

Chapter Four: The Cabins-and-Snowshoes

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.

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 inter-

vened. 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 a 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 headquar-

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

ters 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 deemed "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 see the park during the summers of 1923 and 1924. His orneriness, however, proved grating 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

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

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 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

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

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

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 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.

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





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

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

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

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



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;



Savage Camp – tents and horse corral. Candy Waugaman Collection

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 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-



Guests boarding the stage for a day trip. Lingo Collection



Many guests enjoyed horseback riding. 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 built, we'll be back" and others would say "Don't ever build the hotel, that'll spoil it all." People would be disappointed 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.

[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,

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



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

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

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 wintertime 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, 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 Sanctu-



ary); 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

ages, 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



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. Geologi-

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

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 superinten-

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 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



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

dent 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

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 drain-

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

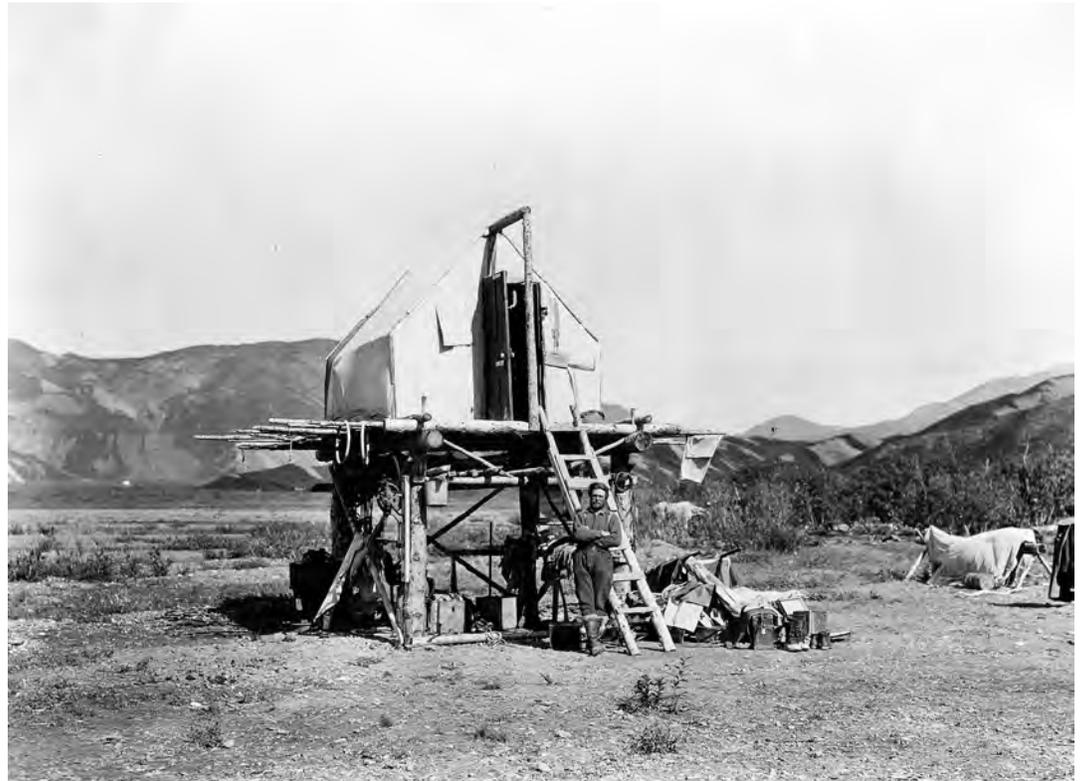
As noted above, the key to the NPS being able to protect its wildlife—and to put a human face

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 Ny-



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



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. 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

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 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



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 Col-

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

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



berg, 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 team⁷², feeding the dogs, entertaining dignitaries, maintaining the weather station⁷³, 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

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 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

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



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 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

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



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

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 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

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



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

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



so rangers can make patrols from there instead of patrolling farther back in the interior.”¹¹¹ In 1930, rangers erected a boundary-line patrol cabin along the East Fork of the Toklat, followed by similar structures at the mouth of Sunday Creek¹¹² 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 conquered 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

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 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

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



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 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

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



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 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. 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

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



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

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

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, 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. 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 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

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



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 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 hostleries: 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 mid-summer.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

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

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, 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.¹⁶¹ 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

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 accommodations 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 Collec-

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

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 northeastern 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

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,

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



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

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



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 completed 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 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.



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



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 overnights 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.

