

**THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A TOURIST
FACILITY IN THE MOUNT MCKINLEY
PARK AREA**

A Thesis
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the United States and Canada there is an evergrowing interest in the vast vacation land in Alaska.¹ People are fascinated to discover frontier life and modern cities that exist as neighbors. The unsuspecting tourist is astonished to see skyscrapers, modern hospitals, office buildings, neon signs, and paved streets complete with parking meters, in a land thought of as ice and snow.² Just beyond city limits lie the wilderness areas that have lured many an adventurer to Alaska.

There are many highlights to a trip to Alaska; massive rivers of ice, crystal clear streams and lakes, endless forests, and a variety of wildlife. But probably the most awesome sight to the tourist is Mount McKinley. Besides having the tallest mountain in North America, Mount McKinley Park is a scenic wonderland with an abundance of wildlife. With the completion of the Denali highway,

¹Bob Henning (ed.), The Milepost (22d ed.; Anchorage; Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1970), p. 1.

²Ibid.

tourists were able to drive to the park for the first time.¹ Before the Denali Highway, the only way to reach the park was by the Alaska Railroad. Now with the construction of the new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway, a shorter and faster route, there will be a third choice of reaching the park.

The major problem facing Alaska tourism is the need for adequate facilities near prominent tourist attractions such as Mount McKinley Park. This is due to the rapid increase in volume of visitors each year.²

The construction of the new highway should create the opportunity to establish a tourist accommodation.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not sufficient tourist travel will be present on the new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway to warrant the establishment of a lodge, and campground accommodations near the Mount McKinley Park. The problem was further divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What was the total number of tourists traveling in Alaska for each of the past five years?

¹Ibid., p. 342.

²Stephen M. Brent and Robert M. Goldberg (eds.), The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971, (Anchorage: The Research Institute of Alaska, Inc., 1970), p. 189.

2. How many tourists visited the selected lodges, tourist information centers and museums already established on the main tourist routes?
3. How long was the Alaska tourist season and which month represented the peak of the season?
4. How many of the tourists traveling in Alaska in the future will use the new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway?
5. How many tourists visited the Mount McKinley Park as compared to the other selected parks in Alaska for the past five years?
6. What did the tourists enjoy most about their vacation within Alaska?
7. What were the origins of the tourists traveling in Alaska?
8. What was the average length of stay for tourists in Alaska?
9. What was the average amount of money spent by tourists while on vacation in Alaska?
10. Was there an increase in the number of tourists camping out while on their vacation within Alaska?
11. What is the state government doing to promote tourism in Alaska?

Importance of the Study

In an average year nearly half as many visitors as there are residents in Alaska, visit the state. These

tourists spend over \$40 million, which represents almost \$175 for every man, woman, and child living in Alaska.¹

These tourists' dollars have a multiple factor of seven.² Every dollar exchanges hands seven times before the year ends. Therefore, the visitor's dollar becomes an important part of the Alaska economy.

Alaska's tourism is a renewable industry. Unlike the industries that extract resources from the land, tourism limits are not necessarily confined. Present accommodations represent the major factor stifling the Alaska tourist trade. The predicted growth of tourism by 1980 will be 325,000 visitors to Alaska each year, spending \$100 million annually.³ If the expansion prediction holds true, tourism could become an even more important part of Alaska's economy. Already it is the fourth largest dollar producer for Alaska and the only truly statewide industry.⁴

The new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway and Mount McKinley Park area was selected for this study for three reasons: first, Mount McKinley is one of the major tourist attractions in Alaska; second, the highway will be completed in 1972, and at the time of this study no new tourist

¹Tourism is Everybody's Business, (Anchorage: Alaska Visitors Association.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Mike Miller, "Tourism is Everybody's Business," Alaska Industry, III, 2 (February, 1971), 35.

accommodations have been built; and third, the main tourist routes have ample tourist accommodations.

Delimitations

The study is concerned with the tourists who have visited Alaska in their own vehicle or who entered the state by either the Alaska Highway or the Alaska State Ferry System using the Inside Passage. The major segment of the study will be restricted to the area covered by the Alaska Highway System. See the Appendix, Illustration 1, for a map of the Alaska Highway System. The highway system is made up of hard surface roads connecting major cities of South-central Alaska with Fairbanks and the Canadian border.¹ The tourists visiting the Southeast or panhandle of Alaska and the Arctic are not of major importance to this study.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study.

Mount McKinley National Park

The park is located in the central interior of Alaska, approximately midway between Anchorage and Fairbanks. It is second in size only to Yellowstone with an area of 3,032 square miles. It is a highland region bisected by the Alaska Range, with Mount McKinley

¹ Brent and Goldberg, op. cit., p. 210.

(20,320 feet) as its dominant feature. Park travel is usually possible from about June 1 to September 15.¹

Anchorage-Fairbanks highway

This highway will be the first direct route between Anchorage and Fairbanks. It is a 357-mile modern highway costing \$147 million to construct. This highway will slice more than 120 miles, one way, off the present route which goes through Tok Junction. By 1972 most of the road will be paved; and by 1973, this will be the most beautiful highway in Alaska.²

Denali highway

The highway is a 161-mile gravel road from Paxson on the Richardson Highway to the east entrance of Mount McKinley Park, completed in 1957.³

Alaska highway

The highway begins at Dawson Creek, British Columbia, and extends 1,221 miles, unpaved, to the Alaska border. At Tok Junction, 85 miles within Alaska, the highway divides. One branch, 213 miles long, goes to

¹Henning, op. cit., p. 346.

²The Anchorage Daily Times, October 1, 1970, p. 1, Col. 1.

³Henning, op. cit., p. 342.

Fairbanks; the other branch is the Glenn highway, which extends 328 miles to Anchorage.¹

Mile Zero

The Alaska Highway begins at Dawson Creek, British Columbia; the origin of the highway is referred to as "Milepost Zero."²

Marine Highway

In 1963 the State of Alaska established its own fleet of ships to open up the Inside Passage, a magnificent waterway, to the traveler and the tourist.³ The Inside Passage stretches from Seattle, Washington, to Skagway, Cordova, Valdez, Whittier, Seward, Kodiak, Seldovia, Homer, and Anchorage. Travel is by foot passenger, car, or camper. Staterooms are available. Starting points are Seattle, Washington or Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

Richardson Highway

This 364 mile, hard surface highway, is a vital artery of commerce and travel. It was Alaska's first highway which presently extends from Valdez to Delta

¹J. C. Ferguson Publishing Company, The Alaska Book, Ernest Gruening, Alaska: The Forty-ninth State, (Chicago: J. C. Ferguson Publishing Company, 1966), p. 39.

²Henning, op. cit., p. 68.

³Alaska Marine Highway, 101-200m-11-69-M, (Juneau: Department of Public Works, Division of Marine Transportation).

Junction, then on to Fairbanks. Initially, it was a pack trail for horses in the summer and dog teams in winter.¹

Glenn Highway

The 328-mile hard surfaced highway extends from Anchorage to Tok, Alaska. It was constructed in three sections of 189 miles, 14 miles, and 125 miles. The 125-mile Slana-Tok "cutoff" was first built during World War II as a shortcut for Army convoys traveling to Anchorage.²

Haines Highway

This highway connects the Marine Highway, at Haines, to the Alaska Highway at Haines Junction, Yukon Territory, Canada.³

Seward-Anchorage Highway

The road originates in Anchorage and parallels the Alaska Railroad along the scenic north shore of Turnagain Arm, extending 125 miles to Seward.⁴

Sterling Highway

The highway begins at a junction on the Seward-Anchorage Highway, about 55 miles north of Seward, and terminates at Homer.⁵

¹Henning, op. cit., p. 222.

²Ibid., p. 239.

³Ibid., p. 208.

⁴Ibid., p. 278.

⁵Ibid., p. 290.

Methods of Procedure

After an intensive search for information at the William Allen White Library, it was determined that the only means of obtaining information for this study was from the state of Alaska. City and state agencies, tourist agencies, lodges, and museums were selected and sent questionnaires to secure the information needed to write this study. A sample questionnaire is located in the Appendix. Questionnaires were individualized, according to the recipient; items were varied to gain maximum information. All information was obtained directly by correspondence.

Each sub-question of the problem was used as free-standing sidehead and the procedures used to obtain the information follows.

Number of Tourists

Information was gathered from a survey taken in 1970 by the Alaska Visitors Association. Questionnaires were sent to the Immigration office at Tok, Alaska, for records on the number of tourists using the Alaska Highway to enter the state. The Department of Public Works, Division of Marine Transportation was sent a questionnaire referring to the number of tourists traveling to Alaska by ferries. Tourist agencies were sent questionnaires to establish the number of tourists traveling on company tourist ships or by commercial airline to Alaska.

Tourists Visiting Lodges,
Tourist Information
Centers, and Museums

Questionnaires were sent to lodges in the Mount McKinley Park area, on the Alaska Highway, and well-known lodges within Alaska to determine whether or not tourists were utilizing the facilities already established. Questionnaires were sent to the tourist centers and museums located at the University of Alaska, Dawson Creek, and Palmer to secure information on the number of tourists visiting these facilities. Questions were included on the questionnaire to try to determine the highlight of the tourists' vacation.

Tourist Season and State
Origin of Tourists

Lodges, the Mount McKinley Park system, state government agencies, and chambers of commerce in various Alaskan cities were sent questionnaires as to the length of stay and the peak month of the tourist season. Information was also requested as to the states that the majority of the tourists represented. Information from The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971 was used on these two items.

Number of Tourists Visiting
Mount McKinley Park

Information on this question was gathered from The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971; no information was received from the Mount McKinley Park.

Tourist Enjoyment

Lodges, cities, parks, tourist agencies, and tourist information centers were sent questionnaires about the tourists' major choice of enjoyment while on vacation in Alaska.

Promotion of Tourism

Chambers of commerce in various cities, government agencies, and tourist agencies were sent questionnaires on the tourist promotion that they were planning for the future. Other information on tourist promotion was acquired from the Alaska Industry Magazine.

Length of Visit and Money Spent by Tourists

These two questions were asked of all recipients of the survey questionnaire. Information on these two questions were also gathered from the Alaska Visitors Association survey and from The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971.

Tourist Camping

Tourist information centers, Tok Immigration Center, and government agencies were questioned whether or not there had been an increase in the number of tourists driving pick-up campers or pulling camping trailers.

Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway

A questionnaire was sent to the Alaska State Highway Department to obtain information on the new Highway. The

major interest was the number of expected tourists using the highway and the effects the highway will have on people visiting Mount McKinley Park.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Alaska's long struggle to become a state began on March 30, 1867. This was the treaty that ceded the territory that had been known as Russian America to the United States. The area of 586,400 square miles sold for the purchase price of \$7,200,000, less than two cents an acre. At that time Alaska was denounced as a barren land of ice and snow and a waste of the taxpayers' money. This idea is still present with many in the lower forty-eight and has hampered development.¹

history

Alaska's economy through the years has been thought of as the colonial extraction type. Most of the raw materials were shipped outside to be processed into finished products. The only exception in the past has been in the area of fish products. Fishing has been the leading industry in Alaska from the beginning of the 1900's. The petroleum industry is now in the spotlight as the Prudhoe Bay oil field may be one of the largest in the world. This

¹J. G. Ferguson Publishing Company, The Alaska Book, Ernest Gruening, Alaska: The Forty-ninth State, (Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Company, 1966), p. 12.

discovery will have a profound effect upon the economy of Alaska. Mining, timber, fur, and agriculture all have played an important role in Alaska's development, but now may become of minor importance.

The tourist trade has the potential to become the largest industry in Alaska.¹ During the 1969 tourist season 107,000 people visited the state, or one visitor for every three Alaskans. This was twice the number of tourists just six years ago. Tourism is perhaps the segment of Alaska's economy with the most potential for providing jobs for Alaskan's.²

Alaska, at present, accounts for one-third of the total national park system in the United States. There still exists the opportunity for expansion since the majority of the land is government owned.³

Statehood

A statehood bill was sponsored as early as 1943, but was buried in a committee. In 1945 the statehood bill reappeared and came up before congress every year thereafter. The Alaska and Hawaii statehood bills were combined

¹Stephen M. Brent and Robert M. Goldberg (eds.), The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971, (Anchorage: The Research Institute of Alaska, Inc., 1970), p. 86.

²Ferguson and Gruening, loc. cit.

³Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, Outdoor Recreation for America, January 31, 1962 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 1.

in 1954 over the protests of both Alaskans and Hawaiians. Alaska became the 49th state of the union on July 7, 1958; the bill was introduced into Congress by a Representative of New York.¹

Size

The state is one-fifth as large as the other forty-eight states combined, it is larger than the three largest states or the twenty-one smallest states. If superimposed on the United States, Alaska would touch the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans and the Canadian and Mexican boundaries.² Refer to the Appendix, Illustration II for a map of Alaska superimposed on the United States.

When flying from Juneau to Nome, the voyager sets his watch back three hours, the same as if he were to fly from New York to San Francisco. The 26,000 mile coast line is longer than the combined Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf coast of the lower forty-eight states. Mount McKinley is the tallest peak in North America, but Alaska has ten other peaks that soar to heights greater than any other mountains in the continental United States.³

Population

Alaska at the present time ranks fiftieth in population count. For the year 1970 there were an estimated

¹Ferguson and Gruening, op. cit., p. 17.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

300,000 people living in the state. The average growth rate of population is higher in Alaska than for the continental United States. There are two main factors that account for the high growth rate, natural increase and migration to Alaska. The actual growth is measured in hundreds of thousands while the other states measure in the millions.¹

The average Alaskan is seven years younger than the average American in age; therefore, there are a greater percentage of women within the child bearing age.² This information is illustrated in Tables I and II. Alaska has a small percentage of retired people living within the state.

For the period of 1950 to 1960, the Alaska population grew about 100,000. Natural increase accounted for the largest portion, approximately 60,000; migration into the state 25,000; and military accounted for the balance. Between 1960 and 1970 the population increased 76,000; natural increase accounted for 90 percent of this total; and military remained the same.³

Climate

The weather in Alaska has long been misunderstood by people of the lower forty-eight states. The majority of Alaskans live along the Pacific coast where the climate is

¹Brent and Goldberg, op. cit., p. 4.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

TABLE I
 MEDIAN AGE OF ALASKA'S POPULATION BY COLOR AND SEX
 COMPARED WITH TOTAL UNITED STATES
 1900-1960

Year	Alaska All Classes			Alaska White			Alaska Non-white			United States All Classes
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1900	29.1	31.4	22.0	33.5	34.3	27.3	22.7	23.7	21.7	23.4
1920	30.7	34.9	22.9	37.5	40.1	29.6	19.3	20.5	18.2	25.6
1940	27.8	30.5	23.8	34.8	37.8	30.3	18.6	18.6	17.7	29.5
1960	23.3	23.9	22.1	24.6	24.9	24.0	18.0	19.0	16.8	29.5

Source: The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971.

TABLE II
 SELECTED STATES BY PANK PERCENT OF
 POPULATION AGED 65 OR OLDER
 1967

State	Percentage	State	Percentage
Florida	12.9	UNITED STATES	9.5
Oregon	10.5	California	8.6
Washington	9.9	Alaska	2.6

Source: The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971.

warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer than the climate of the New England States. It is much warmer on the Alaskan coast than the winter temperatures of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, the Dakotas, and Montana. The United States Weather Bureau wrote the following article about the eastern part of Alaska's coast:

To those whose conception of Alaska is that of a desolated waste of perennial ice and snow it will come as a surprise to know that the mean temperature of January at Sitka is nearly a degree higher than the mean temperature for that month in St. Louis.¹

Settlement

The Russians were interested only in furs and did not penetrate far inland in Alaska. Their main settlements were along the Pacific coast, the earliest was made in 1784 on Kodiak Island. All but a few Russians returned to Russia, leaving behind scores of towns and villages bearing Russian names and the Russian Orthodox religion that still exists today.²

Many towns owe their existence to the fishing industry, and other towns to mining. The more famous towns of literature were established because of the Klondike gold rush.

The gold rush of the late 1890's created a rediscovery of Alaska by the American people. But the land

¹Ferguson and Gruening, op. cit., p. 21.

²Ibid., p. 23.

remained stagnant of growth until world War II when Alaska became important to the defense of the United States.

Alaska became the only area in the North American Continent that was invaded and held by the Japanese.¹

The majority of Alaskans live in communities. However, there does exist the atmosphere of rural life in Alaska due to the smaller towns and villages that are isolated from one another, except for air travel.²

Between Alaska's most southern community of Bethlakatla and the most northern city of Barrow, lie about thirty incorporated municipalities, all unique and different. Anchorage is by far the largest and the most progressive city in Alaska. It has become the retail market center for Alaska. The city supports a symphony orchestra and community chorus, art exhibits, amateur theatricals, a Methodist University, and a community college.³

Fairbanks is the second largest city and located within the central interior. Gold was the creator of Fairbanks and supported it for over half a century. The University of Alaska is located west of Fairbanks.⁴ Table III gives a selection of Alaska's largest cities and their respective growth records. Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau are the three largest cities in Alaska. Refer to the

¹Ibid., p. 25.

²Ibid., p. 30.

³Ibid., p. 33.

⁴Ibid., p. 34.

Appendix, Illustration III for the location of towns and cities of Alaska.

The capital of Alaska is located at Juneau. The city is built virtually on the mountain side, which was the site of a gold-mine camp. Now the economy is based on state payroll, forest products, and fishing. It contains many points of interest for the tourists that make regular stops at Juneau.¹

Transportation

The tourists have a choice of four modes of travel to Alaska: highway, ferry, cruiseship, and airline. This study is mainly interested in the tourists traveling by the Alaska Highway and the Alaska Marine Highway.

Alaska highway

The Alaska highway was constructed by the army engineers in 1942; construction time was less than eight months. The highway was built for military reasons as the government had feared a land invasion in Alaska by Japanese forces.²

The highway stretches from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Fairbanks, Alaska, a distance of 1,523 miles. The 1,221 miles of the highway owned and maintained by the

¹Bob Henning (ed.), The Milepost, (22d ed.; Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1970), p. 200.

²Ibid., p. 3.

TABLE III
 POPULATION OF ALASKA'S MAJOR
 TOWNS AND CITIES
 1900-1969

Place	1900	1920	1940	1950	1960	1969
Anchorage	---	1,856	4,229	11,254	44,237	45,076
Cordova	---	955	938	1,165	1,125	1,320
Fairbanks	---	1,155	3,455	5,771	13,311	20,000
Juneau	1,864	3,058	5,729	5,956	6,797	12,853
Kenai	290	332	303	321	778	4,500
Ketchikan	459	2,458	4,695	5,305	6,483	8,289
Kodiak	341	374	864	1,710	2,628	7,132
Nome	12,488	852	1,559	1,876	2,316	2,830
Petersburg	---	879	1,323	1,619	1,502	2,000
Seward	---	652	949	2,114	1,891	2,170
Sitka	1,396	1,175	1,985	1,985	3,237	3,800
Valdez	315	466	529	554	555	1,000
Wrangell	868	821	1,162	1,263	1,725	1,800

Source: The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971.

Canadian Government is gravel. The highest elevation is 4,300 feet and the width of the road varies from 20 to 40 feet. The Alaska Highway is rated as the world's best major gravel road.¹ The portion of the highway in Alaska is blacktopped and is as modern as the roads in the lower forty-eight states. Car service and accommodations can be found at intervals along the entire route.

Passports are not needed when traveling from the United States into Canada, so border crossings are made without difficulty or delay. The border check points at major crossings are open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Tourists may take personal belongings, sporting equipment, cameras, and film, duty free into Canada. The only restriction made at the border are on tobacco and alcoholic beverages. A tourist may purchase up to \$100 of souvenirs or other goods, duty free, while in Canada.²

There has been a bill before Congress to provide for sharing the cost with Canada to pave the Canadian portion of the highway. If this bill is ever acted upon, the paving of this road will create a tremendous increase in motor traffic.³

¹Ibid., p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 39.

Alaska Marine Highway

The Inside Passage is 1000 miles of scenic waterway from Puget Sound to Skagway, Alaska. In 1963 the State of Alaska established its own fleet of ships to open up this magnificent waterway to the tourist.¹

The Inside Passage is a string of bays, sounds and channels; it is almost completely sheltered from the ocean throughout its entire length. The Passage provides scenery unequaled in any other state. The ship cruises peacefully in a world of blue, green and white. Dense virgin forest, great waterfalls, crystal blue glaciers and snow-capped mountains that raise thousands of feet straight from the water's edge can be viewed throughout the entire trip. Here can be seen the unspoiled land as it existed before the coming of man. John Muir wrote,

No excursion that I know of may be made into any other American Wilderness where so marvelous an abundance of noble newborn scenery is so charmingly brought into view. Never before had I become embossed in scenery so hopelessly beyond description.²

Stops are made along the way in the following colorful and historic coastal cities of Alaska:

¹Alaska Marine Highway, 101-200M-11-69-M, (Juneau: Department of Public Works, Division of Marine Transportation).

²Ferguson and Gruening, op. cit., p. 18.

Ketchikan. Salmon derby, pulp mills and the world's largest collection of Indian totem poles are found in this city.¹

Wrangell. The city had its beginning as a fur trading post in 1834. Since that time the city has flown three flags, Russian, English and American.²

Petersburg. The city is often called "Little Norway" since it was the home of Scandinavian Pioneers. It is an important fishing center in Alaska.³

Sitka. The Cathedral of St. Michael reminds the visitors of the era when Russia owned Alaska.⁴

Juneau. Snow capped mountains, glaciers, gold mines, and the brand new Alaska State Historical Museum await the tourist in the capital city of Alaska.⁵

Haines-Port Chilkoot. The town is famous for its Indian arts, crafts and the authentic Chilkat tribal dances.⁶

¹Alaska Marine Highway, loc. cit.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

Skagway. It was the gateway to the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898's a pageant is held regularly during the tourist season to recreate the era.¹

Cordova. This city's primary industry is commercial fishing; it was once a well-known city for its important copper industry.²

Valdez. The city has been completely rebuilt and moved four miles after being severely damaged in the 1964 "Good Friday Earthquake"; referred to as the Switzerland of Alaska.³

Whittier. The area surrounding the city offers the tourist some of the finest alpine scenery in the world.⁴

Seward. The unique annual endurance race to the top of Mount Marathon and Back, is one of the world's most grueling tests for athletes and an exciting attraction for visitors held every Fourth of July.⁵

Kodiak. The oldest permanent settlement in Alaska was founded by Alexander Baranof in 1784; it is also the home

¹Ibid.

²Henning, op. cit., p. 235.

³Alaska Marine Highway, loc. cit.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Henning, op. cit., p. 288.

of the famous Kodiak Bear and the King Crab Capital of the world.¹

Seldovia. Kachemak Bay is its picturesque setting. Annually on the Fourth of July, a water skiing endurance race is run between Homer and Seldovia.²

Homer. Russian's referred to it as "Summerland"; delightful sunny days with an abundance of wildflowers makes it a photographer's delight.³

Passengers can arrange to stop off at any or all the ports for as long as they wish and catch another boat on north. Tourists also may travel on the ferries either with their cars, campers, or as foot passengers. There are staterooms available, but advance reservations are needed to secure them.⁴

Tourist Trade

The industry began in the 1880's with sightseers accompanying the freight boats north to the many ports where freight was discharged. Later tours were organized by the Alaskan Railroad and by bus over the Richardson Highway. The roadhouses long intrigued the visitor who traveled the long stretches of highway to marvel at Alaska's beauty. The

¹Ibid., p. 308. ²Ibid., p. 306.

³Alaska Marine Highway, loc. cit.

⁴Ibid.

State Government finally recognized the tourist potential and established the Alaska State Travel Division and the Alaska Visitors Association to develop the tourist industry.

Besides the matchless scenery, Alaska provides the tourist with a variety of wildlife for photography or just for the enjoyment of observation. Some of the more common animals that can be seen along the Alaska Highways are moose, goat, sheep, bear, and caribou. For the fisherman there are salmon, trout, grayling, just to mention a few. For those enthusiastic about the out-of-doors, hiking and camping opportunities have no equal in the lower forty-eight states for finding the solitude of getting away from it all. There are smoking volcanoes, glaciers, the midnight sun, and the aurora borealis, just a few of the attractions that await the visitor who travels north.

Alaska is so vast a territory that it could accommodate 100,000 visitors daily for a vacation season that could extend from May to October; it could become a \$250,000,000 industry.¹

Tourist Surveys

The following three studies were conducted by the Alaska Travel Division.

¹Ferguson and Gruening, op. cit., p. 36.

Independent Highway Tourist
Study 1969

The Alaska Travel Division designed a questionnaire that was made available and was to be filled out by traveling parties that stopped at the Alaska Tok Visitor Information Center during the month of August 1969. The 291 traveling parties who arrived at the Tok Information Center and filled out the questionnaire did not differentiate between tourists traveling the Alaska Highway or the Marine Highway.

The results of the study were as follows:

1. Thirty-one percent of the sample came from the west-coast states of Washington, Oregon, and California. The majority of the tourists in this group were from California. Twenty percent came from the northeast-central states. In this group the states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio were included. Thirteen percent came from the northwest-central states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota.
2. The average traveling party intended to stay in Alaska for 16.2 days. This did not include the travel time to and from the state. The older people traveling in Alaska tended to stay longer. People from the west coast and mountain states stayed longer than people from the more geographically removed areas.
3. The head of the group was employed in an occupation that generally required a college education.

The largest general group was made up of business managers and owners. There was a small group of blue-collar workers but even these occupations required a high degree of skill, such as aircraft mechanics. It was noted that only 16.2 percent of the sample was retired.

4. The average size of the traveling party was 2.5 and average age of the head of the party was 48.5 years. Over 52 percent of the sample were within the age bracket of 30 to 39. The second largest group fell within the 60-69 age bracket. It was noted that the majority of families were traveling without children.

5. About 85 percent of the respondents indicated that they planned to camp out most of the time they were in Alaska. Only 15 percent intended to use motels and hotels during their stay. For the distribution of camping vehicles, 48 percent of the sample were traveling in pick-up campers and 11 percent in cars pulling trailers. Twenty-six percent traveling in cars indicated that they would be camping, and 15 percent intended to stay in motels and hotels. A conclusion of the study was, "although the vast majority intended to camp out, common sense and observation tell us that the camping people will stay in hotels or motels every few nights just to clean up."

6. Of the 291 parties surveyed, 255 intended to visit Anchorage; 236, Fairbanks; 178, McKinley; and 170, Haines. This sets up a typical travel pattern ending or beginning at Haines, Alaska.

7. The following question was asked on the survey, "what magazines does your family read regularly?" The results were divided into twelve categories. The highest ranking category included Life, Reader's Digest, and National Geographic. The second largest group included Newsweek and Time.

The objective of the study was not to gain statistics with pin-point accuracy but to gain an overall picture of the person who travels to Alaska in his own vehicle.¹

Inquiry Conversion Study 1969

The specific purpose of the study was to determine what proportion of those persons requesting travel information from the Alaska Travel Division actually came to Alaska as tourists that same year.

Inquiries made to the department for travel information are placed in two general categories. The first group consists of people using advertising coupons clipped from magazines. The second group is made up of people who are requesting information but have not been exposed to the department's advertising.

The Alaska Travel Division sponsored sixteen different keyed ads, so it could be distinguished from which magazine the coupon was clipped. A sample size of 269 to

¹Based on personal correspondence between Alaska Travel Division, and writer.

432 was selected for each one of the sixteen ads making up group one. From group two a sample of 633 names and addresses was taken.

A survey card was then designed and sent to each person in group one and group two. The survey asked the following questions:

1. "Did you come to Alaska the same year you wrote to the Alaska Travel Division for travel information?"
2. Was this your first trip to Alaska?"
3. If you did not travel to Alaska do you plan to next year, sometime in the future, or do you have no plans to travel to Alaska?"

A total of 5,346 survey cards were mailed out on the first of November. The cut-off date was December 19, no cards were accepted after this date. Of the 5,346 cards mailed out 111 were returned to the post office as rejects, leaving a potential survey of 5,235. At the cut-off date 2,464 cards had been returned for a survey response rate of 47.1 percent.

The results of the 2,464 cards returned indicated that 652 actually made it to Alaska in 1969, this was a response rate of 26.5 percent. It was noted that only 16.8 percent of the people mailing coupons and who were exposed to the Alaska Travel Division promotion came to Alaska. On the other hand, those of group two that were not exposed to the promotion averaged 36.4 percent.

Between December 1968 and May 1969 the Alaska Travel Division received 77,672 inquires about travel in Alaska.

The department generalized that 26.8 percent of the total came to Alaska in 1969 which would be 20,783 parties. The traveling party to Alaska averages 2.5, so the Alaska Travel Division advertising and inquiry service assisted, in attracting 51,958 tourists to Alaska in 1969.

The study summarized that advertising in the glossy, high priced magazines does not generate a large number of inquiry coupons, but is more likely to generate genuine travel prospects. The more pulpy magazines such as Argosy, Outdoor Life and teachers' magazines are good coupon producers, but result in a much lower rate of genuine travel prospects.

The study did not present any information on questions two and three of the survey. No reason was given why this information was left out of the study.¹

Independent Highway Tourist
Expenditure Survey 1970

One aspect of the study was a survey of 223 independent camping parties arriving at Tok Visitor Center near the Alaska-Canada border on the Alaska Highway. Each party was given a form to carry with them to fill out as a daily routine. Later the tourists returned the survey to the visitor's center upon leaving the state.

¹Ibid.

The basic results of the study were as follows:

1. Average size of the party - 2.8 persons.
2. Average length of stay (excluding Southeast Alaska) - 13.3 days.
3. Average total expenditure per party - \$448.90.
4. Average total expenditure per person - \$160.30.
5. Average daily expenditure per party - \$33.90.
6. Average daily expenditure per person - \$12.10.

A majority of the parties had at least one day where they spent over \$150. This amount indicated a side trip taken, generally by plane, or a major purchase of an Alaskan product.

The study also revealed that the head of the party was generally of professional skill. A sub-sample revealed that the professional skilled families spent an average of \$225 more and stayed 3.5 days longer in Alaska, than the blue collar worker.

A segment of the study was done on the origin of tourists who passed through the Tok Tourist Center. A sample of 2,200 tourists revealed that 24.8 percent of the tourists came from three Western States. Compared to a prior study, Independent Highway Tourist Study 1969, this indicated a drop. It was brought out that a new trend is developing. An increased number of tourists are coming from the North Central region. It is interesting to note that Michigan and Minnesota had a higher visitor ratio than the state of California, which has been Alaska's prime market

for tourists. It was suggested by the study that the hard-hit aircraft and aerospace industries of the west coast could account for the decrease in tourists from this area.¹

Summary

Alaska contains vast areas set aside for recreational purposes. Some areas are more highly developed than others, because of limited road accessibility. Mount McKinley Park is a good example of a developed area compared to other parks. The state provides many vacation opportunities that can not be matched by any other state. These opportunities are available for tourists of all ages; whether it be lounging around cities or roughing it in the back country. A vacation to Alaska can be a pleasant experience for anyone, regardless of his appreciation for the out-of-doors.

Tourists have three choices for transportation: airplane, ship, or car. Although the trip to Alaska crosses Canada, passports are not needed and border crossing takes but a few minutes.

The tourist industry is becoming a more important segment of the Alaska's economy. The industry is in its beginning stage; tourists at present are utilizing a very small portion of the available land.

¹ibid.

The Independent Highway Tourist Study of 1969 was in questionnaire form and involved 291 traveling parties in Alaska. The results were as follows:

1. Thirty-one percent of the sample came from the western states and the majority were from California.
2. The average traveling party intended to stay in Alaska for 16.2 days.
3. The head of the family generally had a college education.
4. The average size of the party, traveling in Alaska, consisted of 2.5 persons.
5. About 85 percent of the sample planned to camp out most of the time.
6. Of the 291 parties surveyed, 170 intended to visit Mount McKinley Park.
7. The majority of the families participating in the survey read Life, Reader's Digest and National Geographic.

The purpose of the Inquiry Conversion Study 1969, was to determine what portion of the people requesting information from the Alaska Travel Division actually came to Alaska. The Alaska Travel Division concluded that their advertising helped to attract 51,958 tourists to Alaska in 1969.

The 1970 tourist study conducted by the Alaska Travel Division established that camping tourists average 13 days in Alaska and they are spending \$160 per person.

Usually at least one day the party will spend over \$150 for a side-trip or purchase of an Alaskan product.

CHAPTER 3

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Of the twenty-seven questionnaires sent out, nineteen were returned--a survey rate of 70 percent for the study. The sources of information were divided into three general categories: tourist agencies; city and state agencies; and lodges, tourist information centers, and museums. In order to obtain the variety of information required, questionnaires were designed specifically for each category.

Number of Tourists

The tourists traveling to Alaska have four modes of transportation from which to choose. Alaska Highway, airlines, Marine Highway or cruise ship. The volume of tourists and percent of tourists representing each mode of travel for the years 1964 to 1970 are shown on Tables IV and V. Alaska has experienced a 111 percent increase in tourist trade from the year 1964 to 1970. The Alaska Highway has been the most popular mode of travel for tourists to Alaska.

Of the three largest tour agencies sponsoring trips to Alaska, only Westours Incorporated offered information on the number of tourists traveling with their firm. Table VI shows the number of tourists traveling with Westours for the

TABLE IV
 VOLUME OF TOURISTS TRAVELING TO ALASKA
 BY THE FOUR MODES OF TRAVEL
 1964-1970

Year	Highway	Ferry	Cruiseship	Airline	Total	Percent of Change
1964	23,300	11,650	11,000	13,250	59,200	
1965	28,400	14,400	11,700	15,100	69,600	18
1966	27,150	17,300	12,400	16,250	73,100	5
1967	33,950	18,950	13,200	20,600	86,700	19
1968	34,000	18,000	15,000	23,000	90,000	4
1969	40,000	20,000	21,000	26,000	107,000	19
1970	44,000	20,000	31,000	30,000	125,000	17

Source: Alaska Travel Division

TABLE V
 PERCENT OF TOURIST VISITS TO ALASKA
 BY MODE OF TRAVEL
 1964-1970

Year	Highway	Ferry	Cruiseship	Airline
1964	39	20	19	22
1965	41	21	17	21
1966	37	24	17	22
1967	39	22	15	24
1968	37	20	17	26
1969	37	19	20	24
1970	35	16	25	24

Source: The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971

years 1966 to 1970. These totals represent the number of tourists traveling by airplane and bus only.

The United States Customs and Immigration Office, Tok, Alaska, reported 101,518 people traveling the Alaska highway in 1970; Alaska Travel Division classified only 44,000 of these people as tourists. The yearly figures shown on Table VII represent the total number of people using the highway for the years 1966-1970. They were not classified as tourists or non-tourists. The Immigration Office reported that the normal annual rate of growth of number of people using the Alaska highway has been 8 percent, but the 1970 tourist season had a 32 percent growth over the 1969 season.¹

The Alaska Marine Highway stated that the largest percent of their passengers are Alaskans. In 1969, for the months of June, July and August, a total of 79,200 people used the ferry system.² The Alaska Travel Division considered only 20,000 of these people as tourists.³

Information on the number of tourists traveling by tour agency cruiseships was not offered. but in 1970, eight

¹Based on personal correspondence between U. S. Customs and Immigration Office, Tok, Alaska, and writer.

²Based on personal correspondence between Department of Public Works, Division of Marine Transportation, State of Alaska, and writer.

³Based on personal correspondence between the Alaska Travel Division, and writer.

TABLE VI
 NUMBER OF TOURISTS TRAVELLING TO ALASKA
 WITH WESTOURS INCORPORATED
 1966-1970

Year	Tourists	Percent of Change
1966	5,650	
1967	7,100	+26
1968	9,409	+32
1969	10,007	+ 6
1970	8,111	-19

Source: Westours Incorporated

TABLE VII
 NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRAVELING
 THE ALASKA HIGHWAY
 1966-1970

Year	People	Percent of Change
1966	76,690	
1967	80,350	+ 5
1968	75,690	- 6
1969	87,440	+15
1970	101,518	+16

Source: United States Customs and Immigration Office, Tok, Alaska

cruise lines operated eleven passenger ships in Alaska's waters.¹

Tourists Visiting Lodges, Tourist
Information Centers and
Museums

Of the ten questionnaires sent to lodges, tourist information centers and museums, eight were returned and only five listed the number of tourists visiting their facility. The museum at the University of Alaska attracts better than 50 percent of the tourists visiting Alaska.² Anchorage and Fairbanks are the only two cities on the new highway that have natural history museums. Table VIII gives the results of the questionnaires received. Four out of the five lodges, tourist information centers and museums, made significant gains in the number of tourists visiting their facilities. Hart D Ranch had a 200 percent increase in tourist trade from the year 1966 to 1970, for the high.

Tourist Season

Five lodges replied to the length of the tourist season. Two stated June, July and August; the third one designated the month of June to the middle of September; the fourth considered May 26 as the beginning of the tourists season and ending on September 12; and the fifth responded

¹Mike Miller, "Tourism is Everybody's Business," Alaska Industry, III, 2 (February, 1971), 67.

²Based on personal correspondence between University of Alaska Museum, and writer.

TABLE VIII
NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISITING ALASKAN LODGES,
TOURIST INFORMATION CENTERS
AND MUSEUMS
1966-1970

Lodges, Information Centers and Museums	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	Percent of Change
Lawson Creek Tourist Information Center (museum)	19,148	20,618	21,058	16,468	13,203	- 31
Matanuska Valley Tourist Center	3,000		5,700		7,225	+141
Mount McKinley National Park Company (hotel)	1,400	1,500	1,700	1,600	1,800	+ 33
Hart D. Ranch	400	600	700	800	1,200	+200
University of Alaska Museum	33,411	57,016	50,719	52,762	57,542	+ 72

Source. Dawson Creek Tourist Information Center, Matanuska Valley Tourist Center, Mount McKinley National Park Company, Hart D. Ranch, University of Alaska Museum

that tourists frequented his facility year around. However, all five lodges agreed on July as the peak of the tourist season.

The Alaska Travel Division, Division of Marine Transportation, commercial airlines, and two tour agencies are trying to lengthen the tourist seasons. Eric McDowell, who has conducted several research studies for Alaska Travel Division, has made the following statement about the future tourist seasons in Alaska:

...the length of the summer season (currently mid-May through mid-September) can be extended from its present 120 days to at least 150, if more promotion and advertising dollars can be made available to educate potential spring and fall travelers.¹

The Alaska Marine Highway offers a 20 percent discount during the winter schedule. The discount applies to passenger fares, staterooms and vehicles. The discount date begins on November 30 and is extended to May 31.²

Both Alaska Airlines and Wein Consolidated Airlines have put together packaged tours to the Arctic for the off-season. A special off-season price will be available for the winter months.³

The Kneisel Travel Agency has been trying to establish winter tourist trade to Alaska. The Kneisel Agency

¹Miller, op. cit., p. 36.

²Travel Alaska and the Yukon. (Anchorage: Alaska Visitors Association, December-January, 1971), p. 2.

³Ibid., p. 1.

provides a special winter tour to Alaska during the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous. The travel agency also features an Arctic tour via Alaska or Wien Consolidated Airlines.¹

Westours Incorporated is beginning the tourist season a little earlier for the 1971 season. The M. V. West Star and the M. S. Orpheus will begin an eight-day round trip, starting May 3, through the Inside Passage to Skagway. The ships will sail from Victoria and include many Alaska towns on their ports of call.²

Origin of Tourists

An increasing number of tourists are coming from the Northeast Central portion of the United States. In 1970, 24.8 percent of the surveyed parties were from this area. In 1969 only 21.7 percent represented this area. Very little marketing effort was extended in this region by either the State or private Alaskan travel industries. The western states provided only 24.8 percent in 1970 as compared to 34.7 percent in 1969.³

The Pacific States and the Northeast Central States combined represent the origin for nearly half the tourists visiting Alaska by driving the Alaska Highway. Table IX gives a representation of the origin of tourists using the Alaska highway.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Based on personal correspondence between Department of Highways, State of Alaska, and writer.

TABLE IX
 REGION OF ORIGIN OF TOURISTS IN ALASKA
 1969-1970

Region	Percent		Difference
	1969	1970	
Pacific	34.7	24.8	-9.9
Mountain	6.3	8.6	2.3
NW Central	14.1	13.3	-.8
SW Central	3.6	3.9	.3
NE Central	21.7	24.8	3.1
SE Central	0.0	1.7	1.7
Northeast	4.1	3.6	-.5
Mid. Atlantic	10.9	13.4	2.5
S. Atlantic	4.7	5.9	1.2

Source: Alaska Visitors Association

Table X gives a comparison of the percentage of Alaskan visitors from each state to the states percentage of United States population. California represents the largest single state in numbers of tourists; but, a greater percentage of the population from Colorado, Washington, Minnesota, and Michigan are traveling to Alaska.

All but one questionnaire reported California as being the leading state for supplying tourists to Alaska. The questionnaire that did not recognize California named Washington as the number one state for tourists.

Number of Tourists Visiting Mount McKinley Park

Mount McKinley Park has become the most popular park for tourists in Alaska. The park attracts almost half of the total tourists visiting the state.¹ Table XI gives a comparison of the number of visitors to the National Parks and Monuments of Alaska. The total number of visitors to the National Parks and National Monuments increased 119 percent from the year 1965 to 1969. Mount McKinley Park accounted for 42 percent of the total number of tourists visiting the National Parks and National Monuments for 1969.

Tourist Enjoyment

One of the questions on the questionnaire sent to the lodges asked, in the opinion of the person filling out

¹Travel Alaska and the Yukon, op. cit., p. 4.

TABLE X

RATIO COMPARISON OF THE PERCENTAGE OF ALASKAN
VISITORS TO THE STATES PERCENTAGE OF
UNITED STATES POPULATION
1970

State	Alaskan Visitors	Percent		Ratio
			United States Population	
California	17.93	9.63	1.86	
Michigan	9.48	4.34	2.18	
Pennsylvania	6.12	5.85	1.05	
Illinois	5.20	5.47	.95	
Minnesota	4.66	1.83	2.55	
New York	4.47	9.07	.49	
Washington	4.42	1.68	2.63	
Ohio	3.89	5.32	.73	
Indiana	2.93	2.53	1.16	
Colorado	2.77	1.04	2.66	

Source: Alaska Visitors Association

TABLE XI
 VISITORS TO ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS
 AND NATIONAL MONUMENTS
 1965-1969

National Parks and National Monuments	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Mount McKinley National Park	21,400	31,300	39,800	33,300	45,500
Sitka National Monument	25,800	38,600	44,800	23,800	39,500
Glacier Bay National Monument	11,800	4,900	8,300	13,500	16,000
Katmai National Monument	800	900	1,200	1,500	7,800
Total Visitors	49,800	75,700	94,100	72,100	108,800
Percent Change		52	24	23	51

Source: The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971

the questionnaire, "What did the tourists seem to enjoy most about their vacation in Alaska?"

Scenery was recorded, by lodge owner's, as the highlight of the tourist's vacation. Wildlife ranked second, camping, hiking, and fishing finished third, fourth and fifth. Mount Alyeska Resort specified that their tourists enjoyed visiting with and just being around Alaskans and fellow travelers. Mount McKinley Hotel emphasized that the tourists visiting the park enjoyed seeing the wildlife; in fact, they rated wildlife as being more important than the scenery.

Promotion of Tourism

In preparing for the tourist season of 1970, the Alaska Travel Division for the first time promoted to the off-season, off-beat and convention traffic. This campaign was undoubtedly the reason why the tourist season of 1970 went down in the Alaska record books as a fair-to-good year. Elsewhere in the nation the year was recognized as a fair-to-poor year, due to the recession. Some areas reported a bad tourist season.¹

The State's promotion for a spring and fall tourist season consisted of full-page, full-color spectaculars in National Geographic, Sunset, Travel Magazine and other publications. Folders also were made up to mail out to

¹Miller, op. cit., p. 36.

people who wrote for information. "Spring Up to Alaska" and "September" emphasize the early-season and late-season beauties of Alaska. The folders stress the uncrowded accommodations, and the unhurried friendliness of Alaskans. Many of the Alaska travel industry firms paid \$200 for a back cover listing on the folders. The companies also offered early and post-season discounts for tours, hotels, sight-seeing, and for the other services they provided.¹

The campaigns proved successful. The vice-president of Alaska Airlines reported to the Alaska Visitors Association that the summer traffic had been "soft" because of the national economic conditions, but that spring and fall tourist traffic was up "substantially" because of the off-season campaigns. The Division of Marine Transportation reported that their ships have had an increase in traffic. The Marine Highway System chalked up a half million dollar increase on the Whickersham due to the off-season promotion and the 20 percent discount that is offered to early and late travelers. The president of Northland Tours stated that the October 5 sailing of the cruiseship Meteor was filled to a 87 percent load factor. This tourist load was credited to the fall promotion. Before the campaign, the ship had been booked only to a 20 percent load factor.²

The state's promotion of the "Off-Beat Alaska" campaign was a combination of a full-page, full-color

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 37.

magazine advertisement and a ten-page folder which listed, at no charge to the operators more than one hundred forty lodges, resorts, camps and charter carriers. Both the state and these off-the-beaten-path operators rated the campaign a success.¹

The state is also interested in attracting conventions to Alaska. Conventioneers spend an average of \$50.00 per day as compared to the \$35.00 per day for the average summer tourist. As a result of the campaign 40 out-of-state service organizations, lodges, companies, and other groups have scheduled conventions in Alaska during the next few years, and an additional 60 more are considering the state.²

The Alaska Visitors Association is trying out a new program that could draw 5,000 Japanese tourists or more to Alaska by 1972. If this program is successful, it could open the door for exploration in other parts of the world for developing tourist trade for Alaska.

One of the major reasons why the program looks like it could be a success has been the introduction of reduced airfare on round trips between Alaska and the Orient. A round trip fare of \$250 per passenger between Tokyo and Alaska is possible if a group of 40 or more travel with Pan American or Northwest Orient.³

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 14.

Another important factor that will help this program has been the loosening of the restriction on the amount of money that a Japanese can take out of the country. The Government had a ceiling of \$500 in addition to the airfare; now this limit has been double to \$1000. Japan is a natural market because skiers from Japan have been coming to Alaska over the Christmas holiday in the past. The Japanese are attracted to the open spaces of Alaska because of the thickly settled urban life that is part of their environment.¹

The Alaska Visitor Association has written a letter to each member of the State Legislature proposing the following:

... The addition of staff and money to beef up the Alaska Travel Division's present limited research effort.

... Legislation creating a state revolving fund, or state guarantee of bank loans, for the construction of private visitor facilities and attractions.

... Budgeting 'of a minimum of \$500,000' for the AVA's annual national advertising and public relation contract. Of this amount the AVA advocates the use of \$50,000 for foreign travel promotion, which in turn can be matched by federal monies under a program of the United States Travel Service.

... Expansion of the state's convention promotion activities, including 'a more realistic appropriation for funds for expenses necessary in selling Alaskan convention facilities.'

... A major new program of statewide grants to communities 'for the necessary feasibility studies, construction cost, and diminishing participation in the operation

¹Ibid.

cost of public facilities such as civic convention centers, museums, exhibition halls, parks, visitor centers, highway camper facilities, and similar multiple-purpose facilities.¹

Average Length of Stay

The questionnaires confirmed the statistics stated by the Independent Highway Tourist Expenditure Survey conducted by the Alaska State Travel Division. Their findings suggested that the average length of stay within Alaska for tourists is 13.3 days.²

The United States Customs and Immigration Office gave the shortest estimated length of stay within Alaska for tourists, 10 days.³ The Anchorage Travel Bureau was high with 15 days. The other responses fell in between these two estimates.

Westours Incorporated, stated that their tours averaged 18 days, but tourists were scheduled to do something each day. Hart D Ranch reported that their tours take between 10 and 30 days, but like Westours, each vacation day is planned for the tourist.

The lodges reported that tourists generally stayed one day then continued on to other points of interest. Only

¹ Ibid., p. 69.

² Travel Alaska and the Yukon, loc. cit.

³ Based on personal correspondence between U. S. Customs and Immigration Office, Tok, Alaska, and writer.

the lodges or resorts that offered some form of recreation held the tourists longer than one day.

Average Amount of Money Spent

Of all the questions on the questionnaires, this one had the greatest variety of answers. The question was, "What was the average daily amount spent per person?" The largest amount was represented by tourists on a guided tour spending \$75.00 per day. The smallest amount was represented by the tourist that was camping while on vacation within Alaska, and averaged \$12.50 per day. Actually, the results of the questionnaires indicated three different groups of tourists. The first group is made up of those people taking guided tours, the second group represents the tourist traveling on his own and using the lodges and cafes. The third group is made up of tourists traveling on their own, but camping out the majority of the nights, while vacationing in Alaska.

By far the highest estimates for the average amounts spent per person, per day, were received from the tour agencies. Northland Tours estimated the average amount spent by the tourist was \$900 on a vacation lasting 12 days or an average of \$75.00 per day. Westours' 18-day vacation cost \$700, or an average of \$39.00 per day. Westours' cost covers only the expense of the trip and did not include money needed for extras, souvenirs, gifts, film, entertainment, and the many other items that tourists purchase.

The second group included tourists traveling on their own, staying in lodges, motels, and hotels, and eating out. Mount McKinley Hotel, received an average of \$40.00 a day per tourist. The Glen-Rich International hotel, farther from the park and serving as just a stop-over, averages \$25.00 a day per tourist. The Hart D Ranch offers a package price on their lodging and out-door recreational trips. Their river trips and trail trips average between \$25.00 and \$35.00 per day.

The Alaska State Travel Division's study on the Independent Highway Tourist Expenditure Survey concluded that tourists camping-out during their vacation averaged \$12.50 per person. The average expenditure per party was \$33.90.¹

The State Travel Division suggests an average of \$35.00 per day per person; this figure represents a cross-section of all tourists traveling in Alaska.²

Tourists Camping

The Dawson Creek Tourist Information Center, which is located at Mile Zero on the Alaska Highway, reported the following percentages of the tourists indicated that they were camping: 1965, 73%; 1966, 75%; 1967, 78%; 1968, 80%; 1969, 83%; and 1970, 84%. The United States Customs and

¹Travel Alaska and the Yukon, loc. cit.

²Miller, op. cit., p. 37.

Immigration Office, Tok, Alaska, at the opposite end of the Alaska Highway, did not keep statistics, but observed an increase in the number of campers and mobile trailers entering the state.

The Division of Marine Transportation reports an increase in campers traveling throughout Alaska over the past seven years. The ferries that were transporting 10-20 campers in 1964, now report that they are transporting 40-50 campers.

In the past few years the campgrounds in Alaska have become overcrowded, especially near big cities or special attractions. The bumper-to-bumper traffic has beaten down the vegetation and has left the campgrounds dusty and full of ruts. The trees and bushes have been cut down for firewood, thus creating a campground that the camper has not expected to find in Alaska.

More campgrounds are needed to meet the demands of tourists and the old ones need to be expanded and modernized.¹

Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway

The following information was received from the State Department of Highways in regard to the tourist travel on the Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway and the effect the

¹Ibid., p. 67.

highway will have on the number of tourists visiting the Mount McKinley Park.

The new highway between Anchorage and Fairbanks should carry approximately 250 vehicles daily in the vicinity of McKinley Park. The traffic volume will generally increase as one gets closer to Anchorage or Fairbanks. There would also be local increases in volume near settlements and recreational areas. With a road north out of Fairbanks to the North Slope and increased tourist activity, the traffic volume could grow at a rate of 10% per year for a few years.

The new highway will definitely induce more tourists and Alaskans to visit McKinley Park. Approximately 50% of the tourists into the state drive to McKinley Park on the present gravel access road. With the completion of the new highway, a 100% increase is estimated. Based on time, travel via the new highway between Anchorage and McKinley Park and between Fairbanks and McKinley Park will take about 25% of the time presently required. On the basis of road mileage, the distance between Anchorage and McKinley Park on the new highway is about 200 miles compared to about 400 miles. On the new highway it is about 100 miles between Fairbanks and McKinley Park compared to about 340 miles.¹

Summary

Alaska has increased its tourist trade from 59,200 tourists in 1964 to 125,000 in 1970. The bulk of the tourists are using the Alaska Highway as a mode of travel. During 1970, 101,518 people used the Alaska Highway.

Of the lodges, tourist information centers, and museums reporting the number of tourists visiting their facilities during the tourist season, four out of five showed a substantial increase. The Alaska tourist season

¹Based on personal correspondence between Department of Highways, State of Alaska, and writer.

is about 120 days, with July representing the peak of the season.

Almost half of the tourists traveling in Alaska came from two general areas, the Pacific States and the Northeast-Central part of the United States. California is reported as having the largest number of tourists visiting Alaska.

Tourists promotion campaigns are rather new for the State of Alaska but the campaigns used so far have been successful. The 1970 tourist season was reported as a fair-to-good year, while other parts of the country reported a fair-to-poor tourist season. The Alaska tourist season has made a good showing for a year when the overall national economy has been poor.

The tourists average 13 days in Alaska, and spend an average of \$35.00 per day per tourist. The tourists taking planned tours are spending substantially more per day on their vacation in Alaska than the tourists traveling on their own. A greater number of tourists are turning to camping-out while on vacation in Alaska.

The Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, when completed, will increase the number of tourists visiting the Mount McKinley Park by 100 percent. The park had 45,500 visitors in 1969, if the State highway prediction materializes, about 100,000 tourists will visit the park in 1972. Scenery appears to be the highlight of the tourists' trip to Alaska; however, when traveling in Mount McKinley Park, wildlife becomes the main attraction.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not sufficient tourist travel will be present on the new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway to warrant the establishment of a lodge, museum and campground near the Mount McKinley Park. The problem was further divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What was the total number of tourists traveling in Alaska for each of the past five years?
2. How many tourists visited the selected lodges, tourist information centers and museums already established on the main tourist routes?
3. How long was the Alaska tourist season and which month represented the peak of the season?
4. How many of the tourists traveling in Alaska in the future will use the new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway?
5. How many tourists visited the Mount McKinley Park as compared to the other parks in Alaska for the past five years?
6. What did the tourist enjoy most about his vacation within Alaska?

7. What was the origin of the tourists traveling in Alaska?

8. What was the average length of stay for a tourist in Alaska?

9. What was the average amount of money spent by a tourist while on vacation in Alaska?

10. Was there an increase in the number of tourists camping out while on their vacation within Alaska?

11. What is the state government doing to promote tourism in Alaska?

Personal correspondence was used to secure the majority of the research materials needed to write this study. Questionnaires were sent to lodges, tourist information centers, museums, tourist agencies and city and state agencies. Some information was obtained from pamphlets, newsbulletins, and periodicals supplied by the Alaska Visitor Association. The book, The Alaska Survey and Report: 1970-1971 was obtained from the Research Institute of Alaska Incorporated.

Summary

The tourist trade in Alaska is a young and growing industry. The United States Customs and Immigration Office, Tok, Alaska, reported that the 1970 tourists season had a 32 percent growth over the 1969 season, but that the normal annual rate of growth in number of persons traveling for the Alaska highway is eight percent. The Alaska Marine Highway

also has experienced a steady growth in tourist travel over the past seven years.

The established lodges, tourist information centers, and museums on the present highways are experiencing a steady growth of tourist trade.

The tourist season in Alaska is about 120 days. Several programs have been initiated to extend the season. The Alaska Marine Highway and several airlines offer an off-season discount to tourists traveling during the spring and fall. There are winter tours available to the Arctic or tours to attend special celebrations conducted by Alaska's cities throughout the winter months. Westours' cruiseships are starting the 1971 tourist season much earlier than usual. Their sailing date is scheduled for the third of May.

The museum at the University of Alaska attracts a large number of visitors each year. The University's museum is one of the largest and finest in Alaska.

The majority of the tourists visiting Alaska come from the Pacific coast and the North Central part of the United States. California provides Alaska with more tourists than any other individual state.

The Alaska Travel Division has only recently begun a satisfactory tourist promotion campaign. The results of the 1969 campaign were clearly visible in the 1970 tourist season. The 1970 tourist season for Alaska was rated as fair-to-good while in other parts of the country the tourist

season was rated fair-to-poor. The slump in the national economy was the major factor in the poor tourist trade for 1970.

The campaign proved to be a success for both the out-of-state conventions held in Alaska and the off-the-beaten-path lodges, resorts, camps, and charter carriers. Now a new program has been created to lure the Japanese tourists to visit Alaska.

The Alaska Visitor Association has proposed the following ideas to the State Legislature:

1. Additional staff and money for research.
2. Bank loans for the construction of private visitor facilities.
3. Require incoming visitors to fill out a short questionnaire.
4. Budgeting \$500,000 for annual national advertising and public relations.
5. Expansion of the out-of-state convention promotion.
6. Grants to communities for construction of convention centers, museums, exhibition halls, parks, visitor centers, highway camper facilities, and other multiple-purpose facilities.

The average length of stay for the tourists visiting Alaska is 13 days. The tourists on guided tours tend to stay longer; also, tourists taking part in an outdoor

recreational program stay longer. The tourists spend an average of \$35 per day.

A greater percentage of the tourists each year are camping out while on vacation in Alaska. The Dawson Creek Tourist Information Center, Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada, reported that 84 percent of the tourists visiting their facility during the 1970 tourist season were camping out. The United States Customs and Immigration Office, Tok, Alaska, reported an increased number of campers entering the state. The Marine Highway reports that they are transporting more campers each year to Alaska. The increasing number of campers has resulted in overcrowded campgrounds in Alaska.

The State highway Department predicted that 250 vehicles daily within the vicinity of the Mount McKinley Park upon the completion of the new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway. The expected growth rate will be ten percent per year for a few years immediately after the completion date. Approximately 50 percent of all Alaskan tourists visit Mount McKinley Park. With the completion of the new highway, the park should experience a 100 percent increase in tourists. The new highway will save 25 percent of the travel time it presently takes to reach the park.

Conclusions

Alaska has much to offer the tourist on vacation-- scenery, wildlife, and out-door recreation of all types.

The state has been referred to as the last frontier, and rightfully so, for it offers the much needed open spaces and wilderness for the tourist to explore.

Tourism is a renewable resource and is increasing each year in Alaska. The highway seems to be the most popular mode of travel.

There were 45,500 tourists visiting the Mount McKinley Park in 1969; and if there is to be a 100 percent increase in the number of tourists when the Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway is completed in 1972, there will be nearly 100,000 tourists in the area. Logically, the present accommodations will need to be doubled in order to take care of this influx of tourists. Whereas in the past, tourists were scattered over the state, the new highway will tend to draw them together at a central location. The Mount McKinley Park area should have the largest concentration of tourists of any location in the state.

Selection of a lodge by tourists must be based on either availability or advertisement. If a lodge has a good site location, is well advertised, and offers the tourist something extra, such as out-door recreation, it should be very competitive in attracting tourists. If the campgrounds that are located near scenic or historical areas are overcrowded, then the park area would be an ideal location for the establishment of campgrounds.

Tourist Information Centers and Museums have been a good tourist attraction. At the time of this study, there

is not a museum near the Mount McKinley Park. Since the main tourist attraction in the park is wildlife, and since most of the smaller mammals are nocturnal, a museum should prove to be successful as a tourist attraction. Tourists must travel either to Fairbanks or Anchorage to visit a museum, and once tourists leave the park area, scenery becomes the main attraction.

A large percentage of the tourists are camping and since the existing campgrounds are becoming overcrowded, a modern campground, including showers and laundry facilities should be a tourist attraction. Once the camping tourist has established his camp for the night, he then has free time for entertainment. If a lodge or museum is nearby, the majority of the campers probably will visit either one or both. A combination of the three--lodge, museum, and campground--should become one of the most competitive businesses on the new highway.

The ideal locations for advertising would be the Pacific coast and the north-central area of the United States. California would be the best state to concentrate an advertising program.

The combination of a lodge and campground would provide accommodations for the tourists traveling on their own and staying in lodges and eating out, and the tourists traveling on their own and camping out. The museum would be attractive to both these groups and it may draw tourists traveling with planned tours. The museum also will provide

the opportunity to sell souvenirs and gifts. These 100,000 tourists visiting the areas will bring with them about \$3.5 million, provided each tourist spends only one day.

The Alaska Travel Division has accomplished much toward its tourist promotion; and if the state decides to back the tourist industry, a tremendous growth is sure to develop.

Recommendations

1. Assessment of the present tourist facilities, such as lodges and campgrounds, in the Mount McKinley Park areas should be made.
2. A site study for the location of the lodge, campground, and museum should be initiated.
3. The land for the building site should be acquired before official travel on the Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway begins.
4. A campground with shower and laundry facilities should be constructed first if it is not possible to construct a lodge and campground in the same building season.
5. The construction of a campground or lodge and campground should be started the year the highway opens.
6. A museum could be added later when financial standing deems it possible.
7. An out-door recreation program including sport fishing or horseback riding should be established after the

initial construction of the lodge, campground, and museum to increase the competitiveness of the business.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Anchorage Travel Bureau. Personal correspondence between Anchorage Travel Bureau, and the writer. February 23, 1971.

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Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce. Personal correspondence between Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, and the writer. February 27, 1971.

Glen-Rich International Hotel. Personal correspondence between Glen-Rich International Hotel, and the writer. February 26, 1971.

Hart D Ranch. Personal correspondence between Mr. Don DeHart, owner, and the writer. March 3, 1971.

Matanuska Valley Tourist Center. Personal correspondence between Matanuska Valley Tourist Center, and the writer. February 6, 1971.

Mount McKinley National Park Company. Personal correspondence between Mount McKinley National Park Company, and the writer. February 6, 1971.

- Northland Tours, Incorporated. Personal correspondence between Northland Tours, Incorporated, and the writer. February 7, 1971.
- Tok Lodge. Personal correspondence between Mr. Philip Clarke, owner, and the writer. February 23, 1971.
- United States Customs and Immigration Office. Personal correspondence between United States Customs and Immigration Office, and the writer. February 5, 1971.
- University of Alaska Museum. Personal correspondence between University of Alaska Museum, and the writer. March 16, 1971.
- Westours, Incorporated. Personal correspondence between Mr. John Hickman, General Manager, and the writer. February 26, 1971.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Addresses of Questionnaire Recipients
and Sample Questionnaire

Alas/Kon Border Lodge
Milepost 1202
Beaver Creek, Yukon
Canada

* Alaska Railroad
P. O. Box 7-2111
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

* Alaska Travel Bureau
902 Joseph Vance Building
Seattle, Washington 99801

* Alaska Travel Division
Pouch E
Juneau, Alaska 99801

* Alyeska Resort Incorporated
Girdwood, Alaska 99501

Anchorage Chamber of Commerce
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Anchorage Travel Bureau
P. O. Box 1583
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Mr. Stanley F. Brown
Paxson Lodge
Paxson, Alaska

* Mr. Philip Clarke
Tok Lodge
Tok, Alaska 99780

* Dawson Creek Tourist Information Center
Dawson Creek, British Columbia
Canada

- * Mr. Don DeHart
Hart D Ranch
Gakona, Alaska 99586
- * Department of Highway
Office of the Commissioner
Juneau, Alaska 99801
- * Department of Public Works
Division of Marine Transportation
Pouch R
Juneau, Alaska 99801
- * Department of Travel and Publicity
Department of Economic Development
Juneau, Alaska 99801
- * Department of Travel and Publicity
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada
- * Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce
Fairbanks, Alaska

Glennallen Chamber of Commerce
Glennallen, Alaska
- * Glen-Rich International Hotel
Gakona, Alaska 99586
- * Matanuska Valley Tourist Center
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Mount McKinley Bus Line
124 East 5th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
- * Mount McKinley National Park Company
1753 East Fort Lowell Road
Tucson, Arizona 85717
- * Northland Tours, Incorporated
Plaza 600 Building
Seattle, Washington 98101

Mr. Ray Scoby
Forty-Mile Roadhouse
Mile 1301 Alaska Highway, Alaska

Trailway Travel Bureau Corporation
1010 South West Sixth Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

- * University of Alaska Museum
University of Alaska
College, Alaska
- * United States Customs and Immigration Office
Tok, Alaska 99780
- * Westours, Incorporated
900 I. B. M. Building
Seattle, Washington 98101
- * Questionnaires returned

Thunderbird Estates #36
Emporia, Kansas 66801
January 18, 1971

U. S. Customs and Immigration Office
Tok, Alaska

Gentlemen:

I am writing a paper on the "Alaska Tourist Trade" for a graduate class. Any information you can offer will be of great benefits in writing my paper. I would appreciate your answering the following questions and returning the questionnaire in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

1. List the number of tourists traveling the Alaska Highway for the following years:

1966	_____	1968	_____	1970	_____
1967	_____	1969	_____		

2. What dates best represent the length of the tourist season? Example: June 5 to August 31.

3. Which month is the peak of the tourist season?

4. What did the tourists seem to enjoy most about their vacation in Alaska? Rate the following 1-2-3-4-5-6-etc.

scenery	_____	fishing	_____	wildlife	_____
hiking	_____	camping	_____	other	_____

5. Which state seem to provide Alaska with the most tourists?

6. What is the average amount of money spent per day per tourist?

7. What is the average length of stay for tourists in Alaska?

8. What percentage of the tourist checking through the Immigrations Office indicated they were camping?

9. Any other information that you might have on tourist trade in Alaska would be appreciated.

Due to the period of time that is allowed for writing this paper, I would appreciate your returning the information by March 1, 1971.

Sincerely,

Jim Sellens

Enclosure

6. What is the average amount of money spent per day per tourist?

7. What is the average length of stay for tourists in Alaska?

8. What percentage of the tourist checking through the Immigrations Office indicated they were camping?

9. Any other information that you might have on tourist trade in Alaska would be appreciated.

Due to the period of time that is allowed for writing this paper, I would appreciate your returning the information by March 1, 1971.

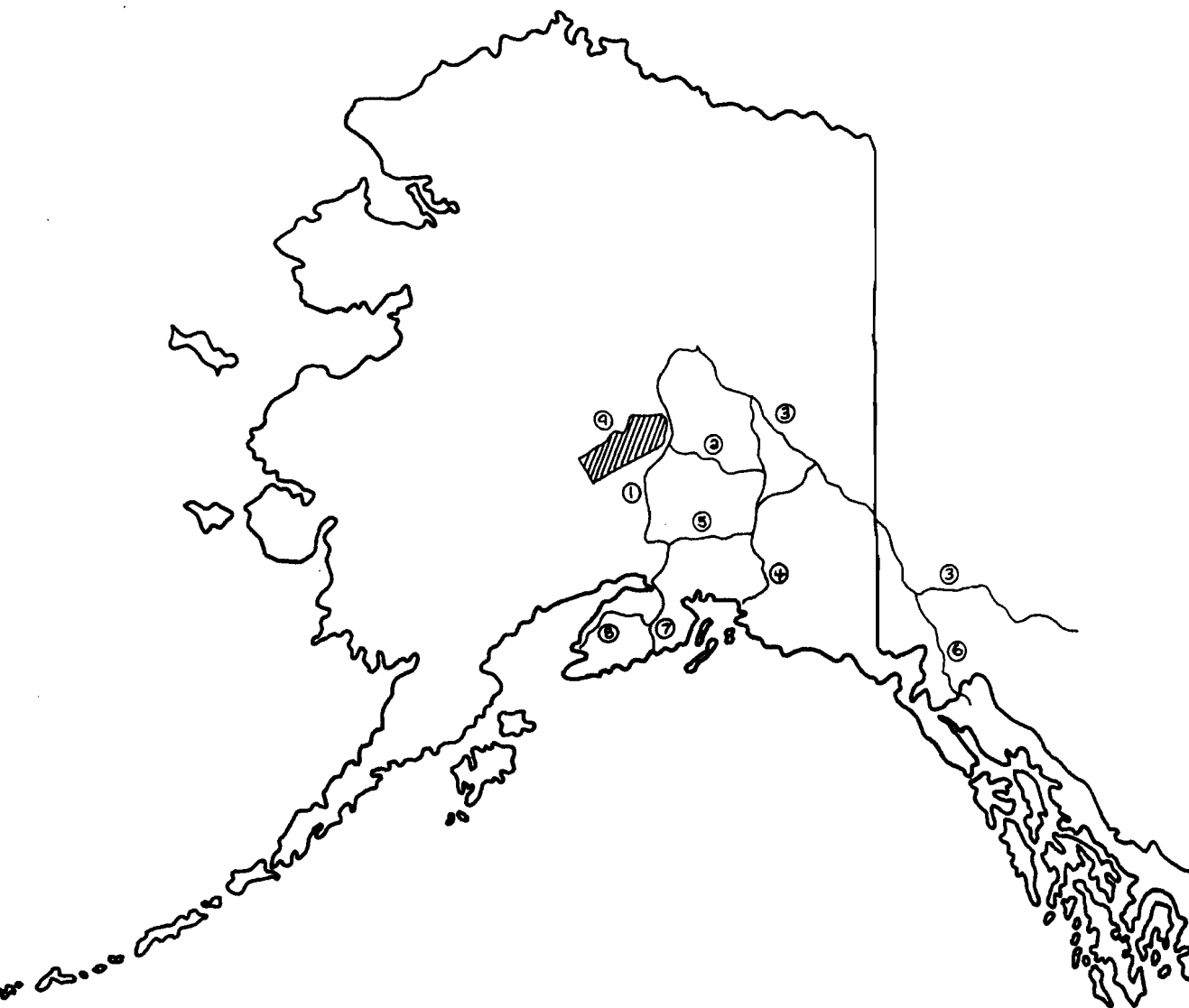
Sincerely,

Jim Sellens

Enclosure

APPENDIX B. Alaska Highway System

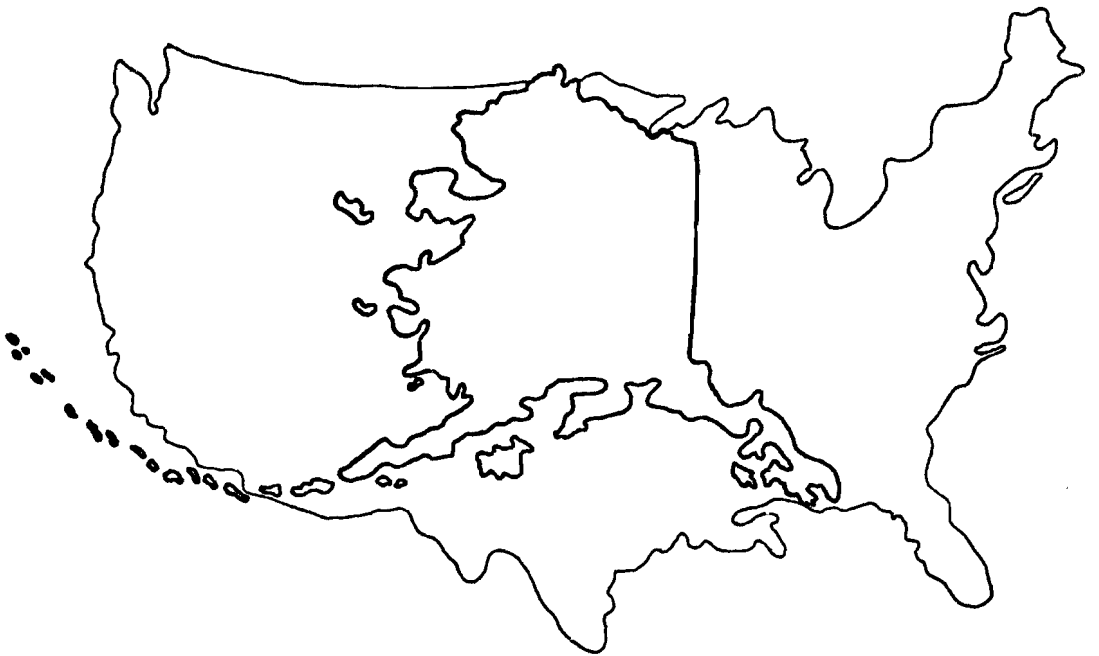
Illustration I



1. Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway
2. Denali Highway
3. Alaska Highway
4. Richardson Highway
5. Glenn Highway
6. Haines Highway
7. Seward-Anchorage Highway
8. Sterling Highway
9. Mount McKinley National Park

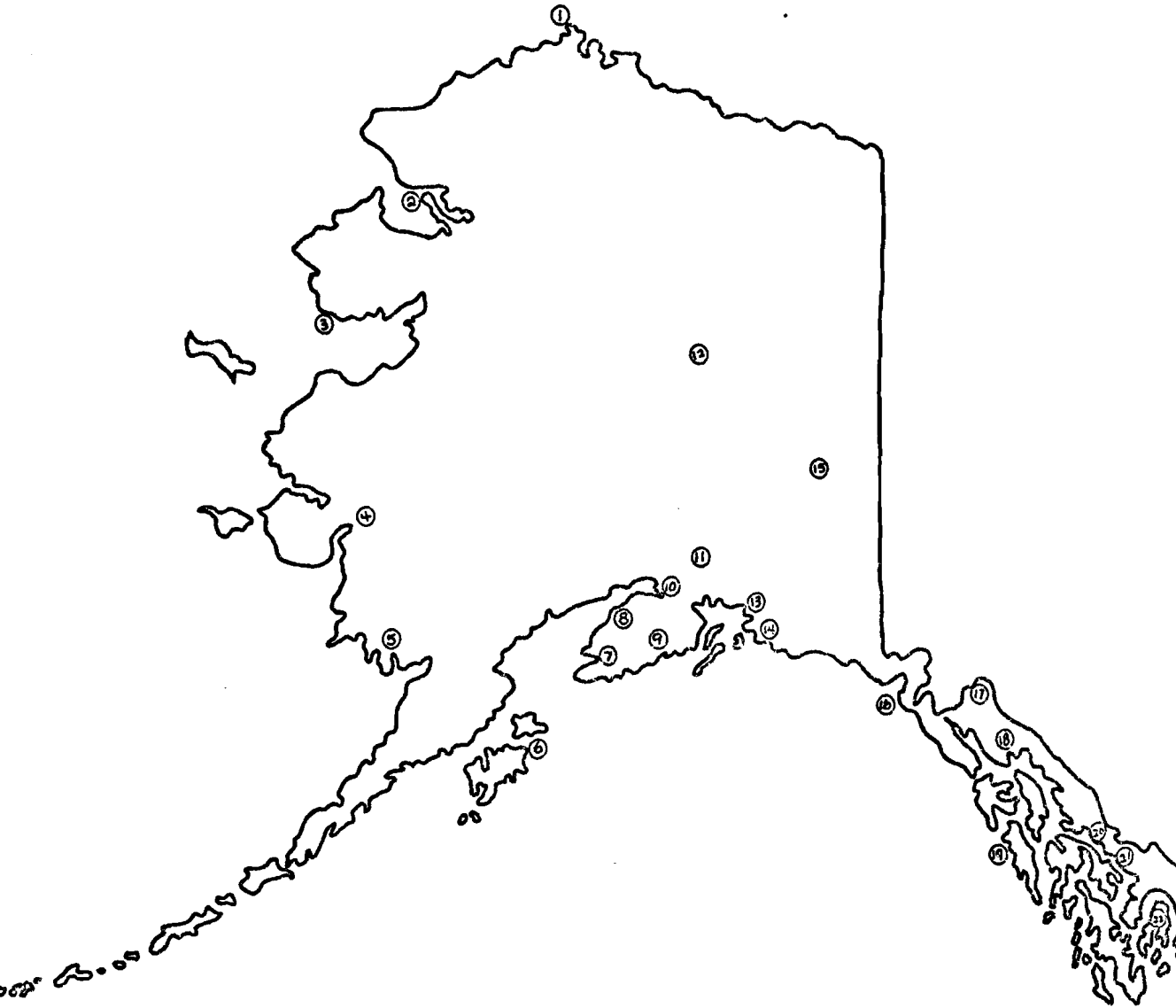
APPENDIX B. The Relative Size of Alaska
and the United States

Illustration II



.. APPENDIX B. Towns and Cities of Alaska

Illustration III



- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. Barrow | 12. Fairbanks |
| 2. Kotzebue | 13. Valdez |
| 3. Nome | 14. Cordova |
| 4. Bethel | 15. Tok Junction |
| 5. Dillingham | 16. Yakutat |
| 6. Kodiak | 17. Skagway |
| 7. Homer | 18. Juneau |
| 8. Kenai | 19. Sitka |
| 9. Seward | 20. Petersburg |
| 10. Anchorage | 21. Wrangell |
| 11. Palmer | 22. Ketchikan |