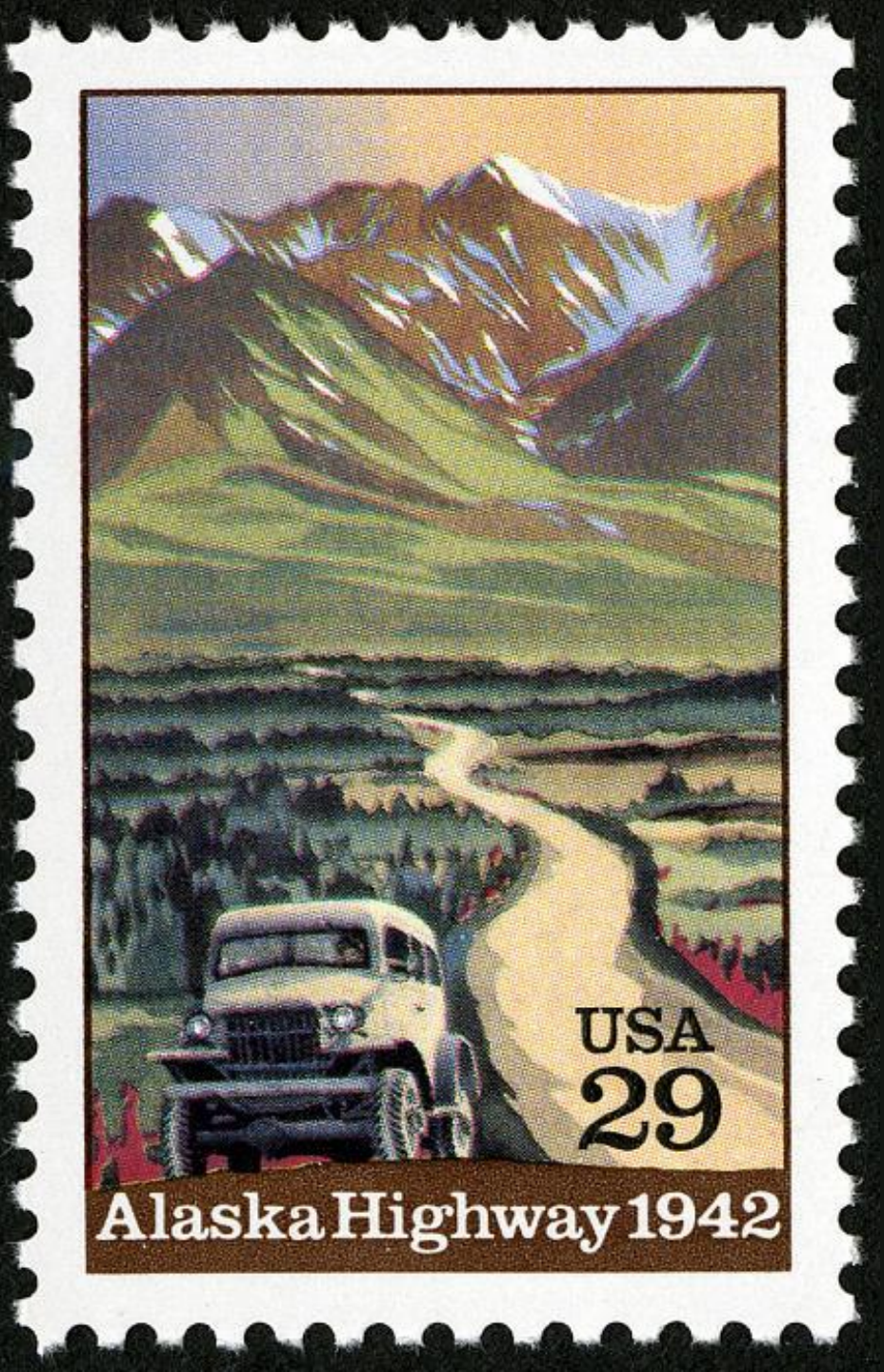


North-to-Alaska

The Alaska-Canada (ALCAN) Highway

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Part 1

America's Burma Road

Putting it Mildly

When they started building "America's Burma Road," the Army Engineers dropped from their vocabulary the word "impossible." They say, with the infinite reserve of a war communique, that it's "difficult." That's putting it mildly."

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Roderick M. Grant* entitled: "Shortcut to Tokyo"

The Edge of the Possible

"TRAVEL is at its best along the route of the new highway to Alaska when it's 30-degrees below zero and the snow trains can lay their own tracks. At a clearing in the woods one train turns off the trail to await the down-bound train like a freight on the railway siding…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**



"…Over the frozen rivers and through narrow forest lanes the Caterpillar tractors drag sled trains laden with supplies, some of them resembling a caboose on skids…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

<u>Caption</u>: "Crawling diesels haul the 'snow trains' with supplies. Usually there is a 'caboose' serving as cookshed and dormitory"



"…In summer, certain difficulties arise. Man-eating flies and mosquitoes swarm. Thaws send ice floes down the rivers and floods spill into marshy pockets. Bulldozers and scrapers crash through thickets and saplings, skim the crust off the muskeg and are swallowed-up in ooze 15-feet-deep…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

<u>Caption</u>: "Big 'Cats' like this are moving mountains of earth to pave a way to Alaska for caravans of Army supplies"



Caption: “June 8, 1942 - Sigrid Arne, Wide World News writer, climbs a roaring bulldozer to get first-hand information from U.S. Army Engineers soldiers as they work clearing away for advance road crews on the Alaska Highway at the farthest north construction point. The soldiers are Private Levi Schrock of Arthur, Illinois, left, and Private Albert Tomaino of Pittsburgh, PA. This picture, taken by Grant MacDonald, Wide World Photographer, was made at the extreme end of the road, far out in the wilderness. The mosquitoes were very bad here. Note neck cloth of Schrock and head-kerchief on Arne."



"…You might describe the country as impassable, but that word is also stricken from the vocabulary of the Corps of Engineers…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

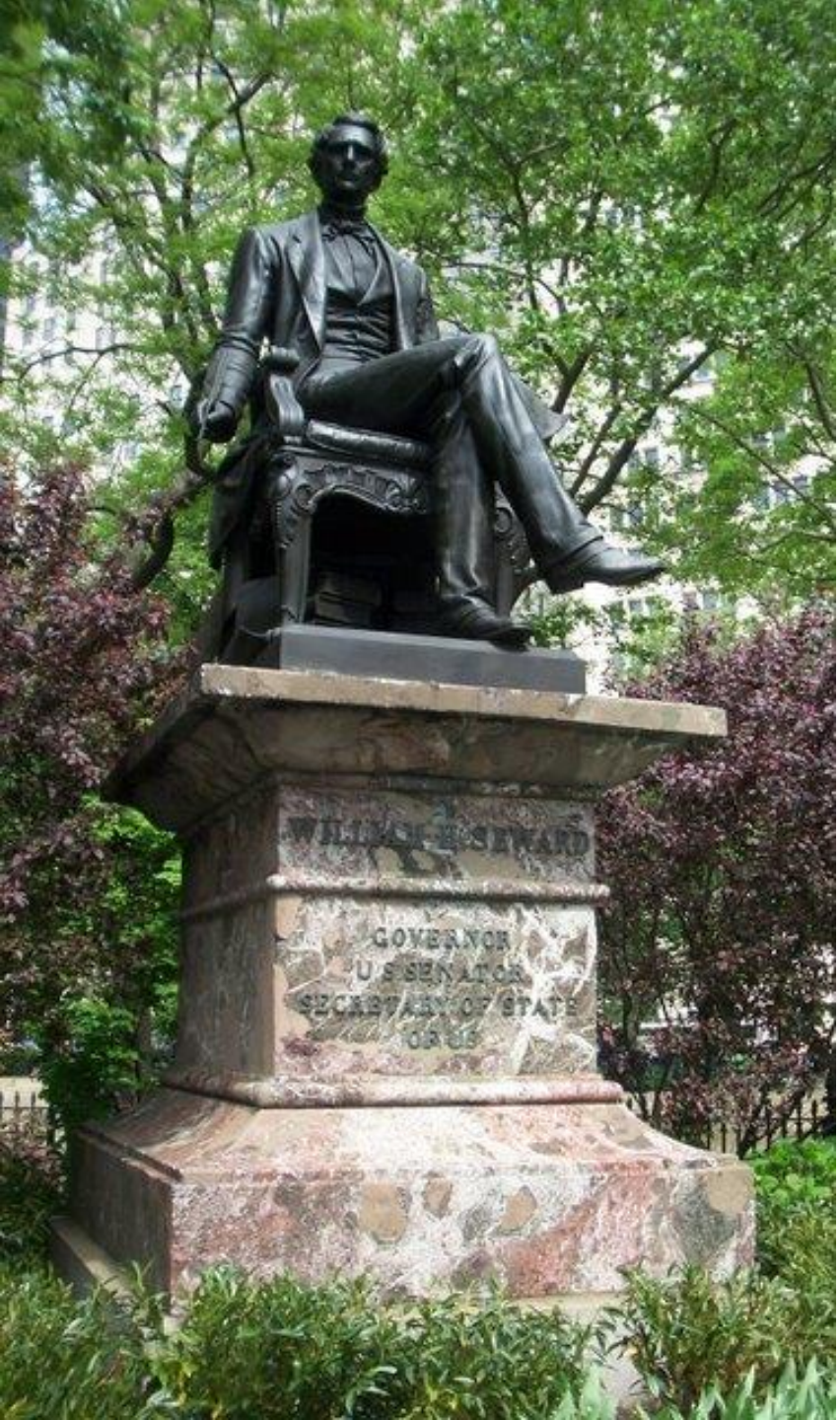
<u>Caption</u>: "A large earth mover, or 'scraper,' lies tipped on its side in the ditch during early construction of the Alcan Highway"

Shortcut to Alaska

"…The Army wants a shortcut to Alaska the worst way and it's getting it with impossible speed. A shortcut to Alaska is a shortcut to Tokyo…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

A Bargain at Any Price



"…Exactly 75 years ago, the United States bought Alaska from Russia for $7,200,000. Critics called it 'Seward's Folly,' but it was a bargain at any price…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

RE: on March 30, 1867, the U.S. purchased the rights to Alaska. Secretary of State *William H. Seward* negotiated a price of $7.2 million, or roughly 2 cents-per-acre. Some Americans disparaged the purchase and the acquisition was scorned in editorial cartoons as "Seward's Folly." Others saw the acquisition as the inevitable progress of "Manifest Destiny."

<u>Left</u>: statue of *William Sewad* in NYC park. Seward was Governor of NY from 1838-42 and Senator from 1848 until becoming Lincoln's Secretary of State in 1861.



“Seward’s Folly” Postcard

Strategically Significant

"…Alaska is the base for any thrust across the north Pacific; it flanks any attack striking at the North American coast; enemy bases in Alaska could pour streams of bombers into our cities. Take a piece of string and stretch it across your globe from the Panama Canal to Tokyo. It shows that the shortest route from the canal to Japan and Vladivostok touches the Aleutian Islands…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**



WHO HOLDS ALASKA!

"Who holds Alaska, holds the World" . . . said the late General Billy Mitchell

* * *

Alaska was ours, so we held Alaska. It was very simple through the years . . . but the tides of greed were rising in the Orient.

Far out beyond the northern wilderness we held the tempting jewel . . . in reach of others who would rule the world.

Then in a blinding flash we saw that *to have* is not the same as *to hold*. And every American knew that we must build a land route to the far northwest. A route for armies, and arms, and ammunition . . . for defense . . . *for offense!* Not at our own sweet time, but NOW!

The Alcan Highway came into being in a moment of supreme danger . . . in six months of heroic achievement. Victory Boulevard, to "the most strategic land on earth."

Alcan is a busy truck highway now, a road which trucks helped build, for truck traffic. Night and day, in the turmoil of construction, husky International Trucks bore a gigantic burden, hauling capacity loads of rock and gravel as the highway advanced through mountains, swamplands, and timber. They helped keep vital supplies moving through wilderness. They hauled fuel, repair parts, water, a vast tonnage of mechanical equipment, and food for an army of men.

Truck maintenance is at absolute minimum on a job like the Alcan Highway, and only the toughest of trucks can take it. Once again International Trucks proved their stamina, as they are proving it, day after day, on the highways and battlefronts of the world.

INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER COMPANY
180 North Michigan Avenue • Chicago, Illinois

INTERNATIONAL

MAJOR WAR PRODUCTS BUILT BY INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER

Tanks • Half-track Military Vehicles
Torpedoes • Artillery Prime Movers
Automatic Airplane Cannon
Oerlikon Gun Mounts
Military Trucks • Military Tractors
Steel Products for Military Use
Shells • Gun Carriages
High Speed 155 m.m. Gun Carriages
Tank Transmissions
Adapter Boosters
Airplane Engine Cowling Assemblies
Trackers • Gun Loaders
Marine Corps Invasion Ice Chests
Blood Bank Refrigerators

INVEST IN AMERICA ★ ★ ★ BUY MORE WAR BONDS

★ INTERNATIONAL TRUCKS ★

"Who holds Alaska, holds the World" . . . said the late General Billy Mitchell

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Road to the Back Door

"…In the last few years we have spent ten times its original cost to begin fortifying Alaska. Now we're spending 30 or 40 million dollars to build a road to the back door…"
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

Highway Follows Airway



"…It will be a road like no other; here, for the first time, highway follows airway…"

Popular Mechanics,

September 1942

"TAMING THE WILD"

THE last frontier of the vast Northlands has been opened. Civilization and Man's ingenuity are spreading their wings to the far reaches of these rugged lands of Canada and Alaska. The Wild is being tamed.

The men and women of Jacobs are very proud of the part their products have played in this pioneering. For a decade, planes powered by Jacobs have been carrying men and supplies into the "Bush Country," helping to open it. The Alcan Highway—that great achievement of modern engineering and human energy—has recently been completed, and Jacobs-powered planes carried in much of the equipment and supplies for its construction.

Today, military needs swallow all aircraft production, and Jacobs' output, multiplied many times, is powering the majority of the Bomber Pilot Trainers of the huge U. S. Army Air Forces' training program and Canada's Commonwealth Air Training Plan. After Victory is won, however, airplanes will make the rich resources of the Northwest available for the civilized progress of the World, and Jacobs Engines, with new efficiency and new economy, will be ready to blaze the way.

The Trail of the Caribou

"…It was only yesterday that caribou trails alone crossed this British Columbia wilderness. The Indians followed the caribou fur traders and trappers followed the Indians…"
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

Indians Puzzled By Rush on Road

Edmonton Journal - March 20, 1942
by Don Menzies
(*Edmonton Journal* Staff Reporter)

DAWSON CREEK, B.C., March 20 - Indians who have spent all their lives in northern British Columbia think the white man must be crazy. All they can say is a disgusted “ugh ugh,” added to the usual “ugh.”

The white men are racing against time to take supplies for building the Alaska Highway into Fort Nelson from this end of steel town. In army transports and trucks, the white men are moving along the winter trail night and day, bouncing over frozen muskegs, racing across rivers and sliding down slopes in an attempt to get all supplies to the northern point before the spring break-up.

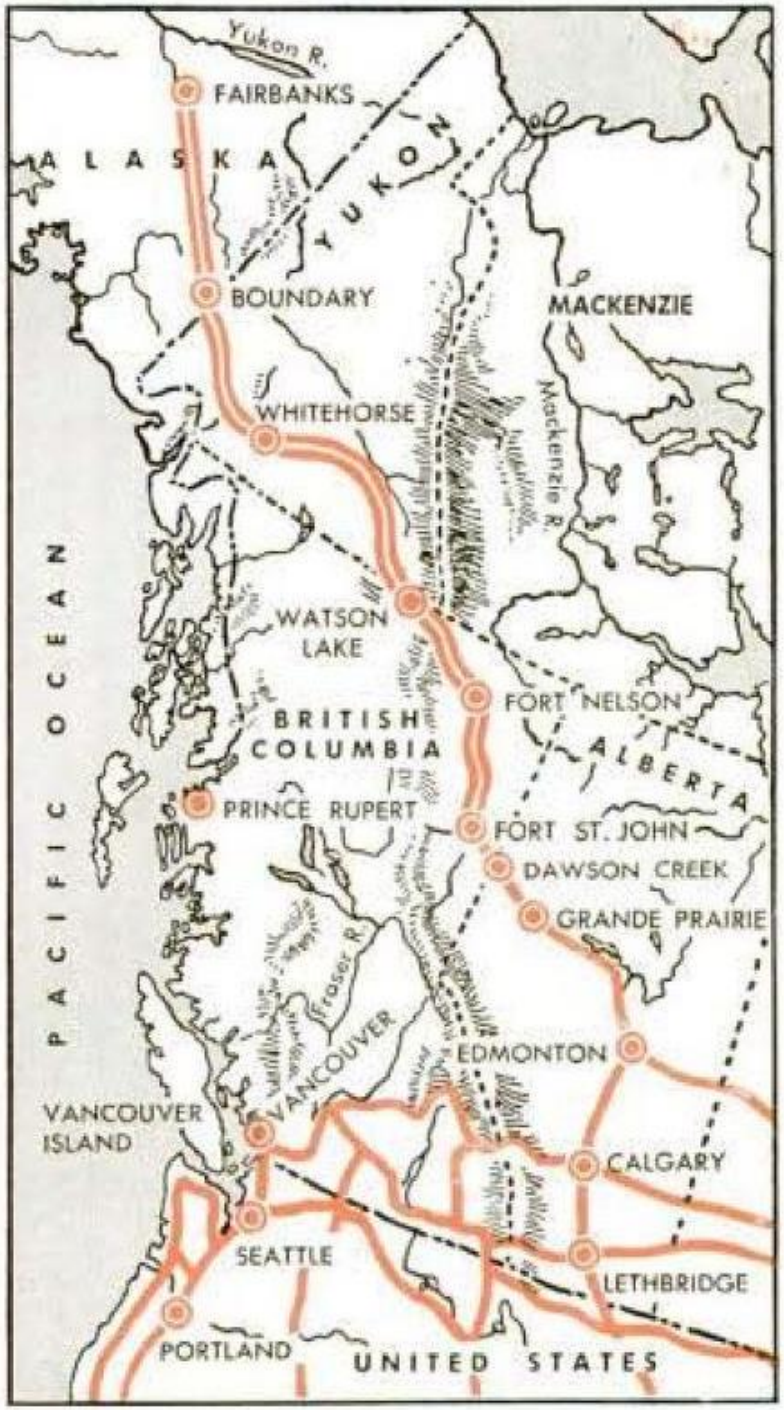
Slavey and Beaver Indians who never before saw a truck are amazed.

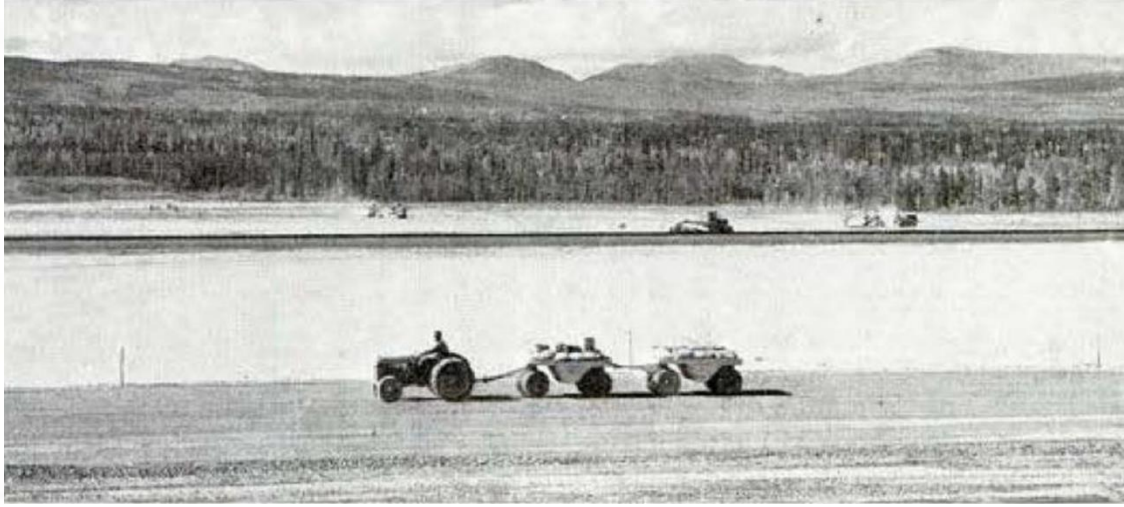
One of the Chiefs in the Fort Nelson district came upon a Caterpillar tractor bulldozing its way through rough terrain. Later, telling the story of meeting that monstrous machine, the Chief said: “I thought it was the old devil himself, knocking down trees and digging in the earth.”

Even-tempered and philosophical, the Indians can’t quite grasp what it’s all about. They understand a road must be built but they can’t understand why everybody is in such a hurry.

When told about the war and Hitler’s plans for conquest, one said: “What’s he want all that land for? Won’t do him no good. He sure die some day.”

Air-Field Anchors





"…Only last year Canada completed a chain of air-bases from Edmonton, Alta. - jumping-off place for the radium and gold mines, the oil fields and trap lines of the north country - to Fairbanks, Alaska. Those air-fields are the anchors of the new highway…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

<u>Above</u>: caption: "Not much more than a year ago this broad expense of smoolh air-field was carved-out of a wilderness of Evergreen Forest"

<u>Left</u>; caption: "Double lines on mop mark the new highway, which follows the chain of airports Canada built last year"

The Road to Fairbanks

"…A full week before Canada and the United States actually agreed formally to the terms of the project, a 26-car trainload of troops from the States with jeeps and trucks, road machinery released from CCC camps, field kitchens and tents reached rail-end at Dawson Creek, B.C., and overnight the hamlet of one hotel, two stores and a cluster of houses, became the booming base of the road to Fairbanks…"
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

Fairbanks or Bust



"…Thirty miles north of Dawson Creek is Fort St. John, starting point of a winter road to Fort Nelson. Once the spring thaw set in it would be a quagmire and the hundreds of American soldiers began the struggle in early March to push a fleet of ten-wheel trucks and gasoline trailers and road machinery up to Fort Nelson while ice still paved the trail…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

Caption: "A soldier standing beside a wooden sign proclaiming the location of the beginning of construction of a section of the Alcan Highway. A smaller sign to the right shows 0.0, assumed to be the beginning mileage."



"…From Fort Nelson, bush country guides with dog teams led Army reconnaissance units on to survey the route to Watson Lake, site of another air-field, and westward across the Continental Divide – north-end of the Rockies - into Whitehorse in the Yukon. From there the road strikes northwestward to the Boundary airport and thence to its terminal at Fairbanks, Alaska…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

<u>Caption</u>: "Dog sleds, tractors, jeeps and airplanes oil do their part in hauling men and supplies. Here a dog team skirts an airport."





<u>Above</u>: caption: "The ubiquitous jeep pauses at 'Broadway and 42nd Street' in a winter camp of the Army Engineers on the sh-ortcut to Tokyo"

<u>Left</u>: caption: "Somewhere in the winter-bound wilderness a big shovel gets a lift from a tra-ctor"

Now and Again



"…Along those bleak miles the Engineers step now and again - upon the trail of the prospectors who fought their way here in the Klondike Gold Rush. At Watson Lake a band of 50 luckless gold hunters reached the end of their trail in 1898 and died of starvation and disease…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

<u>Above</u>: some of the prospectors who made the perilous and arduous journey to the Klondike's gold fields. This included surviving a long journey on foot, escaping being robbed or killed, contending the 1.1-km-high route through the Chilkoot Pass and finally 600-km of raging river to get into Dawson City.


SCALES AND SUMMIT OF CHILKOOT PASS

A Problem for Every Mile



"…It's 1,200 miles from Edmonton to Fairbanks and there's a problem for every mile…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

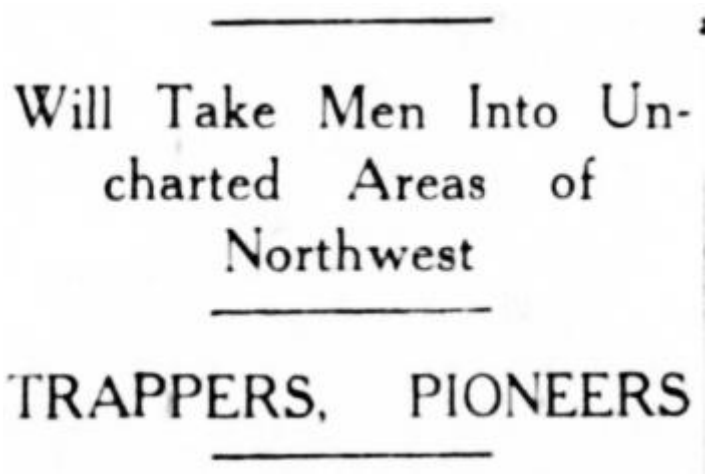
<u>Caption</u>: "A Caterpillar tractor is mired in mud as it was clearing evergreen trees from the highway right-of-way. Heavy spruce forest is behind the tractor and the forest continues over hills in the background."

Problem Solving

"…After the political problem, settled by the agreement that the United States would build and maintain the road during the war and turn it over to Canada when peace returns, there came the topographical problem. The Surveyors are settling that…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

4 Brothers Lead Americans In Alaska Road Route Quest



Edmonton Journal - March 20, 1942

by Don Menzies
(*Edmonton Journal* Staff Reporter)

DAWSON CREEK, B.C., March 20. - When the saga of the Alaska Highway is written, four brothers, all trappers, traders and ranchers, will figure prominently.

The brothers will take U.S. Engineer units by dog team into the uncharted areas between Fort St. John and Fort Nelson, and Fort Nelson and Watson Lake, to blaze the trail which eventually will become the North American continents most vital road.

They are Elisha, John, Dennis and Lynch Collison, who operate a ranch north of Fort St. John and trading posts in the north, including Fort Nelson.

These brothers have traveled over vast areas in the north by dog team and pack horse and have an excellent knowledge of Indian trails. They even have blazed trails themselves.

The brothers will take American survey parties into areas which will be selected from reconnaissance planes as logical routes for the highway. The survey parties will study ground conditions, return and make their findings known, then start out to blaze the Alaska Highway.

Ten Surveyors of the Federal Works Agency, Public Roads Administration, at Denver, arrived late Thursday by truck. They are charged with plotting the exact course the highway will follow.

The Surveyors, all civilians, drove here in light panel trucks and intend to go through to Fort Nelson before starting their task. Few passenger cars have negotiated the difficult road from Fort St. John to Fort Nelson and truck drivers here say the men will have a tough time getting through.

The Surveyors will travel by dog team and pack horse both north and south of Fort Nelson in making surveys over the terrain to be followed by the road.

They stopped over in Edmonton for a “break” in the long drive from Denver. The men will be under the direction of C.F. Capes, Civilian Engineer from Washington.



Mr. Capes was in Fort St. John Thursday conferring with Army Officers. He and other high Army Officers recently traveled with H.P. Keith, District Airways Engineer for the Dept. of Transport, over the winter road from Fort St. John to Fort Nelson.

Caption: “These pictures were taken at Fort Nelson, furthest point in which American troops have traveled in their preparations to build the road to Alaska. The top picture shows a copy of THE JOURNAL being delivered by THE JOURNAL’S Thomas Moprfitt to Garnett Harold, who said his dog team was passing the airport when Morfitt handed him a paper. In that edition was a story detailing plans for the road construction. Below, other residents read the papers.”

Ready For Defence

U.S. Engineer forces working on the highway are to be equipped with some defence arms as a precaution against attack from the air. Truck drivers and others have been schooled in plans for dispersal should an attack ever come and each has been assigned a specific duty. Practical training in this phase of defence was taught the soldiers during manoeuvres in the U.S. last fall.

Because the U.S. sees fit to arm its forces against possible attack, observers here point-out that the Canadian government should “take-the-tip” and station forces of soldiers at the vital airports stretching from Edmonton to the Yukon.

“Canadian soldiers should be ready to protect this chain of bases in their own country,” one citizen said.

Just how well-equipped these U.S. forces will be, of course, is a military secret.

American officers in-charge of construction work have established headquarters in a building in “downtown” Fort St. John.

Headquarters for the Quartermasters units has been established in Dawson Creek and until the recent arrival of more Engineer troops preliminary work was done there by Engineer Officers.

Have Medical Units

Completely self-contained, the Engineer troops, which are under canvas at Fort St. John and Fort Nelson, have their own medical units and skilled technical staff. Quartermaster troops are to be stationed with the Engineers ensuring delivery of supplies from railhead to camp.

Caterpillar tractors pulling heavy road-building equipment continued the rest of the way from Dawson Creek to Fort St. John on Thursday. The tractor train started from railhead Wednesday but encountered difficulty crossing the Cutbank River where the bridge was found to be too weak to carry some of the heavy pieces.

The tractors crossed the wide Peace River on planks, placed there last week by advance Engineer units, to help prevent melting and chuck holes. All of the roadbuilding equipment and necessary supplies for the troops must cross that river before the spring break-up. Soldiers worked on the ice all day, testing its strength and depth with long picks.

When the thaw comes, it will not be possible to cross the turbulent river by ferry for at least two weeks; a long time for an army of men charged with completing a task in a hurry.

Ruts in Roads

Heavy Army vehicles are working day and night transporting tons of supplies across the Peace from Dawson Creek to Fort St. John. The six-wheel-drive vehicles equipped with lugged tires and chains have chewed the slushy road into deep ruts.

American Army scrapers are busy on the road, filling-in the ruts as quickly as possible so as to keep the highway in shape until the last vehicle completes its trip.

Road equipment will start north for Fort Nelson as soon as it has been assembled and made ready at the Fort St. John camp, which is a beehive of activity.

Dozens of tents have been pitched and the lanes between them covered with sawdust and straw. In the wide lane between two sections of the camp, trucks are lined-up in perfect order. They are getting ready to make the 250-mile journey to Fort Nelson. Many trucks loaded with supplies already have arrived at the far north camp.

Pussy Willows are a common sight, but not a too happy one for officers in charge. They are a sure sign, northerners say, of an early spring. These trucks and tractors must cross nearly 100 miles of muskeg to reach Fort Nelson. As soon as the thaw comes muskeg and rivers will be impassable.

Two master mechanics from a U.S. firm manufacturing Caterpillar tractors are going along with the troops. These mechanics will help to iron-out wrinkles encountered by the soldiers who drive the “land battleships.”

Sixteen Army radio operators will establish stations from Fort Nelson to Fairbanks. Their job will be to keep the forces informed of weather conditions and other necessary information.

Very Hush-Hush

Make Alaska Road "Hush-Hush" Job

Edmonton Journal - March 20, 1942
by Robert Elson
(Special Correspondent of the *Edmonton Journal* and *Associated Southem Newspapers*)

WASHINGTON, March 20. - A policy of silence on all details of construction will make the Alaska Highway very much of a "hush-hush" project so far as the U.S. Public Roads Administration is concerned.

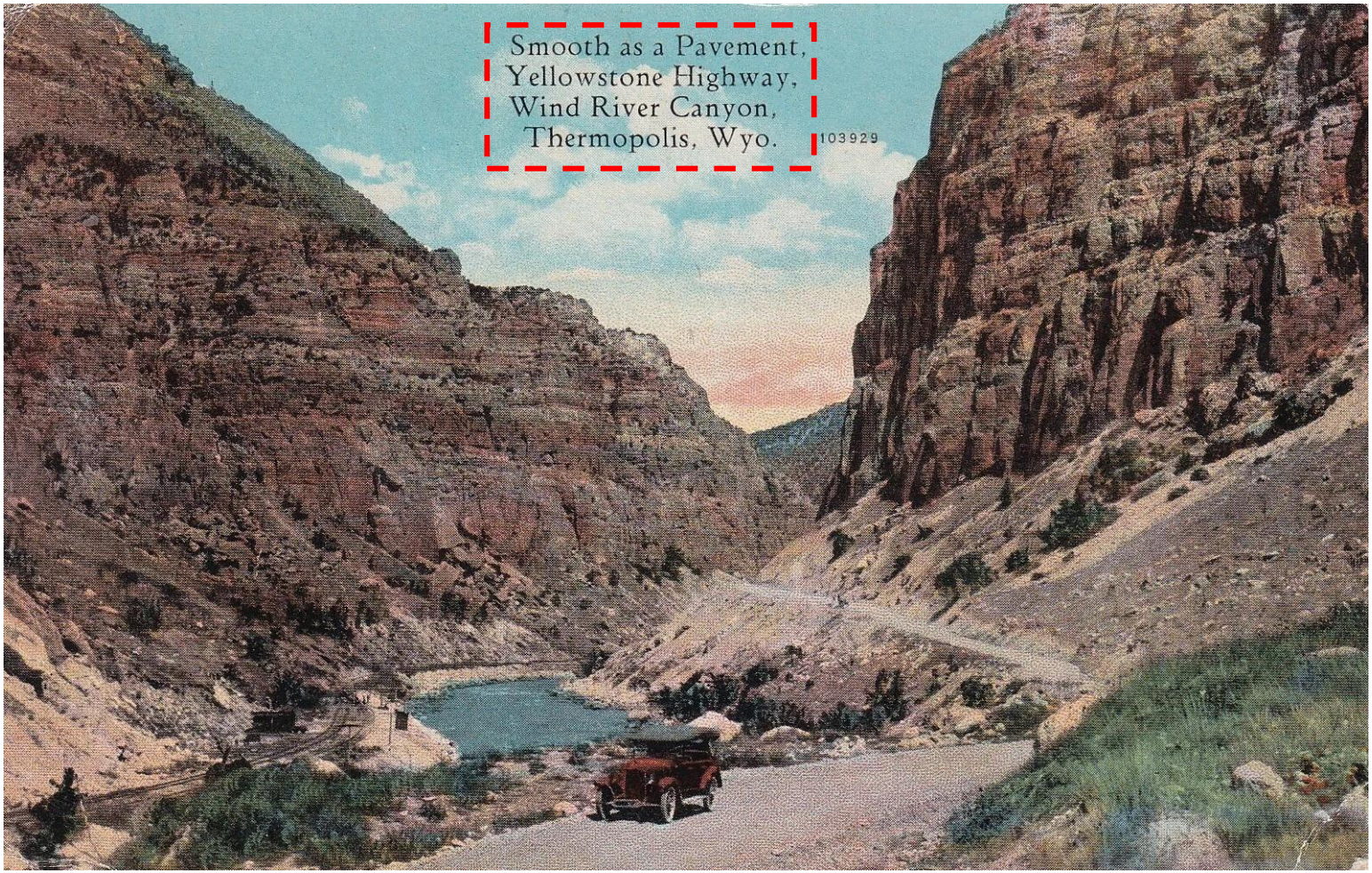
By terms of the exchange of notes, under which the road will be built, this agency will supervise construction of the permanent 24-foot gravel surfaced road that will link Alaska and Canada.

Information Officials of the Administration say they cannot discuss construction plans or policies because "of its strategic importance." They add Canadian authorities have been asked to adopt a similar policy.

Indications are, however, the road will be built directly under the supervision of the Administration's Engineers. The U.S. Army Engineer Corps already announced civilian construction of permanent right-of-way is expected to follow immediately on heels of development of the nine-foot pioneer survey road.

In the continental U.S. the Public Road Administration does not build the so-called "Federal Highways," in which the Federal Government grant-in-aid matches dollar-for-dollar State Highway votes and appropriations. But the Administration's Engineers carefully supervise the letting of contracts and all details are carefully scrutinized. In the national parks, however, the Administration builds highways directly under the supervision of its Engineers and lets contracts on its own account.

Its Engineers have built the wonderful roads in the Yellowstone and Yosemite national parks, which are models of good Highway Engineering.


Smooth as a Pavement,
Yellowstone Highway,
Wind River Canyon,
Thermopolis, Wyo.
103929

Men who handled these projects are available for the Alaska Highway. The U.S. Public Roads Administration has often been characterized here as one of the most efficient agencies of the federal government and the federal highway system here is the envy of the world.

Meanwhile in congress the Washington State delegation has been receiving representations from the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and other public bodies on the west coast asking them to press for the construction of the link between Dawson Creek and Prince George to provide an outlet to the coast.

Delegate Anthony F. Dimond, Alaska, and Congressman Henry Martin Jackson, Everett, Wash., have already said they were “definitely in favor” of such a connection. Dimond was originally very critical of the choice of route but acknowledges military considerations must dominate. He says: “In Alaska we are not inclined to look a gift horse in the mouth.”

Officially the proposal to connect Dawson Creek and Prince George has not yet been brought to the attention of the War Department.

Pioneer Road



"…Next, the job of getting men and supplies in. A pioneer road had to be surveyed and built to keep the truckloads of material flowing north…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

<u>Caption</u>: "The Corps of Engineers built this trestle on the pioneer road that precedes the permanent highway"

Studebaker Trains

The South Bend Tribune.

SOUTH BEND, INDIANA, FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 8, 1943.

Studebaker 'Trains' Run to Alaska.

Studebaker trucks, built in South Bend for the army, are maintaining round-the-clock schedules in moving vast quantities of food, fuel and other supplies northward over the recently completed Alaska Highway. Although the highway is unpaved and army drivers have to wear masks for protection against dust, construction engineers have reduced the sharpest grades, blocked slides, filled-in depressions and built four steel bridges. Convoys of Studebaker trucks now can travel the 1,000 miles between Dawson Creek and Whitehorse in 72 hours. A camera crew that spent several weeks in the territory reports that the army has worked-out a routine whereby each driver works 100 miles in one direction, sleeps for six hours at a control station and then takes over a truck going in the opposite direction.

Trucks Carry Fuel and Food To Far North

The South Bend Tribune - October 8, 1943

Convoys of Studebaker trucks, their drivers helmeted and masked against thick, rising curtains of dust, now maintain round-the-clock schedules over the Alaska Highway.

According to word brought back by a camera crew that spent several weeks in the territory, vast quantities of food, fuel and other vitally needed supplies are moving at a fast clip through the scenic wonderland that in the postwar period is expected to become a magnet for American tourists.

The highway, reported the crew, is still unpaved and rugged in spots but engineers have accomplished a miracle in cutting across sections that were wilderness only 10 months ago.



STUDEBAKER TRUCKS CLIMB 'SUICIDE HILL' AND OTHERS LIKE IT EVERY DAY ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY.



A TRUCK CONVOY SPEEDING NORTH WITH SUPPLIES.



PROTECTION FROM DUST.

Steel Bridges

Four magnificent steel bridges, a notable one spanning the Peace river, have been completed, thus eliminating loss of valuable time in ferrying. Sharp grades have been reduced, slides blocked, depressions filled in, and millions of tons of earth moved to improve both the speed of transportation and the safety of driving.

A few strips still present tough going and repair and construction gangs are working feverishly to prepare the roadbed for the constantly increasing load of traffic.

Despite the handicaps and hazards, military drivers push the convoys of 10 or more Studebakers through in remarkably short time. The 1,000-mile stretch between Dawson Creek and Whitehorse is covered in 72 hours.

Driving calls for skill and concentration even though the government has endeavored to build as ‘foolproof’ a roadway as possible. Occasional signs like “Suicide Hill” jolt the driver’s attention.

100-Mile Trips

As a general routine, drivers work 100 miles one-way, curl-up in sleeping bags at a control point for six-hour catnaps, then are ready to take over a convoy assignment in the opposite direction. They consider their jobs as difficult as any dealt-out by the army to its drivers but few would change. Sparkling clear air, inspiring vistas and a fellowship born of pioneering and common problems offer recompense for lonely hours of travel.

Army officers, meantime, keep close tab on these rubber-tired flocks. A dispatch board at Dawson Creek posts the exact location of each truck and its destination. Evenly spaced service stations furnish gasoline and oil for the vehicles.

Studebaker trucks oh the Alaska Highway are some of the 10s of thousands the factory here has shipped to combat and defense sectors. The first vehicles engineered to Army specifications in the current war, production began in mid-1941. Four and 6-wheel-drives are provided.



Arctic cold on the Alcan highway doesn't faze these big Studebaker trucks

HUNDREDS upon hundreds of huge, multiple-drive Studebaker trucks are rumbling over the wild, rugged route of the great new 1610-mile Alaska-Canada highway. More of these big Studebakers are in service on this amazing military road than any other make of truck. And despite temperatures that often drop far below zero, Studebaker stamina is getting the cargoes of vital supplies through to our important North Pacific theater of war.

Tens of thousands of multiple-drive Studebaker military trucks are in service on the supply lines and at the fighting fronts of the United Nations all over the world. And tens of thousands more are on the way.

Studebaker engineering and craftsmanship provide Studebaker trucks in wartime with the same stand-out superiorities for which they were so widely recognized in peacetime. Through generation after generation, for more than 91 years, the men of Studebaker have made it their habit to "give more than they promise." And that is still their watchword in the manufacture of big, multiple-drive military trucks, Wright Cyclone engines for the Boeing Flying Fortress and all the other vital war matériel which they are producing now.

BUY U.S. WAR BONDS



Studebaker builds Wright Cyclone engines for the famous Boeing Flying Fortress, big multiple-drive military trucks for the United Nations, as well as much other war matériel.

HUNDREDS upon hundreds of huge, multiple-drive Studebaker trucks are rumbling over the wild, rugged route of the great new 1610-mile Alaska-Canada highway. More of these big Studebakers are in service on this amazing military road than any other make of truck. And despite temperatures that often drop far below zero, Studebaker stamina is getting the cargoes of vital supplies through to our important North Pacific theater of war.

Tens of thousands of multiple-drive Studebaker military trucks are in service on the supply lines and at the fighting fronts of the United Nations all over the world. And tens of thousands more are on the way.

Studebaker engineering and craftsmanship provide Studebaker trucks in wartime with the same stand-out superiorities for which they were so widely recognized in peacetime. Through generation after generation, for more than 91 years, the men of Studebaker have made it their habit to "give more than they promise." And that is still their watchword in the manufacture of big, multiple-drive military trucks, Wright Cyclone engines for the Boeing Flying Fortress and all the other vital war matériel which they are producing now.



<u>Above</u>: this Studebaker US-6 heavy duty 2-1/2-ton 6x6 truck in on display at Delta Junction; the end of the Alaska Highway

Bridge of Planks



"…Over the Peace River and other water barriers a 'bridge' of planks was laid to help support the heavy loads of equipment crossing on the ice before the spring break-up. Sawdust spread on the ice under the planks helped delay the thaw…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

<u>Caption</u>: "U.S. Army men lay plunks across a frozen river in northwest Canada to help support the load of road-building material rushing north before the ice thaws"

Quick and Dirty

"…When the ice did break, there would be a pause of several weeks before the river cleared enough to re-establish the flow of transportation by ferries and pontoon bridges…"
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**



Caption: "Pontoon bridge beside timber bridge being constructed with pile driver, 1942. Pontoon bridges were 'quick and dirty' structures that allowed equipment and men to cross rivers before timber bridges could be built.."

150 Days

"…Until a surface is laid over the bottomless muskeg, the Engineers at Fort Nelson will be isolated from the outside world for 150 days of the year, with airplanes the only means of bringing in food and equipment. At some work stations along the road, cableways have been slung from lakes to hilltops to carry pipes for the camp water supply…."

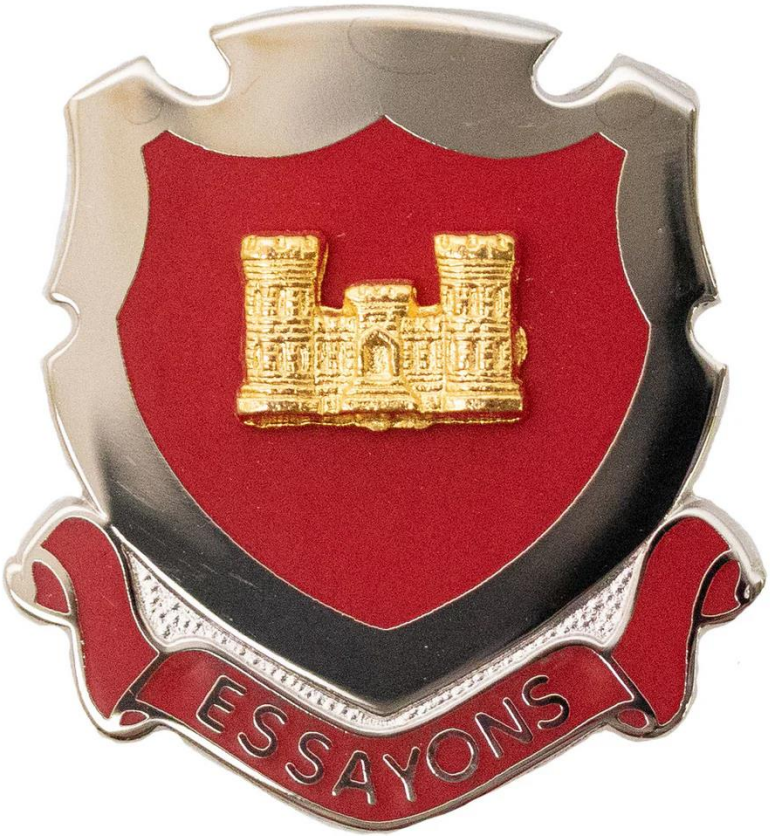
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

Essayons

"…Even in the well-paved United States there are places where sinkholes continually undermine the highways. Bridging those hundreds of miles of quicksand and granite and muskeg in the wildest part of America is a Paul Bunyan task no one but the Corps of Engineers would undertake…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

RE: the motto of the *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (USACE) is "Essayons," a French word meaning "Let us try." The motto is an homage to the French Engineers who assisted the fledgling United States during the Revolutionary War. *Essayons* emphasizes a collective effort to succeed where others have failed. It signifies a commitment to bringing all skills and resources to-bear on a difficult task. The motto reflects the Corps' spirit of innovation, problem-solving and confidence in overcoming challenges. The phrase is found on the Corps' command unit crest and other official insignia.


ESSAYONS



The Army's rolling to Alaska... on the road that *"couldn't be built"*

Man had never set foot on much of the wild frontier territory through which Army Engineers and contractors have punched their way to build the Alaska Highway . . . the most important military project since the Panama Canal.

Mountains stood in the way . . . their very grades hidden beneath the camouflage of forests never before penetrated. So did hundreds of bleak miles of muskeg, black mud and sub-arctic ooze deep enough to swallow huge motor trucks and leave no trace of where they had stood.

Indomitable men and machines . . . many of them White trucks . . . slashed their way through, *and in record time.* Vital projects of this kind dramatize the wartime importance of motor trucks.

But your truck, too, is important because *it cannot be replaced.* To conserve its life is your patriotic duty.

Investigate now the White Cooperative Plan of Truck Conservation—a definite method prolonging truck life and saving critical materials. It provides all the facilities to enable you to fulfill the conservation pledge which the Office of Defense Transportation has asked every truck owner to sign.

THE WHITE MOTOR COMPANY, Cleveland

Builders of U. S. Army Tank Destroyers, Scout Cars, Half-Tracs, Prime Movers and Cargo Trucks, the complete line of Super Power Trucks and Tractors, City and Inter-City Coaches, Safety School Busses and the Famous *White Horse.*

White

FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS THE GREATEST NAME IN TRUCKS

Man had never set foot on much of the wild frontier territory through which Army Engineers and contractors have punched their way to build the Alaska Highway . . . the most important military project since the Panama Canal.

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Left: 1943 magazine advertisement for White trucks featuring the "road that couldn't be built"

A Never-Ending Job



"…Once the crust of that sponge-like muskeg is broken, it won't even support a man. For a beginning, they're laying mats or building trestles over the bog to keep the supply convoys above ground…."
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**



<u>Above</u>: road building on northern terrain was new to the Army Engineers who discovered that, when they removed the ground cover, the permafrost below would melt and sink the road and machinery. They then changed the construction method to covering-over the exposed road base with fill, before thawing could start. Although plans were to build the route 36-feet-wide, it was actually only 12 to 18-feet-wide.



Roadbuilding through the northern bush



"…One of the first photographs to come back from the scene of operations showed one truck hoisting back to the rocky road another that had gone over the shoulder - reminiscent of the Burma Road…"
***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**



<u>Above</u>: opened on Jan. 10, 1939, the 716-mile-long road linking Kunming, in China, and Lashio, in Myanmar's Shan State, took some 300K workers around 19 months to build. Thousands of tons of military equipment was transported by rail from Yangon Port to Lashio and then conveyed to Chongqing, in China. It was built while Myanmar was a British colony to convey military supplies from Great Britain and the U.S. to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government of China, which was at war with invading Japanese forces.



Caption: "The Burma Road was a 716-mile-long narrow highway stretching from Lashio, in eastern Burma (now Myanmar) to Kunming, in Yunnan Province, China. It was built by Chinese and Burmese laborers from 1937–1938."

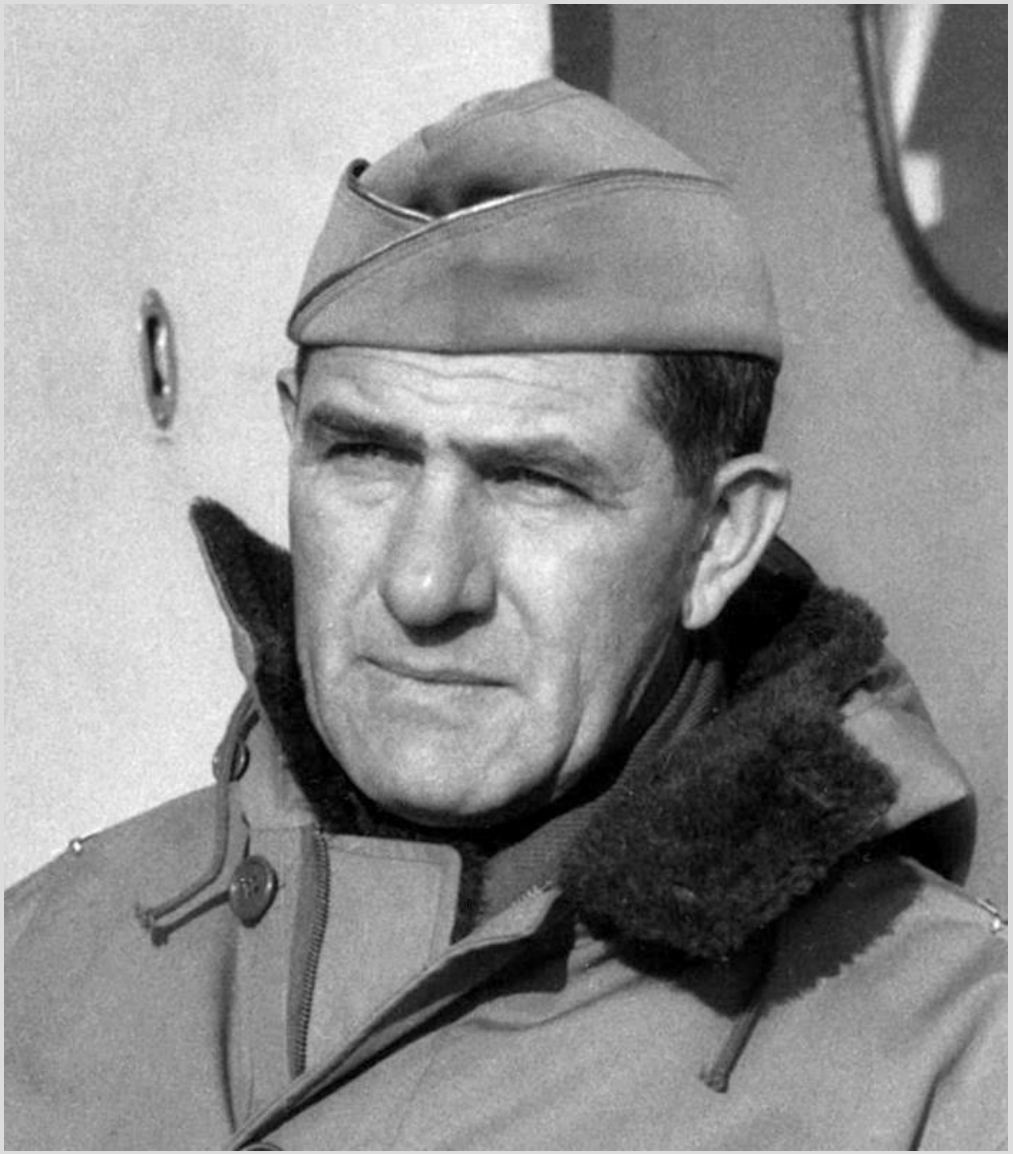
The Chosen *Man*

“…And who is a chosen man, that I may appoint…”
Jeremiah 50:44-46

"…They picked a he-man to handle this job – Col. William Morris Hoge, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In the World War he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bridging the Meuse under shell fire. They have given him a year and 30,000 men to do the job…"

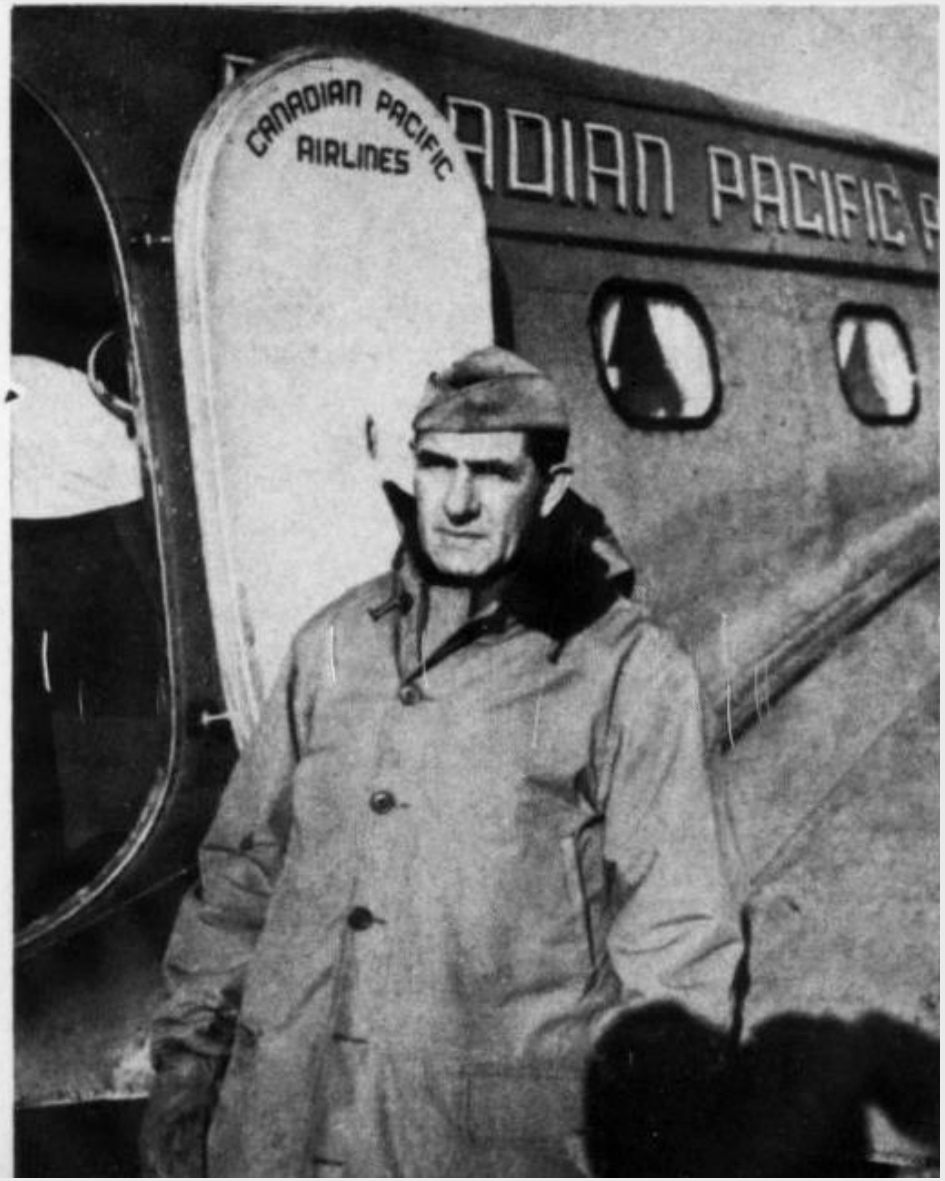
***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

RE: during WWI, Hoge received the Distinguished Service Cross personally from General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the *American Expeditionary Forces* (AEF) for heroic action under fire as a Battalion Commander during the Meuse-Argonne offensive. He was also awarded the Silver Star "for gallantry in action." During the interwar years, Hoge graduated from MIT and from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Hoge directed the construction of the 1,519-mile (2,450 km) ALCAN Highway in just nine months (February ~ May 1942). During the war in Europe, he commanded the *Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group* attached directly to V Corps which oversaw the assault on Omaha Beach on D-Day. By war's end, he was Commanding General of the famous 4th Armored Division. Hoge was promoted to Major General in May 1945; Lieutenant General in June 1951 and full General in October 1953. He died suddenly on Oct. 29, 1979, at Munson Army Hospital, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.



Brigadier General William H. Hoge directing the construction of the ALCAN Highway in 1942

Brig.-Gen. Wm. M. Hoge, director of the project in its early stages before leaving on another big war assignment.



The Chosen *Men*



Thomas H. MacDonald, commissioner, and J. S. Bright, engineer in charge for Public Roads Administration, ready to inspect the project.



Maj.-Gen. Eugene Reybold, Chief of Engineers, heads the army roadbuilders.



Assistant Chief of Engineers, Brig.-Gen. C. L. Sturdevant in charge of all engineer troops visits the highway.

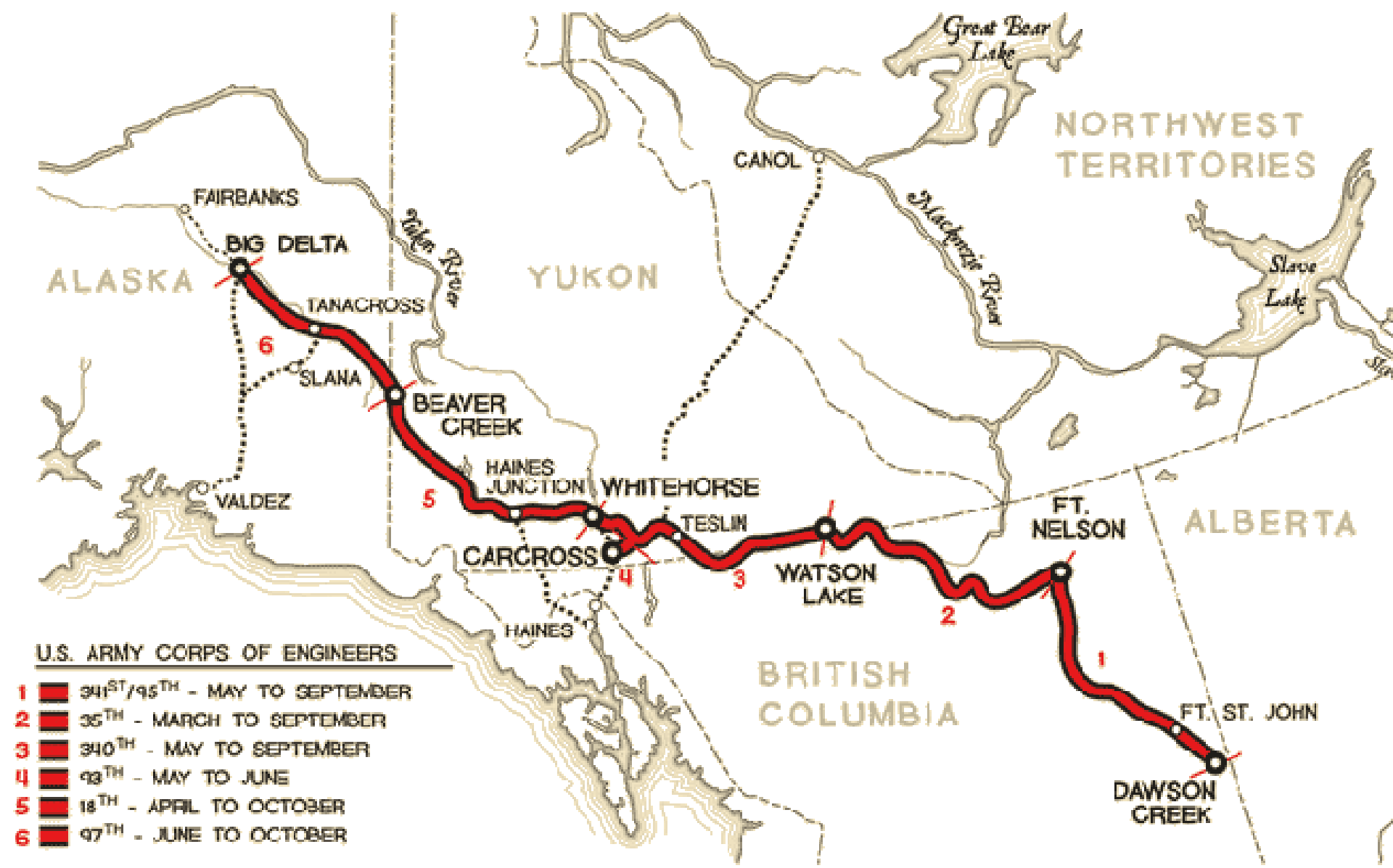


Brig.-Gen. James A. O'Connor, head of the Northwest Service Command and boss of the road.



Alaska's Governor Ernest H. Gruening discusses the highway with Col. John W. Wheeler, army engineer in direct charge of building the road.

The Latest Word



"…The latest word is that a passable road will be ready by winter, the full length of the route…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

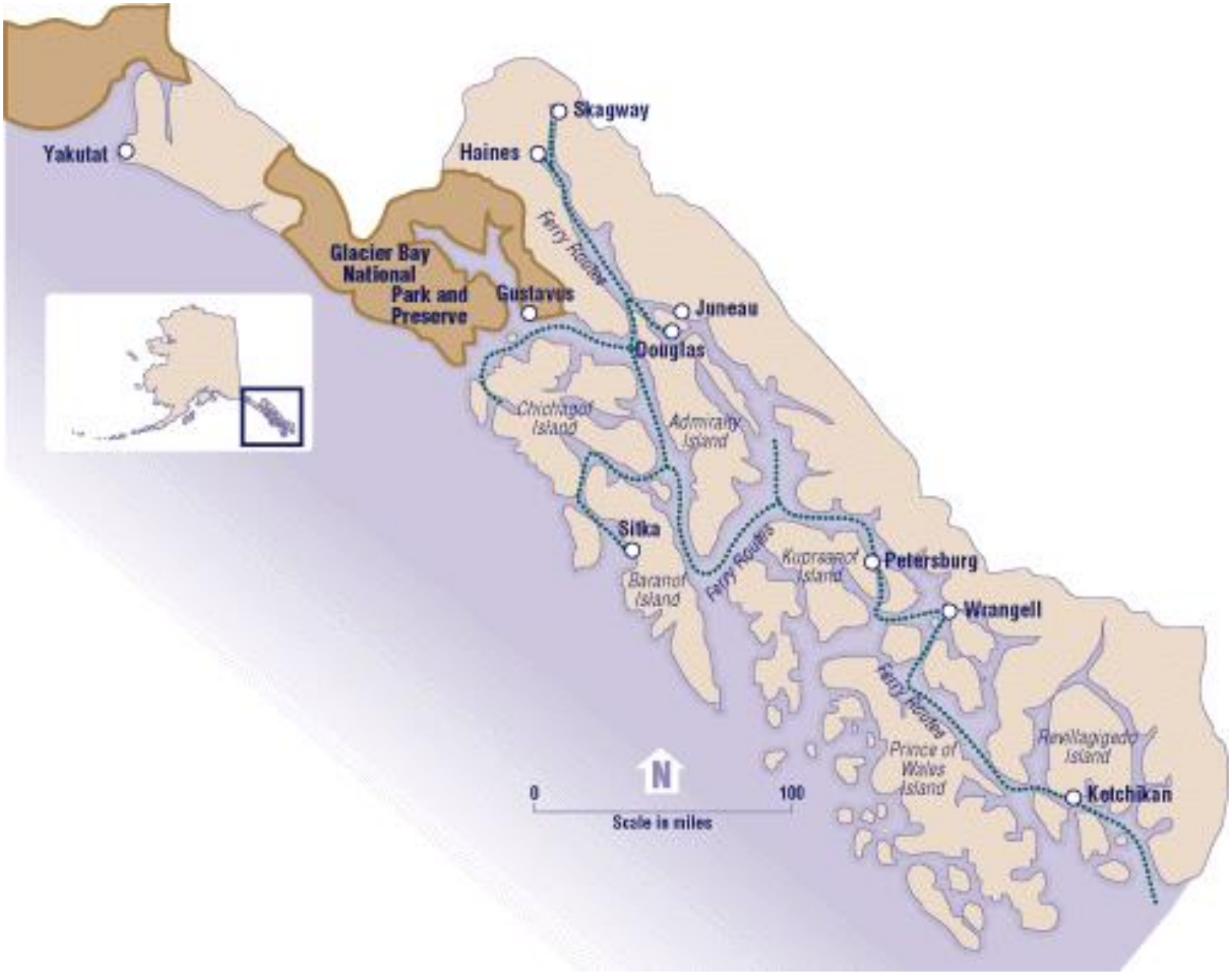
Where Others Have Dared

"…Others have attempted smaller trail-making projects in this desolation; back in 1905 the Northwest 'Mounties' superintended the construction of a wagon road from Peace River Crossing to the mountains 400 miles away. The job was abandoned after three years of work…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

Annihilating Time

"…But if Col. Hoge's Engineers annihilate time as American industry and armed forces are, there'll be troop and supply convoys rolling overland to Alaska on a permanent! 24~foot rock-topped highway in less than a year. Then reinforcements will reach our northwestern bastion in three-to-four days instead of the eight days by steamer up the Inside Passage…"
***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**



A map of the Alaskan portion of the Inside Passage

A Vast Storehouse

"…Military considerations are paramount at the moment. But after the war, what vistas of commercial developments the highway opens! The lands northwest are unopened treasure chests of precious ores. Not far from Fort Nelson there are oil fields…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

States-to-Alaska Highway Seen as Postwar Project

The Dispatch (Moline, Illinois) - Jan. 21, 1942
by William A. Baker, Jr.
Central Press Writer

Washington - With Japanese vessels reported in Alaskan waters, attention is drawn to the proposed Alaska Highway which has been under consideration by the United States and Canada since 1929. The highway is advocated primarily to meet a situation which now seems imminent. Its proponents have contended that it would be badly needed as a supply line if sea lanes between Seattle and Alaskan ports should be menaced by enemy warships or airplanes.

With from three-to-fifteen years estimated as the time required for construction of the road, it does not seem likely that it could be utilized to aid Alaska in this war, even if work were commenced immediately. Such a highway has been favored by high government authority as a re-employment project after the war.

The United States would be expected to foot most of the bill. It is estimated that a gravel road safe for heavy loads would cost from $10,000,000 to $75,000,000, the great disparity in estimates being due chiefly to diversity of country through which it is proposed to run the highway.

The distance by road from the United States-Canada boundary to Fairbanks, Alaska, would be about 2,000 miles. Three main routes have been considered - two from Seattle through British Columbia and one from Chicago through the prairie provinces and down the Mackenzie River Valley in the Northwest Territories. All three enter Alaska from the Yukon Territory. Gravel roads on these routes now end at Hazelton, B.C., Prince George, B.C., and Grimshaw, Alta.

The Alaskan International Highway Commission, representing the United States, seems to favor the route from Seattle via Hazelton, and the British Columbia-Yukon-Alaska Highway Commission, representing Canada, the more easterly route from Prince George via Sifton Pass. Either would make possible the development of mineral and timber resources in British Columbia not reached by railway or steamship lines, and would surpass the Mackenzie valley route in scenic grandeur.

Among the persons who recommend the route from Chicago via the Mackenzie Valley is Vilhjalmur Stefansson, famous Arctic Explorer, who recently inspected various routes.



Two proposed routes of the Alaska highway.

Arctic Pipeline

The most urgent need, however, according to Stefansson, is not several thousand miles of highway, but about 300 miles to serve as a sort of Arctic pipeline for moving oil and gasoline from a refinery at Norman to Mayo, Yukon territory, on the Alaskan-side of the continental divide. This road would enter the Canadian Rockies at or north of the Keele (Gravel) River, where the mountains are much lower than in southwestern Canada.

Alaska's entire supply of oil and gasoline has to be shipped in by ocean tanker. Consideration of the long line of communication by sea and the importance of keeping the Army's big airbase at Fairbanks supplied with oil and gasoline, emphasize the Explorer's view.

Stefansson's findings which convinced him that the Mackenzie route was the logical one for a highway between the United States and Alaska were: 1 - It would cost the least; 2 - could be completed most quickly; 3 - would be most likely to be usable in winter; 4 - would be safest from attack; 5 - would provide a source of fuel.

Stefansson believes that it is desirable to construct highways eventually on both of the routes in British Columbia and also connecting roads from the westernmost route to cities along the coast.

"…The vast storehouse of mineral wealth lies waiting and transportation has been the principal obstacle to its realization; freight planes have only begun to tap it. Alaska - still an almost unexplored wilderness twice the size of Texas and with a population under 80,000, half of it native - holds vast stores of timber and ore and game, yet its principal Industry is - salmon…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

Railway to Alaska

"…Hardly had the road building begun when Canada and the United States agreed on a survey to determine the feasibility of a railway to Alaska, Army Engineers took over that job, too…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

Highway to Asia

"…And after the war - perhaps it will be a highway to Asia. A dream? Until now, yes. But the Engineers pour dreams in concrete…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1942**

"…Years back, there was talk of tunneling under Bering Strait and driving a railroad across to Russia. The strait is only 55 miles across, only 30 to 63-feet-deep. Motorists drive over the ocean to Key West, Fla. Why not a bridge to Russia?..."
***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

"…That's looking ahead, but not too far. If Russia built roads from Khabarovsk or Vladivostok or some point on the Trans-Siberian Railway to the peninsula opposite Nome, eventually a motorist might journey across a Bering Strait Bridge on a highway reaching from New York – yes, from Buenos Aires to Gibraltar."

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1942**

RE: the idea of an overland connection crossing the Bering Strait dates back to the 19th century. William Gilpin, first Governor of the Colorado Territory, envisaged a vast "Cosmopolitan Railway" in 1890 linking the entire world through a series of railways. Two years later, Joseph Strauss, who went on to design over 400 bridges and served as the Chief Engineer of the Golden Gate Bridge, for which he was the main proponent, put forward the first proposal for a Bering Strait rail-bridge in his senior thesis. The project was presented to the Government of the Russian Empire, but was rejected. In 1904, a syndicate of American railroad magnates proposed a Siberian-Alaskan railroad from Cape Prince of Wales, in Alaska, through a tunnel under the Bering Strait and across north-eastern Siberia to Irkutsk via Cape Dezhnev, Verkhnekolymsk and Yakutsk (about 3,100 miles of railroad to build plus over 1,900 miles in North America). The proposal was for a 90-year lease and exclusive mineral rights for 8 miles each side of the right-of-way. Czar Nicholas II approved the American proposal in 1905. However, it was debated by officials and finally turned-down on March 20, 1907.

The Little Bridge-Builder

"Before a crowded house, a bewildered faculty, and a distinguished group of visitors and speakers, this modest, soft spoken young graduate unfolded his utopian dream."

Alfred K. Nippert

RE: Strauss' University of Cincinnati fraternity brother recalling Strauss' commencement address to the graduating class of 1892. Strauss presented his senior thesis to the audience; a proposed railroad bridge across the Bering Strait linking Alaska with Russia. Though skeptical, the audience admired his boldness. As both Class President and class poet, Strauss also read aloud his poem entitled "Reveries."



"The Golden Gate Bridge, the bridge which could not and should not be built, which the War Department would not permit, which the rocky foundation of the pier base would not support, which would have no traffic to justify it, which would ruin the beauty of the Golden Gate, which could not be completed within my cost estimate of $27,165,000, stands before you in all its majestic splendor, in complete refutation of every attack made upon it."

***Joseph B. Strauss* – Chief Engineer, GGB**

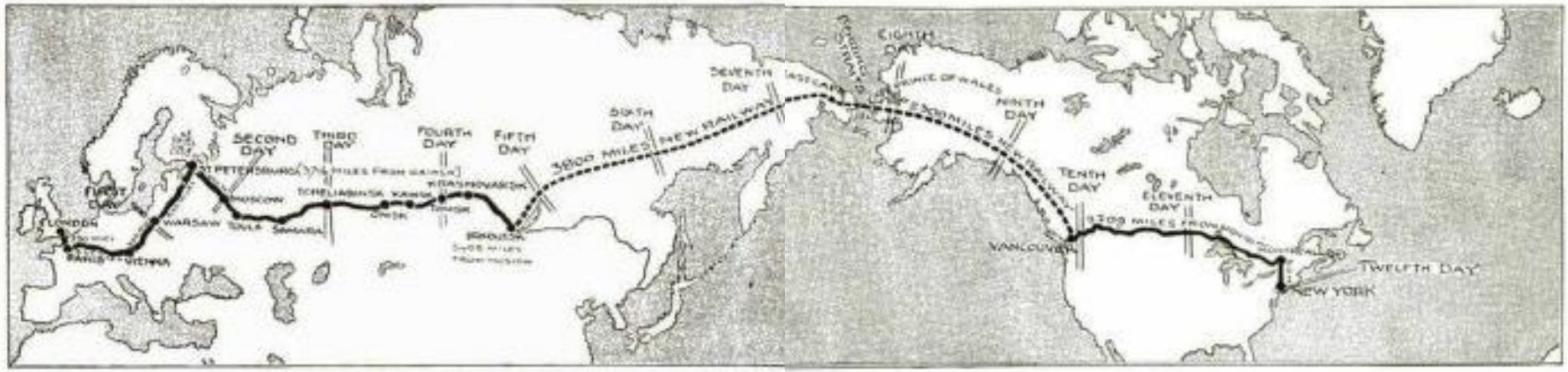
RE: excerpt from Strauss' May 27, 1937 Opening-Day speech

An All-Rail Route

Submarine Tunnel of 30 Miles to Connect England and France - Another Tunnel of 38 Miles Between Siberia and Alaska

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "All-Rail Route, London to New York"



From London to New York by Rail in 12 Days' Time

TUNNEL UNDER BERING STRAIT

American Syndicate Is Making Plans for an Enormous and Seemingly Feasible Project.

Plans Are Nearly Completed and Attempt Is Being Made to Get the Permission of Russia.

Would Be of Immense Importance to Both Countries, America and Russia.

Railroads and Telephones Planned—Cost Would Be Something Like 1,250,000,000 Francs.

Special Cable to the New York American and the World-Herald—Copyright, 1906, by W. R. Hearst.

Berlin, July 7.—According to a dispatch from St. Petersburg, the American Syndicate of Civil Engineers, of which Loicq de Lobel is president, have almost succeeded in arranging with the Russian government for the construction of a tunnel un-

"From New York to London by 12 days' travel in a palace car without change is the dream of ambitious Railway Engineers. Moreover, the dream is likely to come true before many years, as the best expert engineering minds in the world, after exhaustive study, have pronounced the daring conception not only possible, but involving less serious problems in tunnel construction than others which are already built and in daily use…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

<u>Left</u>: ***Omaha Sunday World-Herald,* July 8, 1906**

No Great Difficulties



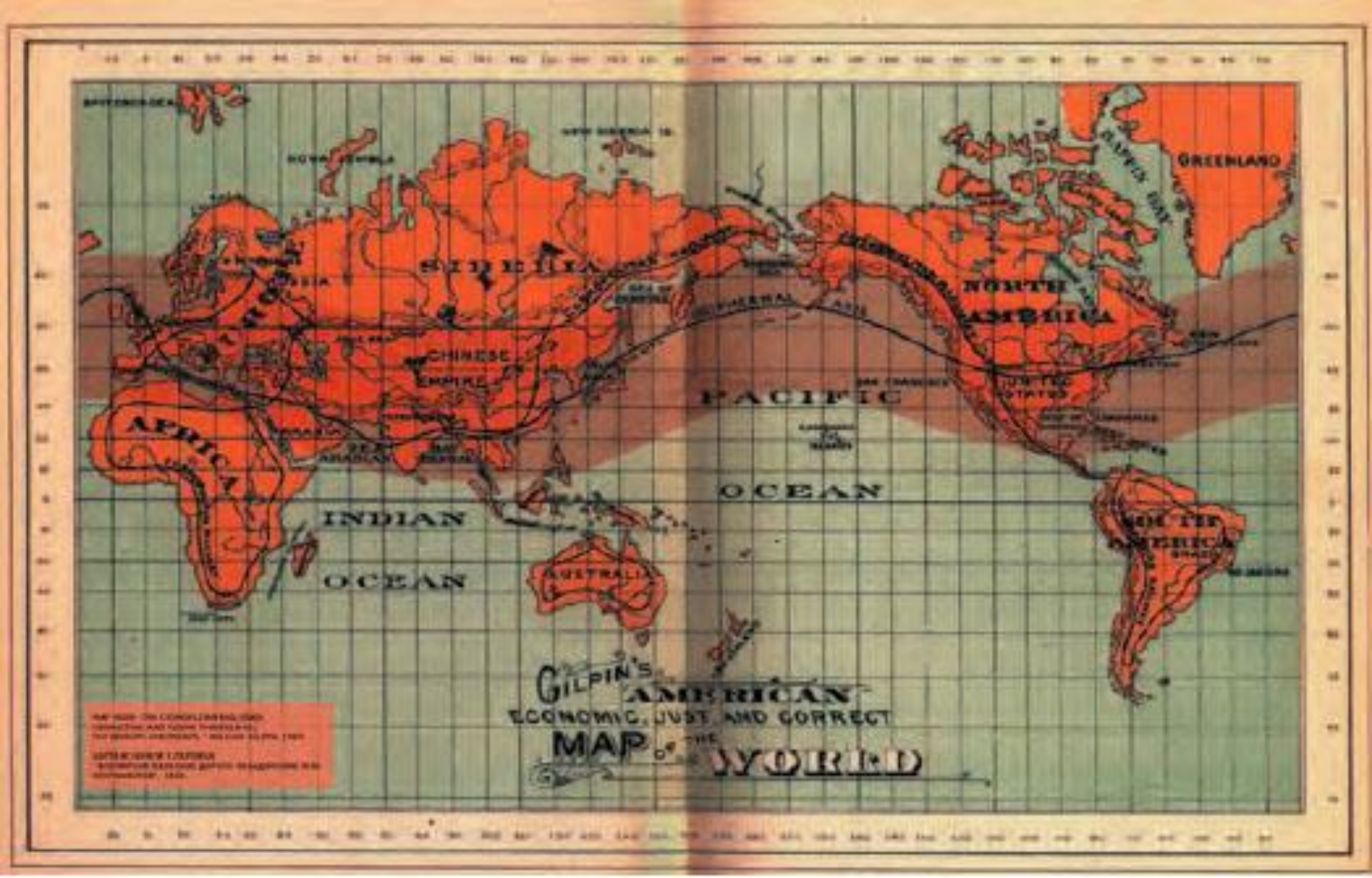
"…The idea of a submarine tunnel between Siberia and Alaska has recently received much attention in Russia. In spite of the distractions that government has experienced of late. Neither is the plan as new as generally supposed, for it was discussed nearly 30 years ago, and in 1886 our own geological survey reported on the subject to the United States Senate…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

RE: as recently as 11K years ago, the Asian and North American continents were connected by a land bridge

Caption: "U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, J.E. Hilgard, Supt. Alaska and adjoining territory, 1884"

Prior to the Russian Revolution (1917), relations between the U.S. and Russia were congenial. Czarist Russia had sold its Alaskan lands to the U.S. fifty years earlier, in 1867, in part as a hedge against British seizure of the territory. The Suez Canal, linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean, was built in 1869. The Panama Canal was completed in 1914. The Bering Strait is similar in width and depth to the English Channel thus, an undersea tunnel was proposed there, as in the Channel, during the 19th century. In keeping with these ambitious projects, a bridge or tunnel across or beneath the Bering Strait has long been suggested. During the early years of the 20th century, a rail line across the Bering Strait was negotiated but languished due to the depletion of Russian capital owing to the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05).



Caption: "Gilpin's American Economic, Just and Correct Map of the World. From 'The Cosmopolitan Railway: Compacting and Fusing Together All the World's Continents,' by William Gilpin, 1890."



"…Mr. Powell, who made the report, stated the undertaking involved - at that time - no greater difficulties than those which existed during the construction of our first transcontinental railway and since then, great improvement has been made in tunnel work. The original idea was to bridge the straits, taking advantage of the several islands which are directly in the route selected…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

The Only Way

"…The advance in tunnel work has taken the bridge feature out of the conditions and all Engineers now agree on the tunnel as the only way…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1906**

"…From East Cape, Siberia, to Prince of Wales Cape, Alaska, is 38 miles, passing through the islands of Diomede and the island of Kruaenstern. The prime mover in the enterprise is a French Engineer, M. de Lobel, who has studied the subject for years and who only recently received an interested hearing at the Russian court…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

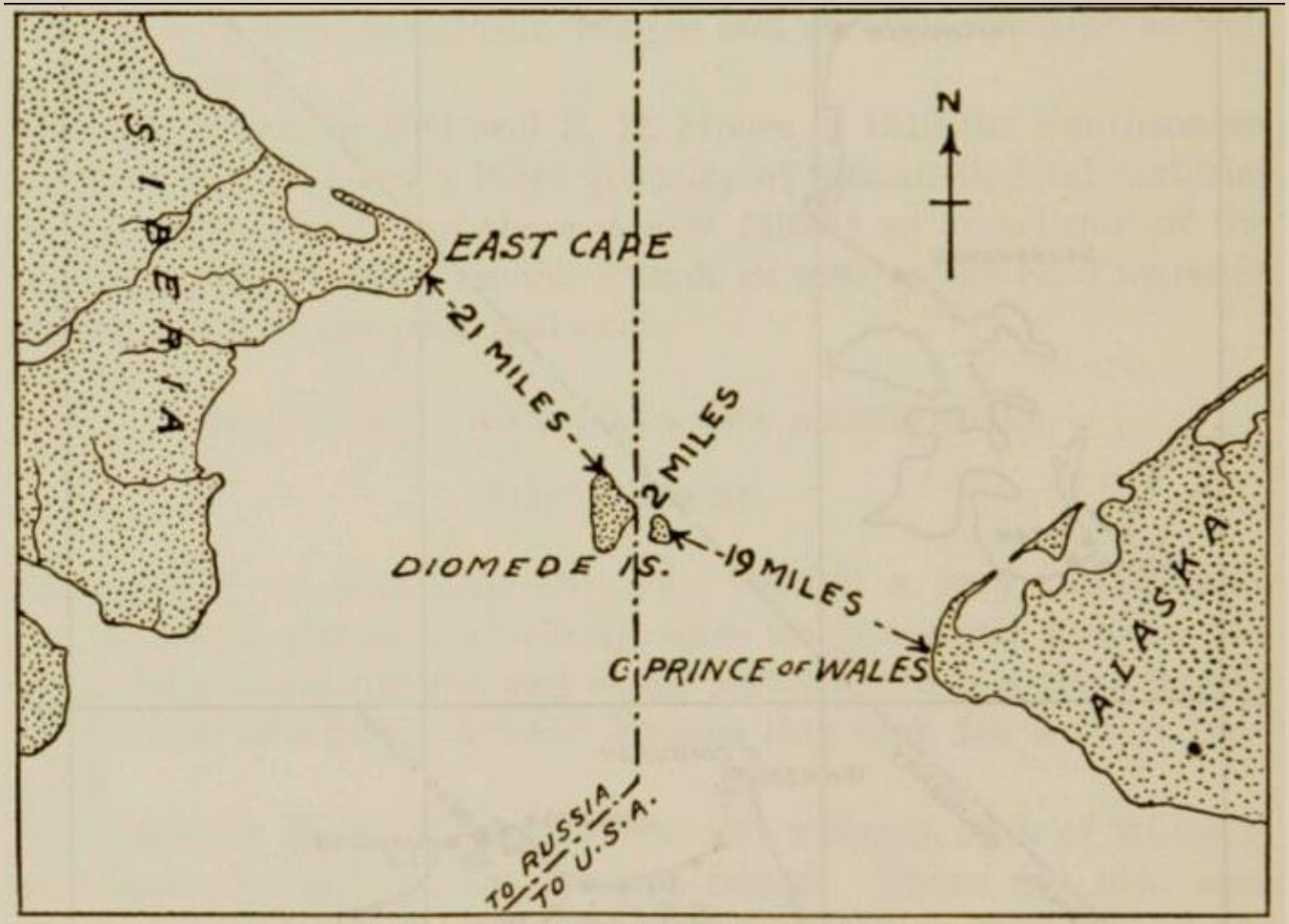


FIGURE 28.—The Bering Strait Islands

The Tunnel Under the Channel

"…The tunnel under the English channel would be about 30-miles-long. This project also dates back 30 years and the company which has a concession from the French government some years ago bored 5,900 ft. of test tunnel and has spent over half-a-million dollars. Little work has been done since 1894, during which year the British government raised such strenuous objection to the work that boring was discontinued…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1906**

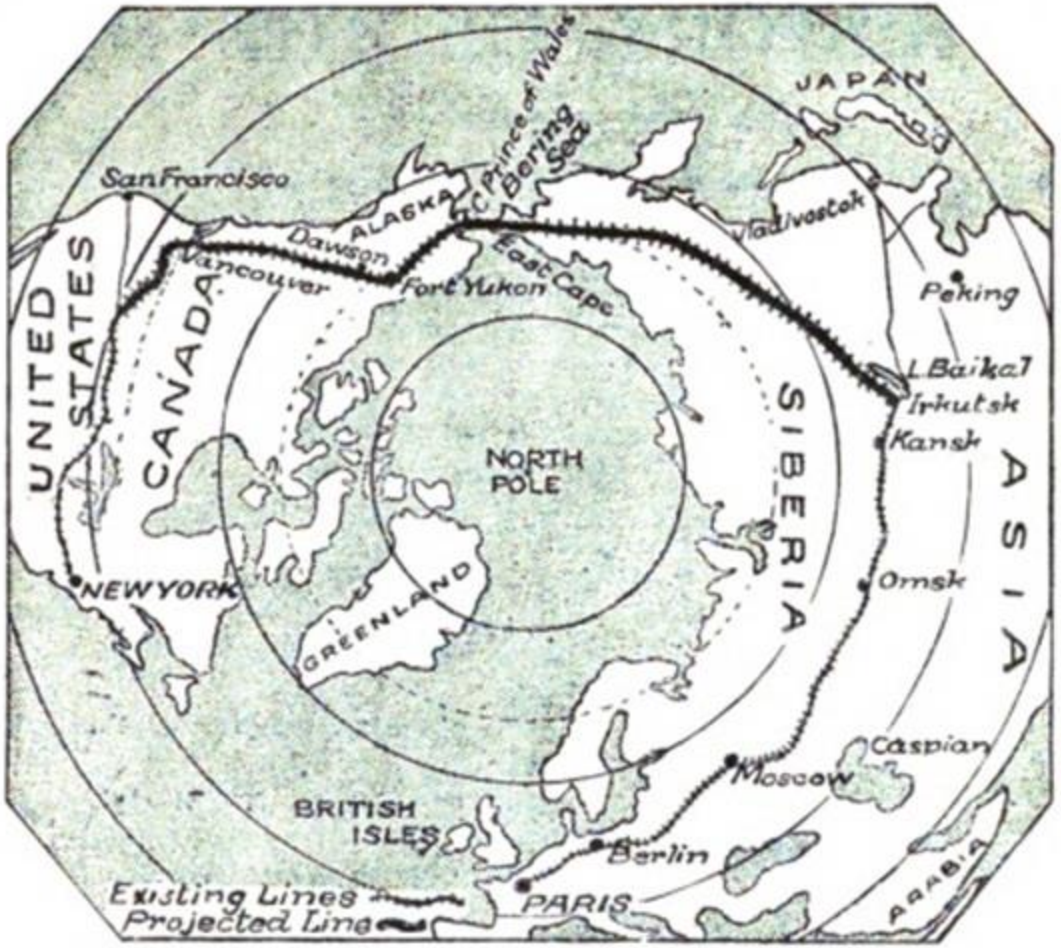
The Proposed Route

"…The proposed route and distances are;

	Miles
London to Paris	**230**
Paris to Vienna	**625**
Vienna to Warsaw	**350**
Warsaw to St. Petersburg	**650**
St. Petersburg to Moscow	**400**
Moscow to Irkoutsk	**3,405**
Irkoutsk to East Cape (Behring Sts.), to be built	**3,800**
Across Behring Straits	**.38**
Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska, to Vancouver, B.C., to be built	**2,300**
Vancouver to Montreal	**2,209**
Montreal to New York	**310**
Total	**14,317**

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

LONDON TO NEW YORK BY RAIL.



TO LINK UP EUROPE, ASIA AND AMERICA: THE ROUTE OF THE PROJECTED TRANS-ALASKA-SIBERIAN RAILWAY.

The Lost Cause

"…For years past the English Channel has been to Engineers as was an unconquered nation to Alexander, it offered a field for brilliant achievement; the lure of Progress rose like a sea siren out of its seething waters and beckoned them to dare great deeds. And again and again that weird call has stirred to restiveness the hearts of the English and the French peoples; but ever the cautious islanders, feeling themselves doubly fortified against foreign invasion because of their insular position, hesitated to link themselves by a land route with the European continent, and in their trepidation the cause was lost…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

Far from Probable

"…The military objection so long raised by Great Britain would be met by keeping a considerable force of men at the tunnel entrance at all times and it is far from probable that an enemy could succeed in sending troops through, even unexpectedly - as in times of profound peace…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1906**

The Great Advantages

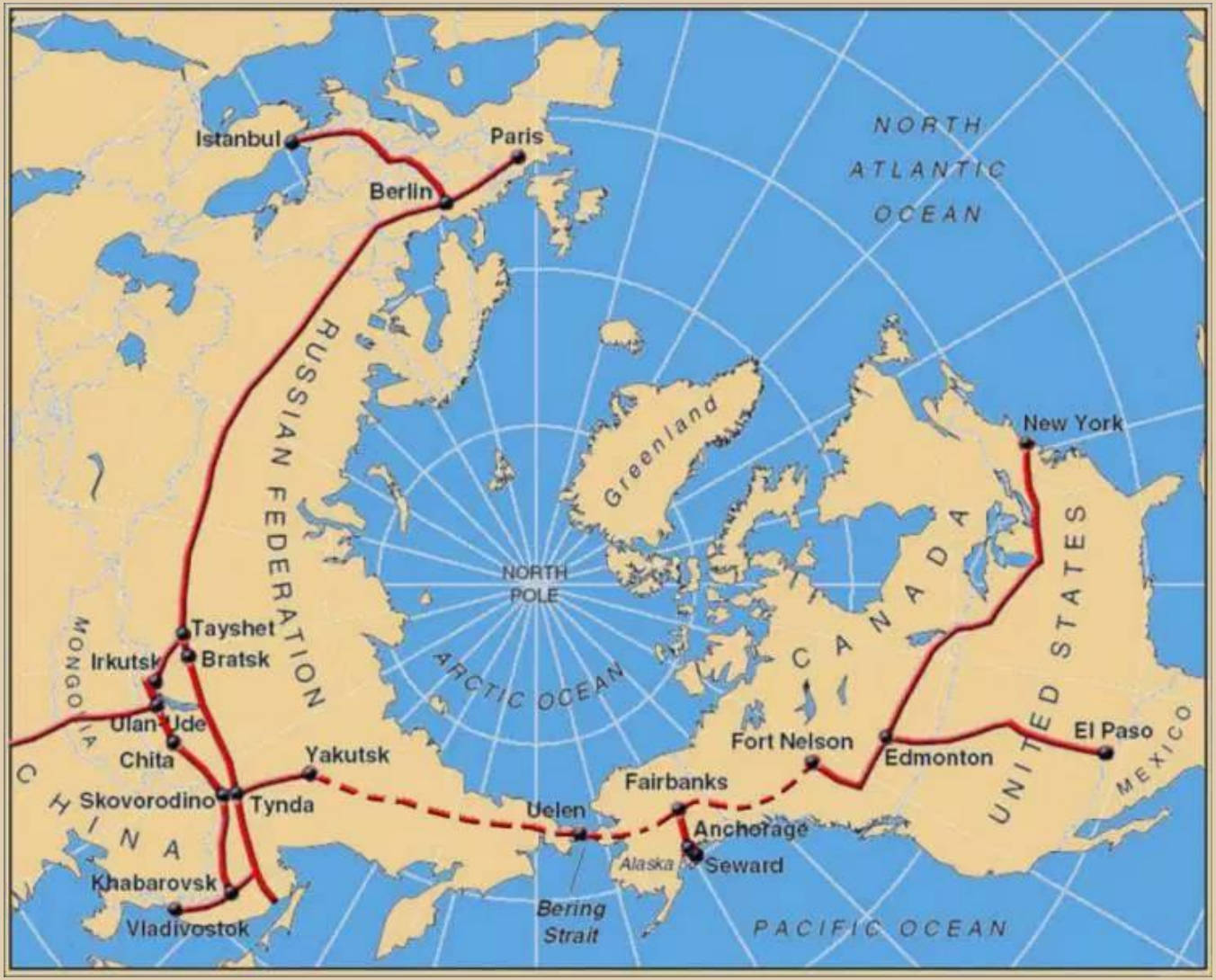
"…The great advantages of unrestricted international intercourse involved in the question are hardly to be overemphasized. The dread of seasickness has kept traffic at its lowest point: but with an electrically lighted tunnel and electric cars, the tourist and the Londoner and the Parisian will think nothing of the little ride between the two shores. Then, too, the shipment of merchandise now entails two additional handlings going in either direction which would be rendered unnecessary with a tunnel route at an estimated saving of $1.25 per-ton…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1906**

The Longest Journey

"…The next link to be forged In the international route is a 3,800-mile railway line across Siberia's frozen interior. That Russia in her time of stress and with her fear of political intrigue and her disapproval of American independence should consider linking the two continents is, to say the least, unexpected. The new railway would be an extension of the Trans-Siberian line which now terminates at Irkoutsk. The difficulties of construction owing to rigorous climate and lack of facilities for transporting material would be great, but not prohibitively so. This part of the journey, probably the least enjoyable, would occupy only a little more than three days…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**


Istanbul
Paris
Berlin
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
Greenland
New York
NORTH POLE
ARCTIC OCEAN
CANADA
UNITED STATES
MEXICO
MONGOLIA
Tayshet
Irkutsk
Bratsk
Ulan Ude
Chita
Yakutsk
Fort Nelson
Edmonton
El Paso
Fairbanks
Skovorodino
Tynda
Uelen
Anchorage
CHINA
Alaska
Seward
Khabarovsk
Vladivostok
Bering Strait
PACIFIC OCEAN

New and Improved



Plan of the Proposed Behring Strait Tunnel

"…As stated previously, the old plan of bridging Behring Strait, using the Diomede Islands as central points of support, has been abandoned entirely with the improved methods of tunnel construction. This undersea tunnel would be 38 miles in length, pierced through solid rock and with a depth of 192 ft. of water above it at one point, yet the time required for construction is estimated at only four years and the cost would be about $250,000,000…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1906**

"…It is said the excavated material would not exceed that taken out for the New York Underground. Naturally both Russia and the United States would establish military stations at their respective entrances to the tunnel…"
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1906**

At a Glance

"…From Bering Strait to Vancouver, B.C., is a distance of 2,300 miles to be covered by a steam railway line which will connect with our transcontinental routes and make them a part of the international line. The advantages accruing to the United States from such a line are apparent to the American, at a glance…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1906**

Trail of Civilization



"…The most northerly railway in Alaska at present is the Council City and Solomon River road which has been built over the frozen ground and serves the transit of gold-miners, but the new line will go far north of this, forming a trail of civilization through a now almost inaccessible region…"
***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**
RE: the long-abandoned C*ouncil City & Solomon River Railroad* operated from 1903 to 1907. The route was from a point near the mouth of the *Solomon River* (adjacent to Solomon City) to a point adjacent to Council City.
<u>Above</u>: the remains of the railroad (at Mile 31 of the *Nome-Council Highway*), comprising three locomotives, two flat cars and a boiler were listed as an historic district on the *National Register of Historic Places* in 2001

Sharing the Burden

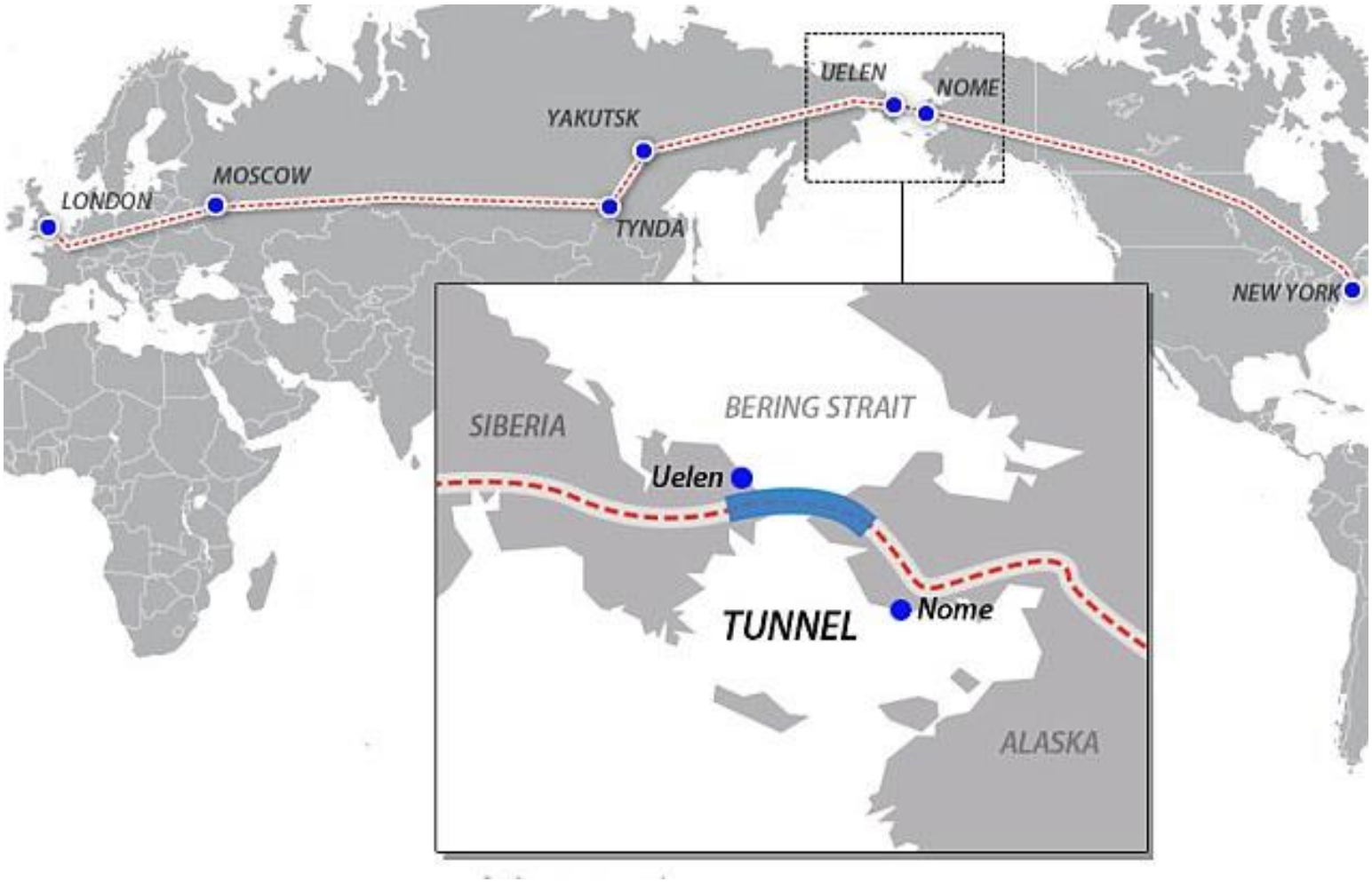
"…It is estimated that at a speed of 50 miles-an-hour, the distance of 14,317 miles between New York and London could be covered in just 12 days. One of the great difficulties is the carrying of supplies for the trip into the frozen interiors of Alaska and Siberia. Not only would it be necessary to provide for the round trip, as it would be impossible and prohibitively expensive to procure supplies in these regions, but it would also be necessary to establish supply stations for relief in case of protracted blockades from heavy snows. But as the lines would be operated independently, both the Russian and the American systems would share this burden."

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1906**

Déjà vu All Over again

"If you're keen on visiting the Big Apple but not on air travel, making the journey by rail could one day be a possibility. Russia has given the thumbs up to a £60 billion project which would see a 65-mile tunnel dug under the Bering Strait, connecting Asia with North America. If plans go ahead, the journey from London to New York could take a mere three weeks, covering three continents along the way…"

***dailymail.co.uk,* August 22, 2011**


UELEN
NOME
YAKUTSK
MOSCOW
LONDON
TYNDA
NEW YORK
SIBERIA
BERING STRAIT
Uelen
TUNNEL
Nome
ALASKA

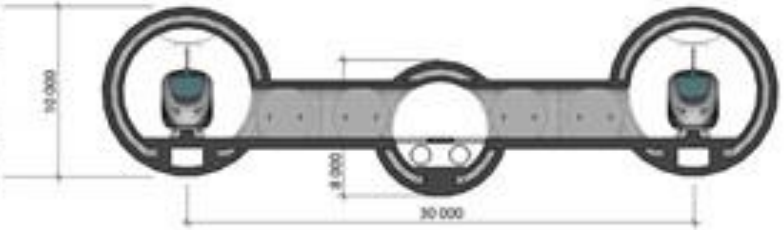
Tunnel typical segment plan



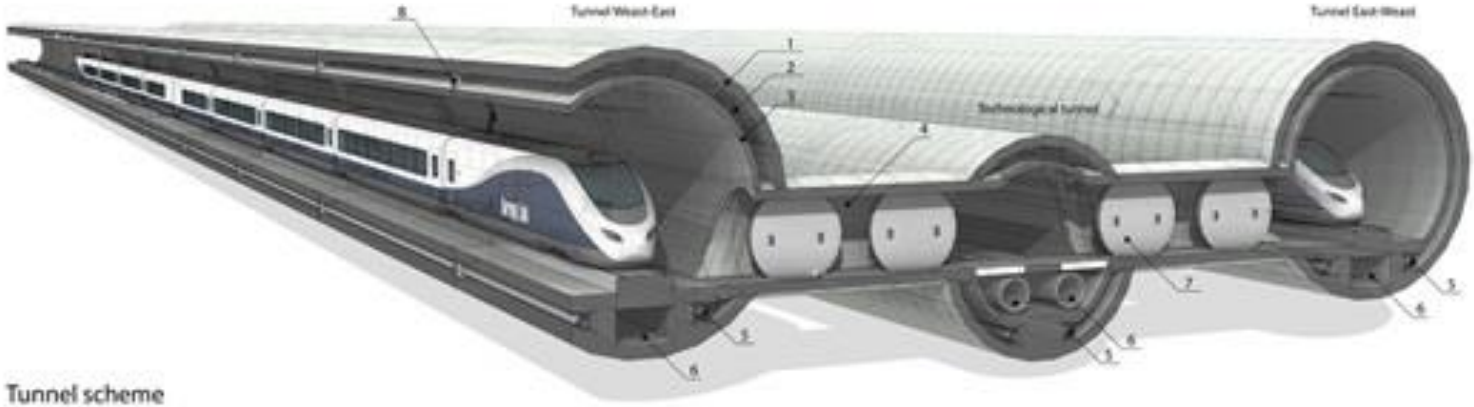
Longitudinal section



Transversal section



Tunnel model

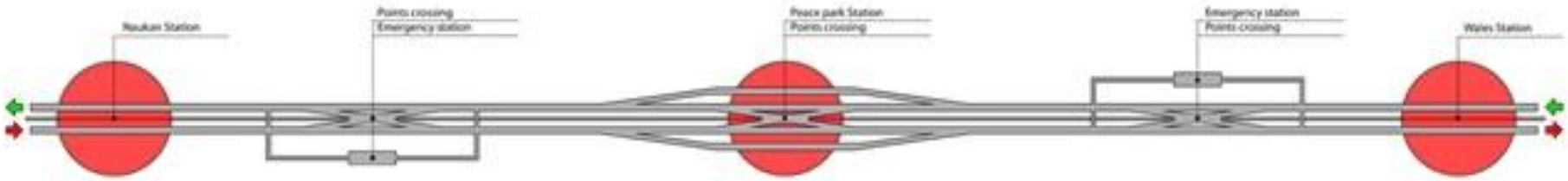


1. Outer shell
2. Drainage course
3. Inner shell
4. Crossing for stream assessment and free movement in extreme cases.
5. Drain pump tube
6. Electricity supply tunnel
7. Interlocking firebreak partition
8. Fire-resisting bulkhead of drinage course



No vehicle passage.
Vehicles transport by shuttle-train only

Tunnel scheme



Part 2

Father of the Alaska Highway

The “A” Route

Donald MacDonald Proposed New Short Route to Alaska

Daily News-Miner (Fairbanks, AK) - May 4, 1955

by Kay J. Kennedy

The ghost of a doughty Scot must be haunting the halls of Congress these days. I think he must have been close lo Senator Bill Langer of North Dakota on Jan. 14 when the Senator introduced a bill. It was Senate Bill 451 “to provide for the investigation of the practicability of constructing a new section at the Alaska Highway.”

The bill authorizes and requests the President, through agencies to enter into consultation with Canada looking toward the negotiation of an agreement for the construction, through the joint efforts of both, of a section of the Alaska Highway which would begin at Prince George, B.C. and run in a northwesterly direction generally along the course known as the “A” Route as surveyed by the Alaska International Highway Commission and connecting with the existing highway at Whitehorse, Y.T.

MacDonald’s Dream

It was nearly 30 years ago that Donald MacDonald II, then a locating Engineer for the Alaska Road Commission, conceived the idea for a highway link from the United States through Canada to Alaska, essentially along this same route proposed by Senator Langer.

Donald must be chuckling right now and I know his spirit will guide the survey teams when they are sent out. I can almost hear his sudden burst of laughter echoing. “And it could have been built back in 1929 for the price of one small battleship!”

The old Engineer never lost faith that his route would be built someday . . . “because it’s logical” he’d say flatly, as if that would settle it. Those of us who knew this man of far vision shared his faith.

Donald and I were sitting in the late summer sunshine in front of Jack Allman’s tent that housed the *Matanuska Valley Pioneer,* Palmer’s first newspaper. It was in 1936. Jack had told me that Mac was the Father of the International Highway idea.

“Tell me about it,” I suggested.

“No, I don’t want to ever talk about it again. I’ve been batted around so much so much on it,” he replied. I persisted. Soon he was drawing lines with a stick in the dirt at our feet, outlining the route.

“Where’d you get the idea for it?” I asked.

“It really isn’t original with me,” Donald told me. “All I did was to take E.H. Harriman’s idea for a railroad and convert it into a highway.”

He then related how he’d been sent into the Nabesna country to locate a road that started at a mine and went to a small airfield. “That bit of road started nowhere and went nowhere really.” Donald shrugged in disgust. “It don’t connect with any other roads. As I was scouting out a location I kept thinking it would make more sense if someday that bit of road could be a link in a highway system - say from the United States to Fairbanks.

“That was it! Why not a road over Harriman’s projected rail route? Times had changed. This was the age of autos and air-planes. A road. A land link to Alaska. When you’re out like that you do a lot of thinking. There’s nothing ‘Scotch’ about me,” he laughed loudly at his own joke, “so I started thinking that there could be a highway from Nome to Cape Horn! That’s how it started.”

A Great Man

Here was a great man, I recognized. Not the most tactful man in the world, but a dedicated one who could see into the future. Rivers were not just rivers to MacDonald - they were horsepower. To him wilderness was nothing to shun - it was something to build roads through, for homes to be built in, mines to be developed, timber to be utilized and recreational facilities to be enjoyed.

The first serious consideration of the project began in 1928 and 1929. The International Highway Association was formed. In 1931 preliminary air flights were made over the route with the Canadians favoring a location east of the coastal range where precipitation is lightest.

An international U.S.-Canada Commission was appointed and its report released in 1933. At that same time it was estimated that the Alaska section of the road would cost $2 million and the Canadian section, $12 million.

Studies were made by MacDonald, Maj. Malcolm Elliott of the Alaska Road Commission, Col. J.J. Rolston and J.H. Gray.

In 1932 one American official flew over the general area close to the Coast Range and made the announcement that construction of a road would be impossible. In a verbal tangle with Slim Williams, an old Copper River trapper and dog-musher, the official repeated the statement. Slim declared that he would take a motorcycle over the route - which he and John Logan did the following year.

Many Old Trails

For more than 100 years Indians, traders and prospectors had traveled the relatively easy drainage trails north and south between the coast range and the main cordillera.

In 1865 the route had been surveyed for a telegraph line by Western Union Overland Telegraph and some line strung. The plan had been to connect the U.S. and Canadian telegraph lines with Europe through that part of Canada, Alaska and cable on the floor of the Bering Sea and across Siberia.

The Collins Overland Telegraph

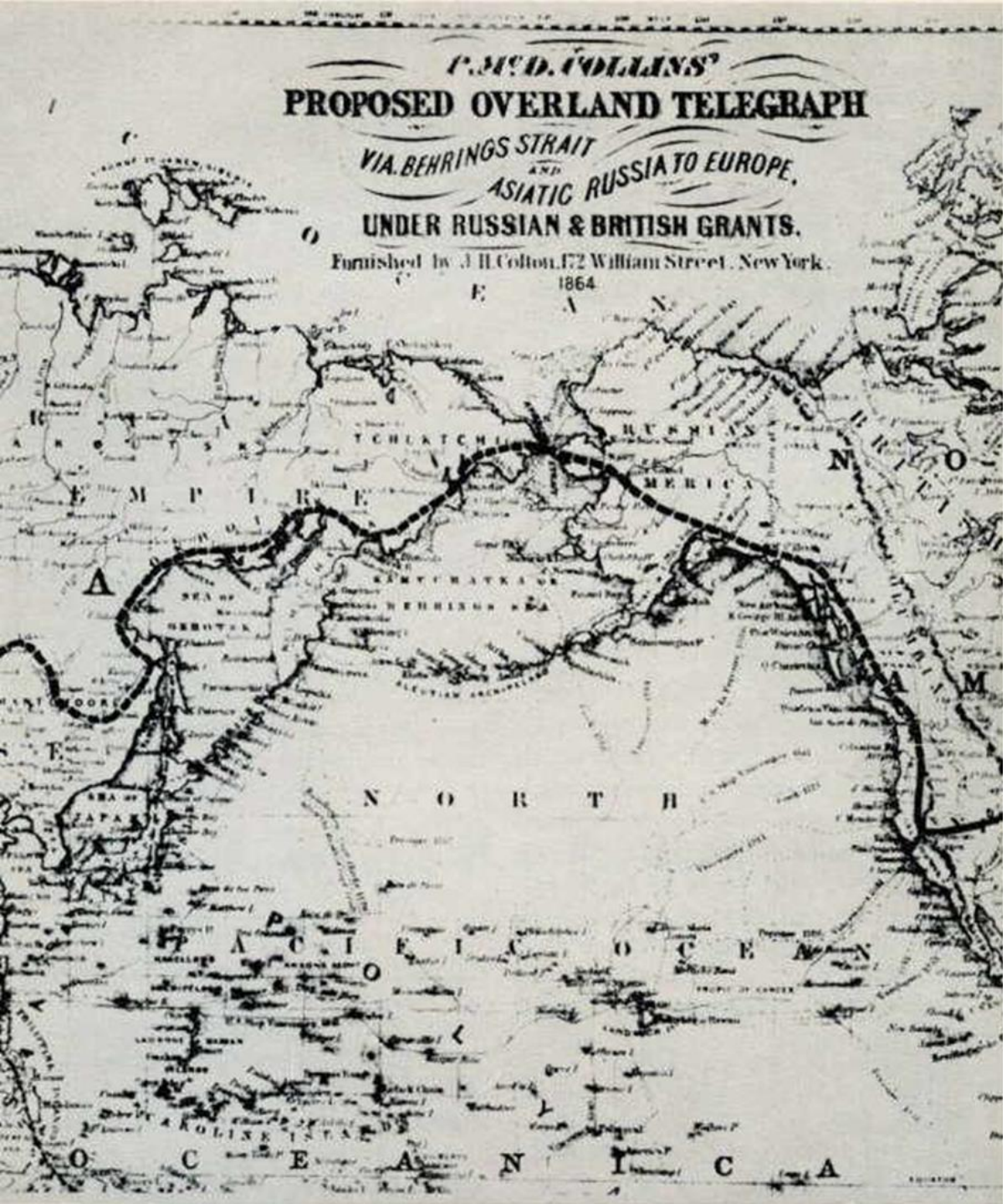


In 1847, John Young, a businessman and telegraph entrepreneur from Montreal, Canada, became a promoter of the profitable Montreal Telegraph Company and, in 1856, sought a charter to connect Canada to Britain by telegraph. Young headed a group which formed the Canadian and British Telegraph Company, chartered in 1859 to build a telegraph line via the St. Lawrence River and Labrador to Great Britain. Because of the reluctance of investors to put-up large sums of money to compete with the by now already existing Atlantic cable, nothing ever came of Young's 1859 transatlantic cable project.

<u>Caption</u>: "John Young in 1873"

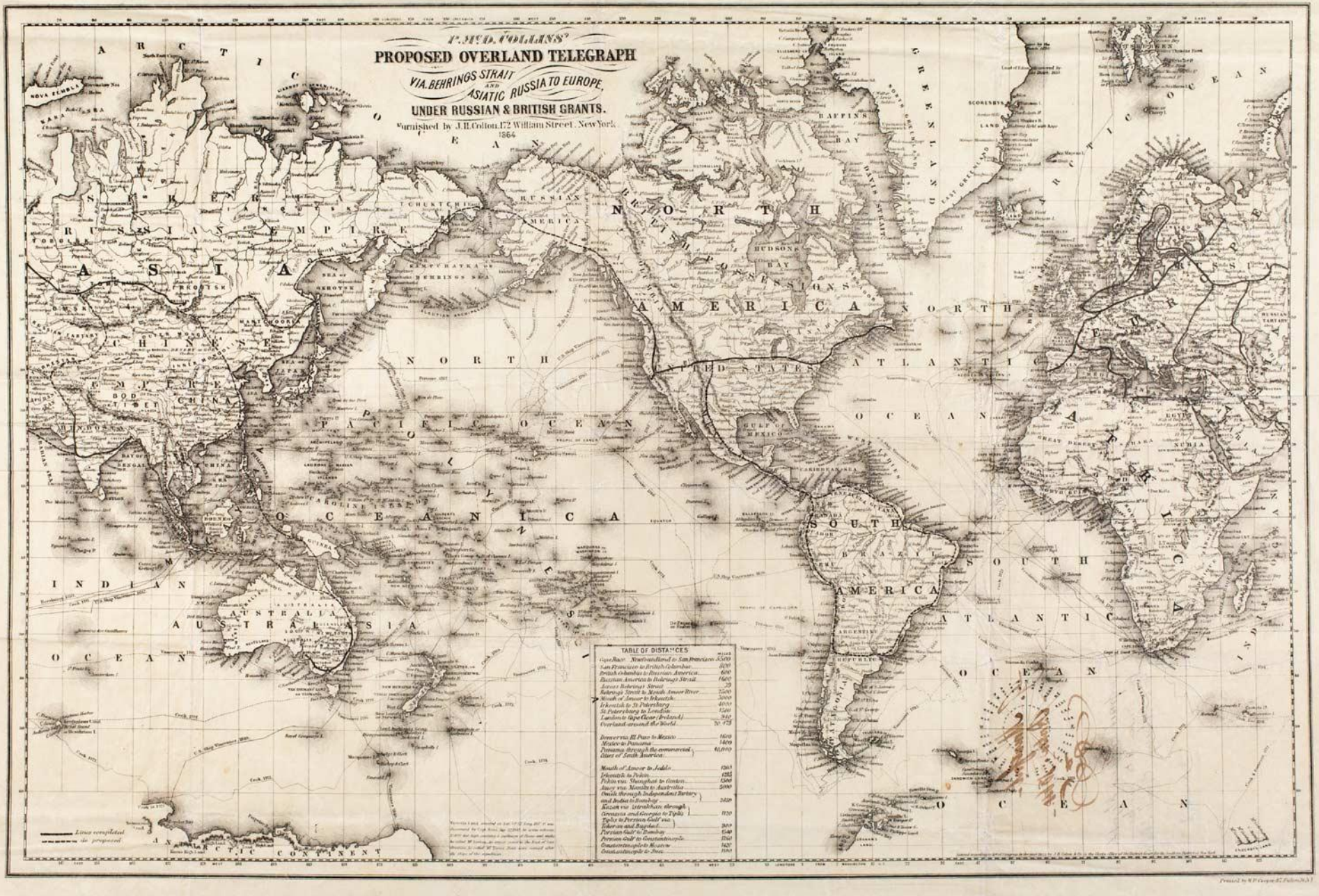
Young was also a principal in a company planning a route to the Far East via the west coast of Canada. In 1859, Perry Collins, then a U.S. Commercial Agent in Russia, had conceived a route between North America and Europe which passed through Siberia, Russian America (Alaska), British Columbia, the Hudson's Bay territories and Canada to Montreal, where it would have joined the American system. Collins received a charter from the Canadian Government for the *Transmundane Telegraph Company* in 1859, then proceeded to Montreal to seek financial backers, which is how John Young became involved. However, Collins soon abandoned the Canadian company and, in 1860, presented his concept to the U.S. government.

After receiving support from the U.S. and British Governments, in 1861 Collins interested the *Western Union Telegraph Company* in the undertaking, after which he sold the company his rights in exchange for stock in a new subsidiary and $100K. The Board of Directors of Western Union were concerned about Cyrus Field's previous failure/s to establish a reliable telegraph connection to Europe via a submarine cable.



The alternative was to connect San Francisco with Moscow overland via a submarine cable beneath the *Bering Strait.* This undertaking was considered equally as challenging as laying the Atlantic cable since most of the route had never been surveyed. Beginning in late 1864, Collins and Western Union began their daunting task.

<u>Caption</u>: "Route of proposed United States-Siberian telegraph"



Caption: "Proposed Overland Telegraph"

"…While viewing with great pleasure the success which has attended the projects of connecting various European countries across sundry arms of the sea, our faith is at present hardly strong enough to indulge in any very sanguine hopes of speedily witnessing the success of telegraphic wires for the contemplated distance under the waters of the 'broad Atlantic.' The EMPEROR OF RUSSIA could readily extend telegraphic communication across his dominions to the Russian settlements on our North-Western coast; while the growing importance of our settlements in California and Oregon, as well as the British plans of colonization farther northward, render it certain that many years will not elapse before the telegraph lines will connect the regions of Bering's Straits (where Asia and America can be readily 'wired together') with the cities of our Atlantic coast…"

***American Telegraph Magazine*, 1852**

"…The Russian Empire, embracing portions of Europe, Asia and America, furnishes the opportunity for connected Telegraphic intercourse between the Old and New Worlds. IT WOULD BE GLORY ENOUGH FOR ANY MONARCH TO EXERT HIS POWER IN THUS ESTABLISHING ELECTRIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE ENDS OF THE EARTH."

***American Telegraph Magazine*, 1852**



Russo-American Telegraph:

FOR

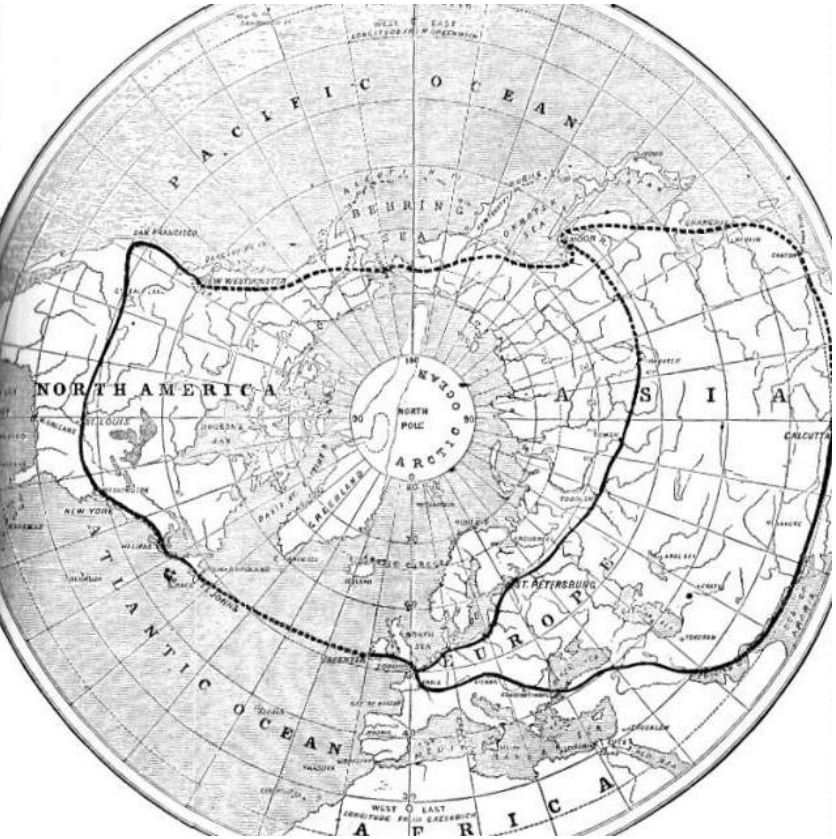
Connecting the Old and New Worlds, through the Dominions of Alexander the Second,

And thus Signalizing the Completion of the First Millennium of Russian Nationality.

MEMORIAL OF HENRY O'RIELLY,

Projector and Constructor of the First Telegraph Range that Electrically connected the different sections of the United States—

<u>Above</u>: in 1852, Henry O'Rielly (1806-86), an early telegraph entrepreneur, wrote an article for *American Telegraph Magazine* in which he noted that the Russian Empire, embracing portions of Europe, Asia and America provided the means to connect the Old and New Worlds via telegraph. In January 1861, O'Rielly published a "Memorial to the Russian Imperial Academy," proposing the Czar construct the "Russo-American Telegraph."

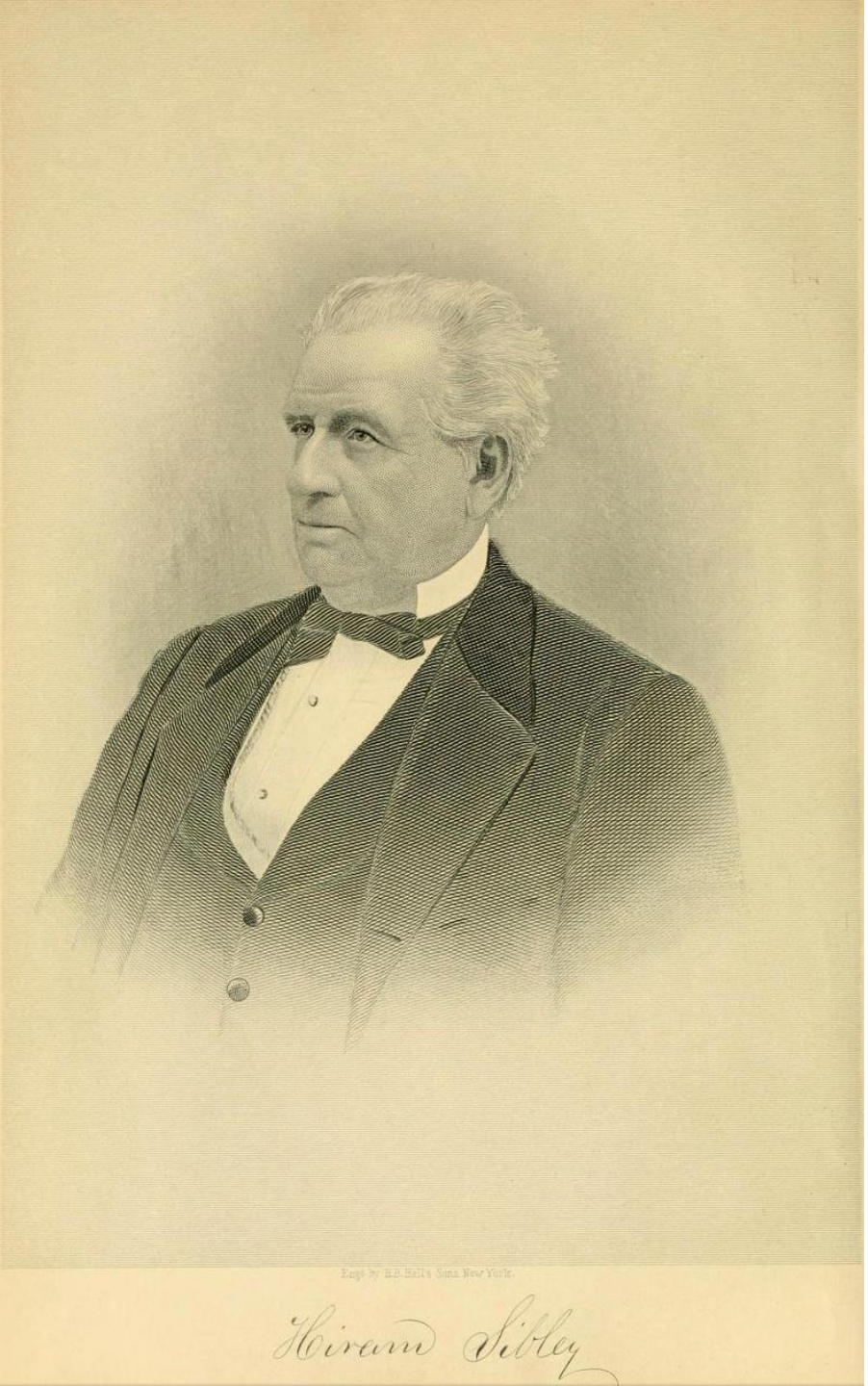


"…with the cordial good will and support as well of this government as of those of Great Britain and Russia"

***Abraham Lincoln,* POTUS**

RE: with the Russian government committed to do their part by extending their system east from Moscow to their Pacific coast, *Western Union* organized the *Western Union Russian Extension Company* (a/k/a "Collins Overland Telegraph Expedition") with the intentions of constructing a line to meet the Russians. The project received encouragement and support from then POTUS *Abraham Lincoln*.

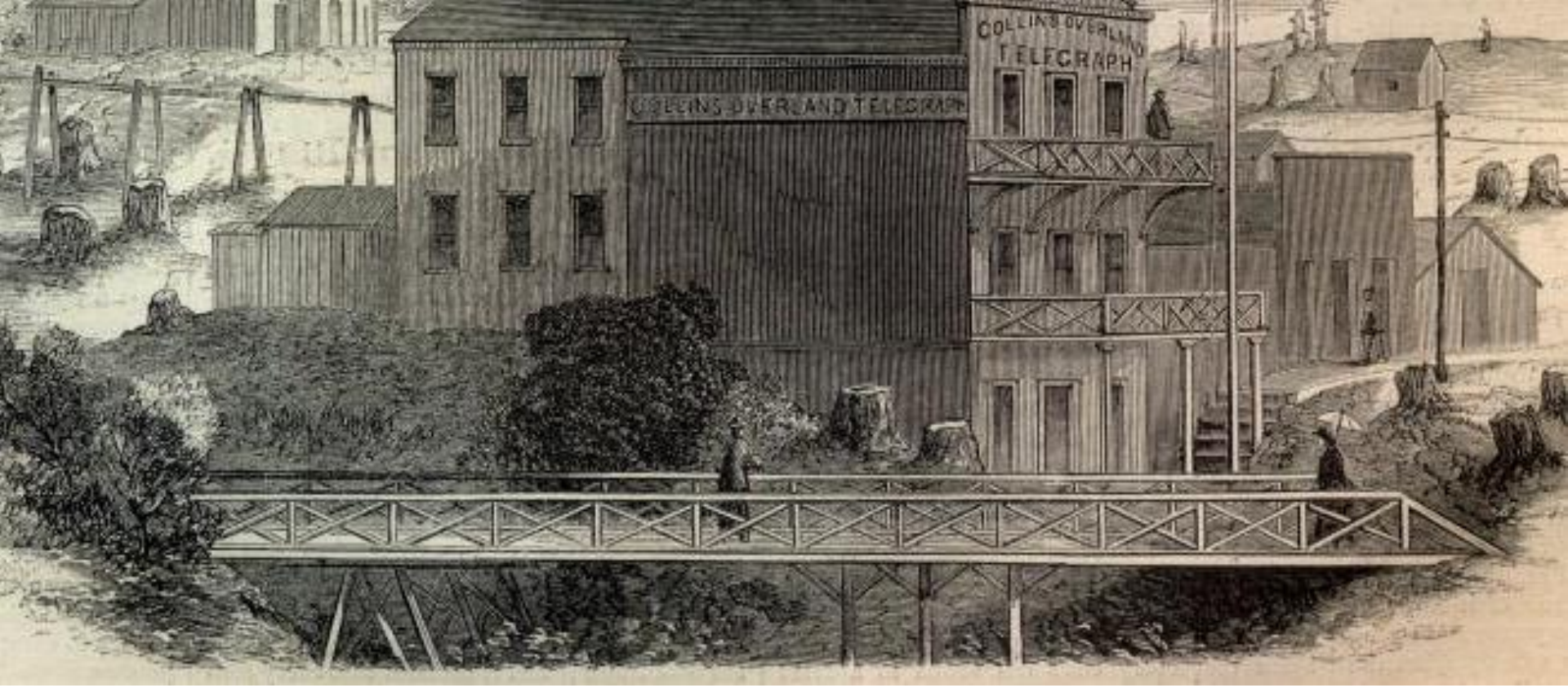
<u>Caption</u>: "Linking the Continents, 1865. Proposed route of the Russian-American Telegraph Line and the Atlantic Cable."



"If the Russian government will meet us at Behring Straits, and give us the right of way through the territory on the Pacific, we will complete the line in two years, probably in one. The whole thing is entirely practicable. No work was ever accomplished by man that will be so important in its results. The benefit to the world will pay its entire cost every year after its completion."

Hiram Sibley

RE: Sibley, President of the *Western Union Telegraph Company,* had negotiated the right-of-way with the Russian Government. Western Union was to pay $750K for a perpetual lease to a tract from one-hundred and fifty to three-hundred miles in width, extending inland from the coast. However, the deal had not been completed when the success of Cyrus Fields' Atlantic cable came as the death-blow of the *Overland Telegraph Co.* (in Aug. 1866).



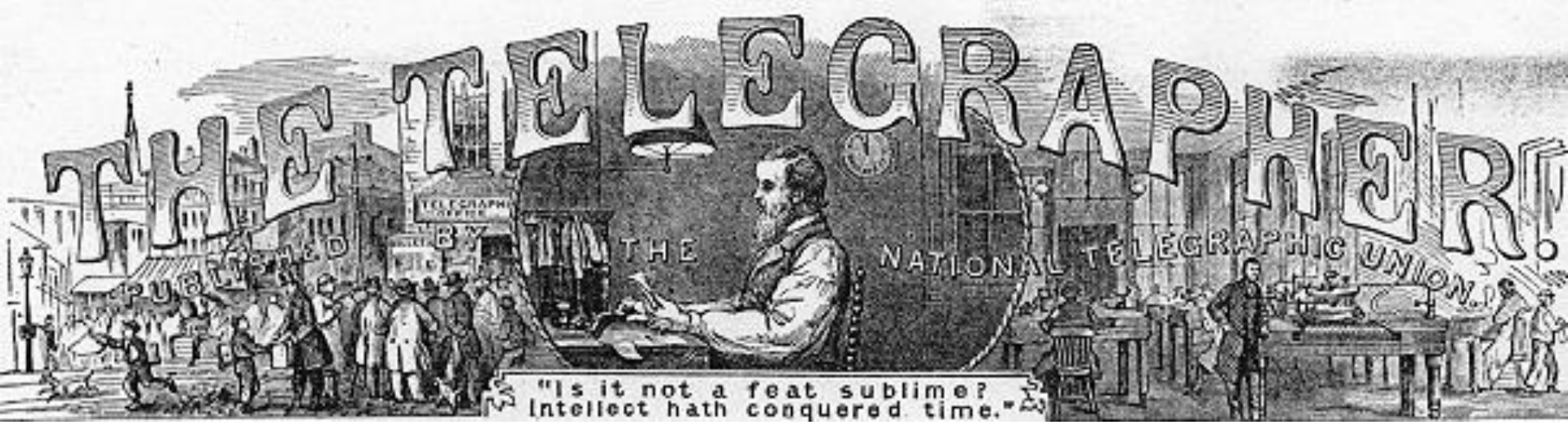
Franklin Pope was appointed "Assistant Engineer and Chief of Explorations in British America." His responsibility was to survey the route from New Westminster, British Columbia (on the Fraser River, about fifteen miles from its mouth and the terminus of the California State Telegraph), to the Yukon River (approximately 1,500 miles). Portions of route were intentionally explored during the harsh winter months (the snow allowed their sleighs to go over the dense underbrush).

<u>Caption</u>: "Collins Overland Telegraph Terminal at New Westminster, British Columbia"



DOG-DRIVING NEAR THE VESOLIA SOPKA.





In 1863, the *National Telegraphic Union* was formed, made-up of telegraphers from across the country. Pope was their NYC District Secretary. They published a popular magazine entitled "The Telegrapher," providing telegraphers information on recent developments in the industry. Pope had a long association with the publication as a writer, artist and editor (in early articles his work was signed under the pseudonym "Electron"). The average telegrapher in the field came to rely upon Pope's ability to explain seemingly complicated new systems with clear and practical descriptions.

Caption: "The heading from *The Telegrapher,* April 24,1865, designed by Franklin Pope to be symbolic of telegraphy"



"...We set-out on our journey into the unknown wilderness, with no guide but the compass, and the certainty that the river Stikeen lay at an unknown distance to the north-west. Our greatest difficulty was caused by the depth, and more especially the lightness of the snow, in which the dogs would sometimes struggle for an entire day, with merely their heads above the surface, we drawing the load ourselves, and sometimes even carrying the dogs on our backs, when they were too much exhausted to move."

Franklin Pope

RE: in a letter to his younger brother, Henry, Pope gave this description of the conditions when heading for the Stikeen River, a point about 700 miles north of New Westminster, B.C.

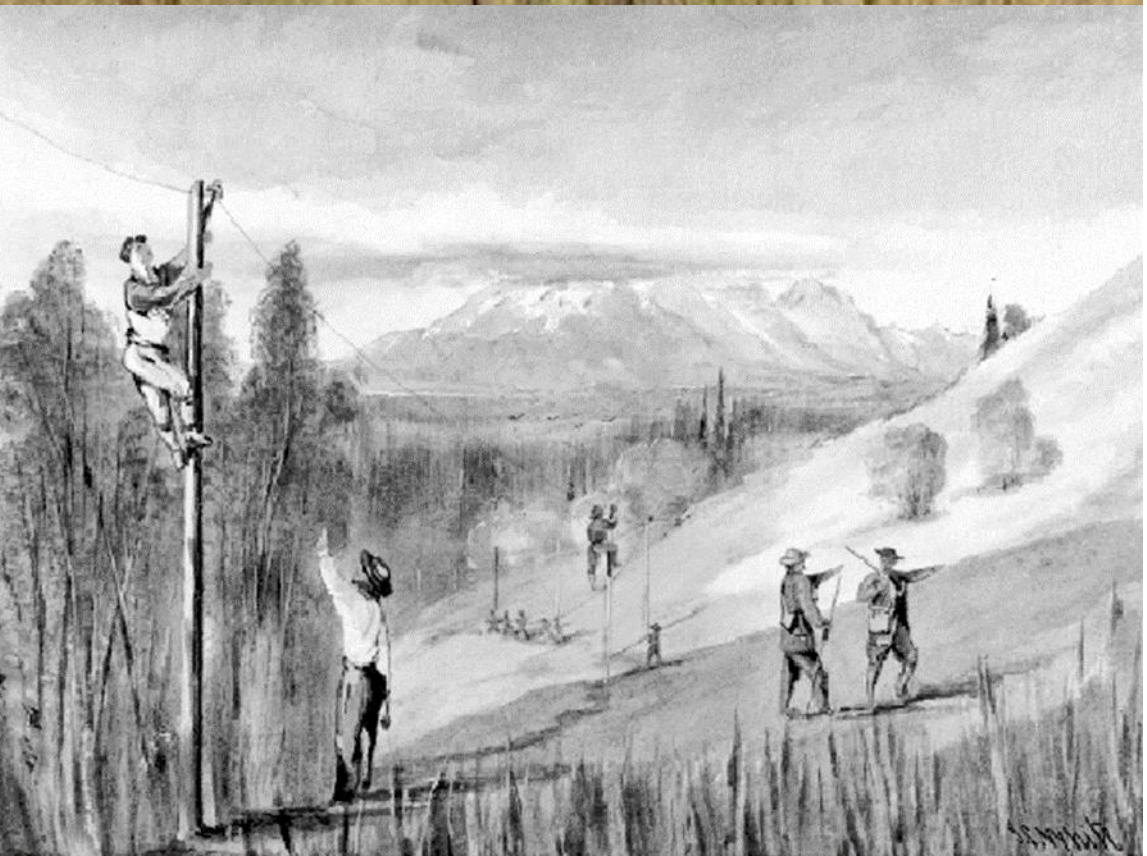


"…When the telegraph to the Klondike is completed, let it not be forgotten that on New Year's Day, 1866, the first telegraph pole in the Yukon Valley was erected, near Nulato Bay - the telegraph boys making of it a flagstaff for the Stars and Stripes, and giving it a grand salute of thirty-two guns, to which was added the explosion of an old Russian blunderbuss. No doubt they sang what they were much given to singing:

In eighteen hundred and sixty-eight -
Hurrah! Hurrah!
The cable will be in a miserable state,
And we'll all feel gay
When they use it to fish for whales.

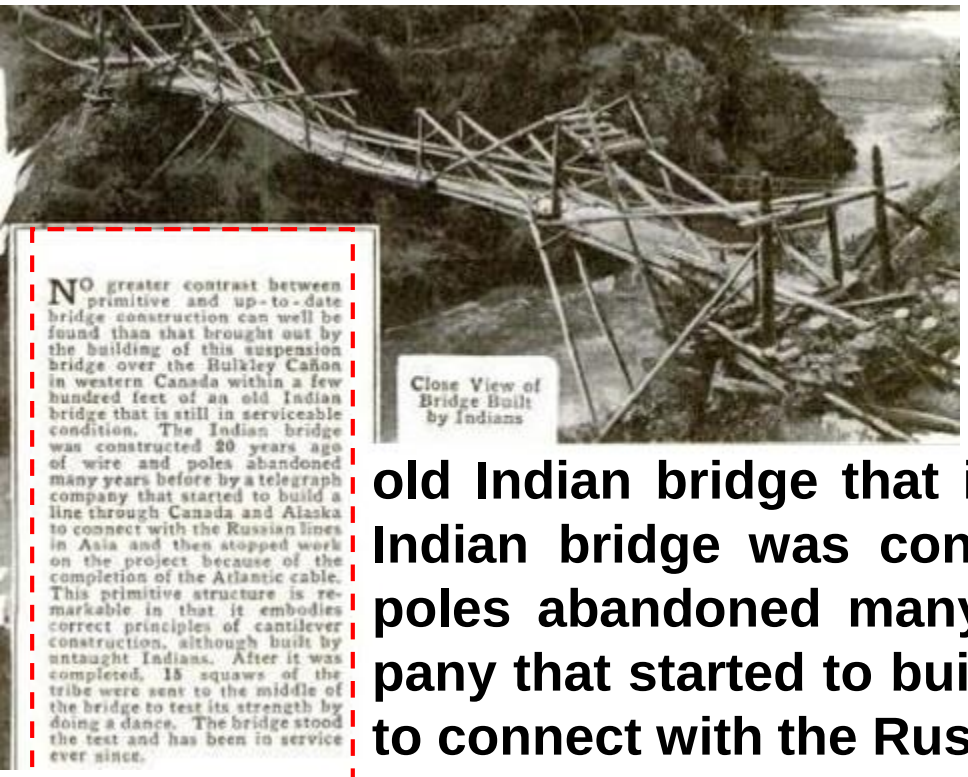
In eighteen hundred and sixty-nine -
Hurrah! Hurrah I
We're going to finish this overland line;
And well all feel gay
When it brings us good news from home…"
RE: excerpt from: "The Exploration of the Yukon in 1866" (1897)





In August 1866, the line was operational to the Skeena River, approximately five-hundred miles north of New Westminster, BC, when construction crews received the news over their own telegraph line that Cyrus Field's most recent Atlantic cable attempt was a success. The directors of the *Western Union Co.* officially halted operations of the overland project in March of 1867 and absorbed the entire cost, which was over $3 million. The charts and maps (top) Pope created before and during the expedition were considered by leading Geographers of the day as the most accurate in existence for that portion of the world. The overland route was abandoned in July 1867 with nearly the entire investment lost, although some portions of the line became the first local telegraph system in Alaska and locals made use of the abandoned materials in the proceeding years.


OVERLAND TELEGRAPH
Perry Collins, an American, envisioned a land route to link America and Asia by telegraph. All attempts to lay a cable across the Atlantic had failed.
Western Union had completed 800 miles northerly from New Westminster in 1865-66, when the ocean cable was successfull. The overland project was abandoned but the line to Cariboo remained.
DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION & CONSERVATION



Caption: "No greater contrast between primitive and up-to-date bridge construction can well be found than that brought out by the building of this suspension bridge over the Bulkley Canon in western Canada within a few hundred feet of an old Indian bridge that is still in serviceable condition. The Indian bridge was constructed 20 years ago of wire and poles abandoned many years before by a telegraph company that started to build a line through Canada and Alaska to connect with the Russian lines in Asia and then stopped work on the project because of the completion of the Atlantic cable. This primitive structure is remarkable in that it embodies correct principles of cantilever construction, although built by untaught Indians. After it was completed, 15 squaws of the tribe were sent to the middle of the bridge to test its strength by doing a dance. The bridge stood the test and has been in service ever since.

***Popular Mechanics,* June 1915**





"A very interesting footbridge spans the North Thompson River in British Columbia, of which the entire superstructure is built of cables. These cables are made up of 15 strands of galvanized wire which was originally intended for use in a telegraph line that was to reach Paris from New York, over Alaska and Siberia. The project was abandoned, however, when the Atlantic cable was successfully opened. The cables and other material were then cached at various points along the proposed route of the telegraph line and were subsequently appropriated by settlers. In its final use as the suspension footbridge, the wire still performs important service."
***Popular Mechanics*, January 1922**



<u>Caption</u>: “Footbridge suspended by means of cables which were originally intended to be used as part of the telegraph line from New York City to Paris, France, by way of Alaska and Siberia”

"...All evidence of the right-of-way and poles were gone, but in a few instances we found pieces of old telegraph wire imbedded several inches in the spruce, jack-pine and poplar trees that had long-since grown up and over the wires that touched them. I found one of the old green glass insulators still attached to a galvanized wire. I kept it as a souvenir but lost it later with a camera and some clothing when a scow was nearly overturned on Lake Laberge…"

***Walter R. Hamilton,* Author**

RE: excerpt from: "The Yukon Story." In his book, Hamilton described the condition of the trail thirty years after it was abandoned.

The Overland Telegraph Company's expedition, while an economic failure, provided a further means by which America was able to expand its national boundaries, precipitating the purchase of Alaska from a cash-strapped Russia in the wake of the failed project. The expedition was also responsible for the first examination of the flora, fauna and geology of Alaska, providing useful and valuable data on the Russian territory. As well, British Columbia further explored, colonized and communicated with its northern territories. In fact, many of the towns in Northwestern British Columbia can trace their initial settlement back to the Collins Overland Telegraph (i.e. Hazelton). The expedition also laid a foundation for the construction of the *Yukon Telegraph Line* (built in 1901 from Hazelton to Telegraph Creek and beyond, to Dawson City). Portions of the telegraph route became part of the Ashcroft Trail, used by gold seekers during the Klondike Gold Rush of the late 1890s.

After $3-million had been spent the project was abandoned in 1866 when the trans-Atlantic cable was successfully laid.

It is significant that the telegraph location chosen was essentially what is now known as the “A” Route. This may have had something to do with Harriman’s choice of a location for his proposed railroad.

Might Have Changed History

MacDonald used to speculate how the course of history was changed by two factors - the Treaty at Portsmouth and Harriman's death.

"As far back as 1893 Alexander III of Russia considered the possibility of the Trans-Siberian Railroad eventually being connected with the North American rail system." Mac told me. "He didn't realize that dream. Czar Nicholas, his successor, continued work on it and hired a French Engineer to make a study for a tunnel under the Bering Sea to connect the roads."

Work might have started but for the Russian-Japanese war."

The proposed railroad got another setback at the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905 following the war when the victorious Japanese insisted that the project be abandoned. They termed it a "vicious encircling movement."

Harriman vowed he'd build the road anyway and Mac believed the American railroad tycoon would have - had he lived. Again the dream died with a man.

The great railroad-building era drew to a close. Automobiles caused a road-building era to replace it. Then came aircraft with need for landing fields and roads for supply. Having been a Railroad Locating Engineer, MacDonald turned to highway location and it was natural that he should think of a highway over the old basic route.

Convince Many

Once Mac adopted the idea, he continued to spread it. He even went on an American Magazine-sponsored lecture tour to tell the people in the States about it but his words fell on deaf official ears.

Many fell under the spell of this man of vision. I was one. Ed Borders, a young engineering student at the University of Alaska was another who believed in MacDonald and his dream.

During the winter of 1940, Ed volunteered to travel alone over the proposed highway route to take snow depths and make other observations. Williams and Logan had taken the motorcycle over the route during the summer months.

Ed had two reasons to make the trip. First was to get additional information for MacDonald. The second reason was more personal. As a youngster, Ed had been crushed in a gravel pit slide. Doctors said that he wouldn't be able to walk again - but they hsd reckoned without his determination and his mother's faith.

Just being able to walk was not enough. He went in for sports, especially boxing, but deep within him an inferiority feeling persisted. If he could make that trek alone it would prove to himself for once and for all that his once-crushed body was as good as the best. A letter from his mother convinced him to go ahead.

Covers 1,700 Miles

In the middle of February, 1940, Borders left Fairbanks on skis with one dog, a sled and a minimum of equipment. He lived off the country while covering 1,700 miles. He measured river crossings, took snow depths and kept records. Spring break-up caught him 200 miles north of Hazelton, B.C. He discarded his skis.

Upon reaching Hazelton he got his first mail. There was a letter from his mother telling him that she was ill and did not expect to live much longer. In her continuing faith she congratulated him upon his successful trip and urged that in the event of her death not to come home but to go on with his project. “It isn’t necessary,” she wrote, because I’m always with you, son.”

Then there was the telegram of a later date saying that she had died.

Borders’ important records were valuable and proved the feasibility of a year-around route that could he kept open in winter.

Later, Capt. Ed Borders of the Commandos was killed in sharp fighting in Africa during World War II.

Still nothing was done about building a road to Alaska until the war emergency pointed up the vulnerability of the sea lanes to Alaska and the need of a land supply line as vital to the defense of the territory and Canada. Hurriedly the “Alcan” road was pushed through far to the east of the original location.

From time-to-time interest in the original “A” Route comes up, conferences are held but nothing concrete takes place. Meanwhile, the Canadians have pushed through the Hart Highway which considerably shortens the distance between Alaska and Seattle.

Mac Holds Faith

In the autumn of 1949, I again talked with MacDonald about the road. Mac was then nearly 70 years-old. His body was weary - yet, faith that his route was the right one, held fast.

“Of course it’ll be built some day because it’s logical,” he repeated, “I will not live to see it, but I hope you will.”

We got out a map and he traced in an Engineer’s dash-line the projected road over what he called the “Middle A” route. It takes-off from Fort St. James northward along the Stuart, Trembleur and Takla Lakes to Bear Lake, hits the upper Sk-eena River, crosses a 3,200-foot divide (highest elevation), goes down the Kaplan River, crosses the Stikine above Tele-graph Creek, on to Sheslay, to Inklin, Pike and Atlin where a road to the Alaska Highway already exists.

“This route requires 550 miles of construction.” he said. “It would cost $22 million for a 26-foot gravel road. The location follows the drainages and crosses only one major river - the Stikine, which would require one 525-foot cantilever span.

"Because the line follows drainages, the grades will not exceed 3 per cent as against 12 per cent on the Alcan. There is only one major river crossing as against 78 on the Alcan. The total rise on the "A" Route is 6,000-feet as compared with 30,000-feet on the Alcan.

"Much of the Alcan is in an economic vacuum of dreary terrain. The "A" route penetrates one of the richest, most beautifully romantic areas in North America," he declared.

The “Middle A” Route


FAIRBANKS
Daily News - Miner
"America's Farthest North Daily Newspaper" - - - Member of The Associated Press
10¢ Per Copy FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 1955 Sixteen Pages

Daily News-Miner (Fairbanks, AK) - May 4, 1955

A Vital Road Link

Only 550 miles of new highway, linking Fort St. James in British Columbia with Atlin, in British Columbia, can provide a short economical route between the United States and Alaska, and can link coastal cities and industrial sites with the United States road system.



The map produced on this page shows the route of this proposed new highway. This route has been examined carefully by Engineers and it has been found that it poses no difficult construction problems. Furthermore. there are no steep grades that would be a hindrance to trucking traffic.

PROPOSED NEW HIGHWAY—Here is a map of a proposed new highway link which would greatly shorten the distance between the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. The route would also open up a vast undeveloped but promising area in British Columbia and Southeastern Alaska. It would be possible to link Southeastern Alaska cities with the Alaska highway system if this 550 mile road were built.

The benefits of the “Middle A” Route to Alaska are apparent. First of all, it would cut approximately 500 miles off the present highway between the Pacific Northwest and Alaska points. Secondly, this road provides a link that opens-up the promising coastal area of British Columbia and Alaska where great industrial development is now in-progress.

Spur roads, extending westward from the proposed new road, could link points in Southeastern Alaska with the new Alaska Highway. The proposed Frobisher development on the Taku River could be linked with the highway system as well as the City of Juneau.

This proposed road could open one of the most promising industrial areas on the American continent. The route could also bring Alaska’s larger cities within three days driving time of Pacific Northwest trade centers.

The new route would make valuable mineral deposits, potentially rich hydroelectric sites, and timber resources and industrial sites far more accessible than they are now. It would also serve to reduce freight rates in many parts of Alaska and British Columbia.

The proposed new route would also give the Pacific Northwest of the United States a gateway to all the promising industrial development now taking place in the upper waters of the Yukon River and along the coast of Alaska.

The new route was proposed by the late Donald MacDonald II, the man who is known as the “Father of the Alaska Highway.” While he proposed the Alaska Highway and urged its construction for many years, he was bitterly disappointed with its final route which he felt was needlessly long and poorly located from a maintenance standpoint.

He proposed the “Middle A Route” to correct the errors committed when the present Alaska Highway was located and built.

This new route would be of tremendous value to Alaska, Canada and the United States.



We urge that Canada and the U.S. jointly study this route and examine the benefits that would accrue to both nations through its construction.

We are certain that an impartial study will show that this road would produce new trade and industrial development that would far exceed the cost of the project.

FATHER OF ALASKA HIGHWAY—The late Donald MacDonald II, longtime Alaska engineer, is known as the "father of the Alaska highway." It was he who proposed it, and for many years he conducted a campaign to have it built. However, he never approved of the route selected by a joint board of Canadians and Americans. The new proposed "middle route A" was also his idea.

What Would It Have Meant?

Mac was impatient with the slow-moving machinery of negotiations and diplomatic relations that never happened.

“Look,” he smiled wisely, “what the road would have meant at the beginning of the war - and built at the cost of one small battleship. It would have changed the history of British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska. By now, it would have been paved and the whole country would be many years ahead in economic development.

Need is Apparent

As the years have rolled along more thinking on this logical road link crops-up. The need for it nudges those who would develop that vast roadless area.

Two years ago a forceful speaker at a Pacific Northwest Trade Association conference held in Tacoma, Wash. pointed this project up as the “highway of the future.” He was Frank E. Landsburg, District Director, Bureau of Motor Carriers, Inter-state Commerce Commission, Portland. Ore.

He regarded it as the “master key” to unlock the ultimate development of the North Country. Declaring that this highway would be justified from a military defense standpoint alone, Landsburg went on to cite it as a doorway to vast resources also.

This “A” Route would be 1,000 miles shorter from the North-west to Alaska than the present Alcan, a factor important in motor transport. Development of resources could provide a back-haul to reduce freight rates. Being through a truly scenic terrain, a lucrative tourist industry would naturally follow.

Since Landsburg's speech, during the past two years, a number of committees from various organizations have been quietly working for the project. Senator Langer has introduced the bill to get the official wheels turning if and when it is passed. The Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and the All-Alaska Chamber of Commerce have passed resolutions endorsing the bill. A resolution favoring the construction of this road is to be presented at the forthcoming meeting of the PNTA conference in Vancouver, B.C. May 9 and 10.

It may be that some announcement on progress will be made at the meeting.

With the developments that have been sprouting-up in British Columbia and the Yukon during the past several years, there seems a be an increasing interest in the building of the "A" Route.

The hitch is that the location is through a thinly populated stretch of British Columbia which has limited funds for roads in areas scarce on voters. However, some development is going forward despite the lack of roads.

A firm is opening-up a promising copper prospect at Granduc in Canada near the head of the Unuk River northeast of Ketchikan. A survey party investigated the possibility of building a narrow-gauge railroad along the river to get the ore to deep-water for shipment. When the “A” Route becomes a reality, a connection to it from the mine could be built.

Farther north is the Stikine with lakes and tributary rivers holding tremendous hydro water-power potential. Northeast is McDame Creek; its rapidly expanding development of high-grade asbestos deposits. Another short road connection to the proposed highway would greatly shorten the haul north.

In addition there are other minerals to be mined and vast timber resources untouched. A feeder road could be built from the gold and base metal mines at Tulsequah.

With the completion of the “A” Route it would be but a matter of time until Panhandle Alaska would be getting outlet roads from Skagway to Whitehorse; up the Taku River from Juneau; up the Stlkine from Wrangell and Petersburg; up the Unuk from Ketchikan with ferry service from these last three cities as all are built on islands.

Meanwhile, the Canadians are blacktopping a highway from Vancouver to Prince George, B.C. for a permanent highway. The road from Prince George to Prince Rupert is scheduled for paving. Further aluminum and pulp mill projects are in the offing for this area according to information received here.

The Hart Highway of 265 miles from Prince George northeastward has been opened and is proving a popular route for Alaskans traveling to and from the States. The road penetrates and serves a rich resource area that is fast becoming important for oil and mineral production in addition to tourists.

The northern section of the “A” Route could be as vital to the economic development of another section of British Columbia, Yukon Territory and, not least in importance, a land supply line for defense of both Alaska and Canada.

Main roads beget feeder roads. Homesteaders and settlers follow the roads. Access to mines and timber bring industries. The pattern of settlement in the Pacific Northwestern wilderness could be repeated on a grand scale.

The dream of Donald MacDonald; II will come true . . . some day. He's not around any more to repeat. "Of course a highway will be built over my route because its logical." There are those of us who will keep saying it for him and keep pushing for its construction.

I wish that Engineer Ed Borders could be around to be on the project when it's built.

There are many who Mac inspired with his vision of the future would like it to be called the "Donald MacDonald High-way" when it is dedicated.

It will be built some day . . .

Part 3

Connecting the Dots

Routes of Least Resistance

There were several attempts to get a road built to Alaska, but the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 made it a strategic priority. The following articles highlight that pre-war effort.

SHOULD BUILD B. C.-ALASKA HIGHWAY

Civil Engineer Tells of Benefits Road Would Be to Vancouver.

ADVISES EARLY ACTION ON PROJECT

Informs Trade Board Bureau Americans Ready to Build Branch Roads.

The Daily Province (Vancouver, B.C.) - Nov. 20, 1929

THE proposed British Columbia-Yukon-Alaska Highway should be built at once along a route to connect Telegraph Creek, the Taku District, and Atlin; the Americans are waiting to build lateral roads to it and a great development in mining production will follow its completion, a group of Vancouver mining and engineering men were told Tuesday by Mr. H. McN. Fraser, Civil Engineer of many years experience in Northern British Columbia.

While telling about the mineral prospects of the Taku region to a joint luncheon at Hotel Vancouver of the Mining Bureau of the Board of Trade, the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and the executive of the British Columbia Chamber of Mines, Mr. Fraser strongly urged Vancouver men to support the project for the new highway.

Benefit to Vancouver

"Vancouver especially will benefit by the construction of that highway," Mr. Fraser said. "Already this year $70,000 has been spent in this city for supplies for the miners of the Taku region and that sum will be increased in proportion with the tremendous development which would accompany the building of the highway."

The highway route which Mr. Fraser proposed would, he said, serve both economic and scenic purposes; it would be beautiful for motorists and it would open a mining district, vast in possibilities and hitherto inaccessible.

It would run north from Telegraph Creek along the Tuya River, reach a high-point of 2,800-feet at the Nahlin River, proceed along the Inklin River, reach another high-point of 4,800-feet at the Nakina River and then go east by north to Atlin. It would enter the Taku District and connect it with both Atlin to the north and Telegraph Creek, to the south.

Rich Mineral Region

Skirting the Alaska-British Columbia boundary near the Taku River, the highway would also provide the Americans with an opportunity to build lateral roads to join it.

Part of the Taku region could be opened up now, Mr. Fraser said, if the Canadians would cooperate with the Americans in building a road eastward along the Taku to the junction of the Tulsequah River, which could eventually be used as a lateral to the big highway. A section of this lateral, the most expensive to construct, leading from Juneau to the boundary, would be within American territory; the rest would be Canadian.

The mining properties near the junction of the Taku and Tulsequah already show so much promise of wealth that such a road leading from them to Juneau has become almost a necessity, Mr. Fraser declared.

District Advancing

The Taku District, as a place for large scale mine operations, is virtually a new discovery, having recently been examined for that purpose. The two firms interested in the development, the United Eastern Mining Co. and the Alaska Juneau Mining Co., are so confident of results that two concentrators will shortly be built there and a railroad is already completed between the mines and Juneau.

At present, he said, the companies are using the Taku itself as a means of transport for their ore, but as it is closed to navigation for five months of the twelve and the mines can be operated for the full year, another connection must be sought.

Mr. Fraser said that 1,000 persons are expected in the district in 1930 and enterprising men of Juneau are purchasing two score motor boats with which to transport supplies from Juneau up the Taku River to the mine sites. The Dominion Government is also expected to establish a customs inspection point on the boundary above Juneau on the Taku.

Need of Road

Describing the mining potentialities of the Taku District, Mr. Fraser declared that he knew of two good prospective mines which need only a road to be practicably workable; now they are inaccessible. He said he also has knowledge of two others which would bear investigation.

As an added inducement for operation, he said, the district affords plenty of lumber and water-power for mine development.

Much of the traveling in the region is now done, Mr. Fraser said, by airplane, since it is often possible to go in an hour a distance which would occupy four days by pack horse. He remarked that the present maps of the district show few of the lakes really there, lakes which become useful for landings when riding by plane.

The article that follows; from the La Grande *Observer* of September 27, 1933, gives an insight into one of the attempts to build a road to Alaska in the pre-war years. It was called the "Pacific-Yukon Highway."

This syndicated article appeared in newspapers across North America, at that time. Note that the article spells the name of Alaska's Delegate to Congress; *Anthony J. Dimond,* incorrectly (as *Diamond*).

Despite the coverage this syndicated article received, a short piece in the *Washington Post* four days prior foretold what the result of the highway promotion would be: "The two governments may not now be ready to make such a costly investment, but some day the road doubtless will be built."

ROAD TO ALASKA TO OPEN UP NEW LAND OF BEAUTY

WASHINGTON (AP) - Proponents of the Pacific-Yukon Highway, the proposed 2,000-mile road linking Alaska and the United States, are pressing for governmental approval of the project that would make more accessible one of America's "last frontiers."

Anthony J. Diamond, Delegate to Congress from Alaska, has asked the Public Works Administration for an allotment of $2,000,000 to finance the Alaskan section of the highway. Diamond is also seeking President Roosevelt's approval of the project, which has been recommended as feasible by the United States Commissioners appointed to cooperate with Canadian representatives in studying the plan.

Advocates of the highway say it would open to motorists a new scenic wonderland, to farm settlers rich acres in areas hitherto inaccessible and to miners an opportunity to develop one of the richest mineral storehouses on the North American continent.

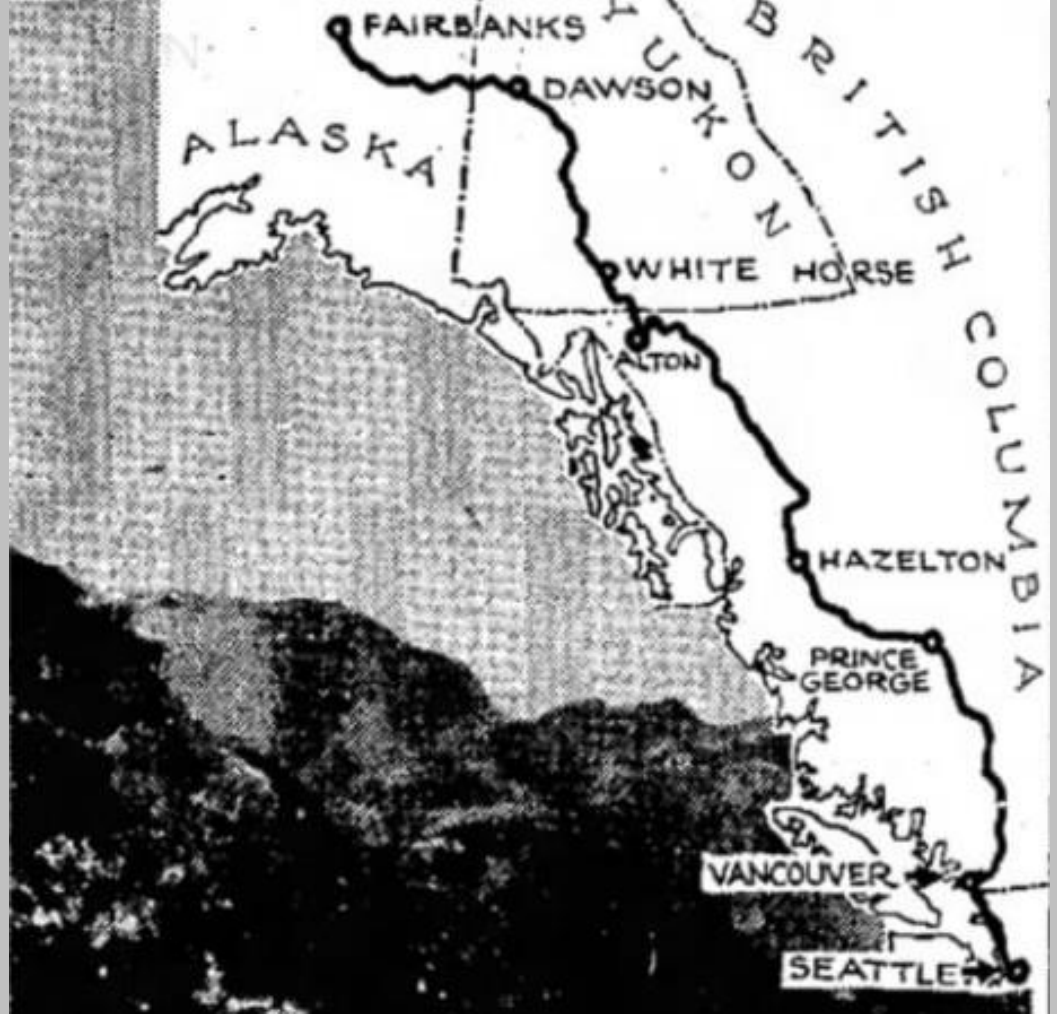
The American members of the Commission report that the advantages to be derived from a highway extending from Seattle to Fairbanks “are obviously more than commensurate with the cost.”

They also say it would foster air-commerce with Alaska by furnishing a guiding landmark and by providing service to aviators along the most practicable flying route to the interior of the territory and to Asia.

Thousands of motorists in quest of the new and picturesque in touring territory would travel the Alaskan road every year, it is believed.

Surveys place the highway to the east of the coast mountain range, where climatic conditions are such that snowfall is comparatively light and if traffic justified, the road could be kept open the year ‘round.

The estimated cost of constructing the Canadian section of the highway is $11,990,000 while that of the Alaska section is figured at only $1,970,000.



The map of the route (above) was published in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* of October 5, 1933. It roughly follows the routes of what would become Interstate 5 to Vancouver, B.C.; Highway 97 to Prince George; Highway 16 to Hazelton; the Stewart-Cassiar Highway to a point south of Dease Lake where it crosses to Atlin (on the map as "Alton"); the Atlin Road and Alaska Highway to Whitehorse; the North Klondike Highway to Dawson and the Top of the World, Taylor, Alaska and Richardson Highway, to Fairbanks.

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
December 5, 1933

GOLD Per Ounce Is Priced By The Reconstruction Finance Corporation Today At $34.01

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

FARTHEST NORTH DAILY NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VOLUME XXX. FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1933. PRICE TEN CENTS

DIMOND SEEKS $1,970,000 FOR HIGHWAY

Fire Destroys Livengood Mining Records

PROHIBITION LAW WIPED OUT OF FEDERAL CONSTITUTION TODAY

DRINKING TO BE LEGAL IN 18 STATES

CUSTODIERS IN SOME PLACES MAY STAND, IN OTHERS SIT AND IN OTHERS GO TO THEIR HOMES

Prohibition was wiped from the constitution of the United States at 5:31 o'clock this afternoon, Pacific Time, when Utah, the thirty-

CHARGE OF $8,000,000



NOTHING IS SAVED FROM NIGHT BLAZE

UNITED STATES COMMISSIONER LEE P MERRY SENDS MESSAGE TELLING OF LOSS OF BOOKS AND EQUIPMENT

Fire has destroyed all court and mining records in the Livengood district, according to a message received yesterday by K. H. Cit-

LAST DREDGE CLOSED DOWN TODAY BY F. E.

PRESENT FORCE OF 121 MEN WILL BE REDUCED TO WINTER CREW AND REPAIRS WILL BE MADE

With the closing down today of No. 5 dredge on Cleary Creek, all dredges of the Fairbanks Explor-

Alaska's Portion Of Road Regarded Ideal Public Work

CONSTRUCTION OF TERRITORY'S PART OF INTERNATIONAL THOROUGHFARE WOULD OPEN LARGE TRACTS OF VIRGIN TIMBER AND EXTENSIVE MINERAL AREAS.

Article includes information of more local interest, corrects errors in the AP article previously published and responds to the reluctance of Canada to build their section

WORKS FOR ROAD



Anthony J. Dimond

WASHINGTON, Dec. 5 - Describing the project as an ideal enterprise for the Public Works Administration, Anthony J. Dimond, Delegate in Congress from Alaska, announced today that he would seek an appropriation of $1,970,000 at the coming session of Congress, which meets in January.

Anthony J. Dimond, Alaska Delegate to Congress, 1933. “Much of the work on the 174 miles of the highway to be constructed in Alaska would be hand-work,” Delegate Dimond said. “A great portion of the appropriation, namely $1,600,000, would go for day-labor; the remainder for bridges, culverts and engineering.

Usefulness Is Emphasized

The usefulness of the Alaska section in no way depends on the Canadian portion of the highway, as the Alaska section will open-up thousands of acres of rich virgin timber lands and creek mining areas hitherto scarcely touched.

Under plans favored at present, the Alaska portion of the highway would be 24-feet-wide with a 16-foot gravel surface.

Would Prove Incentive

Delegate Dimond declared that he believed construction of the Alaska section would be an incentive to the construction of the Canadian portion, the cost of which is estimated at almost $11,000,000.

In the above Associated Press dispatch, the uncompleted Alaska section of the highway is stated to be 174 miles. According to the report of the Special Commissioners appointed by President Hoover to study the project, the uncompleted Alaska portion of the highway is 183 miles and the cost of construction for this mileage is estimated at $2,000.000.

Statement as to Cost

The Associated Press dispatch says the estimated cost of the Canadian portion of the highway is “almost $11,000,000.” According to the report of the Special Commissioners, the cost of the Canadian portion would be $12,000,000.

The total length of the highway - Seattle to Fairbanks - as reported by the Special Commissioners, would be 2,256 miles. Of this length, 1,073 are completed and 1,183 uncompleted.

Uncompleted Portions

Of the uncompleted portion, 1,000 miles are in Canadian territory; between Hazelton, B.C. and the Alaska Boundary, and 183 miles in Alaska; between the Alaska Boundary and Fairbanks.

The Special Commissioners were Herbert H. Rice of Detroit, Chairman Ernest Walker Sawyer, former Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior and Major Malcolm Elliott, Corps of Engineers, United States Army, former President of the Alaska Road Commission.

At the same time that many people were promoting the Pacific-Yukon Highway from Seattle to Fairbanks others, with an even grander vision, were promoting the *Midnight Sun Highway*; from Alaska to Mexico. A brief article in The *Pittsburgh Press* of November 25, 1933, stated that boosters of the project "are overjoyed at the news the U.S. government will spend $18,000,000 in building a modern highway from Alaska to the Pacific Coast Highway system. The new highway will be 850-miles-long of which 440 miles are in British Columbia; 200 miles in Yukon and 210 miles in Alaska. It will give motorists a 4,000-mile run from Alaska to Mexico."

Other routes were being discussed by other groups, too. A brief article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* of October 15, 1933, talked about a "proposed Alaskan-Canadian Highway" that would link Alaska with the Peace River and Lesser Slave Lake regions. "Travel from this district to Edmonton, Great Falls, Mont., and Salt Lake City, Utah, would be over the Sunshine Trail route." The Sunshine Trail had just been surfaced between Edmonton and Great Falls.

The Prairie Route

Support Grows For Prairie Route For Proposed U.S.-Alaska Road

The Winnipeg Tribune (Winnipeg, Manitoba) – Jan. 28, 1939

APPOINTMENT by the Dominion government of a five-man commission to study the proposed U.S.-Alaska Highway has drawn attention to the fact that the shortest route leads across the prairies within 200 miles of Winnipeg. Those wishing to detour through this city would have to drive only 75 miles extra.

Support for the Prairie Route has been gaining ground in recent weeks, Before that, most of the publicity for the highway proposal came from British Columbia, where Premier Pattullo has been working for a highway connection between British Columbia and the Yukon. Now, however, Alberta Spokesmen have given a new turn to the discussion by arguing the superior advantages of a route east of the Rocky Mountains.

The need of swift communications between the United States and Alaska in the event of war is the basis of many arguments for construction of the highway. Other advantages of the route are chiefly by-products, which could not by themselves justify the expenditure. So much is agreed upon in most of the comment published from New York to Vancouver.

Routes Suggested

From the defense standpoint, the important thing is to have the shortest possible route between Alaska and the industrial regions of the United States - from which war materials would have to be shipped - it has been pointed out by F.S. Wright, of Edmonton, Publisher of the Nor'-West Miner.

The bulk of United States heavy industry lies to the east of Chicago. Therefore the mileage between Chicago and Alaska is the first test by which the possible routes must be judged, Mr. Wright argues.

From Chicago to Alaska, four main routes have been suggested from various sources. Shown on the accompanying map, they are:

By the coast, through Seattle, British Columbia and the Yukon:

1. From Prince George via Finlay Forks and Lower Post.

2. From Prince George via Hazelton and Whitehorse.

Across the prairies, through Alberta:

3. From Edmonton via the Peace River - or via Jasper and Prince George - to Finlay Forks, Lower Post and the Yukon.

4. From Edmonton via Hay River and the Mackenzie Valley.

Route No. 2 via Hazelton, B.C., and Whitehorse, Yukon, is likely - from the trend of published comment - to be discarded, owing to its narrow valleys and high altitudes. For 100 miles it would run above 4,000-feet and at one point is reported to touch 6,000-feet. British Columbia opinion now is supporting the inland route via Finlay Forks.

As between the three remaining routes, as the map shows, the project falls into two parts - the southern from to Finlay Forks; the northern, from Edmonton to Fairbanks.



Chicago-Winnipeg-Alaska: Government study of routes for a highway from the United States to Alaska has drawn attention to the fact that the shortest, least expensive, and most easily defended route from Chicago to Alaska leads across the prairies within 200 miles of Winnipeg. The above map shows the alternative routes on the southern half of the project from Chicago to Finlay Forks, B.C., and the four routes proposed on the northern half, from Edmonton to Fairbanks. Travelers detouring through Winnipeg between Detroit Lakes or Fargo and Saskatoon would have to drive only 75 miles extra.

On the southern part, the Prairie Route to Finlay Forks, B.C., via Edmonton and the Peace River leads on all counts. It is 500 miles shorter than the coast route - only 2,500 miles as against 3,050.

Upkeep Costs Lower

Construction and upkeep are much cheaper. The Prairie Route runs through mountains for less than 200 miles, compared with 1,500 miles for the coast route - 700 in the western states and 800 more in British Columbia. To within 50 miles of Finlay Forks the Prairie Route is rarely more than 2,000-feet above sea-level, almost the highest point being Edmonton, 2,200-feet, The coast route for hundreds of miles is rarely under 2,000-feet. In British Columbia it rises to 3,000-feet, and in the Western States still higher.

Because of the low altitude on the Prairie Route, precipitation is less and winter operation feasible on most of its length, whereas on the coast route, mountain passes are easily blocked by snow.

Defense of the Prairie Route would be much easier. It is twice as far inland as the coast route; is sheltered behind the Rocky Mountains and runs through open country where detours easily could be made if necessary. The Coast Route runs mostly through valleys and near the Fraser River, it lies in a canyon where a single bomb could blow the road into the river.

Local Revenue Greater

Local revenue on the Prairie Route is much greater. For all but 200 miles of its length it is already a trunk highway through well-settled country, Whereas the Coast Route runs through sparsely-settled dry plains or mountain valleys almost all the way through the Western States and British Columbia. Fueling on the Prairie Route, from the defense angle, also, would be easier, with the Turner Valley oil fields less exposed to possible attack.

On the northern part of the highway project, from Edmonton to Fairbanks, Alaska, all the same considerations seem to favor route No. 4 - from Edmonton to Great Slave Lake, down the Mackenzie Valley and by the Valley of the Peel River to near Dawson.

Government reports show the country traversed on the Mackenzie-Peel Route to be open and less than 1,000-feet above sea-level, except in the 200 miles near Dawson, with clay or shale soil, large forests, medium precipitation and gasoline supplies available from the oil field at Fort Norman.

A good deal of local traffic would issue from the growing mining towns on Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes and the Fort Norman oil wells and there is good soil for gardening at least all along the route.

New Construction

Mileage on the Finlay Forks-Yukon Route from Edmonton would be about 1,750, of which nearly 1,200 miles would be entirely new construction. The Mackenzie-Peel Valley Route would total about 1,900 miles, but of this only about 1,200 miles would be entirely new construction. A road is in use from Edmonton to beyond Peace River Crossing, 400 miles, and construction of a route for 350 miles to Hay River on Great Slave Lake has been agreed upon by the Dominion and Alberta governments, although the standard of construction is not yet decided.

Edmonton is 1,767 miles from Chicago. The whole distance from Chicago to Fairbanks via the prairies and the Mackenzie would be about 3,700 miles; via the prairies and the Yukon, about 3.500 and via the coast and the Yukon, about 4,000 miles.

Since part of the purpose of the Alcan Highway is to serve these airports, both as an emergency access and as means of transporting gasoline for refueling by truck instead of by valuable air-cargo space, it was logical that the route follow the airports laid-out the previous year. These principal airports are at Edmonton, Alberta, and Fort St. John and Fort Nelson, B.C., Watson Lake and Whitehorse, Y.T., and Northway, Big Delta and Fairbanks, Alaska. That's the story on the final location and the Senate Subcommittee decided no further investigation was necessary.

Part 4

The Trail

An “All-American” Route

Alaska's first highway – the *Richardson Highway* (a/k/a "The Trail") - remains one of its most spectacular and enduring. From sea-level at Valdez, it climbs over the Chugach Mountains, along the Copper River and finally through the broad, fertile Tanana Valley to Fairbanks; Alaska's second-largest city.

For the first +/-150 years after the arrival of the first Europeans in Alaska, the primary transportation routes for the explorers, traders and prospectors were along the waterways. With the vast distances involved, building trails was generally not considered in most areas. The Klondike Gold Rush, however, changed all that.

The highway's history goes back to the Klondike Gold Rush, when thousands of people were trying to find the easiest way to reach the gold fields. With the huge influx of people, finding a way to the gold fields through Alaska would mean more development on the American-side of the border and thus, more money for the federal government, which had still not yet convinced many people that the purchase of Alaska 30 years previous had been a good deal for the U.S.

In 1898, a U.S. Army exploration party under the command of Captain William R. Abercrombie did a rough survey of a route starting at Valdez.

Several explorations of the Alaskan interior, notably one by U.S. Army Lieutenant Henry T. Allen in 1885, had produced an enormous amount of new information. However, in 1898 the primary routes to the goldfields were on Canadian soil and in two cases (the Ashcroft and Edmonton Trails), all of their length.

In 1898, as the gold rush was at its peak, the U.S. Army sent exploration teams to Alaska to locate a practical "All-American" route. The main corridors under initial consideration were the Susitna and Matanuska Valleys at the head of Cook Inlet and the Copper River area. Captain William R. Abercrombie was in-charge of the Copper River parties and at the season's end, his suggestion that a trail could be built from Valdez was accepted.

Valdez was already a booming town; a base for the prospectors who were heading to the Klondike along a route, discovered in January 1898, that led across the Valdez Glacier. This route, heavily promoted by the Pacific Steam Whaling Co., was exceptionally difficult and dangerous and many deaths were the result.

In the early spring of 1899, work started on what would eventually become the Richardson Highway. Cut as a 5-foot-wide pack trail initially, progress was fairly rapid. By the end of the summer, the first +/-40 miles (the most difficult section) had been completed and 93 miles surveyed and cleared. As well as the regular crews, the government hired destitute prospectors at $50/month plus board, allowing hundreds to accumulate enough cash to escape the country.

In 1900, construction on a military telegraph network began. A crucial part of the network was a line from Fort Liscum, at Valdez, to Fort Egbert, at Eagle. Much of the pack trail was upgraded as part of that work.

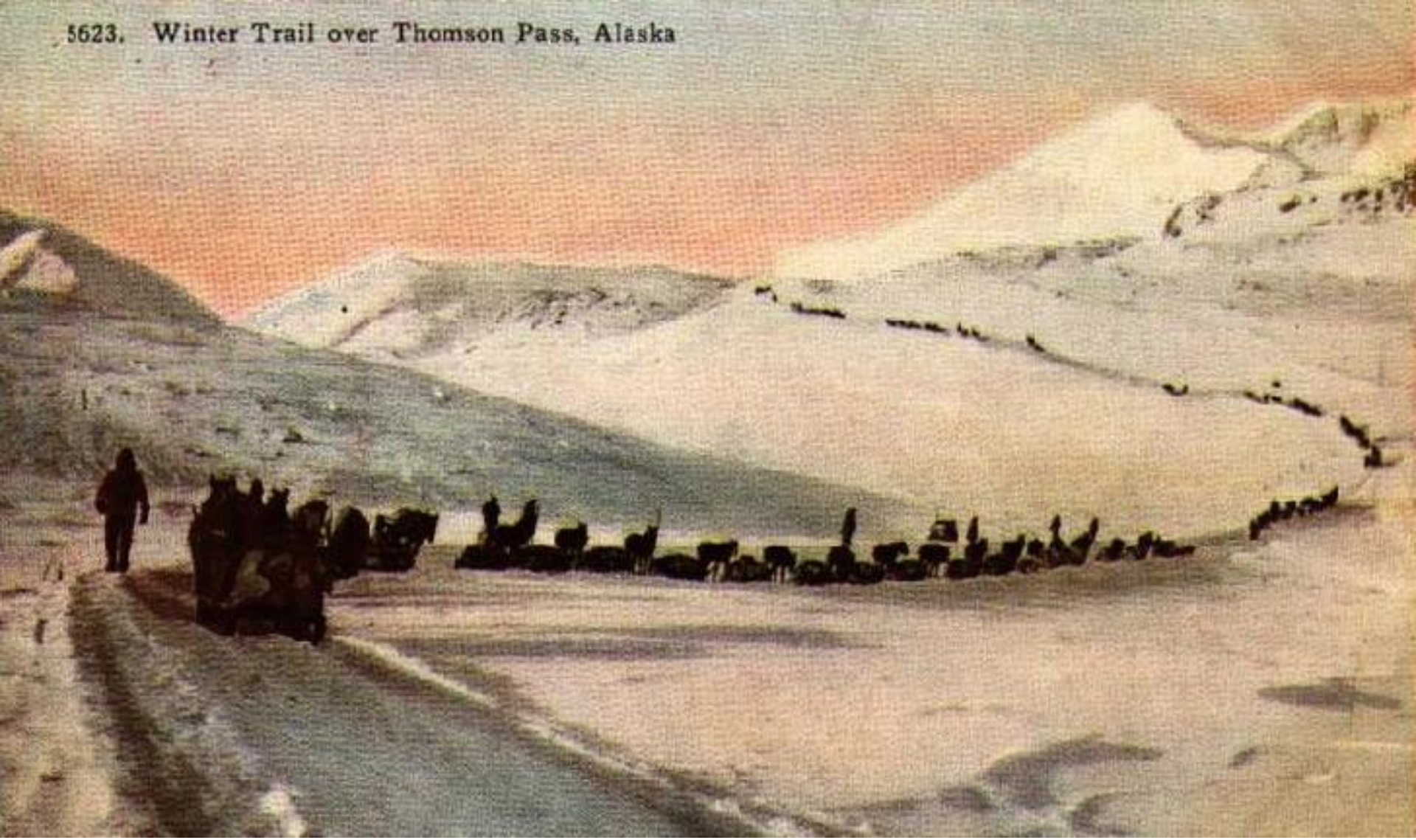
The trail was further improved in 1902 due to the rush to the new gold strike near what is now Fairbanks and the current highway follows that route fairly closely. During that rush, the first permanent roadhouses were built along the trail. At least one of them; the Copper Center Lodge, is still operating (although in a newer building, constructed in 1932).

Following the formation of the *Board of Road Commissioners* in 1904, upgrading of the road was fairly steady, against the objections of many who thought that this one 409-mile-long road received far too high a percentage of annual appropriations.

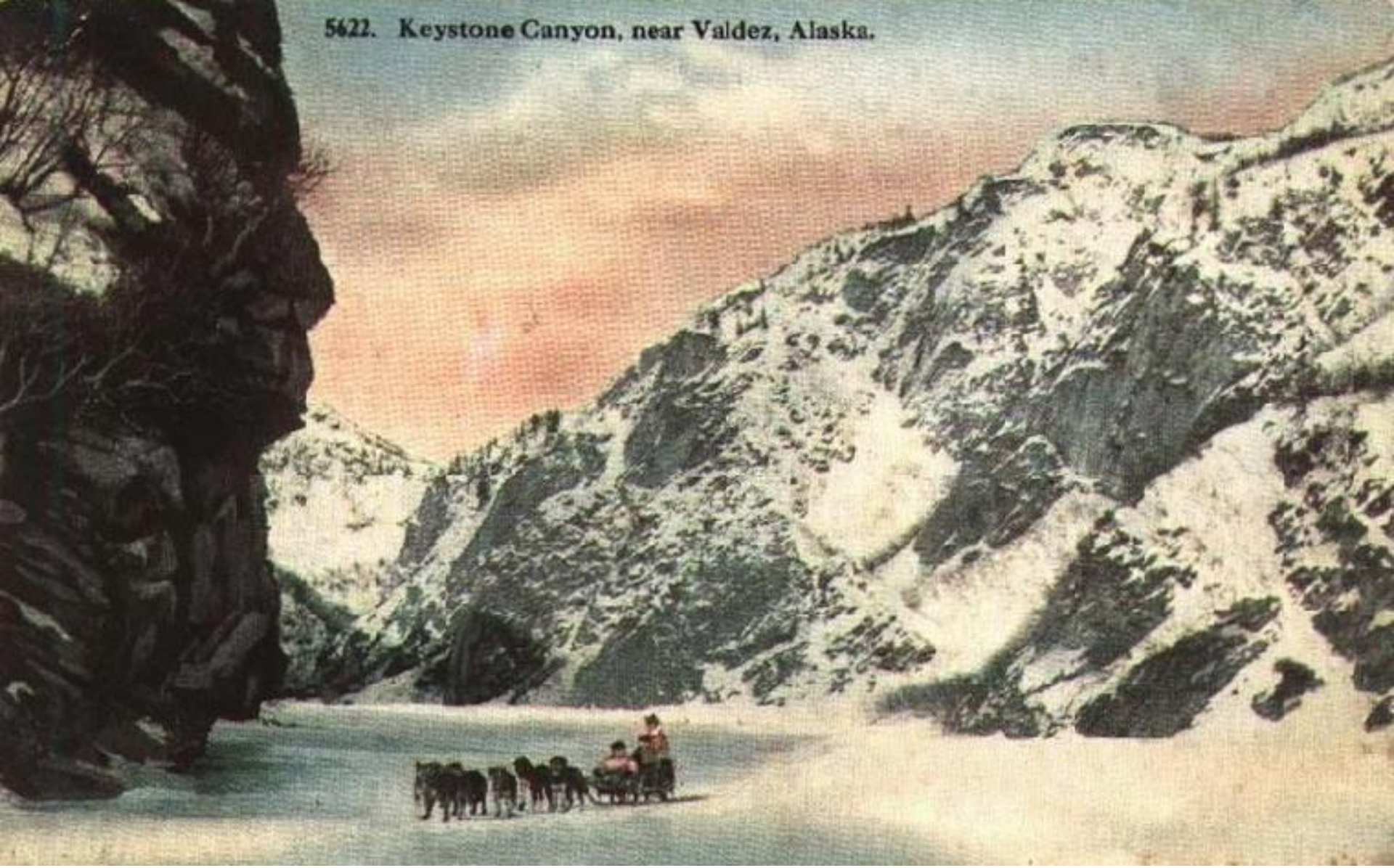
That fact, however, was justified by the government as a prudent response to the proven mineral riches that were made accessible by the road. Of particular note was the copper found at Kennicott.

In 1913, the U.S. Army sent a truck on a trip from Valdez to Fairbanks and back; it was able to make about 50 miles/day. Thus, the use of trucks and automobiles on the road had became common within a couple of years. By 1919, 90% of the traffic was motorized.

To finance the highway maintenance, in 1933 tolls were instituted for commercial vehicles; passenger vehicles carrying from 5 to 15 passengers were charged $100-175 per-trip, with freight trucks charged by the pound. Despite heavy lobbying for decades, it wasn't until 1957 that the highway was paved.



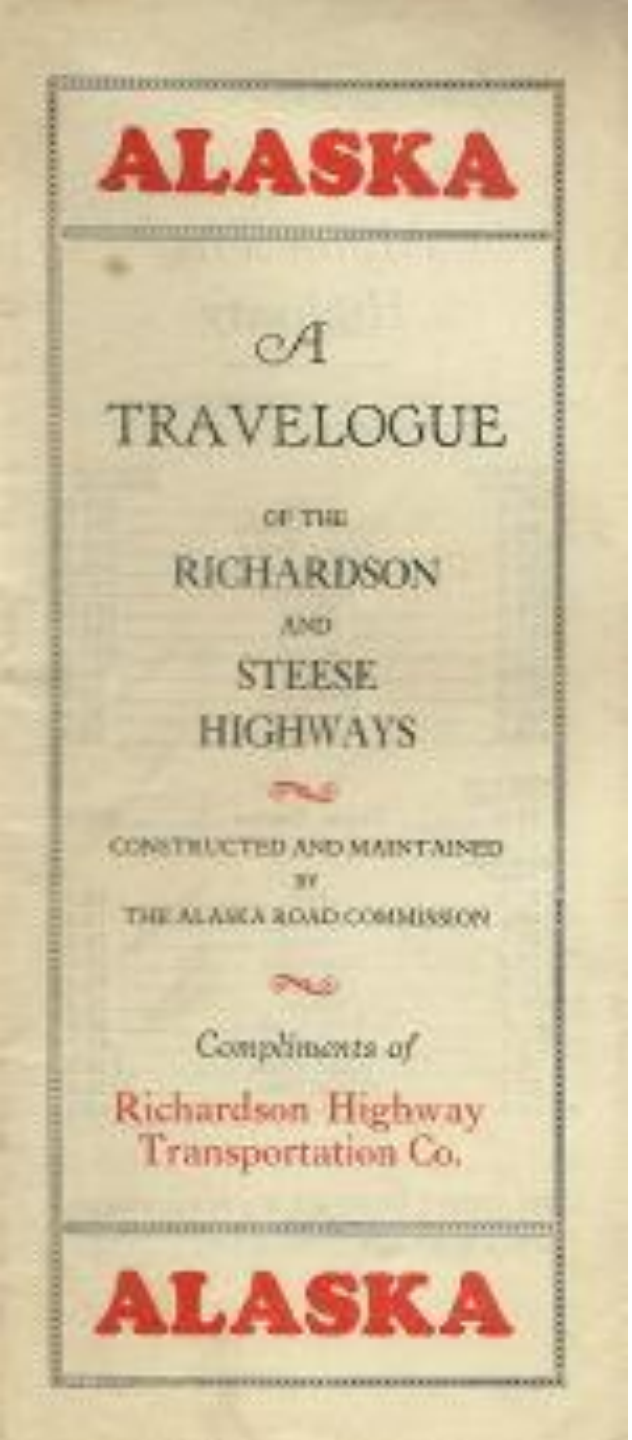
Throughout most of the road's history, the climb from Valdez to Thompson Pass and the passage through Keystone Canyon have been the main trouble spots. In only 7 miles, the road had to climb +2,600-feet and even today, it's a difficult grade, but at least motorists can travel along Alaska's gold route in comfort on a paved, all-weather highway.



The trail through the canyon used to be high above the Lowe River, but now it's on the canyon floor. The waterfalls in the canyon continue to attract people. There are few signs of the early days along the current highway, but it remains one of the most dramatic routes through Alaska.

Among the many sites of interest along the highway are:

- **Keystone Canyon** - one of the most challenging parts of the highway's construction is also one of the most beautiful, with large waterfalls falling over the sheer cliffs.as it goes through Thompson Pass, the highway reaches an elevation of 2,678-feet, affording spectacular views of the valley and surrounding peaks;
- **Worthington Glacier** -the mostly easily-accessible glacier in Alaska - you can drive to within 500-feet of the ice and you can even walk along the edge of it;
- **Trans-Alaska Pipeline** - for much of its length, the Richardson Highway parallels the pipeline. Of note is one of the pump stations, which pushes North Slope oil though the pipe with huge jet engines and the bridge that carries it across the Tanana River;
- **End of the Alaska Highway Monument** - at Delta Junction;
- **Eielson Air Force Base** - beside the highway.



In 1931, the *Alaska Road Commission,* which constructed and maintained both the Richardson and Steese Highways, published a 24-page Travelogue to assist travelers. Following are excerpts from that brochure.

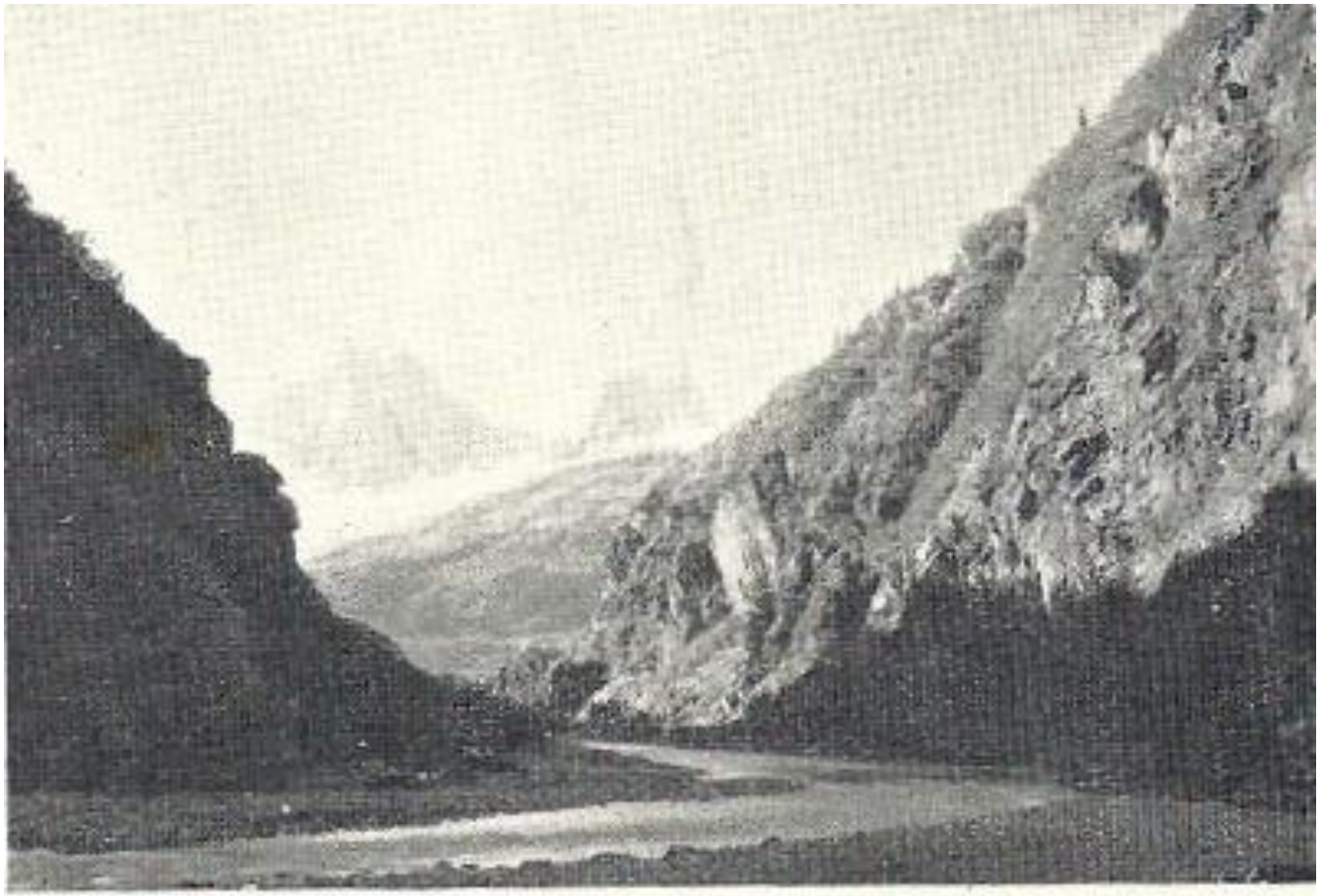
Accommodations Along the Highway

Miles from Valdez		Miles from Fairbanks
52.0	Tiekel	319.0
80.0	Upper Tonsina	291.0
103.0	Copper Center	268.0
128.0	Gulkana	243.0
150.0	Sourdough	221.0
175.0	Meiers	196.0
191.0	Paxson	180.0
233.0	Rapids	138.0
280.0	McCarty	91.0
301.0	Richardson	70.0
320.0	Fox Farm	51.0
353.0	18 Mile	18.0

Miles from Chitina		
15.0	Lower Tonsina	302.6

Miles from Circle		
151.9	Fox	10.7
148.8	Gilmore	13.8
140.4	Summit	20.2
133.5	Chatanika	29.1
121.6	Lingo's	41.0
106.0	Cassiar	56.6
92.8	Faith Creek	69.8
73.1	12 Mile	89.5
46.6	Miller House	116.0
33.6	Central House	129.0
14.3	Birch Creek	148.3

TELEPHONE MESSAGES may be sent along the route from all the roadhouses listed above, as well as from Beale's Cache, (Mile 262.0).



KEYSTONE CANYON, MILE 41.0, RICHARDSON HIGHWAY

Of Historical Interest

The Highway between Valdez and Fairbanks is named in honor of General W.P. Richardson, U.S. Army, who was President of the Alaska Road Commission from 1905 to 1917.

In those days there was no railroad to Fairbanks and this route was the most important means of access to the interior, because the Yukon River is closed to navigation for so much of the year.

Under the direction of General Richardson, the highway was located and improved so that by 1907 it was passable throughout for dog teams and horse sleds. In 1910, wagons could make the trip and about 1913, the first automobile made a through trip from the coast to Fairbanks.

After the slump due to the War, the entire Alaska transportation system was rehabilitated under the able direction of General James G. Steese (President of the Alaska Road Commission 1920-1927) and the highway was improved, widened and reconstructed to automobile standards throughout with up-to-date mechanical equipment.

Thus, for 24 years this famous trail has been giving service and its improvement has steadily kept just ahead of the de-mands of transportation.

The highway between Fairbanks and Circle City is named in honor of General Steese in view of the fact that it was originally con-ceived by and almost entirely constructed under the direction of this able officer.

Photographic Highlights

Part I

Valdez to Willow Creek



BEAR CREEK SUSPENSION BRIDGE, MILE 17.0,
RICHARDSON HIGHWAY

BEAR CREEK SUSPENSION BRIDGE (El. 650). A neat sample of the work of the Engineer.



WORTHINGTON GLACIER, MILE 30.0, RICHARDSON HIGHWAY

WORTHINGTON GLACIER (El. 2070). About 500-yards from the road. Here we are able to inspect a glacier at short range and may be lucky enough to see a glacier bear off in the distance.

Part II

The Edgerton Cut-off

Willow Creek to Chitina and Cordova



LAKE CHENAN MILE 1.0, EDGERTON CUTOFF

LAKE CHENAN (El. 650). The southern-most of a series of three beautiful small lakes that the road follows. “Chenan” means “thank you,” the lake having been named by the natives in appreciation for the bountiful supply of grayling contained in its waters.

The Indian Meaning of the Names of a Few Alaskan Rivers Seen Along the Route

GAKONA – “Rabbit river”

GULKANA – “Saw-tooth (or crooked) river”

KLUTINA – “Long way to head lake” / “river with big head”

SALINA – “Crooked river that carries the fish”

TANANA – “River of the mountain men”

TAZLINA – “Swift water”

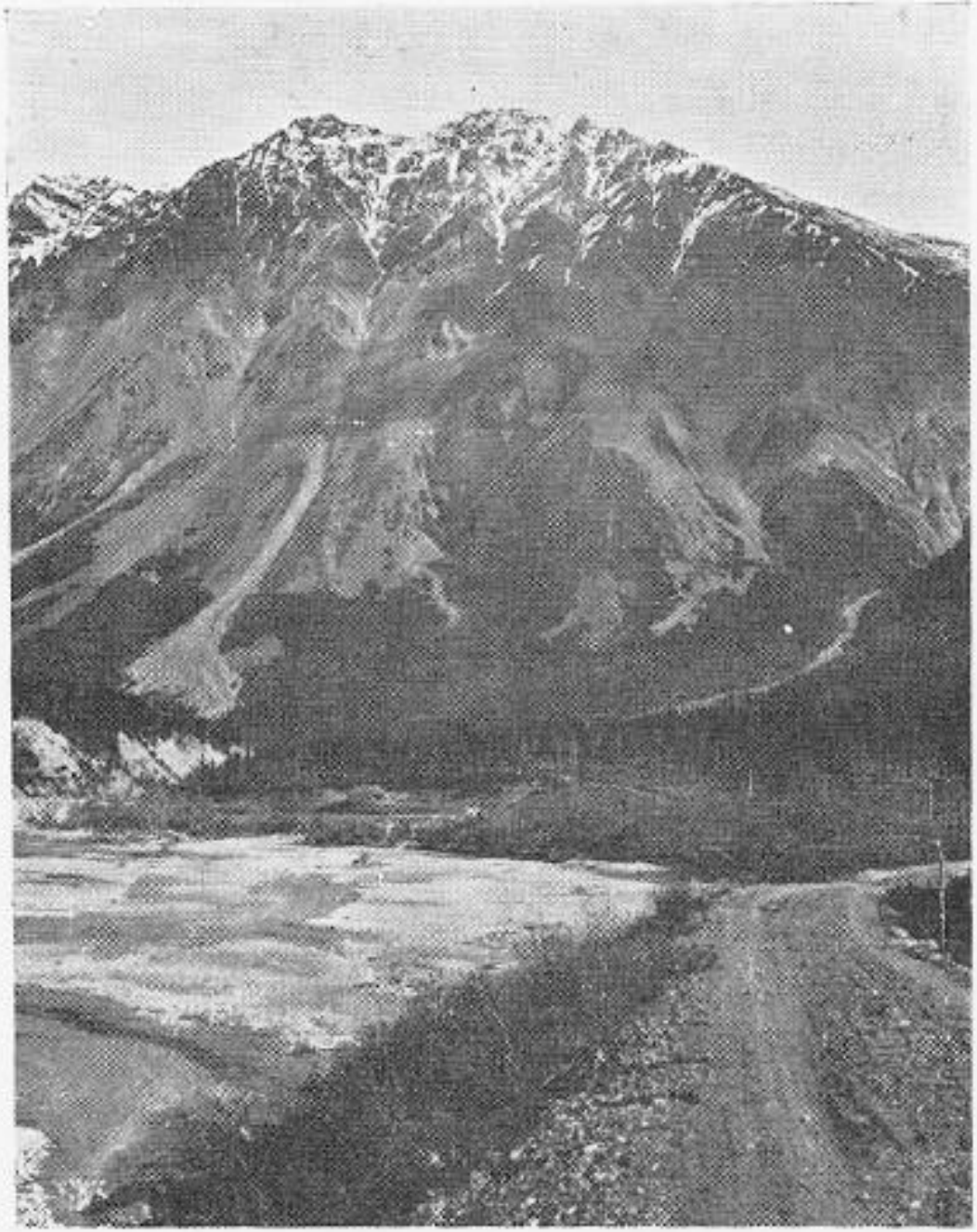
TIEKEL – “No fish,” “no head” / “cup of tea”

TONSINA - (Old native “CONSINA”), “Cottonwood river” / “Big King Salmon River”

Part III

The Richardson Highway

Willow Creek to Fairbanks



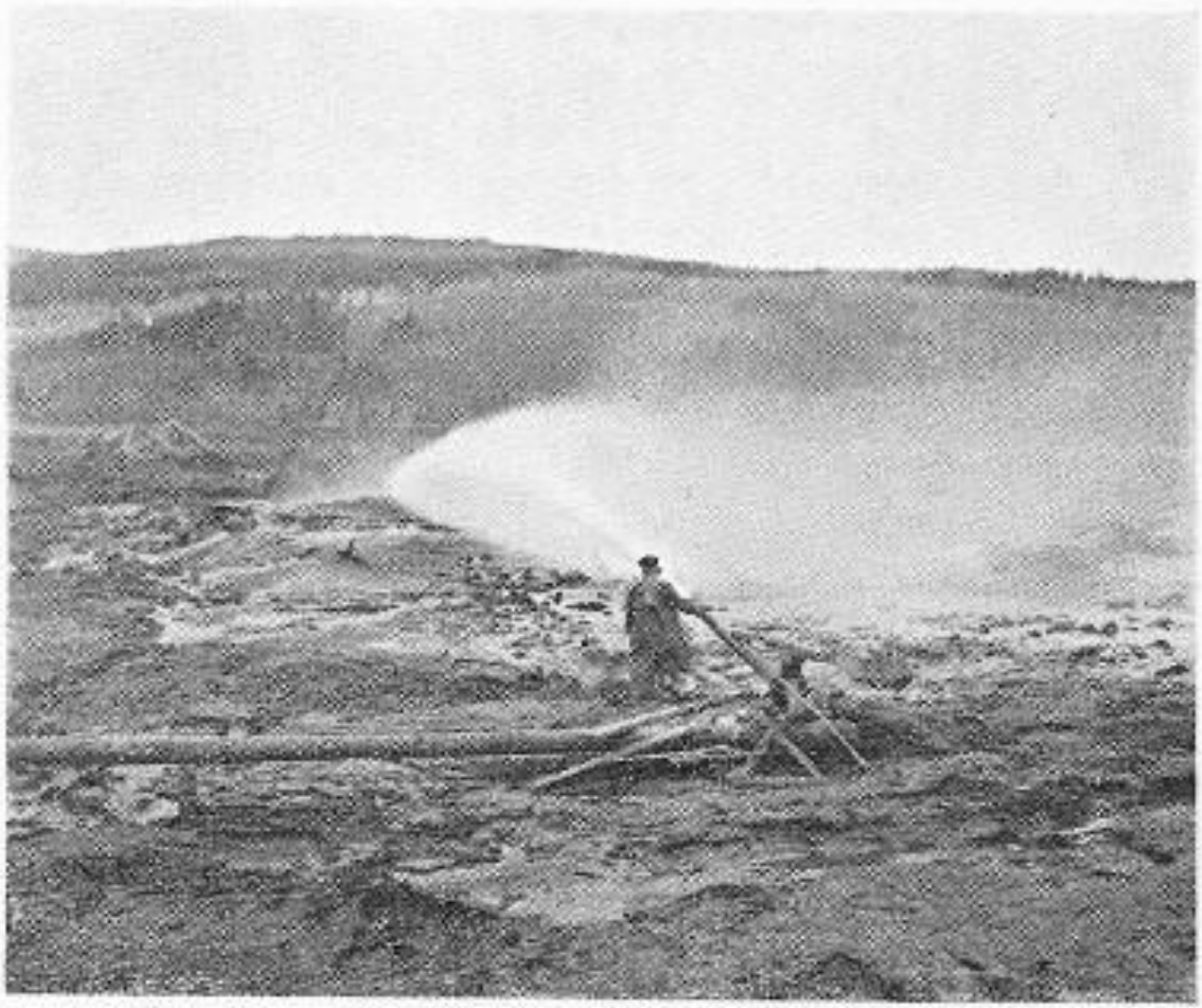
RAINBOW MOUNTAIN, MILE 212, RICHARDSON HIGHWAY

RAINBOW MOUNTAIN (El. 27-00). Numerous slides, each with a different coloring, give this mountain the appearance of a huge rainbow. This is one of the most beautiful sights in Alaska.

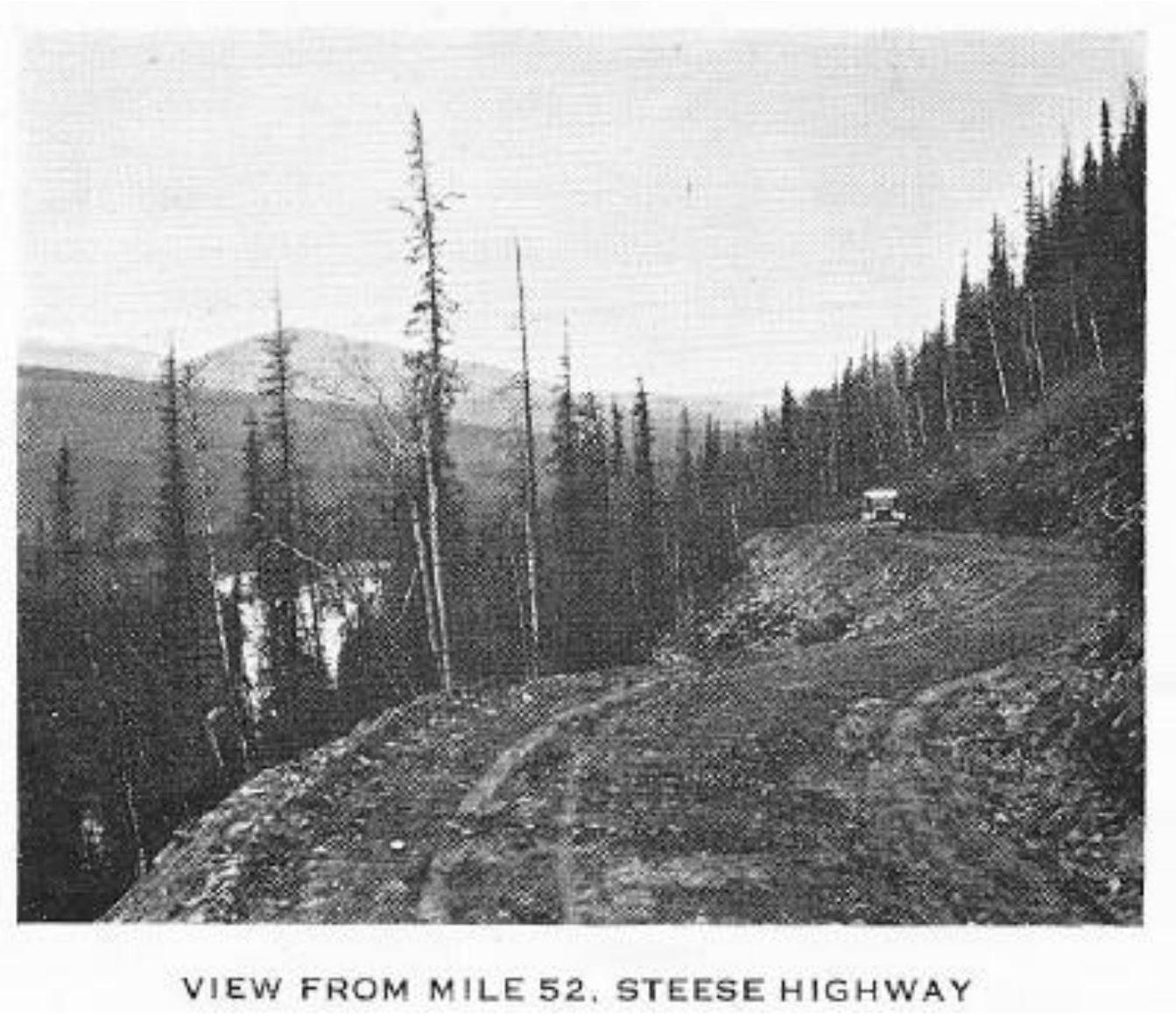
Part IV

The Steese Highway

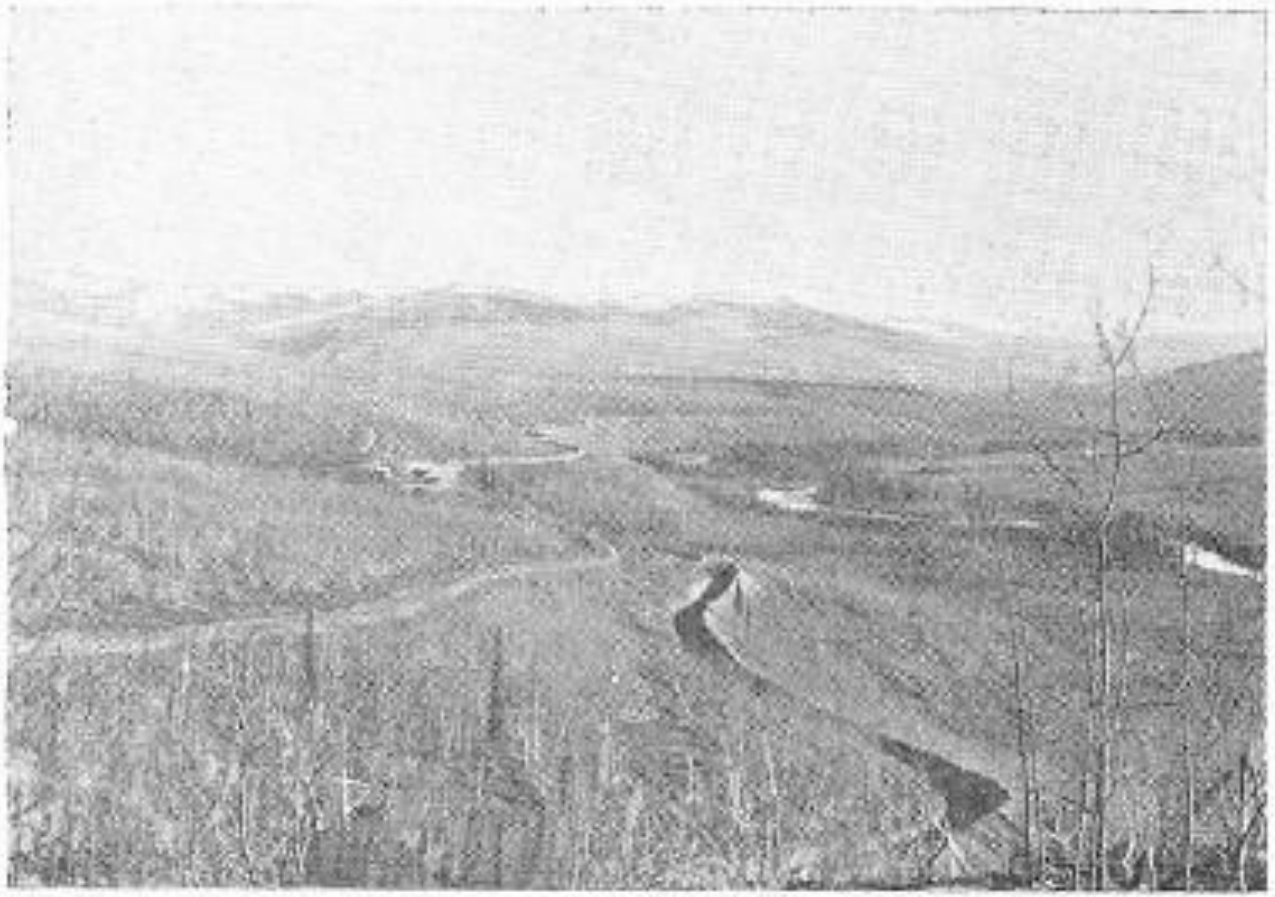
Fairbanks to Circle City



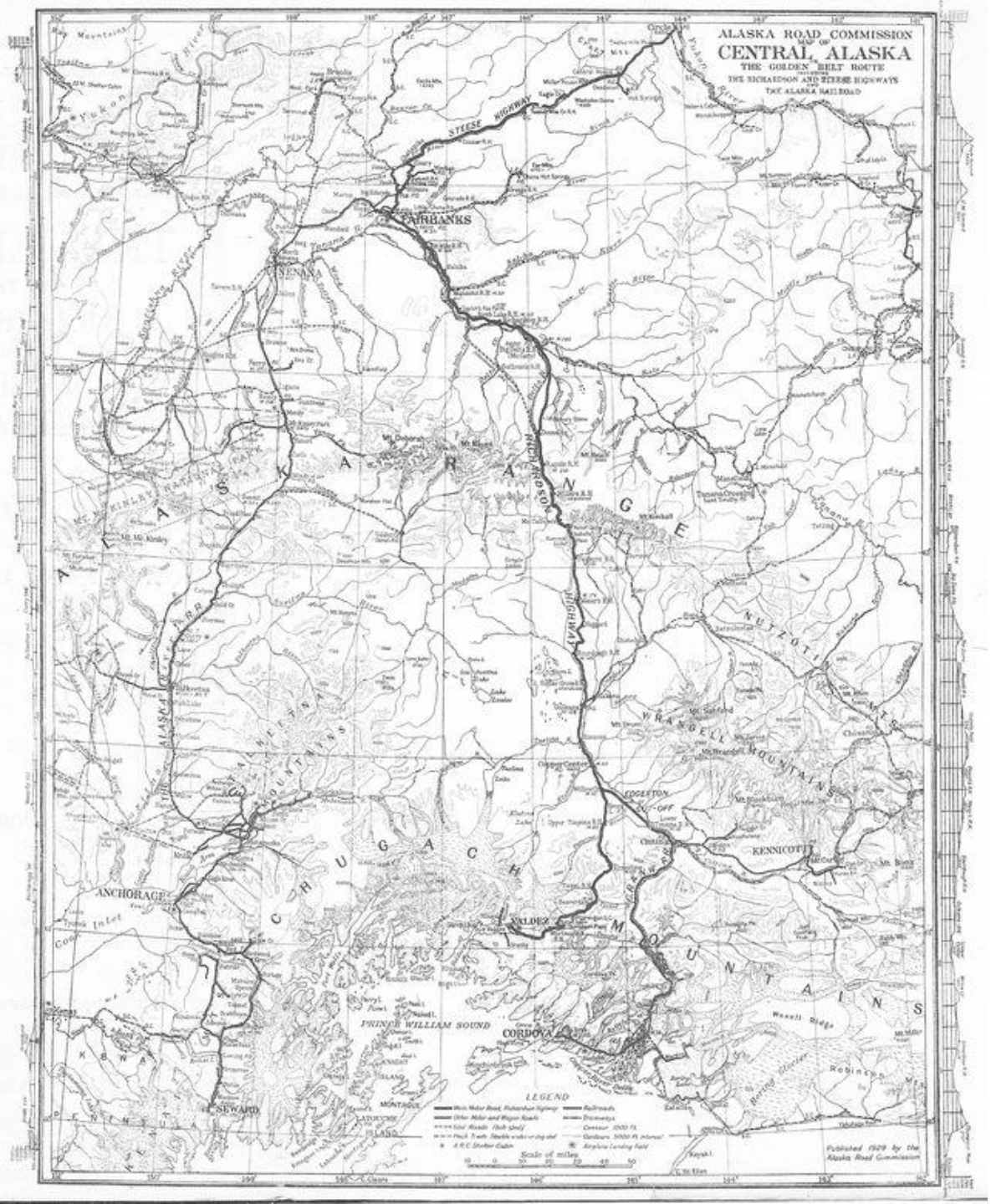
STRIPPING OVERBURDEN AT CHATANIKA, MILE 30,
STEESE HIGHWAY



VIEW FROM MILE 52, STEESE HIGHWAY



MILE 63, STEESE HIGHWAY, SHOWING ROAD, FAIR-
BANKS EXPLORATION CO. DITCH AND
CHATANIKA RIVER



Alaska Road Commission

Map of Central Alaska


Richardson Highway
366 miles
Nunavut
Alaska
Fairbanks
Northwest Territories
Yukon Territory
Valdez
Alberta
British Columbia
Montana
Washington
Idaho

Part 5

Glory Road

ALCAN

AMERICA'S GLORY ROAD



Alcan signpost — halfway to Tokyo

AN ENGINEERING NEWS-RECORD REPORT


SIBERIA
ARCTIC OCEAN
BERING SEA
Nome
Yukon River
Tanana
ALASKA
Fairbanks
Big Delta
Gulkana
Anchorage
Slana River
ALASKA PENINSULA
Valdez
Seward
THE ALEUTIANS
YUKON TERR.
Mackenzie
Norman Wells
NORTHWEST TERR.
KLUANE LAKE
Whitehorse
Watson Lake
Liard River
Skagway
Haines
Ft. Nelson
Ft. Nelson R.
Slave River
Peace River
Ft. St. John
BRITISH
Dawson Creek
PACIFIC OCEAN
Prince Rupert
Prince George
ALBERTA
Edmonton
COLUMBIA
Vancouver
Seattle
UNITED STATES
Scale in Miles
0 100 200 300 400 500

HOW TO SAY IT

Pronunciation of geographical names found in the Northland is puzzling to the newcomer. Here are a few examples to aid the reader in following the map and text:

Kluane—Klew'-aw-nee
Sikanni—Sick'-an-nee
Tanana—Tan'-a-naw
Nisutlin—Ni-sut'-lin
Donjek—Don'-jeck
Dezadeash—Dez-a-dee'ash
Tok-Toke

Part I—Strategy and Location

Harold W. Richardson
Western Editor, Engineering News-Record

(*ENR* - December 17, 1942)

This and succeeding accounts of the construction of the Alcan Highway, stretching for 1,800 miles from Dawson Creek, B.C. to Gulkana and Fairbanks, Alaska, are largely based upon first-hand inspection of the road by the author. He was the first person - either Army officer or civilian - to travel the full length of the highway as well as all its branches. At the final holing-through of the pioneer road in the Yukon near the Alaska boundary he was the only civilian present, and it was his camera that made the sole photographic record of that historic ceremony. Engineering News-Record joins with the author in expressing thanks to the War Department, the Corps of Engineers, the Public Roads Administration and the contractors on the project for their wholehearted cooperation in making it possible to cover the work for the preparation of these articles. And to the many individuals out on the line who went far beyond the bounds of ordinary duty to be of service, particular thanks are extended.—The Editors.

“GUTS AND TRACTORS built that road,” remarked a hard-bitten Colonel of Engineers - one of several who led troops into the North to hack the Alcan Highway through the wilderness. The remark is symbolical, for it was the fortitude of men - officers and soldiers, engineers and contractors - and the stamina of American construction equipment that built 1,636 miles of new route and rebuilt 162 more miles of old trail, all in one short construction season.

Since mid-November trucks loaded with military supplies have been rolling into Fairbanks, Alaska, from Dawson Creek. British Columbia, 1,670 miles away - rolling over a highway that only last spring the experts said could never be built in time to be of use in this war. Those experts thought only of the uncharted and unmapped wilderness, the difficult supply problem, the muskeg, the streams and the mountains to cross. They failed to consider the spirit, ingenuity and ability of U.S. engineer officers and troops and of American and Canadian engineers and contractors when meeting the “impossible.”

Like a jagged streak of lightning the highway weaves through northern British Columbia, clear across the Yukon and into eastern Alaska. where it ends in a forked tongue; one branch serving interior Fairbanks the other reaching out toward the seacoast at Valdez.

Engineer troops - nearly half of them colored – slashed-out a pioneer road through all but 150 miles of the new route. They proved the “impassable muskeg” to be a myth; certainly, the muskeg was there, but the army locators ducked around it so successfully that they crossed less than 4 miles in one 265-mile stretch reported to be impassable, and without much difficulty at that. The troops forded small streams, used pontoon ferries and bridges on the larger rivers until pile trestles could be driven. They fought mud and bad weather, mosquitoes and other obnoxious bugs, subsisted at the ends of precarious supply lines, worked equipment without repairs or repair parts seven days and nights a week, and lived in camps offering only the bare necessities of life, without recreation or relief from the monotony of hard work.

The first regiment of troops on the project walked their heavy equipment - tractors, trucks, scrapers and shovels - overland for 325 miles in winter weather, 35-deg. below zero, to get it to an inland point before a frozen winter trail broke-up behind them. Hard, tough soldiers driving tractors without cab protection literally cried from the cold; wrecks were frequent, meals very infrequent, yet they got through with their equipment and rations to last four months before they were isolated by spring thaws.

Other troops, working in the northern sector of the highway, learned to leave permanently frozen ground alone. They learned from experience it was best to leave the humus in-place as insulation, to cover it up with brush and trees cleared from the site, then fill over the whole for the road. Through bitter and painful experiences, the army learned how to build a road through the wilderness. Even reserve officers coming directly from highway engineering posts had a lot to learn about North Country roadbuilding.

Engineer troops built the pioneer road. Behind them came a group of 54 contractors under the direction of the Public Roads Administration to build a standard road, using the army pioneer route as access. Such were the original intentions and the project started under those plans. However, by late summer the army authorities realized that specifications and standards under which the contractors were working were too exacting for fast construction.

If the original plans were to be followed the advent of winter would find only an impassable pioneer road and short sections of completed standard highway. So the contractors were pulled onto the pioneer route, to shape-it-up, to gravel the surface, to widen and to improve the alignment and grade where possible in a short time. Meanwhile, as the various regiments completed their allotted sections of the pioneer route, they fell back and improved their original efforts, working with the contractors in some cases.

The part the civilian employees and the PRA engineers played in this achievement cannot be overlooked. They fought the same mud, the same bugs and mosquitoes, their supply lines were just as precarious and their hardships just as great as those endured by the soldiers.

The result of these combined actions was the completion of a gravel-surfaced truck route the full length of the project by Nov. 20; the day the Alcan Highway was officially dedicated by United States and Canadian authorities at Kluane Lake, 165 miles west of Whitehorse, Y.T. The gravel surface is a minimum of 18 ft. wide and for most of the distance it is 22 to 24 ft. All streams have been bridged by pile trestles.

So today the highway is in useful military service. Of course the road is rough in spots, it is crooked in others, following the ground surface with a minimum of grading. Cuts and fills are scarce, sight distances are often short, steep pitches are not infrequent, but the objective of getting military traffic into Alaska this winter was achieved, to the glory and credit of all concerned.

Some of the same soldiers built the road are operating the truck transport system. Rest camps have been established from 45 to 90 miles apart and drivers shuttle these camps while the trucks run straight through. Service and repair facilities are located at the rest camps. Here, also, are snow-fighting squads equipped with plows and rotaries. Some of the contractor outfits are remaining through the winter to augment squads of troops assigned to maintain and to constantly improve the road.

The Alcan Highway is a battlefront, exacting its toll of life the same as any other field of combat. A pontoon ferry on Charlie Lake capsized in a squall, drowning two officers and ten soldiers; a tug towing a barge-load of equipment up the Alaskan Inside Passage went down with all hands in a storm. Several bridges and other local points-of-interest have been dedicated and named in honor of some officer, soldier or civilian who gave-up his life in building the road.

Purpose and Directives

An international highway to Alaska has been talked about for years and in the past decade studies have been made by an International Commission of Engineers. However, it was not until we became engaged in war with Japan that the immediate necessity of the road was realized. The road was planned as a military supply route to Alaska that also would serve a string of airports established in 1941 through Canada and Alaska by the Canadian government and the U.S. Army Air Corps, respectively, and now in constant use by our Air Forces.

The Army General Staff turned the job over to the Corps of Engineers. The Chief of Engineers decided to build a pioneer route with engineer troops and issued the following directives: “A pioneer road is to be pushed to completion with all speed within the physical capacity of the troops. The objective is to complete the entire route at the earliest practical date to a standard sufficient only for the supply of the troops engaged on the work. Further refinements will be undertaken only if additional time is available.” Such were the original orders and under these instructions work was started.

The command in the field decided the following standards, in general, would govern: Clearing, 32 ft. wide minimum; grade, 10 percent maximum; curves, 50 ft. radius minimum; surfacing, 12 ft. minimum; shoulders, 3 ft. minimum; ditch depth, 2 ft.; crown, 1 in. per ft. maximum; bridges, single-lane H-15 minimum loading.

Using the pioneer road as a base wherever possible and as access elsewhere, a standard highway was to be built by contractors working under the direction of the Public Roads Administration.

The PRA received the following directive from the Corps of Engineers in regard to standards to be followed on its road: “To build a final type of highway according to specifications for construction of roads and bridges in national forests and national parks, 1941, issued by PRA. designated as P-41. The road to be two lanes with suitable surfacing, which can be reduced to 20 or 22 ft. if necessary. Surfacing shall be local materials with final surfacing to be applied only after drainage has been taken care of. Bridges will be trestles of local timber. Permanent bridges will be left to future financing and to the determination of the government authorities charged with operation of the road…”

"…The loading of temporary bridges shall be H-15. Trusses over 50 ft. long and trestles over 100 ft. long are to be 12 ft. wide, otherwise all bridge structures are to be 24 ft. wide. Future bridges will be designed for H-20 loading. Initial culverts will be built of local timber, permanent culverts to be of concrete or pipe. Ruling grades will be a maximum 5 percent, maximum grade will be 7 percent; curvature on prairie routes will be 3-degrees and in mountains 19-degrees and all curves above 3-deg. will be spiraled. The sector commanders are to locate the pioneer road with above qualifications in mind for a standard final-type road in order to permit the final road to follow the pioneer route as far as practicable."

Acting under these instructions, PRA engaged four managing contractors, three American firms and one Canadian who, in turn, each negotiated contracts with nine to fourteen contracting firms. Meanwhile, PRA transferred many of its engineers and other personnel to the project for making surveys and keeping records. Another contracting firm was engaged to handle all transportation of men and supplies from the States to the project.

While the army regiments arrived on the project at various intervals from March to the middle of June, none of them really got going at full-speed until almost the first of July because of bad weather and floods, though some mileage was built between the April thaws and the June floods. The contractors arrived in June, but they also did not get started until early July.

Early in August, the army authorities realized the progress being made on the standard highway was much too slow for completion of any kind of a road that would be of service this winter and, moreover, that the army pioneer route would not be suitable for military traffic. Therefore, PRA was ordered to transfer some of the contractors to improving the pioneer route. These firms had equipment better suited to shaping-up and surfacing the route than did the army, though the army units dropped back after they had finished their pioneer road assignment and worked along with the contractors in improving the road. The contractors were then working under a new directive as follows: “PRA operations are to be directed chiefly to the end of assisting in the completion of the pioneer road for use during the winter.” Later, all contractors were shifted to the army road.

Meanwhile, PRA has gone ahead and surveyed a line for the final road. In general, this follows the pioneer route; but in some places it does not. Just what will be done next spring has not been announced, but probably the contractors will be put back-to-work making further improvements as soon as possible.

Specifications under which PRA is working for the final type standard road provide a highway good for 70 mi. per hr. speed. They also call for burning of all brush, for borrow pits and gravel pits to be screened from the right-of-way by trees and for trimmed back slopes. In short, they are specifications for the highest type of highway through scenic country, designed to handle large volumes of tourist traffic.

Whether such a road is desirable or necessary for a military supply route to Alaska is questioned by some authorities. Some PRA officials hold that even the improved army road, with its crooked alignment, cannot handle an appreciable volume of military traffic. They maintain that a high standard road is necessary to serve the military needs. These same authorities also hold that civilian travelers after the war will not be satisfied with anything less than a high standard route.

However, the decision as to how to proceed next spring will depend on several factors unknown at this time, such as the ability of the present route to carry the desired military traffic adequately, the way the road stands-up under the spring thaws and the trend of the war in the Pacific.

We are building the part of the highway through Canada under a treaty with that country which calls for the United States to build the road and to maintain it for six months after the war, when it will be turned over to Canada without cost. Just what type of road we are supposed to turn over to Canada is not mentioned in the treaty.

Route of the Highway

There has been much criticism of the route finally selected for the highway. In fact, the location of the route was discussed at stormy hearings of a Senate Subcommittee last June. The International Commission had favored, as a peacetime route at least, a location between the Coast Range and the Rocky Mountains, running north from Prince George, B.C., to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

Coast Congressman Protests Route Chosen

Edmonton Journal - March 30, 1942

WASHINGTON, March 30. - Representative Coffee (D-Wash) said Thursday night he had protested to the State Department against the joint Canadian-American plan to construct an International Highway to Alaska along what is known as the easterly route through Edmonton.

"I regard it as a grave error and it has the appearance of the U.S. financing construction of a highway system for Canada under pressure of war emergency." Coffee said.

"So far as can be ascertained no ground survey of the route has been made and the terrain is immeasurably difficult for road construction. The high altitude will cause delays and the frozen tundra of the northern section of the route will cause road collapses."

Coffee declared the recommendations of the Alaska International Highway Commission, headed by Representative Magnuson (D-Wash) now a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy, had been disregarded by the joint Canada-U.S. defence board headed by Mayor La Guardia of New York.

“The treatment accorded this Commission has been shabby,” Coffee said. “The proposed road will take longer to build than the western route favored by the Commission, cost more and have no post-war value to the U.S.

“The western route advocated by the people of Washington State and B.C. would have cost less to construct and could have been put in use in much quicker time. It was favored by all who knew the actual conditions and it is a grave blunder to choose the eastern route.”

However, in 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps - in the defense of Alaska - started to improve and to use a series of Canadian airports from Edmonton, Alberta, north to Ft. St. John, B.C., along the so-called “Prairie Route” east of the Rocky Mountains, thence across the Rocky Mountains in a rather open section of the country to Watson Lake and on to Whitehorse and direct to Fairbanks, Alaska.

The Alcan Highway really starts at Dawson Creek, B.C., 500 miles northwest of Edmonton. Between Edmonton and Dawson Creek is a branch line railroad; the Northern Alberta, jointly owned by the C.P.R. and C.N.R. It is a poorly-built route through muskeg and wilderness that finally ends-up in the Peace River Block, a prosperous wheat-growing section in the Peace River Valley. Despite inadequate motive power, light rail and operating difficulties, this road has done a fine job in getting supplies and equipment through to Dawson Creek.

There is a provincial highway between Edmonton and Dawson Creek, but it loops around through the country even longer than the railroad does; it is only a fair-weather road entirely inadequate at present to handle any appreciable amount of traffic.

The United States has no plans for a direct highway from Edmonton to Dawson Creek, but will depend upon the railroad for access to the southern terminus of the Alcan Highway.

From Dawson Creek to Ft. St. John, 52 miles, there existed a British Columbia provincial road. This has been partly relocated and improved to the PRA standard final type of road by a group of Canadian contractors under PRA direction. The army started building its pioneer road at Fort St. John. The road between these points crosses the Kiskatinaw, or Cut-bank River and the mighty Peace River, one of Canada's greatest streams.

For the first 18 miles north of Fort St. John the road follows along the west-side of Charlie Lake and then turns-off to the northwest on a ridge west of the Blueberry River. Then it crosses the Beatton and the Sikanni Chief Rivers, the latter one of the major streams in this area and continues almost due north on the east-side of the Prophet River, most of the way high up on ridges and buttes. This route lies quite a bit to the west of the winter trail through the heart of the muskeg and because of its location along the ridges much of the worst muskeg was avoided. At Fort Nelson the road drops down between the Prophet and the Fort Nelson Rivers to cross the Muskwa River, another major stream.

At Fort Nelson a short section connects with the airport and the route turns west following the Muskwa for 50 miles or so to Steamboat Mountain, first of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

From Fort St. John to this point the road traverses a rolling, heavily forested country. At Steamboat Mountain the route leaves the Muskwa and turns up the Tetsa River, which it follows to Summit Lake; a pass through the Rocky Mountains, 102 miles west of Fort Nelson and 119 miles from Dawson Creek. Summit Lake is at El. 4,212; the highest point on the entire Alcan Highway.

The route on the east slope of the Rockies traverses some rough country but none offering very serious construction difficulties. Westward from Summit Lake the road drops down through McDonald Creek Valley and for miles traverses the bed of this glacier debris stream. Trouble may be experienced here next spring if the water gets very high. After leaving McDonald Creek the road cuts over a low divide into Racing River Valley and now crosses that river on a long trestle, though the original trail route went upstream 3 miles to cross on a short bridge over a narrow spectacular gorge.

From the Racing River, the route extends westward into the Toad River Valley and follows this stream all the way up to Muncho Lake, one of the most beautiful spots on the highway. The Toad River traverses a deep canyon for most of its length and along this part of the route and along Muncho Lake some of the most difficult construction was encountered. Muncho Lake is 172 miles west of Fort Nelson and resembles one of the lakes in Glacier National Park in its setting.

West from the Rockies

Dropping down from Muncho Lake, the road follows the Trout River to its junction with the Liard; 20 miles west of Fort Nelson. The Liard is another one of the great rivers o! the North and the road crosses to the north-side of this stream on a long trestle just above the junction of the Trout. By this time the road has left the mountains and for the next 150 miles follows westward along the north bank of the Liard through heavily forested country, crossing three main tributaries of the Liard; the Smith, the Coal and the Hyland.

At Watson Lake, 662 miles from Dawson Creek, an 8-mile connection leads to the airport. The road continues on west, soon crossing the Liard again, but this time on a much shorter bridge than down below. After crossing rolling country full of swamps and lakes, the road finally gets over into the Rancheria Valley, following up this stream almost to its source.

At the upper-end of the Rancheria; 88 miles west of Watson Lake, the road crosses a low divide between the MacKenzie and Yukon drainage areas and follows down the Swift and Morley Rivers to Teslin Lake through a wet, swampy section that caused some trouble. Crossing Nisutlin Bay on a 2,000-ft. trestle the road continues northwestward along Teslin Lake, then crosses the Teslin River to the Lewes River, a branch of the Yukon.

Beyond Tagish Lake, at a point known as Jakes Corner, a branch takes-off to the town of Carcross. while the main road continues northwest to Whitehorse, the principal city of Yukon Territory. Whitehorse is also the interior terminus of the White Pass & Yukon Railroad; a narrow-gage route running 111 miles from Skagway, Alaska, at the head of the Inside Passage on the coast.

From Whitehorse westward for about 150 miles the road follows the Takhini and the Dezadeash River Valleys along old trails established in the days of ‘98. These trails were not much use as access routes since they are strictly for winter travel, passable only when frozen, but they were of some aid in locating the route.

Only one major stream is crossed in this section, the Takhini. At the little Indian village of Kluane, 147 miles west of Whitehorse, the road strikes beautiful Kluane Lake, 45-miles-long, nestling at the base of the foothills of the St. Elias range of mountains. Skirting along the west-side of the lake the road passed through some of the most scenic country en route.

After leaving Kluane Lake the road follows the Kluane River for some distance and then takes-off through the foothills, crossing the Donjek and White Rivers, both wide glacial debris streams heading up in the St. Elias Mountains. From the White crossing the route swings north through low-lying hills, crossing many small streams, striking the Alaska-Yukon border 325 miles west of Whitehorse.

Road Splits in Alaska

On entering Alaska the route follows the north-side of the Tanana Valley for 100 miles, crossing this river just below the junction of the Tok River which comes in from the south. From this junction the main road runs another hundred miles west to Big Delta, the terminus of the Alcan Highway, 1,582 miles from Dawson Creek. Here the new road meets the Richardson Highway running between Valdez, on the coast, and Fairbanks, in the interior. It is 88 miles from Big Delta to Fairbanks and this section of the Richardson Highway has been improved considerably by the Alaska Road Commission this past summer.

At the junction of the Tok and Tanana Rivers another branch of the Alcan Highway swings south, following up the Tok Valley through the Nutzotin Mountains and the Wrangell Range, dropping down through the Slana River Valley to the village of Slana. Here the road technically ends. 72 miles from the Tok Junction. However, for another 64 miles to Gulkana, where the main-line of the Richardson Highway is met, the contractors improved most of this branch road. Gulkana is 131 miles from Valdez.

The Alaska Road Commission has just completed a 200-mile link between Gulkana and Palmer. serving Anchorage, so it is now possible to travel by road from Dawson Creek to Anchorage.

Another section of road is being surveyed between Haines, on the coast, to Champagne on the Alcan Highway, 65 mi. west of Whitehorse to relieve the load on the W.P.&Y.R.R. This stub link, 165-miles-long, will cut through Chilkat Pass, following one of the trails of ‘98. A winter trail is now under construction which will be improved into a road next spring.

Route from Aerial Surveys

The route, traversing great stretches of unmapped and unchartered wilderness was, for the most part, selected by aerial reconnaissance. In some places it follows old Indian and trapper trails and in the western Yukon, old trails of the ‘98 gold rush were utilized as the basis of locations for some stretches.

500 MILES SAVED ON ALASKA HIGHWAY

'IMPOSSIBLE' ROUTE FOUND BY AIR

U.S. Officer Discloses How Unknown Low-level Line Located

The Vancouver Daily Province, May 22, 1943

WHITE HORSE, Y.T., May 22. - Some of the most picturesque aspects of the early construction of the Alaska Highway have just been disclosed by Brigadier-General Clarence L. Sturdevant, assistant chief of the United States Army Engineers, who organized and mobilized the regiments which did the job.

Gen. Sturdevant said that at first it was thought impossible to build the road along a direct route between Watson Lake and White Horse.

All the available maps made it seem as if the highway would have to swing in a great loop via the Dease River, Telegraph Creek and Atlin. This would have increased the length of the road by nearly 500 miles, a staggering addition in terms of gasoline, effort and trucks.

However, airplane reconnaissance came to the rescue. A route over the mountains was discovered entirely in forest growth, which does not thrive higher than 4,000-feet in the northern latitudes.

“This route,” said Gen Sturdevant, “was apparently unknown to any of the local inhabitants and its discovery was an important factor in the early completion of the road.”

Leap Frog System

Gen. Sturdevant also described for the first time in detail exactly how the road was shoved, pushed and forced through the British Columbia and Yukon fastnesses.

“In a typical operation of a regiment engaged in breaking new trail through the forest,” he said, “we would find in the lead the locating party, which indicated the centre-line by blazes or pieces of colored cloth.”

“The clearing crew with three shifts of tractor operators followed. One large bulldozer ran along the marked centre-line clearing a narrow trail. Other large machines were then assigned tasks along this trail.”

“Pushing the trees laterally to both sides, they made a clearing from 60 to 90-feet-wide. Having finished a task, a bulldozer would leapfrog forward to its next similar task.”

Three Miles-a-Day

“On much of the route the forest growth was dense but the trees were usually not large or deeply rooted. Where the ground was firm, 10 or 12 bulldozers could clear two to three miles through solid forest each day.”

“The smaller bulldozers were used to follow the large tree movers cleaning off moss, muck and lesser debris.”

“The clearing crew was generally several miles beyond the reach of trucks and had to be supplied by pack horses or tractor-drawn sleds. The men slept in pup tents and moved camp nearly every day.”

“Softness” Disproved

Brig. Gen. James A. O'Connor, head of the U.S. Army Northwest Service Command, said the punching through of the original road was as much a frontier enterprise as the expeditions of Lewis and Clark, Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser.

"Whenever I hear someone say that our present generation of boys is soft, I think of the young Americans from every walk of life who bulldozed that road through the wilderness in less than a year."

In addition to the completion of the Alaska Highway, the Northwest Service Command is supervising the construction this spring and summer of an auxiliary road from Haines on the Inside Passage to Champagne on the main highway. Champagne is 108 miles northeast of White Horse.

Colonel Kenneth B. Bush, Service Command Chief of Staff, has announced that this feeder route will be known officially as "The Haines Military Road."

“This additional highway from the seacoast," Col. Bush said, "will connect southeastern Alaska with the Alaska Highway, it will relieve any threat of congestion on the White Pass and Yukon Railway at Skagway, and it will enable water traffic to come up the inside passage from Seattle, Vancouver and Prince Rupert and be loaded directly onto trucks for the haul into Fairbanks and the interior of Alaska.”

Late in March, parties of PRA engineers made reconnaissance's by dog sled, one investigating the proposed route from the Sikanni Chief River north to Fort Nelson, the other working west from Fort Nelson through the Summit Lake Pass to Muncho Lake. These ground trips collaborated air trips by Army officers. For some time the army was inclined to continue north from Fort Nelson, following the Fort Nelson River Valley to the Liard, thence west on the north-side of the Liard Valley to Watson Lake through open country.

Subsequent investigation showed this proposed route might be wet and swampy for great distances, so the final location shifted into the mountains to the south, through the Summit Lake Pass and past Muncho Lake, thence down the Trout to the Liard.

From what few maps were available for the north British Columbia and Southern Yukon areas and from popular belief, the army thought there were several definite mountain ranges, running generally north and south, that must be crossed. In fact, the maps indicated a high range between Watson Lake and Whitehorse with passes at elevations from 6,000 to 7,000 ft. The army was told it would have to swing south from Watson Lake up the Dease River and come into Whitehorse through the Lake Atlin country, lengthening the route by 500 miles.

Actually, the mountains are not in long ranges up there, but rather are arranged in groups separated by low-lying areas and broad valleys. Aerial inspection revealed the possibilities of the Rancheria and Swift River Valleys.

The line, as finally located west of Western Lake, crosses the low divide between the Rancheria and Swift Rivers (Mackenzie and Yukon drainage areas) at an elevation of 3,000 ft. Throughout its entire length the highway never drops below elevation 2,000 and traverses the country at an average elevation of 2,500.

Thus, the Alcan roadbuilders proved three questioned points: the road could be built along the route desired; it crossed the mountains at much lower altitude than critics believed possible and it was completed as a suitable truck route in one short season, in-time to be of military service this winter.

Subsequent Articles

The next article will tell of the problems of supply, how equipment materials and supplies were gotten into the wilderness and distributed throughout the project. It will also tell of living and working conditions, of the road camps and headquarters and of the difficult equipment, repair and maintenance problems. The third and final article in this series will describe the construction tactics, how the various regiments were filtered into various points for effective attack, and how the PRA and contractors organized and distributed their forces. A list of key personnel and contractors also will be included.

News-Record Camera Shots



Advance troops walk their equipment 325 miles over the winter trail to Ft. Nelson in sub-zero arctic weather to attack the road at an interior point. Breaking up of the winter trail under spring thaws isolated the regiment for four months.



Surveying parties, location crews and the lead tractor gangs often were supplied by horse pack trains. Here is a typical pack train setting out for the head end over the army pioneer road.



Pioneer road through heavy-forested section of British Columbia prior to any improvements. From trails like this roads as shown to the right were built.

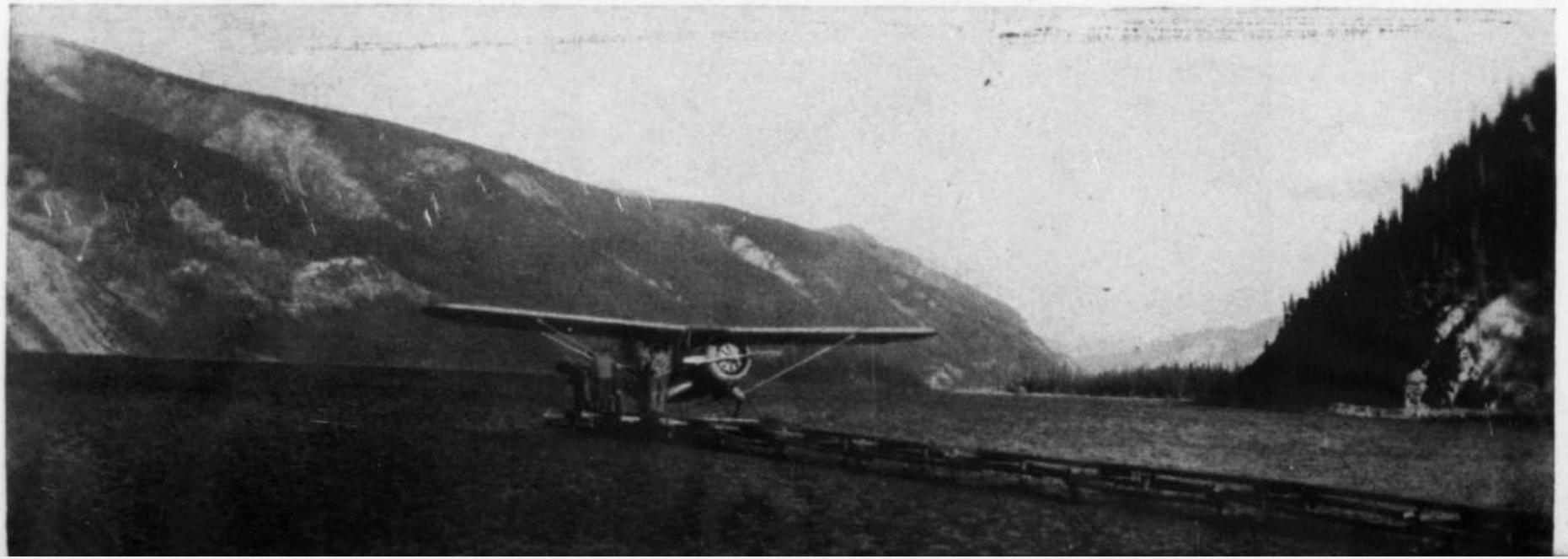


Typical of the improved army road is this section in the upper Tetsa River Valley in British Columbia, looking toward Summit Lake pass through the Rockies. Summit Lake, El. 4212, is the highest point on the Alcan Highway.

Fairbanks Freight, through trucks enroute from Dawson Creek, signify that the road is open to the military traffic for which it was built.

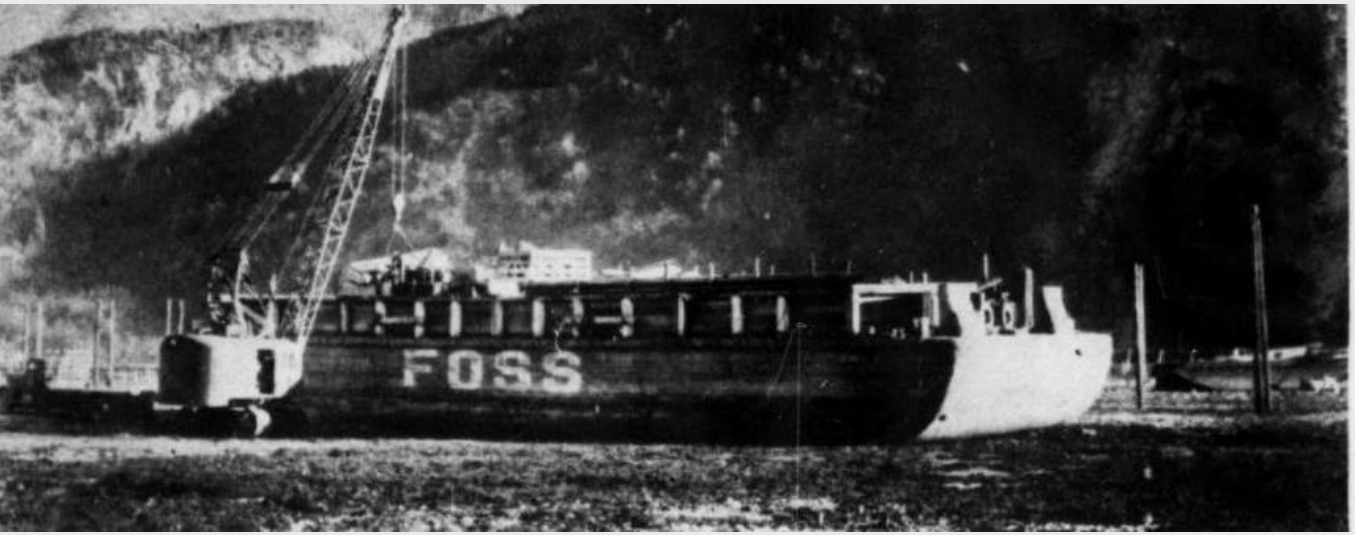


For aerial reconnaissance, communication, transportation of men and supplies, small "bush-hopper" planes like this were indispensible in building the highway through the wilderness. Here is a pontoon equipped ship landing at Muncho Lake.





Waterways from swift mountain torrents to broad rivers had to be crossed. This temporary structure across the Muskwa near Ft. Nelson is a combination of timber cribs and pile trestle.



Supply problems were many and varied. At Skagway barges from the States were beached at low tide, unloaded from dry ground.

Roadbuilding could not wait for bridge building, so crude ferries were rigged up for transporting men and equipment across waters too deep to ford. Two big diesel tractors, piloted by negro soldiers, complete a trip over Nisutlin Bay in the Yukon.





A bunkhouse takes a ride across the Tanana River. Several contractors found shacks mounted on log skids preferable to tent camps, so moving day called for tractors instead of trucks. Note the Yukon Heater on the tractor, a canvas enclosing the engine and lower part of the driver. This is also a good view of temporary bridge construction.

Camp life lacked all the comforts of home. This bewhiskered construction worker is washing his woolies with a scrubbing brush. The empty oil drum furnished the hot water. Construction camps, both army and contractor, were primitive, with a modern touch supplied by portable light plants. Recreation facilities were woefully lacking.





Keeping equipment rolling was the most difficult job of all. Spare parts could not be obtained, repair facilities were crude at best. Here a contractor near Whitehorse has rigged up a couple of tents for field repair shops.



Spreading cleared brush and trees over undisturbed topsoil as an insulation mat prior to placing fill was found the best way to build roads over perpetually-frozen ground in the Yukon.



Blasting a shelf along the 3-mile shore of Muncho Lake was the heaviest rock work on the whole highway. Meanwhile a temporary route took over the cliffs on a 35-percent grade.



"DYNAMITE" ON THE ALCAN

UP NEAR THE Arctic Circle, on the famous Alcan Highway, Marmon-Herrington *All-Wheel-Drive* converted Ford trucks "packed dynamite," literally and figuratively, to blast a cut over the heights above the Sikanni River.

"Dynamite" in each truck's four power-driven wheels, enabled them to climb rock-strewn grades too steep and too rough for conventional drive trucks to master—and dynamite in their cargoes was carried to blast a road out of the mountain side.

Hundreds of Marmon-Herringtons on this project helped drive the highway through forest, muskeg and mud. They helped haul gravel, make grades, remove snow and build bridges over torrential streams, that our Armies may have all the supplies they need to build an Alaskan stronghold.



Some of these trucks were the first motorized vehicles to break the silence of this Northern wilderness.

Wherever the going has been particularly hard, in this war, Marmon-Herrington *All-Wheel-Drive* trucks have been in the vanguard. The same advantages of power and traction, applied through all four, or all six wheels, which made these vehicles so popular in the world's most difficult civilian services, before the war, have made them equally popular with military men, everywhere.

We look forward to the day when Marmon-Herringtons will shed their chevrons, and return to the works of Peace. May it not be long in coming!

☆

Back the Attack — Buy More Bonds!

MARMON-HERRINGTON

INDIANAPOLIS 7, INDIANA

UP NEAR THE Arctic Circle, on the famous Alcan Highway, Marmon-Herrington *All-Wheel-Drive* converted Ford trucks "packed dynamite," literally and figuratively, to blast a cut over the heights above the Sikanni River.

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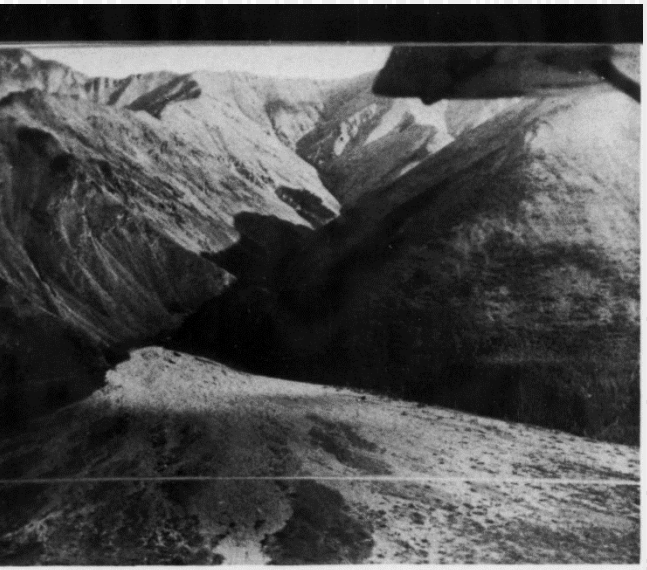


Emergency repairs on the road kept equipment in service. This roadside scene of an army crew working on a broken tractor track with portable welding and repair outfits was repeated time after time along the highway. Lack of spare parts was partly offset by the ingenuity of mechanics in making repairs with materials on hand.



Strange conveyances were utilized for transportation of men and supplies at the head end. Tractor-drawn track wagons, as shown here, were but one of the ingenious methods developed. Sometimes sleds dragged through the mud replaced the wagons.

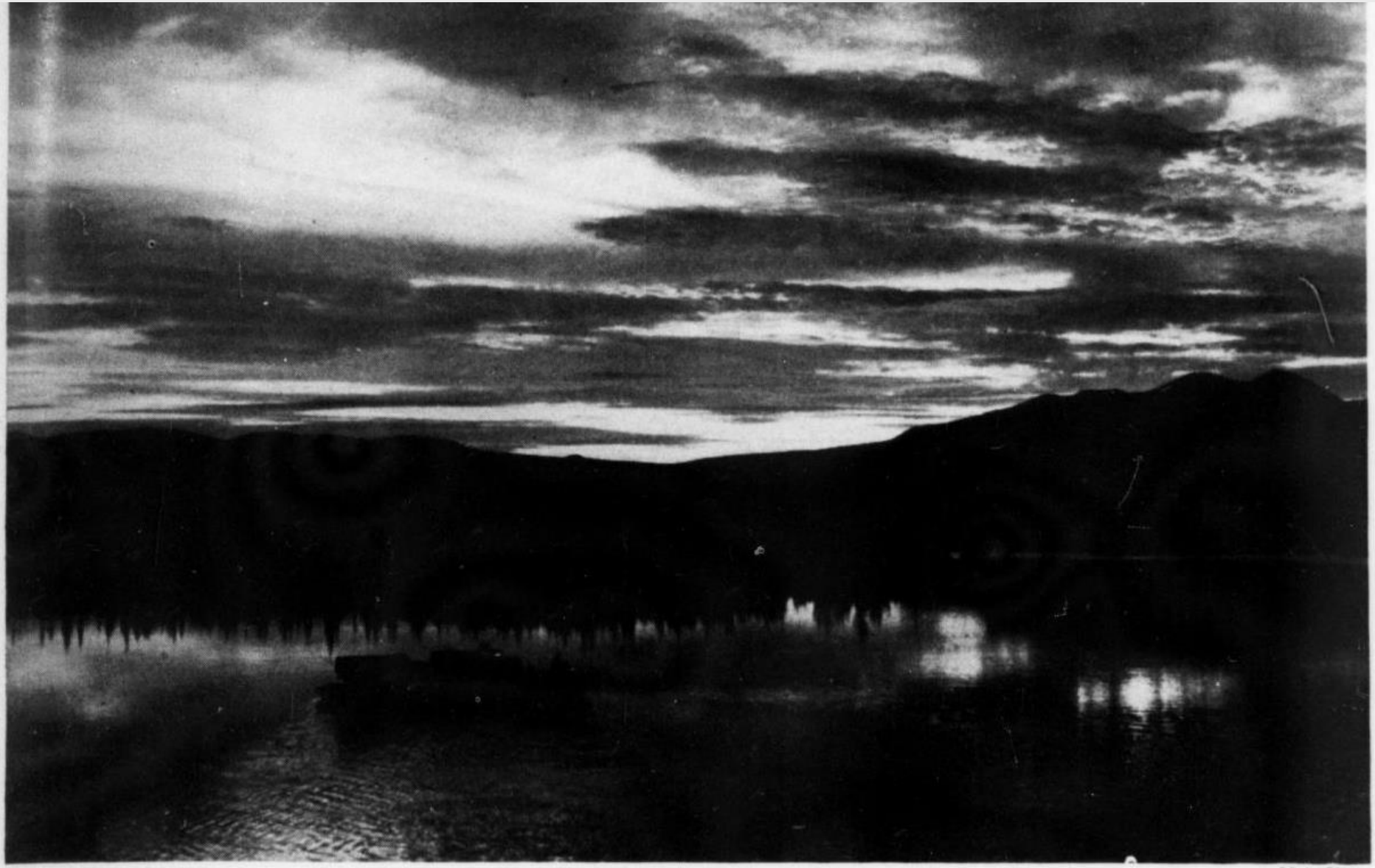
Each change in terrain unfolded new problems in location, but none more perplexing than how to get over or around the huge delta washes fanning out from side canyons in the Rockies. In the top view the straight line across the delta fan is the road as seen from the air. Below is the same stretch of road as seen from the ground. These pictures show evidence of large water flows at times. How to protect the road from washing out remains an engineering problem.







Soldier's Summit at Kluane Lake, site of the official dedication ceremonies opening the highway on Nov. 20.



PRA Photo

Sunset on beautiful Kluane Lake in the Yukon finds a squad of PRA engineers returning to base camp from a surveying trip.

Wild life abounds in the Northern wilderness. Roadbuilders met many bear and moose; game supplemented camp fare.





Chilly evidence of the permanently frozen ground in the Yukon. Ice is just below the surface.



Washday in a primitive surveyor's camp far out in front of the road. Note the head nets for protection against mosquitoes.



The Alcan battlefront took its toll of life. This monument on Kluane River is a tribute to Lt. Roland Small, formerly a construction engineer for P. T. Cox in New York.



Rivers had to be crossed long before the bridge building crews arrived. Deep streams called for pontoon ferries, but all shallow waters were forded by the equipment. Here a party of officers cross Yukon's Rancheria River aboard a tractor.



Mud and treacherous side ditches on the pioneer road caused lots of grief. Here a trailer and its shovel load take a spill.



"Cat skinners" from opposing regiments relax as their bulldozers meet to close last gap in the pioneer road.

No customs officers bothered this first bulldozer crew to cross the international boundary between Alaska and the Yukon. Jovial at beating the oncoming white regiment to the border, the negro troops set up a signpost "Los Angeles City Limits".





Smashing its way through a white poplar forest comes the lead bulldozer, forerunner of Alcan road building.

Part II—Supply, Equipment and Camps

Harold W. Richardson
Western Editor, Engineering News-Record

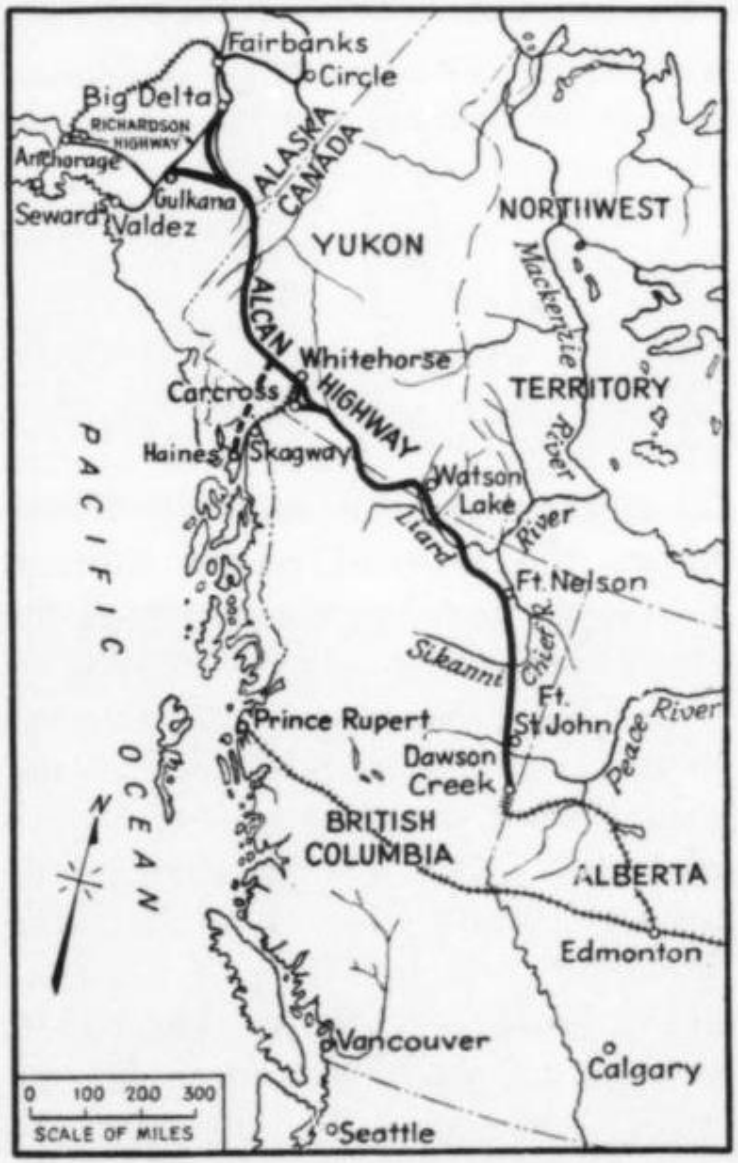
(*ENR* - December 31, 1942)

This is the second of a series of articles on the Alcan Highway. The first, appearing in the Dec. 17 issue, told of the purposes of the project and the route location. Part Ill, covering the actual construction operations, will appear in the Jan. 14 issue.

OFFICIALLY it may be Alcan, but to the boys on the project it is the “Oilcan” Highway because of the hundreds upon hundreds of gas and diesel fuel drums scattered over the full length of the road. These steel drums are symbolical of the problem of supply. Building of the route involved far more than mere construction.

To get equipment and supplies to the thousands of troops and civilians engaged on the project was no small job. Not only did such materials have to be transported long distances from the United States, but they had to be distributed along 1,800 miles of road being built through raw wilderness, often over stretches of rough trail that defied any kind of transportation.

This article will deal with the problems of supply and subsistence, the camps and headquarters facilities and conditions under which the soldiers, engineers and contractors lived, worked and moved.



Route of the Alcan Highway and its supply lines. The connection from Haines is now under construction to relieve the load on the W. P. & Y. R. R.

There are three major supply routes to the project: (1) via rail to Dawson Creek; (2) by boat to Skagway and rail to Whitehorse; (3) by boat to Valdez and highway to Gulkana and Big Delta. The west coast ports of Skagway and Valdez, Alaska, are served from both Seattle, Wash., and Prince Rupert, B.C. A fourth route was possible via the Alaska Railroad from Seward to Fairbanks and thence by road to Big Delta, though this route was little used.

Railheads are being built at both Dawson Creek and Whitehorse for transfer of freight from rail to trucks for transportation over the road. The Dawson Creek set-up is quite elaborate, for this will be one of the main points of supply. It includes miles of sidings, many warehouses, unloading platforms and barracks for housing the freight handlers and truck operators.

All subsistence and supplies for the army are handled at the main points by quartermaster detachments and distributed through the supply detachments of each engineer regiment. Keeping scores of camps supplied over trail roads last summer was a big job. Often it was necessary to drag supplies to the head crews by tractors and sleds through the mud and, later, a fleet of tractor wagons was obtained for this same purpose

Dawson Creek, B.C., southern terminus of the Alcan Highway, is at the end of rail. A standard-gauge branch railroad, the Northern Alberta, connects this outpost with the main-line Canadian National and a branch of the Canadian Pacific at Edmonton, Alberta, 500 miles to the southeast. All supplies for the southern sector of the highway and all war material for Alaska routed this way comes into Dawson Creek over the Northern Alberta. A long, poor, provincial highway passable only in fair weather, between Edmonton and Dawson Creek, does not figure in the Alcan plans. One contractor wheeled a few trucks into the job over it last summer, but the experience was not worth repeating.

At first, facilities for unloading and transferring at Dawson Creek were wholly inadequate. Just as fast as possible, unloading tracks were extended and platforms were built. Some of the platforms were later housed-over as warehouses, but in the meantime the materials, including perishables, were protected from the weather by canvas. The temporary railhead developed into a substantial installation, including insulated storage space for foods and a battery of refrigerators. Complete and adequate facilities of all kinds are provided in the new railhead, built late this fall.

The supply route through Skagway, Alaska, is particularly interesting. Some of the equipment and materials come in by boat, including towed schooners, which are unloaded at the wharf, but most of them are shipped from the West Coast terminals of Prince Rupert, B.C., or Seattle, Wash., in barges towed by tugs.

As there is a 20-ft. tide at Skagway Harbor, which is at the head of the Inside Passage, the barges are pulled-in at high-tide and beached at low-tide to be unloaded by crawler cranes working from the dry, hard beach. Extensive improvements now underway in the harbor will provide a long barge slip alongside a fill whose top is above high-tide level, so unloading can proceed at all times regardless of the tide.

Material removed to create the deep slip makes-up the embankment from which the unloading cranes will work. At present it is necessary to move or haul all supplies and equipment unloaded from the barges immediately to ground above the high-tide mark.

Everything coming into Skagway must be moved over the 3 ft. White Pass & Yukon Route Railway to Whitehorse, 111 miles away in the Yukon. This historic railroad, built in the gold rush days of ‘98 and ‘99, climbs to an elevation of 2,900 ft. at White Pass, 20 miles out of Skagway, up a 4 percent grade and around 22-deg. curves. En route to Whitehorse, the railroad passes through Carcross, used in early stages of the roadbuilding as a point of supply.

For years, business on the railroad had been light, so the roadbed and rolling stock were not kept up to full efficiency. Rail up the steep grade through White Pass is 56 lb., elsewhere it is 45 lb. Ties, 64 ft. long, are in fairly good shape. The ballast is also adequate, but there are no spring washers in the rail joints, so the track is difficult to maintain under heavy traffic. Bridges are in excellent shape and will stand heavier engines than are now being used.

As roadbuilding and other materials started to tax the original facilities and organization, the army detailed a railroad detachment to assist in operating the route. Now the railroad is entirely under army control, although the civilian employees have been retained.

When the army took over, there were only 12 locomotives on the system; from 4 to 42 years-old, weighing from 60 to 120-tons. Of course, the first thing the soldiers did was to christen each with a favorite girl's name, including some movie stars.

Recently, more locomotives have been obtained from an abandoned narrow-gauge line of the D.& R.G.W. Railroad in Colorado. Rolling stock consists of box cars (20-ton capacity), flat cars, a miscellaneous assortment of stock, gondola and tank cars, two rotary snowplows and passenger coaches. Maintenance-of-way equipment was limited to hand tools, one pile driver and an A-frame derrick car. Rolling stock has been augmented lately by several new box cars built for some Latin-American railroad, but obtained by the army for the Yukon route.

The railroad formerly used 3 or 4 locomotives to get a freight train up the hill, but the army is finding it more expedient to keep the train loads down to the capacity of one engine and a pusher and then to assemble longer trains at the pass for single engine haul into Whitehorse.

For the Alaska part of the highway, men, materials and supplies went up the west coast to Valdez, southern-end of the Richardson Highway, to Fairbanks, and were transported by truck to headquarters at Gulkana, 131 miles up this road.

The contract for hauling men, equipment and supplies for PRA and the contractors between the lower west coast ports and Skagway and Valdez and for distribution over the road is held by the E.W. Elliott Co., of Seattle. Originally, the army intended to do all of its own hauling up the coast in army transports and army-chartered boats, but as shipping facilities became more and more scarce the army also depended a lot on the Elliott Co. Larger boats make the run to Valdez, which required leaving the Inside Passage and taking to the open sea, but for the Skagway run a fleet of small yachts transports the men from and to the States. All of the yachts were formerly pleasure boats, designed for quiet waters. The construction workers get many a thrill and doses of seasickness when the light craft are caught in storms that often sweep-up the West Coast. The ferocity of some of these storms is evident from several tragedies, including the sinking of a tug and its barge tow with loss of all hands off Etolin Island. Again, the “Scottish Lady,” a towed schooner carrying heavy construction equipment, broke loose from its tug to be wrecked upon the shoals of this same island. Most of the equipment was subsequently salvaged, though damaged by saltwater immersion.

Beating the Sun

Lytle & Green's contractors found the bridges on the Richardson Highway between Valdez and Gulkana too light for the big tractors and scrapers, so they had to ford the streams. They found that 4 to 9 a.m. the best time for crossing, for the streams rose rapidly in the late morning as the sun warmed-up their glacier sources. By midnight, the congealed glaciers choked-down the flow, only to spout freely again when the sun went to work the next morning.

Distribution of Supplies

In the van of the engineer troops was a quartermaster detachment, which arrived by rail at Dawson Creek at 1:30 a.m., March 9, under the command of Capt. Elmo Schlei. The temperature was 30-deg. below zero and the detachment set-up tents in a nearby field with the ropes tied to trees and logs as the ground was too frozen for pegs. The troops then scraped the snow out of the tents.

As soon as fires were lighted in the stoves, ice on top of the ground, 6 in. thick, started melting, forming a lake inside each tent, which soon steamed-up into a perfect Turkish bath. Finally, the soldiers were forced to move to a hillside where there was better drainage but where they were exposed to bitter winds. This outfit paved the way for engineer troops, which began arriving within a day or so.

This quartermaster unit remained at Dawson Creek to requisition, receive, unload, store and issue all army supplies and equipment passing through that supply center. The distribution of supplies over the road and to the various army contingents was handled by regimental supply officers. A few flatbed trailers were available for moving heavy equipment, but most of the shovels, tractors, cranes, scrapers and patrol graders were moved out onto the job under their own power, especially in the early stages when the route was impassable to trailers.

Trucks were used for distributing food, fuel and small supplies whenever the condition of the road permitted, but often sleds and crawler wagons, dragged by tractors, had to be used to reach head-end operations.

Similar quartermaster detachments operate for the army at Skagway, White-horse and Valdez.

An emergency shipment of 476 bbl. of fuel oil into Ft. Nelson early in August to the regiment working west from there is an example of how difficult it was formerly to get supplies into that area.

The road from Ft. St. John had not yet reached Ft. Nelson and the isolated regiment was running short of fuel. This shipment was sent by rail to Waterways, Alberta, portaged to Ft. Smith, Northwest Territory, sent by small boat down Slave River to Great Slave Lake, transferred to a larger boat to cross the lake to the MacKenzie River, again unloaded onto a shallow-draft boat for travel down the MacKenzie to the Liard River then up the Liard to Ft. Nelson River and up this stream to Ft. Nelson.

The individual contractors requisition supplies through their respective managing contractors who, in turn, purchase only with PRA approval under government procurement regulations.

Three proposals have to be obtained for all purchases except the very smallest, often a difficult procedure because of slow communication facilities. Warehouses and supply stores are maintained by the managing contractors at base headquarters. Distribution is partly by the Elliott Co. and partly by trucks operated by both the managing and the individual contractors. It is essential constantly to anticipate the multitude of supply needs, but even the best scheduled plans go wrong at times when shipments are delayed.

The biggest headache on the whole project to both contractors and the army was the lack of spare parts and the difficulty in making repairs to keep the equipment rolling. Not until October did repair parts start to come through; previous to that time the equipment was kept going by ingenious mechanical field work.

Fortunately for the army, most of its equipment was new at the start of the job. However, extremely hard service, continuing day and night, and inexperienced operators took toll of equipment. The army was forced to train many of its operators right on the job.

The equipment repair situation was even worse for the contractors, for they had to use old equipment, both their own and that furnished by PRA. From previous experience, each of the managing contractors made-up an order of standard repair parts certain to be needed. Most of these orders, placed in June, never were filled; delivery on others started trickling through in October. On some standard items, notably tires and wire-rope, the contractors were not allowed to make direct purchases because PRA was informed the government would furnish these items from central purchase stocks.

Shipment from such stock was delayed until fall, meantime, the contractors became desperate. One contractor finally ordered a carload of wire-rope on outside purchase to be shipped to Dawson Creek by express. Another, when only 250 tires out of an order of 1,250 finally came through, was forced to put many pieces of equipment on the deadline for lack of rubber. A big shovel and its contingent of 20 trucks and 40 truck drivers were idle for days while a contractor argued with a manufacturer by jammed and inefficient radio over the priority number for supplying a vital shovel part. Considering the tales of grief heard up and down the road it is a wonder the road ever was completed.

Several of the larger equipment manufacturers had representatives on the ground, but their activities finally resolved into teaching new men how to operate equipment, for even factory representatives could not get parts and supplies.

Both contractors and the army made the best of makeshift equipment repair facilities. At major points, such as Fort St. John, Whitehorse and Gulkana, substantial shop facilities were installed, but elsewhere field repair jobs had to serve. Portable welding and repair outfits went right out on the road and did a lot of minor repair work.

When such repairs were inadequate and where the field station could not take care of the situation, the equipment had to be transported back to one of the main shops for servicing. Dowell Construction Co. was fortunate in buying the entire machine shop and powerplant from an abandoned mine at Mayo, Y.T., which provided excellent repair facilities at Whitehorse.

Living and Working Conditions

The road was built through long stretches of raw wilderness, far from points of civilization, so naturally living conditions were primitive and working conditions severe. Even the so-called points of civilization were, by most standards, primitive. Dawson Creek, the southern terminus, is a tiny farming hamlet of only 200 or 300 permanent population. Its water supply is a horse-drawn tank wagon, the source is a creek 44 miles away. Even the army has to haul water here for there is no groundwater in the tight glacial silt of the whole east slope of the Rockies.

Whitehorse, the only other town on the Alcan Highway proper, has a population of less than 1,000. Its water supply also is team and tank wagon, though the army, contractors and PRA have developed a shallow well supply for their camps. Fairbanks, of course, is a modern city, but it is 88 miles beyond the end of construction of the highway. Most other named places on the map are merely Indian and trapper trading posts.

The main semi-permanent camps are fairly complete and comfortable. These include such installations as those at Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Whitehorse and Gulkana. Buildings, for the most part, are of prefabricated new units of insulated plywood, or CCC demountable buildings shipped in from the States, or Nissen steel semi-cylindrical insulated huts.

All of these main camps have running water and sewers (except Dawson Creek) and electric power and lights. Some of the contractor and army barracks at Whitehorse are built of lumber shipped in from Seattle.

Out on the road the camps are much more simple. During the fast-moving construction stages the camps were framed tents, with field kitchens housed under canvas. They were frequently moved, so it was not possible to make them very comfortable. However, in most instances, electric lights were available from portable generating sets. One enterprising group of officers rigged-up a portable welding machine as a light plant.

Several contractors, especially the Alaska group, discarded tents in favor of small shacks mounted on log skids. Moving day saw a fleet of cabins dragged down the road by tractors, trucks and even by patrol graders.

Of course, water supply dictated the location of even the most temporary of camps. Usually the streams and lakes were a potable source of water, but whenever any doubt existed as to possible pollution the water supply was chlorinated with portable units. A detachment of Public Health Service officers assisted the army medical officers in maintaining health regulations.

Just as fast as construction units, both army and contractor, could be spared from road operations they were assigned to building the permanent rest camps for housing the truck operators and road and equipment maintenance crews. These camps are of varied construction. Some of them are old CCC buildings, others are prefabricated units or Nissen huts, but many of them are built of local lumber produced by roadside sawmills that earlier in the program turned-out bridge timbers. These camps are all equipped with running water and lights. Th-ey are heated mainly with oil-burning heaters, as also are the main camps.

On the road the army officers and soldiers are all supplied with comfortable sleeping bags, blankets and folding cots. The regular pyramid army field tents are used, each equipped with a small wood-burning stove. If the men put a little effort into properly setting-up the camps they can be made fairly comfortable. Soldiers at these camps, each supplied with a field mess kit, are fed in the open from field kitchens. Most of the time the officers eat in a mess tent.

The contractors usually set-up large tents or buildings for kitchens and mess halls. They also prefer bunkhouses or dormitory tents where possible instead of the smaller units.

PRA engineers always have good camps, even on the trail. They are often demountable prefabricated wood units though, of course, the surveyors out on the line had to live in tents. Contractors and PRA furnish cots with mattresses and blankets whenever possible in preference to sleeping bags

The food supplied by all three organizations is of good quality, wholesome and in sufficient quantity. Exceptions, of course, occur when supply lines break-down or small detachments are called upon to feed persons outside their own unit. Travel up and down the line is continuous and the rule of the road calls for feeding whomever is present at meal time, regardless of affiliation.

The army food supplied to field units is largely field rations, designed primarily to sustain soldiers in combat. In normal combat operations the units are usually in front lines for short periods and get a change of diet when relieved. On the highway, however, the men are in the field constantly, week-after-week, so the canned field rations become monotonous. The army supplements these rations with fresh meats and vegetables to some extent and this situation improved as the various sections of the road became stabilized to permit scheduled truck operations.

Frankly, PRA and the contractors feed better, probably not a better quality of food, but more variety and a greater proportion of fresh products. They put meat refrigerator trucks into service as-soon-as-possible. The army has refrigerator storage units at the main points of supply, but facilities for storing fresh meats in the field are limited.

The government promised to furnish much of the kitchen and camp equipment needed by the contractors from CCC camps in the States. Delays in shipping these supplies caused some inconvenience at first, especially in Alaska where workmen arrived ahead of camp equipment. Some trouble was also experienced from coal-burning cook stoves delivered from CCC camps to a project devoid of coal. There was plenty of oil and wood on hand, so the stoves simply had to be converted to other fuel.

Sometimes the camp fare was blessed with fresh game, especially moose and game birds. One outfit working at the head-end had to depend on game for a while when the supply line failed, so long in fact that the boys complained of the monotony.

Most of the contractors worked two 11-hour shifts-a-day, seven days-a-week, though a few operated on 10-hr. shifts. Regardless of whether the men worked 70 or 77 hours-a-week, very little overtime was paid. Hourly rates ran from a minimum of 964 c. for laborers to $2 for shovel, dragline and crane operators. Tractor drivers got $1.60; scraper operators $1.70. Truck drivers were paid from $1.10 to $1.40. The men were charged from $1.50 to $2 per-day for room and board, depending upon the individual camps.

Civilians working for contractors received transportation from the States and return if they stayed the length of the job or until released. If discharged for cause or if they quit before being released, they had to pay their own way back. Paying for the return trip wasn't nearly so hard sometimes as finding means of transportation. The supply of men for the most part was satisfactory, although at times contractors lacked certain classes of workmen. Both the Canadian and American firms are restricted to hiring workmen from their own country.

Morale of the troops and the contractors' employees was, and still is, excellent in view of the living conditions. The contractors' men knew they would return home when the season's work was done (most of those staying the winter are doing so voluntarily).

The officers and soldiers, on the other hand, knew they were stuck for a long time. Rumors of furloughs swept through the bush by “moccasin telegraph.” Uncertainty of furlough was the greatest single item in breaking-down morale. The army has now announced furloughs will be granted to all men possible this winter, contingent upon the physical difficulties of transportation over the vast distances between the project and home.

Difficulties in getting mail through added to the morale problem. Sometimes letters from home were delayed three to six weeks. Lack of world news was another disappointing feature. Radio reception, especially through the Yukon and Alaska, is poor because of climate and topographical conditions, so the boys out on-the-line were really out-of-touch with the world for days and days.

Mosquitoes were bad on some parts of the line, were singularly absent on others. Those who were plagued the worst were men deep in the woods, the surveyors, locaters and the lead construction crews. These pests lasted from two to six weeks, the length of time varying greatly in different sections. In some cases they were followed by flies and minute bugs, just as annoying as the mosquitoes.

Entertainment was simply non-existent. There was no recreational program provided for soldiers or civilians, probably none could have been provided. Work, work and more work was the only program - day and night, seven days-a-week. Reading material was scarce, so outside of working hours life became a bore to many of the boys.

Yet, after all, the morale must have been high in view of the work accomplished. Men and boys can't feel too discouraged and still build nearly 1,800 miles of road in one short season. The spirit was there, even if living did become primitive and monotonous.

The third and final article in this series, to be published January 14, will tell of the actual construction operations; how the army filtered the various regiments into the project and attacked the work; how the contractors operated and how the bridge and drainage problems were solved.

News-Record Camera Shots



Distribution of gasoline and diesel fuel to thousands of construction equipment units along the highway is a major supply problem. Scenes like this cause the men to dub the road the "Oilcan Highway".



Temporary oil and gas storage depot at Whitehorse indicates the vast amount of equipment fuel needed to build the road.



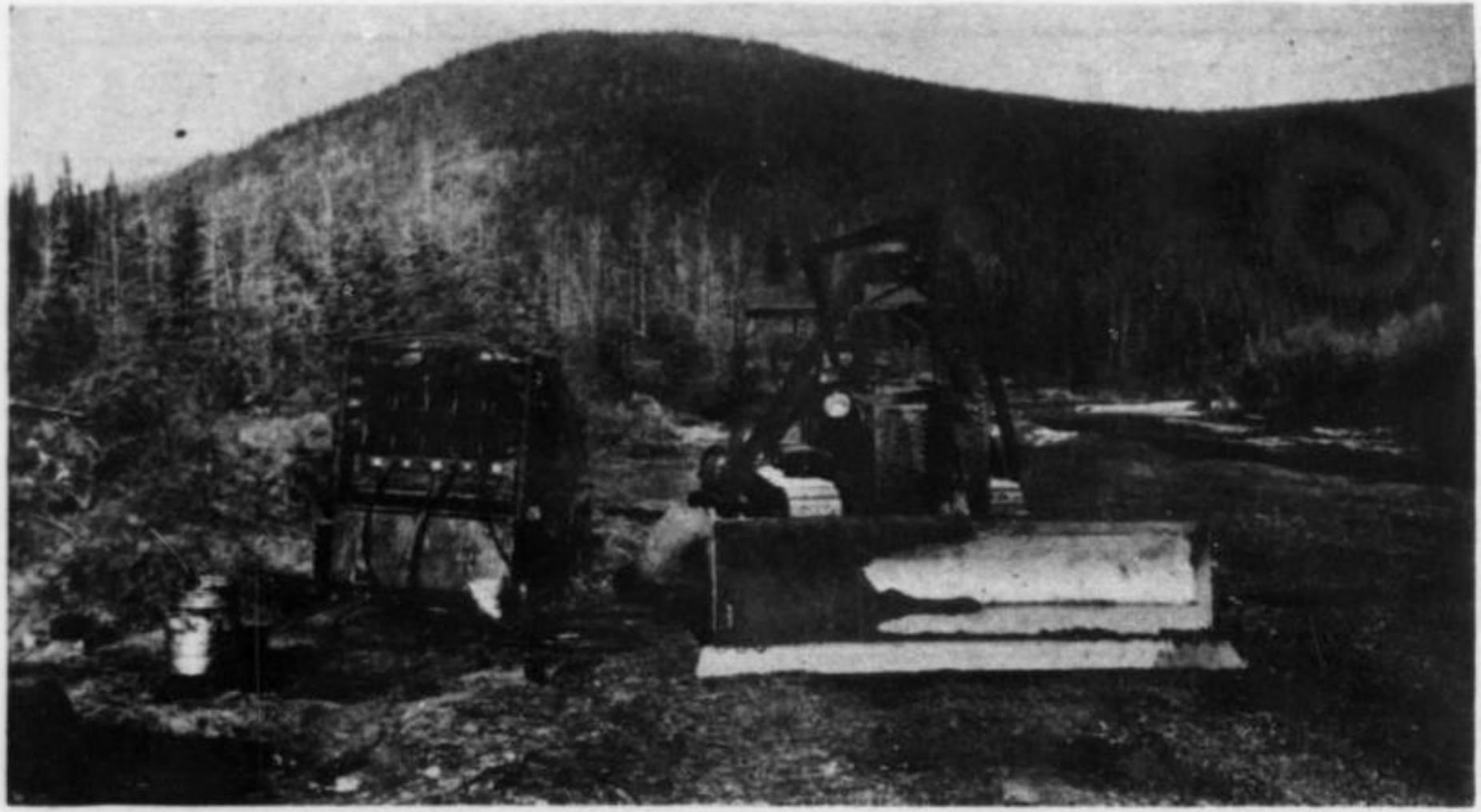
Supply trucks plow through mud to reach head-end camps.



Supply truck comes to grief on road along Muncho Lake.



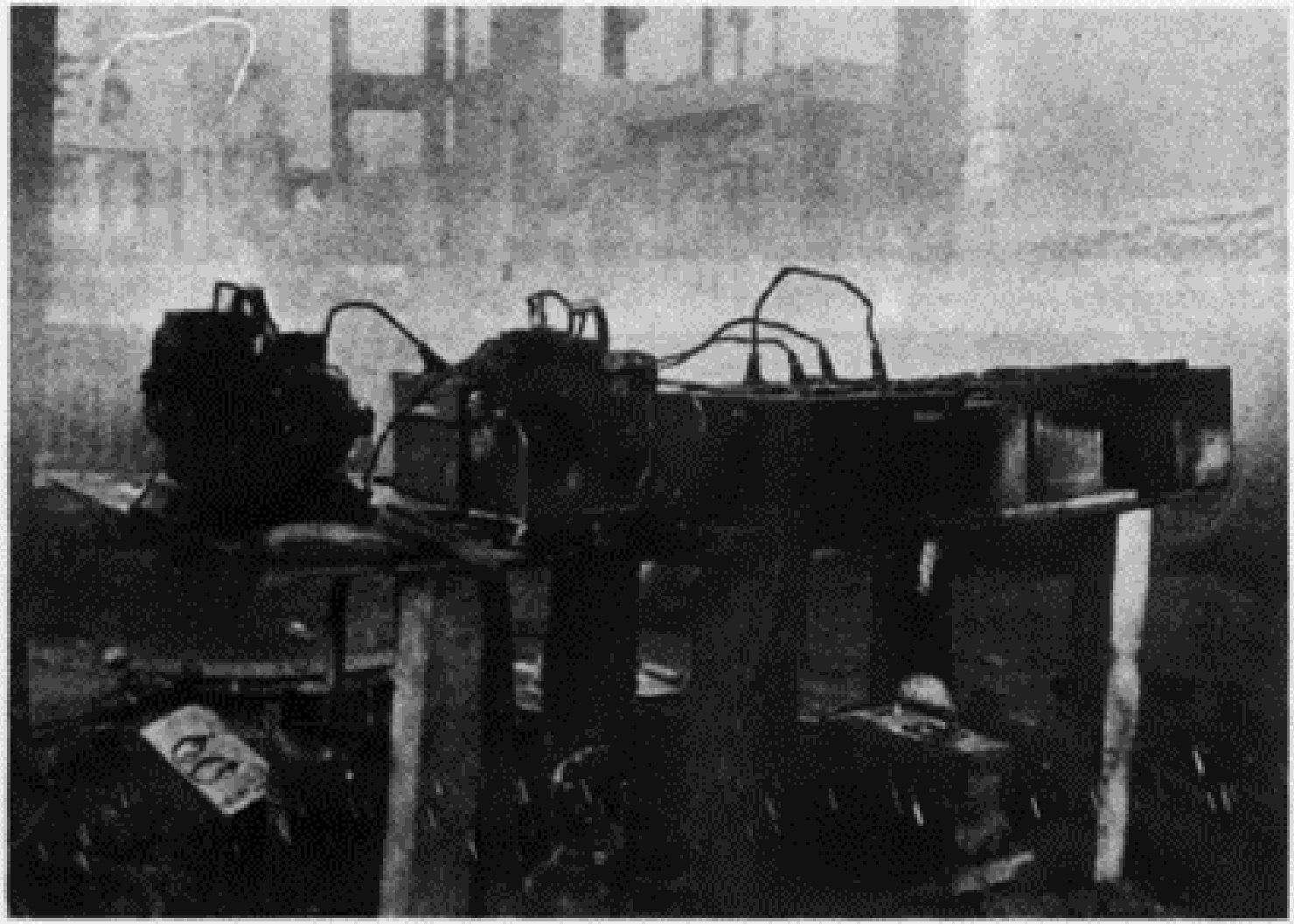
Equipment and prefabricated buildings on the beach at Skagway, Alaska, waiting shipment over railroad to Whitehorse.



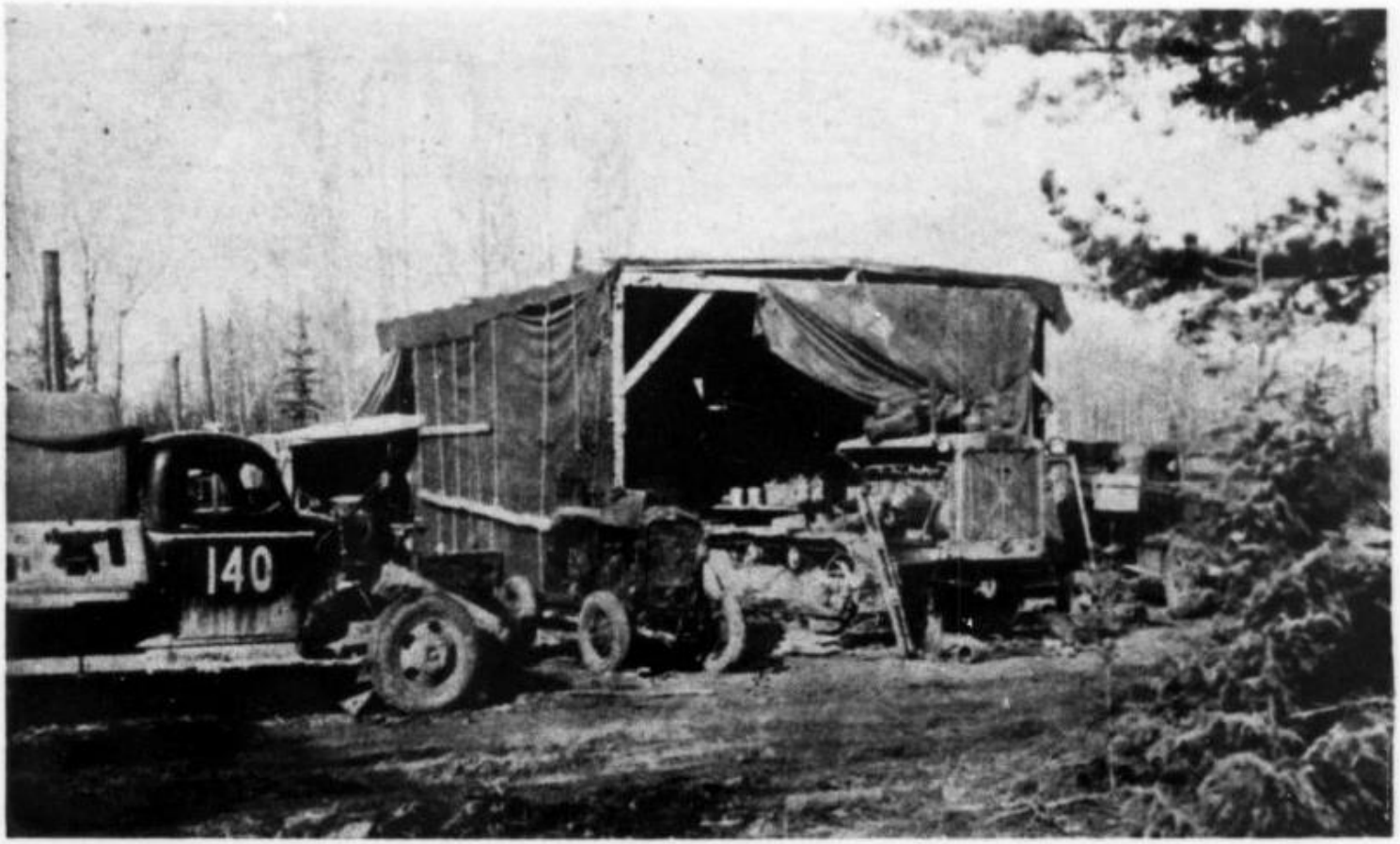
Trailer lubricating unit catches up with a bulldozer out on the road. Much of the construction equipment was serviced by portable refueling, greasing and repair outfits to save time.



Extensive repair facilities were set up by the 340th Engineer regiment at its Watson Lake headquarters by grouping truck-mounted machine shops.



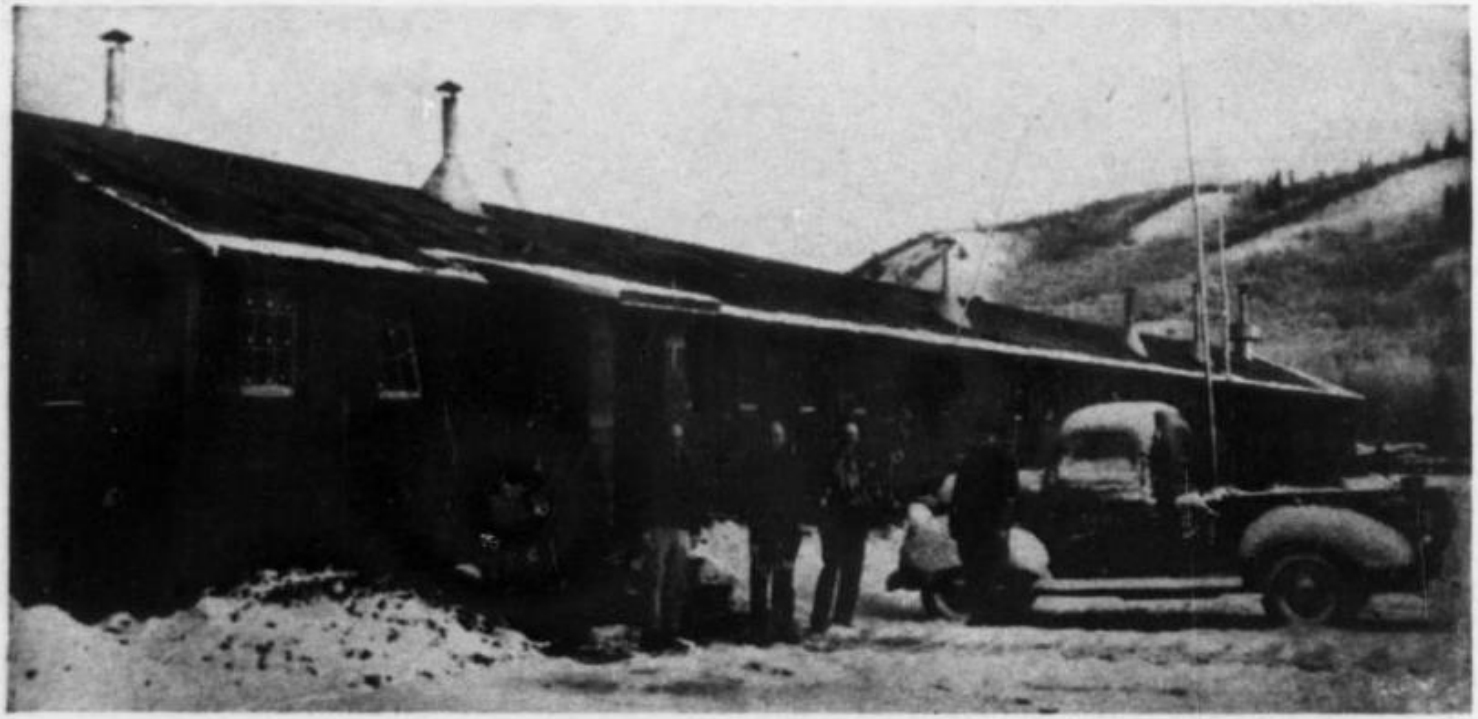
Tiny gas-driven generators charge storage batteries at an army field headquarters repair station. Lighting of equipment for night work increased the battery load.



Canvas-inclosed machine shop set up by a contractor south of Ft. Nelson to keep his equipment rolling.



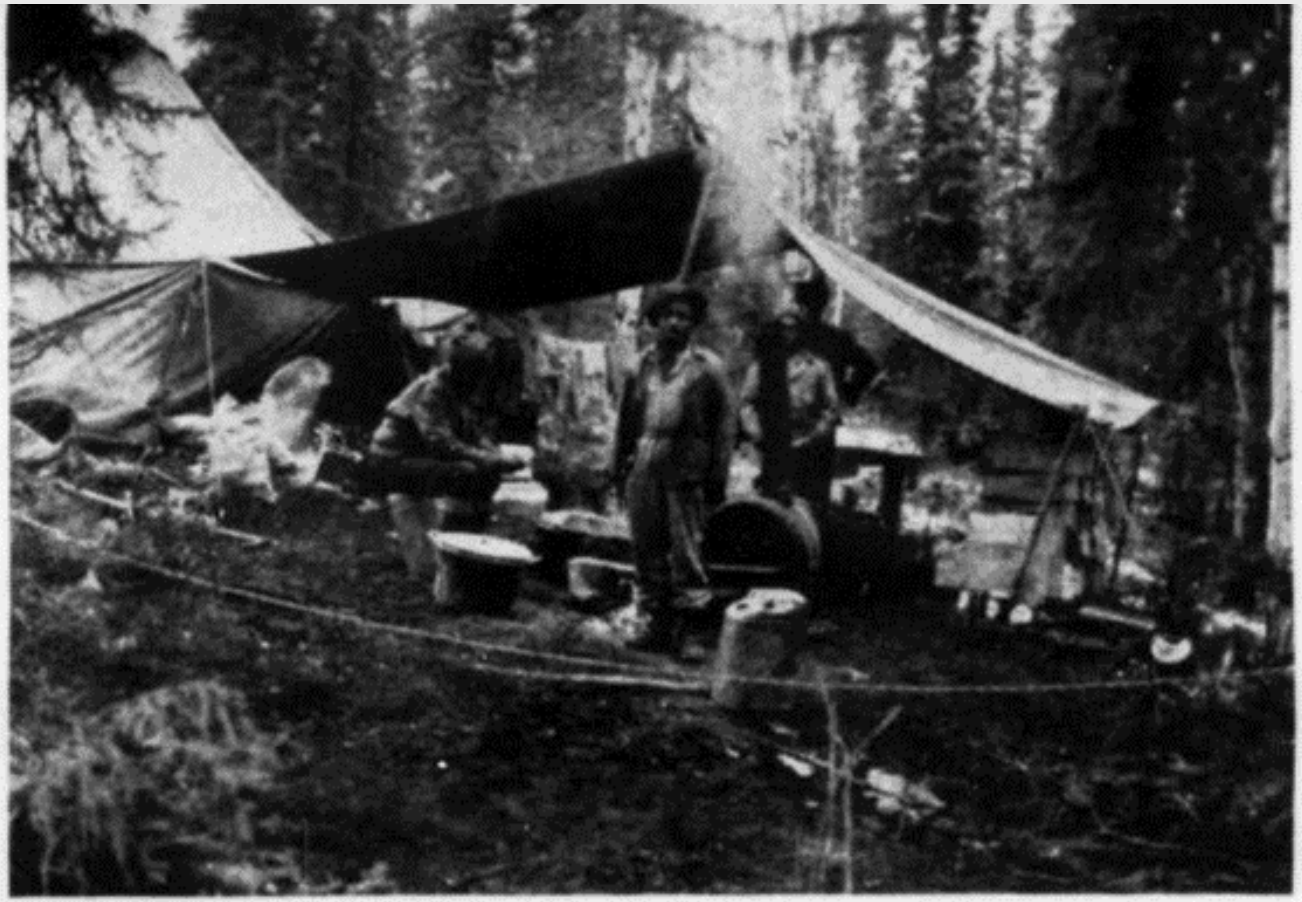
Ready for the winter equipment repair program is this big machine shop just completed at Whitehorse by the L. J. Dowell Co. It houses machine tools obtained from an abandoned Yukon mining camp.



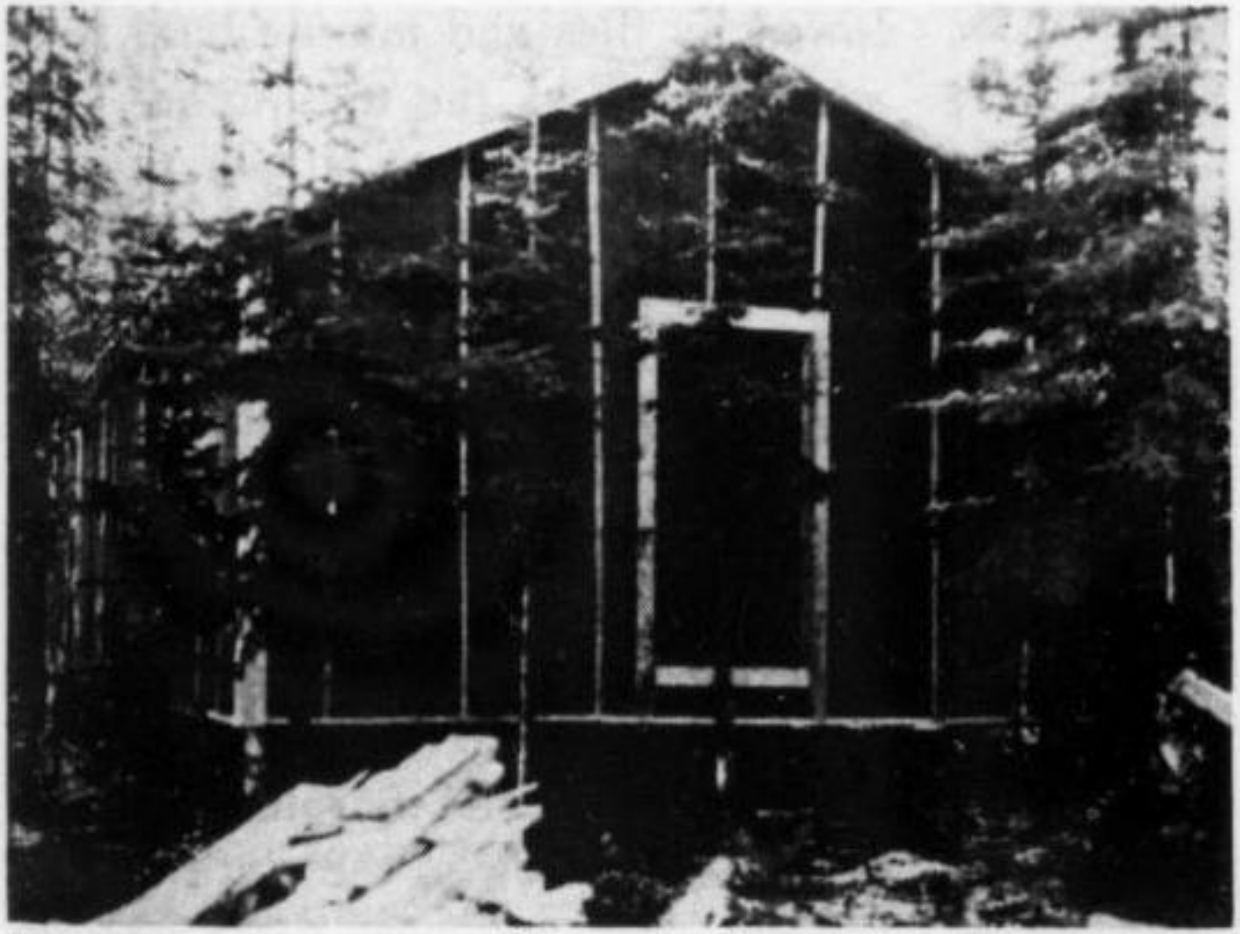
PRA headquarters camps were substantial and comfortable. This prefabricated building serves as office, mess hall and barracks for the engineers at their Alaska headquarters near Gulkana.



Preparation of a new army camp site and serving mess proceed together in a British Columbia spruce forest. Moving camps every few days to keep up with road building was a considerable job in itself.



Camps at the head end of pioneer roadbuilding operations were primitive. Here is an outdoor kitchen serving negro troops in the Yukon. The G. I. stove never reached this outfit so they use open fires and an oil-barrel oven.



Substantial rest camps have been established from 45 to 90 miles apart to house truck drivers, equipment service and repair men, and snow-removal and road maintenance crews. This army bunkhouse, built from lumber sawed on the site near the Tonona River is typical of the winterized buildings.



Portable generating sets made it possible for even the smallest of camps to have electric lights, one comfort in otherwise primitive accommodations.



Camp water supplies are well protected. Where water sources are subject to pollution the supply is treated by portable chlorinators and treated water stored in canvas tanks as shown here.

Part III—Construction Tactics

Harold W. Richardson
Western Editor, Engineering News-Record

(*ENR* – January 14, 1943)

This is the third and concluding article of the Alcan Highway series. Part I, which appeared in the Dec. 17 issue, told of the purpose of the project and described route location. Part II, covering the problems of supply, equipment and living conditions, was published in the Dec. 31 issue.

CONSTRUCTION of the Alcan Highway is largely a problem of organization and supply. Actual construction operations are relatively simple, especially in building and improving the army pioneer road. Because this phase of the project moved so fast very little time was spent in any one locality and a special road-building technique based on speed, and speed alone, was developed.

The army used seven regiments of engineer troops, three of them colored, to attack the pioneer road at six different points. Following close behind were 54 contractors, including 13 Canadian firms, working under the supervision of four managing contractors, all under the direction of the U.S. Public Roads Administration.

These contractors, as noted previously, were at first assigned to build the final-type or permanent road to high-class specifications, following the pioneer route as closely as possible. Early in August, however, plans were changed to shift the contractors over to improving the pioneer road, along with the troops who dropped back to this work as soon as they had completed smashing through a trail road. The combined efforts resulted in completion of the pioneer road as a passable truck route, graveled the full length, from 18 to 24 ft. wide, by Nov. 20. Since that date the road has been in use hauling military supplies.

The first troops to arrive on the project, the 35th Engineer Regiment, landed by rail at Dawson Creek on March 10. This regiment had the most hectic time of all, as it was important to get these troops into an inland point, Ft. Nelson, 325 miles beyond Dawson Creek, over a winter trail across the muskeg, passable only when frozen, in order that they might start building the road to the west toward Watson Lake. Because Ft. Nelson was inaccessible after the winter trail broke-up under spring thaws, getting the 35th in was the key to completion of the whole project in one season.

In addition to its regular army engineer equipment, the 35th received 23 cars of supplemental equipment shipped as a trainload out of Peoria, Ill., which arrived at Dawson Creek about the same time as its own outfit. Getting all this stuff unloaded and on the road to Ft. Nelson was quite a job.

There was no bridge at all across the Peace River at that time. In order to preserve the ice, the engineers planked a road across the ice and covered it well with sawdust. Then the long trek overland started for Ft. Nelson. The temperature ranged from 35 to 47-deg. below zero. The outfit was moved a company at a time, with rations sent ahead in each case so as to be sure food was available for each company as it arrived. The toughest part of the whole job was driving the big tractors and graders, all without adequate cab protection.

There were many wrecks and mishaps, but in spite of it all the last of the equipment was wheeled into Ft. Nelson on April 5. The road went out-of-service because of a spring thaw on April 17. Rations to last four months were included in the supplies.

Heavy rains and extremely bad weather kept the unit pretty well bottled-up near Ft. Nelson until the latter part of June, after which it broke loose and averaged 3 miles-per-day, traversing some of the toughest country of the entire project, including 160 miles of Rocky Mountains. Two narrow passes, occupied by Summit Lake (El. 4,212; highest point en route) and Muncho Lake had to be crossed. On Sept. 26, the 35th met the 340th Regiment, working east, at a point 305 miles west of Ft. Nelson, east of Watson Lake – 305 miles of tough going in three months actual working time. Then the men dropped hack to improve the pioneer road.

The 35th had the following equipment, typical of each of the army units: twenty heavy diesel tractors and bulldozers; twenty-four light gas tractors and bulldozers; six pulled road graders; three patrol graders; six rooter plows and six 12-yd. carrying scrapers. Also, they had ninety-three 3-ton dump trucks; a 6-ton prime mover truck; seven 4-ton cargo trucks and nine 24-ton cargo trucks, twenty-five jeeps; ten command cars; one sedan; twelve 3/4-yd. pickup trucks; a truck crane and two 4-yd. shovels. All of this equipment was new. Pontoons were also included as heavy equipment.

Smaller equipment included portable electric generating units; a 4-yd. concrete mixer; a 315-ft. portable compressor; 8 small portable compressors; 6 plows; 24 gas-driven saws; 2 portable electric welding machines and several drop pile hammers.

The second regiment to pull into Dawson Creek was the 341st, arriving in April and moving immediately to Ft. St. John over the existing road. Its equipment did not arrive until June, however, so it did not accomplish much until after the June rains and floods.

Because the heavy rains made mire out of the low-lying ground to the west of Charlie Lake where new construction started, this unit ferried men, supplies and equipment on pontoon barges the full length of the lake to get started at the north-end of the lake on higher ground. During these ferrying operations the greatest tragedy of Alcan construction occurred - sinking of a barge with loss of two officers and ten men.

After the rains subsided, the 341st backed-up and completed the first 18 miles skipped by the jump across Charlie Lake. This unit drove the pioneer road through to Ft. Nelson, 265 miles from Ft. St. John, arriving there Aug. 24. Upon reaching its objective this regiment kept right on going, improving the pioneer road built by the 35th.

The 95th Regiment of colored troops arrived in Ft. St. John in June and followed the 341st, widening the clearing and the road, shaping and grading-up, building culverts and bridges and improving he pioneer road in general. Besides several smaller bridges, the 95th built one major temporary bridge across the Sikanni Chief River.

Three Regiments Through Skagway

Meanwhile, three regiments arrived in Skagway, Alaska, in April, traveling up the West Coast. One, the 18th, soon went over the narrow-gauge railroad to Whitehorse, arriving there April 29. The other two, the 93rd (colored) and the 340th, remained in Skagway until June awaiting their equipment. While stationed in Skagway these two regiments found enough equipment to give them some road-building experience in rebuilding the streets of the city. Also, they did considerable work on the railroad, which the army later took over under a lease.

The 93rd got out of Skagway first, shipping its equipment to Carcross by rail. From this point, the troops started building road to the southeast, though a few companies were detailed at first to improve the 45-mile existing road between Carcross and Whitehorse. Hard going was encountered by the 93rd in building the 100-mile section from Carcross to Lake Teslin through swampy ground and mountains. Upon reaching Lake Teslin the regiment split; part of it dropping back to improve its own pioneer road the rest jumping across Nisutlin Bay, an arm of the lake, to improve the road built beyond that point by the 340th.

When the 340th equipment arrived it was shipped to Whitehorse by rail and thence by boat through devious waterways to Morley Bay on Lake Teslin. One battalion went with the equipment, the other battalion hiking overland to Morley Bay. From this latter point the troops worked both ways; east and west. It was only 7 miles back to Misutlin Bay; one of the major water barriers of the entire route, 2,400 ft. wide. Going the other direction, the 340th made 219 miles from June 9 to Sept. 24, when it met the 35th east of Watson Lake.

The 340th was one of the best organized of all the regiments, especially from an engineering standpoint. Its operations section established a field engineering office wherever it was camped, complete with drafting room and reproduction machines housed in a tent.

The section kept accurate records of the type of ground traversed, footage of corduroy and plotted its pioneer route from traverse and level lines.

In following the Morley and Swift Rivers to the divide between the Yukon and Mackenzie Basin, much swampy ground was crossed. In this 80-mile stretch records show that the road was built across 71,640 ft. of wet ground (17.0 percent of the distance) requiring 37,469 ft. of corduroy (8.8 percent).

Upon meeting the 35th Regiment, the 340th dropped back to work on the eastern portion of its pioneer road, building bridges across the Swift, Rancheria, Upper Liard and Hyland Rivers, as well as structures across many smaller streams.

The commander of the 18th Regiment, which reached Whitehorse in April, had planned to split his unit, sending one battalion ahead to the west over a winter trail to Kluane Lake, the other to start working west from Whitehorse. However, the winter trail broke-up too soon for this move so the regiment stuck together as a unit. The most difficult construction these encountered was road-building over the perpetually frozen ground of the Yukon and crossing the glacier streams of the St. Elias range foothills, whose wide valleys are completely filled with glacial debris.

The 18th took its regimental band along, which did much to bolster-up the morale of the troops and to relieve the monotony of work. Hearing this band play in the Arctic dusk, standing in deep snow in a spruce forest while the soldiers filed past an open field kitchen for their evening mess, was one of the greatest thrills the author experienced on the entire Alcan trip.

The last attacked the road through Alaska, working down into the Yukon. It arrived at Valdez regiment on April 3 and spent six weeks there and at work improving the existing Richardson Highway between Valdez and Gulkana. Then it jumped over a branch of this road to Slana and started north out of there building the pioneer road toward Tanacross, where the Tok River joins the Tanana, on July 1.

This regiment, the 97th (colored) had some pretty hard going from the first. It started right out in the Wrangell Mountains and in the first 10 days made only one mile total progress. During the next 10 days it made 3 miles, which was still mighty discouraging as the schedule called for at least 2 miles-a-day. However, as the troops became more experienced and hardened, progress became better, though the country didn't.

Following-up the Slana to Mentasta Lake Pass in the Nutzotin Mountains, then down the Little Tok and Tok Rivers, they reached the Tanana River near Tanacross, 78 miles from Slana, on Aug. 25. Turning-up the Tanana, they made much faster progress and exactly two months later they met the 18th coming up from Whitehorse at Beaver Creek, in the Yukon east of the Alaska border, 195 miles from Slana.

Army Construction Procedure

The above paragraphs show how the army units were filtered into the project. Their construction procedures were, for the most part, the same although details varied with the ideas of each commanding officer.

The actual location of the road was made by stereoscopic examination of aerial photos, followed in the field by reconnaissance on foot. However, not all of the route was flown in advance of actual construction of the trail road, sometimes all the commanding officer knew was the general direction he was to follow; he had to do his own locating on the spot.

Planes were indispensable in laying-out, also in building the project. The aerial photos were made from a standard army photographic plane, but for the most part the planes used in aerial reconnaissance were the small, single-motor “bush-hoppers,” piloted by local men who knew the country. These planes, fitted with skis for landing on snow or ice and with pontoons for landing on water when the ice went out, were in constant use.

Planes were also used to carry crews for building temporary bridges ahead of trail construction. In one instance, when a commanding officer realized supply lines to the head crew would be difficult to maintain in a certain location, rations, supplies and fuel were flown ahead, cached along the banks of lakes and streams, waiting for the advance crew to arrive.



Route of the Alcan Highway and its supply lines. The connection from Haines is now under construction to relieve the load on the W. P. & Y. R. R.

Sometimes it was necessary to sustain the foot survey and reconnaissance parties by horse-pack train. A few isolated parties kept in touch with their headquarters through Signal Corps “walkie-talkie” radio sets, but all were equipped with larger radio sets mounted in jeeps or trucks.

As location on the ground was determined, a centerline was blazed ahead by the officers in-charge. Speed was the first consideration, so the trail was carried around soft spots that would have taken more time to go across, looped around ravines that would have meant another bridge to build and detoured into open stretches that meant less clearing. Such instances account for much of the crookedness of the route.

Trees Easy to Knock-Down

Close behind, sometimes too close for comfort, came the lead bulldozer knocking-down the trees along the centerline. Flanking the lead machine were two or more bulldozers that mopped-out the full width of clearing. Behind these were a couple more bulldozers that cleaned-up the brush and fallen trees, pushing them off to the side. The trees, even the largest, were easily knocked-over, for in the Northland the trees have no deep tap roots into the frozen subsoil. The roots broom-out in shallow fans, which popped-out when the big bulldozers crashed against the trunks.

The head crews made no attempt to build a road, even a rough trail, but merely swamped-out a right-of-way. Occasionally, they had to stop to build a small bridge or culvert to get the bulldozers across a soft spot, but usually they just kept plugging ahead. One company of soldiers ordinarily formed a head outfit.

Then strung out maybe as much as 30 to 50-miles behind the lead crews were various soldier units who graded-up the rough trail road, built culverts and small bridges, widened the clearing where necessary, hauled in gravel for the worst soft spots and improved or rather built a trail road. The road was shaped-up and the necessary grading done with the big scrapers and graders. All operations continued day and night, seven days-a-week.

Equipment operators had to be developed and trained on-the-spot. The boys had been trained in some instances on gas tractors in camps in the United States, but many of them had only a few minutes instruction on diesel equipment before going north. Yet, some of the best operators; both colored and white, were boys that had never been on construction equipment until they arrived on the project. Of course, the equipment suffered considerably at first from lack of experienced operators; an unfortunate condition in view of the difficulty in getting repair parts.

Different Method of Attack

Each commanding officer varied the procedure somewhat. One such variation was to keep at least one battalion way back building a fairly substantial road, for manpower in the army units was plentiful and this commander figured at least part of his men might as well be building a decent trail instead of merely a rough one. Another commander flew small patrols ahead, equipped with hand saws and axes, for building bridges so that streams could be crossed when the bulldozer crew arrived.

Some regiments kept pretty good records of their accomplishment, others were intent on getting through. One unit ran surveys of its own trail route, tying the exact line in with traverse points, while other survey crews plotted an accurate profile. One regiment also set-up field engineering offices where all bridges and camp buildings were designed in advance.

By the time the later regiments had been organized for the project it was not possible to obtain all new supplemental equipment for them. One interesting case concerns a fleet of second-hand trucks assigned to one regiment. When this regiment left Seattle it abandoned 26 trucks on the wharf as useles and immediately requisitioned 26 more. Two months later, the requisition was filled - with the same 26 trucks that had been left behind, still in the same worn-out condition.

Except for conditions incidental to the terrain, such as going through the mountains, swamps and heavy timber, the actual building of the road was routine operation. Very little of the route was easy-going, however, and whoever named this the “Prairie Route” never saw the country.

Heartbreaking and back-breaking incidents could be recited by the score, but an example or two will suffice. In crossing the Nutzotin Mountains much of the line lies high on the hillside. Sometimes a tractor or grader would go off the narrow bench and the only way to get it back would be to build a trail from wherever it landed back up the mountain to the road.

To jump a crew ahead in coming down the Tok Valley, pontoons of supplies and rations, half-filled for light draft and half-filled barrels of gas and diesel fuel, were thrown into the Little Tok, a surprisingly small stream for the purpose and caught in a log boom 15 miles below. Meanwhile, a fleet of bulldozers took-off through the swamp and woods to the rendezvous below.

The most notable exception to normal road building was through the perpetually frozen section of the Yukon west of Whitehorse. Here permanent frost lies only a foot or so below the surface, yet this land supports heavy spruce forests.

At first, the topsoil was stripped and attempts were made to grade the road. As fast as the insulating cover was removed, the ground thawed, creating a morass that grew worse the longer it was worked.

Finally, the scheme was adopted of leaving the original humus blanket in-place and adding to its insulating value by spreading the brush and timber cut from the right-of-way over the road area. Sometimes this mat of trees and brush would be 4 or 5 ft. thick. Then, the highway fill was placed on top of the mat by end-dumping. The biggest difficulty here was to find enough unfrozen material.

Gravel for the most part is plentiful. The longest distance between gravel sources is about 35 miles, requiring a maximum haul of 18 miles. The average haul, however, is less than 3 miles. For mile upon mile in some sections, roadside pits and even the grade itself supply the surfacing material. Nowhere on the original army road was the gravel crushed or screened. In fact, as yet there is but little equipment for such purposes available on the entire job.

Contractors at Work

The four groups of managing contractors and their associated firms were distributed as follows: R. Melville Smith Co., Ltd., of Toronto, the relocation and reconstruction of the provincial road between Dawson Creek and Ft. St. John, and also the new road west of Ft. Nelson to Watson Lake. Okes Construction Co., St. Paul, the standard road between Ft. St. John and Ft. Nelson. Dowell Construction Co., Seattle, all contract work in the Yukon, from Watson Lake to the Alaska border. For all Alaska sections the contract was held by a combination of C.F. Lytle Co., Sioux City, Iowa, and Green Construction Co., Des Moines, Iowa.

A fifth contracting firm, E.W. Elliott of Seattle, Wash., held the contract for transportation of all men, supplies and equipment from the States to the project for all the other American contractors. Later this firm also did some work on the Yukon section of the road. At first the Army took care of its own transportation, but subsequently Elliott also transported some army supplies.

On the relocation and improvement of the Creek-Ft. St. John road, the Canadian contractors under R. Melville Smith Co. followed the old road part of the way, but some of the route is now on new alignment.

CONTRACTORS ON THE PROJECT

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

E. W. Elliott Co., Seattle, Wash., R. B. Johnson, project manager

C. F. Lytle Co., Green Construction Co., Sioux City and Des Moines, Iowa, O. W. Crowley, project manager; C. C. Coykendall, field manager

Associated Firms

E. M. Dusenberg, Inc., Clear Lake, Ia.
Eblen & Eblen, Cumberalnd, Ia.
Eblen & Ekdahl, Cumberland, Ia.
Wm. Horrabin Contr. Co., Iowa City, Ia.
V. L. Lundeen, Inc., Montezuma, Ia.
Gus Ostermann, Ocheyeden, Ia.
J. W. Scothorn Construction Co., Cherokee, Ia.
Sears Construction Co., Clear Lake, Ia.
J. Leo Hoak, Des Moines, Ia.
L. Peterson, Cedar Rapids, Ia.
Welden Bros., Iowa Falls, Ia.
Western Engineering Co., Harlan, Ia.
Duvall & McKinney, Logan, Ia.
Ira VanBuskirk, Hawarden, Ia.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Okes Construction Co., St. Paul, Minn., Day Okes and Wm. Bates, project managers

Associated Firms

Adolphson, Huseth, Layser & Welch, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Astleford Co., Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.
Art Bolier, Minneapolis, Minn.
Brown & Leguil, Mankato and Adrian, Minn.
Coglan Construction Co., Rollo, No. Dak.
Pederson Bros., Inc., Montevideo, Minn.
Standard Salt & Cement Co., Duluth, Minn.
Thomas Bros., Foley, Minn.
Vulck Construction Co., Rice Lake, Wisc.
Sorensen & Volden, Albert Lea, Minn.
Roverud Bros., Spring Valley, Minn.
Southern Minnesota Construction Co., Caledonia, Minn.
Reese & Olson, Greenbush, Minn.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Dowell Construction Co., Seattle, Wash., L. J. Dowell and Ross Woodward, project managers

Associated Firms

Angeles Gravel Supply Co., Port Angeles, Wash.
L. L. and R. W. Byers, San Francisco, Cal.
J. C. Dawson Co., Seattle, Wash.
Hugh Govan and Adler Construction Co., Seattle, Wash.
Haas-Royce-Johnson, San Francisco, Cal.
Joe A. Jussel, Seattle, Wash.
C. E. O'Meal, Ellensberg, Wash.
J. S. Ramstad, Seattle, Wash.
W. C. Thompson, San Francisco, Cal.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

R. Melville Smith Co., Ltd., Toronto, Ont., T. F. Francis, project manager

Associated Firms (All Canadian)

Emil Anderson Construction Co.
Bond Construction Company, Ltd.
Campbell Construction Company, Ltd.
Curran & Briggs, Ltd.
Don Construction, Ltd.
Dufferin Paving Company, Ltd.
W. H. Harvey & Son
A. E. Jupp Construction Company, Ltd.
Wallace A. Mackey, Ltd.
Storms Contr. Company, Ltd.
Tomlinson Construction Company
Caswell Sand & Gravel Company

In both cases construction on this 52-mile stretch was according to PRA specifications for the final-type road. One 3-mile tangent section on new alignment across muskeg caused considerable trouble. It was necessary to remove the swampy material; 3 to 4 ft. thick, by dragline, and backfill with dry clay hauled from some distance away.

The Canadians were equipped with enough portable crushing and screening plants to provide graded gravel for surfacing most of the road into Ft. St. John. When the Smith group of contractors finished the section south of Ft. St. John they were jumped to various stretches west of Ft. Nelson to improve the army pioneer road.

Okes Construction Co. made its headquarters at Ft. St. John and its associate firms started-off to build the PRA final road north of this point. Specifications called for clearing 100 ft. wide and grading 60 ft. wide. On top of the subgrade was placed 12 in. of select material (sand or any material other than muck).

Next were two courses of gravel, first 8 in. of crushed material (2 in. maximum size, when available) and a 4-in. layer of 1-in. crushed gravel. No plans are made for surfacing other than with gravel, but perhaps a bituminous top may be placed on certain sections this coming summer to cut-down maintenance.

Actually, the gravel used is largely pit run, as screening and crushing facilities are limited to one installation at the Peace River. Creosoted wood-stave culverts are called for on the PRA standard section.

On the PRA route the alignment was mostly tangent, crossing muskeg and soft ground as encountered on corduroy or by blading-out the soft stuff. Side ditches and back slopes were carefully cut and trimmed. Grades were low and uniform, necessitating heavy excavation in many spots.

In addition to the 52-miles of reconstruction between Dawson Creek and Ft. St. John, the first 26-miles of route north of the latter village were built to these standards before the order was given to abandon the high-type road construction and to shift all contractors to improving the army pioneer road. These 78 miles of good road are now part of the highway.

After leaving the PRA section, the Okes group of contractors worked through to Ft. Nelson on the army road, then jumped west to various sections between that point and Watson Lake.

In the Yukon, Dowell's contractors worked at first on two sections. They built the 50-mile cut-off east from Whitehorse to Jakes Corner, connecting with the army road out of Carcross toward Teslin Lake. This section was not built to the full high standards outlined above, but is a compromise between the army improved road and the PRA specifications.

The same group of contractors also started a full PRA specification route 15-miles-long on the south bank of the Takhini River west of Whitehorse, which would have cut 6-miles off the army road. When the army orders for stopping high-type road construction were issued, however, this-stretch was temporarily abandoned about half complete. Then the Dowell group, accompanied by Elliott's Road building forces, were scattered over various sections of the pioneer road between Watson Lake and the Alaska border.

In Alaska, Lytle & Green's contractors started a PRA section of road north out of Gulkana along the general location of the branch of the Richardson Highway to Slana. About 5-miles were partly completed when the stop-order was issued and about a mile of this construction, eliminating a bad stretch on the old road, is all that is now in-service.

Also, this group of contractors was assigned to build, without any advance army pioneer road, the stretch between Big Delta, where the Fairbanks branch of the Alcan Highway meets the Richardson Highway, eastward 108-miles to Tok Junction, where the south branch comes in from Slana. This work, started from the Big Delta-end, began as a high-type road, but after 50-miles or so the standards were relaxed in favor of speed.

Some of the Alaskan group followed the army north out of Slana, others worked down the Richardson Highway branch between Gulkana and Slana and all pitched-in on the main-line from Tok Junction eastward into the Yukon, where their assignments were finished. Toward the last, in all cases, the army units and contractors were working together as one big organization bent on getting the trail road converted into a passable road at the earliest possible moment.

Contractor Equipment

The PRA informed the managing contractors that the government would furnish certain construction equipment, principally trucks and tractors, from the reservoir of CCC equipment. Taking these items into consideration, the managing contractors instructed each of their associated individual firms as to what equipment units they should furnish.

This plan did not work-out as well as anticipated, partly because some of the CCC equipment was too old for useful service and partly because of difficulties and delays in its transportation to the project. About 5,000 pieces of major equipment are operated by the contractors.

Handicapped as they were with old equipment in a locality far from sources of repair parts and with inadequate repair facilities, the contractors turned-out a remarkable performance. Often it was necessary to strip one piece of equipment to keep others in-service and at all times there was a shortage of units, especially trucks.

Actual roadbuilding operations were simple. In improving the army pioneer road both contractors and army units widened the clearing, built up a low grading to provide adequate drainage.

Except to reduce the grade to a maximum of 10 percent, no heavy grading was done. For the most part the improved army road follows the ground surface. Cuts and fills are scarce. Contractors and engineer troops are both on the job this winter to improve the worst stretches, maintaining the road in bitter winter weather and keeping the route free of snow.

Snow removal won't be as difficult as might be supposed. The total winter snow fall on any part of the highway, except possibly in the mountain passes, doesn't exceed 24 in. Snow removal equipment has been spotted at the rest camps, from 45 to 90 miles apart, where the road maintenance crews have been quartered for the winter. Snow-fighting equipment includes 50 big V-plows mounted on tractors and 40 rotaries, in addition to scores of truck-mounted blades. Motor patrols and bulldozers can also be used if necessary.

Winter Maintenance

November, 1943 — Roads and Bridges

Winter-Maintenance Problems on the Alaska Highway

Honeycomb Ice Formation Coupled with Peculiar Stream Behavior Caused Serious Traffic Difficulties

By LIEUT. G. A. WILLIAMS
Office of Technical Information, Northwest Division, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Edmonton, Alta.

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY if set-down in an inhabited area with suitable access roads, railroads and other means of transportation and supply would be just another road like thousands of others that interlace the northern United States and Canada. This particular highway does not fall into this category, however, for its construction and maintenance, besides embodying certain essential and basic elements - plans and specifications, labor, material, equipment and management - as in the case of any construction or maintenance operation wherever located, involved two other problems of major importance - a short construction season and difficulties in transportation.

The original “tote” road for the Alaska Highway was pushed through last year by troops of the U.S. Corps of Engineers under the command of Brigadier-General William H. Hoge and Brigadier-General James A. O’Connor, respectively in-charge of the northern and southern sectors. The initial plan called for the soldiers to build a “tote” road over which equipment could be hauled and supply lines established. The intention then was that the “tote” would be widened, straightened, graveled and generally brought up to proper standards by civilian contractors working under the U.S. Public Roads Administration.

The original idea was abandoned, however, when it became certain that a uniting of all the forces - engineers and contractors - was needed to complete the assignment by the end of the year. Thus, it came about that it was the pioneer military highway and not a finished highway that presented maintenance problems last winter. It was strictly a military winter road.

Roughly the road follows this route: beginning at Dawson Creek. B.C., 400 miles northwest of Edmonton, Alta., and the end of the Northern Alberta Railroad, it follows a former dirt highway northward for 65 miles to Fort St. John, B.C., where it leaves a fairly well inhabited district and plunges in to densely wooded rolling country, proceeding northward for 250 miles to Fort Nelson, B.C. From Fort Nelson it goes past mountains northwest for a distance of 360 miles to Watson Lake on the Yukon-British Columbia boundary, thence through mountains westerly and then northwesterly for 275 miles to Whitehorse, Yukon gold-rush town. From Whitehorse the route lies along beautiful Kluane Lake and skirts the St. Elias Mountain Range, crossing the Alaskan-Yukon border and proceeding north-westerly to Fairbanks, Alaska, 600 miles from Whitehorse.

The total length of the highway is 1,639 miles, and there is only one town worthy of the name in this distance. Other than the terminals at Dawson Creek and Fairbanks only one access point exists along the entire highway, namely at Whitehorse which was served by the narrow-gauge railway of the White Pass and Yukon Route from Skagway on the Pacific Coast.

Transportation Problem

The chief problem in respect to maintenance, it can be readily seen, became transportation - transportation of men and machines to do the work, of food, clothing, fuel, everything needed to enable men to live and work and machines to function properly. This transportation was dependent on a long, extended life-line, a breakdown of which anywhere would throw the whole plan into disorder.

Snow Easily Handled

The intense cold during the winter proved another great hazard, perhaps the greatest as far as maintenance proper is concerned, but snow, strangely enough, did not present a major problem. From Dawson Creek to Whitehorse the snow never exceeded 1-1/2 ft. in depth; from Whitehorse to Kluane Lake it was not more than 2 ft. and from there to Fairbanks it ranged from 2 to 3 ft. In most cases this depth of snow could be handled readily by blade graders and bulldozers. In case of trouble V-type snowplows were available.

Nature, however, has queer traits in a country where the temperature may drop as low as 72-degrees below zero, as it did last winter - springs that flow all winter long; rivers that freeze from the bottom-up; bitter cold that frosts a man’s lungs if he breathes too deeply or quickly.

To brave the frigid temperatures men had to be clothed with heavy woolen underwear, socks, shirts and jackets. Leather shoes proved unsatisfactory. and Indian moccasins, mucklucks or felt boots had to be used. A fur-lined parka was devised with a hood to cover the head and thick blanket-like trousers and wool mittens, sometimes with outer leather ones, completed the apparel necessary to meet the extreme climatic conditions. To prevent frosting of lungs wool mufflers were wrapped about the nose and mouth, all breathing being done through this covering so as to check the cold air long enough to warm it slightly.

In the sleeping and living quarters the frost often became inches deep on the walls despite insulation and roaring fires. The men were furnished with sleeping bags as blankets were insufficient. The sleeping bags were double-lined, the inner lining being filled with kapok or eiderdown and the outer lining being windproof and water-repellant.

Keeping Equipment Functioning

The problem of keeping engines warm enough to function properly or at all was a very serious one. At times the motors were left running practically the entire night and day. On diesel equipment it became necessary to warm the fuel lines by placing under them and igniting cans filled with sand or dirt saturated with gasoline. At one time the driver of a light pickup vehicle used a mixture of half No. 10 motor oil and half kerosene for lubrication, but even with this mixture the motor had to be run l5-minutes of every hour night and day or the mixture would freeze solid. Of course, this vehicle was used for transportation only. No hauling could he done as the motor would not have had sufficient lubrication to enable it to run.

Ice a Major Problem

As stated above, snow provided no problem; on the other hand, ice proved a major one. Between Watson Lake and the Alaska border there were more than 250 places where icing caused grief in one form and another. East of the continental divide, this condition was not a problem as the annual rainfall amounts to only 13 in. approximately, the country being virtually semi-arid.

In some sections of the road there is permanent glacial ice, or permafrost as it is sometimes called, a few feet and sometimes only a few inches below the surface. On some side-hill cuts, for instance, there can be found several feet of earth and gravel overlying from three to six-feet of ice beneath which is gravel again.

A peculiar thing about this formation is the fact that springs which flow from the ice deposits in the summer continue to flow or bleed during the coldest weather. The water flows into culverts and ditches where it freezes, filling them up and then overflowing on the road. The continued overflow and subsequent freezing cause huge mounds of honeycombed ice which block the road.

This is called “mushroom ice” due to the formation of the deposits, which build-up into mounds not unlike gigantic mushrooms. It is thought by some that the explanation of the phenomenon of the ice deposits bleeding in the winter-time is that the tremendous pressure on the ice from the weight above on the hillside increases the temperature to such an extent, where the ice comes in contact with bedrock, that thawing occurs underneath, resulting in springs which last winter continued to flow at 72-degrees below zero.

Combating the Ice

Portable steam outfits mounted on trucks were used in an effort to clear the culverts and ditches and to relieve the icing conditions, but this proved a never-ending task. The use of oil drums filled with fuel was also tried, these being set near the culverts and allowed to burn night and day, but this scheme was found impractical. Gangs of men laboring with picks and shovels attempted to dig out the clogged drainage systems and to remove the ice from the road, but could never keep up with the work. Where they were available, sand and gravel were sprinkled over the top and traffic was enabled, slowly it is true, to travel over the road.

River Peculiarities

The streams and rivers of this far-north country have a habit of freezing from the bottom up. The current is so swift that ice does not form on the surface as in normal cases; instead, freezing occurs along the sides and bottom, causing the stream bed to rise. Because the stream bed is raised, the water overflows and forms a new channel. This keeps up all winter long, with the stream overflowing time after time and wandering all over the valley or canyon bottom as the case may be.

In many cases the ice has been measured and has been found to have built-up as high as 20 ft. above the original surface of the stream. One case is recorded of a northern river with banks 109 ft. high where the ice built-up to a depth of more than 50 ft.

Nothing being known at the time of the construction of the highway about this peculiar trait of northern rivers, bridges and approaches were constructed in the normal manner. The result was that the approaches and bridges were in many cases completely covered with ice, making them useless. The ice was honeycombed and unsuitable to travel over. The ice going out in the spring incidentally took out nearly all the bridges.

Rebuilding the Bridges

The only remedy for this situation was to rebuild the bridges last spring and summer with the decking sufficiently high above the stream or river to stay clear of the ice. The same steps were taken with the approaches and in many cases what formerly was an approach became part of a longer-span bridge. It really became necessary, because of the spring and summer floods, to build the bridges with abutments on the bluffs on each side of the stream.

For example, one bridge with a total span of 175 ft. over a river with water flowing in two channels proved wholly inadequate when a sudden rise in the stream caused it to spread from bluff-to-bluff, a distance of 2,700 ft. In another case a stream that was hardly wide enough to prevent one from jumping across turned into a raging torrent extending across the canyon for 1,900 ft. It is not unusual for flash floods to be experienced in many other parts of the world, but the peculiar feature of the northern rivers is the unpredictable things they do. In both of the cases just referred to there was no indication to show that this flooding had happened before for decades, if ever.

At one place during this past summer, after the danger of spring floods had been overcome and the summer rains were supposed to be over, a certain bridge was replaced seven times in ten days. This, of course, was a temporary bridge which was finally replaced by a permanent structure.

Most of the rivers of the north are glacial in origin and their valleys and canyons are strewn with boulders, trees and huge gravel deposits which form what appears to be a delta, sometimes extending across a valley for a width of a mile to two miles. These are the same streams that ice-up in the winter. In the summer, the freshets caused by rainfall or the melting of glaciers as a result of unusually warm weather carry down an enormous amount of material - boulders as big as pianos, logs, gravel, etc. This debris clogs the channels, raises the level of the stream bed and causes the water to overflow and form new channels just as in the winter. This condition results in glacial-deposit fans that spread all over the valleys.

An instance is recorded where a stream changed its channel four times in half an hour and the level of the valley as a whole was raised five feet by the deposits of gravel, boulders and other debris. What this boils down to is that conditions in the north are unpredictable both in the summer and the winter and that the only way to provide a crossing over these streams is to bridge the entire valley or glacial fan.

Trucks Frozen in Solidly

To revert to winter maintenance, the ice formed by either springs or overflowing rivers is honeycombed. Naturally the only way by which traffic could proceed was over the top of the ice, but the trucks broke through the upper layers and often became stuck. Unacquainted with the quirks of nature in the North, some truck drivers would get out of their cabs to look over the situation. That is all it took to cause trouble, for in temperatures of 30-degrees and below only a few minutes are required for truck tires to become frozen solidly in the ice. Before the driver could get back into the cab to break the wheels loose the truck had become frozen-in until spring.

At one river crossing in particular, trucks could be seen in all stages of becoming buried in the ice. Some had been buried to such an extent that just the tops of the cabs were showing. After the spring thaw all of this equipment was recovered.

Crossings Corduroyed

To overcome this condition the crossings were corduroyed with logs or timber. Water was then poured on this foundation so as to form a solid sheet of ice and provide a firm road bed.

During the coming winter many of the difficulties experienced last winter will be overcome to a great extent. Maintenance and relay stations have been built every fifty miles or so along the entire length of the highway and warm barracks, mess-halls, heated garages and repair shops are scattered along the route.

Highway Improved

During the past construction season, U.S. Army Engineers under the command of Brigadier General Ludson D. Worsham; Division Engineer of the Northwest Division, with the aid of the U.S. Public Roads Administration and civilian contractors and workers have converted the original “tote” road to an all-weather military highway. The road now averages 26 ft. in width, most of the bad curves and hills have been removed and the surface is graveled from end-to-end. The first convoy over the new all-weather road reached Fairbanks, Alaska, shortly after the middle of October.

It is thought that most of the bad icing conditions have been eliminated by the installation of permanent bridges specially designed to span the streams and rivers where icing conditions existed last winter. The roadway will be far above the ice even if the situation becomes worse than last winter which was one of the most severe on record. These bridges range from small natural-timber structures to the great Peace River suspension bridge between Dawson Creek and Fort St. John.

All spots where springs caused trouble have either been detoured where possible or bridged to allow water to flow beneath and build-up ice beyond the road. Traffic-regulation signs have been placed and all curves, steep grades, junctions, bad spots and bridges have been marked.

Under the direction of General Worsham each District Engineer will be responsible for the maintenance of his portion of the road. The maintenance problem resolves into the following elements:

1. Road surfaces and ditches.
2. Bridges and culverts.
3. Traffic control (signs, etc.).
4. Unpredictable contingencies and disasters.

Thirty-two Sections

Because of the element of uncertainty, most of the work outside of routine patrol is planned on the basis of having organized forces, especially equipped for a specific purpose, distributed along the project in such a manner that work of a magnitude above normal routine operations can be quickly accomplished.

The highway is divided into 32 sections of about 40 to 50-miles each. within each of which is located one of the more permanent maintenance camps or relay stations. The function of these camps is to provide bases from which routine patrols will operate. Each of these patrols will have civilian labor and motor patrols, dump trucks, pickup trucks, blade-type snowplows and rotary sand spreaders.

In addition, eight areas are established along the highway and its feeder roads. Each are will have a special force equipped with all the machinery and tools necessary to take care of any emergency and will operate under the direction of area headquarters. Among this equipment will be pile-drivers, cranes, welding outfits, heavy trucks and trailers, thawing outfits, power shovels, portable electric plants, etc.

“We Will Try - We Will Dare” is the motto of the U.S. Corps of Engineers, builders of the Panama Canal. Once again in the building of the Alaska Highway with the cooperation of the Canadian government and thousands of American and Canadian workers, they have tried - they have dared - they have won.

Bridges and Drainage

The drainage of this country is interesting. East of the Rockies the drainage is through several large rivers set deep in broad valleys; all tributaries of the Mackenzie, South of Whitehorse in the Yukon basin the streams are frequently marshy, often connecting-up a chain of lakes. North of Whitehorse the streams change to glacier-fed rivers carrying vast amounts of glacial debris, which changes the whole character of the river valleys.

Roadbuilding, especially that on the pioneer route, was always far ahead of bridge construction. Where possible the streams were forded by equipment, even to the extent of crossing with tractors water so deep that the oil inlets had to be sealed-up and only the air-intake and exhaust pipes stuck out of the water. Crossing of the larger rivers at first was by ferries or pontoon bridges handled by pontoon companies assigned to each regiment. Usually the ferries were simply five or six pontoons lashed together and decked over, powered by outboard motors.

Sometimes, the army built bridges by hand tools alone, before it was possible to get sawmills and pile-drivers over the road. In such cases framed bents of logs set on log mud sills carried log caps and stringers and a pole deck. Just as fast as possible sawmills were set-up to produce dimension timber and planking and pile-drivers were brought in for driving the bents.

Both the army and contractors worked on the bridge program. Some of the contractors had regular pile-driving equipment, but often crawler cranes with swinging leads and truck cranes fitted-up as skid drivers drove the piles. One regimental operations section determined the design of its trestles by building a typical span on the ground, loading it with a big tractor and measuring the deflection. From this test span the safe allowable stresses in the local timber could be determined.

Every stream along the entire route is now crossed by a pile trestle built of local timber. Such bridges or parts of them in the larger streams will undoubtedly go out with the ice next spring. It is planned to have extra piles and timber available at each important structure, along with a pile-driving rig and necessary bridge hardware, for immediate replacement when a bridge or a part of a bridge does go out.

Three permanent bridges are now under construction under the direction of PRA, which has been given the responsibility for the permanent bridge program. Greatest of these is a suspension bridge across the Peace River.
This is a critical crossing, and the present trestle will surely go out
with the ice next April.

To get work started a contract was let about Oct. 1 for two river and two shore piers spaced for a center span of 959 ft. and two side spans of 485 ft. each. The piers are being sunk through 12 to 20 ft. of water and ice and 27 ft. of gravel into hardpan. Two twisted-strand cables carried on 195-ft. steel towers and tied to concrete anchorages will support the 24-ft. roadway.

The contract was let for completion April 15. Because of the speed required and difficulties in erecting steel in 59-deg. below zero weather, the towers and deck trusses may be temporarily bolted.

Two other permanent bridges are now being built across the Cut Bank River, north of Dawson Creek and the Sikanni Chief River, north of Ft. St. John. These are creosoted timber trusses, built of material shipped in from the States. For a 1,000-ft. crossing of the Muskwa, negotiations are underway to try to get some steel from the abandoned Southern Pacific lines in the Shasta Dam Reservoir.

There are some 200 major bridges. Until gained from flood flows there is no way to determine which bridges will go out each spring or which ones will stand-up under all but the most severe floods.

Such uncertainty applies to the entire drainage problem. Culverts and small bridges have been installed in every location where the need seems apparent, but there will be no way to tell exactly until next spring as to just where the road should be drained. No two authorities agree as to the number of culverts that should be installed.

Bridges in the glacier country are a different problem. Here most of the streams are narrow channels meandering through wide valley floors completely covered with gravel and boulder glacial debris. Just how these small channels act in floods is not known. Perhaps they spread all over the valley, or maybe they cut new channels through the debris.

The temporary bridges across these streams span the channels only. Occasionally the remainder of the valley is crossed on fill, but often on simply a low grade. It is known that these streams freeze-up from the bottom, raising the water higher and higher. Old trappers report that, at times, the whole valley becomes a mass of ice from such action. What kind of structure would be a permanent bridge in such instances is a nice question.

Another problem is crossing glacier debris fans coming into main valleys from side streams. These deltas are usually dry, but there is evidence of heavy water flows at times. Some of these fans are wide, a half mile or so. To bridge them fully would be a big and expensive job. Consideration is being given to dredging out a definite channel, which would be bridged, with guide dikes directing the flood flows to the opening. However, at present the road usually crosses these spots on a low grade. By next summer some logical solution may be apparent from the spring run-off experience.

Still another annoying drainage problem is underground glaciers. These are numerous in the Alaskan mountain sections. A tongue of ice will be cut into in shaping-up the grade. Regardless of temperature and probably caused by pressure, these ice pockets continue to bleed a steady but small amount of water. As soon as the water reaches the road it freezes, piling-up ice in layer upon layer. Culverts at such spots soon clog-up with ice. The ice tongues do not have to be cut into to act up; there are plenty of cases where the glacier water oozes out of the hillside and manages to reach the road before freezing.

Communications so far depend entirely upon army Signal Corps radio stations. The Signal Corps is building a first-class telephone line the full length of the highway, but this will not be completed for some time.

Building the Alaska Highway

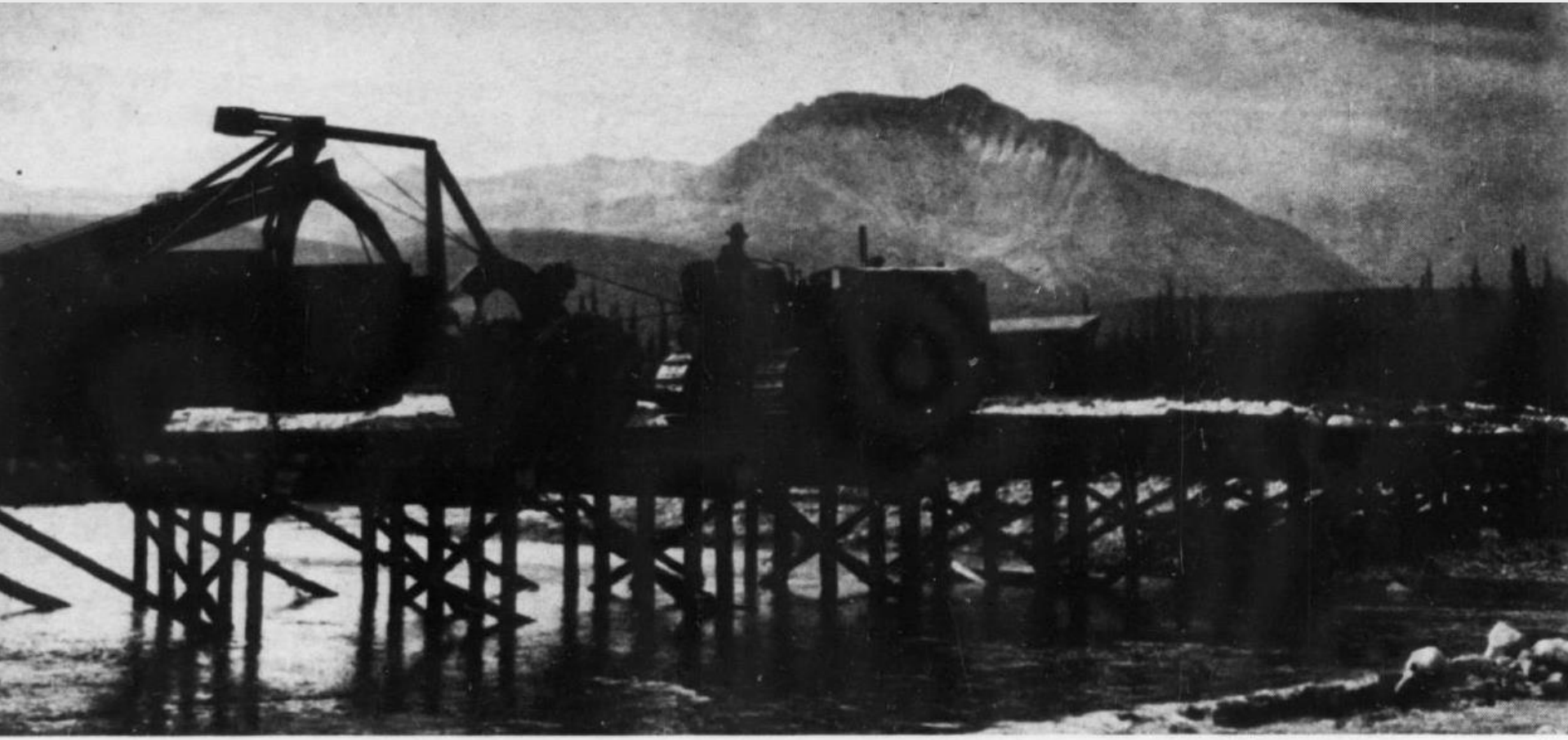
The Alcan Highway is being built under the direction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the recently organized Northwest Service Command. Maj. Gen. Eugene Reybold is chief of engineers; Brig. Gen. C. L. Sturdevant is assistant chief in charge of engineer troops; Brig. Gen. James A. O'Connor, formerly in charge of the south sector is head of the Northwest Service Command. Brig. Gen. William M. Hoge was in charge of the road until June 6, and thereafter was in-charge of the north sector until he was assigned to other duties. At present the direction in the field is under the following: Col. John W. Wheeler, in-charge; Col. E.G. Paules, in command of the north sector; Col. R.D. Ingalls, in command of the south sector; and Col. H.L. Twichell, in-command of the Dawson Creek railhead. Regimental commanders have been changed from time to time, but now include Col. A.L. Lane, Col. F.R. Lyons, Lt. Col. L.E. Robinson, Col. F.M.S. Johnson, Lt. Col. Owain J. Hughes and Maj. J.A. McCarty.

For the Public Roads Administration, Thomas H. MacDonald is Commissioner, J.S. Bright is engineer in-charge of the road. Engineers in-charge in the field include: Fred Capes at Ft. St. John; Frank E. Andrews and H.L. Stoddart at Whitehorse and L.M. Huggins and C.G. Polk in the Alaska section.

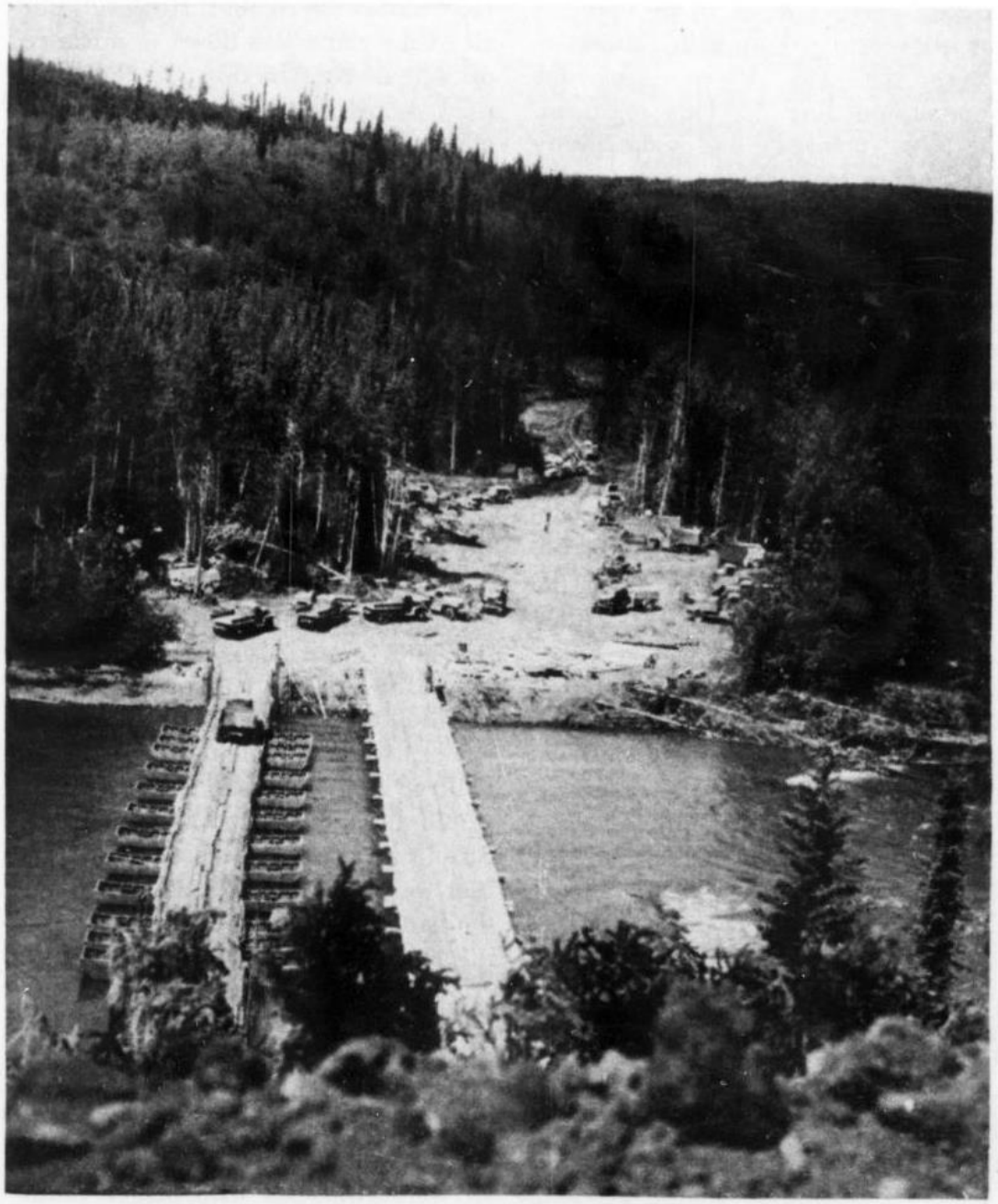
News-Record Camera Shots



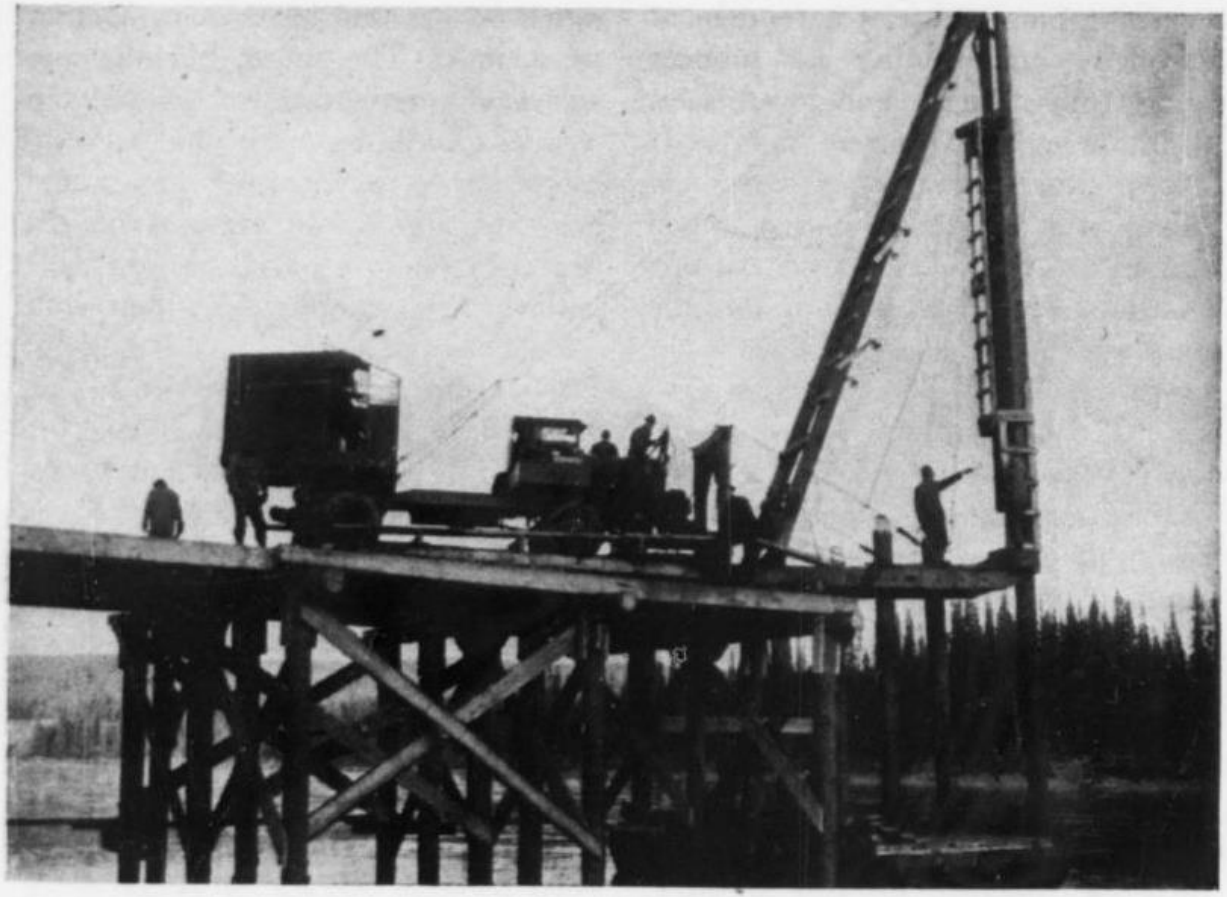
Contractors were shifted onto the army pioneer road early in August to help the regiments get the route ready for winter traffic. This is a particularly heavy section near Ft. Nelson.



One of 200 temporary bridges on the Alcan Highway, built in a hurry to carry heavy loads.



Army ponton bridge served for crossing Yukon's Swift River until a pile trestle could be built alongside.





Army truck crane converted to skid piledriver builds the bridge at the upper crossing of the Liard. Front-end winches skidded the rig around. The drop hammer was handled by the crane load line. Right, Contractor on the Tanana River Bridge at Big Delta used a crawler crane and swinging leads for driving piles with a drop hammer.



Army bridgebuilders often used timber cribs instead of piling or framed bents. Cribs, when rock filled, will probably stand up better than framed bents in spring floods.



Army ponton detachment crosses a larger stream in advance of bridgebuilding operations. Here, six pontons are powered by outboard motors.



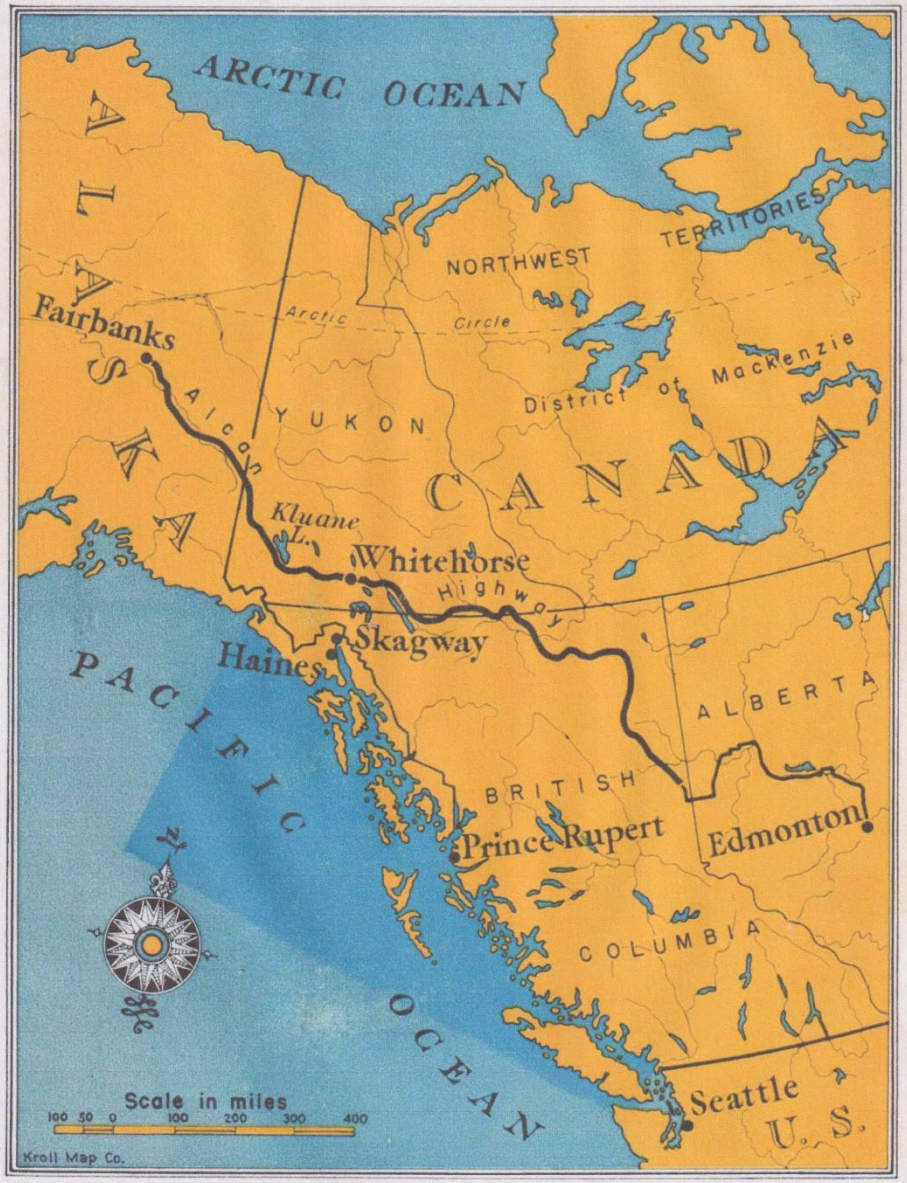
Creosoted wood-stave culverts drain the finished PRA sections. These steel-bound drains are carefully placed in tamped backfill, but only in locations where the road is up to final standards.

Part 6

On-the-Job

Utah Construction Company Employee Handbook. The following is the company's 1943 handbook/contract for employees on their section of the Alaska-Canada Highway project, which was from the Alaska border to Kluane Lake.

Site of Alaska-Canada Highway



The Utah Construction Company

Recently, The Utah Construction Company secured a contract to build a portion of the Alaska-Canada Highway from the Alaskan border southeast to Kluane Lake. Our work is starting approximately a year after the Dowell Construction Company and the E. W. Elliott Company received similar contracts for construction work in the Yukon Territory.

Much of the material contained in this booklet is the same information which those companies found through trial and error, to be of the greatest benefit to their employees on the project.

To All Prospective Employees

Consider carefully the following before you accept employment on the Alaska-Canada Highway Project:

1. The entire cost of this job is being paid by your government.

2. You will be signing a nine-months contract and if you do not intend to stay the full time you should not go at all.

3. There may be times when you will have to put up with major hardships. Transportation is difficult and if you are sent via Prince Rupert you may have to wait there a week or more for boat space north. Every effort will be made to furnish good food but occasionally it may not be up to par. This is a new project and camps are being built as quickly as materials and men arrive at the job site. Whether you are a mechanic, clerk, or cook, you may be asked to help in other capacities, like unloading a train or truck or temporarily digging ditches. We must keep the job moving and we expect your full cooperation.

4. You may have to wait a while for your first pay check. A paymaster will be set up in Seattle, also in Edmonton, to pay per diem expenses at each of these points while en route to the project. These paymasters will also pay salaries due for traveling time but only in the event that a pay period has elapsed. There also may be occasions when you would be en route by convoy and not receive salary for three or four weeks. Therefore, men leaving families in the States should consider this and leave enough money to provide for them during the possible period of waiting.

5. Before leaving, it is imperative that you outfit yourself with good cold weather clothing. A commissary will be set up on the job but because of transportation difficulties there are times when supplies may not get through and the stock will be low.

6. If you are the kind who likes to continually complain, we don't want you on this Project. The Utah Construction Company is performing this job on a low fixed-fee basis and any unnecessary expense or confusion caused by you will only mean added expense to your government.

We are writing this to discourage anyone who is going north with the idea that this is a soft job with big pay. You have the opportunity to contribute to the war effort by performing a very vital task. You are receiving top pay for doing this and all we ask is a fair return to the government for its investment in your services.

Things You Will Want to Know About Your Trip and the Alaska-Canada Highway Job

In order that work on the Alaska-Canada Highway will not be obstructed, and for the protection of this company's employees as well, The Utah Construction Company cannot hire or send to job locations in Alaska or Canada, any man who does not have or cannot obtain before leaving:

1. A certificate of availability from the nearest U. S. Employment Office.
2. Draft clearance, or Form 351, "Permit to Depart from the United States," which his local board issues to him.
3. An adequate supply of proper clothing for use in sub-Arctic climates.

FIRE ARMS: Under no circumstances are sidearms (revolvers, pistols, etc.) allowed. You cannot take guns to Canada without a special permit which is obtained by application to the Commissioner, Canadian Mounted Police at Ottawa, Canada. At the present time there is no law that prohibits your taking firearms into Alaska. However, Alaska is a war zone and to be on the safe side, the company suggests you leave guns at home. On April 10, 1943, the Public Roads Administration in a memorandum stated that owing to the possibility of loss and delays due to the registration requirements, they discourage taking firearms on this Project.

LIQUOR: Liquor is forbidden on Army Transport vesels. Since you will probably travel in this manner, you should have none in your possession.

EXPOSED FILM: If you have exposed negatives with you, they must be turned over to the Customs authorities at the point of departure. They will send them to a commercial photographer to be developed and printed, and after the prints have been censored, they will be forwarded to you together with the negatives upon payment of the customary charge for this service. This rule also applies to negatives in cameras, whether or not the complete roll has been exposed.

PHOTOS: Any photographs in your possession must be submitted to the Customs officials for censoring at the time of your departure.

MAPS: Do not take maps with you that show details relative to harbors, coastal and defense areas. They will be picked up by the Customs before you sail.

CAMERAS, BINOCULARS, FLASHLIGHTS, RADIOS, ELECTRIC RAZORS, etc.: If you are taking any of these items, be sure and check them with the Master or Purser of your vessel when you go aboard. They will be returned to you in good order when you reach your destination.

Immigration Requirements

CITIZENS BORN IN THE UNITED STATES: Be sure and carry with you a copy of your birth certificate or some definite written proof of place of birth. If you do not have either of these papers, a voter's registration certificate or Army discharge papers will be helpful. If there is any question in your mind about your proof of citizenship, be sure to ask the Personnel Office to explain and check your papers.

NATURALIZED CITIZENS: If you are a naturalized citizen, carry your naturalization certificate with you. You will need this in order to leave the United States and to pass Canadian entrance requirements.

ALIENS: If an alien of a friendly power, which now includes all nationalities except German and Japanese, you may still obtain work on the Project. You will, however, have to secure a re-entry permit from the Burea of Immigration and Naturalization. You will also be required to have Draft Form 351 in your possession to show at the border. This permit will be in addition to the copy which must be in our files.

General Information

JOB STABILIZATION: Our Government recently issued an order prohibiting the switching from one job to another without proper clearance. If you are already working in a critical industry, a certificate of availability must be secured from your present employer. If you are engaged in non-essential work, you must secure a certificate of availability from your nearest U. S. Employment Office.

TOOLS: Carpenters and mechanics MUST BRING THEIR OWN TOOLS. Cooks and bakers can bring any special tools that help them in their work. We will pay all carrying charges to the job. If you travel by plane, the limit is 40 pounds and any excess baggage must be shipped by boat.

PERSONAL BAGGAGE: Baggage is not restricted to any definite weight but since space is at a premium, we suggest that you limit yourself to essential equipment. Bedding is furnished by the company and as you have only to bring your clothes and personal effects, there is ample room for everything you need. If you have more than one piece of baggage, you will find it handy to put your personal effects—razors, tooth brushes, etc.—in the smallest bag, which you can keep with you in your stateroom or berth.

CLOTHING: Take enough clothing to keep yourself warm in cold weather. At Whitehorse in the winter it may reach 40 to 60° below. The right kind of clothing will make a big difference. In the summer, of course. it gets hot, but nights will probably be cool. Wool garments are absolutely necessary. You had better take most of your clothing from Seattle or from home, as replacements in Alaska and Canada may be hard to get and expensive. A suggested list of clothing is as follows:

A parka or sheepskin coat.
Wool sweater.
Warm cap that covers your ears.
Heavy leather boots and a pair of 4-buckle Arctics with moccasins to slip inside.
3 woolen shirts.
2 pairs woolen trousers.
6 pairs heavy woolen socks.
Snow glasses.

It would be wise to also take mosquito or chiffon netting for use in summer.

TOBACCO: Tobacco and cigarettes are not sold aboard ship. You had better buy a carton or several bags of your favorite smoke before leaving for the dock, as there is no place nearby where you can get them. The Canadian Immigration allows only 1½ cartons of cigarettes to be taken into Canada by any one person. As cigarettes at the commissary are tax-free, you should not take too large a stock in with you to the job.

COMMISSARY: It is the intention of the Company to furnish adequate commissary facilities at or near the job locations so that you will be able to fill your ordinary needs for personal effects, tobacco, drugs, etc., at reasonable costs. However, it is entirely posible that other more important needs will cause a delay in setting up these commissaries. We suggest that you take a good supply of toilet articles, etc., in case company stores have not been put into operation.

TRANSPORTATION: For all men proceeding to the Project, the minimum transportation by railroad will be provided while on the train. If you do not have a berth at our expense, you will receive $2.50 a day for lodging, as well as $2.50 a day for meals. If a berth is provided for you, you will receive only $2.50 a day for meals while on the train. Most men are routed through Seattle, where they will be cleared through the Alaska Travel Control, their contracts written and signed, and their identification cards completed. From Seattle to the job you will be furnished transportation by boat direct to Skagway or you will be sent by train or boat to Port Edward and from there on transportation will be furnished by Army Transport. At Port Edward you will be accommodated in barracks, under Army regulation, and will be asked to do a certain amount of work around the camp. Whenever room and board are furnished at camps, no per diem will be allowed. You will not, however, be charged $1.25 a day as long as you are en route to the job site. Some of you may be dispatched into the Project to Edmonton by train and from there to Whitehorse via the new highway or air transport.

PAY PERIODS: Pay periods are bi-weekly and are listed below as to dates:

From	*To*
May 10, 1943	May 23, 1943
May 24	June 6
June 7	June 20
June 21	July 4
July 5	July 18
July 19	August 1
August 2	August 15
August 16	August 29
August 30	September 12
September 13	September 26
September 27	October 10
October 11	October 24
October 25	November 7
November 8	November 21
November 22	December 5
December 6	December 19
December 20	January 2, 1944

Checks will be ready the Thursday following the end of the payroll period. If you wish you can arrange with the paymaster to get two checks, one would be in Canadian funds for the amount of money you wish to spend on yourself while on the job. This would be at a 10 per cent premium in American funds. The other would be drawn on an American bank in American funds so that you could endorse and send it home.

INCOME TAX: United States citizens working in Yukon Territory are not subject to Canadian income tax. You will be required, however, to file a regular United States income tax return and make the same payment on your earnings as you would if employed in the continental United States.

LENGTH OF JOB: We expect the work on this Project to last at least a year.

SPARE TIME: If you like to hike or explore new ground, there is plenty of opportunity to see interesting new territory when you are off shift. Take your rod with you if you are a fisherman—you may come home with some new fish stories.

YOUR TRIP TO ALASKA: You are taking one of the most interesting and unusual voyages in the world—through the famous "Inside Passage" to Alaska. For almost a thousand miles this inland waterway is protected from the open ocean by hundreds of islands which form its outer edge, and as a result the water on which you travel is, for the greater part, as calm as an inland lake. You will see a land of remarkable beauty, historic interest, and glamour. Alaska, of course, is American territory and we intend to keep it so. As you travel toward this vital outpost it will surely give you a feeling of satisfaction to know that the job you are going north to do, when finished, may be the means of keeping this great land American territory for all time to come. You will be helping to win the war.

The Following is Included in Our Contract of Employment of Hourly Employees Only:

(All these provisions apply to weekly and monthly employees with the exception of hours. The 40-hour work week does not apply to weekly and monthly employees.)

CLASSIFICATION AND HOURLY WAGE: The position for which the Employee represents he is qualified, and for which he is engaged, is that of

..... at a basic wage of $.....

per hour. It is understood that although the Employee is engaged for the above-mentioned class of work, he may be used temporarily, at the option of the employer, in any other class of work without reduction in pay. If the Employee is transferred to a class of work bearing a higher hourly rate of compensation than that provided herein, the higher rate will be paid to the Employee while performing such class of work. There will be no pay adjustment for occasional or emergency assignment less than one day in length. If the Employee is not qualified to perform the services for which he is engaged, he may, if agreeable to him and at the option of the Employer, be assigned to work bearing a lower classification wage rate.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT: The period of service shall be such period as the Employer may, subject to the provision of this contract, require the services of the Employee, provided, that said period of service shall not, without the consent of the Employee, exceed NINE (9) MONTHS from the date hereof. Such period of service may be terminated at any time by the Employer if so directed by the Contracting Officer. If the Employee's services are required by the Employer beyond the period of NINE MONTHS, the Employee may elect to remain on the project until its completion without a written modification of this contract upon the same terms and conditions as herein otherwise specified.

TRANSFERS TO OTHER TERRITORY: The Employee is originally assigned for work in the Whitehorse, Y. T., area. However, it is understood that the Employee may be transferred at any time to any other area under the Employer's contract and that he will be subject to the hours and conditions prevailing in the area to which he is assigned.

OVERTIME: For all work performed in the Dominion of Canada in excess of eight hours per day and forty hours straight time per regularly scheduled work week, compensation will be computed at one and one-half times the applicable hourly rate.

BOARD AND ROOM: Board and lodging will be furnished by the Employer at the rate of $1.25 PER DAY to the Employee while in company camps.

WHEN PAY STARTS AND STOPS: Wages shall commence on the day and hour Employee entrains or embarks on his journey to the project and shall cease on the day and hour of his return to the point of hire except as otherwise provided herein. Wages paid for time in traveling from point of hire to the project and return will be computed at eight times the basic hourly rate per day, and limited to 40 hours per work week.

HOURS: The Employee agrees to work in accordance with the work schedules which are established by the Employer for the purpose of completing the construction work as rapidly as possible, the work being of utmost importance to the war program. It is anticipated that a ten-hour day and a seven-day week will be established, but it is expressly understood that the Employer makes no guarantee of such working schedule. The Employee shall be guaranteed a minimum payment equivalent to the amount which would be earned by working forty (40) hours at straight time rate for each week of employment provided he is willing, able, and ready to work during each day of such period.

TRANSPORTATION AND PER DIEM ALLOWANCE: Transportation from the point of hire to the place of employment will be paid, or provided by the Employer. An allowance for meals and lodging will be paid by the Employer from the point of hire to the place of employment at the rate of $2.50 PER DAY for meals and $2.50 PER DAY for lodging. However, the Employer reserves the right to provide meals and/or lodgings and, in such instance, shall not be obligated to the Employee for the Per Diem allowance which would otherwise apply. Where meals and/or lodgings are provided as a part of the cost of transportation, the per diem herein provided shall not be paid to the Employee.

MEDICAL: Before departure to the project the Employee shall submit to the required medical examination and inoculations, the cost of which will be paid by the Employer.

WHO PAYS RETURN TRANSPORTATION: The Employee will pay his return transportation costs and expenses if he voluntarily leaves prior to nine (9) months from the date of his contract or if he is discharged for cause in accordance with paragraph 12 hereof. This contract of employment and all payments hereunder shall cease and terminate on the date of discharge or on the date Employee voluntarily stops work on the project. If the Employee satisfactorily performs his contract and remains on the job for nine months or such lesser time as required by the Employer, the Employer will provide return transportation costs and expenses to the point of hire as set forth in paragraphs 5 and 7 or to such other point the Employee may designate at no increase in cost to the Employer.

PAY DEDUCTION FOR RETURN TRANSPORTATION: The Employee agrees to a deduction from the wages due him of forty (40) dollars each pay period by the Employer until the amount of $120 has been deducted. The amount so deducted shall be used to pay Employee's return to the United States in the event the Employee leaves his employment before fulfillment of his contract. In case the Employee is discharged for cause, or if he voluntarily terminates his employment on the project before fulfillment of this contract and before a deduction of $120, the Employee agrees that the amount so deducted and such additional deductions as may be necessary from wages due shall be used to pay his return transportation to the point of hire. If Employee fulfills his obligations under this contract, the deductions so made from his wages will be paid to him upon the completion of his services.

PERSONAL INSURANCE: The Employer is hereby authorized to deduct from the wages earned by the Employee 40c for each weekly period to be placed in a special deposit account by the Public Roads Administration to be used to defray, in part or in whole, any medical expenses which may be incurred on behalf of workmen from causes not attributed directly to the work on the project. Benefits and obligations under this medical authority shall be in accordance with rules and regulations governing this operation, copy of which is on file with the Employer and subject to inspection by Employee.

CONDUCT ON JOB: If the services of the Employee are not satisfactory to the Employer, or if he is not or does not show himself qualified for the position for which he is hired, or is negligent in his duties, or displays bad temper, or if he uses alcoholic drinks to a degree which, in the opinion of the Employer, is immoderate, or if he contracts or develops venereal disease or suffers injury or illness through misconduct, the Employee may be discharged without any further obligation resting on the Employer. It is understood that the Employee may be discharged if requested by the Contracting Officer. Immediately upon such discharge his contract of employment shall terminate.

UNION AFFILIATION: The Employee understands that other men from his trade, or other trades or crafts, may be employed on the work to be performed by the Employer in the Dominion of Canada and the Territory of Alaska, and that these men may or may not be affiliated with labor unions. The Employee agrees that the employment of such men shall not be used as a reason for failure to carry out this contract.

NO PROMISES: *The contract embodies the whole agreement between the parties hereto and there are no inducements, promises, terms, conditions, or obligations made or entered into by the Employer other than those herein contained. No modification of this agreement may be made except by instruments in writing signed by the Employee and the Employer's duly authorized representative.*

PLEDGE: The Employee hereby certifies that he does not advocate, and is not a member of an organization that advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States or its allies by force or violence.

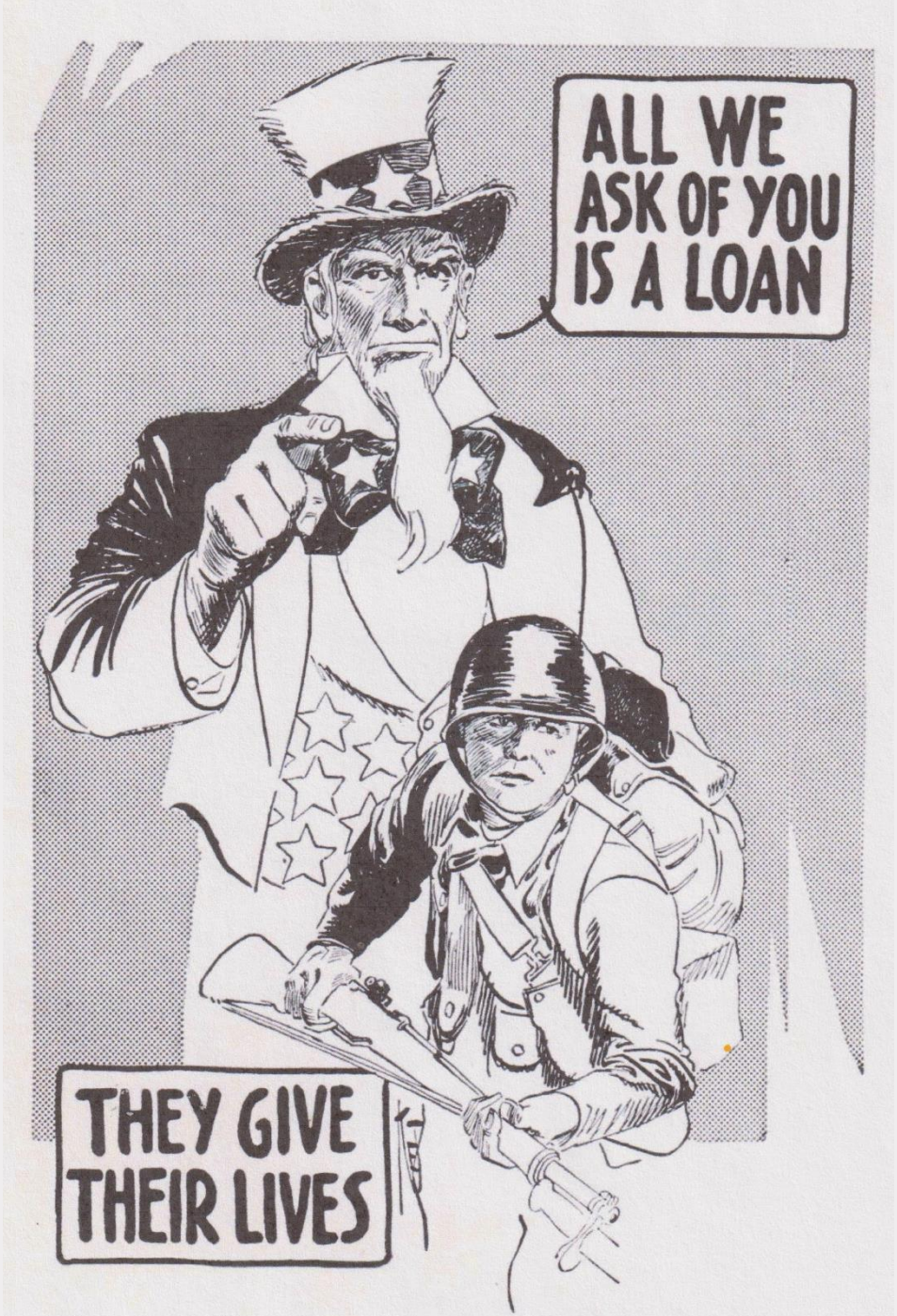
JOB INSURANCE: In the event the Employee, as a result of enemy action, is injured, disabled, killed or detained, it is understood and agreed that said Employee or his dependents will be paid compensation in accordance with the provisions of the act approved December 2, 1942 (Pubic Law 784-77th Congress), entitled "An Act to provide benefits for the injury, disability, death or enemy detention of employees of contractors with the United States, and for other purposes."

Workmen's compensation insurance under the Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act as amended by Public Law 208-77th Congress will be carried by the Employer.

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THE UTAH CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON


ALL WE ASK OF YOU IS A LOAN
THEY GIVE THEIR LIVES

GUERNSEY DAM

SUMMIT TUNNEL

NORFORK DAM

NANTAHALA HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT

BOULDER DAM

GRAND COULEE DAM

DEADWOOD DAM



AND NOW! ALASKA-CANADA HIGHWAY

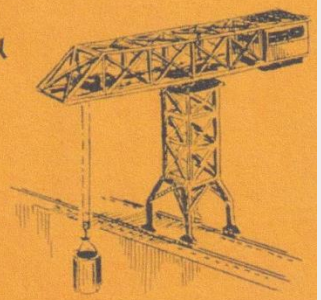
AMERICAN FALLS DAM

GIBSON DAM

PACIFIC NAVAL AIR BASES

DUCHESNE TUNNEL

IMPERIAL DAM



NEW YORK BOARD WATER SUPPLY

ARMY PORT CONTRACTORS

SEMINOE DAM

WESTERN PACIFIC RY

IRON MOUNTAIN TUNNEL
OF
LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT

HETCH-HETCHY DAM

GENEVA STEEL WORKS

Two Races, One Road

In 1942, the Army Corps of Engineers assigned more than 10,000 men to build the Alaska-Canada Military Highway. About a third were black soldiers: members of three newly formed "Negro regiments" the Corps accepted for the job because it had no choice, other engineering units having been dispatched to the Pacific theater.

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Cornelia Dean* entitled: "In Road-Building, Black Soldiers Defied Prejudice"

Relentless Racism

"THE black soldiers faced vicious cold, heat, mosquitoes and mud, like everyone else. But they also had to contend with relentless racism…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

The American Negro

"…The Army was still segregated; black units were led by white officers. As late as 1936, a manpower assessment produced at the Army War College described black soldiers as shiftless, dishonest and lazy. 'Say what you will,' the report declared, 'the American Negro is still a primitive human being'…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

"…It was a view the Army as a whole embraced. The officers in-charge were usually Southerners who supposedly 'understood' blacks but, in fact, disparaged and despised them. Senior commanders of the road-building effort, one of them the son of a Confederate General, declared that blacks (often they called them something else) might be able to wield picks and shovels, but not the heavy equipment the job required…"
***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

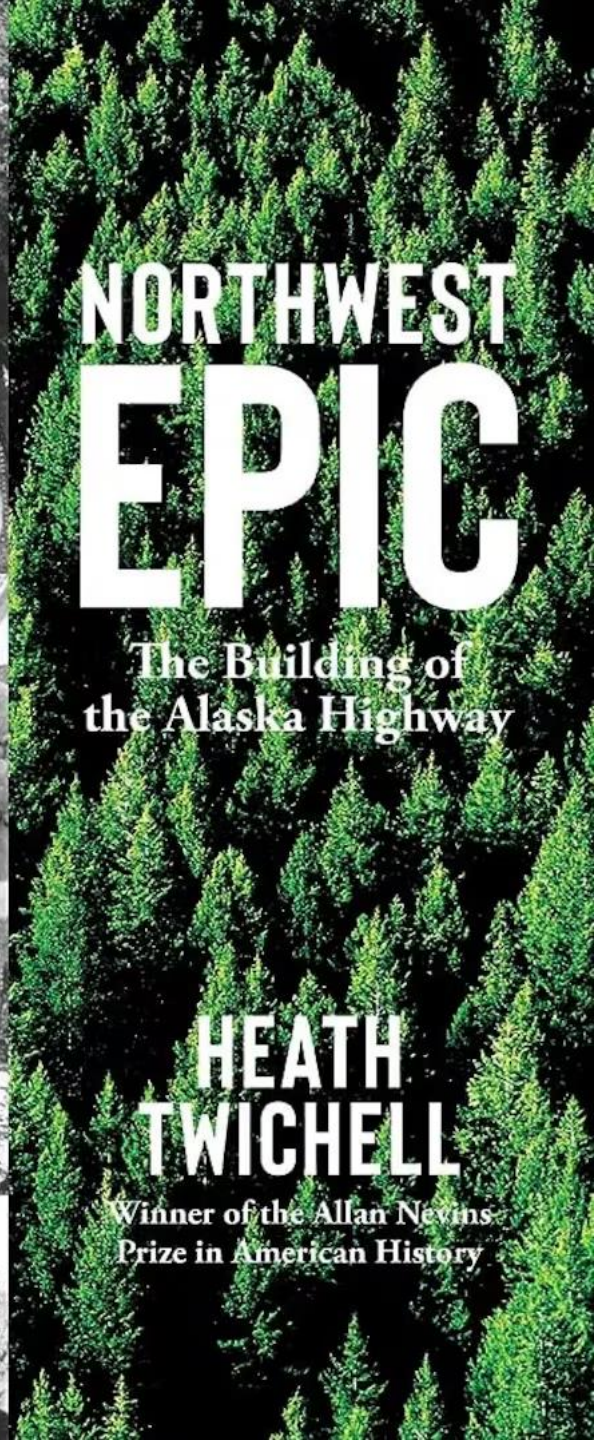
Second Among Equals

"…So when they were issued heavy equipment, black units sometimes received vehicles otherwise headed for the scrap-heap. And sometimes they lost even that to white units whose equipment was delayed or damaged…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

Heartsick





"…Heath Twichell, an Historian and retired Army Colonel who wrote 'Northwest Epic' (St. Martin's Press, 1992), a history of the highway, known as the ALCAN, said in an interview that his father, Col. Heath Twichell Sr., was assigned to the roadwork and was 'heartsick' when he was given command of a black unit. He thought the assignment would kill his chances of a promotion…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

Caption: "…Black soldiers were crucial to its construction, but they were strictly segregated and, especially early on, poorly treated…"

Bridging Racism

"…Twichell's father took command of the demoralized 95th Engineers. The Black regiment had been stripped of most of its heavy equipment by white crews and had been forced to do most of its work by hand. The elder Twichell tasked them with bridge construction instead and soon they were hop-scotching from one river or creek to the next, spanning them with bridges capable of handling the Army's load sizes. Mor-ale improved…"

***adn.com*, August 26, 2023**



"…But he soon realized that all his men needed was a hard job they could do well and get credit for. They found it at the Sikanni Chief, a fast-flowing river through a gorge 300-feet-wide in the mountains of British Columbia…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

"…In what the elder Mr. Twichell wrote later was '72 hours of ceaseless effort,' at times by the light of their truck headlights, the men felled trees, squared timbers, assembled trestles and waded chest-deep into the ice-cold river to float them into position. They cut and assembled wood to form the bridge's decking and built and installed heavy timber cribs to protect its footings from ice and driftwood…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

Permanent Timber Bridges

As everyone knows who reads postwar signs, highways and bridges stand near the top of the *must* list of building activity. In this program the use of trusses and other heavy timber items is entirely logical from the standpoints of availability, economy, ease and speed of construction, permanence.

Timber Structures welcomes your inquiry on trusses of wood for moderate span bridge construction. From small bridges on secondary roads to heavy-duty spans on Alaska and Pan-American highways, our design and engineering departments have had a wealth of experience—all of which is at your disposal.

For your ready reference we have prepared a special folder on the application of timber, illustrated by examples from our bridge job files. A copy will be mailed promptly on request. Address your nearest Timber Structures office.

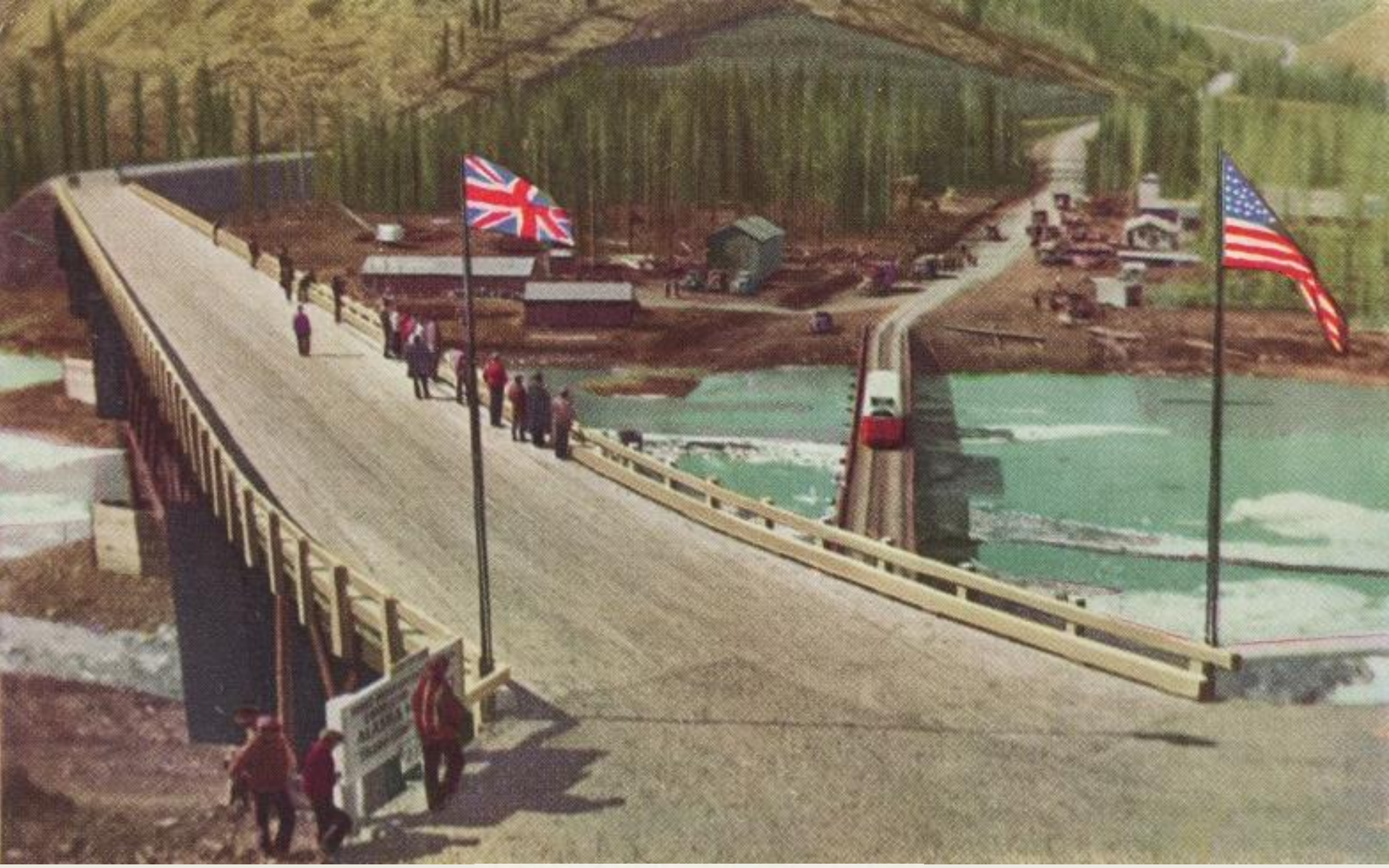
TIMBER STRUCTURES
INCORPORATED
Portland 8, Oregon
New York 17, N. Y.



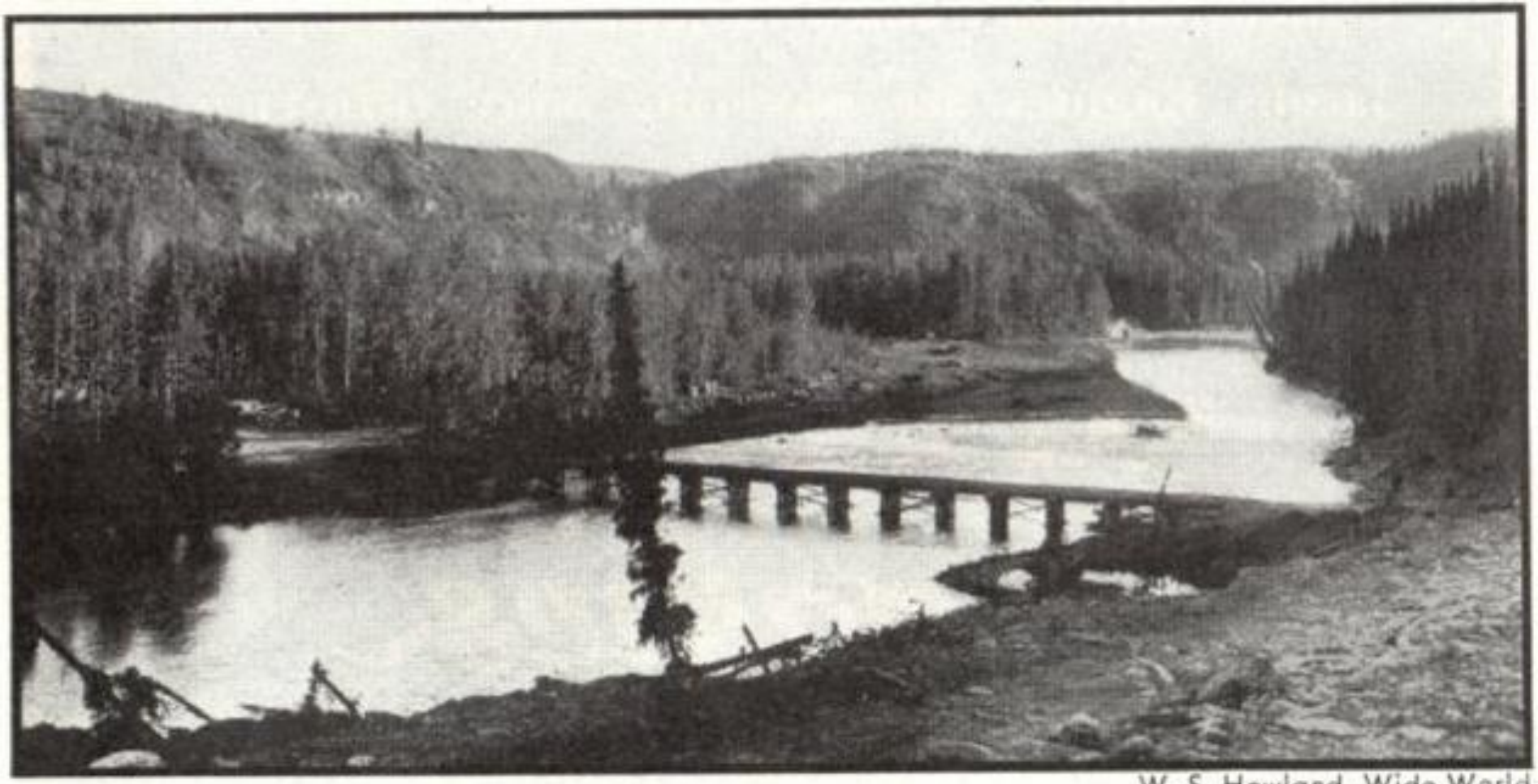
ALASKA HIGHWAY. Permanent timber bridge across the Sikanni Chief River. Three 140' spans for 24' roadway. Designed by U. S. Bureau of Public Roads; prefabricated by Timber Structures, Inc. Pen drawing by Louis C. Rosenberg. A copy suitable for framing free to architects and engineers on Professional letterhead request.

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Caption (drawing): ALASKA HIGHWAY. Permanent timber bridge across the Sikanni Chief River. Three 140-foot spans for 24-foot roadway. Designed by U.S. Bureau of Public Roads; prefabricated by Timber Structures, Inc. Pen drawing by Louis C. Rosenberg. A copy suitable for framing free to Architects and Engineers on professional letter-head request."



This bridge which crosses the Sikanni Chief River was the first permanent bridge to be constructed along the great new 1,600 mile Alaska Highway. It was built in the summer of 1943, and is a low level wooden type of structure.

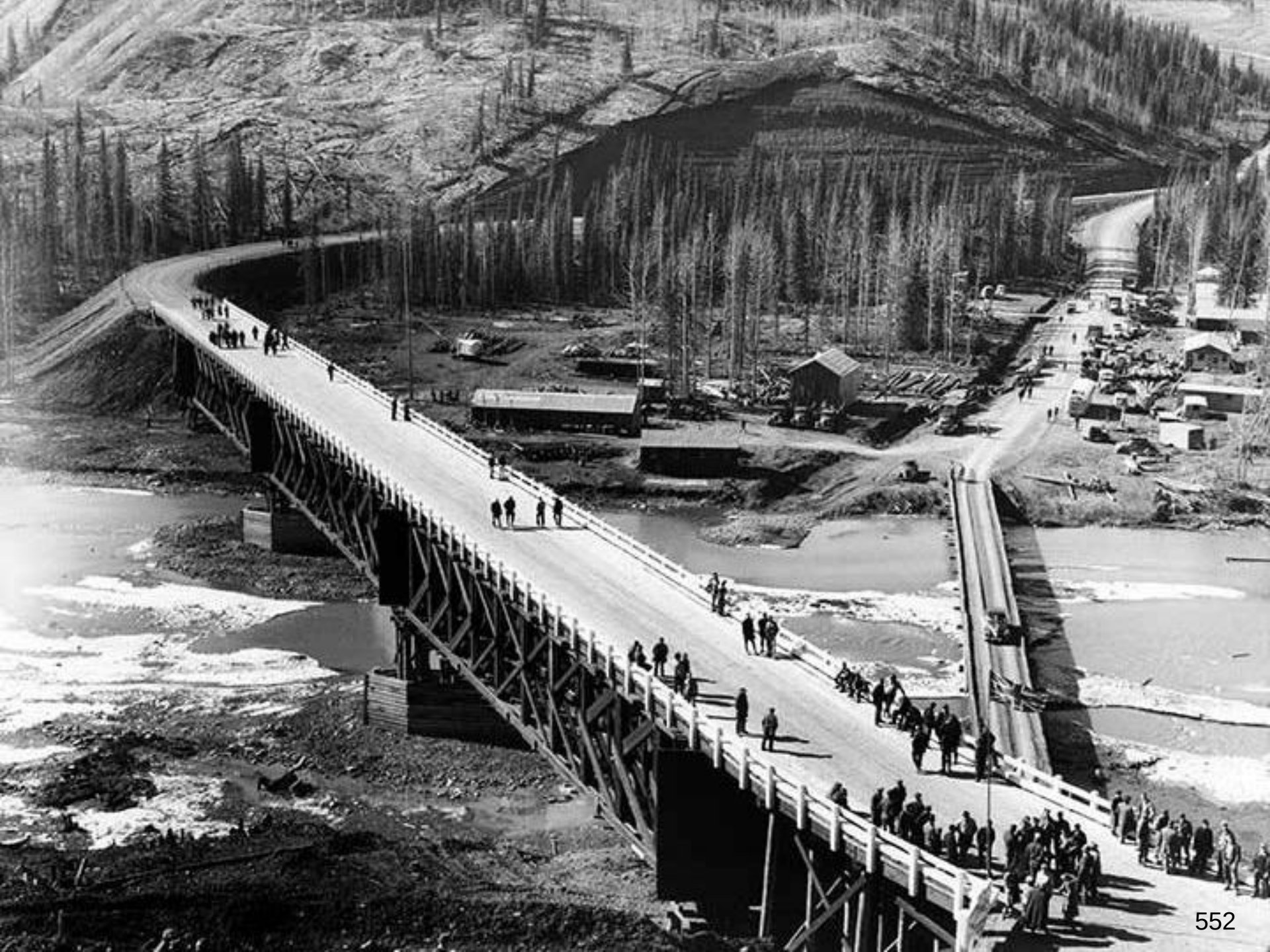


W. S. Howland, Wide World

A COLD ALASKA RIVER: BRIDGED IN TWO DAYS BY U.S. NEGRO ENGINEERS.

"…A photograph of this bridge, with a caption saying who built it, appeared in TIME magazine in August 1942. More important, the unit had won a reputation on the ground as fast workers who produced sturdy bridges under highly adverse conditions and who could operate and maintain their heavy equipment in the Alcan's cold, heat and mud…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**



"…As the elder Mr. Twichell wrote in a letter home, 'We hear less and less about the supposed deficiencies of Negro tro-ops'…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**



Negro troops about to leave Louisiana for Alaska and Canada

Meeting in the Middle

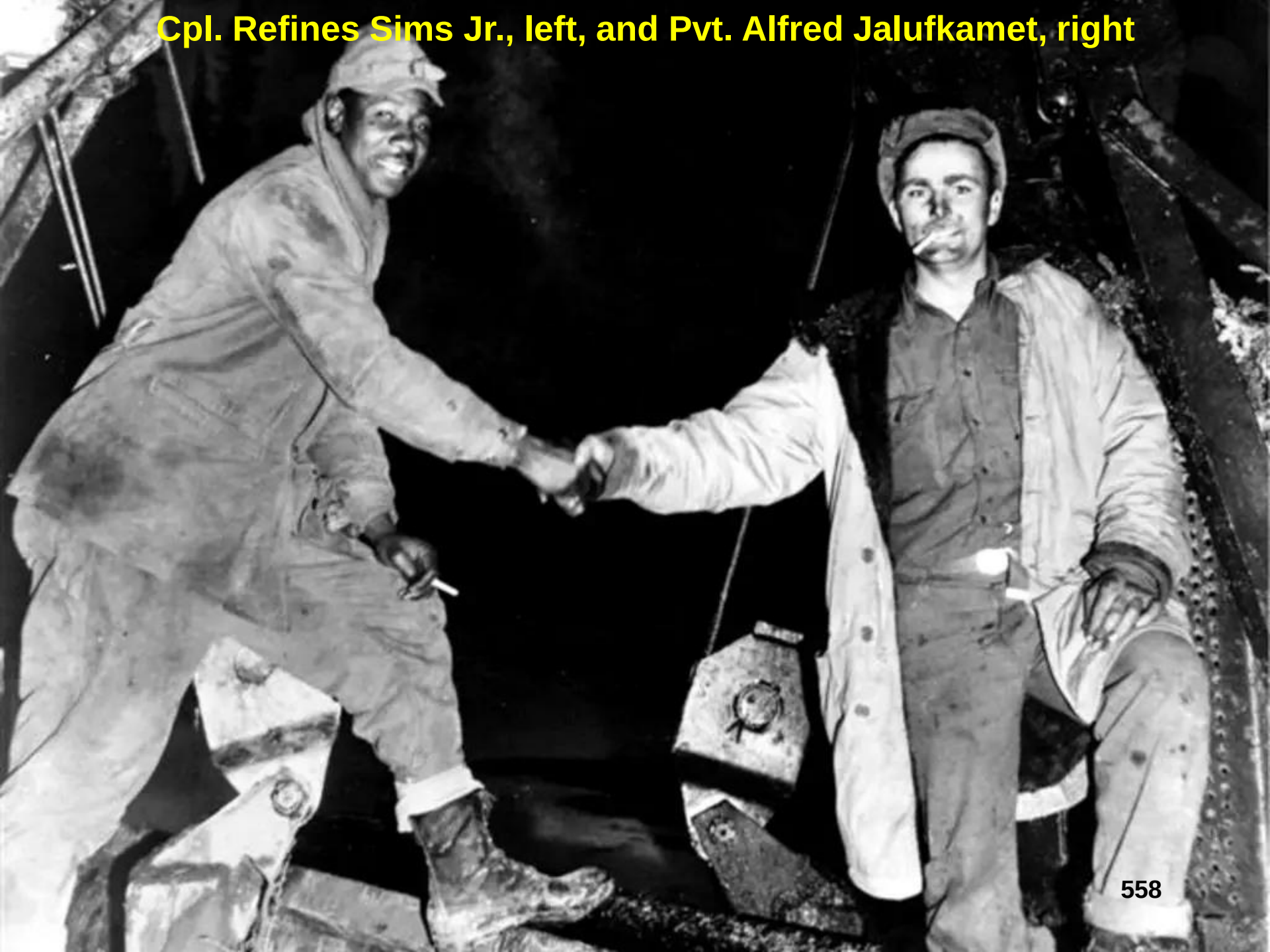
"…In October, two crews, one moving north and one moving south, completed the road's last link. Later, The New York Times reported what happened when they 'met head-on in the spruce forests of the Yukon Territory.' 'Corporal Refines Sims Jr., a Negro from Philadelphia, was driving south with a bull-dozer when he saw trees starting to topple over on him,' the account said. 'Slamming his big vehicle into reverse, he ba-cked-out just as another bulldozer, driven by Private Alfred Jalufka of Kennedy, Texas, broke through the underbrush.' It continued, 'Immediately after this Yukon version of driving the golden spike, Sims and Jalufka turned their bulldozers around and began widening the opening'…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

"…The story captured the public's imagination. The Engineering News Record called it 'two races, working together to build a lifeline to Alaska's beleaguered defenders amidst the most spectacularly rugged terrain and horrendous weather conditions imaginable.' The Army even promoted the story in YANK, its magazine for the troops…"

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

RE: the 11K workers who built the Alaska Highway over the course of eight months in 1942 were divided into units that were tasked with constructing a section of the 1,600-mile road. These crews forced their way through the wilderness toward one another until the road sections connected. The most famous of these meetings took place near Beaver Creek on October 25, 1942, when two bulldozer operators came crashing through the woods toward one another. Photographer *Harold W. Richardson* of ENR posed Corporal Refines Sims, Jr. and Private Alfred Jalufka for a photograph of the two men shaking hands. The image was widely reprinted in newspapers and magazines and the press heralded the construction success as a feat of engineering.


Cpl. Refines Sims Jr., left, and Pvt. Alfred Jalufkamet, right

"…When the highway was officially dedicated, Corporal Sims, Private Jalufka and two other soldiers; one black and one white, were there to hold the ceremonial ribbon…"

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

RE: the official ceremony for the opening of the Alcan Highway took place on November 20, 1942. American and Canadian military representatives and other dignitaries gathered on a frigid day at a scenic overlook 1,500-feet above Kluane Lake at historic milepost 1061; about 100 miles from the Alaska border. The site of the commemoration is now called "Soldier's Summit" and can be reached by a trail a little over a half-mile-long.



The Road to Civil Rights

"…Six years later, President Harry S. Truman ordered the Army desegregated and many Historians cite the ALCAN experience as helping make that possible. On its website, the Federal Highway Administration calls the ALCAN 'the road to civil rights.'"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

Demobilization

4 Major North-Work Firms 'Pulling Out' From Edmonton

Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta), February 24, 1944

Work of four major civilian contracting firms in Edmonton and the north country is nearing completion and they soon will be "pulling-out," Brig.Gen. L.D. Worsham, now commanding General of the Northwest Service Command of the U.S. Army, revealed Thursday.

In announcing the reorganization of all services under the Northwest Service Command, and the merging the command and the Northwest Division, U.S. Engineers, Gen. Worsham stated "demobilization of contractors will greatly ease the congestion in Edmonton."

According to Gen. Worsham, Bechtel-Price-Callahan, contractors for northern projects, “will go out of Edmonton entirely.” The administration force is being reduced “commensurate with field production.” It will take 30 to 60 days for them to get "cleaned-up" after the field work has been completed.

Metcalfe-Hamilton Kansas City Bridge Companies, now occupying the Empire theatre on 103 St., will be leaving Edmonton, it was stated. The move from the theatre, rented from Famous Players Corporation, is expected “sometime this summer” but the general would set no date.

Also completing their work is the firm known as Marine Operators, which had operating contracts on the route to Canol. The Edmonton offices of Standard Oil of California Ltd., on 104 St., also are being vacated and their headquarters is being moved to Whitehorse. This firm has contracts for transporting and refining crude oil from Canol and distribution of the refined products.

Won’t Renew Contract

Contract of Coast Construction Company, which has been building the Namao airport, expires March 1, Gen. Worsham stated, and is not being renewed. The firm has been working on a cost-plus fixed-fee contract and since the work of paving and laying runways cannot be started until the frost is out of the ground, sometime in June, overhead costs will be reduced by the Northwest Service Command taking over, Gen. Worsham stated.

“As the contractors are demobilized they will be consolidated in the Bechtel-Price-Callahan building on 113 St. and Jasper Ave. This will release other office buildings in Edmonton now occupied by the contractors and by government agencies,” he said.

“When the contractors move out altogether, the U.S. government will take over the B.P.C. offices.”

The 113 St. building was constructed at an estimated cost of more than $150,000 and probably is “the most modern office building in Edmonton.”

Asked if all this meant “the boom in Edmonton was over,” Gen. Worsham described the demobilization of contractors as a “leveling-off.” He said the maintenance and operation services of the northern projects will be continuing.

In the reshuffle of personnel and reorganization of the Northwest Service Command, formerly commanded by Brig. Gen. James A. O’Connor, headquarters of the command comes to Edmonton from Whitehorse. The name remains the same.

Under Gen. Worsham there now is an Inspector General, Lt.-Col. Joseph A. Day, Whitehorse; Air Liaison Officer, Capt. Hines of the U.S.A.A.F.; Public Relations Officer, Maj. Freeman C. Bishop; Control Officer, Maj. B.J. Nickelsen; Inspection Officer, Maj. W.J. Hayes. Gen. Worsham has not yet named his Chief of Staff.

Executive Assistant

Chief of Operations of the Northwest Service Command now comes under Lt. Col. K.B. Bush, as Executive Assistant in-charge of Military Services. Former Chief of Staff to Gen. O'Connor, Col. Bush will have under him all special services, morale services and military training. Lt. Col. C.M. Clifford has been named Executive Assistant in-charge of Administration. Under his command comes security, intelligence, office service, surgeon, military and civilian personnel, legal, real estate, fiscal and audit.

Col. L.M. Adams, former Quartermaster of the Northwest Service Command, becomes Executive Assistant of Supply. Col. E.E. Kirkpatrick continues as Executive Assistant in-charge of Engineering and Operations. He has under his command repairs, utilities, construction, equipment, transportation, Canol and communications.

The combined Northwest Service Command and Northwest Division will be divided into five districts under district commanders. In the reorganization, the Post of Edmonton becomes the District of Edmonton, with Gol. Joseph W. Whitney in command. He replaces Col. Ralph W. Dusenbury and will have under his control all field forces in the area.

Other districts and their commanders are Col. Jesse E. Canary, Dawson Creek; Col. James V. Johnston, Whitehorse; Lt. Col. Gerald E. Tyler, Fairbanks, and Lt. Col. Ruben L. Tatum, Skagway. Lt.-Col. Robert W. Lockridge, former District Engineer, will be in-charge of Engineering and Operations and District Engineer for the Edmonton District under Col. Whitney.

Engineers Remain

Lt. Col. L.W. Kehe, former District Engineer at Dawson Creek, will continue there. The District Commanders at Skagway, Whitehorse and Fairbanks also will retain a positions.

Gen. Worshaw described the purposes of the reorganization "to bring about a reduction of military and civilian personnel."

"The mission of the Service Command is to complete construction now authorized and to operate and maintain facilities in the north which come under the command, except the operation of airports under the Air Transport Command. The command's job also is to supply all U.S. forces in the northwest."

Still to be completed are 10 permanent bridges on the Alaska Highway. A total of 103 bridges is planned for the highway. Five of the 10 are near completion, Gen. Worsham stated.

Other projects still uncompleted include Canol project, the paving of airfield runways and some utility work.

“The Canol project will be completed,” the General declared. He said the refinery at Whitehorse will be completed “this spring.” Gen. Worsham also declared “I want to spike any rumor that the Peace River Bridge has collapsed or that salvaged steel from the Tacoma bridge was used in it. That is absolutely absurd. Every bit of steel, every cable was brand new.”

He stated salvaged steel - absolutely good - has been used in some truss bridges on the Alaska highway. He also said it had been found that timber bridges at some spots are satisfactory and will not have to be replaced by steel bridges, as originally planned.

Civilians Replace

Gen. Worsham said a further purpose of the Service Command reorganization is to “replace military by civilians wherever possible.” He explained the military men were needed in more active theatres of war.

“The War Labor Board is being very cooperative in making available Canadian labor which will be under the U.S. Army now and not under contractors. There will be an increased use of civilians, especially hauling over the Alaska Highway. They will be paid on a fixed fee of ton-mileage and not on a cost-plus basis.”

Referring to the reduction in military and civilian personnel under the old set-up, Gen. Worsham said he was not prepared to give figures on the reduction, but said it would be “material.”

He said there “may be a temporary increase in the staff in Edmonton but it will not affect the housing situation here. We have ample space in government quarters to house both military and civilian personnel.” The General said “those we need from the Whitehorse headquarters are being brought here.”

Gen. Worsham stated “there is no new construction which can be announced now.” He said renegotiation of contracts is being prepared by the U.S. Army with civilians “and the remaining work on uncompleted projects will be negotiated on a unit cost contract.”

He paid tribute to Gen. O’Connor. “I regret the loss of my good friend Gen. O’Connor, whose services are desired at an army training centre “because of his qualities in training and commanding troops.”

Gen. Worsham has been directly in-charge of construction of the Alaska Highway and related projects since April, 1943. He graduated from West Point in 1916 and during the last war served in the Philippines and Hawaiian islands, in France and was with the occupation forces in Germany. He has been in the army continuously since then and was Senior Instructor in Military Engineering at the U.S. Military Academy and Graduate Manager of Athletics from 1932 through 1936.

Part 7

Postcards From the Edge

This set of 12 postcards was the first mass-produced set of postcards showing the Alaska Highway as it was being built in 1942-43. They were distributed and printed by the *Provincial News Company* of Edmonton, Alberta.

These photos were all taken between Whitehorse and the Yukon-Alaska border; one of the most scenic sections of the Alaska Highway. Images noted as "WIB Photo" are from the *Wartime Information Board* and images noted as "NFB Photo" are from Canada's *National Film Board*.



1 A TYPICAL STRETCH OF THE ALASKA HIGHWAY WIB PHOTO

APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

1 - *A typical stretch of the Alaska Highway*

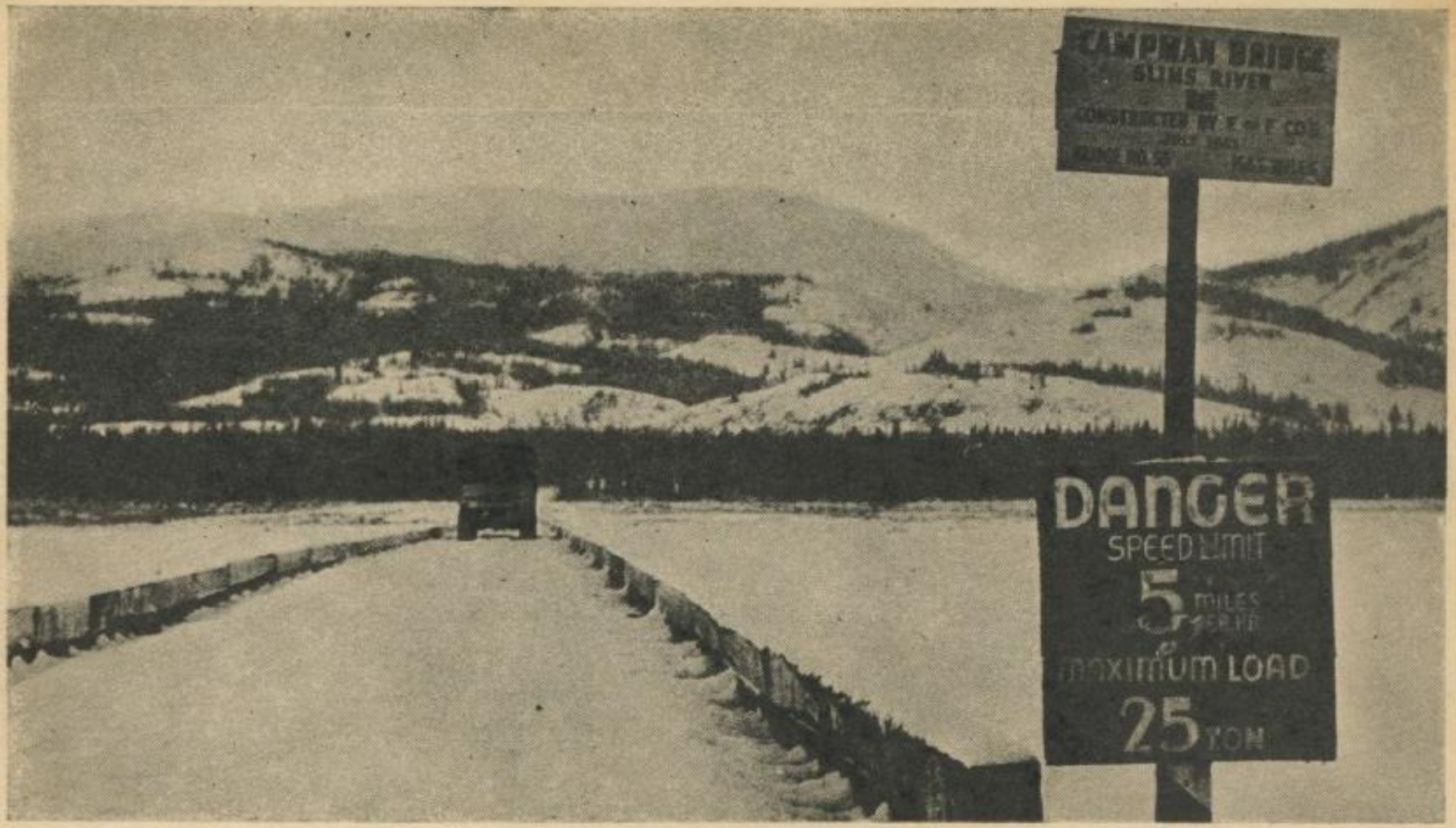


2. CONVOY TRUCK HAULING SUPPLIES TO THE HEAD OF CONSTRUCTION ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

WIB PHOTO

APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

2 - Convoy truck hauling supplies to the head of construction on the Alaska Highway



3. CAMPMAN BRIDGE AT SLIMS RIVER, 1565 MILES FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE ALASKA HIGHWAY NFB PHOTO

APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

3 - *Campman Bridge at Slims River -*
1,565 miles from the beginning of the Alaska Highway

The Slims River, which flows into Kluane Lake, was named after a pack-horse that drowned while trying to cross it during the 1903 Kluane gold rush. The first bridge across it; named the "Campman Bridge," was built by Companies E and F of the USACE in July 1942; about a kilometer upstream from the current bridge position. The following year, the road was re-routed and another wooden bridge built at the current position.

The first steel Slims River Bridge was built by the Canadian Army in 1955, at what was by then Mile 1060 of the Alaska Highway (measured from Dawson Creek, B.C.). It later became Km 1704 and, with highway straightening, it's now Km 1647. The 1955 bridge consisted of two steel through truss spans of 61-meters each on reinforced concrete piers and abutments.



<u>Above</u>: the Alcan Highway has been substantially shortened over the years by re-routing sections of it. This illustration shows the 1942 route of the military road, the current position where bridges were built in 19-43, 1955, 1956 and 2010 and the extent of the silt that forms Slims River Flats; as it was in 2016.



<u>Above</u>: the 1955 bridge as it looked in July 1991. The current Slims River Bridge is only 1023.6 miles (1647.4 Km) from the beginning of the high-way (Mile 0 is at Dawson Creek, B.C.).

The latest bridge, built in 2009-2010, is an 80-meter-long single-span with steel girders and concrete deck. The abutments are on steel piles filled with concrete. The finished bridge deck is an 11-meter-wide travelway with a 2-meter-wide sidewalk which ties into a trail system. The design life of the new bridge is 75 years. It has been designed to meet the seismic requirements for a lifeline bridge.



<u>Above</u>: the latest Bridge, in June, 2017. This view is to the west, towards Sheep Mountain.



4. THE OFFICIAL CANADIAN-AMERICAN OPENING OF THE ALASKA HIGHWAY NFB PHOTO

APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

4 - *The official Canadian-American opening of the Alaska Highway*

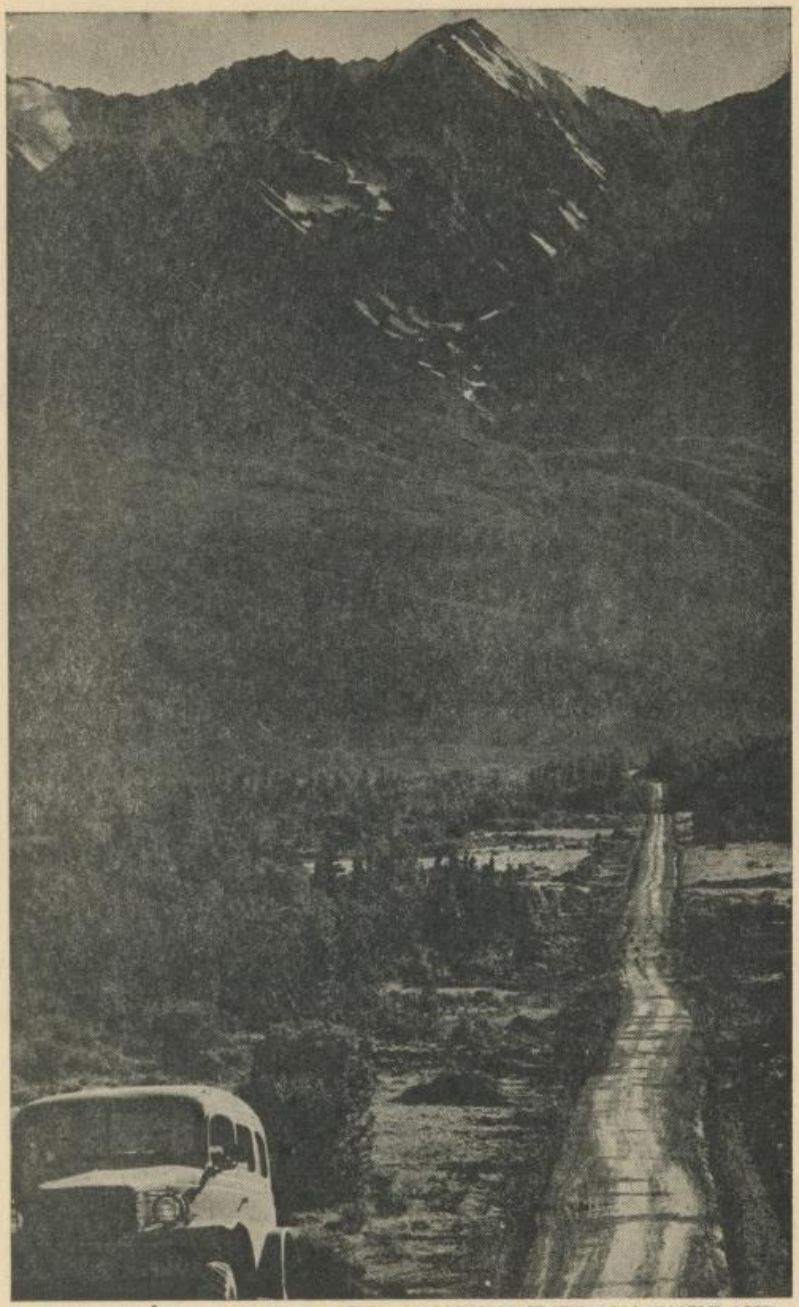
The site of this ceremony, which occurred on Nov. 20, 1942, is now on an abandoned section of the highway which is a popular hiking trail (“Soldier’s Summit Trail”)



5 PORTABLE SAWMILL USED BY ENGINEERS ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY TO MAKE LUMBER FOR BRIDGES AND CULVERTS WIB PHOTO

APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

5 - *Portable sawmill used by Engineers on the Alaska Highway to make lumber for bridges and culverts*



TRAIL OF '42 ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY THROUGH BUSHLAND AND MUSKEG

6 APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY WIB PHOTO

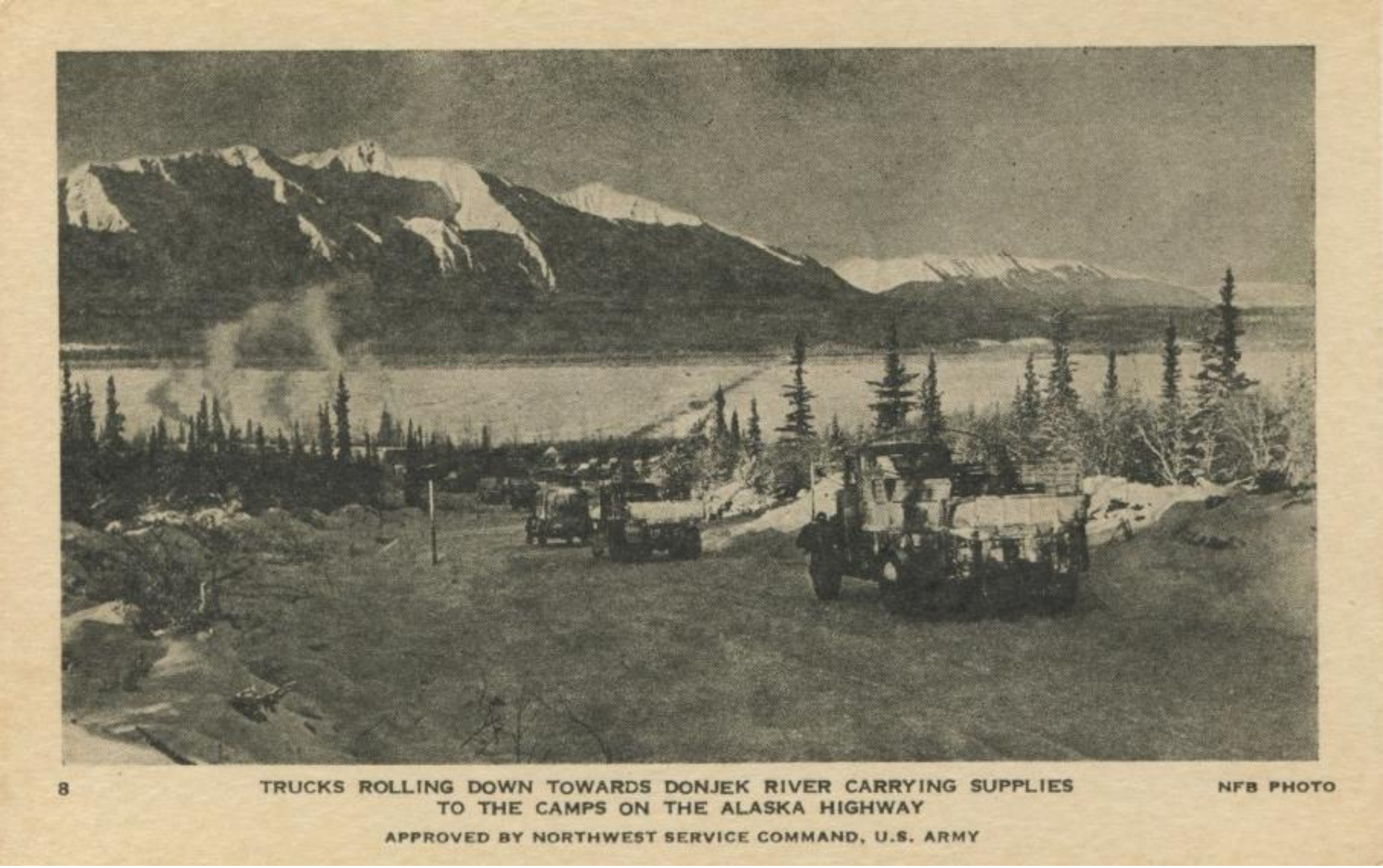
6 - *Trail of '42 on the Alaska Highway through bushland and muskeg*



AN AMERICAN CORP OF ENGINEERS SOLDIERS EMPLOYED ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

7. APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND. U.S. ARMY NFB PHOTO

7 - An American Corps of Engineers soldier employed on the Alaska Highway



8 - *Trucks rolling down towards Donjek River carrying supplies to the camps on the Alaska Highway*



9 AN OLD INDIAN VILLAGE, AT KLUANE LAKE, SOMEWHAT AUGMENTED BY U.S. ARMY TENTS, ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY WIB. PHOTO

APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

9 - *An old Indian village, at Kluane Lake, somewhat augmented by U.S. Army tents, on the Alaska Highway*

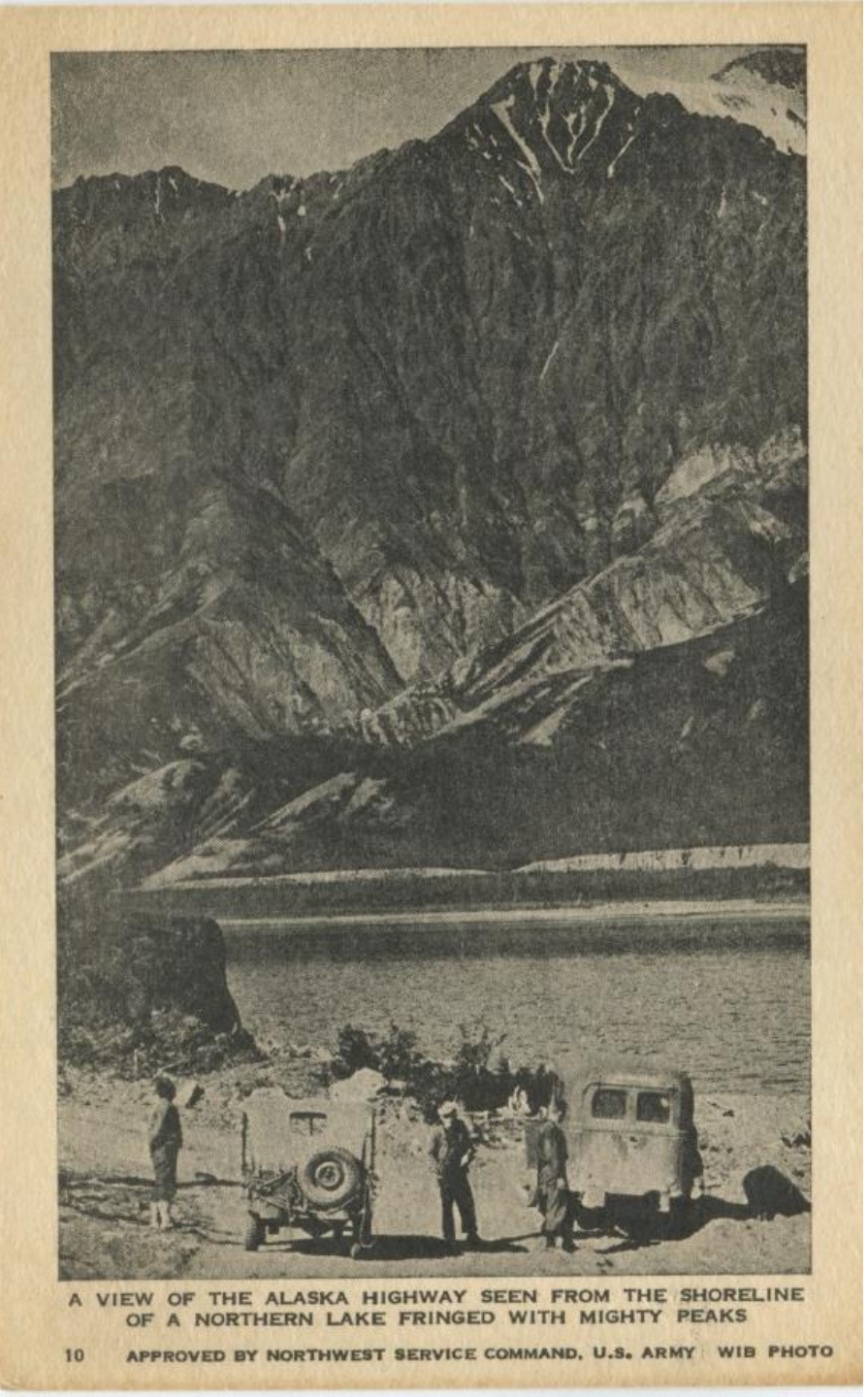
About 3.4 Km (2 miles) down a gravel road heading north towards Kluane Lake (at Km 1635.8 of the Alcan Highway) sits the largest ghost town in the Yukon. As well as being an Indian village, it was also a gold mining service community called “Silver City” or “Kluane.” Most of the land is now privately owned, with many buildings remaining. Years ago. it was going to be restored as a theme park, but that never materialized and slowly, but surely, the town is disappearing as the buildings crumble and Nature reclaims the site.



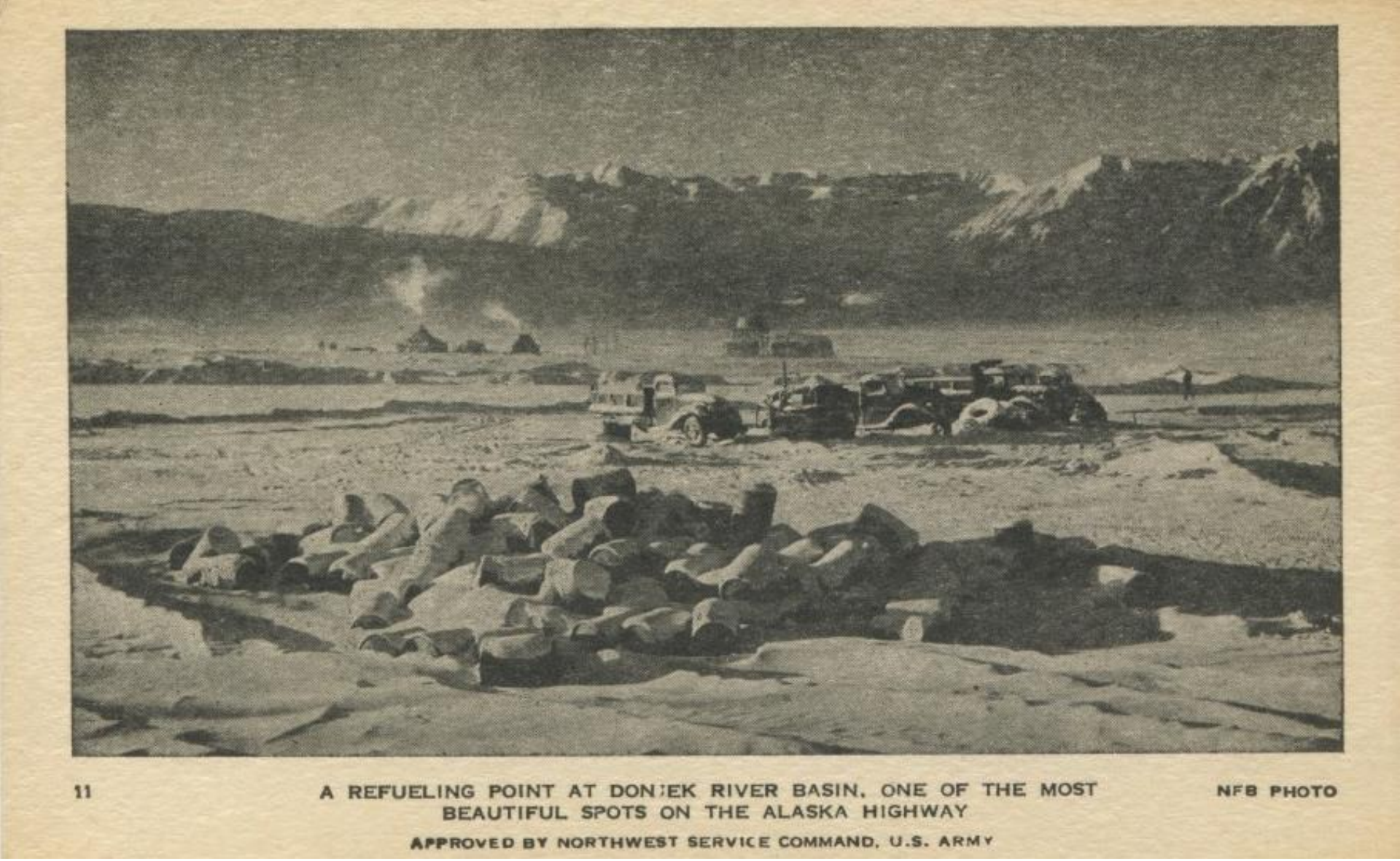
<u>Above</u>: Silver City in ca. 1944. Most of the buildings shown in the photo are still standing in various states of ruin and form the heart of the current ghost town. An Army vehicle is raising dust as it veers off the Alaska Highway towards the military camp on the beach.

Silver City began due to its location at the end of the wagon road from Whitehorse; from there, goods were transported by boat. The original name was soon changed to "Kluane" to avoid confusion with another Silver City on the White River, but the original name eventually came back into use. Kluane's creeks did not produce much gold, however, and Silver City was gradually abandoned, with the Post Office closing in 1921.

During construction of the Alcan Highway, in 1942 a large camp was built at Silver City as a logistic hub. In Nov. 1951, 40 Canadian and American soldiers began building a 500-person camp at Silver City for a 6-month-long training exercise for Army Engineers. The exercise, called "Eager Beaver," began in Jan. 1952. The most visible project built during the exercise was the airfield that's still in use.



10 - *A view of the Alaska Highway seen from the shoreline of a northern lake fringed with mighty peaks*



11 A REFUELING POINT AT DONJEK RIVER BASIN, ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOTS ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY NFB PHOTO

APPROVED BY NORTHWEST SERVICE COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

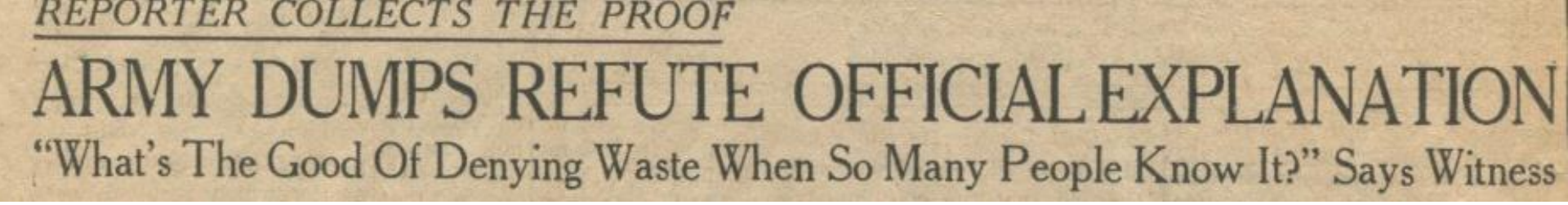
11 - *A refueling point at Donjek River basin, one of the most beautiful spots on the Alaska Highway*

Due to the large number of abandoned fuel barrels along it, as seen in the foreground, “ALCAN Highway” was often changed to “Oilcan Highway.”

Unfortunately, there are stories of appalling waste during the departure of the U.S. Army, PRA and contractor crews in 1944. From food to kitchen appliances and furniture; buildings to trucks and tools, enough material to stock entire towns was discarded in a period when wartime rations were still in-place. Much of it was destroyed and/or burned to prevent salvage. Even so, there was still usable material left-over. One family built a cabin in Carcross with materials taken from both U.S. Army stores and abandoned sternwheelers and was expanded partly with salvage from the U.S. Army dumps.

Nothing was spared in the dumping - even barrels of fuel, oil and various lubricants were burned. Millions of dollars were spent cleaning-up some of the dump sites in the 1990s but even today, huge sums of money are still being spent on cleanups at dump sites such as the one near Mile 115.

The following article talks about the dumps in the Dawson Creek and Fort St. John area, but dumps like this were burning all along the Alcan Highway. Some drivers taking loads to the dumps could be convinced to set some material aside, but more often than not they would dump their load into the fire or take sledgehammers to material right in front of the people watching.


REPORTER COLLECTS THE PROOF

ARMY DUMPS REFUTE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION

"What's The Good Of Denying Waste When So Many People Know It?" Says Witness

The Vancouver Daily Province, July 8, 1944

by B.A. McKelvie

(*Daily Province* Staff Correspondent)

VICTORIA, July 8 - Denial by officials of salvage waste on the Alaska Highway does not alter facts.

I had not been in Fort John many hours when I was told about what was termed "criminal dumping" of perfectly good material that was not required longer on the road.

The first individual upon whom I called greeted me with "I hope you can do something to call attention to the awful waste and destruction of perfectly good - and lots of them unused - things that is going on about here."

I asked what was meant by "things" and was told that stoves and ranges - and these most essential household utilities are uppermost in the minds of a people who live in a country where the winters are long - sleeping bags, blankets and similar articles were destroyed.

Collects Evidence

My friend took me to meet a prominent man. “He got a fine new stove off the dump,” was added to the introduction “Yes,” replied the man, “but it is a crime. I don’t wonder at people going ‘red’ when they see such waste.” My companions then fell to discussing a “brand new kitchen range” that another family had salvaged.

I called on several other prominent citizens. All had something to say about the destruction of property.

That afternoon I went to Dawson Creek and the following morning to Pouce Coupe. In the bus passengers were talking about the waste and burning that was going on.

“Afraid to Write”

Returning to Dawson Creek that night I was driven about the district by a friend. “I hope you will write something about it,” he said. “No one here dare write to the papers telling what is going on.” He added that one protest was met with the suggestive reply, “You’d better keep your mouth shut.”

We passed a big heap of tile pipes. I remarked upon the size of the pile.

“Too bad,” he declared, “that stuff like that has to be broken-up.”

We drove to the top of a hill. Looking back I saw a fire blazing and asked if it was a burning building. I was told that it was a consuming fire on a dump and that it was burning night and day.

We drove back that way and the flames were fingering 25-feet into the dusk of a gray evening.

“What kind of stuff?” I questioned my companion. “Well,” he replied, “I'll give you an example; a friend of mine was standing on this road the other day when a big truck-load of stuff for this fire came along.”

Got Bundle

He called to the man sitting on the pile, “Kick one of those bundles off.” Whether the man did kick it off or whether it fell from the truck I can’t say, but, anyway, he got the bundle and in it were three new blankets.

My friend had also heard of the story that I had first heard at Fort St. John that a few days previously 600 pounds of sugar had been destroyed. He had no personal knowledge of it but the report was current.

On Sunday morning I talked with several men. One of them had formerly been a trucker on the road. His stories of waste and extravagance during construction were astounding, while his indignation at the continued waste in salvage operations was emphatic.

Others in the group agreed that it was “criminal” to waste what so many people could use.

Joins Church Group

That evening I joined a group after church. These good people were also condemnatory of what was going on about them.

Returning to Fort St. John I secured a car and with two friends visited two of the dumps. I understand that there was a third, but I did not see it.

In the afternoon we drove to the edge of the high plateau that stands 800-feet above the flat on which the original Fort St. John of fur trading days was located.

The top of the dump, which one of my friends estimated to be about 600-feet-long, was littered with cans, debris and decaying food. He explained that heavier articles rolled down the slope and if I cared to climb down I would probably find something worthwhile there. Time would not permit the 800-foot descent.

Visits Second Dump

That evening, we drove out to the other dump. It is just above the point on the opposite shore where the Moberley River enters the Peace. We estimated the width of it to be roughly 1,000-feet and the descent to a fringe of poplar trees 200-feet. The top of the hill was fringed with people, while the foot of the dump had the appearance of an active ant hill as men and women worked and sorted over the material.

It was here that I met a triumphant farmer who proudly exhibited a big barrel heater that was in brand new condition and a patent water heater that he had recovered. He pointed-out other stoves that could be seen among the poplars below.

In answer to a question as to whether he was going to bring up another, he replied that he was satisfied; the stove he had on his wagon would last him for ten years, but he announced to the group of admiring and envious people around him. “I’ll bring up another stove for anyone for $10.”

Whether or not his offer was accepted I do not know, as I moved off.

One of my friends went down to the bottom at the dump, when he returned I pointed out what appeared from the top to be numerous truck tires, and asked if they were usable.

“They are not tires,” he said. “I thought they were at first, but they are hot-air chambers for furnaces. The rotten thing is that every one has been hit with a sledge hammer and the cast-iron has been broken before chucking them over this dump.”

As we left the dump my other friend picked-up a big porcelain cup, such as is used in construction camp mess halls. There was not a crack in it, nor was the glaze even chipped. He remarked, “Well, this will be a souvenir of this terrible waste.”

Today at Victoria I was informed by an official that a colleague who had recently returned from the Peace area “tells me the same thing. What’s the use of trying to deny the waste, too many people know about it.”



12 – *Hubbell's laundry; washday on the Alaska Highway*.

This set of 42 postcards (incomplete) was the most successful of any Alcan Highway early postcard series. The stamp box on the reverse of all the postcards show that they are real photographs, printed on Eastman Kodak silver chloride paper (a/k/a "AZO" paper)

The pioneer highway completed by U.S. soldiers in 1942 was a rugged, boggy trail that tested the skills and determination of even the most experienced driver. One of the most notorious sections was given the ominous name: "Suicide Hill."

Perhaps the most famous (or infamous) hill on the road to Alaska, it was in use for a short period of time. It could have been as early as the Spring of 1941 when airfield construction began, or in June 1942, during the early months of the actual Alaska Highway construction.

A sign announced "SUICIDE HILL," followed by another, more descriptive warning, "PREPARE TO MEET THY MAKER." The hill claimed countless vehicles and at least one driver before the highway was re-routed several years later. The original road from the north-end of Suicide Hill joins the present highway at Historic Mile 156. The south-end, from the airstrip, is now closed-to-traffic.



1 - *View along the new Alaska Highway through Canada's wilderness. Built by a welcome army of U.S. soldiers.*

This photograph shows the infamous "Suicide Hill"" near Mile 148.



SUICIDE CURVE, CHANGE GEARS, ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY, YUKON, CANADA

In the late summer of 1943, the Brown & Leguil Co. of Minnesota was working on the section of the road from Mile 105 to Mile 130, building a five-mile piece of completely new road around Suicide Hill and making a wide, gradual grade down to the Sikanni Chief River.


SUICIDE HILL
500 FT. AHEAD
PREPARE
TO
MEET
THY
GOD

UP THE ALASKA HIGHWAY—

Boom! And Explosion Tears Hill Apart

By GEORGE L. PETERSON
(*The Minneapolis Star Journal,* July 20, 1943)

Mile 117 North of Fort St. John. JACK AND JUDD BROWN of Mankato and Frank Leguil of Adrian, Minn., were road builders who joined forces to negotiate a contract to build part of the Alaska Highway. Last year, they followed the Army Engineers, building hasty 20-mile stretches between Fort St. John and Steamboat Mountain, west of Fort Nelson.

This year they have the section from Mile 105 to Mile 130, building a five-mile piece of completely new road around Suicide Hill and making a wide, gradual grade down to the Sikanni Chief river. The bridge there was a separate contract by Pedersen Brothers of Montevideo, Minn.

Organization of the Brown & Leguil camp is pretty typical of contractors along the way. Jack Brown acts as Superintendent of Construction. Frank Leguil is known as a “free man.” That is, he is not on the government payroll as are all the others. Each contracting firm must have a free man to deal with the PRA and other governmental groups. Practically all contracts provide for payment by the government of expenses, plus a specified fee. Judd Brown remained at Mankato.

Five foremen are on the job, drawing from $450 to $550 a month each. R.S. Anderson of Minneapolis is Camp Manager at $350 and Terry Louris, Clerk, of Mankato, earns $275 a month.

Hourly men get time-and-a-half for all hours over 40. There are two shifts-a-day, seven days-a-week, starting at 1 a.m. and 1 p.m. With an hour off for eating, the usual trick is 10 hours. The four hours off allow time for oiling, greasing and minor repairs.

Tractor operators get $1.60-an-hour and scraper operators $1.70. In the two classifications are 35 men. The five shovel operators get $2 an hour. Six motor patrol operators get $1.60, the blacksmith and six mechanics $1.56-1/2, the 32 truck drivers $1.40, six laborers 96-1/2-cents, four oilers $1.30, four greasers $1.06-1/2, four dump directors $1.16-1/2. The pay scale is set by PRA and is the same in all camps. In addition to the two office men here, three men are in the Brown & Leguil office at the Okes camp in Fort St. John.

Ole M. Olson of Balsam Lake, Wis., is cook, a job he has had in Jack Brown's camps for 20 years. He draws $350 a month, as does the baker. A second cook gets $325 a month and a third cook $300. The 10 dishwashers and waiters each get $225. All kitchen help receives board and lodging in addition. The rest of the workers pay $1.25-a-day.

Four meals must be prepared each day to care for the two shifts. Lunches may be had at cost in the canteen. In addition to their own workers, Brown & Leguil, under common agreement, must also feed other workers who happen by at meal time. There is no rationing of food, but meat, butter and canned milk have been scarce of late.

Each contractor has an engineering staff, furnished by PRA (public roads administration). Here they have offices and bunk rooms in a separate building. T.E. Anderson of Duluth, on leave from the St. Louis County Highway Department, is resident engineer, P.A. Leverson of St. Paul is assistant and Leo Tschida, St. Paul, office man. Both were with the State Highway Department.

Nine young Engineers' Aides are employed, both Canadian and American. They are high school and college youths who work as linemen, chain men and level operators.

When finished, according to present plans, the Alaska Highway will be a heavy-duty road of good construction, Anderson explains, but with some steep grades. Maximum grade on the highway is 10 per cent, while Minnesota sets a limit of 6 per cent.

The Engineers stake-out and supervise all work. If the Brown & Leguil section of the road is typical, engineers and contractors are cooperating splendidly. Anderson estimates that this 25-mile sector will be completed before Sept. 1.

Brown & Leguil men boast of the fine soft water which they haul from a well nearby. Taking a shower in it, I spied an electric washing machine in the bath house and saw a chance to get the dust out of my clothes. After sketchy directions I went to work. The clothes were clean in five minutes, but all had turned a rosy hue. I HAD INCLUDED A PAIR OF RED SOX.

With Brown, Leguil or Anderson I moved from one spot to another with those busy fellows, watching graveling operations, the putting in of creosoted wood culverts, the rooting up of wet sections. But principal attention went to the Sikanni Chief hill. For days a well driller had been making holes 20 to 40 0feet-deep in anticipation of dynamiting-off a big corner of rock. The crew poured box after box of dynamite into the holes, non-chalantly packing it with a big tamper. Four hours they kept loading in the explosive. By 10 p.m. four tons had been stowed into the holes and covered tight with mud and rock.

The dynamiter hooked-up his wires. Traffic was stopped half a mile away in both directions of the road, trucks were moved to safety, the dozen onlookers got near shelter, 300-feet from the nearest charge. Frank Leguil had hoped to get movies of the explosion but heavy clouds moved into the sky, a wind whipped downstream along the valley and the evening turned cold. Still, the night was not dark. With a clear sky, movies would have been possible.

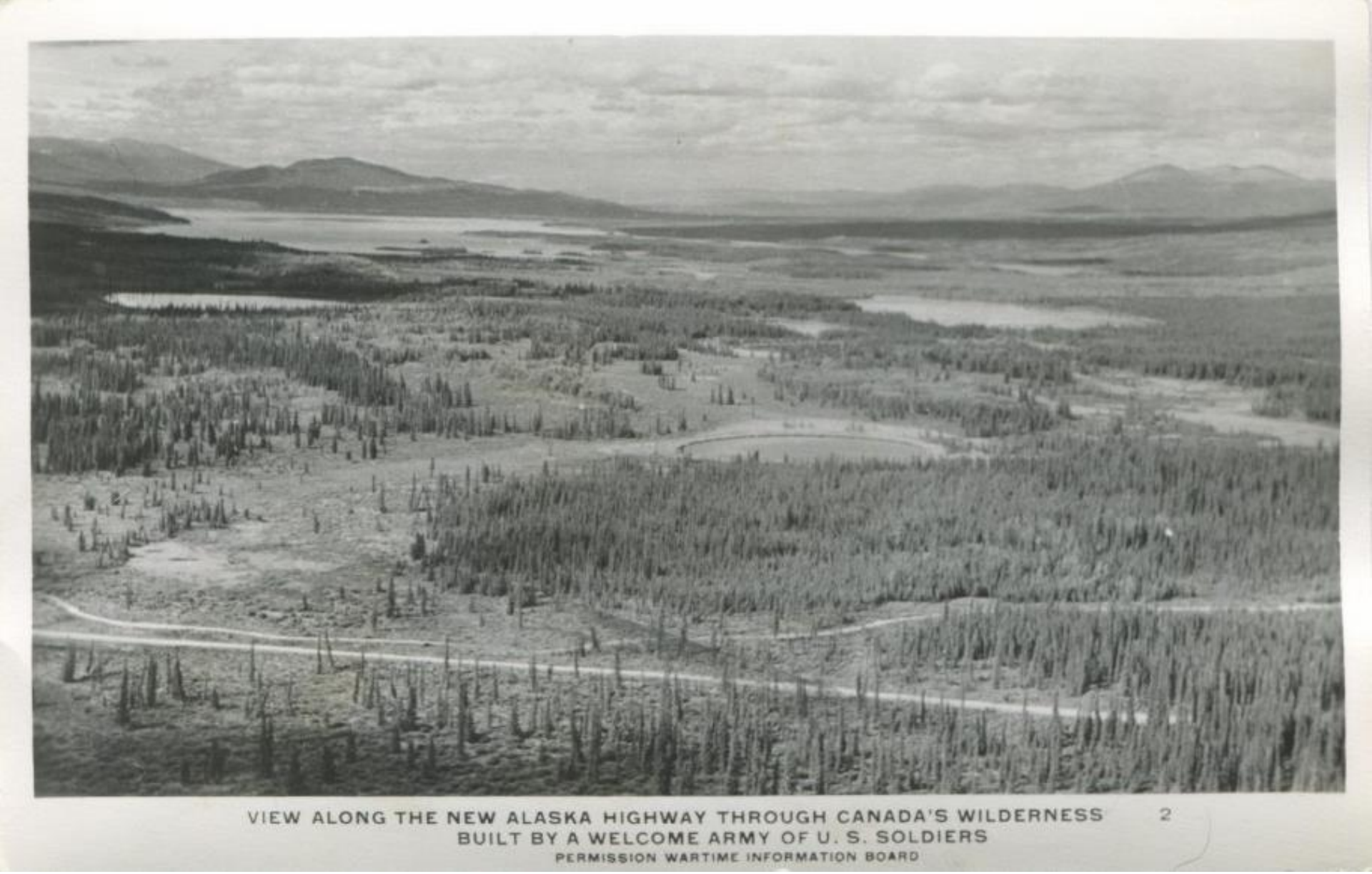


BLASTING NEAR SIKANNI

Leguil shouted the signal, the powder man made contact and the side of the hill shot into the air. Shot far and wide. The ground shook. I dived under a truck. Stones showered down on it.

When the unpleasant smoke had cleared away, we climbed into the rough gash. Thousands of tons of rock had been sent down the slope. More had been torn loose. A minute later the huge shovel moved up and began tossing the debris over the cliff.

Brown & Leguil like to keep “bulling” ahead.



2 - *View along the new Alaska Highway through Canada's wilderness. Built by a welcome army of U.S. soldiers*.



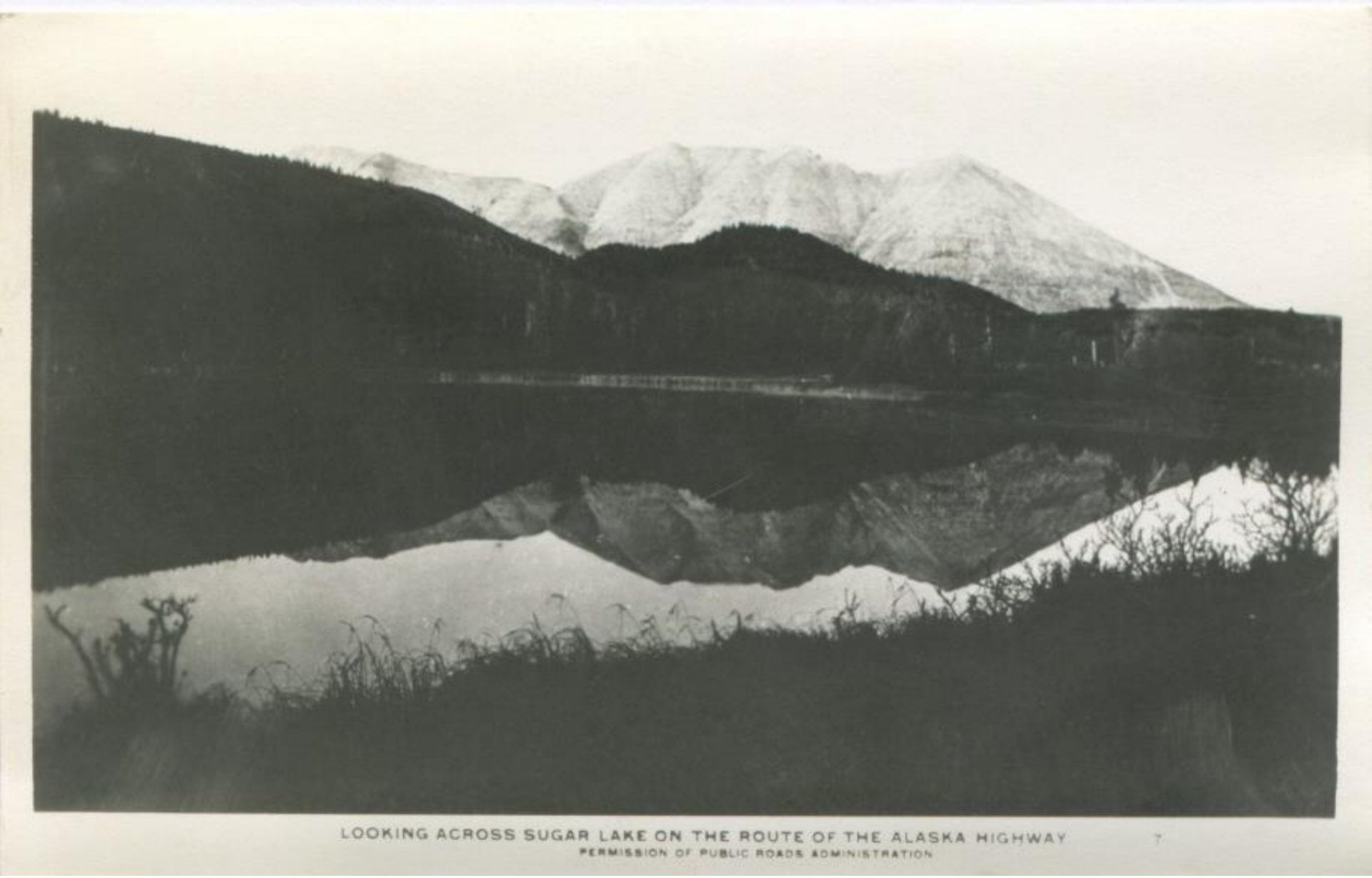
3 - *Along the Alaska Highway through Canada's wilderness. Built by a welcome army of U. S. soldiers.*



4 - *View along the Alaska Highway through Canada's wilderness. Built by a welcome army of U.S. soldiers.*



5 - *Heavy duty grader on section of the Alaska Highway skirting a mountain lake*.



7 - *Looking across Sugar Lake on the route of the Alaska Highway*



8 - *Clearing the way for the new Alaska Highway. Canadian timber was a pushover for powerful tractors.*



9 - *Sunset near the new Alaska Highway*



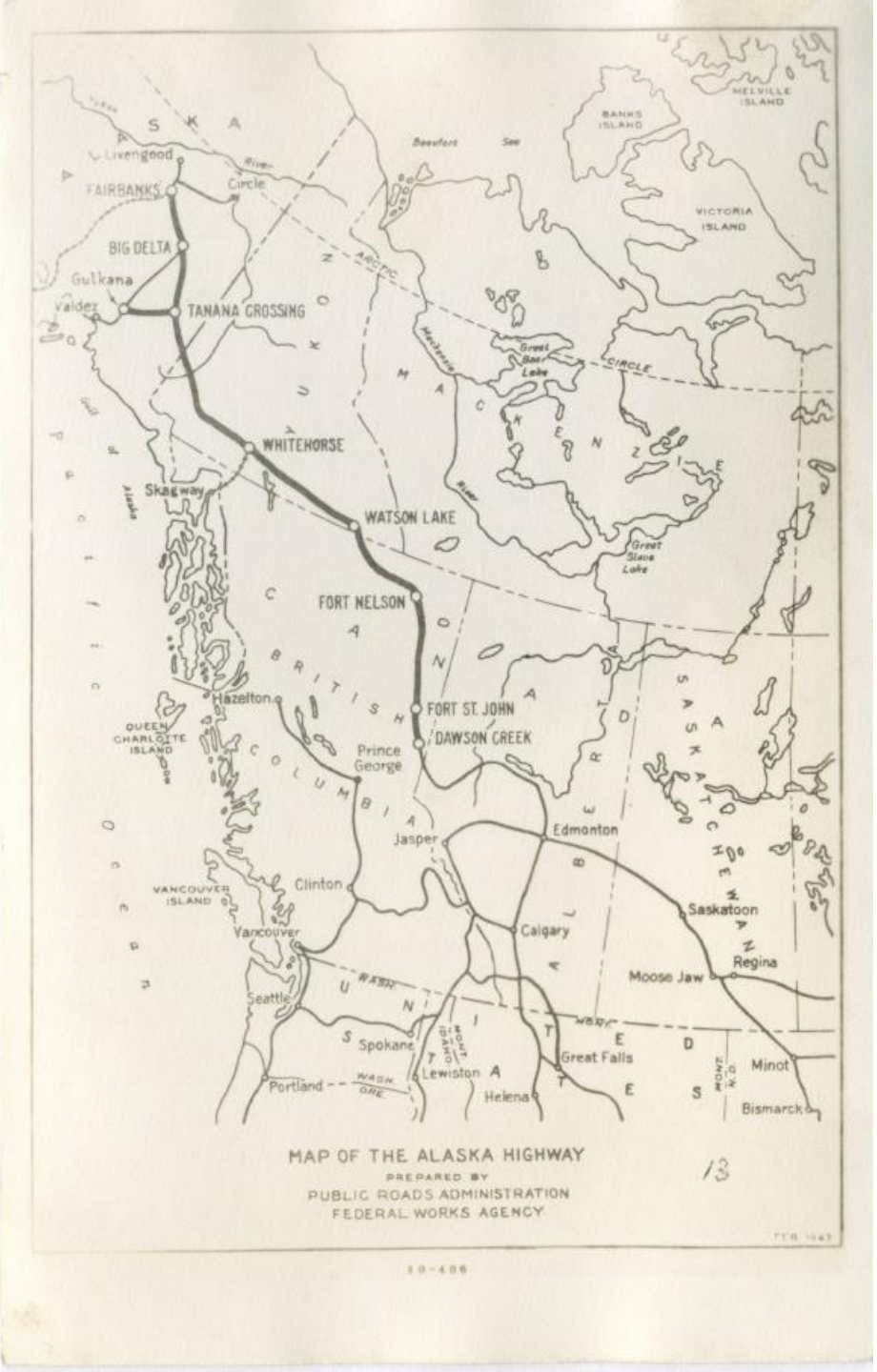
10 - *Looking upstream at the Peace River which is crossed by the Alaska Highway*



CHOPPING PERMANENT ICE UNCOVERED IN AUGUST ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY MELTING OF SUCH ICE WHEN THE INSULATING COVER IS REMOVED IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS SOLVED.

PERMISSION OF PUBLIC ROADS ADMINISTRATION, FWA. 12

12 - *Chopping permanent ice uncovered in August on the Alaska Highway. Melting of such ice when the insulating cover is removed is one of the problems solved.*



13 - *Map of the Alaska Highway. Prepared by Public Roads Administration, Federal Works Agency.*

The differences between the road system in 1943 and nowadays, in the north, are quite considerable. Among the many changes:

- Highway 16 now runs from Prince Rupert to the Alberta border through Prince George;
- The Stewart-Cassiar now connects Highway 16 to the Alaska Highway;
- The Hart Highway now runs from Prince George to Dawson Creek;
- Highway 40 now connects Jasper to the north;
- The South Klondike Highway has replaced the railway between Whitehorse and Skagway and;
- The George Parks Highway parallels the Alaska Railroad between Fairbanks and Anchorage.



15 - *Along the Alaska Highway through Canada's wilderness. Built by a welcome army of U.S. soldiers.*



17 - *View along the Alaska Highway through Canada's wilderness. Built by a welcome army of U.S. soldiers.*

This photograph became the basis for the USPS stamp commemorating the construction of the Alcan Highway



18 - *Best Wishes, Neighbor. The Alaska Highway. Built by a welcome army of U.S. soldiers.*



32 - *Army carry-all making good time on the packed snow on the Alaska Highway near Morley Bay, Dawson Peaks in distance*.



34 - *Truck about to descend one of the steepest grades on the Alaska Highway, this will be eliminated*



35 - *Army trucks crossing the frozen surface of the White River on the Alaska Highway*



36 - *Army trucks moving freight west of the White River on the Alaska Highway*



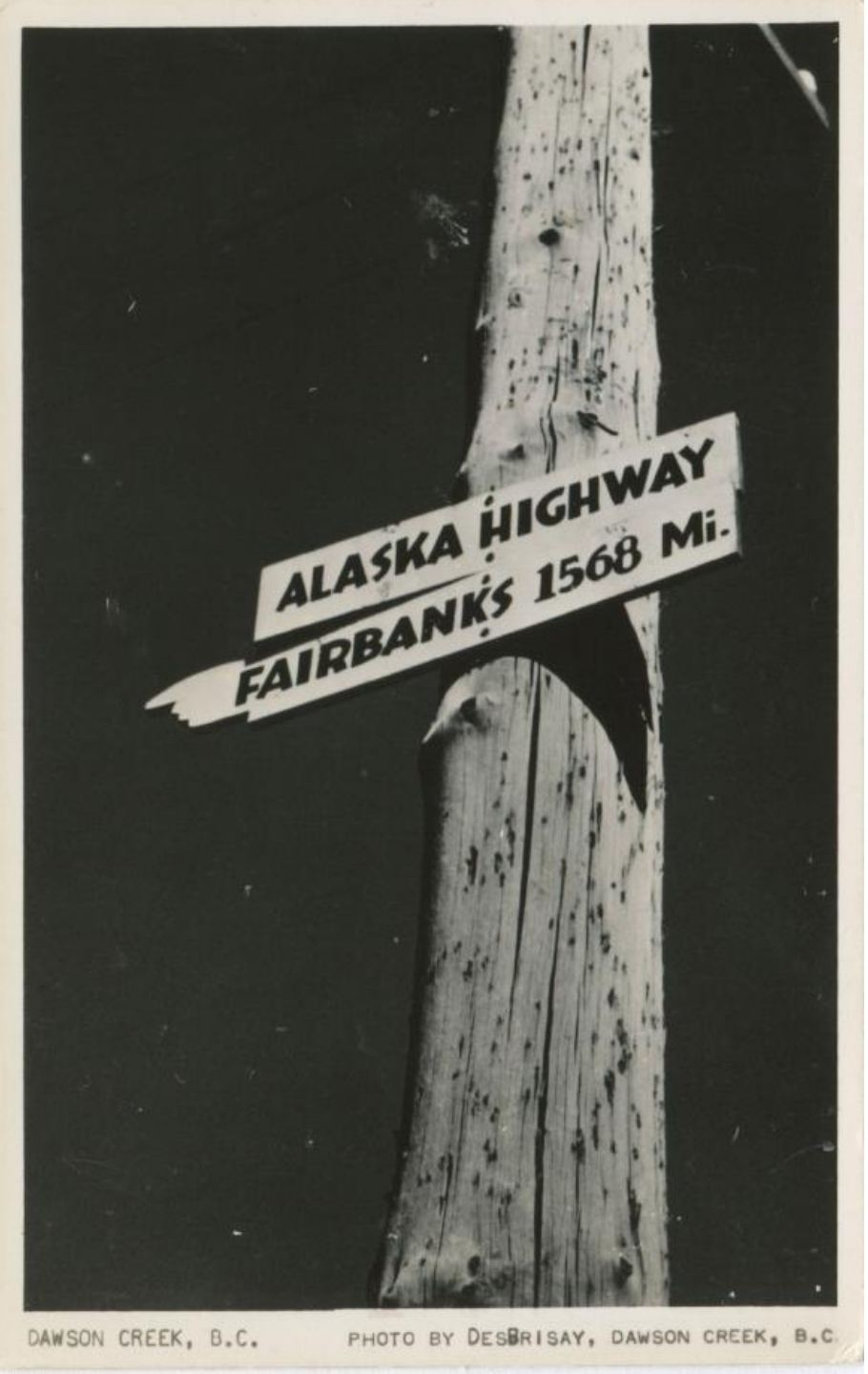
42 - The midnight sun, Yukon. Photo made at 15 minute intervals. As seen from the Alaska Highway.

The following postcards are from unknown printers/distributors and/or were issued in very small sets

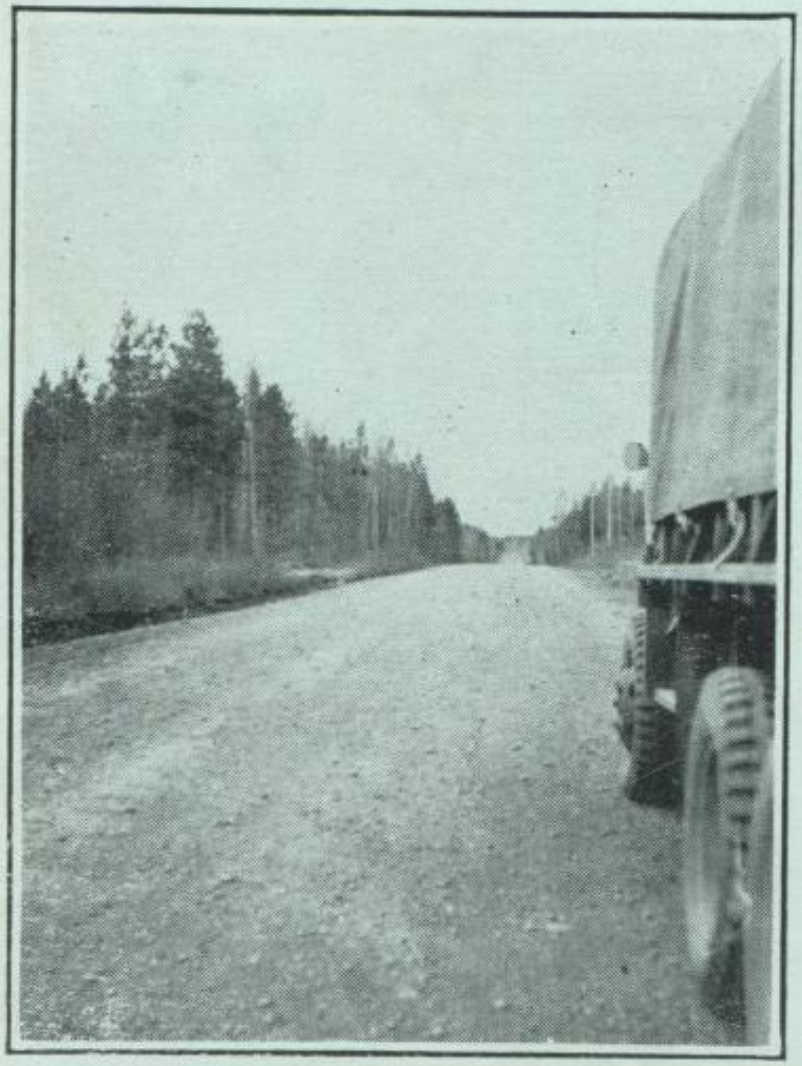


Alcan Highway

This postcard show signs marking Mile 0.0 of the "Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway." Fort Nelson is noted as being 360 miles away, and the sign on the right also states: "Road under construction. Not open to the public." The sign on the left reads: "Beginning of St. John Ft. Nelson sector, Alcan military highway. Construction began on May 6, 1942. U.S. Army."



The original military road was 1,670-miles-long, but by the time it had been upgraded to an all-weather highway in 1943-44 this sign, in Dawson Creek, stated the length as 1,568 miles



THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

From Dawson Creek, B.C., the road runs some 1,500 miles north-west through Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, Whitehorse and on to Fairbanks, Alaska. Coming into the field in March, 1942, and working from Dawson Creek and Whitehorse, the U.S. Engineers did a remarkable job of locating and building a rough but serviceable road over the entire distance by November This cleared the way for moving in heavy equipment and supplies. Highway contractors' crews are now widening, straightening and, in places, rebuilding the original road. Later this fine gravel highway (see picture) will be hard surfaced.

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The Alaska Highway

The Peace River Bridge, which replaced the ferry at Taylor's crossing ten miles south of Fort St. John, was built by the U.S. Government at a cost of $1,750,000. It was officially opened and presented to the Dominion of Canada on August 30, 1943. It's a two-lane suspension bridge, 2,275-feet-long and the deck is 100-feet above water-level. The towers are 190-feet-high. The bridge was of great value in facilitating transport along the +1,600-mile-long Alaska Highway.



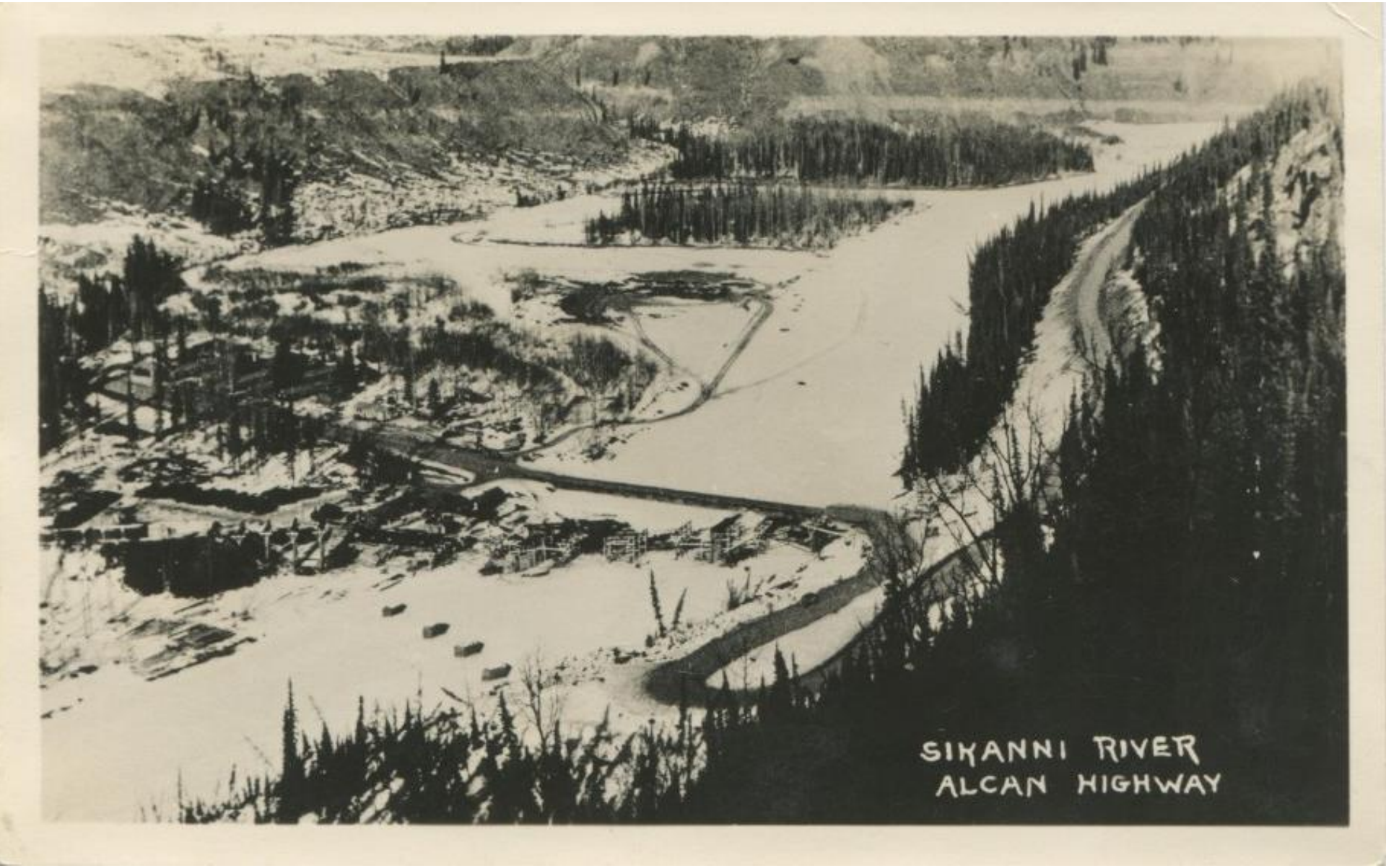
Peace River, Alcan Highway

Ferries were initially used to cross the biggest river on the Alaska Highway. This wooden one didn't last very long - it was destroyed by ice jams.



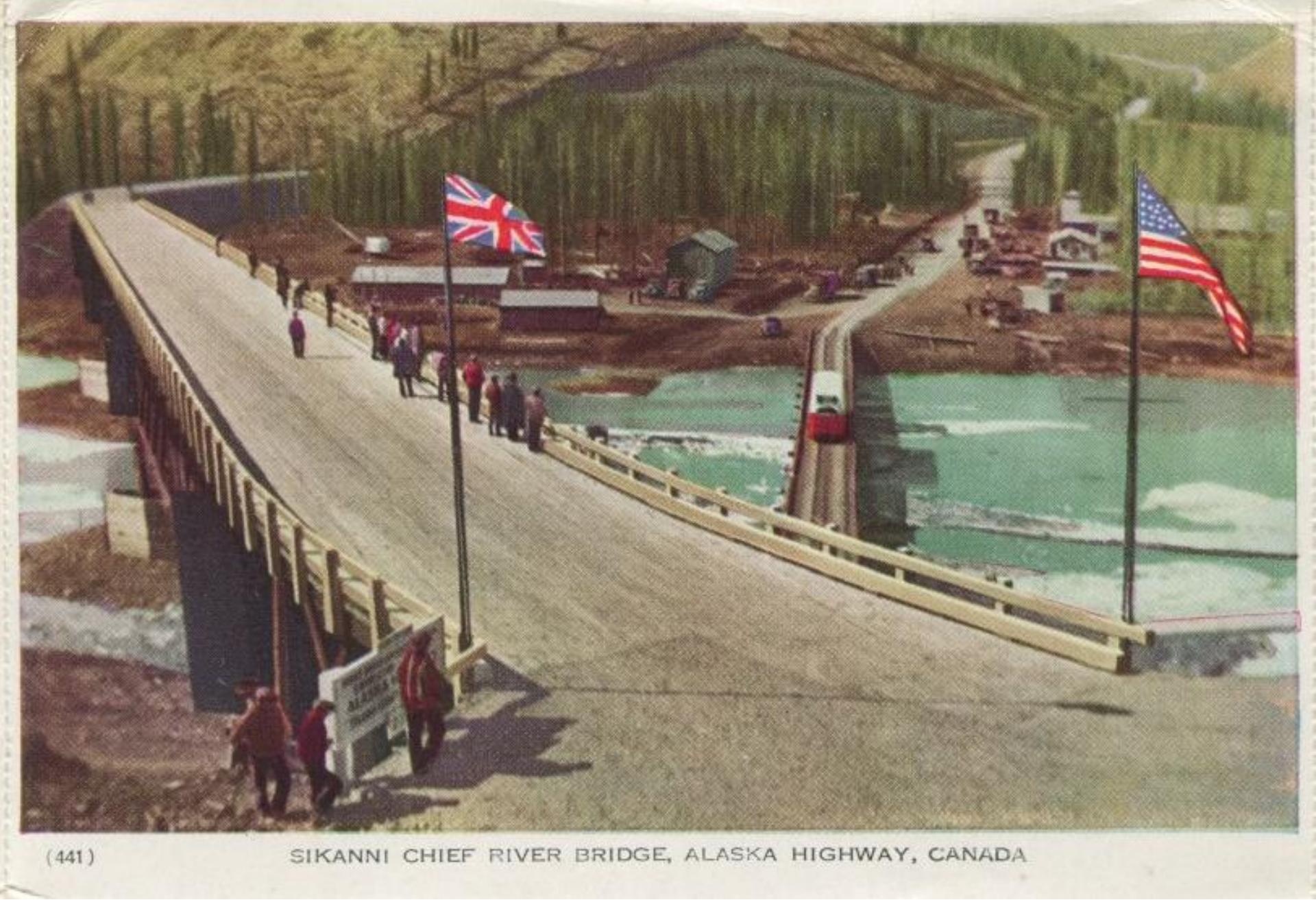
96 - *Peace River Bridge, Alaska Highway*

This bridge which crosses the Sikanni Chief River was the first permanent bridge to be constructed along the Alaska Highway. It was built in the summer of 1943 and is a low-level wooden of structure.



Sikanni River, Alcan Highway

The photo shows the temporary wooden bridge across the Sikanni Chief River in use and the permanent wooden bridge under construction in early 1943



441 - *Sikanni Chief River Bridge, Alaska Highway, Canada*

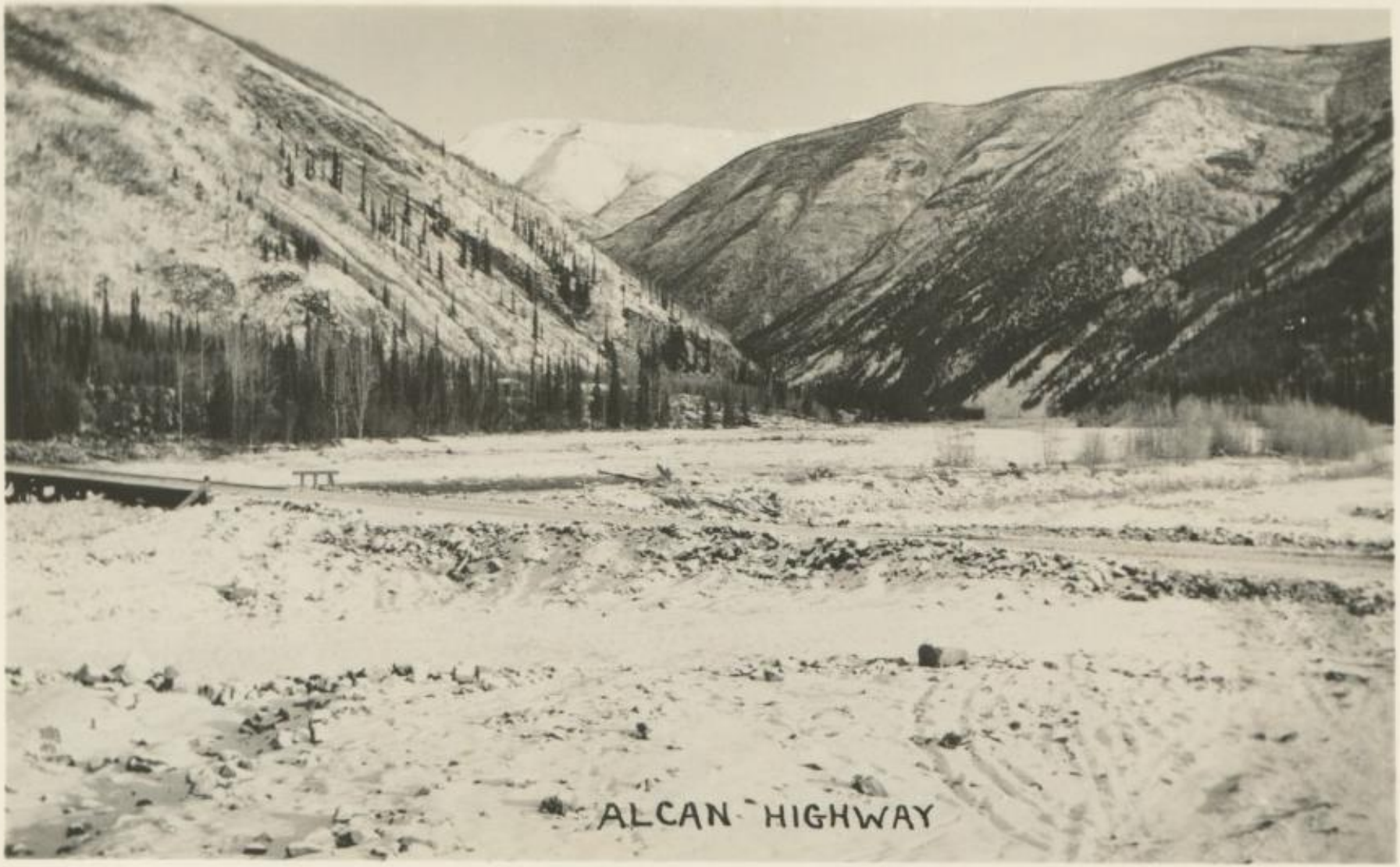


Alaska Highway showing the valley filled to reduce the grade



Alcan Highway - Mile 391

Looking north down “The Gorge” where the highway drops down into the MacDonald River valley (Km 603 today)



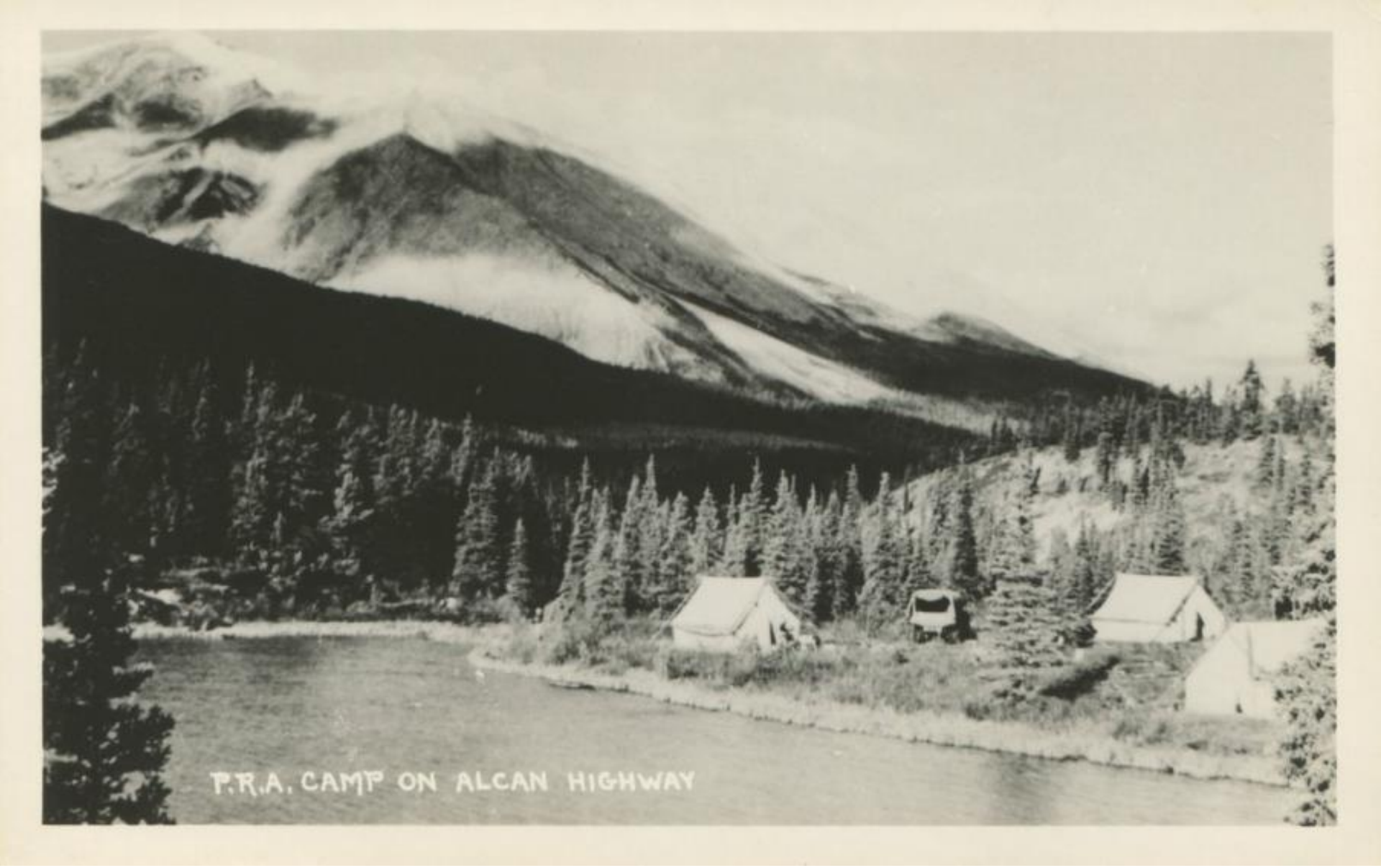
Alcan Highway

The new Alaska Highway (“Alcan”) crosses a small bridge on an out-wash plain near Muncho Lake, ca.1940s



Alcan Highway

The original road was built on top of the cliffs along Muncho Lake, but a shelf was soon blasted along the lakeshore for a new road, which is in the same location today



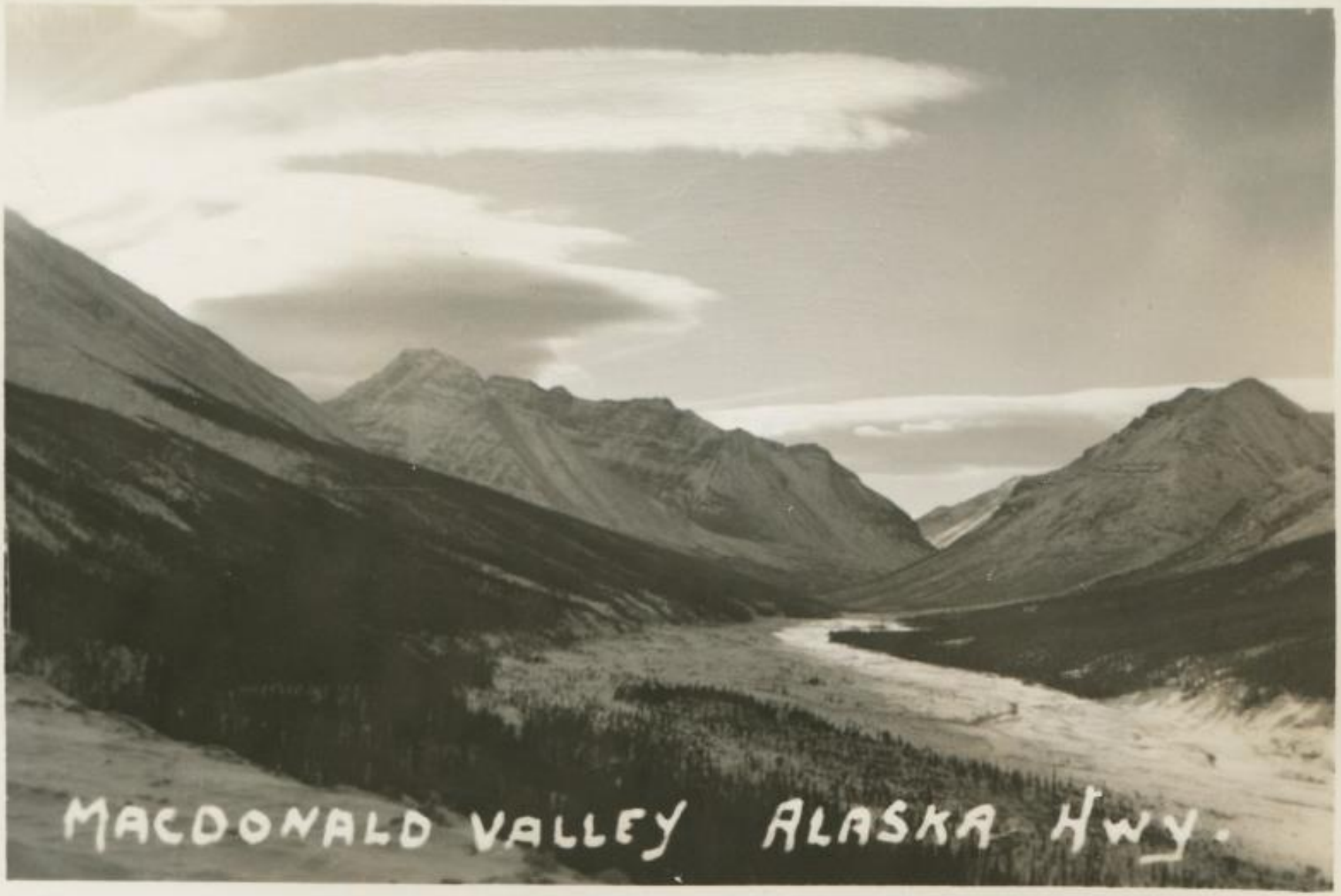
P.R.A. camp on Alcan Highway

Once the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had built the original tote road, the Public Roads Administration (PRA) was brought-in to bring the road to a higher standard



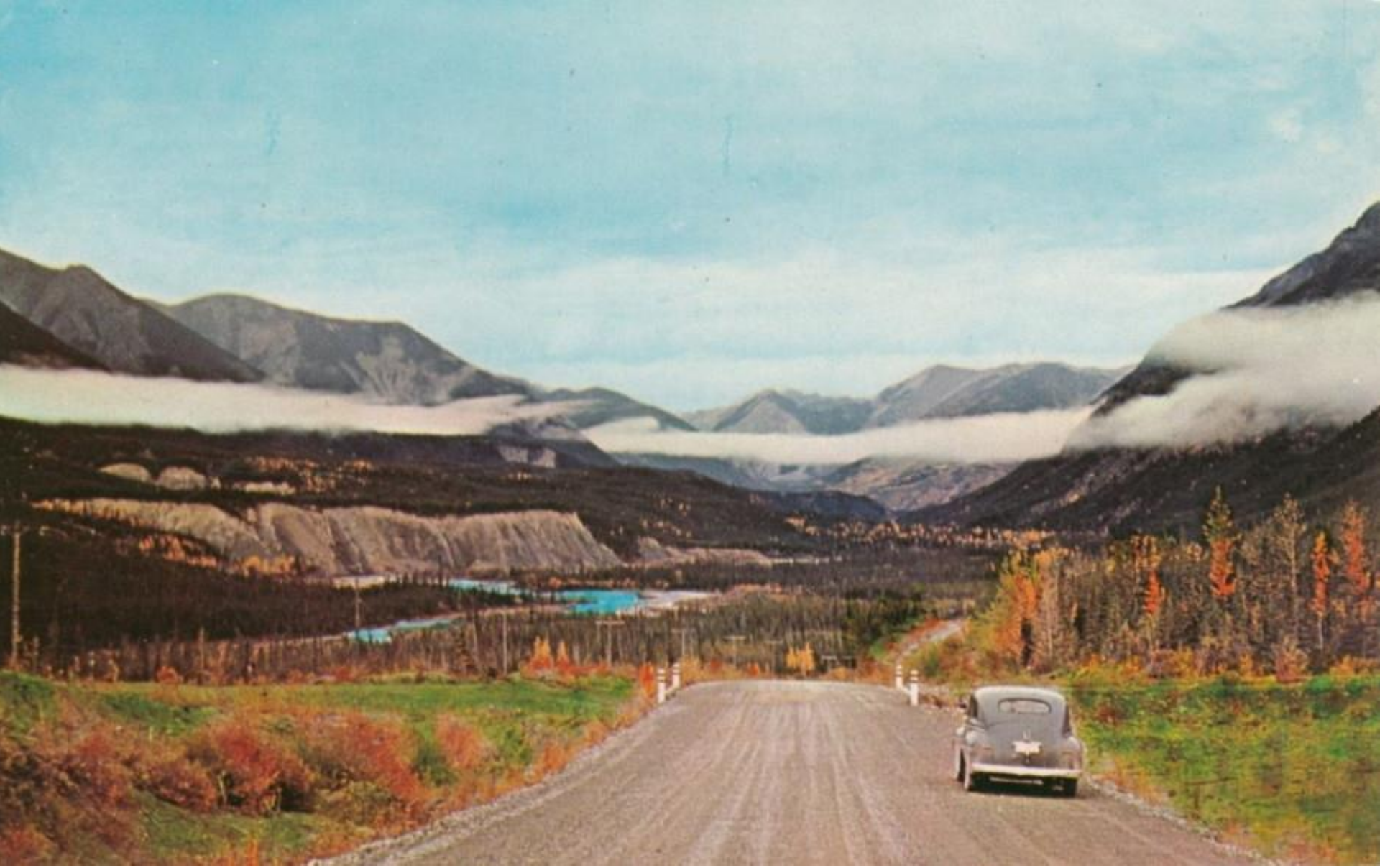
Mile 426 - Alaska Highway

Mile 426, now Km 652 and the location of Poplars Campground is 4 miles north of Toad River, B.C.



MacDonald Valley, Alaska Hwy.

This photo of the broad glacial valley was taken from what is now Km 605 and the view hasn't changed since then



Trout River, Alaska Highway, mile 472.
Mountain sheep and goats are often seen crossing the highway at this point.



Watson Lake, Alcan Highway.

The building in the center of the photo is the Hudson's Bay Company trading post



Johnson's Crossing, Mile 837, Alaska Highway

The bridge in the photo, which spans the Teslin River at Johnson's Crossing, is the second longest bridge on the Alaska Highway.



"Johnson's Crossing Lodge: Historic Mile 837, Alaska Highway

The large building above (at right in previous photo) is Johnson's Crossing Lodge, which is still in operation, although in a new and smaller building

One of the most famous of the landmarks along the Alcan Highway was started by a homesick GI in 1942 and is now one of the attractions which make Watson Lake, at Km 980 of the highway (Historic Mile 635), a must-stop.

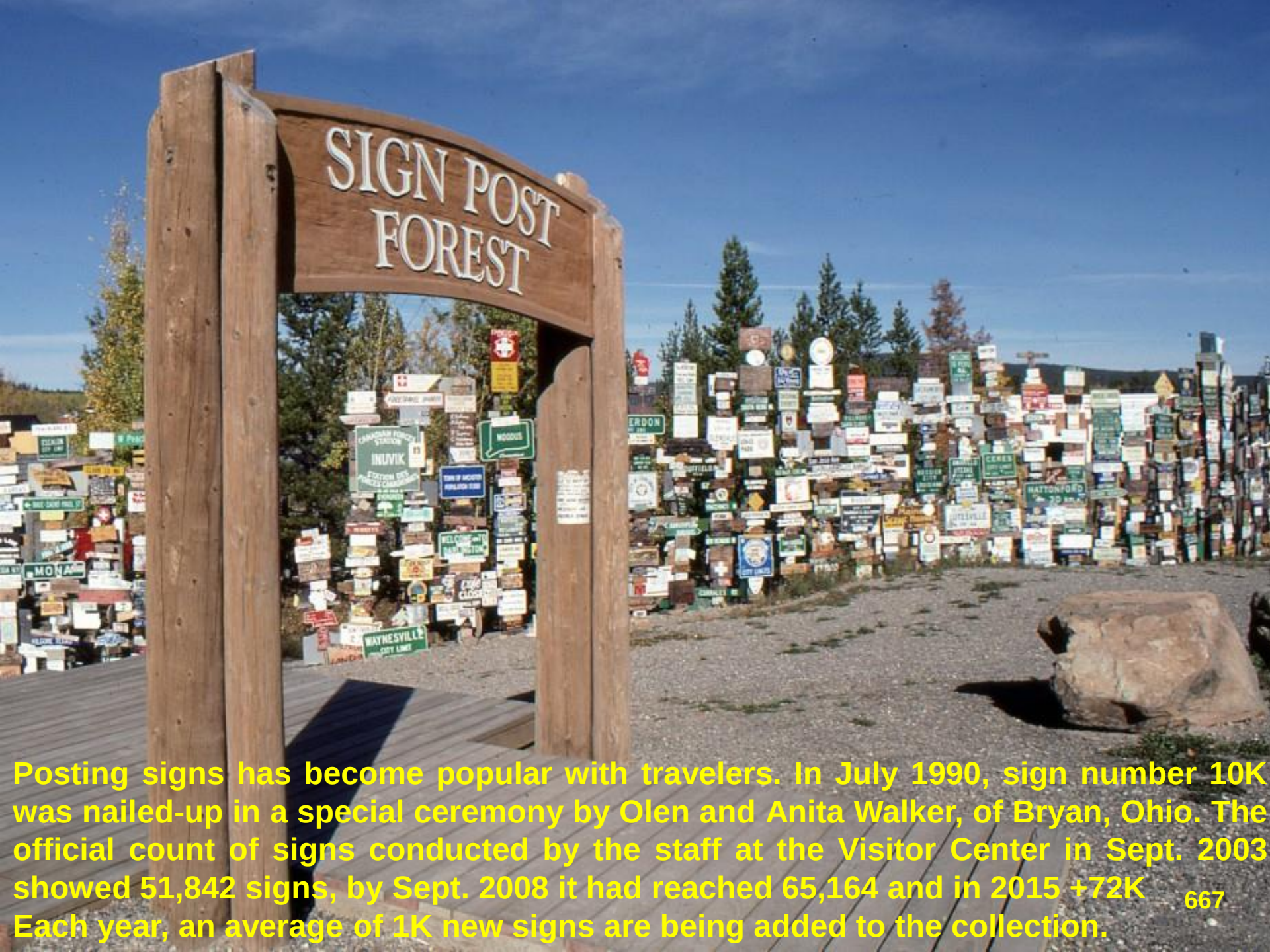
In 1942, a simple signpost pointing-out the distances to various points along the tote road being built was damaged by a bulldozer. Private Carl K. Lindley, serving with the 341st Engineers, was ordered to repair the sign and decided to personalize the job by adding a sign pointing to his hometown; Danville, Ill. Several other people added directions to their home towns and the idea has been snowballing ever since.

The "Signpost Forest" takes up several acres, with huge new panels being constantly added, snaking through the trees. There are street signs, there are "Welcome To..." signs, there are signatures on dinner plates, there are license plates from around the world - the variety is as broad as human imagination.



Sign Boards, Watson Lake, Alaska Highway, Mile 635

Starting in 1942 with one post and three signs, travelers have added others each year, increasing the number to nearly 700.



Posting signs has become popular with travelers. In July 1990, sign number 10K was nailed-up in a special ceremony by Olen and Anita Walker, of Bryan, Ohio. The official count of signs conducted by the staff at the Visitor Center in Sept. 2003 showed 51,842 signs, by Sept. 2008 it had reached 65,164 and in 2015 +72K Each year, an average of 1K new signs are being added to the collection.



Alaska Highway.



Liard River in the Rockies, Alcan Highway

Although he title on this postcard is “Liard River in the Rockies, Alcan High-way”, but the photo shows Maligne Lake, Alberta

Part 8

Common Cause

Impressions

THE VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE
VANCOUVER, B.C. — Saturday Magazine — DECEMBER 31, 1943

"Still The Land Is British Columbia"

New Alaska Highway Reveals Grandeurs That Were Never Suspected By Many Americans Here On War Duty

The Vancouver Daily Province - December 31, 1943
by Capt. Richard L. Neuberger

In September, 1942, a group of us reporting for duty with the United States Army in the Far North, were riding along the steep shores of Lake Bennett on a puffing little train of the narrow-gauge White Pass & Yukon Railway.

The old day coach swayed rhythmically as we rounded a sharp curve; it dated from the era of the Klondikers. A high camel-backed stove was at each end of the car.

Suddenty a Lieutenant of Engineers pointed to a rocky island just off-shore. “What’s that sign?” he asked.

We looked. On the pile of basalt outcroppings that formed the island stood a sign with the legend “B.C.-Y.T.” In large letters.

A soldier-conductor of the 770th Military Railway Battalion came through the car. “That marks the boundary between British Columbia and the Yukon Territory,” he explained in answer to our question about the sign.

We looked again. We had travelled nearly 1,000 miles since leaving Vancouver’s imposing waterfront. We were a full 150 miles north of Juneau, the capital of Alaska. We were more than 400 miles above Ketchikan, the seaport which is Alaska's coastal gateway. We were even north of Sitka, the Alaskan capital in the days when those hardy northerners, the Russians, owned the great peninsular rampart of the North Pacific.

Yet we had just crossed the northern edge of British Columbia. None of us had realized how far north Canada’s vast western province extended. We were two long days’ journey by steamship beyond the southern tip of Alaska, we had reached the 60th parallel and yet, still the land was British Columbia.

A Quartermaster major on our train came from Texas. “By gosh,” he admitted, “British Columbia is even bigger than Texas.” For a Texan this is the ultimate in concessions. Our officers and enlisted men from the largest state in the American Union are always astonished to learn that although Texas composes 265,896 square-miles, British Columbia tops this figure by 100,000 square-miles; 366,255. To any U.S. soldier a geographic entity 100,000 square-miles larger than Texas is a measureless place indeed.

But astonishment over British Columbia’s long reach is not confined to us who are guests in Canada. On a recent visit to Vancouver and Victoria with Brig. Gen. James A. O’Connor, I was asked many times if I found the Yukon winters excruciatingly cold and bitter.

My invariable reply was: “Well, you people who are residents of British Columbia should be just about as familiar with these winters as I am. After all, you know, our headquarters at Whitehorse are only 60 miles north of the northern boundary of your own province.”

This statement inevitably led to a hasty search for maps. Looking at these maps, life-tong inhabitants of British Columbia's metropolis, Vancouver, and her capital, Victoria, were amazed to discover that their province ended a bare 60 miles south of the Yukon transportation centre of Whitehorse, where the U.S. Army's Northwest Service Command has its main headquarters and where navigation on the immense Yukon River system begins, a navigation route which ends at St. Michael on the Bering Sea, 2,000 miles away.

American soldiers who have come to Canada to collaborate in the defense of the continent are thoroughly familiar with British Columbia's northernmost settlement of Bennett. To them Bennett symbolizes one of the great triumvirate of "eats, mail and girls." In the case of Bennett it is eats.

Bennett is a small way-station on the White Pass & Yukon Railway, which winds spectacularly for 111 mountain miles from Skagway, Alaska, to Whitehorse. This thread of narrow-gauge steel has been one of the main supply links in the construction of the Alaska International Highway.

The White Pass & Yukon Route is so vital that in the autumn of 1942, after a visit to the Far North by Lieut. Gen. Brehon B. Somervell, commanding the U.S. Army Service Forces, the United States Government leased the line from its British owners for the duration of the war and one year thereafter.

Under this agreement, the railroad has been operated by soldiers of the 770th and the army has shipped up the Inside Passage many new locomotives, freight cars, rotary snowplows and similar equipment. Bennett, the northern outpost of British Columbia, is the most welcome station on the line for it is here that meals are served.

In the high-raftered old station house both passengers and train crews eat a menu which never varies - soup, pot roast, gravy, boiled potatoes, macaroni, jam tarts, pie and coffee. During the past summer such illustrious visitors as the Governor-General of Canada and his wife, the Princess Alice; Mayor La Guardia of New York and many Generals and Admirals of Canada and the United States and numerous Senators, Congressmen and members of the Canadian Parliament partook of this standard meal.

A few miles north of Bennett the White Pass and Yukon tracks twist past the island on which stands the boundary sign. Both Bennett and Lake Bennett were named by Al Schwatka, a pioneer Alaska Surveyor, for James Gordon Bennett, the *New York Herald* Publisher, who financed a number of Arctic explorations.

Of the 1,630 miles of the celebrated Alaska Highway built by the United States Army, more are on the soil of British Columbia than of any other geographic subdivision. Approximately 780 miles of the international road are in British Columbia, 500 in the Yukon Territory and 350 in Alaska. Col. Kenneth B. Bush, Chief of Staff of the Northwest Service Command, believes that some of the most majestic scenery along the road is in British Columbia.

He nominates Muncho Lake, Summit Lake and Folding Mountain as conspicuous examples of this grandeur. At Summit Lake, B.C. the road crosses the Continental Divide. Here the U.S. Army relay station, where trucks and buses are fueled and repaired and drivers and passengers get their meals, nestles in the shadow of peaks which split the Pacific and Atlantic watersheds. Along the precipitous shores of Muncho Lake the highway winds and curves like a hoop.

It is in the east-central portion of British Columbia that the road begins. This is at the northern Alberta railhead of Dawson Creek. The main points on the road are Fort St. John and Fort Nelson. Gen. O'Connor arrived at Fort St. John in early May of 1942 to supervise construction of the southern half of the highway. Under his direction the road was thrust as far as Watson Lake. From Watson Lake northward, Brig. Gen. William M. Hoge managed the far-flung job.

Between Fort Nelson and Watson Lake the Alaska Highway crosses and re-crosses the British Columbia-Yukon line. “On our survey parties when we pioneered the road,” Gen. O’Connor has pointed-out, “we never were certain on which side of the boundary we were. We picked the best routes up the mountain passes and through river canyons and I imagine that often one party was working in British Columbia and a companion party a few rods away might be standing in the Yukon.”

Near the historic old Hudson’s Bay store at Lower Post, B.C., the Alaska Highway is exactly on the British Columbia-Yukon boundary. This is the point at which the proposed road from Prince George up the Rocky Mountain “trench” would intersect the international road.

U.S. troops have now been stationed in Canada's northland almost two years. During that time thousands of them have become thoroughly familiar with British Columbia. Practically all the military projects undertaken by the U.S. Army in the North Pacific touch British Columbia at one spot or another. For example, the Haines Military Road, which connects the Alaska Highway with the sea, is on British Columbia ground for 45 miles as it ascends the Chilkoot and Three Guardsmen passes.

At Dalton Post, historic Mounted Police camp on the border, the road passes from Alaska Into British Columbia. Maj. Gen. George R. Pearkes, V.C., commanding the Canadian Army's Pacific Command, with headquarters at Vancouver, was a constable in the old Northwest Mounted Police at Dalton Post shortly before his enlistment for overseas service in 1914.

Inspector H.H. Cronkhite, commanding the Whitehorse detachment of the Mounties, has recently announced that Dalton Post will be reactivated as traffic begins to move on the Haines Military Road.

The bulk of British Columbia's population is concentrated along its southern rim - in Vancouver, Victoria and a few other centres. But the northland of the province is vast, majestic and impressive. No American officer or enlisted man has traveled through the Inside Passage, that mountain-barricaded arm of the Pacific Ocean, without being awed by the succession of fiords and forest-rimmed inlets which make-up British Columbia's coastline.

"I was born in Norway," a sergeant in the Medical Corps told me as we watched from an army transport, "but our fiords can not match this beauty."

The northern rivers have had a fascination for our soldiers for two widely divergent reasons; (1) because they contain superlative fishing possibilities and, (2) because they have imposed the major construction difficulties in the building of the Alaska Highway.

No soldier learns without surprise that every great river flowing into the Pacific, with the sole exception of the Colorado, originates in British Columbia.

This includes the Fraser, the Skeena, the Stikine, the Liard and even the ponderous Columbia.

On thousands of American soldiers British Columbia has made a profound impression. All of them await the hour when they can return again to their homes, but with equal fervor they promise to bring their families some day to see the magnificence of Canada's most westerly province.

As Smooth as Silk

THE VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE
VANCOUVER, B.C. Saturday Magazine DECEMBER 30, 1944

What U.S. Soldiers Think of Canada

by Capt. Richard L. Neuberger
Who served as General O'Connor's Aide
during construction of the Alaska Highway
and related projects in the Far North.
The Vancouver Daily Province - December 30, 1944

During the past two years, more than 30,000 soldiers of the United States Army have been on duty in the Canadian Northwest. What do these young Americans think of Canada? Of Canadians? How have they been impressed by their country's vast and far-flung ally to the North?. How have Canadians taken to them? What have seemed to be the essential differences - as well as the similarities - between the men of fighting age of the United States and those who wear the uniform of Canada?

Never in our long history as good neighbors has there been so timely an opportunity to answer these questions.

Canada is a land bridge between the United States and Alaska, just as Alaska is a land bridge thrusting toward Japan. The 1,600-mile Alaska Military Highway, contradicting its name, is mainly on the soil of Canada: so, too, are the airports and landing fields which lead to Alaska and the North Pacific theatre-of-war.

The American soldiers stationed in Canada have been engaged in the vital task of transporting planes, trucks, food, military equipment and men to Alaska.

They include varied units and men of many skills and backgrounds - port battalions at Prince Rupert, air corps mechanics at Watson Lake and Fort St. John, Quartermaster truck drivers at Dawson Creek, medical corpsmen at Fort Nelson, railroad battalions at Whitehorse, military police companies at Edmonton and Vancouver, signal corps telegraphers at Calgary, transportation platoons at Waterways and Norman Wells, airplane pilots all the way from the prairies to the Alaska-Yukon international line, 2,200 mountainous miles off to the northwest.

I think that a sergeant in the U.S. Engineer Corps best expressed the universal impression of all these American soldiers as he rode through the Peace River uplands of B.C. in one of Northern Alberta's swaying old wooden day coaches. The sergeant was from Texas, as his drawl and remarks indicated.

"By golly," he admitted wistfully, "you could even lose Texas in this place. Who'd have dreamed it?"

Canada's huge dimensions have awed and astounded the visitors serving on her soil. Occasionally, we Americans are inclined to be presumptuous (in the way we tend to pre-empt for ourselves exclusively the description "Americans" a symbol of this?) We take it for granted that the United States is unchallenged on this continent in virtually all particulars.

At least 90 per cent. of our soldiers have been amazed to learn that Canada exceeds their own country in area, that many of Canada's provinces are several times the size of Texas or California, that Mount Logan, towering above the Alaska Highway in the Yukon Territory, is more than a mile higher than the loftiest point in the United States.

“Longer Than California”

Twenty months ago I was riding along the narrow-gauge White Pass & Yukon Railroad from Skagway to Whitehorse with my commanding officer, Brigadier General James A. (Pat-sy) O'Connor, the United States Army Engineer under whose direction the Alaska Highway was completed. On a rocky islet off the shore of Lake Bennett we saw a sign with the legend "B.C. - Y.T."

"We're a long way north but we must just be coming to the boundary between British Columbia and the Yukon," the Gen-eral said.

He got up from his seat in the coach and pulled a map from a briefcase on the luggage rack, He figured for a moment on the margin of the map with a pencil, "British Columbia is 230 miles longer than California," he said, "I think we are going to get some pretty revealing lessons in geography up here in the North country. I had always thought that California was about the longest political subdivision on the continent, but now I see that British Columbia puts California in the shade."

I nodded understandingly. General O'Connor's home is in Los Angeles and I remembered my own surprise over the Mackenzie River, of which I had heard little, yet which is 1,000 miles longer than the mighty Columbia, on whose banks in Oregon I was born and raised.

All our lessons have not been on geography. At Government House in Edmonton, Mrs. Ruth Bowen, the daughter of Alberta's Lieutenant-Governor, told me about the soldier from Oklahoma who was their guest shortly after reporting for duty in Canada.

"He had brought along his university textbooks in French so that he could confab with the people he expected to meet in British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon," Mrs. Bowen explained. "And in a corner over our teacups he confessed to me, "Why, you folks talk just as good English as we do - maybe even better!"

I asked Mrs. Bowen, who is Informational Representative in the Northwest for the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, where she lodged the blame for such a misconception.

“Well,” she ventured hesitatingly, “there probably are several reasons, One is the fact that our Canadian literature hasn’t especially glamorized Canada as yet. The American is firmly grounded in his own history because it has been glamorized. What young American can’t recite the Gettysburg Address or tell all the dramatic details surrounding it?

“And substantial numbers of Americans from all sections of the United States have really visited Canada as a nation and not just gone to Banff or Jasper, or to the antique shops in Victoria, or dropped in for the Quebec skiing season.

“Your soldiers in Calgary and Whitehorse and Prince Rupert are seeing our nation and her people and their customs and traditions, not just the resorts and tourist centres of the old palmy days of unrestricted pleasure jaunts.”

“And, of course, this last is particularly true. Many of us in the United States Army have now seen far more of Canada than the great majority of Canadians. We are familiar with your land from the American border to the Arctic Circle.”

Consulting my itinerary of the past two years, I find that I have journeyed approximately 29,000 miles in the Dominion by truck, jeep, dog sled, bus, boat, plane and train. I have shared moose cutlets with a half-breed family on Teslin Lake in the Yukon and, together with General O'Connor and our Northwest Service Command Chief-of-Staff; Colonel Kenneth B. Bush, I have had the honor of sampling lobster and salmon from the Maritimes with the ministers of the Canadian Cabinet at the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

These pilgrimages to the distant corners of Canada have convinced me, as they have convinced thousands of other members of the American Army, that the people from the opposite sides of the longest unfortified boundary in the world are basically the same.

There are differences, to be sure, but down underneath the contrasting customs, habits, attitudes and ceremonies one finds similarity in the great important matters which decide the destiny of mankind.

I recall our dinner with the Canadian Cabinet and other leading Parliamentarians. For some time I have been a member of the Legislative Assembly of my State and seated between Hon. James G. Gardiner, Minister of Agriculture, and Capt. George Black, M.P. for the Yukon. I was struck by the brotherhood between the men who direct the government of Canada and those who sit in the Congress and Legislatures of the United States.

They used many of the same phrases, they relied on the same metaphors and anecdotes, they had the same disputes and controversies. And when the toasts had been given and the speeches commenced, I realized that they even told the same jokes!

Yet there are differences between Canadians and Americans. What are some of them? A likely place to enquire, I decided, was at the Post Exchange Office in Whitehorse, where both Canadian and American soldiers buy candy, razor blades and knick-knacks at the army store operated by the Northwest Service Command. Here is What one of the exchange officers said to me:

“Yes, captain, we have noticed differences between our Canadian and American customers. They are not profound differences, but they are differences, nevertheless.”

“My clerks tell me that the Americans are quicker to wait on but a good deal more demanding and impatient. The men from the R.C.A.F. base deliberate longer before making their purchases, they weigh values more cautiously.”

“The American soldiers seem more impetuous, a little more reckless and considerably more nervous and higher strung, Standing in line at the counter, they become more restless and irascible than the Canadian soldiers and aviators, who appear capable of being able to wait their turn graciously and quietly.”

“By and large, I would say that the American soldiers show evidence of having lived their lives at a faster and more carefree tempo than their Canadian counterparts.”

This was an American viewpoint. What was the opinion of Canadians? I asked a prominent merchant in Edmonton, who had sold much merchandise to both Canadian and American troops in the past two years. This is what he said:

“Not only have I seen Canadian and American soldiers in my store, but my wife and I have entertained them at our home. They share many qualities - and, happily, these are the best qualities - but they are different, too.

“Americans are more ingenious and original. They devise their own amusements and games, they improvise. The Canadians stick mainly to what is at-hand. The Americans will turn laughingly to bizarre and unusual things, but the Canadian boys harbor a greater caution and conservatism.

“The American soldier has more of a sense of humor also. His funny bone is sharper. He will put a ‘No Parking’ sign on top of a 12-foot snow-pile. His barracks is plastered with joking slogans and pin-up girls.”

Much Mutual Admiration

“The Canadian soldier may have one pin-up girl, or even two, but the American’s wall will literally be papered with them.”

Looking over these answers to my question, I was struck by one thing. The impromptu spokesman of each country had tried to give the other country the best of the bargain in his reply.

There is much mutual admiration between Americans and Canadians. This admiration is at its height where American and Canadian troops have served together in the Canadian North-west.

A Canadian military police corporal on the long upland train ride from Prince Rupert to Jasper told me, “Sir, Americans sometimes bash Americans and every so often I have to pull Canadians apart, but Canadians and Americans get along together as smooth as silk, I’ve never had to officiate at a brawl between ‘em.”

Many of the American soldiers associated with the construction of the Alaska Highway have been decorated, but no presentation at our headquarters at Whitehorse stirred half the enthusiasm among our men as the posthumous award of the U.S. Army air medal to the late Leslie Cook, famed Canadian bush pilot.

I think Cook came to be a symbol to us all of the friendship between our two countries, No weather was too bleak or forbidding for him to take-off. He flew through a fierce Arctic blizzard to bring medical aid to a sergeant on the Donjek River stricken with appendicitis and landed his plane in the darkness guided only by truck headlights.

He braved countless storms to survey the wild fastnesses penetrated by the Alaska Highway and telephone lines. “Les” was admired by every American soldier from Fort St. John to Fairbanks.

I venture to predict that, many years from now, American-Canadian bonds of understanding will be strengthened by Americans who still think of Canada in terms of “Les” Cook and the other Canadian bush pilots who blazed the air route to Alaska.

Our soldiers have acquired a real respect for the North Country. Like the people in Goldsmith’s poem, many of them came to scoff but have remained to pray.

I will not soon forget my first trip on the Northern Alberta railroad, which meanders circuitously from Edmonton to Dawson Creek. The soldiers across the aisle spoke contemptuously about the ancient Pullmans with their tattered seats and stubborn doors. The jolting roadbed and the one-choice meals in the diner were also subjects for ridicule.

After a year in the North I travelled again on the Northern Alberta, this time toward civilization instead of away from it. The dilapidated Pullmans looked dilapidated no longer. I marveled that a standard-gauge railway could function at all that far to the North.

With deep appreciation, I sank into my berth, reveling in the sheets and woolen blankets. What if the cushions did not rival the Twentieth Century Limited? What if the creaking ventilator would not close? Here I was north of the latitude of the Aleutian Islands and tucked away in a Pullman berth.

By this time I had some slight notion of what it means to build and operate a railroad where blizzards grip the land and the thermometer drops to 60-degrees below zero,

I think Canadians still fail to realize the joint nature of the partnership which has resulted in such phenomenal developments in the Far North. Canadians have played a major role in the accomplishments of the American army.

Consider the bus service which has been put into operation on the Alaska Highway with notable success. Buses now travel the 1,600 miles between Dawson Creek and Fairbanks in 66 hours. Their headlights pierce forests where a short time ago the baleful eyes of the lynx and bobcat glistened.

Jean Louis Coudert, Catholic bishop of the Yukon, told me recently that he now can complete in 10 hours in a Greyhound bus on the Alaska Highway a journey which in 1942 required three weeks of rugged effort by canoe, pack train and on foot.

The men driving these buses are all Canadian civilians, recruited from Greyhound runs in western Canada, They are volunteers and have not seen their families for six or eight months. Most of them come from Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon and Vancouver.

Many times I have sat in the front of buses threading through the wilderness from Whitehorse to Fairbanks and listened to the drivers trading shop talk. They work in pairs and not one of these men has failed to be gripped by what General O'Connor calls "the spirit of the road."

To them the principal lure of their task is a chance to cooperate with their American allies in the winning of the war.

I have seen drivers stay at the wheel 16 out of 24 hours to get a busload of soldiers to an air base on schedule.

A hefty bus driver from Saskatoon proudly told me one day, “Took 39 Air Corps mechanics to Fairbanks last Tuesday. That’s the way to get this war over in a hurry. Wish I could do that every day.”

Having been associated with both Canadian soldiers and civilians in the North, what are my own observations as to their comparison with Americans! It is perilous to generalize, but I will rush in where angels fear to tread.

I think Canadians are more devoted to ceremony and stateliness than Americans. Most of us, for example, had never drunk toasts at banquets before until we learned to do so from our Canadian friends. We heard *God Save the King* played at the conclusion of many Canadian movie performances, an instance in which the American national anthem is seldom rendered.

Our soldiers at Whitehorse and Watson Lake were keenly disappointed not to find your Mounted Police constables wearing their famous scarlet tunics. “Oh, those are reserved for state occasions,” we were informed.

Just as Canadians are more addicted to stateliness and pomp than their American allies, so have I found them less exuberent. Their enthusiasms run just as deeply, I venture to say, but not quite so noisily.

On a bus ride between Fort Nelson and Watson Lake, where the Alaska Highway crosses the Continental Divide, I had an opportunity to compare the reactions of some American soldiers with those of a pair of R.C.A.F. corporals.

As the mountain vistas broke into view, the Americans were volubly enthusiastic. They exclaimed frequently, “Boy, what a peak!” was a common tribute. I glanced at our Canadian passengers. They were looking quietly out the window.

Finally one of them observed, “That’s all right, isn’t it?” This comment sounds unappreciative of the scenery of that majestic place, yet from the Canadian Airman’s expression I am convinced that he was as impressed as his American cousins.

The Commanding General of the Alaskan Wing of the U.S. Army Forces has had much association with the R.C.A.F. men. Men under his command fly the R.C.A.F. staging route between Edmonton and Northway.

I heard him observe one day that the Canadians, while sharing much of the mechanical and technical skill of the American aviators, were quieter and more perfunctory in the performance of their tasks.

I have served In the Canadian northwest and Alaska for more than a year-and-a-half and I am certain that the experience of our soldiers in your country will pay dividends in international good will for many generations.

The men who built the Alaska Highway have hailed from all our 48 States. Back to those States they Will take stories of the warm hospitality of Canada’s people and their voices will have a ring of admiration when they tell of the Mounties, trappers and bush pilots who have pioneered the North Country.

Americans Like Leacock

One frosty night in a tent on Kluane Lake in the Yukon Territory, I read several of Stephen Leacock's stories to a group of soldiers. Before we sought our sleeping bags, all of them had asked me for a list of Dr. Leacock's books. I later found out that they got them, too, and those of many other Canadian authors besides.

Informality is a hallmark of understanding. And relationships in the Far North between the armed forces of Canada and the United States have been as informal as a trapper's bivouac.

No example of this is more vivid in my mind than the night before the opening of the Alaska Highway. We were camped at Kluane Lake in a temporary C.C.C. building. Outside, the north wind bit at the frail structure with 27-below fangs.

Everyone had arrived except Major-General George R. Pearkes, the Victoria Cross wearer, who heads the Canadian Army's Pacific Command and Major General H.H. Ganong, who commands the Canadian Eighth Division. Their plane had been grounded by fog.

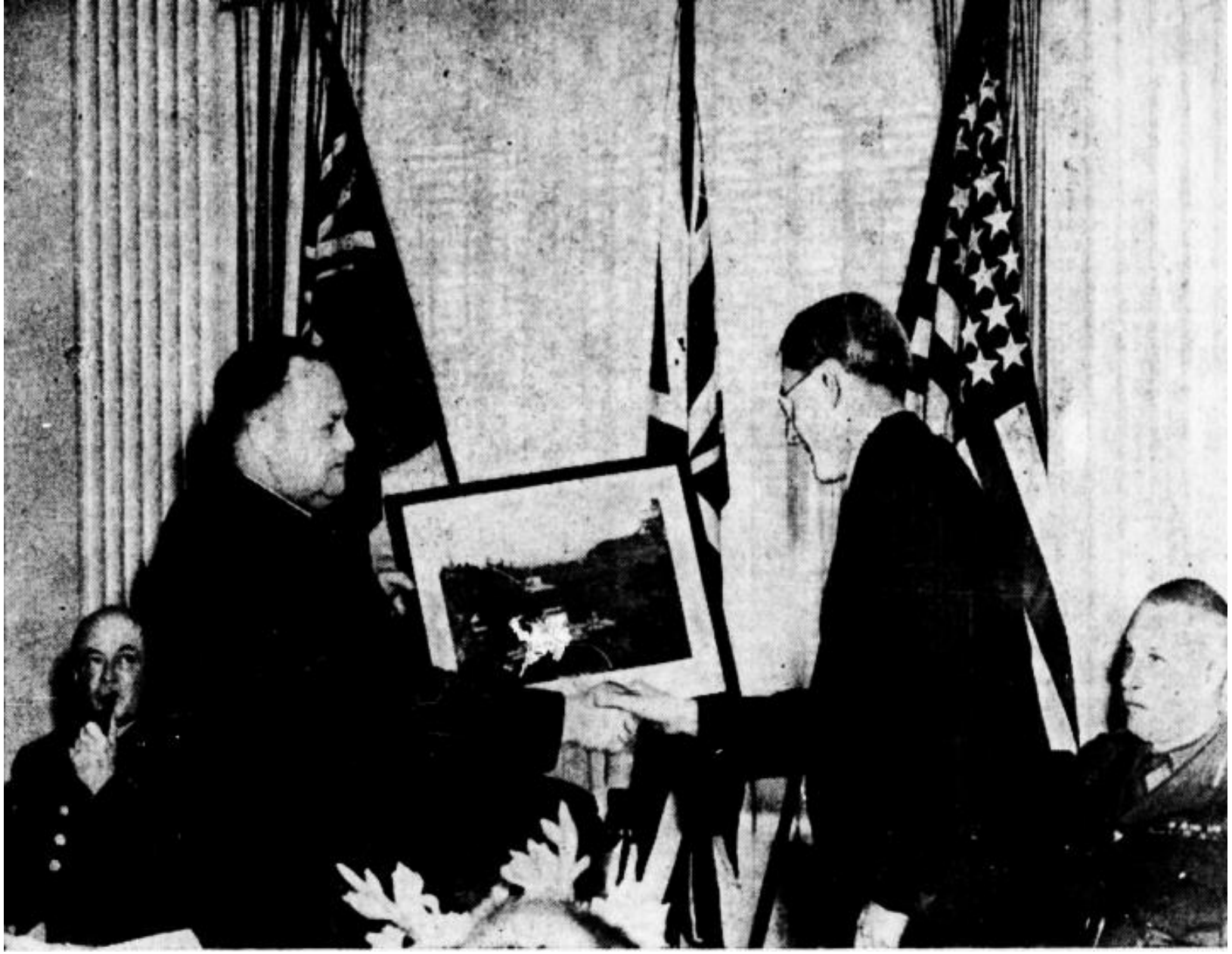
At midnight, with the aurora twisting across the sky, we heard a command car at the door. General O'Connor crawled out of his sleeping bag in his long woolen underwear. Colonel Bush followed suit. I got up next, similarly attired.

With a merry "Hello," Generals Pearkes and Ganong strode into the barracks their red lapels visible through the folds of their parkas. Ignoring our wraithlike appearance, they insisted on producing a nightcap.

"You chaps look quite nifty," said Captain Bob Sails, General Pearkes' aide-de-camp, as he surveyed our ankle-length union suits.

If I ever despair of American-Canadian understanding which I know I shall not, I will think of that underwear-bracketed scene in the distant Yukon and be permanently reassured.

Good Neighbors



Symbol of the Good Neighbor policy in Canada. Stanley S. McKeen, president of the Vancouver Board of Trade, presents a photograph of the entrance to Vancouver harbor to Raul R. Josselyn, retiring U.S. consul-general. At the left is Brigadier-General James A. O'Connor, builder of the Alaska Highway, and at the right sits Major-General George R. Pearkes, V.C., G.O.C. in C., Pacific Command.

One of the major construction achievements of WWII was the Alcan Highway, a little less than of half of which was built through British Columbia territory (a little less than 25% lies within Alaska). These photographs give some idea of the scenery and terrain through which the Alaska Highway passes within B.C.



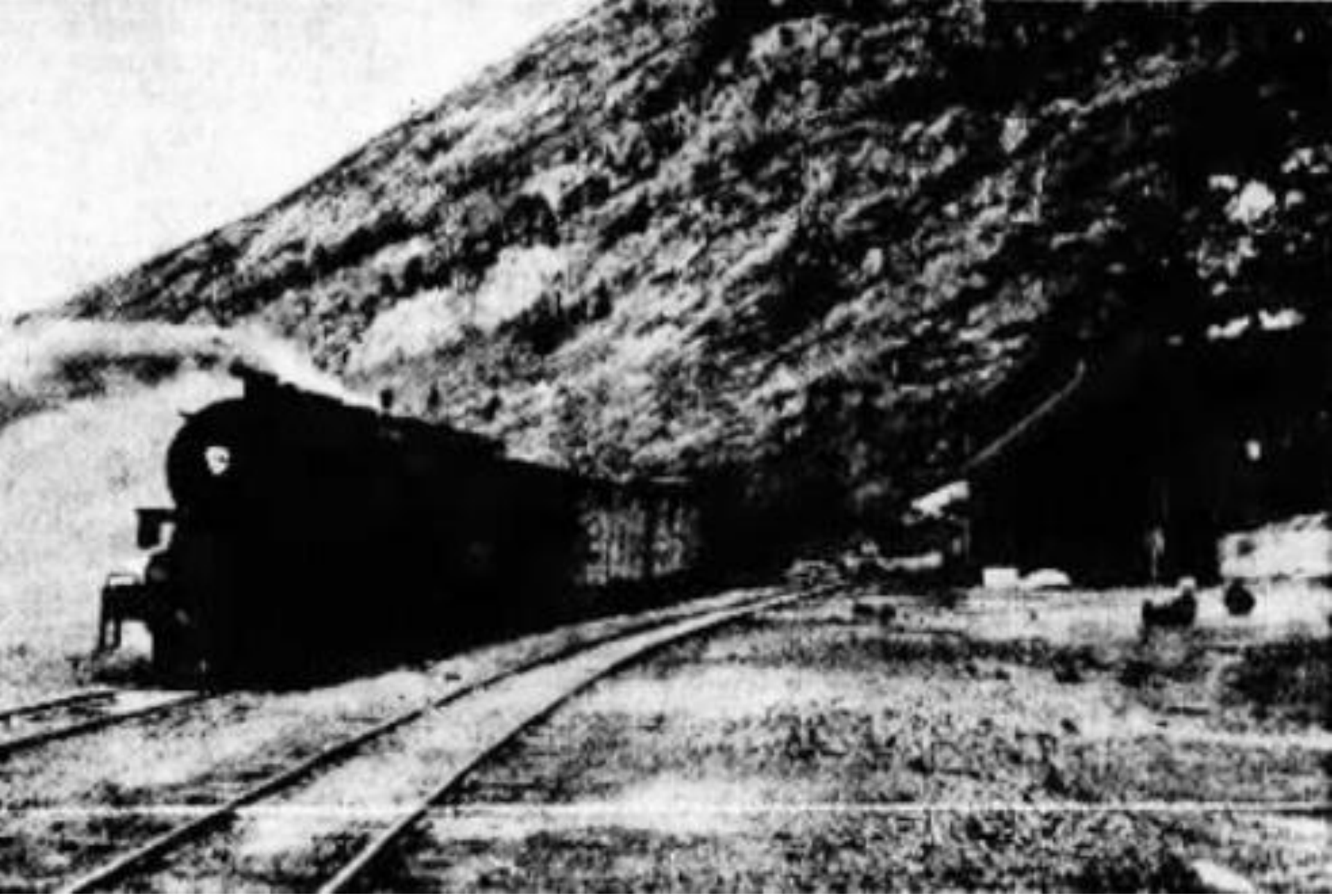
Along the rim of quiet beauty of Muncho Lake, in the B.C. uplands, the highest point of the international highway, about 4,000-feet above sea-level.



Summit Lake relay station of U.S. Army along the Alaskan Highway in the B.C. mountains. At this point the road crosses the divide separating the Atlantic and Pacific watershed systems.



At an Alaskan Highway relay station along the B.C. northern boundary, the highway's builder, Brigadier O'Connor, greets a husky visitor. Left-to-right, Lieut. Philip Aster of Cleveland, Ohio; Capt. Richard L, Neuberger, A.D.C. to Brigadier O'Connor (and author of this article) and Brigadier O'Connor.



Bennett, B.C., a White Pass & Yukon train, operated by U.S. soldiers, stops on its journey from Skagway to Whitehorse.

Comrades

Have a Coca-Cola = Going our way?



. . . or meeting a comrade in Northwest Canada

Friendship comes easy to allies devoted to common causes and borders without guns. *Have a "Coke"*, says the Yank sergeant to the Canadian mountie, and he's talking a lingo of friendship that both understand. That's the informal North American way to say *Greetings, friend.* It's the same informal way to put friends at ease in your own living room, too. From the Yukon to the Gulf, Coca-Cola stands for *the pause that refreshes,*—a symbol of a friendly way to get along with folks.



It's natural for popular names to acquire friendly abbreviations. That's why you hear Coca-Cola called "Coke".

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Part 9

Permanent Way



By Barney Mulvany, New Hazelton

The Vancouver Sun - February 5, 1944

So much has been said and written, and so little done, about the permanent Alaska Highway that the original and important idea has been lost track of. For this general oversight there are several good reasons, and some that are not so good.

Every road running north of the Canadian National Railway has been referred to as the “Alcan Road,” or some other such discordant and inappropriate term; but a casual glance at any fairly accurate map of northwestern British Columbia and Alaska would show that the route of a true Alaska Highway must run more westerly than northerly.

All these roads have been, and will continue to be, of material value during the war. Censorship is necessarily strict in regard to western development. However, if the war should terminate tomorrow, all the existing roads would revert within six months to their former status of trails and traplines. For on these roads the cost of maintenance would be forty percent of the original cost of construction and the fabulous sum would have to be expended annually. The cost of each one of these roads has been astronomical and all of them are littered with the wrecks of trucks abandoned because of soft bottom and poor road material.

In this regard there is, of course, much that may not be said. Any information about Western construction is rightfully muzzled by the censor and not so rightly throttled by the Eastern press and Eastern interests.

Much has been said about the great engineering feats accomplished by the locating engineers; but it is to the construction men and their engineers that all credit is due. One may look at every trail and road that runs north and west of the Canadian National right-of-way through the mountainous country which prevails and to the close observer one thing is obvious: the vast herds of caribou, now sadly depleted, followed the path of least resistance as they paddled their migratory trails along the trackless miles. They found the best fords, crossed the summits by the easiest passes and avoided carefully the mud and muskeg of all the eastern routes. In turn, the Indians followed the caribou and the trapper and prospector followed the Indians. The big pack trains followed and sometimes led the prospectors. The Northwest Mounted Police improved the trails.

When the reconnaissance engineers finally arrived at a location, they found themselves, in almost every case, within a few hundred yards of the trail of the Mounties. In the passes they found sometimes as many as twenty trails abreast, cut indelibly in soil and softer rocks by centuries of travel.

Even the Mounties, however, finally abandoned the northern route and came down the east fork of the Skeena and followed the Telegraph Trail to the Yukon. For many years it has been conceded that the eastern route was impassible for horses and cattle, but a fine country for dog teams during the seven months of the year in which the frost is on the ground. During the remaining five months, as Charlie Barrett says, and George Biernes corroborates, many of the muskeg flats would “mire a saddle blanket.”

Of the thousands of outfits which left Edmonton for the Yukon in 1898, ‘99 and 1900, the only horse outfits that made the trip in a single year were those that left Liard and followed the Stikine River to Telegraph Creek or Glenora. A few outfits which had dogs shot their horses and succeeded in getting through that way, destitute and barely alive!

Even the trip from Hazelton was at that time fraught with difficulties, as the Indians went to a lot of trouble to misguide all outfits in order to take them away from the beaver country of the Nass and Stikine. Then, when the Yukon Telegraph line was built from Hazelton to Telegraph Creek, the notorious outlaw, Simon Gun-a-noot and his partner, Peter Hi-ma-dam, “guided” the right-of-way crews away from the best and shortest route. The location running northwesterly from Hazelton, and that running southeasterly from Telegraph Creek, overlapped but were eighty miles apart. Charlie Barrett was sent from Telegraph Creek to Hazelton in the winter to tie in the two ends.

However, Hazelton, being the most westerly and northerly point on the Canadian National, is undoubtedly the best point of departure. By following the Kispiox Valley, as one of the greatest pioneers and pathfinders of the North had finally done in the location of the old Collins Telegraph Line, which was finally abandoned when the “Great Eastern” successfully laid the Atlantic Cable, Naas water may be reached over a low summit with easy construction.

Colonel Bulkley, in-charge of the location of that historic telegraph line, had tried all the eastern routes and left his blazes everywhere. He abandoned the route north from Fort St. James, although he built the Bulkley House, which still stands at the head of Takla Lake. Parties under him cruised the routes north of Takla Lake and abandoned them, as their report showed there were miles of terrain so soft that a telegraph pole would not stand-up after being set.

He withdrew from Takla, went to Hazelton and made a good location from Hazelton to Teslin Lake via Telegraph Creek, getting his supplies by canoe up the Skeena and Stikine Rivers. His location went up the Kispiox River to the Naas; over the Naas Summit to Stikine water; across the Stikine and to Teslin Lake; thence to the Hootalinqua and down the Hootalinqua to the Yukon.

Work was stopped when the Atlantic Cable was a proved success, but it is interesting to know that some of the parties out on location were still out a year after all work had been ordered to stop, as they were scattered from Telegraph Creek to the Lower Yukon. At the same time, the Russians were building a telegraph line across Siberia, with the intention of spanning the sixty-mile Bering Strait by cable and connecting with the parties working in Alaska.

It is evident, therefore, that considerable investigation was made before Colonel Bulkley chose the Hazelton route and undertook his extensive project and in 1899, a railroad survey was made from Telegraph Creek to the Yukon over the same route described.

So let the East have all the roads that are necessary for the government of the vast territory east of the McKenzie River; but an Alaska Highway is a distinctly western road, a continuation of Road 109 from Mexico, through California, Oregon and Washington. It must go through British Columbia by the shortest route to Alaska, on solid bottom and as close as possible to the navigable rivers and salt-water inlets which penetrate far into the interior from the deeply indented coastline of British Columbia and Alaska, The Alaska Highway must be a western road.

Geological and forestry reports testify to the wealth of natural resources along this route. Timber, oil, coal and all minerals abound and the agricultural land along the route is adequate to supply a large part of the demand for food that would arise. This is the route originally chosen by Representative Warren G. Magnusson of Washington and by many prominent Alaskans who, it would appear, should be entitled to some voice in the matter of location.

The fact is that this route offers the only PERMANENT road to Alaska. It would lead to the development of the vast resources of British Columbia; the big rivers would be crossed at their sources by permanent structures which would be unaffected by the spring run-off of snow water. Truly a Roman Road it would be, built for all time, with no adverse conditions that do not also exist on all other suggested or attempted routes and with many advantages which the other routes do not offer.

This road should never leave British Columbia, from the time it enters the province at Bellingham until it crosses the Alaska boundary.



The beginning of a permanent bridge on the Alaska Highway



The Whitehorse Star

CIRCULATING THROUGHOUT THE YUKON TERRITORY

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MAKING THE ALASKA HIGHWAY A MAIN ARTERY IN HIGHWAYS SYSTEM ON THIS CONTINENT—SUGGESTION AND A CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN BUSINESS ACUMEN.

AN EDITORIAL.

The Whitehorse Star - September 14, 1945

For sometime past, much activity has been evinced in the ultimate disposition of the Alaska Highway, particularly south of the border, and this activity has been greatly accelerated in recent months.

As a result there has been some confusion of thought and a certain amount of distortion of facts concerning the same. Members of U.S. Senate Committees, representatives of various Chambers of Commerce, airlines, automobile associations, transportation companies and others vitally interested in the subject have visited Whitehorse in recent months and others are still doing so for the express purpose of securing at first-hand accurate data upon which to formulate their own decisions and to utilize their influence accordingly.

Much of the discussion of late has been relative to the location of a route south of Whitehorse to connect with the Alaska Highway. This is a matter upon which a decision will have to be arrived at in the near future notwithstanding the conflicting opinions at present held concerning the same.

A still more important matter, however, is the future of the Alaska Highway itself. This is of paramount importance. This is a matter in which both Canada and the United States are vitally interested involving as it does the question of defence which, is still, and will always remain, a matter of major importance notwithstanding what may be stated to the contrary. So far Canada has shown little or no disposition to furnish any definite information on the subject. What is transpiring behind the scenes at the present time is a closed book as far as the public is concerned.

Canada’s Position

Under the terms of the original agreement the United States Government has undertaken to hand-over that portion of the Alaska Highway lying within Canadian borders six months after the end of the war. The exact date from which such period is to be computed has yet to be announced. What then happens? This remains to be seen. In the absence of any definite information speculation is thereby occasioning not a little confusion in the public mind.

Apparently, the opinion is held generally throughout the United States that when the transfer of the highway has been made the Canadian government will be prepared to expend large amounts of money both for completion of its construction and for its future maintenance. There are those who think otherwise, and it must be confessed that it is more than likely that their contentions are based upon a more or less accurate knowledge of Canadian affairs and Canadian history.

Up to the present, Canada has been considered, and in fact still is, a young country with a sparse population. Not withstandiing that the area of Canada is over 600,000 square-miles larger than the continental U.S., she has only a population of approximately 11,500,000 (1941) as compared with that of the great republic to the south of 132,000,000 (1940), or thereabouts. Canada's total revenue in 1937 was approximately $455,000,000 and in 1941 roughly $872,000,000, whilst that of the U.S.A. in 1942 was approximately $22,300,000,000 and in 1943 $41,186,000,000.

Today, like all other members of the United Nations, Canada is faced with many major problems as a direct result of the war, which will entail a heavy drain upon her national revenue for some years to come. Due to their urgency, these problems will, as a matter of course, have priority over all those of lesser importance no matter how essential these latter may appear to be.

During the next few years much of our national revenue will be devoted to war purposes, to donations made to devastated European countries and by way of long-term credits to enable them to rehabilitate themselves in the commercial world. In so doing Canada will likewise be afforded an opportunity to re-build and extend her export trade which is her veritable life blood.

In placing the cards on the table at this time and furnishing a few salient facts we are motivated simply and solely with the object of presenting a true picture of Canada's present position, insofar as we are able to do so with the time and space at our disposal for the benefit and edification of those not already conversant with the same. We have no other purpose to serve and certainly no ulterior motives to hide. We are convinced that the Alaska Highway must always be regarded as a very important part of any defence scheme designed for this continent and the best insurance against contingencies. We therefore stand ready to assist in any and every movement tending toward making the Alaska Highway a vital link, which is its destiny in the great chain of arterial highways which will one day traverse this whole continent.

A Little Debunking

It is frequently asserted that the construction of the Alaska Highway has cost one-hundred million dollars to construct. This may be true in part, but like all half-truths it almost invariably tends to create an erroneous impression in the public mind. Particularly does this seem to be the case concerning the “gift” of the highway to Canada. What are the salient facts in a nut-shell?

In the first place, this highway was conceived and its construction later carried-out by the U.S. War Department as an emergency defence measure. Actual construction in the first instance was carried-out by U.S. Army engineers to be followed later by U.S. contractors and thousands of U.S. labourers, all of whom were transported north at U.S. Government expense and from nearly all States in the Union. The rate of wages paid for such labour was far in excess of the Canadian scale prevailing at the time.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that a large part of the highway lies in Alaska and therefore within United States Territory. But, undoubtedly, the most important point to be emphasized is the fact that the major part of the total expense incurred has long since been returned to the United States and for all we know is still in circulation there. For obvious reasons we are unable to quote any figures to substantiate our contention, but it is a fair assumption to suggest that in all probability not more than twenty per cent of the total cost of the undertaking remains in Canada. It may well be less.

These facts are cited in order to keep the records straight and more particularly to refute any erroneous impression, which may still prevail throughout the United States, that the transfer of the highway to Canada, if such takes place, represents a gift valued at one-hundred million dollars. As a matter-of-fact, the undertaking, having been carried out by the U.S. Government for war purposes, it is natural to assume that the cost of same will appear in the U.S. War Department as a necessary liability justifiably incurred in the circumstances and, as such, will be included in all its other war liabilities to be written-off eventually as the United States contribution toward the cost of the war.

As Matters Now Stand

Reviewing the present situation in the light of what is above stated, it would seem to indicate that there is not much likelyhood of Canada being in a position to make large expenditures upon the Alaska Highway for some time to come due to her already heavy commitments. Under existing circumstances the maintenance of the highway is too great a financial burden for Canada to assume and may be likened to presenting the White House to a man and expecting him to be able to operate it on an income of a few hundred dollars-a-month. It simply can't be done.

There is another aspect of the matter which should not be overlooked: the history of Canada, like that of the United States, discloses that settlement and development of commerce in the early days originated on the Atlantic seaboard and for very obvious reasons. And even at this late date, as far as Canada is concerned, the east still dominates the west insofar as commerce and industry are concerned, much to the chagrin of all Westerners.

In a nutshell, this has been the industrial history af Canada up to and including the present time; a condition which recalls to mind a quotation from Rudyard Kipling: “Oh, East is East, and West is West and never the twain shall meet.” Any apathy,. therefore, on the part of the Canadian Government, if such there be, is no doubt due, at least in part, to this fact.

The Challenge

In the light of the above and the facts herein adduced, the most logical course to pursue regarding the Alaska Highway would appear to be for the government of the United States to secure a long-term lease of the same and then go ahead and complete and maintain the same with the proviso that citizens of both countries have equal rights and privileges over the same. Other details of such a lease could easily be mutually agreed upon.

There is evidence that overtures are now being made with a view to having the Alaska Highway placed wholly within United States territory. This, it is proposed to accomplish, by the transfer of certain U.S. territory adjacent to other parts of Canada in exchange for territory in British Columbia and the Yukon through which the highway runs. This is neither necessary nor desirable. The construction of the highway in the first instance was undertaken and carried-out by mutual agreement and we see no reason why its maintenance should not be upon a similar mutual arrangement.

In any event, it is obvious that the great majority of those traversing the Alaska Highway will be of United States citizenship. This would imply that the major part of the maintenance charge will devolve upon the United States government as a matter of course as well as a matter of equity. It is on this assumption the suggestion is here made of a lease in lieu of transfer of territory.

Here is a challenge to the business acumen of our good friends and neighbours in the United States as well as to their most commendable Good Neighbour policy. It is put forward in good faith and in the belief that it is the most logical course to pursue, having due regard to the best interests of all concerned. It entails an expenditure of public funds which will be fully justified by reason of the great public service it can be made to render. Moreover, there is no knowing how valuable the indirect benefits which will be derived in the operation of the highway in the years ahead. In the immediate future there is not a transportation company operating to or in the north which will not be directly benefitted. - H.E.M.

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

By Duncan W. Johnson, Ottawa

(ca. 1945)

THE war has brought many changes, many of them so startling, that it is almost impossible to conceive their magnitude and scope. The building of the Alaska Highway is, perhaps, one of the finest, and most outstanding examples of accomplishment and change of this generations.

By a mutual agreement between Canada and the United States the task of building the Alaska Highway was placed in the hands of the American Army. As if by magic overnight the whole of the great Lone Land situated between Dawson City and Fairbanks, Alaska, became the scene of an activity such as this continent never experienced before.

Men, equipment, supplies, poured in one long ceaseless stream over the Roof of the World into the great primeval wilderness of the Great Lone North Land, to begin the building of the Alaska Highway as a war effort, and a challenge to the cunning Jap, who had himself planned to use this route as a Line of penetration into Southern Canada and the United States. To appreciate the war value of this great undertaking, one has to understand the general topography of Alaska and its sister areas of Canada.

Alaska is really a great thumb—like peninsula thrusting out of the North-Eastern corner of North America towards Soviet Siberia. Two strips of Alaska Territory stretch like narrow fingers South-Eastward and North-Westward. The South-Eastern strip runs down what would otherwise be Canadian Coast to a point about 600 miles from Seattle, Washington, while the South-Eastern extends out into the North Pacific, forming the long narrow Alaska Peninsula, that links up a chain called the Aleution Islands. Altu, the westermost of these Aleution Islands, is less than 800 miles from Japan's Northern Islands, the Kuriles. This area of the great North Land has been regarded, both by the Russians and the Japs, as penetration points into the heart of the North American, particularly so by Japan, who, for a quarter a century or more, looked with longing eyes, on the vast treasure house of resources possessed by this magic land up at the Top of the World.

The stratagey of war changed overnight this great Lone Land into a hive of indescribable activity, completely changing in the space of a few months the whole outlook of this great area, which both the United States and Canada planned someday would be properly opened up for settlement and development.

And so war, with its miracle like hand forced the hands of the two great friendly nations, Canada and the United States, to speedy action. The great enemy Japan, with her foul designs, must be checkmated and matched. The Northern Route by air was the quickest route to strike the first telling blows; the lone route via Alaska and the Aleutions, was the quickest for actual transport of Army supplies and men. And so overnight it was agreed by the two Governments that the United States Army would be empowered to build a great inland Highway Route from Dawson City to Fairbanks, Alaska, taking full advantage of all the penetration routes hitherto created by both Governments, connecting with the rail and highway routes of Southern Canada and the United States, and opening to the world a Wonder Road of penetration into the great hitherto unknown land of resources and of Scenic Wonders that, to the tourist, will in future years spell glorious holiday periods in a land of romance, scenic beauty and resource, in a land full of stories and the "glamour of one of the greatest gold rushes in the history of the world".

"There's a land where mountains are nameless,
And the rivers all run God knows where.
There are lives that are erring and aimless,
And death that hangs just by a hair;
There are hardships that nobody reckons,
There are valleys, unpeopled and still,
There's a land, Oh, it beckons and beckons
And I want to go back and I will."

This expresses Robert Service's idea of the great land at The Roof of the World. In the past this verse has been read by tens of thousands with the thought—"Wouldn't I love to go there?", but it was only a thought—a heart's desire expressed that seemed so remotely impossible of satisfaction that it was dismissed as one of the things impossible.

To-day the new Alaska Highway has changed the situation regarding penetration into this Northern Land, and many a tourist will, in the future, find that the lure of the North will act on them the same as it has on the thousands who have penetrated into Yukon and Alaska, for this land weaves a spell around you, for, "It beckons and beckons, and beckons" once you have partaken of her bounties

Alaska and the Canadian Yukon have long range importance for peacetime, and as the years unfold great things will happen there. They are rich frontier territories undeveloped and thinly settled as yet: Here a thousand Switzerlands await the Tourist, the Scenic lover, the Sportsman and holiday explorer.

A fact worthy of note is the fact in South Eastern Alaska, the panhandle stretching down the Pacific the average temperature in January is about the same as that of Centrai Maryland, Southern Illinois and Southern Kansas. The Japanese Current acts upon this area the same as the Gulf Stream does in the North Atlantic.

Here we find the world's greatest fishing grounds, a wealth of fur bearing animals of many types, and mineral resources of many varied types. In fact this magic land at The Top of the World has all the resources necessary to make her one of the most prosperous areas in the North American Continent, and this applies to the Yukon as well as Alaska itself, both of which territories are the beneficiaries of the Alaska Highway. In addition there is practically every known commercial metal to be found there, as well as a great untapped reservoir of forest wealth and oil resource.

The Highway begins at Dawson Creek, British Columbia and runs Northwest to Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory, and from there runs to Boundary where it crosses into Alaska, terminating at Fairbanks, Alaska. This road is 1,681 miles long, and was built by 10,000 American Soldiers and 2,000 civilians at a rate of 8 miles a day. In its construction 200 bridges had to be built; one bridge over the Peace River, which the American Government gave as a gift outright to Canada, costing $1,500,000. 1,200 miles of this road lies within Canada, and at the conclusion of the war will be handed over to Canada by the United States Government as her possession, having been built entirely at the expense of the United States.

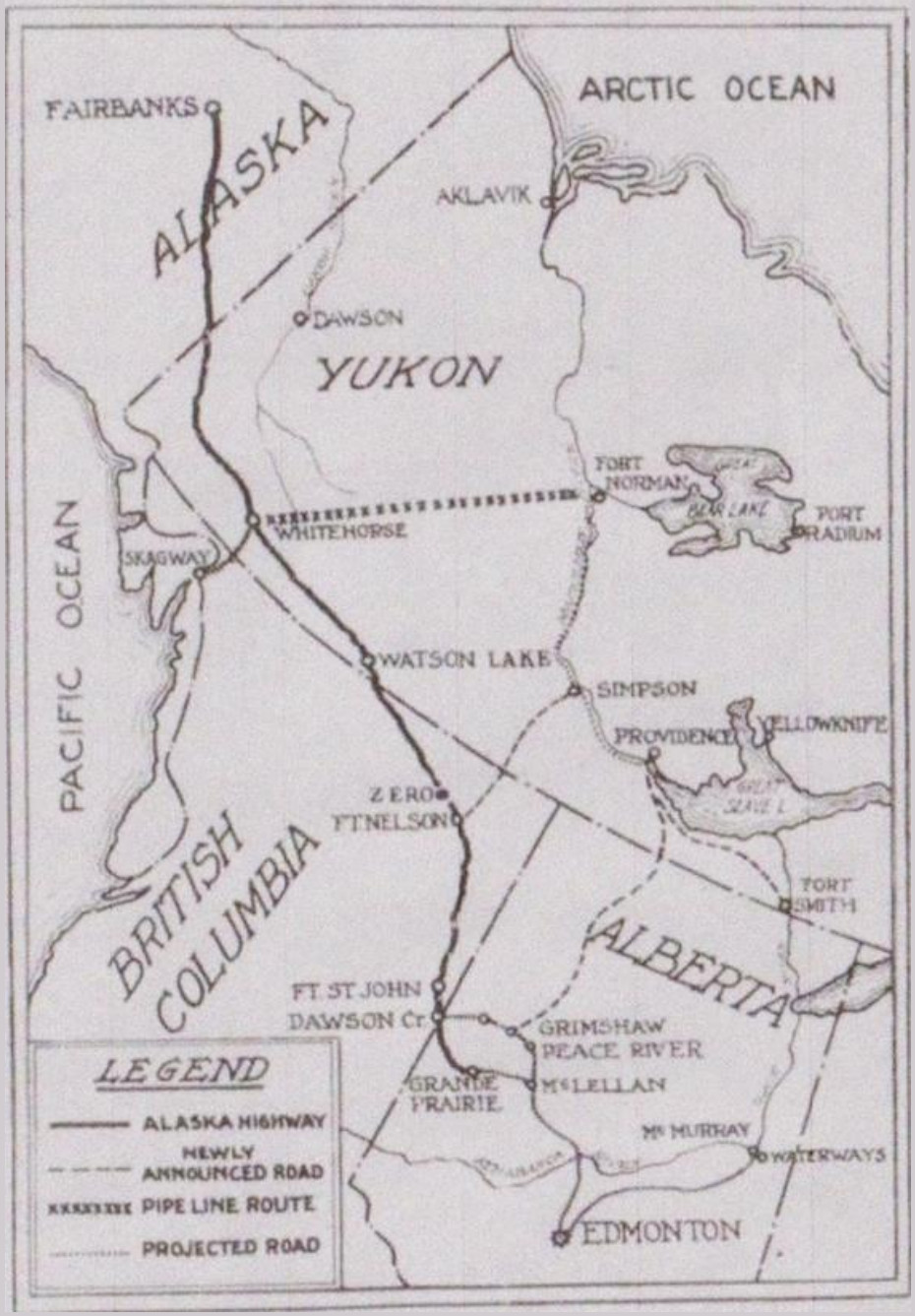
The Tourist or traveller journeying over this road from Whitehorse towards Dawson Creek will revive in memory episodes of the Dawson Trail, for this Road is a glamorous road teeming with the stories of red-blooded men, who fought their way over the Chilcort Pass into the land of the Klondyke, there to make their fortunes, or perish, or live to become, and many have, good citizens of the Land at the Roof of the World, holding dear and loving forever the land for which they gave so much.

John Burrough's, the famous naturalist and explorer, thus describes the lands of the Alaska Highway:

"Here are scenes such as artists try in vain to paint, and travellers to describe, towering snow-cloud peaks far ahead of us rearing behind dark blue and purple ranges, fold on fold, and all aflame with the setting sun. The solid earth becomes spiritual and transcendent."

Beloved John Muir, another scientist and naturalist, passed over this well-beloved area also. Here on every hand he saw and wrote of the great eternal design's of the Great Master which here he found displayed in so many moods. His was the love for the mountain heights and snow-kissed and cloud-tipped peaks where as he writes he saw God; the Great Teacher. He describes the magic witchery of an Alaskan or Yukon Sunrise where he saw daylight creep down the sides of the mountains, changing at every moment, now a glowing crimson crowning the peak above, then a gleaming streak of light coming down the mountain to man, lighting in its soft and mellow light the dark recesses of the mountain side at the Command of the Master of Light, revealing here a gem of beauty, there a stupendous cliff gleaming in the crimson glory like a living burning thing, and then he relates :—"Day was born, and in its birth all the glory of sky, and mountain height, and glittering lakes and sylvan pools and cloud kissed and snow tipped mountain peak was revealed, and he, John Muir, in reverence cried aloud:—"God is love and we have met God this morning!" And to all those who in the years to come, journey over the Alaska Highway will come immemorable experiences, such as this true experience of one who passed that way long ago.

Words fail to describe the Lands of the Alaska Highway, pen cannot, and so, to you we bring this Souvenir Book, with its wealth of scenic pictures, inspired by the thought that in scanning same, you may collect something of the glamour and romance and the thrill of this newly opened territory, the great wonderland at the Roof of the World, first penetrated by the trapper, the explorer, the prospector, the adventurer and the settler, who made the penetration into the wilds and found there a land worthy to be called Home.

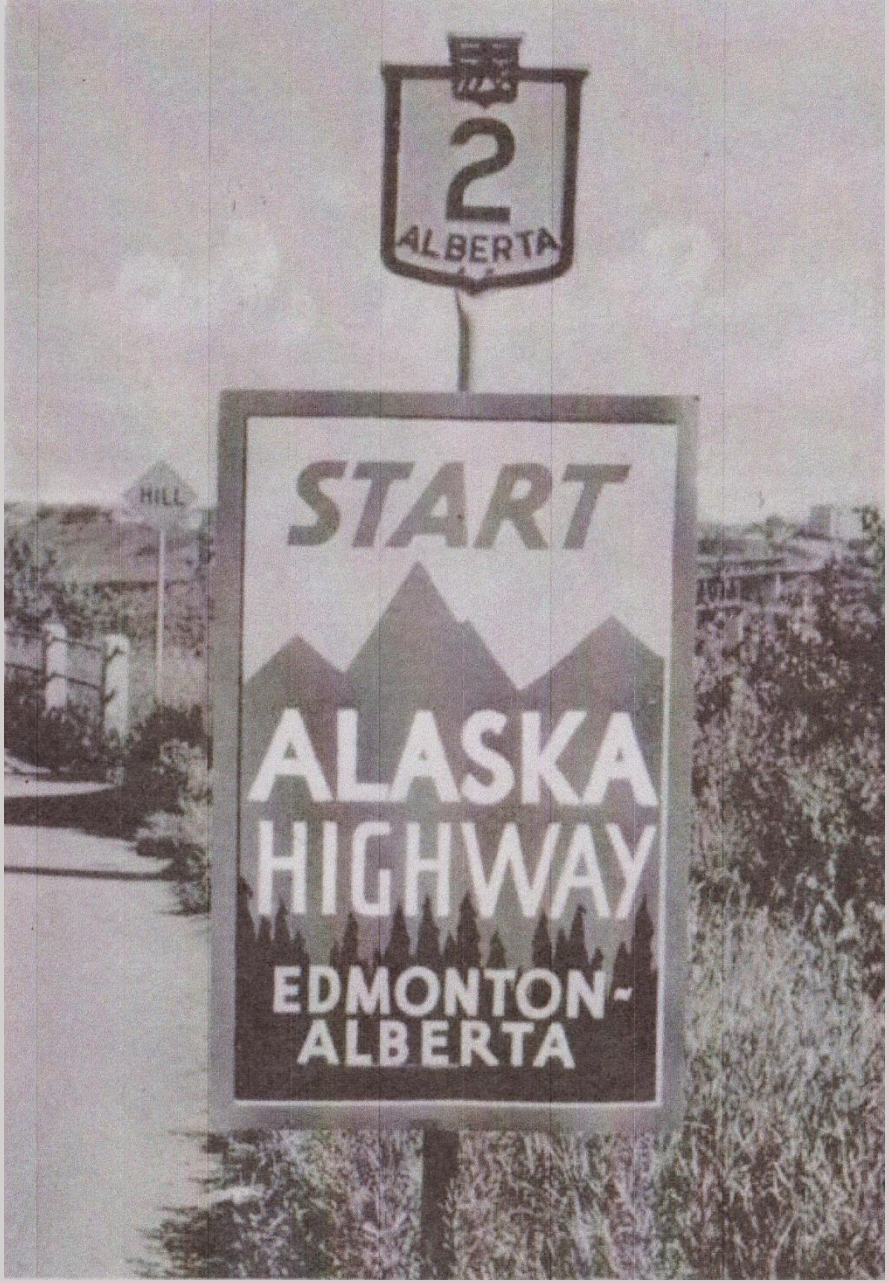


Map of the Alaska Highway



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Alaska Highway showing the valley filled to reduce the grade



Road sign just outside Edmonton Indicating the start of the Alaska Highway on Route 2



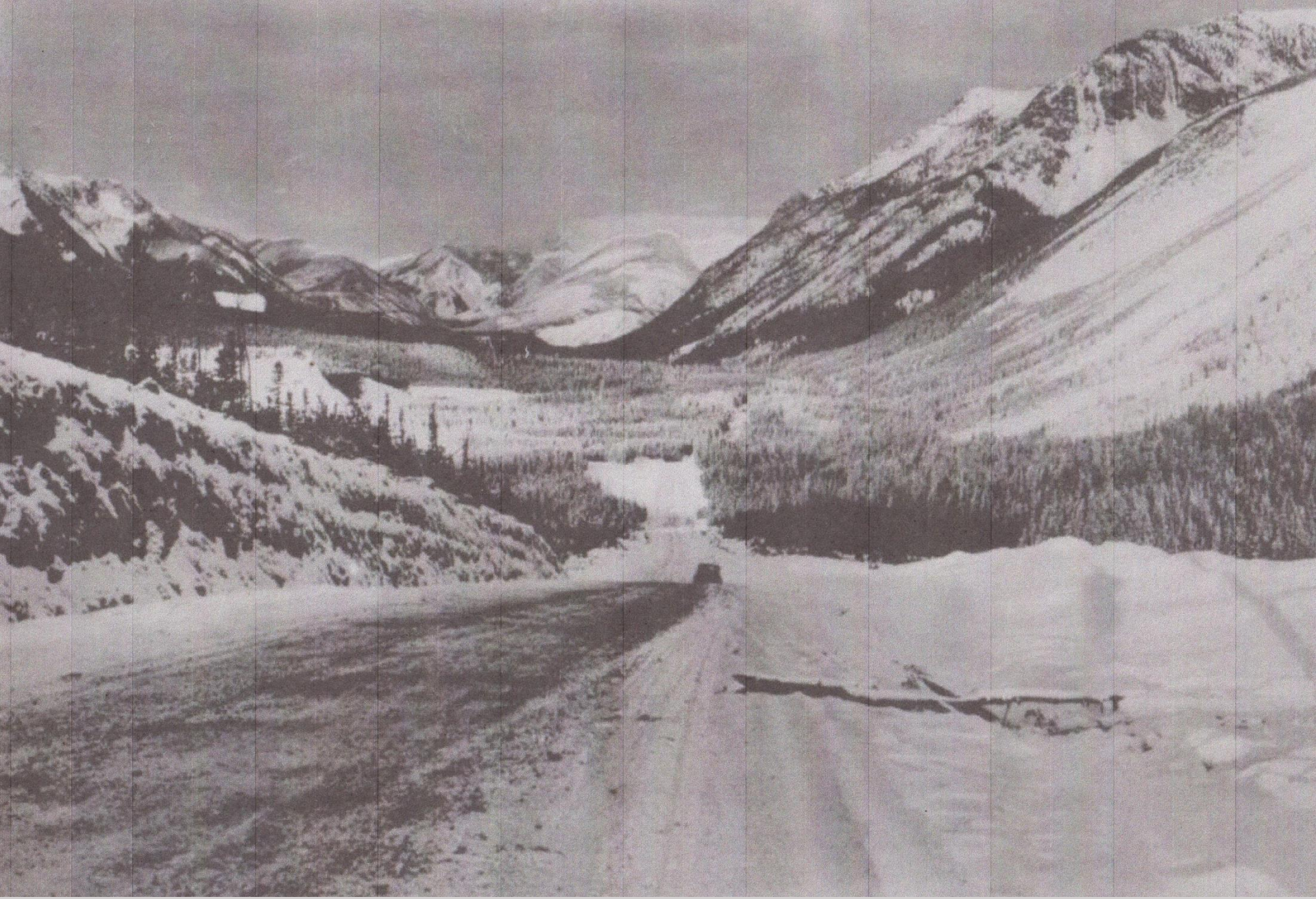
The Alaska Highway – an achievement through the cooperation of Canada and the United States



Aerial shot showing the country
as seen along the Alaska Highway



Typical terrain in the Northern section of the Alaska Highway



Trout River Valley, B.C., on the Alaska Highway



“Charlie” MacDonald – Pioneer along the highway



760

Trapped Lynx at mile “67”



Gigantic scenery on the Alaska Highway



A supply base along the Alaska Highway



The Alaska Highway passing through an old-time hamlet



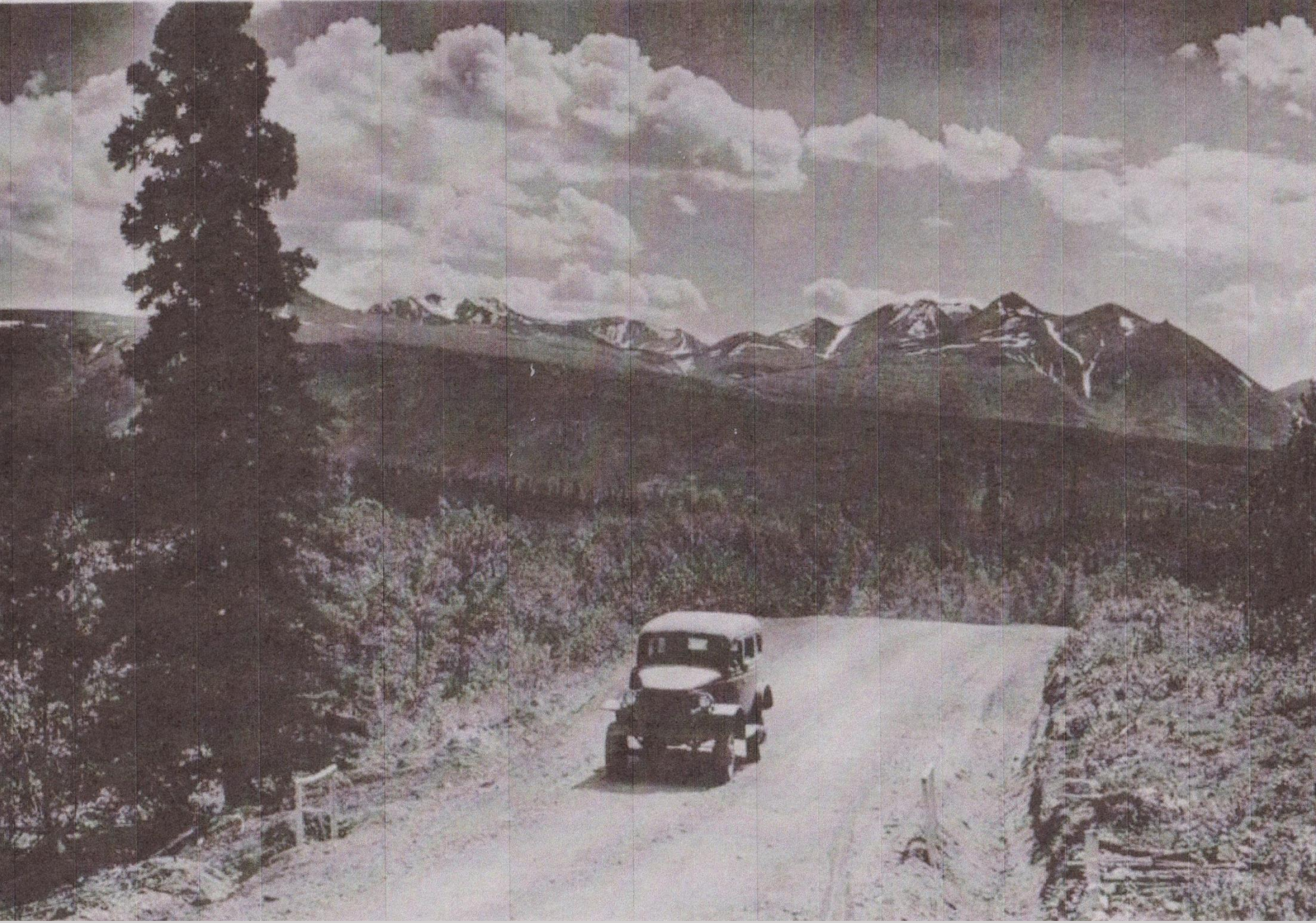
Alaska Highway crossing Sikanni Chief River



Magnificent mountain scenery along the Alaska Highway



Toad River Valley west of Ft. Nelson, B.C.,
on the Alaska Highway



On the Alaska Highway through Canada's wilderness



Through Canada’s wilderness on the Alaska Highway



On the Alaska Highway

Part 10

The Haines Lateral

A Coast-to-Interior Road(?)

The Alaskan.
Sitka, Alaska Territory
November 21, 1891

Can a Road be Built From the Coast Into the Interior?

As a constant observer of events in Alaska for seven years past, the question whether a wagon road could be built from some point on the coast into the interior of the territory has often sprung-up in the writer's mind and it is only now, that the preliminary reports have come to our knowledge of the expedition under the leadership of Lieut. Frederick Schwatka and, on the other hand, that of Lieut. E.J. Glave, each of which parties crossed the coast range at a different initial point, that an idea of the question can be formed more definitely. Both explorers report that they have met with a rich mineral country between the coast and the left bank of the Yukon River, the affluents of which, as is already well known, are pregnant with gold dust of a remarkably fine quality.

The discoveries of Schwatka and Glave, taken in connection with Russell's explorations during the past two summers and also those of Dawson and Ogilvie, respectively four and three years ago, to the boarders of the recently visited country, dissolve at last the old theory that a great ice belt extends from the coast ranges to the Arctic Circle. Schwatka has definitely fixed the actual limit of the belt as forty miles beyond these ranges; the country to the northward of that line being in several months of the year quite free from ice and snow. The warmest weather experienced during his trip being 87-degrees and no frost was encountered till Copper River was reached in the middle of September.

Speaking of the immense number of geological specimens which the party collected, Schwatka says: "One specimen in particular will without doubt be the means of opening-up a large section of new country. It is a large piece of pure native copper that was torn-off a flint rock at the great canyon, gone through at the risk of their lives."

“The specimen contains 97 per cent of pure copper and is to be taken to a party of capitalists in New York, who will, it is believed, at once start to develop what Schwatka declares is the richest copper mine in the world. It is comparatively easy of access and there is a good watercourse all the way to the ocean from the deposit of ore.”

Glave reports from Pyramid Harbor in October last, “Altogether we had a most successful journey, for we covered a lot of new territory hitherto unexplored. I have mapped-out quite an interesting section of land and we experienced all the usual incidents, strange and exciting, of a journey through a wild country.”

“Our experiment with pack horses is destined to play an important part in Alaskan history. It proves a possible transport where none before existed, except the Indian carrier, a mode of conveyance upon which the solid development of the country could not be made. “

“The United States and the Dominion Governments can now follow our footsteps and survey the land they claim; they can go in and fill in the big blank chart with the lakes and streams belonging there.”

From Schwatka’s as well as Glave’s report, it will therefore be seen that the practicability of roads leading into the interior has not been barred-out by Nature and if the route followed by Glave were only within the limits of U.S. territory, the highway opened-up by him from the Chilcat River to the northwest would be more preferable than the one pointed out by Schwatka, by way of the Copper River, the entrance of which is some 500 miles from Sitka, only to be reached through an open sea.

The Glave Route being more easy of access, as it can be approached from the protected waters of the Inside Passage, it will doubt become incumbent upon our government, in the near future, to make arrangements with that of Canada to allow the road to pass through its territory, as the American strip of land in that section of Alaska only covers 30 nautical miles from the summit of the mountains which extend in a direction parallel to the coast, as provided by Sec. 2, Art. 4 of the convention between Great Britain and Russia, signed at St. Petersburg, February 16-28, 1825, which treaty is still binding upon the United States at the present-day.

Should that highway be opened as a result of the mining enterprise which is bound to gradually develop in Central Alaska, great benefits will be reaped therefore by Juneau, our sister city, as it is lying on the direct route between Puget Sound and the Chilcat River, or Pyramid Harbor, as the landing place of the steamers at that point is named and it is thought most advisable for the residents of the mining metropolis not to lose sight of the advantages which it may gain from its proximity to the entrance of the first road possibly to be built at the Government's expense in this territory.

Relieving the Strain

The *Haines Lateral Road* (a/k/a "Haines-Champagne Road" or "Haines cut-off") was built to relieve the transportation strain on the narrow-gauge White Pass & Yukon Railroad, which connects Skagway, AK, with White-horse, Y.T. At the time construction was commenced, the W.P.&Y. was being used to transport supplies and equipment to the Whitehorse sect-ion of the Alcan Highway and serious delays were being encountered in maintaining deliveries, on schedule, at a time when they were vitally need-ed.

The Haines Lateral was constructed under a contract let directly by the U.S. War Department to the firm of Foley Bros., Inc., and Rohl-Connolly Co. The pioneer trail over which the Haines Road was constructed was built principally by troops of the 340th Engineers at a cost of $1,694,000. Before the War Department contractor was employed to build the road, PRA contractors performed grading and bridge construction work at a cost of $1,610,000. The total cost of constructing the Haines Lateral Road, including the pioneer trail, was $12,216,000.

Route Description

The Haines Lateral Road begins at tidewater of Lynn Canal in the town of Haines, AK, and extends northwesterly 154 miles across the southwestern part of Alaska, B.C., and the Y.T, in Canada, where it joins the Alcan Highway 98 miles west of Whitehorse and 502 miles southeast of Fairbanks, Alaska.

The highway follows the northeast bank of the Chilkat River for 24 miles, thence up the Klehini River to mile 50, reaching an elevation of 1,613-feet. At this point, the highway enters Chilkat Pass, traversing steep mountain slopes subject to slides. The grade increases to mile 57, elevation 3,140, where the road descends for two miles into Clear Creek Valley. The highway reaches the summit at mile 63, elevation 3,416-feet, traversing heavy grades from mile 59. From the summit, the road descends by easy grades, passing the southern edge of Mosquito Flats, crossing the Nadahini River at mile 67.1 and following its left bank to Mule Creek, crossing at mile 72. At mile 74 the road passes over a gravel moraine which forms the divide between the Chilkat and Tatshenshini Rivers and continues through relatively flat country to mile 78. From this location, it traverses the slopes of Mount Mansfield and rises to an elevation of 3,183-feet at mile 94, thence to an elevation of 2,390-feet to cross the Takhanne River at mile 99, approximately six miles east of Dalton Post.

From Takhanne River, the road rises on heavy grades to an elevation of 2,949-feet to mile 101, thence over rolling country along the east-side of the Unihini River Valley to Unihini Crossing at milepost 113.5. The road continues northerly over level wooded country to reach a point opposite the southern tip of Dezadeash Lake at mile 120, thence along the west shore of Dezadeash Lake to milepost 131 where it turns northwesterly, passing through a region of low glacial moraines and crossing Kathleen River at mile 138.2 and Quill Creek at mile 145.7. The highway descends on low grades from this point into the Dezadeash River Valley, joining the Alcan Highway at a point approximately 98 miles west of Whitehorse, Y.T.

The Haines lateral road was built to the same standards as the Alcan Highway.

At the location where the Haines Lateral Road crossed the Dezadeash River was an Alcan Highway construction camp which had been established by a civilian contractor; Haas-Royce-Johnson. It was called "Camp 108" since, at that time, it was 108 miles from Whitehorse. That camp would become the community of Haines Junction.

Route Construction

(Dec. 1942 – Nov. 1943)

PRA contractors were assigned to the construction of the Haines Lateral Road during the winter of 1942-43 after a preliminary survey of the best possible route for the highway had been made by PRA Engineers.

A study was made during the winter of 1942-43 by Col. Theodore Wyman, Jr., Division Engineer, Northwest Service Command, who had overall jurisdiction for the War Department, at that time, for the construction of both the Alcan Highway, the Haines Lateral Road and collateral engineering projects in Northwest Canada. As a result of this study, Colonel Wyman concluded that PRA contractors would be unable to complete both the Alcan Highway and the Haines Road during the 1943 construction season. PRA contractors were directed to continue work throughout the winter on the Haines Lateral Road and then return to the Alcan Highway project in the spring of 1943. Colonel Wyman then awarded the contract for the completion of the Haines Lateral Road to Foley Bros., Inc., and Rohl-Connolly Co., a new contractor operating under direct supervision of the War Department and not under supervision of the PRA

Construction was started by the U.S. Army contractor on the Haines Lateral Road during the latter part of March 1943. The directive was to construct a two-way road with sixty-foot clearing and 24-foot roadway, graveled, from Haines to Champagne, or some point west of Champagne where a satisfactory line intersects the Alcan Highway. Two-thousand employees were used at the peak of construction. The quantities of major items of work performed by the contractor on this project were as follows: clearing, 1,340 acres; grading, 4,074,551 cubic-yards; surfacing, 723,223 cubic-yards; culverts, 35,396 lineal-feet; bridges; 3,100 linear-feet.

A total of 36 bridges were constructed, only four of which were steel structures. The balance were chiefly pile trestle bridges. Work on this project was completed in November, 1943.

During construction of the Haines Lateral Road, the War Department contractor found it necessary to deviate considerably from the route surveyed and recommended by PRA Engineers in the winter of 1942-43. This was done with the approval of U.S. Army supervising Engineers. The reason for this deviation was that the south 50-mile road alignment selected by PRA required approximately 2,250,000 cubic-yards of excavation, 50% of which was rock work.

The PRA location was obviously more satisfactory for a permanent alignment but use of that route, on account of the heavy rock cuts, would have delayed the completion of this feeder road at least one construction season and would have done so at a time when the facility was most needed to transport supplies and equipment onto the Alcan Highway project. All supplies and equipment for work in the Whitehorse area were then being brought in over the narrow-gauge W.P. &Y. RR. This road and its rolling stock was never built with the heavy traffic in view that this program imposed on it and some means had to be devised to prevent the further delay of moving the supplies bottlenecked at Skagway. The Haines Lateral Road was the only solution to this problem and speed was imperative in its construction, at that time.

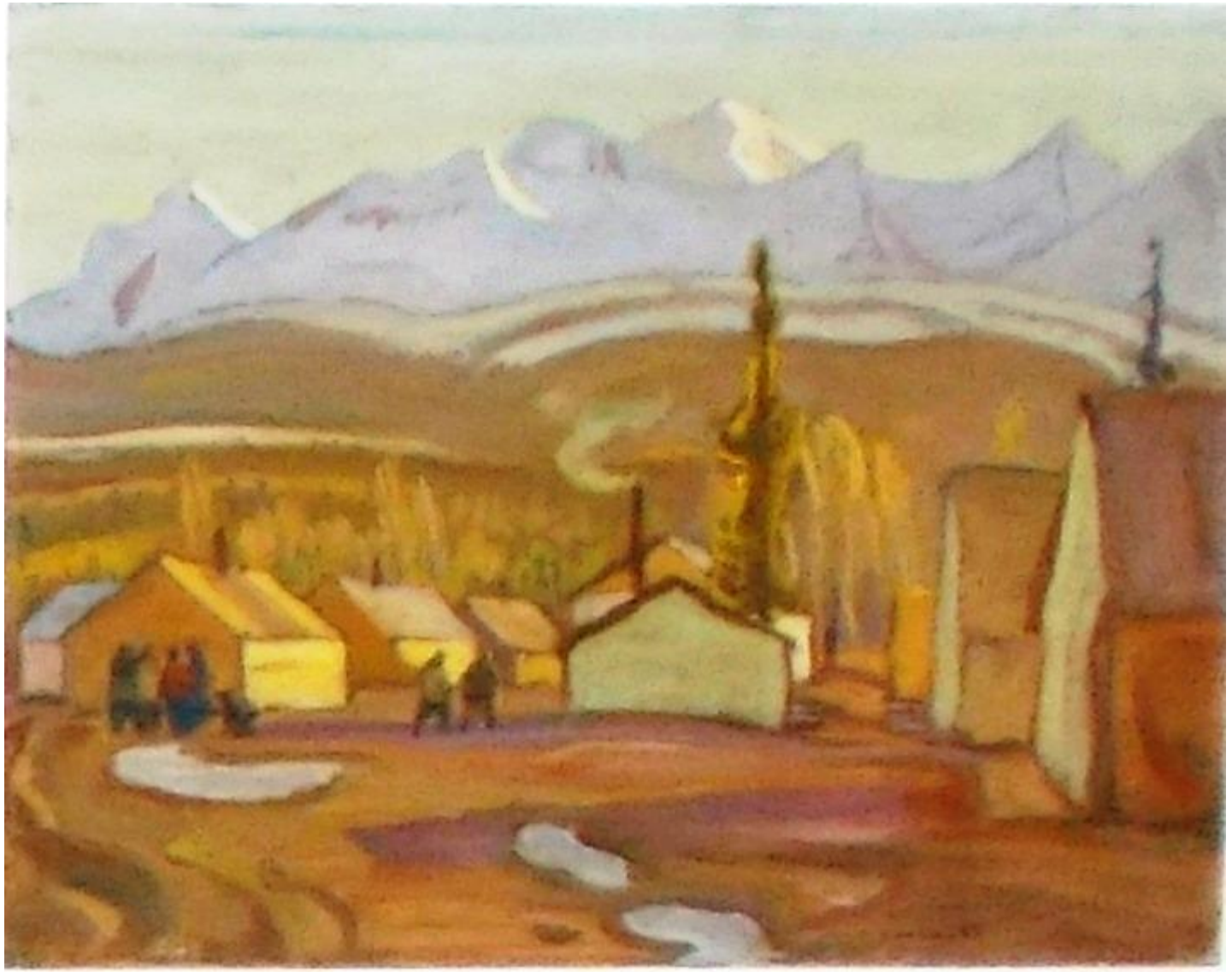
In several places on the Haines Lateral route selected by the U.S. Army the ground was subject to slides or was along and across rivers where fills and bridges could not be expected to remain permanently.

While overtime costs were high ($1,050,000) due to the extra hours required in order to expedite construction, some other costs were lower than on the Alcan Highway due to the proximity to tidewater. On the Haines project, added transportation cost was estimated at $20 per-ton, instead of $40 per-ton on the Alcan Highway. Worker housing on the Haines project was only $400 per-man as against $600 on the Alcan Highway. Labor turnover was more than 100% for the entire construction period and the average cost of round-trip transportation and travel time for individual laborers was estimated at $200 per-man for the Haines project against $300 per-man on the Alcan Highway.

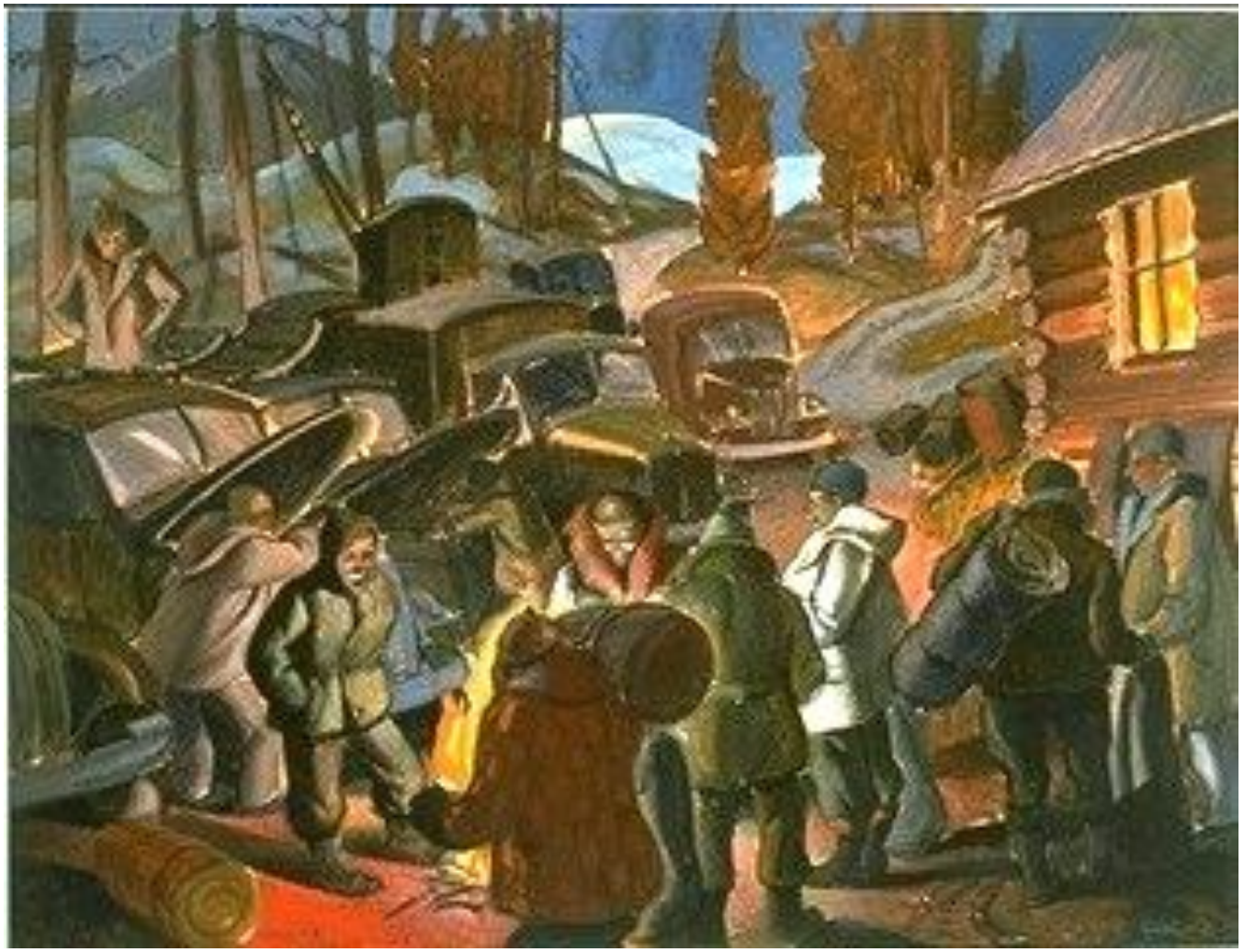
Approximately 1,200 pieces of equipment were used by the contractor, Foley Bros., Inc. and Rohl-Connolly Co., during the construction of the Haines Lateral Road. Of this number, more than 900 pieces, valued at approximately $3,000,000 were U.S. Army-owned and the balance of 231 pieces, valued at $946,000 was rented by the prime contractor from an equipment contractor, Bowen & McLaughlin, while 11 pieces, valued at $458,807, were rented from the prime contractor. The equipment rented from the prime contractor, Foley Bros., Inc., and Rohl-Connolly Co., con-sisted of marine equipment used for transporting construction materials up the Inland Passage from Prince Rupert to Haines.

Documentation

In October 1943, A.Y. Jackson - the well-known Canadian and "Group of Seven" artist, came to the Yukon to paint. He and another artist; Henry Glyde, were commissioned by the National Gallery of Canada to document, in art, the construction of the Alcan Highway as part of Canada's war effort. Over a three-week period, they produced a number of oil and pencil sketches of the people, equipment and activities involved in the highway construction, as well as capturing some of the scenery of the territory.



A.Y. Jackson’s Camp Mile 108, West of Whitehorse, 1943



Henry Glyde's Alaska Highway Warming-up, Camp 108 Northwest of Whitehorse, Yukon, 1943

Timeline

June 16, 1911
Civil Engineer H. L. Robbins arrived at Haines on the Dolphin to set-up an office for the Alaska Midland Railroad project. A great deal of development and construction work will soon be done. By late August a rough survey of the route to Fairbanks by way of the Porcupine, the Kluane; the head of the White river and down the Tanana had been completed as far as the head of the Tanana.

January 18, 1918
After a lapse of about a decade, the old R.N.W.M.P. post at Pleasant Camp, on the international boundary back of Haines, AK, is to be rehabilitated and put in-charge of a police patrol, consisting of Consts. Vinall and Gurr of the Whitehorse detachment. From Haines, a party under Capt. A.L. Bell of the R.N.W.M.P. took in supplies with dog teams to last for several months.

January 17, 1941
Under authority granted by the Canadian government to the U. S. War Department, a detachment consisting of two officers and ten men, with five sleds and forty-three dogs, left Haines on or about January 18th en route to Fairbanks. It was estimated that the trip would take from 30 to 45 days to complete; the major part of which would be spent in Canadian territory.

December 11-12, 1942
Haines Road construction begins. Articles from *The Whitehorse Star* and the Chicago *Tribune* report that construction has begun on a road from Haines to the Alcan Highway at Champagne.

NEW FEEDER ROAD CONNECTING HAINES WITH ALCAN HIGHWAY NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The Whitehorse Star - December 11, 1942

Brigadier General James A. O'Connor, commanding the Northwest Service Command, has informed Anthony J. Diamond [sic - Dimond], Alaska's veteran Delegate in Congress, that construction has started on a second road to connect the Alcan International Military Highway with the waters of the Inside Passage.

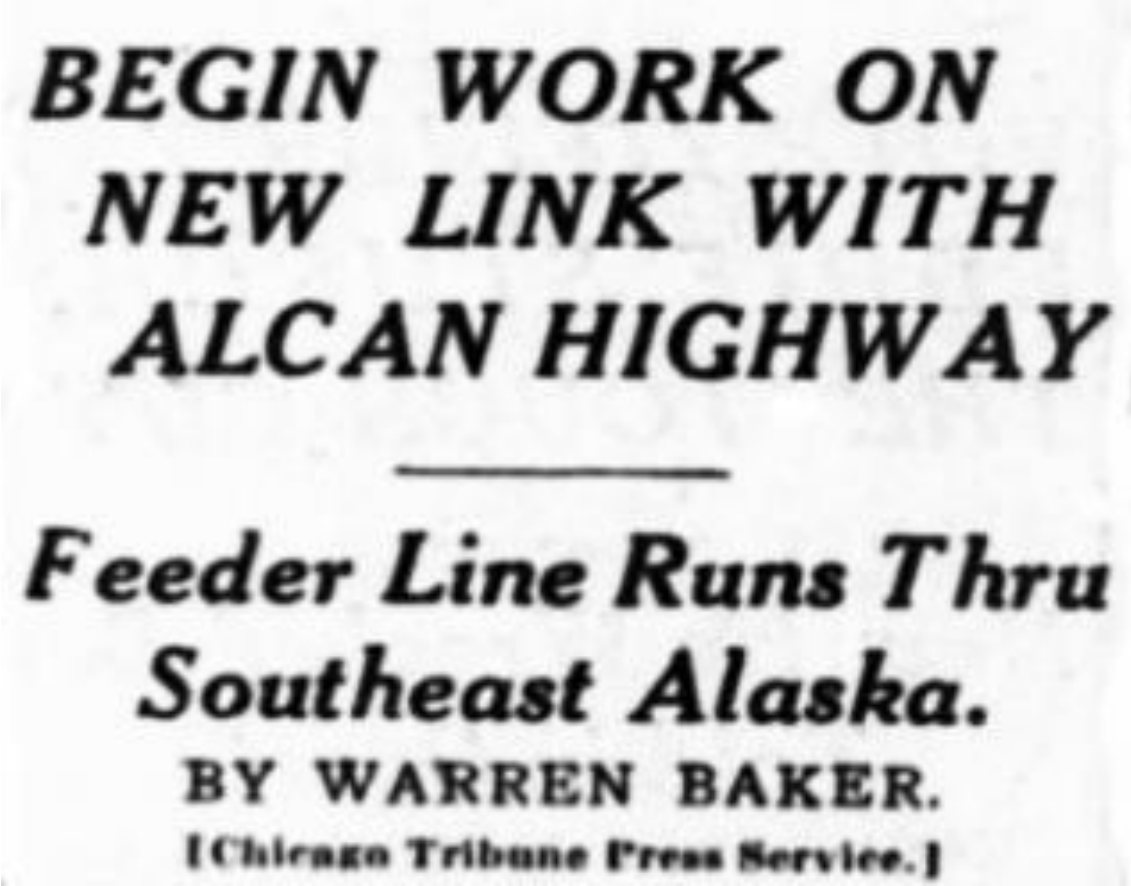
In a letter to Delegate Diamond, General O'Connor today declared: "I am well aware of your long-time interest in the development of land communication with Alaska. The Haines-Champagne road, construction of which has started, will connect southeastern Alaska with the Alcan Military Highway and will be an important step in the development of the Alaskan road network. We already have landed crews and equipment at Haines.

"This road will provide a second port of entry from south-eastern Alaska to the Alcan Highway and will bring the Highway closer to such Alaskan cities as Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka."

The road will extend approximately 142 miles from Haines on the Alaskan seacoast, to the Yukon frontier settlement of Champagne. It will ascend the heights of Chilkat Pass, the third route that the '98s followed to the Klondike, the others being the Chilkoot and White of dreadful memory. Forty-two miles of the road already have been developed to some extent by the Alaska Road Commission.

The Haines "cut-off" has long been favored by Governor Ernest Gruening of Alaska. He conferred with General O'Connor concerning the new development here early in November. Delegate Diamond has also been actively urging the linking of the Alcan Highway to various parts of Alaska through the construction of additional "feeder" roads.

General O'Connor's statement was contained in a letter thanking Delegate Diamond for the message praising American workmanship on the Alcan Highway which he sent to the ceremonies opening the road at Kluane Lake Nov. 20.



BEGIN WORK ON NEW LINK WITH ALCAN HIGHWAY

Feeder Line Runs Thru Southeast Alaska.

BY WARREN BAKER.

[Chicago Tribune Press Service.]

Chicago Tribune - December 12, 1942

WHITE HORSE, Yukon Territory, Dec. 9 [Delayed]. – Another feeder line and important new link in the Alcan Military Highway System now is underway, Brig. Gen. James A. O'Connor, Chief of the Northwest Service Command which is operating the roadways, announced today in a letter to Anthony J. Dimond, veteran Delegate who represents Alaska in Congress. Gen. O'Connor wrote:

"I am well-aware of your long-time interest in the department of land communication with Alaska. The Haines-Champagne road, construction of which has started, will connect southeastern Alaska with the Alcan Military Highway and will be an important step in the development of the Alaskan road network."

"We already have landed crews and equipment at Haines. This road will provide a second port of entry from southeastern Alaska to the Alcan Highway and will bring the highway closer to such Alaskan cities as Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka."

Brings Highway Closer to Cities



Arrow locates new road to link ocean port with Alcan highway.

The new highway will run from Haines near the head of the inside Passage on the Lynn Canal, about 20 miles south of Skagway Chilkoot barracks. The first American army post in Alaska is nearby. It will take much of the pressure off Skagway as the port from which supplies take to the road system for distribution to Alaska and Yukon posts. About 42 pioneer miles of the new road link already are in existence, having been developed by the Alaskan Road Commission, winding-up over the timbered mountain slope near the coast.

Army to Complete Job

The army will complete the job, bringing the highway up over Chilkat pass, the third route followed by the Klondikers in 1898, the others being the Chilkoot and the White. Then it will wind for about 100 miles to Champagne, Yukon Territory, one of the important construction centers in the building of the Alcan north from Whitehorse.

The link road is a pet project of Gov. Ernest Gruening of Alaska. He and Gen. O'Connor conferred on its building in a November meeting here.

Images



<u>Caption</u>: "March 12, 1943: looking north at the crossing of Quill Creek at survey station 428. The trench on the left indicates the survey line, with the temporary truck trail to the right."



<u>Caption</u>: "March 25, 1943: above, looking south at the crossing of Kathleen Creek, 15.5 miles from the Alaska Highway. Below, looking north at the survey camp, survey line cut and truck trail."

August 13, 1943:
Alaska Delegate Dimond tours new Haines road, 1943 An article in the Edmonton Bulletin of August 13, 1943, describes Congressman Dimond's reaction to the road.

September 27, 1943:
An photo-article in The Vancouver Daily Province highlights the opening of the Haines Lateral.

Military Road Proving Value In War Effort

Edmonton Bulletin - August 13, 1943

HAINES, Alaska, Aug 13 - In an army jeep Anthony J Dimond, veteran Delegate in the United States Congress from Alaska, today inspected the new Haines Military Road and predicted that its completion would be of “first-rate importance as a link between southeastern Alaska’s seaports and the Alaska Highway.”

He also said that he believed the Haines road would eventually rank as “one of the great scenic drives of the North American continent.”

Dimond's trip was the first journey by a visitor over the lofty summit of Three Guardsmen Pass, which the Haines Road crosses on its winding route from the Inside Passage to the Alaska Highway. His trip occurred coincidentally with the dramatic breakthrough by army troops working from the north and civilian contractors pushing up from the south.

Shortly beyond the rocky hump of Three Guardsmen Pass, bulldozers operated by engineer troops of Brig. Gen. James A. O'Connor's Northwest Service Command bumped radiators with the cats of the Foley Brothers Constuction Company.

Delegate Dimond congratulated Lt. Col. Thomas J. Hayes of Washington, D.C., Haines District Engineer, on the early joining of the units working from opposite ends of the 166-mile road.

Other members of the first party to travel the new road were E.L. Bartlett of Juneau, Secretary of Alaska; Capt. Richard L. Neuberger, of Portland, Ore., aide to Brig. Gen. O'Connor and Capt. Charles E. Whittington, U.S. Army Engineers, of San Antonio, Texas.

Mr. Dimond said he was “immensely pleased” with the progress made on the Haines project. He also added that his trip had given him great respect for the traveling prowess of the army jeep.

From Haines he proceeded on to Skagway, where he conferred with Mayor G.A. Benedict and the town council. He was driven around Skagway’s military installations by Col. Fank E. Ahrens of Brooklyn, N.Y., Port Commander, and was the guest of Father G. Edgar Gallant at the Catholic Mission. Col. K.B. Bush of Quincy, Ill., Northwest Service Command Chief of Staff, met Dimond at Skagway.

In Whitehorse. Yukon Territory, Delegate Dimond conferred with the commanding general of the Northwest Service Command James A. O’Connor. He also visited the pipeline project from Norman Wells and drove 40 miles northward on the Alaska Highway with Colonel Caryl R. Hazeltine of Corvallis, Ore., Gen O’Connor’s Deputy Chief-of-Staff.

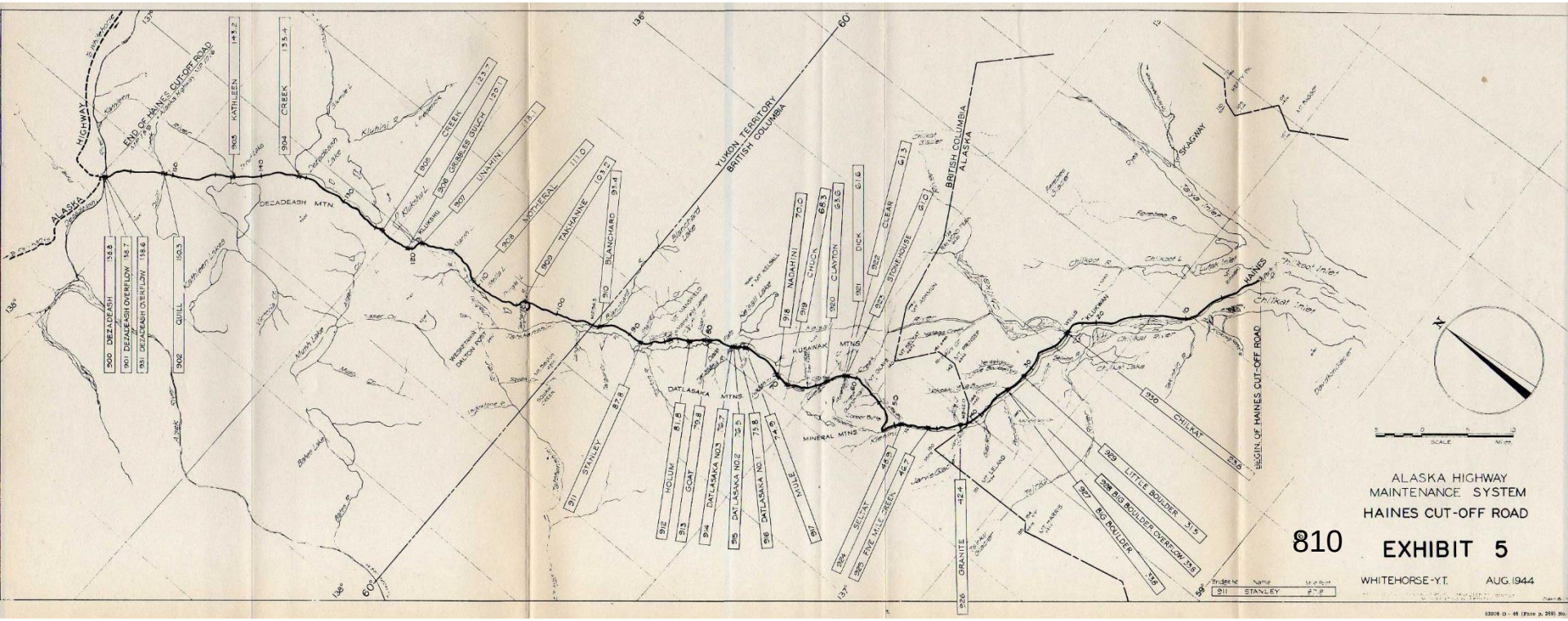
“Splendid progress has been made,” Delegate Dimond told Gen. O’Connor. “I wish to congratulate you and the officers and men of your command.” Dimond is a member of both the Military Affairs and Naval Affairs Committees of the American Congress. On a flight to Fairbanks from Whitehorse, he was accompanied by Major General John Peter Mackenzie of the Canadian Army.



NEW ROAD OPEN—This is a scene on the Haines Military Road, which is now open to traffic, according to announcement in Vancouver today at a Board of Trade luncheon by Brig. Gen. James A. O'Connor. The road is of great importance to Vancouver, Gen. O'Connor said, because it ties the international highway to salt water. In this picture, where the road ascends the Chilkat River toward Dome Mt., are Honorable Homer D. Angell, member of the U. S. Congress, and Lt. Col. T. J. Hayes of the American Army Engineers. (U. S. Army Singal Corps).

November 4, 1943:
A Minnesota contractor, Foley Bros. and Rohl-Connolly Co. of St. Paul, is almost done with work on the Haines cut-off, a new road running from Haines, Alaska, over Chilkat Pass, to join the Alaska Military Highway in Yukon Territory; 100 miles beyond White-horse. By this cut-off, the road distance to Fairbanks is about 750 miles. Many Alaskans think that freight may be more economically sent up by boat, transferred to trucks at Haines and sent on to interior Alaska, than to be shipped all the way overland.

Haines Highway, 1944
A large annotated map of the road as it was in 1944 is published.



August 17, 1944
An article in the *Edmonton Journal* discusses the abandonment of the Haines "cut-off"

September 21, 1944:
An article in the *Victoria Daily Times* of September 21, 1944, reports on comments by a northern old-timer about the failures of the Alaska Highway nor-th and Haines Lateral despite "a mad orgy of spending."

Alaska Road Link Is Being Dropped

August 17, 1944, *Edmonton Journal*

Partially constructed between the Alaska coast and the Alaska Highway to relieve congestion, the Haines “cut-off” road is being abandoned as an artery of traffic, headquarters of Northwest Service Command announced in Edmonton Thursday.

The military road, running from Haines, Alaska, to a point 105 miles northwest of Whitehorse, was constructed to relieve pressure on the White Pass & Yukon Railway in the construction days when much heavy equipment was taken into the northwest via boat to Skagway and then over rail to Whitehorse.

Heavy slides and difficult snow conditions last winter made it impractical to keep the Haines Road open in view of the reduced amount of material being moved into the northwest as construction jobs were completed.

The road is being used to evacuate heavy equipment used in its construction and that of the northern half of the Alaska Highway but it is not open to any other traffic, officials said.

Cost of the road was about $10,000,000. Construction was carried-out by U.S. Public Roads Administration.



Victoria Daily Times, September 21, 1944

FAIRBANKS, Alaska (Special) - Announcement that the U.S. had abandoned to Canada the Haines Highway from Fairbanks to Whitehorse has led to some of the "sourdoughs" up here opening up on the whole highway question.

Now that this section has been dumped back on Canada, it is up to the Canadian government to put-up the money to maintain it. Ottawa cannot make-up its mind what it should do about it - let it go, or pour thousands per-mile into it for upke-ep.

One today asserted there was "a clique which wants a Haines-Fairbanks road" with "free corridor" through Canada for their road and "some of them have even advocated asking Canada for a cession of territory."

This man, who has been in the north more than 45 years and knows the country well, said he has followed closely construction of the Alaska road from Dawson Creek in British Columbia to its northern terminus here.

He dealt particularly with the Haines cut-off, which was started from Haines, not far from Skagway, and was to have connected with the main highway. This road, however, was abandoned by U.S. Army Engineers.

He said “certain political influences” got this road started. In 1942 the bottleneck on the main road was north and west of Whitehorse, “but instead of working on this weak-link they took men and equipment from the main road to start the cut-off.”

‘Complete Failure’

But, he said, they hardly got a start on the cut-off before winter clamped-down on them and the main highway west and north of Whitehorse (around Kluane Lake and beyond) was left in such a condition “that practically nothing went over it in the winter of 1942-43,” and the road was utterly impassable from the spring break-up in 1943 and nothing at all went over this stretch of road from April 15 to Oct. 15, 1943, when the tundra froze-up.

This sourdough said “there is a clique in Alaska which wants to get a highway from Haines to Fairbanks and it has become an obsession with them - I have heard them rant and rave about it for hours. We should worry - except for a few hundred miles, the road would be in Canada and it is going to be excessively expensive to maintain such a road, largely because the main road west of Kluane Lake is in the wrong place. They worked on the Haines Road all last summer and tried to use it last winter after the freeze-up. It was a complete failure; the snowfall is very heavy in this section and they got a lot of equipment snowed-in and it stayed there until spring.”

$100,000 per-mile

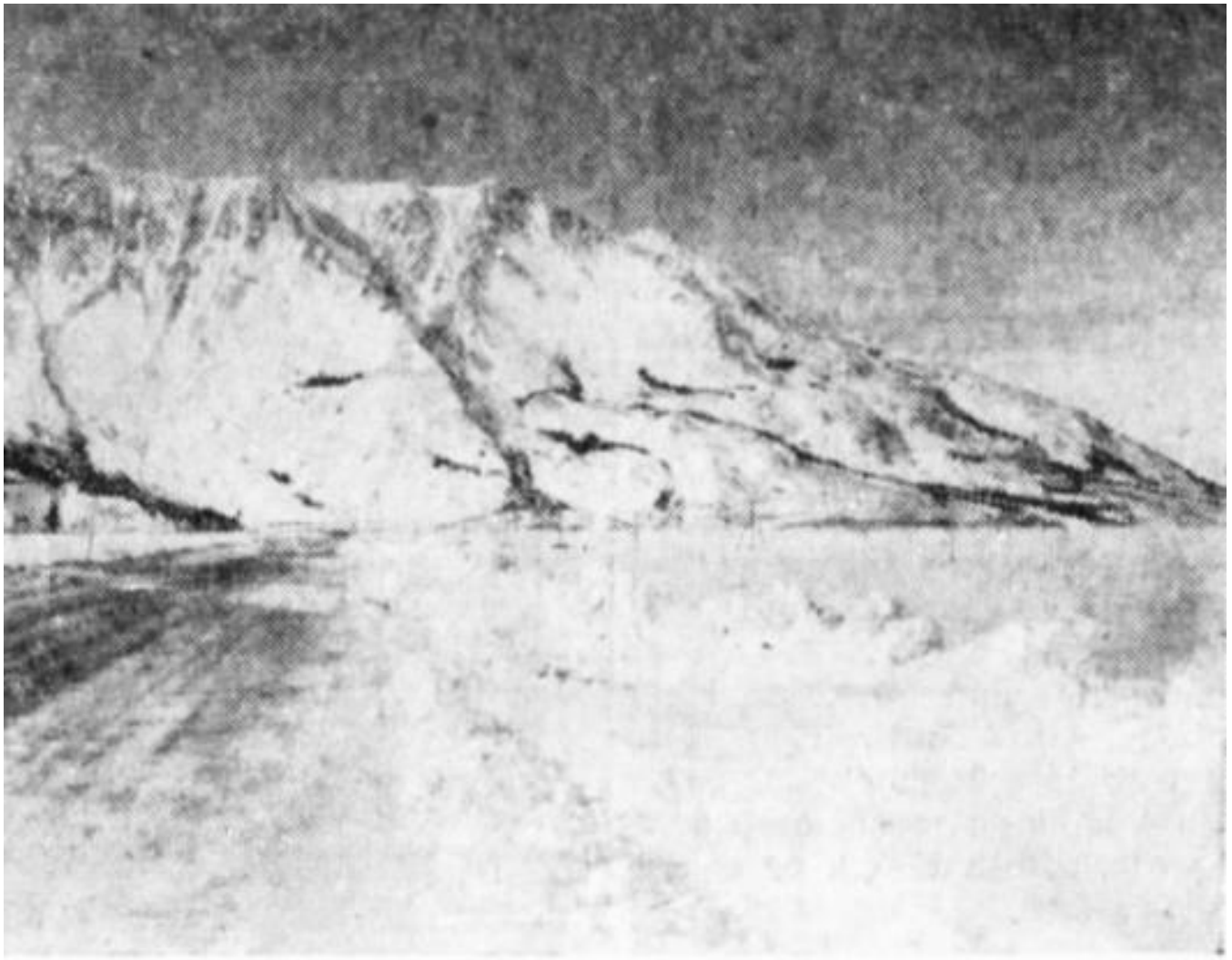
He said there was no need of the Haines-Fairbank Road from a Canadian standpoint and the cost would be out of all reason. Many more millions would have to be spent, he said, to make even a passable summer road.

“In this last mad orgy of spending they must have put in nearly $100,000 per-mile and they have no road yet,” he said. “The people back of this Haines cut-off took advantage of war emergency to boost their pet along and they were willing and did cripple the main highway scheme to get this thing started. The highway south of Whitehorse functioned during the winter of 1942-43 and so did the railway (White Pass & Yukon Route), but the road north of Whitehorse was a hopeless flop.”

The road was built to take care of an emergency, he added, “but if the emergency had occurred there they had no road - they could have been ready at half the expense if they had gone about it the proper way.”



Around Kluane Lake . . . "flop," says one sourdough.



Fill across Kluane Lake . . . called by some "the weak link."

1946:

A proposed major realignment of the Alaska Highway (seen on the map below captioned the “Bear Creek Cut-off Road”) was cancelled due to protests from the community that was developing at the site of Camp 108. This would have added about four miles to the length of the Haines road.

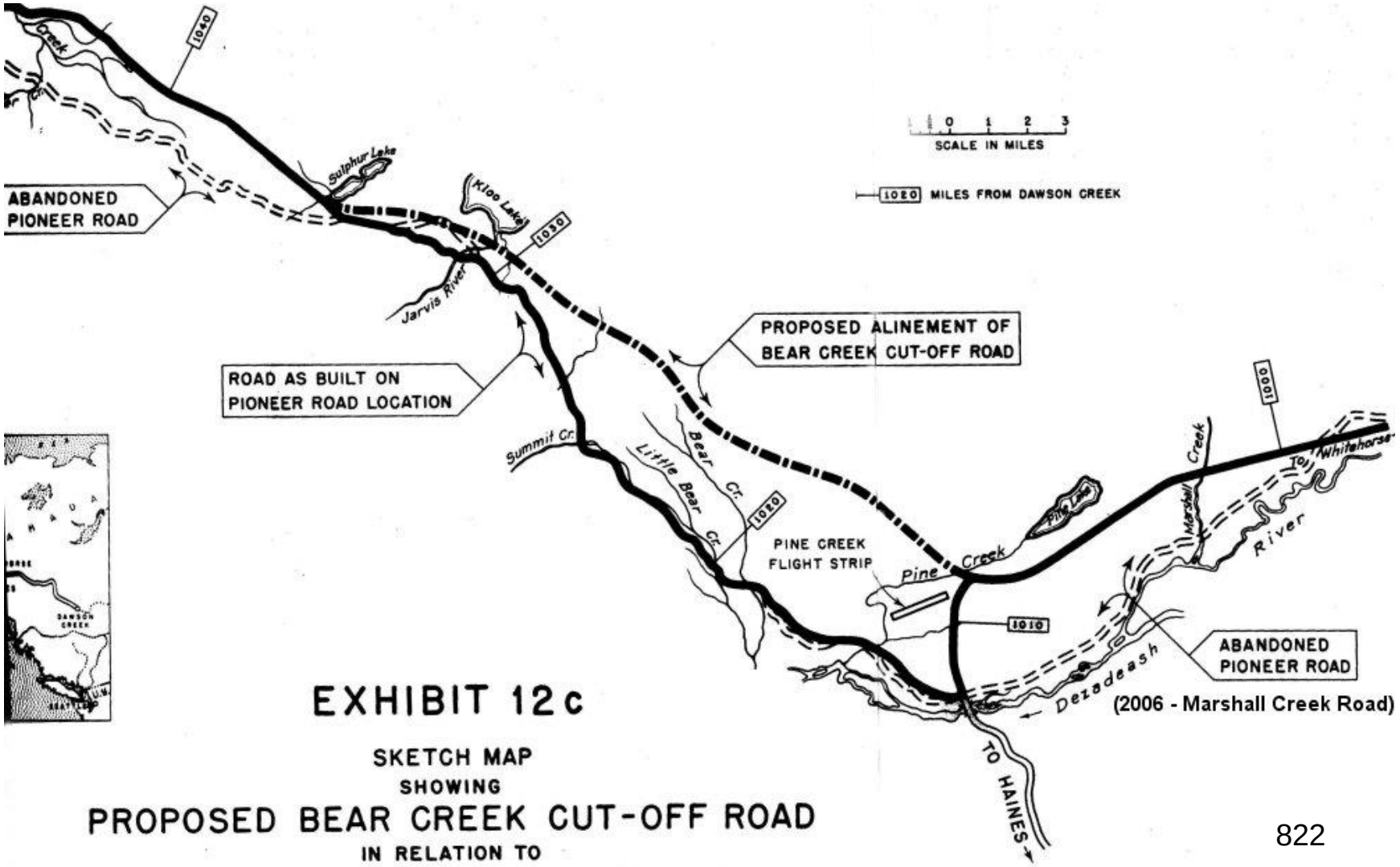


EXHIBIT 12c

SKETCH MAP
SHOWING
PROPOSED BEAR CREEK CUT-OFF ROAD
IN RELATION TO
PIONEER ROAD AND ROAD AS BUILT

August 9, 1946:
The first through bus trip from Anchorage to Juneau is scheduled for this week, Ken O'Harra of the O'Harra Bus Lines Inc., announced. Mr. O'Harra received notice from the Canadian government that he has permission to operate over the Haines Road. On September 12th, O'Harra started running from White-horse to Haines and Juneau.

September 17, 1946:
Haines Road closures A Chicago *Tribune* article talks about closures of the Haines Road and the effects on prices of goods in Alaska.


RAILWAY GAINS
IN FRATE BAN ON
YUKON HIGHWAY

Alaskans Slam Canada
on U. S. Built Cut-Off

Chicago *Tribune* - September 17, 1946
by William Strand
(Chicago *Tribune* Press Service)

JUNEAU, Alaska, Sept. 16 - Alaskans were quick to reply today to Canadian officials reported to have said that the Canadian government was not responsible for the closing of an American-built highway in the British Yukon last month.

Closing of the road was enforced by both the Canadian army, which now has the responsibility of maintaining it, and Canadian customs agents at the border, the Alaskans said. They added that it was inconceivable that such action could have been taken without the knowledge of top Canadian officials.

Since publication by the TRIBUNE of a story telling of the denial of the road use to American traffic, the highway has been reopened to American buses, with Canada retaining control over movement of the vehicles. Bus operators must renew every two weeks their permit to use it. The Canadian army has explained that it, not the experienced bus operators, will be the judge as to whether the road is passable.

Costs U.S. $12,000,000



The road is the 139 mile Haines cut-off linking the Alaskan coastal town of Haines to the Alcan Highway at a point in the Yukon 106 miles west of Whitehorse. It cost American taxpayers $12,000,000 and was built during the war by the United States Army as an added supply line for the Yukon Territory and Alaska.

Highway Engineers said the road is excellently located to serve both territories in peace. It opens a new Alaska port of entry for passengers and frate, they added, while shortening by several days the frate haul to Valdez or Seward.

A survey by the Chamber of Commerce in Fairbanks indicated that there would be a saving to consumers of 15 per cent on prices of commodities shipped to Haines and trucked the rest of the way to interior Alaska. This would represent the difference in transportation costs on goods shipped to Seward and carried to the interior on the Alaska railroad, famed for its high frate rates.

Competition for Railway Seen

Donald MacDonald, renowned in Alaska as the Engineer who first saw the feasibility of an overland highway between the territory and the United States, noted that the opening of the Haines Road would offer the first competition in 50 years to the White Pass & Yukon Railroad.

Owned by London interests, the railroad is a 110-mile, narrow-gauge line connecting the Port of Skagway, Alaska, to Whitehorse, in the Yukon. It is the only link between the sea and the interior of Western Canada.

High Costs Laid to Rates

“The Canadians evidently do not want to disturb the status quo,” MacDonald asserted. “The White Pass Railroad has a monopoly that is threatened by the new Haines Road. Most of us remember that during the war the United States offered to build a highway from Skagway to Whitehorse. After that, the railroad turned itself over for a price to the United States Army for wartime operation. It didn’t want that highway built for post-war competition.

The frate rates charged by this line, said the Alaska Engineer, are responsible for the high cost of building materials, petroleum products and other commodities in the interior of Western Canada.

He cited, as an example, the rising cost of gasoline as it is shipped farther from the seaports. Motor fuel cost about 13-cents delivered at Skagway, he said, but at Whitehorse, after the trip by rail, it costs consumers 46-cents, including a 5-cent tax.

The distance from Haines to Whitehorse by truck would be 238 miles. MacDonald said, however, that trucks supplied with cheap gasoline at the sea could offer frate rates much lower than those charged by the railroad for less than half the distance.

Statements by the Canadian officials that they had not ordered the Haines Road closed to Americans were published after the thoroughfare was reopened on a limited basis by the army slides.

Tell of Ban on Frate

The Canadian army chieftains had previously forced postponement of the first test trip by an American bus for several weeks. After a pioneer run was made successfully on Aug. 17, the Canadians said each bus would be required to get a permit for each trip. American bus line officials said this maneuver effectively blocked use of the road for several more weeks since it made operations on a regular schedule virtually impossible.

In addition to hampering the movement of passengers, Canadian customs agents have blocked shipment of frate over the road, records show. The following ruling was issued at the border north of Haines on Aug. 20:

“All commercial frating between Haines and Fairbanks is now prohibited on the section of the Haines cut-off which traverses Canada.”

This decree came three days after the first Alaska bus, operated by the O'Harra Bus Lines, had completed a successful trial run over the road from Fairbanks to Haines. The O'Harra lines, owned by Ken O'Harra of Anchorage, Alaska, a former GI, have been among the first to utilize war-built highways for peacetime commercial use. They serve virtually all Alaskan population centers that have road connections.

Assail Canadian Explanation

Alaskans snickered at the Canadian explanation that there is supposed to be a long standing regulation against shipment of bonded frate by truck across Canada. The wording of the ruling, ". . . as now prohibited . . ." does not indicate that that regulation is of very ancient vintage, they asserted.

"There's one thing for sure," said Walter Sharpe, Alaska's Commissioner of Labour. "The regulation is no older as far as Alaska is concerned than the highways the United States built and gave to Canada."

"It looks as if the Canadian government is a bit confused over what its representatives are doing in the field. Meanwhile, Alaska working people will continue to pay exorbitant prices for necessities because a neighboring government refuses to permit them to benefit from improved transportation facilities developed during the war."

August 29, 1947:
Freight rates to Whitehorse were halved for Vancouver shippers this week with the inauguration of the Vancouver-Haines service of the B.C. Steamships Co. First shipments left Vancouver this week by the *Alaska Prince*. They will be landed at Haines and carried by truck over a 226-mile cut-off to Whitehorse.

October 3, 1947:
B.Y.N. Bus Lines announces regular passenger service to Haines, leaving Whitehorse on Fridays and returning on Mondays.

October 31, 1947:
The State Department informed Senator Magnuson it hopes to be able to workout a plan for keeping the Haines cut-off open throughout the year. Canadian officials do not feel they could keep the road open during the winter because of heavy snows and light travel over the road, though they maintained the road last summer.

April 3, 1951:
Motorship ferry service between Juneau and Haines, providing the only outlet from Juneau to the Alaska Highway, will be available as soon as the Haines cut-off road opens. R.J. Sommers, President of the Chilkoot Motorship lines, said weekly service will be maintained on the route and the sailings may be increased. The previous year, nearly 600 cars were ferried from Juneau to Haines for travel on the Alaska Highway.

August 3, 1951:
Contrary to reports from points along the Alaska Highway, the ferry was operating between Haines and Juneau. It had recently been taken over by the Territory of Alaska and was now being operated as a government transportation service.

November 8, 1951:
The Haines cut-off road, which joins the town of Haines to the Alaska Highway, now is closed-to-traffic, Territorial Highway Engineer Frank Metcalf announced this day. The Canadian government has put a gate across the entrance to the Canadian section. However, the territory will keep the road open to Mile 32.

December 21, 1953:
Construction of the 626-mile-long Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline begins. It took 22 months to build and operated until 1971.

May 24, 1956:
Timed to coincide with the opening of the Haines Highway, the Lynn Canal Corporation of Haines announces the opening of its modern hotel in the city center.

November 13, 1956:
This year, figures on tourists entering Alaska via the Haines cutoff were kept for the first time. They showed that a total of 3,829 cars entered Alaska on the Haines Road.

April 23, 1959:
The United States has proposed legislation which would authorize appropriations of $11,000,000 a year for six years starting July 1, 1960, for improving and paving the Alaska Highway and the Haines cut-off in Canada on condition that Canada spend the same amount for the program and then would maintain the roads for year-round use.

February 11, 1960:
The feasibility of keeping the Haines Road open later in fall and earlier in spring is being studied. A study several years before found there was not sufficient traffic to warrant longer opening, but present demands were considerably greater and there was now a mining operation in the Kathleen Lake area hauling out to Haines.

March 9, 1961:
An economic survey was underway to consider feasibility of keeping the Haines Road open year-round, MP Erik Nielsen told the Whitehorse Board of Trade. He said the study followed an offer made the previous winter by Alaska Freightlines to keep the road open in winter itself, though they later retracted the offer.

January 21, 1963:
New records for travel were set in 1962 for both the Alaska Highway and Haines Highway. At Pleasant Camp on the Haines Road, August was the big month with 2,995 inbound passengers and 3,035 outbound. Total for the year was 14,359 inbound (up from 12,989 in 1961) and 14,632 outbound. There were 4,408 cars inbound and 4,483 outbound with 937 trucks in and 885 out, 15 buses in and 17 out.

October 24, 1963:
Subject to ongoing negotiations with Alaska, the Haines cut-off Road will be kept open the coming winter on a one-year trial basis. On December 12th it was announced that Canada has agreed to pay $127,000 for American crews to keep the road.

September 28, 1964:
Northern Affairs Minister Arthur Laing announced that the Haines Road will once again be maintained through the winter, though the program is still considered ‘experimental.’

May 3, 1965:
Alaska's Highways Commissioner D.A. McKinnon announced that the winter maintenance of the Haines cut-off was "a definite success" that year and proved the feasibility of wintertime operation of the route. Between December 1, 1964 and March 1, 1965, a total of 1,509 vehicles used the Haines Highway, compared with 816 the previous year. Canada paid costs of maintenance and the State of Alaska provided the men and equipment for the job.

August 9, 1965:
White Pass & Yukon Route sells their bus business to Canadian Coachways, with the change of ownership to take place on August 5th. The run from Whitehorse to Haines is affected and four buses will be transferred: two new 39-passenger Challenger types, one 41-passenger coach and an 8-passenger Checker.

February 26-27, 1970:
The first Alcan 200 snowmobile race from Haines to Whitehorse, sponsored by the Chilkat Snowmobilers Club and the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous, takes place.

Alcan 200

Snowmobile Race

(Sponsored by Chilkat Snowmobilers Club)



Feb. 26 - 27 1970

Haines (Alaska Border) to Whitehorse

Entry Fee:

$25.00

Overnight stop at Cartina Lodge

Class A	from 0 - 340 c.c.
B	341 - 440 c.c.
C	441 - 699 c.c.

$50 per day money for all classes for 2 days.

Best Place Prize **$200** for overall time

Yukon Sourdough **Rendezvous Office** Call 7-2148 11-3

The Shakwak Project

January 5, 1978:
The Shakwak Project involves the paving and realignments of the Haines Road from the Alaska-B.C. border to Haines Junction and the Alaska Highway from Haines Junction to the Yukon-Alaska border; a distance of approximately 520 kilometers. The U.S. has offered to pay for the construction because it would provide a paved, all-weather link between Alaska and the lower 48 states. Canada could benefit from the project because it would provide easier travel for tourists.

August 15, 1978:
Two engraved brass survey stakes were driven into the ground at Haines Junction today to officially open the Shakwak Project. One of the stakes is engraved with a U.S. flag and the symbols 0+000 while the other stake has a Canadian flag with the numbers 0+516 which is the projected total highway distance in kilometres when it is completed in about 10 years.

Motoring in the North Will Never be the Same Again

<u>Editor's Note</u>: Paving of the last remaining 310 miles (500 kilometres) of gravel on the Alaska and Haines Highways in the Yukon and Northwestern B.C. will soon start, a $200-million job paid for by the U.S. But not everyone wants to bid the gravel goodbye.

The Province (Vancouver, BC), July 29, 1978
by Peter Calamai
Southam News Service

HAINES, Alaska - Like Sam McGee, immortalized in Robert Service's verse, the unhappy tourist was from Tennessee.

And he was cursing a Dixie streak as he wrestled to attach unfamiliar snow chains to the rear wheels of his air-conditioned, power-steering, V-8 car.

We were outside the Canada Customs post on the Haines Highway, 40 miles (65 kilometres) of paved road from the sea-coast town bearing that name.

Ahead was 120 miles (193 kilometres) of gravel road to Haines Junction in the Yukon and then another 90 graveled miles (145 kilometres) of Alaska Highway south to Whitehorse.

And it was snowing. Thick, wet, determined February flakes that stuck the eyelids together and transformed even a gentle gravel slope into a greased slide.

What lay ahead wasn't a gentle slope. A series of hairpin turns and stomach-tightening switchbacks climb northward above the tree line to Chilkat Pass, elevation 3,493-feet (1,064-metres).

"We almost made it; it was the last hill that stopped us," grunted the Tennessean. "We just spun the wheels and slide backwards."

With chains, the tourist from Dixie would safely cross the pass, as we did in our chainless rental car, guided through the total unblemished whiteness of blowing snow by poles 20-feet-(6-1/2-metres) high at the road's edge, placed there to help snowplow operators.

At the time it was a bit unpleasant - a strain from staring into what seemed the interior of a pillow - and inconvenient, because of a missed airplane.

Later it became a great adventure in the retelling, almost making-up for Canada's tallest peak, Mt. Logan, being obscured by the storm.

But this same drama won't be repeated for visitors much longer, no matter how bad the blizzard in the Chilkat Pass, because the last 300-mile (485-metre) stretches of dirt-and-gravel Haines and Alaska Highways in the Yukon and north-western B.C. are about to be rebuilt and paved at a cost of $200-million.

Tourist authorities in the Yukon Territory are enthusiastic ab-out the road improvements, known as the Shakwak project, because it will vanquish the unwanted part of their Klondike image - the broken windshields and hours of dusty driving endured by Americans in their high-priced recreational vehicles.

“The majority of people come up here pulling a $20,000 to $30,000 trailer,” says Dunc Myers, then with the Yukon Visitors Bureau in Whitehorse.

“We don’t want to frighten the little old ladies; there isn’t a road in the territory that a camper can’t go on.”

This official view is understandable: tourism and mining provide, often indirectly, a living for the bulk of the territory's 23,000 permanent residents. About 300,000 visitors will come to the Yukon this year, concentrated in the summer months, 70 percent American and perhaps one-third driving up the Alaska Highway.

Not everyone in the Yukon welcomes the paving, even though construction jobs will go to them first and the U.S. taxpayer is footing-the-bill as part of a trade-off in the Alaska Highway gas pipeline deal.

Take Wayne, who pumps gas, tends bar and practices his electric guitar when things are slow at the Dezadeash Lodge, 34-miles (55-kilometres) off the Alaska Highway on the Haines Road and the spot to discover whether the road ahead is passable.

“When they pave the road, I’ll be moving on,” says Wayne.

“They’re only doing it for the U.S. truckers who are scared to drive on gravel roads. They want pavement all the way from the Pacific to the Arctic. And those people from the southern States always want to drive at 80 miles-an-hour (about 125 kmh) . . . straight ahead.”

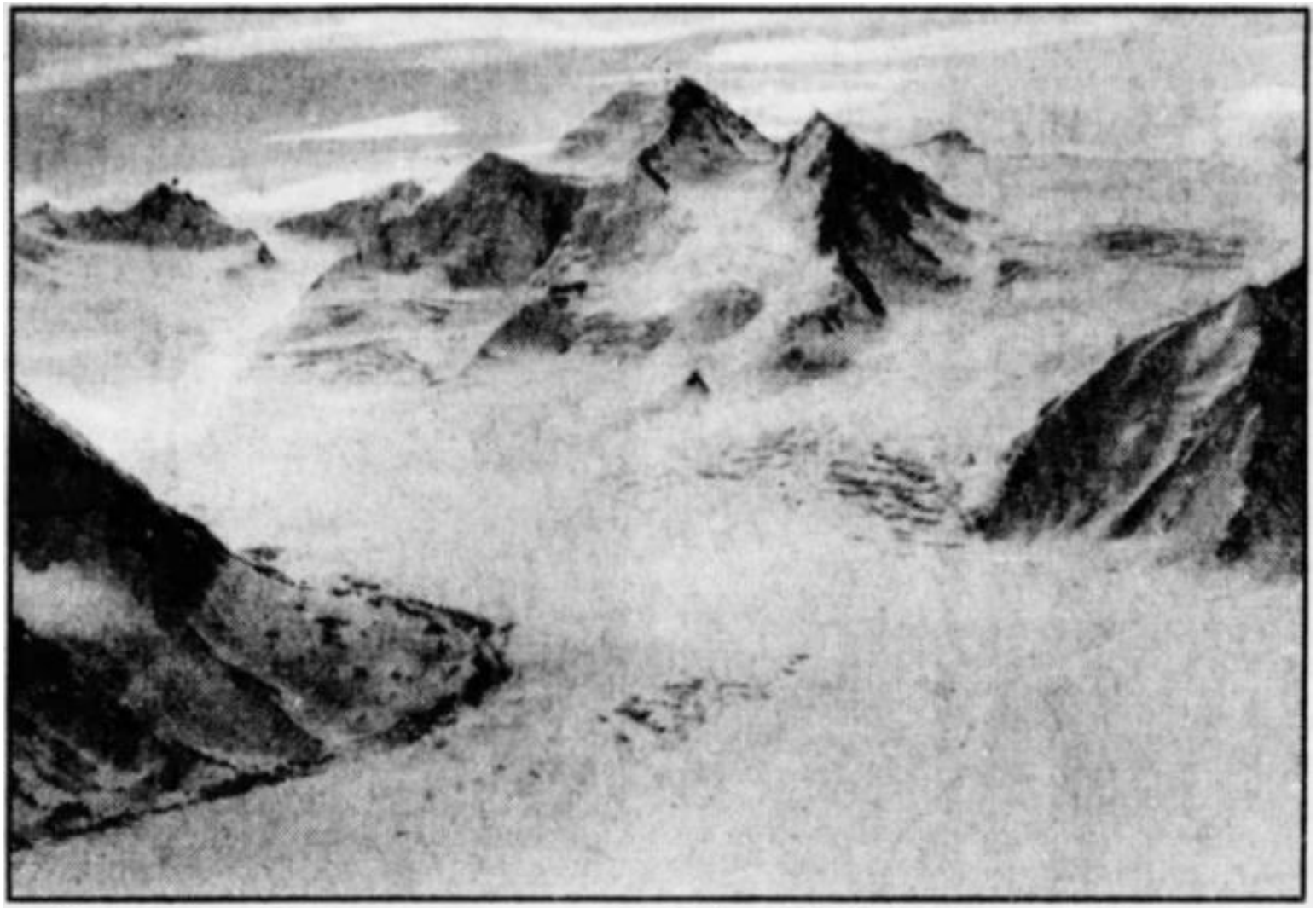
Forget Wayne’s argument that pavement suffers from frost heaving in the Arctic winters and doesn’t provide the attraction of gravel.

Consider only the image of air-conditioned, power-steering, V-8s scooting along what used to be a packhorse trail blazed by Jack Dalton to get miners and their supplies ($150 apiece) into the Klondike gold fields.

On a dirt-and-gravel road, the tourist feels no compulsion to “make time.” When the Milepost Guidebook ($6.95 and indis-pensable for any northern motorist) mentions a unique Indian cemetery at Champagne, there’s time aplenty to stop.



Speeding tourists may bypass atttractions like the Lowell Glacier . . .



of Kluane National Park in the Yukon . . . or the Kaskawulsh Glacier whose icefields stretch like fingers between the stark mountains. Both sites can only be reached by hiking in from main roads.

Or you might hike into Kluane National Park, bordered by the Haines and Alaska Roads and a terrain of mountains and icefields which harbors grizzlies, Dall sheep, moose and mountain goats.

Or you can sit listening to someone like “Old” Charlie Ross, who spends half the year 20-miles (33-kilometres) in from the highway at his placer mine on Squaw Creek.

A motorist making time wouldn’t swap drinks with Charlie and learn about the One Big Union, or the Vancouver women who stole milk en masse to feed their Depression babies, or being a carpenter on the film *All Quiet on the Western Front.*

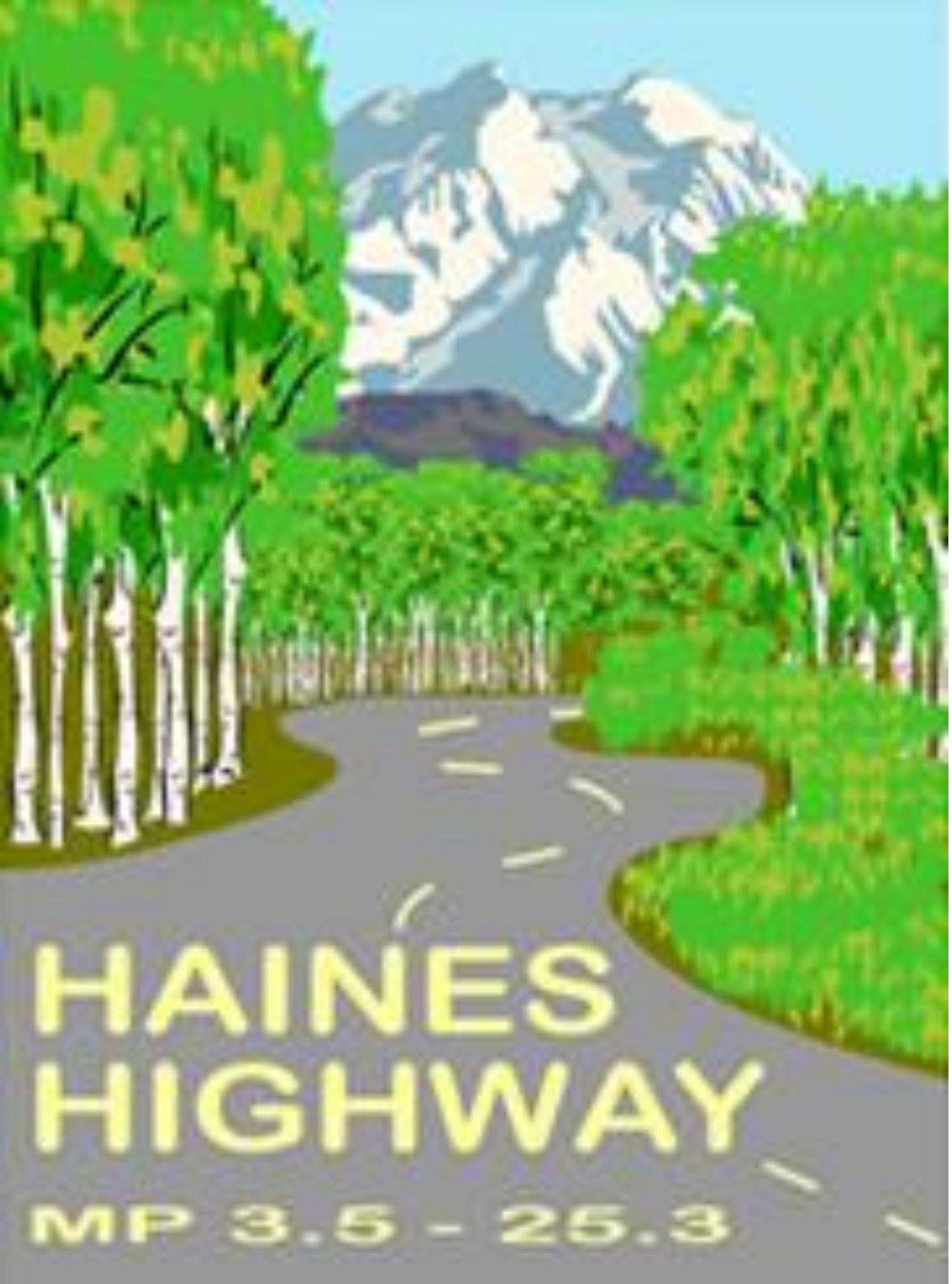
It’s the poetry and history learned by a man alone in the bush with three dogs from March until October.

And the swapping of tall tales with another prospector, Josephine, to impress the young folk from the south.

Pretty soon, the folks young and old will drive by cocooned in a southern culture of tape-decks, television and paved roads.

August 15, 1986:
The Alaska government announces $8 million of its U.S. federal government highway funds will be diverted to the Shakwak Highway project, involving reconstruction of the Haines Road in British Columbia and the Yukon.

December 8, 1987:
The U.S. government comes up with another $8 million to complete the Shakwak Highway Project along the Haines Road.



July 3, 1993:
The first Kluane-to-Chilkat Bike Relay attracted 150 riders to take on the 250-kilometer road from Haines Junction to Haines.

2009:
The 44 miles of the Haines Highway in Alaska was designated a *National Scenic Byway.*





2011:
Major paving project. This photo was shot looking south at Twin Lakes on September 11, 2011. A large camp and asphalt plant had been set-up near the Kelsall Lake road junction.

Marinka’s Hill

In 2012, a section of the Haines Highway was named “Marinka’s Hill” to honor Marinka Darling, who spent 35 years with the Canada Border Services Agency, much of it as superintendent of the Port of Pleasant Camp, B.C.



<u>Above</u>: driving north from Haines, the other "Marinka's Hill" sign (highlighted) is at Km 72.3, which is about 300 meters/yards north of the Pleasant Camp Canada Customs post


Haines
Highway
146 miles
Nunavut
Alaska
Yukon
Territory
Northwest
Territories
Haines
Junction
Haines
Alberta
British
Columbia
Montana
Washington
Idaho

Part 11

Along the Alaska Highway



The feature article in the January 1944 issue of *Sports Afield* magazine was an illustrated 6-page piece about the Alaska Highway by George L. Peterson – it was one of the first "tourist" articles about the new road to be published. The cover art (left) showed a bulldozer invading country formerly ruled by the grizzly bear. When Peterson travelled the highway in the summer of 1943, the new highway, though open, was still under heavy construction in many places and was restricted to military and private vehicles with permits.

Sports Afield
January 1944



Beyond Fort Nelson, hundreds of miles of mountains rise along the highway.

Along the Alaska Highway

by George L. Peterson

Planned as a military emergency, the Alaska Highway may prove to be an avenue of adventure for anglers and hunters when peace comes

Apparently a lot of Sportsmen are planning to pack the old jalopy full of equipment and take off for the Alaska Highway as soon as war restrictions are lifted. The country is full of game and fish, they have heard, and the scenery beautiful.

True enough. This past summer I met a young Lieutenant just back from 80 days of isolation along the Haines cut-off, a spur of the Alaska Highway. His company had gone into the wilderness, clearing the way for the new road, before frost was out of the ground. When the frost went out, the swamp land behind the soldiers became impassable and they were mar-ooned. Planes brought them mail and some fresh food to add to emergency rations.



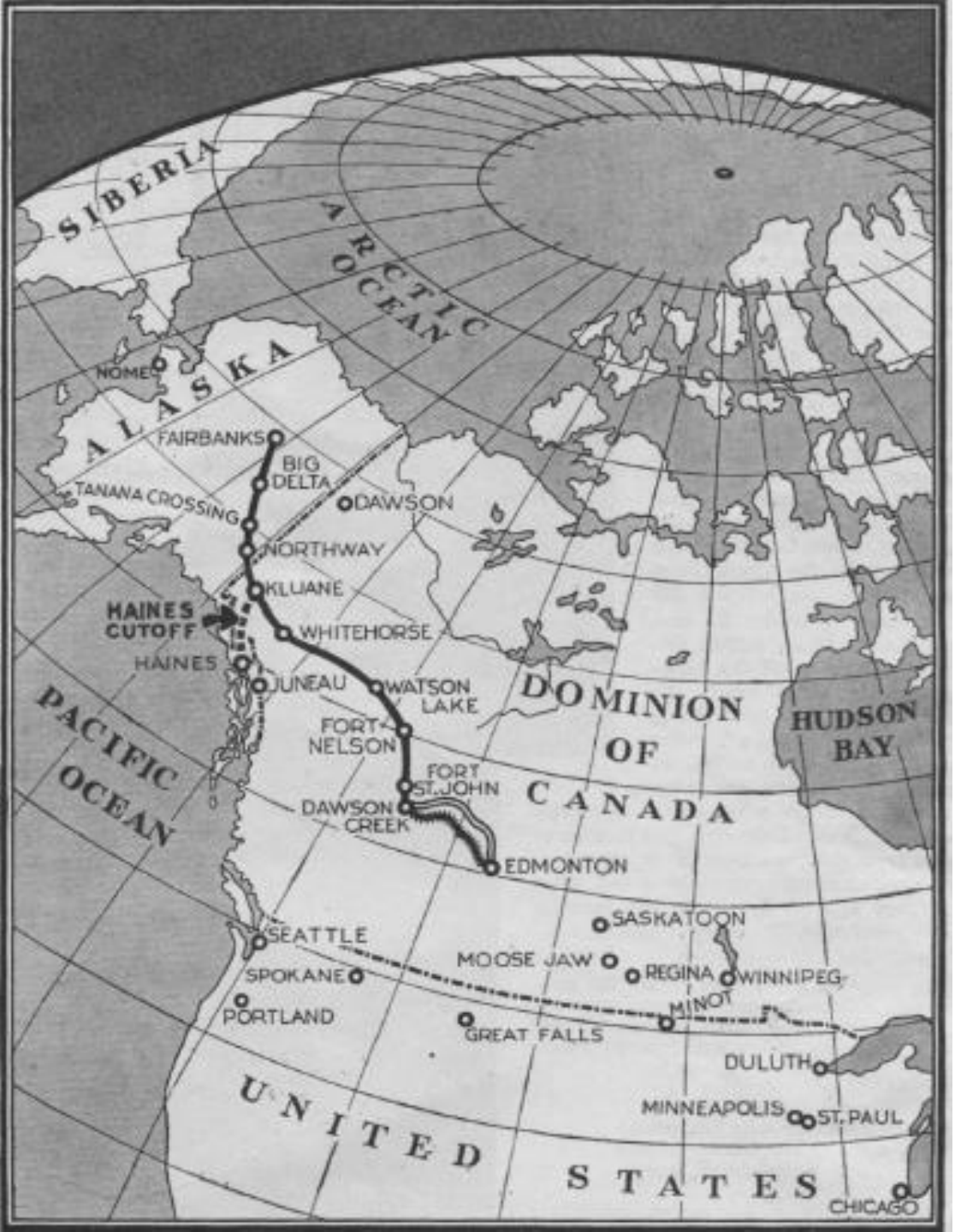
"We fished when we weren't working," the Officer said. "Lake trout took any bait that was offered. Men pulled them in until their arms were tired. I caught enough salmon in a swift stream one day to feed the entire company. Rainbow trout went as big as eight pounds."

Caption: "It is easy to imagine the excellent fishing that exists in some of the waters along the highway, until now an untried wilderness."

There are several reasons why a trip on the Alaska Highway would not be a success in the near future.

For the period of the war, travel on the road is next to impossible save for military vehicles and those of civilian contractors. A control station at the start of the highway bars the way unless you have the proper credentials.

Within a reasonable period after peace comes, the road undoubtedly will be available for civilian traffic. That won't mean an open sesame to speedy travel on a super boulevard, however. To many people, the road means a through route from Edmonton to Fairbanks. A sign just outside Edmonton proclaims that the Alaska Highway starts there, but officially the road begins at Dawson Creek, British Columbia. An old road meanders 500 miles from Edmonton to Dawson Creek. As the crow flies, the distance is 250 miles. This rough, dirt trail is muddy and almost impassable in spring, dusty and bumpy in summer.



The American Army, which controls and is paying for the Alaska Military Highway, apparently has no idea of building a new road or improving the old one from Edmonton to Dawson Creek. Army materiel comes to Dawson Creek via the Northern Alberta Railroad. Dawson Creek was selected as the start of the highway because it is the end of steel.

Caption: “Alaska Highway winds northwestward from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, the end of steel, to Fairbanks, in inland Alaska”

The Army planned the road as a military emergency - an inland route to get men and supplies to Alaska in case the Japanese took the territory from the sea. The Army is not interested in tourist travel.

Under terms of the American agreement with Canada, the United States Army surrenders control of the highway to Canada six months after the war ends. What will happen to it then is a subject for endless debate in the north country. Many a worker on the road points-out that sparsely settled Canada has not been conspicuous for its maintenance of wilderness routes in the past - that the cost of maintaining the Alaska Highway (its designation was changed from the Alcan Highway largely at the insistence of Canadians who disliked the sound of the name) is more than Canada can afford.

Contradicting this view are equally insistent voices which say that the highway will be one of the greatest permanent improvements to come out of the war and that Canada can't afford not to maintain and improve it. They point to the immense territory it opens up. Scientific parties have been exploring the country along the road with a view to oil, mineral, wood and agricultural development after the war. Canadians and Americans will find an outlet for their energies along this last frontier, the enthusiasts say.

Whatever the worth of the road itself, it has been worth all the cost (something like $125,000,000) for providing a route for heavy machinery to build the modern airports adjoining the highway. And for carrying the trucks which haul gasoline to refuel planes stopping at these airfields. Eventually pipelines will furnish gasoline to the entire territory along the road.

Well, whichever view of the Alaska Highway is right, it will not be a super road when peace comes, unless the war lasts indefinitely. The highway in many spots is like a good graveled county road. In other places it is still pretty bad.

The 1,600-mile road was pushed through in about five working months in 1942. Army Engineers, the Public Roads Administration and private contractors shared the task. Army crews cleared the way, felling trees across swamps and mountains, providing temporary crossings of rivers and creeks. Contractors or other Army units followed, bulldozing their way, making hurried fills, moving up the highway sometimes at the rate of a mile-a-day.



Caption: “This stout bulldozer is capable of powerful doing. The tree on the left vibrates as its roots are torn-up from the onslaught”

The pioneer road they built was intended to be the supply route for a straighter, better planned road to be constructed in 1943. The lessening of the Japanese threat to Alaska and the immense number of men and amounts of materials that would be involved apparently decided the Army against the super highway. Instead, they mapped improvement of the pioneer road - additional fills, cutting-down of steep grades, elimination of dangerous stretches, short cuts where feasible, permanent bridges and culverts and graveled surface. That was the work done in 1943.

From Dawson Creek to Fort Nelson, a distance of 300 miles, the highway is in good shape. The great suspension bridge across the Peace River - widest stream the road crosses - was completed last fall. Most of the other permanent bridges are built along this stretch. Dangerous Suicide Hill has been eliminated. Grades have been reduced to a maximum of 10 per cent. The 26-foot road has been graveled.

The contractors working on this part of the road completed their work and left late in the fall. Some of their personnel, equipment and camps was turned over to the United States Engineering Department, which will have charge of maintenance. Even beyond Fort Nelson, many of the contractors were ordered home. Apparently the Engineering Department, civilian branch of the War Department, is planning to do most of the work on the road until the American Army turns it back to the Canadian government, six months after the war is over.

Above Fort Nelson the highway has not had as intensive attention. In many places it is excellent, but it still needs a great deal of work.

One problem, however, that does not have much hope of early solution is the dust. Someone has said that northwestern Canada has only two kinds of roads - muddy and dusty. Where the Alaska Highway is not graveled, its surface is dangerously slippery in wet weather. Yet it dries quickly. And as soon as it is dry, it is dusty. I traveled the road last summer when it was so dusty truck drivers had to turn on their lights in the middle of the day to warn oncoming traffic. Between the walls of trees that hedge in the road much of the way, dust hung like a blanket. It permeated everything and made men wheeze like 20-year-old flivvers. From a hilltop, the dust, as heavy as a London fog, could be seen filling great valleys.

People speak of blacktop or concrete for the highway, but there is no evidence the Army has plans for such work. The cost of surfacing 1,600 miles of highway would be tremendous. Anyway, the road is not in shape for permanent surfacing.

But suppose the highway were ready for tourist traffic. What would you do for gasoline and supplies? In Edmonton and Dawson Creek many people talk of establishing gas stations and tourist camps, but the plans are still in the blueprint stage, if that far.

There are few towns of any sort along the highway. Dawson Creek has mushroomed from 500 people to perhaps 10 times that many, but the end of construction will send most of the people back to old homes. There is a small settlement at Taylor Flats, on the Peace River, 35 miles above Dawson Creek. Fifteen miles farther on is Fort St. John, with a couple of hundred souls. The big construction camps were outside the town. Then there is no hamlet for 250 miles, only a trader or two. Fort Nelson is an Indian village eight miles off the highway at the point where the road swings from a northerly direction to northwest. After that it is 650 miles to Whitehorse in Yukon Territory. Probably a village or resort will be established at Watson Lake, but that is several miles from the road. Now there are Army and construction camps along the way, but they will move out before tourists move in. It's a long, lonesome road. It may always be.

Through the Yukon country, trading posts are far apart. The road does not hit Dawson, the old gold mine city. In Alaska the highway joins the Richardson Highway at Big Delta, a hundred miles southeast of Fairbanks. From there on to Fairbanks are several towns.

Well, that's a pretty formidable list of reasons why Sportsmen and tourists won't travel up the Alaska Highway in comfort very soon. There are several reasons why they should make the trip when the journey is feasible.

A lot of relatives of soldiers and construction men who were on the road will want to see what has been accomplished. Alaska has always had a romantic lure. Motorists who have been everywhere else will want to try a new route..

There is beautiful scenery galore. From Dawson Creek past Fort Nelson, the country is much like northern Minnesota or Wisconsin, but without the many lakes of those States. The country is wooded and moderately hilly. Numerous muddy streams rush by. A hundred miles past Fort Nelson the highway enters the mountains - skirts them, follows along their sides and goes over them. Sometimes the tops have been knocked off mountains to fill canyons. The rivers become clearer and the woods change from spruce and poplar and birch to pine. Rock basins cradle lakes. The Liard River tumbles through its majestic canyon, though the most spectacular part is away from the highway

Apparently, a lot of Sportsmen are planning to pack the old jalopy full of equipment and take-off for the Alaska Highway as soon as war restrictions are lifted. The country is full of game and fish, they have heard, and the scenery beautiful.

All the way to Whitehorse the mountains continue, wooded or rocky, they are all eye-appealing, but after hundreds of miles they become a bit monotonous. They have to be taken in st-raight doses now, unrelieved by towns.

Whitehorse, filled with associations of Gold Rush days, is an interesting place. Its pre-war summer population was about 600. In winter it was hardly more than half that, for workers on the narrow-gauge railroad that comes over the famous White Pass from Skagway, Alaska, went “outside” for the cold mon-ths. So did the river transport workers. Army Engineers took over the railroad when the United States went into the war and kept it going all winter.

The bank is the one in which Robert W. Service clerked from 1904 to 1910. He left his Whitehorse job because the bank wouldn't lend him $500 to publish his Yukon writings. The Old Log Church, where Service was vestry clerk, is still used by the Anglicans. And nearby is Sam McGee's cabin. In real life, McGee found the frozen body of a fisherman as he walked across the ice of a lake near Whitehorse. Unable to carry the body and afraid the wolves might get it, McGee made a funeral pyre. He told the story to Service, who changed it a bit for his poem..

The Lewes River, which becomes the Yukon farther down, runs through Whitehorse and Dawson in Yukon Territory in Canada and continues a couple of thousand miles to St. Michael, Alaska. Whitehorse is the head of navigation and comfortable steamers take on freight and passengers just across the tracks from the railroad station. Once tourists were the main business, but last summer military needs were far more important. Half-a-dozen old vessels lay rotting on the bank, Indian children running in and out of the cabins. One, the *Yukon Rose,* lifted a saucy prow and looked as though she might be reconditioned.

Two miles upstream are the famous rapids where so many gold seekers cracked-up when they came from the south by raft. It is an enchanting spot on a summer night, with hills and mountains and red sky forming a backdrop to the west. The blue-green water leaps dangerously over rocks and a steady roar envelopes everything. Roses and half-a-dozen other wild-flowers grow on the banks and people from Whitehorse, with little other diversion, wander the paths through the woods.

It is not hard to understand the spell of the Yukon. One wonders what Robert Service (still living in Seattle) would think of it with the bustle of the highway replacing the earlier gold boom.

But there is also much to see beyond Whitehorse. A hundred miles farther on, the Haines cut-off joins the big road and some people see in this cut-off the eventual doom of the long route from Edmonton. It starts at Haines, Alaska, on the Lynn Canal below Skagway. It winds over the mountains through Chilkat Pass, another of the gold rush routes, and finds the highway at the foot of the St. Elias Range.



Scenery along the Haines cut-off is gorgeous. Going south the tremendous peaks of the St. Elias Range rise at the travelers right. Save only for Mount McKinley in Alaska, several summits of the St. Elias Range tower above anything on the North American continent. Huge glaciers hang between high, jagged peaks. They are cold and aloof, yet fascinating and beautiful in a forbidding way. Rivers, waterfalls and forests add their attractions.

Caption: “The Haines cut-off road crosses a river. The mountains are part of the Saint Elias Range.”

North from the Haines cut-off, the highway skirts the St. Elias Range, following valley bottoms most of the way. Another 50 miles on is what many people consider the most enchanting part of all the route - Lake Kluane.

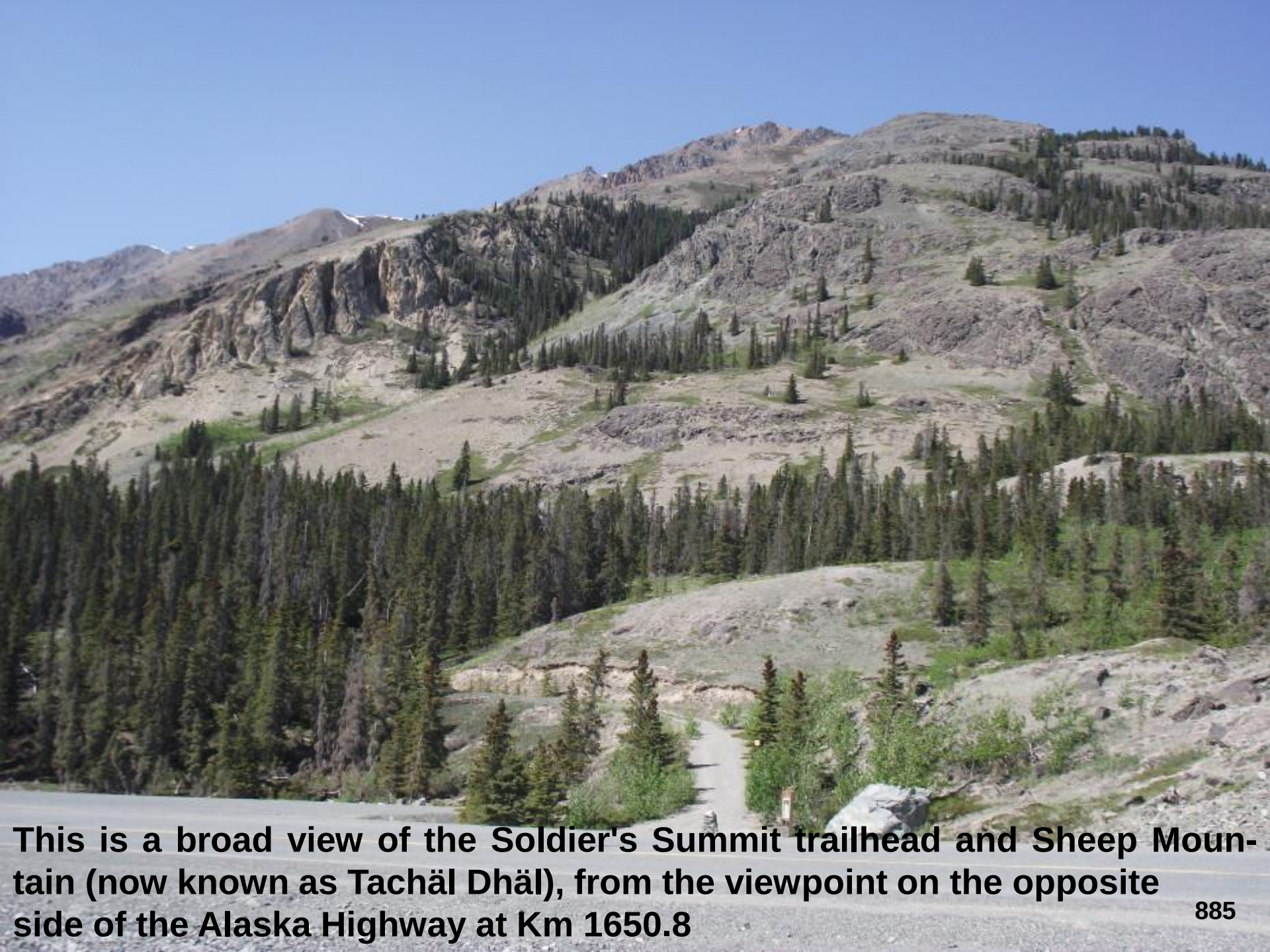
Lake Kluane is shaped like a tuning fork, is 35-miles-long. The sharply-contoured St. Elias mountains crowd down upon its vary-colored waters - waters sometimes blue-green in the sun, sometimes red as you watch from a distance at the end of day, sometimes clay colored near the mud flats where streams bring down silt.

Here, where Soldier Summit falls off into the water, the high-way was opened in the fall of 1942 and the formal dedication was held at the place where working parties from the north and south came together.



—Photo by Gail Pinkstaff, U. S. Public Roads Administration.

BEAUTY IN THE YUKON—This striking picture shows the type of scenery which the Alaska Highway will open to tourists after the war. Here the road winds around the spectacular shore of Lake Kluane. It was here that the opening ceremony took place last fall.



This is a broad view of the Soldier's Summit trailhead and Sheep Mountain (now known as Tachäl Dhäl), from the viewpoint on the opposite side of the Alaska Highway at Km 1650.8

From the road you look down on a high rocky island. Across the lake, more mountains close in the scene. Blue and white ice of glaciers shines in the sun.

And so to Alaska. If it’s scenery you want, the Highway is your dish.



Game and fish? There is plenty of that, too. Every camp has bears at its garbage dump. Some become pets. Early arrivals shot the animals for their fur, but such slaughter of the fat creatures soon lost favor.

Caption: “The bears grow fat on the garbage dumps at the Army and construction camps and men foster risky friendships with them”

Moose are plentiful. Indians used to hunt moose. The meat was a welcome addition to a usually scanty larder and the hide was used for moccasins and leather clothing. But war jobs have lured the braves from old pursuits and many a squaw is without the moose hide she needs to shoe her family. Soldier and civilian workers took a number of moose calves for pets. In fact, most camps were overstocked with animals - squirrels, crows, bear cubs, foxes and dogs of all kinds, especially sled dogs.

Though not available for hunting, the government has established a buffalo herd at Big Delta, Alaska. Buffaloes get along splendidly in the far north. Among the high peaks, mountain sheep hide.

In the low, hilly country that stretches from the Alaskan part of the highway to the Arctic Ocean, live caribou and reindeer, which are so close to being the same thing that most people can’t tell the difference

A herd of several thousand caribou was seen near Fairbanks during the summer. Caribou have been increasing in number. At the same time the numbers of the more or less domesticated reindeer farther north have been waning. The great Lomen herds were turned over to Eskimos by the government. But the Eskimo herders have gone to better paying defense jobs or into the Army. The decline in the reindeer herds is laid to inroads by wolves. However, some authorities believe that the reindeer have been joining their wild cousins, the caribou. Caribou meat is esteemed by the white men as well as by the Indians. In the wilderness they live on caribou all winter without tiring of the diet.



On the lower part of the highway, ducks and geese are common in the fall. Grande Prairie, Alberta, located on the old road between Edmonton and Dawson Creek, is said by hunters to afford some of the best goose and duck hunting in the northwest.

Streams along the lower road yield grayling and Dolly Varden trout to fishermen. Farther north in the lakes are lake trout and whitefish. At Teslin Lake, which the highway follows for 30 miles a half day's journey below Whitehorse, I saw lake trout taken that looked suspiciously close to 40 pounds.

Caption: "Parts of Alberta and BC tapped by the Alaska Hwy. offer some good duck and goose shooting"

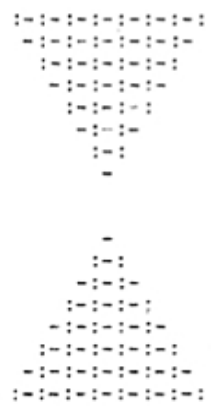
Alaska streams teem with salmon during the spawning season and also raise rainbow trout as big as the ones that got away in the States.

Game and fish and scenery - the highway has them all in good measure. Too bad the road isn’t more inviting for the traveller.

Road Log

ROAD LOG

ALASKA MILITARY HIGHWAY



Compiled at
The Office of The Special Commissioner
for Defence Projects in North West Canada,
9937-103rd Street, Edmonton, Alberta.

September 1st, 1945.

1. The following log of the Alaska Military Highway was com-piled at the office of the Special Commissioner for Defence Projects in Northwest Canada at 9937 - 103rd Street, Edmonton, Alberta.

2. The mileages given are distances from Dawson Creek, B.C. proceeding northwesterly towards the Canada-Alaska border but are not guaranteed as absolutely correct due to various reasons. They are however approximately correct in relation to the mileposts as at August 31st, 1945.

3. L & R refer to left-hand side of road and right-hand side of road respectively, proceeding northwesterly.

4. “#” Denotes maintenance camp in operation.

Mile	
0.0	Dawson Creek Railhead and Flight Strip No. 1
2.5	Old camp on R.
14.5	Old camp on R. Buildings gone.
20.0	Maintenance Camp and Kiskatinaw Bridge #
22.0	Old camp on R.
27.0	Old camp on R.
31.0	Old camp on R. (Farm Buildings)
34.5	Old camp on R.
34.7	Pingel Creek Bridge
35.0	Peace River Bridge and 2 old camps on R.
48.0	Old camp on R.
48.9	Old camp on R.
49.0	Maintenance Camp at Fort St. John (now closed)
52.3	Charlie Lake Store on L and road to Hudson Hope
52.5	Old camp on R.
52.7	Charlie Lake Laundry (U.S.) on R.
52.8	Alaska Highway checking station R.
53.2	Trail to Charlie Lake on R.
56.5	Old camp on R.
58.1	Fort St. John Lumber Co. on L.
67.0	Old trail to Montney on R.
68.0	Old camp on L. (not visible from road)
69.0	Old camp on L. (not visible from road)

72.8	Road to Beatton River Intermediate Landing Field on R.
73.3	Telephone Line to River Intermediate Landing Field on R.
74.9	Old camp on R. (not visible from road)
83.5	Old camp on R.
84.5	Road to sawmill on L.
92.5	Old camp on R.
97.4	Road to U.S. Weather Station on R.
98.3	Old camp on L.
100.4	Maintenance camp “Blueberry 101” #
117.5	Old camp on L.
135.0	Stone Quarry on R. Bldgs. on L.
136.0	Old camp on R.
136.2	Jorgys Bend Sign on L.
142.8	Old camp on L.
147.0	Old camp on L. & Tuck’er Inn (meals) Beatton River Bridge
147.3	Road to Flight Strip No. 2 (Sikanni Chief) on R.
154.0	Sign:- “Pink Mountains” on R. Mountains are on L.
159.2	Old camp on L.
159.9	Old camp on R.
161.5	Old camp on L.
161.9	Sikanni River Bridge
162.0	Old camp on R.
163.0	Maintenance camp on [...] “Sikanni Chief”
170.5	Mason Creek

170.8	Old camp on R.
175.1	Buckinghorse River Bridge
176.3	Old camp on R.
190.7	Old camp on L.
200.2	Old camp on R.
201.0	Maintenance Camp “Trutch” on [...]
206.8	Be [...] Creek Bridge
208.9	Old camp on L.
223.5	Road to Flight Strip “Prophet River” on [...]
223.9	Old camp on R. and L.
228.5	Bea[r?] Creek Bridge
229.0	Old sawmill camp on [...]
232.2	Old camp on R and L
232.9	Prophet River Store on R.
233.0	Lum & Abner (meals) on L.
233.9	Indian Creek bridge
242.5	Martin Creek Bridge
245.0	Maintenance camp “Prophet River” on [...]
246.9	Pa[...] Creek bridge
252.8	Little Beaver Creek bridge
258.5	Old camp on L.
260.1	Old camp on L.
264.3	Big Beaver Creek bridge
278.0	Old camp on R and L

278.5	Jackfish Creek bridge
278.8	Maintenance camp “Jackfish Creek” on L (now closed)
295.5	Old camp on R.
297.0	Old camp on R. Muskwa River bridge
299.0	Old camp on R.
299.6	Road to Ft. Nelson Airport on R. 6½ miles distant
300.0	Maintenance Camp “Fort Nelson” on R & L. #
306.8	Old camp on R
307.9	Old camp on R.
308.0	Old camp on R.
308.2	Old camp on R & L
320.7	Spruce Creek (culvert)
324.8	Raspberry Creek bridge & camp on L.
335.0	Kledo River Bridge & camp on R & L.
340.1	Old camp on L & steamboat Creek bridge.
351.0	Maintenance camp on L “Steamboat Mountain” (now closed)
352.2	Summit of Steamboat Hill
358.4	Gardner Creek bridge
363.0	Mill Creek bridge & old camps on L.
375.0	Old camp on L.
383.0	Tetsa River bridge #1
385.0	Tetsa River bridge #2
387.9	Old camp on L.
390.0	North Fork Tetsa River bridge.

391.5	Old camp on L.
392.0	Maintenance camp “Summit Lake” on L.
	Highest point on Highway elevation 4170-feet
392.0	Summit Lake on L extends to mile 393.3
395.2	Vetah bridge
396.5	“107 Mile Creek” bridge
396.6	Old camp on L.
398.5	Stoney Creek bridge
402.0	Pebble Creek bridge
403.5	Gravel Creek bridge
408.2	Old camp on L.
410.5	McDonald Creek bridge
417.1	Small culvert - bridge
418.5	Racing River bridge
422.8	Old camp on L.
422.9	Old camp on [...]
424.5	Wood Creek bridge
425.0	Small bridge
425.5	Old camp on R & L
433.5	Small wood bridge
435.0	Little Wood Creek bridge
437.8	Toad River Bridge
441.8	Old camp on L & Pederson Creek bridge #1
441.9	Old camp on R & L

443.5	Pederson Creek bridge No. 2
444.7	Pederson Creek bridge No. 3
445.0	Pederson Creek bridge No. 4
449.0	Summit of Muncho Pass elevation 3160-feet
449.9	Old camp on R & L
456.0	Maintenance camp “Muncho Lake” on L. Old camp on R
	Time changes here - one hour back going north.
456.5	Old camp on L
458.0	Old camp on L
460.0	Old camp on R
460.0	Old camp on R (near to previous camp)
462.0	Old camp on R
463.1	Old camp on L
472.0	Old camp on L
476.3	Trout River bridge & Old camp on L
478.0	Small wood bridge
479.3	Prochniak Creek bridge
492.3	Old camp on R (trail to this camp is just beyond Lower Liard Bridge)
493.5	Old camp on L
495.7	Old camp on L
495.9	Lower Liard River Bridge & Maintenance camp “Liard” on L. (now closed)

496.0	Trail on R. to U.S. Weather station
496.5	Trail to “Liard Hot Springs”
501.3	Teeter Creek bridge
502.5	Old camp on L.
507.6	Road to Flight Strip #4 “Liard Canyon” on L
513.9	Smith River bridge
514.1	Old camp on R.
516.8	Road to Smith River Intermediate Landing Field on R
527.5	Old camp on R & L
532.2	Old camp on R & Coal River bridge
537.0	Old camp on R & L
539.6	Old camp on L #
543.0	Maintenance camp “Coal River” on R
547.0	Old wooden bridge
558.0	Leguil Creek bridge (small)
558.1	Old camp on R.
570.5	Signpost “Allens Lookout” on L.
577.3	Sandin Creek
578.1	Old camp on R
583.9	Soby Brook (Sign on R)
588.1	Contact Creek bridge (where highway const. crews met in Nov. 1942)
594.3	Iron Creek bridge
596.0	Maintenance camp on L “Iron Creek” now closed

606.0	Old camp on R just before bridge & Hyland River bridge
606.1	Old camp on R & one hut on L
606.2	Old camp on L
618.7	Mill Creek bridge
619.9	Lower Post. Hudsons Bay Co. Store on L.
626.8	Marker on L Re: Entering Yukon
631.9	Old camp on L.
634.6	“Watson Lake” Maintenance camp on L. RCAF guard gate 7 miles distant #
652.5	Old camp on R
670.2	Little Rancheria bridge
670.3	Maintenance camp “Little Rancheria” on L
674.0	Big Creek bridge
687.0	Old camp on R
687.1	Lower Rancheria Bridge
692.6	Pump Station “Z” on L
694.9	Spencer Creek bridge
710.0	Rancheria maintenance camp on L (now closed)
712.0	Canyon Creek bridge
721.5	Upper Rancheria bridge
722.3	Old camp on L. Access road on L to Pine Lake Flight strip #5
725.1	Swift River bridge
727.3	Old camp on L
733.0	Seagull Creek bridge

733.4	“Swift River” Maintenance camp on L #
735.9	Partridge Creek bridge
741.6	Screw Creek bridge & old camp on L
747.7	Pump Station “Y” on L
751.2	Logjam Creek bridge
755.4	Youall Creek - small bridge
759.2	Smart River bridge
759.3	Old camp on L
767.6	Upper Hazel Creek bridge
768.7	Lower Hazel Creek
770.0	Morris Lake maintenance camp on R. Now closed.
775.8	Old camp on L
777.0	Morley River bridge
777.3	Old camp on R
777.7	Old camp on L
790.7	Old camp on R
790.5	Small bridge
794.0	Pump station “X” & camp on R
803.6	Nisutlin Bay bridge
804.0	Teslin Maintenance camp on R #
804.2	Village of Teslin on L
804.5	Access road on R to Teslin Intermediate Landing Field
813.1	“Ten Mile Creek” bridge
815.9	Hamlet on L at lakeshore

816.8	“Lone Tree Creek” bridge
822.5	“Deadman Creek” bridge
825.0	“Twenty-mile creek” bridge
829.7	Old camp on R & L
836.0	Johnson‘ Crossing maintenance camp on R (now closed). Road to Norman Wells on R.
836.1	Road to Norman Wells & Canol on R
836.5	Teslin River bridge
836.6	Old camp on R
843.0	Access road to Flight Strip #6 on R. Squanga Lake
843.9	Old camp on L
849.0	Johns River bridge
855.0	Pump station "W" on R
865.4	Jakes Corner. Road Junction to Carcross (33 miles)
865.8	Old camp on R
872.2	Judas Creek bridge
883.2	Marsh Lake maintenance camp on L #
888.5	Bridge “Glacier #1”
888.6	Bridge “Glacier #2”
890.3	McClintock River bridge
893.4	Bridge “Glacier #3”
897.6	Lewes River Bridge. Old camp on L just over bridge
904.6	Road junction to Carcross (31½ miles)
908.3	Old checking station on R

909.3	Checking station on L. Also McRae Railhead
909.4	Whitepass & Yukon Railroad crossing
909.8	Access road on R leading to U.S. laundry
910.8	H.Q.'s maintenance camp on R “911” now closed
916.2	U.S. Airport guard-gate on R
917.0	R.C.A.F. No. 10 C.M.U. on L
917.3	Top of “2-mile hill” to Whitehorse
919.1	Checking station on L & McIntyre Creek bridge
936.5	Old camp on R & L
946.5	Takhinni River bridge. Old camp on L. Just over bridge.
956.0	Stoney Creek bridge & maintenance camp on R #
956.7	Pump Station “B” on R
968.0	Old camp on L
968.1	Mendenhall Creek bridge
974.7	Indian Village on L & Indian graveyard on R
987.5	Old camp on R
987.8	Cracker Creek bridge
995.2	Road to Aishihik Intermediate Landing Field on R (74 miles)
996.0	Building on R
996.4	Aishihik Maint. Camp (Now closed) on R & L & Aishihik bridge
997.8	Pump Station “C”
999.9	Old camp on R
1006.8	Marshall Creek bridge
1013.5	Access road to Flight Strip No. 7 on R “Pon Lake”

1016.4	Haines Road Junction maintenance camp on L (RCMP here) #
1018.8	Pine Creek bridge
1019.0	Dominion Experimental Station on R
1022.1	Bear Creek bridge & Mrs. McIntosh's Trading Post on R just over bridge
1027.9	Summit Bear Creek Pass elevation 3240-feet
1034.5	Jarvis Creek bridge
1035.9	Pump Station "D"
1036.2	Kloo Lake trading Post on R. Old camp on L
1038.1	Old camp on R
1048.1	Christmas Creek bridge
1053.4	Trail on R to Kluane Lake
1054.4	Old camp on L
1056.0	Kluane Lake Maintenance camp on L (now closed)
1058.9	Slims River bridge
1061.5	Soldiers Summit on L .Alaska Highway officially opened at this point.
1064.1	Old camp on R
1066.6	Small new wood bridge
1071.6	New small bridge replacing culvert
1078.3	Nines Creek bridge
1080.3	Standard oil camp on L. Old buildings on R
1082.9	Pump Station "E" on L
1083.0	Destruction Bay maintenance camp on R old pump station on L #

1083.8	Old buildings on R
1089.1	Small bridge “Half-breed Creek”
1093.0	Trail to Burwash Landing on R. Jacquot Bros.
1095.0	Access road on R to Flight Strip #8 “Burwash”
1098.0	Old camp on R
1098.1	Old camp on L
1098.5	Duke River bridge
1103.9	Burwash Creek bridge
1111.6	Quill Creek bridge
1113.9	Glacier Creek bridge
1116.7	Cairn to U.S. Officer - crushed by a Caterpillar tractor
1119.2	Swede Johnson Creek bridge
1126.5	Pump Station “F” on L
1130.0	Old camp on L
1130.1	Old camp on L
1130.4	Donjek Trestle No. 1
1130.8	Donjek Trestle No. 3
1131.2	Donjek Trestle No. 4 - 5
1131.7	Donjek Trestle No. 6
1131.8	Donjek Trestle No. 7 (Main channel here)
1132.2	Concrete mound on L to U.S. Private
1137.0	Old camp on R
1146.1	Grafe Creek bridge
1146.6	Edith Creek bridge & Old camp just over bridge on R

1150.0	Old camp on R
1151.5	Lake Creek bridge
1155.9	Koidern Maintenance Camp on L #
1156.0	Koidern #1 bridge
1164.0	Koidern #2 bridge & old camp on L just over bridge
1164.2	Two Lakes bridge
1165.0	Old camp on L
1165.1	White (overflow) bridge
1165.8	Pump Station “G” on L
1167.3	Old buildings on L
1168.6	Old camp on L
1169.1	White River bridge
1176.8	Old camp on L
1178.0	Sanpete Creek bridge
1178.4	Little Sanpete Creek bridge
1181.0	Dry Creek bridge #1
1184.2	Old camp just before bridge on R & L. Dry Creek Bridge #2
1188.4	Road junction on R to Snag Intermediate Landing Field
1191.8	Old camp on R
1195.7	Niggerhead Creek bridge
1200.0	Old camp on R
1200.3	Beaver Creek #1 bridge
1200.5	Beaver Creek #2 bridge (main channel)
1200.6	Old camp on R & L

1205.4	Pump Station “H” R & L
1206.2	Snag Creek maintenance camp on R (now closed)
1208.0	Snag Creek bridge
1213.1	Old camp on R. Another on L
1218.0	Mirror Creek bridge
1220.0	Old camp on R
1220.3	New bridge replacing culverts
1221.4	Canada-Alaska border

NOTES:

- The locations of 123 old highway construction camps are noted.
- 16 airfields are listed, at Miles 0 (Dawson Creek), 72.8 (Beatton River), 147.3 (Sikanni Chief), 223.5 (Prophet River), 299.6 (Fort Nelson), 507.6 (Liard Canyon), 516.8 (Smith River), 634.6 (Watson Lake), 722.3 (Pine Lake), 804.5 (Teslin), 843.0 (Squanga Lake), 916.2 (Whitehorse), 995.2 (Aishihik), 1013.5 (Pon Lake), 1095.0 (Burwash), and 1188.4 (Snag)
- 11 pump stations are listed, at Miles 692.6, 747.7, 794.0, 855.0, 956.7, 997.8, 1035.9, 1082.9, 1126.5, 1165.8, and 1205.4.
- There were only 7 facilities for civilians noted: Charlie Lake Store at Mile 52.3, Tuck'er Inn at Mile 147.0, Prophet River Store at Mile 232.9, Lum & Abner at Mile 233.0, a Hudson Bay Company store at Mile 619.9, Mrs. McIntosh's Trading Post at Mile 1022.1 and the Kloo Lake Trading Post at Mile 1036.2.

Part 12

Catalyst for Change

The Will of the People

Alaska Highway Brings Impetus to Bid By Whitehorse as Territorial Capital

Great Falls Tribune (Great Falls, Montana) - April 14, 1946
by W.P. (Luke) Wright

WHITEHORSE. Y.T. - Whitehorse, long the commercial capital of the Yukon, now is making a determined bid to become the political capital as well.

Pointing-out that Dawson, the seat of government since the gold rush days, is isolated except by air and river navigation a few months each summer, Whitehorse residents, already promised a new government building, hope to convince Ottawa that the territorial offices should be moved here and that a more democratic form of government should be introduced.

The Yukon is the only one of the territories with representation in the dominion parliament but actual control of the day-to-day development rests largely in the hands of a Controller appointed by the Dominion Department of mines and resources. The Whitehorse men's council is asking that the three-man territorial council be given more authority to carry-out the will of the people.

The urge for change is not new in Whitehorse but the present impetus can be traced to the increased importance of this community as a result of the building of the Alaska Highway and other joint defense projects.

Whitehorse was born when the stampede to the Klondike started shortly before the turn-of-the-century. Its commercial importance in a territory larger than any American State other than Texas became assured when the White Pass & Yukon narrow-gauge railroad was built through to the head of navigation on the Lewes River from salt-water at Skagway in 1902.

Long before men thought of a military air route to Asia, bush pilots were operating out of this town, serving numerous mining camps.

Then, in 1942, the military highway was constructed and the airfields enlarged. The Northwest Staging Route; the chain of large airfields built to accommodate the biggest planes, is supplemented by a series of landing strips along the highway itself, thus providing a constant guide to the pilot of the small plane that may not be equipped with a radio direction finder.

Those who expect the highway and landing fields to grow-up into bush again in a few years appear to be doomed to disappointment.

Canadian Pacific Airlines now flies a daily schedule both north and south through Whitehorse. Pan American Airways has a less frequent schedule but maintains a permanent traffic office here.



The 0'Harra bus line makes twice weekly trips along the highway from Fairbanks to Whitehorse and the British-Yukon Navigation Co. has just taken delivery of three new 21-passenger busses to continue, as a private venture, the service it previously has operated between Whitehorse and Dawson Creek, B.C., under contract with the United States Army.

<u>Left</u>: in 1938, Kenneth F. "Ken" O'Harra started operating a bus between Fairbanks, Alaska, and Livengood, a mining camp 82 miles to the north. In 1939, O'Harra bought two more buses to operate charters and special excursions. When the O'Harra Bus Lines went bankrupt 10 years later, it was the largest bus operation in Alaska, with runs extending into the Yukon Territory.

While the highway; renamed the Northwest Highways System when it was taken over April 3rd by the Canadian Government, will be under the jurisdiction of the Canadian army for the present it would be improper to infer that the route is barred to civilians. Canadian authorities have made it plain that they cannot be responsible for the safety or comfort to the horde of tourists that has indicated a desire to travel over the road this year. But commercial truckers are increasing.

The bus lines report a large share of their business is from travelers who go only a hundred or two miles rather than from one end of the route to the other. This sort of travel eventually must lead to the establishment of additional facilities for overnight stops, gasoline and automotive service. The Canadian government has said it will open the road to ordinary civilian travel by sections as these facilities are developed.

The Canadians are taking over maintenance of the road just as soon as the spring thaws become evident. No matter who is in-charge, some difficulties are to be expected. But the new caretakers have the advantage of a system of maintenance camps previously set-up by the Americans and manned by Canadian citizens so it is to be expected that they will have no difficulty in preserving the record of no blocking of any section of the route for more than 48 hours.

The betterment program carried-out by the American army Engineers since the route was turned over to them by the Public Roads Administration late in 1943 is to be continued, Canadian authorities here say.

Since last September, two new steel bridges have been erected across streams between Whitehorse and the Alaska border and steel for others lies in stockpiles here, having been turned-over by the American forces with the understanding that it would be used for the purpose for which it originally was intended.

The Americans did not lose a bridge in the spring breakup of 1945 but are frank to admit this was a lucky break. Engineers say it is amazing that more bridges have not been lost considering the lack of high-water data available when the original survey was made. They are sure the Canadians, with the additional information now at-hand, will be able to locate new bridges and to speed the realignment of certain sections of the highway so as to make a better road than if all the work originally planned had been carried-out the first year.

Mecca for Tourists

Fort Nelson Visioned As Mecca for Tourist

The Vancouver Daily Province (Vancouver, B.C.) - September 3, 1946

FORT NELSON, Sept. 3 - This important link in the North-west Staging Route for air travel across the world may so-on become the centre of another famous Canadian holiday resort.

Plans are well advanced for construction of a modern hotel capable of catering to 50 transient tourists as soon as the Alaska Highway is opened for unrestricted travel.

This is one of four hotels to be built on the northern part of the highway route this year as part of an intensive tourist drive into the north country under sponsorship of the British Yukon Navigation Company; a British controlled organization with headquarters in Anchorage, Alaska. Fort Nelson has been chosen as the southern point of the company's plan to cater to the expected influx of American tourists.

Under present plans construction of the hotel will be financed by the company and it will be turned-over to an independent organization at cost price-for operation.

No Billboards

The other three hotels will be constructed at Lower Post, B.C., Whitehorse and at an undetermined point on the Yukon side of the Alaska border.

James Bell, present representative of the company here, revealed plans also include salvaging a number of buildings from now vacant construction camps. They will be converted into apartments capable of housing four families.

From observation of the country north of Fort Nelson the choice appears to be a wide one. The only real scenery encountered during my three days travel with exercise north began 50 miles north of the settlement. Entry into the Rockies provided a continues panorama of mountain beauty, deep sweeping valleys and hidden lakes.

The untouched natural beauty of nature is here in abundance. For the 160 miles traveled since leaving Nelson there has been a notable absence of advertising signs and everything usually found along a tourist route.

Will Finance Hotel

Absence of advertising prompted an American newspaper correspondent accompanying the party to remark “I’d give a day’s pay to see a Coca-Cola sign or a Hot-Dog stand.”

Natives in the area say the country has a better climate than midwest provinces.

Winter normally begins Nov. 15 and lasts until Feb. 15th. During this period, according to old timers, the temperature ranges from approximately 10-degrees cold dropping as low as 30-degrees below zero.

Snow in the Fort Nelson area disappears early in April and navigation down the Nelson and Mackenzie Rivers begins earlier than farther south.

However the weather changes greatly for every 200 miles farther north, most oldsters said.

Snow fall is light and the Alaska Highway is kept open. In fact many residents in the area say they prefer driving in the winter despite the short days.

The mountainous terrain and broad valleys could provide ideal winter sport areas.

The most favoured centre for this would be close to the Liard, 200 miles north of Nelson. Hot-springs temperature in the pools varies from moderate warm to 190 degrees.

Hunter’s Paradise

The whole area supports hundreds of trappers. From their information the country is a hunters paradise, with moose, mountain goat and an abundance of small animals.

The lakes and small streams throughout the area can lure any fisherman with trout and grayling. But if any Isaac Waltons are planning to come up this way they had better make sure they bring deep-sea fishing tackle. Those special beauties love the bottom and come in 24-pound size with amazing regularity.

Part 13

The Canadian Section

Open-to-Traffic

TIP TO TOURISTS: SCENERY MAGNIFICENT, BUT FACILITIES MEAGER ON ALCAN ROAD

The Record-Herald (Washington Court House, Ohio) - March 30, 1946
by William A. Baker
Central Press Correspondent

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Jurisdiction over the Canadian section of the Alaska highway is to be transferred to the Dominion government by the United States Army on April 1. The road will then become “in all respects an integral part of the Canadian Highway System.

It is likely that tourists will be permitted to travel on the road this summer. However, Canadians who are closely in touch with the situation consider it improbable that the highway can be used to any great extent by general traffic before 1947 - or, possibly, 1948. This is because of limited facilities for obtaining gasoline, food and overnight accommodation.

The Alaska Highway, a gravel road 26-feet-wide, extends from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Fairbanks, Alaska - a distance of approximately 1,600 miles. It was constructed by the United States Army Engineers.

The road has been maintained by the Army, and an Army Spokesman states that it is in excellent condition. Members of a recent inspection party reported that most of their driving was at a speed of 40 miles-an-hour.

The war spurred to completion the far northern part of an Inter-American highway advocated for years by tourist organizations.

Whether the Alaska Highway is maintained for civilian traffic probably will depend upon whether the defense authorities of Canada and the United States believe that the strategic importance of the road justifies the expenditure in peace-time.

Because the road was built chiefly with the labor of soldiers there have been varying estimates of its cost to the taxpayers of the United States. These estimates range from $25,000,000 to $75,000,000, exclusive of maintenance. The cost of maintenance for the fiscal year 1944-1945, it is understood, was $10,564,554.

Officially, the Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway, the great north road is popularly known by its soldier-engineered nickname – “Alcan.” Speedy tourists could drive from Glacier National park in Montana (on the Canadian border) to Fairbanks in five days; from New York to Fairbanks in nine days.

From the United States-Canada border to Edmonton, Alberta by a hard-surfaced road through Calgary, the distance is 370 miles. From Edmonton to the southern-end of the Alaska Highway (495 miles) there is a dirt and gravel road which the Army reports closed-to-traffic at certain times of year.

If You’re Interested…

For the latest information concerning this road, anyone desiring to travel over the Alaska highway should communicate with the Edmonton Automobile club (the Army shipped heavy freight by rail as far as Dawson Creek, the end of steel).

On the military road the British Yukon Navigation company operates buses between Dawson Creek and Whitehorse, and the O'Harra Bus company operates buses between Whitehorse and Fairbanks.

These lines are under charter to the United States Army, however, civilians are carried if seats are available after all government passengers have been accommodated. An approved rate schedule governs the fares.

The facilities along the highway are utterly inadequate to accommodate a large number of tourists. Civilian motorists can buy gasoline at Fort St. John (Mile 49), Trutch (Mile 201), Fort Nelson (Mile 300), Muncho Lake (Mile 456) and Whitehorse (Mile 917).

At these points gasoline prices vary from 55-cents to 65 cents-a-gallon. Because the Alaska Highway was constructed primarily as a military road there were provided along its length only those facilities required by the Army.

It is reported that the Imperial Oil Company may establish service stations at intervals, as required by civilian travelers, along the Canadian section of the highway.

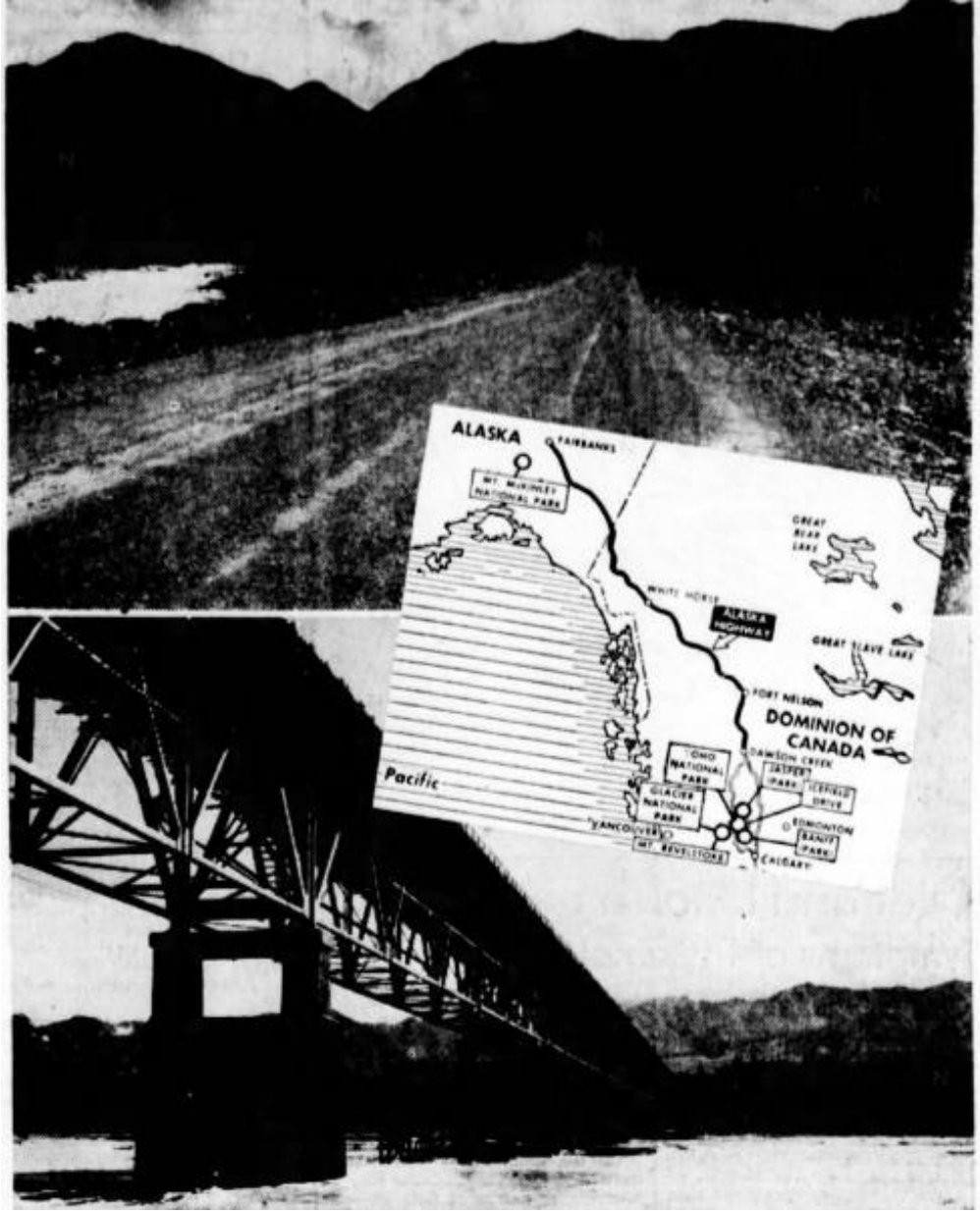
There are hotels at the small city of Whitehorse (half-way point on the highway). Overnight accommodation can be obtained at only two additional places - Fort Nelson and Watson Lake (Mile 635) - on the Canadian section. Civilians, however, have very low priority for obtaining this accommodation. Present rates are 75 cents-a-night.

It appears almost certain that no restrictions as to civilian traffic will be imposed upon that part of the highway between the Canada-Alaska boarder and Fairbanks.

The agreement between the governments of the United States and Canada provides that there shall not be imposed at any time any discriminating conditions to the use of the highway between United States and Canadian civilian traffic. The War Department does not have any knowledge, a Spokesman states, of any intention to charge a toll on any part of the highway.

In Alaska the highway follows the Tanana River and makes a junction with the Richardson Highway at Big Delta, 90 miles southeast of Fairbanks. The Richardson Highway runs from a point north of Fairbanks to Valdez, on the southern coast of Alaska.

In both Canada and Alaska the highway cuts through big game country. If the road is kept open sportsmen will be able to drive to hunting and fishing grounds that few white people have seen. War Department necessity and the desirability of linking a chain of airfields determined the route of the Alaska Highway.



THE GREAT NORTH ROAD—Top photo shows a typical view of the Alaska-Canada highway (Alcan) where scenery abounds. In background is Hayes Peak in Yukon territory. Lower photo is a general view of the Robertson river bridge of the Alcan highway, while under construction. Map shows the extent of the highway from Dawson Creek, Canada, to Fairbanks in Alaska, its northern terminus.

The following 6” x 9” brochure entitled “Alaska Highway – Canadian Section” was published by the Canadian Government Travel Bureau in 1955; issued under the authority of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources

ALASKA HIGHWAY

Canadian Section



Issued under the Authority of the
Honourable Jean Lesage, Minister of
Northern Affairs and National Resources



Compiled by the Canadian Government Travel Bureau in co-operation with the Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, and the Customs Division, Department of National Revenue, Ottawa, Canada.

EDMOND CLOUTIER, C.M.G., O.A., D.S.P.
QUEEN'S PRINTER AND CONTROLLER OF STATIONERY
OTTAWA, 1955.

Alaska Highway - Canadian Section

The Alaska Highway (Canadian Section) was commenced in March, 1942, as a military highway and was completed in 1943. Its total length from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Fairbanks, Alaska, is 1,527 miles, of which 1,221 miles are in Canada and 306 miles in Alaska. It has a graveled, all-weather surface from Dawson Creek through British Columbia and the Yukon Territory to the Yukon-Alaska Boundary and is open to travel throughout the year. It is operated and maintained by the Canadian Army, (Northwest Highway System) with Headquarters at Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

The Alaska Highway through Canada commences at Dawson Creek, British Columbia (Mile 0-0) and enters Alaska at Mile 1221. Dawson Creek is the western terminus of the branch of the Northern Alberta Railways, (495 miles from Edmonton) and is also reached via the provincial highways of Alberta and British Columbia.

Motorists from the Pacific and Midwest States can drive through British Columbia over highways No. 1 and No. 2 (97) and the John Hart Highway, a distance of approximately 773 miles from Vancouver. From Osoyoos, at the Washington State border, the distance to Dawson Creek is 778 miles.

For Pacific States and Midwest motorists the route from Coutts, Alberta, over Highways No. 4 and No. 2 to Dawson Creek is 870 miles.

Connecting highways through the Prairie Provinces offer more direct connections to motorists from the East and Central parts of the North American Continent.

Travel Regulations

Crossing the U.S.-Canadian border either way is usually made without difficulty or delay by permanent residents of the U.S.A. They do not require passports. To assist officers of both nations to speed the crossing, however, native-born U.S. citizens should carry identifying papers such as birth, baptismal or voter's certificate, driver's license or special letters. Other residents from the United States will need either a Naturalization Certificate or an Alien Registration Receipt Card.

Canadian Customs Requirements (Alaska Highway)

1) Everyone entering Canada either from Alaska or from any part of the United States and intending to drive over the Alaska Highway should have in his possession at time of entry into Canada a sufficient sum of money for the trip, or should be able to prove to the satisfaction of frontier officers that he can obtain in Canada any additional funds required. The total mileage to be driven from point-of-entry to point-of-exit will provide some idea of the number of days the traveler will be in Canada. The types of vehicle, i.e. ordinary car, truck, trailer, etc., will indicate the quantity of gas and oil required for the trip. In the same way the number of people in the party multiplied by the number of days and the average daily expenditure for food and lodging will provide a good indication of the total normal expenditure. A reasonable sum should also be included in the estimate for repairs or in case of accidents, because the trip is mostly over gravel surfaced roads.

2) Motor cars in poor condition and older models such as those constructed prior to 1940 will be entered on a Commercial Vehicle Permit, with either cash or guarantee bond for export.

Similar action will be taken with respect to other travelers where the amount of money and/or equipment carried appear to be inadequate for the journey.

3) Unless it is felt the vehicle used for tractive purposes is not equal to the task, house trailers up to 15-feet-long may be permitted entry when towed by any four-wheeled automotive vehicle. House trailers of 16-feet to 30-feet in length may be admitted when towed by any standard American make of automobile not lighter than the Ford-Plymouth-Chevrolet class. Any trailer beyond 30-feet in length may be permitted entry only when towed by a vehicle of at least three-quarter ton or higher tonnage rating. All motor vehicle-trailer combinations shall be covered by a permit with cash or guarantee bond as security for export. The Canadian Customs Officer at the frontier port of arrival is the person best qualified to indicate whether the car can handle the trailer and by physical examination arrive at the amount of the bond to be taken out.

4) Any vehicle used to carry household effects, tools-of-trade, or any items of merchandise, except normal baggage, must be entered on a commercial vehicle permit with cash or guarantee bond for export. AGENTS FOR BONDING COMPANIES ARE LOCATED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE PRINCIPAL PORTS OF ENTRY INTO CANADA.

5) Report inwards into Canada from Alaska and outwards from Canada into Alaska is required to be made through Canadian Customs at Snag Creek, Little Gold Creek, Old Crow, Y.T. or Pleasant Camp, B.C.

Firearms

A tourist does not require a Federal permit to possess rifles, shotguns or fishing tackle in Canada. He must provide a description of such items (with serial numbers of guns) to the Customs Officer so that they may be readily cleared upon their return.

Such permission does not give the rights to hunt or fish. Nonresidents must obtain provincial hunting and fishing licenses, or permits, from game or police authorities of the provinces that they visit.

Fifty (50) rounds of ammunition per-person are admitted duty-free.

Revolvers, pistols, or other prohibited weapons, the personal property of persons traveling by highway to and from Alaska through Canada, however, may be allowed to be transported in such highway vehicle without special firearm import permit, under the following regulations:

(1) The firearm must be placed in a separate container and sealed by Canadian Customs.
(2) At the port of exit the seal will be removed by the Customs Officer. If there is indication that it has been tampered with, the firearm will be seized.

Dogs

Hunting or pet dogs may be brought into Canada duty-free.

All dogs for entry into Canada from the United States of America shall be accompanied by a certificate in one of the following forms:

(a) A certificate signed or endorsed by a veterinary inspector of the United States Bureau of Animal Industry certifying that the dog has been inspected and found free from any symptoms of contagious disease; that the dog has not been exposed to the infection of rabies and that no case of rabies has occurred within a radius of fifty miles of the place in which the dog has been kept for a period of six months immediately prior to date of shipment. The certificate should be surrendered at the Canadian port-of-entry.

(b) A certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian of Canada or the United States certifying that the dog has been vaccinated against rabies during the preceding six months. Such certificate shall carry an adequate and legible description of the dog, date of vaccination and shall be initialed by the inspecting official at the port of entry and returned to the owner.

(c) Performing dogs entered for temporary stay and kept under direct control while in Canada and dogs known as “Seeing Eye” dogs are exempt from this regulation.

Baggage, Furniture and Equipment

Personal belongings, sporting equipment, radios, musical instruments, still and moving picture cameras and six rolls of films per-person, typewriters for personal use, 50 cigars, 200 cigarettes, two pounds of manufactured tobacco, one quart of alcoholic beverage, two days' food supply per-person (excepting pork and pork products) and gasoline and oil for 300 miles motoring, may be brought into Canada free-of-duty or deposit.

Larger quantities of goods or materials and settler's effects must be transported "In-Bond," that is under seal from the United States-Canada border to the Canada-Alaska border.

Provincial Approach Roads

The principal approach road through Alberta is paved from Coutts opposite Sweet Grass, Montana, to fifty miles north of Edmonton. From there it is graveled to Dawson Creek, except for 40 miles of pavement in the Grande Prairie District. The two principal approach roads through British Columbia from Vancouver and Osoyoos are paved to North of Williams Lake; from that point there are some graveled stretches to Prince George and a well-maintained gravel surface from there to Dawson Creek. These Highways are kept in good condition in all seasons except when unusual weather prevails. Current road reports for Alberta and British Columbia may be obtained from the Director, Alberta Government Travel Bureau, Legislative Building, Edmonton, Alberta, and from the British Columbia Travel Bureau, Victoria, British Columbia respectively.

Special Provincial Trailer Restrictions

There are certain restrictions on use of trailers on the Cariboo Highway between Yale and Lytton, British Columbia (Highway No. 1). The overall length of automobile and trailer must not exceed 30-feet; the length of trailer with load, including tow-bar, must not exceed 19-feet; the width must not be greater than 8-feet, 6-inches nor the height more than 12-feet.

Motorists entering British Columbia pulling trailers above these specified measurements may by-pass the Yale-Lytton Highway by driving via Hope-Princeton-Merritt and Spences Bridge (Highways Nos. 3-5-8).

Legal Speed Limits on Alaska Highway

	British Columbia	*Yukon Territory*
Passenger Vehicles	50 miles per hour	50 miles per hour
Trucks	50 miles per hour	40 miles per hour
Solid Tire Vehicles	10 miles per hour	10 miles per hour
Camp Areas	30 miles per hour	30 miles per hour

Loading and Clearance Regulations

The Gross Weight of vehicle and load shall not exceed 600 pounds-per-inch width of pneumatic tire, inside diameter fully inflated.

The Overall Width of vehicle and load shall not exceed 8-feet.

The Overall Height of vehicle and load shall not exceed 12-feet, 6-inches.

The Overall Length of any single vehicle shall not exceed 35-feet with or without load. The overall length of any combination of vehicles shall not exceed 60-feet. Semi-trailers shall not exceed 40-feet.

Not more than one trailing vehicle will be permitted attached to any towing unit.

A detailed loading chart may be obtained by writing the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, Canada.

Road Conditions

Approach roads through the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia as well as the Alaska Highway are being improved every year and most hazards of the journey have been eliminated. However, it is still a long and arduous journey.

Weather has a great influence on travelling conditions along the Alaska Highway. The following summary will give a general idea of seasonal conditions:

December – January – February

During these months snow-fall usually averages from 10 to 15-inches a month, and the highway is generally in good condition. Hard-packed snow provides smooth driving. Below zero weather prevails at this time of the year. Precautions should be taken to have necessary clothing for protection against such weather. Automobiles should be completely winterized to withstand 60-degree F. below zero temperatures. Tire chains, towrope, shovel and means to produce fire should be brought along.

March – April - May

Melting snows create icy conditions during March. Throughout the months of April and May the highway is usually poor owing to spring thaws and maintenance crews are active repairing it for summer travel. If a motorist should decide to travel during this period, he is advised to drive cautiously and to carry tire chains, tow-rope, pick and shovel.

June – July – August – September

These months are the most favourable for motoring. The days are warm with cool evenings. The road is well-graded, although a long dry spell tends to make it dusty. It is suggested that the motorist, travelling at this time, carry a good spare tire, insect repellent and a basic set of car tools. It is also advisable that the underpart of the gasoline tank be protected with a piece of rubber tire or inner tube against flying gravel.

October - November

During October and November rain, light snow, and frost cause slipperiness. Travelers should acquaint themselves with highway conditions. This information is usually posted at telephone repeater stations or highway maintenance camps en route. Chains, a container of sand, pick and shovel should be carried.

Elsewhere in this booklet will be found a chart showing average monthly maximum and minimum temperatures along the Canadian section of the highway.

* * *

The Haines Road, connecting the port of Haines, Alaska, with the Alaska Highway at a point approximately 95 miles west of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, is open-to-traffic during the summer period from June to October inclusive.

Telephone and Telegraph Services

The Northwest Communication System, operated by Canadian National Telegraphs, provides facilities for public long distance telephone and commercial telegraph services. These facilities are located at repeater stations and offices listed with roadside accommodations.

Connections may be made with agencies for exchange of telegraph and telephone messages with Alaska; telegraph messages with sections of Northwest Canada and with Edmonton for telephone and telegraph messages to or from any destination.

The Northwest Communication System also has interchange arrangements with Department of Transport facilities at Fort St. John, Beatton River, Fort Nelson, Smith River, Watson Lake, Teslin, Whitehorse, Aishihik and Snag.

Bus Services

The Western Canadian Greyhound Lines operate services between cities and towns from Winnipeg to the West Coast; this line also runs to Edmonton in Alberta and Prince George, British Columbia.

Buses are operated between Edmonton and Dawson Creek by Canadian Coachways, Ltd., and from Prince George (over the John Hart Highway) to Dawson Creek by Northern Stages, Ltd. The White Pass and Yukon Route maintain regular bus services on the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek to Scottie Creek on the Yukon-Alaska Border; from there Alaska Coachways run to Fairbanks. The latter also operates services into Anchorage, Alaska, in conjunction with its Alaska Highway run. Information concerning bus schedules may be obtained from Western Canadian Greyhound Lines, 222 1st Ave., West, Calgary, Alberta; Canadian Coachways, Ltd., 10610 98th St., Edmonton, Alberta; Northern Stages Ltd., Post Office Box 613, Prince George, British Columbia:

General Passenger Agent, White Pass and Yukon Route, P.O. Box 1846, Seattle 11, Washington, or 1418 Standard Blvd., Vancouver, British Columbia, and Alaska Coachways at Fairbanks, Alaska.

Administration of Natural Resources

The administration of natural resources along the Alaska Highway falls within the jurisdiction of the various governments concerned.

Disposal of public lands in British Columbia comes under the jurisdiction of the British Columbia Government representative at Pouce Coupe, B.C., or from the Department of Lands and Forests, Victoria, B.C.

Territorial lands in Yukon Territory may be disposed of by sale, lease, or licence of occupation. Applications for land privileges should be made to the Commissioner of Yukon Territory at Whitehorse, or to the Agents of Dominion Lands at Whitehorse or Mayo, Y.T., from whom application forms and additional information may be obtained.

Prospecting and Mining

Any person over 18 years of age has the right, with certain reservations, to prospect and mine upon lands in Yukon Territory where the right to mine minerals has not been alienated from the Crown. The fee for recording a claim is $10. Copies of the Yukon Quartz and Placer Mining Acts and other mining regulations may be obtained on application to the Commissioner of Yukon Territory, or the Lands Division, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa, Canada. Information concerning mineral regulations for that section of the Alaska Highway situated within British Columbia may be obtained from the Department of Mines, Victoria, B.C.

Information concerning natural resources along the highway in Alaska may be obtained from the United States Department of the Interior, Juneau, Alaska.

Business Opportunities

Persons planning to operate tourist camps, service stations, or other concessions along the Alaska Highway in Canada, are reminded that the tourist business, particularly in this area, is a seasonal occupation. Therefore, any such venture should be augmented by some other source of income. For additional information concerning business opportunities or licenses in Yukon Territory, application should be made to the Commissioner of Yukon Territory at Whitehorse, Y.T. or the Territorial Agent at Whitehorse, Y.T.

Similar information concerning business opportunities on sites in British Columbia may be obtained from the Department of Trade and Industry, Victoria, B.C.

Persons planning to operate bus or trucking services over the Alaska Highway will be required to comply with provincial and territorial regulations. For further information, application should be made to the Public Utility Commission, Victoria, B.C., and to the Commissioner of Yukon Territory, Whitehorse, Y.T., or to the Territorial Agent, Whitehorse, Y.T. Additional information concerning these services on the Alaska Highway in Alaska may be obtained from the Alaska Road Commission, Department of the Interior, Juneau, Alaska.

Motor vehicle operators desiring to become bonded carriers shall make application to the Department of National Revenue, Ottawa.

Fish and Game Regulations

Fishing and hunting in the Yukon Territories is permitted during open seasons. Licence fees are as follows:

Angling

Residents	$ 1
Non-Residents	$ 2

Hunting

Resident	$ 2
Big Game Non-Resident (Can. Citizen)	$100
Big Game Non-Resident (Alien)	$150
Game Bird Non-Resident	$ 10
Special Bear Non-Resident (Can. Citizen)	$ 25
Special Bear Non-Resident (Alien)	$ 50

NOTE

1. Do not discharge or carry loaded firearms within a distance of one mile from the centre line of the Alaska Highway, Haines Road or Whitehorse-Mayo-Dawson Road—except that restrictions on last mentioned roads permit discharge of firearms over 100 yards from the centre of said roads.

2. Do not have in your possession within Kluane or McArthur Game Sanctuaries any firearms without first having same sealed by a Game Guardian.

3. (a) Full information and up to date regulations may be obtained from the Game Department, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada.
(b) This restriction also includes "MacLean Fish and Game Sanctuary" (situated 8 miles south of Whitehorse).

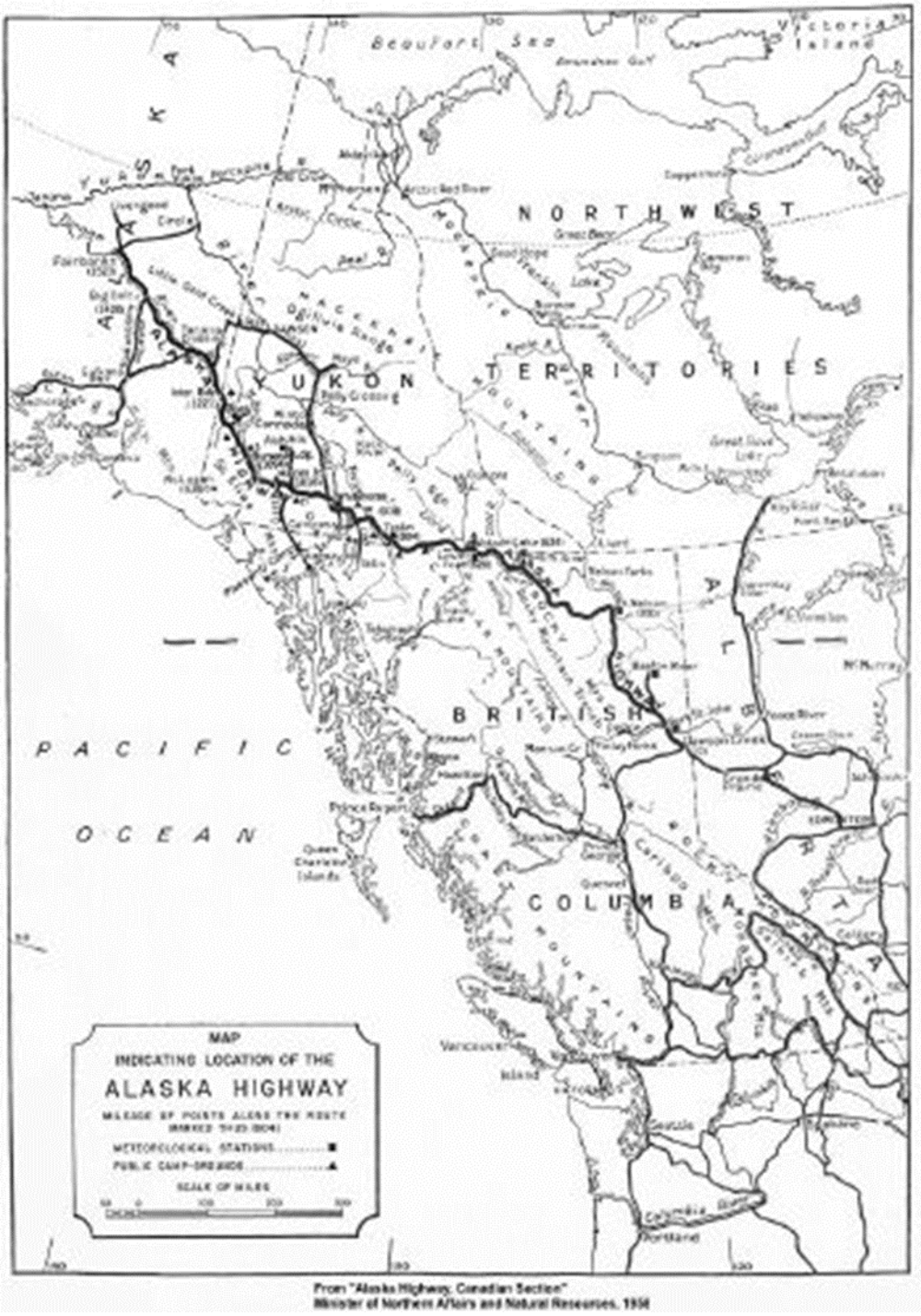
Fishing and Hunting in British Columbia

Regulations governing fishing and hunting in British Columbia may be obtained from the Provincial Game Commissioner, 567 Burrard Street, Vancouver, British Columbia or the British Columbia Government Travel Bureau, Victoria, British Columbia.

NOTE: Sport rifles and shot-guns should be registered with B.C. Game Commission through any Game Warden and fishing rods should be sealed by the Game Warden after crossing the border unless the owner desires to fish on his way through the province, when a non-resident provincial fishing license is required.

Campfire permits for British Columbia may be obtained from any police, game or forestry office, if the party proposes to camp or light fires at other than established campsites.

Topographical and Geological Maps



Topographical and geological maps of the British Columbia and Yukon Territory sections of the Alaska Highway may be obtained from the Map Distribution Office, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Ottawa. The cost is usually 25-cents per-sheet for topographical maps. Maps of the British Columbia section of the highway may also be obtained from the Department of Lands and Forests, Victoria, B.C.

Gasoline, Meals, Accommodation

The cost of gasoline on the Alaska Highway ranges from 47-cents at Dawson Creek to 68-cents at Coal River, B.C., halfway along the highway. From that point the price declines to 51-cents at Whitehorse and gradually increases again to 68-cents at Koidern Camp. This fluctuation of prices is caused by the long haulage of this commodity from main distribution centres in Canada and Alaska. In Canada the Imperial gallon is the measure used and it is one-fifth larger than the American gallon.

The prices of accommodation and food compare with those in the U.S. and main sections of Canada. In the smaller lodges a room may be obtained for $2 per-person per-night, up to $8 for a double room at the larger inns and hotels. Breakfast, lunch and dinner may be purchased at prices ranging from 75-cents to $3.

The prices quoted above are the latest available, but may be subject to change from time-to-time.

Additional Information

Requests for additional information concerning the section of the Alaska Highway in British Columbia should be addressed to the Department of Trade and Industry, Victoria, B.C., and for the part passing through Yukon Territory, to the Commissioner of Yukon Territory, Whitehorse, Y.T.

Information about travel on the Alaska Highway within Alaska may be obtained from the Alaska Road Commission, Department of the Interior, Juneau, Alaska.

Roadside Facilities

A list of accommodation, camp-grounds, lunch-stops and roadside facilities along the highway will be found on the following pages. Travelers cannot expect assistance in matters of food or shelter from Northwest Highway System maintenance camps.

The Canadian Government has provided 10 free camp-grounds and 7 lunch stops along the Alaska Highway in the Yukon Territory. These facilities are intended for the convenience of travelers who carry their food and supplies. Parking areas are convenient to cooking and kitchen shelters. Each location has fireplace, tables, good water, toilets and available firewood. Campgrounds have indoor cooking ranges.

Although there are no developed picnic or camp areas along the highway in British Columbia, there are numerous turn-offs by streams or lakes where brief stops can be made.

A Note to Canadians...

. . . who intend to travel on the Alaska Highway. Although the border regulations included in this booklet do not apply to Canadian citizens, they are advised to observe the precautionary measures designed to minimize the hazards of this long journey through unsettled country.

Accommodations and Roadside Facilities Available on the Alaska Highway in Canada

Mile	*Location*	*Services and Facilities*	*Beds*	*Telephone and Telegraph Service*
	BRITISH COLUMBIA			
0	Dawson Creek	Acc., Meals, Stores, Gas & Oil, repairs	300	Yes
16	Farmington	Post Office, Store, Gas & Oil		
35	Peace River Bridge	Meals		
36	Peace River Bridge	Minor Repairs		
49	Fort St. John	Acc., Meals, Stores, Gas & Oil, Repairs	150	Yes
52	Charlie Lake	Meals, Gas & Oil, Minor Repairs		
101	Blueberry	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	Yes
147	Halfway	Meals, Gas & Oil	Ltd.	
147	Beatton River	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil Repairs	30	
171	Mason Creek	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil Repairs	10	
201	Trutch	Meals, Gas & Oil, Acc.	10	Yes
233	Prophet River	Acc., Meals, Stores, Gas & Oil	20	
275		Meals		
300	Fort Nelson	Acc., Meals, Stores, Gas & Oil, Repairs	50	Yes
351	Steamboat Mtn.	Acc., Meals Gas & Oil	10	
392	Summit Lake	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil Repairs	12	Yes
397	Rocky Mt. Auto Ct.	Acc., Meals, Stores, Gas & Oil, Minor Repairs	10	
422	Toad River	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil	10	
462	Brandt at Muncho	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil, Storage	18	
463	Muncho Lake	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil, Minor Repairs	10	
496	Liard River	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil, Minor Repairs	12	Yes
533	Coal River	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	Yes
543	Coal River	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil, Minor Repairs	5	Yes
596	Irons Creek, Y.T.	Meals, Gas, Oil		
620	Lower Post, B.C.	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil, Repairs	40	Yes
	YUKON TERRITORY			
632	Watson Lake	Campground		
634	Watson Lake	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil	40	Yes
643	Upper Liard River	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil, Repairs	13	

Mile	Location	Services and Facilities	Beds	Telephone and Telegraph Service
	YUKON TERRITORY (Con't.)			
674	Big Creek	Lunchground		
687	Lower Rancheria	Meals, Gas & Oil	6	
710	Rancheria	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil, Campground	10	
733	Seagull Creek	Lunch Stop		
733	Swift River	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil	20	Yes
777	Morley River	Campground		
777·7	Morley River	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	6	
804	Teslin	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil	22	Yes
813	Teslin Lake	Campground		
829	Brook's Brook			Yes
837	Teslin River	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	20	
843	Little Teslin L.	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	
849	——	Campground		
850	Squanga Lake	Lunch Stop		
865·5	Junction Atlin Rd.	61 miles to Atlin, B.C.		
865·5	Junction Carcross Rd.	33 miles to Carcross, Y.T.		
872	Judas Creek	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil Campground	10	
883	Marsh Lake	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	30	Yes
907	Wolf Creek	Lunch Stop		
918	Whitehorse	Acc., Meals, Stores, Repairs	300	Yes
925	Junction Mayo Rd.	255 miles to Mayo, and 353 miles to Dawson		
967	Mendenhall Creek	Campground		
974	Champagne	Store		
987	Cracker Creek	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	
988	Cracker Creek	Lunch Stop		
996	Canyon Creek	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	Yes
1013	Pine Creek	Campground		Yes
1016	Junction Haines Rd.	Approximately 135 miles to Haines, Alaska		
1016	Haines Junction	Acc., Meals, Store, Gas & Oil, Repairs	15	
1022	Bear Creek	Acc., Meals, Store	4	
1034	Jarvis Creek	Lunch Stop		
1054	Kluane Lake	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	12	
1075	Kluane Lake	Lunch Stop		
1083	Destruction Bay	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	Yes
1093	Burwash Landing	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil Store, Repairs	40	Yes
1095	Airport Lodge	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	Ltd.	Yes
1105	Burwash Flats	Campground		

Mile	*Location*	*Services and Facilities*	*Beds*	*Telephone and Telegraph Service*
	YUKON TERRITORY (Cont.)			
1152	Lake Creek	Campground		
1167	Koidern	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	Yes
1168·5	White River Lodge	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	10	
1200·4	Beaver Creek	Store, Gas & Oil, Towing Service		Yes
1202	Beaver Cr. Lodge	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	30	
1206	Snag Y.T.	Canadian Immigration and Customs		
1210	Sourdough	Acc., Meals, Gas & Oil	5	
1213	Mirror Creek	Campground		
1220		Meals, Gas & Oil	6	Yes
1221	Canada-Alaska Boundary			
		Whitehorse—Mayo-Dawson Highway		
103·2	Carmacks	Acc., Store, Meals, Gas & Oil	10	
151	McCabe Creek	Meals, Gas & Oil		
169	Pelly Crossing	Meals		
213	Stewart Crossing	Meals, Gas & Oil	5	

Average Monthly Maximum and Minimum Temperatures

	Fort St. John		Beatton River		Fort Nelson		Smith River		Watson Lake		Teslin		White-horse		Aishihik		Snag	
January	31	–39	26	–45	28	–44	22	–56	18	–57	29	–45	29	–49	33	–50	24	–64
February	36	–26	34	–28	29	–34	28	–44	30	–45	33	–37	32	–41	28	–46	27	–62
March	43	–26	45	–29	51	–28	44	–39	43	–37	42	–25	42	–26	41	–36	44	–39
April	59	9	56	3	62	5	54	0	54	4	48	7	50	8	45	– 8	54	–13
May	73	39	70	34	72	39	67	34	66	31	62	35	64	35	63	30	64	32
June	82	34	81	31	85	34	82	26	85	33	84	30	84	32	82	30	85	30
July	84	42	86	30	88	41	85	33	88	40	83	35	84	38	79	34	82	35
August	84	35	81	31	83	33	81	26	73	39	79	32	80	32	78	28	80	26
September	81	26	78	25	84	25	75	21	76	28	75	25	72	24	70	19	74	17
October	59	5	51	– 1	55	8	51	– 4	52	3	48	5	47	2	46	1	48	–15
November	58	0	55	–10	50	–14	52	–24	47	–28	48	–15	49	–22	46	–30	36	–40
December	36	–30	28	–32	27	–41	24	–49	19	–46	28	–40	31	–35	31	–40	14	–48

– indicates below Zero

Travel Information

The Canadian Government Travel Bureau, a branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, provides a free information service on travel to and within Canada.

The Bureau works in close cooperation with other federal departments and with provincial and local tourist associations and information bureau and inquiries are regularly referred to those sources so that full information shall be supplied.

In order that inquirers may obtain all available data, including the full benefit of unpublished information, they are urged to state their needs definitely and in detail and, if possible, name the particular section of the country in which they are interested. Inquiries should be directed to the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, Canada.

Provincial Bureaus

The following provincial tourist bureau can give information on their respective provinces:

NEWFOUNDLAND - Tourist Development Office, St. John's.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND - Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau, Charlottetown.

NOVA SCOTIA - Bureau of Information, Halifax.

NEW BRUNSWICK - New Brunswick Travel Bureau, Fredericton.

QUEBEC - Province of Quebec Tourist Bureau, Quebec City.

ONTARIO - Department of Travel and Publicity, 67 College Street, Toronto.

MANITOBA - Bureau of Travel and Publicity, Parliament Building, Winnipeg.

SASKATCHEWAN - Saskatchewan Tourist Bureau, Legislative Building, Regina.

ALBERTA - Alberta Travel Bureau, Legislative Building, Edmonton.

BRITISH COLUMBIA—British Columbia Government Travel Bureau, Victoria.

* * * *

YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, Canada.

* * * *

In addition there are numerous bureaux devoted more particularly to the promotion of tourist traffic to local points. Many of these also give general information respecting the tourist facilities of the province in which they are situated.

* * * *

For additional copies of this publication write to the:

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TRAVEL BUREAU
Ottawa, Canada



PRINTED IN CANADA

To Get to the Other Side

Sun Shines Brightly As New Bridge Is Officially Opened At Teslin

The Whitehorse Star - May 10, 1956

A serene and sunny day saw the Nisutlin Bridge opened at Teslin last Wednesday, May 2nd. The simple ceremony and brilliant sun were in contrast to the many difficulties encountered by the contractors in building the seven-span structure. Commissioner F.H. Collins cut the ribbon to officially declare the bridge open. As he cut the ribbon the bridge actually opened with a “bang” as a thunder-flash was set-off on the lake ice some distance away.

Reverend Father F.B. Triggs, OMI, blessed the bridge and prayed for the good passage of those who might travel across its steel and concrete spans.

Many local people were on hand, including Cub and RCM Police representatives. An official party representing a cross-section of the public and Army officials left Whitehorse early Wednesday morning for the highway trip to the opening.

After cutting of the ribbon the official party moved in a motor cavalcade across the bridge and up the hill on the south-side of the bay, then turned at the hilltop to make the return trip. From there the group went to the DOT area where a reception was held and the familiar figure of Bob Hughes was on-hand to things moving.

In his address on opening of the bridge Commissioner Collins said, “construction of this new bridge is graphic illustration of the forward thinking of the Commander of the Northwest Highway System and the contributions made to the Yukon Territory by the Canadian Army since the Canadian portion of the Alaska Highway was taken over from the United States in 1946. Not only in bridges but in other important items which collectively make up the highway are the evidences of leadership, initiative and energy emphasized. I am sure we can look forward to a continuation of this program under the guidance of Brigadier Meuser.”

Tribute

“Tribute must also be paid to Messrs. R.M. Hardy & Associates Ltd. for the design and supervision of construction, to Messrs. Dutton-Mannix for superstructure construction, to the Western Bridge and Steel Fabrication Ltd., for steel supplied and fabricated, and to Edgar Bickerton Bridge and Steel Erectors Ltd. for steel erection.”

“It is customary to say a few nice things about a departed friend but in this case it would be difficult to do so as the old bridge has been a constant source of trouble and expense. However, we can say it was the longest bridge on the highway - 2,326 feet - and let it go at that.”

“The new bridge is 1,917-feet-long and the shortening of the spans by over 400-feet reflects great credit on the Royal Canadian Engineers in planning and effecting the obvious economy involved. We, in the territory, have much cause for gratitude to the RCE and associated military and civilian services operating and maintaining the Northwest Highway System with such year-round efficiency.”

“I would like to take this opportunity of tendering my sincere congratulations to all those who have had a part in bringing the new Nisutlin Bay Bridge to completion and thanking Brigadier Meuser for the honour of opening it to the traffic of the world.”



The new (left) and old (right) Nisutlin Bay Bridges, ca. 1956



Looking east along the Nisutlin Bay Bridge on July 27, 2011



Looking west along the Nisutlin Bay Bridge on October 6, 2013

Part 14

Last Frontier

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

One of the Great Wartime Engineering Triumphs, In Which Dartmouth Men Had a Hand, Remains As a Fascinating Route to Our "Last Frontier"

By LAURENCE W. LOUGEE '29

Dartmouth Alumni Magazine - May 1947

THE costly engineering feats of wartime are more often than not a total loss in the days of peace which follow. However, one superhuman achievement, pushed through in the face of threatened Jap invasion, remains today as a residual asset which will undoubtedly be an important factor in the future development and defense of the North American Continent. This invaluable asset is the Alaska Highway, winding its 1671-mile way through the wilderness from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks and providing for the first time an all-land route to our far-flung Territory of Alaska.

Dartmouth men and others drawn by the lure of the romantic north country see the Highway also as the road to a frontier land offering great attractions to the traveler and the sportsman. One purpose of this article is to answer some of their questions about the Highway and the possibility of driving over it to Alaska. The following account of what the traveler will encounter on his trip from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks might hold interest also for those who plan to stay home, for the Highway itself is a fascinating route and its building will always be one of the great stories of the war.

The construction of the 1671-mile-long Alaska Highway is an epic of engineering achievement. The Engineer troops, both white and colored, who pushed through the pioneer road in six months encountered almost unbelievable weather and living conditions; sleeping in tents at 50° below zero; wading through ice-cold mountain streams while surveying; frozen hands and feet and faces; ice and snow and more ice and more snow; and in the summer—tramping through mosquito infested muskeg swamps; choking dust from hundreds of trucks and bulldozers; barges capsizing and drowning their crews in the foaming whirlpools; accidents on the Highway itself—all these and many more hardships were the inevitable accompaniment of this undertaking. The little white crosses in the military and civilian cemeteries along the Highway stand as mute evidence of the toll exacted in completing the new military roadway ahead of schedule in order that the Japs might not get a foothold on this Continent.

In those early days of the War, military strategy called for immediate completion of a chain of airports between Edmonton, in Canada, and Fairbanks, Alaska, which had been started as a joint Canadian-United States defense measure in 1941. To complete these airfields and to construct others in an almost totally unmapped wilderness stretching thousands of miles into sub-arctic country, a connecting roadway was necessary for emergency purposes and also to serve as an additional means of transporting troops and equipment to Alaska.

The Army engineers, in selecting the route to be followed, were guided solely by military exigencies. It had to be a road which would be protected against Jap landings on the West Coast; one which would take advantage of the best weather conditions throughout an all-year operation; and a route which would follow the easiest terrain for construction purposes. Muskeg, those treacherous bogs of unknown depth, had to be avoided wherever possible. No consideration was given to constructing the Highway through does go through sections having many of these peacetime attractions.

Today the Alaska Highway is a finished roadway costing upwards of 100 million dollars. When compared with Seward's original purchase price of 7.2 million dollars for Alaska, the cost of the Highway gives some indication of the value placed on our immense northern possession at the outbreak of World War II. The Highway is today in excellent condition with a gravel surface from end to end and a maximum width of 24 feet. Travel over it is actually best during the winter months but probably few civilian motorists would care to drive over it during the short dark days. Nowhere is it built of cement or asphalt as some people have been led to believe. The Highway has good drainage, steel or semi-permanent heavy wooden bridges over the 200 streams crossed by the Highway and easy gradients. Maintenance stations are located every 50 miles and at every 100-mile mark there is a big relay station with buildings for billeting and feeding military personnel using the Highway. These latter facilities could easily be converted to civilian use both for hotel accommodations and vehicle maintenance.

On April 1, 1946, the entire section of the Alaska Highway located in Canada was returned by the United States Army to the exclusive control of the Canadian Government, and on October 1, 1946, the Dominion Government lifted the present restrictions against civilian travel over the Highway. Before any person seriously contemplates making a trip over the road to Fairbanks he would do well to fully appreciate the magnitude of his undertaking. To reach Edmonton, Canada,—the gateway leading to the Alaska Highway—a motorist from the Middle-Atlantic states will have traveled 2,800 miles, and if his vacation is limited to only two or three weeks, he may not be able to go much farther. Even at Edmonton he is still nearly 500 miles from the southern terminus of the Highway at Dawson Creek, and the road between these two places is none too good.

Whereas Edmonton is the metropolis of northwest Canada and has fine hotels and stores, the town of Dawson Creek is at most an unsightly and sprawling western prairie community. During the building of the Highway, Dawson Creek was jammed with soldiers, contractor's employees, trucks, roadbuilding equipment, military supplies and a motley array of dogs of every size and breed. Almost overnight the town mushroomed from a few hundred inhabitants to many thousands. Through Dawson Creek funneled much of the equipment and supplies needed for building the Highway to Fairbanks, the airports and flight strips along the way, the Canol oil project from Whitehorse to Norman Wells, the Catel telephone line from Edmonton to Alaska, and the military equipment needed to supply the Army personnel. Today the town has slumped back to much of its former sleepy status.

If a distance equivalent to the length of the Alaska Highway is measured off on a map of the United States, it would stretch almost from New York City to Denver, Colorado. The road can be extremely dusty in dry spells and after long rainy spells it can be muddy and slippery. Driving time over it will depend on whether the motorist has a relief driver, his wish to stop and enjoy the scenery or to fish and hunt, and his desire to take advantage of some of the colorful side trips as he drives north. Two full weeks is a conservative time to allow for reaching Fairbanks, but the traveler will be missing much that the Highway and neighboring country have to offer in the way of scenic splendor and adventure unless he allows for an even longer time.

After leaving Dawson Creek the first few miles of the Highway pass through relatively flat country marked by scattered farms in the amazingly fertile Peace River Valley. At the 38-mile mark the road crosses the stately steel suspension bridge over the 2000-foot-wide Peace River. This bridge, began in sub-zero weather and completed in 18 weeks, is in itself a remarkable engineering achievement. A few miles north of Fort St. John the Highway leaves the last cleared areas and plunges into a heavily forested section. The road follows the west side of Charlie Lake and passes through the relay stations at Blueberry and Trutch before reaching Fort Nelson.

Although this southern section of the Highway may not be as scenic as portions of the road farther north, nevertheless every turn of the Highway holds something of interest for the traveler. At Fort Nelson a sideroad turns off to the airport and the Highway makes a sharp turn to the west as it continues on another 50 miles to Steamboat Mountain. The road now enters the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and climbs to Summit Lake which is the highest point on the Highway with 4,212-foot elevation. Many soldiers regarded this section as the most beautiful on the entire Highway, and the hunting, fishing and camping in this locality will appeal to sportsmen.

It was near here in the winter of 1943 that an Army truck skidded and killed the lead-dog of an Indian dog-team which was using the Highway as a new trail to the trapping area. Tears rolled down the Indian's cheeks as he looked at his dead malamute. When the truckdriver told him that the Army would make good the damage, the Indian seemed but little consoled and said, "More better the truck had killed my woman—can always get another woman but lead dog takes years to train!"

The broad Liard River is crossed on a smaller steel suspension bridge and in this section the Highway passes through the relay stations at Muncho Lake and Coal River. This is rugged yet beautiful country and soldiers stationed at these locations were able to shoot moose and bear almost in sight of their barracks. For one stretch in this area the Highway leaves the mountains and cuts through heavily forested country for nearly 150 miles. Another sideroad connects with the airport at Watson Lake, which is the first relay station over the boundary line in Yukon Territory. Occasionally flight strips are passed that have been constructed alongside the Highway for emergency landings by Army and commercial planes flying to Alaska. Several times these flight strips resulted in saving both lives and planes and their usefulness to air travel should increase as time goes on.

Teslin Lake Community Interesting

The Highway, after passing through Swift River, follows along the shore of Teslin Lake where there is an interesting community and Trading Post. Not far beyond here the Canol pipeline and construction road leading to Norman Wells branches off to the right and continues for hundreds of miles across unmapped territory to the Mackenzie River. At Jake's Corner another road branches off to the left and leads to Tagish Lake and Carcross. This short stretch was built as a feeder to the main Highway.

It was at Tagish that an Indian woman made caribou jackets for many of the American soldiers. Starting with a raw caribou skin she mixed moose brains and water in the manner passed down through the centuries by her ancestors, and patiently scrubbed the hide with the paste. After repeated scrubbings and dryings in the sunlight the skin bleached a pure white. Then, by laboriously scraping only a square inch at a time with a small steel blade, she made the skin as soft as chamois. It was next cut to measurements, fringed and then adorned with beadwork of Indian design. The completed jacket was a thing of utility and beauty in true Yukon style.

The Lewes River is the headwater of the mighty Yukon River in this section. In the days of '98 when the hordes of prospectors climbed through White Pass on their way to Dawson City and the newly discovered gold strikes at Klondike, Bonanza and Eldorado, the Lewes River was the principal means of transportation heading north. It was in this region that both Robert Service and Jack London had their first glimpse of the north country which was to figure so prominently in their later writings. Many prospectors drowned while trying to negotiate the dangerous gorge at Miles Canyon and the treacherous rapids and whirlpools at Whitehorse. Old timers say that as much as $1,000 per trip was charged by native guides to take a flatboat through these brief but deadly stretches of water. Competing portage lines carried men and supplies over wooden-railed tracks lining both sides of the river at this point and the decaying equipment may still be seen in spite of the 48 arctic winters intervening.

At nearby Robinson, pack horses are obtainable for camping or prospecting trips into the mountainous back-country, and fishing in this area offers some of the greatest catches in the entire region. Rainbow trout, salmon, muskie, greyling and many other varieties are there waiting for their first fisherman in a score of years—in fact many of the lakes have probably never been fished by white men. Soldiers often used to return with a string of fish which would average better than 25 pounds!

The metropolis of the southern half of Canada's famed Yukon Territory is the town of Whitehorse lying about midway between Dawson Creek and Fairbanks. Formerly a boisterous center during the gold rush days of the last century, the town soon dropped back into its sleepy ways until the construction of the Alaska Highway suddenly jumped its population of 500 to well over 10,000 during the War. The Highway skirts the town and the motorist must drive down Mile Long Hill and past the Canol Oil Refinery to reach the business center on the banks of the Lewes River.

Here is the terminus of the narrow-gauge railroad from Skagway, Alaska, whose 110 miles of track played such an important part in the building of the Highway. No one will ever regret having left his auto in Whitehorse while making this scenic trip over the Rockies on the train. The railroad skirts famous Lake Bennett with its waters of unforgettable arctic blue-green and at whose head stands still the picturesque remains of the old log church. This edifice was built by the gold rush prospectors while awaiting transportation down the Lewes River and today the old church is the only remnant of what once was a town of nearly ten thousand souls. Walking along the shore of the lake a visitor can still pick up many souvenirs that have lain there untouched since those historic days of '98.

Old ‘98 Trail Still Viable

The train ride across the Continental Divide through White Pass and down the steep slopes to tidewater provides scenery long to be remembered. The old Trail of '98 is still visible and the traveler can almost visualize the long line of men and beasts struggling up that narrow winding path in the dead of winter. It is hard to believe that the headwaters of the Yukon River which rise in this section only 18 miles from the Pacific Ocean must travel nearly 2,000 miles to finally reach the Pacific at the Bering Sea. Skagway, at the other end of the railroad, is a historic town at the head of the Inland Waterway. Here the mountains seem to perpetually threaten to crush down upon the town and the roaring waterfalls literally tumble out of the sky.

Whitehorse is also the starting point for the steamers which ply back and forth to Dawson City on the Yukon. The town of Whitehorse consists mainly of log structures with grass roofs. The old Log Church where Robert Service once served as a vestryman is one of the historical spots worthy of a visit and directly across the street is the legendary cabin of "Sam McGee" who, according to the poem, was cremated on the shores of neighboring Lake LeBarge. The town also boasts of a comfortable hotel and restaurant. The atmosphere of the north country makes itself felt here at the sight of Eskimo and Malamute dogs accompanied by Indian children. It was in this section that the United States Army obtained scores of huge pack-dogs which were shipped to Camp Rimini in Montana for training with K9 units for plane rescue work in Labrador, Greenland and Iceland.

The Indian population in and around Whitehorse is large and the presence of the red-coated "Mounties" adds to the feeling that at last you have reached a frontier town. Much time could be spent here exploring the neighboring country, visiting abandoned mines and chatting with the few remaining survivors of the '98 gold rush. Some of these old fellows still live alone in log cabins near the river and spend every summer prospecting for the elusive golden metal. If the traveler is a fly-fisherman he will find the greyling in the Lewes River and in nearby streams a tasty catch, but a headnet will be his best friend against the hordes of mosquitoes while he is wading.

From here the Highway continues northward through interesting and scenic country. The village of Champagne has associated with it a strange tale. Each fall the herd of horses owned by the natives in the village, instead of being shut up in barns as protection against the arctic winter blizzards, are turned loose to browse where they will, far up in the mountain canyons. A green moss under the snow provides their fodder. When attacked by wolves, the horses stand back to back in a circle and fight off their assailants. The horses have survived many a winter in this fashion and in the spring a round-up is staged to find the horses and bring them back to the village for the summer tasks.

The next relay station is located at Canyon, where there is an excellent trout fishing stream. In this section there are occasionally trappers' cabins close to the Highway. A few minutes' pause at some of these cabins will bring forth many stories of adventure in the north country. Near here the so-called "Cut-Off" enters the Highway from Haines, Alaska. Originally this cut-off was constructed as part of the Highway in order to save considerable distance between the end of the Inland Waterway and Fairbanks.

An interesting story is told about this Haines Cut-Off. The Army Post at Haines is the oldest military reservation in Alaska. Some years ago a Regular Army sergeant who had spent most of his years of service at Haines, decided to retire. Having become fond of the neighboring country he trudged his way inland for many miles so as to be assured privacy and then built a log cabin as a homestead. His only trips to civilization were the yearly treks to Haines to obtain supplies—mainly tobacco. He

He wanted solitude and he had found it. Then one day in 1943 he was surprised to find surveyers running levels past his front door and not long afterwards the bulldozers came along knocking down everything in front of them. For days he stood in his doorway and silently watched the men and trucks engaged in the roadbuilding. His silhouette in the doorway was a familiar picture to the men on the road. Then for several days he was not seen and when an inquisitive truck-driver finally investigated, the body of the old soldier was found hanging by the neck from the rafters of his cabin. He had been unable to stand the sight of civilization pushing so close to him. The ironic part of the story is that if the old veteran had waited only a few months more he would have seen the Haines Cut-Off temporarily abandoned because of the severe winter storms, and today the Canadian government is even threatening the complete abandonment of its portion of the Cut-Off, which would return the area to its primeval state.

Where the Haines Cut-Off joins the Alaska Highway there are a few log cabins which comprise one of the oldest Trading Posts in this region. The widow who now runs the Post alone originally came into the valley by dog-team with her husband. After his death she decided to carry on the Trading Post for the benefit of the few natives nearby. She is a graduate of an American university and even holds a post-graduate degree. The high mountains to the West which practically rise in her front yard hold very few secrets from her, and her stories of the early days in these mountains reveal her true pioneer spirit. Even today at an advanced age this remarkable woman likes nothing better than to take her dog and gun and hunt for mountain sheep and goats in their mountain fastnesses. When you knock at her door, if she is not inside the Trading Post, then look for her down by the brook where she has a fine garden . . . . or possibly she has gone hunting for a few days.

Beautiful Lake Kluane is skirted by the Highway and a short visit to the old log settlement at the southern end of the lake is well worth while. Here lives an elderly hunter and trapper who first came into the country during the gold rush of '98 and who finally drifted north to the Eskimo settlement of Old Crow near the shores of the Arctic Ocean. Bringing back with him an Eskimo wife, this early settler has since enjoyed the reputation of being one of the best guides for big-game hunting in the Yukon. Several of his shacks are filled with the trophies of many hunts including record-size moose, caribou, grizzlies, elk, mountain goat and mountain lion. It is with a twinkle in his eye that he likes to pull back the curtain in a corner of his cabin to reveal an antiquated porcelain bath-tub that was brought in by dog-sled many years ago. He chuckles when he says, "Yes, we take a bath every year or two whether we need it or not!" That tub being one of the show places in the district, it is safe to wager that it has seen much service over the years.

Kluane Lake offers one of the most picturesque camping places along the entire Highway. The Canadian Government has established a Park at this place because of its undisturbed beauty. The river which flows into the lake from the west finds its headwaters at the base of towering Mt. St. Elias whose 18,008 ft. altitude makes it the third highest peak on the Continent. The snow-covered mountains which rim the lake cast motionless reflections in the blue-green water and a camera enthusiast will have to search long and far to find better subjects for his colored film. And here is the place to try your luck at lake fishing. Use a wet streamer fly with a small spinner and you'll have no trouble in catching some big ones. During the summer months it is light enough at midnight to still take pictures and only by keeping close tabs on his watch does a person know it is time to get some sleep.

A short stop should by all means be made at Soldier's Summit overlooking Kluane Lake. It is only a few yards' climb from the present roadway and a fine panorama spreads out to the east and south. It was here on November 20, 1942, that the official dedication ceremonies of the Alaska Highway took place before a small group of Canadians and Americans who stood shivering in the biting 15-below-zero wind.

Heading north again, the motorist passes through the relay stations at Destruction Bay and Koidern before reaching the boundary between Alaska and Canada. This is a rugged mountainous section with fine scenery at every turn of the road. Steel bridges placed on concrete piers span the roaring mountain streams. The boundary itself is marked by only a small sign but as a person stands in the roadway and looks north and then south he will see that a swath has been cleared as far as the eye can see. From here on the country flattens out as the Highway approaches Northway, the first relay station in Alaska. The road here follows the eastern rim of a broad valley and a fine view extends to the west across the taiga to the snow-capped peaks in the far distance.

The relay station at Cathedral Bluffs is nestled between high mountains but the next relay station at Big Delta is out on a flat stretch where the wind never ceases to blow. Even in the winter the snow is all blown away from the Highway and bare ground shows for miles. It is at Big Delta that the Richardson Highway branches off to Valdez on the southern coast of Alaska. Valdez is an ice-free port and Anchorage has taken advantage of that by building the new Glenn Highway to connect with it. From Big Delta the Alaska Highway follows the old Richardson Highway which has been straightened and widened. This is the Tanana Valley where in summer months the Alaska fireweed grows in a riot of color as far as the eye can see.

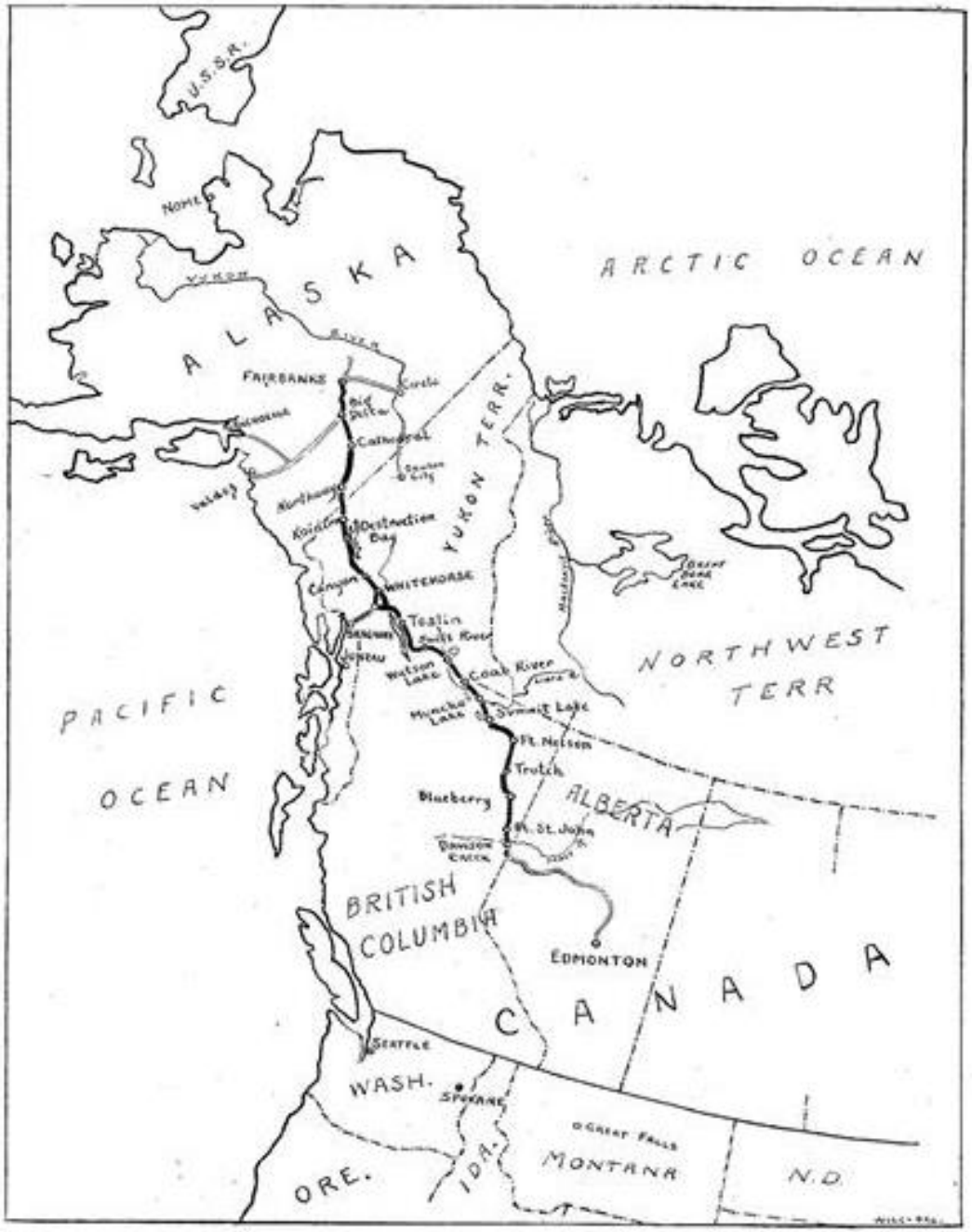
As the motorist approaches Fairbanks he passes the tremendous new airport constructed by the Army on the flat stretches of tundra. Not far beyond, the Highway skirts Ladd Field which played such an important part in the delivery of fighting planes to Russia during the war. Fairbanks is a modern community with paved streets, Federal Courthouse, stores, hotels, theatre, newspaper and bank. However, the atmosphere of the arctic is present in the type of buildings and in the clothing of the inhabitants. Many of the structures are of log construction with grass roofs and the people wear parkas, mukluks or moccasins according to the season.

On the outskirts of Fairbanks are the buildings of the University of Alaska, the modern Experimental Farm where vegetables grow to almost unbelievable size in a very short time due to the long hours of summer sunlight, and the great goldfields where dredge mining is one of the Territory's major industries. On a clear day, from the campus of the University majestic Mt. McKinley, the highest peak on this Continent, can be seen far to the south towering 20,300 feet into the sky.

The Alaska Highway ends at Fairbanks and any person who has driven over it will agree that it represents one of the greatest engineering achievements of our time. A traveler who has not yet had his fill of driving can continue on to Livengood and to Circle Springs just over the Arctic Circle where the sun does not set during the long summer days. Or from Fairbanks planes will fly you to Nome, Anchorage, Point Barrow or almost any place in Alaska where a bush pilot can make a landing. Many visitors will find Fairbanks much to their liking. Gone are the days when the town was filled only with persons who wanted to strike it rich and then return to the States. Today the people who live in Fairbanks are serious-minded citizens who have chosen Alaska for their permanent home. They extend a welcome to new residents who are willing to meet the rigorous requirements of the north country and who seek a permanent home in that great Territory which has so much to offer in the way of abundant living.

International cooperation between Canada and the United States originally built the Alaska Highway during a period of emergency, and continued international cooperation during times of peace can keep it open for the benefit of all. The Highway can play an important part in the future development of not only Alaska but also the entire northwestern section of this Continent. And to the far-sighted, the upkeep of the Highway is a guarantee of the security of our great northern possession in times to come, especially against surprise attack from across the great arctic wastes which constitute the most direct route from northern and central Europe.

If you are one of those fortunate ones who someday have the privilege of driving over the entire length of the Alaska Highway, just remember that it leads to our "Last Frontier" and to what may soon become the 49th State in the Union.



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A SCALE MAP OF THE 1671-MILE HIGHWAY CONNECTING DAWSON CREEK AND FAIRBANKS

Photographs





SIGHTS ALONG THE HIGHWAY ARE VARIED. The view at left offers what looks like a mesa in New Mexico or Arizona. Right, one of the Greyhound buses which leave both Dawson Creek and Fairbanks three times a week. Traveling day and night with relays of drivers , they complete the journey in four days and nights. The best travel is in the winter when the all-gravel highway offers a packed, smooth surface.



MOST PHOTOGRAPHED SPOT on the Alaska Highway is this cluster of signs near Watson Lake. During the war it was a favorite subject of troops.



THE AUTHOR ON A HANOVER VISIT: During terminal leave in February 1946, Major Larry Lougee '29 returned to the spot where he learned some of the outdoor skills which proved valuable in the far north.

Dartmouth Men

A few months after the outbreak of World War II author Lougee was called into service with the U. S. Army. A 35-year-old New York lawyer at the time, Lougee volunteered for the mountain infantry and, after training at Camp Hale, was transferred to the Judge Advocate General branch and sent to school at the University of Michigan. Upon completion of this training he was sent to Alaska and the Alcan Highway, where he served in 1943-44 before being transferred to the European theatre. When discharged he held the rank of Major.

Other Dartmouth men who were connected with the construction of the Highway during their service tours were Captain Edgar D. Hoag CE '23, post engineer at Dawson Creek and Edmonton; Major Robert A. McKennan '25, research worker on cold weather clothing and living conditions in the Yukon and Alaska; Col. Frank Foster MC '29, who also worked on the same project; Lt. Col. Allen G. Miller AC '29, with the Alaskan Wing at Edmonton; Capt. Theodore S. Johnson AGD '31, chief of military personnel, Northwest Service Command; 1st Lt. Abraham Belsky '35, legal and claims officer, Dawson Creek; Capt. Thomas W. Hine AC '39, adjutant ATC of Alaskan Wing; Maj. Francis M. Gavan '31, adjutant, Dawson Creek railhead; and 2nd Lt. Stewart Wallace '41. The above list undoubtedly is incomplete and the editors will be glad to receive information about other Dartmouth men who served on the Alaska Highway project.

Part 15

Road Trip

Alaska Highway Travelogue Makes Clear That the 1,500-Mile Trip is No Picnic

High-Water May Block a Ferry or Take Out a Bridge - Hotel and Eating Facilities Are Not Adequate Since the Route Has Been Opened to General Use - Long Wait for Parts if the Car Breaks Down.

The following excerpts from a Reporter's dispatches give an idea of what may be encountered in traveling the Alaska Highway.

The Kansas City Times - June 22, 1948

by Joseph Hearst.
(Copyright, 1948, the Chicago *Tribune*.)

GRAND PRAIRIE, ALTA. - So you want to see the Alaska Highway. Well, if you are from the Mid-West, be prepared for 2,500 to 3,000 miles of driving through monotonous plains country before you even reach it.

And if you are bringing your wife, tell her to get out her grandmother's old linen duster and be prepared to breathe and eat dust for many miles before you reach this little town 100 miles from the start of the highway. And they say the dust of the Alaska Highway can match anything encountered so far.

Theoretically, the highway from Edmonton to Grand Prairie, a stretch of almost 400 miles, is a gravel all-weather road. Actually, in rainy weather it becomes impassable in many spots. Culverts wash-out. Cars have to be pulled through the bogs by tractors or teams. If you hit that kind of weather it will be wise to wait in Edmonton until the road dries-out.

Dust and Deep Ruts

We were fortunate in finding the road dry, so all we had to contend with were the clouds of encompassing dust caused by each passing car and the deep ruts here and there that called for careful driving lest the oil pan be ripped away.

Driving through Alberta to Dawson Creek takes the tourist through mile-after-mile of spring wheat country, where nearly every town has five or six grain elevators. Occasional great stands of birch, spruce, poplar and pine trees break the monotony of the rolling farmlands. Here and there, burned-over areas dramatically illustrate why every traveler is urged to use extreme care with matches and cigarettes. Between High Prairie and Valley View there is a 20-mile stretch of charred stumps and trunks lining each side of the road.

The ferry over the Big Smoky River, east of Grand Prairie, illustrates the uncertainty of travel in this region. Recently high-water kept the ferry from operating for two days and cars backed-up on each side of the river in a spot where there were no accommodations for travelers.

Town of Wooden Sidewalks

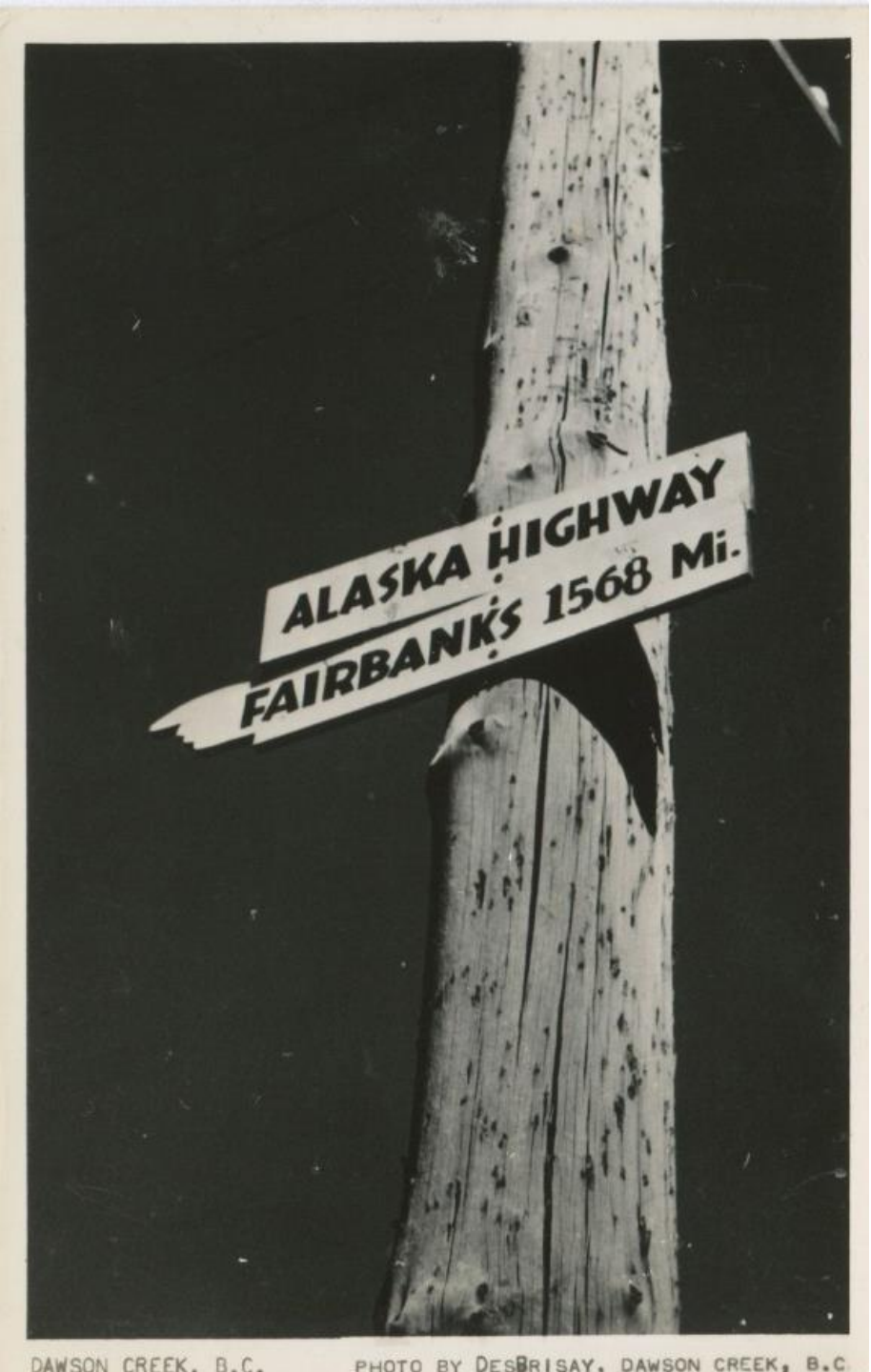
Dawson Creek, British Columbia - this is the little town where the Alaska Highway proper starts. It had a bustling, shoving population of 15,000 in the war days, when American soldiers and civilians were building the highway and running supplies through to Alaska.

The population is down to about 3,000. A pall of dust seems to hang permanently in the air. Business is good. The hotels, one very modern by local standards, are doing a good business. It is a town of wooden sidewalks, thirty telephones and some running water. Some houses have water piped into them. The other householders buy water at 65 cents-a-barrel from peddlers who bring it around in trucks. Just now the water is bad because of floods in the mountain rivers and probably some breakdown in the water system itself.

In the center of the intersection of the two main streets the “zero” mile post, signifying the start of the highway, has been erected. It shows the mileage to Fairbanks at 1,523.



"Start of the Alaska Highway"



Dawson Creek, B.C, is the true start of the "Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway" (as it was originally named). Construction began on May 6, 1942. Road signs stated: "Road under construction. Not open to the public." The original military road was 1,670-miles-long, but by the time it had been upgraded to an all-weather highway (in 1943-44), this sign in Dawson Creek stated the length as 1,568 miles (left). Nowadays, there's a lot of confusion about the highway. Many Americans still know it as the "ALCAN," despite claims by communities as far away as California that they're the start of the Alaska Highway (the Alaska Highway portion of Alaska Route 2 was once proposed to be part of US 97, which begins at Weed, Calif.).

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On March 12, 1942, the *Edmonton Journal* clarified that: "Edmonton will be on the Alaska Highway this year. Whether it will stay there in succeeding years will depend in large measure on the foresight and energy of the government and people of Alberta. This year, the part of the highway that lies in Alberta is a railway. That is likely to be the case as long as the war lasts, for railway transportation is certain to be used wherever possible in preference to motor vehicles in order to save gasoline and tires. The actual new highway, being built by the United States, does not lie in Alberta at all, for its southern terminus is Dawson Creek. The new road runs through northern British Columbia and the Yukon territory. Whether, when peace returns and the military highway becomes a commercial and tourist highway, the southern extension of the road from Dawson Creek runs through Alberta or British Columbia or both will depend on the governments and peoples of these two provinces."

Non-residents are requested to stop in Dawson Creek to check with the provincial police. If they have firearms but no hunting license, the police will seal the guns for the trip through British Columbia and Yukon Territory. This wasn't done formerly, but the police say there has been much indiscriminate shooting at wild animals from cars. Hunting has been prohibited under any conditions in a 2-mile strip down each side of the highway.

The police, however, say few Americans stop for the firearm inspection or to obtain the permits that give them the right to kindle campfires along the highway if they camp-out or have a breakdown at night and need a fire for warmth.

Fort Nelson, B.C - a sign in the little lobby of the hotel says the bridge near Watson Lake is still out. A footnote says the bridge over Gardiner Creek is unsafe for automobile travel and closed to loads of more than 4,000 pounds.

Hotel Full, Food Short

Motorists bound for Alaska inspect the notices and debate whether to remain here or move on up the road to the hotel at Lower Post, 300-miles away. Then they read another notice which says the hotel at Lower Post is filled and that the hotel at Watson Lake is short on food and they decide to stay at Fort Nelson until the bridges are repaired.

The washout or dangerous weakening of a bridge on the Alaska Highway automatically stops all traffic. There are no detours in the wilderness of birch, spruce and poplar forests and across the scores of small streams that crisscross the terrain. When the road is barred travelers just stand by and wait it out. If they are housed in a place such as this hotel they are lucky. This is a 1-story hotel of forty rooms that resembles a converted barracks building. Most of the rooms are just large enough for a single bed, a dresser and chair. There are no private baths. But the place is clean and the management friendly. The food is good.

In the little lobby Americans sit around in the long evening - it gets dark about 11 o'clock p.m. now and dawn comes at 3 a.m - and talk about their experiences, the opportunities for a living in Alaska and whether anyone should come up here for a short vacation. A young couple returning to their home in Fairbanks from a trip to the United States say that living is very high in Fairbanks, the housing is extremely short and that some people are living in tents, but they wouldn’t live anywhere else.

Cost of Car Trouble

Mrs. Myrtle Cook of Long Beach, Calif., and her brother, Robert Mullen of Redwood, Calif., hope to get there sometime.

“We’ve been sitting here for two weeks trying to get our car fixed," Mrs. Cook said. “To-date it has cost us $200 and the car still won’t run. We spent $35 to fly in parts. It is costing us $15 a day for food and rooms. I don’t think anyone should drive up here who doesn’t have to.”

Mile 687, Alaska Highway - Women held an indignation meeting on the south bank of the Rancheria River. Some had been sitting in the little clearing for twelve days since the bridge over the river was closed-to-traffic and work of tearing-down the ice-battered wooden structure and replacing it had begun. The husbands of some had pitched in and worked as volunteers, aiding the slim crew of ten or twelve employees of the Canadian Northwest Highway System brought-in to build the new bridge.



ROUTE OF THE ALASKA HIGHWAY.

Mrs. Thomas Olwell of Philadelphia and her husband are among the few travelers on the highway who are making a vacation trip. Most of the parties are men going to Alaska to work and taking their families with them.

"I wouldn't send my worst enemy to this highway," said Mrs. Olwell. "I don't think anyone who hasn't been over it can imagine the dust. And this delay at the bridge is a double hardship on many of these people trying to get to jobs in Alaska on limited means."

Whitehorse, Yukon Territory - Americans heading for jobs in Alaska were strung-out for hundreds of miles along the Alaska Highway tonight, driving through the twilight in an effort to make up a few of the many hours lost when the bridge over the Rancheria River at mile 687 was condemned, torn-out and re-built. For hours this morning cars, trucks, trailers and busses lined-up waiting for the last plank to be nailed down. Finally, just before noon, the few cars on the north-side came across. Then the rush from the south started.

Speed Despite Danger

Great clouds of dust filled the air and formed a dense fog that made tast driving hazardous. But there were anxious drivers who swung out of line and raced to get ahead. The first accident occurred within three miles of the bridge when a driver pulled out, saw a dust-obscured gully too late and turned over. Fortunately neither of the passengers was injured.

Brig. Gen. A.B. Connelly, Commanding Officer of the North-west Highway System with headquarters in Whitehorse, says the delay at the Rancheria Bridge is the worst that has occu-rred since the Canadians took over its maintenance from the United States Army on April 1, 1946. It seems obvious that more men and more machinery are needed to keep-up the 1,221 miles of the highway in Canadian territory. Connelly declined to say how much money is appropriated annually for upkeep but from other sources it was learned that the request in the next budget is for $3,800,000.

One of Connelly's Engineers volunteered the view that the highway will not actually be a year-'round all-weather road until all of the rivers it crosses are properly spanned by steel and concrete structures. Steel for these bridges is stacked in White-horse where it was left by the United States Army, but Connelly does not have enough manpower to put in more than one or two permanent bridges a year.

Fairbanks, Alaska - The speedometer on this Reporter's car showed it had traveled 4,214 miles from Chicago to Fairbanks. The final twenty-five miles were over a road that had recently been flooded by the Tanana River for two weeks.

Regardless of the time you arrive in Fairbanks during the summer it will be daylight to some degree and the sun will set and rise in the North. Newcomers frequently hang blankets over the windows to get enough darkness to sleep.

The town of 7,000 is a welcome sight after the miles of wilderness. Neon signs dot the streets, some of which are paved. There are many taverns and restaurants. Prices are high and so are wages. Housing accommodations are tight.

Here are prices from a restaurant menu where we had our first meal: steaks, $2.50 to $5; bacon and eggs, $1.50; chicken chow mein, $2.25; griddle cakes, 45 cents; two poached eggs on toast, $1.50; salads, $1.25 to $2.25; fresh sliced tomatoes, $1.75; hamburger sandwich, 50 cents. Plenty of coffee costs a dime.



CANADIAN GRADERS AT WORK ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY . . . THE SCENERY IS OFTEN GRAND, THE ROAD AT TIMES NOT SO GOOD.

The following photographs were taken along the Alaska Highway in mid-September 1948 by a couple from central Missouri who had spent the summer exploring the territory; from Anchorage to Edmonton. These photographs were taken on Kodachrome slide film during their drive back home to Missouri.



The photograph above shows the couple's well-equipped car; a 1941 Pontiac they called "Gussie," on the Alaska Highway. It may have previously been a police car (Pontiacs were often used as police cars in that era and she's equipped with two side spot lights, one for each of the officers in the car, common then also.



Tok Lodge.



The U.S. Customs & Immigration office at Tok Junction.



The Alaska Highway at Tok Junction.



The view from the bridge over the Tanana River.



Entering Yukon Territory; at the border at Historic Milepost 1221, what is now Km 1902.5 (measured from Dawson Creek, B.C.).



Looking back at the “Entering Alaska” sign.



What's left of the original bridge over the Donjek River. This bridge was a few miles upstream from the current crossing.



Lost light meter lake.



The Yukon River at Whitehorse. The float plane was owned by the White-horse Flying Service.



This native cemetery is at the bottom of what is now called “Two Mile Hill,” in Whitehorse..



On the Alaska Highway, passing Marsh Lake.



Looking back at the Nisutlin Bay Bridge at Teslin.



The signpost forest in Watson Lake.



Near Contact Creek, along the Liard River.



Along the Toad River.



In the Muncho Lake area.



The Liard River Bridge; the last remaining suspension bridge on the Alaska Highway.



Looking back at “The Gorge,” at about Km 602, where the Alaska Highway climbs steeply out of the MacDonald River Valley for southbound traffic.



Summit Lake is in Summit Pass which, at 4,250-feet, is the highest summit on the Alaska Highway. Summit Lake was the site of a large camp during, and for a few years after, construction of the Alaska Highway. All that's left is a campground and a long-abandoned lodge.



Descending southbound from Summit Lake.



Descending southbound from Summit Lake.



Quonsets & Teepees.



Near Fort Nelson.



View from Trutch Mountain, Historic Mile 178, which was on a 30-mile-long section of the Alaska Highway that was bypassed in 1987. The old road went to the top of the ridge at 4,130-feet in order to avoid the extensive muskeg below, while the new highway deals with the wet conditions in the bottom of the Minnaker River Valley.



Looking north from the Sikanni Chief River Bridge at Historic Mile 162. Photograph shows the original road going down to the river where the first two bridges were located.



The first Sikanni Chief River Bridge was a temporary pontoon bridge while the second was built built of rough logs in just 84 hours by 166 black soldiers from Company A of the 95th Regiment - it was the first permanent bridge. The current bridge is shown in the above photograph.



Road surface of the current Chief River Bridge.



Looking back to the north. The current bridge is just out-of-view to the right of this view.



Mile 68, about 16 miles north of Charlie Lake.



This is the first permanent bridge over the Peace River at Taylor, Historic Mile 35. The 2,275-foot-long bridge, constructed at a cost of $1,750,000, was opened on August 30, 1943, replacing ferries which had moved enormous loads of freight, equipment and people across the river and 3 trestle bridges which had been destroyed by high-water or ice-jambs.



The bridge had problems with the north pier sinking and by 1948, crews were working to try to stabilize it. It was thought by some that the pier had been built on a lens of ice that had been mistaken for bedrock. The bridge collapsed on October 16, 1957, when a large landslide hit the already unstable pier.

Dawson Creek was a quiet farming community of about 600 souls, that is until March 9, 1942, when a train arrived on the Northern Alberta Railway line carrying the first American soldiers assigned to build a military road to Alaska. Within weeks, the Dawson Creek area would have a rotating population of about 10K as people arrived and left for points further north. The 1,523-mile-long Alaska Highway was officially opened on November 20, 1942, but until February 1948, special travel permits were required to drive on it.

The following photographs of the Dawson Creek area were taken on September 21-22, 1948 by the Missouri couple headed home.



As the couple neared Dawson Creek on the evening of Sept. 21st, they encountered heavy rain, but the skies were clearing as the sun went down.



Looking west on 102nd Avenue past the famous “Alaska Highway Mile 0” monument on September 22nd.



The Dew Drop Inn on the right in this view looking south would later become the Alaska Hotel. It was destroyed in a fire in September 2012.



Hartman's Home Furnishings, the Bank of Toronto and the New Palace Hotel & Cafe are among the businesses shown.



Starting out of Dawson Creek, the Missouri couple got a hint of what the roads ahead would be like.



The roads between Dawson Creek and Edmonton were notoriously bad, at the time. On September 22nd, the Missouri couple were stuck in deep ruts in the middle of the road and had to be pulled out by a tractor.



Captioned: “S.O.S.”.

Driving from Dawson Creek to Edmonton in September 1948



The roads between Dawson Creek and Edmonton were notoriously bad, at that time.



The “odd cloud formation” (noted in the caption on this slide) was apparently the reason for this photo-stop.



“Talking to God" apparently didn’t help the couple once they got “Gussie,” their 1941 Pontiac, high-centered on these ruts.



Captioned: “Help”



In downtown Edmonton on September 24, 1948, major work was being done on the Hudson's Bay Co. store, which opened on Nov. 14, 1939.



The 699-foot-long, low-level bridge, built in 1900, crosses the North Saskatchewan River. It became apparent that the traffic volume was too much for the bridge thus, City Engineer, A.W. Haddow, suggested the bridge be twinned and a new bridge, based on the original plans with a wider bridge deck, was built next to the existing low-level. Construction was begun in 1948 and completed in 1949.



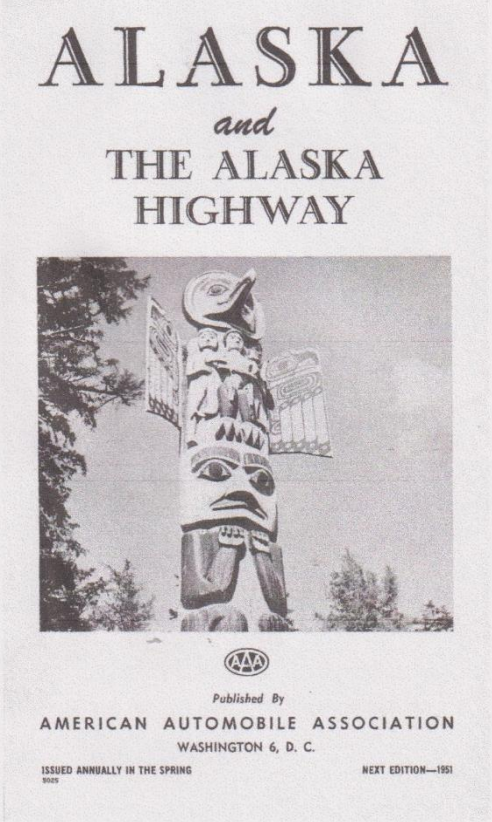
A residential area of Edmonton - the Cloverdale district at the southeast-end of the Low Level Bridge.



New concrete grain silo at terminal in Lethbridge.

Part 16

AAA Guides



ALASKA

and

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

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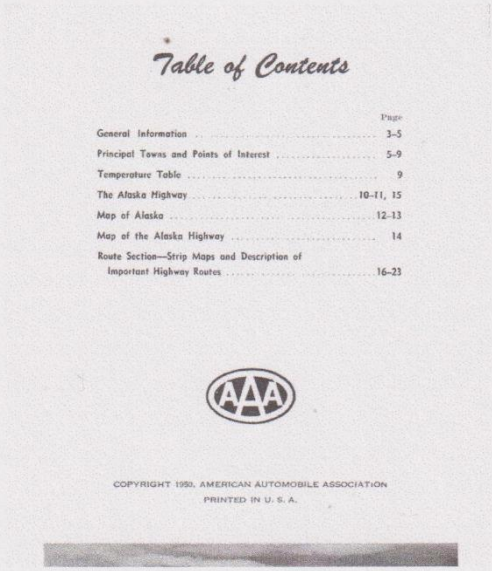
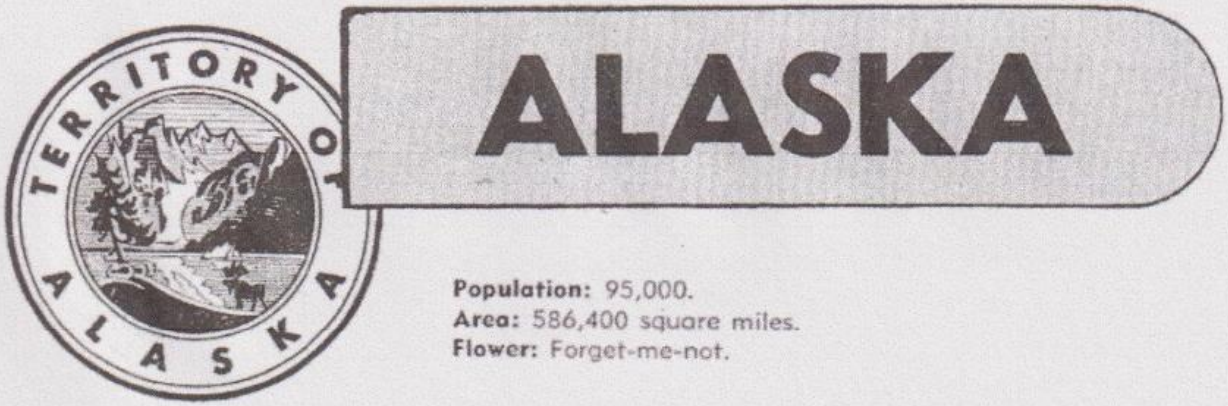


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In the Spring of 1950, the *American Automobile Association* (AAA) published a 5-1/2” x 9-1/4” – 24-page brochure entitled: “Alaska and the Alaska Highway“

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The Highest Point in North America—Mount McKinley, Alaska

CERTAIN FACTS about Alaska and its history stand out as unusual in contrast and interest: A purchase price of $7,200,000, less than two cents an acre, was paid by the United States in 1867 for this vast land, an area one-fifth the size of continental United States . . . Its mineral production alone totaled $950,000,000 from the year 1880 through 1949 . . . Once called "Seward's icebox" and sometimes "Seward's folly," Alaska actually enjoys an average climate generally considered mild . . . Here snow-capped mountains rise above great valleys of flowers . . . The territory today has a total of 27 incorporated towns but only 12 of more than 1,000 population.

The name Alaska is an English variant of the native word "al-ay-ek-sa," probably meaning "The Great Land" or "Mainland." First visited by Russian ships under the command of Vitus Bering, a Dane, and Alexei Chirikof in 1741, the territory became part of the United States March 30, 1867, when the Treaty of Purchase was signed at Washington by Secretary of State William H. Seward, for the United States, and Baron Edward de Stoeckl, for Russia. This treaty called for the payment of the sum of $7,200,000 in gold by the United States, and under its terms all natives of Alaska acquired full rights of citizenship.

A photostatic copy of Treasury Warrant No. 9759, payable to Edward de Stoeckl, Envoy Extraordinary, for the amount of the purchase price, hangs in the Alaska Historical Library and Museum at Juneau.

For many years the Federal Government took little interest in the development of Alaska. But the discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1896 brought a large number of settlers and created a need for additional laws. Congress provided a code of civil and criminal law and in 1903 passed a homestead act, and by the Act of May 7, 1906, empowered Alaska to elect a delegate to Congress.

The year 1912 saw the creation of the Territory of Alaska with Juneau as capital. Provision was made for a legislature of two houses to be elected every two years by popular vote, and for a Governor to be appointed by the President for a term of four years. The legislature meets biennially in odd years; there are 40 members, 24 in the House of Representatives and 16 in the Senate. The delegate to Congress is elected every two years. He has a seat in the House of Representatives and membership on committees dealing with Territorial affairs but no vote. Alaska now is seeking admission to the Union as a state.

ALASKA consists of three distinctive regions: (1) the main territory, bounded by the Arctic Ocean on the north, the Bering Sea on the west, the Pacific Ocean on the south and Canada's Yukon Territory on the east; (2) the panhandle or southeastern Alaska, comprising the narrow fringe of the continental coast together with the adjacent islands, and (3) the Aleutian Archipelago, composed of the islands westward from the Alaska Peninsula, including Attu and Kiska, both of which were occupied by Japanese forces during World War II.

Three-fourths of the Territory is in the North Temperate Zone, only one-fourth being north of the Arctic Circle. Variations in temperature are extreme, though the climate for the most part is considered equable. In southeastern Alaska there is no great variation between summer and winter temperatures, the yearly average being mild. (See temperature table on page 9.) Precipitation, however, is heavy, exceeding in some sections that of any locality in continental United States. At Ketchikan it totals 150 inches a year. As one progresses inland, it generally decreases and the seasonal temperature variation is then much more pronounced.

Temperature Table

From Records of the U. S. Weather Bureau

	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Gambell	Juneau	Ketchikan	Kotzebue	McGrath	Nome	Northway
JANUARY									
Average Maximum	19	−2	9	32	39	6	5	11	−6
Average Minimum	4	−19	1	24	28	−9	−14	−4	−22
FEBRUARY									
Average Maximum	27	11	8	35	41	6	18	13	9
Average Minimum	10	−10	−2	26	29	−9	−2	−2	−12
MARCH									
Average Maximum	33	23	8	39	44	3	19	17	20
Average Minimum	14	−4	−2	29	51	−14	−8	1	−7
APRIL									
Average Maximum	44	42	22	47	50	20	39	27	39
Average Minimum	27	17	12	35	35	−1	12	16	11
MAY									
Average Maximum	54	59	34	55	57	35	54	41	58
Average Minimum	36	35	26	40	40	20	33	28	33
JUNE									
Average Maximum	62	71	43	62	63	48	68	53	69
Average Minimum	44	46	35	46	46	36	46	38	45
JULY									
Average Maximum	65	72	49	64	65	60	69	56	69
Average Minimum	49	48	41	50	50	48	49	44	49
AUGUST									
Average Maximum	64	66	49	62	66	52	62	56	64
Average Minimum	48	44	42	49	51	42	45	44	43
SEPTEMBER									
Average Maximum	56	54	44	56	61	45	53	48	51
Average Minimum	39	33	38	45	47	35	36	36	33
OCTOBER									
Average Maximum	43	35	35	48	52	32	36	35	43
Average Minimum	29	18	29	39	41	23	22	24	22
NOVEMBER									
Average Maximum	29	11	26	40	45	8	10	22	5
Average Minimum	16	−5	20	32	35	−9	−7	10	−15
DECEMBER									
Average Maximum	20	1	12	35	40	3	0	14	−10
Average Minimum	6	−16	4	27	31	−12	−16	1	−28

Alaska has five major mountain ranges with elevations ranging upward to 20,300 ft. The snow-capped peaks and glacier formations of these mountains, in contrast with flower-carpeted valleys, are among Alaska's most scenic attractions. Mount McKinley, 20,300 feet, is the highest peak on the North American Continent.

The Yukon River, in its bow-shaped course of 1,500 miles from the Canadian boundary to Bering Sea, receives three large navigable affluents—the Porcupine, Tanana and Koyukuk. The Yukon watershed, about 175,000 square miles in area, together with the sections of Alaska along the Pacific Coast comprise the greater part of the habitable regions of the Territory.

NINETY per cent of the land in Alaska is in the public domain, but lands generally considered suited for homestead entry are relatively limited areas located along the southern coast and in the broad interior valleys. Title to homesteads of 160 acres may be secured by complying with the requirements of the homestead law, the principal provisions of which are residence upon the land for three years, cultivation of the prescribed acreage, and erection of a habitable house.

Persons considering land settlement in Alaska should contact the U. S. Land office at either Fairbanks or Anchorage, Alaska, before they reach Alaskan soil. Bulletins discussing land settlement may be had upon mailed request to either Land office. Persons seeking employment in Alaska should contact the Chambers of Commerce in either Fairbanks or Anchorage before starting to Alaska.

Because of the high cost of transportation from the United States, the farmer or homesteader finds it advantageous to raise as much as possible of the food and other products required by his family and livestock. In general, almost all kinds of hardy vegetables and berries and some grains can be raised in Alaska on favorable locations south of the Arctic Circle.

The growing season averages 140 days along the southeastern coast, 120 days on the central Pacific Coast, and 80 to 90 days in the central Tanana and upper Yukon valleys. The unusual length of the summer day compensates somewhat for the shortness of the growing season in these northern valleys.

In some sections dairying is a principal farm activity. With improved transportation, cattle raising may become more widespread, as it is estimated that there are 35,000 square miles of grazing land in the Territory. Sheep are raised, but not for commercial sale. Swine is the meat animal most successfully raised.

ABOUT one-third of the total population of 100,000 is composed of native stock —Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts. Large numbers of the population have been concentrated in southeastern Alaska, which includes the towns of Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka, Skagway and the capital city of Juneau. Wartime growth, however, brought a great expansion to Anchorage and Fairbanks, now the largest towns in Alaska.

Conditions and local customs among the white people of Alaska are similar to those in comparable parts of the United States. Educational facilities include two separate school systems: (1) public schools for children of all races, under the direction of the Territorial Department of Education, with a commissioner at Juneau, (2) schools for Indians and Eskimos, under the direction of the Alaska Native Service, U. S. Office of Indian Affairs. The only institution of higher learning is the University of Alaska, a land grant college, located near Fairbanks. The University offers specialized courses in mining and agriculture, and, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, operates experiment stations at Fairbanks, Matanuska and Petersburg.

Most of the larger towns afford private hospitals, physicians, dentists and nurses in private practice, but there is need for additional trained medical and nursing personnel. The U. S. Public Health Service maintains eight relief stations, and the Alaska Native Service operates six hospitals in various parts of the Territory for the benefit of Indians and Eskimos. It also employs a number of public health nurses, who travel from one native village to another teaching sanitation and arranging for the hospitalization of the sick and injured.

Churches of various denominations are available throughout the Territory.

ALASKANS gain their living largely in fishing and fish canning, mining, fur trapping and farming, forest products, transportation, trades, service industries and general farming. Fishing is the chief industry, the canned salmon pack alone being valued in 1949 at 90 million dollars. Some 100 canneries employ about 20,000 persons, but canning is a seasonal industry, which furnishes employment only during the summer months. Many workers in the fishing industry have their homes in the States and go to Alaska for the fishing season.

Alaska's large and varied mineral resources include gold, silver, antimony, tin, coal, copper, iron, lead and platinum. Gold mining has in the past accounted for most of Alaska's mineral production, but since the war, prospecting for, and mining of, strategic metals have increased. Present efforts also include the development of petroleum reserves, coal mines and such materials as limestone, clay and gypsum.

Most of the merchantable timber in Alaska is set aside in two large national forests, under the supervision of the United States Forest Service, Department of Agriculture. Tongass National Forest comprises 16,080,000 acres in southeastern Alaska and is estimated to have over 78 billion feet of merchantable timber. Chugach National Forest embraces most of the land along the shores of Prince William Sound and the eastern half of Kenai Peninsula and is estimated to contain over six billion feet. Most of this is hemlock and Sitka spruce.

The Territory is notable for big game hunting and sport fishing, but nonresidents must secure a license to fish or hunt and must obey the laws and regulations governing open and closed seasons and the take of game. Information is obtainable from the Alaska Game Commission, Juneau, Alaska, or from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, Washington, D. C.

WITH the exception of the most westward islands of the Aleutian group, there are no travel restrictions for persons wishing to visit Alaska.

The Alaska Highway, extending 1,527 miles from Dawson Creek, B. C., to Fairbanks, or 1,659 miles to Anchorage, is open to travelers without restriction or the necessity of obtaining permits.

Regular steamship service is available between Seattle and the principal ports of Alaska, and air service is established between Seattle and Ketchikan, Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Nome, with connections to nearly every community in the Territory. Air travelers may also come from Canadian points via Whitehorse, Y.T., or fly direct from Minneapolis, Minn., to Anchorage, which is a stop on a through route to Tokyo, Shanghai and Manila.

Much of the transportation within Alaska is by airplane and water. Although there are 3,000 miles of roads in the Territory, the total connected highways affording a tour by automobile is 1,500 miles. Regular bus service is maintained on the main routes.

The Alaska Railroad, operated by the Department of the Interior, furnishes year-round freight and passenger service to all points on the road between the ports of Seward and Whittier and the city of Fairbanks, a distance of 471 miles. In the winter dog teams are still used in the more isolated districts.

Cities and Towns

Although the territory has no large towns, neither has it a great number of small ones, as the spots on the map would ordinarily indicate. Here, these spots may represent merely the location of a cannery or a trading post or a roadhouse, which, in Alaska, means a hotel or series of cabins located in the wilderness to accommodate travelers unable to reach a town for an overnight stop.

ANCHORAGE (pop. 20,000)

Situated on a level plateau of Knik Arm, a branch of Cook Inlet, Anchorage was established in 1915 as a construction base for the Alaska Railroad project. In 1923 the first train went through on its way from Seward to Fairbanks.

Today Anchorage is the largest city in the territory and business center for the Bristol Bay fishing area and for the fertile Matanuska Valley, which lies 50 miles north. The scenic Glenn Highway provides a good connection with Valdez, Fairbanks and points on the Alaska Highway.

The local airfield, said to be the busiest in Alaska, is on a commercial route to Asia. Near by is Fort Richardson, Alaska Dept. headquarters of the Army.

Anchorage Hotel, 82 rooms, 48 baths. Single $3.25 to $6, double $5 to $10.50. Popular.

Parsons Hotel, 100 rooms, 50 baths. Single $3.50 to $5, double $5 to $8.

Roosevelt Hotel, 53 rooms, 8 showers. Single $2 to $3, double $4 to $6. Comfortable, well kept.

Westward Hotel, 190 rooms, 100 baths. Single $5 to $8, double $8 to $12. Modern, very nice.

Jade Room, 411 H St. An attractive restaurant serving excellent food. Closed Mon.

La Bries', 139 E. 4th Ave. Unusually good food. Open daily, except Tues., 5 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Thompsons, 532 Eye St. A popular cafe serving wholesome food.

BIG DELTA JUNCTION

Triangle Lodge, Mile 1428 Alaska Hwy. Roadside cafe serving good food. Cabins.

Black Rapids Hunting Lodge, 35 mi. s. on Richardson Hwy., 10 rooms, 2 showers. Single $2.50, double $5. Open May 1 to Nov. 1. Rustic. (P.O. Fairbanks)

CIRCLE CITY (pop. 100, mainly native)

An Indian village and mining center located on the Yukon River, about 50 miles south of the Arctic Circle. It is reached from Fairbanks by the Steese Highway.

Circle Hot Springs, 26 miles south, is a resort centering around the hot springs. The best vegetables in Alaska are said to grow here.

Circle Hot Springs Resort, at Circle Springs, acc. 155. Single $3 to $5, double $5 to $7.50.

COPPER CENTER (pop. 138)

Copper Center Roadhouse, ½ mi. s. on Richardson Hwy., 14 rooms, 2 baths. Single $1.50 to $2, double $4. Plain.

Tonsina Lodge, 22 mi. s. on Richardson Hwy., 28 rooms, 28 baths. Single $3, double $6. Open Apr. 1 to Oct. 15. Comfortable.

Tiekel Roadhouse, 52 mi. s. on Richardson Hwy. Good wholesome food. Open May 1 to Oct. 15.

CORDOVA (pop. 2,000)

Historical copper gateway of Alaska, Cordova is located between Eyak Lake and Orca Bay on picturesque Prince William Sound. The town was formerly the water terminus of the Copper River Railroad, which is no longer in operation, but a short section of the roadbed has been converted into a scenic drive. Cordova fishery operations include cold storage plants, four large salmon canneries, as well as the largest crab and clam canneries in Alaska.

Northern Hotel, 50 rooms, 16 baths. Single $1 to $3.50, double $1.75 to $4.

Windsor Hotel, 72 rooms, 36 baths. Single $2.50 to $4, double $3.50 to $6.

CURRY (pop. 250)

Halfway point between the coast and the interior, on the Alaska Railroad.

Curry Hotel, 60 rooms, 25 baths. Single $3.50 to $4.50, double $5.50 to $6.50.

FAIRBANKS (pop. 8,500)

One of the two largest cities in Alaska, Fairbanks is center of gold mining operations and market for agricultural products from the Tanana Valley. It is southern terminus of Steese Highway which runs to Circle on the Yukon River, and northern terminus of the Alaska Railroad and of the Alaska Highway and Richardson Highway from the port of Valdez. The city airfield is base for six companies covering most of Alaska. Adjoining Fairbanks is Ladd Air Force Base, large cold weather test base.

University of Alaska, northernmost university in the world, and its farm experiment station are near by. The University Museum, open daily, contains interesting exhibits relating to Alaska history.

Fairbanks Hotel, 39 rooms, 12 baths. Single $3 to $6, double $5 to $7. Modest, neat.

Nordale Hotel, 115 rooms, 30 baths. Single $3 to $6, double $4 to $10. Leading hotel.

Scotty Creek Lodge, Mile 1226 Alaska Hwy., 15 rooms. Single $2 to $3, double $4 to $5.

Silver Fox Lodge, 52 mi. s. on Alaska Hwy., 8 rooms, 2 baths. Single $3.50 to $5, double $5 to $7. Plain, comfortable.

GAKONA (pop. 46)

Gakona Lodge & Trading Post, 2 mi. n.e. of Gulkana Post Office, 8 rooms. Single $2, double $4. Plain; good food. (P.O. Gulkana)

GLACIER BAY NATIONAL MONUMENT—Second largest area administered by the National Park Service, Glacier Bay includes numerous tidewater glaciers set in a magnificent land of lofty peaks projecting upward from the eternal icecap which covers portions of the area. Mt. Fairweather, outstanding peak within the monument's 2,297,456 acres, rises 15,300 feet. Most spectacular of the tidewater glacier group is Muir Glacier, nearly 2 miles wide and rising 265 feet above the water level. Large ice floes and icebergs of tremendous size are actively discharged by this and other glaciers into the waters of the bay.

This area is of great scientific importance as one of the finest exhibits of glacial action, climatic changes and the resulting movements and development of vegetation and wildlife as well as relics of ancient interglacial forests. It is a haven for bears, rare fur-bearers, mountain goats, whales and porpoises, spawning salmon and many species of waterfowl.

The monument lies near the northern end of the Alaska panhandle, extending from Icy Strait to the boundary of Canada's Yukon Territory. About 80 miles northwest of Juneau, it may be reached by chartering a small boat or plane. Special steamer cruises are also available into the bay.



U. S. Forest Service

Northern Bald (American) Eagle in Chugach National Forest, Alaska

GLEN ALLEN

Tazlina Glacier Lodge, 30 mi. w. at Mile 156 Glenn Hwy., 6 units. Double $4. (P.O. Palmer)

GULKANA (pop. 25)

Santa Claus Lodge, 2 mi. s. of jct. Richardson Hwy. & Tok-Slana Cutoff, 35 rooms. Single $2.50 to $3, double $5.50. Main building comfortable.

Sourdough Lodge, 19 mi. n. on Richardson Hwy., 6 rooms. Single $1.50 to $2, double $3 to $4. Open June 1 to Oct. 1. Modest, well kept.

HAINES (pop. 500)

Located on the Chilkat Peninsula, Haines occupies a scenic spot between Rainbow Glacier and mountain range and Lynn Canal. The town is starting point of the Haines Cutoff, built by Army engineers as transportation connection with the Alaska Highway, 100 miles northwest of Whitehorse, Y. T. This road is maintained as a tourist drive and transportation shortcut to Fairbanks; open during the summer.

Near-by Port Chilkoot, former Army post, is being developed as an all-year port and resort area. Eighteen miles north by water are Skagway and the ghost town of Dyea.

Port Chilkoot Company, 50 rooms, 15 baths. American plan: single $7.50 to $10, double $12.50 to $17.50.

HOMER (pop. 450)

Eighteen miles north of Seldovia, Homer is located across Kachemak Bay in an area which was once one of the great trapping regions of Alaska. The town is center of a homestead area, which holds promise as a sea food center and farming region.

JUNEAU (pop. 7,500)

Seat of Territorial government and Federal agencies, Juneau is also a transportation crossroad, lumbering and fishing center. The history of the city dates from 1880 when Joe Juneau discovered gold in a creek which became known as Gold Creek.

Adjacent to the city is the Alaska-Juneau Mine and across Gastineau Channel is the town of Douglas. Fourteen miles north is beautiful Auke Bay, a sport fishing center and the locale for many summer homes. Tee Harbor, 19 miles north on Glacier Highway, is the loading point for an automobile ferry running 70 miles to Haines. Fine fishing and public camping accommodations are available at Hasselborg Lake, 20 minutes by air from Juneau.

Territorial Museum, housed in the Federal Building, contains one of the most complete Eskimo collections found in the United States; also many rare Indian artifacts and historical specimens.

Mendenhall Glacier and Auke Lake, 13 miles from Juneau by Glacier Highway, which leads right to the 2-mile face of the glacier. Of interest is the raw glacier moraine and remnants of a buried forest sheared off by the advancing ice and later exposed when the ice retreated. Trails on either side of the glacier lead to points affording views of deep crevasses.

Baranof Hotel, 98 rooms, 98 baths. Single $5.50 to $9, double $6.50 to $9.

Gastineau Hotel, 91 rooms, 10 baths. Single $2.25 to $4.50, double $2.50 to $6.

Hotel Juneau, 40 rooms, 12 baths. Single $2.50 to $4, double $4 to $5.50.

KATMAI NATIONAL MONUMENT

Largest area administered by the National Park Service, Katmai National Monument consists of 2,697,590 acres on the southern shore of the Alaska Peninsula. Primarily an exhibit of volcanism, it is also a region of magnificent scenery where waterfowl and fish are abundant. The Peninsula brown bear, largest of the carnivorous animals, is found here.

In 1912 Mount Katmai erupted so violently as to leave a crater over 8 miles in circumference. The most spectacular feature is the mountain-encircled "Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes."

The monument is remote and at present comparatively inaccessible. There are no roads leading into the monument, nor are there any public accommodations for visitors. Charter plane service for flights over the area can be arranged from the two closest towns—Kodiak, located on Kodiak Island, or the fishing village of Naknek, located on Bristol Bay.

KETCHIKAN (pop. 7,000)

Situated on the west coast of Revillagigedo Island, Ketchikan is separated from the mainland by Behm Canal. The city is salmon center of the world, a leading port and principal area of spruce logging in southeastern Alaska.

A park contains a number of well preserved totem poles. At the falls of Ketchikan Creek from late July to October, may be seen salmon climbing the fish ladder.

Gilmore Hotel, 41 rooms, 14 baths. Single $2.50 to $5, double $4 to $7.

Ingersoll Hotel, 75 rooms, 50 baths. Single $3 to $5, double $4.50 to $7.

Stedman Hotel, 50 rooms, 10 baths. Single $2 to $3, double $2.50 to $3.50.

KODIAK (pop. 1,500)

A scenic port and fishing center. The island is popular with big game hunters because of the huge Kodiak bear found here; season Sept. 1 to June 20. Kodiak is the site of a U. S. Naval Operating Base, headquarters of the 17th Naval District.

Kodiak Hotel, 25 rooms, 5 baths. Single $2.50 to $5, double $3.50 to $7.50.

MOUNT McKINLEY NATIONAL PARK

Situated in south central Alaska, Mount McKinley National Park comprises an area of 3,030 square miles of magnificent mountain country.

Mount McKinley itself, the highest peak in North America, rises to a height of 20,300 feet above sea level and 17,000 feet above timberline. First ascended in 1910, this peak has long been the goal of expert climbers. For two-thirds of the way down from its summit, it is enveloped in snow throughout the year. Denali, home of the sun, was the name given it by the early Indians.

Near Mount McKinley are Mount Foraker, with an elevation of 17,000 feet; Mount Hunter, 14,960 feet; and Mount Russell, 11,600 feet. All the largest northward-flowing glaciers of the Alaska Range rise on the ice-covered slopes of Mount McKinley and Mount Foraker.

Typical among the 118 kinds of birds and 34 kinds of mammals found within the park are the willow ptarmigan and the caribou, found in no other national park. The surf bird is also unusual in that its eggs have been found here and nowhere else in the world. Also of interest are the Alaska moose, mountain sheep and grizzly bear.

The white spruce is the most common evergreen, but the white birch, cottonwood, quaking aspen and willow are also prevalent. Thickets along the lower mountain slopes are principally of dwarf birch, which is a dull green in summer but flaming scarlet and orange at the touch of frost.

The flora include the deep blue forget-me-not, which is the Territorial flower, the blue larkspur, blue and pink chiming bell, white and pink pyrolas, yellow arctic poppy and the white and yellow dryas.

Accommodations and costs—There are 91 miles of gravel surfaced roads in and accessible from the park, and trails for pack and horseback trips. Saddle horses rent for $7.50 a day and pack horses for $6 a day. Guide service is $12 a day. Automobiles can be taken to the park by train, the preferable starting point being Fairbanks. Gasoline can be purchased through McKinley Park Hotel. Located at the railroad station, this modern hotel is operated by the Alaska Railroad and is open during the official park season, June 10 to Sept. 15.

There are no prepared campgrounds like those in the national parks of the States. However, the motorist should have tent and camping equipment as the road crosses many streams where there are pleasant campsites.

McKinley Park Hotel, 74 rooms, 45 baths. Single $5 to $7, double $8 to $10.

NENANA (pop. 500)

Located on the Tanana River, Nenana is the transshipping point for freight from rail to steamers serving the Yukon River system. Each spring this is the scene of the famous and traditional ice sweepstakes, when thousands of Alaskans compete in guessing the exact day, hour and minute of the ice breakup on the river. The stakes often amount to $150,000.

NOME (pop. 1,600)

Located on the shores of Norton Sound, Nome is the center of commerce for northwestern Alaska. It is accessible by airplane from Anchorage, and Fairbanks, and is the main stop on tourist excursion flights to Kotzebue and other Arctic points.

Gold was discovered on the beaches here in 1899 and placer mining is still carried on. The city is a center for native arts and crafts, an important industry. Many Eskimos are seen in Nome during the summer months. King Island natives, famed ivory carvers, gather here at that time to offer their handiwork to the tourist trade. Nome is the home of the Northwestern Alaska Fair.

Wallace Hotel. 25 rooms. Single $3.50 to $5, double $5 to $8.

OLD KASAAN NATIONAL MONUMENT—In southeastern Alaska, Old Kasaan National Monument includes historic ruins of an abandoned Haida Indian village. The area, comprising 38 acres on Prince of Wales Island, contains totem poles, grave houses and portions of the original framework of buildings. These represent a distinct type of aboriginal American civilization, vestiges of which are rapidly disappearing.

There is no common carrier transportation to the monument, nor are there any public accommodations available. Charter plane or small boat service may be arranged from Ketchikan.

PALMER (pop. 150)

Central community in the Matanuska Valley, Alaska's largest developed agricultural area. The immediate vicinity also affords very good hunting and fishing.

Eureka Roadhouse, Mile 128 Glenn Hwy., 8 rooms, 2 baths. Single $2, double $4. Plain, comfortable.

Matanuska Hotel, 42 rooms, 42 baths. Single $5, double $8 to $10. Modern.

Matanuska Valley Lodge, 28 rooms, 6 baths. Single $3 to $4.50, double $4.50 to $6. Neat.

PAXON

Paxon's Lodge, 65 mi. n. of Gulkana on Richardson Hwy., 16 rooms, 2 baths. Single $2.50, double $5. Open June 1 to Oct. 1. (P.O. Fairbanks)

PETERSBURG (pop. 2,000)

With sidewalks and streets of wood, Petersburg is noted as the shrimp capital of Alaska and a fishing center for Norwegian Alaskans. The town, which is located on Mitkoff Island, is also an outfitting point for game hunters. The University of Alaska operates a fur farm branch of its experimental station here.

Arctic Hotel, 34 rooms, 4 baths. Single $2 to $3.50, double $3.50 to $4.50.

SELDOVIA (pop. 500)

Reached by plane or boat, Seldovia is a busy fishing village near the southern tip of Kenai Peninsula.

SEWARD (pop. 2,500)

Completely surrounded by mountains, Seward is at the north end of Resurrection Bay. The town, named for William H. Seward who negotiated for the purchase of Alaska, is gateway to Kenai Peninsula, farm and resort area. It is southern terminus of the Alaska Railroad, though some traffic now goes through Whittier.

New Seward Hotel, 40 rooms, 11 baths. Single $3.50 to $5, double $5 to $7.

Van Gilder Hotel, 32 rooms, 4 baths. Single $2.50 to $3.50, double $4 to $5.

SITKA (pop. 2,800)

Alaska's most scenic large town, Sitka is surrounded by high peaks and small wooded islands. The town is located on the west shore of Baranof Island, and is accessible by plane or boat. The harbor, which docks more than a thousand small fishing boats, is dominated by Mt. Edgecombe, an extinct snow-capped volcano rising above a chain of blue hills. The mountain is on the southern tip of Kruzof Island.

Founded in 1804 by Alexander Baranof, Sitka was capital of Russian America until 1867 when the Territory was purchased by the United States. Sitka ranks as the world's leading port for king salmon. The Sitka Cold Storage Plant has a capacity for three million pounds of salmon.

Sitka claims the oldest school in the Territory, the Sheldon Jackson High School and Junior College. A fine library, the C. L. Andrews Memorial, is housed in the City Hall. Near the dock is Pioneers Home, surrounded by landscaped grounds featuring native Alaska plants. From the Home, a 10-minute walk leads to a Russian cemetery, notable for its headstones dating to 1799.

Near by the Alaska Native Service has opened a vocational school, a tuberculosis sanitarium and an orthopedic hospital.

St. Michael's Cathedral, completed in 1842, is of Eastern Orthodox design. The interior of the church is decorated with aged icons, or holy paintings.

Sitka Hotel, 70 rooms, 12 baths. Single $3 to $4.50, double $4.50 to $7.

SITKA NATIONAL MONUMENT

Located in southeastern Alaska, Sitka National Monument covers approximately 57 acres on the west shore of Baranof Island fronting Sitka Sound, and is reached by the Indian River Road from the town of Sitka. The monument was created to protect a unique collection of Alaskan Indian totem poles and to preserve items of historical interest in the vicinity. A replica of a Russian blockhouse, the graves of seven Russians killed during the Battle of Sitka (1804) and the site of the Indian stockade where the Kit-Siti tribe made their last stand against the Russian settlers are among interesting features of this area.

Indian River, or Kolosh Ryeku, as it was called by the Russians, flows through the monument. Thousands of salmon may be seen during the spawning season on their way to spawning beds in the upper reaches of the river.

SKAGWAY (pop. 800)

A scenic city dwarfed by mountains rising steeply behind it, Skagway is located at the head of Lynn Canal. It is the southern terminus of the White Pass and Yukon Railway, which runs past Lake Bennett to Whitehorse, Y. T.

To the north is historic White Pass, route of the Yukon gold rush of 1897. Eight miles west on a branch of Lynn Canal is the ghost town of Dyea and Chilkoot Pass, route of the 1898 rush.

Pullen House Hotel, 35 rooms, 12 baths. Single $2.50 to $6, double $3.50 to $8.

SLANA

Duffy's Tavern, 73 mi. s.w. of Tok on Tok-Slana cutoff, 6 rooms. Single $2, double $4. Plain, rustic. (P.O. Gulkana)

TOK JUNCTION

Log Cabin Lodge, 28 mi. s.w. on Tok-Slana cutoff, 5 units. Double $4 to $5. Very well operated.

VALDEZ (pop. 600)

The most northern all-year port in this hemisphere. Valdez is situated at the head of mountain-enclosed Valdez Arm, a deep fiord on the rugged coast of Prince William Sound. The town occupies a fan of Valdez Glacier at the foot of Keystone Canyon and Thompson Pass.

The tent city known as Copper City, which grew up here during early gold rush days, was renamed Valdez in 1898. Then, as now, the trail from Valdez was the most direct way to the interior of Alaska, entirely within the bounds of United States territory. Today's Richardson Highway leading to Fairbanks begins here, and affords a drive through a very scenic section.

Of interest near by are beautiful Bridal Veil Falls and Horse Tail Falls. Short boat trips may be made to Columbia Glacier, a few miles outside Valdez Bay, or to the native villages of Tatitlek and Ellamar, just outside the Valdez Narrows. A salmon cannery is located at Danville, formerly the site of Fort Liscum, a U. S. Army post.

Valdez Hotel, 14 rooms, 4 baths. Single $3 to $4, double $4 to $5. Best here.

WRANGELL (pop. 1,500)

Centrally located in the panhandle of southeastern Alaska, Wrangell is a center for timber, mining and fishing industries. It is the gateway to the rich Canadian Cassier area, and an outfitting point for big game hunters and sport fishermen.

Founded in 1811, the town is noted historically as the outfitting center for miners during the gold rushes of 1883 and 1898. Of interest to visitors are the many well-preserved native totem poles.

Wrangell Hotel, 40 rooms, 8 baths. Single $2.50 up, double $4 up.

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY, an amazing feat in engineering, was rushed to completion in wartime. Cut through a great wilderness area, it was built primarily as a military highway to connect airfields and other Army installations for supply purposes.

Construction was begun in March 1942 and completed two to three years later. Without adequate or accurate maps available, the U.S. Army and the Public Roads Administration charted the route through country virtually unknown, relying on the existing line of airports at Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake and Whitehorse, in Canada, and at Northway, Big Delta Junction and Fairbanks, in Alaska. Between each of these points there were about 200 miles of wilderness – forests, muskeg swamps, hills, mountains and valleys cluttered with glacial debris.

Construction camps along the way housed a maximum of about 14,000 men, together with a corps of doctors and nurses of the United States Public Health Service. Over a hundred rivers and streams were bridged – the main rivers being Peace, Muskwa, Liard, Lewes and Tanana. Permanent structures have replaced many of the temporary bridges, the 1,800-foot suspension bridge across Peace River being the longest.

Driving the Alaska Highway

The Alaska Highway starts at Dawson Creek, B.C. Its total length is 1,527 miles, of which 1,221 miles are in Canada and 306 miles in Alaska. The road has a graveled, all weather surface from Dawson Creek to the Yukon - Alaska boundary. The paved-road driver will find that he must take it a good bit slower on gravel surface until he is used to the roll of the gravel under the wheels. Some of the curves on the highway are quite tricky and not all the curves are superelevated. Braking must be smooth and every effort and attention turned toward avoiding sudden starts and stops. The greatest length of the highway can be driven at a comfortable 45 miles-per-hour. On short stretches, on curves, over hills and on soft surface the speed must be reduced to 25 to 30 miles-per-hour.

Covering approximately 2,350 miles from the United States border to Fairbanks, the trip over the Alaska Highway is definitely not for the motorist vacationing on a time and money budget. Thirty days would be a minimum for this jaunt from Great Falls, Mont., or Spokane, Wash., to Fairbanks and return. An estimated minimum of $800 for two persons in one car for the trip does not include elaborate meals or lodgings.

The motorist's money will buy only what is available - extremely modest accommodations and very plain fare in cafes that range from the homespun frontier cabin type to modest but clean lunch counters. It is important to note that credit cards written on major oil companies are not honored in the Yukon or in Alaska. Many motorists taking just enough money for expenses, exclusive of gas and oil, have had to wire home for money to continue the trip, or have had to turn back.

United States currency is accepted at par throughout Canada. Canadian currency may be exchanged for United States money by persons entering continental United States or Alaska at a rate of about 90c United States money for a Canadian dollar.

Preferred Travel Season

Although the highway is kept open all year, the preferred travel season is from June to October. Ferries are used to cross some of the larger rivers on approach roads between Edmonton, Alberta, and Dawson Creek, B.C., and it is not available to travel during the spring when the ice is breaking-up or during the fall when ice is forming on the rivers. From mid-June to mid-September the temperature ranges from 35 to 75-degrees. Freezing nights for interior Alaska begin in September and snow and severe cold may be expected before the end of October. During June and the first half of July, the mosquitoes are reported to be at the height of annoyance. August is usually a rainy month.

Travel Regulations

Special permits to travel on the Alaska Highway no longer are required. United States citizens passing through Canada to Alaska do not need passports but must fulfill the usual customs requirements. Foreign-born citizens must bring proof of citizenship. Dogs or other pets must be accompanied by a certificate, signed by a veterinarian of the State of origin, certifying that the animal is free of contagious disease.

Customs inspection also includes an estimate of the entrant's ability to take care of himself financially while in Canada. Inspection Officers must be satisfied that entrants are in possession of sufficient funds to maintain themselves during their stay in Canada and to meet any obligations that might arise.

A cash or guarantee bond is required for older model cars, cars in poor condition or in cases where the amount of money and/or equipment carried, appears inadequate to meet the requirements of the proposed journey.

The use of trailers and cabin trailers is permissible. However, the use of heavy trailers in conjunction with passenger cars is not recommended, owing to difficulties which might be encountered on some of the longer grades.
The owner of each vehicle should carry proof-of-ownership.

Special regulations apply in some instances. It is recommended that in preparing for a trip over the Alaska Highway the motorist check with the Editorial Information Division, Department of Resources and Development, Ottawa, Ontario.

Car Equipment and Service

Travelers cannot expect assistance in matters of food and shelter nor of automotive repairs from the highway maintenance camps. Service offered by repair stations is sufficient for the driver operating good equipment. The following is considered necessary for all vehicles: two mounted spare tires and tubes, spark plugs, fan belt, light fuses, tire gauge, car tools, tire pump, tow rope or cable and a first-aid kit. A spare 5-gallon can-of-gas will serve to supply peace-of-mind.

For winter driving automobiles must be prepared for extreme cold weather operation. Vehicles should be in good operating condition and be equipped with anti-freeze, rear wheel chains, heater, defroster and radiator grille covers. Winterizing with light oils and greases is necessary and the use of a fuel additive to prevent frost and ice in the fuel system is recommended. Travelers should be equipped with sufficient heavy winter clothing and foot gear to protect them from the weather in case of breakdown, stall or accident.

Accommodations on the Highway

The highway cuts mainly through unsettled areas formerly inaccessible except by dog sled, by plane or by river routes in summer. Most of the country between the infrequent small settlements is wilderness with few signs of life. These settlements, together with the occasional mining projects and highway maintenance camps, furnish the only human contacts along the road.

Distances between stores, repair facilities and overnight accommodations are great. The only solution to the present problem of accommodations is the careful consideration of comfortable day's drives so that the motorist stages himself over the length of the highway in daily trips that will bring him each afternoon to points where there are the better run of establishments.

Several free campgrounds have been established for the convenience of those equipped for camping, carrying their own food and supplies. In the Yukon, in addition to an area for the erection of tents, the grounds provide cooking and dining shelters equipped with stoves and tables. Existing roadside facilities have been spotted on the strip maps following.

Establishments listed below have been inspected by the AAA and are logged according to their location along the Alaska Highway in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. Accommodations in Alaska are listed under their respective cities in the first section of this booklet.

DAWSON CREEK, B.C.

Dawson Hotel. 54 rooms, 8 baths. Single $2 to $5, double $3 to $7.50. Modern

FORT ST. JOHN. B.C.

Condill Hotel, 35 rooms, 6 baths. Single $2 to $3.50, double $3 to $5.50. Comfortable, well kept

MILE 233

Lum and Abner, 9 units, 2 baths. Double $4 to $5. Plain. (P.O. Fort Nelson).

MILE 300

Fort Nelson Hotel, 40 rooms, 6 baths. Single $1.25 to $3, double $3 to $5.50. (P.0. Fort Nelson).

MILE 392 - SUMMIT LAKE, B.C.

The Summit. acc. 21. Double $3 to $4. Very plain rooms. (P.O. Fort Nelson)

MILE 397

Rocky Mountain Auto Court. 8 units, 2 baths. Double $3.50 to $4.50. Neat, modest rooms; good wholesome food. (P.O. Fort Nelson)

MILE 463 - MUNCHO LAKE, B.C.

Muncho Lake Lodge, 12 units, 2 baths. Double $2.50 to $4. (P.O. Fort Nelson)

MILE 620 LOWER POST. B.C.

Liard Lodge. 25 rooms. 8 baths. Single $2 to $2.50, double $1. Meals 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (P.O. Watson Lake)

MILE 7l0 - RANCHERIA, Y.T.

Rancheria, Hotel, 13 rooms, 4 baths. Single $1.25 to $2.50, double $3 to $4. Very plain rooms but a better than average meal stop for this area. (P.0. White-horse)

MILE 804.5 - TESLIN, Y.T.

Nisutlin Bay Lodge, 8 rooms, 3 baths. Single $5, double $7.50. Unusually nice

MILE 843

Silver Dollar Lodge 8 rooms. 2 showers. Single $1.50, double $3. (P.O. Whitehorse)

MILE 888 - MARSH LAKE, Y.T.

Marsh Lake Lodge, 8 rooms, 2 baths. Single $3, double $6 to $7. One of the nicer rustic log lodges. (P.O. Whitehorse)

WHITEHORSE, Y.T.

Regina Hotel. 30 rooms, 4 baths. Single $2.50, double $3.50 to $5. Very plain but well kept.

Whitehorse Inn. 57 rooms, 33 baths. Single $3, double $5.50 to $8. Leading hotel.

Whitehorse Auto Camp, n. edge of town. 31 units, 15 baths. Double $6 to $10.

HAINES JUNCTION, Y.T.

Dezadeash Camp, 34 mi. s.w. on Haines Cutoff. 15 rooms, 4 baths. Single $2 to $4. Open June 1 to Nov. 1. Adequate

MILE 1022

Mackintosh Trading Post, 7 rooms, 1 bath. Single $1.75 to $2.25, double $3.25 to $4. Modest. (P.O. Whitehorse)

MILE 1093 - BURWASH LANDING, Y.T.

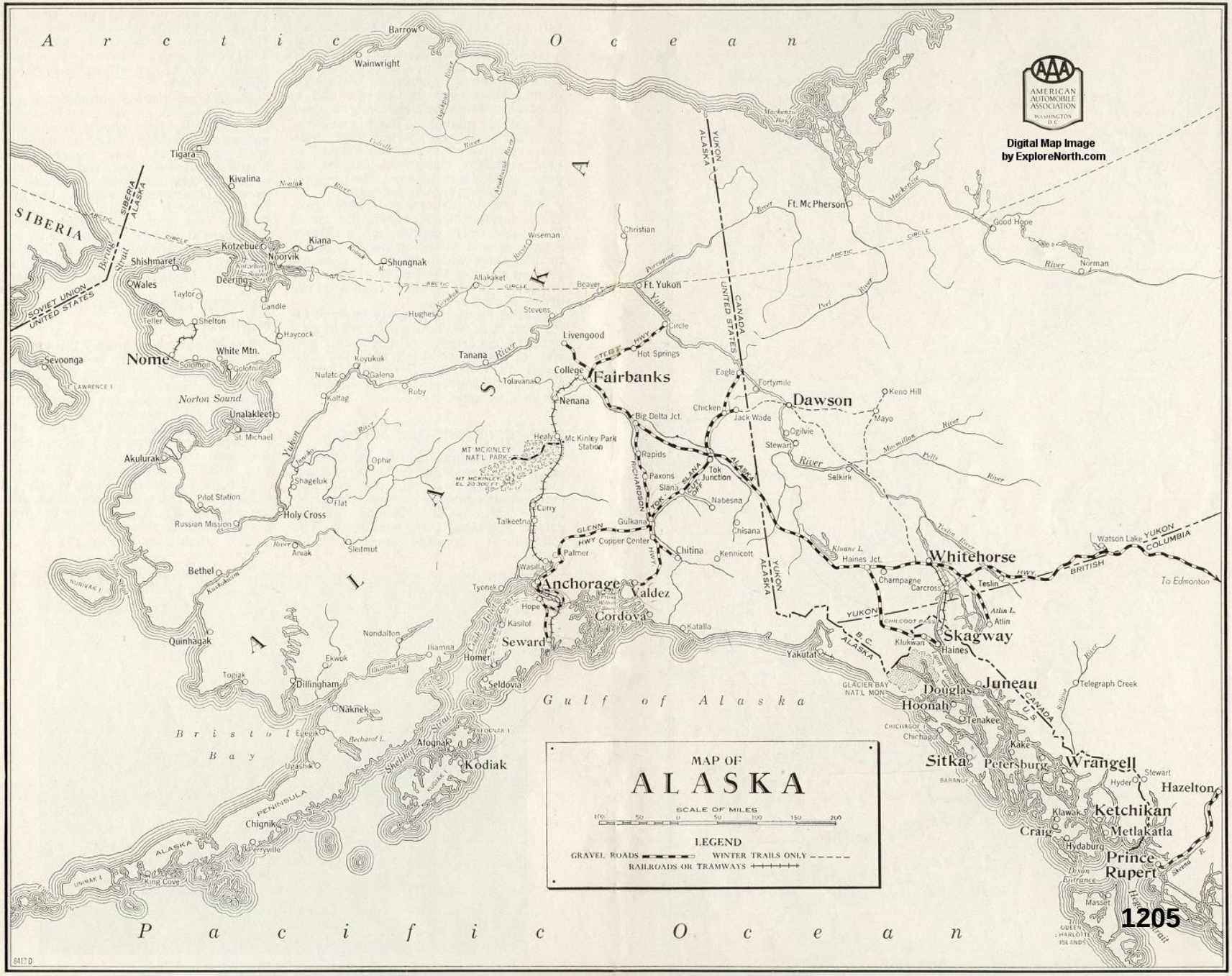
Kluane Inn, 19 rooms, 4 showers. Single $2.50, double $4.50. Rustic, very comfortable.

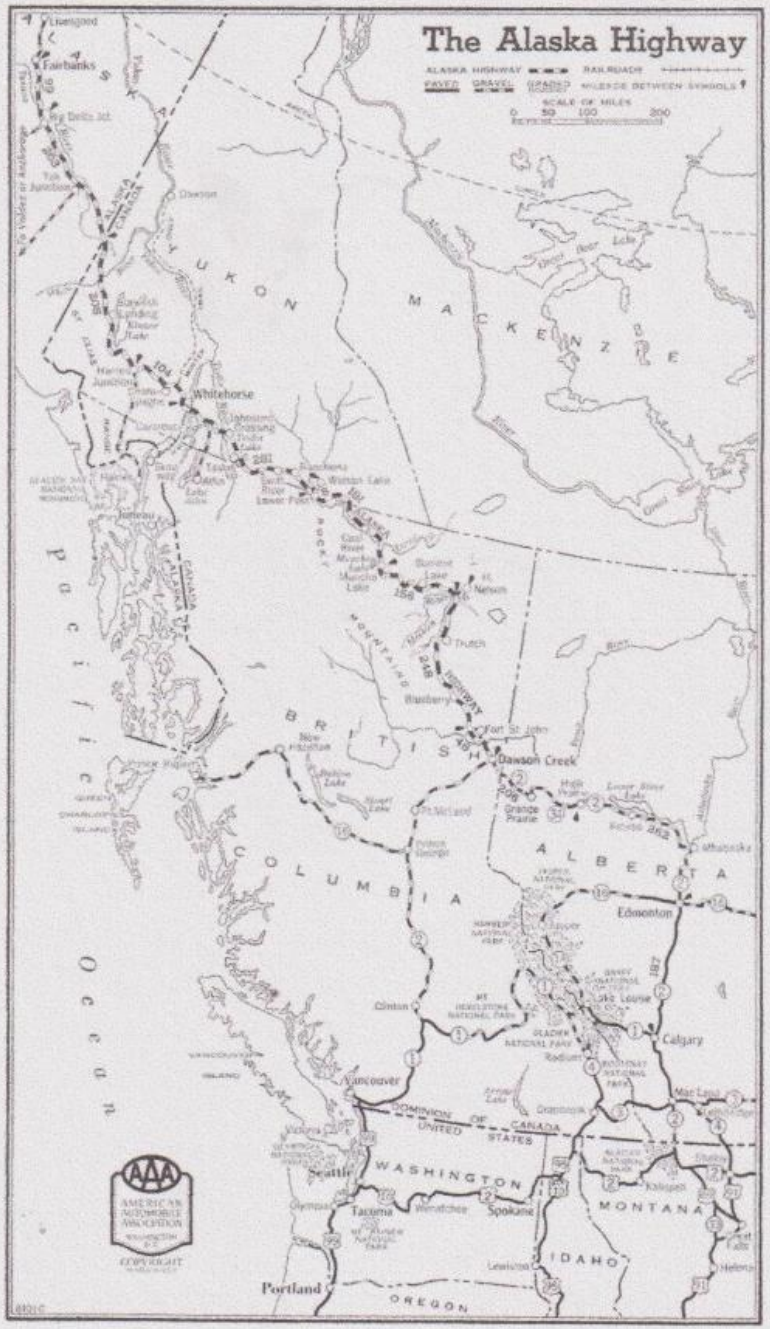
MILE 1184

Dry Creek Lodge, 18 rooms, 2 showers. Single $1.50, double $3. Adequate overnight stop. Food is extremely plain but good enough.



A Section of the Alaska Highway Near Whitehorse


Arctic Ocean
Barrow
Wainwright
Tigara
Kivalina
Noatak River
Kotzebue
Noorvik
Kiana
Shungnak
Shishmaref
Deering
Wales
Taylor
Teller
Shelton
Haycock
White Mtn.
Golofnin
Nome
Solomon
Sevoonga
St. Lawrence I.
Norton Sound
Unalakleet
St. Michael
Akulurak
Pilot Station
Russian Mission
Holy Cross
Shageluk
Ophir
Flat
Yukon River
Anvik
Sleetmut
Bethel
Kuskokwim River
Nunivak I.
Quinhagak
Topiak
Ekwok
Dillingham
Nondalton
Iliamna
Iliamna L.
Naknek
Egegik
Becharof L.
Bristol Bay
Ugashik
Chignik
Perryville
Alaska Peninsula
King Cove
Unimak I.
Afognak
Kodiak
Shelikof Strait
Seldovia
Homer
Seward
Kasilof
Hope
Tyonek
Anchorage
Valdez
Cordova
Katalla
Yakutat
Gulf of Alaska
Pacific Ocean
Siberia
Siberia Alaska
Bering Strait
Soviet Union United States
Arctic Circle
Wiseman
Christian
Allakaket
Hughes
Stevens
Koyukuk
Nulato
Galena
Ruby
Kaltag
Tanana River
Livengood
Hot Springs
College
Fairbanks
Tolavana
Nenana
Healy
Mt. McKinley Park Station
Mt. McKinley Natl. Park
Mt. McKinley El. 20,300 Ft.
Big Delta Jct.
Rapids
Paxons
Slana
Tok Junction
Tok Cutoff
Richardson Highway
Alaska Highway
Nabesna
Curry
Talkeetna
Gulkana
Glenn Highway
Copper Center
Palmer
Wasilla
Chitina
Kennicott
Chisana
Eagle
Fortymile
Chicken
Jack Wade
Dawson
Keno Hill
Mayo
Ogilvie
Stewart
Stewart River
Mcmillan River
Pelly River
Selkirk
Ft. Mc Pherson
Mackenzie River
Good Hope
Norman
Porcupine River
Beaver
Ft. Yukon
Yukon River
Circle
Pixel River
Canada
United States
Yukon Alaska
Whitehorse
Haines Jct.
Champagne
Carcross
Teslin
Watson Lake
Yukon
Columbia
British
Highway
To Edmonton
Kluane L.
Teslin River
Atlin L.
Atlin
Chilkoot Pass
Skagway
Haines
Klukwan
B.C. Alaska
Juneau
Douglas
Glacier Bay Natl. Mon.
Telegraph Creek
Stikine River
Hoonah
Tenakee
Chichagof
Sitka
Kake
Petersburg
Wrangell
Stewart
Hyder
Hazelton
Ketchikan
Klawak
Craig
Metlakatla
Hydaburg
Prince Rupert
Dixon Entrance
Skeena R.
Masset
Queen Charlotte Islands
Hecate Strait
MAP OF
ALASKA
SCALE OF MILES
100 50 0 50 100 150 200
LEGEND
GRAVEL ROADS
WINTER TRAILS ONLY
RAILROADS OR TRAMWAYS
AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
WASHINGTON D.C.
Digital Map Image by ExploreNorth.com
1205


The Alaska Highway
ALASKA HIGHWAY
RAILROADS
PAVED
GRAVEL
GRADED
MILEAGE BETWEEN SYMBOLS
SCALE OF MILES
0 50 100 300
Fairbanks
Dawson
Whitehorse
Watson Lake
Fort Nelson
Fort St. John
Dawson Creek
Grande Prairie
Edmonton
Jasper
Lake Louise
Calgary
Banff
Clinton
Vancouver
Victoria
Seattle
Tacoma
Wenatchee
Spokane
Kalispell
Great Falls
Helena
Lewiston
Portland
YUKON
MACKENZIE
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALBERTA
MONTANA
IDAHO
WASHINGTON
OREGON
Pacific Ocean
DOMINION OF CANADA
UNITED STATES
AAA
AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
COPYRIGHT

FISH AND GAME REGULATIONS—An angler's or sport fishing permit is required in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory: nonresident fee $7 and $2, respectively. These fees are subject to change. Closed seasons must be observed. Copies of the fishing regulations for the Yukon Territory may be obtained from the Department of Fisheries at Ottawa. Regulations governing fishing and hunting in British Columbia may be obtained from the Provincial Game Commissioner, 567 Burrard St., Vancouver, B. C.

The Yukon Game Ordinance provides that no person shall hunt, trap, injure, kill, shoot at or molest any wildlife within an area extending for a distance of one mile on each side of the Alaska Highway. Hunting and trapping within Kluane Game Sanctuary is prohibited. The privilege of hunting and trapping in Peel River Native Game Preserve is reserved exclusively to the native Indian, Eskimo and half-breed population. Elsewhere hunting is permitted in season on payment of the $100 license fee. Full information concerning game regulations may be obtained from the Controller, Yukon Territory, at Dawson; the Territorial Agent at Whitehorse, or from the Northwest Territories and Yukon Services, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa.

Hunting and fishing licenses are also required in the Alaska Territory (see page 4).

ROUTE SECTION—Following are detailed strip maps of the Alaska Highway and approach road, from Calgary, Alberta, to Fairbanks, Alaska. Strip map 1492 shows the popular Richardson Highway from Fairbanks to Valdez. Strip map 1491 routes the well-traveled Tok Junction-Anchorage connection.

Calgary, Alta. – Dawson Creek, B.C.

For the most part, Highway 2 from Calgary to Edmonton is a good road across level farm lands. Near Lacombe is the Dominion Experimental Station. Evergreen trees are seen first at about this point.

From Edmonton, Highway 2 is not well-marked and direction arrows must be closely watched at junctions, By no means an all-weather route, this stretch is gravel and dirt road which becomes soggy and rutted during spring. Open prairie land becomes wooded toward High Prairie. The Athabaska River affords good fishing for rainbow trout and grayling.

At Triangle is the junction with Highway 34 leading to Grand Prairie. Also a country dirt and gravel road with occasional rutted surface, it permits slow speeds of 20 to 30 mph. Travel over Smoky River is by ferry pending the completion of the Smoky River Bridge.

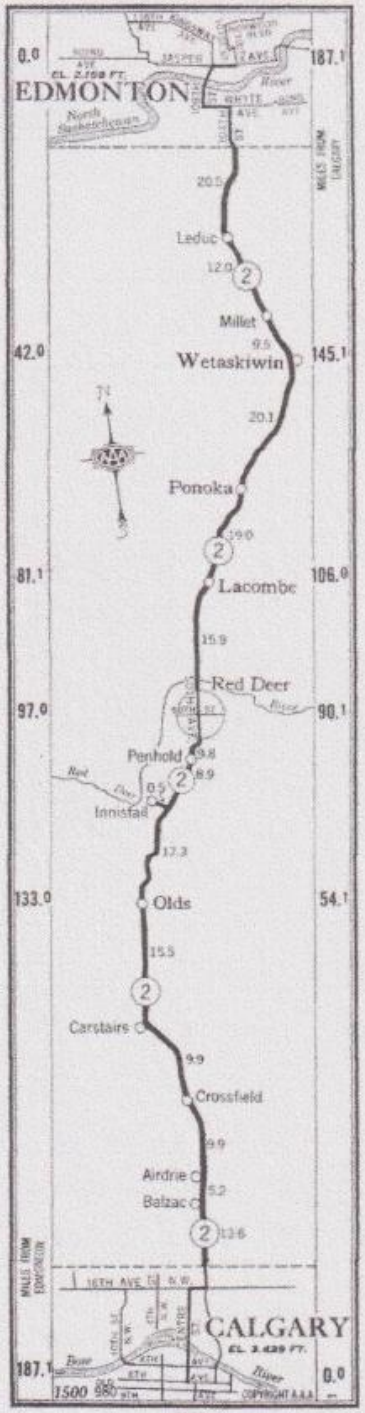
CALGARY (pop. 110,000) Founded in 1875, Calgary is the center of a great ranching country, a territory also noted for its immense wheat producing capacity. The Turner Valley oil fields are to the south. Important industrial establishments in the city include packing plants, flour mills, oil refineries and railway shops. Mount Royal College and the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art are located here. The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede held annually in July attracts visitors from all parts of the continent.

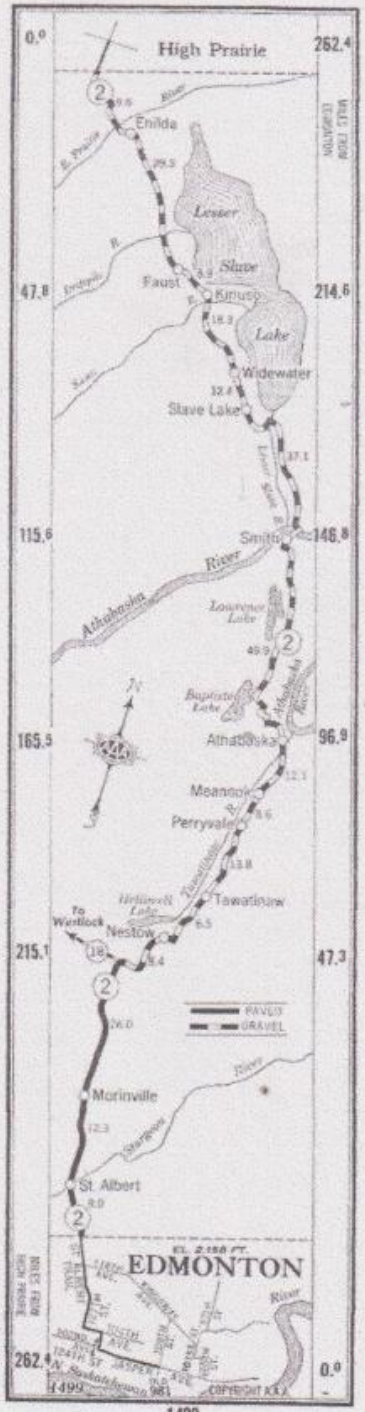
EDMONTON (pop. 137,409). Capital of Alberta, Edmonton is the center of one of the richest farming areas in western Canada. This region is noted for its prize-winning wheat and oats, but dairying and coal mining are also important. The Ledue and Redwater oil fields lie within a few miles of the city. Over 200 manufacturing establishments are located in Edmonton, also the seat of the University of Alberta.

The Parliament Building and the Edmonton Museum of Arts are of interest. Several attractive lake resorts are nearby.

GRAND PRAIRIE (pop. 1,724) is a distributing point and banking center. The wide paved street here is the only concrete pavement between Edmonton and Fairbanks.

DAWSON CREEK (pop. 3,500). In the center of town is Mile Zero on the Alaska Highway. Here were located railroad facilities and troops for construction of the Alaska Highway and the Canol Pipeline.


EDMONTON
EL. 2,158 FT.
Leduc
Millet
Wetaskiwin
Ponoka
Lacombe
Red Deer
Penhold
Innisfail
Olds
Carstairs
Crossfield
Airdrie
Balzac
CALGARY
EL. 3,439 FT.
MILES FROM EDMONTON
MILES FROM CALGARY
1500


High Prairie
Enilda
Lesser Slave Lake
Faust
Kinuso
Widewater
Slave Lake
Smith
Athabasca River
Lawrence Lake
Athabasca
Meanook
Perryvale
Tawatinaw
Westlock
Nestow
Morinville
St. Albert
EDMONTON
EL. 2,158 FT.
PAVED
GRAVEL
MILES FROM EDMONTON
MILES FROM HIGH PRAIRIE
1499


Dawson Creek
HOTEL, RESTAURANT, GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
Pouce Coupe
B.C.
ALB.
Hythe
Beaverlodge
Grande Prairie
To Peace River
GRAVEL
GRADED EARTH
Bezanson
Goodwin
Calais
Sturgeon Lake
Sturgeon Heights
HUDSON'S BAY CO. STORE
Valley View
To Peace River
High Prairie
MILES FROM HIGH PRAIRIE
MILES FROM DAWSON CREEK
1498

Dawson Creek, B.C. - Whitehorse, Y.T.

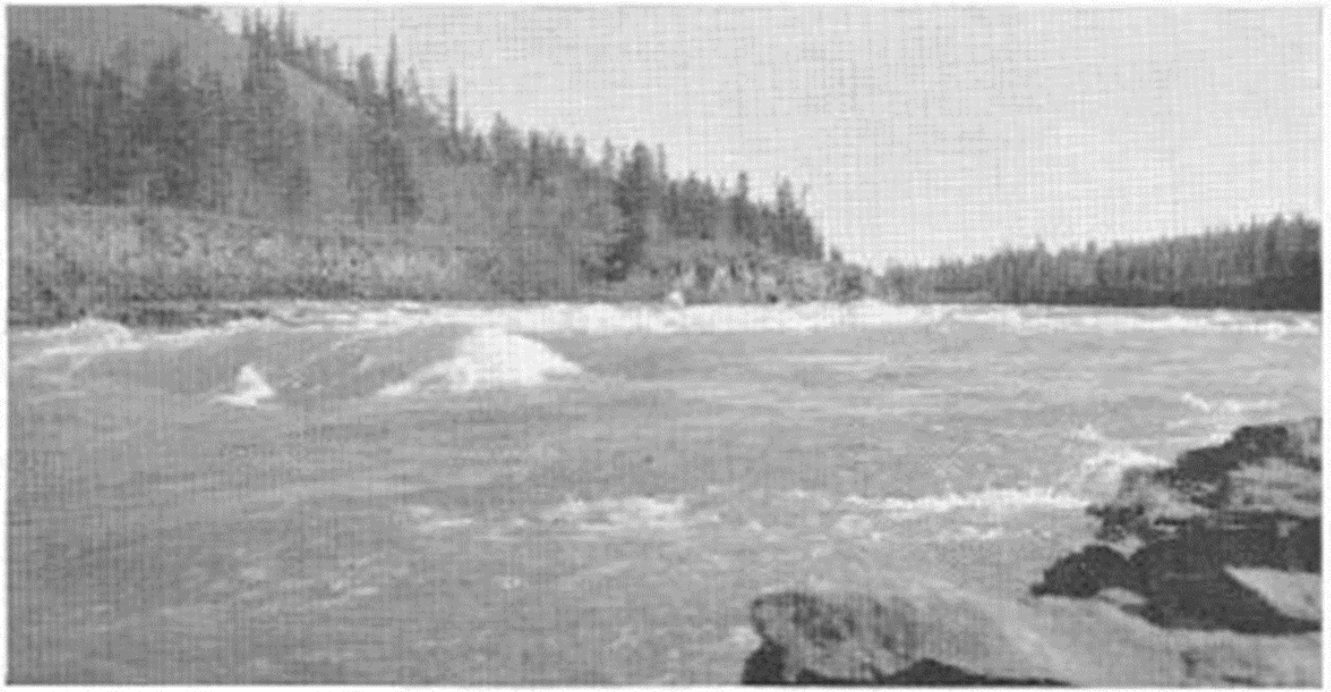
From the “0” mile post at Dawson Creek, the 1,527-mile trip to Fairbanks begins on a very good, wide, well-engineered gravel road. The 26-foot gravel surface varies somewhat in quality according to the character of gravel deposits along the highway. The road has not been surface-treated and is very dusty in summer.

From this point on, all rivers and creeks are bridged. The Peace River Bridge between Dawson Creek and Fort St. John is one of the two suspension bridges along the highway, the other being the Liard River Bridge beyond Muncho Lake.

Sixty miles beyond Fort Nelson the route crosses the northerly extension of the Rocky Mountain Range at an elevation of 4,251-feet, the highest point on the highway. From Summit Lake, the road descends gradually to Muncho Lake offering very satisfying scenic views.

Beyond Muncho Lake, the road is good and views of the distant Rockies are pleasant. The trees that wall the highway for nearly all its length obscure many otherwise fine views.

Approaching Lower Post, a sign along the highway indicates Contact Creek, where in November 1942 U. S. Army Engineers working with bulldozers from the north were met by Engineers from the south. This marked the Breaking-through of the Alcan Highway.



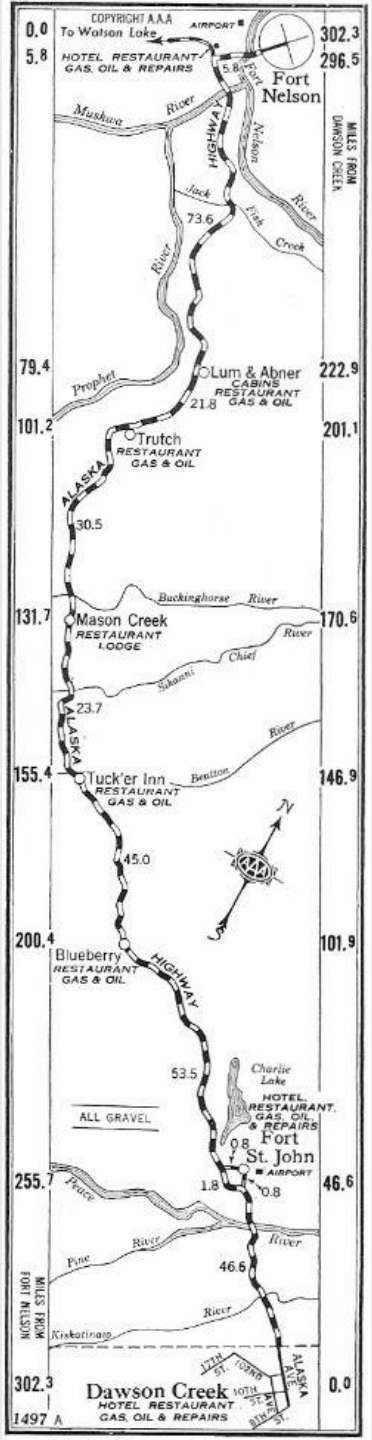
Scenic Whitehorse Rapids on the Yukon River

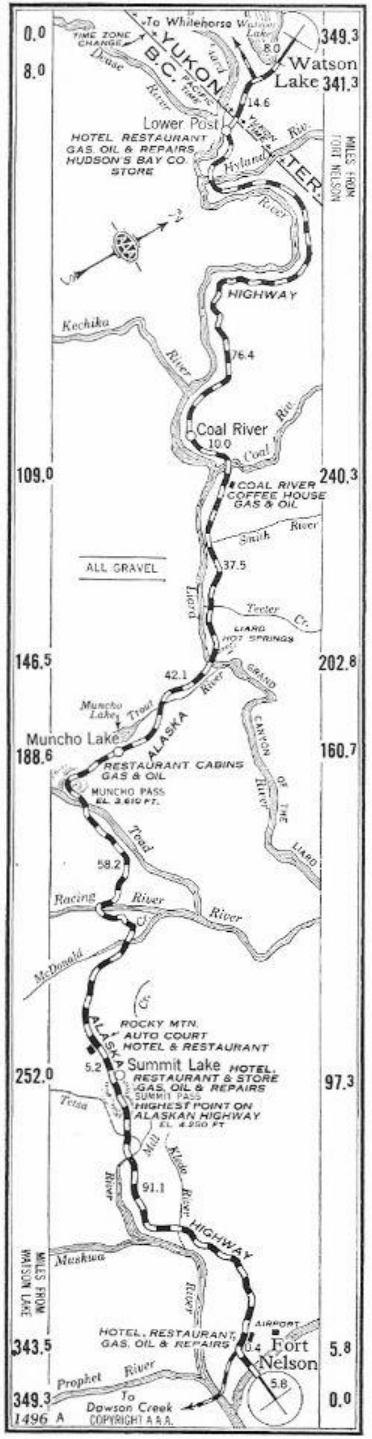
From Lower Post, the highway makes an “S” curve over the British Columbia-Yukon Territory line, crossing the line several times before reaching Teslin. The Territory line is also the time zone boundary; northbound travelers gain one hour. Nisutlin Lodge, on the shore of Nisutlin Bay, is the best stop on the highway and one of the nicest in the north country.

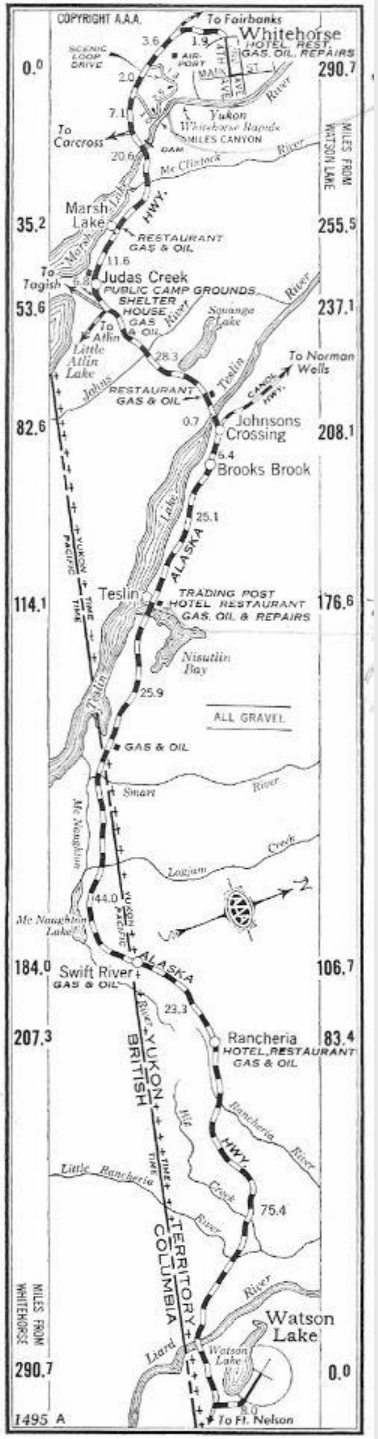
Just this side of Whitehorse, to the east of the highway, is a scenic loop drive to picturesque Miles Canyon and Whitehorse Rapids on the Yukon River. The canyon, which is traversed by the rushing river, may be crossed on foot by a suspension bridge.

FORT ST. JOHN (pop. 1,700). Center of a rich grain growing and lumbering district. This region is noted for its anthracite coal mines and natural gas is being discovered in large quantities. The old trail which crosses the highway at several intervals was used for over a hundred years by fur traders and trappers.

WHITEHORSE (pop. 3,500). Transportation center of the Yukon, Whitehorse is the terminus of the White Pass & Yukon Railway to Skagway and the head of navigation on the Yukon River. Gold was found in this district as early as 1850.


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To Watson Lake
AIRPORT
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
Fort Nelson
Muskwa River
HIGHWAY
Jack Fish Creek
River
Prophet River
Lum & Abner
CABINS
RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
Trutch
RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
ALASKA
Buckinghorse River
Mason Creek
RESTAURANT
LODGE
Chief Sikanni River
Tuck'er Inn
RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
Beatton River
Blueberry
RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
HIGHWAY
Charlie Lake
HOTEL, RESTAURANT, GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
ALL GRAVEL
Fort St. John
AIRPORT
Peace River
Pine River
Kiskatinaw River
Dawson Creek
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
17TH ST.
10TH AVE.
ALASKA AVE.
9TH ST.
MILES FROM FORT NELSON
MILES FROM DAWSON CREEK
0.0
5.8
79.4
101.2
131.7
155.4
200.4
255.7
302.3
1497 A
302.3
296.5
222.9
201.1
170.6
146.9
101.9
46.6
0.0


To Whitehorse
TIME ZONE CHANGE
YUKON
B.C.
PACIFIC
Watson Lake
Lower Post
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
HUDSON'S BAY CO. STORE
Liard River
TERRITORY
HIGHWAY
Kechika River
Coal River
COAL RIVER COFFEE HOUSE
GAS & OIL
ALL GRAVEL
Smith River
Liard Hot Springs
Muncho Lake
RESTAURANT CABINS
GAS & OIL
MUNCHO PASS
EL. 3,619 FT.
Toad River
Racing River
McDonald Cr.
ROCKY MTN.
AUTO COURT
HOTEL & RESTAURANT
Summit Lake
HOTEL, RESTAURANT & STORE
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
SUMMIT PASS
HIGHEST POINT ON ALASKAN HIGHWAY
EL. 4,250 FT.
Tetsa River
Muskwa River
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
AIRPORT
Fort Nelson
Prophet River
To Dawson Creek
COPYRIGHT A.A.A.
MILES FROM WATSON LAKE
MILES FROM FORT NELSON
0.0
8.0
109.0
146.5
188.6
252.0
343.5
349.3
1496 A
349.3
341.3
240.3
202.8
160.7
97.3
5.8
0.0


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To Fairbanks
Whitehorse
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL, REPAIRS
SCENIC LOOP DRIVE
AIR PORT
MAIN ST.
Yukon River
Yukon Whitehorse Rapids
MILES CANYON
DAM
To Carcross
Mc Clintock River
Marsh Lake
HWY.
RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
Judas Creek
PUBLIC CAMP GROUNDS
SHELTER HOUSE
GAS & OIL
To Tagish
To Atlin
Squanga Lake
Little Atlin Lake
Johns
Teslin River
To Norman Wells
CANOL HWY.
RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
Johnsons Crossing
Brooks Brook
Lake
ALASKA
TRADING POST
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
Teslin
Nisutlin Bay
ALL GRAVEL
GAS & OIL
Smart River
Mc Naughton Creek
Logjam Creek
Mc Naughton Lake
Swift River
GAS & OIL
Rancheria
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
YUKON
BRITISH
COLUMBIA
TERRITORY
HWY.
Rancheria River
Little Rancheria River
Liard River
Watson Lake
To Ft. Nelson
MILES FROM WHITEHORSE
MILES FROM WATSON LAKE
0.0
35.2
53.6
82.6
114.1
184.0
207.3
290.7
1495 A
290.7
255.5
237.1
208.1
176.6
106.7
83.4
0.0

Whitehorse, Y.T. - Fairbanks, Alaska

WHITEHORSE (pop. 3,500). Some of the flavor of the storybook Yukon still lingers at this historic point on the Alaska Highway. A stroll to the river front and a few steps up the gangplank of an old river boat will take the sightseer back to his history books and an era of other modes of transportation. Points of interest include the Old Log Church, a picturesque little frontier log church built in 1900, and Sam McGee's Cabin, built in 1899 and now used to house historical items of the Yukon.

An interesting trip may be taken by rail to Skagway or by river boat to Dawson City. The town is also an outfitting point for fishing and hunting trips to the White River and Kluane Lake Districts; guides and equipment available.

From Whitehorse, the highway crosses the Takhini River and reaches Champagne, a little Indian village with log huts and a gas pump. Just beyond the village is an interesting Indian graveyard. An unusual feature of each plot is the doll-size frame house with doors and windows, intended as a shelter for the spirits of the departed.

Some 20 miles beyond this point in the vicinity of Canyon Creek, a narrow rather primitive road to the right leads to Otter Lake Falls and Canyon Bridge.

Finally the highway reaches Kluane Lake, the scenic highlight of the entire trip. The lake is first seen from a fairly good elevation and then the road descends, turning around the tip of the lake and skirting its southwestern shore. In the afternoon light, the mountains across the lake are reflected in its mirror-like surface. At Burwash Landing is situated Kluane Inn, a new rustic log lodge - the second best stopping place on the highway.

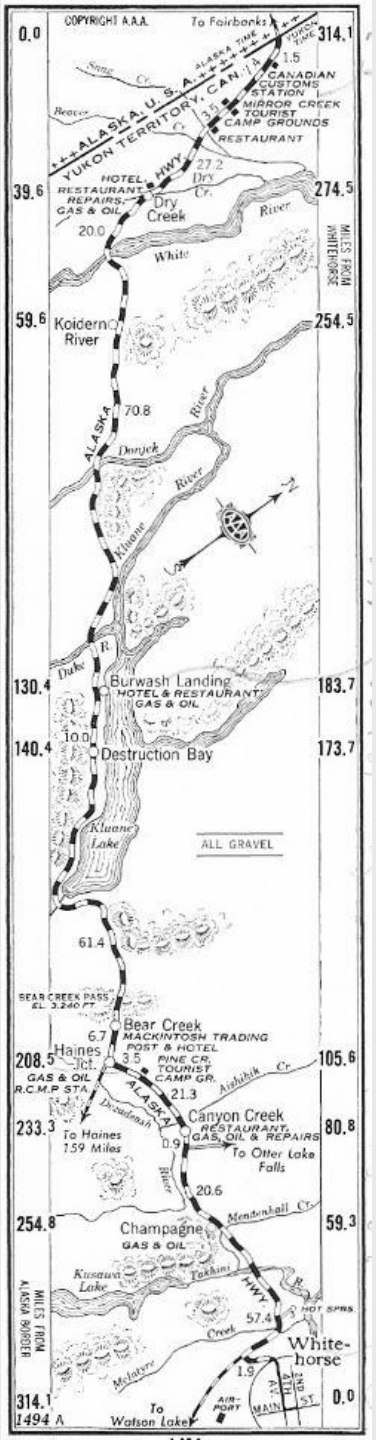
From Burwash Landing, the road crosses the Donjek River on six wooden trestles over that many channels. These are mostly dry river beds, except during the spring when the mountains release the snow.

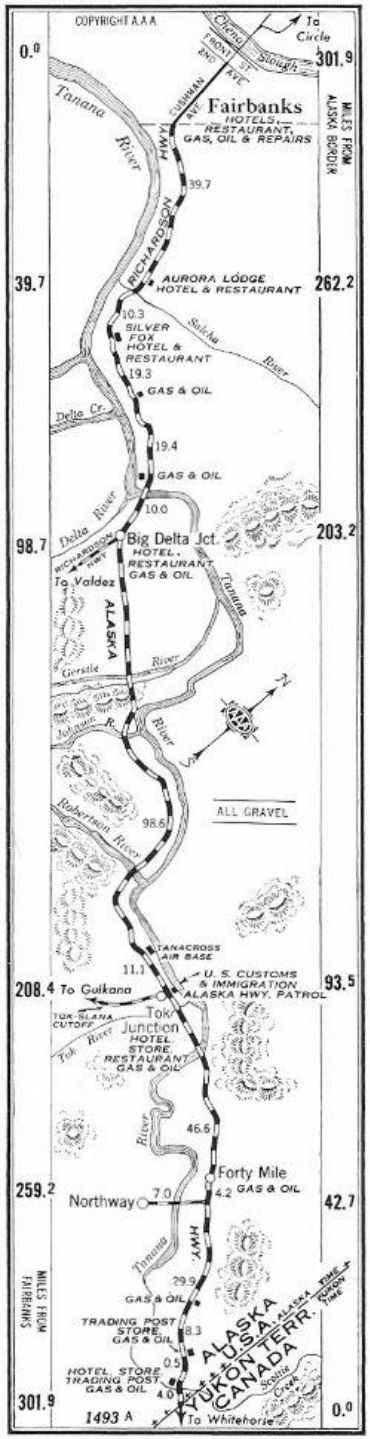
Canadian Customs, located 1/2 miles from the Alaska border, will pick-up the permit given the motorist when he entered Canada. Since this is the beginning of another time zone, watches must be set-back another hour.

At Tok Junction, the U.S. Customs-Immigration issues an Alaska Visitor Sticker for the windshield and the tourist is officially a “Cheechako.” At this point the Tok-Slana cut-off and the Glenn Highway connect with Anchorage.

Beyond Tok Junction lies the final lap of the trip to Fairbanks. Last-minute scenic surprises appear as the car crosses the Robertson and Big Gerstle River bridges. At Big Delta Junction the highway becomes a part of the Richardson Highway which connects Fairbanks with the southern port of Valdez.

FAIRBANKS (pop. 8,500). In addition to being northern terminus for the Alaska and Richardson Highways, Fairbanks is southern terminus of the Steese Highway which runs to Circle on the Yukon River.


COPYRIGHT A.A.A.
To Fairbanks
0.0
314.1
ALASKA TIME
YUKON TIME
1.5
CANADIAN CUSTOMS STATION
MIRROR CREEK TOURIST CAMP GROUNDS
RESTAURANT
ALASKA-U.S.A.
YUKON TERRITORY, CAN.
Sang Cr.
Beaver Cr.
3.5
27.2
Dry Cr.
HOTEL, RESTAURANT, REPAIRS, GAS & OIL
HWY
39.6
274.5
Dry Creek
River
20.0
White
MILES FROM WHITEHORSE
59.6
254.5
Koidern River
70.8
ALASKA
Donjek
River
Kluane
Duke R.
130.4
183.7
Burwash Landing
HOTEL & RESTAURANT
GAS & OIL
10.0
140.4
173.7
Destruction Bay
Kluane Lake
ALL GRAVEL
61.4
BEAR CREEK PASS EL. 3,240 FT.
6.7
Bear Creek
MACKINTOSH TRADING POST & HOTEL
208.5
Haines Jct.
3.5
PINE CR. TOURIST CAMP GR.
105.6
GAS & OIL
R.C.M.P. STA.
Jarvis R.
Highbluff Cr.
21.3
ALASKA
Dezadeash
233.3
Canyon Creek
RESTAURANT, GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
80.8
To Haines 159 Miles
0.9
To Otter Lake Falls
River
20.6
254.8
Champagne
GAS & OIL
59.3
Mendenhall Cr.
Kusawa Lake
Takhini
HWY
R.
HOT SPRS.
MILES FROM ALASKA BORDER
57.4
Creek
Whitehorse
1.9
AIRPORT
2ND AVE.
4TH AVE.
MAIN ST.
314.1
0.0
To Watson Lake
1494 A


COPYRIGHT A.A.A.
To Circle
Chena Slough
FRONT ST.
2ND AVE.
0.0
301.9
Tanana River
CUSHMAN AVE.
Fairbanks
HOTELS, RESTAURANT, GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
HWY
39.7
MILES FROM ALASKA BORDER
RICHARDSON
39.7
262.2
AURORA LODGE HOTEL & RESTAURANT
10.3
SILVER FOX HOTEL & RESTAURANT
Salcha River
19.3
GAS & OIL
Delta Cr.
19.4
GAS & OIL
10.0
Delta River
98.7
203.2
Big Delta Jct.
HOTEL, RESTAURANT, GAS & OIL
RICHARDSON HWY
To Valdez
Tanana
ALASKA
Gerstle River
Johnson R.
ALL GRAVEL
Robertson River
98.6
TANACROSS AIR BASE
11.1
U. S. CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION ALASKA HWY. PATROL
208.4
To Gulkana
93.5
TOK-GLENN CUTOFF
Tok River
Tok Junction
HOTEL, STORE, RESTAURANT, GAS & OIL
46.6
River
Forty Mile
259.2
Northway
7.0
4.2
GAS & OIL
42.7
Tanana
ALASKA HWY
29.9
GAS & OIL
TRADING POST STORE GAS & OIL
8.3
0.5
HOTEL, STORE TRADING POST GAS & OIL
4.0
MILES FROM FAIRBANKS
ALASKA
U.S.A.
YUKON TERR.
CANADA
ALASKA TIME
YUKON TIME
Scottie Creek
301.9
0.0
To Whitehorse
1493 A

Fairbanks – Valdez, Alaska

Connecting Fairbanks with the Port of Valdez, the Richardson Highway is the oldest interior access road in Alaska. Formerly a dog sled trail and then a wagon road, the present highway, although not a fast road, allows comfortable driving at reasonable-to-slow speeds (20 to 40 mph). Two days should be allowed for the trip.

Since this is the oldest road in Alaska, the accommodations along the way are also the oldest of the Alaska roadhouses. Rustic log structures, they are very plain but mostly very clean and comfortable considering their locations. The food, while quite simple, is wholesome. All roadhouses on this highway have gas and oil and several have facilities for minor automotive repairs.

Leaving Fairbanks, the Tanana River is seen from many points. At Big Delta Junction, the highway turns due south and heads across the Alaska Range past Summit and Paxon Lakes. These two lakes, both noted for good fishing, attract many Sportsmen from the States. This is a rather scenic section with some pleasing views.

The highlight of the Richardson Highway is the climb to the summit of Thompson Pass and the descent through Keystone Canyon to sea-level at Valdez. This is a remarkably scenic section and highly recommended to those motorists who will drive carefully on the somewhat narrow roads at safe speeds.

At Thompson Pass, elevation only 2,722-feet, stretches a panorama of bare mountain tops with timber line several hundred feet below and the striking ice mass of Worthington Glacier, just one-quarter mile from the road. In the surprisingly beautiful Keystone Canyon, several long waterfalls drop straight from the top of the sheer rock walls.

FAIRBANKS (pop. 8,500. One of the two largest cities in Alaska, Fairbanks is center of gold mining operations and market for agricultural products from the Tanana Valley. The University of Alaska, northernmost university in the world, and its Farm Experiment Station are nearby.

VALDEZ (pop. 600). The most northern all-year port in this hemisphere, Valdez is situated at the head of mountain-enclosed Valdez Arm, a deep fjord on the rugged coast of Prince William Sound. Short boat trips may be made to Columbia Glacier, a few miles outside the bay, or the native villages of Tatitlek and Ellamar, just outside the Valdez Narrows. A salmon cannery is located at Danville, formerly the site of Fort Liseum, a U.S. Army Post.


Fairbanks
HOTELS
RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
To Circle
0.0
368.5
Tanana River
39.7
328.8
AURORA LODGE
HOTEL & RESTAURANT
Salcha River
SILVER FOX
RESTAURANT
& HOTEL
19.3
GAS & OIL
19.4
GAS & OIL
98.7
269.8
Big Delta Jct.
RESTAURANT HOTEL
GAS & OIL
To Whitehorse via Alaska Hwy
Tanana R.
BLACK RAPIDS
HUNTING LODGE
MEALS & LODGING
ISABELLA PASS
EL. 3,241 FT.
RICHARDSON MONUMENT
ALASKA
RANGE
167.4
201.1
Summit Lake
12.1
PAXSON'S LODGE
MEALS & LODGING
Paxson Lake
Gulkana
38.3
To Tok Jct. on Alaska Hwy
SOURDOUGH
ROADHOUSE
LODGING
& MEALS
19.3
Copper River
237.1
131.4
7 OK-SLANA JCT.
GAS & OIL
SANTA CLAUS LODGE
MEALS & LODGING
Gulkana
12.6
ALL GRAVEL
251.3
117.2
12.7
264.0
104.5
To Anchorage
Copper Center
COPPER CENTER
ROADHOUSE
MEALS & LODGING
Tazlina River
0.5
274.8
93.7
10.3
Copper R.
12.1
To Chitina
Klutina Lake
TONSINA LODGE
MEALS & LODGING
28.9
TIEKEL
ROADHOUSE
MEALS & LODGING
CHUGACH
MTS.
WORTHINGTON GLACIER
36.2
THOMPSON PASS
Tiekel R.
16.5
KEYSTONE CANYON
TUNNEL
368.5
0.0
McKINLEY ST.
Valdez
HOTEL, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
1492 A
Prince William Sound
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1492

Tok Junction – Anchorage, Alaska
via
Tok-Slan Cut-off and Glenn Highway

With an early start, this trip between Tok Junction and Anchorage can be made in one day. The night's stop will be comfortable and the food good at Log Cabin Lodge, 38 miles west of Tok Junction. Gas and oil present no problem on the well-traveled route.

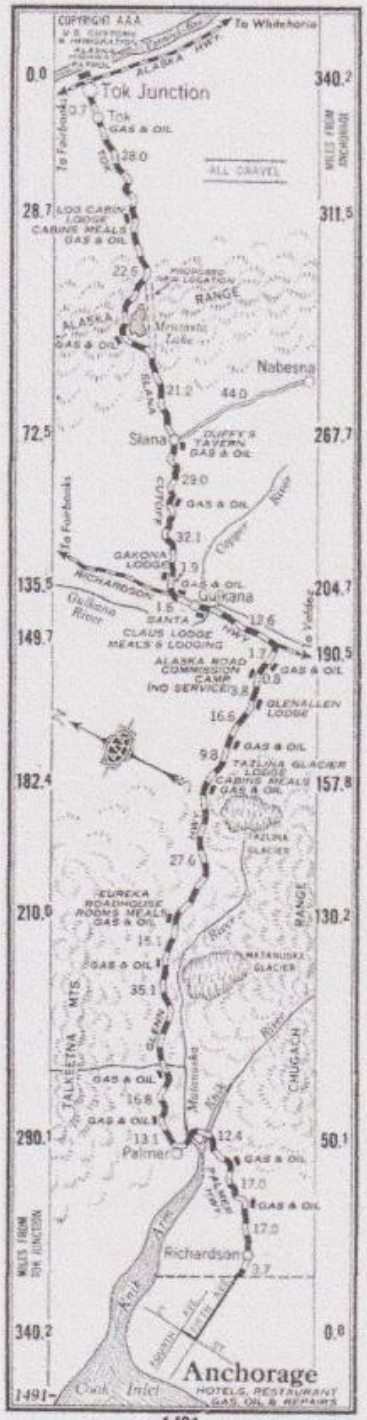
The Tok-Slana cut-off, hurriedly built during the war, is not a very good road. However, this scenic road offers a good saving in time and most people will have no difficulty in making the trip. This part of the Anchorage-Tok Junction connection is being relocated and quite a stretch of graded road already has been put through from the Richardson Highway Junction. It is not necessary for motorists to go the roundabout way via Delta Junction.

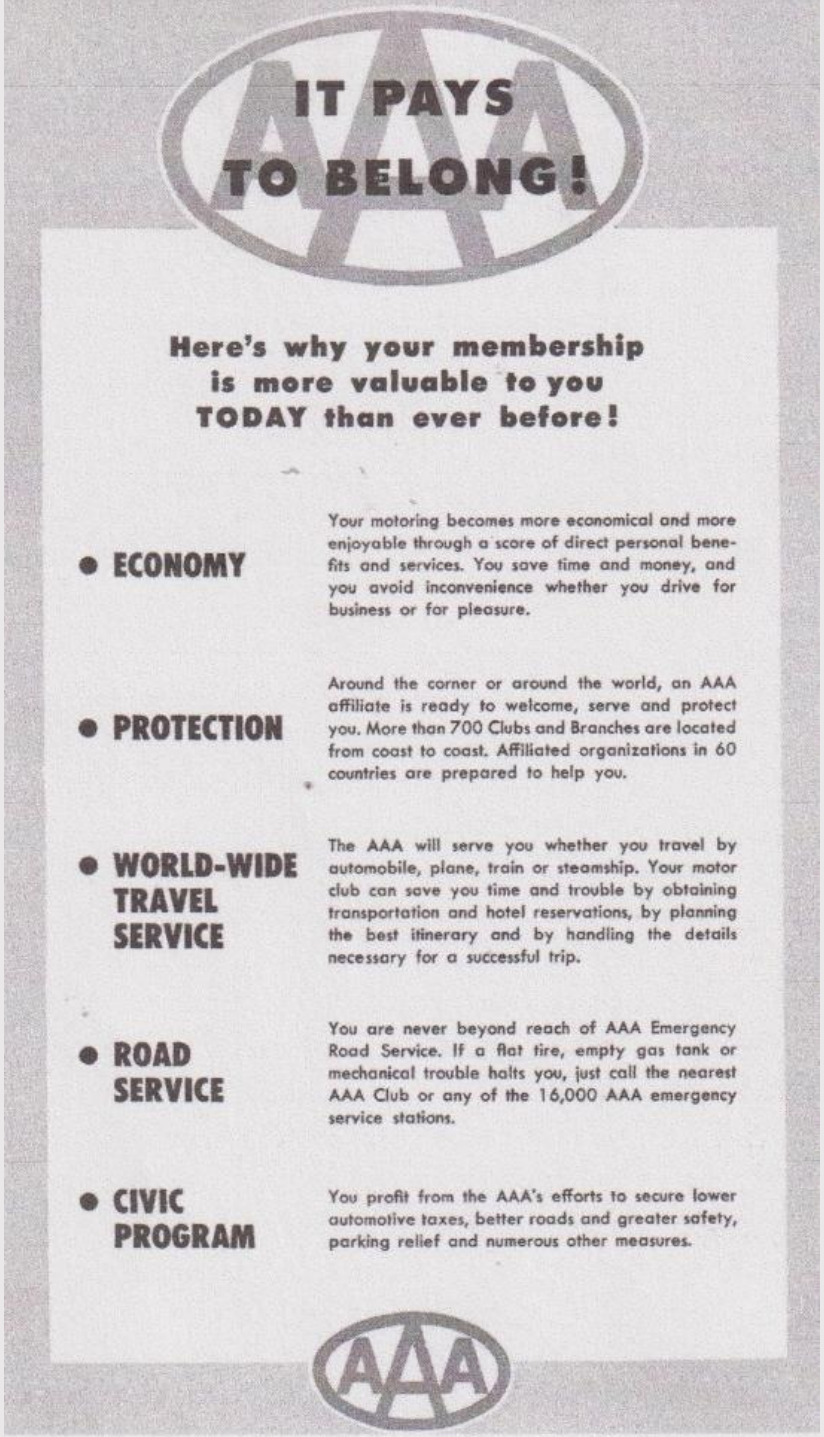
From Gakona, the road goes over a short stretch of the Richardson Highway until a left turn is made onto the Glenn Highway; a first-rate gravel road to Palmer. Leaving Glenallen, this highway starts its scenic, well-engineered way through very striking mountainous country. Several slate blue lakes and two of Alaska's large glaciers; Tazlina and Matanuska, are in full view of the road. The width, surface and alignment of the Glenn Highway are good and speeds of 40 to 50 mph can be maintained for most of the distance to Palmer.

The remainder of the distance to Anchorage, the Palmer Highway makes its rough way through dusty air and rather heavy traffic. This section of the route passes through Fort Richardson Military Reservation, Alaska Dept. Headquarters of the U.S. Army.

ANCHORAGE (pop.) 20,000). Gateway to the Kenai Peninsula, Anchorage is situated on a level plateau of Knik Arm, a branch of Cook Inlet. A fine summer climate and opportunities for outdoor sports including excellent hunting and fishing add to the city's popularity as a tourist objective, despite the present shortage of accommodations.

Established in 1915 as a construction base for the Alaska Railroad, Anchorage is today the Territory's largest city and most progressive community. It is business center for the Bristol Bay fishing area and for the fertile Matanuska Valley, which lies 50 miles north. The local airfield, situated on a commercial route to Asia, is said to be the busiest in Alaska.


COPYRIGHT AAA
To Whitehorse
ALASKA HWY
Tok Junction
Tok
GAS & OIL
To Fairbanks
ALL GRAVEL
MILES FROM ANCHORAGE
LOG CABIN LODGE
CABINS MEALS
GAS & OIL
RANGE
ALASKA
GAS & OIL
Mentasta Lake
Nabesna
BLANA
Slana
DUFFY'S TAVERN
GAS & OIL
CHISTOCHINA
Copper River
GAS & OIL
To Fairbanks
GAKONA LODGE
GAS & OIL
RICHARDSON
Gulkana River
Gulkana
SANTA CLAUS LODGE
MEALS & LODGING
To Valdez
ALASKA ROAD COMMISSION CAMP
(NO SERVICE)
GAS & OIL
GLENALLEN LODGE
GAS & OIL
TAZLINA GLACIER LODGE
CABINS MEALS
GAS & OIL
TAZLINA GLACIER
EUREKA ROADHOUSE
ROOMS MEALS
GAS & OIL
GAS & OIL
MATANUSKA GLACIER
TALKEETNA MTS
GLENN
GAS & OIL
GAS & OIL
Matanuska River
CHUGACH
Palmer
GAS & OIL
GAS & OIL
Richardson
Knik Arm
Knik Inlet
Anchorage
HOTELS, RESTAURANT
GAS, OIL & REPAIRS
Cook Inlet
MILES FROM SEW. JUNCTION
0.0
28.7
72.5
135.5
149.7
182.4
210.0
290.1
340.2
340.2
311.5
267.7
204.7
190.5
157.8
130.2
50.1
0.0
2.7
28.0
22.5
21.2
44.0
29.0
32.1
1.9
1.5
12.6
1.7
0.8
3.8
16.6
9.8
27.6
15.1
35.1
16.8
13.1
12.4
17.0
17.0
2.7
1491
1491


IT PAYS
TO BELONG!
Here's why your membership
is more valuable to you
TODAY than ever before!
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Your motoring becomes more economical and more enjoyable through a score of direct personal benefits and services. You save time and money, and you avoid inconvenience whether you drive for business or for pleasure.
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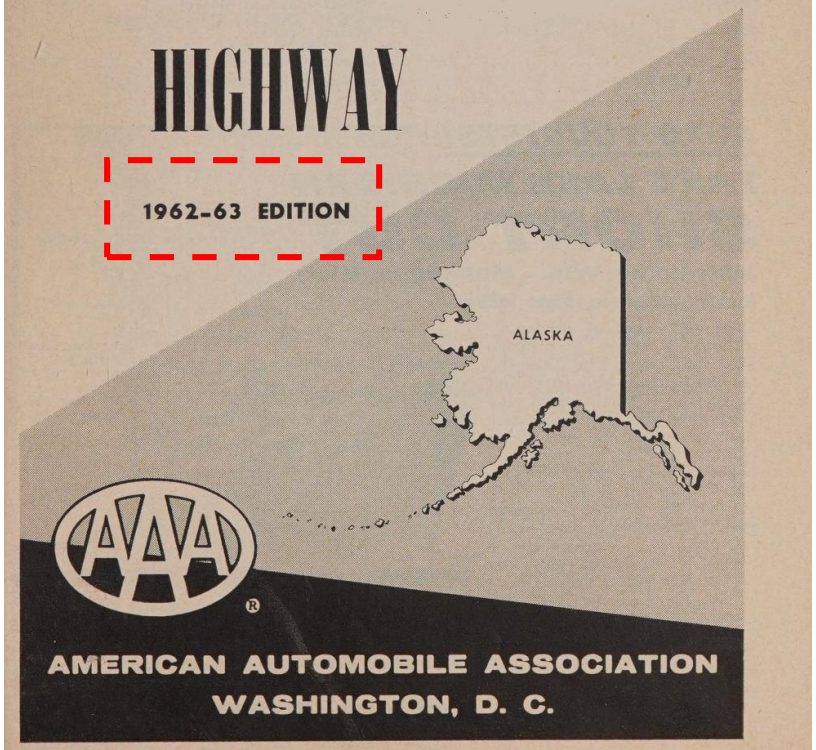
INFORMATION *concerning current* condition of the Alaska Highway may be obtained from The Canadian Travel Bureau, Ottawa, Ontario. The Editorial Information Division, Department of Resources & Development at Ottawa also furnishes information of interest to the traveler.

1962-63 Edition

ALASKA

and the ALASKA HIGHWAY

1962-63 EDITION



AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

ISSUED ANNUALLY IN THE SPRING

5025

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For Those Who are Driving

AN INCREASING number of visitors are expected in the new state. Although for many a trip to Alaska will mean travel by air or steamship, this book is especially for those visitors who will drive to this vast new State on the Alaska Highway. This is not a trip for those who demand luxurious accommodations, exotic cuisine and four-lane, superhighways. For most, these features are more than compensated for by the rewarding adventure in northland scenery that unfolds constantly along the highway.

The trip to Alaska, covering approximately 2,350 miles between the United States border and Fairbanks, requires a minimum of 8 days from Great Falls, Mont., or Seattle, Wash., to Fairbanks under normal road conditions. An estimated expense for two adults making a one-way, 8-day tip from the United States border to Fairbanks is $235. This allows $75 for lodgings, $80 for meals and $80 for gas and oil. It does not allow for emergencies or delays. The motorist's money will buy only what is available - extremely modest accommodations and plain food. Because of the great distances food and other items must be transported, prices are higher. Several of the major points of interest within Alaska are reached only by air, creating additional expenses if it is desired to visit these areas.

Camping is popular along the highway and a number of public campgrounds have been established in the Yukon Territory and Alaska for the convenience of tourists with their own equipment, food and supplies.

Many unmarked, natural campsites may be found along the highway. Some commercial establishments also operate camping areas.

Although the highway is kept open all year, the preferred travel season is from June through September. During this period temperatures range from 35 to 85 degrees, with warm days and cool evenings. Although casual sports clothes are usually worn en route along the highway, light or medium weight street clothing is recommended for all cities. With modern fabrics, which may be washed and require little or no ironing, it is necessary to take fewer changes of clothing. In winter, heavy woolen clothing such as is worn in northern border States is necessary.

In summer clothes should be protected from dust. A plastic garment bag with a tight closure is most effective. Another essential item for summer travel is an insect repellent. Mosquitoes are often very annoying, particularly - from June to mid-July. Insects are even more numerous should the motorist leave the road to explore into the brush.

Cameras and a sufficient supply of film to capture the magnificent scenery - all along the route should not be forgotten. As the motorist approaches the Alaska Highway film becomes more expensive. A first aid kit and sun glasses are also helpful. Tourists may also wish to take cigarettes with them as American brands, when available, are somewhat more expensive in Canada.

What to Expect on the Alaska Highway

Although paved in Alaska and for 80 miles from\ Mile 0 at Dawson Creek, most of the Alaska Highway is a two-lane road with a gravel base and a clay surface which stretches through sparsely settled regions. The combination of these factors creates certain conditions seldom encountered elsewhere in the United States and Canada.

Except in larger communities such as Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, Whitehorse, Tok and Fairbanks, accommodations and service facilities are isolated. The basic facility on the highway is the lodge. Generally, connected with these modest accommodations are a cafe, gasoline service and, in many cases, repair services. These facilities are usually between 20 and 30 miles apart. The longest span without service facilities of this sort is about 65 miles, so the driver is never more than 33 miles from gas.

In summer, dry weather makes unpaved sections of the highway very dusty and flying gravel and mosquitoes add to the problem. A more complete description of Alaska Highway conditions and a more detailed account of the type of accommodations on the highway are found in another section of this booklet.

Car Equipment and Service

As for any trip of comparable length, automobiles should be in the best possible condition and all ordinary precautions should be taken. In addition to gas and oil, most service facilities make tire repairs and many sell tires and small parts. However, should a major part be needed, the garage may have to telephone one of the larger communities where those parts most often needed are stocked. The part would then have to be sent by truck or bus, causing delay, or be flown in, at greater expense. Mechanics in many of the highway garages, because of the difficulty in securing replacement parts, have become ingenious at repairing old parts, and are often able to fix the damaged part well enough to enable the car to be driven to a larger settlement.

Standard Oil and Chevron credit cards are the only credit cards usable the entire length of the highway. Gulf cards are accepted by B/A, a Canadian affiliate found as far north as the Yukon-Alaska border. Texaco cards are good only for the first 528 miles of the highway. Gasoline prices vary with a noted increase as the center of the highway is approached. The highest price is about 58¢ per gallon, the lowest, 50¢. It must be remembered, however, that the imperial measure used in Canada is one-fifth larger than the corresponding United States measure. It is advisable to keep the tank at least a quarter-full
it all times.

Conventional tires, even the tubeless variety, are in general use on the highway. Tire repairs are available at reasonable intervals and most stations sell new, conventional-sized tires at standard prices. Unless a less common size is needed, only one spare should be needed. However, most residents \f the area carry two spares. Unusually heavy cars or cars heavily laden with passengers and luggage should be equipped with six-ply tires. A spare inner tube will often facilitate repair work on tubeless tires: Residents of the area usually install tubes in tubeless tires because the gravel on the roads tends to dent the rims causing loss of air. It is also wise to reinforce the springs in the rear of cars which will carry extra heavy loads.

Summer driving requires few special or unusual precautions. In the summertime, the motorist is advised to cover the gasoline tank with a piece of rubber matting as a protection against flying gravel. Clear, hard plastic guards, which can be purchased at any well-equipped garage in the area, will help protect headlights from rock breakage. Cardboard or plywood coverings should not be used since lights are often needed in dusty sections.

During dry weather, dust is quite heavy and rubber plugs should be fitted into brake drum openings to protect brake linings and shoes from abrasive dust wear. Windshield washers will help fight the dust.

It is almost impossible to prevent windshields from being chipped by flying gravel thrown-up by other vehicles. Motorists should carry insurance which will cover this eventuality. Bug screens reduce the number of stones striking he windshield, keep out insects and protect the paint finish.

For winter driving, it is very important that automobiles be prepared for extreme cold weather operation. Freezing nights which are encountered in interior Alaska and the Canadian areas usually begin in September; snow and severe cold may be expected before the end of October. Vehicles must carry tire chains or be equipped with snow tires. Failure to use them when the road is posted for chains constitutes a traffic violation.

Those not experienced in subarctic winters should limit travel to temperatures above -20-degrees F. Besides very heavy winter garb, the wise winter traveler should carry a down-filled, Arctic sleeping bag which gives good protection until help comes in case of breakdown, stall or accident. For the same reasons, it is advisable to carry a small amount of canned foods; however, Canadian Customs prohibits the duty-free entry of more than 2 days' supply of food per person. A means of starting a fire is essential in winter in case motor failure prevents heater operation. Extremely low temperatures will cause frostbite quickly unless a fire and warm clothing are immediately at-hand.

Vehicles should be in good operating condition. They should be supplied with anti-freeze, shovel, tire chains, headbolt engine heaters to prevent freezing at night, defroster and radiator grill covers. Winterizing with special winter lubricants and oils is necessary. A fuel additive to prevent frost and ice in the fuel system is advised. Filling the gas tank at night will prevent condensation of moisture in the tank and possible freezing of the fuel pump and line.

The months of October, November and March are least desirable for travel - due to icy roads. In April and May spring thaws usually create poor highway conditions. The highway is generally in good condition during December, January and February. Because the hard-packed snow provides smooth driving, many of the people accustomed to extreme cold-weather conditions prefer to travel during these months.

Approach Route to the Alaska Highway

THE AAA member’s trip to Alaska will be tailored to his individual needs and specifications by a competent travel counselor in his local motor club. AAA travel counselors will provide maps and information about the best route from the member’s home town. In this section of the booklet, a few of the more common approaches to Dawson Creek and Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway are described.

Seattle, Wash. – Cache Creek, B.C.

From Seattle to Cache Creek the approach route follows the Fraser Canyon Highway via U.S. 99 in Washington and Highway 1 in British Columbia. The route traverses a prosperous farming area to Hope, north of which it passes through the Fraser River Canyon near the top of the mile-high cliffs rising from the river's banks.

North of Spuzzum, the Fraser River swings in a long curve between jagged rock walls which turn the rushing current back upon itself in a jumble of foaming crisscrosses and boiling whirlpools.

There are special restrictions for the use of trailers on Highway 1 between Hope and Lytton. Car and trailer combinations must not exceed 40-feet in length, 8-feet in width and 12-1/2-feet in height. This section may be bypassed by taking Highway 3 from Hope to Princeton, Highway 5 from Princeton to Merritt and Highway 8 to Spences Bridge on Highway 1.

North of Lytton, the road emerges from the Fraser Canyon to follow the Thompson River through very scenic country.

Wenatchee, Wash. – Cache Creek, B.C.

This approach, designated U.S. 97 in Washington and Highway 97 in British Columbia, stretches northward through scenic mountainous country studded with beautiful lakes. North of Penticton, the road skirts Okanagan Lake, crossing it via toll bridge (50c).

Although Highway 97 provides the most direct route to the Alaska Highway, travelers with ample time may wish to take Highway 97A to Highway 1, traveling northeast through several of Canada's most beautiful and scenic parks. Tourists following this route, which includes the spectacular new Rogers Pass section between Revelstoke and Golden (scheduled for completion in late 1962), may pick-up another approach northeast of Jasper.

Cache Creek, B.C. – Dawson Creek, B.C.

Highway 97 is a good, paved road from Cache Creek to Prince George where the Hart Highway to the city of Dawson Creek begins.

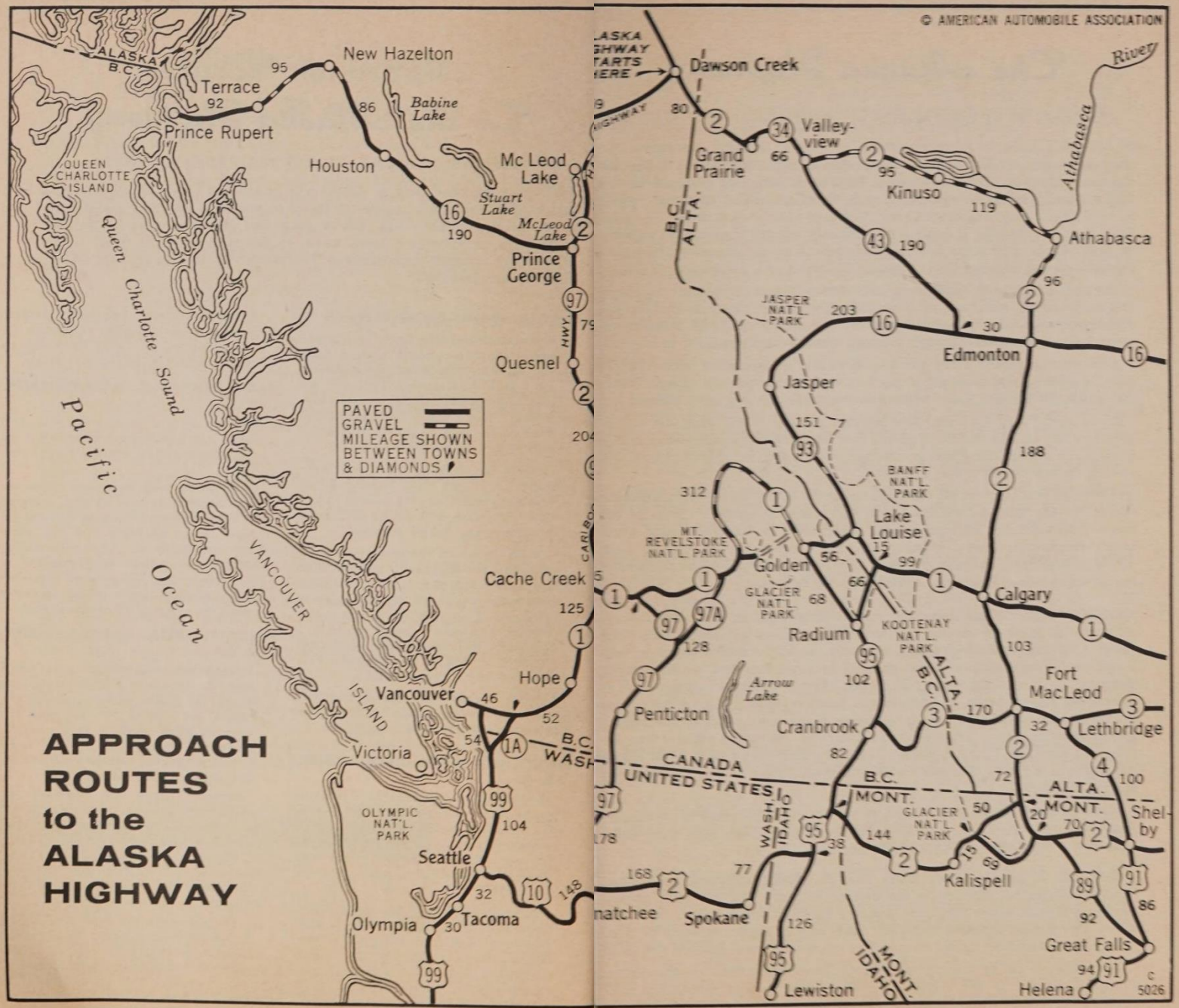
Traversing scenic mountainous areas, the Hart Highway is open all year. However, in winter motorists should be prepared for snow and icy conditions. Pine Pass, elevation 3,060-feet, is the highest point reached along the Hart Highway. Almost half of the highway is gravel surfaced, necessitating particularly careful driving on curves where the gravel is not always packed.

Calgary, Alta. – Dawson Creek, B.C.

Several major routes offer access to Calgary from the mountains, hilly farm-lands and prairies of Idaho, Montana, British Columbia and Alberta. For the most part these are paved two-lane roads, many offering the leisurely traveler easy access to several beautiful national parks in Canada and the United States.

Between Calgary and Edmonton, the shorter route (Highway 2) travels about 185 miles through rolling farmlands and forests. The longer route, 468 miles via Highways 1, 93 and 16 allows travelers to visit Banff and Jasper National Parks, both considered outstanding for scenery and recreational facilities.

The two routes join about 30 miles west of Edmonton at Highway 43, the major eastern approach to Dawson Creek. The approach route is designated Highway 2 and 34 between Valleyview, Alberta and Dawson Creek, B.C.


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APPROACH ROUTES to the ALASKA HIGHWAY
ALASKA B.C.
Terrace
New Hazelton
Prince Rupert
Houston
Babine Lake
Mc Leod Lake
Stuart Lake
McLeod Lake
Prince George
Quesnel
QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND
Queen Charlotte Sound
Pacific Ocean
PAVED
GRAVEL
MILEAGE SHOWN BETWEEN TOWNS & DIAMONDS
Cache Creek
Hope
Vancouver
Victoria
VANCOUVER ISLAND
OLYMPIC NAT'L. PARK
Seattle
Olympia
Tacoma
B.C. WASH.
Dawson Creek
Grand Prairie
Valley-view
Kinuso
Athabasca
Athabasca River
B.C. ALTA.
JASPER NAT'L. PARK
Edmonton
Jasper
BANFF NAT'L. PARK
Lake Louise
MT. REVELSTOKE NAT'L. PARK
Golden
GLACIER NAT'L. PARK
Radium
KOOTENAY NAT'L. PARK
Calgary
Fort MacLeod
Lethbridge
Arrow Lake
Penticton
Cranbrook
CANADA
UNITED STATES
B.C.
MONT.
ALTA.
MONT.
GLACIER NAT'L. PARK
Shelby
Kalispell
Great Falls
Spokane
Lewiston
MONT.
IDAHO
Helena
C 5026

L256

The Alaska Highway

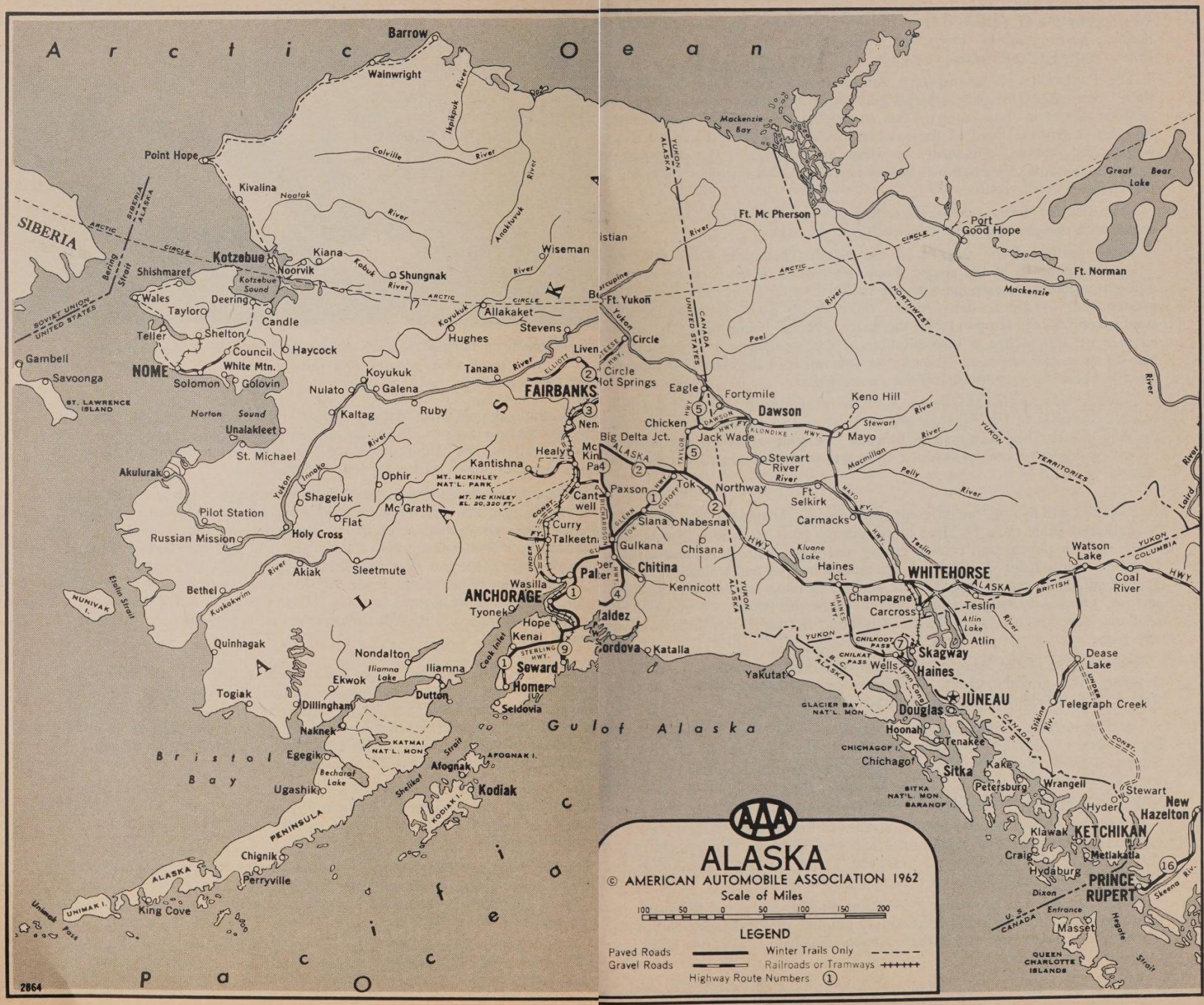
SLASHING across a great wilderness of forests, muskeg, mountains and waterways, the Alaska Highway was rushed to swift completion during the Japanese occupation of the Aleutian Islands. A vanguard force of United States Army Engineers began bulldozing from north and south on March 9, 1942. They met at Contact Creek, Milepost 588, on September 23, 1942. Some two months later a small group officially opened a pilot road passable to Army jeeps and trucks. The following year a permanent all-weather road existed between Dawson Creek, British Columbia, and Fairbanks, Alaska.

An epic of highway engineering, the Alcan Military Highway, as it was originally called. was built to connect airfields and other installations for supply purposes. The United States Army and the Public Roads Administration charted the route through country virtually unknown.

Construction camps along the way housed a maximum of about 14.000 men, together with a corps of doctors and nurses of the United States Public Health Service. Over a hundred rivers and streams were bridged.

Since April 1, 1946, when the Canadian portion of the road was tamed over to Canada, the Alaska Highway has been regraded and widened until it ranks as one of the finest gravel highways anywhere. The highway was opened to unrestricted travel in 1947.

Accommodations along the Alaska Highway are not only few in number, but also very modest, particularly in the less populated areas. The basic facility along the highway is the lodge, usually run in connection with a cafe and service station. Although there is a trend toward modernization, the majority of establishments still do not offer accustomed luxuries such as radios and private baths. Establishments listed in detail by AAA have been inspected and found to be clean, although many have small rooms with a minimum of furniture. Electricity and water may be turned-off any time between 10 pm. and 7 am. in places generating their own power. Most lodges are frame or log with fiberboard walls and several have an open transom for heating purposes.


ALASKA
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Scale of Miles
100 50 0 50 100 150 200
LEGEND
Paved Roads
Gravel Roads
Winter Trails Only
Railroads or Tramways
Highway Route Numbers
Arctic Ocean
Pacific Ocean
Gulf of Alaska
Bristol Bay
SIBERIA
Barrow
Wainwright
Point Hope
Kivalina
Kotzebue
Noorvik
Shungnak
Kiana
Wiseman
Shishmaref
Wales
Deering
Taylor
Candle
Teller
Shelton
Council
Haycock
Gambell
Savoonga
NOME
White Mtn.
Solomon
Golovin
Nulato
Koyukuk
Galena
Kaltag
Ruby
Unalakleet
St. Michael
Akulurak
Pilot Station
Russian Mission
Holy Cross
Shageluk
Ophir
Flat
Mc Grath
Kantishna
Allakaket
Hughes
Stevens
Tanana
FAIRBANKS
Healy
Cantwell
Curry
Talkeetna
Wasilla
ANCHORAGE
Tyonek
Hope
Kenai
Seward
Homer
Seldovia
Valdez
Cordova
Katalla
Yakutat
Bethel
Akiak
Sleetmute
Quinhagak
Togiak
Nondalton
Iliamna
Ekwok
Dillingham
Dutton
Naknek
Egegik
Ugashik
Afognak
Kodiak
Chignik
Perryville
King Cove
Fort Yukon
Circle
Eagle
Fortymile
Chicken
Big Delta Jct.
Jack Wade
Dawson
Keno Hill
Mayo
Stewart River
Paxson
Tok
Northway
Ft. Selkirk
Carmacks
Slana
Nabesnai
Gulkana
Chisana
Chitina
Kennicott
Haines Jct.
WHITEHORSE
Champagne
Carcross
Teslin
Atlin
Skagway
Haines
Wells
Watson Lake
Coal River
Dease Lake
Telegraph Creek
JUNEAU
Douglas
Hoonah
Tenakee
Chichagof
Sitka
Kake
Petersburg
Wrangell
Stewart
Hyder
New Hazelton
KETCHIKAN
Klawak
Craig
Metlakatla
Hydaburg
PRINCE RUPERT
Dixon
Masset
Ft. Mc Pherson
Port Good Hope
Ft. Norman
Great Bear Lake
Mackenzie Bay
Mackenzie River
Peel River
Macmillan River
Pelly River
Stewart River
Yukon River
Laird River
Skeena Riv.
Stikine Riv.
Lynn Canal
Chilkoot Pass
Chilkat Pass
Glacier Bay Nat'l. Mon.
Sitka Nat'l. Mon.
Baranof I.
Chichagof I.
Afognak I.
Kodiak I.
Unimak I.
Unimak Pass
Nunivak I.
Etolin Strait
Shelikof Strait
Cook Inlet
Iliamna Lake
Becharof Lake
Katmai Nat'l. Mon.
Lake Clark Pass
Alaska Peninsula
Aleutian Islands
Queen Charlotte Islands
Hecate Strait
Dixon Entrance
U.S. Canada
Alaska Highway
Richardson Highway
Glenn Highway
Sterling Highway
Taylor Highway
Klondike Highway
Dempster Highway
Haines Highway
Top of the World Highway
Canol Road
Yukon Territories
British Columbia
Alaska
Canada
United States
Soviet Union
Arctic Circle
Bering Strait
Siberia Alaska
St. Lawrence Island
Norton Sound
Kotzebue Sound
Mt. McKinley Nat'l. Park
Mt. McKinley El. 20,320 Ft.
2864

Part 17

Day Trippin’

17 Days

BUICK CONQUERS GRADES

Monrovians Pull Large Trailer to Fairbanks

Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles, Calif.) - July 23, 1950



ALASKA HIGHWAY TOURED—Arriving at Fairbanks, James Post, center, and his wife Helen are shown with their 1950 Buick Special sedan and 35-foot trailer coach as they check in at newspaper office in the Alaska metropolis. The couple, who drove over the Alaska (Alcan) Highway on vacation tour, report little difficulty on the 17-day trek.

Driving a Dynaflow-equipped Buick Special four-door sedan, hauling a 35-foot trailer weighing 7,300 pounds and carrying 1,500 pounds of luggage, James Post and his wife Helen traveled the 4,465 miles from Monrovia to Fairbanks, Alaska, with no more trouble than two flat tires and the wearing-out of three sets of tire chains.

The trip from Monrovia to Seattle was made without incident. But the story of the trip from Seattle to Fairbanks by way of the Alaska (Alcan) Highway is that of a modern motoring pioneer. Two days out from Seattle the Posts arrived at the Canadian border town of Kingsgate, British Columbia, where they were confronted with the Canadian regulations “to haul trailers over 21-feet in length into Canada the motive power must be a jeep, a four-wheel drive or power at least equivalent to a one-ton truck.”

The customs inspectors shook their heads at the sight of the huge trailer hauled by a mere automobile but after a sales talk on Dynafiow by Post the situation was referred to the Deputy Minister of Transportation at Ottawa and permission to enter Canada was finally granted after 51 hours’ delay.

"…With 1950 Buick Dynaflow Transmission Drive power is transmitted through oil instead of through gears. So each mile is smoother and more restful, free of geared-drive hardness. There is so little for the driver to do with Dynaflow that day-long-driving is much less tiring. Tension and nerve-strain are lessened, so you feel much less the effect of several hundred miles behind the wheel. There is restfulness and comfort, too. In starts and stops that are smooth and easy, never abrupt and jerky. On top of that, the whole running mechanism takes fewer shocks with Dynaflow Drive. Engine parts are oil-cushioned against sudden loads and strains so tale less wear-and-tear…

RE: excerpt from the 1950 Buick *Dynaflow* transmission booklet



"In announcing the new Buicks for 1950, we feel that we have achieved a new high standard in those elements of automobile design which make for owner satisfaction"

1266

***Charlie A. Chayne*, Chief Engineer - Buick Motor Division**



Buick's the Fashion for 1950

Sunset Viewed

The drive from Kingsgate to Fernie, British Columbia, highlighted by a gorgeous sunset behind the snow-capped, purple mountains, is acclaimed by the Posts as the most beautiful of the entire trip. At Fernie, the motorists were warned of the hazardous conditions of the highway to Crows Nest Pass, but although they encountered many sharp curves, long steep grades and plenty of mud their greatest danger was from falling rocks.

Enjoyable driving over a paved highway was experienced from Crows Nest to 50 miles north of Edmonton. Then 80 miles of sticky mud and deep ruts that proved a real test for the Dynafiow Buick.

Reaching Dawson Creek, the halfway point on the trip and the beginning of the Alaska Highway, the Posts were met by amazed people who didn't believe it possible for an automobile to haul so large a trailer over such a difficult and hazardous route. It was here that the motorists got their first flat tire, having picked-up a nail.

Army Maintains Road

The Alaska Highway is maintained by the Northwest Highway System of the Canadian Army. Maintenance camps are 50-miles apart. Mileposts along the highway make it easier for the motorist in trouble to indicate his exact location when calling for assistance. However, no aid is available from the NWHS, according to Post. The one thing they will do, he said, is to remove your car from the highway if it is blocking traffic.

Continuing from Dawson Creek the Posts discovered that the Alaska Highway goes over the mountains rather than through them. From Mason Creek (Mile 171) the going is a gradual climb until Mile 392, the highest point on the highway is reached.

At Coal River (Mile 533) they were told that no automobile could possibly pull so large a trailer over the Mile 595 grade. The Posts were determined to attempt it. “Starting up that grade we seemed to stop breathing,” James Post said..

Inched Ahead Slowly

“We inched along so slowly that the speedometer didn’t register but we made it and the folks at Lower Post (Mile 620) were speechless with unbelief when they saw us drive in. A bus driver then gave us our first encouragement - he informed us that since we had successfully made the Mile 595 grade we would surely get to Fairbanks.”

“Rugged conditions with continuous mountain climbing were encountered all the way to a point 35 miles from Fairbanks where we hit paved highway.”

Seventeen days after leaving Seattle the Posts arrived at their destination. The couple said that on the 3,225-mile trip (including a 114-mile side-trip without trailer) the Buick used 408 gallons of gasoline at a cost of $236.12 with an additional $125 for food.

The newspaper story that follows was written by Mrs. S.E. Warren of Vauxhall, Alberta. It appeared in *The Lethbridge Herald* of December 6, 1951. In it, she tells of her bus trip from Edmonton to Fort Nelson.

THROUGH SOUTH ALBERTAN EYES

Gateway To The North

By S. E. WARREN, VAUXHALL
(First of Three Articles.)

It was October 6th, 1951, the night was still and warm as we sped along the highway - north and west from Edmonton to Dawson Creek. Skirting around the southern shore of Lesser Slave Lake, the gleam of its waters by the light of a half-grown moon showed now and then through the heavy growth of trees. The Northern Lights dropped low - so low that they seemed to be waving like a large white blanket in the wind: a blanket almost near enough to touch. Along the quiet roadside, faded, frost-curled leaves on low bushes and branches gleamed white in our headlights, looking for all the world like heavy white lilies drooping on their stems.

When we left Edmonton at dusk the bus had been crowded with home-goers for the Thanksgiving holiday. All the canvas chairs had been set up in the aisles, and were occupied. We were so late getting into Edmonton from the south, that we could find no vacant seats. Before long a well-dressed young woman travelling alone offered me her seat, while she took a turn standing against the large hood that enclosed the motor. As we passed through the outskirts and the little towns of St. Albert, Morinville and others on the highway, more and more passengers crowded on. Near Westlock I was able to pass on the favor when several young women and girls, looking like store clerks at the end of a busy days, got on, to find only standing room. I spoke to the one standing nearest, while I motioned to the arm of my seat, “Sit down here if you like and lean over my way. I am not very big.” She sat down quickly, saying “You’ll never know what it means to me to be able to sit down! I was supposed to be off work at 5, but it’s after 9 now.”

Then the brightly-lit towns became fewer and farther apart. Passengers were getting off now and the crowd was thinning out. All were able to gets seats, relax, and be comfortable. Now the roads were getting rougher and more rutted. We were meeting fewer cars. We seemed in be travelling through lonely wooded country. Once the bright eye of a motorcycle flashed towards us. The motor patrol hailed our bus driver and they talked briefly. When we stopped for a few minutes at Smith most of the passengers got off. Only a small number got on again to continue their night journey.

About this time the passengers aboard began to take stock of vacant seats, and scattered themselves in well-spaced order that they might as comfortably as possible spend the night hours in resting or sleeping.

I was glad I had been wide awake when we crossed the Athabasca River with its fine, new bridge. I had never realized what a mighty rolling current it was, although I had heard plenty tales of the huge cargoes ferried across it, in pre-Alaska Highway days. The lights of the bus and the light of the half-moon above outlined the river and its banks perfectly and its surging waters looked ever so dark and deep. It was indeed a sight to remember!

Kinuso was a busy town, and here the passengers that got off, and the ones that got on, were so noisy that everyone must have waked up. I was more than half-asleep when we reached High Prairie, and all I can remember of it was that we seemed to have changed bus drivers. The countryside around now showed faintly in the early-morning light.

We were on the slopes of the Smoky River when I first became fully awake. My first thought as we came on the bridge was “How well that one fits!” For a grey-purple mist or haze, exactly the color of wood-smoke, lay on the surface of the water in scattered scarf-like clouds. It was a long stiff climb up the hill on the far side of the river, but soon we were beginning to enjoy the sight of miles of beautiful farmland in its park-like setting. Acres upon acres, field after field, thick with stooks of standing sheaves. It seemed a very short time until we got off at Grande Prairie.

A fine, clean-looking town, Grande Prairie stood out in the morning sunlight. Here we changed bus and as soon as we could pry our 3-year-old (who always made friends with the bus drivers, and was now busy helping them put the suitcases from the hold of one bus to the other), away from his bus-driver friends, we walked over town for a block or two and found a restaurant when we got a good breakfast.

Once again we watched the farming country as we passed through Wembley, Beaver Lodge, and Hythe. Such crops as we saw through that district! No wonder it is famous.

A car was waiting for us when we pulled into the bus station at Dawson Creek. Here we set our watches back one hour for B.C. time. We were glad of the extra time in which to complete the remaining 300 miles of our journey.

Dawson Creek is a pleasant-looking little town, laid-out before the eye on a gently-sloping background of diversified country. At a large, airy and clean-looking eating-place we had a satisfying, well-served dinner, reasonably priced, before setting out on the Alaska Highway.

In the heart of this little town of about 3,500 people is something unique - Milepost Zero, which marks the beginning of the Alaska Highway. This is a graceful pillar or column standing firmly on a heavy concrete foundation - the letters “ALASKA HIGHWAY” written in vertical fashion down each side of the column. At the top is a large sign-plate giving distances to Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Whitehorse, and Fairbanks.

The Alaska Highway is now a very good road, wide and well maintained. When it was first opened many prairie people said “Won’t that be a nice vacation trip to make say, in five years, when the road will be really good.”

Well, considerably more than five years’ time has passed, and the highway is all that can be desired. Nevertheless I was glad we had a driver who had been over the road before, for its winding and sharp curves, its hills and sudden dips, would otherwise have left me breathless.

The afternoon of Oct. 7 was very sunny and warm, with the mercury almost up to 80-degrees. There was only a very light wind, but with the car windows partly open it was still uncomfortably warm in the car. My fur coat was folded on one end of the back seat; a few days before I had been thinking glad I would be to be wearing it once we started travelling north on the highway.

We had seen with some surprise several grain elevators at Dawson Creek, and as we left it behind we noticed some fine farm lands scattered here and there. We by-passed Fort St. John and came down to the Kiskatinau River bridge. Although the waters of the river had gone down till it was but a narrow stream in its wide riverbed, we could not help comparing its steep cut-banks with those of our southern rivers. In fact we were told that the name Kiskatinau is the Beaver Indian word for cut banks. At any rate the scenery at the bridge was wonderful and well worthy of a camera.

After having read and heard so much of the Peace and its mighty waters I was somewhat disappointed to see the river so low. But probably that would be one result of the very dry B.C. summer. At any rate the new long 2,130-ft. bridge of steel is very notable and said to be the longest bridge on the whole length of the highway. It is a suspension bridge. Our milepost guide tells us that the name Peace was given to the river because it was once a truce boundary between warring Crees and Beaver tribes.

After we bypassed Fort St. John, some distance off the road to the right, we travelled close to the shores of Charlie Lake, getting glimpses of its beauty through the tree-lined shores as we passed. More and more the highway became hemmed-in by bushland. It was not the size and height of the trees that impressed you, rather their straightness and denseness. Clumps of white birch, here, there and all over the landscape, were wonderfully beautiful.

At Blueberry, Milepost 101, we seemed to be entering the true wilderness, lonely and immense. Signs of the great fire that swept that region in 1948 were still visible, but many of the buildings there have been rebuilt, they say.

After a while we came to “Suicide Hill.” I can’t say I liked the sound or the implication of that name. The highway at that point still abounds with awesome curves and turns, but is nothing like the original road which was said to have been the graveyard of many loaded trucks. Its seems the ground beneath had a habit of slipping down the slope, leaving a dangerous overhang on which traffic travelled above. Experienced truckers on the highway say that the number of vehicles that disappeared in those slides will never be known, as most were never recovered.

A breather after Suicide Hill and you find yourself once more going down, down in sharp winding curves that after a sudden turn takes you out on the Sikanni River Bridge. Sikanni is pronounced with the accent on the first 3-word syllable (I was promptly corrected when I put the accent on the second syllable). The Sikanni Chief River when in flood must be an awesome sight, but in this fall of 1951 it is a small stream in the middle of a wide riverbed.

Ahead of us lay a steady climb of 11 miles up the winding slopes of Trutch Mountain. While, in the distant west, we were in sight of many snow-clad ridges, Trutch is in contrast a forested mountain, very beautiful in all its green and autumn colors. The summit is 4,111-feet above sea-level, second highest point on the highway. It is also called Milepost 181. At Milepost 222, cut out of the wilderness, is No. 3 emergency flight strip. All along the highway one sees these emergency flight strips - clearings in the dense bush for emergency landings. They are well-marked as to boundary and at night well-lit for planes going through.

All along the highway here and there are lodges, restaurants, garages. etc., but we stopped only once, to get a supply of gas, some drinking water and pop.

As we traveled along Prophet River near Milepost 245 the evening shadows were beginning lo lengthen and our small three-year-old was beginning to get tired. We tried to beguile him by telling him to watch-out for bears along our road. But none appeared. Only a couple of grouse and the glowing eyes of a kit-fox rewarded our searching eyes.

All this time we had been making innumerable short quick turns in the road, and the straight-away of the Muskwa River Bridge was a relief from the dizzying round. Muskwa is an Indian name meaning “Bear” - although we hadn’t seen any. The Muskwa is a fine, large river and has a modern steel bridge 970-feet-long. The elevation here is 1,000-feet (a drop of over 3,000-feet in the last 100 miles) and is the lowest point on the Alaska Highway.

Milepost 300 of the Fort Nelson settlement is called Zero by its inhabitants. It is a Hudson’s Bay post. It is headquarters for Mackenzie River navigation. Also outfits trappers for a vast region which includes explorers of the Nahanni River country. This Nahanni region is famed as the location of “Headless Valley” and the “Land of Vanishing Men.”

Here we were almost at the end of our journey and we turned away sharply to the right, while the highway wound westward toward the wild and rugged Rockies…

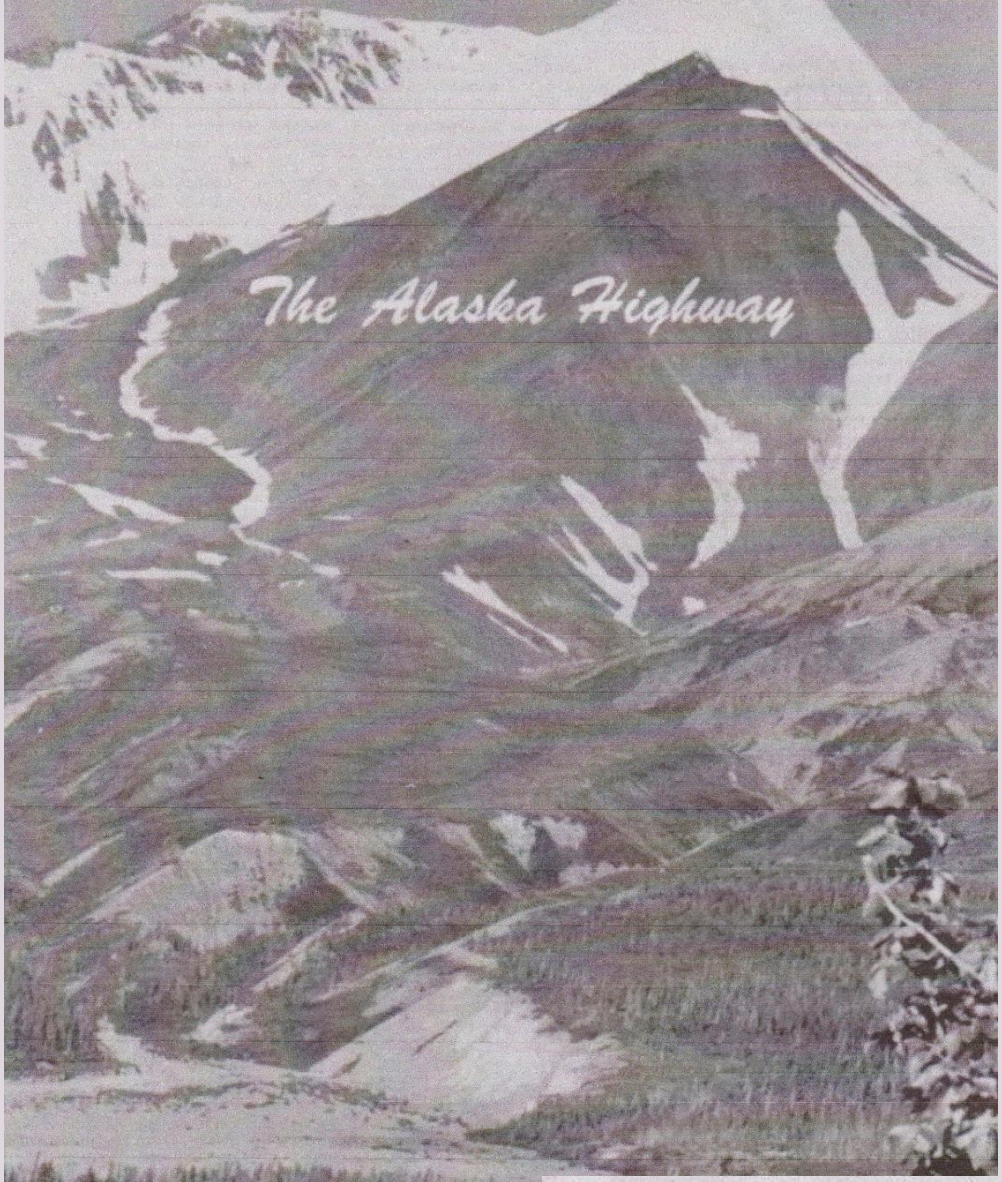
Part 18

Travelogue 1958

1958 Northwest Travelguide

Forward

Information in the 1958 Northwest Travelguide is the latest available at press time, in March. But since British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska rank high among North America's fastest growing areas, noteworthy changes occur yearly. Roads are being repaved and black-topped, bridges replacing ferries, established shopping places changing hands, new ones appearing and even new villages and cities growing where once was only forest. Because of these changes, the Travelguide is completely revised yearly…





The Alaska Highway, left below, winds past the Canadian Government Experimental farm at Mile 1016.

Harrington photo

On February 14, 1942, little more than two months after Pearl Harbor, United States Army Engineers were instructed to construct a military highway from “Fort St. John in B.C. to Big Delta in Alaska, via Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, Whitehorse and Boundary.” Less than a month later, the Engineers’ vanguard arrived at Dawson Creek and for a month, nine troop and freight trains-a-day rolled into the village over the Northern Alberta Railway from Edmonton.

The task facing the Engineers was virtually fantastic. As quickly as possible they had to punch a road through some 1,400 miles of sheer wilderness and through some of the most rugged terrain on the continent. But so they had been commanded and so did they act, attacking the project at four places - Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Whitehorse and the Big Delta, about 100 miles south of Fairbanks. The work was divided into two major sections; the northern section, with headquarters in Whitehorse, and the southern section, with headquarters at the trading post at Fort St. John.

By April, woods which had known little movement but that of wild animals, a few Indians and the occasional trapper now resounded to the crash of fir and spruce, the growl of crawler tractor, the staccato rap of drills and the uproar of thousands of trucks.

Slowly, a pencil line inched into the wilderness, creeping northward and southward despite spring blizzards or muskeg by the mile or mountain ranges which straddled the route. It continued at an average of eight miles-a-day until September 24th, when a clearing crew of the 340th Engineers at Mile 305 at a rivulet that became known as “Contact Creek.”

This opened the southern section and, on November 3rd, units working north from Whitehorse met units working south from Big Delta at Mile 1220 near the Yukon-Alaska border. Construction of the “Long Trail,” as Army Engineers dubbed it, had taken just nine months and six days.

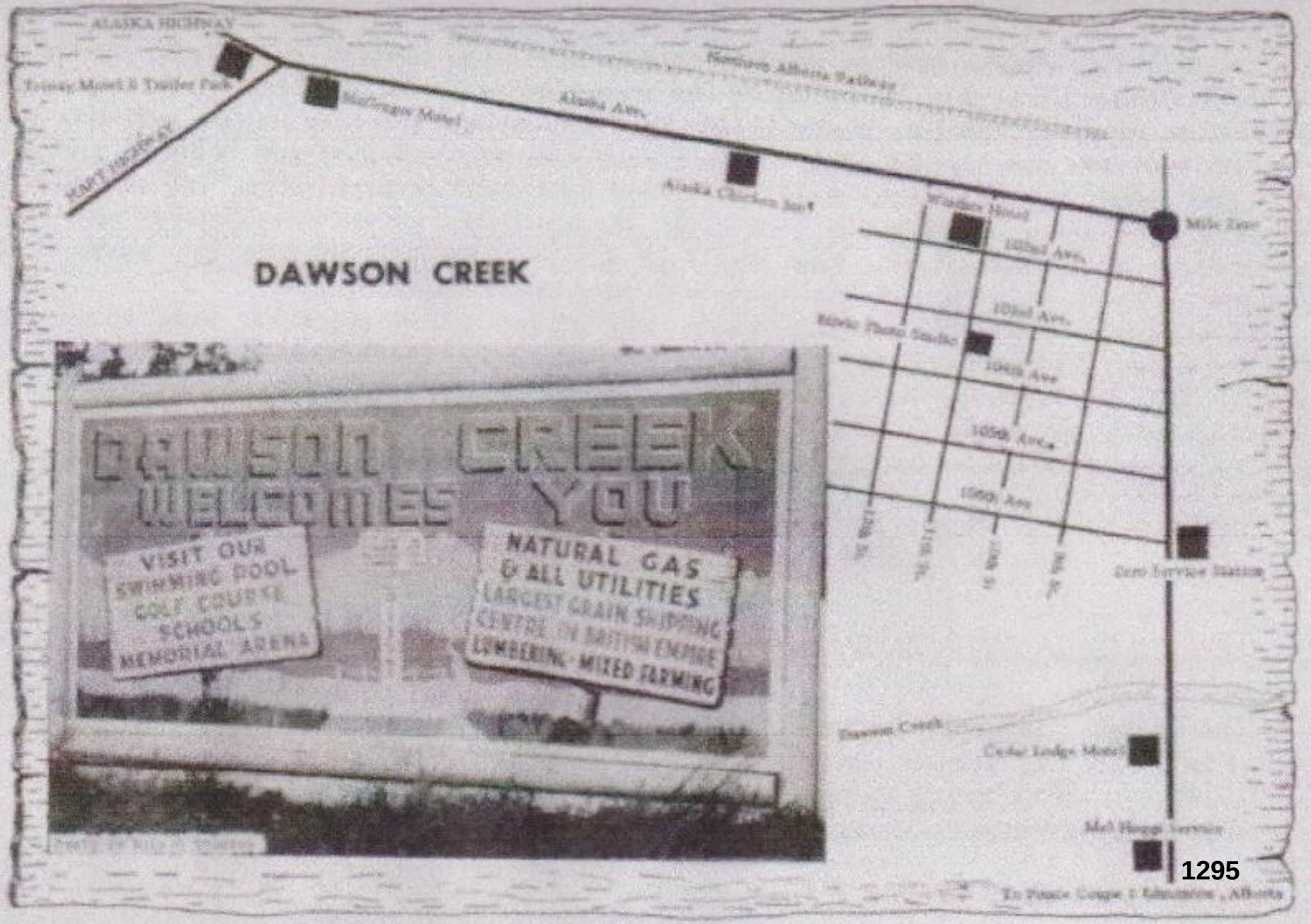
The route, as yet, was very much a lone trail, but in 1942 11,000 troops 10,000 civilian workmen and some 7,000 pieces of equipment transformed it to a passable highway and it has since been continually improved. The construction bill for the 1,523-mile route was about $140,000,000. On he highway there were 133 major bridges and over 8,000 culverts which, if placed end-to-end, would reach over 57 miles.

On April 1, 1946, control of the Canadian portion of the highway;1,221 miles, passed to Canada and since then the Canadian Army has maintained the Canadian section.

They do an excellent job, in fact the 26-foot-wide road is considered one of North America's best all-weather gravel highways. Telephone and telegraph service is available along the route and stopping places average about 30 miles apart. Mile-posts end at Mile 1422, where the Alaska Highway joins the older Richardson Highway.

Traffic over the highway is increasing steadily and from the time the road was opened to civilian traffic, in 1947, until 1957, about 100,000 vehicles carrying over one-quarter million passengers traveled the "Great North Route." Speed limit for the B.C. section is 50 miles-an-hour unless otherwise posted and, in the Yukon, 50 for cars and 40 for trucks.

Dawson Creek, at Mile Zero, is B.C.'s newest city and one of its fastest growing; its current population of over 8,000 more than double that of five years ago. It has all facilities including radio station, two newspapers, a modern hospital, two theaters, arena, nine-hole golf course, swimming pool, dial phones, house-to-house mail delivery and modern hotels and auto courts. Dawson Creek is picturesquely situated in the rolling agricultural land characteristic of the Peace River.


ALASKA HIGHWAY
Alaska Ave.
DAWSON CREEK
DAWSON CREEK
WELCOMES YOU
VISIT OUR
SWIMMING POOL
GOLF COURSE
SCHOOLS
MEMORIAL ARENA
NATURAL GAS
& ALL UTILITIES
LARGEST GRAIN SHIPPING
LUMBERING - MIXED FARMING
Mile Zero
Bus Service Station
Cedar Lodge Motel
To Peace Coupe & Edmonton, Alberta

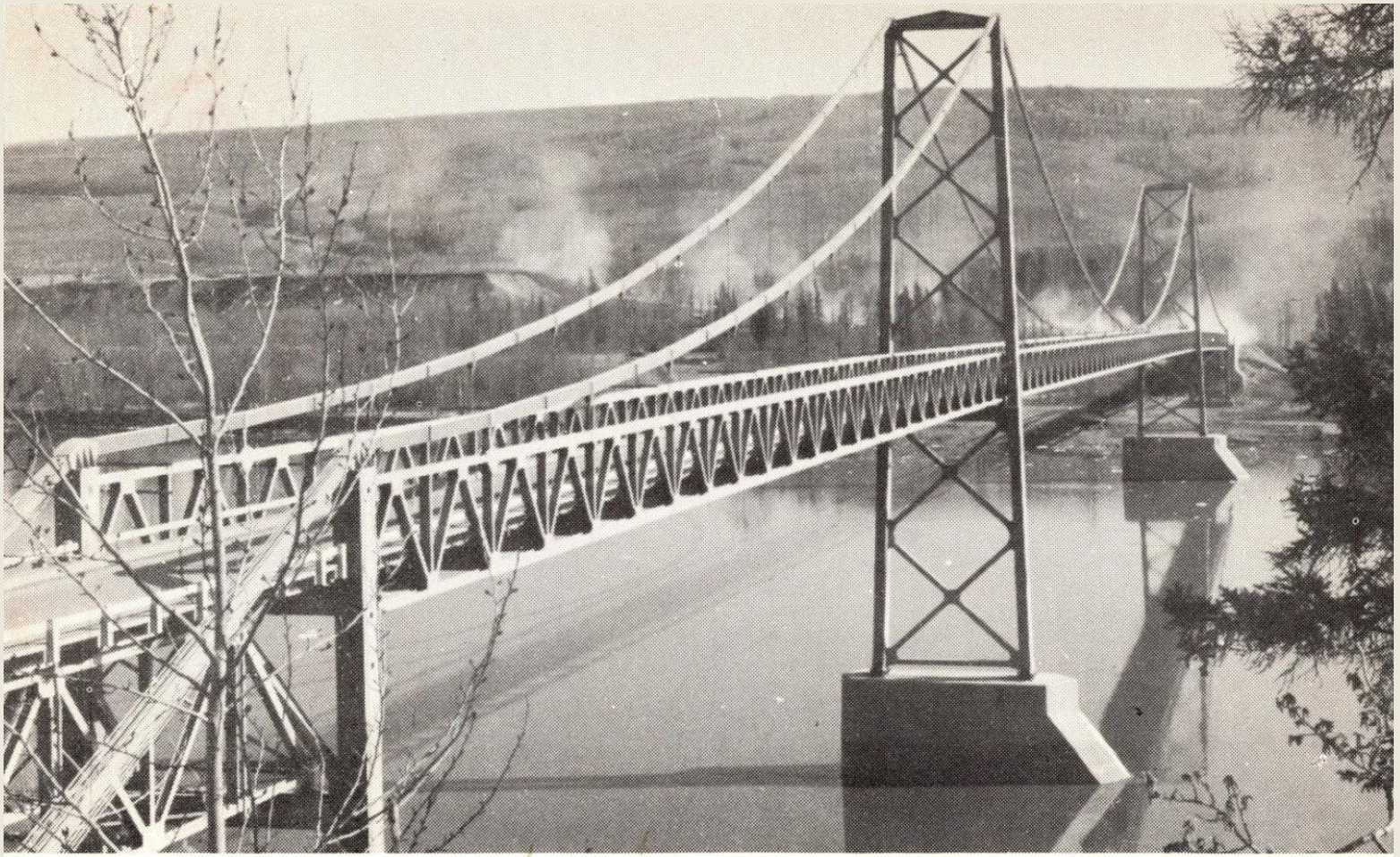
Until now, agriculture has been the backbone of the local economy; in fact, the city is the largest initial grain shipping center in Canada. But in recent years, it has been gaining fame as a gas and oil center and, recently, a $2,000,000 refinery was opened. With the completion of the P.G.E. Railway last year, more industries are scheduled to move in.

To the tourist, Dawson Creek is best known as “Mile Zero” on the Alaska Highway. In fact, its Mile Zero Marker, on the main intersection, is probably the most photographed point on the entire route. Strictly speaking, though, this marker isn’t the starting point of the highway. It was erected by the JayCees to emphasize the fact that Dawson Creek is Mile Zero and it proved the best publicity stunt ever staged by North American JayCees. The official milepost is about three blocks from the JayCee marker; on the corner of Alaska Avenue and the Peace Coupe Road…

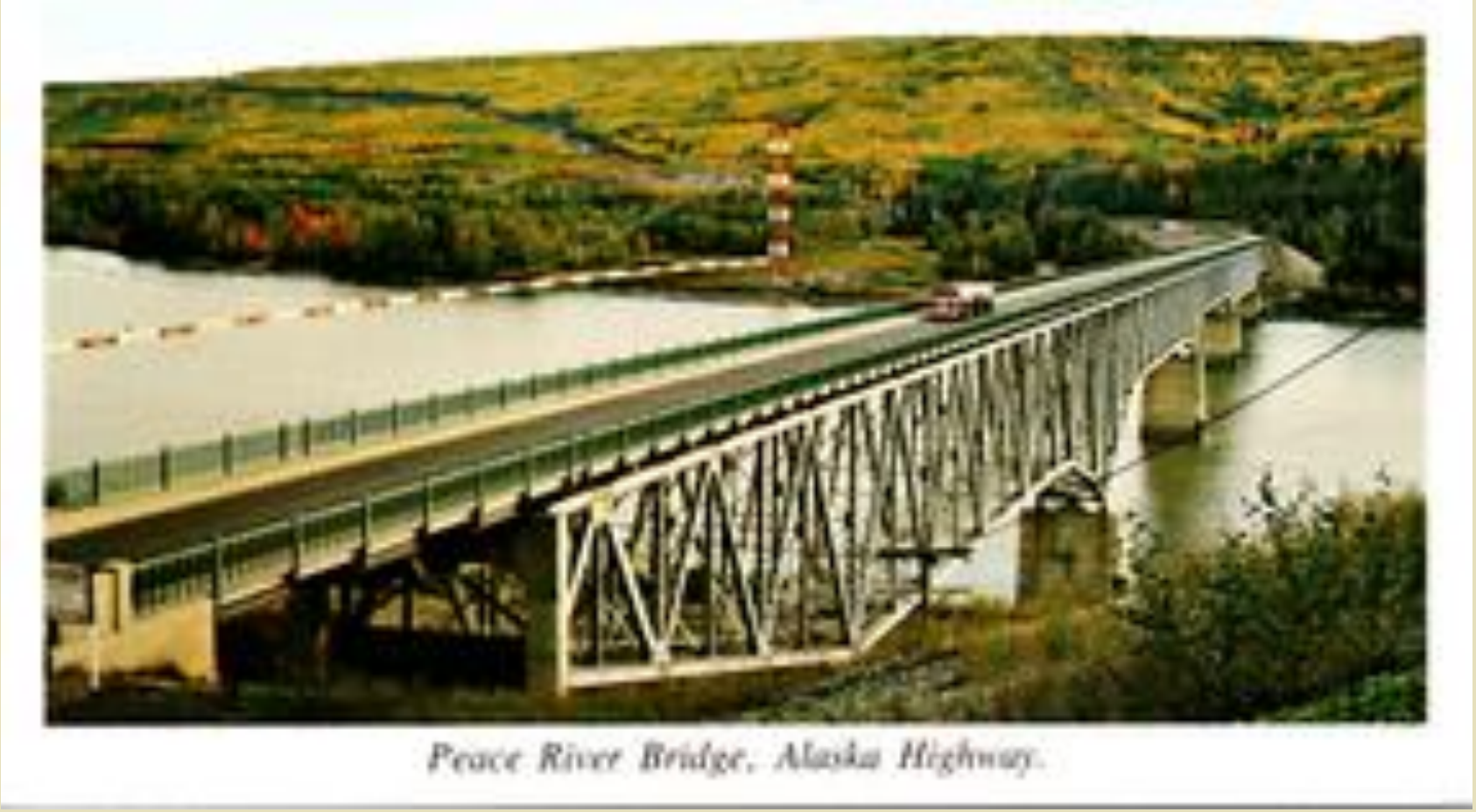

DAWSON CREEK
FT. ST. JOHN 48
FT. NELSON 300
WHITEHORSE 918
FAIRBANKS 1523
MILE "O" ALASKA HI-WAY
MOTOR HOTEL
CARS

…As you head northward toward the Peace River at Mile 35, you will come to a detour made necessary when the famed suspension bridge fell into the river last October 16th. The seven-mile detour takes you over the Pine River and then across the Peace over the new bridge of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway. You rejoin the Alaska Highway just north of the once majestic suspension bridge.

The bridge was weakened when a 92-ton load was permitted to cross it and finally collapsed when a 25,000-ton anchor supporting the cables slipped. The bridge was a favorite pictorial landmark on the highway and was originally opened in 1943. It is being replaced by a 22-foot-wide structure which is expected to cost some $6,000,000…



PEACE RIVER BRIDGE, ALASKA HIGHWAY



Peace River Bridge, Alaska Highway.

The Peace River itself is 900-miles-long and drains 120,000 square-miles. It is North America's only river breaking through the Rocky Mountains and, all told, its waters flow 2,500 miles to the Arctic Ocean. Here its trench is 900-feet-deep. The name is Indian, meaning Unchaga, or Peace, and originated about 1780 when the Crees and Beavers smoked the peace pipe on its banks.

Although the river looks peaceful, it is treacherous – especially in spring, and it didn't surrender easily. During highway construction eight men were drowned near the bridge.



Peace River, showing the community of TAYLOR, with gas and oil refineries, Alaska Highway bridge, pipe line and PGE bridges.

Examples of the Modern Bridges Spanning Waterways Along the Alaska Highway



<u>Above</u>: the Liard River Bridge: since the collapse of the Peace River Bridge the only suspension-type on the highway. It is at Mile 496.



<u>Above</u>: Johnson's Crossing, or the Teslin River Bridge. The high center arch permitted sternwheelers to pass underneath. It is at Mile 836.5.



<u>Above</u>: the MacDonald River Bridge, at Mile 410

If you could turn back the clock-of-time to the morning of May 16, 1793, you would see a birch-bark canoe slowly fighting upstream. It was a frail-looking craft, measuring 25-feet-long, 26-inches-deep and 57-inches-wide and in it was 3,000 pounds of supplies, two Indians and eight white men. The leader was a Scot Adventurer; Alexander Mackensie, and he was on his famous journey that took him to tidewater at Bella Coola and made him the first white man to cross the North American continent.



Convinced that the North West Co. (the Hudson's Bay Co.'s main competitor) needed a base on the Pacific coast, explorer and adventurer *Alexander Mackenzie* set-out, in 1793, with a small party and only essential supplies to map-out a route to the west. After bra-ving rushing rapids in their spe-cially-designed canoe, Mackenzie's gr-oup began a trek by land across the Rocky Mountains. Twelve years ahead of American explorers Lewis and Cl-ark, Mackenzie had reached the Pacific Ocean. They'd logged 2,811 miles in territory never before seen and/or ex-plored by Europeans.

<u>Caption</u>: "Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1764-1820) was a Scottish-Canadian explorer and fur trader known for accomplishing the first crossing of North America north of Mexico by a European in 1793. The Mac-kenzie River and Mount Sir Alexander are named after him."



"Map of the North Part of America on which is laid down Mackenzies Track (dotted line) from Montreal to the North Sea [map] Scale not given. In: A Collection of Voyages and Travels, from the Discovery of America to the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century (Volume 24). London: 1809."

The Yukon

The Yukon Territory takes in the extreme northwestern part of the mainland of Canada and has an area of 207,076 square-miles or 5.6 percent of Canada's area. It is bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean; on the east by the northwest territories; on the south by B.C. and on the west by Alaska.

It is generally mountainous, although there are many stretches of rolling country with wide flats in the river valleys where flowers and vegetables grow amazingly in virtually 24-hour daylight. The southern Yukon is drained by the Liard River into the Mackensie and the Arctic Ocean, while most of the remainder is drained by the Yukon and its tributaries into the Bering Sea.

Current population is about 12,000 and the three main settlements are Whitehorse, Dawson and Mayo. For its comparatively small population, the Yukon has a comprehensive transportation system. A 110-mile railway; the White Pass & Yukon, joins Whitehorse to the Pacific Ocean at Skagway.

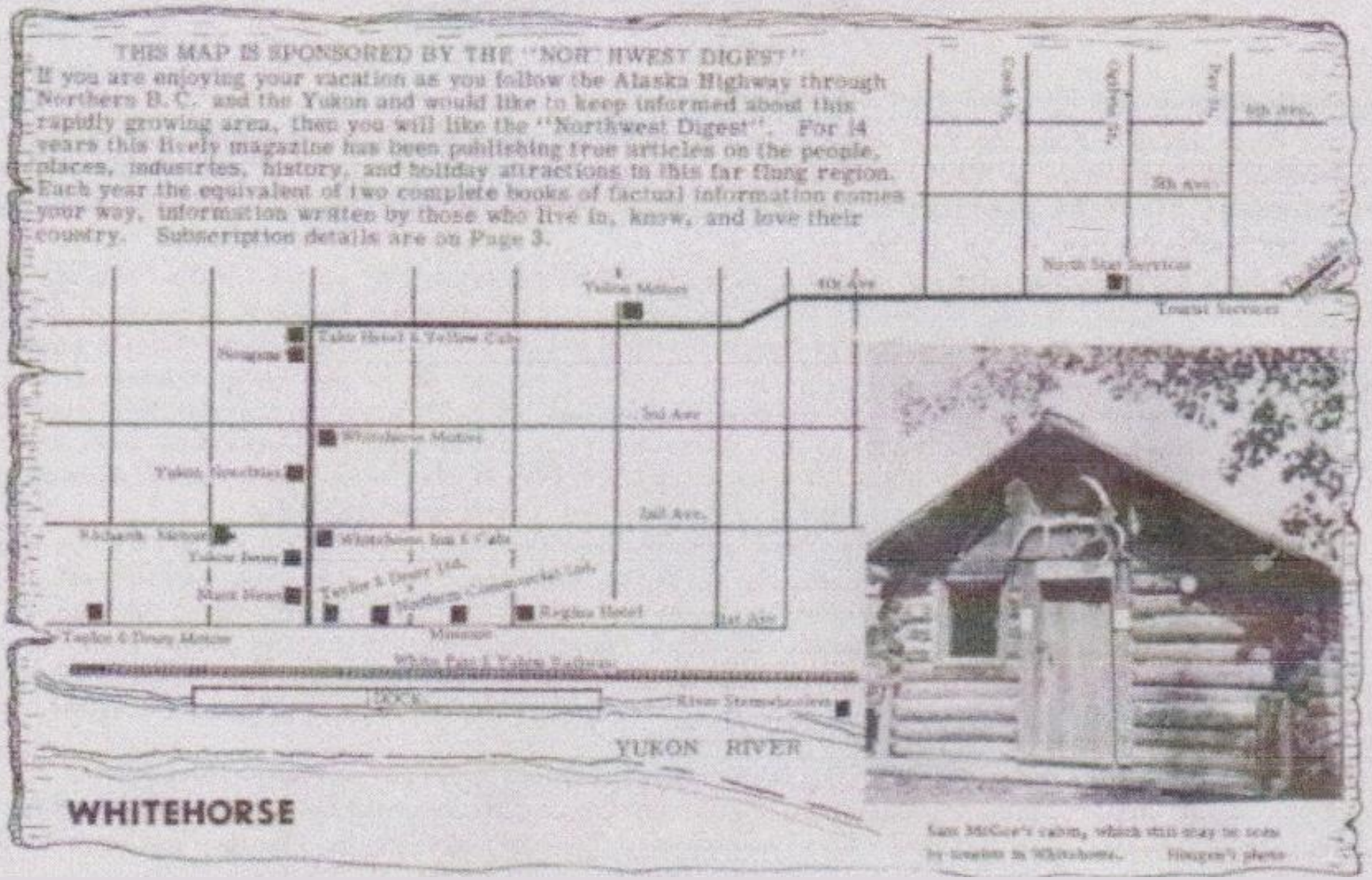
The Alaska Highway cleaves the territory for 580 miles and important side roads are in Haines, Alaska, and from Mile 925.1 on the Alaska Highway in Dawson City and the mines at Mayo and Kino Hill.

In addition, C.P.A. maintains a scheduled service and smaller airlines run charter flights to any point in the Yukon. Until recently, sternwheelers plied hundreds of miles of the Yukon River, but they have now passed into history because of road construction.

The name “Yukon” is said to be derived from an Indian word; “Yuchoo,” meaning “big river.” Similarly, “Klondike” is an adaptation of the Indian word “Tro-ndiuck,” meaning “hammer water.” This particular stream was noted for its annual salmon run and the natives trapped the fish by means of barriers of stakes driven into the gravel bottom - hence “hammer water.”

Yukon Territory became famous following the discovery of gold by “Skookum” Jim, “Tagish” Charlie and George Washington Carmack on a tributary of the Klondike River, near Dawson City, on August 17, 1896, Carmack christened the tributary “Bonanza.” When news of the strike reached the outside world the stampede started and in the next eight years about $100,000,000 was wrested from the gravel bars.

The Yukon is becoming popular for the big game hunter. Moose, grizzly, caribou, goat and similar large game animals are plentiful in the mountain ranges that angle north-to-south across the territory.



Whitehorse is ideal for a breather after the drive from Dawson Creek or Fairbanks. It has all facilities including radio station, newspaper, two theaters, modern accommodation, stores and similar facilities for the visitor.

Mayo-Dawson City Loop

The mileposts along the route run cumulatively to Mayo, but the Dawson City route leaves them at Mile 213. From Mile 213 to Dawson is 115 miles. From Dawson City to Tetlin Junction on the Alaska Highway is 173 miles for a total distance of 501 miles. Straight through Alaska Highway mileage is 375, so the extra distance is only 126 miles.

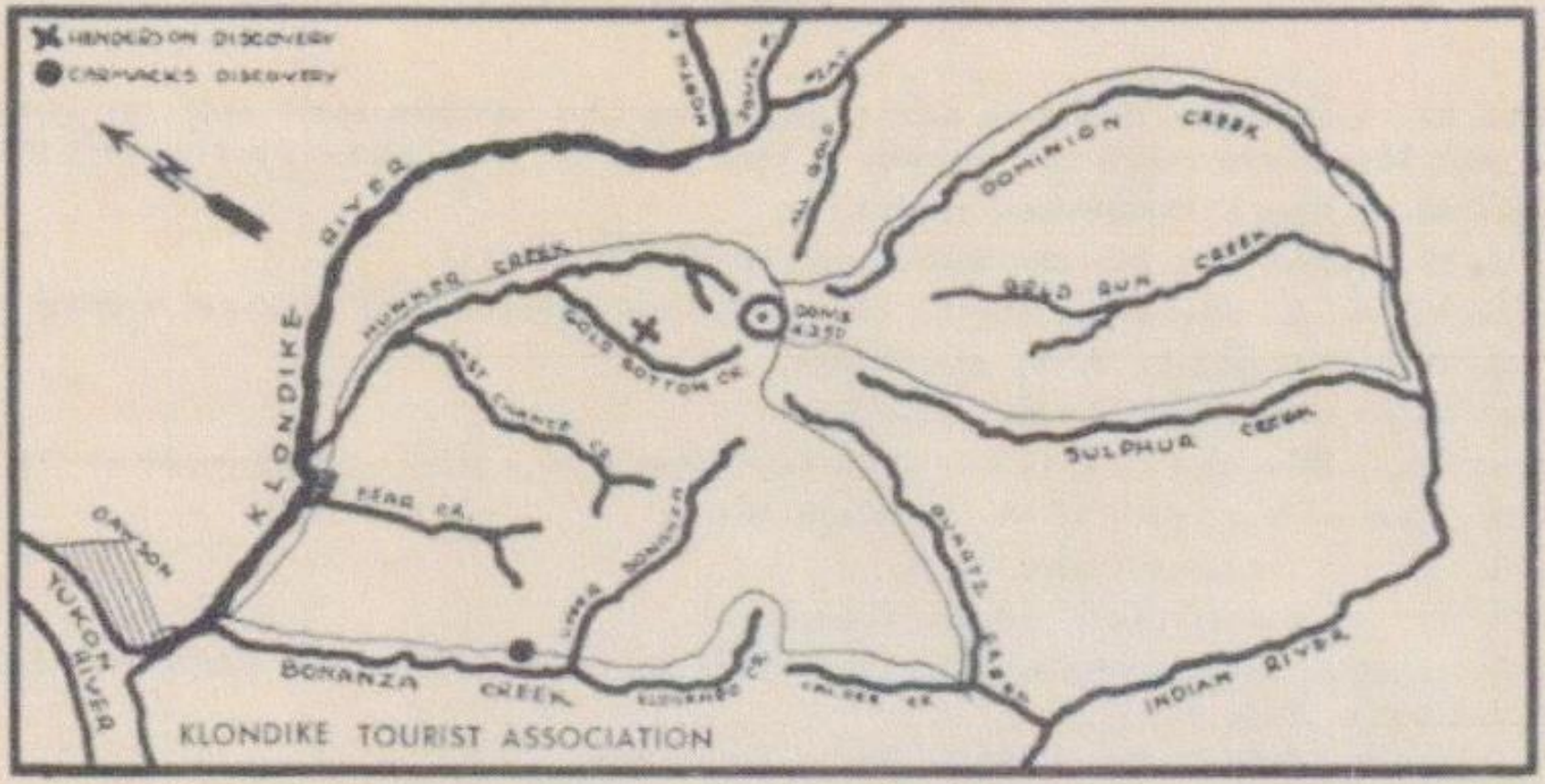
From the junction to Dawson City the highway is generally wide and well maintained, but from Dawson City to the Alaska border it is narrower with steep hills. If you are pulling a house trailer with a light-powered vehicle, check with the road department In the Federal Building at Whitehorse before trying the loop.

There are four free ferry crossings on the route. The first three; between the junction and Dawson, operate 24 hours-a-day, with a one-hour stoppage between 6 and 7 a.m. and p.m., 12 noon to 1 p.m. and 12 midnight to 1 a.m. The fourth ferry operates between Dawson and the north bank of the Yukon, with hours from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and launch service until about 11 p.m. The ferry service is free, but launch service is operated by private enterprise.

Dawson City (Mile 115)

The event that gave birth to Dawson City occurred on August 16, 1896, when George Carmack, Shookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, acting on the advice of Robet Henderson, found gold on a creek which became known as “Bonanza.” After news of the discovery seeped to the outside, it started the world’s mad-dest stampede.

In 1897 and 1898, some 60,000 adventurers clawed their way over the Chilkout Pass from Skagway, built boats at the head of Lake Bennett, sailed down this lake to the Yukon River and set-out on a 450-mile journey down this treach-erous waterway to the promised land.



From these creeks have come almost a quarter billion in gold. Today motorists can drive through the heart of the area that created the famed Klondike gold rush.

Additional thousands came via other routes and the influx reached a peak in 1898 when 50,000 arrived in Dawson. In the next eight years they were to wrest about $100,000,000 in gold from Eldorado, Bonanza, Dominion, Hunker and Sulphur Creeks and their tributaries.

In 1897 Dawson was a flapping bedlam of tents, but by 1898 permanent buildings were everywhere and by 1899 the city had assumed the general layout of today. It boasted a sewer system, electric lights, sidewalks, orderly government, fire department and similar services.

Its population was estimated at 35,000 and fed by a stream of gold from the creeks, it was a boisterous city, with saloons and dance halls open 24 hours-a-day and gold changing hands, literally, by the ton.

One day, Alex McDonald came in from the creeks, bringing with him 29 pack-horses laden with gold. No one knows how much McDonald took from the ground, but at one time he was credited with being worth $7,000,000. The Auditorium Theater, now a tourist attraction, reportedly earned its owner a clear profit of $1,500,000 between 1899 and 1906.

But while the area made millionaires, it made far more destitute. By 1898, all productive ground had been staked and Klondikers arriving in 1899 were disillusioned and disappointed. Thousands of would-be miners took whatever work was available to earn money for passage home, and Dawson's population waned over the years until today it is down to about 800.



Over the years, many original buildings have either fallen or been torn-down and those remaining are warped and buckled because of the action of the permafrost on which the buildings sit

But Dawson City is not dead. Each year tourism shows an increase and dredges have sufficient ground left to last another 35 years. Then, recently, huge deposits of exceedingly rich asbestos were discovered near the city and this could be a tremendous boost. There is now an air of optimism in the famous center such as hasn't been present since the Gold Rush.

Haines Junction (Mile 1016) / Highway

A highway community with maintenance camp, R.C.M.P. station, post office, school, churches and similar services. Not the unusual structure of the Catholic church on the right-hand side of the highway as you approach the junction northbound. At the junction, the Alaska Highway turns sharp right, northbound.

The mountains looming behind Haines are part of the Coast Range but known locally as the “Dezedeesh.” Behind them rise the St. Elias Range, Canada’s highest mountain system with 16 peaks higher than the highest in the Rockies. You cannot see this range until Mile 1125.5.

The Haines Highway extends 159 miles to the seaport of Haines, in Alaska. Of this, 61.7 miles is in the Yukon, 52.3 miles in B.C. and 42 miles in Alaska. It is probably the most scenic of northern roads, skirting large lakes, crossing rushing rivers, climbing to timberline to cross the Coast Range and penetrate the lush vegetation of the Alaska coast. Haines has all tourist facilities.



Flanking the 159-mile-long Haines Highway is some of the most spectacular scenery on the Alaska Highway.

Alaska

Alaska, largest of the U.S. possessions, was called “Seward’s Folly” in 1867 when that Secretary of State arranged for its purchase from the Russians for $7,200,000. Since then, Alaska has returned approximately $3,500,000,000 worth of products to the U.S. as well as giving the United States a stronghold to dominate the North Pacific.

The territory, rugged and primitive, is a land of may surprises for the tourist. Alaska is not the frigid land of popular concept, though it does have extremely cold weather. Average snowfall in West Virginia is more than that of the Arctic lowlands and greatest summer heat in central Alaska is about on a par with that of New York City.

Though gold mining is often thought to be Alaska’s ranking industry, it is over-shadowed by commercial fisheries - to which salmon contributes over 80 per-cent. Trapping and agriculture make important contributions to the economy and Alaska’s forests are starting to be a very valuable asset. A growing tourist trade adds to the income of this land whose 586,400 square-miles are a fifth as large as the 48 States.

In addition, Alaska mines gold, supplies all domestically mined U.S. tin and also turns-out platinum, coal, antimony, silver, mercury, lead, tungsten and other valuable metals.

Alaska’s estimated population is 100,000 and the largest cities are Anchorage, with about 60,000; Juneau, with 8,000; Fairbanks, with 25,000; Ketchikan, with 6,500 and Seward, terminus of the Alaska Railway and outfitting center of big game hunters headed for Kenai Peninsula, about 3,000.

Alaska has an overall coastline stretching an amazing 33,000 miles. There are over 3,000 islands, 1,100 of them in the Alexander Archipelago through which the Inland Passage winds its way. Boats that thread the passage put-in at three of Alaska’s cities – Ketchikan, Juneau (the present capital) and Sitka, the old Russian capital.

Delta Junction (Mile 1422)



Here, the Alaska Highway joins the Richardson Highway and the familiar Alaska Highway mileposts end. Those you see now are for the Richardson Highway which runs from Valdez to Fairbanks.

1329

Caption: “A “milepost,” familiar to those traveling the Alaska Highway”

Fairbanks (Mile 1520)

End of the “Long Trail,” as the Alaska Highway was known to construction men. This is Alaska’s second largest city; population 25,000 and known as “The Golden Heart of Alaska.” The city has two radio stations, a weekly and a daily newspaper, a TV station and all the facilities of a States-side city. It is the site of the University of Alaska; the most northern university in the world and one famed for its museum of Arctic lore.

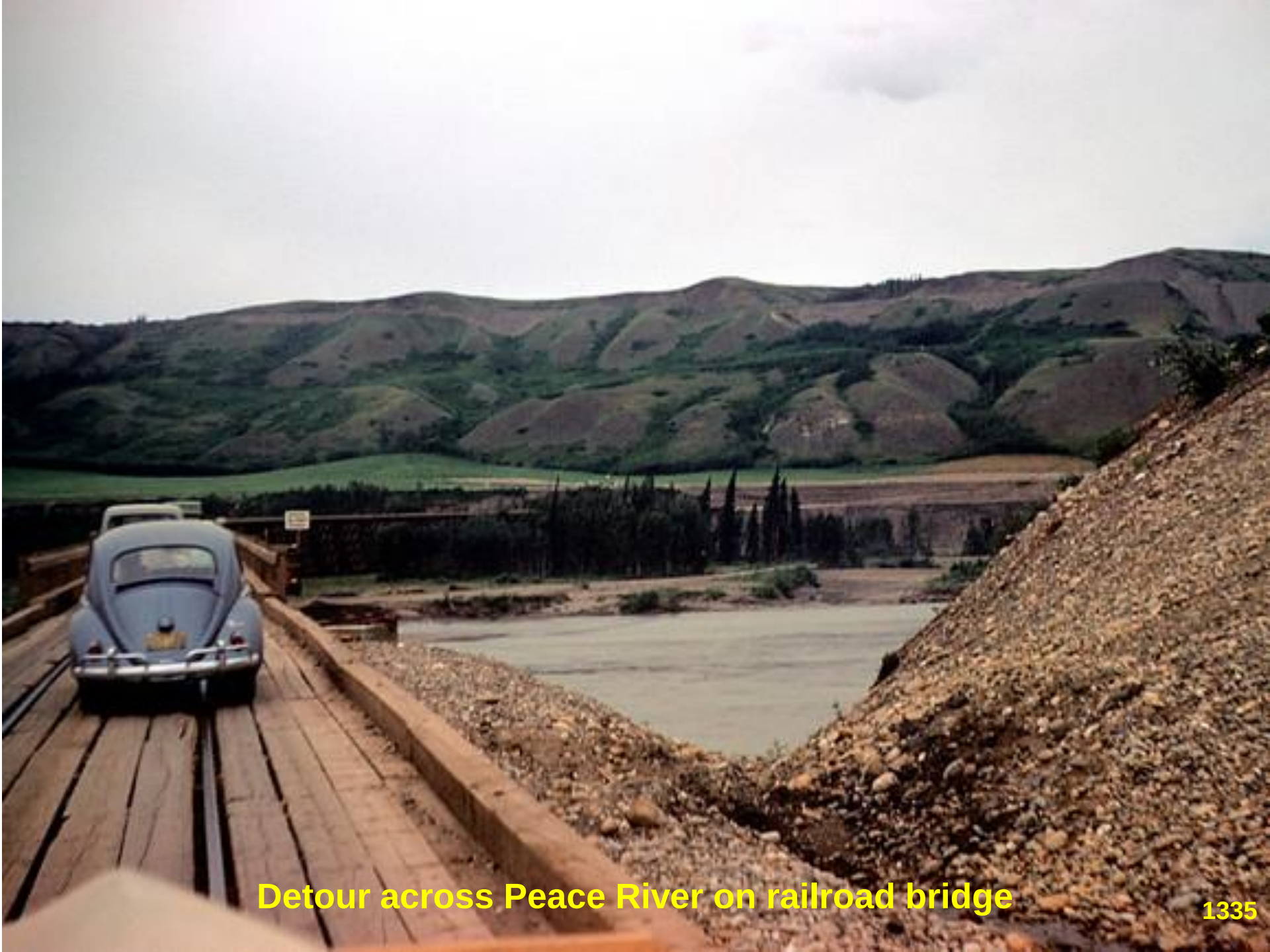
In the summer of 1958, six months before Alaska became a State, *Hubert* and *Sevilla Priddy,* their children and Hubert's father left their home in Glendale, Calif., and traded it, temporarily, for a custom-designed truck-camper with the goal of exploring Alberta, the Yukon and Alaska, via the ALCAN Highway. Hubert took many pictures along their extensive journey and created a slide-show with captions on each slide. The following are those slides most relevant to the Alaska Highway portion of their trip.



Map of Alcan Highway and Alaska

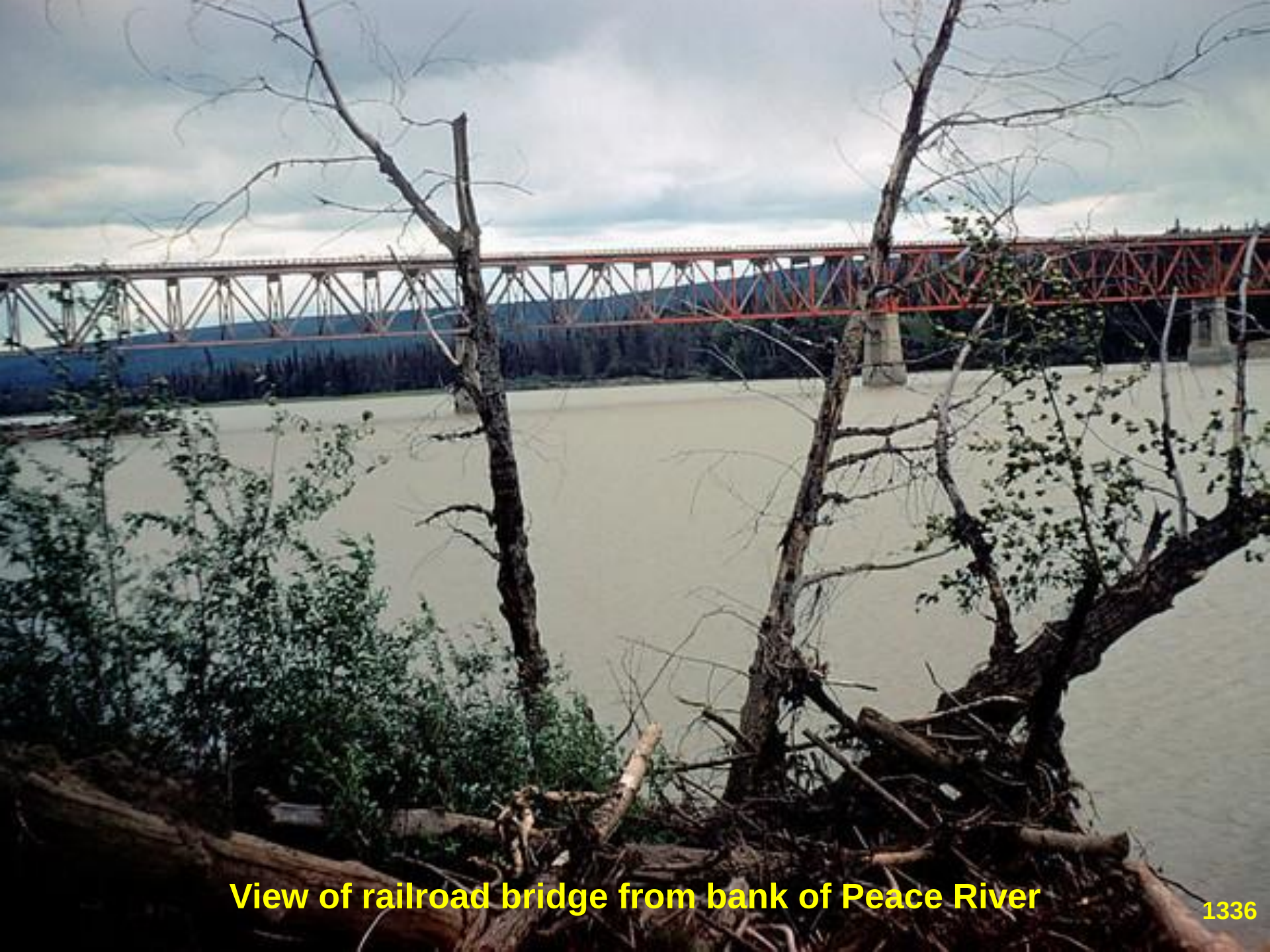


View of failed Peace River Suspension Bridge.
Bridge fell in October 19, 1957..



Detour across Peace River on railroad bridge

1335



View of railroad bridge from bank of Peace River

1336


Milepost 222.5



Milepost 262



Picking wild berries beside the road at milepost 262

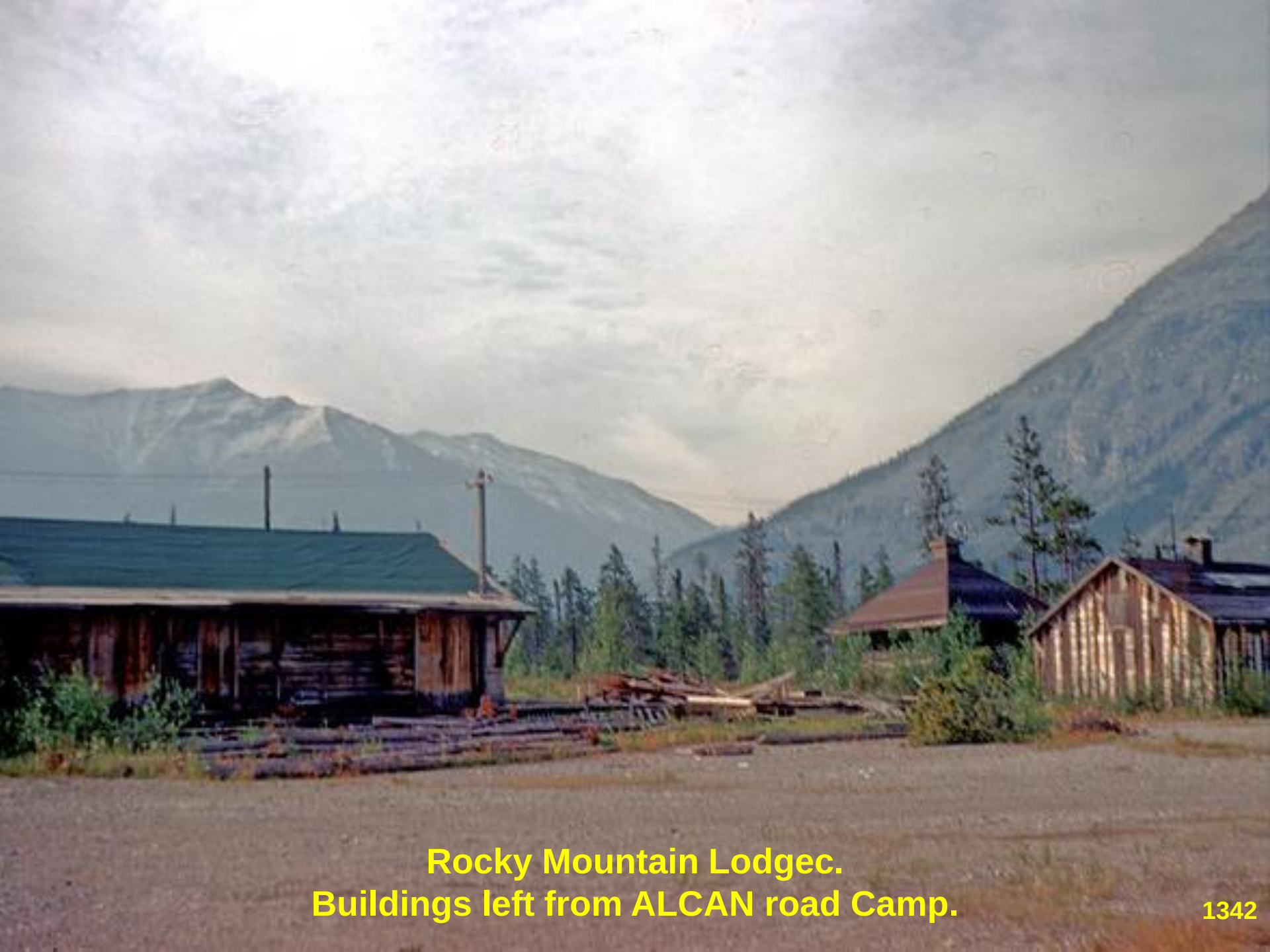
1339



Milepost 263 - reworked section of the ALCAN Highway.

1340


Milepost 358 - Indian Head Rock



Rocky Mountain Lodgec.
Buildings left from ALCAN road Camp.



Milepost 412 - McDonald Creek and Glen.



Milepost 422. Saw Mill at Todd River.



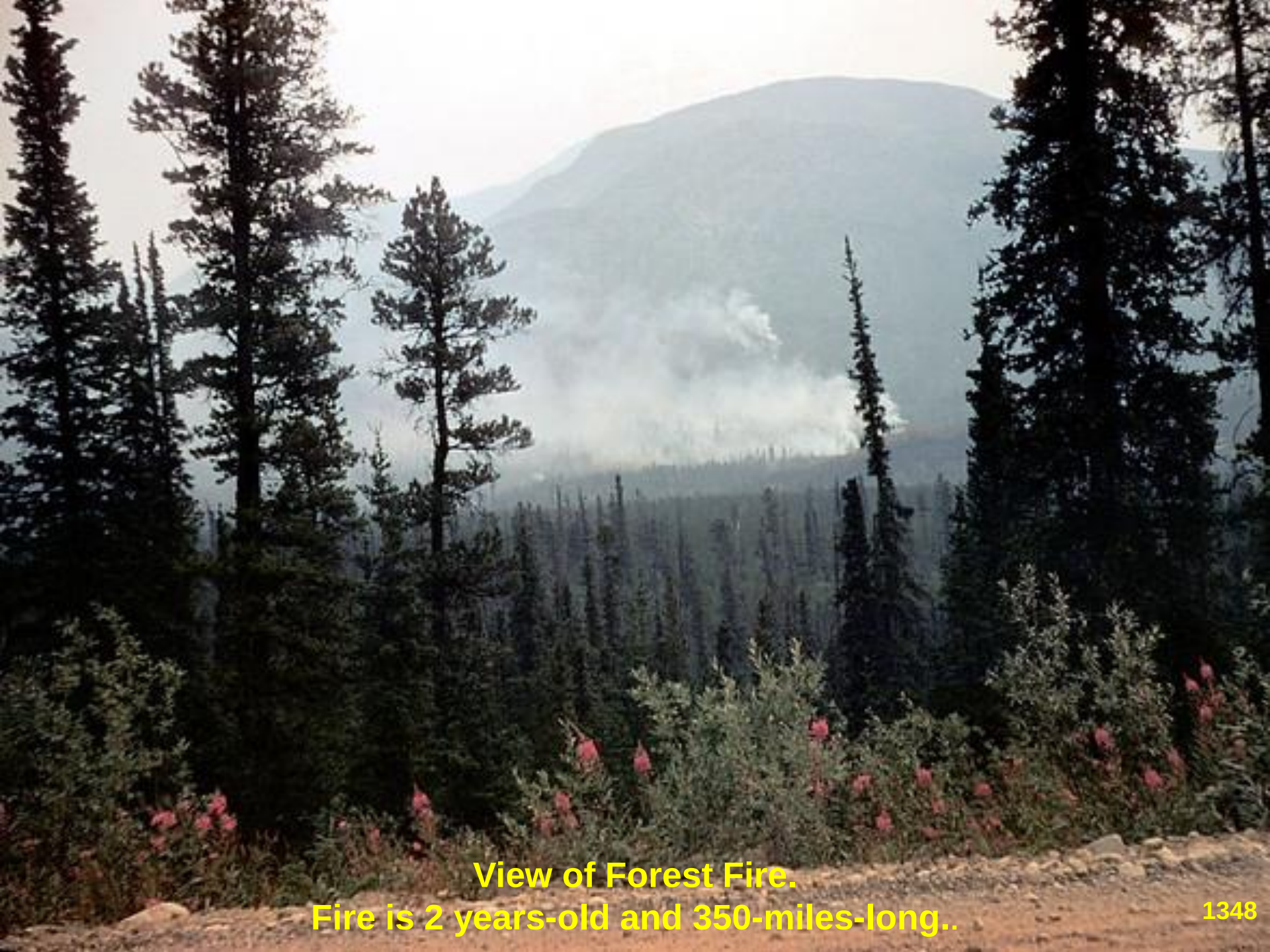
Milepost 462 - Muncho Lake



Milepost 474. Two miles of the ALCAN Highway..



Milepost Signs in town of Watson Lake



View of Forest Fire.
Fire is 2 years-old and 350-miles-long..



Whitehorse Main Street.

1349



Forest fire along the ALCAN north of Whitehorse

1350



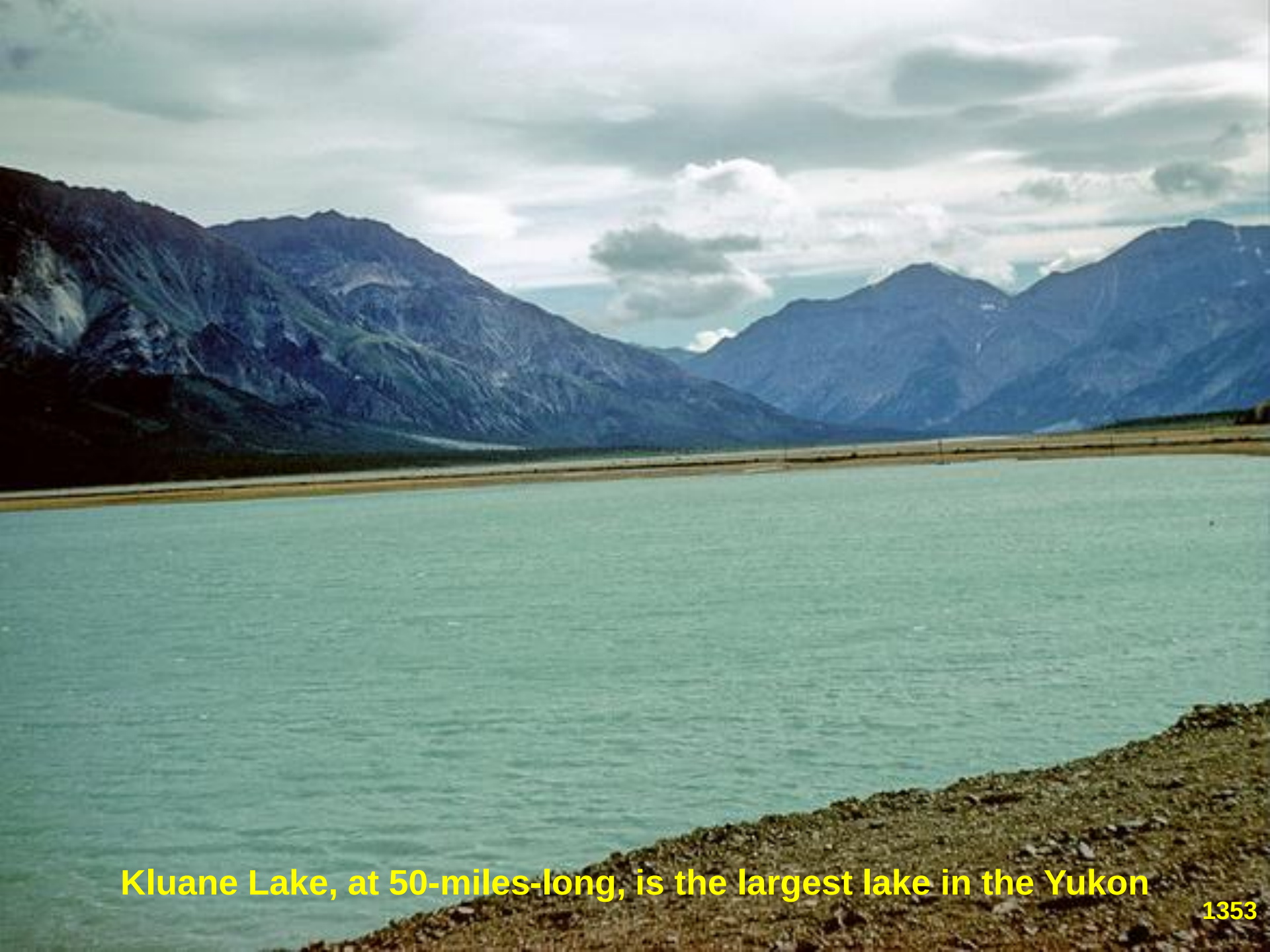
View of ALCAN Highway south of Haines Junction.
Flowers are Fireweed.

1351



Haines Junction.

1352


Kluane Lake, at 50-miles-long, is the largest lake in the Yukon
1353



Burned 1957 Ford staton wagon and 20 ft. trailer.
They had thrown a rock through the gasoline tank..

1354


White River Lodge
1355



Canadian Customs - departing Yukon for Alaska

1356



Canadian / Alaska Border.
Looking south down the dotted line..



Alaska - we made it!



Typical truck on the ALCAN Highway. “Flying low.”.

1359



Alaska tundra and mountains



Tok Junction - to Anchorage or Fairbanks



Steese Highway (Alaska Route 6) extends
162 miles north from Fairbanks to Circle City, Alaska.



Straight section of the Steese Highway

1363





<u>Above</u>: Circle City is located on the Yukon River 50 miles below the Artic Circle

<u>Left</u>: Circle City, Alaska was the end of the road in 1958



Steese Highway - leaving Circle City for Fairbanks



Deserted log cabin along Stesse Highway, is over 50 years-old

1366





<u>Above</u>: One of many drainage tubes across the Steese Highway - near Circle City

<u>Left</u>: A very moist section of the Steese Highway


Eilson Air Force Base - south of Fairbanks on ALCAN.
1368


Tanana River from ALCAN Highway
1369



Delta River - from the Richardson Highway.

1370



Me. Kimball seen from Richardson Highway -
south of Delta Junction

1371

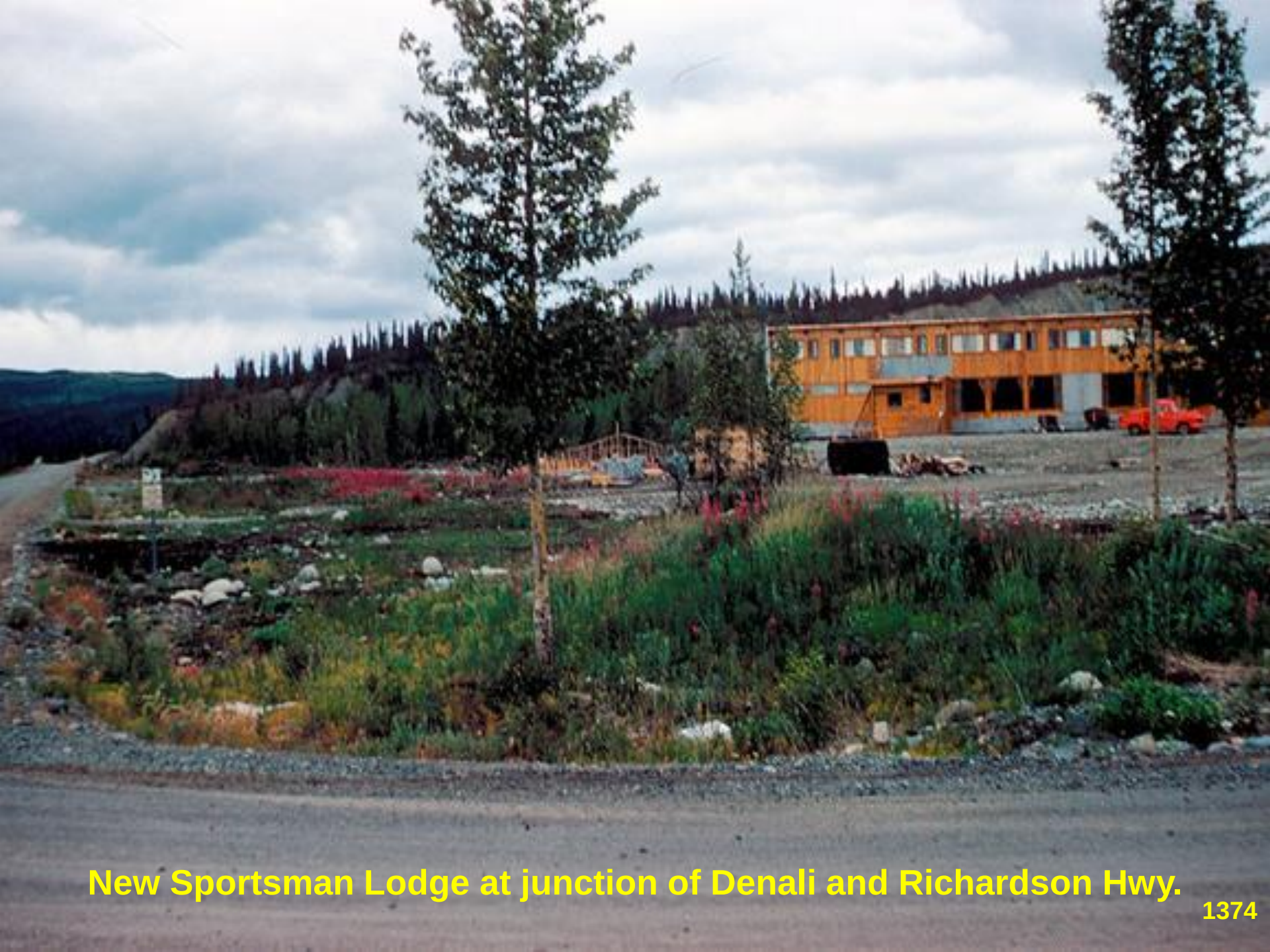


Looking east along the Denali Highway



Maintenance crew on the Denali Highway

1373



New Sportsman Lodge at junction of Denali and Richardson Hwy.

1374



Road over Quartz Creek

1375



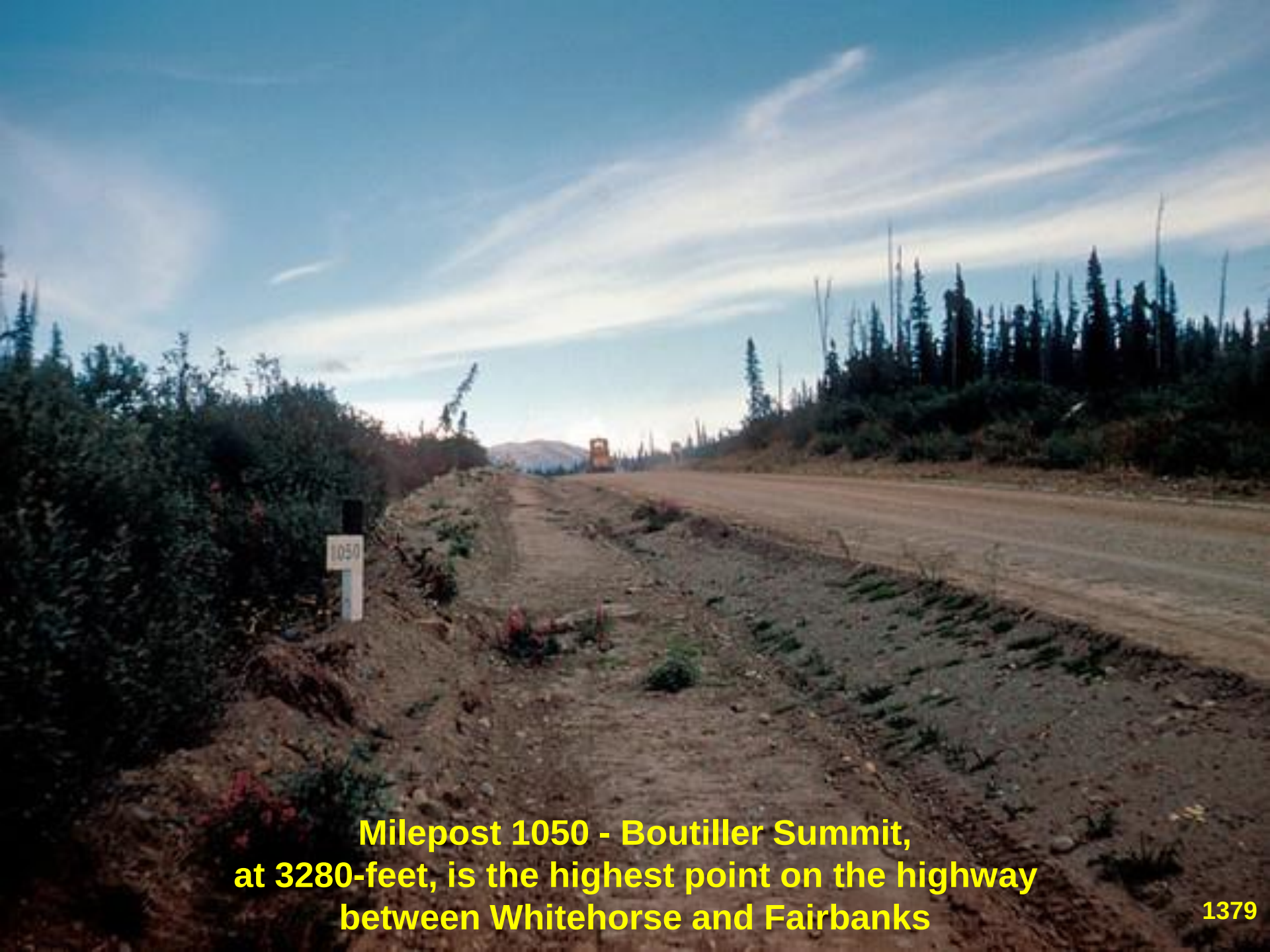


<u>Above</u>: Sterling Highway near Hope turn-off
<u>Left</u>: part of the 17-mile-long road to Hope. Road is very narrow.

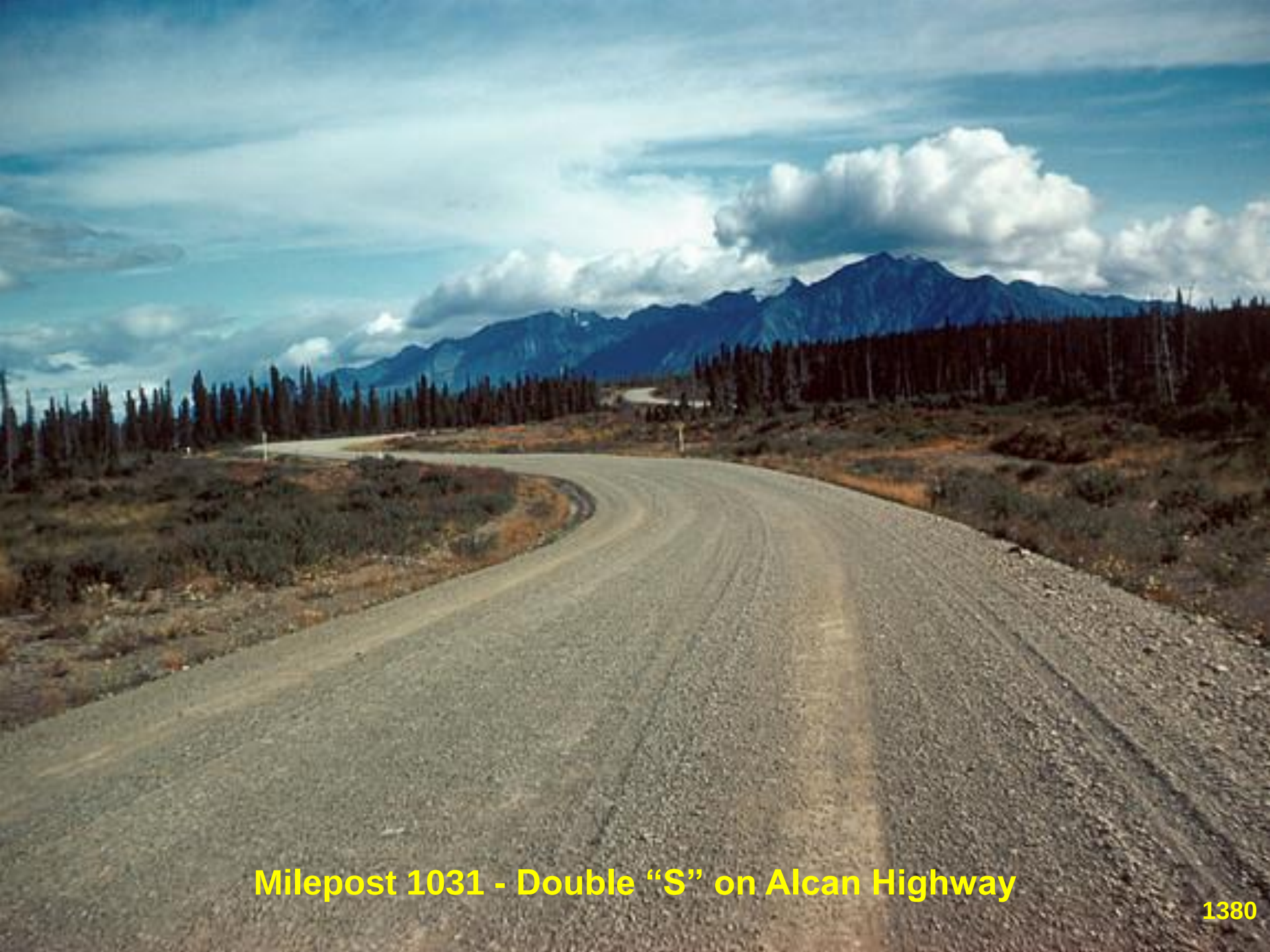


Milepost 1100 - Chevy, Trailer & boat with California license.
Typical of ALCAN Highway..


Milepost 1060 - Kulane Lake



Milepost 1050 - Boutiller Summit,
at 3280-feet, is the highest point on the highway
between Whitehorse and Fairbanks



Milepost 1031 - Double “S” on Alcan Highway



**Milepost 1028.5 - Bear Creek Summit,
at 3204-feet, is the second highest point on the highway
between Whitehorse and Fairbanks**


Milepost 1000


Milepost 900


Milepost 850

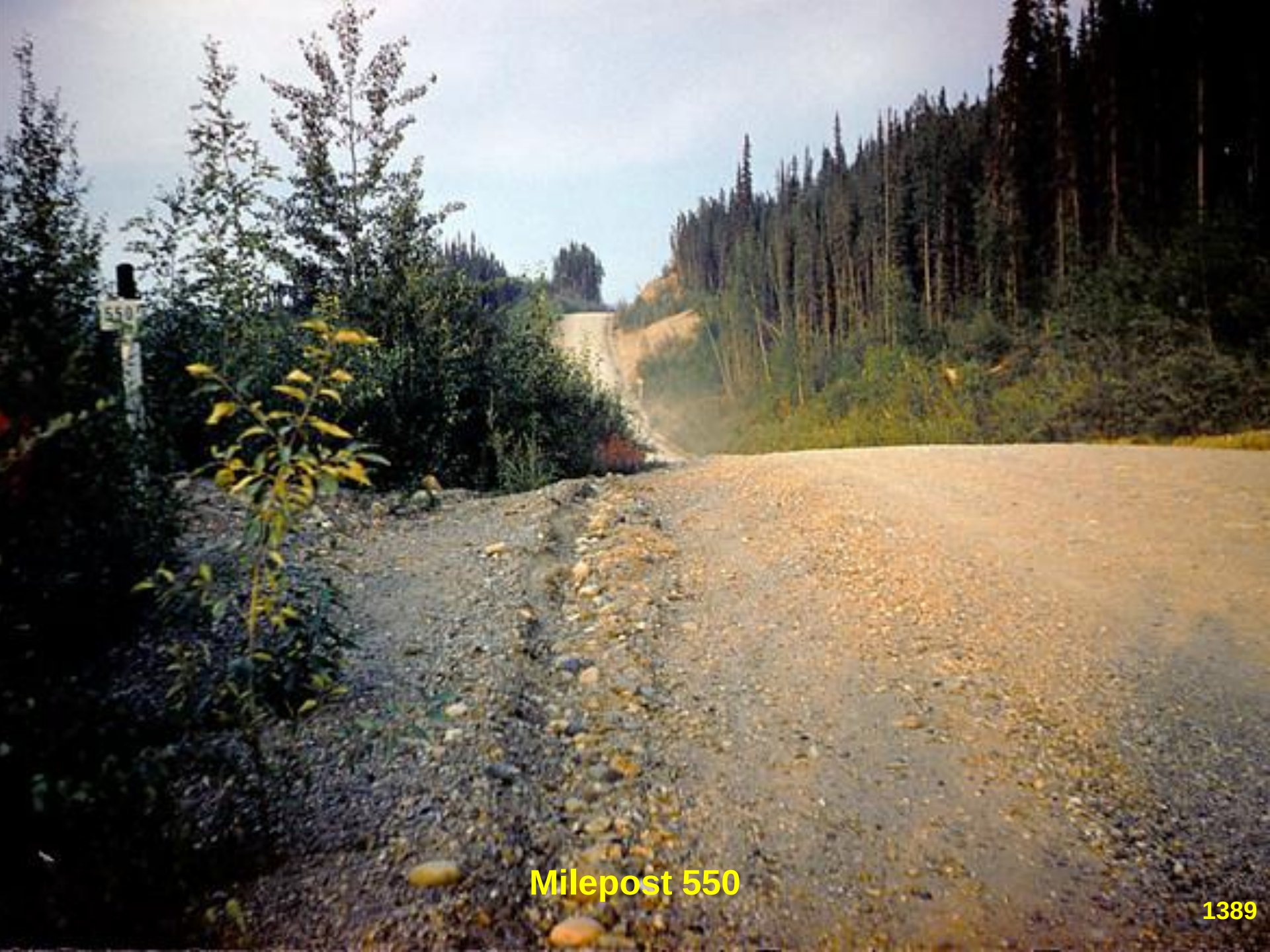

Milepost 800


Milepost 750



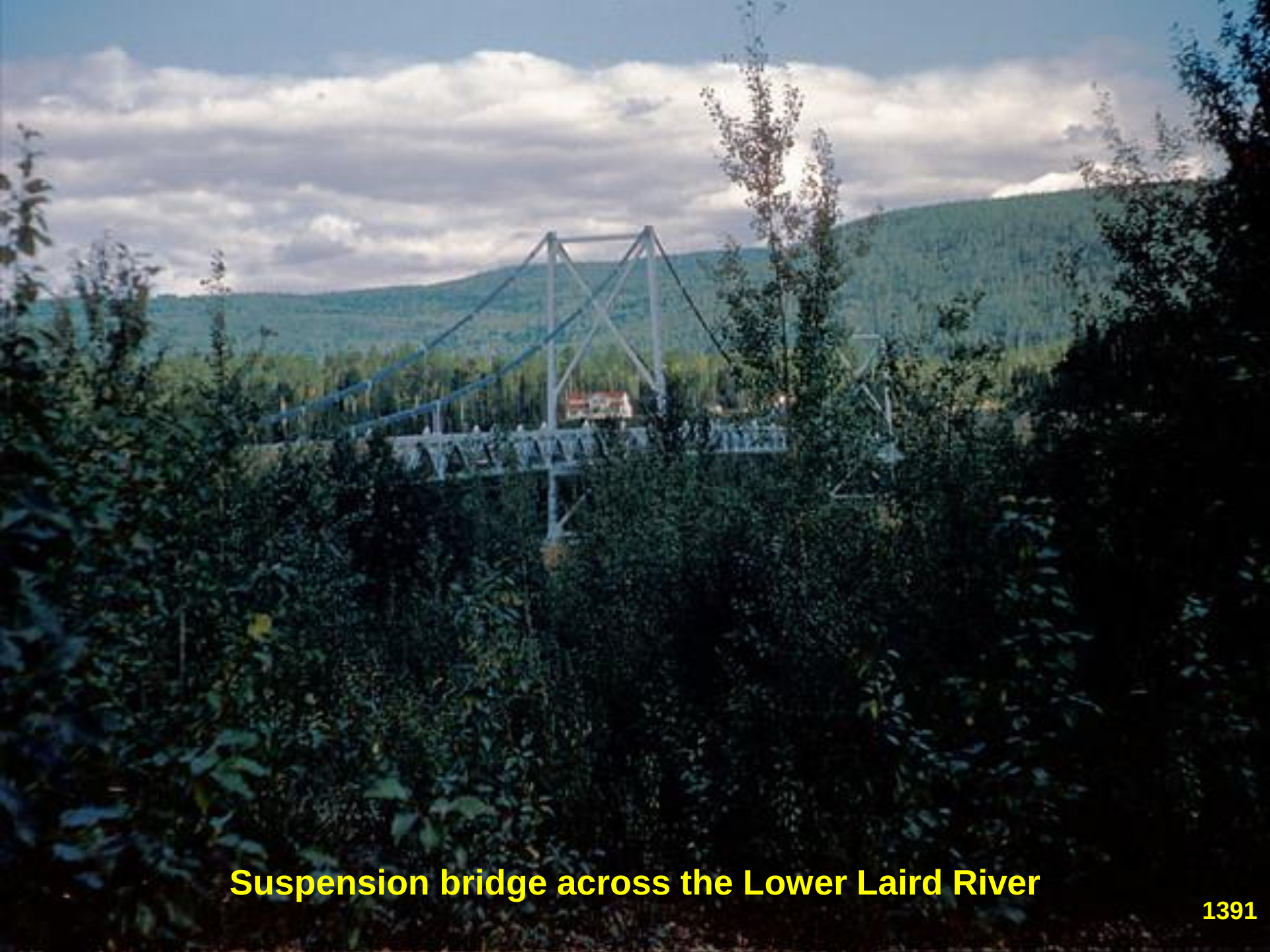
Milepost 650


Milepost 600



Milepost 550


Milepost 500

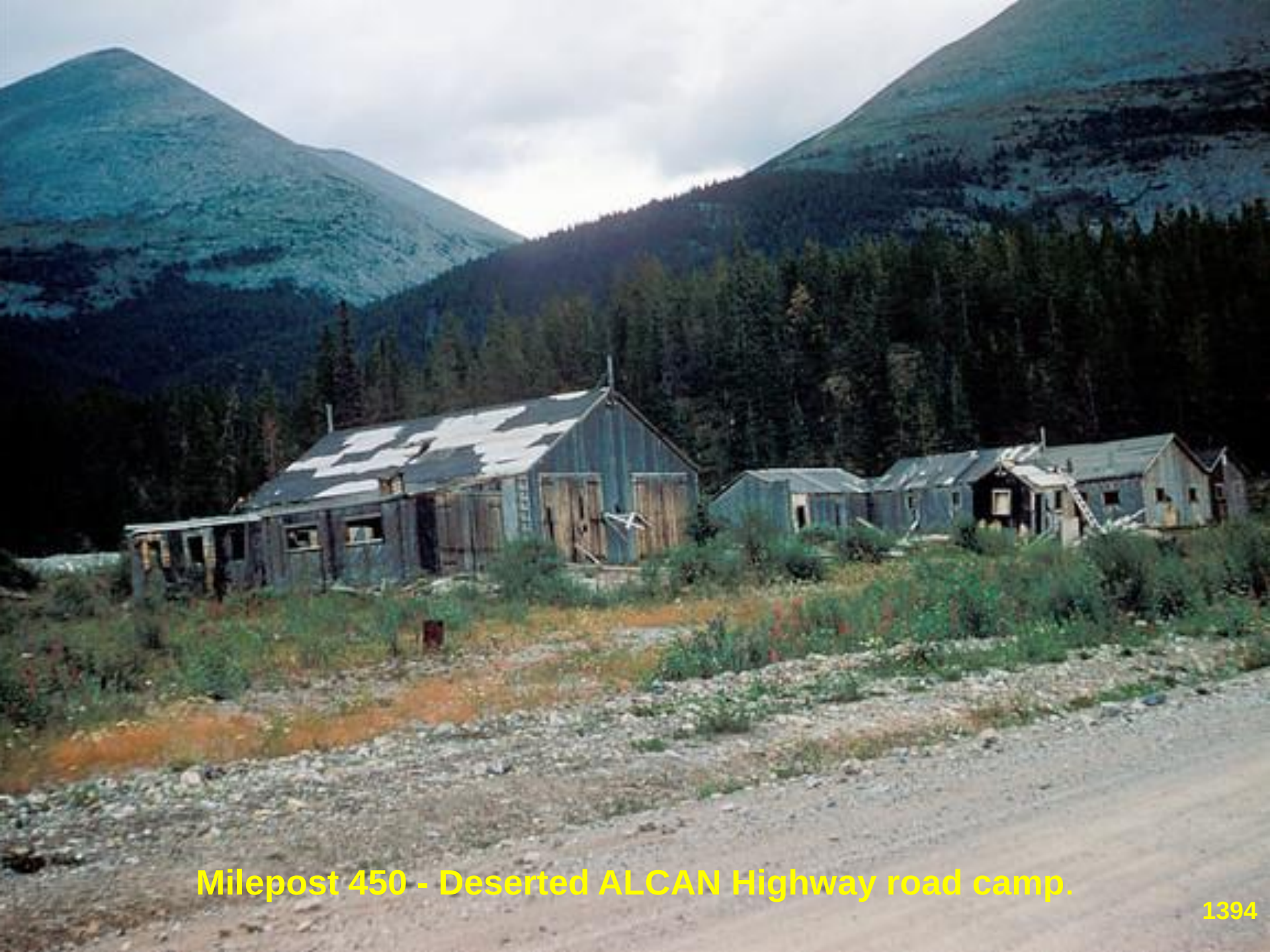


Suspension bridge across the Lower Laird River


Milepost 486



Highland-Glen (gasoline stop).

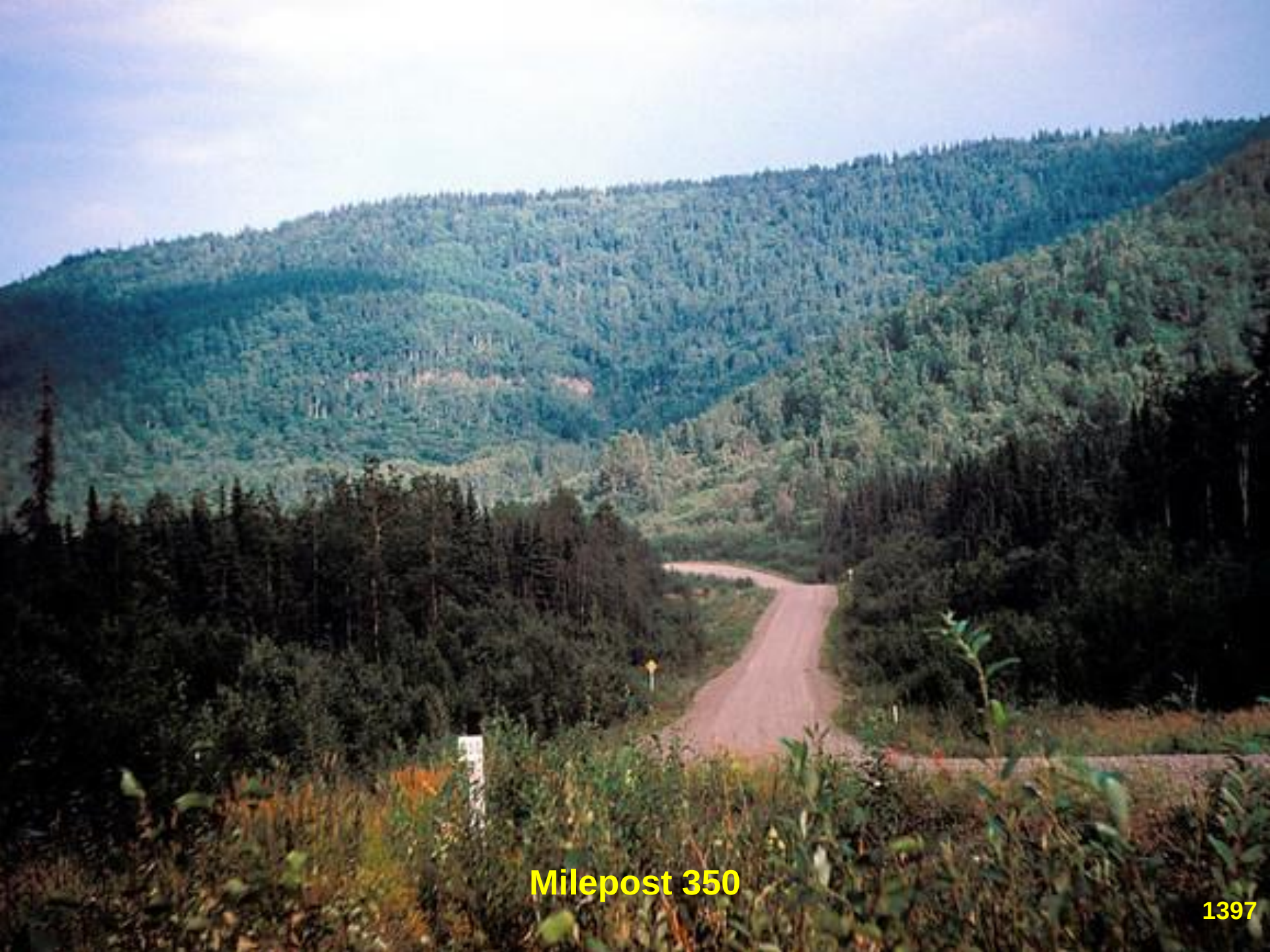


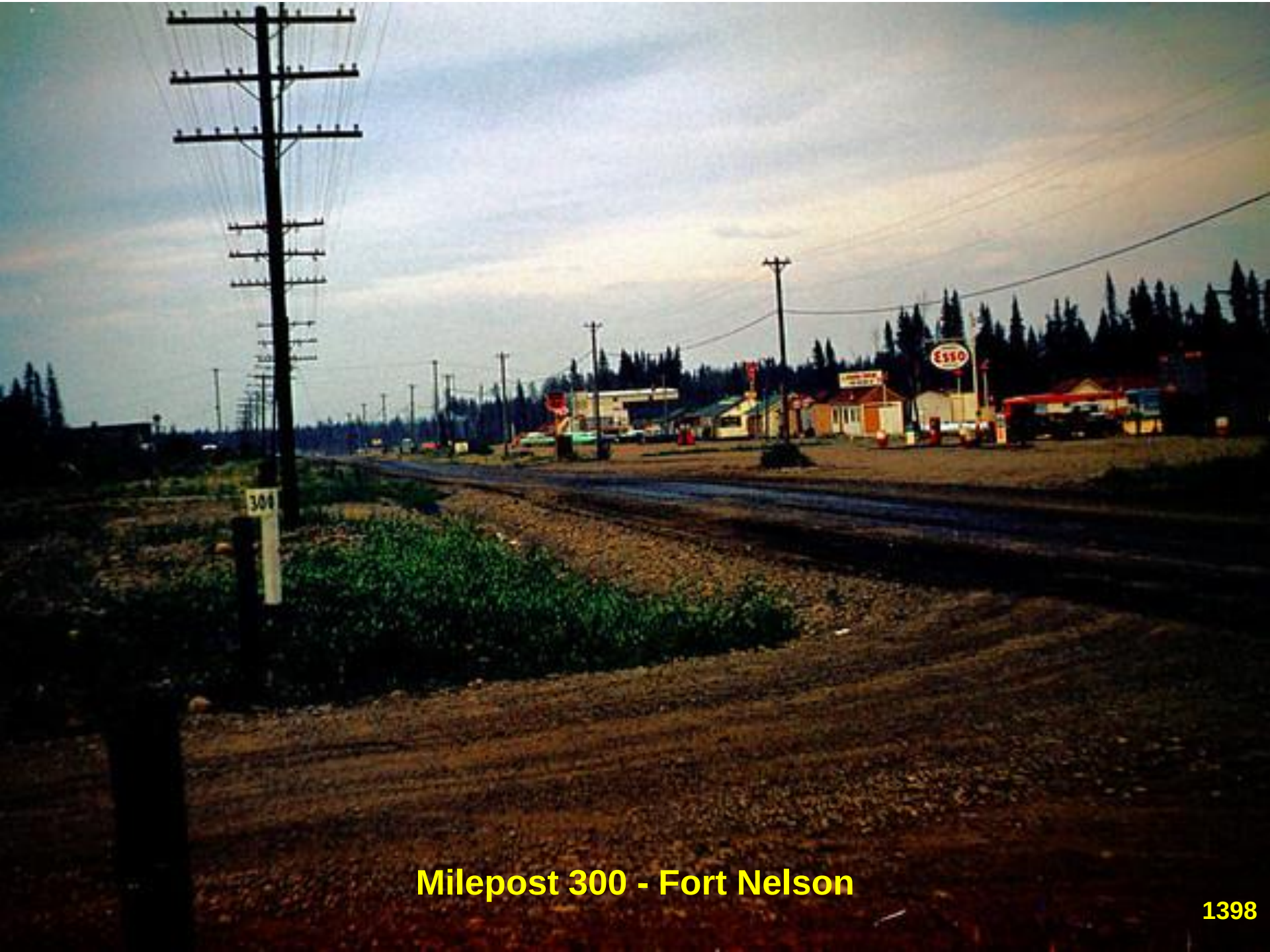
Milepost 450 - Deserted ALCAN Highway road camp.


Milepost 400



Milepost 355 - Stop for cold water (34-degrees).


Milepost 350



Milepost 300 - Fort Nelson

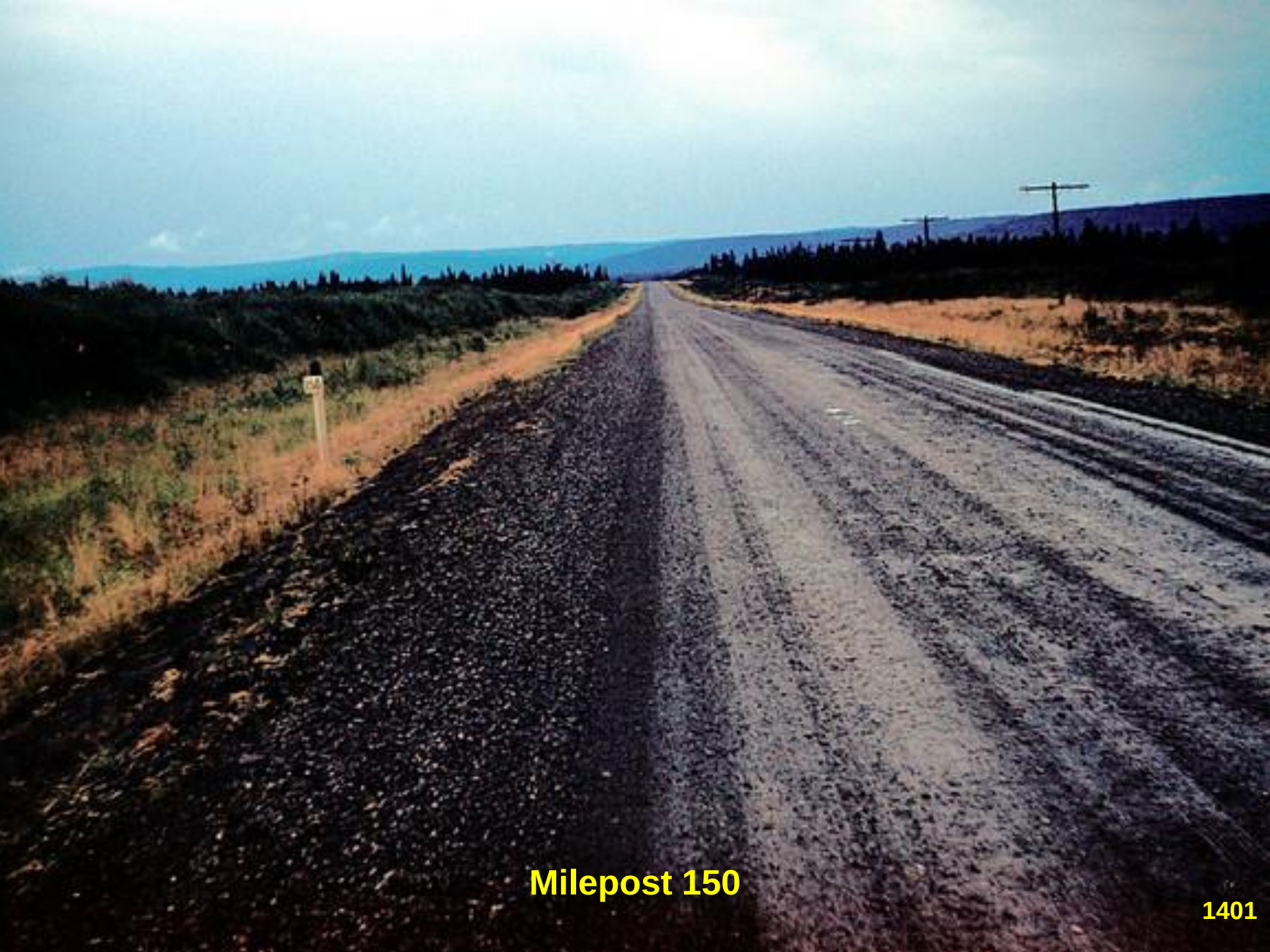
1398



Milepost 50



Milepost 200

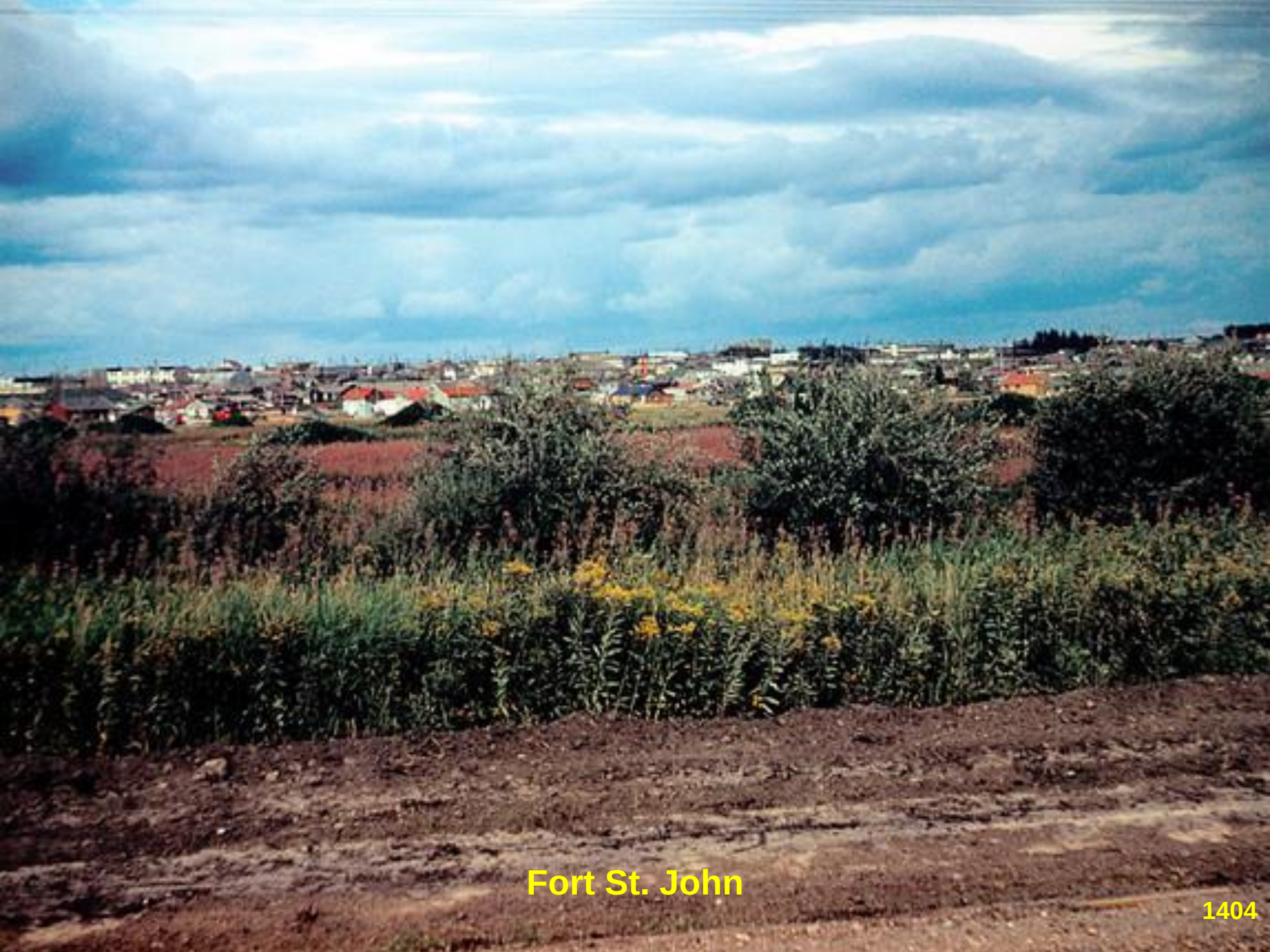

Milepost 150

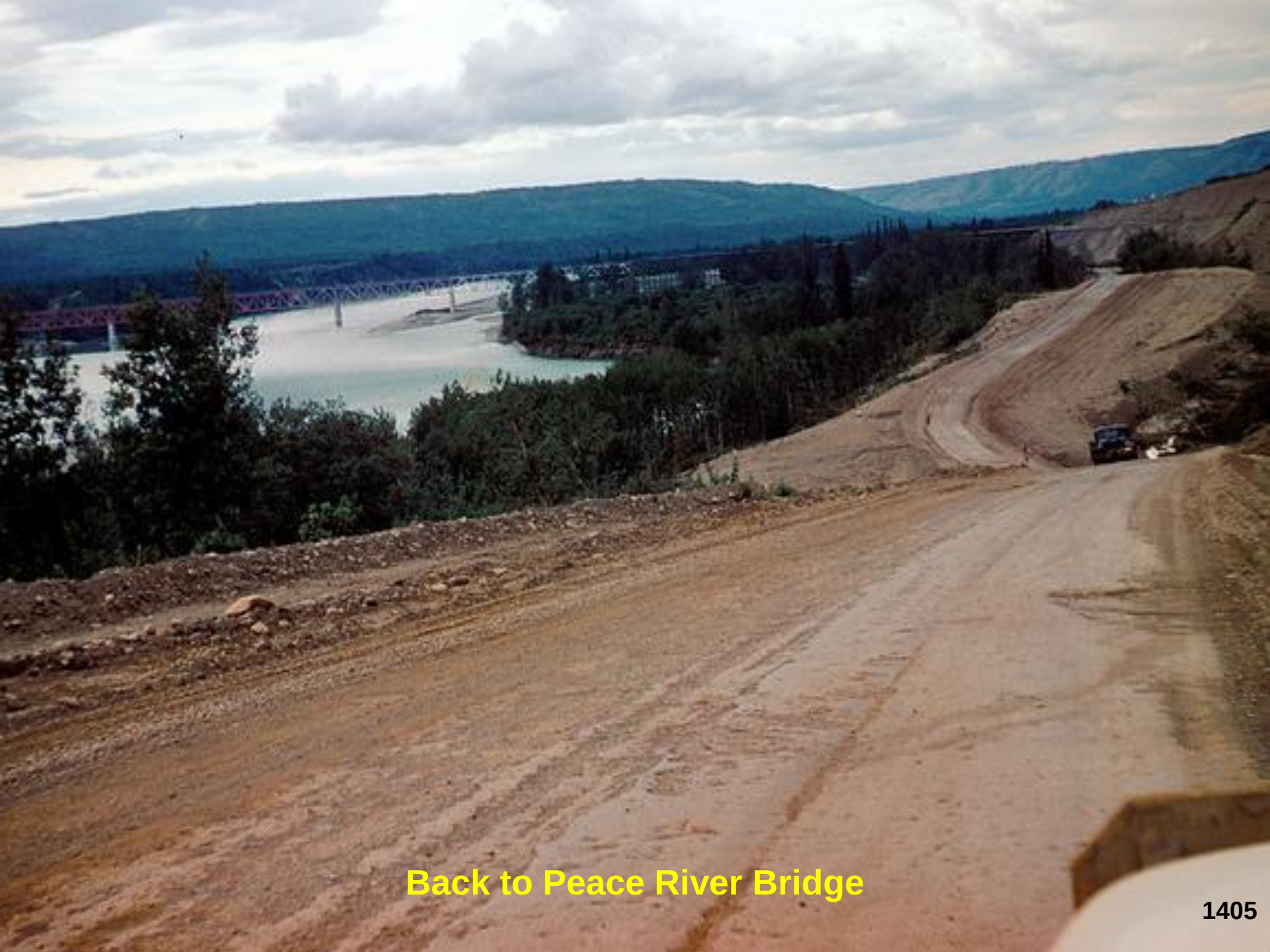




<u>Above</u>: Milepost 52
<u>Left</u>: Milepost 100


Milepost 50
1403

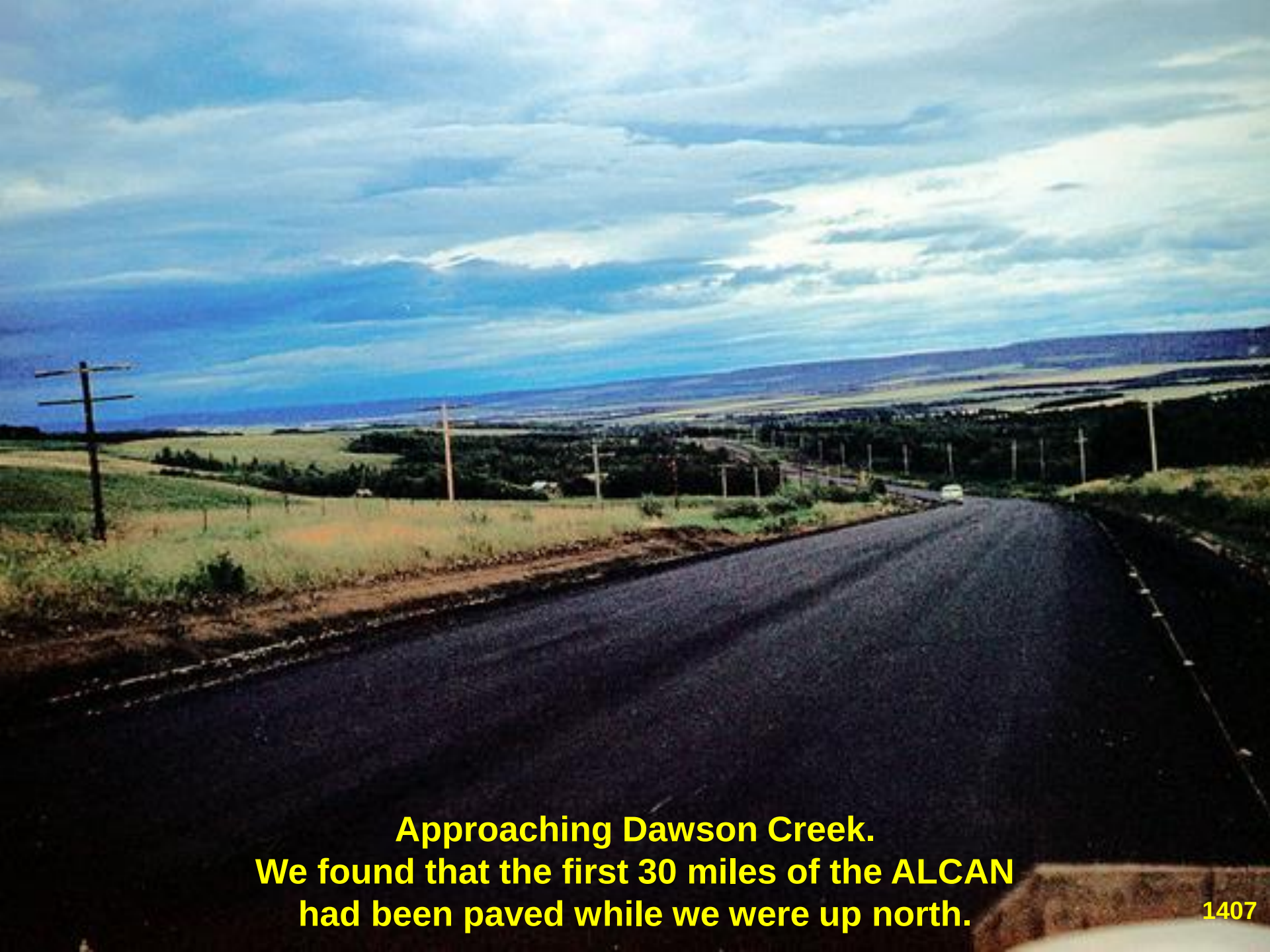

Fort St. John


Back to Peace River Bridge

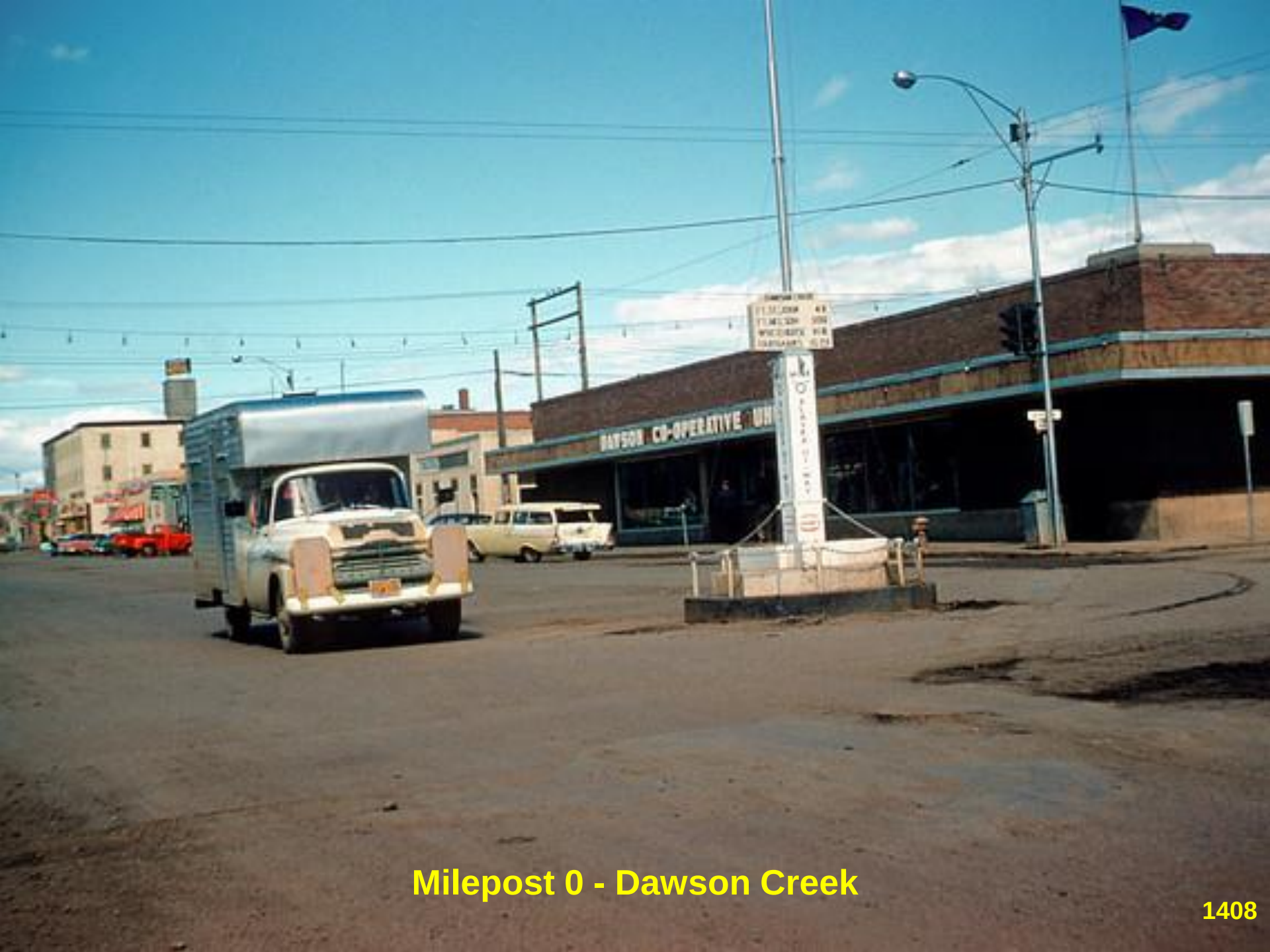


Following a truck across the Peace River RR Bridge detour

1406



Approaching Dawson Creek.
We found that the first 30 miles of the ALCAN had been paved while we were up north.



Milepost 0 - Dawson Creek

Part 19

Legendary Road of the North

Many Wonders

WHITEHORSE, Yukon Territory - As a tourism destination, the Alaska (or ALCAN) Highway does not have a lot to recommend it - and that is the biggest thing in its favor

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

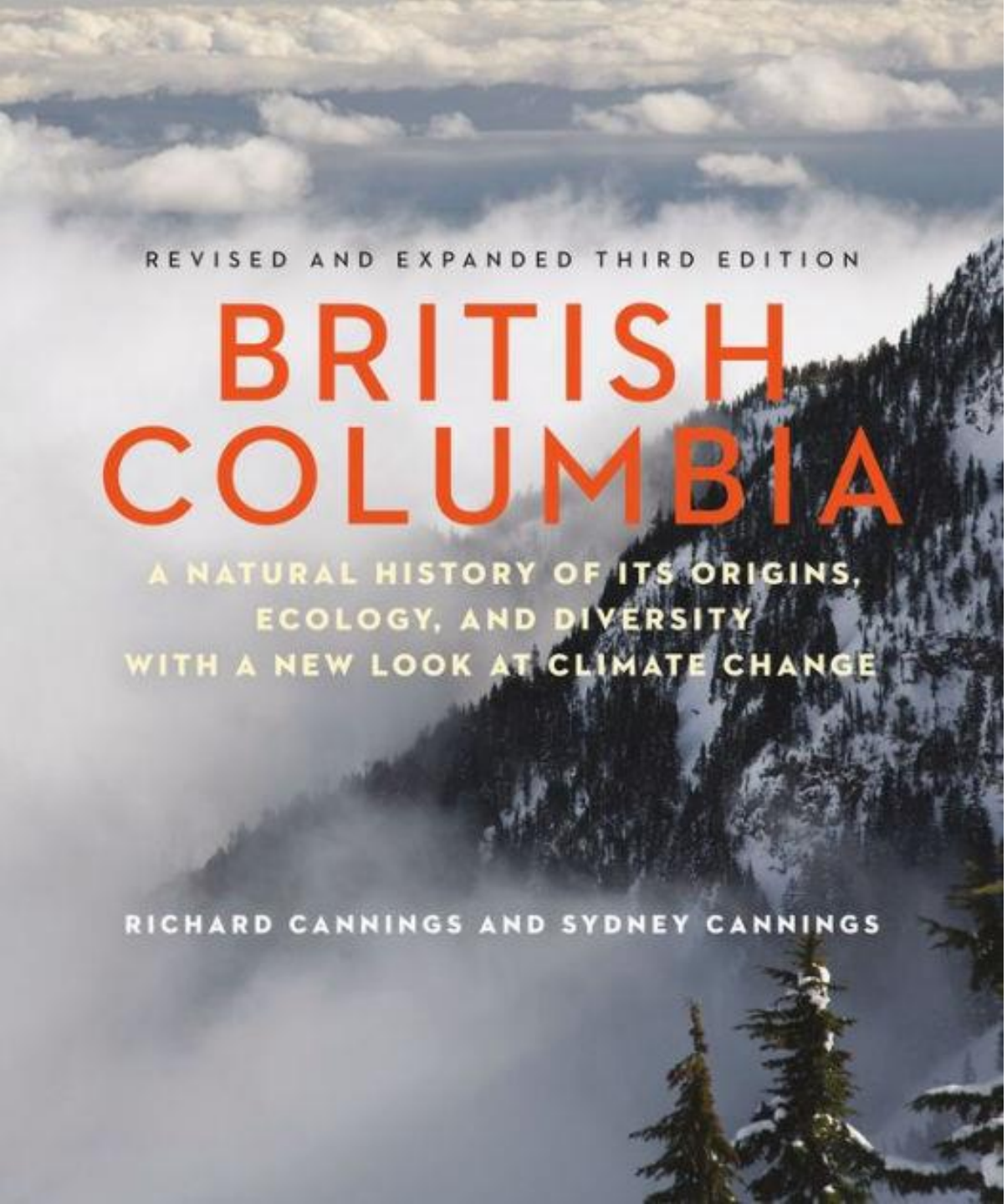
RE: introduction to an article written by *Cornelia Dean* entitled: "Many Wonders (but Few Amenities) on a Legendary Highway"

What You ***Won't*** See

"IF you drive the 1,000 or so miles from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Delta Junction, near Fairbanks, Alaska, you will not see many motels, fast food joints, miniature golf courses, water parks or other hallmarks of North American road trips…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

What You *Will* See



"…What you will see are snow-covered mountains, spruce forests, wildflowers, tundra and eagles, bears, caribou, moose and even the occasional bison grazing along the side of the road. 'The Alaska Highway is the legendary road of the north,' Syd Cannings, a Zoologist at the Yukon Conservation Data Center, writes in a coming book on the ecosystems the road crosses - among them the Rockies (and the Continental Divide), the Yukon River and the St. Elias Mountains (which include the highest peak in Canada)…"

1415

***The NYT,* July 24, 2012**

Land Bridge

"…At its northern-end, it enters Beringia, one of the few northern realms untouched for millions of years by glaciers. This was the landscape the ancestors of today's Native Americans encountered when they crossed the land bridge from Asia in the last ice age…"

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

RE: towards the end of the Ice Age, the Earth experienced prolonged frigid conditions. In the northern region of the Earth, glaciers began to form. As more-and-more of the Earth's water got locked-up in glaciers, sea-levels began to drop. In some areas it dropped up to 300-feet. The land beneath the Bering Strait became exposed and a flat, grassy, treeless plain emerged connecting Asia to North America. This exposed land stretched 1K-miles from north-to-south. As the Ice Age ended and the Earth began to warm, glaciers melted and sea-levels rose. Beringia became submerged, but not all the way. The Diomede Islands, the Pribilof Islands of St. Paul and St. George and St. Lawrence and King Island are evidence of this phenomenon. When exposed, the land bridge was vital for the transfusion of life between Asia and North America. People on both sides of the Bering Strait are united by language, kinship and tradition and dependence on their environment.



<u>Caption</u>: "Beringia is the land and maritime area between the Lena River, in Russia, and the Mackenzie River, in Canada, and marked on the north by 72-degrees north latitude, in the Chuckchi Sea, and in the south by the tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula. Bering Land Bridge National Preserve protects a piece of this ancient crossroad."

Risky Business

"…When the road opened in 1942, even military trucks did not always survive it. After World War II it was opened to civilian traffic, only to be closed almost at once when too many vehicles ended-up broken-down at the side. As recently as the 1980s, much of the Canadian portion was paved with gravel, enough to leave many a car and truck a battered wreck…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**



<u>Caption</u>: "It pays to plan ahead if you're driving the Alaska Highway. When the road opened in 1942, even military trucks did not always survive it."

Year ‘round Driving

"…Today, all of this can be enjoyed from the two-lane highway's relative comfort and safety, but that is a relatively recent development. 'We still get people showing-up with 15 jerrycans and spare tires on the roof rack,' said Wally Hidinger, Yukon's Director of Transportation Engineering. 'You just don't need it. You can drive with no trouble at all, summer and winter'…"

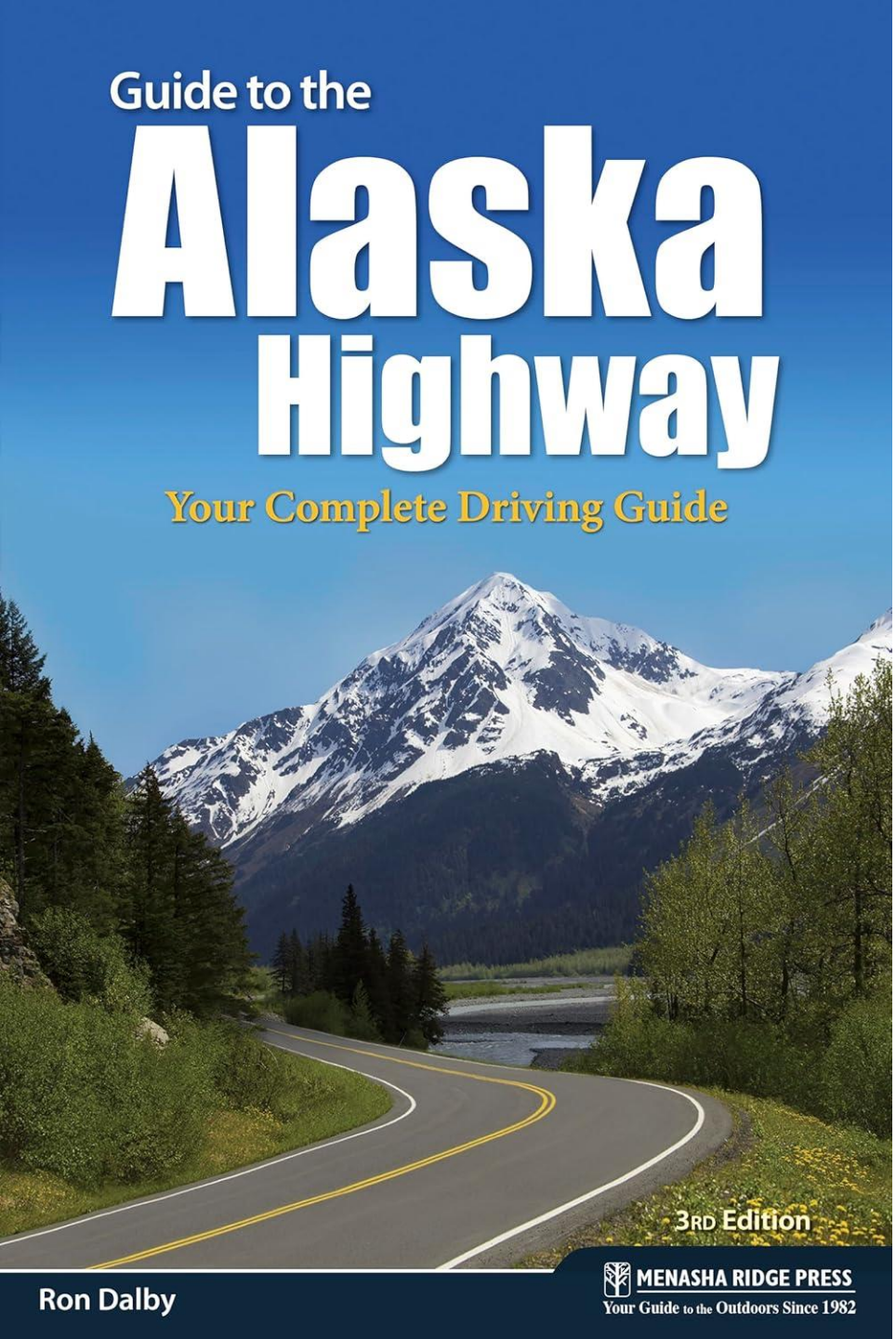
***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

Planning Ahead



"…Still, given the highway's relative lack of plush amenities, it pays to plan ahead. For that, you need 'The Milepost,' an annual guide that lists campgrounds, gas stations, restaurants and so on, mile-by-mile (note that because Engineers have been straightening the road's curves since it was opened, milepost designations don't always match actual mileage)…"

The New York Times,
July 24, 2012



"…'The Guide to the Alaska Highway,' by Ron Dalby, offers tips on what to pack for the trip, how to find fishing holes and where to camp. Among other things, it advises that recreational vehicles' water, propane and sewer pipes should be 'tucked out-of-the-way of flying gravel'…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**

Caption: "Ron Dalby is a veteran of more than 50 trips up and down his favorite road and now he shares his insider's tips with you. With Ron as your guide, you'll discover the many treasures that the highway has to offer."

Good Advice

"…More good advice: Gas-up every day at lunchtime (gas stations along the ALCAN often open late or close early), drive with your headlights on, pay attention to the weather, and turn-off radar detectors, which are illegal here…"

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

Sight-seeing



"…If you make this trip, you will probably want to spend some time here in Whitehorse, Yukon's territorial capital and by far the largest community along the road. The city is home to the S.S. Klondike National Historic Site; the Klondike is one of the few survivors of the scores of paddle-wheel steamboats that once plied the Yukon River…"

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

<u>Above</u>: *S.S. Klondike* was the name of two sternwheelers; the second of which is now a National Historic Site located in Whitehorse, Yukon. They ran freight between Whitehorse and Dawson City, along the Yukon River; the first from 1929 to 1936 and the second, an almost exact replica of the first, from 1937 to 1950. In June 1936, *Klondike I* ran aground north of the "Thirty-mile Section" of the Yukon River. The company salvaged the ship's boiler, engines and many fittings in order to build *Klondike II* the following year.


KLONDIKE
KLONDIKE
KLONDIKE
S.S. KLONDIKE
SS KLONDIKE

"…The 'Yukon Transportation Museum' offers exhibits not just about the highway, but also relics of Yukon travel by everything from dogsled to ambulance…"

***The New York Times*, July 24, 2012**



<u>Above</u>: roadhouses along the Alaska Highway were generally of a bare-bones, spartan character, but still offered a welcome respite to early travelers and truckers. This is the roadhouse at the Beaton River (Milepost 147) of the original highway.



<u>Above</u>: when visitors enter the museum, they walk directly into a quilting exhibit created by the *Kluane Quilters Guild*. These quilts represent scenes from different twists and turns along the Alaska Highway, as envisioned by different members of the Guild who created their own distinct guilt using different techniques, materials, textures and colors.



"…The 'Yukon Beringia Interpretive Center' has exhibits on people and animals of land-bridge days - including the cast of a skeleton of the largest woolly mammoth ever recovered in North America and a diorama of a cave settlement of people who might have hunted it…"

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

Caption: "Ice Age Beringia was home to a diverse mix of strange and familiar animals. During the cold glacial times, icons like the woolly mammoth, steppe bison and scimitar cat roamed the treeless plains alongside caribou, muskox and grizzly bears."

Stick-to-the-Ribs Fare

"…The premier hostelry in Whitehorse is the Westmark, one of a chain of hotels serving Alaska and the Yukon. It's not fancy, but its rooms are comfortable and its restaurant offers stick-to-the ribs fare. Nearby are other restaurants, including a Tim Hortons (purveyors of the doughnuts that are practically the national food of Canada). Also try the Burnt Toast Cafe and ask for the bison sausage; and the Yukon Mining Company, where the spécialité de la maison is bison burger."

***The New York Times,* July 24, 2012**

Part 20

Winter Rally

The Lure of the Arctic

The lure of the Arctic still haunts many who visit, especially several hundred motorheads who have competed in the 5,000-mile Alcan Rally organized by Seattle's Jerry Hines since 1984

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Paul Duchene* and *Jeff Zursch-meide* entitled: "Tackling the Bitterly Cold and Ultra-Challenging Alcan 5000 Winter Rally."

Gritty Magic



"THE 24th running began in Kirkland, Washington, on February 26th and ended 5,120 miles later in Anchorage, on March 6th…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

Troika

"…The two of us, together with our friend Mark Scholz, were among the 39 teams that ventured out into the wilderness on this rally. As veterans of prior Alcan rallies, we wanted to experience the far north again and share the experience with new people…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

Off-road Capable



"…We chose a shiny new 2020 GMC Sierra pickup for the journey, one equipped with the AT4 off-road package, CarbonPro bed and the new 3.0-liter turbo-diesel engine (that's relevant later in the story). Full disclosure: GMC was good enough to lend us the truck and Nokian outfitted us with a set of their best Hakkapeliitta-studded winter tires for the trip…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

What is the Alcan Rally?

"…The 2020 Alcan rally was divided into nine TSD (time/speed/distance) competitive legs, each 10-30 miles-long. Each leg had several speed changes and hidden checkpoints. The competitive legs were connected by daily transit sections as long as 650 miles. You're right, up to 10 hours on the road **after** ***the morning TSD…"***

hagerty.com, **April 1, 2020**

"…Competitors could choose three classes: 'Unlimited' allows every electronic gadget you can employ; 'Equipped' permits computers with no time-distance input or link to GPS; and 'SOP' (Seat of the Pants) allows stock odometers, slide rules, a Stevens wheel and basic electronic calculators…"
***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

"…The 2020 Alcan route wound through British Columbia via Quesnel and Fort Nelson, then to Whitehorse and Dawson City in the Yukon. Then comes the long trek through the wilderness, taking the lonely Dempster Highway to Inuvik and Tuktoytakuk in the Northwest Territories. After the run to the far north, the rally backtracks to Whitehorse, then turns northwest to Fairbanks and the finish line at Anchorage…"
***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**



"…Thirty-nine rally cars carried 82 drivers and navigators, (including four past winners and 41 first-timers). Vehicles ranged from our near-new GMC to Ford F-150 Raptor, Toyota Tacoma and several Ram pickups. Among the cars and SUVs, there was a Mercedes 350 AWD sedan, five Jeeps, five Toyota SUVs, four Subarus, three Porsche SUVs, two Mini Coopers, a 1991 JDM Mitsubishi Pajero and an ex-SCCA 1973 Ford Capri. The Capri and the Minis were the only 2WD cars in the event…"

1451

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**



"…Entrants were supported by 13 organizers and checkpoint workers, including three 'sweep' or rescue trucks, which patrolled the snow-covered roads looking for stragglers. Almost everybody was towed-out of a snowdrift at least once during multiple blizzards as the mercury sank past zero…"

1452

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**



"…The coldest point was 40-degrees below zero at the village of Tuktoyaktuk at the mouth of the Mackenzie River. Tuk lies 300 miles above the Arctic Circle and only 1,426 miles from the North Pole…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

"…Ultimately, expert navigators combined with skilled drivers to top the podium. Garth Ankeny and now three-time Alcan 5000-winning navigator Russ Kraushaar piloted the 1973 Capri to the No. 1 slot, with 76 points. They were followed by Jeff Lebesch and Ryan Trail in a Porsche Macan GTS with 83.8 points. Rounding-out the top three were previous winners Paul Eklund and Yulia Smolyansky in a 2004 Subaru Forester XT with 92.4 points…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

Everyone’s Rally is Different

"…Any experienced Alcan rallyist will tell you to choose your vehicle carefully and prepare it as well as you can. That means bringing two spare tires, 10 gallons of winterized fuel, and enough safety gear to get your vehicle out of at least a moderate jam. As it happened, we didn't use the spare tires, but we did find a use for most of the other stuff…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

"…The first several days of the rally are spent driving north through British Columbia and into the Yukon Territory. A stop at Liard Hot Springs in northern B.C. is a must. The trip wou-ldn't be complete without a swim in the sulfurous waters with snow all around…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**



"…This region is where travelers see the most wildlife and we were treated to close-up views of Stone Sheep and American Bison…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**



"…Snow in this part of the world tends to be fat flakes, sometimes swirling in white-out conditions. But as the rally winds its way north, those storms give way to extreme cold and packed snow that's been on the ground for months…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

"…Part of our prep involved a simple luxury. A 12-volt electric kettle boiled water in about 20 minutes. An Aeropress and three pounds of good dark roast coffee completed our mobile espresso bar. A few packs of sugar and some milk from the hotel breakfast bar kept us going on the long transits…"
***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

"…The rally changes its nature north of Whitehorse. Teams make the run up to Dawson for an ice race, but everyone's fuel economy is dropping with the temperatures. Extremely cold air is also extremely dense, delivering more engine power but also requiring more fuel…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**



"…One factor we failed to take into account was increased consumption of Diesel Exhaust Fluid. We hadn't packed any, and by the time we reached Dawson, our GMC was issuing dire warnings…"

1462

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

Mutual Assistance



"…There's a thing about people who live up in the far north: they understand mutual assistance. We rolled into Dawson at 6 p.m. on a Saturday night. The gas station didn't have any DEF and neither did any of the other teams…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

"…However, we encountered a local man in the hotel bar who thought a friend might have some. Out into the cold he went, returning about 15 minutes later with a full jug. 'No charge,' he said. His friend didn't need it and was happy to help us out. We bought a round in the bar and thanked our new team-mate for his generosity…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

The Real ALCAN Rally



"…After Dawson comes the real Alcan rally. The Dempster highway leads northeast from Dawson to Inuvik, crossing the Arctic Circle along the way. Settlements are more than 100 miles apart and several ranges of hills and mountains must be crossed on the way. In one long day we tackled the Dempster as fog and snow closed in. Several teams turned back in the first hour and we pulled one SUV out of a snow bank…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

"…About 100 miles later, it was our turn to take a peek over the edge. Blowing snow had narrowed the road ahead and threading the needle just didn't work. In an instant we were somewhere on the shoulder, fighting to stay out of the sizable ditch. Luck was with us at that moment and we scrambled back on the road…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

"…We went on, not saying much for a while, but that was a warning. The Arctic doesn't often give a second warning and several other teams had to rely on the sweep trucks employed by the rally to pull them out of trouble…"
***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

"…The following morning is the most important day of the event. Teams arise in Inuvik before dawn and make their way along the final 100 miles due north to Tuk…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

Icebound

"…Dawn breaks in blue and peach colors over the Arctic ice and it's minus-40 degrees. According to the map there's land under your feet, but all that anyone can see for miles around is ice. No one can spend much time outside their vehicles, so a few snapshots later we were turning around and heading south…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

Northern Hospitality

"…Winter in the Arctic is unpredictable and treacherous. Our plan had us bypassing a second night in Inuvik in favor of Eagle Plains, located just south of the Arctic Circle. The point was to cut 250 miles off the next day's drive back to Whitehorse. However, when we got to Fort McPherson, the upcoming Richardson Mountains were under a deadly blizzard…"
***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

"…About a dozen rally vehicles clustered around the town's lone motel. There were far more people than beds and the town opened the church and its supply of cots for the over-flow. This was not these folks' first time welcoming stranded travelers. There are no restaurants in this town, but the motel opened its kitchen for our use. We found the town grocery store and created a potluck dinner…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

"…After sunset, the RCMP showed-up and told us that the way south to Eagle Plains was now open and several teams elected to press on rather than sleep on the motel floor. Our team elected to stay-put and that proved wise. Two rally cars collided in the dark when one got stuck in the snow and the other followed its taillights off the road. Luckily, no one was hurt and both cars made it to Eagle Plains that night…"
***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**



"…As a reward for our patience, we were treated to another spectacular daybreak the next morning as we stopped once more at the Arctic Circle monument…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

"…The balance of that day was spent trekking back to Whitehorse. Our amazing luck ran out in this stretch - another snowbank and another trip onto the shoulder ended with our truck high-centered on its skid plate. It was our turn to be thankful for the sweep trucks, because waiting for a tow truck to make a long trip out to us would have been tedious, to say the least…"

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

Do’s and Don’ts

How to Survive an Arctic Journey

"…The list of Do and Don'ts is extensive and failure to observe them will put your life on the line. There is safety in numbers in the Arctic and that can be the difference between a fun time and a very scary experience.

<u>Pro tip</u>: get some paint protective film (such as 3M) to cover windshield chips as soon as they happen. Thoroughly dry-out the chip and clean around it. Then cut a small circle of film that completely covers the chip and apply it. Water that freezes inside the chip is what cracks your windshield…"
***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

Do These Things:

- **Choose the right car and prepare it properly. Reliability is paramount.**
- **Winter tires are required by the rally and studs are recommended.**
- **Install a skid-plate to keep ice from building up on engine and suspension components.**
- **Pack two spare tires and wheels, windshield washer fluid, full gas cans, motor oil, jumper cables, LED flashlight, pry bar, full tool kit, mat, a first aid kit and warning triangles or flares.**
- **Bring the warmest clothes you can find (silk long johns, Thinsulate gloves, wool hat, scarf or face mask, snow boots, sunglasses or ski goggles, lip balm, sunscreen, thermos and hand warmers).**
- **Get a Garmin InReach or Spot satellite communications tracker and subscribe to the SOS service. This allows your family and friends to track your progress and you can notify authorities from anywhere on the planet if you get into trouble.**
- **Take a winter driving or SkidCar course to sharpen your winter driving skills.**

<u>Pro tip</u>: if you plan to install additional lights, choose yellow fog lights, and install them low on the front of your vehicle. That way the beams light the road, not the falling snow.

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

Don’t Do These Things:

- **Never travel alone - stay with a group.**
- **Don’t be overconfident and drive too fast for conditions.**
- **Don’t piss-off the truckers - they talk.**
- **Don’t follow too closely, especially in blowing snow.**
- **Don’t ever pass-up a gas station - fuel economy drops in low temperatures.**
- **Don’t drive at night on a highway which has just been opened.**
- **Don’t assume a hotel will be open when you’re an hour late.**
- **Don’t be left behind because you didn’t read the day’s rally instructions. Yeah, that happened.**
- **Don’t ignore animal warning signs and never get out of your car to photograph any large animal.**

<u>Pro tip</u>: a ‘snatch strap’ or recovery rope is much better than a tow strap. Teams broke several conventional tow straps and only the best recoil recovery ropes were up to the task. Then make sure you’ve got top-grade recovery points. Chrome-plated dress-up hooks won’t do…”
***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

You Really Can Do This

"…The next Alcan goes to Yellowknife in the Northwest Territory in February 2024. Cost is projected at $3,200 for two entrants and one car plus an additional $800 for a third rider. The money covers lodging for 10 days, some meals and all the rally support…"

***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

"…That last bit is the best value you can hope for. When you're looking at your car 25-feet off the road in four-feet of snow 200 miles from your destination at 4:30 p.m., minus 18-degrees and it's starting to snow, that sweep truck is your guardian angel. You will cheerfully buy them dinner and all the drinks they want in a warm friendly restaurant. It will be a bargain. The alternative does not bear thinking about…"
***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**

"…There are many reasons people choose to compete in the Alcan 5000 Winter Rally over and over again. The Yukon and the Arctic are among the most beautiful and remote parts of North America. Everything is much more extreme. The weather is colder, the hot springs are hotter, the wildlife is bigger, the mountains are grander and the horizon is farther away than you've ever seen before. It's also damned dangerous and we'd be lying if we said that wasn't part of the appeal…"
***hagerty.com*, April 1, 2020**

The Challenge

"…The challenge of visiting the far north in winter makes the Alcan rally unique in all of motorsports. Your fellow rallyists are a select group of personalities, to say the least. If you're looking for true adventure, the last frontier is up there and it's waiting for you."

***hagerty.com,* April 1, 2020**


scheel-mann
Seats. Perfected
Trackside
Alcan 5000

Part 21

Timeline (1767~2012)

1787
The region's first fur trading post; Rocky Mountain Fort, was built at the mouth of Tea Creek, 6 miles west of the present site of Fort St. John.

1832
Eighteen years after the continental U.S. is wired from coast-to-coast, the first telephone wires connect to Juneau and Nome.

1843
U.S. Secretary of State William Marcy and Senator William M. Gwin inquire as to whether the Russian colony of Alaska is for sale. Although the Russians are not selling, the two expansionists have made their interest in the colony known.

January 24, 1848
Gold is struck near Sacramento, California. Within one year 90K people will catch gold fever and move to California, mining 10-million ounces of gold. America's focus moves west and soon railroads, banks and telegraphs will branch out toward the Pacific Ocean.

1859
As a result of its crippling loss to France and Britain in the Crimean War, Russia reconsiders selling Alaska to the United States to help its economy rebound following the financial losses of the war.

April 9, 1865
The Civil War ends.

The Western Union Co. begins building a telegraph line through Canada, Alaska and across Siberia into Europe. Under the direction of entrepreneur Peter M. Collins, plans call for the construction of almost entirely overland cable, with only 50 miles of underwater cable across the Bering Strait. The Russian American Telegraph Expedition, led by famed scientist Robert Kennicott, goes to Alaska to conduct a land survey.

1866
After 12 years of cajoling investors and solving technical problems, Cyrus W. Field's attempt to complete a transatlantic cable succeeds. As a result, Collins and the Western Union Company abandon their work, despite having made significant progress.

March 3, 1867
The Russian Ambassador to the U.S., Edouard De Stoeckl, begins negotiations with the American Secretary of State, William Seward, for the sale of Alaska.

March 30, 1867
The United States buys Alaska from Russia, for $7.2 million. Pressure to provide reliable transportation to Alaska soon begins.

October 18, 1867
Russia officially transfers Alaska to the United States.

1868
The first salmon cannery is constructed on Prince of Wales Island in Alaska. Salmon fishing will become one of Alaska's key industries.

July 18, 1868
After much convincing on the part of Seward, the United States House of Representatives votes to reimburse Russia for the acquisition of Alaska. Under this legislation, Alaska is officially deemed the Department of Alaska and placed under the control of the U.S. Army.

September 19, 1868
The first issue of the *Sitka Times,* Alaska's first newspaper, is published.

1877
The War Department withdraws all military personnel from Alaska. The possession is placed under the administration of the U.S. Treasury Department.

August 17, 1880
Joseph Juneau and Richard Harris strike gold at Silver Bowl Basin. It is the first of many gold strikes in Alaska over the next 20 years. The Juneau-Douglas mines quickly become Alaska's largest company. The town that develops around the basin is called Juneau City, later shortened to Juneau.

1884
POTUS Chester Arthur signs the *Organic Act,* creating the "District of Alaska" and appointing several officials to reside over the region, including a Governor, several Judges and a District Attorney. The Act also provides for the protection of Native Alaskans; however, the developing industries - fishing, mining and timber - that had begun with the influx of settlers and prospectors are taking their toll on the Native Alaskans.

1890
Juneau is populated by 1,251 people and boasts several schools and stores, a hospital and nine saloons.

1896-1897
Geologist Dr. Charles Camsell conducts a survey of the Liard, Frances and Pelly drainages. This exploration was very important to highway surveyors.

July 17, 1897
Returning from the Klondike River in Yukon Territory, the S.I.S. Portland arrives in Seattle. On board the ship is $1-million worth of gold. As word spreads about the Klondike gold, people flood into the Yukon Territory, leading to the development of many towns and businesses. At the mouth of the Klondike River, the town of Dawson City is founded.

September 22, 1889
Four miners strike gold in the vicinity of present-day Nome. News of the strike spreads quickly and prospectors inundate the area.

The White Pass & Yukon Railroad gets a boost. Originally a British-financed connection between Skagway, Alaska, and Whitehorse, Yukon, the railroad garners U.S. government support following the successive gold rushes and immigration to Alaska. The railway will be extended along the Yukon River and riverboats will distribute goods throughout the Yukon River Basin.

Congress authorizes funds for the development of a telegraph from Seattle to Sitka.

May 31, 1899
The Harriman expedition leaves Seattle to explore the flora, fauna and native cultures of Alaska. Later in the year, the expedition's namesake; railroad tycoon Edward Harriman, will propose the construction of a railway to Alaska from the continental United States, with a connection to Russia.

1900
Alaska has seen substantial growth, thanks to successive gold strikes. The total population in Alaska is now 63,592. More than 20,000 miners live in Nome alone. Congress votes to incorporate towns in Alaska and moves the capital of Alaska from Sitka to Juneau. The White Pass and Yukon Railroad, begun in 1898, is completed.

1902
Another significant gold strike occurs in the center of Alaska, in the Tanana Valley. As the area swarms with gold prospectors, the town of Fairbanks is founded.

December 17, 1903
Wilbur and Orville Wright record the first controlled flight of an aircraft at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. With few roadways, air travel will become extremely important to the development of Alaska in the post-WWII era. Until then, interior shipping will still travel mainly by riverboat.

1904
Telegraph cables are laid from Seattle, Washington, to Valdez, Alaska, by way of Sitka. For the first time, Alaska is able to communicate via telegraph with the continental United States.

January 27, 1905
Congress creates the Alaska Road Commission to build the region's first proper roads.

1906
At the behest of Alaskans, Congress permits residents to elect a non-voting representative to sit in the House of Representatives. Alaskan residents will continue to push to be politically recognized by the United States.

1907
POTUS Theodore Roosevelt establishes the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. The forest is the largest national forest in the United States today.

August 24, 1912
Congress passes Alaska's Second Organic Act, designating Alaska an official territory of the United States and creating a legislature and government for it.

1915
Construction begins on the Alaska Railroad, a line that will eventually connect Seward to Fairbanks.

April 6, 1917
Congress approves President Woodrow Wilson's call to enter WWI and America officially mobilizes. As a result, Alaska's population decreases significantly as many Alaskans join the war effort.

May 3, 1917
The University of Alaska is founded with a particular emphasis on agriculture and mining.

1920
Exploratory flight through northern British Columbia by R.S. Logan, for the Canadian Civil Aviation Branch.

1920, July 25
Four U.S. Army Air Service DH-4B aircraft designed by Geoffrey de Havilland leave NYC for Nome, Alaska. The "Black Wolf Squadron" took 40 days, 4,502 miles and 50 flying hours to reach Nome. Leaving Nome on the last day of August, the aircraft arrived back at Mitchel Field on Oct. 20.

1922
A120-mile trail was cut from Fort St. John to the Sikanni Chief River (Historic Mile 162, now Km 256) by the Topographical Survey of Canada. In 1941 this was extended to Fort Nelson by the Canadian Department of Transport.

July 13, 1923
The Alaska Railroad, approximately 470-miles-long, is completed at a cost of roughly $65 million. Running from Seward to Anchorage and ending in Fairbanks, the railroad provides the sole year-round route from Alaska's coast to its interior. The Alaska Railroad will serve as the primary mode of transportation for the American military and prove invaluable for moving military goods and Engineers, including those needed for the construction of the Alaska Highway during WWII.

1924
KFQD, Alaska's first radio station, goes on the air in Anchorage.

1925
Fight to Upper Liard by Lt. Col. J. Scott Williams.

1927
Yukon aviation begins with the formation of Yukon Airways and Exploration Company by businessman Clyde Wann and pilot Andy Cruickshank.

May 1927
Charles A. Lindbergh becomes an instant celebrity after he completes the first non-stop airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

1928
Peter Cramer flew over the present highway, en route from New York to Nome.

1929
The United States Navy begins surveying Alaska for military bases.

E.J. “Paddy” Burke began flying between Atlin and Teslin. Burke died of exposure and starvation after his float-equipped Junkers F-13 crashed on October 10, 1930, while flying between Liard Post and Atlin.

1930-31
Wiley Post flew over current highway.

1931
At the beginning of the Depression, local officials propose a highway to Alaska to spark economic development in British Columbia and the far northwest. A Congressional Committee approves the plan, but the Canadian Government rejects it for fear that Americans will claim sovereignty over the Canadian west.

Charles Lindbergh, accompanied by his wife Anne, flies a plane from New York to Shanghai, China, via the arctic circle of Alaska. Anne will later write an account of the famous flight, entitled *North to the Orient*.

November 21, 1932
Slim Williams begins a trek from Alaska to Washington D.C. on a dog sled to speak with politicians in support of a highway proposal known as Route A. Strongly supported by British Columbia, Washington State and Alaska, the proposed route will connect Vancouver and Alaska, running along a scenic route a short distance inland from the Pacific Coast. During his travels Williams becomes a minor celebrity and when he reaches Washington, he is immediately invited to speak with POTUS Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

September 1933
An international Commission reports on the feasibility of building what was named the *Pacific-Yukon Highway* from Seattle to Fairbanks.

1935
Pacific Airways begins service from Juneau to Fairbanks.

Aerial survey of routes to the Yukon for the Canadian Post Office.

July 5, 1937
An air-mail route is established between Edmonton and Whitehorse.

1938
The Alaskan International Highway Commission is appointed by the U.S. Government, followed shortly after by a Canadian counterpart.

The last of the Alaskan copper mines is closed, as the period of rapid expansion of the mining sector comes to an end.

1939
At the age of 57, Slim Williams, sometimes riding, sometimes dragging, travels with a 300-pound motorcycle from Fairbanks to Seattle in another publicity stunt to garner support for Route A.

Spring, 1939
A survey for construction of airports is authorized by Canada.

Summer, 1939
Airport survey begins; finished January 1940.

1940
Pan American Airways begins service from Juneau to Seattle.

72,000 people live in Alaska, with natives comprising nearly 45 percent of the total population. At this time, the White Pass & Yukon Railroad and the Alaska Railroad provide the only land transportation service in Alaska. The U.S. Navy constructs air stations in Kodiak and Sitka.

August, 1940
Formation of Permanent Joint Board on Defence.

November 13, 1940
Construction of a modern airway between Edmonton and Fairbanks is requested by Joint Board on Defence. The air mail routes initiated in 1937 and 1938 would become the basis for the new airway, which would have better communications facilities and a series of emergency air strips.

Feb. 9, 1941
First Cats pull out of Dawson Creek for airfield construction.

Road Pushed Clear Through Northland

Men Brave Cold and Hardship in Race Against Time to Get Freight Into Fort Nelson Airport Site; World's Fastest Planes Coming

by Jack Meek
Vancouver Sun Financial Editor
(*The Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver, B.C.) - April 4, 1941)

The story of the Trail of ‘98 over which thousands trekked into the Yukon for gold will always be told but none the less interesting, over the years to come, will be the tractor train which pushed its way through 400 miles of northern British Columbia fighting all the vagaries of nature to establish a road from Fort St. John, in the Peace River Block, to Fort Nelson, about 800 miles north of Vancouver.

Arrival of the first section of the tractor train on Monday at the site of the Fort Nelson airport, one of the group of fields being constructed under the Canadian-United States defense pact made history, not only from an engineering standpoint, but marked the approach of a new era in which that great country is to come into its own through a vast development, undreamed of, un-thought of by even the most optimistic who have placed their faith in it, struggled to wrest a living from it and master it.

For 50 days, from the departure of the tractor train from Dawson Creek, until arrival at Fort Nelson this week, 28 men, who formed the crew of the first section fought the merciless cold of the Northland, plowed through deep drifts of snow and braved sleepless nights, working 11-1/2 hour shifts to get the road through before the ice went out of the rivers so that tons upon tons of materials could be transported north for the construction of the Fort Nelson airport. Twice, a mighty 17-ton bulldozer, which led the train, biting into the earth and making the road, broke through the ice of the Sikanni and Muskwa Rivers.

City Man Drives Bulldozer

The writer flew from Vancouver to Fort Nelson with Yukon Southern Air Transport to meet the tractor train on the last lap of its journey and apart from the marvelous job done, the most striking feature was the nonchalance of the crew. They went about their work as though it were an everyday job, seemingly oblivious of the history they had made in pushing the road through under what at times were almost insurmountable difficulties.

Vancouver was represented on the expedition by Joe Holt, who formerly resided in this city and is now homesteading at Mortney, 16 miles north of Fort St. John. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Holt, live at 145 West Eleventh Avenue. Joe was one of the bulldozer drivers and was at the controls when the machine crashed through the ice on the Muskwa River, staying at his post as the bulldozer settled into the water with motor still running. The trip was a great experience for him, although he drove a bulldozer in the construction of the road leading from Dawson Creek to the oil well being drilled by the government at Commotion Creek.

Eight Days Lost Making Repairs

The first train left Dawson Creek for Fort Nelson on February 9. This was the caboose made up of four sleds, containing a cook house, three bunk houses, office and radio room. The train was in constant touch by radio with Yukon Southern Air Transport stations along the line. A second train carried about 50-tons of materials, including fuel oil, portable sawmill, black-smith shop and two diesel engines for a powerplant.

Throughout the trip, the train averaged about 8 miles-a-day. Eight days were lost due to damage to tractors and mechanical troubles. At one point a large tree fell over the bulldozer, smashing the radiator and tying up the machine from 2 a.m. until 4 o'clock the next afternoon. Without the blacksmith shop, which was on the second train, it was necessary to travel back to Fort St. John with a smaller tractor to make repairs to the radiator.

J.H. Higgins, Foreman, said it was the roughest ride he had ever had, the small tractor, equipped with rubber tires, traveling 20 miles-an-hour over the road which had only been bulldozed.

A second trip had to be made to Fort St. John later when the tightening tracts on the bulldozer broke, this necessitated an all-night ride.

Machine Sinks in Quicksand

The next event of importance was the bulldozer going through the ice on the Sikanni River. At this time of year much of the ice on the rivers is overflow and about 18 inches of the more than two-foot thickness was rotten ice. For a while, the crew thought the bulldozer would be a complete loss as it started to settle in quicksand. By the time ice was cut away to make a channel to pull the machine out, it had sunk three feet into the quicksand and only a small portion of the cabin was showing above the five or six-feet of water in which it rested. This resulted in an 18-hour delay.

The next ducking for the bulldozer was on the Muskwa River, about three miles from Fort Nelson and four miles from the airport site, which was its destination. The ice gave way when the bulldozer was some 30-feet from the river bank and the crew was forced to saw-out huge chunks of ice before the machine could be pulled out by two other tractors, However, less than four hours later it was again busy making road on the last lap of its journey.

It was at the Muskwa River where Indians rushed to see the giant machine do its work. They waited on the river with their dog teams and could hear the bulldozer approaching. Suddenly it emerged from the bush on the river bank, pushing trees, boulders, dirt and snow ahead of it like a monster on a rampage. It came as such a surprise to the Indians that many of them fled, screaming. They called it “Bad Devil” and at least 10 of them refused to come back. They had never seen such a thing before and were deathly afraid of it.

1,000-tons Freight Before Breakup

It is planned to take about 1,000-tons of freight over the road to Fort Nelson before breakup. At present, trucks are running from Fort St. John over the road to the Sikanni River and leaving freight there to be taken the rest of the way by tractor and sleds. Some 400-tons is now lying at the Sikanni River waiting to be hauled-in.

It is a rush against time as the ice is not expected to hold out for more than another week or two, at least as far as transportation of heavy equipment is concerned, and if the job is not completed in time, the freight will either have to he taken down numerous rivers by scow to Fort Nelson, or carried in by plane.

Whatever happens now, there is one man who is more than glad the trip is over, although he said he wouldn't hesitate to do it again, He is Ole Hovland, the cook, and he probably had the roughest time of all. Ole would be working over the cook stove when the train would suddenly start moving, sending him plunging the length of the cookhouse to the back door. More than once, big metal coffee and tea pots hanging from the rafters would drop down on him with a sudden lurch of the train.

Many times during the trip men eating in the cookhouse would suddenly find their meal resting in their lap after the train had gone over a rough spot in the road, but the real hazard was cake making. Two or three lurches of the cookhouse found a cake sadly sinking in the middle and Ole soon learned there was little use trying further.

Lodestars for Yukon Southern

Vancouver figures prominently in the whole scheme of northern airport development, for while the undertaking is primarily for defense, it will form part of the future route to the Orient, with this city and Edmonton being jumping-off places.

The route over which the air bases are to be constructed was pioneered by Yukon Southern Air Transport, operating out of Vancouver and Edmonton to Whitehorse. Grant McConachie, President of the company; Chief Pilot Captain Sheldon Luck; Captain Ted Field, Operations Manager, and others who developed the company from its bush flying days to the present mainline operation, are now realizing the fruits of their efforts.

The company started with open cockpit planes operating a fish-haul in Alberta. Always with an eye to the Yukon they built the company to a point where they received a mail contract for a once-weekly service to Whitehorse. This grew to two trips weekly and the company's latest schedule lists three trips-a-week starting June 1.

Also, the company will take delivery of the first of two new Lockheed Lodestars either this afternoon or on Saturday. Mr. McConachie passed through Vancouver Wednesday to meet the planes in Portland.

Thus the world's fastest commercial transport planes will be operating out of Vancouver for the north, augmenting the fleet of three Barkley Grows and other aircraft already in use by the company. When the war is over and the great north circle route becomes the air-lane to the Orient, great sleeper planes will fly overnight from Alaska and the Yukon to Vancouver.

Airports for Largest Planes

The Government is leaving no stone unturned in making a thorough job of the airport scheme in the north. Work is to start soon on a new field at Prince George, also at Fort St. John and Watson Lake. It Is possible that a new field will be constructed at Williams Lake. All these tie into the defense scheme and the post war development to come.

The Watson Lake field is a big undertaking. Fourteen scows and three boats are now being constructed in Vancouver at a cost of $100,000 to carry supplies and airport equipment into Watson Lake. They will be knocked-down and shipped to Wrangell, Alaska, and from there up the Stikine River to Telegraph Creek. From Telegraph Creek they will be transported 72 miles by road to Dease Lake, then assembled and pulled up the Dease and Liard Rivers to Lower Post, where a 25-mile road is being constructed to Watson Lake.

By next fall the north will have the same navigation aids enjoyed by TCA and the large air transport companies in the United States. There will be beam equipment at Prince George, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake and Whitehorse, all on the Yukon Southern Air Transport route and runways to be put in will accommodate the largest aircraft. Runways will also be ready for winter use and will be hard-surfaced in the summer of 1942,

The north is really coming into its own.

Picture Story
of a Great Northern Undertaking

The following pictures clearly depict the story of the tractor train which established a road over the northern wastelands to Fort Nelson, where one of the group of airports is being constructed under the Canadian-United States defense plan.



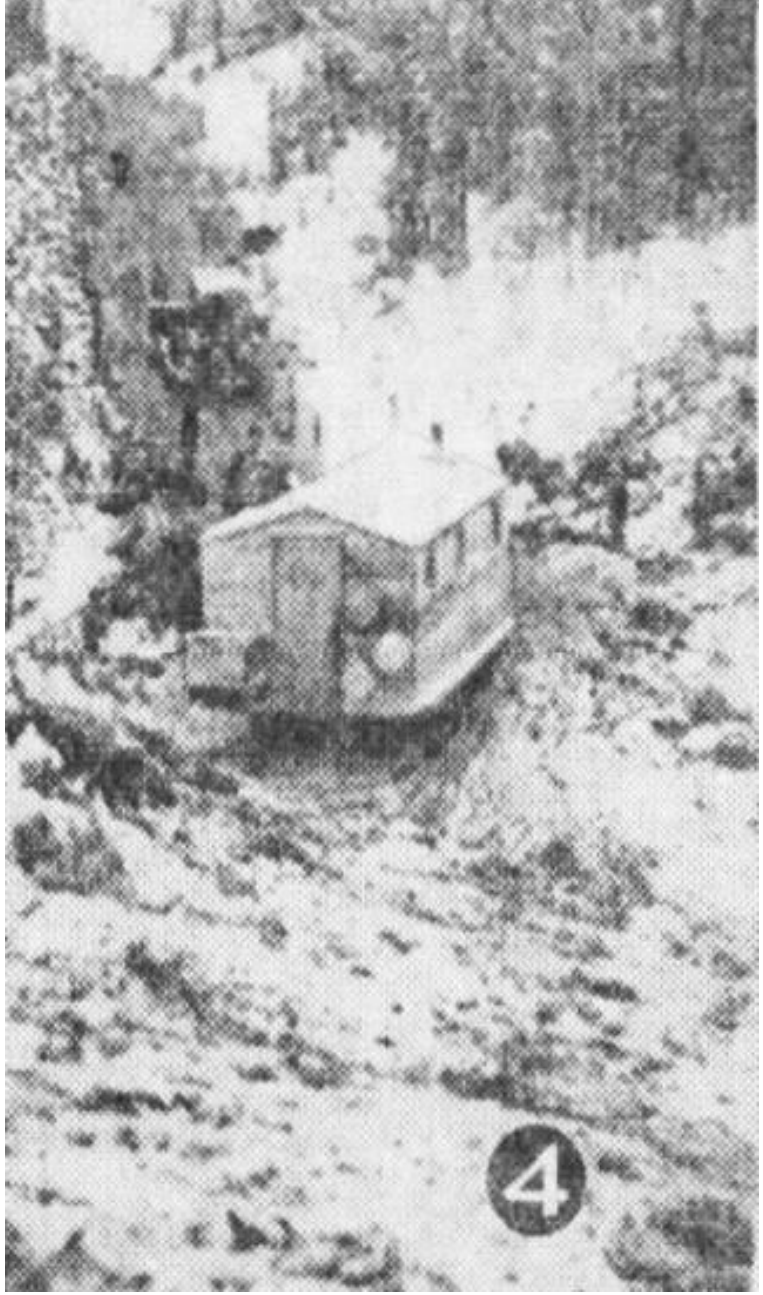
1. The bulldozer pushing its way up a ravine to establish a road for the tractor train to follow. Note the tree which has just been pulled-out by the roots.



2. Part of the road over which the bulldozer has just gone, clearing everything in its path.



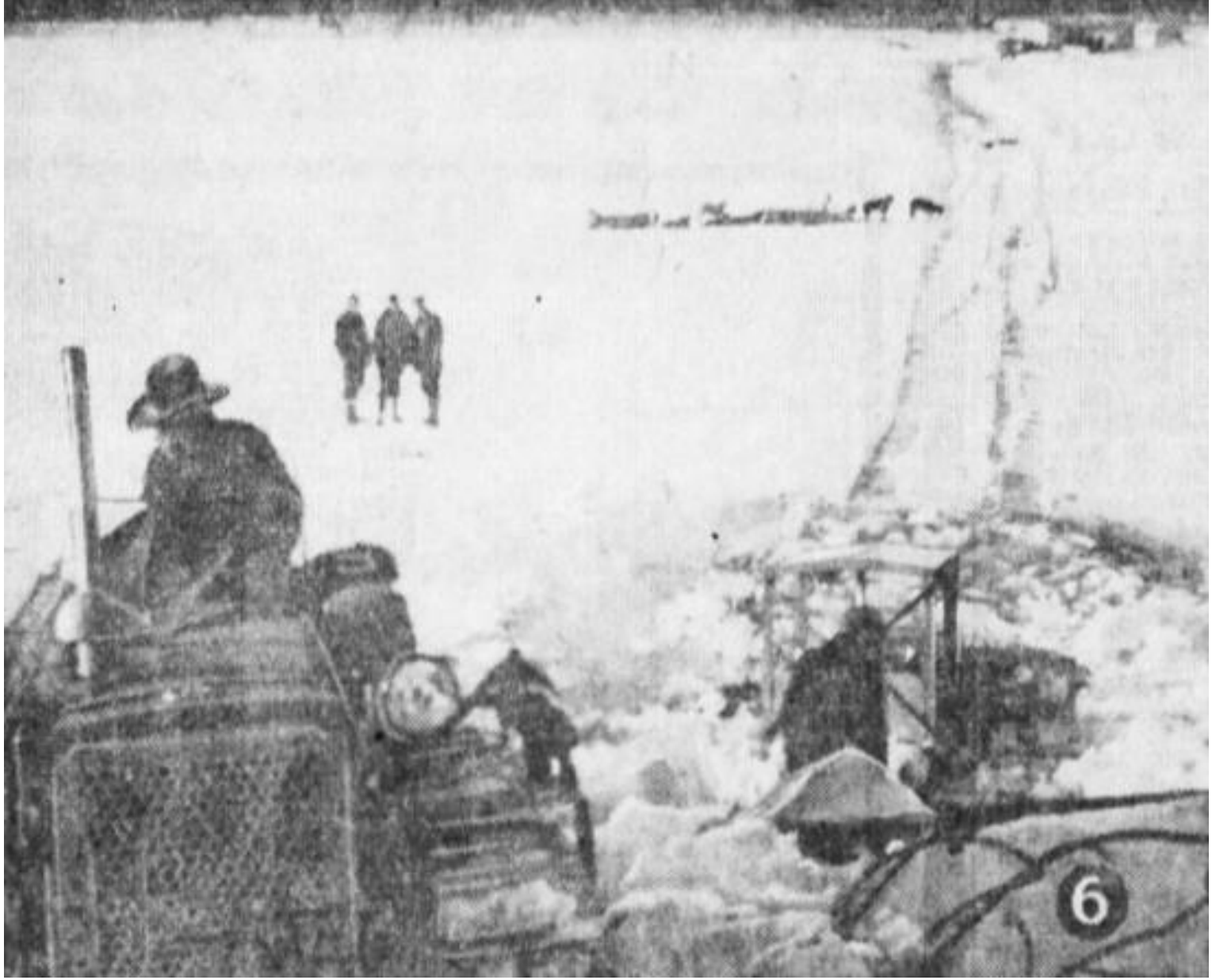
3. Captain Sheldon Luck, Chief Pilot for Yukon Southern Air Transport over which company's route the fields are being constructed, and with an eye to the future route to the Orient. Captain Luck, one of the veterans of northern aviation, will soon be flying Lockheed Lodestars; the fastest commercial transport planes in the world, over the route from Vancouver to the Yukon.



4. Caboose of the tractor train on the road somewhere near the Sikanni River.



5. Glen Miniker, who with three other men, blazed the trail with dog teams for the bulldozer to follow.



6. Bulldozer being pulled from ice through which it crashed on the Muskwa River.



7. Airview of the road in one of the open sections of the barren lands.



8. H.P. Keith, Department of Transport Engineer, who is in-charge of airport construction at Fort St. John, Fort Nelson and Watson Lake.

July 25, 1941

The Canadian Commissioners appointed two years ago for the purpose of studying the feasibility of the various proposed routes for the construction of the proposed British Columbia-Alaska Highway, have now completed their report. The U.S. Commissioners do not agree with their recommendations, though. Since it is more than likely that the U.S. will be furnishing the funds with which to carry-out the construction of this particular undertaking, it is almost a foregone conclusion that the choice of the U.S. Commissioners will prevail.

United States Commissioners Do Not Favour Route Advocated by the Canadian Members of Commission for British Columbia-Alaska Highway.

It is announced that the Canadian commissioners appointed two years ago for the purpose of studying the feasibility of the various proposed routes for the construction of the proposed British Columbia-Alaska Highway, have now completed their report wherein, it is stated, first preference is given to what is called the Findlay Fork Route.

This route would lead from Prince George to Manson Creek and thence on to Findlay Fork. From there on it would lead through Sifton Pass, headwaters of the Liard and Pelly rivers, then along the Pelly to the Yukon and on to Dawson. This, it is stated, would involve the construction of approximately 1,100 miles of new road within Canadian territory. The reason this route is given preference is stated to be because it is the most satisfactory and the most economical to construct.

The second feasible route is given as being from Hazelton, B. C. to Whitehorse where, it is stated, the country would be more difficult to penetrate and the snowfall heavier.

It is stated that the United States Commissioners do not concur wholly with the report of the Canadian Commission. They favour a coastal route from Prince George via Vanderhoof, Stuart Lake, Takla Lake, Stikine River, Atlin, Carcross, Whitehorse, Kluane Lake and across the White River to the international boundary afterwards following the Tanana River connecting with the Richardson Highway.

Since it is more than likely that the U.S.A. will be furnishing the funds with which to carry-out the construction of this particular undertaking it is almost a foregone conclusion that the choice of the U.S. Commissioners will prevail.

October 17, 1941

The *Long Beach Sun* (Long Beach, Calif.) published a progress report on the airports and air route.

Julius C. Edelstein

'BRIDGE OF PLANES'

Uncle Sam and Canada Join in Perfecting 'Top of World' Route

Long Beach Sun (Long Beach, Calif.), October 17, 1941

Canada and the United States rapidly are pushing to completion a vast airport construction program which could be used in a "bridge-of-planes" to Russia over the "top-of-the-world" via Alaska.

Flying from the eastern part of the United States to northern Alaska, across Canada, this correspondent saw the route which planes to Russia could follow. Airfields are in preparations, some of them virtually completed, capable of handling a huge volume of planes of every type.

American bombers already have tried out the route, with various alternative by-passes, and are flying regularly to Alaska by the so-called “inland valley” to avoid Pacific coastal storms.

Canada has allocated $9,000,000 for four airports along this route. This air route through Canada is of tremendous value now to the United States in that it would establish air-links between this country, Alaska, Asia and Europe. After the war commercial planes may fly “over-the-top” to Japan and China. It is 4,000 miles shorter that way than across the Pacific by way of San Francisco.

There are four great airports in western Canada, all of them many miles from major centers of population. The biggest, the farthest north and the most important is at Whitehorse, in the Yukon Territory. It is an hour’s flight from Juneau and on a direct line with Fairbanks and Nome. Here great runways are being completed and great stores of gasoline are being brought in by the White Pass & Yukon Railway along the mountainous roadbed from the Alaskan port of Skagway.

A few hundred miles south is Watson Lake, where an airport is being hewed out of the wilderness, hundreds of miles from the nearest civilized settlement. The gravel runways already are capable of handling huge American bombers and have done so in increasing numbers in recent weeks. Early this year an expedition of tractors, bulldozers, caterpillars, a sawmill on wheels and workmen crashed and cut their way through 350 miles of wilderness and ice to reach Watson Lake, to build that airport.

At Fort Nelson a similar heroic job of airport building has been gotten well underway in a record short time. It is similarly situated in the wilderness where gasoline, until recently, has been brought-in entirely by air. Farther south is Fort St. John, the jumping-off place between civilization and wilderness. Here, too, groundwork for an airport has been constructed. Farther south the territory of Yukon ends and the province of Alberta begins.

Grande Prairie and Edmonton, Alberta, maintain sizeable airports for both Canadian and American use. There are Canadian Royal Air Force training stations at both these places. From Edmonton it is an easy hop to Great Falls, Mont. This route, avoiding high mountains, skirting the Rockies and favored by generally good weather could be used by short-range fighter planes as well as by long-range bombers. Once in Alaska, the planes may follow several routes to Nome and thence, across to Siberia. Russians have disclosed the existence of secret landing fields at sufficiently frequent intervals across Siberia to enable them to reach Moscow in short-range planes.

Bombers, of course, which are understood reliably already to have begun to stream into Russia by this route, have a much easier time of it. They can follow either the inland way or go by the coast route from Seattle to Prince George to Juneau, where adequate airports are available or are under construction. This is the route usually followed by commercial airlines.

Canadian aviation officials, even before the war, had surveyed the possibility of this over-the-top road to Moscow and to Tokyo. Preliminary plans for its accomplishment were held in abeyance until Russia entered the war.

December 1941

Airway operational with radio ranges from Edmonton to the Alaska border. From "Canadian Geographical Journal," March 1943: "A natural airport site, high on a bench above Whitehorse, had gradually been improved over a period of years by clearing and smoothing its surface. This work had been done by the joint efforts of the Territorial Government of the Yukon, the British Yukon Navigation Company and Pan American Airways. lt was now completely regraded, paved with an asphalt surface, lengthened and widened up to standard airport specifications. The airway between Edmonton and Whitehorse was, therefore, usable in fine weather and during daylight by the beginning of September, 1941, some seven months after receiving final authority to proceed with its construction."

December 7, 1941

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, the United States Government forces Aleutians to evacuate their homes in the Aleutian Islands for fear of a Japanese invasion. The nearest Japanese military base is only 750 miles away. Over the next few years, America's military presence will increase dramatically in Alaska; from 500 in 1940, the number of troops will reach 124,000 in 1943.

December 7, 1941 (cont'd.)

By the close of 1941, the radio ranges from Edmonton to the Alaska border were in operation so that when the United States entered the war on December 9th, Canada was able to offer them an airway with good airports and radio ranges at 200-mile intervals all the way from Edmonton to the Alaska Boundary. "It had been used for many months before that date by many U.S. aircraft. At the airports housing and messing were gladly made available to their crews for many months till their own facilities could be organized." (*Canadian Geographical Journal,* March 1943)

January 21, 1942

"With Japanese vessels reported in Alaskan waters, attention is drawn to the proposed Alaska Highway which has been under consideration by the United States and Canada since 1929. With from three to fifteen years estimated as the time required for construction of the road, it does not seem likely that it could be utilized to aid Alaska in this war, even if work were commenced immediately. Such a highway has been favored by high government authority as a re-employment project after the war."

States-to-Alaska Highway Seen as Postwar Project



Two proposed routes of the Alaska highway.

by William A. Baker, Jr.
Central Press Writer

The Dispatch (Moline, Illinois) - Jan. 21, 1942

Washington - With Japanese vessels reported in Alaskan waters, attention is drawn to the proposed Alaska Highway which has been under consideration by the United States and Canada since 1929. The highway is advocated primarily to meet a situation which now seems imminent. Its proponents have contended that it would be badly needed as a supply line if sea lanes between Seattle and Alaskan ports should be menaced by enemy warships or airplanes.

With from three to fifteen years estimated as the time required for construction of the road, it does not seem likely that it could be utilized to aid Alaska in this war, even if work were commenced immediately. Such a highway has been favored by high government authority as a re-employment project after the war.

The United States would be expected to foot most of the bill. It is estimated that a gravel road safe for heavy loads would cost from $10,000,000 to $75,000,000, the great disparity in estimates being due chiefly to diversity of country through which it is proposed to run the highway.

The distance by road from the United States-Canada boundary to Fairbanks, Alaska, would be about 2,000 miles. Three main routes have been considered; two from Seattle through British Columbia and one from Chicago through the prairie provinces and down the Mackenzie River Valley in the northwest territories. All three enter Alaska from the Yukon territory. Gravel roads on these routes now end at Hazelton, B.C., Prince George, B.C., and Grimshaw, Alta.

The Alaskan international Highway Commission, representing the United States, seems to favor the route from Seattle via Hazelton and the British Columbia-Yukon-Alaska Highway Commission, representing Canada, the more easterly route from Prince George via Sifton Pass. Either would make possible the development of mineral and timber resources in British Columbia not reached by railway or steamship lines and would surpass the Mackenzie Valley Route in scenic grandeur.

Among the persons who recommend the route from Chicago via the Mackenzie Valley is Vilhjalmur Stefansson, famous Arctic Explorer, who recently inspected various routes.

Arctic Pipeline

The most urgent need, however, according to Stefansson, is not several thousand miles of highway, but about 300 miles to serve as a sort of Arctic pipeline for moving oil and gasoline from a refinery at Norman to Mayo, Yukon Territory, on the Alaskan side of the continental divide. This road would enter the Canadian Rockies at or north of the Keele (Gravel) River, where the mountains are much lower than in southwestern Canada.

Alaska's entire supply of oil and gasoline has to be shipped in by ocean tanker. Consideration of the long line of communication by sea and the importance of keeping the Army's big air base at Fairbanks supplied with oil and gasoline, emphasize the Explorer's view.

Stefansson's findings, which convinced him that the Mackenzie Route was the logical one for a highway between the United States and Alaska, were: 1 - It would cost the least; 2 - could be completed most quickly; 3 - would be most likely to be usable in winter; 4 - would be safest from attack; 5 - would provide a source of fuel.

Stefansson believes that it is desirable to construct highways eventually on both of the routes in British Columbia and also connecting roads from the westernmost route to cities along the coast.

February 6, 1942
The U.S. Army's Chief-of-Staff reveals a plan to construct a military supply route to Alaska. Five days later, President Roosevelt will authorize the building of the Alaska Highway.

February 11, 1942
The Alaska Military Highway project receives Presidential approval.

February 25, 1942
A U.S. Army Commission headed by Col. W.M. Hoge, having travelled the proposed route from Dawson Creek to Fort Nelson, reported that the project was feasible.



Weather Forecast
Somewhat Warmer

Edmonton Journal

'One Of Canada's Great Newspapers'

THIRTY-NINTH YEAR • • EDMONTON, ALBERTA, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1942 SINGLE COPY, 3 CENTS 20 PAGES

Alaska Road Via City Gets U.S. Army O.K.

Route Is 'Entirely Feasible,' Engineers' Commission Says

But Group's Job Not to Decide, Just to Pass Judgment— Find No Barriers Exist But Construction Would Be Big Undertaking

OFFICIALS LEAVE TODAY FOR WASHINGTON TO REPORT FINDS DURING NORTH JOURNEY

Edmonton Journal - February 25, 1942

Construction of an Alaska highway by way of Edmonton, the northern tip of British Columbia and the Yukon is entirely feasible, in the opinion of a United States Army Commission which returned to Edmonton Wednesday after an inspection of the route as far as Fort Nelson, B.C.

Meanwhile, in New York, the Canadian-American Joint Defence Board was meeting Wednesday to consider recommendations to the two governments on construction of the Alaska road. It was learned emphasis in the present discussions is on the route via Edmonton.

Decision whether the road will be built is not within the province of the Commission. Their job, the members stressed, primarily was to see the route at first hand and make a report to Washington as to whether the construction of the road was possible.

No barriers exist, the Commission has decided. But, they added, if the road is constructed it will be a huge job.

1545

The Commission is headed by Col. W.M. Hoge, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Col. Hoge was to leave Edmonton later Wednesday for Washington and to hand the report of the Commission to the Chief of the Corps of Engineers.

Other members of the Commission are Lieut. Col. R.D. Ingalls, Corps of Engineers; Lieut. Col. E.A. Mueller, Quartermaster and C.F. Capes, a civilian, who is Senior Highway Engineer for the U.S. Public Roads Administration.

His Commission, Col. Hoge said, is not empowered to recommend the Alaska Highway be built. “Our job is solely to see whether a road could be built and to report back,” he said.

By Train and Car

The Commission travelled by train to Grande Prairie, then by car to Dawson Creek, Fort St. John and Fort Nelson. They returned by the same route by car and rail. Weather during the entire trip, Col. Hoge said, was “excellent” and the group was given every opportunity of examining the route at first-hand.

Asked if his Commission had or was planning to examine a proposed route up the British Columbia coast, Col. Hoge said it had not, either by traveling it “or on paper.”

One of the difficulties met by the Commission during its northern trip was the lack of authoritative maps of the area.

Received Aid

H.P. Keith, Engineer with the federal Department of Transport, met the officials at Dawson Creek and accompanied them on the rest of the journey, Col. Hoge said. Help given the Commission by Mr. Keith and other men experienced in the north was of “great use,” he added.

Regarding a report that the Commission had reserved storage space at Dawson Creek for equipment, Col. Hoge said this was entirely false. He said the Commission had made inquiries along the complete route about storage space but this had only been done to increase its knowledge and facts of the route and that no commitments had been made anywhere.

Wednesday, the Canadian-American Joint Defence Board was meeting in New York to consider recommendations to the two governments on the construction of the Alaska Highway. Asked if he would make any recommendations to this Board, Col. Hoge said he had not been instructed to make any report and that his recommendations were to go direct to the Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Will Hurry Back

He added that he will get back to Washington “just as quick-ly as I can.”

Nothing is known even by men of the north of some of the sections of ground covered by the route to Alaska, Col. Hoge said. He said this lack of knowledge of certain areas and also the complete lack of “real” maps or even any kind of maps of some areas was one of the handicaps the Commission met in making a complete study of the route.

It would be impossible for him, he added, to estimate how long it would take to construct the highway if the decision to build was made. It would depend, he said, “on just how much effort was put into it and just what natural barriers of the country were met during the construction.”

Col. Hoge said the other officials were in conference Wednesday morning with Hon. W.A. Fallow, Minister of Public Works, and other department officials.

“I assured Col. Hoge that the Department of Public Works is at his service, either in the engineering or construction branches,” Mr. Fallow stated after the conference.

“I said that anything that is required which we may have will be made available in order to assist in the construction of the highway,” said the Minister.

The Minister pointed-out that speedy action would be required to take advantage of winter weather conditions during possibly the next three weeks for the moving of road equipment.

The U.S. officials told the Minister that nothing definite concerning their recommendations would be known until the U.S.-Canada Joint Defence Board holds a meeting in Washington.

With Col. Hoge at the interview were Lt.. Col. C.A. Mueller and C.F. Capes.

Mr. Fallow said Mr. Capes will remain here to keep in close touch with the Department of Public Works and ascertain actual requirements for construction purposes.

“I have issued instructions that every possible cooperation shall be given by this department,” said Mr. Fallow.

Highway is Discussed by Joint Defence Board

By J.F. Sanderson
(*Canadian Press* Staff Writer)

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25 - The Canadian-American Joint Defence Board is meeting in New York Wednesday to consider recommendations to the two governments on the construction of the Alaska Highway.

It was learned the emphasis in the present discussions between Canada and the U.S. is on a route from Edmonton, north through the Peace River country to White Horse, in the Yukon, thence into Alaska; a route considerably further inland than those hitherto regarded as the most advantageous.

The Edmonton-White Horse route would follow or parallel the string of seven airfields built by the Canadian government last year on the recommendation of the Joint Defence Board to permit rapid transit of men and materials from the U.S. to Alaska.

It is hoped in some quarters here that work will start on the Alaska road by April 1 and it is expected that if the Edmonton-Whitehorse route is selected U.S. Army Engineers will commence actual construction this year.

In the opinion of some quarters here, the Edmonton route, sometimes called the “Prairie Route,” would have at least three advantages over the others which would run closer to the coast. The inland route, they say, would parallel the air fields; it would be far enough inland to escape all fog and finally, it would be easier to defend in the event of an invasion of the West Coast.

It was emphasized here, however, that the Edmonton Route has not been selected finally and probably will not be until the Joint Defence Board acts and until the U.S. Army Engineers complete their preliminary investigation.

Estimates of the cost of a 24-foot gravel highway run as high as $50,000,000 with maintenance placed at $1,000,000 per-year. Delegate A.J. Dimond, of Alaska, has a bill before Congress to authorize construction of the road, the whole cost to be borne by the U.S.

The Dimond bill leaves the choice of a route to the U.S. Government but he personally favours it running from Prince George to Fairbanks by way of Whitehorse, the one closest to the coast.

March 9, 1942
First troops arrive at Dawson Creek, Mile 0 of the Alaska Military Highway. The 35th (Combat), 340th and 95th Engineer Regiments were assigned to the southern-end of the project; the 18th (Combat), 93rd (Black) and 341st to the north-end (based at Whitehorse) and the 97th (Black) Regiment to Valdez.

March 18, 1942
Canada approves U.S. plans to build the highway.

April 11, 1942
Construction officially begins on the Alaska Highway. When the Army Corps of Engineers comes to the Northwest, Alaska's population is 60,000. The neighboring Canadian territories are much more sparsely populated.

May 17, 1942
Twelve men drown when their makeshift ferry is overcome in a sudden storm on Charlie Lake in British Columbia. In 2008, a monument was erected at Charlie Lake to commemorate the tragedy.



Clearing the way for the new Alaska Highway.
Canadian timber was a pushover for powerful tractors.
Permission of Public Roads Administration.

1555

June 1, 1942
After nearly two months of work in difficult terrain, the Army Corps of Engineers has completed only 95 miles of the Alaska Highway.

June 4, 1942
Japan bombs Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands, killing more than 100 Americans. Within less than a week, the Japanese invade the Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska. They will occupy the islands for nearly a year. Aleuts taken prisoner will be held in Japanese camps for the duration of the war.

June 30, 1942
The Army Corps of Engineers speeds its progress in the month of June, building 265 miles of the Alaska Highway.

July 1942
During this month, aided by the good working conditions, the Army Corps of Engineers picks-up the pace and builds 400 more miles of highway.

August 31, 1942
An article in *TIME* magazine heralds the construction underway in Alaska and brings the project to the attention of Americans.

Northwest Passage

(*TIME* magazine – August 31, 1942)

"This is the Law of the Yukon, that
only the Strong shall thrive;
That surely the Weak shall perish, and
only the Fit survive."

—Robert W. Service.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had one of the biggest and toughest jobs last week since they built the Panama Canal. They were both surviving and thriving on it. There was no fanfare. Almost no outsiders had penetrated the vast, still, endless wilderness where the engineers are wrenching and hacking a great military road 1,500 miles from Fort St. John, B.C. to mid-Alaska.

This was a job for Paul Bunyan; to wrest an all-weather road from the jealous Northland between early spring and autumn; to span the fierce, death-cold rushing rivers, the black custard quagmires; to cut switchbacks across the Great Divide, to make the way between the Arctic and the U.S. for a highway which some day may be as common as the Boston Post Road.

In February the land was deep in snow. At the railhead three Americans swung off the twice-weekly train 500 miles up from Edmonton. They paused for hot coffee in one of the Chinese restaurants and headed north. They were Fred Capes, construction expert for the Public Roads Administration, and Colonels William Hoge and R.D. Ingalls. Jamming down fur caps, they slogged through snow drifts, checking grades, rivers, elevations. Rumors spread by the "moccasin vine" that at last the Americans were going to build the Alaska highway.

The Job. Then came the first Engineer troops. Their job was to drag supplies and equipment up the line to road depots before the thaw. On March 9, they tumbled off the train at dingy Dawson Creek station, staked stiff canvas tents under the northern lights. "Jeez, it was so cold," a Bronx private remarked, "that every time we had hot stew for chow, the goddam stuff froze before we could eat." Behind the troops came trucks, road machinery, supplies, gas, diesel fuel and planks from torn-down CCC camps.

Within a month the ice would break, the mighty Peace River, the Sikanni Chief, the Buckinghorse, the Fort Nelson would be crackling torrents. There were never enough trucks to move up the stuff. Farmers, garagemen, merchants, traders piled in with their own vehicles. All the short days and long nights the trucks mired down in slush, were dug out, pushed on.

In April the effort seemed not enough. A sudden thaw set the river ice groaning and cracking like pistol shots. Trucks crossed only in the middle hours of the night. Came a late hard freeze and the last truck was over. Weary drivers looked at the big Peace River and grunted: "Go ahead and bust wide open, you old bastard, we've licked you." The stuff to build the road was through to Fort St. John, to Fort Nelson. But the road was still to be built.

As the snow slopped off the warming land, survey parties hacked the bush. Army photo planes roared overhead. Soon the first few miles were laid out and the "cat company" bumbled on grinding treads up the road to Charlie's Lake, six miles from Fort St. John, and jumped off into the wilderness. The "cats" clawed at the soft soil, bogged down, sank almost to the driver's seats in the black muck. The engineers sweated and swore, dug out the cats, clawed on. Every day it rained. Every day they sweated and swore.

Gradually, steadily, doggedly, the snorting cats drove the forest back. Woodsmen logged the spruce, pine and aspen for corduroy roads over the bogs. "Mister, I thought we'd never get through those first 15 miles. We'd get so damn tired we could hardly drag home, but every afternoon when we got to the store at Charlie's Lake, the lady there'd have a cake for us. Boy, those cakes were good."

When the rain retreated, there was the muskeg—spongy, orange-black decayed vegetation covering mudpits. Sometimes the road was detoured. Sometimes the corduroy planks were bridged across to support the traffic. On soldiers' pay (plus 20% for foreign duty) the men worked in two ten-hour shifts seven days a week. With no time to wait for steel or concrete, they built wood culverts, pushed ahead. Always they moved on.

The days got longer, the weather warmer. Now came the black flies, horse flies, deer flies, the tiny "no-see-ums" that announce themselves only by a sting, and the mosquitoes. ("Why, over at Watson Lake, a mosquito landed on the airport and they put 85 gallons of gas into it before they realized it wasn't a bomber.") The insects made sweating, swollen hands look like grey fur. The engineers slapped and cursed till they got head nets and gloves.

Captain Hampton Green's bog-busters chewed switchbacks down a steep hillside of ice-hard dirt in a day and a half, ferried a river, scratched up the other side. Right on their heels, Lieut. Colonel Heath Twichell set his Negro engineers to bridging the tumbling water, singing as they sawed. Wading waist deep in the fast icy stream, they put the bridge across in 36 hours, sang hymns at a Sunday service down by the riverside after the job was done.

Far to the north engineers, with equipment from the Alaska coast, hit troubles of their own. The cats, seeking a roadbed, tore off the top moss, exposed sheer blue ice. Sun-melted ice sucked down the roadway. The engineers scraped the moss back, over the ice, put a corduroy planking on top and let nature freeze a solid roadbed. Pushing out of Whitehorse and Slana, one group paused briefly one afternoon on the shore of Kluane Lake at the foot of 19,000-foot peaks. Beside the log cabin of Trapper Hayden and his half-breed Indian wife the Engineer band played. A young private rose and sang the marching song of the road: *Squaws along the Yukon Are Good Enough for Me.*



EQUIPMENT FOR THE ALASKA HIGHWAY; TRUCKS PUSHED STEADILY NORTHWARD.



CORDUROY ROAD: THE LOGS COVER QUAGMIRE AND MUSKEG.



NORTH OF FORT ST. JOHN: ARMY TRUCKS PLOW THROUGH CHOCOLATE MUD.

The Men. Not many soldiers have fewer comforts, less to do on Saturday night, less discipline from above than these bearded, weather-tanned engineers. There is little saluting. A worker accepts a captain's order with an "Okay, Ham." More than 40% of the engineer workers are Negro. As men on a battlefront, these engineers are challenged to fight it through or lose. Against the mountains they work too hard to be restless. There is little talk of women. "But," laughed a colonel, "I'm sorry for the first town they hit when they get away from here."

Out in the bush the only recreation is hunting and fishing—on special rights given them by the Yukon territorial government. Doughboys hunt to vary meals of corned beef, potatoes, lemonade, carrots, preserves and dried eggs, by adding moose and bear steaks, lake trout, spruce partridge, ptarmigan, grouse, venison. At Swan Lake, for lack of regular tackle a Signal Corps man made a line from telephone wires, hammered a fishing spoon out of a tin can and brought in strings of fat trout over the side of an assault boat. Others knock the heads off the foolish spruce partridge (Yukon chicken) which doze on the lower tree limbs in the summer twilight.

Soldiers near enough to hit the few towns find expensive beer, and little else. In Fort St. John they mill around on the dusty or muddy main street with lumberjacks, trappers and "dirt stiffs" (construction workers), looking over the waitresses and dumpy Indian girls. Sometimes they get a haircut in Joe's tent barbershop, or go to the hospital, which has the only bath and running-water toilets in town. Average Saturday night consumption of 50¢-a-bottle beer is 3,500 bottles. At the Inn in Whitehorse the jampacked soldiers sometimes push the 11 o'clock curfew up to 2 a.m., ending with a mouth-organ duet and fine, boozy soldier harmony. Checks are cashed at the only bank for 460 miles around—the same one in which Poetaster Robert Service clerked in the gold-rush days.



Acme

THE BOSS: BRIGADIER GENERAL HOGE
Snow, rain, mud, flies, work and beer.

The Boss. In a 26-foot square house at Whitehorse lives the boss of the road, quiet, firm William Morris Hoge, now a brigadier general. At 48 he has been engineering 26 years for the Army. But his biggest job began the day he stepped from the train at Dawson Creek on to the crunchy snow to start surveying the route. His was the big worry when scores of cats were bogged down in the slush, and the rains seemed never to stop. Impatient, Hoge steamboated up and down the road in Bush Pilot Les Cook's seaplane, watched the men slogging it through. He said little, eyeing the tremendous job, but every mucker and cat driver knew the general was on the job. "A tough guy, but square," they said. "A regular guy too. He sure likes that Yukon chicken."

In his little green-painted house Hoge likes to slump his square shoulders in a chair and sit with the wife he met in a Lexington, Mo. kindergarten—planning the week ahead. Pretty, brown-eyed Mrs. Hoge knows how to live the frontier life. As a general's lady she still does her cooking and washing. When the general is in town they take a short evening stroll on the board sidewalk with their fox terrier—Hoge puffing a favorite pipe. Nettie Hoge has led frontier life before. In the Philippines her husband built the main road on Bataan. But she has waited behind the lines, as when he won the D.S.C. for driving a bridge across the Meuse under fire in World War I.

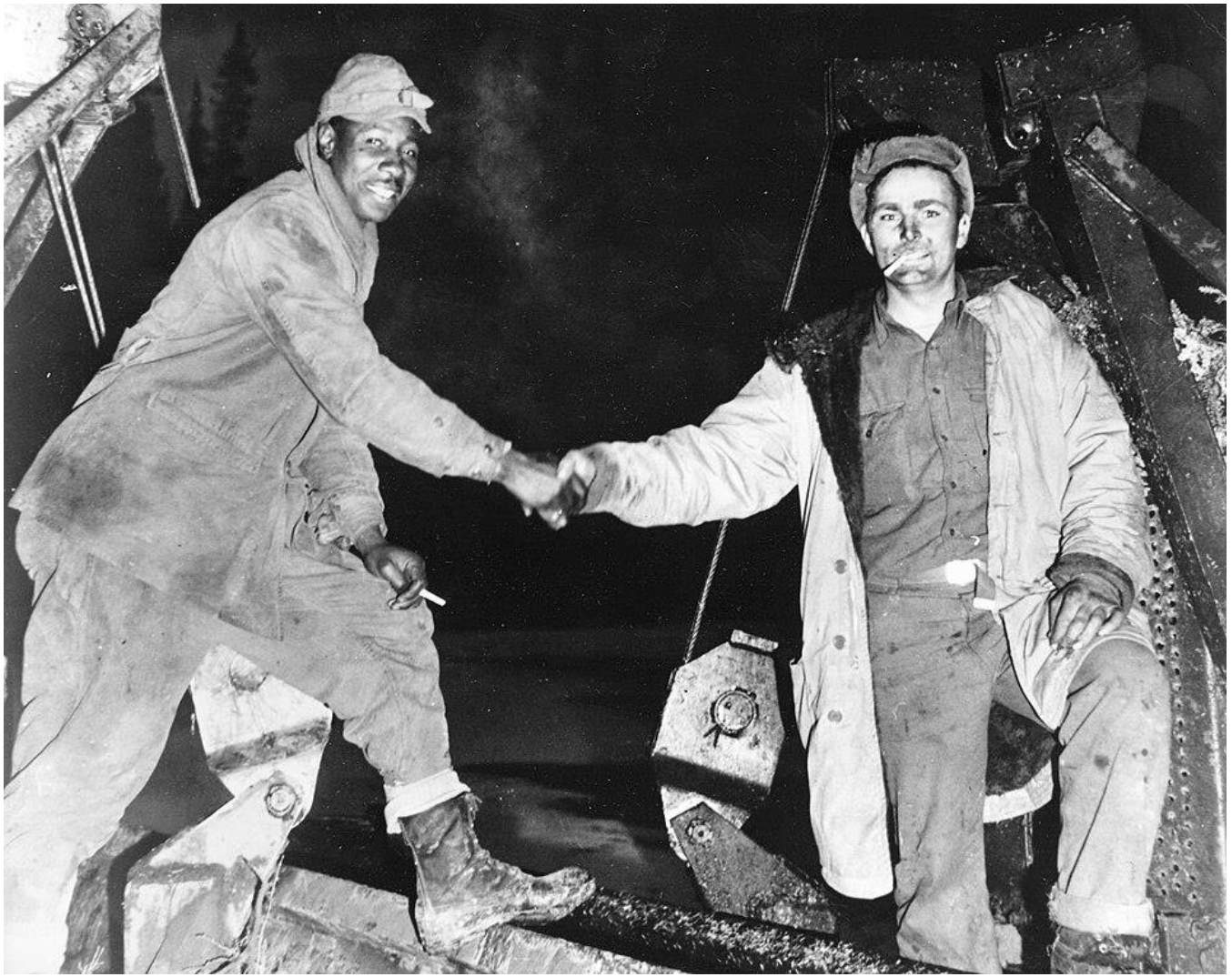
When Hoge's party rode and mushed up to Fort Nelson in the winter snow the citizens wondered why he had come. After all, there was nothing to see but a trading post. But Hoge had other ideas. Alaska was a transportation island linked with the U.S. by a moving bridge of ships—ships now needed desperately elsewhere. Hoge knew that Fort Nelson could be one of a string of airports connecting Edmonton to the Aleutians. He knew that with such a string and with a road to supply them, Alaska could be held; knew also that with Jap islands blockading Vladivostok such a route might well be the only way to send adequate help to an attacked Siberia. The Army road would do for that and later the Public Roads Administration would grade and realign the rough highway. Then, after the war, the people would come. The small dirty towns would have a new reason for existence, and out of fabulous Alaska could come minerals by the truckload for the factories of the future.

September 24, 1942
Soldiers of the 36th Regiment from the south and the 340th Regiment from the north met at Contact Creek, completing the southern section of the highway.

October 16, 1942
Brigadier General James A. O'Connor has arrived at Whitehorse, a frontier settlement on the upper reaches of the Yukon River, to head the farthest north service command ever established by the United States Army.

October 25, 1942
At 4 p.m., the Army Corps of Engineers closes the final gap on the pioneer road that laid the foundation for the Alaska Highway. Civilian contractors managed by the Public Roads Administration continue their work on the more substantial highway.

The D-8 Cats of Private Refines Sims of Company A of the 97th Engineers, working south, and Private Alfred Jalufka of the 18th Engineers, working north, met near Beaver Creek, Yukon. Civilian contractors managed by the Public Roads Administration continue their work on the more substantial highway.



ALCAN Highway. Meeting of bulldozers at Beaver Creek, Yukon Territory, 25 October 1942. Left: Corporal Refines Sims, Jr. (Philadelphia), 97th Engineers. Right: Pvt. Alfred Jalufka (Kennedy, Texas), 18th Engineers.

November 20, 1942
The Alaska Highway is officially opened to military traffic as the first truck makes the trek from Whitehorse to Fairbanks. A widely-broadcast ceremony at Soldiers Summit overlooking Kluane Lake is part of a wartime propaganda effort. In reality, work on the road will continue.

February 15, 1943
A fire started in a barn in downtown Dawson Creek that was being used to house material for the U.S. Army, including a truckload of dynamite. The explosion that resulted and the fires that followed did extensive damage, killed 5 people and injured another 150.

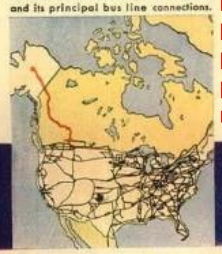
June 21,1943
Bus service began on the Alaska Highway when Western Canadian Greyhound Ltd. began a contract with the Northwest Service Command. In September 1944, the Greyhound contract was terminated and the army ran the bus service with 5 of its own vehicles.



"Roll 'er through to Fairbanks!"

Greyhound serves America-at-War along the Alcan Military Highway

THE OUTLINE MAP below shows the Alcan Highway (heavy red line, including both highway and rail links) in relation to the 68,000-mile Greyhound System and its principal bus line connections.



No, you can't ride a Greyhound Super-Coach to Alaska over the Alcan Highway . . . not today!

But, just the same, these familiar blue-and-white buses are rolling on that highway—doing an important job for Uncle Sam, along the most amazing military road of all history.

Buses have followed the bulldozers on the Alcan! Operating under direction of the Northwest Service Command, they are carrying the military and civilian personnel that is building, strengthening, protecting the great road.

The Alcan Military Highway is an everlasting tribute to the courage and skill of the Army Engineer Corps—that grand body of men who shoved it through ice and storm and bottomless muskeg in impossibly fast time.

What's more, it's America's pledge to the world that we'll run the greedy little Japs clear back to Tokyo and beyond! It's a pledge, too, of cooperation and friendship between Canada and the United States—a mighty link in the chain of highways that will one day span all the Americas.

After Victory comes, who can doube that roads and buses will work together to develop the wonderland of Western Canada and Alaska, just as they have worked to give America the most convenient and flexible peacetime transportation—*and as they are now working to carry the Nation's manpower in time of war.*

GREYHOUND

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July 22, 1943

Agreement on “Alaska Highway” as the official name for the highway from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Fairbanks, Alaska, was announced today in an exchange of notes between the United States and Canadian governments. Secretary of State Cordell Hull proposed the name as “suitable and in harmony with popular usage,” at the suggestion of Anthony J. Dimond, Alaskan Delegate in the House of Representatives. Leighton McCarthy, Canadian Minister to Washington, replied that his government concurs. Heretofore, the project has been known generally but unofficially as the *Alcan.*

September 3, 1943

U.S. and Canadian Officials Participate in Colorful Ceremony as Peace River Bridge is formally opened. Exactly 150 years ago (1793) the great Explorer, Alexander Mackenzie, discovered the Peace River when he made his famous trip across Canada. On Monday (Aug. 30th) another historic event was recorded when one of the finest and largest steel bridges on the North American continent, which spans the Peace River 37-miles north of Dawson Creek and forms part of the great Alaska Highway System, was formally opened with an impressive ceremony attended by high ranking military and government officials of the U.S. and Canada.

The Whitehorse Star

Whitehorse, Yukon - September 3, 1943

United States and Canadian Officials Participate in Colorful Ceremony as Peace River Bridge is Formally Opened

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The distinguished visitors from the United States of America were Major General Philip D. Fleming, of Washington, D.C., who designed the bridge and is Administrator of the Federal Works Agency, Mr. Thomas M. MacDonald, P.R.A. Administrator of Washington, D.C.; Senator James C. Scrugham of Nevada, Chairman of the sub-committee of the U. S. Senate Committee on post roads and post offices; Senator C. Douglas Buck of Delaware and Senator William Langer of North Dakota, both committee members. Accompanying them were Mr. J.S. Bright, Chief of Public Roads Administration for the Northwest District with headquarters at Edmonton and Mr. Frank Andrews, Superintendent for the P.R.A. at Whitehorse, Lt. Col. J.L. Friedlich and Major Harlow. Local celebrities attending the function were General James A. O'Connor, Col. K.B. Bush, Chief of Staff, Northwest Service Command, Lt. Richard L. Neuberger, Aide to General O'Connor and Capt. Bishop, Public Relations Officer, N.W.S.C. The Hon. Herbert Anscomb represented the government of British Columbia and Hon. W. Fallow that of Alberta.

Senator Scrugham dedicated the bridge "to a lasting peace" and said he was sure that this opening ceremony was symbolic of a closer cooperation and friendship between the United States of America and Canada in the future.

Major General Fleming

Major-General Fleming in his address termed the bridge “an important link in the armor of the North American continent. Over it will pass men and material to help make us secure from attack and more quickly bring peace to this war-weary world. Perhaps we may also think of it as one of the keys that will unlock the yet untold wealth of Alaska, that fruitful land which, until yesterday, seemed to many of us, both in Canada and the United States, so remote and inaccessible. New waves of pioneers to settle in Alaska and exploit its wealth will count this structure an important milestone along the way.” General Fleming paid tribute to the splendid cooperation between the Dufferin Co., of Toronto, who built the substructure and the John A. Roebling & Sons Co. of Scranton, New Jersey, who built the superstructure. “I think I can say,” continued General Fleming, “that the gratitude of our two nations goes out today to the workers who labored here. Their comrades on the battle fronts of the world have not toiled more heroically or, at times, under greater hazard, to bring victory to our arms.”

Brig. General O’Connor

It is both an honor and a privilege for me to speak briefly on this historic occasion as the representative of the United States Army. This great bridge across the Peace River fittingly symbolizes the 1,630 mile highway of which it is a part. Beyond the northern tower of the bridge stretches the vast wilderness of the Canadian Northwest, and beyond that the strategic Territory of Alaska; and beyond Alaska lies the immense battleground of the North Pacific Ocean, where inevitably the armed forces of the United Nations will punish the Japanese aggressors.

Off to the south, beyond this span's opposite abutment, are Edmonton, Winnipeg, Minneapolis, Chicago and countless other North American cities where the weapons of democracy are being produced in ever-increasing quantities. The Peace River Bridge, which we dedicate today, may almost be said to be a link between the productive centers of freedom and the battle-front where free men will at last bring the Japanese to book.

It is particularly fitting that today's ceremony should be attended by high officials of the two great countries of the North American Continent. We are honored by the presence of a Cabinet Minister of the Province of British Columbia. We also have the pleasure of being host to a delegation of leading businessmen from the great Canadian city of Vancouver. We are similarly honored by the attendance of a committee of distinguished members of the United States Senate who have come to see for themselves the results of American handiwork, tenacity and resourcefulness.

A wise philosopher once said that history was made subconsciously. I wonder how many of the men, soldiers and civilians alike, whose heroic efforts went into this bridge and the road it carries, actually realized that they were participating in events of historic magnitude? Who here can measure the future significance of the first land route to Alaska.

Perhaps this is the beginning of a network of roads penetrating the farthest reaches of the American Northwest. The highway on which we stand today is a military road. It was authorized under the impact of urgent military necessity. Its two-fold purpose is essentially military in purpose - first, to supplement, supply and anchor the air route to Alaska and, second, to provide an alternative thoroughfare to the North Pacific in case the sea lanes should be lost.

This road accomplishes that twin objective. Yet in years to come, other objectives will surely be recognized. Alaska, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Northern Alberta and Northern British Columbia - who can estimate the natural resources which those immense domains hold in trust? Across the roof of the world a new artery of travel is in development, an artery which may link us more securely to our allies in Asia and the East.

Before I conclude these brief remarks, let me tell you a few facts about the imposing span we are about to open. The overall length of the Peace River Bridge is 2,275-feet, nearly half a mile. It is thus one of the great bridges of the Dominion of Canada. The main span, from tower-to-tower, is 930-feet-long. The width of the roadway is 24-feet; ample for a constant flow of two-lane traffic.

This bridge cost $1,750,000. It was designed by the U.S. Public Roads Administration; the superstructure was built by John Roebling & Sons and the smaller sub-structure was the product of the Dufferin Company of Canada. Construction was started in November of last year. Construction was carried on throughout last winter, when the temperature often dropped to 55-degrees below zero. This bridge represents not alone steel and concrete, cable and timber. It also represents human talent, skill, persistence and heroism.

I think we may safely predict that this line on the Peace River Bridge, where soon the dedicatory ribbon will be severed, is an historic threshold in the development of our Continent. And I believe we all owe prayer and thanks to God for making possible this advanced stage in our task. We pray to Him that this great bridge, spanning one of Canada's mighty rivers, will prove of use and benefit to mankind - now, in the stern job before us and later, in the peace to come.

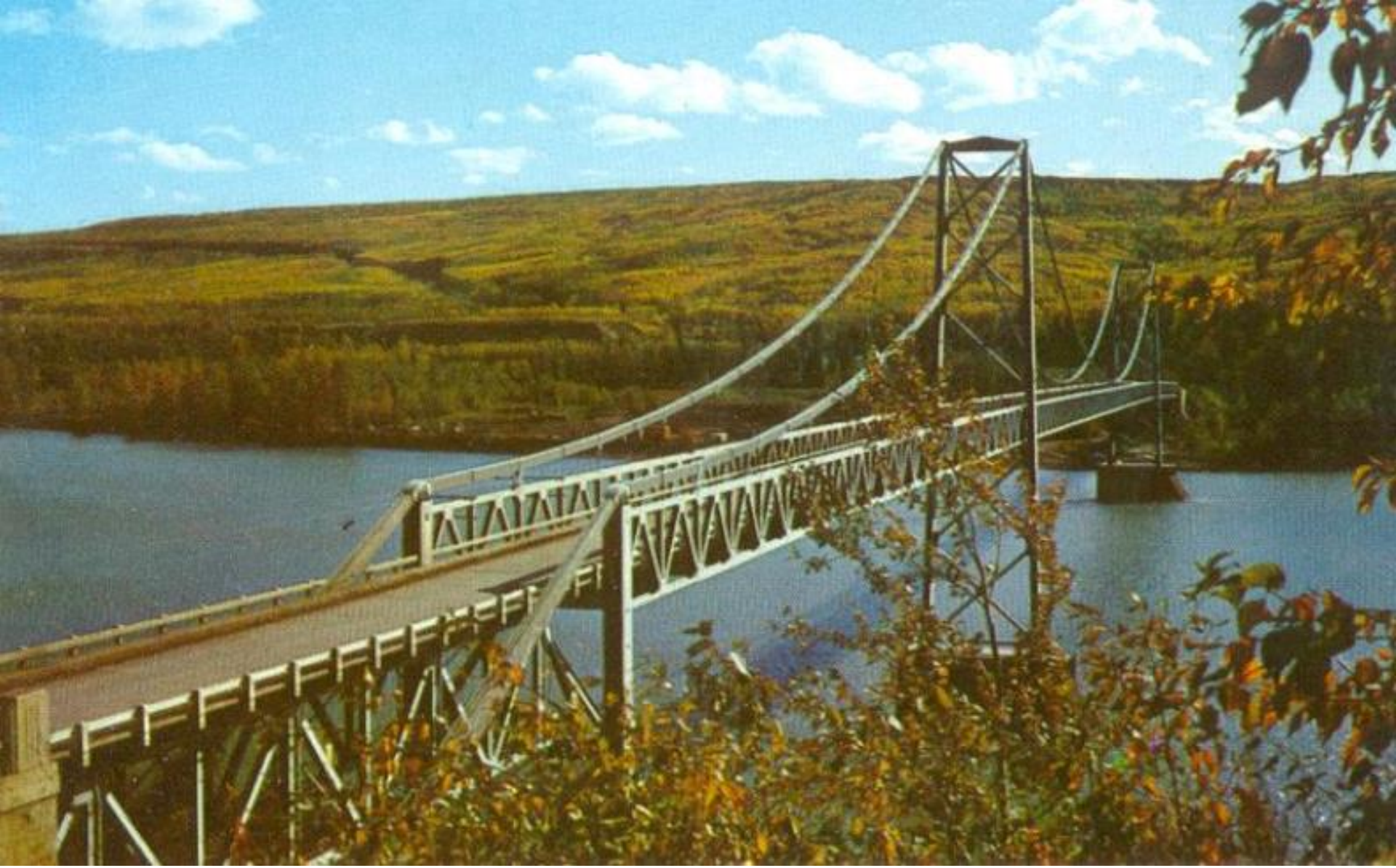
Col. K.B. Bush

I would be remiss if I did not open this program with a brief message of appreciation to the men, soldiers and civilians, whose efforts have made possible this magnificent structure over one of Canada's great rivers. It is their achievement which we honor today. The ceremony about to begin is merely symbolic of what they have accomplished.

I also want to thank the distinguished visitors of both Canada and the United States who have come long distances to attend this dedication of the Peace River Bridge. Their presence here together is further indication - if such indication were needed - of the solidarity and Good Neighborliness of our two nations.

The dedication of this imposing bridge marks a new era in the development of the Far Northwest. I believe it deserves to rank with that historic morning 45 years-ago when Inspector O'Brien of the old Northwest Mounted Police led northward through this very region the detachment of scarlet-coated men who were to bring law and order to the Yukon.

In concluding these introductory remarks, I want to express the gratitude of the Northwest Service Command to the men and women of this section of Canada who have cooperated so whole-heartedly in the many undertakings for our joint defense and security which have been started here.



<u>Above</u>: the Peace River Bridge in 1950, looking across to the south-side of the valley. The bridge collapsed on October 16, 1957 when the north tower, which had stability problems for years, was hit by a rock slide of shale from the north-bank.

January 4, 1944
Tthe tote road along the Canol pipeline from Norman Wells to Whitehorse is completed.

February 16, 1944
The final weld on the Canol pipeline is laid. With more pipeline having been built to Fairbanks, Watson Lake, Skagway and Haines, 25,000 men (and about 150 women) had built 1,800 miles of pipeline and 2,000 miles of road in only 20 months. The final price tag for construction was about $130,000,000.

1945
Over the course of WWII, the U.S. has invested nearly $2 billion in Alaska. During this time, railroads, airfields and roads have been modernized. The military presence in Alaska is increased dramatically and by 1950 the civilian population of Alaska will reach 128,643, up from 72,524 in 1940.

April 1, 1945
The Whitehorse Canol refinery is shut-down. Leaks and spills were common along the pipeline and maintenance costs were extremely high.

June 22 , 1945
Following President Truman's endorsement of a connection to the Alaska Highway as an absolute necessity, two bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives at Washington asking Congress to make immediate arrangements with Canada to earmark $15,000,000 for construction work to connect the existing highway with the continental road system. It is pointed-out that only 625 miles of new construction is necessary. This new road will be built from Fort St. James to Tagish to connect with Whitehorse.

July 6, 1945
Imperial Oil has opened service stations at Fort St. John, Trutch, Muncho Lake and Fort Nelson and others are planned.

IMPERIAL OIL OPENS SERVICE STATIONS ON ALASKA HIGHWAY.

The Whitehorse Star (Whitehorse, Yukon Territory) - July 6, 1945

After all the confusion occasioned in the public mind by the contradictory reports which have been disseminated from time-to-time regarding the future of both the Canol project and the Alaska Highway, it is indeed refreshing to learn that the Imperial Oil Co., opened last week service stations at Fort St. John, Trutch, Muncho Lake and Fort Nelson and that others are to be opened at strategic points between Fort Nelson and the Alaska section of the highway. Harry Noakes, well-known Ontario man, has charge at Trutch, Ed. Campbell at Fort Nelson and Paul Greenning at Muncho Lake. Mr. J. Holland, District Manager of the Imperial Oil Co. Ltd., accompanied by Sgt. Smith of the U.S. Army, assumed charge on behalf of his company. Gasoline and lubricants, along with other commodities, are now on sale. The price of gas to Canadians is 54.1 cents-per-gallon and to U S. Army personnel 46.1 cents.

Whilst no bid as yet is being made for tourists, stopping and eating places and full accommodation is already provided for truckers, Army and Air Force personnel and such civilians as are now passing over the highway. It is reported that the Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey will open similar service stations at strategic points on the Alaskan section of the highway.

Electric light, hot and cold water and the most modern equipment and furniture are features of the various camps which the Imperial Oil Co. are now operating. Sound pictures are being shown at intervals and the camps are in radio and telephonic communication with the outside world at all times. What more could one wish for?

Between Whitehorse and Canol camps have been left intact ready for immediate occupancy, each equipped with artesian wells for their water supply. Inventories of these and their contents have now been completed and forwarded to Washington, D.C., presumably with the object of their being acquired later by the Imperial Oil Co. Ltd., or some other commercial concern.

September 27, 1945
A twice-weekly bus service between Whitehorse and Dawson Creek starts October 1. The owners are the British Yukon Navigation Company. Buses will be taken over from the U.S.A. Army fleet. They are modern and have specially built heating systems.

1946
After the war, Alaskan residents begin a campaign for statehood. A referendum passes, with 9,630 Alaskans voting for statehood and 6,822 against.

April 1, 1946
The U.S. transfers control over the Canadian portion of the Alaska Highway to Canada. In order to reduce future American claims to the Highway, the Canadian Government repays the U.S. for the cost of the Canadian portions of the construction.

1947
Congress begins hearings on the Alaska statehood bill. However, the Korean War interrupts the legislative process and the statehood bill will be forced to the back burner until 1955.

July, 1947
The new steel and concrete bridge over Big Creek at Mile 674 opens and another at the Little Rancheria River is under construction. The Big Creek Bridge is the first permanent bridge built entirely by the Canadian Army since Canada assumed control of the highway in 1946.

1948
The Alaska Highway is opened for public transportation on a limited basis, with checkpoints and convoys used to ensure safe travel along the still-rough road.

February 13, 1948
Resources Minister J.A. Glen announces in Ottawa that travel restrictions on the Alaska Highway have been removed. Tourist facilities along the highway have been improved to the point that travel for any reason is now allowed, without permits.

June, 1949
Paving of the Alaska Highway begins at Fairbanks.

1953
Television makes its debut in Alaska; broadcasters send out the first TV signal from Anchorage.

1954

A magazine advertisement for Atlas Tires warns about the “hazardous journey” along the Alaska Highway.



"People who had made the long overland trip to Alaska called it a 'hazardous journey' and cautioned us to take along at least two sets of special heavy-duty tires! My wife and I settled for Atlas Grip-Safe Cushionaire Tires and the famous warranty you get with them."

Alaska Drive No Pleasure Trip

(*Great Falls Tribune* - May 12, 1948)

Be Prepared

HELENA - Motorists contemplating a trip over the Alaska Highway were today advised by officials of the Montana Automobile Association, affiliate of the American Automobile Association, to be thoroughly prepared and equipped.

A steady increase in motor travel, from 3 to 4 cars-a-day to 30 or 40 per-day, has been observed at Edmonton, officials said. It appears at the present time that persons who travel the highway regularly in the course of their business, plus current tourists, are using about 70 per cent of available accommodations at hotels and stopping places.

Pioneer Journey

Word from the Alberta Motor Association is that persons undertaking the Alaska road trip should be well prepared for a possible “pioneer” journey as far as accommodations at hotels and stopping places are concerned, if traffic continues to increase at present rate.

Removal some weeks ago of restrictions requiring travel permits by those using the highway is expected to increase the flow of traffic greatly.

The highway is in relatively good repair, reports indicate, with some 75 timber bridges needing replacement during the summer by the Alaska Highway maintenance force. There are also some 8,000 culverts of which many must be replaced.

The Canadian Army his established 13 maintenance camps along the highway, each about 70 miles apart. Each camp houses between 5 and 10 families. The highway is used as a freight road for the R.C.A.F. and army rations and other government utilities, officials stated.

1955
The Alaska Legislature holds a constitutional convention and drafts a constitution in its push for statehood.

1956
Alaskans ratify the State constitution and one Representative and two Senators are sent to the U.S. Congress. The first U.S. Senators from Alaska are former Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening and William A. Egan; the President of the Constitutional Convention. Alaskans send Ralph J. Rivers, a former Territorial Attorney General, as their U.S. Representative. The Congressional delegation still cannot vote, but the group lobbies in Washington, D.C. to secure statehood.

May 2, 1956
The new Nisutlin Bay Bridge at Teslin opens.



The new and old Nisutlin Bay Bridges, ca. 1956

HERE! NEW TASK·FORCE 57 CHEVROLET TRUCKS



The fleet that conquered the Alcan Highway

Here's proof—straight from an AAA-certified rough and tough test run—that new 1957 Chevrolet trucks have the power, performance and stamina to increase hauling efficiency on any job!

With their first steps, new '57 Task-Force trucks proved their greatness. Six payload-carrying models, lightweights, mediums and heavies, roared up the entire length of the 1,520-mile Alcan Highway (normally a 72-hour run) in less than 45 hours—and with gas mileage ranging up to 18.17 miles per gallon!

Chassis components (frames, steering, suspensions) were subjected to twisting, torturous miles of rutted, rough going. Engines and transmissions (including Chevrolet's new 160-h.p., 283-cu.-in. Taskmaster V8) were severely tested over an obstacle course of mud and pounding gravel, up towering grades and through treacherous washouts. One heavy-duty Task-Force model, equipped with Chevrolet's revolutionary 6-speed Powermatic (automatic transmission), traveled the entire length of the Alcan Highway—up and down the steepest slopes—in a single forward-speed range!

And these rugged new Chevrolet trucks came through, conquered the Alcan in a history-making round-the-clock run! See the Alcan champs in person at your Chevrolet dealer's! . . . Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Michigan.



Whether your job calls for fast-working efficiency against tight schedules, or big muscles for off-the-road grinds—Chevy's got the *proved* answers!

PROVED ON THE ALCAN HIGHWAY CHEVROLET CHAMPS OF EVERY WEIGHT CLASS!

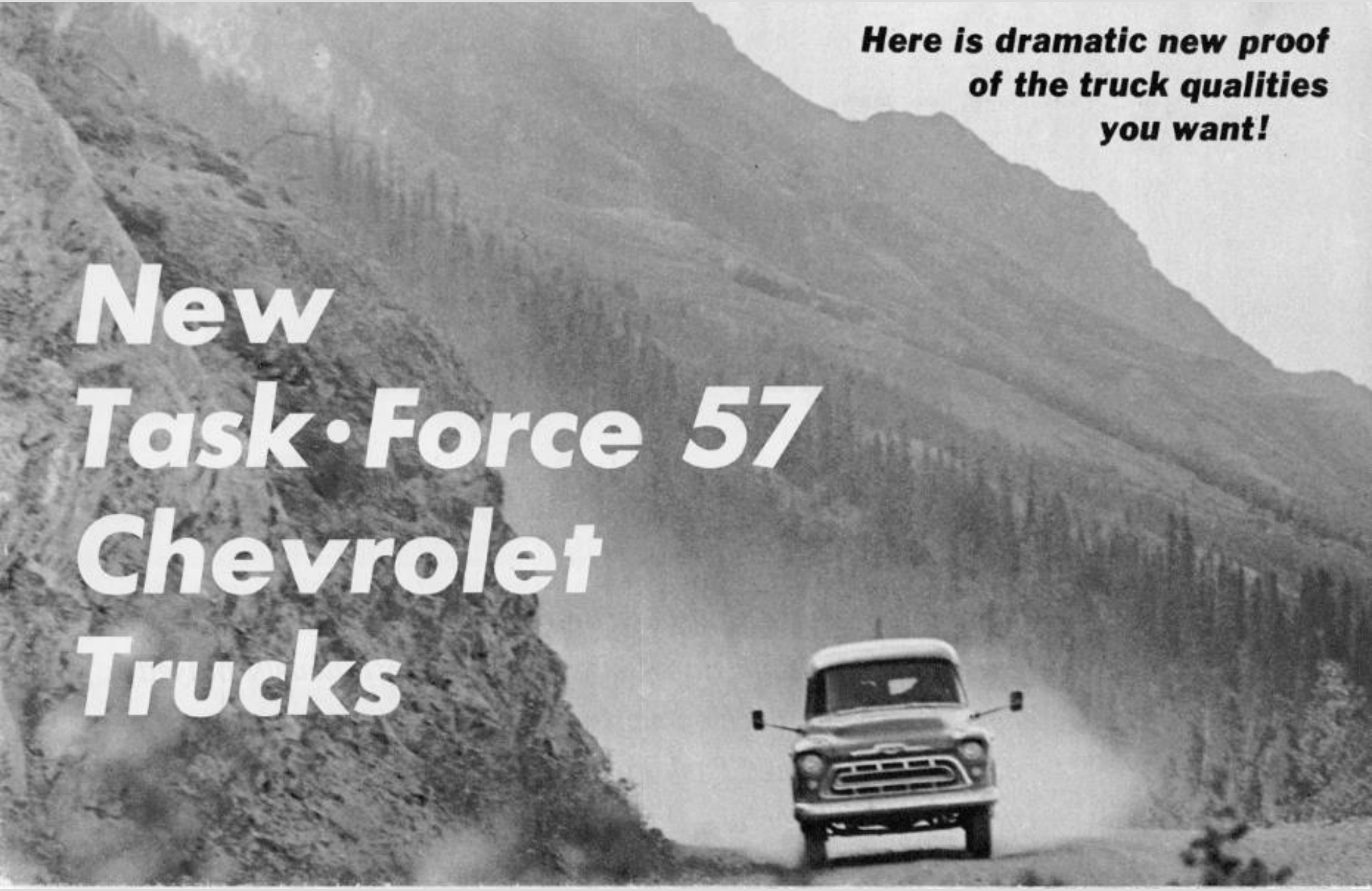
October 16, 1957
The Peace River Bridge collapses.

1957
*The fleet that conquered the Alcan Highway…*Chevrolet sent a fleet of 1957 trucks, from pickups to 5-tons, up the highway and used the results of the trip extensively in their advertising program.

In order to promote the toughness of its full line of trucks, Chevrolet sent a convoy - the "57 Task Force fleet" - up the Alaska Highway, making the 1,523-mile run from Dawson Creek, B.C., to Fairbanks, Alaska, in less than 45 hours. The trucks used included:

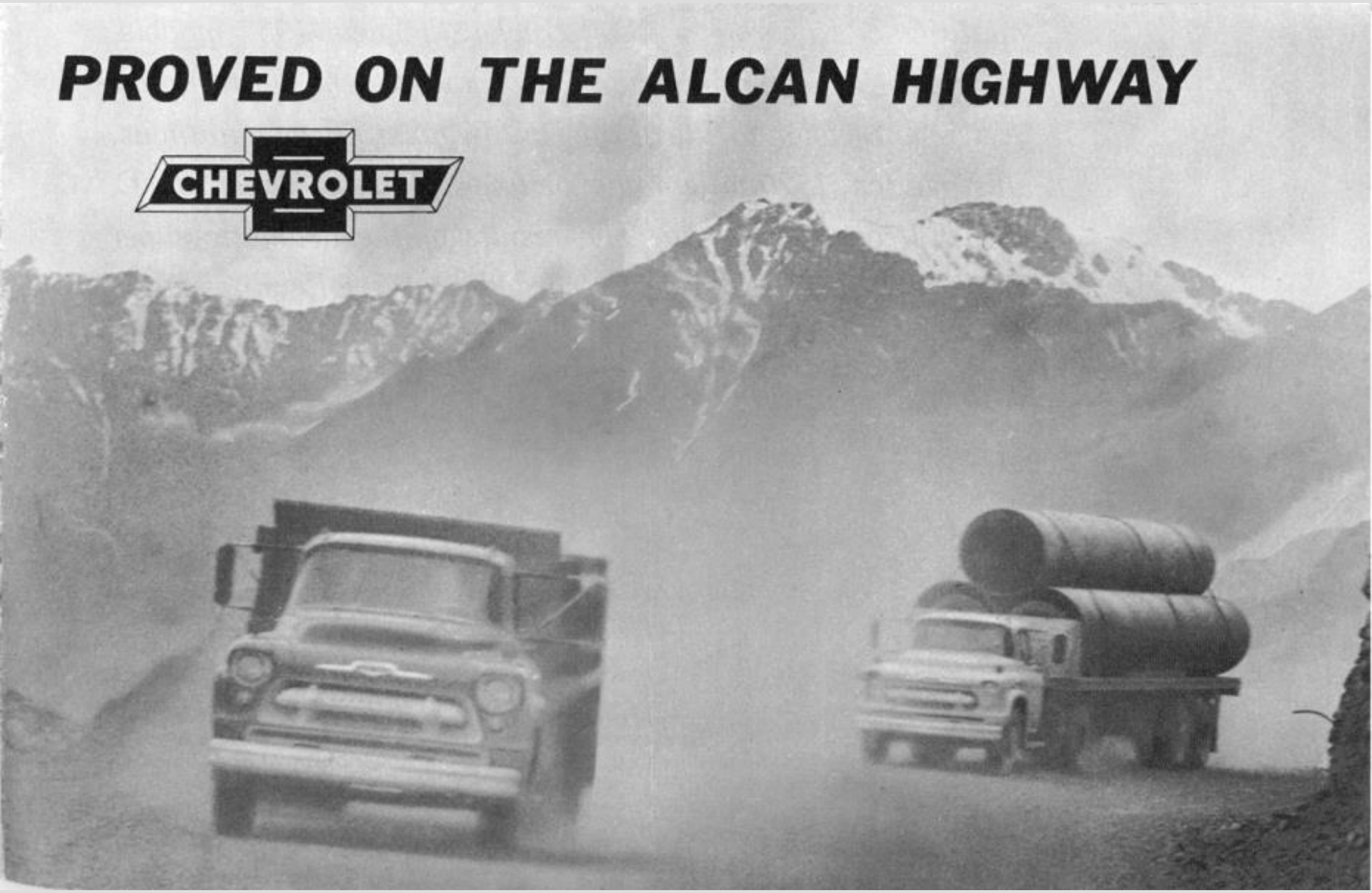
- **Cameo Carrier pickup;**
- **1-ton panel truck;**
- **Dump-body tandem axle truck**
- **Van-panel-body Low Cab Forward;**
- **High-speed transmission tractor-trailer;**
- **Tractor-trailer with the new Powermatic transmission.**

Chevrolet's Marketing Department sought a dramatic way to prove the stamina and power of their new truck lineup, which included the GM Division's "Powermatic" automatic transmission option. They decided on an ambitious adventure-travelogue theme; a format they would use again for a later "Baja Run" (1963). Instead of keeping testing on a private proving ground, Chevrolet conducted this "test" as a highly public, real-world demonstration. The novelty was in the transparency and the extreme conditions of the open road, which was largely untamed and required significant preparation and resilience from both the vehicles and the drivers. The fleet completed the challenging 1,523-mile journey in less than 45 hours; a remarkable time for the era, especially given the road conditions.


Here is dramatic new proof
of the truck qualities
you want!
New
Task·Force 57
Chevrolet
Trucks

PROVED ON THE ALCAN HIGHWAY

CHEVROLET



The story behind a new kind of truck test—

the Chevrolet Alcan Run!

Extensive testing at ultramodern proving grounds in Michigan, Arizona and Colorado has continuously played a key role in the development of America's most popular load pullers—Chevrolet Task-Force trucks. This year, however, an additional test site—the Alcan Highway to Alaska—was selected as a super proving ground to test the performance qualities of Chevrolet's finest trucks, the new 1957 models. Six new 1957 pre-production Chevies were sent North under AAA supervision to "do or die" on the twisting, mountainous, dust-ridden 1520-mile route between Dawson Creek, B. C. and Fairbanks, Alaska. The results of the dramatic super truck tests are graphically recorded on the following pages.

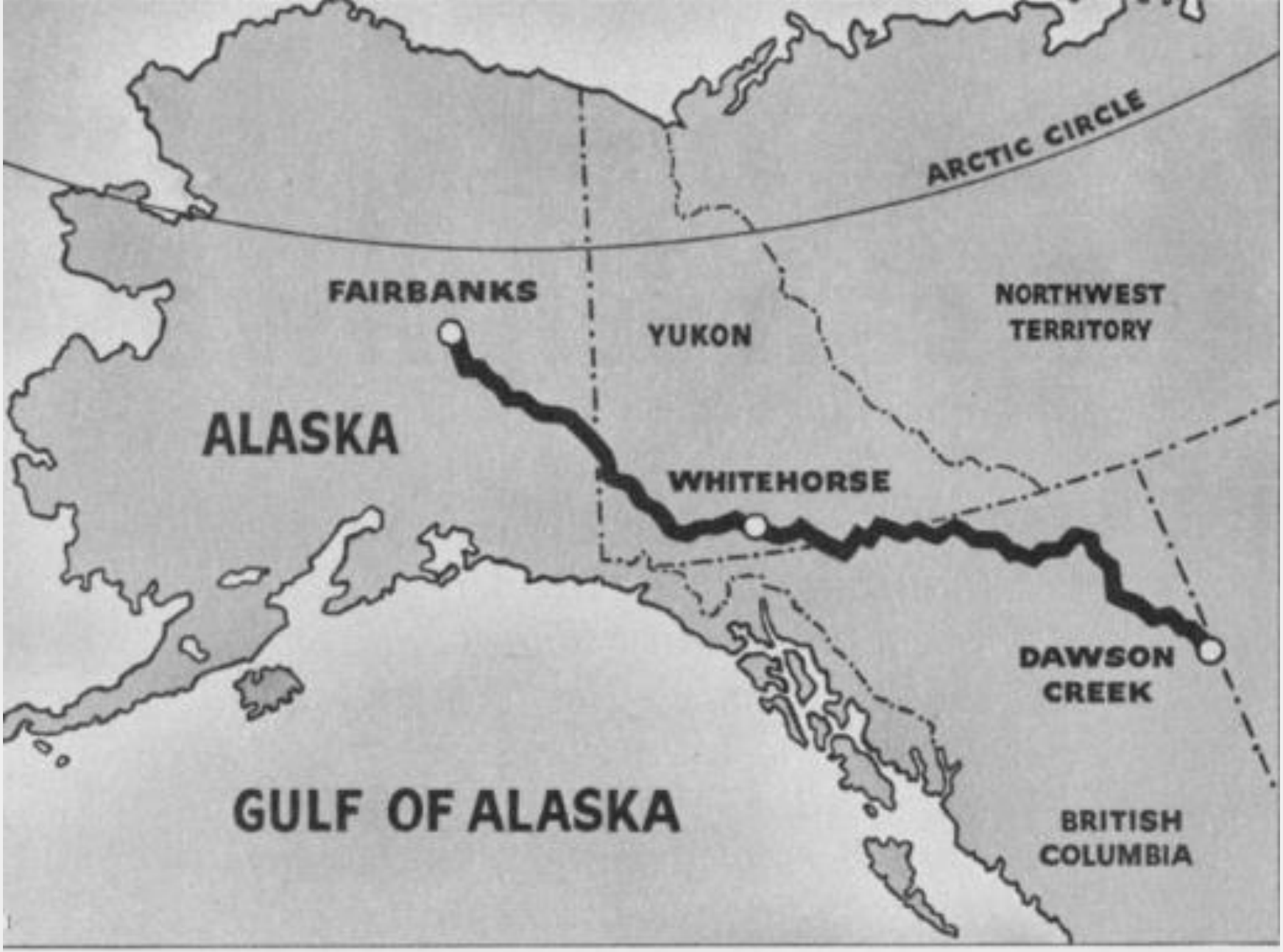


The AAA sanctioned this history-making test!

From Detroit to Fairbanks and back again, AAA officials supervised all phases of the test and tabulated results with painstaking accuracy. First the trucks were checked to make certain that all components were regular items of standard production. Trucks were sealed at the GM proving ground, driven all the way to Dawson Creek, B. C., start of the Alcan run, and inspected again. Results of the Alcan run were then carefully checked and certified by AAA officials who accompanied the trucks. At the completion of the run, the trucks were driven back over the same route to Detroit, where further AAA inspections were made.

1520 of the world's toughest miles . . .

the route of Chevrolet's Alcan Test Fleet!



Here, across the top of the world, pre-production 1957 Chevrolet Task-Force trucks set new standards of efficient power-performance!

The Alcan Highway to Alaska tested Chevrolet trucks as they have never been tested before . . . proved that Chevy for 1957 is ready and able to bring you a new kind of power-packed, low-maintenance hauling!

The six trucks tested were equipped only with options and accessories available through any Chevrolet dealer, and each truck carried cargo typical for its weight class. Maintaining a steady, gruelling pace, they crossed mountains, pushed through mire, rain and hail, traveled over hundreds of miles of roads choked with dust and deeply rutted by recent washouts.

Each truck component was forced to perform to the utmost of its capacity, and *all* trucks came through with flying colors! In the light-duty models, the engines were not stopped once during the entire 1520-mile ordeal, yet at the finish they ran just as smoothly and quietly as they did at the start! In the heavier trucks, the new 283-cubic-inch Super Taskmaster V8 and the big Super Loadmaster V8 performed superbly all the way in spite of the truck-killing conditions.

Revolutionary Powermatic transmission virtually eliminated manual gearshifting, even on Yukon mountains, to prove that it offers you a *new kind* of easier, safer big-truck operation. And new Triple-Torque tandems, rear axles, brakes and tubeless tires stood up to the worst the Alcan Highway has to offer . . . finished strong and ready for more!

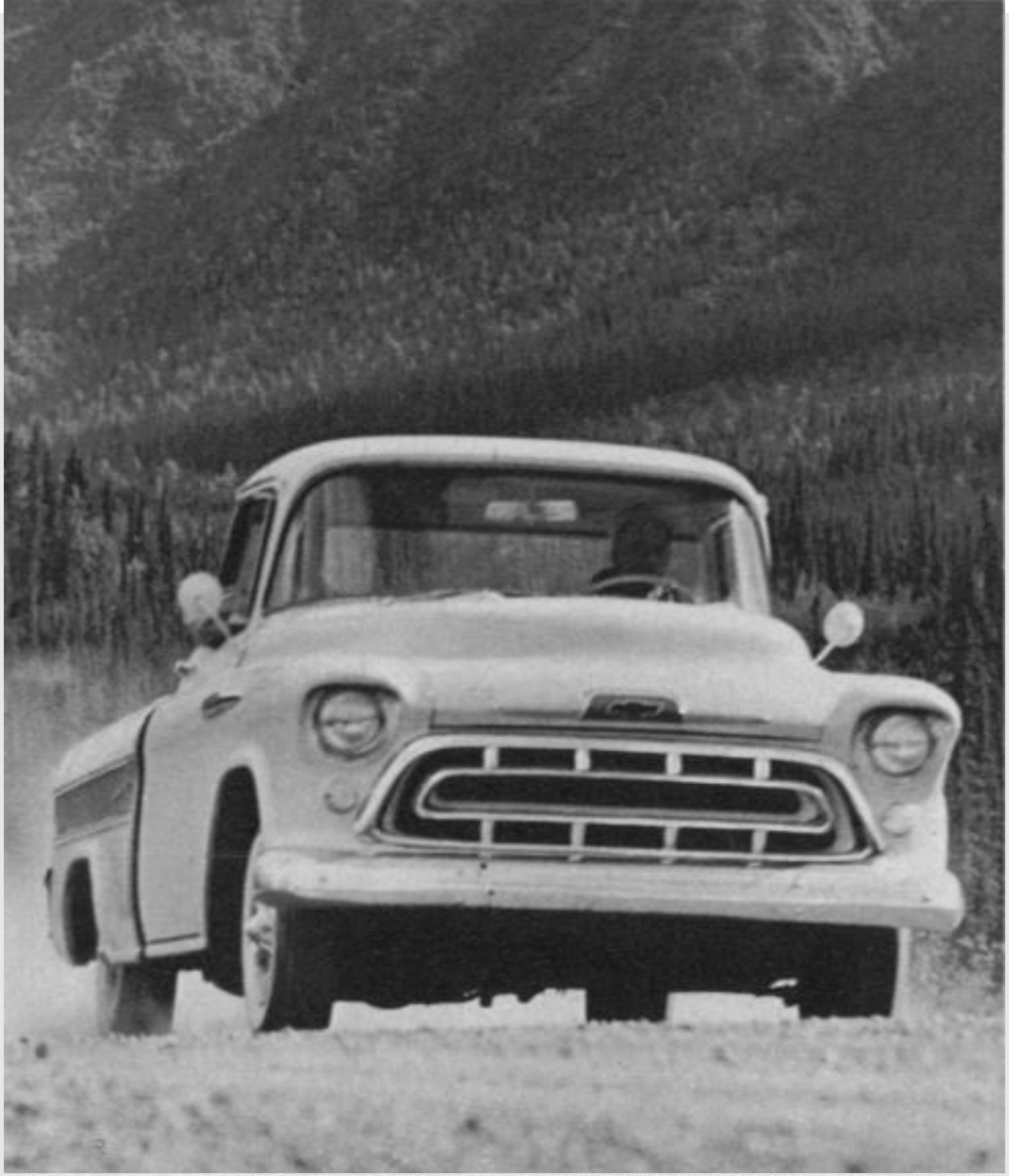
These '57 Task-Force champs wrote a whole new chapter in the history of hauling as they completed the tortuous grind (a normal 72-hour trip) in less than 45 hours without one single truck dropping out because of mechanical failure!



Here's how new Chevrolet trucks conquered
"The road where trucks grow old before their time!"

Running round the clock, six traveled the Alcan Highway

Two days of steady, round-the-clock hauling on the Alcan Highway can seem an eternity. The rough road knifes through the wilderness endlessly; the blinding dust, the towering hills—with rain, hail and treacherous washouts in between—test the fiber of trucks and men. But the Task-Force champs took it all in stride and enabled their drivers to do the same!



Here's the 1957 Chevrolet Cameo Carrier, maintaining a steady, gruelling pace through the Yukon wilderness. This truck, powered by the famous Thriftmaster 6, averaged over 18 miles to the gallon on the Alcan Highway, though its engine was not turned off once during the run!



Stops for refueling were made at normal intervals, and were controlled by AAA officials who accompanied the trucks. Whenever necessary, the trucks used gas from the same pumps which serve other travelers on the highway.

The scenic grandeur of the Canadian Rockies added a note of pleasure to the long grind. Often, however, dust, rain and hail restricted the view from the steadily rolling trucks.



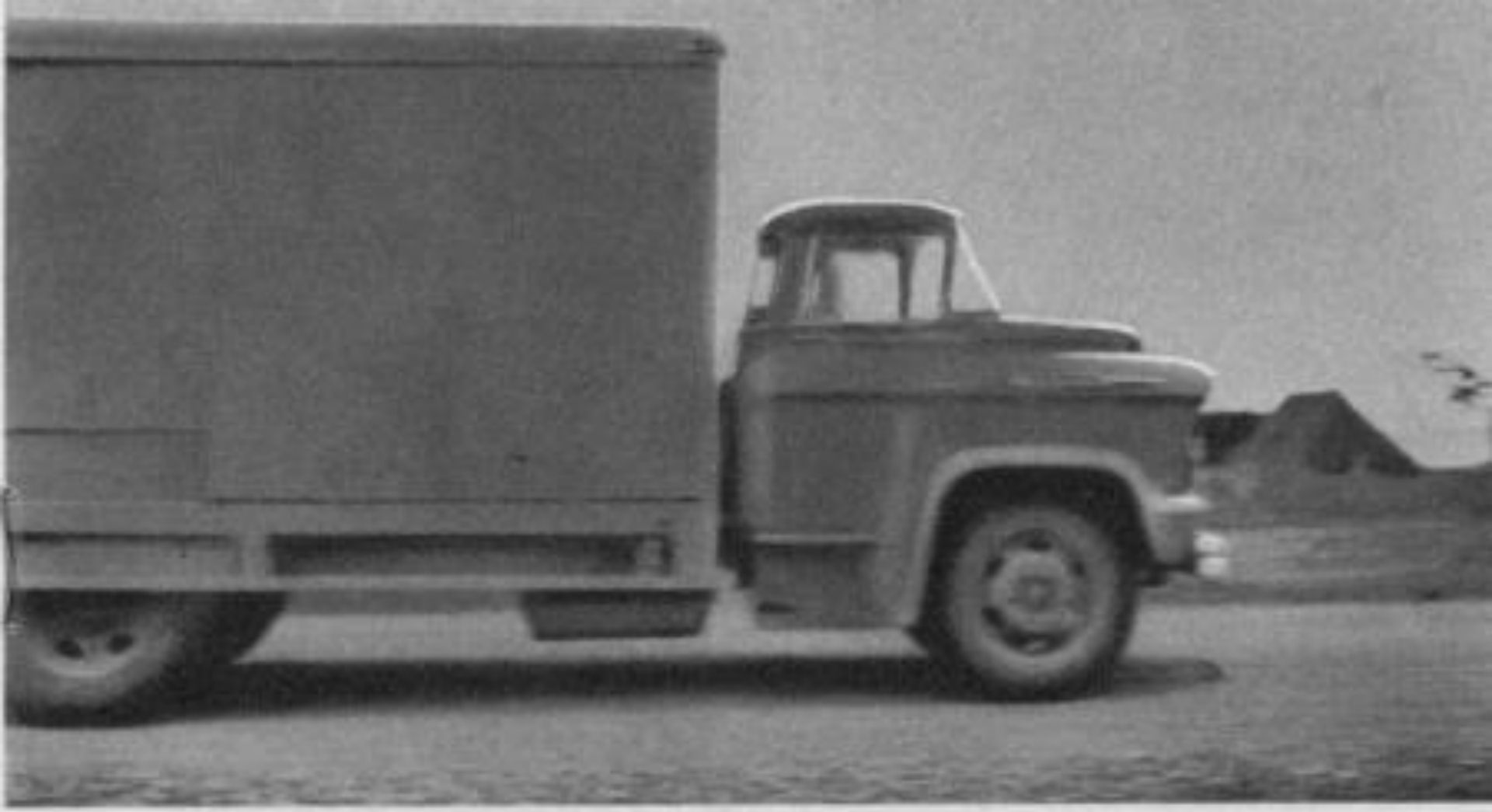
Occasional Indian huts dotted the wilderness route; the people of the Yukon watched the convoy roll by, unaware that they were observing modern truck performance at its best!



The 1000-square-inch Chevrolet truck panoramic windshield contributed much to driving ease and safety. This *wide* expanse of safety glass gave good visibility on a road where it's a necessity!



new '57 Chevrolet trucks in less than 45 hours!



Truck performance remained virtually flawless through this primitive "land of the midnight sun." Here, a 1957 L.C.F. model with new 283-cubic-inch Super Taskmaster V8 roars on through the late hours as the bright horizon silhouettes a tiny village.



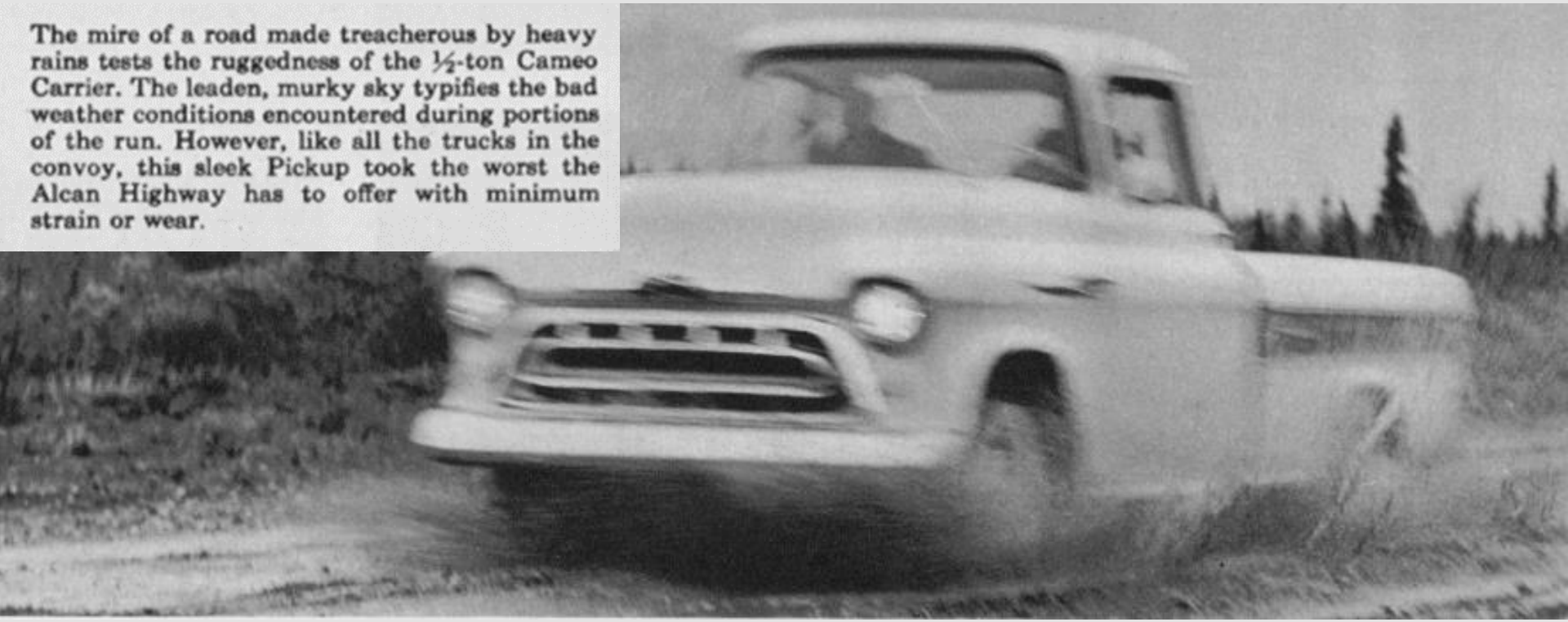
Dust and more dust. At times, the choking haze that rose from the dry roadbed limited visibility to a few hundred feet. Yet no special air filtering systems were used; each engine was equipped only with standard components as offered by Chevrolet.



Not a moment is wasted as this driver is replaced by his relief man. The official AAA report states: "No attempt was made to attain higher than legal speeds and since the entire fleet was operated as a caravan . . . the 1520-mile run was accomplished in excellent time."



Fairbanks, Alaska! All six trucks completed the run in less than 45 hours after leaving Dawson Creek, B. C. The AAA reports: "Despite the severity of the test under the most adverse road conditions not a single truck turned back or dropped out because of mechanical failure."



The mire of a road made treacherous by heavy rains tests the ruggedness of the ½-ton Cameo Carrier. The leaden, murky sky typifies the bad weather conditions encountered during portions of the run. However, like all the trucks in the convoy, this sleek Pickup took the worst the Alcan Highway has to offer with minimum strain or wear.

Special Alcan Test shows new Trucks champs in every way



In this truck, the brand-new 283-cubic-inch Super Taskmaster V8 demonstrated tremendous torque and a vast reserve of power as it conquered the steepest grades with jackrabbit agility.



Here she comes—a brawny new heavy-duty model powered by the big 210-h.p. Super Loadmaster V8. In spite of the adverse conditions, this engine performed superbly.



This heavily loaded Series 10000 model with tandem option and dump body provided revolutionary driving ease! The Powermatic transmission virtually eliminated manual shifting on upgrades!

Flite-Ride Custom cabs kept drivers comfortable. Modern Nu-Flex seats with deep-comfort coil springs and foam rubber cushions eased long spells at the wheel. And High-Level ventilation, with its wide intake at the bottom of the windshield, minimized the discomfort of Alcan dust and road heat.



Here's the most advanced tandem option in the industry, now proved on the Alcan Highway. Chevrolet Triple-Torque tandems boost G.V.W.'s to 32,000 lbs. and assure truer tire tracking on highway curves for better handling. They're rugged yet simple in design to handle your biggest jobs with ease!





This truck was equipped with Chevrolet's revolutionary Powermatic transmission. Thus, on mountainous downgrades the driver was able to control truck speed with the hydraulic retarder. He enjoyed a new kind of hauling ease and safety and he minimized service brake wear, too!



"Tubeless tires of the latest design were specified for all trucks," the official AAA report states. "Over the entire 1520-mile run, not a single tubeless tire failure of any kind was encountered." Tubeless tires are standard on *all* 1957 Chevrolet truck models!

Task·Force 57 Chevrolet . . . in every weight class!

Here's the Chevrolet Alcan convoy as it roared through the silence of a virgin wasteland. On this super test track, no truck part got off easy; each was forced to perform to the utmost of its capacity. And all trucks came through with true championship performance!

A special test featured these two heavyweights. One truck, equipped with Powermatic, was driven the entire length of the Alcan Highway in a single forward speed range—the Selector Lever was never moved from DRIVE position, except when the truck was started in neutral or backed up! In the other truck, the 5-speed manual transmission and 2-speed axle registered 1560 separate shifts during the trip. These 1560 shifts represent driver's work that was almost completely eliminated by Powermatic!



At the completion of each refueling, fuel tanks were carefully sealed. AAA officials who accompanied the trucks supervised all phases of the run and controlled the tabulation of data on gas mileage, elapsed time, engine tests, Powermatic tests, etc.



Here is the official AAA certificate of performance, as certified by the Contest Board. It fully substantiates the great performance of 1957 Chevrolet Task-Force trucks on the world's most challenging road—the Alcan Highway to Alaska.



Contest Board

of the

American Automobile Association

Washington, D. C.

CERTIFICATE OF PERFORMANCE

The undersigned Certify in the name of the

Contest Board, American Automobile Association

that

FIRST with the MOST modern features

Again in '57, Chevrolet Task-Force trucks—the sales leaders since 1937—are moving out front with modern components that assure the last word in low-cost high-profit truck operation. For example, standard features for 1957 include such up-to-the-minute items as:

- **Modern short-stroke V8's and high-compression, high-horsepower 6's**
- **Trouble-free tubeless tires**
- **Smooth, durable Synchro-Mesh transmissions**
- **Agile Ball-Gear steering**
- **Safe, sure Torque-Action and Twin-Action brakes**
- **High-output 12-volt electrical systems**
- **Comfortable Flite-Ride cabs with concealed Safety Steps, panoramic windshield, high-level ventilation system**

And here are just a few of the many advanced extra-cost options provided by 1957 Chevrolet trucks:

- **No-shift Hydra-Matic transmission**
- **Revolutionary Powermatic transmission**
- **Easy Hydrovac power brakes**
- **New Full-Air brakes and cast-spoke wheels**
- **Powerful Air-Hydraulic brakes**
- **Effortless power steering**

The "Big Wheel" in trucks!



PROVED ON THE ALCAN HIGHWAY

Champs of every weight class



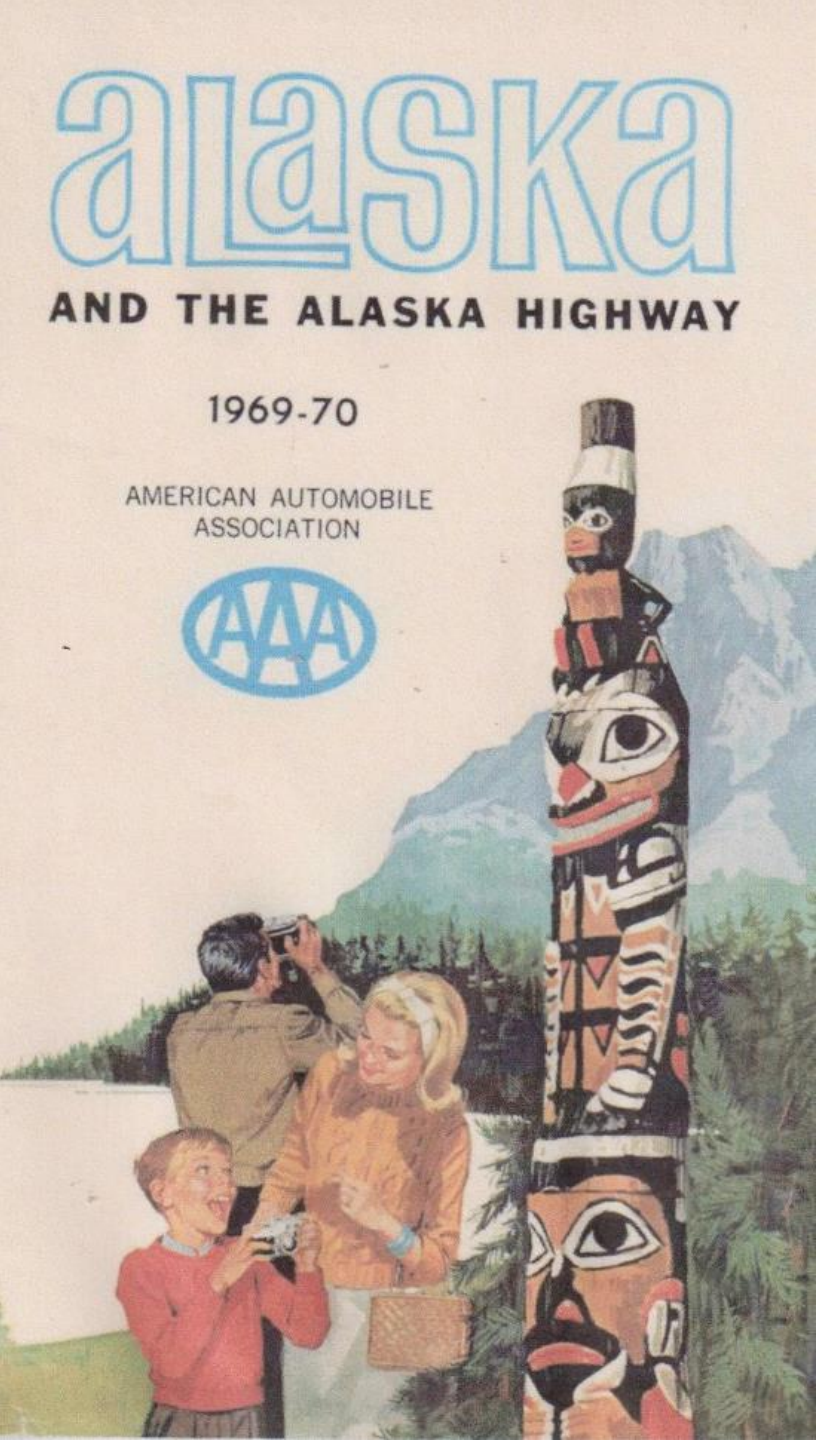
May 28, 1958
The U.S. House of Representatives passes the Alaska statehood bill.

June 30, 1958
The U.S. Senate passes the Alaska statehood bill. A week later, on July 7, President Dwight Eisenhower will sign the bill into law.

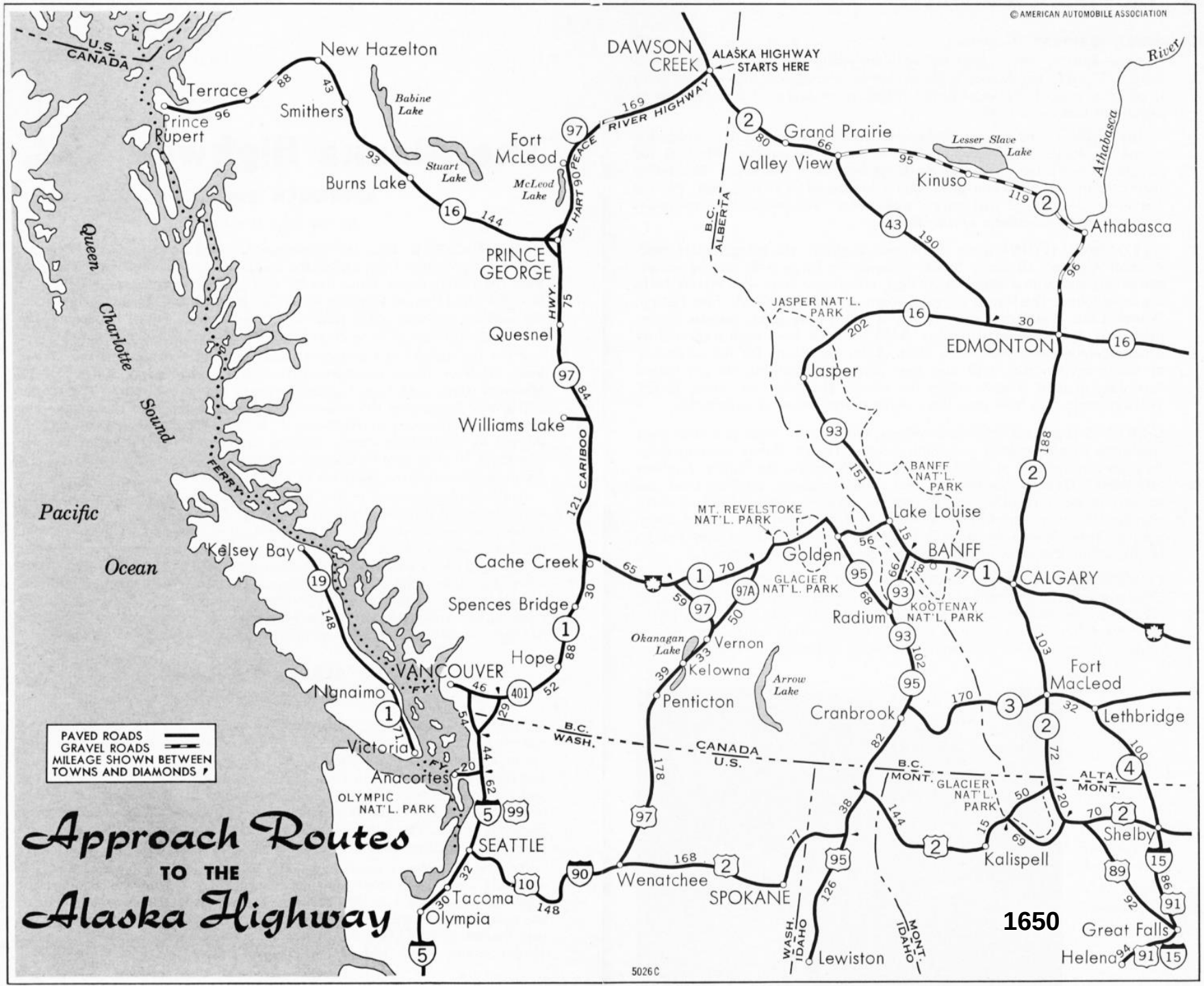
August 26, 1958
Alaskans head to the polls in a special election to affirm their wish for statehood. With heavy voter turnout, Alaskans approve of becoming a State by a six-to-one margin.

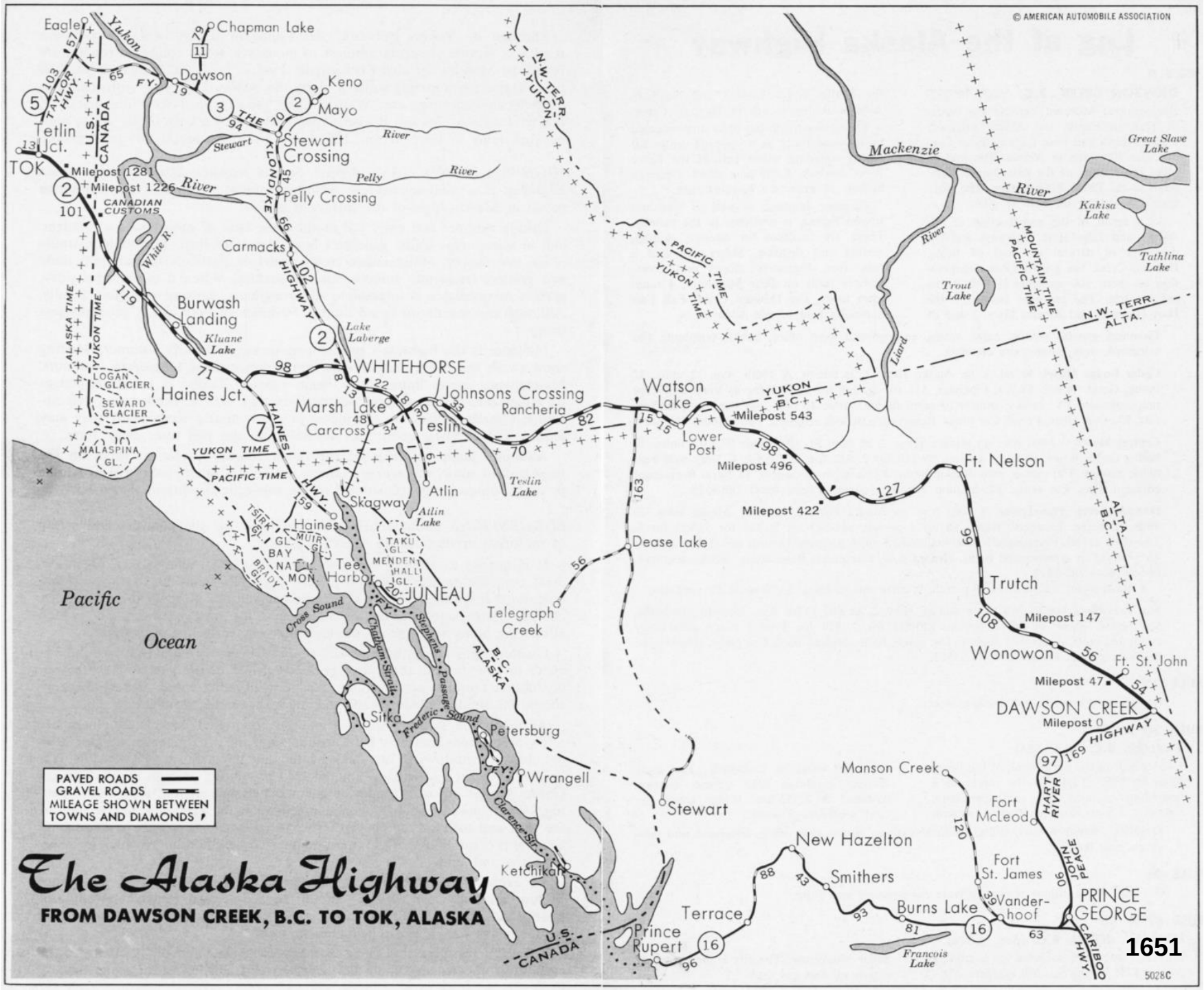
January 3, 1959
Alaska is officially proclaimed the 49th U.S. State. More than 25 percent of the State's land is titled to the Alaskan government.

April 1, 1964
In a ceremony at the same location in Whitehorse as the one transferring the Alaska Highway from the United States Army to the Canadian Army in 1946, the highway was transferred from the Canadian Army to the Department of Public Works.

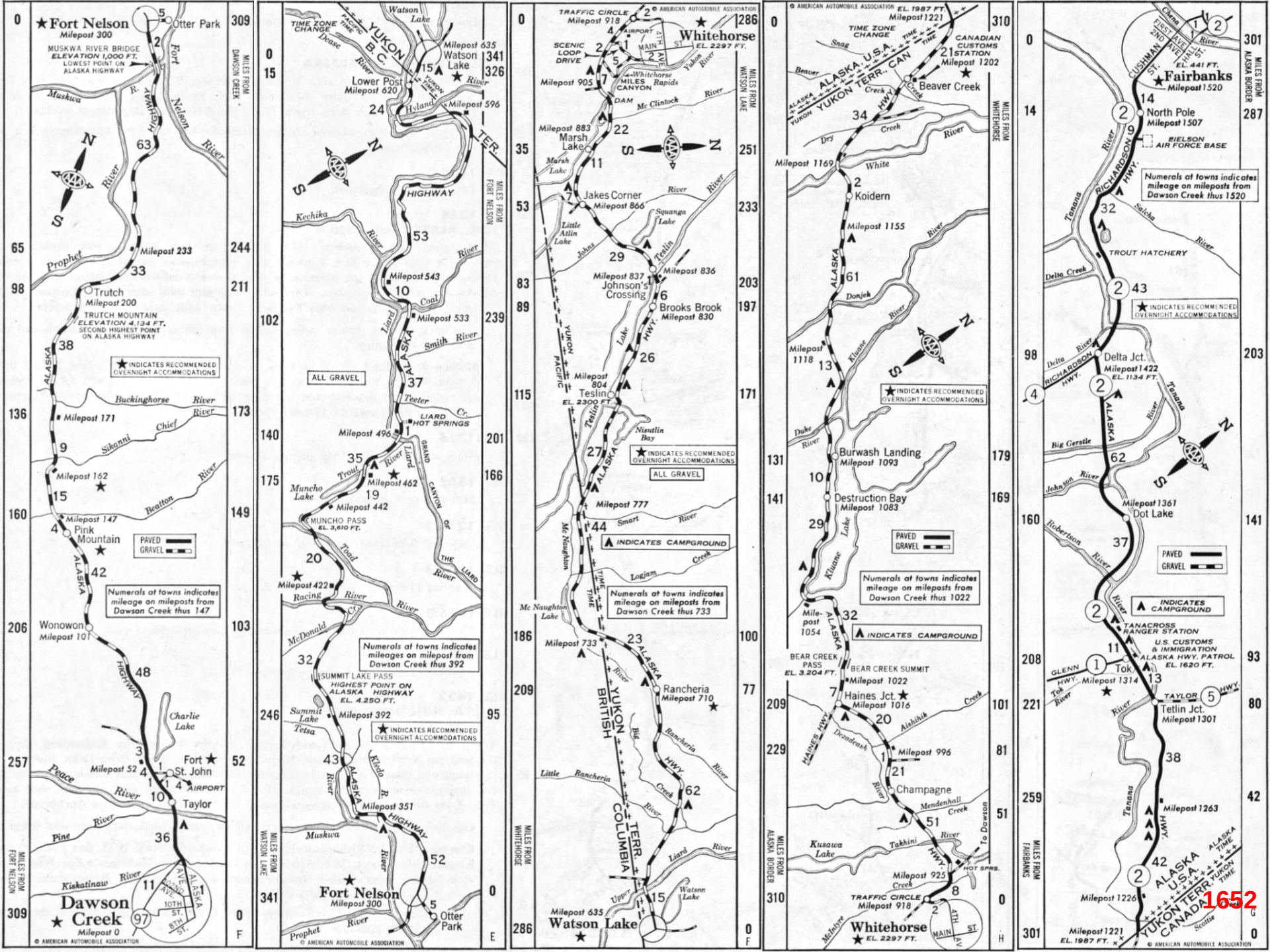


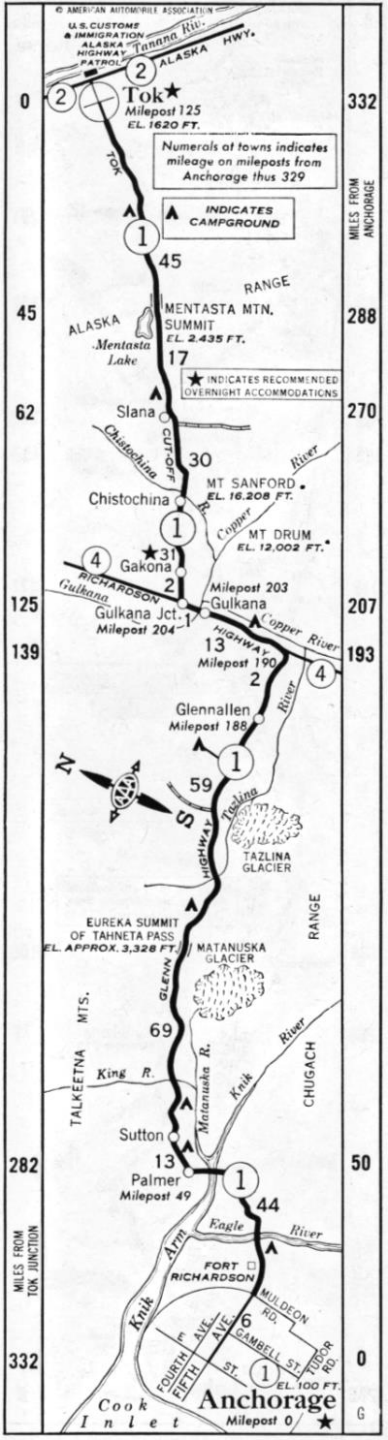
The following maps/strip-maps were published in the AAA's 80-page brochure entitled: "Alaska and the Alaska Highway 1969-70"


© AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
U.S. CANADA
New Hazelton
Terrace
Prince Rupert
Smithers
Babine Lake
Stuart Lake
Burns Lake
Fort McLeod
McLeod Lake
DAWSON CREEK
ALASKA HIGHWAY STARTS HERE
RIVER HIGHWAY
PEACE
J. HART
Grand Prairie
Valley View
Lesser Slave Lake
Kinuso
Athabasca
Athabasca River
B.C. ALBERTA
PRINCE GEORGE
HWY. 75
Quesnel
Williams Lake
CARIBOO
JASPER NAT'L. PARK
EDMONTON
Jasper
BANFF NAT'L. PARK
Lake Louise
MT. REVELSTOKE NAT'L. PARK
Golden
GLACIER NAT'L. PARK
BANFF
CALGARY
KOOTENAY NAT'L. PARK
Radium
Queen Charlotte Sound
FERRY
Pacific Ocean
Kelsey Bay
Cache Creek
Spences Bridge
Hope
Okanagan Lake
Vernon
Kelowna
Penticton
Arrow Lake
VANCOUVER
FY.
Nanaimo
Victoria
Anacortes
OLYMPIC NAT'L. PARK
Cranbrook
Fort MacLeod
Lethbridge
B.C. WASH.
CANADA U.S.
B.C. MONT.
GLACIER NAT'L. PARK
ALTA. MONT.
Shelby
Kalispell
SEATTLE
Tacoma
Olympia
Wenatchee
SPOKANE
Lewiston
WASH. IDAHO
MONT. IDAHO
Great Falls
Helena
PAVED ROADS
GRAVEL ROADS
MILEAGE SHOWN BETWEEN TOWNS AND DIAMONDS
Approach Routes TO THE Alaska Highway
1650
5026C


© AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
The Alaska Highway
FROM DAWSON CREEK, B.C. TO TOK, ALASKA
PAVED ROADS
GRAVEL ROADS
MILEAGE SHOWN BETWEEN TOWNS AND DIAMONDS
Eagle
Yukon
Chapman Lake
Dawson
Keno
Mayo
Tetlin Jct.
TOK
Milepost 1281
Milepost 1226
Stewart Crossing
Pelly Crossing
Stewart River
Pelly River
Carmacks
Burwash Landing
Kluane Lake
White R.
Lake Laberge
WHITEHORSE
Haines Jct.
Marsh Lake
Carcross
Johnsons Crossing
Rancheria
Teslin
Teslin Lake
Atlin
Atlin Lake
Skagway
Haines
Tee Harbor
JUNEAU
Pacific Ocean
Crose Sound
Chatham Strait
Stephens Passage
Frederic Sound
Sitka
Petersburg
Wrangell
Clarence Str.
Ketchikan
Telegraph Creek
Dease Lake
Watson Lake
Lower Post
Milepost 543
Milepost 496
Milepost 422
Ft. Nelson
Trutch
Milepost 147
Wonowon
Ft. St. John
Milepost 47
DAWSON CREEK
Milepost 0
Stewart
Manson Creek
Fort McLeod
New Hazelton
Smithers
Fort St. James
Vanderhoof
Burns Lake
Terrace
Prince Rupert
PRINCE GEORGE
Francois Lake
Trout Lake
Liard River
Mackenzie River
Great Slave Lake
Kakisa Lake
Tathlina Lake
Lake Teslin
Kluane Lake
Atlin Lake
Francois Lake
N.W. TERR.
YUKON
B.C.
ALTA.
ALASKA
U.S.
CANADA
ALASKA TIME
YUKON TIME
PACIFIC TIME
MOUNTAIN TIME
TAYLOR HWY.
KLONDIKE HIGHWAY
ALASKA HIGHWAY
HAINES HWY.
HART HIGHWAY
JOHN HART HIGHWAY
CARIBOO HWY.
CANADIAN CUSTOMS
LOGAN GLACIER
SEWARD GLACIER
MALASPINA GL.
TSIRKU GL.
MUIR GL.
BRADY GL.
TAKU GL.
MENDENHALL GL.
BAY
NAT'L MON.
B.C. ALASKA
5028C

1651


Fort Nelson
Milepost 300
Otter Park
MUSKWA RIVER BRIDGE
ELEVATION 1,000 FT.
LOWEST POINT ON ALASKA HIGHWAY
Milepost 233
Trutch
Milepost 200
TRUTCH MOUNTAIN
ELEVATION 4,134 FT.
SECOND HIGHEST POINT ON ALASKA HIGHWAY
INDICATES RECOMMENDED OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS
Milepost 171
Milepost 162
Milepost 147
Pink Mountain
PAVED
GRAVEL
Numerals at towns indicates mileage on mileposts from Dawson Creek thus 147
Wonowon
Milepost 101
Milepost 52
Fort St. John
AIRPORT
Taylor
Dawson Creek
Milepost 0
© AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
TIME ZONE CHANGE
YUKON B.C.
Watson Lake
Milepost 635
Lower Post
Milepost 620
Hyland
Milepost 596
HIGHWAY
Milepost 543
Milepost 533
ALL GRAVEL
LIARD HOT SPRINGS
Milepost 496
Milepost 462
MUNCHO PASS
EL. 3,610 FT.
Milepost 442
Milepost 422
Numerals at towns indicates mileages on milepost from Dawson Creek thus 392
SUMMIT LAKE PASS
HIGHEST POINT ON ALASKA HIGHWAY
EL. 4,250 FT.
Milepost 392
INDICATES RECOMMENDED OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS
Milepost 351
Fort Nelson
Milepost 300
Otter Park
TRAFFIC CIRCLE
Milepost 918
Whitehorse
EL. 2297 FT.
SCENIC LOOP DRIVE
MILES CANYON
Whitehorse Rapids
DAM
Milepost 905
Milepost 883
Marsh Lake
Jakes Corner
Milepost 866
Milepost 837
Johnson's Crossing
Milepost 836
Brooks Brook
Milepost 830
Milepost 804
Teslin
EL. 2300 FT.
INDICATES RECOMMENDED OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS
ALL GRAVEL
INDICATES CAMPGROUND
Milepost 777
Numerals at towns indicates mileage on mileposts from Dawson Creek thus 733
Milepost 733
Rancheria
Milepost 710
Milepost 635
Watson Lake
© AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION EL. 1987 FT.
Milepost 1221
TIME ZONE CHANGE
CANADIAN CUSTOMS STATION
Milepost 1202
Beaver Creek
Milepost 1169
Koidern
Milepost 1155
Milepost 1118
INDICATES RECOMMENDED OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS
Burwash Landing
Milepost 1093
Destruction Bay
Milepost 1083
PAVED
GRAVEL
Numerals at towns indicates mileage on mileposts from Dawson Creek thus 1022
Milepost 1054
INDICATES CAMPGROUND
BEAR CREEK PASS
EL. 3,204 FT.
BEAR CREEK SUMMIT
Milepost 1022
Haines Jct.
Milepost 1016
Milepost 996
Champagne
Milepost 925
TRAFFIC CIRCLE
Milepost 918
Whitehorse
EL. 2297 FT.
Numerals at towns indicates mileage on mileposts from Dawson Creek thus 1520
Chena
FIRST AVE.
2ND AVE.
HALIF.
EL. 441 FT.
Fairbanks
Milepost 1520
North Pole
Milepost 1507
EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE
RICHARDSON HWY.
TROUT HATCHERY
Delta Jct.
Milepost 1422
EL. 1134 FT.
INDICATES RECOMMENDED OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS
Milepost 1361
Dot Lake
PAVED
GRAVEL
INDICATES CAMPGROUND
TANACROSS RANGER STATION
U.S. CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION
ALASKA HWY. PATROL
EL. 1620 FT.
Tok
Milepost 1314
TAYLOR HWY.
Tetlin Jct.
Milepost 1301
Milepost 1263
Milepost 1226
ALASKA U.S.A.
YUKON TERR. CANADA
Milepost 1221
EL. 1987 FT.
1652



Left: there was also a strip-map of the Tok cut-off and Glenn Highway; from Tok to Anchorage, AK



May 30, 1992

50th Anniversary Alaska Highway stamp issued. The U.S. Postal Service commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the completion of the Alaska Highway with the issue of a 29-cent commemorative stamp in Fairbanks, Alaska. The design of the 29-cent postage stamp commemorating the 50th anniversary of the completion of the Alaska Highway was released in December 1991, with the stamp issued for circulation on May 30, 1992, at Fairbanks, Alaska. Designed by Byron Birdsall, the stamps were printed in offset/intaglio process by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and issued in panes of fifty. A total of 146,-610,000 stamps were issued.

“The U.S. Postal Service this year commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Highway, one of the great engineering collaborations of this century, with a new 29-cent postage stamp. The stamp, based on a 1942 Department of the Army photo, was designed by Byron Birdsall, the first Alaska artist ever to win such a distinction. In the planning stages since May 1930, the Alaskan Highway did not actually begin construction until March 1942. The 1500-mile highway was devised as a route for connecting army installations in Alaska with the United States during World War II. Despite the many hardships encountered by the 11,500 U.S. and Canadian troops and 7,500 civilians (natives, trappers, and prospectors alike), the pioneer road connecting Dawson Creek, British Columbia and Delta Junction, Alaska, was completed only eight months later, on October 25.”

“The scene depicted on the stamp is a vintage military vehicle traveling the new highway, with the Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains looming in the background. Opened for public use by passenger vehicles in 1949, the main Alaska Highway today connects the ports of Valdez, Seward and Haines with Alaska’s principal interior cities and military installations, while a secondary system connects more remote farming, mining, and industrial areas to the main network.“

USPS

June 5, 2001
A huge culvert, the largest of its type ever built, collapsed at Iron Creek (sometimes called Irons Creek), at Km 918.9 of the Alaska Highway, in British Columbia, about 40 km southeast of Watson Lake, closing the highway for 2 days.

2004
Alaska's total population is approximately 648,000 people, of which Alaska Natives account for just over 15 percent. Each year, about 360,000 people make the trek across the Alaska Highway.

2010
In 2010, Alaska's total population had risen to approximately 710,000 people, of which Alaska Natives still accounted for about 15 percent. Hundreds of thousands of visitors visit the Alaska Highway each year.

November 9, 2012
*Yukon portion of the Alaska Highway Dedicated to all War Veterans…*In partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 254, the Yukon government officially dedicated the Yukon portion of the Alaska Highway to all past, present and future war veterans.



<u>Above</u>: Yukon Legislative Assembly Speaker David Laxton, Legion Branch No. 254 President Darcy Grossinger, Highways and Public Works Minister Wade Istchenko, Whitehorse Legion Branch No. 254 past President Red Grossinger, Premier Darrell Pasloski and Commissioner Doug Phillips (L-to-R) with one of the new signs.

Historic Mileposts

Historic Mile 0 - Dawson Creek

- Start of the Alaska Highway; Dawson Creek Flight Strip; Public Roads Administration (PRA) offices; R. Melville Smith Camp; U.S. Engineers Camp; M.H.K.C.B. Construction Company Camp; Area No. 1 and 2 Army Camp; Dowell Construction Company Camp; U.S. Quartermaster Corps.
- In the spring of 1942, the ‘end of steel’ became a major terminus for troops, supplies and equipment arriving from Edmonton and destined for the north.

Historic Mile 2 - Cantel Repeater Station

- Cantel telephone-teletype lines stretched from Alberta to Fairbanks, making it one of the world’s longest open wire toll circuits at the time.

Historic Mile 21 - Kiskatinaw Bridge; Wallace A. Mackey Ltd.

- A 162-meter curved structure, one of the first of its kind in Canada, is the only original timber bridge built along the highway that is still in use today.

Historic Mile 35 - Taylor, BC

- Peace River Bridge; 1st Main Army Camp 341st Engineers
- Before the Peace was bridged in 1943, the ferry from Taylor served as the major link across the river. The original Peace River suspension bridge, the longest bridge on the highway, collapsed in 1957.
- In 2000, a memorial garden and cenotaph were dedicated as a veterans memorial generally, and to the 341st Engineers specifically.

Historic Mile 47 - Fort St. John

- In 1942, the population of Fort St. John suddenly exploded from 200 people to 6,000 with the construction of the camp for highway crews.
- As the southern sector headquarters for the United States military and the PRA, Fort St. John was the site of two large camps of tents and Quonset huts, erected in open fields just outside of town.

Historic Mile 49 - Camp Alcan

- Public Roads Administration HQ; Okes Management Contracting headquarters; Standard Salt & Cement Company; Coghlan Construction Company; M.G. Astleford Company; Southern Minnesota Construction Company; Art Bolier; Sorenson & Volden; R M. Smith Headquarters.

Historic Mile 52 - Charley Lake Mile 0 Army Tote Road

- Site of a major distribution camp for workers and supplies heading north.
- On May 14, 1942, 12 of the 17 men on a pontoon boat crossing the lake drowned after the boat sank. In 2008, a monument to commemorate the tragedy was built on the shore of the south end of Charlie Lake, in Ross McLean Rotary Park.

Historic Mile 73 - Beatton River Flight Strip

- One of the gravel air strips constructed to provide emergency landing facilities for American military aircraft heading north.

Historic Mile 101 - Blueberry Control Station

- Site of the Blueberry Control Gate, a 24-hour military checkpoint operated by U.S. Army personnel throughout the war years.
- The site is now the community of Wonowon - the name was taken from “101.”

Historic Mile 148 - Suicide Hill

* One of the most treacherous hills on the original highway, noted for its ominous greeting: “Prepare to Meet Thy Maker.”

Historic Mile 191 - Trutch Mountain Summit

- At 4,134-feet, the 2nd-highest summit on the original highway. The bypass route, completed in 1987, eliminated the steep, winding section of road.

Historic Mile 234 - Adsett Creek

- A major re-routing between here and mile 275, completed in 1992, eliminated 132 curves in the highway.

Historic Mile 300 - Fort Nelson

- End of Section “D,” start of Section “E,” which was contracted by the Don Construction Company. Called “Zero” by the troops because it was the beginning of the roads to Whitehorse and Fort Simpson. Home to approximately 2,000 troops during construction.

Historic Mile 392 - Summit Lake

* At 4,250-feet (1,295-meters), this is the highest summit on the highway.

Historic Mile 422 - Toad River

- Camp 138, Jupp Construction.
- The community was established by Dennis and John Callison, after guiding PRA Surveyors into the area in 1941.

Historic Mile 456 - Muncho Lake

- Refueling Stop and Checkpoint. The road around the lake was a particular challenge. Workers had to cut their way through the lake's rocky banks and use horse-drawn "stone boats" to haul the rock away.

Historic Mile 496 - Liard Hot Springs

- Site of a major construction camp. The natural hot springs were used by the troops daily, although once a week they left the springs to the women of the camp.

Historic Mile 514 - Smith River Bridge

* A narrow gravel side road just north of the bridge will take you 1.6 miles to Smith River Falls. About 22 air miles NNE of the bridge lies a mountain-ringed valley that has become known as Million Dollar Valley due to the forced land-ing/crash of 3 Martin B-26 Marauder bombers in 1942.

Historic Mile 533 - Coal River Bridge

- 1943, a sawmill along the Liard River cut timbers for the bridge over the Coal River as well as others in the area.
- Coal River Lodge opened in 1949 - still operating seasonally (2019).

Historic Mile 588 - Contact Creek

- On September 24, 1942, the soldiers of the 36th Regiment from the south and the 340th Regiment from the north met here, completing the southern section of the highway.

Historic Mile 627 - BC/Yukon Border Crossing

- Between Contact Creek and here, the highway crosses the border
- 7 times. This is the final, and official, crossing into the Yukon.

Historic Mile 635 - Watson Lake

- During the early years of World War II, the existing airfield at Watson Lake was expanded to accommodate the steady stream of fighter aircraft en route from the United States to Russia along the Northwest Staging Route.

Historic Mile 710 - Rancheria

- One of the first lodges to be built after the highway was opened to civilian traffic in 1947.

Historic Mile 836 – Johnson's Crossing

- The junction of the Alaska Highway and the Canol Road, which was part of the project to pipe oil from the Mackenzie River to a refinery at Whitehorse, then on to Fairbanks.

Historic Mile 910 - Macrae (or McCrae)

- There were 3 major construction camps in the area, the Utah Construction Company Camp, Camp 1-E and the K.C.B. Camp.

Historic Mile 918 - Whitehorse

- A major transportation hub since the Klondike Gold Rush, Whitehorse would become the capital of the Yukon Territory largely as a result of the Alaska Highway construction.

Historic Mile 974 - Champagne

- A historic Indian village, Champagne was in the center of one of the easiest sections of the highway to construct, due to both topography and to the fact that there was an existing wagon road that had been in use since 1902. The highway was re-routed to bypass Champagne in 2002.

Historic Mile 995 - Aishihik Road

* 17 miles north on this road which led to an airfield at Aishihik Lake is Otter Falls, featured on the 1954 Canadian $5 bill. You can see the falls and bill here.

Historic Mile 1016 - Haines Junction

- The Junction of the Alaska Highway with the Haines Road, a 160-mile highway built to access the coast, for supplying crews by ship.

Historic Mile 1053 - Silver City

- Barges and boats were used extensively to transport men and materials across Kluane Lake.

Historic Mile 1061 – Soldiers' Summit

- On November 20, 1942, at -35 degrees, the highway was officially opened at a ceremony here.

Historic Mile 1083 - Destruction Bay

- During the early years, driving the highway was diffcult and often dangerous, causing wear and tear on both men and machines. Destruction Bay was one of the relay stations which were spaced at 100-mile intervals to give drivers a break and to service vehicles.

Historic Mile 1093 - Burwash Landing

- After months of rough camp life, soldiers were surprised to find this prosperous little settlement. Father Eusebe Morisset, an Oblate missionary who served as auxiliary chaplain for the U.S. Army, was based here.

Historic Mile 1117 - Lieutenant Small Memorial

- First Lieutenant Roland Small of the 18th Engineers Regiment was killed here in 1942 in a jeep accident.

Historic Mile 1130 - Donjek River Bridge

- The current bridge is three miles downriver from the original, which crossed at a narrower location.

Historic Mile 1202 - Beaver Creek

- On October 28, 1942, the final connection was completed here when the 97th Engineers met the 18th Engineers.

Historic Mile 1271 - The Alaska Skyway

- Alaskan airfields, like the Northway field south of here, played a significant role in the construction of the highway.

Historic Mile 1292 - Dusenberg Camp No. 2

- The E.M. Dusenberg Company was one of about 50 civil road construction contractors working on the highway in 1943.

Historic Mile 1420 - Delta Junction

* The Alaska Highway met the pre-existing Richardson Highway here.

ASCE Recognition

"The Alaska Highway, initially called the Alaskan-Canadian (Alcan) Military Highway, provided an essential transportation link to the Yukon and Alaska during World War II. It begins at the junction with several Canadian highways in Dawson Creek, British Columbia and runs to Delta Junction, Alaska, via Whitehorse, Yukon. After the shock of Pearl Harbor, the Alaska Highway was a first step in America's defense strategy - a vital military supply line during the war. Over ten thousand Army Engineers were rushed to the far Northwest. Their mission was to blaze a road to Alaska in less than a year. They battled mountains, muskeg and mosquitoes on a front that stretched across miles and miles of rugged, sub-Arctic terrain. To this day, it has remained the only transportation link to the Yukon and Inuvik Region of the Northwest Territories…"

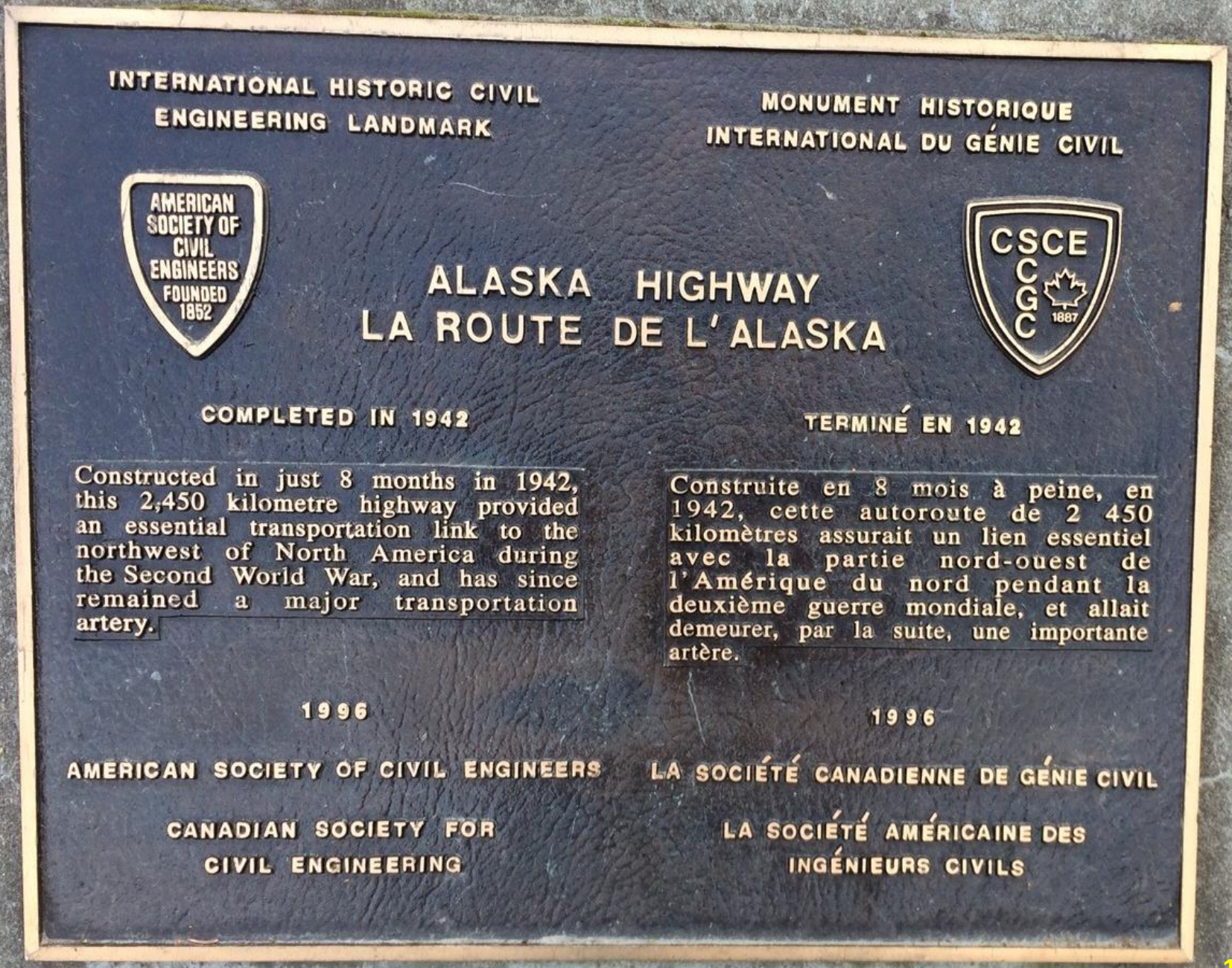
asce.org

"…Built in 1942 in just eight months, the 2500 km (1570 miles) highway was a significant feat of time critical engineering and construction. Besides being completed much sooner than expected, the Alaska Highway was the largest undertaking at the time for a northern construction project. It still remains one of the largest northern construction projects to this day…"

asce.org

"…During the project's construction, significant experiences were gained in Arctic engineering and construction, particularly in permafrost. The Alaska Highway provided an opportunity for the development and refinement of cold region engineering roadway construction techniques and construction supply techniques. In addition to increasing knowledge in the field of cold region engineering, it enabled the development, settlement and economic growth of millions of acres of land. The highway also became the basis for a substantial tourism-based economy."

asce.org


INTERNATIONAL HISTORIC CIVIL ENGINEERING LANDMARK
MONUMENT HISTORIQUE INTERNATIONAL DU GÉNIE CIVIL
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS FOUNDED 1852
CSCE CGC 1887
ALASKA HIGHWAY
LA ROUTE DE L'ALASKA
COMPLETED IN 1942
TERMINÉ EN 1942
Constructed in just 8 months in 1942, this 2,450 kilometre highway provided an essential transportation link to the northwest of North America during the Second World War, and has since remained a major transportation artery.
Construite en 8 mois à peine, en 1942, cette autoroute de 2 450 kilomètres assurait un lien essentiel avec la partie nord-ouest de l'Amérique du nord pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale, et allait demeurer, par la suite, une importante artère.
1996
1996
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS
CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR CIVIL ENGINEERING
LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE GÉNIE CIVIL
LA SOCIÉTÉ AMÉRICAINE DES INGÉNIEURS CIVILS
1674


Alaska Highway