

Chapter Five: A Diversified Federal Presence, 1937-1945

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

This area had recently undergone a visual transformation. Prior to the 1932 expansion, the area (as noted in Chapter 4) had been the scene of several squatters' residences, within which an undetermined number of residents "jungled in" each winter.¹ But shortly after the area was absorbed into the park, Morino tore down several "unsightly" buildings on his property—including the school house that operated from 1922 through 1924—and moved others farther away from the entrance sign that the Alaska Railroad had installed back in the spring of 1926.² Morino made other improvements as well; he got rid of the existing stumps, brush and debris on his property and replaced it with fields of oats and hay. The improvements, to be sure, were intended to allow him to obtain a patent to his property, and were thus temporary; for the time being, however, these fields caused "much comment among the travelers" to the McKinley Station area.³

The McKinley Park Hotel

The quiet that prevailed in and around McKinley Park Station in early 1937, however, was illusive, because events taking place among Washington bureaucrats portended dramatic, immediate changes to the area. Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, working together with Territorial Chief Ernest Gruening,⁴ recognized that tourism would need to be a major element of any Alaska economic development strategy. As noted in Chapter 4, Department plans dating back to the mid-1920s had consistently noted the need for a park hotel in the McKinley Station area, and during the winter of 1934-35 Ickes had shown an interest in the site. In 1936, Gruening visited the park and recognized that the provision of

adequate tourist accommodations was the park's most pressing need. He afterward worked with NPS personnel and was able to persuade Ickes to appropriate \$350,000 in Works Progress Administration funds to build a hotel.⁵ (The Works Progress Administration, headed by Harry Hopkins, had been established in 1935 to provide relief to the unemployed; it was in its heyday during the late 1930s.) Because Secretary Ickes fervently believed that the public-sector should own and manage facilities in the national parks, he had decided early in the planning process that the Alaska Railroad would be given control of the hotel project (see Appendix D). On that basis, Ickes directed the railroad to use the WPA funds on hotel construction; the NPS would be the railroad's agent for design and construction. Given those expectations, a site was surveyed in mid-May 1937 for the hotel and a power house, both of which would be located approximately 300 yards from the McKinley Park train station.⁶ Ickes and Gruening had expected that the hotel would be built according to a rustic design, following preliminary plans that had been drawn up by Thomas Vint. By the time construction began, however, budget cutbacks had forced the hotel to conform to a more functional, Spartan design.⁷

The Interior Department announced the hotel project on June 20, 1937, and on-the-ground activity commenced less than three weeks later. Under the de facto direction of Alston Gutterson, an architect from the NPS's Washington office, ground was broken on July 12; hotel plans, however, did not arrive until July 31.⁸ By the end of August, 78 were on hand to help with the project; they began by constructing a bunkhouse, powerhouse, underground reservoir, and septic tank, but in September crews began on the hotel building itself. Aided by good fall weather, work continued on the project until November 28, by which time "all framing, roofing, siding, sash, entrance doors and exterior trim [had been] accomplished." Project leaders were hopeful that the hotel would be completed by July 15, 1938.⁹ Some visionaries were predicting even more; an article in *Collier's*, a top-selling periodical, noted that

Heretofore the park has closed officially for visitors every September. . . . Now the government is building a hotel at the gate beside the railroad [and] McKinley will be open for winter sports—with authentic facilities

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

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



unsurpassed elsewhere in the world.¹⁰

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

rolling into the park siding, an atrocious sight greeted us – an elongated pile of bastard-modern, dun-colored boards, pierced by niggardly slits of windows. . . . Without exception, it is an appalling monstrosity. Tiny cells of rooms; no view; no sitting space; a

power plant blocking the approach. . . . A typical example of criminal inefficiency on the part of bureaucrats. Harold was simply frantic.¹²

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

By late October, construction had been pushed to the point where the hotel was fully enclosed. Work could therefore continue throughout the following winter, with crews numbering between 30 and 45. On December 8, Vint was replaced by the first of a series of Alaska Railroad foremen. By the end of February 1939, Superintendent Liek reported that "work on the new McKinley Park Hotel is rapidly nearing completion," and two months later he noted that the job was "practically completed."¹⁴ The hotel, which cost between \$300,000 and \$450,000,¹⁵ opened with a maximum capacity for 200 guests on June 1, 1939; it contained "98 rooms, 54 with private baths, dining rooms, lounges, game rooms, and other facilities and accommodations for guests." A cocktail lounge in the hotel served liquor by the drink and also did business as a package store. Reviews of the hotel were mixed; while both visitors and development advocates were

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





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

glad to see and use the new facility, a number of park visitors told the park superintendent “that the new hotel should be within view of Mount McKinley and that a luxury hotel is questionably appropriate.”¹⁶ Some government planners felt, during the hotel’s construction phase, that the railroad would move its overnight stop on the Anchorage-Fairbanks run from Curry to McKinley Park. No such move was made, however; the hotel at Curry (which had been built in 1923) continued to be used for years after the new hotel opened, and the railroad’s summertime schedule continued to include one daily midday stop in each direction at McKinley Park Station.¹⁷

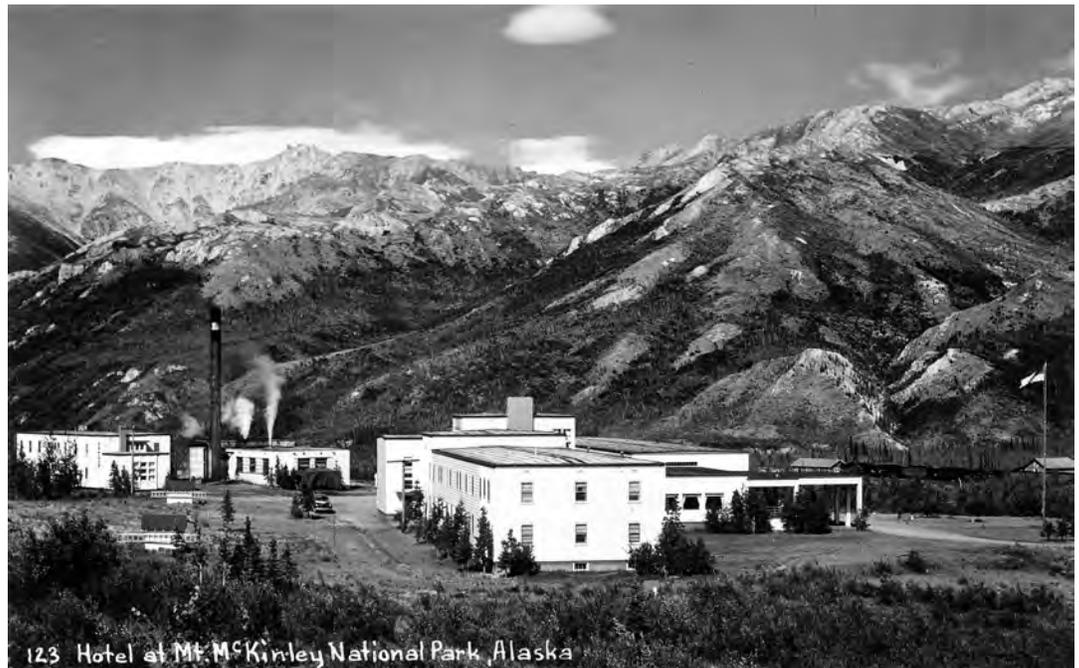
Secretary Ickes’s belief that the public sector—and more specifically the Alaska Railroad—should operate the McKinley Park Hotel rankled the railroad’s general manager, Col. Otto Ohlson. Ohlson had spent his ten years on the job trying to stanch the annual flow of red ink, primarily by paring expenses,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

he assigned M. J. McDonald to be the hotel’s first manager, a position he retained for the next several years.¹⁸

Impacts of Hotel Construction on the Park Concessioner

The government’s decision to build a hotel at McKinley Park Station upset the park’s longstanding relationship to its concessioner, the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company. This Fairbanks-based company, in 1937, had been taking care of the park’s tourists for thirteen years; it had a successful operation at Savage River Camp, where they had built a new social hall and four new tent cabins the previous year, and it also had a two-tent complex (called Camp Denali at the time) at Mile 66 along with even smaller camps at other park destinations. (See Appendix D.) Camp officials recognized that the presence of the new hotel might ruin the company. Despite the obvious handwriting on the wall, however, the concessioner continued to run its camps as it always had, and company officials gleefully declared that both 1937 and 1938 were the most successful years in its history.¹⁹ During the early months of construction, when government officials were predicting a hotel completion date during the summer of 1938, concessions officials probably thought—given that their ten-year concessions contract was due to expire in January 1939—that their contract would not be renewed. Given the ongoing delays, however, NPS officials recognized the obvious and renewed the concessioner’s contract for another year.²⁰

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



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

staying open for the full season, and re-opening Savage Camp to accommodate late-season visitors—reaped just \$25,000 in gross revenues (a 30 percent drop-off compared with 1938) and incurred higher-than-usual expenses associated with moving its camp buildings out to Camp Eielson.²³

The Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company, which had full control over tourist movements into and within the park prior to 1939, was understandably upset that they were forced into a marginal position due to the new hotel's presence. In light of Secretary Ickes's opposition to the NPS's concession system, and in recognition of the fact that a hotel at McKinley Park Station was an important part of a territorial development strategy, even if operated at a loss, Rep. Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.) submitted a bill (H.R. 4868) on March 8, 1939 that amended the Alaska Railroad Act of March 12, 1914 by authorizing the U.S. government, at Mount McKinley National Park, "to construct, reconstruct, maintain, and operate hotels, lodges, and other structures and appurtenances," and also "to purchase . . . the personal property, structures, and buildings of the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company" along with "motor-propelled passenger-carrying vehicles and all necessary fixtures and equipment." Senator Homer Bone (D-Wash.) submitted an identical bill (S. 1785) less than a week later.²⁴ Both bills were referred to their respective territorial committees, and in April, Interior Secretary Ickes wrote to the two committee chairs, explaining the bills and recommending that each be passed. Ickes noted that

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



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

In early May, both committees passed the measures on to the full House and Senate, respectively. The only variation between the two measures, at this point, was a two-word amendment added to the House bill. Later that month, the full Senate considered S. 1785; when it got to the Senate floor, Senator Carl Hayden (D-Ariz.) stated that “The Alaska Railroad Co. [does] not have authority to take care of buildings off the right-of-way. This permits that to be done.” Given that explanation, the full Senate passed the bill and referred it back to the House.²⁶ Later that year, however, dissident voices began to emerge. On July 6, Rep. Jesse Wolcott (R-Mich.) stated on the House floor that H.R. 4868 was “designed primarily to bail out the Mount McKinley Tourist and Transportation Company, which has made a failure of operating these services,” and he also noted that the bill offered no estimate of what it might cost to purchase the concessioner’s assets.

Less than two weeks later, Rep. Robert Jones (R-Ohio) also debunked the notion that the bill (as suggested by Ickes’ letter) was “an effort to correlate train schedules with bus schedules;” instead, it was “for the obvious purpose of buying out the concessionaire’s equipment and goodwill after the United States has fulfilled its obligations under the terms of the contract.”²⁷

The House refused to consider H.R. 4868 again until March 6, 1940. Recognizing that the bill was potentially contentious, the House leadership allowed several hours to discuss it. The leading advocate for the bill was Rep. Robert Green (D-Fla), while Rep. Robert Jones (R-Ohio) marshaled those who were militating against it. It was soon generally recognized that certain parts of the bill were vaguely worded or perhaps poorly written; in addition, the few House members who were familiar with the park area, and with Alaska more generally, quickly recognized that most Congressmen had wildly inaccurate notions about the territory and its problems.²⁸ Those who advocated for the bill—most of whom, like Territorial Delegate Tony Dimond, were New Deal Democrats—recognized that the operation of a hotel, even if run at a deficit, was an important element in Alaska’s economic development. The purchase of the concession, moreover, was necessary in order to ensure a seamless, low-cost way to promote visitation to and through the park. But those who fought the bill—most of whom were Republicans—made it clear that the government should not be in the hotel business, and they further demanded that both the Alaska Railroad and the newly-opened hotel should either be run profitably or they should be discarded. Schuyler Bland (D-Va.) stated that “it

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



is our duty to the people in that Territory to help build up and maintain and make that Territory which we have taken over,” and on a more specific level, Delegate Dimond noted that “it seems absurd that the Government should not operate the park facilities, particularly when it can do so at a profit.” But on the opposite side, Frederick Smith (R-Ohio) said, “For the life of me, I cannot understand, when our national finances today are threatening the well-being of our whole Nation, how men can stand in this House and defend an appropriation of this kind. I think it is a crime.” And Robert Rich (R-Pa.) stated that “I do not know of a hotel that the Government operates that is not going in the red and going in the red fast.”²⁹

As to specific objections with the bill, it was generally recognized that there were two prime reasons for the proposed concessions purchase. One was that “the hotel and transportation should be under one management,” and because both the railroad and the hotel were operated by the Alaska Railroad, therefore the transportation and west-end lodging operations should be run by the government, too. Congressmen were particularly perturbed about the high cost of the existing bus trip: \$25 to Camp Eielson and \$35 to Wonder Lake.³⁰ Several representatives also expressed a general worry—given the opening of the McKinley Park Hotel less than a year earlier—that the government was in no position to support the construction of another hotel. (The original House bill, introduced in March 1939, effectively sought permission for the Federal government to build a hotel in the park, but by March 1940 this argument was moot.) Rep. Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.), the bill’s sponsor, parried that the government had no interest in a second park hotel, only a “lodge” or “shelter” to

upgrade the existing tents. His response, however, led various fiscally-conservative Congressmen to question whether there was an easily-defined difference between a hotel, lodge, and shelter.³¹ In addition, Delegate Dimond and Rep. Magnuson noted that the concessioner’s assets totaled approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000. However, the bill provided no limit regarding the level of funds the government might pay to purchase those assets, and various bill opponents worried that this provision would provide a back-door avenue for a sky-is-the-limit government bailout of a marginally successful operation which was operating on a temporary basis after the expiration of its concessions contract.³²

Given the nature of the debate and certain representatives’ obvious misgivings, Rep. Green offered an amendment that replaced the original bill with a one that omitted the term “hotels” and also omitted any reference to specific funds being obligated for the government’s purchase of the park concession. Rep. Jones then offered a new amendment that eliminated any reference to the construction and maintenance of “lodges and other structures.” That amendment was defeated, 70 to 59. Rep. Frank Keene (R-Wis.) then proposed an amendment that prevented the U.S. Treasury from spending more than \$30,000 to purchase the park concession. That amendment passed, 81 to 54. The House next voted 95 to 43 to use Rep. Green’s amended bill—not the original bill—as the primary vehicle to advance this legislation. Finally, on the overall House vote on whether to pass the overall legislation, an initial vote showed that the bill passed, 106 to 81. The closeness of the vote, however, prompted Rep. Henry Dworshak (R-Idaho) to “object to the vote on the ground there is not a quorum present.” A few minutes later, therefore, a roll call vote was

taken, and Rep. Green's bill passed, 173 to 170. This razor-thin margin was all the more remarkable considering that the Democratic party, at that time, held a commanding 262 to 169 majority in the House of Representatives.³³

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

continue until such time as Congress appropriated the necessary buyout funds. The public, to even a greater extent than it had in 1939, showed a preference to board buses toward the western end of the park and to stay at Camp Eielson, and on "several occasions the accommodations at that camp were taxed to the limit, and not all visitors could secure accommodations there for the periods desired." The railroad, as in 1939, closed the hotel in late August. As a result, the concessioner re-opened its dormant Savage Camp facility for a short-term period. Camp Eielson closed in early September, and Savage Camp a few days later.³⁷

Operations in 1941 played out much as they had the previous year, with one exception. The park concessioner, sensing that there was an untapped market for Anchorage and Fairbanks residents

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

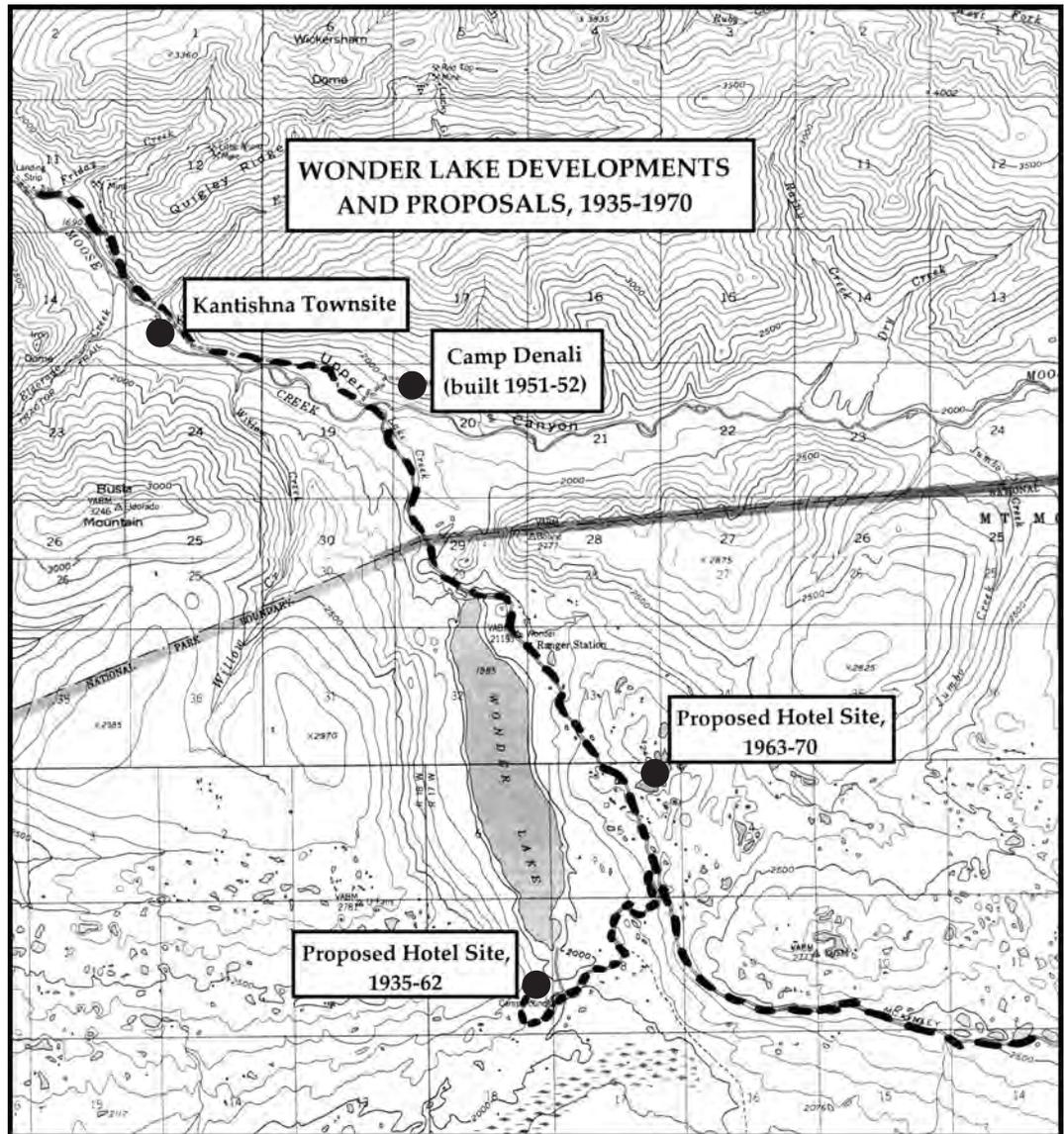


1940.³⁵

The passage of H.R. 4868 paved the way for the Interior Department to purchase the concessioner's assets and thus take over all concessions activities in Mount McKinley National Park. To effect the purchase, however, the government needed to appropriate the necessary \$30,000, and the Interior Department appropriations bill for 1941—which was approved in May 1940—failed to include funds for this purpose. A year later, the Department was similarly negligent. Lacking any other recourse, agency officials reacted by providing the concessioner with two more one-year contract extensions.³⁶

Park officials were clearly pleased with the "spirit of service" maintained by the longtime park concessioner and were hopeful that it would

"who would like to remain in the park but are unable to pay hotel rates," offered "housekeeping accommodations" at Savage Camp throughout the summer. That June, however, the concessioner was informed that Congress had finally decided to purchase the company's assets. During the season that followed, there were "overflow crowds" at Camp Eielson, as in previous years. But company officials, knowing that it was their last year, were in no mood to spend more than was absolutely necessary at the camp; as they noted in a letter to Supt. Been that April, they "agreed to operate this year . . . on a cautious basis." They would, moreover, "keep expenses down and . . . be prepared to reduce operating expense whenever the outlook for business warrants." So they skimmed on many services; horses, for example, were not available to explore the more distant parts of the park. Although the



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

concessioner's contract extension continued until January 31, 1942, its presence was effectively terminated on December 31, 1941, when the Alaska Railroad bought nearly all of the concessioner's personal property for \$22,044.99. (See Appendix D.) All that remained was for the purchase of the company's Camp Eielson property; the government bought these items in the summer of 1942 for \$2000.³⁸

A key point of discussion during the Congressional debate over the government's purchase of the park concession was the role of the Federal government in building and operating hotels, both within national parks in general and at Mount McKinley more specifically. As the March 1940 Congressional debate made clear, the Federal government had built and operated hotels in West Virginia, Florida, Virgin Islands, and Panama, but its only other NPS hotel property was the Longmire Springs property in Mount Rainier National Park.³⁹ Many in the Congress, primarily Republicans, were decidedly uncomfortable

with the government being in the hotel business at Mount McKinley, and several noted that the bill held the door open for the construction of a second government-run hotel. As noted above, however, the House voted down an amendment that would have prevented any future hotel-building at the park.⁴⁰

During this period, Ernest Davidson of the NPS went ahead and developed detailed plans for a Wonder Lake hotel.⁴¹ The government's decision to build the hotel at McKinley Park put any serious consideration of a west-end hotel on the back burner for several years, and the June 1939 arrival of a new park superintendent, Frank Been, further slowed momentum. (In 1940, Been noted that the park's greatest need was for "moderate accommodations and camp grounds," not a "high priced hostelry . . . planned for imminent construction with government funds."⁴²) That same year, however, the hotel gained a new champion, Governor Ernest Gruening, a frequent visitor who was clearly enthusiastic about the park's economic potential.⁴³ Working in

concert with Alaska Railroad officials, who were on the verge of taking over the park concession, Gruening worked to obtain Congressional funding for a hotel, and during the summer and fall of 1941, park officials were led to believe that the agency would build a lodge near Wonder Lake the following summer.⁴⁴

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

Recognizing that road construction was over, ARC and NPS officials worked together to clean up the old ARC camps and cabins, to get rid of upturned tree stumps and similar roadside debris, and to smooth over various abandoned borrow pits. The completion of the road also meant that Road Commission officials were free to spend their annual allotments (funded by the NPS, as noted in Chapter 4) on post-construction work (widening and small realignments), regular maintenance (grading, clearing ditches,

bridge and culvert work), and minor improvements (resurfacing and guard rail installation).⁴⁷ One of the Road Commission's biggest jobs was opening the road each spring. Because the park did not officially open until June 10 from the 1920s through the early 1940s, ARC crews were not under great pressure to clear off the road as early as possible each spring. This was especially true during the early years, when the park's road mileage was small and the road did not cross the high passes. Even so, problems were often unavoidable. In 1924, when the road was built from Rock Creek up to the Hines Creek-Jenny Creek divide, road crews bladed out a section of road four miles west of McKinley Park Station only to discover that it was "too low and that the glaciering of the stream in winter will cover the road with ice." In May 1927, the problem—caused by a series of small, all-weather springs—reasserted itself; as reported in the *Seward Gateway*, "some aggressive measures have been taken against the few glaciers which were blocking auto traffic on the park highway. At mile posts 3, 5 ½ and 6 the



Road Commission have had a gang of men with steam-points and dynamite for the last week. . .". Karstens, in a report that month, further noted that "it is unanimously agreed that the only solution to this problem [of glacial mud and schist slides in this area] is to construct a log cribbing on the hillside and thereby retard the slow but

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

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



steady movement of that soft material in rainy weather and in the spring.”⁴⁸ Beginning in 1930, Superintendent Liek’s monthly reports suggest that springtime glacier removal—which was at its worst just west of park headquarters but was also a problem elsewhere—was a concern almost every year until World War II. To contain the problem, ARC officials once suggested (but later rejected) “running the road up and around the glaciers at mile 3.” They later dug ditches on the north side of the road, tried to divert the water elsewhere, blasted away at the glaciers, and removed accumulating snow with a “snogo” or bulldozer. Despite these measures, none of which were entirely satisfactory, park officials were often skeptical in January or February that the glaciers would disappear before the tourists arrived. In almost all cases, however, their skepticism proved unfounded, and virtually no early-season tourists during this period—except perhaps in 1931 and 1933—were prevented from traveling the full length of the park road.⁴⁹

The Civilian Conservation Corps and its Contributions

In the spring of 1937, even before the official announcement that the government would build a hotel at McKinley Park Station, park Superintendent Harry Liek received a visit from Robert Fechner, the head of the Civilian Conservation Corps.⁵⁰ This organization—which was officially known for its first few years as the Emergency Conservation Work Organization (ECW), though popularly called the CCC—was one of President Roosevelt’s most popular New Deal relief-work programs, and at the time of Fechner’s visit, the four-year-old organization was a seemingly ubiquitous part of American life. It was also a boon to the National Park Service, which employed

a broad range of technical experts that planned and helped execute various projects. Each year between 1933 and 1937, the CCC had operated several hundred camps in scattered locations across the country; many of these were based in NPS units, while others were located in state parks and other reserved areas. Under that arrangement, the program had been extended to the territories as well; by 1934 there were two ECW camps in Hawaii, and by 1936 there were two additional camps in the Virgin Islands.⁵¹

Alaska, however, was out of step because CCC camps were normally operated by the War Department, and Alaska during the 1930s had a painfully small military contingent. To overcome that obstacle, the U.S. Forest Service’s Regional Forester for Alaska, Charles Flory, convinced President Roosevelt, in May 1933, to have the Forest Service take charge of all CCC activity in the territory including enrolling, clothing, housing, transportation, and project supervision. Under those conditions, Flory asked forester Charles F. Burdick to head the CCC program in Alaska, and by the end of 1934 the Forest Service had several camps in operation, with 325 men enrolled. Most of the camps were in Southeast Alaska, but small camps were also located in the Prince William Sound and Kenai Peninsula areas. Most of the Alaska projects, during this period, appear to have taken place on either the Tongass or Chugach national forests. As the decade wore on, the CCC got involved in work projects outside of the forest boundaries, and later in the decade the Corps got involved in projects in such diverse locations as Kotzebue, Nunivak Island, Galena, and Fairbanks.⁵²

NPS Assistant Director Conrad Wirth, who had

headed the agency's CCC work since early 1936, contacted regional officials and park authorities in early 1937 about the possibility of establishing a camp at McKinley Park that summer. Supt. Liek, in response, prepared a list of proposed projects, and it was initially hoped that there would be a camp established by May 15. That deadline, however, proved unrealistic. When Fechner, accompanied by Burdick, visited the park that June, an attempt was made to lay out a proposed program. The Corps, however, was unable to establish a camp that year because they were unable to secure enough Alaskans to staff the facility. Alaska, during this period, suffered an acute unemployment problem along with the rest of the country; the problem in Alaska, however, was a seasonal one, and few young Alaskan men were idle during the summertime.⁵³ NPS officials redoubled their efforts and hoped that a CCC camp could be established the following spring. Those efforts proved successful. On April 24, 1938, the NPS's Washington office announced that a 200-man CCC contingent would be arriving at the park in slightly over a month. The men were being recruited from Washington and Oregon, and their proposed tasks included "building two employee residences, moving dog kennels, telephone maintenance, trails and roads in the headquarters area, roadside cleanup, and cleanup and planting at the hotel project." In response, Liek asked his chief ranger, Lou Corbley, to "supervise the clearing of a camp site for the CCC camp and building tent platforms." Meanwhile, the contingent of men, which was headed by Project Manager Franklin G. Fox and 11 other supervisors, assembled near Seattle and boarded the *North Star*, which was chartered for the occasion. It left Seattle on May 21. When the ship arrived in Seward five days later it was met by a special train, which brought the men to the park on May 29. They wasted no time in

getting to work; Liek noted that "a tent camp was established immediately and the work of erecting knock-down buildings and establishing a permanent CCC camp was well under way within 48 hours after arrival of the company at the Park." Owing to its location in the park, the camp was dubbed Company NP-1.⁵⁴

During June camp construction continued, and by the end of the month a number of prefabricated "knock down buildings" were completed, including headquarters buildings, infirmary, mess hall, enrollees' bath house and recreation hall. Throughout the process, Supt. Liek gave the contingent "very fine cooperation and extended the use of all the facilities at this disposal in getting the camp organized." The ARC was similarly helpful. Given the short lag time for the planning and construction process, inevitable problems surfaced: initial paychecks were delayed, and many construction materials and supplies arrived so late that camp leaders had to borrow them from the NPS or ARC until the CCC could replenish their stocks.⁵⁵ But the camp ran smoothly; the Project Manager reported that it "had no accidents involving automotive equipment, exceptionally few lost time accidents to enrollees, . . . the general health of the company has been good, camp discipline was maintained without company punishment [and] the majority of enrollees in key positions gave excellent work performances."⁵⁶ Toward the end of summer, camp activities began to wind down. Almost half of the camp headed south in September, and most of the remaining personnel left on October 9. The last contingent, 30 enrollees and 5 supervisors, vacated the park on November 3.⁵⁷

During their extended summer in the park, the men had accomplished a great deal. Major projects included the construction of two employee



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

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



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

Liek, hopeful that the camp would return the following year, visited the agency's regional office in December to discuss plans for the continuing construction program. On February 15, 1939, agency officials in Washington announced that Company NP-1 would again operate "on the same general basis as last summer," and in order to avoid the supply problems encountered in 1938, regional and park officials were advised to act quickly. Plans called for the CCC contingent

to leave Seattle on the *North Star* in early April—two months earlier than the previous year.⁵⁹ Liek spent most of March "completing plans for the CCC summer program" in conjunction with regional-office staff. A month later, knowing that Franklin Fox would not be part of the group that left Seattle, Liek accompanied the men on the way north to the park. The contingent—193 men and 12 supervisors—arrived at McKinley Park Station on April 14. Initial work centered on camp repairs and gearing up for the summer's operation.⁶⁰

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

summer, of the “abandonment of the camp earlier than planned due to possible lack of funds.” The camp, in fact, closed earlier than in 1938; the last enrollees left the park on September 29.⁶³

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

close, and given that state of affairs, all remaining equipment that had once belonged to the CCC was given to the park. That July, Congress announced the CCC’s liquidation, and in the months to follow, the NPS closed up its books related to the McKinley park operation. All that remained of the once-bustling CCC camp was just five widely-spaced wooden buildings: a mess hall along with a garage, storage building, bath house and photography lab.⁶⁷

Inholding Consolidations

As noted in Chapter 4, the 1932 extension of the park boundaries brought with it a large number of parcels for which the federal government did not have a clear title. Some acreage had already been deeded to private individuals, while in other cases, claimants were only part of the way through the land acquisition process or had little more than squatters’ rights. In order to clear up the confusion, particularly as it applied to the McKinley Park Station area, the General Land Office brought in a special agent to investigate the veracity of the various questionable or unresolved claims. The agent quickly eliminated the legal basis for several of these claims, and only one of the twelve claims investigated—that of fox farmer Duke E. Stubbs—resulted in a land patent. (Stubbs received his patent in April 1933, before the GLO investigator completed his report.) One other claimant—John Stephens, who had a 133.76-acre parcel that surrounded the Windy railroad station—was also awarded a land patent during the same period, on February 9, 1933.⁶⁸

When the park took an inventory of its property



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

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

in the fall of 1938, there were still eight parcels in the park that were either owned by private parties or were still in the adjudication process. Three of those parcels—Edward Shannon’s 160-acre tract, Logan Varnell’s 15-acre tract, and W. A. Baker’s 5-acre tract—were never patented.⁶⁹ But private citizens owned the other five. Three of those parcels—Maurice Morino’s 120-acre tract, Duke Stubbs’s 35-acre tract, and Dan Kennedy’s 5-acre tract—were in the McKinley Park Station area. John Stephens, as noted above, owned a large parcel at the southeastern corner of the park, and Paula Anderson owned a 160-acre tract just north of Wonder Lake. The NPS’s regional director, as part of his request for the property inventory, admitted that “I do not know that there is any possibility of obtaining funds for the acquiring of these holdings.” Agency policy, however, had long called for the acquisition of private lands in the parks, so officials did what they could to induce landowners to either donate or sell their parcels to the Park Service.⁷⁰

As a result, NPS officials carried on intermittent correspondence with each of the five landowners or their designees.⁷¹ The correspondence files show that most of the inholders threw roadblocks into the appraisal process by claiming that the park had impinged on either current or potential commercial activities. As a result, the



owners claimed that the government owed them money, and several petitioned to Delegate Tony Dimond for Congressional bills that authorized compensation.⁷² To complicate matters, at least one of those owners refused to sell at any price. As a result, some of these cases dragged on for more than 20 years.

The first to be resolved involved Paula Anderson’s Wonder Lake property, which had been patented on August 1, 1930. In early 1938, Mrs. Anderson asked the government to buy her out, noting that the “new addition to Mt. McKinley National Park . . . deprived us of our livelihood [as fox farmers] and trap line, and we were compelled to move from there.” She further noted that “our home is destroyed” and there had been “the annihilation of all my personal property under the mismanagement of Mr. Leak [sic].”⁷³ Anderson hoped to reap a windfall similar to that which had been awarded to the Stubbs in the recent Court of Claims ruling, and in April 1940,



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

Delegate Dimond submitted a bill (H.R. 9353) to advance her case to that court. The Interior Department, however, opposed Dimond's bill. During this period, it was revealed that the Andersons had moved from the park well in advance of any activity related to the 1932 park extension, and that they had also broken territorial game laws by feeding wild game to their foxes. Mrs. Anderson then signed an option to sell the property for \$3120. That option expired, however.

Not long afterward, the Public Works Administration proposed an unidentified project in the vicinity of Anderson's property; \$10,000 was allotted for this project, and the property was considered sufficiently important to institute condemnation proceedings (a "declaration of taking") against the property. By April of 1941 that declaration had been completed and a U.S. Attorney in Fairbanks petitioned to condemn the tract. Meanwhile, Dimond—based on guidance provided by Interior Department officials—submitted a new bill asking that the government provide Anderson a direct \$3000 payment. That bill (H.R. 327) was introduced in January 1941, and on April 1 the House passed it. A month later, a Senate committee reduced the award to \$2,500. The full Senate passed the bill on May 15, the House quickly agreed to the Senate's changes, and President Roosevelt signed the bill on May 28.⁷⁴ Nine months later, in February 1942, a Fairbanks federal court jury awarded \$1600 in conjunction with the taking. Two months after that, on April 9, the court in Fairbanks completed its condemnation proceeding; it awarded Anderson \$800 for her parcel, and title transferred to the U.S. government.⁷⁵

Other Park Operations, 1937-1941

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

First, the completion of the

park road meant that officials needed to maintain a presence just inside the park boundary in the Wonder Lake area. Back in the fall of 1933, they had chosen a site for a ranger station at the "north or Kantishna entrance," but recognizing that road construction was several years off, NPS officials (as noted in Chapter 4) erected a cabin along Moose Creek in either 1935 or 1936.⁷⁶ In June 1939, shortly after the road was completed, agency staff revisited the area and concluded, regretfully, that the optimum site for the ranger station was on land still owned by Paula Anderson.⁷⁷ Soon afterward, they picked out a site on high ground east of Wonder Lake, and in mid-July, a CCC crew established a "stub camp" and started excavating a basement. After a whirlwind summer of construction, Been reported in September that "this fine, thoroughly insulated house" was complete except for exterior painting. Been later reported that "the house stood up well" that winter, but "as soon as the surface thawed and allowed the building to settle, defects and weaknesses" such as leaning, sagging, and curling became apparent. The first ranger lived there in the winters of 1939-40 and 1940-41, but no one used it as a summertime residence during this period.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, previously-established cabins toward the western end of the park were utilized during this period to combat game violators. Trapping in this area, in all probability, had been going on for quite some time, but the NPS's new awareness of the problem was due to the rangers' easier access to the area, and also because Alaska Game Commission agents, who occasionally flew along the park boundary and spotted questionable activities, cooperated with NPS authorities.⁷⁹ Trapping in the area may also have increased because more people now lived in the newly-accessible Kantishna area. Evidence of trapping was discovered in early 1938 when rangers located a series of traplines inside the park boundary as they trekked west from Wonder Lake to Slippery Creek. These traplines, which harvested marten, were laid out, in all probability, by longtime Slippery Creek resident Hjalmar



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

“Slim” Carlson. In response, NPS rangers fixed up an old cabin on Birch Creek and used it as an ad hoc base camp for patrols; this action caused Carlson to move his traplines north to areas outside of the park.⁸⁰ In both 1938 and 1939, rangers patrolled the boundary between Wonder Lake and Moose Creek in response to the Game Commission’s decision to have an open season on beaver in the Kantishna area.⁸¹ At Horseshoe Lake, near McKinley Park Station, rangers nabbed Carl Rozansky of Ferry in the midst of a beaver-harvesting operation. NPS officials were pleased to note that when the case was tried by C. C. Heid, the U.S. Commissioner in Nenana, Rozansky was assessed both a \$100 fine and a 30-day jail sentence. This was an obvious indication that territorial authorities were willing to clamp down on wildlife violators.⁸²

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

Station in the fall of 1939. A third, portable set, also in place in 1939, was for use on dog-sled ranger patrols. Park officials hoped, of course, that the three sets would considerably ease communications between headquarters and the field.⁸⁴ Reality, however, proved problematic; the superintendent often complained about the “almost total uselessness of the park radios,” and in the spring of 1941 the park saw fit to augment its radio-system capabilities by purchasing a new receiver.⁸⁵

A more obvious and visible change at the park centered on its dog teams. Throughout the 1930s, dog teams had been virtually the only way in which rangers, in wintertime, reached the more distant parts of the park; they were a proven lifeline in emergency situations and were consistently popular with park visitors. Elsewhere in Alaska, however, dog teams were quickly being replaced by airplanes and motor vehicles, and by 1936, Superintendent Liek admitted that because “the mail delivery by dogteam in most sections have been discontinued, . . . dogs have become scarce and difficult to purchase.” Superintendent Been, shortly after his arrival in June 1939, noted that “dog sleds typify McKinley winter travel. The method is exhilarating, interesting and romantic but practically obsolete in Alaska” and further noted that snowshoes—not dog teams—were the “conventional mode for winter patrol in most national parks.”⁸⁶ Late in 1940, Been stated that “consideration is being given to the elimination of dog team patrols except to the most remote places of the park. Perhaps there airplane [travel] will be more economical, certainly more effective, than dog team travel. . . . The money and time given to dog care may thereby be devoted to foot patrolling.” As the winter wore on, Been’s position became more



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

entrenched; he noted that “dog teams are not necessary for patrols where cabins are reasonably close” and “that the sled dogs may be more liability than asset for patrol work except on extended trips.” He recommended foot patrols in most cases. By April of 1941, Been remarked that “reduction of kennels is being made by culling the dark dogs, leaving about 2 teams of the light colored animals which are beautiful dogs weighing 100 pounds or more.” A follow-up letter that July noted that the park had “kept those of light colors, rounded heads, erect ears, masked, and plume tails.” Been decided to keep only sufficient dogs for longer patrols and for interpretive demonstration purposes.⁸⁷ Within the next year or two, the remaining park dogs were taken away; longtime employee Bill Nancarrow noted that the military used them as part of various troop deployments.⁸⁸

The change of superintendents, from Harry Liek to Frank Been, had significant impacts on the other park staff. As was suggested earlier, Liek had a fairly *laissez faire* management style; he gave considerable independence to his rangers, and there was by all accounts an easygoing camaraderie among the park staff. Liek, however, was ousted in the spring of 1939 following reports—dating from the previous August—of gambling,

from the traditional ranger ranks, Been was a naturalist and a forestry-school graduate. The park, by this time, had hired several short-term or seasonal ranger-naturalists, and interpretation was considered part of a jack-of-all-trades ranger’s duties. Been’s style, however, set him apart from the other park staff—he issued frequent memos to his staff as “a guide to the Superintendent’s practices and methods of administration”—and several tragic gaffes during the early part of his superintendency did little to endear him to his subordinates.⁹¹ Moreover, Been—who was the NPS’s primary Alaska representative⁹²—was gone from the park for much of the summer in 1939, 1940 and 1941 on inspection trips related to proposed or existing parks. These long absences were necessary because Washington officials demanded them; even so, they rankled park employees because it resulted in an increased workload for the remaining park staff.⁹³ Longtime park employee Grant Pearson, who briefly served as his chief ranger, found him authoritarian, exacting, humorless, and rigid; after months of trying, he concluded that “I guess there are some people you just can’t seem to get along with.” Been, in turn, thought that Pearson was a “good man” but “requires a helluva lot of development for administrative work,” and he fought against promoting him.⁹⁴ Soon after arriving, Been



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

drinking, and a lack of discipline among park supervisors.⁸⁹ He was transferred to Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. Been, by contrast, was totally different. Although his last posting was in San Francisco, where he had served as an assistant to Regional Director Frank Kittredge, he had previously worked at Sequoia National Park, where he was a disciple of Col. John White, the longtime superintendent and former Army officer.⁹⁰ But unlike his predecessors, who came

recognized that low morale was a problem. He felt that the problem, in part, was due to difficult employees (“the transfer of families or individuals that do not fit into the community may be necessary”), but he also felt that families fit into the isolated environment better than bachelors. He was hampered, however, because there were no available quarters for married employees.⁹⁵

The problem of low morale was aggravated by a

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

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

In response to the fire, Been requested funds for the construction of a new superintendent's house. That request was disapproved. Sufficient funds existed, however, to erect an employee's residence and to repair the damage to the superintendent's garage. Despite the lack of a CCC contingent (which had built two other headquarters residences in 1938) and the difficulty of procuring other labor due to military construction projects elsewhere in Alaska, work on the structure—located well away from the former superintendent's residence—was "proceeding satisfactorily" during the summer of 1940. The exterior of the structure was completed in June 1941. That summer, Been decided that he and his family

commented that "Indications point to a nearly denuded organization." Indeed, during June and July of that year, Superintendent Been and ranger John Rumohr constituted the entire park staff.¹⁰³ Anticipating the loss of men, Been stated in March 1942 that "an innovation at McKinley appears destined to occur as women will probably have to be employed." His hunch soon became reality, because that July the first woman began working at the park: clerk-stenographer Raye Ann Ayers. Ms. Ayers later rose to the principal clerk's position and remained at the park, off and on, for most of the decade.¹⁰⁴

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

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



choice, the park was cast adrift from many of its usual roles and duties.¹⁰⁶

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

would occupy the new structure; due to staff and budgetary cutbacks, however, Been's family did not move in until late March 1943.⁹⁹ Superintendents and their families continued to live there on a year-round basis for another fifty years.¹⁰⁰

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

World War II: the Army Gets Involved

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

These national trends had varying degrees of impact on Mount McKinley National Park. The park budget, for example, was reduced by only about one-third, from \$29,970 in fiscal year 1940 to \$20,450. (See Appendices B and C.) The lack of a greater cut was primarily because the park served several valuable wartime functions, as will be seen below. As was true in many parks, Mount McKinley lost a number of employees to military service; the overall permanent staff dropped from eight to five. Staff reductions were felt most keenly in the spring of 1942, when Been

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

Just a month later, in February 1941, military officials first broached the idea of the park as a recreation site. Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., who headed the Alaska Defense Force (and was thus in charge of Alaska's entire military effort), arrived at park headquarters with Colonel John Hood, who commanded the newly-established Fort Richardson in Anchorage, and Lt. Col. William Bray. The three officers



discussed with Been various locations for soldiers' recreation camps, noting that "lack of recreation for soldiers in Alaska contributes to the seriousness of the morale problem." The officers showed an obvious interest in establishing a camp at the park, but because the camps were intended to be permanent, Been suggested other locations, and more specifically Iliamna Lake.¹⁰⁸ That June, Bray and Hood showed a specific interest in having the Alaska Defense Command use the recently-abandoned Savage River Camp concessions facility for the summer. A lack of appropriations nixed that idea for the time being.¹⁰⁹

That fall, Buckner spent three days in the park with Been, and together they worked out a massive recreation-camp scheme which proposed sufficient recreation facilities to care for a large contingent of soldiers. The two men's plans, however, differed significantly. Been envisioned 200 men in the park each ten days, and to accommodate them he recommended the construction of a large, year-round central camp at Savage

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

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

No sooner had the recreation-center idea been discarded, however, than the Army announced that it would be conducting an extended expedition in the park. The U.S. Army Alaskan Testing Expedition, organized at Ladd Field, arrived at the park on June 12; though organized by the Army’s Quartermaster’s Corps, supporters and coordinators included the Army Air Forces, the Medical Corps and Signal Corps, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force. Included in the group was Bradford Washburn, a Bostonian who, six years earlier, had become familiar with the high Alaska Range during an extended aerial reconnaissance; he was now a civilian consultant assigned to Office of the Quartermaster General as an expert on cold-weather clothing and survival.¹¹⁴ NPS staff drove the 17-member contingent, led by Lt. Col. Frank Marchman and

ment “donation” by salvaging what the Army left behind at its base camp.¹¹⁵

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

On-the-ground activity began in late December 1942, when Capt. George Hall of the Army’s Special Services Division arrived in the park “to study the situation and to formulate plans.” He stated that between 150 and 200 men would “be in constant attendance” and would be at the park on seven-day furloughs. Initial predictions called for the first men to arrive in February. Inevitable delays ensued, however; the 30-man opening crew did not arrive until March 27, and the Mount McKinley U.S. Army Recreation Camp did not officially open until April 10.¹¹⁷ Thirty-three staff officers from Fort Richardson, along with Governor Gruening, attended an opening dinner that night, after which Acting Superintendent Pearson read a welcoming speech from NPS Director Drury and rangers showed motion pictures of the park’s wildlife. The following day the officers toured the park headquarters. Pearson later wrote that the military brass were “well pleased with the park in general and thought it an ideal place for the boys to spend their vacations after duty in the Aleutians and other Alaskan outposts.”¹¹⁸

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

made to order for soldier vacations.
... The glass enclosed lobby is strictly
Fifth Avenue. It is beautifully de-
signed, with modern furniture, big,

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



guided by Washburn, out to Camp Eielson. The group then headed south, ascended Muldrow Glacier, and eventually encamped on the edge of the glacier, at the 5,600-foot level near McGonagall Pass. From there they conducted lengthy testing of cold-weather food, tents, and clothing; anything “from tents and parachutes to food rations, stoves, boots and socks.” As noted in a *Life Magazine* pictorial, “the purpose of the expedition was not to determine what equipment is best for expert mountain and ski troops, but what is best for ordinary American soldiers forced to fight in cold weather.”

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

thick rugs, comfortable easy chairs, oil paintings,, shining chrome, and a hotel desk of Ritz Carlton caliber. . . . The game room is a knockout. It is one of the most completely equipped you ever saw. And the bedrooms will really slay you. Each has brand new twin beds and inner spring mattresses.

He also noted that the hotel also offered a tap room (which was a soda fountain; guests were asked not to bring whiskey, which was prohibited), a barber shop, a recreation room, movie hall, library, lounge, and dining room. Other parts of the bulletin noted that soldiers were hurriedly preparing facilities for winter sports (ski runs, toboggan slides, and ice skating rinks), and come summer time, courts would be laid out for softball, volleyball, and tennis. A Park Service dog team would be available for both “mushing” and

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



picture-taking; both Camp Savage and Camp Eielson would be open for camping opportunities, and there were chances galore for hiking, swimming (“if you’re really tough”), and fishing.¹¹⁹

Despite the bulletin’s promotionally-induced optimism, the Army did in fact offer most of these activities (though not all were opened as soon as the bulletin had predicted), and the following year new pastimes were added: archery, miniature golf, horseback riding from Savage River Camp, bicycling, horseshoe throwing, golfing from a short-range tee, ping pong, billiards, and dancing.¹²⁰ Skating was offered at such far-flung



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

venues as Horseshoe Lake and the Teklanika area, and during the winter of 1943-44, Army personnel rigged up a ski tow and warming hut at Mile 6 of the park road and offered skiing from December through April.¹²¹ Entertainers from the U.S.O. performed, and by 1944 there were weekly stage shows at the McKinley Little Theatre. The park’s first-ever religious services were held on Easter Sunday in 1943, and there were even wedding bells to ring, in February 1945, when an Army Corporal and a Recreation Camp hostess (one of “five capable women hostesses” on duty) tied the knot.¹²²

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

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

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

reasons. Not only did the visitors’ experiences provide “praise and good will” to the agency (according to Pearson), but the military helped in more tangible ways as well. Recognizing that the existing ranger staff was overtaxed trying to keep up their patrols and public contact work, the military approached the agency and asked what might be accomplished if four soldiers were assigned to assist with park duties. Pearson quickly replied and noted that they be assigned to do various critical construction jobs: repairing the telephone line from headquarters to Camp Eielson, constructing a first-ever telephone line from the headquarters to the hotel, improving

the “ranger cabin at Savage,”¹²⁷ overhauling the headquarters utility system, tearing down two abandoned log cabins at headquarters (which were in a “sad state of repair”), moving a small garage at headquarters, and various miscellaneous tasks. The Alaska Defense Command granted the request “in a decidedly satisfactory manner” (in Pearson’s words), and during the summer of 1943 it assigned Company F of the 176th Engineers to the task. The

company, commanded by Captain Childress and Lieutenant Schaid, spent the next several months on the job; they did the work “promptly and efficiently, in fact more was accomplished than was originally contemplated.”¹²⁸ Army officials also offered to have soldiers take part in public contact work. Experienced proved, however, that the rigid hierarchy between officers and enlisted men prevented the NPS from allowing the military men to assume broader park management responsibilities.¹²⁹

The Army also helped access to the McKinley



Station area by improving the old Morino airstrip at McKinley Park Station. As noted in Chapter 4, local landowner Maurice Morino had cleared out a 700-foot airstrip in the summer of 1932, and it was used for emergency purposes for the remainder of the decade. In 1939, new super-

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



interior Alaska.¹²³

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

From the NPS's point of view, hosting the thousands of soldiers was successful for several

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

The military assumed other roles at the park

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

That August, Army officials prepared for a new round of equipment field testing. Plans called for a party of six men, based at Wright Field in Ohio, to spend six weeks in “the terrain near Wonder Lake” beginning on September 10 testing food and clothing for the Air Force. The party—which included Bradford Washington, now Assistant to the Chief of the Army’s Flying Clothes Branch, along with several military officers—did not arrive at Wonder Lake (in a pontoon plane) until approximately October 15.¹³⁶

But by this time, the Army had far larger concerns. On September 18, an Army Transport Command C-47 with 19 aboard had crashed on the southern slopes of Mount Deception,¹³⁷ 16 miles east of Mt. McKinley. An aerial reconnaissance taken a few days later confirmed that all aboard had immediately perished. The Army Air Corps’ Col. Ivan Palmer, however, demanded to know more details about the crash, so he asked Supt. Pearson to fly over the area. After that October 2 reconnaissance, the Army asked Pearson if he could head a rescue party to the crash site. Pearson demurred, stating that it would be too risky to descend a 50-degree, icy slope for a body-recovery operation. Palmer and his higher-ups, however, explained that the son of a Congressman had died in the crash, making a trip to the site virtually mandatory; and furthermore, the military could draft Pearson for the purpose

if he chose not to volunteer.

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

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

The Army’s Cold Weather Test Section, based at Wright Field, soon let it be known that they were interested in yet another testing expedition, and in March 1945 a five-man party flew into the park on a ski-equipped airplane and camped on a glacier¹⁴⁰ at the 6,100-foot level. Decked out in “the latest type mountain equipment,” the men spent the next two months testing cold weather equipment and food; they also did some surveying and mapping in the area and made a first-ever climb of a 13,220-foot peak that they named Mt. Silverthrone because of its “stately appearance at the head of Brooks Glacier.”¹⁴¹

By the time the Army’s springtime cold weather expedition was underway, conditions in the McKinley Park Station area had undergone severe changes. On February 2, military authorities told local officials that the Army Recreation Camp had to cease operations on March 1. This was “in accordance with general orders that all unnecessary activities of the army be dis-

continued at once.” This should have come as no surprise to those who were in charge of the camp; by this time, it had been almost 18 months since Alaska military forces had seen combat, and as a result, troop strength in Alaska had fallen from more than 150,000 in 1943 to just 60,000 in 1945. Authorities decided to close the camp because too many soldiers had been shipped out of Alaska to warrant its continued operation. On March 1, all members of the camp staff and part of its detachment departed for Anchorage. Twenty members of the detachment stayed behind to close the hotel, but they too were soon gone.¹⁴²

Although the hotel was no longer operating as a military recreation camp, World War II was still

in 1945, therefore, included groups of military officers, Anchorage business men, and scattered Alaska-based tourists. That number was augmented by two groups of Congressmen who visited in August and made trips out the park road. (They overnighted either at park headquarters or at the Wonder Lake Ranger Station and were served meals prepared by the superintendent and his staff.) In addition, railroad and steamship-company officials made periodic visits to the park “to study tourist travel to McKinley Park after the war.”¹⁴³

Otto Ohlson, the Alaska Railroad’s general manager, released an optimistic statement to the newspapers regarding the carrier’s postwar plans, which included “one-day train service



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

raging in both the Pacific and European theatres. As a result, access to and from Alaska was still closely monitored, and recreational tourism to the park—except by civilians residing in the territory—was still prohibited. Those conditions would not change until well after V-J Day in August 1945. As a result, visitation to Mount McKinley National Park during the summer of 1945 was largely a repeat of what the park had experienced in 1942. Summertime visitors

between the coast and Fairbanks . . . an addition to the McKinley Park Hotel and the erection of a lodge and cabins at Wonder Lake to care for the inevitable tourist traffic; and most important of all, a reduction in rail rates.” Both he and others, however, knew that all of those plans depended on a strong upsurge in visitation and, just as important, on a Congress willing to loosen its purse strings for Alaska projects.¹⁴⁴ In the meantime, all they could do was wait.



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

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

Notes - Chapter 5

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 W. B. Courtney, "Christmas Zoo," *Collier's* 100 (December 25, 1937), 13. This level of optimism has been found in no other source; by contrast, the federal government's National Resources Committee, in a December 1937

report (*Regional Planning, Part VII, Alaska—Its Resources and Development* (Washington, GPO, 1938), p. 135) stated that “Winter sports demand both accessibility and population. These conditions make the development of winter sports within the park unimportant at the present time.”

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

12 T.H. Watkins, *Righteous Pilgrim: the Life*

and *Times of Harold L. Ickes, 1874-1952* (New York, Henry Holt, 1990), 610-16.

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

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

15 *Congressional Record* 86 (March 6, 1940), 2449; *New York Times*, November 20, 1938, X3.

William H. Hackett (in *Alaska's Vanishing Frontier; a Progress Report*, prepared for the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives [Washington, GPO], 1951, p. 46) notes that the hotel "was built with Public Works Funds allocated to the Alaska Railroad ... an additional sum of \$450,000 was later provided for a warehouse, employee quarters, a powerhouse, a 100,000 gallon reservoir, and a sewer system."

16 SMR, May 1939, 2; June 1939, 2; Brown, *A History*, 201-02; Albert H. Good (Acting Chief of Planning, NPS) to H.A. Bauer, Alaska Planning Council, June 14, 1939, in Jane Bryant Collection, DENA; Been to RD/R4, November 4, 1947, in File 208-08 ("Liquor Traffic"), Box 1407, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA CP.

17 National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning, Part VII*, 134.

18 Stroud (*History of the Concession*, 9-10) noted that the NPS "was not eager to operate the hotel but agreed to undertake the task if it was assigned to them," while the park concessioner believed that the hotel "would not prove profitable" and "wanted a guarantee against losses." Brown, *A History*, 201-02; SMR, April 1939, 2; August 1942, 3; William H. Wilson, *Railroad in the Clouds; the Alaska Railroad in the Age of Steam, 1914-1945* (Boulder, Colo., Pruett Publishing, 1977), 195-96, 203.

19 SMR, May 1936, 5; June 1936, 4-5; September 1937, 5; September 1938, 3.

20 Tony Dimond testimony in *Congressional Record* 86 (76th Congress, 3rd Session), March 6, 1940, 2443.

21 Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 10.

22 SMR, June 1939, 3; July 1939, 3.

23 Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 10; SMR, August 1939, 2; September 1939, 4; May 1940, 1. In a 1940 hearing, Rep. John Taber (R-N.Y.) suggested that "hotel revenues last year amounted to something like \$56,000, and the expenses, as near as I can figure them from the hearings on the Interior Department bill, amounted to \$146,000." *Congressional Record* 86 (March 6, 1940), 2447.

24 76th Congress, 1st Session, *House Report No. 567*, May 8, 1939; 76th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 448*, May 18, 1939; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 12.

25 See, for example, Ickes to Hon. Millard E. Tydings, in 76th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 448*, May 18, 1939.

26 *Congressional Record* 84 (76th Congress, 1st Session), May 19, 1939, p. 5796.

27 *Congressional Record* 84 (76th Congress, 1st Session), July 6, 1939, 8708; July 17, 1939, 9283.

28 *Congressional Record* 86 (76th Congress, 3rd Session), March 6, 1940, 2443, 2447-49. Mistaken ideas about Alaska that were brought up in debate, all by the bill's opponents, included John Schafer's (R-WI) statement that the "several hundred strawberry growers" that had moved to the Matanuska Valley "had all graduated to the relief rolls," the assertion of John Rankin (D-MS) that "there is nothing in McKinley Park except Mount McKinley," and a statement from John Taber (R-NY) that there were "six visitors to this park who might be available as customers at [the McKinley Park] hotel."

29 *Ibid.*, 2443-2460.

30 *Ibid.*, 2449, 2454. The price for the two bus trips, equated to 2005 dollars, was \$360 and \$500, respectively.

31 *Ibid.*, 2445, 2447, 2452, 2454-55, 2458.

32 *Ibid.*, 2443, 2445, 2447, 2455-56.

33 *Ibid.*, 2457-60; *New York Times*, March 11, 1940, 9; *World Almanac and Book of Facts*, 2002 edition, 92.

34 *Congressional Record*, March 6, 1940, 2851-52.

35 *Ibid.*, 3883. The bill became Public Law No. 445 of the 76th Congress.

36 SMR, May 1940, 1, 4; April 1941, 3.

37 SMR, June 1940, 4; July 1940, 3; August 1940, 3; September 1940, 3.

38 SMR, November 1940, 3; January 1941, 3; May 1941, 2; June 1941, 3; July 1941, 2-3; August 1941, 2; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 12; R. E. Sheldon to Been, April 29, 1941, in File 910,

Collection 5969, DENA Archives.

39 *Congressional Record*, March 6, 1940, 2447, 2451; Theodore Catton, *Wonderland; An Administrative History of Mount Rainier National Park* (Seattle, NPS, May 1996), 322-26.

40 *Congressional Record*, March 6, 1940, 2444, 2449, 2459.

41 SMR, September 1938, 2; January 1939, 3; August 1939, 2; NPS, "Wonder Lake Lodge Area, Part of the Master Plan for MOMC" (drawing 2004a, sheet 11), January 1942.

42 Brown, *A History*, 201; Supt. To the Director, March 11, 1930, in "620-037" file, Box 1412 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; Been to the Director, June 25, 1941, in File 501-3, Part 1, "Newspaper Articles," Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

43 SMR, May 1936, 1; July 1938, 1; August 1938, 1, 7; December 1939, 1; October 1940, 1.

44 SMR, March 1941, photo; June 1941, 3; July 1941, 2; September 1941, 1, 2; October 1941, 3.

45 SMR, February 1936, 4; July 1939, 3; August 1940, 3.

46 Brown, *A History*, 112; "Kantishna 50399" file, Airports Division historical files, FAA Collection, Anchorage.

47 Although the ARC was given broad approval to install "guard rails," none were knowingly installed. Instead, guard posts were installed east of Polychrome Pass, along the bluffs west of Thorofare Pass, and perhaps elsewhere along the park road. Frank T. Been to Director NPS, October 6, 1939; Been to Ike Taylor, October 7, 1939; both in File 630, Box 1413 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

48 SMR, June 1924, 4; May 1927, 2-3; *Seward Daily Gateway*, May 26, 1927, 4.

49 SMR, May 1931, 2; September 1931, 3; January 1933, 3; May 1933, 2; May 1936, 1-2; June 1937, 4.

50 SMR, June 1937, 1.

51 Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Denver, NPS, September 1983), 76-86. The CCC's establishment is chronicled in John C. Paige's *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History* (Washington, NPS, 1985), 8-10.

52 Lawrence W. Rakestraw, *A History of the United States Forest Service in Alaska* (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Commission, 1981), 95-98; *Daily Alaska Empire*, May 8, 1933; W. Conner Sorensen, "The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alaska (1933-1942) and Military Preparedness," in Fern Chandonnet, ed., *Alaska at War, 1941-1945, the Forgotten War Remembered* (Anchorage, Alaska at War Committee, 1995), 235-36.

53 Wirth to Regional Officer, Region Four, April 26, 1937, in File 600, "Jobs, Part 1 (4/16/37-12/11/37)," Box 78, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; Unrau and Williss, *Administrative History*, 86; Rakestraw, *A History*, 96; SMR, June 1937, 1; August 1937, 1; September 1937, 1-2.

54 SMR, April 1938, 1; May 1938, 1, 4; Paul Gallagher to NPS Director, August 10, 1938, in File 204, Part 1, "Inspection and Investigation," Box 1404 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP; *Daily Alaska Empire*, April 26, 1938.

55 Grant D. Ross to Regional Director, Region Four, August 8, 1938, in File 600, Part 2, "Jobs, Part 2 (1/19/38-12/20/39)," Box 78, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; Gallagher to NPS Director, August 10, 1938, in File 204, Part 1, noted above.

56 Franklin G. Fox to Harry J. Liek, November 1, 1938; Liek to the Director, November 18, 1938; both in File 600, Part 2, noted above. Fox's statement about good "camp discipline" was apparently overoptimistic; Liek noted that "due to the fact that enrollees could not be conveniently discharged as an extreme disciplinary measure, it was difficult to maintain the proper discipline among the enrollees." And Fox himself admitted that alcohol was a problem; he proudly noted that "no drinking or gambling was permitted after the camp was well organized," but conceded that two of his supervisors "were unwilling to set an example of sobriety."

57 SMR, September 1938, 3; October 1938, 1; November 1938, 1.

58 Franklin G. Fox to Regional Director, Region IV, July 3, 1938; Fox to Liek, November 1, 1938; Liek to the Director, November 18, 1938; all in File 600, Part 2, noted above; SMR, October 1938, 2. The educational guide (Job #14), although completed, was apparently not adopted by park personnel, inasmuch as there are no references to such a guide being used or reproduced.

59 Fred T. Johnston to Regional Director, Region IV, February 24, 1939, in File 600, Part 2, noted above; SMR, December 1938, 1; February 1939, 1.

60 SMR, March 1939, 1; April 1939, 1, 2.

61 SMR, May 1939, 1-2; June 1939, 2; September 1939, 1, 3. Crews who built the telephone line lived in a "side camp" at Mile 29 of the park road, near present-day Teklanika Campground. Edward E. Ogston to Supt. Been, July 17, 1939, in uncatalogued "CCC History" file folder, DENA Archives.

62 John C. Bunce, "Minutes of Supervisory Personnel Meeting, Camp NP-1, July 3, 1939," in File 600, Part 2, noted above; Marlys Rudeen, comp., *The Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Papers: a Guide* (Chicago, Center for Research Libraries, 1991), 193.

63 SMR, July 1939, 3; September 1939, 1.

64 SMR, July 1939, 3; September 1939, 1-3; National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning, Part VII, Alaska – Its Resources and Development* (Washington, GPO, 1938), 135.

65 SMR, November 1939, 3; March 1940, 1-3; Assistant Regional Director to Supt. Been, January 2, "1939" [1940], in File 600, Part 2, noted above.

66 SMR, August 1940, 3; September 1940, 2-3; October 1940, 1, 4; December 1940, 3; January 1941, 3; B.F. Manbey to Supt. Been, February 28, 1941, in File 600, Part 3 (1/1/40-12/31/41), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

67 SMR, January 1942, 2; Unrau and Williss, *Administrative History*, 92; Herbert Maier to Director NPS, August 20, 1942, in File 600, Part 4, "Development" (1/1/42-1/1/51), in Box 78, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; NPS, Drawing MOMC-5317 (January 1947), TIC Aperture Card Collection.

68 Horace M. Albright to Supt. MOMC, May 5, 1933, in "General Entries, 605, Stubbs" file, Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

69 F. A. Kittredge to Supt. Liek, October 18, 1938, in File 610 ("Mt. McKinley NP Private Lands"), Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB. Grant Pearson, asked to follow up on the three claimants six years later, caustically noted that "these properties ... have been abandoned, Varnell and Baker have departed for parts unknown, and Shannon long ago discovered that homesteading was too arduous for anyone so devoid of ambition and so gave up his idea and his homestead entry." Pearson to RD/R4, March 18, 1944, in "File 610: John Stephens: 1941-May 19, 1953," Box 79, noted above.

70 Kittredge to Liek, October 18, 1938, noted above; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 65-66; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 318, 338, 482-84.

71 Stubbs, Kennedy, and Anderson were still living landowners at this time. But Maurice Morino, as noted in Chapter 4, had died in 1937 and was buried on high ground at the western end of his parcel; the administrator of his estate was Mary Liek, wife of the former superintendent. John Stephens, owner of the Windy parcel, had died in 1934, and H. Stephen Simpson was designated as the administrator of his estate.

72 Dimond submitted bills on behalf of the Stephens estate in 1937 and 1941; Anderson in 1940 and 1941; and Kennedy in 1941. As shall be seen, only Anderson was successful in this process.

73 It was later shown that government surveyors—ostensibly the 1936 boundary-survey crew—had burned down the Andersons' cabin, and a year later, ARC crews had bladed the park road across her property without permission. Regional Director to Director, November 2, 1939, in File 610, "Paula Liebau Anderson, 1938-5/19/53", Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

74 *Congressional Record* 87 (1941), pp. 2800, 4120; 77th Congress, 1st Session, *House Report No. 189* (March 10, 1941), 1-2; 77th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Report No. 265* (May 8, 1941), 1-2; Albert L. Johnson to Mrs. Paula Liebau Anderson, April 14, 1941, in File 610, "Mt. McKinley N.P. Private Lands" file, Box 79, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

75 Mrs. Paula Anderson to SOI, January 28, 1938; Anderson to Joseph E. Taylor, November 2, 1939; Been to RD/R4, November 21, 1939; Herman Maier to Director NPS, January 24, 1941; Arthur E. Demaray to Supt. MOMC, February 27, 1941; Hillory A. Tolson to RD/R4, May 1, 1942, all in File 610, "Paula Liebau Anderson," noted above; U.S. District Court, 4th Judicial Division of Alaska, *USA v. Paula Liebau Anderson*, No. 4681, "Petition for Condemnation," April 8, 1941, and "Final Judgement of Condemnation," June 5, 1942; both in "DENA Deeds to USA" file, AKRO Lands Division.

76 SMR, September 1933, 2; August 1934, 2; September 1934, 3; July 1936, 4; September 1936, 2; Jane Bryant email, June 24, 2005.

77 SMR, June 1939, 2. As noted in Chapter 4, John and Paula Anderson had abandoned this 160-acre parcel in 1929, but Paula had obtained title to it in August 1930 and it remained in her name throughout the 1930s.

78 SMR, July 1939, 2; September 1939, 1, 3; September 1940, 2; June 1943, 2.

79 These flights apparently began in 1940. See SMR, November 1940, 5; December 1940, 4; December 1941, 3.

80 SMR, February 1938, 4; August 1938, 5; September 1938, 3; Brown, *A History*, 122-25.

81 SMR, April 1938, 4; May 1938, 4; April 1939, 3.

82 SMR, May 1939, 3.

83 Document 5 (1933-52), dated December 20, 1939, in File #40-10 (National Park Service #1), RG 101, ASA.

84 SMR, March 1938, 2; April 1938, 4; October 1939, 4.

85 SMR, November 1939, 3; December 1939, 3; April 1940, 3; November 1940, 2-3; March 1941, 3. The new equipment was a Sky rider Marine receiver, Model S28R.

86 SMR, December 1935, 2; November 1936, 5; April 1940, 8.

87 SMR, November 1940, 5; January 1941, 4; April 1941, photo; June 1941, photo; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 187; Been to Eva Seeley, July 9, 1941, in "Outgoing Park Correspondence" file, Box 2, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

88 William J. Nancarrow, interview by Jane Bryant, October 8, 2002; Jane Bryant email, May 12, 2006.

89 Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 152. Alcohol consumption had been legal in Alaska since April 1934, but it remained illegal within NPS units. (See SMR, April 1934, 6.) The change in superintendents was announced to the press on April 28, 1939.

90 Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 152; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 55-56.

91 Rawson, *Changing Tracks*, 152; Supt. to Park Personnel, November 28, 1939, in Jane Bryant Collection, DENA. See Appendix C for a list of the early park naturalists. Been badly damaged the park sedan within days of arriving at the park, and in December 1939, while out on a practice run with one of the park's dog teams, Been shot at a wolf but hit and wounded one of the park dogs instead. SMR, June 1939, 5; December 1939, 4.

92 The adoption of a centralized function suggested the need for an off-site work location. This had first been manifested in 1934, when the NPS was given space in the new Federal Building in Fairbanks. That arrangement apparently lasted just a few months. Then, in 1940, Been was provided a small office in Anchorage shortly after its Federal Building was completed. That office remained until early 1942, when it was turned over to the Army. In late 1941, an NPS official had recommended that park headquarters be moved to "a city such as Anchorage for the winter months." NPS Director Newton Drury approved the request, but the onset of World War II prevented the move from taking place. SMR, April 1934, 5; May 1934, 2; June 1940, 3; January 1942, 1-2; R. O. Jennings to Supt. MOMC, November 27, 1941, in Collection 000-099, DENA Archives.

93 SMR, July 1939, 1; September 1939, 1-2; July 1940, 1; August 1940, 2; September 1940, 2; July 1941, 2.

94 Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 186-89; Been to Tomlinson, February 2, 1943; Been to Director NPS, February 2, 1943, in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

95 SMR, October 1939, 1, 4.

96 SMR, October 1939, 1; 76th Congress, 2nd Session, H.R. 8336 was introduced on February 6, 1940.

97 *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 22, 1940. The women's club consisted of "every woman now living in McKinley Park" and included the postmaster (Mrs. Elmer Hosler) and the wives of Fred Shumaker (Alaska R.R.), Chief Ranger Louis Corbley, and Senior Clerk Gerald Janes.

98 SMR, March 1940, 1; File #40-10 (National Park Service #1), Documents #84-92 (1933-52), RG 101, ASA. Supt. Been fired his clerk shortly after the investigators completed their work.

99 Been left for military service in January 1943, so he did not occupy the house until his return to the park in early 1947. SMR, May 1940, 3, 4; June 1940, 3; July 1940, 1-2; August 1940, 1-2; September 1940, 1, 3; April 1941, 2-3; June 1941, 3; July 1941, 3; March 1943, 1.

100 Beginning with Steve Martin, who became superintendent in October 1994, the building has alternated between housing the superintendent and hosting less-than-full-time personnel.

101 SMR, June 1940, 2, 4; July 1940, 2; July 1941, 2; August 1941, 1; October 1941, 3; July 1943, 2; June 1944, 2. A. E. Demaray to Ike P. Taylor, April 17, 1940; Supt. MOMC to Director NPS, June 5, 1941; both in File 640 (Trails), CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

102 USDI, *Budget Estimates/NPS, Fiscal Year 1966*, NPS Budget/Files Room, WASO; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 150-51; NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks; a Statistical Report, 1941-1953* (the author, ca. 1954), 1.

103 SMR, March 1942, 1; April 1942, 1; May 1942, 1; July 1942, 4.

104 SMR, March 1942, 1; July 1942, 4.

105 Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun*, 73; Brown, *A History*, 203; *Jessen's Weekly*, February 20, 1942; NPS, *Public Use of the National Parks, 1941-1953*, 2; S. B. Buckner, Jr., Headquarters Alaska Defense Command, *Public Proclamation No. 1*, April 7, 1942, in Bill Brown files, DENA Archives; Lyman L. Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest; The U.S. Army in Alaska and Western Canada, 1867-1987; Volume Two, 1918-1945* (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Society, 1997), 122-23; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 8, 1941, 1.

106 SMR, January 1942, 2; *Nome Nugget*, March 20, 1942, 4.

107 SMR, January 1941, 1-2.

108 SMR, February 1941, 1, 4. Been's response was consistent with a memo from NPS Director Drury which asked military authorities to consider "alternative plans" before using NPS areas for defense purposes. Drury to "Washington Office and all Field Offices," November 27, 1940, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

109 SMR, June 1941, 1; July 1941, 1. Been recalled that Col. Hood took a dim view of the military utilizing the existing Savage Camp facility, believing "there should be log or frame buildings in a camp adequate for 200 men. He considers tents unsatisfactory, particularly for winter use.... Because a soldier is 'roughing it' as part of his business, he is not likely to find relaxation by roughing it for a vacation. He should therefore be made comfortable so that he can loaf if he wants to." Been diary entry, August 27, 1941, in RG 09, 1936-48, DENA Archives.

110 Been to RD/R4, September 18, 1941, in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

111 Buckner to Been, September 28, 1941, in File 201, noted above. This "valley," in all likelihood, was that of Clearwater Creek or one of its feeder streams.

112 SMR, September 1941, 1; October 1941, 1; November 1941, 1. When Been visited "the foothill country south of Mt. McKinley ... the region impressed [him] favorably for recreation. ... In addition to recreation from hiking, swimming, fishing, etc., the country is well mineralized so that soldiers could become quite excited about placer mining." Been to Gruening, November 15, 1941, in "World War II/Army Rec Camp" files, Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.

113 SMR, December 1941, 3; February 1942, 1; April 1942, 2; Newton Drury to Ernest Gruening, April 2, 1942, and Buckner to Been, April 22, 1942; both in "World War II" file, Box 3, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

114 SMR, May-July 1942, 1; Barbara Washburn with Lew Freedman, *The Accidental Adventurer* (Fairbanks, Epicenter Press, 2001), 77. As noted in one contemporary article ("The Army's Expedition to Mount McKinley," *Quartermaster Review* 22 (January-February 1943), p. 29), Washburn—a veteran of ten previous Alaska expeditions—was often referred to as "knowing the mountains of Alaska perhaps better than any other person."

115 "Mt. McKinley Quartermaster Corps Expedition Tests Winter Equipment Here," *Life* 14 (March 22, 1943), 69-73; SMR, August 1942, 1-2; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 186-88, 226-27; Brown, *A History*, 191-92; Lyman Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest; Vol. Two*, 240.

116 SMR, November 1942, 2; Charles W. Porter III, ed., *National Park Service War Work, December 7, 1941 to June 30, 1944*, May 27, 1946, pp. 22-23, in "Miscellaneous Files," Box 3009H, non-central classified files, RG 79, NARA SB; *Alaska Defense Command, Special Service Bulletin* 1 (April 1943), 1, in File 504 ("Army Rec Camp"), Box 77, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB; NPS Press Release, July 4, 1943, in File 501-03 ("Newspaper Articles"), Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

117 SMR, December 1942, 2; January 1943, 2; February 1943, 1; March 1943, 2; *Jessen's Weekly*, March 12, 1943, 11.

118 SMR, April 1943, 1; *Jessen's Weekly*, April 23, 1943, 15; Drury to Supt. MOMC, February 2, 1943, in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

119 Alaska Defense Command, *Special Service Bulletin*, vol. I:1 (April 1943), 1-2, in File 504, noted above.

120 Alaska Defense Command, *Special Service Bulletin*, vol. II:8 (April 1944), in File 504, noted above; Grant H. Pearson, *A History of Mt. McKinley National Park* (n.p., NPS, 1953), 53.

121 SMR, October 1943, 2; November 1943, 1-2; December 1943, 1; March 1944, 1; April 1944, 1.

122 Pearson, *A History*, 55; SMR, February 1944, 1; Alaskan Department, *Special Service Bulletin* II (April 1944), 1; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 2, 1971, 3.

123 Pearson to Ickes, April 30, 1943, in File 504, "Publications, General," Box 1409 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

124 SMR, June 1943, 1; July 1943, 1; February 1944, 1.

125 Pearson, *A History*, 53. A total of 11,519 people visited the park for recreational purposes during World War II, including 63 in 1942; 3,674 in 1943; 5,770 in 1944; and 2,012 in 1945. The huge disparity between the total number of park visitors and the number reported in the NPS visitor use statistics—that is, the difference between *all* visitors and *unaffiliated civilian* visitors—can perhaps be explained by 1943 correspondence between Pearson and his Washington superiors, which is located in File 501-03 ("Newspaper Articles"), Box 1408 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP. Acting Director Hillory Tolson, in an August 7 memo, noted "We would like very much to use this figure" (i.e., total park visitation) "since military use of the national parks is one of the strongest justification for personnel funds, etc." But Pearson, prodded by an Alaska Defense Command censor,

had to remind his boss on July 28 that “we are in a war zone and that information as to the number of men in our armed forces within any definite area is not proper publicity material.” The under-scoring is from Pearson’s memo. By the spring of 1944, the military no longer felt the need to keep park visitation a secret (see the Alaskan Department, *Special Service Bulletin* II (April 1944), 1, which announced that “over 5,000 soldiers on furlough had checked into the palatial vacation resort ...”), but the NPS never included military visitation in its official visitor use figures.

126 SMR, May 1943, 1; June 1943, 2; July 1943, 3; December 1943, 1; July 1944, 1; March 1945, 1. Grant Pearson to RD/R4, June 30, 1943, and Pearson to RD/R4, January 21, 1944, both in File 201, noted above; *Jessen’s Weekly*, July 14, 1944, 2. In addition to Capt. Hall, recreation camp leaders included Lt. Richard Dunn and Captain Peck.

127 The “dogtrot style” two-building Upper Savage Ranger Station, which soldiers improved during this period, had been moved in 1940 from the river’s east bank to a new location, two miles to the southeast and closer to the Savage River Campground. As noted in Chapter 7, one of the two cabins is still standing at that site; the other was torn down in the mid-1960s. Jane Bryant email, July 14, 2006.

128 Pearson to Ickes, April 30, 1943, noted above; Pearson to RD/R4, June 30, 1943; Pearson to Commanding General, Alaskan Department, U.S. Army, January 17, 1944; both in File 201 (National Defense, Part 1), Box 91, CCF/MOMC, RG 79, NARA SB.

129 Pearson to RD/R4, January 21, 1944 in File 201, noted above.

130 SMR, December 1939, 3; January 1940, 2; February 1940, 1, 3; April 1940, 9. Been finally made a summertime flight over the park in June 1941 (SMR, June 1941, 1), but otherwise, the agency apparently used its Pollock Flying Service contract very infrequently.

131 SMR, November 1940, 2; March 1941, 2, 5; April 1941, 2; December 1941, 3; April 1942, 2; Been to Director NPS, March 26, 1941, in “General Entries” file, Box 1411 (MOMC), Entry 7, RG 79, NARA CP.

132 SMR, July 1943, 1; August 1943, 2; September 1943, 1; October 1943, 1.

133 SMR, November 1943, 2; April 1944, 2; August 1944, 3; January 1945, 1; February 1945, 1.

134 Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest; Vol. Three* (1945-87), 20-21.

135 SMR, January 1944, 1; February 1944, 1; March 1944, 1; Pearson, *A History*, 53.

136 L. S. Hall to Director NPS, August 26, 1944, in File 201, Part 1, noted above; Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 195; Pearson, *A History*, 54; SMR, October 1944, 2; Michael Sfraga, *Bradford Washburn: A Life of Exploration* (Corvallis, Oregon State University, 2004), 126-44.

137 Contemporary news reports noted that the crash took place on an unknown mountain between Mount Brooks and Mount Mather. Pearson, in a February 12, 1945 crash report (in File 201, Part 2, noted above), stated that “Washburn suggested the name Mt. Deception.” See Orth, *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, 262.

138 Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 190-99; SMR, November 1944, 1; Pearson, *A History*, 50-52; Sfraga, *Bradford Washburn*, 130-38; Brown, *A History*, 205-06; various memoranda, File 201 (“National Defense,” Part 1 and Part 2), Box 91, noted above. In January 1945, the Army memorialized the crash victims with a Ladd Field service, after which it flew a plane over the crash site and dropped three floral wreaths onto the snowbound landscape. Pearson was later lauded for his exemplary efforts in leading the dangerous expedition; the NPS gave him an “especially meritorious promotion” in mid-March 1945, and in April 1947, the Army awarded him a Medal of Freedom. NPS Press Release, March 15, 1945; *Inside Interior* 5 (April 1947), 3.

139 SMR, December 1944, 1; January 1945, 1; Sfraga, *Bradford Washburn*, 143.

