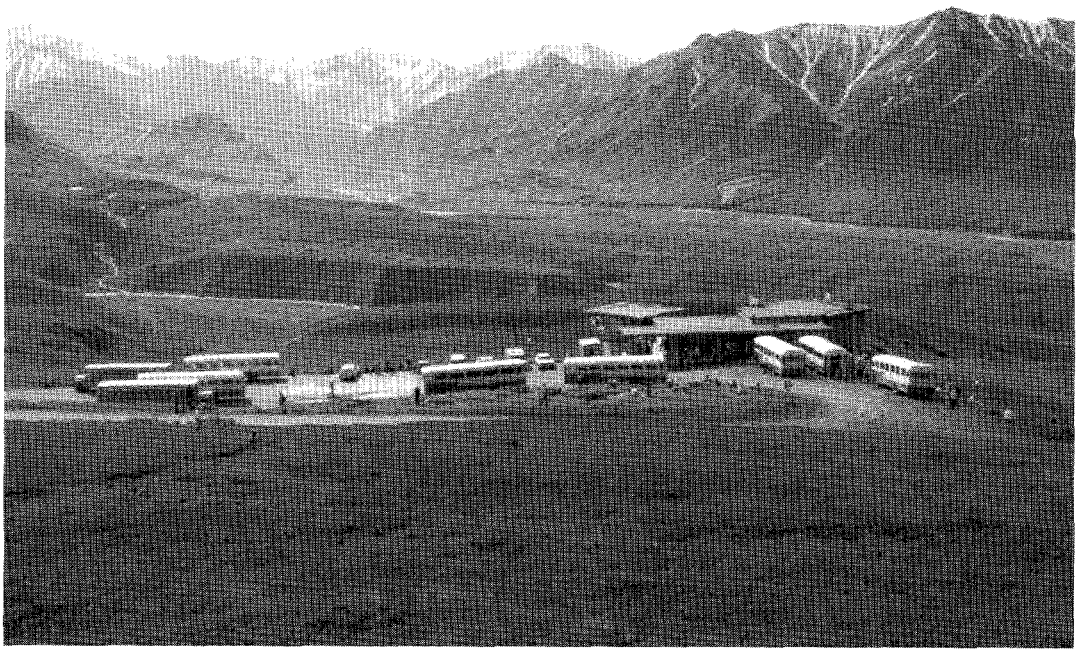
Superintendent Dan Kuehn's staff turned out for this group photo on October 30, 1975, at -8 degrees F. Back row, left to right: Joe Donchak, Bill Garry, Bruce Wadlington, Dan Kuehn, Bill Nancarrow, and Steve Buskirk. Front row, left to right: Bill Truesdell, Rusty Stevens, June McLane, Sandra Kogl, Cheryl Ann Cannon, Billy Walker, Jean Rogers, Jim Rogers, Gary Brown, and Tom Adams. DENA 27-112, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

against the plan, spoke to NPS Director George Hartzog and was able to hammer out a revised plan that allowed motorists, after obtaining permits, to access specifically-allotted spaces in the various campgrounds west of Savage River. Given that compromise, most of the park's campgrounds remained open to vehicle camping. Igloo Camp, however, was designated for tent camping only, and Toklat Campground—for 1972 at least—was closed to all campers because of heavy bear activity. As the decade wore on, further changes were made; Toklat Campground remained closed after the 1972 season, and by the mid-1970s the old Morino Campground—which had apparently been closed after the 1969 season—was reopened as a walk-in campground, limited to tent campers.[158] Throughout this period, tourists in vehicles were free to stay at Riley Creek and Savage River campgrounds, and those with a permit continued to use the Sanctuary, Teklanika, and Wonder Lake campgrounds. (Wonder Lake, though accessible by motorists, was open only to tent campers.) Because the demand for park campground space consistently exceeded the available supply, the five campgrounds west of the hotel area (Savage River, Sanctuary, Teklanika, Igloo, and Wonder Lake) were typically filled to capacity all summer long.[159] During this period, a new aspect of campground operation—fee collection—first became significant. Fees were first collected at the various park campgrounds beginning about 1970.[160] In 1971, park staff collected only $5,038 in campground fees. The boom in visitation brought on by the new Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, however, resulted in a tripling of campground fees (to $16,788) in 1972, and by 1980 fee revenues had tripled again, to $49,800.[161] These revenues, modest in comparison to the total park budget, did not remain at the park but instead were sent on to Washington. Inasmuch as there were no park entrance fees or shuttle-bus fees during this period, many visitors enjoyed the park without paying any fees to either the federal government or to the park concessioner.

During the 1970s, NPS crews or contractors constructed a number of new or expanded facilities and planned for others. Toward the western end of the park road, the 1972 establish-



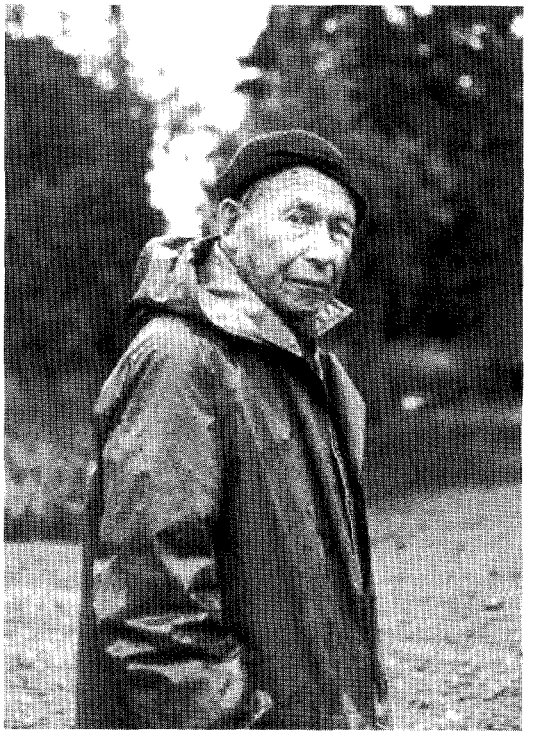
Throughout the 1970s, campers with a campground permit could drive their private vehicles to the Wonder Lake Campground. Buskirk Photo, DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve



This 1979 view of Eielson Visitor Center shows its mid-1970s expansion, including restrooms and a viewing deck. DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve

ment of the bus-based transportation system and the huge increase in overall park visitation placed enormous demands on the decade-old Eielson Visitor Center. By 1973, planning and design staffers were already at work on a redesign of the center; the project would provide additional restroom facilities, a new entryway, covered walkways, and a large, open picnic shelter that offered incomparable views (on clear days) of Mt. Eielson, the Thorofare River plain, Mt. McKinley and adjacent Alaska Range peaks. Bids were let in April 1974 and project construction began later that year. The work was completed in 1976, and a related exhibit package was installed the same year.[162] No dedication ceremony was held for the overall expansion project; in July 1978, however, National Park Foundation and NPS officials gathered at the spot and dedicated the main interpretation room in honor of the late Joe Hankins, a self-appointed park guide and Igloo Campground host who loved to photograph the park sheep and entertain tour-bus passengers during the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. A plaque summarizing key points about Joe's life and his warm personal qualities was displayed at Eielson Visitor Center for many years thereafter.[163]

At the eastern end of the park road, several new facilities were built, including a temporary entrance-station replacement, an auto shop, and a sewage lagoon. As noted in Chapter 7, park staff in 1959 had erected a prefabricated entrance station just north of the McKinley Park Station airstrip, and in 1962 an adjacent exhibit building had been added. But by 1967 the exhibit building had been removed. Plans called for the entrance station to be replaced by a kiosk in the middle of the new park entrance road, but this kiosk was never built.[164] Instead, the entrance station remained until the early 1970s. Then, in the late summer of 1972, it was replaced by a new visitor orientation center—a 20' x 50' trailer popularly called the Riley Creek Information Center—at the Riley Creek Campground entrance. It was here that many park visitors gathered to board the park shuttle buses.[165] The completion of the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway meant that the park's entrance station was now on a side road. In



Joe Hankins spent more than 20 summers as a self-appointed naturalist. Based at Igloo Campground, he often rode along on tour buses, enhancing visitors' experiences with his information and stories of the park. Joe enjoyed observing Dall sheep and was a keen wildlife photographer. DENA 28-102, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

order to overcome this obstacle, the park's Interim DCP recommended that the Riley Creek Information Center be relocated to the new road alignment. But the planned move never took place, and the double-wide trailer at the campground entrance continued to serve as the park's entrance station until, many years later, a larger and more appropriate facility was built.[166]

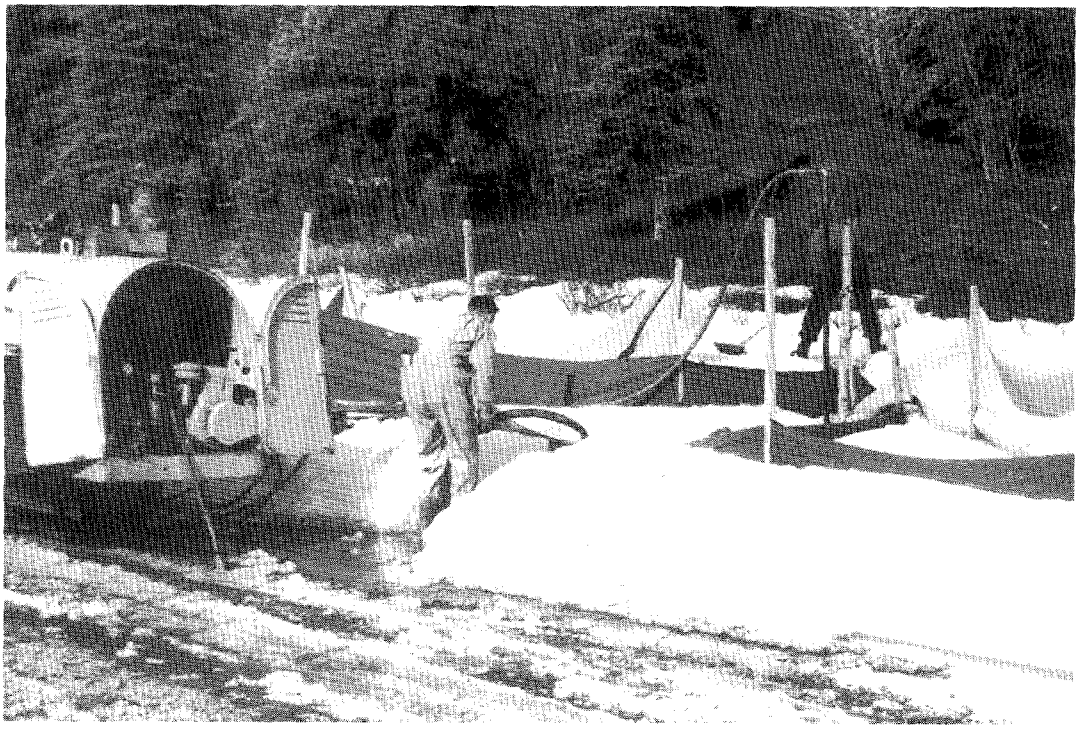
For a full 50 years after Harry Karstens moved the park headquarters away from its former site at the Riley Creek-Hines Creek confluence, virtually all east-end work-related activities had been centered at the site just west of Rock Creek. But since the mid-1960s there had been a dramatic growth in visitation, staff, and budgets (see Appendix B). One of the most visible areas of growth was in the park's vehicle fleet; it had been tiny through the 1950s, but the assumption of road maintenance in 1960 and a proliferation of new duties had resulted in many new vehicles. Superintendent Kuehn, who was trained as a historian, recognized that the primary business buildings in the headquarters area formed a cohesive historical unit. New buildings, as a result, would be a visible intrusion on the prevailing rustic architecture. Given those realities, Kuehn moved to have a new auto shop constructed away from the headquarters area. The shop was located on the hill slope just above the old CCC camp. Park maintenance staff began using the facility in 1975, and the old garage was soon converted to other uses. Since that time, vehicle maintenance and storage functions have remained at "C-Camp," and as noted in Chapter 10, additional maintenance functions moved to the site in the mid-1990s.

The need for a new, improved sewage lagoon was also apparent. During the 1950s, a septic tank and cesspool had been located just north of the park's garbage dump, which was just east of the McKinley Park airstrip.[167] But the plans for the new Riley Creek Campground, laid out in late 1966, included provisions for the construction of a new sewage lagoon, and a site was chosen just north and west of the future intersection of the park road and the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway. Then, in the spring of 1970, NPS design personnel—perhaps recognizing that the existing sewage lagoon east of the airstrip needed to be improved—sketched out plans to connect the hotel's sewage system to an enlarged Riley Creek Campground sewage lagoon.[168] Most of this system, built on contract, was constructed in 1974; it became operational the following year.[169] Changes were also made to the dump itself during this period. In 1964, as noted in Chapter 6, the dump had been relocated to the east side of the Denali Highway (today's Parks Highway), two miles south of Riley Creek. It began as an open dump, but in the late 1970s—possibly as late as 1981—the pit was cleaned up and replaced by a large holding container. Ever since that time, park garbage has been deposited here, but only temporarily until hauled off to the Healy landfill.[170]

Action also took place during this period to eliminate the park's traditional dependence on locally-generated power and, instead, tie into a larger electrical grid. As early as January 1972, NPS Regional Director John Rutter had announced that the park, in September, planned to switch over to power that would be delivered by Golden Valley Electric Association (GVEA) of Fairbanks.[171] Such an announcement, however, proved premature, and in late 1974 it was announced that GVEA, at NPS's request, was "developing plans to extend electric service from Healy to Mount McKinley Village and the park headquarters. A further extension to serve the village of Cantwell also appears feasible."[172] In early 1976, personnel in the agency's regional office prepared a draft environmental statement (DES) for a proposed electric distribution line that would extend from Healy Roadhouse south to the park. That document was completed and distributed that May.[173] Soon afterward, a meeting held on the subject at McKinley Park was considerably enlivened when Charlie Ott, a longtime resident and occasional park employee, suggested a right-of-way for the proposed line—above the railroad tracks as it wound through the Nenana River Canyon—that was widely agreed to be superior to any of the alternatives that had been laid out in the draft document.[174] The final ES on the proposed line was completed in December 1976, and the following year negotiations began with GVEA to bring power to the park. Construction of the line was begun in 1980 and completed in 1981. The line extended south only to the depot; it did not continue on to Cantwell or other points south.[175]

As suggested above, a number of additional facilities were planned during this period as part of the park's Interim Development Concept Plan for the headquarters and hotel areas, which was formulated in 1975 and 1976. But much of what the plan recommended was not built, at least in the short term.

One of the major challenges for the park's maintenance personnel was the annual spring road opening. During the 1960s, as noted in Chapter 7, crews had relied on a bulldozer and Caterpillar tractor to clear the snow off the park road. As late as 1972, however, the park admitted that it had a "lack of proper snow removal



During the spring road opening process, park road crews had to steam culverts to remove the ice buildup in them and keep drainage channels open so that the melting snows could be kept away from the road surface. This process continues today. DENA 1-45.7, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

equipment," and ice buildup at Mile 4 and elsewhere remained a problem. The following winter William Broadaway, head of the park's Roads and Trails crew, tried a new strategy: laying thousands of feet of Primacord (a long tube filled with Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate, also known as Penthrite) that blasted the ice away. This method was used the following year as well; in 1975, however, ice buildup was not a major problem, and Jim Rogers, Doug's successor, concluded that Primacord's effectiveness was limited. By 1977 park officials wrote that "Primacord is no longer used for ice removal. Ice is cut from [the] road surface during the winter, and culverts are kept open using a barrel heater. This system seems to work. It is much easier on the equipment...". This new method was continued for the remainder of the decade.[176]

### A Newly-Expanded Park and Preserve

In October 1974, as noted above, the Alaska Planning Group issued its final environmental statement for the proposed Mount McKinley park additions; that document recommended that 3,210,000 acres be added to the park, which was a slight (30,000-acre) increase over what had been recommended in the Draft Environmental Statement and Master Plan. The way was now clear to have Congress consider the Alaska lands issue. But officials in Gerald Ford's administration showed no inclination to work for passage of an appropriate bill. In the face of their apathy, the Mount McKinley and other park proposals that Interior Secretary Rogers Morton had put forth were shelved for the time being.[177]

Federal and state legislators, during this period, were also fairly quiet, although not entirely so. In May 1975, for example, Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D-Wash), who chaired the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, and Paul Fannin (R-Ariz.) introduced an Alaska- wide lands bill, and four months later, Rep. Lester Wolff (D-N.Y.) introduced a House bill that, among its other provisions, would have expanded the boundaries for both Mount McKinley National Park and Katmai National Monument. Both bills went nowhere.[178] Meanwhile, in the Alaska legislature, Rep. Leslie "Red" Swanson of Nenana drafted a bill calling for a Kantishna State Recreation Area that would have covered several hundred thousand acres north of Wonder Lake and allowed the various Kantishna-area mine owners to continue their exploration and extraction activities. This bill quickly passed the House Resources Committee. Legislators soon learned, however, that virtually all of the land within the proposed recreation area was owned by the federal government. Perhaps as a result, no further action took place on Swanson's bill.[179]

The ennui that had characterized Congressional activity related to Alaska land issues came to an abrupt halt in November 1976, when Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford in the presidential election. Carter, during the campaign, had pledged to include conservationists in his administration and, more specifically, had promised to support an Alaska lands bill; one of the criteria for which he chose his Interior Secretary, in fact, was a pledge to fight for a strong Alaska lands bill. In addition, conserva-

tionists were buoyed to learn that Rep. Morris Udall had been chosen as the new Interior and Insular Affairs Committee chair; Udall, in turn, picked Rep. John Seiberling to chair the newly-organized Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands.[180] Udall, working with the conservation community, hurriedly concocted an initial cut of an Alaska lands bill; that bill, H.R. 39, was submitted on the first day of the 95th Congress in January 1977. Among the bill's provisions, it called for a 4.7-million acre addition to Mount McKinley National Park. The bill further called for the entire addition, plus 1.9 million acres in the existing park, to become "instant wilderness" in the National Wilderness Preservation System; it was thus a marked departure from previous Interior Department efforts, which called for a study period prior to wilderness being designated.[181]

Other legislators, however, did not share Udall's view, and during the next several months a variety of other bills offered contrasting visions for how the "d-2" lands should be treated. Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), for instance, introduced a "consensus bill" (S. 1787) on June 30 that proposed a 1,130,000-acre McKinley park addition, plus an additional 1,960,000 acres of NPS-managed federal cooperative lands.[182] The proposals of former Secretary Morton, which called for a 3,210,000-acre park expansion, were submitted by Sen. Henry Jackson, (D-Wash., as S. 499) and Rep. John M. Murphy (D-N.Y., as H.R. 6564) in January and April 1977, respectively. And the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission still had its three-year-old proposal for a 3,050,000-acre park expansion, plus approximately 400,000 acres of federally-controlled "Alaska National Lands" in the Cathedral Spires area. None of these alternative measures recommended "instant wilderness" as had been included in the Udall bill; the Stevens bill and the Commission proposal were silent on the matter, and the Jackson-Murphy bills—similar to Secretary Morton's 1973 recommendations—called for wilderness study, to be undertaken within three years of the bill's passage. Other Alaska land bills submitted to Congress that year were either more narrowly conceived than those above or had a slim chance of passage.[183]

During the spring and summer of 1977, each of the major land-management bureaus had been able to make their views known to Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, and Reps. Udall and Seiberling had conducted an extensive series of public hearings in a wide variety of Alaska settings as well as in selected "Lower 48" locations.[184] That September, Andrus attended a Congressional hearing and presented recommendations that, among other measures, called for the renaming of Mount McKinley to Denali National Park and a 4,089,000-acre park expansion. He also recommended a total of 5,499,000 acres of park wilderness: 1,848,000 acres in the existing park and 3,651,000 acres in the proposed park.[185] On into the fall, Interior Committee members spent extensive time working on modifications to Udall's bill; on October 12, for example, it produced Committee Print No. 1, and on October 28, Committee Print No. 2 was released. Both prints recommended the establishment of a 3,890,000-acre national park expansion and approximately 5.5 million acres of wilderness.[186] The following January, two weeks of mark-up sessions began in John Seiberling's Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands, and it was not until February 7 that the marked-up bill was forwarded on to the full committee. During the mark-up sesssions, Rep. Lloyd Meeds (D-Wash.) had tried (and failed) to substitute a "fifth system," multiple-use proposal, but the bill that emerged in the full Interior Committee on February 15 provided more modest protections: 2,650,000 of expanded park, a 1.1-million-acre Denali National Preserve, and a continuation of the previously-recommended 5.5 million acres of wilderness. (The newly-designated preserve, located at the margins of the park expansion proposal, would sanction sport hunting as well as subsistence hunting.)[187] When the Interior Committee concluded its work on March 21, it recommended a somewhat strengthened Denali proposal: it called for a 3,350,000 Denali National Park, a 400,000-acre Denali National Preserve, and a 5,410,000-acre wilderness. The bill then went on to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, where it was subject to further revisions, and on May 17, debate about the bill began in the full House. During the three-day debate, Rep. Meeds and Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) tried to reduce the total acreage allotted to the four conservation systems. Those efforts, failed, however, and on May 19, the House passed H.R. 39, with Denali-related acreage identical to what the Interior Committee had approved on March 21: 3,350,000 acres of new park, 400,000 acres of preserve, and 5,410,000 acres of wilderness.[188]

Action then moved to the Senate, which received H.R. 39 on June 8, and on June 22 the Energy and Natural Resources Committee began debating the issue. Traditionally, the Senate has been very reluctant to pass any bill affecting a state if both senators were opposed to it. Senators Ted Stevens and Mike Gravel had publicly announced their opposition to H.R. 39.



Superintendent Dan Kuehn, left, meets with members of Rep. John Seiberling's subcommittee at the McKinley Park airstrip in this late 1970s photo. Jim Shives photo, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

The Senate therefore opted not to use H.R. 39 as its mark-up vehicle. By this time; both Stevens and Gravel had submitted their own bills pertaining to the d-2 issue. S. 1787, introduced by Ted Stevens on June 30, 1977 (as noted above), had called for a 1,130,000-acre park expansion along with 1,960,000 acres in federal cooperative lands, while Mike Gravel's S. 2944, introduced on April 19, 1978, had called for only a 2,620,000-acre expansion to Denali National Park. Stevens's bill was silent on the wilderness question, while Gravel's bill called for the Joint Federal - State Land Use Planning Commission to provide a wilderness report within two years of passage.[189] But Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson, the committee's chairman, recognized that eight other bills had been submitted to address d-2 issues; Jackson, in fact, had introduced two of them (S. 499 and S. 500).[190] To address the diversity of opinion on the subject, the committee on June 28 voted to consolidate the various Senate bills into a single bill; that bill, rather than the House-passed version, was subject to a wearying series of 42 mark-up sessions. The bill that finally emerged from the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on October 5, 1978 called for Mount McKinley National Park to be expanded by 2,587,000 acres and for the establishment of a 1,169,000-acre Mount McKinley National Preserve. The bill offered no "instant wilderness;" instead, new parklands would be studied for their wilderness potential within four years of passage. This bill, more so than its House counterpart, was favored by the State of Alaska, sport-hunting groups and development advocates. With just eight days left in the 96th Congress, House and Senate leaders tried to bridge the gap between the two bills, but the two bodies were unable to hammer out a mutually-acceptable bill, and Congress adjourned on October 15 without passing an Alaska lands package before its self-imposed December 18 deadline.[191]

The Carter administration, however, was unwilling to abandon the tremendous efforts that Congress and the Executive Branch had made over the previous seven years. Interior Department officials, recognizing that Congress might not be able to resolve the matter, had spent much of the summer analyzing what impacts the expiration of the 17(d)(2) provision would have on the affected lands, and also on how interim protection might be obtained for the land in case Congress was unable to act. What emerged from that analysis was a massive supplement to the 28 final environmental statements that had been prepared back in 1974. That analysis noted that one way of protecting the lands in question would be via presidential proclamations establishing national monuments. President Carter, on December 1, responded to the FES supplement by proclaiming the establishment of seventeen national monuments which protected a total of some 56,000,000 acres. Of these monuments, thirteen were to be managed by the National Park Service. One of these proclamations called for the establishment of a 3,890,000-acre[192] Denali National Monument (see Map 8). For the foreseeable future, therefore, the NPS would be managing Mount McKinley National Park, as it had for more than

seventy years, but it would also be caring for a much larger Denali National Monument which now surrounded the existing park to the north, west, and south (see Appendix A).[193]



Attendees of the "Great Denali Trespass" arrived in Cantwell by cars which lined the main road into Cantwell, January 13, 1979. DENA 5669, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Many Alaskans denounced President Carter's action, some more vociferously than others. In Fairbanks, some of the more militant protesters burned Carter in effigy, and in Eagle, the city council passed a resolution "to offer no aid or assistance to the National Park Service or its employees while your current regulations are in effect." The broadest, best-publicized protest was orchestrated by the Real Alaska Coalition, a hastily-organized, statewide assemblage of sportsmen's and recreation groups. Recognizing that Denali was the most accessible of the newly-established monuments and that monument land was located just outside Cantwell, the Coalition made plans to hold a mass rally there over the weekend of January 13-14, 1979. Just days before that weekend, Coalition organizers stated that they expected "several thousand persons" to attend the "mass trespass" at the new monument, where they "planned several activities that violate federal regulations governing use of Alaska's national monuments."[194] (On December 26, just two weeks earlier, the federal government had issued new regulations that were specifically applicable to the new monuments, although most of these rules provided for more "relaxed subsistence and access provisions" than would otherwise be allowed on National Park Service lands.[195]) In response to the planned actions, the NPS—hoping for the best but fearing the worst—organized a large (if low-key) operation involving 13 rangers (most from Oregon and Washington) and 13 other personnel (mostly from Mount McKinley or other Alaska parks).[196] Park superintendent Frank Betts met with the protestors in Cantwell on the evening before the protest began. The leaders of the protest announced that they planned to camp within the monument, start fires, and hold dog races, snowmachining, hunting, archery contests, and pistol shoots. Betts, in turn, told them that NPS rangers "were not gonna arrest anybody ... we're not gonna make a fuss over this," and other NPS officials stated that most of the planned activities were not illegal.[197]

Protesters assembled, as promised, at Cantwell on Saturday, January 13. But the crowd at the "Great Denali Trespass" was smaller than expected; estimates ranged from "less than 1,000" to "more than 2,000" people.[198] And although several NPS rangers mingled among the crowd, it was (in the words of one NPS employee) "simply a park visitors operation" emphasizing information distribution, first aid, and search and rescue aid. "Law enforcement," he noted, "is way down on our list," because NPS officials were mainly concerned "with the safety and enjoyment of the public."[199] "About one hundred" people "apparently illegally camped in the new monument, huddled around dozens of bonfires built to ward off the chill temperatures." But, as expected, no one was arrested, and the only unfortunate incident was the death of a 23-year-old snowmobiler (Robert Blessing) when he collided with a wing strut of a taxiing airplane. Protesters left the area on Sunday. As they left, their leaders—Clark Engle and Ken Fanning among them—called the event "successful," and both NPS officials and local residents were generally pleased at how the event was conducted.[200]

No sooner had the "Great Denali Trespass" run its course than Congress was hard at work on a renewed attempt to pass Alaska lands legislation. Rep. Udall, who had helped steer H.R. 39 through the House in 1977 and 1978, introduced a new version of H.R. 39 on January 15, 1979, at the beginning of the 96th Congress. Udall's bill, which was consistent with President Carter's recent action, called for a 3,890,000-acre national park boundary expansion, along with a 5,510,000-acre wilderness. Unlike the bill that had passed the previous May, no mention was made of a Denali National Preserve.[201] On February 26, the House Interior Committee began its mark-up. Here, however, Udall and other conservation-minded Congressmen ran into a wall of opposition, and in a key vote, the Committee approved a substitute bill offered by Rep. Jerry Huckaby (D-La.). A measure similar to Huckaby's, offered by Reps. John B. Breaux



Protesters rallied with snowmachines, dog teams, and campfires. DENA 5680, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

(D-La.) and John Dingell (D.-Mich.), was approved in the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. One of these bills called for the same level of Denali expansion as had the Senate Committee bill in October 1978: in other words, an additional 2,587,000 acres in Denali National Park along with a new 1,169,000-acre Denali National Preserve, and a four-year wilderness study effort. The other bill, however, called for a 3,350,000-acre park, a 400,000-acre preserve, and a 5,410,000-acre wilderness, which was consistent with the bill that the full House had passed in May 1978.[202] Conservationists, hoping to recoup their losses in the full House, cobbled together a new substitute bill, which was jointly sponsored by Udall and Rep. John Anderson (R-Ill.). That bill, initially called H.R. 3636, called for an expansion of Denali National Park by 3,410,000 acres, a new 480,000-acre Denali National Preserve, and a 2.8-million-acre wilderness. The House discussed the Alaska lands issue beginning on May 15, and a day later, the Udall-Anderson bill—now renumbered as H.R. 39—prevailed in a key vote against a weaker substitute. Soon afterward, the same bill passed the full House on a 360-65 vote.[203]

The Senate, however, was no more likely to go along with the House than it had the year before, and the prevailing Senate vehicle for Alaska lands legislation when the 96th Congress opened was S. 9, sponsored by Sen. Jackson, which was largely if not identically the same bill that had emerged from Jackson's Energy and Natural Resources Committee the previous October. That bill had called for a 2,587,000-acre expansion of Denali National Park plus a 1,169,000-acre Denali National Preserve. The new bill, however, abandoned its wilderness-study language and substituted a 1.9 million acre "instant wilderness."[204] As in 1978, the Senate chose not to adopt the House-passed H.R. 39 as its mark-up vehicle; instead, it delayed work on the Alaska lands issue until October 9 and then began revising S. 9. Three weeks later, the committee reported out a bill similar to the one that it had agreed to the previous October; this bill included the same Denali acreage figures as in its January 1979 incarnation. Conservationists, hoping to improve the bill when it came to the full Senate, worked with senators Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) and William Roth (R-Del.) to carve out a substitute bill. The Senate did not take up the Alaska lands issue until mid-July 1980. Initial Senate votes showed a strong tendency to support a more conservation-oriented stance. Sen. Stevens, however, refused to capitulate; instead, he prevailed upon the Senate leadership to pull S. 9 from the floor, and instead he set up a series of closed-door meetings with a small coterie of senators. What emerged from those meetings was Amendment No. 1961, which was a rough compromise between S. 9 and the House-passed H.R. 39. That amendment passed the Senate, 78-14, on August 19.[205]

Thereafter, the House and Senate were at loggerheads. Leading senators—both committee chairman "Scoop" Jackson and Alaska's Ted Stevens—vowed that they would accept no changes to the Senate bill. But Reps. Udall, Seiberling, Philip Burton (D-Calif.) and others kept working toward a compromise bill. The




New park signs were necessary after the 1980 name change from Mount McKinley National Park to Denali National Park and Preserve. DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve

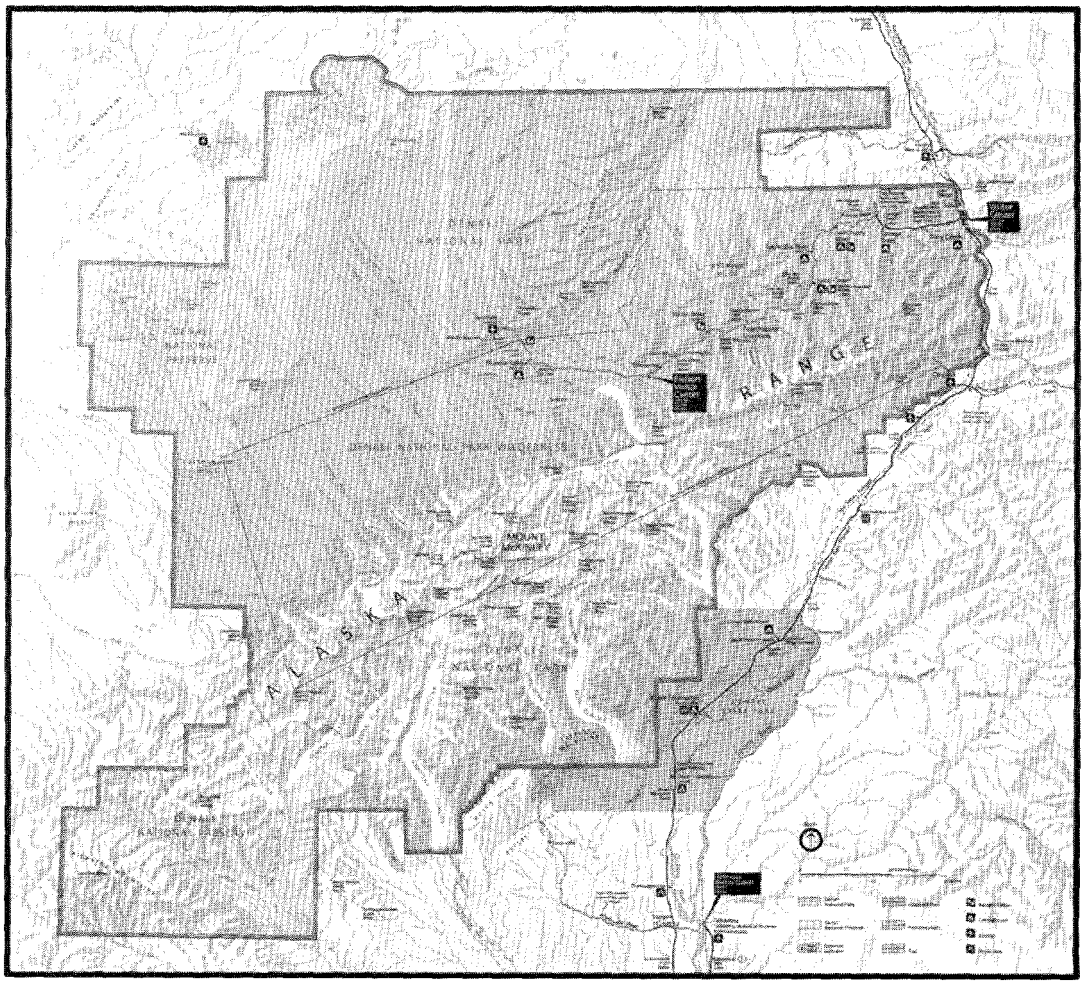
November election, however, swept Ronald Reagan—an avowed opponent of a strong Alaska lands bill—into the presidency, and gave the Republican party control over the U.S. Senate. Given those developments, House members recognized the futility of further attempts to compromise, and on November 12 they voted to accept the Senate bill. President Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) on December 2, 1980.[206]

Among its many provisions, ANILCA called for a name change of the park (from Mount McKinley to Denali), a 2,547,147-acre park expansion, the establishment of a new 1,334,118-acre Denali National Preserve, and a 1,900,000-acre wilderness, all of which was within the boundaries of the former Mount McKinley National Park (see Map 8 and Appendix A). Inasmuch as Section 1322(a) of ANILCA rescinded the December 1, 1978 proclamations that established Denali and the other national monuments, one effect of ANILCA's passage was to shrink the area managed by the local park superintendent from approximately 6,372,000 acres to 6,075,000 acres – a net loss of almost 300,000 acres. Most of this acreage was transferred from NPS jurisdiction back to the Bureau of Land Management, which had controlled this land prior to President Carter's December 1978 proclamation. Most of the acreage loss was in three major parcels: the "wolf townships" west of Healy, a three-township block along the lower Toklat and Sushana rivers, and an irregularly-shaped area southwest of Cantwell between Lookout Mountain and the lower reaches of Eldridge Glacier.[207]

**International Recognition: Mixed Results**

During the process that brought about the transformation that changed a two-million-acre Mount McKinley National Park to a six-million-acre Denali National Park and Preserve, two major movements began to recognize some of the world's most important natural and cultural properties. Recognizing the superlative scenic and wildlife qualities offered at the park, U.S. representatives to the United Nations began to work toward obtaining international recognition for the park.

The first such move was made in September 1974, when a U.S. State Department official moved to designate Mount McKinley National Park and 19 other areas in the country as "biosphere reserves."[208] According to the U.N.'s Man and the Biosphere program, biosphere reserves are "areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use." The idea was first promoted at the UNESCO's Biosphere Conference, held in Paris in September 1968, where delegates hoped to establish "areas representing the main ecosystems of the planet in which genetic resources would be protected, and where research on ecosystems as well as monitoring and training work could be carried out. To carry out the goals of that conference, UNESCO established the Man and the Biosphere Program in 1970. The program's early proponents stressed that its primary emphasis was essentially scientific,




*The land designations that resulted from the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act are shown on this map. NPS file, Denali National Park and Preserve*

and that all areas designated as biosphere reserves would "remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they were located." More specific international planning for these reserves took place at 1973 and 1974 conferences in Morges, Switzerland, and Paris.[209]

The action taken in September 1974, as it turned out, was not a final designation of Mount McKinley's eligibility. Instead, the twenty areas chosen that month were only the U.S. candidates. They were then forwarded to UNESCO, and it was not until 1976 that these areas were duly selected as the world's first international biosphere reserves. The U.N. designated 53 such reserves that year. Twenty-three of these were located in the United States, and three were located in Alaska: Denali, the Aleutian Islands, and Noatak. Their current extent of these three reserves is 6,032,440 acres, 2,720,430 acres, and 7,500,000 acres, respectively. (Denali was chosen, among other attributes, because it was considered to be an excellent representative of the "temperate needle-leaf forest" ecosystem.) In the years since those initial selections, one other Alaska area has become a biosphere reserve: Glacier Bay-Admiralty Island (3,743,600 acres), selected in 1986.[210]

Not long after the park became a biosphere reserve, the park was being considered for a new international designation: that of a World Heritage Site. As early as the late 1950s, UNESCO had been involved with campaigns to save world-famous cultural heritage sites, and as a logical extension of that concern, UNESCO and ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) pooled their efforts and organized the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, held in Paris between mid-October and mid-November 1972. That convention brought forth the need to establish "an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods." That convention named ICOMOS and two other international bodies to a World Heritage Committee, and out of that committee emerged the World Heritage Site idea. The first World Heritage Sites were selected in 1978; among the initial choices were two U.S. national parks: Mesa Verde and Yellowstone.[211]



Mount McKinley National Park gained fame as a wildlife preserve, and while most visitors sought out the larger mammal species, many have also been pleased by their encounters with parka squirrels (shown here) and other small animal species. Murie Photo, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Each year after 1978 new sites were added to the World Heritage List, and in 1979 a huge binational site was added to the list: Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek, which encompassed areas in British Columbia (Canada), Yukon Territory (Canada), and Alaska. The following year, the U.S. Interior Department selected 14 additional properties for potential nomination to that list. Among those properties were two Alaska NPS units: Mount McKinley and Katmai national parks. And a year later, the Interior Department moved to place Denali and seven other Alaska parks and refuges on the World Heritage list. Plans called for a public comment period and for the government to "submit its final inventory of potential World Heritage nominations to the World Heritage Committee later this year."[212] Although the World Heritage Convention clearly stated that national governments remained in sovereign control of nominated sites, strong objections were apparently raised to these nominations, and as a result, none of these eight areas has been nominated to the World Heritage List. Thus the U.S.'s reserve list (officially known as the Indicative Inventory of Potential Future U.S. World Heritage Nominations), in 1982, was renamed the U.S. World Heritage Tentative List. The Tentative List was intended to list properties that U.S. officials proposed to nominate "during the following five to ten years." But government officials have made no moves since the early 1980s to place either Denali or any other Alaska NPS areas on the World Heritage List, and in recent years the NPS has been working to trim the size of the U.S.'s Tentative List to more accurately reflect properties that have a broad basis of support.[213]

### Tokositna Development Planning and the "Dome City" Concept

As noted above, various proposals to develop major tourist facilities south of the Alaska Range had surfaced during 1972 and 1973. State of Alaska officials favored a tourist complex at Byers Lake, U.S. Senator Mike Gravel floated the

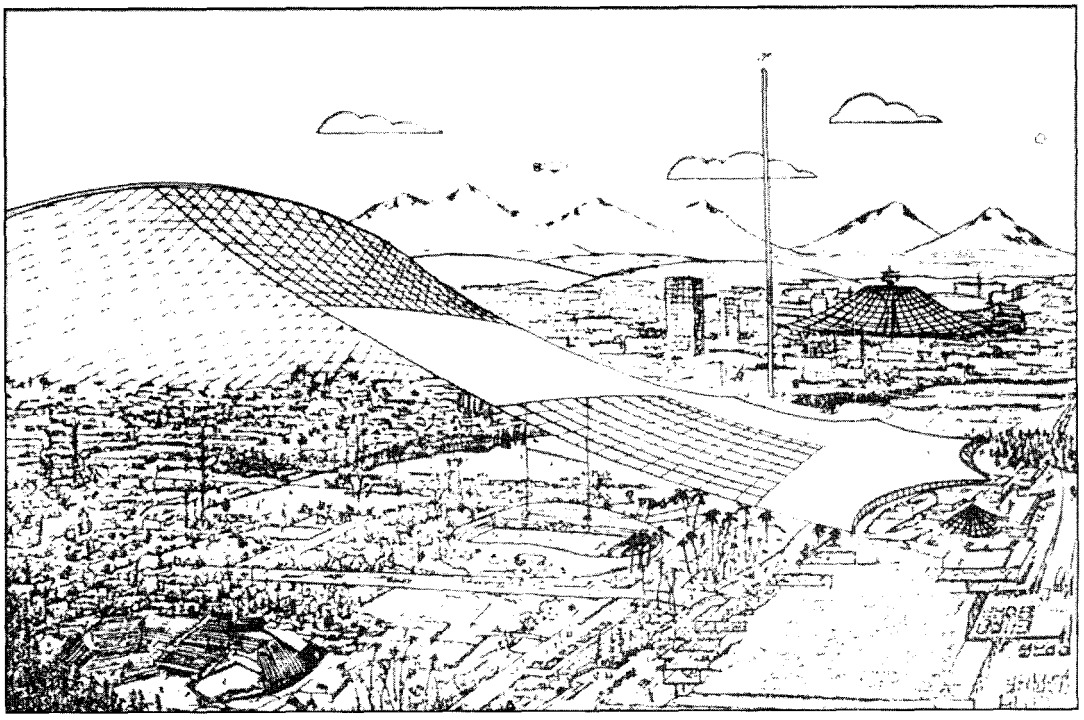
idea of a year-round resort called "Mt. McKinley City" at a yet-to-be-decided location, and Bradford Washburn touted a resort beside Tokositna Glacier, less than 25 miles south of Mt. McKinley. As late as early 1975, Division of Parks officials still backed development at Byers Lake. They also, however, asked the legislature to approve a 66-square-mile extension to Denali State Park, the primary purpose of which was to include a potential tourist development site just west of the Tokositna River. The legislature passed, and Governor Hammond signed, a bill to expand the park in mid-1976. In February 1976—several months before the park expansion bill passed—the state signed a 55-year contract with an Anchorage firm to construct tourist facilities in the state park. That firm, however, was unable to raise the needed $6 million to develop those facilities, and in March 1977 Russell Cahill, the Division of Parks director, cancelled the firm's contract.[214]

That November, Senator Gravel reignited interest in southside development when he proposed a domed "Denali City" development, to be located on state park land near the foot of Tokositna Glacier (see Map 9). To a wide-eyed Anchorage Chamber of Commerce audience, Gravel noted that his "recreation city" idea, which would have lodging and facilities for 5,000 to 10,000 people, sounded "far-fetched and visionary," but he predicted that it would be "one of the physical wonders of the world" and "of benefit to Alaska." The city would offer "shops, restaurants ... skating rinks, swimming pools, and even a golf course," while "a major ski area" would be located "on the slopes behind the complex" along with a tramway leading to an observation station. To ease access to the site from Anchorage, he proposed a $100 million mag-lev (magnetic levitation) system that could take visitors there in 30 to 40 minutes. The transportation system, he proposed, would be funded by the federal government; the state would finance the dome, and private enterprise would fund the development of the city itself. Power for the city would come from the Watana Dam (part of the Susitna hydroelectric project), which he noted "could be on stream by 1986." Just a day after his speech, he brought various architects and both state and national parks officials to the proposed development site and later held a press conference to further explain his plan. Gravel also stated his intent to submit Congressional legislation in early 1978 for a $500,000 study that would provide additional details about the proposed development.[215]

One of those who accompanied Gravel to the Tokositna development site was freshman state senator Patrick Rodey (D-Anchorage), who stated that he planned to introduce legislation in 1978 that would provide state funding for initial surveys. He admitted, however, that his own visions for the site were "a little more modest" and didn't include an artificial dome cover.[216] A month later, Rodey elaborated on his concept; he hoped to see a $25.7 million 150-bed lodge and visitor center complex, complete with downhill skiing and tramways, much as Brad Washburn had envisioned. The hotel, he noted, could be built with or without state financing; the entire project, he felt, was non-controversial and non-partisan, and because it was "ecologically sound," it "has the support of the environmental community." His plan admittedly bore "little relationship" to Gravel's domed city; instead, it came about because he "decided to realistically take a conservative look and provide a facility to take care of the tourists."[217]

On January 13, 1978, Senator Rodey, as expected, introduced two bills and a resolution related to the Tokositna development. SB 408 called for an $85,000 appropriation to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for planning and engineering studies on the Petersville Road; SB 409 asked for $260,000 for the Department of Natural Resources to do a feasibility study for the proposed lodge-visitor center project; and SCR 69 asked the legislature to approve the project and requested Governor Hammond to discuss the project with NPS officials. Rodey's three legislative vehicles cleared the State Affairs and Finance committees without opposition, and on March 21 the full Senate passed them all with unanimous 17-0 votes.[218]

They then moved on to the House. HB 408 proved non-controversial; it passed the House with no dissenting votes and was signed by Governor Hammond on June 3. HB 409, however, was quickly modified to increase the budget amount from $260,000 to $360,000. On June 3, the full House debated three floor amendments, and one of those amendments—which shuttled project funds from Natural Resources to Transportation and Public Facilities—passed on a narrow 17-16 vote. The full House then passed the bill, 30-1. House and Senate conferees kept the $360,000 price tag, but demanded that the funds be channeled through the Department of Natural Resources. The final bill then sailed through both the House and Senate. On July 13 Governor Hammond signed the measure; citing "a consolidation of preliminary engineering studies," however, he reduced the allotted funding from $360,000 to $310,000. Rodey's resolution (SCR 69) also encountered rough going; it passed the House



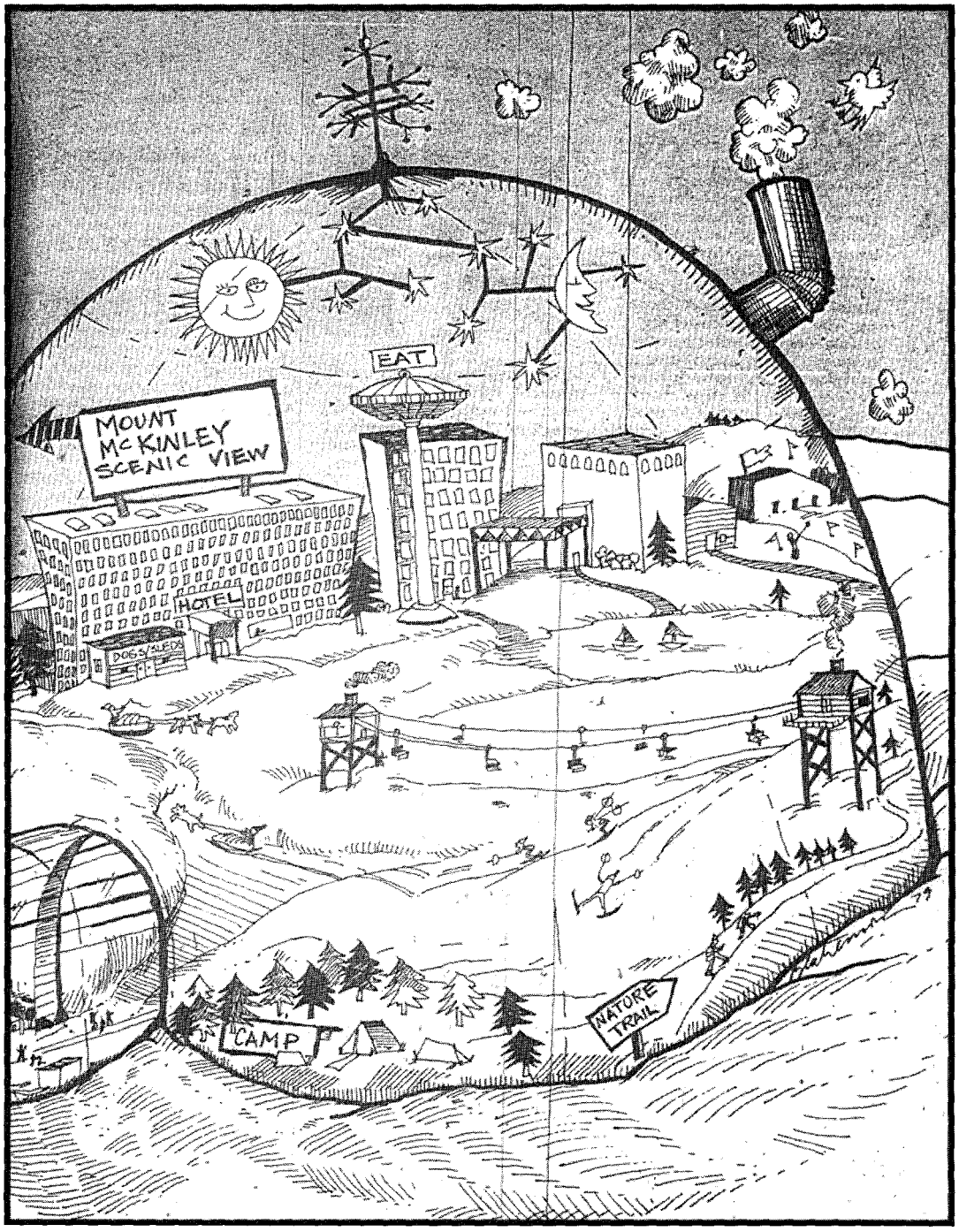
In late 1977, Senator Gravel proposed a domed recreational complex south of the Alaska Range. This drawing shows the "dome city" as Gravel envisioned it.

State Affairs Committee on May 17, but it was never taken up by the House Rules Committee. But Hammond, by this time, was already fulfilling at least part of the resolution's intent by engaging in project talks with NPS officials.[219]

In the midst of these legislative efforts, Senator Gravel—whose plans for southside development were more grandiose than Rodey's but not really in conflict with them—appeared before the Alaska legislature and pitched his admittedly "very Buck Rogerish" notions for what one newspaper termed a "ski resort-golf course-world trade center." By this time, Gravel's financing costs were substantially higher than before; the cost of the follow-up study had ballooned from $500,000 to $2 million, the mag-lev system now cost $500 million rather than $100 million, and the cost of the city itself had gone from being merely "expensive" to an estimated $1 billion. After hearing his proposal, legislators dismissed his "Teflon tent" idea as being either "unbelievable" or "laughable," and it quickly became the butt of jokes. Gravel, however, said that he would include federal financing for both the mag-lev system and the follow-up study in the "d-2" bill he planned to introduce in the U.S. Senate in April.[220] As predicted, Gravel introduced a d-2 bill (S. 2944) on April 19, and Sec. 1201 of that bill called for "the eventual development of a tightly controlled recreational city under the shadow of Mount McKinley" which would be "a visitor attraction of world scale." The bill, however, made little headway; it was briefly debated on the Senate floor but never got beyond the committee stage.[221]

Based on Rodey's various bills, serious discussions soon ensued between state and federal officials, and in September 1978 personnel from the National Park Service, the State Division of Parks, and Matanuska-Susitna Borough began working on a Memorandum of Agreement for a joint planning effort at the Tokositna site.[222] That was followed by an October 17 meeting to discuss policies influencing the project. That effort resulted in a November 17 Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Interior Secretary, the Governor of Alaska, and the Mayor of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Before long, NPS planners began preparing for what they thought would be an environmental assessment and development concept plan for the site.[223]

Meanwhile, the Alaska Division of Parks set up a planning effort with the $310,000 that it had received from the legislature. It began the effort in January 1979 when three public hearings were held to solicit input on whether a tourism development was needed; and if so, what its size and scope should be. Officials at those meetings heard a wide range of opinions; those who attended the Anchorage meeting (more than 70 people, described as "miners and explorers" by one planner) "had mixed feelings, but were generally opposed" to recreation development, while the 60 or so attendees at the Talkeetna meeting and the much smaller number in Fairbanks were "cautiously in favor" of a development. Virtually everyone at the meetings was opposed to new road construction, and Senator Gravel's "all weather city" idea was universally criticized as being too grandiose and expensive.[224]




**For the remainder of the 1970s, Alaskans alternately backed – and derided – Senator Gravel's plans for an enclosed city. Detractors made light of the idea as shown in this cartoon. National Parks and Conservation Association**

The Division of Parks then appointed planner Vicky Sung as project manager, and by early February it had approved two project-related contracts: $93,000 to Sno-engineering, Inc. of Aspen, Colorado for a study of recreational potential in the Tokositna area, and $100,000 to Economic Research Associates of San Francisco to study the site's economic potential.[225] Sno-engineering personnel, who periodically updated state officials on the progress of their work, were universally positive about the area's potential; they claimed that the nearby slopes offered "the best view of any ski area in the world" and that the area had the potential to be "one of the ten best ski areas in all of North America." The ERA study recognized that such a proposed development would have a broad basis of potential support, both from Alaska residents and out-of-state tourists. The resort, however, would not be economically feasible unless a "major resort community" was constructed along with it. That plan called for a proposed resort of 2,000 rooms (for at least 4,000 guests), plus facilities for additional 2,000 service personnel.[226] The legislature, in its 1979 session, showed little interest in providing funding for Denali State Park tourism development.[227] Following Senator Gravel's March 12 speech before the Alaska Legislature, however, Senate and House members moved quickly to pass a resolution—slightly modified from one that Senator Rodey had proposed a month earlier—that would

establish a three-member "Tokositna Committee" to study potential recreational development in Denali State Park and adjacent national park land. The membership of that committee, moreover, would be composed of appointees from the Governor, the Alaska House of Representatives, and the Alaska Senate. Given that criteria, Rodey's resolution passed the Senate, 20-0, on April 2; it passed the House, 25-10, on April 23; and it was read by Governor Hammond on April 30.[228] In an unusual move, Sen. Gravel—who had played a key role in both drafting the bill and in requesting its consideration by the Alaska Legislature—was appointed as the House of Representative's choice. The other two members were State Senator Pat Rodey and Natural Resources Commissioner Robert LeResche.[229]

Perhaps in response to the various consultants' recommendations, Alaska tour operator Robert Giersdorf contacted Bradford and Barbara Washburn in the late spring of 1979 and asked them to take several government and tourism industry officials to Switzerland "for the purpose of giving them an on-the-spot feel of how the Swiss mountain tourist industry ticks." Recognizing that the long-term cost of the planned Tokositna development "will be in the neighborhood of $50 million" (according to one of those officials), the trip's purpose was "to investigate how resorts have combined public and private resources" and also "to learn how Swiss resorts maintain successful year- round operations."[230] The group spent eight days (from July 11 to July 19) visiting "six or seven" area resorts. The trip, which cost $11,000 in state funds, answered a multitude of questions; these funds, moreover, did not pay the expenses for several members of the entourage. Even so, charges that the group was "on an out and out junket, wining and dining their way through resorts" resulted in an announcement by Governor Hammond that he would personally approve all state-financed foreign travel.[231]

Many of those who visited Switzerland returned with a new vision of how the Tokositna area might be developed. State Parks Director Terry McWilliams, for example, said the trip "exploded the concept of what can be done with the Tokositna project. ... Now we're considering a much larger area." Her boss, Natural Resources Commissioner Robert LeResche, came away converted to the idea of building the proposed recreation center; "We saw resorts for 20,000 to 30,000 people in a town with no road access," he said.[232] Senator Gravel, who did not take part in the trip but still had strong, visionary notions regarding the site's development,[233] was highly encouraged to see that the group was considering a world class tourist resort, so he hastily arranged a meeting for the group in Stuttgart, Germany with several of the world's top resort designers including The Architects Collaborative, or TAC (based in Cambridge, Massachusetts) and Ove Arup and Partners (based in London).[234]

The various consultants' recommendations, the attitude of various State of Alaska employees, and U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel's hyperbolic rhetoric clearly seemed to be shifting momentum toward planning for a world-class resort in the Tokositna area—something that might cost between $200 million and $1 billion. The State Legislature, however, had provided funding a year earlier for just a 150-bed lodge and visitor center project that would cost the state between $25 million and $38 million, and such longtime project backers as Brad Washburn were now protesting because he wanted "something that would blend into the scene. Something that would almost disappear into the landscape."[235] And some local residents—specifically property owners along the Petersville Road corridor—organized in opposition to the project. They voiced concern, one reporter noted, that "the building and operation of visitor facilities ... could be an unfair competition to the 'little guy' who owns his own lodge or facility in the general area."[236]

To help resolve the conflict between these starkly contrasting visions, state leaders began a process to decide what company would be its primary project consultant. Sen. Gravel, by this time, had made his choice abundantly clear: TAC, because Gravel and Alex Cvijanovic of TAC "were very close philosophically." TAC consultants, at Gravel's direction, had visited Anchorage at least four times in 1978 and 1979, all at no cost to the state or federal governments, and in July 1979, Gravel had expressed his unhappiness with ERA's "unimaginative" feasibility planning; the U.S. Senator had been disappointed that ERA's studies had recommended *only* a 2,000-room development. Gravel, according to an NPS planner, wanted "a far larger development," so in early August, he began to give TAC "verbal assurances" that it would be the state's choice for the upcoming management job, and later that month NPS officials were led to believe that "project direction and coordination have passed from the staff level of the Division of Parks, to the consulting firm of The Architects Collaborative." And inasmuch as the Tokositna Committee had agreed to eventually award its management contract on a "sole source" basis—something

that was deemed "perfectly legal"—it appeared that TAC was on the inside track to assume control over how the final plans would be developed.[237]

Throughout this period, the NPS had been keeping abreast of project developments. In December 1978 it hired Vincent Radosevich as a research analyst. In early 1979 the agency (primarily Paul Kalkwarf from the Denver Service Center, with assistance from park and Alaska Area Office personnel) teamed up with the Alaska Division of Parks to complete an environmental analysis. By the end of August 1979, much of the agency's work had been completed.[238] And given the completion of the various state-sponsored contracts, only $80,000 in Tokositna Project planning funds remained at year's end.[239]

In order to stimulate new interest in the project, a consulting company now needed to prepare a feasibility report for the Alaska Legislature that would be sufficiently convincing to unlock $1,000,000 from state coffers for final site planning. And based on the events of August 1979, TAC appeared to have the upper hand toward obtaining that contract. That fall, however, the Hammond administration suffered public embarrassment over the awarding of an unrelated contract, so in response, DNR chief Robert LeResche stated that the Tokositna contract would be awarded only through the "request for proposals" process.[240] Six firms responded prior to the January 18, 1980 deadline, and when a six-person review team ranked the various proposals, a West Coast firm named ERA/FMC[241] was chosen by everyone on the review team. TAC, on the other hand, was ranked last by almost all of the panel members. Sen. Gravel, given his position on the Tokositna Committee, nevertheless chose TAC for the management contract. In early February LeResche, following the advice of the review board, chose ERA/FMC. Gravel then, highhandedly, told LeResche that "Senator Rodey agrees with me." The contract was thus awarded to TAC. LeResche, however, insisted that Rodey provide him a written vote. Rodey, allegedly because of the press of legislative business and the need to review all six proposals, did not make his opinion known until almost a month after the advertised March 18 deadline. He cast his vote for ERA/FMC, which was awarded the contract. The delay, however, forced the firm to postpone its presentation to the legislature, perhaps until after it had adjourned for the year.[242]

The future of the Tokositna development, meanwhile, was being fought over within the halls of the Alaska legislature. Sen. George Hohman (D-Bethel), on February 18, introduced a bill "establishing the Denali Recreational Area Commission." That bill (SB 481), which was co-sponsored by Pat Rodey and written to some extent by Mike Gravel, called for a five-member commission that would oversee the future of the Tokositna project and prepare its development plan. That commission, however, would not include members of either the State Division of Parks or the National Park Service. Hohman's



Between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, development interests supported the construction of a hotel at this site, near the Tokositna Glacier terminus. DENA Herkenham #88, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

bill also, not surprisingly, called for a large-scale "recreational community and convention center" rather than a mere "visitors' center." A companion bill (SB 482) called for the allocation of $1 million to fund the Tokositna Development Plan.[243]

Neither of these bills, however, became law. In late April, both seemed well on their way toward being passed; the Senate approved the bill establishing the Commission on a 15-1 vote, and it passed the companion funding bill on an 11-5 vote. When it reached the House, however, the funding bill never made it through the committee stage. Although the bill establishing the Commission eventually passed the House, 22-16, it was not forwarded to the Governor because Hammond, concerned about the lack of state parks representation, promised to veto it.[244]

Despite the defeat of the two bills in the state legislature, Division of Parks personnel continued to work on project plans. In mid-September 1980, they held hearings in Anchorage and Talkeetna "to share ideas with other planners who would build the visitor center at an edge of Denali State Park." What was presented at the meeting was a preliminary plan, prepared by the HKS Associates consulting firm of San Francisco,[245] for a $100 million recreation complex at Tokositna which would include "an environmental center and village center with lodging, restaurant facilities, shopping, cultural and educational facilities, a convention center and a nightclub." A downhill ski course and tramway would come later, the report noted. HKS representatives noted that "if interest is high, ... an active resort could be operating by the summer of 1986." But attendees were warned that Division of State Parks involvement would soon "hibernate" without another legislative appropriation. Area residents, however, reacted negatively to the consultant's proposal, as they had a year earlier. Participants protested that the project was developing too quickly, that the project "would destroy the wilderness concept of Tokositna Valley," and that Curry Ridge was a more favorable development site.[246] The comments of Talkeetna-area residents, moreover, matched the apparent mood of Alaska's voters, because several weeks earlier, Mike Gravel—with his farsighted, futuristic development visions for the site—had been defeated by former state representative Clark Gruening of Anchorage in the Democratic U.S. Senate primary.[247]

Recognizing that another round of hearings was looming in early 1981, area residents became more vocal in their opposition to the Tokositna facility. An informal assemblage of Trapper Creek residents called the Tokosha group, along with the Denali Citizens Council, declared that project planners were too narrow minded; noting that adopting the Tokositna site would disrupt their lifestyle, they urged the adoption of a site atop Curry Ridge.[248] Prospects dimmed further in January 1981, when Tokositna-area miners let it be known that 1,000 acres in the Tokositna River valley were overlain by mining claims, some of which were worth a purported $13 per cubic yard. In addition, state officials admitted that ownership of the proposed development site was still unclear; the state had filed on the land in January 1972, but they had not yet gained "tentative approval" for it.[249]

Matters came to head at a public hearing in Talkeetna on March 4. A consensus of those who attended the meeting stated that they backed the idea of a major tourism and visitor center. However, sites such as Curry Ridge and Mount Baldy (the latter site ten miles east of Talkeetna) were far preferable to the Tokositna site. (One local resident railed against Tokositna because people "won't see the peak much in the summer," another claimed that the winter cold there was "more intense" than had been described, and a third averred that a center there would drive wildlife away.) But regardless of the public's response, the fact that planners and consultants had depleted their 1979 funding allotment meant that all project activity would stop unless the legislature provided additional funding.[250]

Despite the growing antagonism toward the project from area residents, Sen. Rodey continued to support continued development planning, and on March 18, he submitted two bills, both of which called for a supplemental appropriation to DNR, to be devoted to "planning for Tokositna park." Two months later, both bills unanimously passed the Senate Resources Committee. The Resources Committee, however, sent a letter of intent asking that future efforts focus on "several small recreation centers, and not necessarily one large complex," and it further suggested that DNR, in its future planning, "consider the feasibility of recreational facilities at such alternative sites as Curry Ridge, Larson Lake [east of Talkeetna], Byers Lake and the Chulitna River." The Senate Finance Committee refused to consider either bill. As a result, the long-running effort to build either a large or small resort in Mount McKinley's southern shadow appeared to be dead.[251]

### Mount McKinley or Denali? The Fight Over Naming Rights[252]

In late 1974, the proper name for North America's highest peak, and of the park, became a public issue. Jay Hammond, who was elected Alaska's governor in the fall election, enthusiastically supported the idea of changing "Mt. McKinley" to "Denali," and a month later, the Denali Citizens Council publicized its interest in having the name changed.[253] Action then moved to the Alaska legislature. On February 2, Sen. John Sackett (R-Fairbanks) and the Resources Committee submitted a resolution suggesting a name change from Mount McKinley to Mount Denali. It moved quickly through the legislature,[254] and on March 12, 1975 Governor Hammond read the resolution, which stated that "the Secretary of the Interior is respectfully requested to direct the United States Board on Geographic Names to officially designate Mt. McKinley as Mt. Denali," and it "further resolved that Mt. McKinley National Park be renamed Denali National Park."[255]

The legislature's action highlighted a dispute that had first erupted more than sixty years earlier (see Chapter 2). Although Natives, Russians, and early American visitors had supplied a number of names to the Alaska Range's highest peak over the years, it was in November 1896 that William Dickey called it Mount McKinley after returning from a prospecting trip in the upper Susitna drainage. That name was enshrined because of his "discovery" account in the January 24, 1897 *New York Sun*. By decade's end, Mount McKinley was part of the standard geographical lexicon. But such luminaries as Charles Sheldon and Hudson Stuck, more sensitive to Native Alaska concerns, consistently used the name Denali.[256] Despite their influence, however, each of the Congressional bills to establish the park bore the name Mount McKinley, and both the park and the mountain peak kept that name during the years that followed. From the 1920s to the early 1970s, few questioned the name, and although President Johnson in October 1965 announced that the peak's two summits would be called the Churchill Peaks, that designation was honorific and generally ignored.[257] State officials, however, apparently preferred the name Denali, because in 1970 they bestowed that name on the state park they established north of Talkeetna (see above).

On March 7, 1975, the State of Alaska sent the resolution—which called for the peak to be called Mt. Denali rather than Denali, as Sheldon and Stuck had hoped—to the Alaska Geographic Names Board and also to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. The U.S. Board, and more specifically its Domestic Names Committee (DNC), recognized that the Secretary of the Interior had the power to change the mountain's name, but changing the name of the national park would require Congressional approval.[258] Because actions regarding the mountain name and the park name needed to be treated separately, and because Mount McKinley was such a well-known, long-standing name, the Domestic Names Committee saw a long, tough fight on the horizon; in February 1975—even before the state legislature finalized its resolution—the Committee's meeting minutes noted that if the resolution passed, both the Board on Geographic Names and the Federal Government "would have a problem that may not be resolved easily."[259]

Those minutes turned out to be prophetic. In March 1975, Donald Orth of the Board on Geographic Names met with Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton, but the Secretary "expressed the view that he is not in favor of changing the name of Mount McKinley at this time." The Domestic Names Committee, in response, voted to defer action on the name change proposal for six months, and a month later it asked the Department to issue a press release on the subject and invited the public to comment on the state's proposal.[260] By the end of the year, the public had sent the Committee several thousands comments. The initial response (in August 1975) generally opposed the change, but by the late fall, a majority of all letter-writers were favoring the change, and by January 1976, Committee minutes noted that "recent letters are about 4 to 1 in favor of the change." People from President William McKinley's home state of Ohio comprised the main opposition to the change, while Alaskans, former Alaskans, the National Park Service, and people who had traveled in Alaska favored the name change.[261]

By the spring of 1976, 4,000 letters and petitions had been received on the subject, of which about three-fifths favored Denali. But Rep. Ralph Regula, a second-term Republican from President McKinley's home town of Canton, Ohio, drew a line in the sand when he announced that he was beginning a campaign in Ohio to fight the name change. Rallying around Regula, everyone in the Ohio congressional delegation stated their opposition to the proposed name change. In the face of that opposition, the Domestic Names Committee chose to defer the matter for the time being.[262] For the remainder of 1976, neither Interior Secretary Thomas Kleppe nor any of his



"Mount McKinley" continues to be the proper name for the highest mountain on the continent, while the name of the park was changed in 1980 to Denali National Park and Preserve. DENA 32-2, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

immediate lieutenants took a public position in the matter, and given the results of the fall elections, the matter was delayed until the new Interior Secretary, Cecil Andrus, was apprised of the situation. The Chairman of the Geographic Names Board, Ray Hulick, implored his fellow board members to set a public hearing on the subject; others on the board, however, delayed that action for several months.[263]

In April 1977 the Board finally met with Assistant Secretary of the Interior Joan Davenport to discuss the matter, and during that meeting it was mutually agreed that two hearings would be held on the name-change proposal that fall, one of which would be in Alaska.[264] By this time, however, events were taking place in Congress that would strongly influence the outcome of those hearings. On January 4, 1977, Rep. Morris Udall, Chair of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, submitted the first of a number of bills intended to resolve the long-debated Alaska national interest lands question, and each of those bills proposed to expand the existing boundaries of Mount McKinley National Park. But what would be the name of the newly-expanded park? Udall's original bill (HR 39) called for a newly-expanded Mount McKinley National Park, and a revised version issued in July kept the same name. But when Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, on September 15, issued the Interior Department's recommendations on how the Alaska lands issue might be resolve, that document called for the establishment of a newly-expanded Denali National Park.[265]

The Domestic Names Committee, as scheduled, held public hearings on the subject on October 25, in Washington, D.C., and November 10, in Anchorage. Those that attended both meetings clearly favored the name change to Mt. Denali. To countermand the tilt in public opinion, the Ohio congressional delegation introduced a joint resolution in Congress on December 7, 1977.[266] That resolution stated in part:

> ... that the mountain ... in the State of Alaska in the United States of America known as Mount McKinley, shall retain the name Mount McKinley in perpetuity as an appropriate and lasting tribute to the service of William McKinley to his country.

The Domestic Names Committee, in response, voted to defer action on the Alaska Legislature's proposal until Congress resolved the joint resolution introduced by the Ohio delegation.[267] The resolution was not considered further. Secretary Andrus, clearly in favor of the name change, reacted to the stalled resolution by urging the Board to reconsider its action of deferral. Before they could act, however, Rep. Regula introduced an amendment to Udall's H.R. 39 that changed the name of the national park to "Denali National Park" but would

"retain the name Mount McKinley in perpetuity."[268] That bill, with Regula's amendment, passed the House, but Congress adjourned in October without resolving the Alaska lands question. The failure of that bill meant that the Board on Geographic Names could once again act on the case. Rep. Regula, however, informed the Board that he planned to introduce new legislature in the new (96th) Congress as soon as it convened. The DNC, in response, voted to defer action on the Mt. McKinley case until the following year, when "we see what Congress does with the matter."[269]

Before the new Congress met, however, the Carter administration (as noted above) took steps to secure a measure of protection for much of Alaska's national interest ("d- 2") lands. Shortly after Congress adjourned in mid-October, the Interior Department began to enact plans, which had been put in motion earlier that year, to have national monuments designated for the various proposed national parks, along with selected areas of interest to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service. These plans culminated in a series of presidential proclamations that President Jimmy Carter issued on December 1, 1978. One of those proclamations called for the establishment of Denali National Monument, a 3,890,000-acre expanse that surrounded Mount McKinley National Park on three sides. This new designation, which was consistent with recent usage by both administration officials and the Congress, meant that for the time being, the park complex surrounding the continent's highest peak would have two names: both Mount McKinley and Denali.[270]

When the 96th Congress opened in January 1979, Congressman Udall submitted a new H.R. 39, and one part of that bill called for the establishment of a newly-expanded Denali National Park. Missing from that bill was any language mandating a name for the mountain.[271] Three months later, the Domestic Names Committee met. In response to that omission, at least two committee members demanded that the Committee take action in the matter. What they said, however, was equivocal; member Charles Harrington, for example, told one reporter that "As long at it's before Congress, we won't touch it." Later in the same interview, however, he said that because the current trend to restore original Native names favored "Denali," that name "is likely to emerge as the mountain's proper name."[272]

In May 1979, the House passed an Alaska lands bill. Among its other provisions, it called for the existing park to be renamed Denali National Park, and it also called for a newly-expanded Denali National Park (covering 3,410,000 acres) along with a 480,000-acre Denali National Preserve. But Rep. Regula, once again, successfully worked to resist any change in the mountain's name. As a result, language in the House-passed bill stated that the continent's highest peak "shall retain the name Mount McKinley."[273]

Action on an Alaska lands bill then moved to the Senate. As the bill was being considered by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, senators held the opinion that the name change decision should be left to the Board on Geographic Names.[274] Given that go-ahead, Assistant Interior Secretary Joan Davenport encouraged the Board of Geographic Names to proceed "promptly" with the decision as soon as it had assurance that Congress would not reconsider the name issue. The DNC, in response, initially planned to render a decision by late summer or early fall, unless Congress enacted an Alaska lands bill. But given the two-year lapse, the DNC also felt it needed to schedule two more public hearings on the matter.[275]

Congress did, in fact, move to enact an Alaska lands bill, and in mid-August the Senate passed its version of an Alaska lands bill, which (like the House bill) also called for an expanded Denali National Park and a new Denali National Preserve. The Senate bill, unlike the House bill, made no statement regarding a suggested peak name. As noted in the November 1979 Energy and Natural Resources Committee report,

> By these actions the Committee in no way intended to indicate its approval or disapproval of the proposal to change the name of the mountain to Denali, which has been pending before the Board on Geographic Names. The Committee believes that this Board is the entity, which should make such a decision and strongly encourages the Board to continue its examination of this proposal and to reach a decision based on the merits of the case at the earliest possible time.[276]

The House and Senate, for the time being, were unable to agree on differences between the two bills. The Board of Geographic Names, meanwhile, announced that public meetings on the proposed name change would be held in Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C. on November 5

and 14, respectively.[277] These meetings were held as scheduled. Just before these meetings took place, however, Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election, and as noted above, House leaders agreed to accept the Senate-passed version of the Alaska lands bill. On December 2, President Carter signed into law the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which expanded the national park by 2,426,000 acres, added 1,330,000 acres of preserve, and changed the name of the park to Denali National Park and Preserve. It did not change the name of Mt. McKinley.[278]

So by the time the Domestic Names Committee met in mid-December 1980, there were no further legislative actions that had the potential to intercede with its name change proposal. Despite widespread support for changing the name, tensions over the issue were still running high, and staff member Donald Orth "questioned whether the Board should get involved with the issue at a time when 'outside' emotional and political pressures tend to make an empirical judgment difficult." In addition, the Board remained apprehensive of political repercussions. The meeting minutes of the Board noted that Congress "could always override" a decision of the Board. As a result, the DNC voted to defer the Alaska Legislature's name change proposal, for another six months, until its June 1981 meeting.[279]

The Domestic Names Committee's inability to decide the issue left the gap wide open for a legislative solution, a gap which was quickly filled by Rep. Ralph Regula of Ohio. On January 6, 1981, the second day of the 97th Congress, Regula introduced a bill "which would establish as a matter of law that the highest peak in North America shall continue to bear the name 'Mount McKinley.'" That bill was reported out of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee on July 29 and it passed the full House on August 4. But the Senate never acted on the measure, and it thus never became law.[280]

Rep. Regula, however, was not unduly disappointed with the Senate's failure to act, because Board of Geographic Names policy has long demanded that its members steer clear of any name change proposals that Congress is currently considering.[281] Based on that policy, Rep. Regula—who is still at this writing an Ohio representative—has submitted in every Congress a bill (or a clause in a larger bill) that addresses the Mt. McKinley naming issue. Sometimes, as in 1981, he has introduced a bill to "provide for the retention of the name Mt. McKinley," while in other years, he has added a clause in an Interior Department spending bill that "prohibits the use of funds to change the name of Mount McKinley."[282]

## Notes - Chapter 8

[1] "Changing the National Parks to Cope With People – and Cars," *U.S. News and World Report* 72 (January 24, 1972), 52-55; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 19, 1972, 3; *Anchorage Daily News*, January 20, 1972, 4; George Hartzog, telephone interview by the author, December 21, 2005.

[2] Oscar Dick to Peter Doyle III, September 1, 1966, in "D30 Roads and Trails, 1966 thru 1969" folder, DENA Archives; Hall to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, August 26, 1968, in "D18 Planning Program and Master Plan 1970-71" folder, DENA Archives.

[3] Director PNRO to Director NPS, n.d., in "D30 Roads and Trails 1970-1971" folder, DENA Archives; Scott Ruesch, interview with the author, October 21, 2004.

[4] *Anchorage Daily News*, January 20, 1972, 4; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 265, 268; Edward A. Hummel to "All Regional Directors," October 12, 1967; Peter G. Sanchez to Supt. MOMC, December 6, 1967; both in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives. The "carrying capacity" concept, widely perceived in a qualitative sense, provided a basis for judging when a park area was overcrowded and thus visitation needed to be rationalized.

[5] *Anchorage Daily News*, January 20, 1972, 4; Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel; an Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park*, Monograph #11 (Grand Canyon, Ariz., Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 77.

[6] *Anchorage Daily News*, February 27, 1972, 22; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 20, 1972, 4.

[7] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 21, 1972, 9; January 24, 1972, 4; February 9, 1972, 6; *Alaska House Journal*, 1972, 273, 422, 534; *Alaska Senate Journal*, 1972, 424, 439. The passage of this resolution brought forth a predictable chain of correspondence from Governor Egan to U.S. Senate Interior Committee Chairman Henry M. Jackson, to the NPS Director and back again. Jackson asked for the NPS Director to "render a report on the feasibility of the points outlined in the Resolution." That request was answered by a memo to Jackson from NPS Deputy Associate Director Joseph C. Rumburg, Jr., explaining the NPS's rationale for its action and an additional assurance that the agency was developing a "continuing maintenance program for the road based on these new requirements for its use." Various letters in File NR 1-2, Series 88 (1972), RG 01, ASA.

[8] As NPS Regional Director John Rutter noted to Sen. Ted Stevens in an April 5, 1972 letter (in "Miscellaneous" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives), "while we were able to consult in advance with a number of officials and interested persons [about the plan], we were not able to consult with as many as we had intended." The Alaska Congressional delegation was apparently kept informed, but Anchorage NPS officials, ironically, had little inkling of the plan (see *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 15, 1972, 13).

[9] Jim Fuksa to Leslie Swanson, February 1, 1972; F. A. Seymour to John Rutter, February 11, 1972, both in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 26, 1972, 5.

[10] A. Stephen Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," *National Parks and Conservation Magazine* 46 (December 1972), 22; *Anchorage Daily News*, February 20, 1972, 16.

[11] *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 3, 1972, 1; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 5, 1972, 22; March 30, 1972, 1.

[12] *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, March 8, 1972, 4; *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 31, 1972, 8; May 6, 1972, 7; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 31, 1972, 17.

[13] *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 29, 1972, 2; March 30, 1972, 30; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 30, 1972, 1; March 31, 1972, 17; April 18, 1972, 15.

[14] Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Russell Dickenson to Max Baucus, January 25, 1977, in "Park Complaints" folder, DENA Administrative History Collection, AKRO.

[15] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 28; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 15, 1972, 5; Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004. Camp Denali co-owner Ginny Hill Wood, in her article "In the Alaska Wilderness, the Park Service Confronts and Turns Back Motorized Tourism" (*Audubon* 75 [July 1973], pp. 108-09), noted that the buses used in 1972 were "aging school vehicles with three-quarter-size seats."

[16] Steve Carwile, interview by the author, December 29, 2005; June 8, 2006. Under the new system, ten cars at a time were allowed to obtain a permit at the check station and drive another two miles west to Savage River; additional cars had to wait until one of the ten cars had returned to the check station.

[17] *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 22, 1972, 15; Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," 20. Various Toklat Ranger Logs from the 1960s report problems obtaining water at the campground, but bears were never a problem in the immediate camp vicinity. Jane Bryant, email to author, February 22, 2006.

[18] Several mid-season news reports stated that the park had already received 180,000 or more visitors; this total, however, apparently included non-recreational traffic on the new Anchorage-Fairbanks road. *Anchorage Daily News*, August 8, 1972, 2A; August 29, 1972, 2.

[19] *Anchorage Daily News*, August 8, 1972, 2A; Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," 22.

[20] *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 2, 1972, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, August 8, 1972, 2A; Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," 22.

[21] *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 30, 1972, 8; Gordon S. Harrison to Garrett Smathers, November 9, 1972, in "Plan to Restrict" file, DENA Administrative History Collection; Gordon S. Harrison, *Research Study of the Public*

*Reaction to the Mount McKinley National Park Public Transportation System*, Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research, Univ. of Alaska, June 25, 1973, 1-2; Study 184/D50, TIC Collection. A synopsis of this study later appeared as "The People and the Park: Reactions to a System of Public Transportation in Mt. McKinley National Park, Alaska," *Journal of Leisure Research* 7:1 (1975), 6-15.

[22] *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 24, 1972, 12; Diane Tracy, "Human-Wildlife Interactions Along Mt. McKinley Road," in Alaska Cooperative Park Studies Unit, *Final Report: Fiscal Year 1975* (Fairbanks, UAF, ca. 1975), 1, 4, 6, T-1 through T-85.

[23] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 4, 1972, 1-2; September 15, 1972, 5. As noted in a December 14, 1972 *Times* article (p. 2), Fleharty still lived in California during the winter (he kept an office in San Francisco) but stayed at the park during the summer.

[24] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 11, 1972, 2; January 12, 1972, 6; March 29, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 30, 1972, 1; NPS, Drawing MOMC-70005, September 3, 1971, in NPS Aperture Card Collection.

[25] SAR, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 27, 1972, 4.

[26] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 28; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 17, 1972, 20; *Anchorage Daily News*, July 30, 1972, 17; "Mount McKinley Again Will Get Record Visitors," *Sunset* (Central Edition), May 1973, 58.

[27] *Anchorage Daily News*, August 28, 1972, 2; August 29, 1972, 2.

[28] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 1, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, September 5, 1972, 1-2.

[29] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 1; NPS, Drawing MOMC-41004 ("Utilities for 50-Room Wing Addition"), April 23, 1970; NPS Drawing MOMC-41009 and -41009A, February 1973, both in NPS Aperture Card Collection.

[30] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 4.

[31] Robert T. Timlin, *Mt. McKinley Hotel, Mount McKinley, Alaska, Fire Investigation Report*, ca. 1972, in Box 6, File 6-24, Bill Brown Collection (#6857), DENA Archives; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 29.

[32] Chief Ranger, MOMC to Supt. MOMC, October 25, 1968, in File D22 (Construction Project Priority), in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[33] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 1.

[34] At a McKinley Park Station hearing on November 10, Deborah Vogt of the Fairbanks Environmental Center urged "placement of the hotel outside of the park ... it is time to take all commercial operations out of the park [and] we do believe that concessionaire operated facilities in this park constitute a business monopoly which stifles private enterprise outside the park." "Statement of the Fairbanks Environmental Center," November 10, 1972, in Folder 4-16, Box 4, Collection 6857 (Bill Brown Files), DENA Archives.

[35] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 4. Regional officials John Rutter and Rod Pegues "pointed out that anything built in a park is controlled and regulated by the National Park Service, whereas those built by private capital outside a park are not. ... Some facilities outside the park may in fact be more harmful to the park than well-designed and regulated facilities in the park." "Minutes of the Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Regional Advisory Committee," February 3, 1973, p. 7, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.

[36] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 4.

[37] *Anchorage Daily News*, September 5, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 8; Wood, "In the Alaska Wilderness," 109.

[38] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 6, 1972, 1.

[39] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 15, 1972, 5.

[40] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 11, 1972, 14; September 15, 1972, 5; September 28, 1972, 12.

[41] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 18, 1972, 14; September 28, 1972, 12.

[42] *Anchorage Daily News*, September 22, 1972, 7; *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 13, 1972, 1, 4; October 14, 1972, 6; Lawrence C. Hadley to Nick Begich, November 3, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 29; *Southeast Alaska Empire*, October 16, 1972, 8. Stevens's appropriation—which included funds for both hotel construction and future planning—was approved by Congress and signed into law (as part of P.L. 92-607) on October 31, 1972. Hotel construction, as it turned out, demanded $295,000 of the $350,000 appropriation; the remaining $55,000 went to hotel planning efforts.

[43] *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 13, 1972, 1, 4; Hadley to Begich, November 3, 1972, see above.

[44] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 18, 1972, 14; October 23, 1972, 3; October 26, 1972, 2; October 28, 1972, 2; October 31, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, October 24, 1972, 2.

[45] *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 14, 1972, 2; December 15, 1972, 3; January 2, 1973, 16; *Anchorage Daily News*, January 4, 1973, 5.

[46] Press reports differed on the number of railroad cars needed. The December 15, 1972 *Times* article (p. 3) stated that the concessioner would "buy or lease at least four railroad compartment sleeper cars and 40 to 45 other railroad cars to provide additional space for dining and bar facilities," while the January 2, 1973 *Times* article (p. 16) stated that "12 rail cars [would] be used for sleeping quarters, storage and office space, a bar, gift shop and coffee shop." Drawings released in February 1973 (NPS, Drawings MOMC 41009 and 41009A, NPS Aperture Card Collection) showed that 13 railroad cars would be employed in the new design, but only 11 cars—7

purchased and 4 leased—were included in the hotel as actually constructed (Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 31). Two railroad cars came from the Union Pacific in Seattle, while the rest were "Alaska Railroad cars that had been sitting out at Elmendorf Air Force Base." *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 1973, D6.

[47] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 30-31; SAR, 1973, 2, 3; *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 1973, D6.

[48] SAR for 1973, 3; *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 15, 1973, 8; July 16, 1973, 2; August 29, 1973, 15; September 7, 1973, 18. The hostel idea had originally been that of Ann Morton whose husband, Interior Secretary Rogers Morton, promoted youth hostels throughout the country.

[49] SARs for 1974, 2; 1975, 2; 1977, 2; 1978, 7; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 31; Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004.

[50] "Minutes of the Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Regional Advisory Committee," February 3, 1973, pp. 6-7, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives; Glenn D. Gallison to "All Areas and Offices, Pacific Northwest Region," April 6, 1973, in Miscellaneous File, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 6, 1973, 8. An October 23, 1973 letter from Stanley Albright to Edward O. Logan (in Folder 4-16, Box 4, Bill Brown files [Collection 6857], DENA Archives) noted that all master plans had been deferred until the ANCSA-mandated planning process had been completed.

[51] NPS, *Planning Directive, Hotel Site Selection, Mount McKinley National Park, McKinley Park, Alaska,* January 24, 1974, pp. 10-15; unaccessioned file in DENA Archives, also in "Hotel Fire" file, DENA Administrative History Collection.

[52] These included the Carlo Creek Lodge at Mile 223.9 (opened in 1961), the adjacent Jere-A-Tad Lodge at Mile 224 (opened in 1966), and Toklat Village, at the second Nenana River crossing (Mile 231.1), opened in 1967.

[53] Alaska Northwest Publishing, *The Milepost*, editions of 1971 and 1972. Reisland had homesteaded his parcel in July 1965, six years after Crabb had filed across the road. BLM, Case Abstracts for AKF 023539 and AKF 034647. Steve Carwile, who lived in the area during the mid-1970s, notes that Reisland also occasionally operated a liquor store on his property.

[54] In October 1965, three friends—recognizing the area's potential value once the road was complete—had floated down the Nenana River to the area and homesteaded a mile-long stretch of relatively flat ground just east of the Nenana River. From south to north, these claims included an 80-acre parcel staked by Stephen E. Jones, another 80-acre parcel by Charles M. Travers, Jr., and a 70 acre parcel filed by Chalon Harris. All three men obtained patents for their land in 1974. BLM, Case Abstracts AKF 034867, AKF 034868, and AKF 034881.

[55] Alaska Northwest, *The Milepost*, editions of 1971 and 1972.

[56] Alaska Northwest, *The Milepost*, editions of 1971 and 1972.

[57] NPS, *Planning Directive*, January 24, 1974, pp. 8, 15. In his report, Stoddard included an ominous, eerily prescient prediction: "it should be remembered that no statewide land use plan exists and uncontrolled strip development along Highway 3 is inevitable without such control measures." Two years earlier—shortly after the road had opened—Deborah Vogt of the Fairbanks Environmental Center had urged "regional planning and zoning for all lands in the McKinley and Highway 3 region. To allow gaudy or shabby eyesores such as West Yellowstone and Gatlinburg to develop here would seriously degrade the natural, scenic, and recreational qualities of the region." "Statement of the Fairbanks Environmental Center, Hearings, McKinley National Park, November 10, 1972," in Folder 4-16, Box 4, Bill Brown files (Collection 6857), DENA Archives.

[58] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 35.

[59] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 36-42. Details of the Bibles and Hartzogs' visit to Mount McKinley are detailed in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 10, 1971, 1, and in Edgar Wayburn's book, *Your Land and Mine: Evolution of a Conservationist*, pp. 228-31.

[60] H.R. 1888, in *Congressional Record* 119 (January 11, 1973), 865.

[61] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 42-43, 50.

[62] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 50-51.

[63] The agency's plans, however, were shielded from the public; on February 20, 1972, for example, the *Anchorage Daily News* (p. 16) "learned" that the NPS "plans to recommend a two million acre expansion ... almost all" of which would be "north of the park's present boundaries with much of it in what is known as the Kantishna area." Both NPS and DOI officials refused to confirm or deny that report; see *Anchorage Daily News*, February 25, 1972, 8.

[64] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 52-53.

[65] APG, *Mt. McKinley National Park Additions, Final Environmental Statement*, October 1974, 21.

[66] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 54, 57, 59; NPS, *Recommendations Regarding Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 17(d)(2) Withdrawals* (Anchorage?, the author, July 1972), 85-100.

[67] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 54-59, 61.

[68] Albert G. Henson to Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities, October 2, 1972, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.

[69] Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska, *People Planning Today for a Better Alaska Tomorrow* (newsletter), vol. 1 (March-April 1973), 2.

[70] Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska, *Land Planning and Policy in Alaska*, "Preliminary Land Use Recommendations" (typescript), July 1973. This document was finalized in the 93rd Congress, 2nd Session Committee Print, June 1974 (Washington, GPO, 1974), 77-79. The commission's philosophy was reflected in a October 30, 1973 *Anchorage Daily Times* editorial (p. 6) calling for wildlife protection on a 1.2-million-acre northern addition but allowing "people-oriented recreational facilities" to the south. The commission's proposal called for a mining prohibition on only 601,000 acres of the northern proposal area, and none south of the Alaska Range.

[71] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 59-60, 63-64, 68-71

[72] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 65-71.

[73] The Alaska Planning Group's *Draft Environmental Statement, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions* (Washington?, the author?, December 1973), pp. 6-7, which discusses the proposed cooperative zone, did not specify an acreage, but according to later efforts (see below), the zone's area was approximately 100 square miles.

[74] Division of Planning and Research, State of Alaska, "The State's Response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statements for Lands Withdrawn Under Section 17(d)(2) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act," ca. April 1974, at ARLIS; Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 85; APG, *Mt. McKinley Additions FES*, October 1974, 194-95.

[75] "Citizens Organized to Protect McKinley National Park and Surrounding Area" (press release), April 29, 1974, in Folder 12, Box 72, Fairbanks Environmental Center Collection, UAF; *Anchorage Daily News*, May 11, 1974, 6; May 14, 1974, 11.

[76] Everett Drashner to Nathaniel Reed, July 1, 1974, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 22, 1974, A-7.

[77] Alaska Planning Group, *FES, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions* (October 1974), 1, 5-7.

[78] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 36-39.

[79] ALIS Record System for T12-13S, R9-10-11W, FB&M; ADNR Cases GS 1488, GS 1489, and GS 1490. As noted in Chapter 7, the U.S. Geological Survey in February 1958 had reserved some 25,600 acres in the Teklanika and Savage River drainages for a proposed dam and reservoir site; that dam, if built, would have been built approximately 5 miles north of the rivers' confluence and may have flooded a small part of the park. But the dam idea was eventually abandoned, and in September 1994 the state received tentative approval for this acreage.

[80] Alaska Planning Group, *FES, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions,* October 1974, 37, 155; BLM, Historical Index for T12S, R9W, FB&M.

[81] *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 13, 1974, 11; December 11, 1974, 6; January 9, 1975, 18; February 8, 1975, 14; February 16, 1975, C-7; February 25, 1975, 5; March 19, 1975, 2; March 27, 1975, 3; "Mt. McKinley CPMZ" file, Box 3, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[82] Leonard J. Hansen to Walter J. Hickel, December 20, 1968, in File NR 1-2 (1969), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily News*, April 19, 1980, A-1; Sierra Club, Alaska Chapter, "A Resolution," October 1971, UAF Archives, in "Gravel's Dome City" folder, DENA Administrative History Collection.

[83] Irene E. Ryan to William A. Egan, *Alaska Investment Opportunities*, May 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

[84] First-phase proposals were for a commercial lodge, restaurant, general store and service station; a hotel and ski lodge was in the second phase, and an airport constituted the third phase. Ryan to Egan, September 8, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 25, 1972, 1, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, October 26, 1972, 2.

[85] Ryan to Egan, September 8, 1972; Gravel to Egan, November 8, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 10, 1972, 1, 4; December 22, 1972, 6; *Anchorage Daily News*, November 11, 1972, 2; *Southeast Alaska Empire*, February 1, 1973, 1, 8.

[86] Gravel to Egan, January 23, 1973, in File NR 1-4 (1973), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 30, 1973, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, August 30, 1973, 2; August 31, 1973, 2.

[87] Washburn to Leonard J. Hansen, July 18, 1968, in File NR 1-2 (1969), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 7, 1973, 1, 4; September 8, 1973, 1, 3; *Anchorage Daily News,* April 19, 1980, A-1.

[88] APG, *FES, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions*, 9, 35, 126-29.

[89] Gravel to Egan, January 23, 1973, in File NR 1-4 (1973), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

[90] *Anchorage Daily News*, June 25, 1974, 7; March 16, 1977, 2; Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, *Denali State Park, a Master Plan*, 1975, 27, 33-35.

[91] Egan to Bradford Washburn, October 9, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

[92] Alaska DNR, *Denali State Park, a Master Plan*, 1975, 36-38; "Testimony of James J. Hurley," April 5, 1975, in "Denali State Park" file, Richard Stenmark Collection, HFC. Given an agreement with the NPS, the state also hoped to extend its road north past the proposed lodge onto federal land, to a terminus just east of Mt. Goldie.

[93] *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 30, 1972, 7; November 2, 1973, 15; Alaska State Legislature, *House Bill History, 1976*, 10.

[94] Richard Stenmark (JFSLUPC) to Commissioners and Staff, April 8, 1975, in "Denali State Park" file, Stenmark Collection, HFC; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 10, 1975, 4.
[95] Alaska State Legislature, *House Bill History, 1976*, 10.
[96] SMR, May 1924, 3; July 1924, 5; September 1924, 7; March 1927, 1; February 1928, 4-5; June 1928, 1-3; September 1928, 4.
[97] SMR, August 1952, 3.
[98] SMR, September 1950, 3. As the April 1956 *Mission 66 Prospectus* noted (p. 16), "the average visitor to the park is an elderly person who is content to view the park in relative comfort via bus tours and automobile, and usually shows but little interest or desire, or has the capability of walking any distance."
[99] SMR, September 1954, 1; August 1955, 1-2; NPS, *Mission 66 Prospectus, Mount McKinley National Park*, April 1956, 16.
[100] NPS, *Mission 66 for Mount McKinley National Park*, May 13, 1957, 8.
[101] SMR, June 1957, 3; August 1961, 6; June 1962, 5; August 1966, 5.
[102] *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 6, 1971, 27; NPS, MOMC Press Release, March 22, 1974, in "K3417 Press Releases – by MOMC, 1974-75" file, Box 2, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[103] SAR, 1972, 4.
[104] *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 5, 1973, 21. In the early 1970s, it was a new idea to encourage visitors to hike over virgin ground and avoid existing pathways. Tom Ritter, with the NPS in Anchorage, noted that there were no established backcountry trails "as most of the paths would only turn into water canals." A year later, park employee Steve Buskirk would echo that sentiment, noting that "Trails would only get muddy ... If you're not an experienced hiker, the back country of Mt. McKinley Park is not the place for you. Besides, we have to think of damage to the tundra." *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 29, 1974, 20.
[105] SAR, 1973, 5-6.
[106] SAR, 1974, 4; 1975, 4; NPS, *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan, Mount McKinley National Park*, June 1975, 6, 11, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[107] NPS, MOMC Press Release, March 22, 1974, in "K3417 MOMC Press Releases, 1974-75" file, Box 2, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; Steve Buskirk to author, email, October 26, 2004; Dan Kuehn, interview with the author, October 11, 2004; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 27, 1975, 14. The park did not release its final *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan* until June 1975, but several sources noted its implementation a year earlier. A 1976 *Anchorage Times* article (May 11, 1976, 20) noted that "backcountry camping in the national park system has more than doubled in the last five years." By that time, use permits had been implemented in 39 NPS areas, five more than in 1975.
[108] NPS, MOMC Press Release, March 22, 1974; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 29, 1974, 20; SAR, 1974, 2.
[109] Beth Buskirk to author, email, January 12, 2006.
[110] NPS, *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan, Mount McKinley National Park*, June 1975, 13. Appendix C of that plan is the NPS brochure, "Hiking in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska."
[111] Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management to Supt. MOMC, January 29, 1975, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; Daniel Kuehn to State Director, Alaska, June 2, 1975; Steve Buskirk to author, email, October 26, 2004.
[112] Beth Buskirk email, January 12, 2006. Joe Van Horn, in a January 17, 2006 email, notes that Craig Partridge also served as a backcountry ranger in 1976, and possibly 1977 as well.
[113] Robert L. Peterson to Ted Stevens, December 5, 1978, in "N4615 Questionnaire, 1970s Recreation Surveys" file, Resource Management Operations Papers, Box 3, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; SAR, 1977, 5; 1978, 6.
[114] Peter Womble, *Survey of Backcountry Users in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska; a Report for Management* (Seattle, Univ. of Washington Cooperative Park Studies Unit, December 1979), p. 11 and 'Summary of Findings" section, p. 1.
[115] NPS, "Hiking in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska" (brochure), January 1979, in "Trail Guides" folder, Mt. McKinley-Denali Archive, Box 1, HFC.
[116] SAR, 1973, 10.
[117] Kenneth H. Goslin (Team Manager, Pacific Northwest Team, Denver Service Center) to John Rutter (Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region), July 11, 1975, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[118] NPS, *Mount McKinley Headquarters/Hotel Area, Interim Development Concept, Analysis of Alternatives* (Denver, the author, December 1975), 1, 3, 5, 11-12.
[119] NPS, *Interim Development Concept Plan, Riley Creek/Headquarters/Hotel Area, Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska* (Denver, the author, March 1976), 6-14; G. Bryan Harry (Area Director, Alaska) to Associate Regional Director, Administration, PNR, March 12, 1976, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[120] Scott Ruesch, interview with the author, October 21, 2004.
[121] Gary Koy, "Denali Kennels History," unpub. mss., November 1992, in DENA kennel records.
[122] Walter R. Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 276-77.

[123] Gary Koy, "The History of Dog Mushing in Denali Through Quotations," unpub. mss., ca. November 1992, in DENA kennel records.

[124] Gary Koy, "Denali Kennels History," unpub. mss., November 1992, in DENA kennel records. A key part of this transformation may well have been the efforts of an unnamed "dog musher/kennel consultant," who served as a 1972 park volunteer. SAR, 1972, 8.

[125] Roy Sanborn, *Malamutes of Mount McKinley National Park* (Anchorage, Alaska National Parks and Monuments Association), 1971; SAR, 1972, 6; Scott Ruesch interview, October 21, 2004.

[126] Daniel Kuehn, interview by the author, October 11, 2004.

[127] SAR, 1973, 9; 1974, 1; 1975, 1; 1987, 1; *Anchorage Daily News*, August 14, 1980, B1-B4; Sandy Kogl, *Sled Dogs of Denali* (Anchorage, Alaska Natural History Association), 1981.

[128] SAR, 1974, 4.

[129] SAR, 1973, 5; 1974, 4; 1978, 1.

[130] SAR, 1974, 4; 1980, 3; Daniel Kuehn interview.

[131] Frank Betts, interview with the author, October 15, 2004.

[132] SAR, 1973, 6.

[133] Daniel Kuehn interview; Laura Larsen with Sandy Kogl, "Dog Teams on Mount McKinley," *Alaska Magazine* 41 (March 1975), 33; SAR, 1977, 2; SAR, 1984, 1; NPS, *Commercial Service Directory, Alaska Region*, 1990 and 1991 editions; Jane Bryant email, May 5, 2006.

[134] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 32-33; *Anchorage Times*, August 16, 1978, 25; SAR, 1978, 6. The *Times* article noted that the effective transaction date was August 1, not June 1. According to the ARAMARK website (www.aramark.com), the company that later became ARA Services was founded in the 1930s in California, and during the 1950s the vending-machine company became known as Automatic Retailers of America. The "Services" name was added in 1969.

[135] Fleharty's office during the early to mid-1970s was located in the hotel's employee dormitory. When the McKinley Chalets were opened in 1978 (see below), Fleharty moved his office there.

[136] Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 28.

[137] *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 21, 1973, 1.

[138] Daniel Kuehn, interview by the author, October 11, 2004; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 16, 1973, 2; SAR, 1973, 3.

[139] Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Ralph Tingey interview, May 17, 2006.

[140] The first known vehicle accident in the park took place in the late evening of June 25, 1950, caused when a hotel employee drove too fast and rolled his new Ford coupe. Another, in September 1951, took place during the Alaska Science Conference and prevented attendees from taking a scheduled field trip out the park road. SMR, June 1950, 3; Kirk H. Stone, "Geographical Record," *Geographical Review* 42 (January 1952), 151-52.

[141] The various park Superintendent's Monthly Reports note 16 vehicle accidents between 1959 and 1964, inclusive; ranger reports doubtless recorded several others during this period.

[142] SMR, June 1962, 4; September 1962, 3.

[143] NPS, *Denali Park Road Handbook* (bus drivers' manual), 2001 revision, p. 6; Brad Ebel, email to author, January 30, 2006.

[144] Russ Wilson to Steve Cooper, "Memorandum of Points and Authorities," July 26, 1993, in "Denali Park Road – Lands Division File, 27 Oct. 93," in Denali Park Road Issue, Bill Brown Research Collection box, AKRO; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 9, 1974, 1; July 10, 1974, 1; August 6, 1974, 20; August 15, 1978, 16; August 16, 1978, 10; SAR, 1974, 3.

[145] Daniel Kuehn interview.

[146] SAR, 1977, 2; SAR, 1980, 2; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 32; Steve Carwile, interview by the author, January 25, 2006; *Anchorage Times*, August 16, 1978, 25.

[147] Jones and Travers, the other two area landowners, had cabins on their property that they rented out to seasonal workers during this period, but neither landowner catered directly to the tourist trade.

[148] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 35; *National Parks Magazine* 33 (April 1959), 16; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 29, 1965, 2.

[149] *Tundra Telegram* I:24 (December 1975), 1-2, in "K4223 Publications - DCC Newsletter" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 7, 1976, 23.

[150] Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 214, 222; *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 22, 1973, 5; SAR, 1973, 3, 6; Grant Pearson, "Small Tract Petition for Classification" (F 012691), in "Old Serial Fiches" drawer; Pearson, BLM Patent No. 1231148 for U.S. Survey 4015, March 6, 1963; both in Public Room Records, BLM Office, Anchorage.

[151] *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 22, 1973, 5; Lawrence Hadley (Asst. Dir. NPS) to Director, PNRO, June 25, 1973, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives; Steve Carwile interview, January 25, 2006. As noted in a June 1987 article ("Caribou, Tundra, Whitewater, Mount McKinley ... Alaska Adventures," *Sunset Magazine* 178, p. 74), the lodge at that time was "a fifteen-unit motel."

[152] Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Frank Betts interview, October 15, 2004; NPS, *Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials*, May 1991.
[153] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Budget Justifications, NPS*, various years, 1971 to 1980.
[154] Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004.
[155] SARs, various years.
[156] SAR, 1972, 8; 1973, 9; 1980, 5-6.
[157] Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 53, 60, 63, 130-33; SAR, 1973, 1.
[158] Alaska Northwest, *Milepost*, 1972 through 1975 editions. Morino's new limitations were established so that hikers arriving on the mid-afternoon train from Anchorage would have a place to camp before heading out the park road. Steve Carwile interview, June 7, 2006.
[159] SAR, 1974, 3; SAR, 1975, 3.
[160] Although no information specifically notes the park's commencement of campground fees in 1970, an agency-wide history of the fee issue (Barry Mackintosh, *Visitor Fees in the National Park System, a Legislative and Administrative History* [Washington, NPS], 1983) notes on p. 84, "Fees for Government-operated campgrounds ... were not systematically instituted until 1970." They were definitely in place at Mount McKinley by 1971, as noted here.
[161] SAR, 1972, 4.
[162] SAR, 1972, 2; 1973, 2; 1974, 8; 1975, 6; NPS, Drawing MOMC 3112 (November 23, 1956) and 41008/1B (January 1973), both in NPS Aperture Card Collection; GSA, "Invitation for Bids, NPS Project No. 9170-2801," April 26, 1974, in Early Administrative Files, Box D, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
[163] SAR, 1978, 1; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 23, 1978, A-7; John Kauffmann, "A Very Special Legacy...", in Jane Bryant historical files, DENA. Hankins had willed a substantial sum to the National Park Foundation.
[164] NPS, Drawings MOMC 3211 (January 1967) and MOMC 41005 (June 1970), in NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[165] SAR, 1972, 2, 6.
[166] NPS, *Interim Development Concept Plan, Riley Creek/Headquarters/Hotel Area, Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska*, March 1976, 6-7.
[167] NPS, Drawings MOMC 5303A (January 1951) and MOMC 3102A (January 6, 1958), NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[168] NPS, Drawings MOMC 3211 (January 1967) and MOMC 41005 (June 1970), in NPS Aperture Card Collection.
[169] NPS, Drawing MOMC 41007 (May 1, 1972), in NPS Aperture Card Collection; SAR, 1974, 8.
[170] Jane Bryant email, August 29, 2005.
[171] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 12, 1972, 6.
[172] Alaska Planning Group, *FES, Proposed Mount McKinley National Park Additions, Alaska*, October 1974, 111.
[173] Russell E. Dickenson to Associate Director, Park System Management, NPS, April 19, 1976, in "Misc." file; "Draft Environmental Statement for Proposed Electric Distribution Line to McKinley Park" (NPS Press Release), May 17, 1976, in "K3416 Press Releases – Departmental, 1976-77" file; both in Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Federal Register* 41 (May 10, 1976), 19146.
[174] Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004.
[175] NPS, *Final Environmental Statement, Proposed Electrical Distribution Line Extension to McKinley Park, Mount McKinley National Park*, December 1976; SAR, 1977, 10; SAR, 1980, 7.
[176] SAR, 1972, 7; 1973, 8; 1974, 6; 1975, 7; 1977, 9-10; 1978, 5; 1980, 6; Brad Ebel, email to author, Feb. 10, 2006.
[177] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 84.
[178] S. 1688 was introduced on May 8, and H.R. 9346 was introduced on September 3. Neither of these bills got beyond the committee stage. *Congressional Record* 121 (1975), pp. 13503 and 27259.
[179] Swanson's bill, H.B. 489, was introduced on May 7, 1975. *Alaska House Bill History, 1975*, 227.
[180] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 87-88; Cecil Andrus comments, in *ANILCA Roundtable with Former President Jimmy Carter*, August 24, 2000 (VHS Recording), Action Video Productions, Anchorage, in John Quinley files, AKRO; Donald W. Carson and James W. Johnson, *Mo; the Life and Times of Morris K. Udall* (Tucson, Univ. of Arizona Press, 2001), 182-83.
[181] Sen. Henry Jackson, who chaired the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, agreed to submit Udall's bill as S. 500 later that month. Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 88; *Public Law 96-487, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Legislative History* (Anchorage, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fall 1981), Vol. I, 216-17; Vol. II, 708, 715-16.
[182] *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, pp. 11, 36-37.
[183] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 89, 118n; JFSLUPC, *The D-2 Book; Lands of National Interest in Alaska* (Anchorage, the author, May 1977), 182-83; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. II, 677-78.

[184] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 97. Andrus, as Interior Secretary, served as the administrative head of the Alaska lands effort, even though the U.S. Forest Service—one of the four major land management agencies in the Alaska lands effort—was in the Agriculture Department.

[185] Of the proposed acreage expansion, 3,853,000 acres was on federal land; as a result, most documents stated that the park would be expanded by 3.85 million acres. Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 94; 95th Congress, 1st Session, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "Inclusion of Alaska Lands in National Park, Forest, Wildlife Refuge and Wild and Scenic River Systems," September 15, 1977, Part XVI of *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands*, Serial No. 95-16 (Washington, GPO, 1977), 127-28, 130-31, 140-41. See *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. XIX.

[186] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 97; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. I, pp. 341, 393, 565, and 600.

[187] *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. II, pp. 23, 55.

[188] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 97-99; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. I, 745; Vol. II, 443, 498. Many of the ideas that Rep. Meeds espoused were in H.R. 10888, which he introduced on February 9, 1978. That bill, however, gave no Denali-related acreage figure, and it did not get beyond the committee stage.

[189] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 100; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, p. 101, 132-34.

[190] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 100; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, pp. 252, 408-09.

[191] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 100-02; *Congressional Record* 124 (1978), D 918; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, 445-46.

[192] Although the proclamation noted that "the area reserved consists of approximately 3,890,000 acres," a 1979 source stated that this acreage comprised only federal lands. In addition, 103,000 acres of non-federal lands were protected, for a total monument area of 3,993,000 acres. More recent acreage compilations suggest that the total amount added in Carter's proclamation approximated 4,178,600 acres. See NPS, *Index, National Park Service and Related Areas as of June 30, 1979*, 15; *NPS Index, 2005-2007*, 17; Land Ownership Maps, AKRO Lands Division files.

[193] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 102-03, 105; Proclamation 4616, in *Federal Register* 43 (December 5, 1978), 57035-41.

[194] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 104, 139; *Anchorage Times*, January 10, 1979, 4.

[195] Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 88.

[196] NPS, *Operations Plan – The Great Denali/McKinley Trespass*, ca. January 5, 1979, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.

[197] Frank Betts interview, October 15, 2004; *Anchorage Times*, January 12, 1979, 6.

[198] *Anchorage Times*, January 14, 1979, 1.

[199] *Anchorage Times*, January 9, 1979, 2; January 12, 1979, 6.

[200] *Anchorage Times*, January 14, 1979, A1-A2; January 15, 1979, 1, 3; January 17, 1979, 11; Bob Gerhard, email to author, April 11, 2003. Engle was a hunting guide who owned a lodge at the Purkeypile Airstrip, just west of the newly-established Denali National Monument, while Fanning was a Fairbanks guide and trapper.

[201] H.R. 39, Sec. 201(b)(1), in *ANILCA Legislative History*, vol. III, p. 678, 680.

[202] The Breaux-Dingell Substitute had originally been introduced as H.R. 2219, by Reps. Breaux and John M. Murphy (D.-N.Y.). Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 104, 107; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. IV (pp. 25, 80, 234, and 273-74) and Vol. V (pp. 22, 88-89, 303, and 369-70).

[203] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 107; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. V, pp. 581, 632; Vol. VII, 19.

[204] *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. VII, p. 466, 503.

[205] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 108, 111.

[206] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 111-12.

[207] At the time, the announced acreages included a 2,426,000-acre park expansion and a 1,330,000-acre preserve. Since then, however, more exact measurements have modified those figures; see NPS, *The National Parks: Index 2005-2007* (Washington, GPO, ca. 2005), 17, along with recently-updated land ownership maps on file in the AKRO Lands Division.

[208] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 18, 1974, 14.

[209] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "The MAB Programme" website (http://www.unesco.org/mab/index.shtml); Curtis Bohlen to Frederick Dean, November 27, 1974, in "K34 Press Releases – News Clippings, 1974-75" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

[210] *Ibid.*

[211] World Heritage List website (http://whc/unesco.org/heritage.htm) and ICOMOS website (www.international.icomos.org/world_heritage/icomoswh_eng.htm).

[212] *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 5, 1980, G-3; September 3, 1981, E-9. The seven other Alaska units were Cape Krusenstern, Pribilof Islands, Gates of the Arctic, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Aleutian National Wildlife Refuge, Glacier Bay, and Katmai.

[213] James Charleton, email to author, January 3, 2006.

[214] *Anchorage Daily News*, March 16, 1977, 2; March 18, 1977, 2.

[215] *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 15, 1977, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, November 16, 1977, 1, 36; December 17, 1989, H-13, H-16; July 24, 1994, C-3; "Senator Mike Gravel, A Proposal for a Recreational City, Mt. McKinley, Alaska," in "Denali State Park" folder, Stenmark Collection, HFC. The "glassed-in" dome, he noted, would actually be either a geodesic dome or a "Teflon tent."

[216] *Anchorage Daily News*, November 16, 1977, 36.

[217] *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 14, 1977, 2; December 16, 1977, 12; December 18, 1977, A-4.

[218] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 14, 1978, 3; March 22, 1978, 44; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 23, 1978, 1; *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1978*, 562, 665. By late March, the cost of both the lodge complex and the road improvements had risen from $25.7 million to $38 million. The cost would be split by the federal and state governments. But one factor easing its passage may have been how the costs would be apportioned because Rodey, in one article, said that the "feds may well pay for all of it."

[219] *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1978*, 562, 665; *Alaska Senate Journal, 1979*, FJ 27; *Session Laws of Alaska, 1978*, Chapter 146.

[220] *Anchorage Daily News*, March 29, 1978, 2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 29, 1978, 12, 48.

[221] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* 100; *Congressional Record* 124, p. 10712 (April 19, 1978) and pp. 20819 and 20834-35 (July 13, 1978).

[222] The NPS was involved in this process because the agency's October 1974 *Final Environmental Statement* had recommended a Federal-State-Borough Cooperative Planning and Management Zone for the proposed development site. The agency's role was heightened on December 1, 1978, when President Jimmy Carter signed a presidential proclamation establishing Denali National Monument, which included land just two miles north of the proposed development site. And it was further increased in the spring of 1979, when the Alaska legislature passed a resolution (SCR 14) calling for joint federal-state planning in areas where state and national parks shared common borders.

[223] Donald L. Bressler to RD/PNRO, October 3, 1978, in "D 18 – Planning Programs and Master Plans, 1978" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; John E. Cook to Robert LeResche, October 1, 1979, in File 600 (Tokositna), Series 888 (1975-79), RG 242, ASA; HKS Associates, *Tokositna, A Development Study for the State of Alaska*, February 1981, p. 1.

[224] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 7, 1979, A-4; January 13, 1979, 3; Terry A. McWilliams to Robert Ward, March 28, 1979, in File 600 (Contract), Series 888, RG 242, ASA.

[225] *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 11, 1979, A-3; April 23, 1979, 1-2; McWilliams to Ward, March 28, 1979, see above.

[226] *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 23, 1979, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, July 2, 1979, A-1; Michael Frome, "Disneyland North," *National Parks and Conservation Magazine* 54 (February 1980), 6. These two studies were summarized in the February 1981 HKS Associates study, *Tokositna, A Development Study for the State of Alaska*.

[227] Sen. Pat Rodey (D-Anch.) introduced a resolution (SCR 4) "relating to construction of a lodge and visitor center in Denali State Park" on February 5, 1979, but it never moved beyond the committee stage. On February 13, Rodey also introduced a resolution (SCR 14) "relating to the development of Denali State Park," but during the next several weeks it never got beyond the Senate Resources Committee.

[228] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 24, 1979, A-3; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 24, 1979, 12; *Senate Bill History, 1979-80*, 345; *Alaska Senate Journal*, 1979, p. 231.

[229] *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 6, 1979, 2.

[230] *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 6, 1979, 1-2; Bradford Washburn, "State of Alaska, Tour to Switzerland, July 9-21, 1979," in File 600 (Tokositna), Series 888 (1975-79), RG 242, ASA. The participants included state tourism director Richard Montague, Natural Resources Commissioner Robert LeResche, Parks Division Director Terry McWilliams, Tokositna Project Manager Vicky Sung, and Bob Henning of the Alaska Visitors Association. NPS Area Director John Cook, and hotel men Bill Sheffield and Al Parrish, were slated to go but did not take part.

[231] *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 14, 1979, 1-2; July 18, 1979, 8; July 21, 1979, 1.

[232] *Anchorage Daily News*, July 24, 1979, 1; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 26, 1979, 64.

[233] As noted in the *Anchorage Daily News*, July 24, 1979, 1, Gravel "still proposes dirigibles as transportation although he has abandoned the domed-city idea." He also advocated building a dam on the Tokositna River that would create a ten-mile-long lake, and in locating a trade center and cultural institute in his proposed "Denali City." *Anchorage Daily News*, July 2, 1979, A-1; Frome, "Disneyland North," 6.

[234] *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 26, 1979, 64.

[235] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 17, 1980, A-1.

[236] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 9, 1979, L-7.

[237] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 17, 1980, C-10; Cook to LaResche, October 1, 1979, in File 600 (Tokositna), Series 888, RG 242, ASA.

[238] McWilliams to Ward, March 28, 1979, see above; Cook to LaResche, October 1, 1979, see above. The state-federal report was published the following July; see Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of State

Parks and U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, *Environmental Investigation and Site Analysis, Tokositna Study Area, Denali State Park, Alaska*, July 1980, at ARLIS.

[239] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 18, 1980, A-1.

[240] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 17, 1980, C-10.

[241] As noted in the February 1981 HKS Associates study (see above), ERA/FMC was a consortium of Economics Research Associates and Fawcett, McDermott, Cavanagh, Inc.

[242] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 18, 1980, A-1, A-8.

[243] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 19, 1980, A-12.

[244] *Anchorage Daily News*, April 25, 1980, A-3; *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1979-80*, 278-79.

[245] The HKS Associates study (*Tokositna, A Development Study for the State of Alaska*, February 1981) incorporated information gathered by ERA and FMC, along with Dowl Engineers, Edward D. Stone Jr. and Associates, TDA Inc., and Sno-engineering Resource Management Consultants.

[246] *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 10, 1980, B-4; September 14, 1980, B-3; September 16, 1980, C-1; *Anchorage Daily News*, September 16, 1980, A-12.

[247] *Juneau Empire*, August 27, 1980, 1.

[248] *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 29, 1980, A-1; *Anchorage Daily News*, December 30, 1980, A-3.

[249] *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 20, 1981, B-1. The state gained tentative approval for the land in November 1981, ten months later.

[250] *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 1, 1981, B-3; March 6, 1981, B-1; March 15, 1981, A-11; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 6, 1981, A-10.

[251] SB 304 and SB 305, in *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1981-82*, 713-14; *Alaska Senate Journal*, 1981, 1125, 1132-33.

[252] Substantial help in researching this section—specifically, references of Board of Geographic Names actions—has come from Michele Curran, who discussed this controversy at length in her dissertation, *United States Board on Geographic Names: The Impact of Controversy, 1890-Present*, Arizona State University, 2005.

[253] *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 22, 1974, 1.

[254] On February 18, SJR 6 passed the Senate, 13-4; on March 6, it passed the House, 24-9. *Alaska Senate Bill History*, 1975, 547.

[255] *Alaska Senate Bill History*, 1975, 547; *Alaska Senate Journal*, 1975, 387.

[256] Sheldon's book on the area was entitled *The Wilderness of Denali* (New York, Scribner's, 1930), and Stuck's chronicle of his mountain-climbing exploit was called *The Ascent of Denali* (New York, Scribner's, 1914). Shortly after his return from the peak, Stuck vowed that he would rename the peak if he was "able to prevail on the Board of Geographic Names to make the change" (*New York Times*, July 17, 1913, 1). The board, however, made no such change.

[257] "583 Statement by the President Designating Two Peaks of Mount McKinley in Honor of Sir Winston Churchill, October 23, 1965," *Public Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson,* MasterFile Premier Database, American Reference Library; *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 23, 1965, 1; *New York Times*, October 24, 1965, 46. Churchill, the former British Prime Minister, had died at age 90 on January 24, 1965. Johnson's action appears to have been non-binding; it was not filed as a presidential proclamation, and it was never listed in the *Federal Register*.

[258] The Secretary's authority was underscored in March 1976; see U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 327th meeting minutes, 11 March 1976, RG 324.004, National Archives.

[259] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 314th meeting minutes, 11 February 1975, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[260] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 317th meeting minutes, 13 May 1975, and 318th meeting minutes, 10 June 1975; both in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[261] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Executive Committee, Domestic Names Committee, 122nd meeting minutes, August 1975, 123rd meeting minutes, November 1975, and 124th meeting minutes, January 1976; all in RG 324.003, NARA CP; *New York Times*, October 14, 1975, 14.

[262] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Special Meeting, Board on Geographic Names and Domestic Names Committee, 15 March 1976; 328th meeting minutes, 8 April 1976; and 329th meeting minutes, 13 May 1976; all in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[263] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 327th meeting minutes, 8 July 1976; 336th meeting minutes, 9 December 1976; and 337th meeting minutes, 13 January 1977; all in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[264] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 340th, 343rd, 344th, and 345th, meeting minutes, 14 April 1977, 14 July 1977, 14 August, 1977, 9 September 1977; all in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[265] Williss, *Do Things Right the First Time*, revised edition, 88, 93-94; *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 25, 1977, 4.

[266] HJR 672, in *Congressional Record* 123 (December 7, 1977), 38802, 38821.

[267] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 348th meeting minutes, 8 December 1977, RG 324.004, NARA CP; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 12, 1977, 31; *New York Times*, October 24, 1977, 16.

[268] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 354th meeting minutes, 8 June 1978, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[269] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 359th meeting minutes, 9 November 1978, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[270] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 103; Jimmy Carter, Presidential Proclamation 4616, in *Federal Register* 43 (December 5, 1980), 57035-41.

[271] H.R. 39, Sec. 201(b)(1), in *Public Law 96-487, ANILCA, Legislative History*, vol. III, p. 678.

[272] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 364th, and 371st meeting minutes, 12 April 1979 and 25 October 1979, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[273] H.R. 39, Sec. 201(b)(2), in *ANILCA Legislative History*, vol. VII, 19; *New York Times*, November 16, 1980, 62.

[274] S. 9 (January 15, 1979), in *ANILCA Legislative History*, vol. VII, 466; U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 373rd meeting minutes, 12 December 1979, and 376th meeting minutes, 13 March 1980; both in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[275] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 377th meeting minutes, 10 April 1980, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[276] 96th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, *Alaska National Interest Lands*, Senate Report 96-413, November 14, 1979 (Washington, GPO, 1979), 166, as noted in U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 376th meeting minutes, 13 March 1980, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[277] *New York Times*, November 16, 1980, 62; U.S. House of Representatives, 97th Congress, 1st Session, "Providing for the Retention of the Name of Mount McKinley" (Report 97-207), 3.

[278] Williss, *"Do Things Right the First Time,"* revised edition, 112.

[279] U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 385th meeting minutes, 11 December 1980, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

[280] 97th Congress, 1st Session, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Providing for the Retention of the Name of Mount McKinley*, House Report 97-207 (for H.R. 772), July 29, 1981; *Congressional Record* 127, pp. 228 and 19491.

[281] See, for example, "McKinley Isn't Denali, Thanks to Ohio Politico," *Alaska* 65 (May/June 1999), 15.

[282] Examples over the years of these bills include: H.R. 4035 (1981), H.R. 7356 (1982), H.R. 3363 (1983), H.J. Res. 648 (1984), H.R. 5234 (1986), H.R. 4687 (1988), H.R. 2788 (1989), H.R. 5769 (1990), H.R. 3563 (1991), H.R. 2686 (1991), H.R. 327 (1993), H.R. 443 (1995), H.R. 256 (1997), H.R. 231 (1999), H.R. 158 (2001), H.R. 164 (2003), and H.R. 189 (2005).

**Appendix A. Park Boundary Changes, 1917-1980**

| Date | Action | New Park Acreage |
|---|---|---|
| 1917, February 26 | Congress establishes Mount McKinley National Park | 1,591,897 |
| 1922, January 30 | Congress adds 355,175 acres south and east of the park | 1,947,072 |
| 1932, March 19 | Congress adds 246,693 acres to the park: 83,392 east of the park and 163,301 acres to the northwest | 2,193,765 |
| 1978, December 1 | President Carter signs Proclamation 4616 establishing Denali National Monument north, west, and south of the park; its size is approximately 4,178,600 acres. This creates a total acreage (park + monument) approximating | 6,372,365 |
| 1980, December 2 | President Carter signs the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act into law, which establishes a newly-named and newly-enlarged Denali National Park (which contains 4,740,912 acres) along with a new Denali National Preserve containing 1,334,118 acres. Thus the total acreage for Denali National Park and Preserve is | 6,075,030 |

Note: Acreage figures given are derived from present-day land ownership maps located in the AKRO Lands Division files. The acreages given in most published reports (such as those in the annual NPS *Index*) and the acreages quoted in Congressional legislation differ from the above figures, sometimes substantially.

## Appendix B. Park Visitation, Budget, and Staff, 1917 to 1980

Note: Visitation is for calendar years, but budget and staff are for fiscal years. (Until 1976, the fiscal year ended on June 30; after 1976, the fiscal year ended on September 30.)

| Year | Visitation | Budget | Staff[a] | Year | Visitation | Budget | Staff[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1917-21 | --- | --- | -- | 1951 | 7,807 | $74,786 | |
| 1922 | 7 | $8,000 | 2 | 1952 | 7,310 | 81,824 | 10 |
| 1923 | 34 | 8,000 | 2 | 1953 | 6,839 | 82,458 | |
| 1924 | 62 | 8,000 | 3 | 1954 | 5,000 | 83,458 | |
| 1925 | 206 | 11,020 | 4 | 1955 | 3,400 | 85,558 | |
| 1926 | 533 | 13,524 | 6 | 1956 | 5,205 | no data | |
| 1927 | 651 | 18,140 | 6 | 1957 | 10,662 | no data | |
| 1928 | 802 | 21,340 | 6 | 1958 | 25,906 | 275,378 | 15 |
| 1929 | 1,038 | 35,940 | 7 | 1959 | 25,819 | 282,332 | 17 |
| 1930 | 951 | 38,530 | 8 | 1960 | 22,514 | 312,675 | |
| 1931 | 771 | 45,780 | 7 | 1961 | 18,286 | 348,916 | |
| 1932 | 357 | 30,410 | 7 | 1962 | 16,561 | 370,061 | |
| 1933 | 386 | 34,140 | 7 | 1963 | 18,427 | 385,197 | |
| 1934 | 628 | 28,493 | 6 | 1964 | 19,175 | 399,700 | |
| 1935 | 877 | 22,420 | 7 | 1965 | 21,406 | 415,000 | |
| 1936 | 1,073 | 24,650 | 7 | 1966 | 31,300 | 438,300 | 20 |
| 1937 | 1,378 | 24,400 | 7 | 1967 | 39,800 | 528,800 | |
| 1938 | 1,487 | 27,829 | 7 | 1968 | 33,300 | 553,900 | |
| 1939 | 2,262 | 28,070 | 8 | 1969 | 45,400 | 608,000 | 20 |
| 1940 | 1,201 | 29,970 | 8 | 1970 | 46,000 | 717,500 | |
| 1941 | 1,688 | 28,120 | 8 | 1971 | 44,528[c] | 542,900 | |
| 1942 | 63[b] | 28,220 | 6 | 1972 | 88,615 | 632,500 | |
| 1943 | 3,674[b] | 27,610 | 5 | 1973 | 137,300 | 828,700 | |
| 1944 | 5,770[b] | 20,450 | 5 | 1974 | 161,400 | 920,500[d] | |
| 1945 | 2,012[b] | no data | 6 | 1975 | 160,600 | 978,700 | |
| 1946 | 1,145 | 28,248 | 7 | 1976 | 157,600 | 1,084,100 | |
| 1947 | 3,466 | 46,832 | 10 | 1977 | 183,200 | 1,412,300 | |
| 1948 | 4,512 | 51,402 | | 1978 | 222,933 | 1,443,400 | 21 |
| 1949 | 4,831 | 60,768 | | 1979 | 251,105 | 1,600,000 | 18 |
| 1950 | 6,672 | 70,630 | | 1980 | 216,361 | 2,610,100 | 21 |

Notes:

[a] Staff numbers are for full-time permanent personnel. As shown in Appendix 2, there were few less-than-permanent personnel at the park prior to 1950, when the first seasonal rangers were hired. By 1952 there were 13 seasonals; by 1966 there were 36 seasonals; and by the mid-1970s there were 80 seasonals.

[b] During World War II, military personnel comprised the vast majority of park visitors. The totals above include both military and civilian personnel, and have been excerpted from the NPS publication *Mount McKinley National Park Development Outline*, November 1946, 8. Official NPS visitation figures, which list only civilian visitors, provide the following visitor totals: 1942 = 5, 1943 = 12, 1944 = none, and 1945 = 19.

[c] Beginning in 1971, tabulated data are for recreational visits only. Total visits are much higher because they include traffic along the Parks Highway, which follows the eastern margin of the park for 6.8 miles.

[d] Budgets are for operations (ONPS) accounts only. Beginning in 1974, and for several years thereafter, additional budgetary allotments were made to the park in other accounting classifications.

## Appendix C. Selected List of Park Employees, 1921 to 1980

**Management:**

*Superintendents, 1921-1969 (also administers Katmai National Monument):*

| | |
|---|---|
| Henry P. Karstens | July 1, 1921-October 15, 1928 |
| Harry J. Liek | November 4, 1928-May 10, 1939 |
| Frank T. Been | June 4, 1939-February 1, 1943 |
| Grant H. Pearson (acting) | February 1, 1943-January 7, 1947 |
| Frank T. Been | January 6, 1947-February 7, 1949 |
| Grant H. Pearson | February 7, 1949-June 14, 1949 |
| Grant H. Pearson (acting) | June 15, 1949-August 13, 1949 |
| Grant H. Pearson | August 14, 1949-November 10, 1956 |
| Duane D. Jacobs | November 11, 1956-October 29, 1959 |
| Samuel A. King | January 29, 1960-September 29, 1962 |
| Oscar T. Dick | December 9, 1962-February 25, 1967 |
| George A. Hall | March 12, 1967-June 30, 1969 |

*Superintendents, 1969-1978:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Vernon Ruesch | July 1, 1969-June 2, 1973 |
| Daniel R. Kuehn | June 3, 1973-August 27, 1978 |
| Frank J. Betts | August 28, 1978-December 1, 1978 |

*Superintendents, 1978-1980 (also administers Denali National Monument):*

| | |
|---|---|
| Frank J. Betts | December 1, 1978-March 1, 1980 |
| Charles A. Budge (acting) | March 2, 1980-August 23, 1980 |
| Robert C. Cunningham | August 24, 1980-December 2, 1980 |

*Assistant Superintendents:*

Duane D. Jacobs, September 1955–November 1956
Samuel A. King, February 1957–January 1960

**Rangers:**

*Chief Park Rangers:*

Fritz A. Nyberg, July 1926-October 1930
Louis M. Corbley, January 1931-October 1941
Grant H. Pearson, July 1942-January 1943
John C. Rumohr, February 1943-January 1947
Grant H. Pearson, February 1947-May 1947
John C. Rumohr, May 1947-July 1951
Frank T. Hirst, October 1951-May 1953
Oscar T. Dick, June 1953-February 1955
Robert J. Branges, April 1955-February 1958
Elroy W. Bohlin, March 1958-June 1962
Leslie W. (Les) Cammack, August 1962-May 1965
Arthur J. Hayes, July 1965-1968
Wayne P. Merry, 1968-1969
Ivan D. Miller, 1969-April 1973
Gary N. Brown, April 1973-1981 (known as Chief, I&RM in 10/73)

*Supervisory Park Rangers:*

George Peters, 1953-February 1954
Richard M. Ward, May 1954-March 1956
Warren F. Steenbergh, April 1956-October 1957
Theodore S. Roeder, November 1957-November 1959
James W. Corson, July 1958-August 1958

*District Rangers, West District (Wonder Lake District prior to 1973):*

James W. Corson, 1957-July 1958
Richard J. Stenmark, May 1959-February 1963
Darrell L. Coe, March 1963-July 1967
Wayne P. Merry, July 1967-1968
Ivan Miller, 1968-1969
Ray Sanborn, 1969-1972
Bruce Wadlington, 1973-1974
John Haller, 1974-1977
Michael Tollefson, 1977-1979
Craig Stowers, 1980

*District Rangers, East District (Headquarters District prior to 1973):*

James W. Larson, June 1960-February 1963
Carl Lamb, October 1963-September 1965
Eldon O. Reyer, November 1965-1969?
Earnest Scott, 1970-1971?
Vernon C. (Skip) Betts, January 1972-May 1974

Bruce Wadlington, 1974-1975
Bob Gerhard, January 1976->1980 (also south of Alaska Range after Dec. 1978)

*Park Rangers:*

Marcus V. Tyler, November-December 1921
Lewis A. Powless, January-October 1922
Robert S. Bragaw, Jr. [ranger/clerk], October 1922-April 1923
Gustavus S. Buhmann, April-July 1923
Ernest R. McFarland, August 1923-September 1924
John E. Way, July-August 1924
Fritz A. Nyberg, August 1924-July 1926
Robert H. Degen, October-December 1924
Bert Thorson, January-March 1925
Harold H. Dailey, March-June 1925
A. F. (Judge) Stowe, April-June 1925
Charles F. Armstrong, June 1925-January 1926
Ernest H. Sinclair, December 1925-January 1926
Albert L. Winn, January 1926-May 1926
Grant H. Pearson, February 1926-December 1928, August 1929-May 1939
Walter H. Belling, July 1926-November 1926
(Oliver) Lee Swisher, December 1926-April 1934 (also ranger naturalist)
William O. Johnson, July 1927-December 1927
Arthur D. Gardner, December 1927-1930?
William (Bill) Myers, August 1928-1930?
Dan Wilder, December 1928-1930?
Ben Cleary (temporary), 1929
S. H. Simonson (temporary), 1930
Louis M. Corbley, December 1930?-January 1932
Wallace Anderson, January 1931-October 1934
John C. Rumohr, September 1930?-January 1943
David Kaye, May-August 1932 (also ranger naturalist)
Aubrey F. Houston, August 1934-November 1938 (also ranger naturalist)
Walter F. Brown, September 1934?-January 1935
Edward E. (Ted) Ogston, June 1935-August 1939 (also ranger naturalist)
Raymond McIntyre, June 1939-June 1941 (also ranger naturalist, wildlife ranger)
Harold R. Herning, October 1939-October 1940 (wildlife ranger)
Mr. Fleutsch, June 1941-June 1942?
Oscar T. Dick, July 1942-February 1944, February 1946-April 1947
Dale Spalding, May 1944-January 1945
Harold Rapp, March 1945-February 1946?
Harold E. Booth, April 1, 1944 – May 1947 (wildlife ranger)
Charles P. English, Jr., 1945?-January 23, 1946
William H. Clemons, September 1947?-May 1950 (also interpreter, mtce.)
Edward Chatelain, February 4, 1948 – July 17, 1948
William Nancarrow, June 1948- June 29, 1950
George M. Peters, July 16, 1948-January 1954?
James Orr, June 1950-June 1951
Morton S. "Woody" Wood, July 1951?-May 1952
George B. Chaffee, June 1952-February 1953
Elton Thayer, Sept. 1953-May 1954
Warren L. Steenbergh, July 1952-April 1956
James W. Corson, August 1956-1957
Joseph W. Meeker, May 1957-May 1959
James W. Larson – June 1959-June 1960
Bruce Wadlington, April 1972-1973
Steve Buskirk, 1972-November 1973
John Haller, 1972-1974
John Kinney, 1976
Dale Luthy, 1977
Tony Sisto, 1977-1979?

**Interpreters:**

*Park Naturalists:*

Ansel F. Hall (senior park naturalist at Berkeley), August-October 1931
[ranger naturalists, 1926-41 and 1947-48 – see ranger list]
William J. Nancarrow, June 1950-May 1954
Richard G. Prasil, August 1954-January 1957
Neil J. (Jim) Reid, May 1957-February 1961
W. Verde Watson (Supervisory Naturalist), June 1961-December 1965
Peter Sanchez (Supervisory Naturalist), May 13, 1966-1968?
William G. Truesdell (Chief Naturalist), July 1975-1980

*District Naturalists (East District):*

Craig Stowers, October 1977-March 1980?
Deanne L. Adams, 1980

*District Naturalists (West District):*
Deanne L. Adams, 1978-1979

*Interpretive Specialists:*
Henry Warren (half time), June 1, 1973-1974
William Garry (full-time), January 1974-1976

*Kennels Manager (dog handler):*
Ford Reeves, 1972-74
Sandra L. Kogl, 1975->1980

**Resource Managers:**
*Research Biologist (Wildlife):*
Joseph M. Dixon and George Wright, May-July 1926
Joseph M. Dixon, May-August 1932
Dr. Adolph M. Murie: U.S. Biological Survey = 1939; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service = 1940-41 and 1946; NPS = 1947-51, 1953, 1955-56, 1959-64; NPS (retired) = 1965-70
[wildlife rangers, 1939-41 and 1944-47 – see ranger list]

*Resource Management Specialist:*
Steve Buskirk, Nov. 1, 1973-1977
John Dalle-Molle, August 28, 1978->1980

**Maintenance, Engineering, and Construction:**
A. General Positions:
*Equipment Operators/Corralmen:*
Harold R. Herning, corralman, November 1938?-October 1939
Mr. Dollar, corralman, December 1939
William H. Clemons, equipment operator, December 1940?-September 1941, September 1946-November 1947 (also served as park ranger in June 1941)
Joseph J. Braun, equipment operator, July 1942-February 1944
Alfred Staples, equipment operator/corralman, March-December 1944
Jim Carson, September 1947-April 1949

*Supervisors/Foremen, Construction and Maintenance:*
Harold Herning, April 1949-February 1950 (originally carpenter-painter)
Herschel F. (Kenneth) Keathley, June 1950-April 1951
Thomas J. Adams, November 1951-June 1955

*Park Engineers:*
John Joslin, August 1957-May 1959
Jerrol G. Coates, December 1959-September 1963
Donald M. McLane, January 1964-September 1966
Robert T. Hafferman, May-September 1967

*Maintenance Supervisors:*
Noel J. Pachta, 1969-July 1973
Robert M. Keller, 1973-1977 (Chief of Maintenance, Facilities Manager)

*Maintenance General Foremen:*
James R. Hepburn, May 1978-1979
Dickie Stansberry, 1979->1980

B. Building and Utilities Employees:
*Mixed Gang Foreman (Maintenance Foreman), Buildings and Utilities:*
Thomas J. Adams, June 1955-November 1956
Claude Sanders, March 1957-August 1961
Peter K. Markvardsen, September 1961-December 1964
Frank Jordan, April 1965-1968?
Allen L. "Rusty" Stevens (acting), 1972
Richard Day, 1972-75
James R. Hepburn, October 1975-May 1978

*Powerhouse/Power Plant Operators and Mechanics:*
Claude Sanders (Operating Engineer, Hotel), 1956?-March 1957
Peter K. Markvardsen, March-October 1957
Earl DeCamp, November 1957 (temporary)
Eugene Rogers, September-November 1959
William A. (Al) Loescher, January 1960-August 1962
Leroy J. Carruth, November 1962-1964?
Stanley D. Smith (boiler operator), 1969-73?
Joe Donchak, 1973-May 1978

*Maintenancemen:*

Charles J. Ott, April 1957-1959, February 1965?-1970?
George F. Robinson, October 1959-April 1962?
Allen L. "Rusty" Stevens, 1969-75?

*Park Electrician:*

June McLane [laborer], August 1973-1977
Larry Alice, 1977-1978?
Jack Matthews, 1979?->1980

*Park Carpenter:*

Tommy D. Adams, 1973->1980
William Nancarrow, August 1973->1980
Harold Eastwood, May 1978-1979?

*Plumber:*

Rusty Stevens, 1976-1979?

C. Roads and Trails Employees:

*(Automotive) Mechanics:*

John E. Williams, February 1947- January 1951
Merl J. "Bearpaw" Nugent, February-April 1951
Kenneth Brown, March-April 1951
George Bowers, December 1951?-February 1952
Elbert W. Maetche, April 1952-December 1952
Melvin L. Rogers, December 1952-March 1953
Mr. Powell, Summer 1953 (temporary)
Dale E. Joyner, Spring 1955 (temporary)
John C. Galvond, Fall 1957 (temporary)
Peter K. Markvardsen, October 1958-September 1961

*Heavy Duty Mechanic (Roads and Trails Foreman):*

Oliver Onkka, July 1960-1961?
Stewart Burglehaus, October 1961-March 1962
Alvin Heyne, April 1962-April 1966
Alonzo B. Guenther, May 1966-1969?
William B. Broadaway, 1969-1973
James K. Rogers, April 1973->1980

*Heavy Equipment Mechanics:*

Patrick T. O'Connor, 1970-1975, 1976?-May 1978
Billy J. Walker, Sept. 1975-1976
Jack Bertram, 1978

*Motor Grader Operators:*

Frank G. "Shorty" Swab, 12/30/62->Nov. 1965
Rusty Stevens, 1966-68
Bob King (operator – general), 1967

*Equipment Engineering Operators:*

Harry Hughes, 1970s
Jim Burrows, late 1970s

**Administrative Staff:**

*Clerks:*

Ralph P. Mackie, August 1925-October 1927
Eugene G. "Dinty" Moore, November 1927-May 1929
C. E. Richmond, August 1929-August 1933
Carl F. Lottsfeldt, October 1934-March 1938
Gerald Janes, April 1938-March 1939

*Principal Clerks/Senior Clerks:*

Gerald Janes, March 1939-May 1940
Charles L. Peterson, August 1940-March 1942
Louis B. Maupin, August 1942-July 1945
Charles L. Peterson, December 1945-May 1947
Dallas Radcliffe, June 1947?-September 1947
Raye Ann Ayers, November 1947-1949?
Margaret Peters, 1949?-January 1950

*Chief Clerks:*

Marvin L. Nelson, January 1950 – June 1951
Arthur Hehr, June 1951-June 1956

*Administrative Assistants/Administrative Officers:*

Arthur Hehr, June 1956-June 1957
William D. Funk, July 1958-November 1960
Rolla D. Everett, January 1961-July 1963
Charles C. Schmid, July 1963-December 1965
Thomas Atwood, March 1966-July 1967

*Clerk-Stenographers:*

Jesse B. Morrison, June 1940-September 1941
Raye Ann Ayers, July 1942-October 1944
Faith Cushman, 1944-October 1947
Lucille Chatelain, February-July 1948
Margaret Peters, July 1948–1949?
Rosalie J. Friesen, 1956-June 1958
Priscilla Lockwood, July 1958-September 1960
Glenda C. (Carol) Gass, November 1960-February 1961
Marta C. (Catherine) Tack (later Markvardsen), November 1961-June 1962
Pauline Bogart, June 1962-January 1963

*Clerk-Typists:*

Edith Shishido, April 1958-April 1960
Glenda C. (Carol) Gass, January 1959-November 1960
Pearl P. Rich, January-April 1961
Etta Harwood, April-October 1961
John H. Donnelly, June 1961-1962?
Mildred L. Clute, March 1963-April 1965
Peter Fetsurka, 1965?-September 1966
Marguerite Bedour (Anchorage), October 1966-1968?
Cheryl Ann Cannon, August 1973-June 1978?
Arleta O'Connor, 1974-1977
(Barbara) Jean Rogers, 1975-June 1978?

*Project Clerks:*

Mary Moore, January-March 1951
Dorothy Ann Tow, April-October 1951
Pearl Adams, April 1952-1953?
Berniece Thayer, May?-September 1954
Dorothy N. Howard, April-October 1955

*Supply Clerks/Procurement Assistants:*

Odie G. Boyd, October 1952-January 1953
Eino R. Salminen, March 1953-December 1954
William D. Funk, Jr., May 1955-August 1957
Robert Wildfong, August 1957 (temporary)
James Benolken, November 1957-July 1958
Milo Caza, August 1958-June 1961
James J. Berens, November 1961-February 1964
Groo Beck, March 1964-September 1966
John E. Wisner, October 1966-1968?

**Temporary or Seasonal Positions:**

*Park Rangers:*

1926 = Walter H. Belling
1929 = Ben Cleary
1935 = Frank Glaser
1950 = Leslie A. Viereck, James King
1951 = Leslie A. Viereck
1952 = Elton S. Thayer
1953 = Elton S. Thayer
1954 = Delbert Wiens, Roy Christian
1955 = John J. Schuler II, Ralph Turman
1956 = Harry R. Merriam, John L. Sheldon
1957 = Harry R. Merriam, William Johnson
1958 = Harvey King
1959 = Ken Laufer, Elbert Don Payne
1960 = Charles Travers, Val Furlong, Ken Laufer
1961 = Charles Travers, Larry W. Adcock, Robert D. Dewey, William T. Parks
1962 = Charles Travers, Richard Guilmette
1963 = Charles Travers, Richard Guilmette
1964 = James Anderson, Wade Arend, Richard Streb, Scott Sappington
1965 = Charles Travers, Larry Adcock
1966 = Allen Hacker, John Murray, Charles Travers, Don Cornelius
1967 = Richard M. Shields, James McGowan, Bob Worthington, Mark Harkon, John P. Bryant
1968 = Richard M. Shields, Bob Worthington

*Back Country Rangers:*

1974 = Jack and Beth Hebert
1975 = Jack and Beth Hebert, Melinda Frison, Donna Pritchett
1976 = Jack and Beth Hebert, Pete and Gretchen Pederson, Craig Partridge?
1977 = Jack and Beth Hebert, Pete and Gretchen Pederson, Craig Partridge?
1978 = Pete and Gretchen Pederson

*Ranger-Naturalists:*

1941 = Herbert D. Brazil
1950 = Elton S. Thayer
1952 = James H. Castren
1954 = Richard Riegelhuth
1955 = Richard Riegelhuth
1956 = Robert J. Badaracco
1957 = Thomas Choate
1958 = Hugh Klett
1959 = Hugh Klett, George Petrides
1960 = Thomas Choate, Kenneth Walchek
1961 = James F. Kaye, Robert Richey, Kenneth Walchek
1962 = Robert Richey, Jack Reisland
1963 = Martin Dean, Paul Hilburn, Keith Olson, Robert Richey, Jack Reisland
1964 = Jack Reisland, Paul Hilburn
1966 = Gordon Haber, George Perkins
1967 = Gordon Haber, George G. Perkins, John N. Trent, Jane Bryant
1968 = John N. Trent, Paul Glaser
1975-80 = Steve Carwile

*Biologists:*

1973-75 = Gordon Haber
1978->80 = Joe Van Horn (technician)

*Naturalists:*

1978 = Jeff Bohman

*Ranger-Pilots:*

1979 = Hollis Twitchell

*Laborers:*

1926 = Charles E. Armour
1927 = Eugene G. Moore
1950 = Gene Christian, Richard Loe
1952 = Willis G. Hardy, James H. Castren
1953 = Gibert F. Soderberg, McGuire Henry, Charley Tuckfield, Willis G. Hardy
1954 = Willis G. Hardy
1961 = Carl Alto, Jesse Batres, Charles Hubbard, Russel Onkka, Henry Richards
1962 = Robert Gish
1963 = Mike Pedro
1966 = Frederick Fetterman
1975->1980 = Chuck Bale

*Maintenancemen/Carpenters:*

1951 = Claude J. Thomas
1951-52 = Clyde Rayburn
1954 = Coy A. Howard
1955-57 = Charles Ott
1957 = Robert Brannan, John Adams, Robert Auras
1958 = George F. Robinson
1959 = George F. Robinson, Bob Ray
1961 = Will Whittom
1962 = Harlin Harwood
1963 = Robert Murphy
1964 = Dennis Wik, Sidney Gibson, Bill Nancarrow, Walter Spurlin, Floyd Stanilee, Darnell Went
1965 = Stan Poole

*Mechanics:*

1963 = David Yoder, Robert J. King
1964 = Robert J. King
1972-75 = Scott Ruesch
1980 = Tim Taylor

*Plumber:*

1946-47 (winter) = Louis M. Corbley

*Painter:*

1963 = John R. McCann

*Motor Grader/Vehicle Operators:*

Robert W. Cullers, 1963-64
Brad Ebel, 1975

*Engineering Equipment Operators:*

Joe Krier, 1964?->1980
Gary Aldrich, 1972-73
Brad Ebel, 1976->1980
Harold Battest, late 1970s
Rob Hammel, late 1970s->1980

*Truck Drivers:*

1952 = Harold Parsons
1961 = Ray Wiebe, Robert Sharples, Will Whittom
1962 = Lewis McDonald

*Clerk Typists:*

1961 = Carroll Susan Baer, Caroline Cox

*Fire Control Aids:*

1957 = Kenneth Howell
1966 = Bill Ruth

**Appendix D. Park Concessioners, 1923-1980**

| Beginning Date | Concessioner |
|---|---|
| May 4, 1923 | Dan Kennedy |
| June 17, 1925 | Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company (without Kennedy) – until January 31, 1942 |
| June 1, 1939 | Alaska Railroad (operated park hotel only, 1939-1941 seasons)<br>U.S. Army Recreation Camp, April 1943-March 1945<br>Recreational Rest Camp (Army), Dec. 1950-Jan. 1951<br>Recreational Rest Camp (Air Force), Jan. 1951-Apr. 1953 (winters) |
| June 13, 1953 | McKinley Park Services, Inc. |
| August 25, 1954 | National Park Service; operator = National Parks Concessions, Inc. |
| February 6, 1958 | Mount McKinley National Park Company |
| March 1970 | U.S. National Resources Inc. (park subsidiary = Mt. McKinley-Lassen National Parks Company) |
| January 1, 1972 | Outdoor World, Ltd. |
| June 1, 1978 | ARA Services (park subsidiary = Outdoor World, Ltd.) |

## Appendix E. Population of Gateway Communities, 1910-2000

| | 1910 | 1920 | 1929 | 1939 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Broad Pass Station | | | | 10 | --- | | | | | |
| Cantwell | | | | 17 | 67 | 85 | 62 | 89 | 147 | 222 |
| Curry | | | 91 | 45 | 183 | --- | | | | |
| Denali village | | | 52 | 63 | --- | | | | | |
| Ferry | | | | 31 | --- | | | | 56 | 29 |
| Healy[a] | | | 36 | 46 | 102 | 67 | 79 | 334 | 487 | 1,000 |
| Kantishna District | 68 | 120 | 107[b] | --- | | | | | | |
| Lignite | | | | 13 | --- | | | | 99 | --- |
| (Lake) Minchumina | | | | | 60 | --- | --- | 22 | 32 | 32 |
| McKinley Park | | | 49 | 11 | 59 | --- | --- | 60[c] | 171 | 142 |
| Nikolai | | | | | 88 | 85 | 112 | 91 | 109 | 100 |
| Summit | | | | | | 39 | 34 | --- | | |
| Suntrana | | | 61 | 78 | 130 | 81 | 67 | 56 | --- | |
| Talkeetna | | 70 | 89 | 136 | 106 | 76 | 182 | 264 | 250 | 772 |
| Telida | | | | | --- | --- | --- | 33 | 11 | --- |
| Toklat village | | | 44 | 16 | --- | | | | | |
| Trapper Creek | | | | | | | | --- | 296 | 423 |
| Usibelli | | | | | 28 | 30 | 120 | --- | | |
| Usibelli Mine | | | | | | --- | 65 | 53 | --- | |

[a] – Healy was known as Healey Fork in 1930 and Healy Fork in 1940.

[b] – The 1930 population for the Kantishna District, incl. Toklat village was 151; without Toklat village, therefore, the District's population was 107. In 1940, the census noted that the Kantishna District was "annexed to Fairbanks District since 1929."

[c] – McKinley Park's population, as shown in the 1980 census, was 32; the 1990 census indicated that its 1980 population (perhaps based on redrawn lines) was 60.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population, Number of Inhabitants, Alaska,* various years.

## Appendix. F. Growth of the Park Road, 1923-1938

| Fiscal Year[a] | Miles of Road Completed (terminus location noted) | Annual Federal Budget Outlay Construction | + Maintenance | = Total | Cumulative Budget Outlay |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1924 | 2 (near Alaska RR) | $ 3,301 | + $ 960 | = $ 4,261 | $ 6,961[b] |
| 1925 | 10 (near Savage Camp) | 83,085 | + 3,500 | = 86,585 | 93,546 |
| 1926 | 22 (Sanctuary River area) | 52,490 | + 49 | = 52,539 | 147,318 |
| 1927 | 22 (Sanctuary River area) | 12,052 | + 7,065 | = 19,117 | 164,351 |
| 1928 | 34 (Igloo Creek area) | 51,661 | + 9,939 | = 61,600 | 225,942 |
| 1929 | 38½ (near Sable Pass) | 62,913 | + 8,438 | = 71,351 | 297,293 |
| 1930 | 43½ (East Fork Toklat) | 120,250 | + 12,073 | = 132,323 | 458,114 |
| 1931 | 46½ (Polychrome Pass area) | 169,837 | + 20,688 | = 190,525 | 625,932 |
| 1932 | 54½ (west of Toklat River) | 71,042 | + 25,194 | = 96,237 | 722,169 |
| 1933 | 66 (Mount Eielson area) | 64,101 | + 12,688 | = 76,790 | 798,228 |
| 1934 | 67½ (near Mount Eielson) | 43,791 | + 18,427 | = 62,218 | 860,447 |
| 1935 | 74½ (west of Mount Eielson) | 84,688 | + 29,038 | = 113,727 | 974,174 |
| 1936 | 79 (east of Wonder Lake) | 107,906 | + 35,077 | = 142,984 | 1,117,158 |
| 1937 | 85 (Wonder Lake jct. area) | 95,597 | + 35,360 | = 130,957 | 1,248,116 |
| 1938 | 92 (Kantishna district) | 59,857 | + 30,347 | = 90,205 | 1,345,020[c] |

[a] – The various Alaska Road Commission reports may include road construction progress as late as June of the given year. In most cases, however, construction progress is given for the end of the previous construction season. The report for fiscal year 1932, for example, may include construction information through June 1932, but in most cases it chronicles road building progress through the fall of 1931.

[b] – This figure includes $2,000 in federal (non-NPS) funds and $700 from private sources contributed prior to fiscal year 1924.

[c] – The total amount of NPS funds that were specifically allotted toward park-road construction and maintenance during fiscal years 1925 through 1938, inclusive, was $1,396,500. This comprised most of the funds used for park road construction, although funds also came from the Alaska Road Commission, the Territory of Alaska, and private sources. The total federal budget outlay for construction (only) on the park road during fiscal years 1924 through 1938, inclusive, was $1,082,571.

Source: Alaska Bureau of Road Commissioners, *Annual Report of the Alaska Road Commission*, various years.

## Appendix G. Bridges on the Park Road, 1923-Present

| Name | Mileage[1] | Date Built/ Designer[2] | Length (in feet) | Materials |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| "First Creek" (Rock Creek) | 3.3 | 1923/ARC<br>1959/BPR | 126<br>129 | "native timber"<br>steel |
| [unnamed creek] | 3.5 | 1924/ARC<br>1950/ARC<br>by 1976 – replaced by a pipe culvert | | trestle span?<br>trestle span? |
| [unnamed creek] | 5.7 | 1924?/ARC<br>1951-52/ARC<br>between 1982 and 1985 – replaced by a pipe culvert | <br>65 | trestle span?<br>timber stringer |
| [unnamed creek] | 9.5 | 1924?/ARC<br>1953/ARC<br>between 1982 and 1985 – replaced by a pipe culvert | <br>23 | trestle span?<br>treated timber |
| [unnamed creek] | 10.1 | 1924?/ARC<br>1953/ARC<br>between 1982 and 1985 - replaced by a pipe culvert | <br>23 | trestle span?<br>treated timber? |
| [unnamed creek] | 11.8 | 1925?/ARC<br>1954/ARC<br>1982 – replaced by a pipe culvert | <br>23 | trestle span<br>treated timber? |
| [unnamed creek] | 12.4 | 1925?/ARC<br>1955/ARC<br>1982 – replaced by a pipe culvert | <br>16 | trestle span<br>treated timber? |
| [unnamed creek] | 12.6 | 1925?/ARC<br>1956?/ARC<br>1982? – replaced by a box culvert | <br>20 | trestle span<br>treated timber? |
| Savage River | 14.8 | 1925/ARC<br>1950-51/ARC<br>1975/FHWA<br>1983/FHWA | 60<br>284<br><br>318 | pony truss, trestle span<br>treated timbers?<br>[repaired]<br>steel |
| Hogan Creek | 21.2 | 1925?/ARC<br>1950/ARC<br>1982-83 – replaced by a culvert | | trestle span?<br>treated timber, pile bent |
| Sanctuary River | 22.8 | 1925/ARC<br>1956/ARC | 60<br>198 | pony truss + trestle span<br>steel girder, concrete |
| Teklanika River | 31.3 | 1927/ARC<br>1955/ARC | <br>333 | [lengthened in 1930]<br>steel girder |
| Igloo Creek | 34.1 | 1928/ARC<br>1966/FHWA | <br>70 | framed trestle<br>steel girder on pile bent |
| [2 unnamed creeks] | 36, 37 | 1928/ARC<br>1960 – replaced by corrugated metal culverts | | trestle span? |
| Upper Igloo Creek | 37.1 | 1928/ARC<br>1956/ARC | <br>43 | framed trestle<br>steel on pile bent |
| Ghiglione Creek | 42.0 | 1929/ARC<br>1959-60/FHWA | <br>137 | trestle span?<br>steel multibeam |
| [unnamed creek] | 43 | 1929/ARC<br>1961 – replaced by a culvert | | "wooden bridge" |
| East Fork Toklat R. | 43.4 | 1929-30/ARC<br>1952-54/ARC | <br>283 | <br>steel girder |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [4 unnamed creeks] | 47.7, 48.6<br>49.1, 49.7 | 1931<br>1962 – all 4 replaced by culverts | | "old wooden bridges" |
| Toklat River | 53.2 | 1931/ARC<br>built in two sections joined by a fill 5 feet above bar level."<br>1953 – washed out and replaced | 1,176 | "standard pile trestle bridge, |
| Toklat River #1 | 53.2 | 1954/ARC<br>1987/FHWA | 403<br>430 | steel stringer on pile bent<br>concrete with pile bent |
| Toklat River #2 | 53.5 | 1955-56/ARC<br>1987/FHWA | 422<br>430 | steel stringer on pile bent<br>concrete on pile bent |
| [unnamed creek] | 59.3 | 1932/ARC<br>1961 – replaced by a culvert | | "wooden bridge" |
| Stony Creek | 60.6 | 1932/ARC<br>1956-57/BPR | 108 | concrete on wall pier |
| Betty's Brook | 63.1 | 1932/ARC<br>1959?/BPR<br>1981 – replaced by 2 pipe culverts | 16 | treated timber |
| Wonder Lake Inlet | 87.4 | 1937?/ARC<br>1961 – replaced by a culvert | | |
| Lake Creek | 88.5 | 1937?/ARC<br>1955/ARC<br>1981 – replaced by a pipe culvert | 22 | timber stringer |
| Moose Creek | 89.2 | 1938?/ARC<br>1986/FHWA | 83<br>179 | steel pony truss<br>steel girder |

[1] – mileage figures indicate number of miles west of the Parks Highway junction.
[2] – bridge designers include: ARC=Alaska Road Commission, BPR=Bureau of Public Roads, FHWA= Federal Highways Administration.

# A Note About Sources

During the preparation of this volume, the author attempted to locate and use a broad range of source materials that would provide a serviceable park management history within the time and budgetary constraints provided. He soon recognized, however, that the volume of park-related materials was too great to allow full access to them all. Many materials, therefore, were skipped. Inasmuch as many of these records are located in the Headquarters-"C Camp" area of Denali National Park and Preserve—in its library, its museum (which contains the park archives), in the superintendent's office and in numerous division offices—it was quickly recognized that gaining access to the lion's share of these materials would be a tall order indeed. Given the fact that repositories in other locations have also provided an abundance of park-related data, combined with the park headquarters' location, 240 road miles north of Anchorage, the researcher who chooses to delve into the park's historical records will soon recognize that sources at the park have been accessed less than those located in Anchorage and elsewhere.

Several source-related problems arose during the research for this project. First, it was the author's good fortune that historian Kristen Griffin, as part of an earlier effort, was able to assemble scores of park historical folders and make them accessible for this study. Ms. Griffin plumbed records at the park, at the National Archives, and elsewhere; she methodically, and properly, provided exact documentation for the overwhelming majority of source materials. Other agency records, however, appeared that could not be attributed to a specific bibliographic source. The author, in this case, decided to categorize each of these records by folder (when known) and then to give its bibliographic repository as the "Denali Administrative History Collection." All of the materials gathered for this study, in fact, are being deposited in the Denali Administrative History Collection, which will be located in the agency's Alaska Regional Curatorial Center (ARCC).

A similar problem appeared when the author began investigating park records. It was quickly recognized that some historical records at the park were poorly curated and in a state of relative disarray. Many boxes of records dating from the 1950s through the 1990s, for example, were found among heating equipment in the basement of the headquarters building (where the superintendent's office is located), and some loose, uncatalogued historical records were found in the park museum (located in the basement of the resources building). So far as is known, these records still remain at these locations, although they may soon be moved and curated. Records found in these locations, specifically those pertaining to park planning and infrastructure projects, are not referred to by collection name; those records photocopied for this project will also be found in the Denali Administrative History Collection.

One major collection encountered in the park museum was Catalog Number 9169. This massive data set, containing more than 30 boxes of park administrative records, includes materials as early as 1917 and as late as 2001; more than three-quarters of this material, however, dates from the 1960s and 1970s. When research began for this study, the records comprising this collection were in poor shape. In order to properly classify and curate these records, each of these boxes, plus other boxes that included similar materials, were brought to the Alaska Regional Office's curatorial unit in Anchorage during the summer of 2004. Soon afterward, curator Nicole Jackelen began processing them in order to guarantee their physical permanence and their future availability to researchers. The much-needed curation of this newly-expanded collection is now complete. Because of Ms. Jackelen's work, only scattered materials were used from the "old" Catalog 9169 for this study. The collection's reorganization, moreover, means that most if not all references in the present study to box numbers in Catalog 9169 are no longer valid. The fruit of her labor, however, is obvious; any future researchers interested in the history of park administration and management will have a large trove of relatively untouched records to peruse.

In addition to the records from Catalog 9169, tomorrow's historians will have access to many other avenues of not-yet-analyzed archival material. For example, the park has several substantial archives—such as the Grant Pearson, Earl Pilgrim, and Harry Liek collections, plus a large assemblage of ranger and interpretive reports, research files, and an impressive array of historical photographs—which were largely bypassed for this study. Researchers for this study combed a broad range of records in three

National Archives branches, but many other records—both National Park Service records (RG 79) and those in other record groups—have not been perused. The excellent Bill Brown Collection (Catalog 6857) has been perused, but by no means exhaustively. Future researchers will quickly recognize that many Denali articles, both in general-interest magazines and technical journals, were not consulted during the preparation of this report. And the oral history field has been barely scratched; while researchers for this study interviewed various park superintendents and a few additional agency personnel, future historians would greatly benefit by conducting interviews of a broad range of other park and regional-office employees, concession employees, state and borough officials, incidental business permit holders, leaders of park advocacy groups, and others who have played a role over the years in either carrying out or challenging the agency's mission.

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