BUILDING IN AN ASHEN LAND

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY OF KATMAI NATIONAL PARK AND preserve

CLEMENS & NORRIS
H34 (KATM-CR)

November 19, 1999

Dear Friend:

Enclosed is a copy of Building in an Ashen Land: Katmai National Park and Preserve Historic Resource Study. This report, prepared by Janet Clemens and Frank Norris, identifies and documents the major historic events that have occurred in the Katmai National Park and Preserve region. This study provides a focus on human activities and evaluates the most significant historic sites, buildings, structures and other historic resources so that we can better understand, preserve and interpret our park area’s history.

If you would like additional copies or if you have comments, please contact Jeanne Schaaf at the Lake Clark Katmai Studies Center, phone (907) 271-1383.

Sincerely,

Deborah Liggett
Superintendent

Enclosures
Errata

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resources Study of Katmai National Park and Preserve
J. Clemens and F. Norris
1999

p. xii: Portland Packer Scotty’s cabin is located approximately 200 yards east of indicated site.
p. xiii: para. 1, line 14, after “area,”, add “In 1975, NPS historical architect Robert L. Carper conducted the first List of Classified Structures inventory at Katmai.” Later on the same line, replace “1975” with “1977”.
p. 91: para. 4, line 4: replace “(”) with “(¼)”.
p. 92: para. 2, line 3: replace “1°” with “1½”.
p. 115: photo caption: the man in the photo is probably either Martin Monsen, Jr. or John Monsen.
p. 119: para. 5, line 2: replace “1″” with “1¼”.
p. 120: cabin #13: should be located 3 miles northwest of indicated site.
p. 120: cabin #20: proper name for cabin should be “Monsen/Shapsnikoff Cabin Complex.”
p. 124: para. 2, line 3: Martin Monsen, Jr. was arrested, not Martin Monsen, Sr.
p. 124: photo caption: photo was taken in May 1926 by Alyce E. Anderson.
p. 125: top line: entire line, except for “Roy”, is a duplication of previous verbiage.
p. 126: bottom of page: after “firing off a letter to”, add “Alaska’s Congressional Delegate, Anthony Dimond; he demanded that he and other trappers had the right to continue using the monument, and he asked for help in getting compensation if the”.
p. 127: bottom of page: last two lines are a duplication of verbiage at top of p. 128.
p. 129: bottom of page: after endnote number 38, begin a new paragraph and add “The use of the cabin apparently stopped shortly after Bean’s visit. George Eicher, who visited the area between 1940 and 1956, noted that the Natives ‘had temporary camps and drying racks at the river mouth,’ and Mike Shapsnikoff, who moved to the area from Dutch Harbor in”.
p. 133: photo, bottom of page: should be reversed.
p. 134: para. 4, line 2: Berggren’s birthplace was Drammen (not Brammen), Norway.
p. 134: photo caption: Paul Monsen’s nickname was “Paddy,” not “Telly.”
p. 140: photo caption: credit should read “Alvin Aspelund, Sr.”
p. 204: replace “Walakta” with “Walatka”.
p. 205: front cover, caption 4: credit should read “Griggs, Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, inside back cover.”
p. 205: back cover caption: credit should read “Alvin Aspelund, Sr.”
Mrs. Palakia Melgenak, a former Savonoski resident, at South Naknek during the summer of 1961. Photograph from “Mount Katmai, Alaska Eruption Tape Recording Made by Wilbur A. Davis of the University of Oregon, July-August 1961.” NPS-AKSO Katmai park file.
Building in an Ashen Land:
Katmai National Park and Preserve
Historic Resource Study

by
Janet Clemens
and
Frank Norris

National Park Service
Alaska Support Office
Anchorage, Alaska
1999
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Purpose and Summary

Purpose

A historic resource study (HRS) is an NPS management document designed to assess known historic properties and address their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places, commonly known as the National Register. Historic Resource Studies also are prepared to meet federal agency requirements set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and to contribute to and shape park planning, priorities, actions, and decisions that may directly or indirectly benefit, affect, or pose a threat to historic properties. Such a study provides the park with base line historical material on known resources and historic properties, and develops contexts within which these and yet undiscovered resources may have association and meaning. As a result, an HRS integrates cultural resources into the larger scheme of resource management and park identity.

This HRS, which is a revision of a similar study printed in 1971, was researched and written in accordance with the Cultural Resources Management Guideline (formerly known as NPS-28) and sections 101 and 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. It develops historical themes and contexts for the land within Katmai National Park and Preserve and shows how these resources relate to the surrounding areas. It also identifies and provides evaluations for National Register of Historic Places eligible properties as well as recommendations for purposes of NPS planning, interpretation, compliance, and natural and cultural resource management directives.

Summary

People have always been drawn to Katmai’s rich natural resources, whether for catching fish and fur-bearing animals, researching volcanic activity and its effects, mining, or sightseeing. Essentially, this study is a collective view of what human activity has taken place in Katmai by looking at what buildings and structures have been constructed. For example, early occupation sites reveal semi-subterranean houses used by the Native people, while log cabins reflect a twentieth century trapping lifestyle. The 1912 volcanic eruption of Novarupta is a pivotal event in Katmai’s history. It forced residents to leave, dramatically changed the landscape and, at a minimum, buried existing settlements in ash and pumice. No sooner had the ash settled, however, than scientific investigations to the area began. The resulting discoveries led to the establishment of Katmai National Monument, which set the stage for the demise of trapping and the development of tourism. Hence the study title acknowledges that building activities took place both before and after the landscape was covered in volcanic ash.

Katmai’s history is told through ten historic contexts. The chapters are organized first by narratives, which are followed by summaries of the related historic properties and historic preservation recommendations. There is a diversity of historic properties within Katmai. These include former settlement sites, cannery sites, trapping cabins and sites, a fox farm site, a reindeer corral site, mining sites, trails, a shipwreck, an airstrip, visitor cabins and lodges, a fisheries research laboratory and fish ladder, and cabins and rock cairns related to the National Geographic Society’s expeditions and other scientific research.
As many sites have not been surveyed, a recurring recommendation in this study is for historical archeological investigations. What follows is a brief list of the historic contexts with related properties that need some level of survey and documentation:

- **Russian and Early American time periods**: Main settlements at Katmai, Kukak, Douglas, and Kaflia, and seasonal camps along the coast from Kamishak Bay south to Hallo Bay.
- **Scientific Expeditions and Research**: Two cabins and rock cairns built by National Geographic Society's expeditions, and Baked Mountain Cabin.
- **Transportation Links**: Katmai Pass and Hallo Bay trails.
- **Mineral Exploration and Mining**: Areas of Kashvik Bay, Geographic Harbor, Takli Island, and the interior lakes.
- **Clam and Salmon Canning**: Two former cannery sites at Kukak and Swikshak bays.
- **Trapping and other Subsistence Lifeways**: The former trapping and subsistence cabins are the largest group of historic sites located within the park. Approximately fifty cabins or complexes are known to have existed at one time, but fewer than twenty have been identified. The majority of sites are located around Naknek Lake, with a few scattered farther north and some along the coast.
- **Reindeer Herding**: One reindeer herder cabin site in the northwest arm of Naknek Lake.
- **Tourism**: The five original Northern Consolidated Airlines camps (Brooks, Kulik, Grosvenor, Nonvianuk, and Battle).

In general, after surveys are completed that identify eligible properties, the study recommends preparation of Multiple Property Documentation Forms. Such forms should then be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for consideration of listing in the National Register. Prepared along with this study were three Determination of Eligibility forms, for Portland Packer Scotty's Cabin, Lake Brooks Field Laboratory; and the Brooks River Ranger Station and Boat Storage House. The SHPO has concurred that all four historic properties are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
Research Methodology and Acknowledgments

John A. Hussey's 1971 book, *Embattled Katmai: A History of Katmai National Monument* laid the groundwork for this study. The task then was to identify historic contexts, the related built properties, and to gather site specific information as well as additional literature made available since that time. The Alaska Heritage Resource Survey listings from the Office of History and Archaeology provided a baseline of knowledge. The National Park Service-Alaska Support Office provided more detailed survey information through the Katmai Cultural Survey Inventory and the List of Classified Structures files. There have been a few key surveys done in the park. Wilbur E. Davis and Don Dumond conducted the most extensive archeological surveys of the former settlement sites during the 1950s and 1960s. These investigations provided information that led to the listing of several sites on the National Register. The surveys, however, were primarily focused on the prehistoric and not the historic time periods. NPS coastal surveys occurring in 1984 and 1985 documented several cabins and former cannery sites. More recent archeological surveys took place as a result of the oil spill investigations and revealed remains possibly tied to sea mammal hunting camps in the Cape Douglas area. Mike Tollefson, Katmai Ranger, prepared a 1975 cabin inventory that provided a great deal of information about former trappers and their cabins. Additional cabin files became available at the NPS-LAKA Studies Center when the Katmai Park collection was transferred from the King Salmon headquarters into Anchorage.

Valuable source material that was drawn on included the NPS publications by Frank B. Norris, *Tourism in Katmai Country* and *Isolated Paradise: An Administrative History of Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units*. Archival documents were accessed at both of the University of Alaska campus. The Fairbanks staff provided assistance with the Alaska Commercial Company Douglas Station records. The University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, staff of Dennis Walle, Katherine Hertel, and Jeff Sinnott, provided essential assistance with the National Geographic Society's Katmai expeditions collection, providing photographic copies, the *Russian Orthodox American Messenger* index and articles. Richard Bland provided the greatly appreciated translations for several of these articles and in an accelerated time frame. Katherine Arndt's knowledge and expertise about the Russian-American time period were invaluable and generously shared in a flurry of e-mails. A thank you goes to Mike Burwell, for his enthusiastic sharing of Alaska shipwreck history and for information about the Moran fleet and the *Golden Forest*. The assistance of several NPS staff members is appreciated including the Lake Clark/Katmai personnel of Jeanne Schaaf, Chief Cultural Resources and Dale Vinson, 106 compliance archeologist. A thank you goes to John Branson, Lake Clark Historian, for sharing information and for providing photographs for the trapping chapter. Also a note of appreciation to Mary Tidlow, NPS-AKSO Architect, for her review of the Determination of Eligibility documents. Thank you to Sandra Anderson, NPS-AKSO Senior Historian, for her unwavering support of this project. The final product came together with the assistance of Frank Broderick's talented graphic abilities.
Historic Contexts and Associated Sites

- Native/Russian/Early American
- Main Settlements
- Other Sites
- Scientific Exploration and Research
- Transportation
- Mining
- Clam and Salmon Canning
- Trapping Cabin and Subsistence Sites
- Reindeer Herding and Fox Farming
- Fisheries Research and Management
- Tourism and Early Park Management

Sources: George Shroul and Lynne Fuller, NPS, Katmai Coast Field Season Report, 1984; Michael J. Tollefson, NPS Katmai Ranger Memo, Old Cabins 3/21/77; Frank B. Norris, Old Trapper Cabins map compiled; Frank Norris, Isolated Paradise, NPS 1996 and Tourism Katmai Country, NPS 1992; Robert F. Griggs, The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, 1922; The National Geographic Society, 1917-1919 Katmai expeditions map; Alaska Heritage Resources Survey, State Office of History and Archaeology; NPS-AKSO LCS files
THE COMBINED PARK AND PRESERVE is located at the base of the Alaska Peninsula, a volcano-studded protrusion which stretches over 400 miles to the southwest before it terminates at False Pass. An undeniable immense area is enclosed within the park. The lands and waters within its boundaries—3,674,541 acres in Katmai National Park and another 418,699 acres in Katmai National Preserve—span almost the width of the peninsula, and its boundaries extend along the base of the peninsula in a north-south orientation for more than 100 miles. The present park and preserve is the fifth largest National Park Service unit in Alaska. Even so, the combined area of the two units is larger than Connecticut and Rhode Island put together; that area is far more expansive than the largest national park in the Lower 48 states and almost twice as large as Yellowstone. Katmai, as sizeable as it is, is only one small part of an enormous federal land block that stretches, in an almost unbroken line, some 400 miles from Kamishak Bay to the tip of the Alaska Peninsula.

Topography

Two physiographic provinces lie within the park: the Aleutian Range and the Nushagak-Bristol Bay Lowlands. The broadly-defined Aleutian Range province constitutes over 90 percent of the park, and is composed of three zones. The Shelikof Strait seacoast zone, which is a band roughly 10 miles wide along the eastern coast, is a rugged, diversified area of bays, beaches, cliffs, canyons, and waterfalls. The Aleutian Mountain zone, which ranges in width from ten to 40 miles, is located inland from the coastal zone. It is an area of volcanic peaks and glaciers; summits within the zone range from the 3,000-foot level to Mount Denison which, at 7,606 feet (2,318 meters) is the highest point in the park. The last zone in the Aleutian province is the lake region—the so-called Hudsonian zone—which is dominated by lakes, ponds and other hydrographic features. In the eastern portion of the zone, these features are separated by low mountains and hills, while in the western part the terrain opens up and the hills diminish.
The Nushagak-Bristol Bay Lowlands, which are separated from the Aleutian Range physiographic province by the Bruin Bay earthquake fault, is located in the southwestern corner of the park and constitutes only a small part of it. The terrain in this province is relatively flat, with many poorly drained lakes. A number of low ridges, sand dunes and meandering streams break the uniformity of this area.

Biotic Resources

Nature is effusive and diverse in much of the Katmai country. Tundra carpets much of the area; barren and sparse dry tundra is found in many of the higher elevations, while moist tundra dominates the lowland areas in the western third of the park. The boreal forest vegetation complex predominates in more climatically advantageous, lower elevation areas, primarily in river valleys and along lake shores. Dominant species within the complex include white spruce, birch and balsam poplar. In places where trees cannot survive, high brush predominates; primary species include alder and willow. Temperate, spruce-dominated coastal forests cover a few drainages in the northeastern part of the park, while snow fields and bare rock, are found at the highest elevations in the Aleutian Range. The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, along with some adjacent areas, is also largely unvegetated, it being overlain with volcanic ash and rock.
Because of the diversity of habitats found in Katmai, the park supports an abundance of animal life. Biologists have recorded at least six species of marine mammals, 29 species of land mammals, 137 bird species, 24 species of freshwater fishes and four anadromous fish species. Of chief interest to the visitor and park manager are the large mammals and game fishes. Caribou, for instance, inhabit portions of the western end of the park, and moose and brown bear have been found in many sections of the park. Bear roam even onto the mountain slopes. The lakes, particularly those at the lower elevations, teem with sockeye salmon, rainbow and lake trout, Dolly Varden trout, grayling, steelhead, northern pike and other fishes. Chum salmon are found in streams draining into Shelikof Strait.

**Climate and Weather**

The weather, not surprisingly, differs dramatically in the various parts of the park. In the western portion, temperatures are relatively mild; at Brooks Camp, for instance, summer high temperatures average 63°F, while lows average 44°F. The weather is predominantly cloudy or partly cloudy. In the wintertime, average high temperatures drop to 18.5°F, while winter lows drop to an average of -2.8°F. Winds are generally moderate; in the Brooks Camp area, however, summer winds are often sufficiently strong as to prevent airplane landings.

No long-term weather stations have been established at other points in the park. Park managers, concessioners, and others familiar with Katmai, however, unanimously agree that the weather on Shelikof Strait is poorer than that on the lee side of the Aleutian Range. Precipitation levels and winds along the coast are consistently higher, and the number of cloudy days are greater than at Brooks Camp. Summer temperatures are probably cooler along the coast than at Brooks Camp, and although winter temperatures are probably warmer, winds may make wind-chill readings there more severe. Conditions at points in the Aleutian Range zone are even worse than along Shelikof Strait. Cool temperatures, wind, clouds and precipitation are the rule rather than the exception.

**Cultural Diversity**

A variety of phenomena attract tourists to the area. For more than 50 years, sport fishers have been attracted to the streams adjacent to the various large lakes in the western portion of the park, where trout and salmon abound; more recently, the area's reputation as a sport fishing Mecca has become even more widely established, and fly-in fishers now visit lakes and streams throughout the park. Another major attraction is the park's remarkable brown bear population. Several hundred coastal brown bears inhabit the park, and visitors flock to Brooks Camp and other sites in hopes of seeing and photographing these magnificent beasts. Thousands of tourists each year are attracted to the devastated landscape associated with the Novarupta volcanic eruption; this cataclysmic event, which took place in June 1912, initiated geological interest in the area and resulted in President Woodrow Wilson proclaiming the area as Katmai National Monument in September 1918. The Brooks Camp area is becoming increasingly well known for its remarkable archeological resources; recent investigations have revealed that a village of substantial proportions has existed, perhaps continuously, for more than six thousand years, and the NPS, in recognition of that importance, has carefully reconstructed and exhibited a nearby semi-subterranean house. Finally, the Katmai
country's sheer size and sweep has made it increasingly attractive to those who love wilderness, because few other areas, in Alaska or elsewhere, can promise such scenic and biotic diversity in an area that seems so apparently pristine. (Almost 3.5 million acres of the 4.1 million-acre park and preserve is a Congressionally-designated wilderness. The NPS, after an exhaustive public process, has recommended that almost 300,000 additional acres be declared wilderness, and most of the remaining acreage in the park is a de facto wilderness.)

Despite the region's appeal as a wilderness preserve, cultural resource specialists recognize that Katmai has a long, complex cultural history. The Brooks Camp area, as noted above, has been a major locus of human activity for thousands of years, and archeologists have discovered scores if not hundreds of additional sites along Katmai's rivers, lakeshores, and coastline that reveal evidence of prehistoric occupation. Oral traditions and historical journals indicate that several prehistoric trade routes crisscrossed the area; in more recent times, those trails were followed by Russian priests, Nome-bound gold miners, U.S. government geologists, and other travelers. Those who followed in their wake spread out across the Katmai country building fisheries facilities, trapping cabins and traplines, fox farms, tourist camps, and other improvements. These historic properties, to be sure, occupy only a minuscule portion of the park. These sites, structures, and buildings, however, tell a poignant story about the area's people, their activities, their lifestyle, and their culture.

Katmai Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Currently, there are nine properties located within Katmai National Park and Preserve that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Several of these listings have prehistoric significance. Five of these sites are also important for their use as settlements or smaller occupation sites during the early historic time period which ended in 1912. Fure's Cabin is listed for its historic significance as related to a trapping lifestyle.

Northwest of the Aleutian Range:

Brooks River Archaeological District (AHRS Site No. XMK-051). Listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1993. Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.

Old Savonoski (XMK-001). Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.

Savonoski River Archaeological District (XMK-053). Prehistoric significance.

Fure’s Cabin (XMK-050). Historic significance.

Along the Coast:

Archaeological Site 49 MK 10 (XMK-049), near Dakavak Bay. Prehistoric significance.

Takli Island Archaeological District (XMK-052). Prehistoric significance.

Kukak Village (XMK-006). Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.

Archaeological Site 49 AF 3 (AFG-001), near Cape Chiniak. Prehistoric significance.

Kaguyak Village (AFG-043). Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.
Endnotes

1 Unless otherwise specified, the term “park” will refer to all of the area within both Katmai National Park and Katmai National Preserve.

2 NPS, *The National Parks: Index 1997-1999* (Washington, GPO), 1997. By way of contrast, the two largest national parks in the Lower 48 states are Death Valley (3,367,628 acres) and Yellowstone (2,219,791 acres).


5 APG, *FES, Katmai*, 37.


8 APG, *FES, Katmai*, 32.

9 These letters and numbers are from the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey, which is part of the state inventory system that is maintained by the State Historic Preservation Office, Office of History and Archaeology.
EARLY KATMAI PEOPLE

At the beginning of the historic period (ca. 1760), the northern Alaska Peninsula people were living in the interior, east of Naknek Lake, and along the Katmai coast with key settlements at Katmai, Kukak, and Savonoski. The people occupied seasonal camps as well. To some degree, this was the continuation of earlier habitation patterns. People have been living in the Katmai region for thousands of years. Archaeological excavations along the Brooks River indicate that people were living in the area, at least on a seasonal basis, almost continuously since 4,500 years ago. Other habitation sites, dating to less than 500 years ago, have been found along the Savonoski River and at Lake Grosvenor.

Archaeological investigations in the southeast section of the park reveal that human occupation began as early as 7,200 years ago at Amalik Bay. Other habitation sites that include house pits have been found along the shoreline of Shelikof Strait, including (from south to north) Dakavak Bay, Kaflia Bay, Kukak Bay, Cape Chiniaq, and Kaguyak. Evidence at these sites indicates occupation dates spanning 6,000 years.

When the Russians set foot on the Alaska Peninsula coast, there were two groups of people living in the region: 1) the Savonoski people living east of Naknek Lake in several small settlements and 2) the Sugpiat/Alutiiq living along the coast. The following is a brief introduction to the Native Katmai people as well as an explanation of the terms selected for use in this study.

Savonoski People

The multi-village complex located east of the Iliuk Arm of Naknek Lake was known in the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records variously as Severnovsk, Ikhiak, Ikhagmiut, Nanmiut, and Kanigamiut. The people also lived in semi-subterranean houses, constructed from local cottonwood and spruce logs. Like the coastal Sugpiat/Alutiiq, the Savonoski people maintained a community house called a kagmim or gasig. They established seasonal camps and subsisted primarily on salmon, caribou, and bear.
The native word(s) for the people living around the eastern Naknek Lake region is unknown. The Russians called the villages Severnovsk or Severnovskoe settlements and the inhabitants the Severnovskie Aleuty or Severnovsk Aleuts. The inhabitant’s ethnic and linguistic affinity is not clear. While the literature shows inconsistent references to Savonoski’s population as either predominately Aglurmiut or Sugpiat/Alutiiq, there are a few other clues. The Russian application of the term Severnovskie, which means “northerners,” explains that these were the northernmost “Aleut” (meaning Alutiiq or Sugpiat) speakers. This makes sense as the people maintained strong trading ties with Katmai village from pre-contact times through 1912. The people preferred to take the more strenuous route over Katmai Pass instead of the easier Naknek River route to the settlement of Paugvik. Paugvik was the main Aglurmiut settlement during the Russian period; located near the mouth of the Naknek River and about sixty-two miles from Savonoski. There are stories of hostility between the Savonoski and Paugvik people, which could account for their limited interaction. Some anthropologists believe that during the late 1700s, the Savonoski people were displaced by the Aglurmiut from the lower Naknek River drainage.3

The Savonoski people had connections with Douglas, a village located on the coast and at the end of a portage route from Bristol Bay.4 The Savonoski people along with some Katmai villagers contributed to the Douglas settlement’s population.5 There were some linguistic differences between the people of Katmai and Savonoski; however, as Spurr noted from his 1898 visit, there was a “marked difference in the speech.”6 Dumond and VanStone concluded that the Savonoski people, and those of Ugashik, were “native speakers of some form of Alutiiq...and they contrasted with the Central Yupik Aglurmiut of Paugvik.”7 Morseth suggests that the Severnovskie people, like the Ugashik people, spoke some form or dialect on the language continuum between Central Yup’ik and Sugtestun.8

During the early American period, the village located near Iliuk Arm of Naknek Lake became known as Savonoski.9 This Americanized spelling was placed on maps and it fell into general use. For purposes of this study, Savonoski will be used to provide continuity about the village’s population and geographic location as it has been known in recent generations.
The Coastal Sugpiat/Alutiiq

The Sugpiat/Alutiiq inhabitants lived along the Shelikof Strait in settlements at Katmai, Kukak, and probably further north, and established seasonal camps as well. It is believed that village locations were selected in relation to an adequate wood supply used for building houses and boats and for heating purposes. The people built semi-subterranean houses, which were built partially in the ground, supported by wooden posts and had log cribbed roofs. The structures were then covered with mud and sod. The coastal Natives had a land and sea subsistence orientation. They were, however, skilled sea mammal hunters using kayaks and dart weapons.

The Sugpiat/Alutiiq were related to the Kodiak Island people, as Langsdorff noted in his 1805 visit to Kukak:

*The customs, habits and, in part, the clothing, even the language of the inhabitants of Alaksa [Alaska Peninsula], are the same as in Kodiak. Only in food is there a noticeable difference, since the peninsula is connected to America where there are quantities of reindeer and wild sheep. The inhabitants usually hunt them in the fall for use as food and clothing.*

Various terms have been applied to the upper Alaska Peninsula people. The Russians applied the generic term Aleut, as well as the more specific Aliaskentsky and Aliaskan. Additional terms that have been used include Koniag, Kaniaga, Kad’iak Aleuts, Pacific Eskimo, and Pacific Yup’ik. Native

"Katmai Village Natives in their Kayaks or Bidarkas." Photo courtesy of the Erskine Collection and the Kodiak Historical Society.
speakers pronounced the term Aleut as Alutiiq, with Alutiiqs (an Anglicized plural) being the term which many contemporary descendents use today. The early people are considered to be Sugtustun speakers. The pluralized word Sugpiat (meaning “the real people”) was the term traditionally used and has recently gained popularity. For purposes of this study, Sugpiat/Alutiiq will be used to indicate some continuity in language, ethnic, and cultural heritage of the upper Alaska Peninsula inhabitants.

Prehistoric Properties Listed on the National Register

Eight of the early habitation sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are significant for what they tell us about Katmai’s prehistoric occupants.

Old Savonoski (XMK-001).
Savonoski River Archaeological District (XMK-053).
Archaeological Site 49 MK 10 (XMK-049), near Dakavak Bay.
Takli Island Archaeological District (XMK-052).
Kukak Village (XMK-006).
Archaeological Site 49 AF 3 (AFG-001), near Cape Chiniak.
Kaguyak Village (AFG-043).
Endnotes


3 Dumond and VanStone, “Paugvik,” 2-3, 6. Dumond and VanStone also noted that the Paugvik Aglurmiut traded at Katmai.


9 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 252. Hussey noted J.E. Spurr’s report of his 1898 trip through the area that the name for the village located at the head of Naknek Lake “is Ikkhagamut, or Savonoski, as it is now commonly called.”


11 Morseth, *The People of the Volcanoes*, 10, noted that the term Qikertarmiut refers to Sugpiat people affiliated with Kodiak Island.


RUSSIAN AND EARLY AMERICAN INFLUENCE

Russian Period (1760-1867)

At the time of contact with the Russians, the Katmai Native inhabitants were living in settlements along the coast at Katmai and Kukak, and in the interior, northwest of Katmai, around the eastern region of Naknek Lake, at the multi-villages that came to be known as the Savonoski settlements. By the mid-1780s, the Russian fur traders had incorporated the Alaska Peninsula Sugpiat/Alutiiq along Shelikof Strait and, a short time later, the interior Savonoski people into their fur hunting and trading network. The Russian-American Company (RAC) established a hunting and fur trading station at Katmai and constructed several buildings and structures, including a Russian Orthodox chapel. Katmai remained the significant RAC post along the Shelikof Strait coast throughout this period.

Russian Expansion into the Katmai Region

Beginning in the 1760s, the Russian fur hunters (promysshlenniki) moved eastward from the Aleutians into the Kodiak and upper Alaska Peninsula areas. The Russians were eager to incorporate the Native people, who lived on Kodiak Island and across Shelikof Strait, into their fur hunting and trading activities. The Russians knew little about the area except that the Sugpiat/Alutiiq people, like the Aleutian Islands people, were adept at catching sea otters. The pelts were lucrative trade items in China.

Grigorii I. Shelikhov, fur merchant and partner of the Shelikhov-Golikov Company (a precurser to the Russian-American Company), sought to establish a permanent settlement on Kodiak Island from which he could expand his fur hunting activity and the Russian colonization of America. Beginning in the 1760s, the Kodiak Islanders resisted the Russians through a series of armed conflicts that lasted for twenty years. The Russians pushed ahead to establish posts at Karluk (1785) and Afognak (1786). By 1786, the Russians had subjugated the Native inhabitants into hunting for furs, and continued their expansion into the Alaska Peninsula and southcentral Alaska.
Initially, Russian parties that explored as far as Kamishak Bay in the winter of 1785-1786 reported no difficulties in carrying on their trading activities with the area Natives. In May 1786, Shelikhov wrote to his chief manager about stationing crews across the strait from Kodiak Island on the Alaska Peninsula, “These men should be kept in artels [crews]...20 at Katmak [Katmai] and 11 between Katmak and Kamyschak, closer to Katmak, in the village.” The summer settlement of Kukak was most likely the other place to which he referred. It took several years, however, for the Alaska Peninsula artels to be established. Up until the summer of 1791, the area inhabitants had succeeded in keeping the Russians from settling among them. In the meantime, Shelikhov’s outfit established Fort Alexandrovsk (1786) on the Kenai Peninsula. Shelikhov’s fierce competitor, the Lebedev-Lastochkin fur trading company, established a post on the Kenai Peninsula that same year. Their rivalry resulted in hostilities breaking out on several occasions among the company hunters. Those hostilities involved the Natives who worked and traded with them.

This rivalry intensified until the late 1790s when Aleksandr Baranov, then chief director for the Shelikhov-Golikov Company’s American interest, succeeded in overcoming rival Russian traders, notably the Lebedev-Lastochkin Company, for control of the fur trade. In 1789, Shelikhov-Golikov established its headquarters at Kodiak, which became the major fur depot for the region. With its permanent base at Kodiak, the company spread onto the mainland and beyond. In 1799, the Russian Czar, Paul I, authorized a charter that granted monopoly of the American fur trade to the newly formed Russian-American Company (RAC). Baranov later became head of the company and the RAC monopolized the Alaskan fur trade through the end of the Russian period.

The Katmai Artel

The RAC organized hunting crews and workers into artels or into the smaller odinochkas (one man posts). A baidarschchik (crew chief) headed each artel and passed along the manager’s orders to their crews. Shelikhov’s instructions for constructing buildings and structures to support the artels included,

> ...when possible build the company’s buildings according to my plans. They must be made out of logs or in the form of dugouts where there is not enough timber.... For native workers and for other natives who might come on business or for a visit, build special yurts [a driftwood hut or dugout dwelling] about 100 sazhen [approx. 700 feet] from the fort and the company’s buildings.... Always keep a two year supply of local food products in dry barabaras for Russians, native workers and hostages. Have a large and unheated barn in which to keep baidaras, baidarkas and dried fish. Have nets for each work crew, good wooden baidaras, and a supply of lavtaks [skins] for baidarkas.

Katmai was a logical choice for the RAC to set up a post as the nearby Native population provided a source of labor for fur hunting activities. Katmai also had strong trading ties to the upper Naknek Lake area, including the Savonoski villages, and to the Bristol Bay region. Davydov noted that “The baidarschchik in Kakmaisk [Katmai] receives by barter animal pelts from the North and from the hinterland of Aliaska.”
During the early 1790s, the Russians established a hunting party and trading post at Katmai which was considered an *odinochka* by 1794.\textsuperscript{10} The post was active by 1795, when it was noted that “The hostages from Karluk, taken in pacifying the inhabitants are kept in the Katmai artel in Aliaksa.”\textsuperscript{11}

The RAC soon expanded Katmai into an artel that was located away from the coast, “up the river, between lakes, on a plain.”\textsuperscript{12} The RAC established its second artel along the Alaska Peninsula before 1799 at Sutkhum, located on Sutwik Island 130 miles southwest from Katmai. The posts were established because “…A good situation, dependable weather, succulent grass and plenty of fish and land and marine animals persuaded Mr. Baranov to establish settlements in two places on Aliaska [Peninsula].”\textsuperscript{13} For a length of time, Katmai reflected the type of buildings and structures constructed in some of the Kodiak artels. This was part of Shelikhov’s plan to create an agricultural base in the region, as well as to gather furs. As an 1821 description makes clear,

*Katmai artel on the south coast of the Alaska Peninsula. Two Russians. Rather good buildings: a house, barracks, warehouse, shop, barns, etc. Over 20 head of cattle. They did some fishing (“they prepared fish”), trapped sea otters, and bought from the natives furs of river beavers, foxes, deer, bears…”*\textsuperscript{14}

By the 1830s, the Katmai and Sutkhum posts were downsized. As Khlebnikov noted,

*Cattle raising was established successfully in the Katmai artel, but it has been reduced due to a shortage of men. There are very many red foxes of very good quality…. There are natives only near the Katmai artel. Company buildings in both places were originally extensive, but are now dilapidated… the following are on company maintenance: in Katmai - one Russian; in the two combined = Aleuts 10 males and two females and one Russian released from service.*\textsuperscript{15}

**Other Settlements and Places**

Throughout the Russian period and for several decades of the American period, settlements continued along the coast at Katmai, Kukak, and in the interior at Savonoski. There were additional settlements and seasonal camps, as has been indicated by documented visits, surveys, maps and the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records.

The Russians continually sought out new sites as quickly as they depleted the fur resources. In 1786 Shelikhov instructed his chief manager at Kodiak to gather information about locations, resources, people, settlements, and Native place names in the region including the upper Alaska Peninsula.\textsuperscript{16} The Russian hunters gained first hand experience about the Alaska Peninsula through hunting and trading expeditions. Decades later, trained Russian naval officers supplied accurate charts and maps.

During the 1780s, the Katmai coast received few non-Russian visitors. In 1786, however, Captain John Meares in his British trading ship *Nootka* sailed through Shelikof Strait. This voyage recorded new geographical knowledge about the area, including the fact that Kodiak Island was separated from the mainland by the strait. Meares also documented Russian fur trading taking place around Amalik Bay or Kaflia Bay. In this area, Meares’ ship was met by a Russian in a canoe who told him that the Russians were established on Kodiak Island.\textsuperscript{17}
During the 1790s, Baranov sent out various detachments of *promyshlenniks* on exploring ventures. One, the Medvednikov-Kashevarov 1797 expedition, confirmed the location of Iliamna Lake and the various portage routes across the Alaska Peninsula.

The Lebedev-Lastochkin Company, however, was already familiar with the area, having established an artel at Iliamna.

The first map that combined the earliest Russian knowledge about the upper Alaska Peninsula is dated 1802. The map shows Katmai along with an illegible name at the location marked on modern maps as Kaguyak.

Kukak Village, although not identified on the above map, was known by the Russians and singled out in the 1795 and 1804 censuses. In 1806, the first ship stopped at Kukak Bay’s “inner” harbor. Dr. Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff, a German physician and naturalist with Rezanov’s voyage, visited inhabitants from the “Village of Toujajak.” Although it is not clear if “Toujajak” was Kukak Village or a separate seasonal camp, Langsdorff provided a description of his visit to the “native summer huts” located on the northeastern shore of the bay:

> The inhabitants gave us a very friendly reception in their small earthen-covered hut with grass growing all over the outside and an entrance that was so low and narrow that we could only crawl in hunched over. Everyone sat around a fire burning in the middle of the hut. A kettle of fish was hanging over it. Several small salmon, spitted upon sticks stuck in the earth around the fire, were being roasted. ... Opposite the door, the floor was covered with fine, dry wood shavings and several clean seal skins, where we were asked to sit.

By the early 1800s, the RAC sent expeditions across the Aleutian Range and into the interior. The Savonoski people, who lived in the multivillage community located just east of Naknek Lake, were in contact with the Russian traders at least by 1807, when a marriage was registered that year for a Russian *promyshlennyi* from the “Severnovskoe settlement.”
Building in an Ashen Land

The Savonoski people also had several seasonal camps in the area, as twentieth century archeological investigations show habitation sites used at least seasonally during the Russian period near Savonoski River, Grosvenor, and Cottil lakes as well as at Brooks River. Most of these sites continued to be used in the Early American period, some even after the 1912 volcanic eruption.²⁴

Petr Korsakovskiy’s 1818 expedition, from Kodiak to Katmai, across the Alaska Peninsula and into the Iliamna region, highlighted the RAC’s need for information about Alaska’s southwest interior. Korsakovskiy’s expedition resulted in the RAC establishing Alexandrovski Redoubt (1818-1846) at the mouth of the Nushagak River. During the Russian time period, the Aglurmiut village of Paugvik, located at the mouth of the Naknek River, was the primary settlement in the area.²⁵

In 1818, the RAC’s Katmai jurisdiction probably included six settlements located on the upper Alaska Peninsula: two Savonoski settlements, Katmai, Kukak, Naushkak and Ugashek (the latter located over 100 miles southwest of Katmai and outside of today’s park boundaries). The Katmai jurisdiction inventory for that year listed a total population of 837 people.²⁶ Little is known about Naushkak: the settlement is mentioned in the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church Records, it was located north of Kukak (possibly near Cape Nukshak) and it is believed to have been occupied on a permanent or seasonal basis into the 1850s.²⁷

Between 1827 and 1836 the shoreline of the entire Alaska Peninsula was carefully surveyed. Ivan F. Vasiliev’s 1831-32 surveys charted the coast from Cape Douglas south to Chignik Bay. From these surveys, Vasiliev reported the Native designation “Kukak” for an “Eskimo” village located four miles southwest of Langsdorff’s “Toujajak Village.” Vasiliev also provided the name “Kaflia” and reported the name “Akulogak” for Naknek Lake.²⁸

In 1827 Captain A.J. von Krusenstern did not personally visit the Katmai region, but he compiled names from other maps that included “Katmay” (Katmai), “Baie Katmay (Katmai Bay), “P[orte] Aiou (Hallo Bay), C[ap] Noughchack (Cape Nukshak), and C[ap] Ighiack (Cape Ugyak). Captain Feodor Petroviche Lutke’s 1836 chart included place names of “Kaiayakak” (Kaguyak) and Swikshak Bay, as well as Naknek Lake and Naknek River.²⁹

Changes Brought to the Katmai Settlements

The Russian-American Company’s fur hunting and trading practices and the Russian Orthodox Church’s (ROC) mission activities brought different influences to the Katmai region inhabitants. The RAC initially incorporated the Native people into their fur trading activities primarily through coercive means. The Sugpiat/Alutiiq people were considered “dependent” and had to work directly for the RAC in the sea otter hunting and trading activities. The promyshlenniki used the same methods of conscripting labor and holding hostages as they had with the Aleutian people to force the Sugpiat/Alutiiq to gather the sea otter furs. The Savonoski people had less contact and were considered “semi-dependent,” meaning that their relationship with the Russians traders was more independent.³⁰

As part of the Russian system’s relationship with its “dependents”, the RAC selected community leaders called toions from among the Sugpiat/Alutiiq. The toions had limited authority over certain community and public matters and were expected to be good examples in living their lives according
to the ROC dictates. The RAC also required dependents to get permission to visit neighboring islands, thereby controlling the movement of the coastal Katmai people throughout this time.

The RAC Kodiak District organized, provided provisions of food, clothing, and boats, and sent out large sea otter hunting parties during the summer. Under the eye of the Russian overseer, groups of hunters dispersed to their assigned hunting areas where they established base camps and set up temporary shelters of driftwood to store their food and equipment. In a traditional hunting process, the hunters worked together using their baidarkas to encircle the sea otter and used their dart weapons to kill it. The Sugpiat/Alutiiq hunters were part of the sea otter hunting parties that operated along the coast from Kamishak Bay to the Sutkhum odinochka (at or near Sutwik Island). They also joined up with larger contingents, such as the 1805 trek to Nuchek. Some were taken as far away as Sitka, and a few all the way to present-day Fort Ross in California.

The Russian Orthodox Church was the other influential, and to some degree, stabilizing factor in the lives of the Native people. In 1794 the first ROC missionaries arrived and began baptizing the Alutiiq people on Kodiak Island. Within two years, the first church was built on Kodiak and the missionaries took their religious activities to the Alaska Peninsula, Aleutians, Kenai Peninsula and Yakutat. During the winter of 1797, it was noted that “...Aliaksans came to Kadiak and were baptized.” During the first half of the 1800s, the ROC Kodiak parish included the Shelikof Strait and Savonoski settlements.

Certain individuals, including the missionaries, criticized the RAC for its ill treatment of the Native people, which included the practice of taking hunters far away from their homes, and the subsequent depopulation. Langsdorff noted in his 1806 visit to the Kukak area,

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most of the young people having been carried away to Sitcha [Sitka] to hunt sea-otters.... Of a thousand men who formerly lived in this spot, scarcely more than forty remained, and the whole peninsula of Alaksa they said was depopulated in the same proportion.
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The system of forcing Natives into hunting relaxed somewhat after 1818 when Baranov left and new management policies were instituted. The early RAC administration had also often come into conflict with the ROC mission. Greater support for the ROC activities was mandated in the RAC company charters of 1821 and 1844, including provisions that required the company to provide full economic assistance and support to the Church.

Conditions for the Native people at Kodiak do not appear to have improved by the 1830s at which time Ferdinand Wrangell (Chief Manager of RAC from 1830 to 1835) made these observations at Kodiak, which can probably be applied for the Alaska Peninsula,

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From spring to autumn all the men able to work are sent off by the company to hunt sea otters and birds. From the autumn until spring they are occupied in land hunting fox and otter, and although this measure is essential for the survival of the company, the islanders gain little through this. By excessively low prices paid them for their produce and fairly high prices for the goods in which they are paid, they are unable to clothe themselves and their families with what is absolutely necessary. They are obliged to purchase both their parkas and kamleias from the company or else earn them in some other way.
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Throughout the 1800s, the Katmai villages experienced depopulation as did other settlements throughout the region. Below are population figures to give an idea of changes that occurred during the Russian period.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>On Alaska Peninsula</td>
<td>814 (439 M; 375 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>On Alaska Peninsula</td>
<td>209 (119 M; 90 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Katmai Jurisdiction</td>
<td>837 (386 M; 451 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(the jurisdiction probably included these six settlements: two at Savonoski plus Katmai, Kukak, Naushkak, and Ugashek)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>On Alaska Peninsula</td>
<td>838 (386 M; 452 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>On Alaska Peninsula</td>
<td>190 (99 M; 91 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Katmai</td>
<td>239 (222 “Aleut”; 17 creole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(this figure may be for the Katmai jurisdiction)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional figures for the Savonoski settlements comes from the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>99 (48 M; 51 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population loss can be attributed to the extreme hunting conditions, subsequent family and community hardships, hunting accidents, and the numerous epidemics that occurred on both sides of the Aleutian Range. Respiratory epidemics occurred throughout Alaska during the 1800s including the Kodiak area. The devastating smallpox epidemic of 1835-1840 reached the Shelikof Strait settlements during 1837-38. Some success at stopping the epidemic was achieved on the Alaska Peninsula by the Katmai baidarschchik Ivan Kostylev. Kostylev and two others managed to vaccinate 243 people from the villages, all of whom survived; 27 people, the ones who had refused to be vaccinated, died. During the years of 1853, 1860, 1859, and 1863 coughing and respiratory epidemics were reported for villages around Naknek Lake.

Following the losses brought on by the epidemics, the Russian-American Company Chief Manager and governor of Russian America, Arvid A. Etholen, consolidated villages on Kodiak Island during the early 1840s. This activity did not occur along the Katmai coast unless it happened on an informal basis. Katmai continued to be the primary fur trading post and population center on the Alaska Peninsula into the early American period. In 1845, the Russians identified Katmai as one of five depots in the Kodiak district for stocking supplies for hunting parties and for trade.

Northeast of Katmai along the coast, Kukak and Naushkak were occupied to at least 1843. These settlements, however, may have been remnant populations following the smallpox epidemic. Since there is so little mention of Naushkak and Kukak in the historical records, it is likely that these places were used on an intermittent, seasonal basis through the Russian period.
The Russian-American Company Builds the First Chapel

The only chapel built on the upper Alaska Peninsula during the Russian period was at Katmai. In 1843, RAC manager Ioann Kostylev built the first chapel. This building was replaced with a new chapel eleven years later.\(^4\)

The RAC Chief Manager Etolin provided instructions about the settlements building chapels:

> To Toion who are to become starshinas [elders/church readers] in Aleut settlements in the Kodiak Department. The starshina must be firm in having the Aleut men and women fulfill their Christian obligations and carry out all tasks assigned to them by the priest. Toward this end, each settlement is to try to build a chapel, through its own effort, where the priest can conduct worship services when he visits. They should build the chapel when time and circumstances permit, after the settlement has been organized and put into order.\(^5\)

Russian Orthodox Church activities continued with at least periodic visits to Katmai and Savonoski settlements during the 1840s. At Savonoski, the priest would hold services in a tent, as a chapel was not built there until 1877. During 1841 the Kodiak mission recorded a visit to the peninsula with 57 baptisms at Katmai and 46 baptisms in the Savonoski settlements.\(^6\) In the early 1840s, the ROC reorganized its Kodiak Mission, creating the Nushagak and Kenai missions. In 1844 the Savonoski settlements and records were transferred to the Nushagak mission, where a small chapel had been constructed in 1832 and its first missionary assigned in 1842.\(^7\) The Savonoski settlements continued to be served by the Nushagak mission until 1912. The Shelikof Strait villages remained under the Kodiak Mission until they were transferred to the Afognak Mission in 1896.

Early American Influence (1867-1912)

This time span begins when the U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia and ends when the Novarupta Volcano erupted and forced the inhabitants to relocate away from the Katmai area. For the greater part of this 45 year period, the Savonoski, Katmai and Kukak settlements continued with additional settlements at Douglas (identified on modern maps as Kaguyak), and later at Kaflia. The fur trade continued to be the primary economic activity with the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC) becoming the dominant trader in the region. An ACC store was maintained at Katmai with new stores established at Douglas and for a short time at Kukak. The Katmai store continued a brisk fur trade with the interior Savonoski villages. Fur hunters established seasonal camps from Cape Douglas north to Kamishak Bay. The Russian Orthodox Church influence continued within the settlements through visitations by priests and the establishment of chapels at Savonoski, Katmai, Douglas, and Kukak. As the fur trade began to wane in the 1880s, the Katmai inhabitants became more involved with the rapidly growing commercial fishing industry. At the time of the volcanic eruption, many of the Savonoski residents were living in the Naknek area for the summer fishing, and the Katmai and Douglas villagers were fishing at Kaflia, which was the site of a saltery and store.
Main Settlements

During this period, there was continuous occupation of settlements at Savonoski, Katmai, and Douglas, marked “Kaguyak” on modern maps. Kukak was occupied, although it may not have been continuously, until the later 1890s when the population moved to Douglas. The houses continued to be semi-subterranean barabaras, and community houses or kazhims were known to be at Savonoski and Douglas. The largest number of barabaras noted in the literature for Katmai is 20 houses with 218 inhabitants during 1880, and Douglas with ten barabaras and 45 residents in 1901.

The Alaska Native pre-contact barabaras were modified during the Russian period. Early on, the promyshlenniki had adapted the Aleutian Islanders’ barabaras by building the sod-covered and arched-roofed structures above ground and by placing a doorway in a wall instead of through the roof. As a result, Natives began changing their house entrances from the top to the wall. By 1870 some of the Aleutian turf-covered dwellings had glass windows, interior plank walls covered with paper, floors covered with dried grass, and small stoves. The Shelikof Strait post-contact houses usually
contained two rooms. One such house was noted by the Fifth Earl of Lonsdale during his Arctic journey which took him through Katmai in 1889.

...Mr. Farmin [Fomin] received us most kindly. He is a Russian Creole, & the maners of a little French man, fussy & quick but very kind. He at once gave me his room in a two roomed turf & log biraba, & so we are dry & comfortable. This is a very small village only about 15 houses & 35 grown up people....

To the north of Katmai, 1953 archeological investigations noted some changes during the historic time at Savonoski. The early, probably prehistoric, dwellings had multiple-roomed patterns. The nearby semi-subterranean structures that contained European artifacts, however, were one-roomed. The framework of the historic houses included walls of split cottonwood and the use of spruce poles for additional support of the sod. Behind the row of houses, there were several wooden storage houses elevated on pilings similar to those found throughout the Bristol Bay region.
Kazhims existed at Savonoski, Douglas, and probably Katmai. The Douglas community house, investigated in 1953, was built underground except for the roof. Hand hewn lumber was used to build the large oval room with a sloping passageway entrance. Archeologist Wilbur Davis interviewed a former Savonoski resident who reported that “the people danced, held the November festival, and played the stick gambling game, ‘gathak’, in the kazim at Old Savonoski.”

Alaska Commercial Company Establishes Trading Stores

Hutchinson, Kohl & Company emerged as the commercial successor to the Russian-American Company and took over the Katmai trading station around 1868. There soon emerged a second firm, the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC), that assumed control over the Alaska operations and assets of Hutchinson, Kohl & Company in 1870. The ACC’s Kodiak District took over the former Russian trading posts along the Alaska Peninsula and Cook Inlet regions.

By 1872 the ACC was operating the Katmai post, which continued to be the major coastal post for at least a few years. While barabaras were better suited for the climate, the ACC found ways to maintain a log or wood frame store, as this 1890 description noted:

"The village, consisting of sod huts surrounding the ‘store’ and a small log chapel, was built upon a swampy flat along the banks of a salmon stream... The summer visitor is impressed with an idea of what winter must mean in this desolate spot when he notices the heavy chains and ropes which are laid over the roof of the trading store and securely anchored in the ground as protection against the furious gales that sweep down the steep mountain sides but a few miles beyond."

In 1878 the Alaska Commercial Company opened its second post along the Katmai coast at Douglas. At this time, the Native village was already at the site, with a Russian Orthodox chapel built 1875 or 1876, and the Shirpser, Haritonoff and Company had already established a rival fur trading post there as well. Shirpser, Haritonoff and Company sold or reorganized into the Western Fur and Trading Company in 1879. This company continued to operate its Douglas Station for the next four years and also maintained a post at Iliamna.

In 1883 the Alaska Commercial Company eliminated its primary competition by purchasing the Western Fur and Trading Company.

While the ACC maintained at post at Katmai, Douglas became the significant sea otter hunting center along the coast. In 1880, Ivan Petroff, observed that “Katmai was once the centre of all the peninsula trade, and the point of transit for supplies to Bristol Bay, and on through Nushagak and Kolmakosky. Its former glory has departed; it has been superseded by a rival in the north at Cape Douglass, as far as trade and traffic in furs is concerned.” There was only one settlement of any significance north of Kukak along the Katmai coast. “A village of 46 persons.... two trading stores, a chapel, seven barabaras and it was the terminus of a portage to Bristol Bay.”

The Douglas Station’s merchandise inventories included: staples of rice, lard, pilot bread, bacon, sugar and tea, and equipment items such as baidarka and dory, seal gut, spades, hammers, fish nets and hooks, rifles, and mouse and fox traps. Clothing and shoes for men, women and children were listed with items such as dress goods, gingham, red flannel, chinchilla caps, and woolen shirts and socks. Housing items included pots and pans, kettles, crockery, lamps, and seal oil. There was also a
mix of holy pictures and church candles, children toys, alarms clocks, thermometers, cigarettes, playing cards, and musical instruments such as autophone organs, an accordion as well as guitar strings.64

On October 14, 1886 the ACC Douglas Station agent went to Kukak and opened a store there. This was a relatively short trip as Kukak was only six hours by baidarka from Douglas in good weather.65 The Douglas Station agent was also in charge of the Kukak stock. In October 1887 the agent “went to Kukak took stock and Brought what I could from there as the goods was getting damage from wet weather also made the windows good & fast.”66

By 1896 the ACC Douglas Station included a house, a store, and a new shed. Some of the building materials used are found in the Douglas Station accounts and include charges for: pine, shingles, house frame, and putting up the frame. A 1890 invoice was for a new house at Douglas that included “200 Afognack boards, nails...white paint, iron hinges, 1 sheet tin, 2 window glasses, 3 chimney clay pipes, shingles, moss, clay and stone and labor. The house interior included wallpaper described as “prints clothed on House walls.”67

The ACC controlled the Katmai area fur trade through most of the late nineteenth century, maintaining stores at Kukak until 1888, Douglas until 1901, and Katmai until 1903.

Several Chapels are Built

After the American purchase of Alaska, the Katmai region’s inhabitants continued to be influenced by the Russian Orthodox Church, which retained its Alaska property and the right to continue its activities according to the Treaty of the sale of Alaska.68 During this time period, ROC chapels were built north of the Aleutian Range at the Savonoski settlements (two chapels) and along the coast at Katmai, (one rebuilt and one new chapel), Douglas (two chapels), and Kukak (one chapel).69

Initially, the ROC reduced its number of clergymen and withdrew the Nushagak priest. Within ten years a priest was reassigned to Nushagak.70 The Savonoski settlements received regular visits from the Nushagak priest and continued to be under the mission’s influence until 1912.71 At Savonoski, located on the east end of the Iliuk Arm portion of
Naknek Lake, the first chapel named for Our Lady of Kazan’ was built in 1877. Another chapel was built at the second Severnovskoe settlement (Kanigm’iut) in 1902, named for Nikolai the Miracleworker. The Shelikof Strait coastal villages were under the parish of the Church of the Resurrection at Kodiak until 1896 when these settlements were transferred to the Afognak parish.

When possible, annual visits were made by a priest to hold church services, perform baptisms, chrismations, and marriages in the coastal settlements. The 1898 visiting priest noted the difficulty in communicating with the Alaska Peninsula settlements “since it is necessary to cross the numerous bays along the very stormy Shelikof Strait in baidarks.” The Alaska Commercial Company Douglas Station manager noted the priest’s arrivals and departures:

Aug. 15 1885... for 3 days of service; when priest left, Bydarkas left for Katmia & Kogok [Kukak]; Monday August 15 [1887] ... The Priest arrived during day from Wrangell [on the Alaska Peninsula] via Katmia & Kukak with 3 Bydardas to hold church Service with the People here...3 days of services; Friday priest crossed the Straits and The Katmia People left here for home; “August 25" [1888] ... The priest arrived from Katmai to hold church service.

The early chapels were modest buildings:

The outlying chapels in the Kodiak parish were served by lay readers and usually built of logs. “In outward appearance these chapels are not attractive,” wrote a government official, “But many of them are quite tastefully decorated in the interior, and in all of them the greatest neatness is preserved.”

Katmai’s second Orthodox chapel was built in 1854 (the Russian-American Company built the first chapel in 1843). Renovations occurred in 1884, but the wind seriously damaged the chapel in 1886, which required its rebuilding in 1887 (designated as the third chapel). The 1890 census noted this building as a small log chapel. During his 1895 visit, the Kodiak priest, Tikhon Shalamov, described the chapel as “not new...with a small cupola that is painted with white paint, the roof is shingle, spacious, the interior has wallpaper. It has many icons.” Six years later, the visiting Afognak priest, Fr. Vasili Martysh, noted,

The chapel is rather spacious and is kept clean and in exemplary order, owing to the care of the sexton. Though it was built not very long ago, it is rotted underneath. Under the direction of this sexton the inhabitants have set to building a new chapel. The materials for it have been prepared in part from a steamer broken up near Katmai, part purchased from the company.

At Douglas, the first ROC chapel was built in 1875 or 1876. The ACC Douglas Station manager, Vladimir Stafeev, began building a second chapel in 1890. It appears that some of the lumber from the first chapel was used to complete the second chapel. It was consecrated the following year. During 1893, a porch was added, the iconostasis was rebuilt, the inside was wallpapered, and construction on the bell tower began. In 1901, the visiting priest noted that the Alaska Commercial Company had built the small chapel and provided some bells.
Kukak had at least one ROC chapel that was built sometime after the 1880 census and but prior to January 1890. The first mention of this chapel in the church records is New Year’s Eve 1889/New Year’s Day 1890 after a windstorm had destroyed it. Windstorms wreaked havoc on the coastal chapels, but one such storm provided materials for building two new chapels. In June 1898 the *Western Star*, part of the Moran Fleet that was heading for the Yukon, was beached and wrecked at Katmai Bay. The salvaged wood was used in part to build chapels at Katmai and Douglas. One of the Moran fleet crew’s journal entry for July 1898 noted a visit to Katmai village and the dual role of the local ACC manager:

> Last night three of us visited the Katmai Indian village, it sits on the river a short distance above the point where the water spreads out over the wide flats of the lagoon, and is similar to many others along the shores of Alaska. Alexander J. Petelin, who was born in this part of the world, his father a Russian, his mother an Aleut, fills the dual capacity here as agent and store-keeper for the Alaska Commercial Company, he also officiates in the Greek church services, in a building occupied as a chapel. He said he had never been ordained as a priest, but had been educated as such. He speaks the Indian language and preaches to them at times in their own tongue.

Population Ties and Movement

Through most of the early American period, settlements continued at Katmai, Savonoski, and the Douglas and Kukak areas. Katmai maintained the largest population center along the coast. By 1880, Katmai’s population was 218. That same census year, Savonoski had the second largest population with 162 people, and the combined Douglas and Kukak population was 83. Katmai continued its trading business with the Savonoski villages and Bristol Bay. The definite preference by the two Savonoski settlements, to continue trading with Katmai instead of taking the easier Naknek River route to Paugvik, lasted at least through the 1880s. Katmai and Savonoski inhabitants also had ties with the Douglas populace. Although it is not clear when the settlement was first
inhabited, a ROC priest noted that, “Douglas Village was formed in part by the inhabitants from Katmai and in part from Severnovski.”

Douglas was also located at the end of an established route to Bristol Bay. The Katmai villagers traveled to Kukak as noted in 1880, when Petroff described the Kukak residents as “sea-otter adjuncts and contingents of the Katmai people.” This statement indicated that the Katmai people were occupying the area at least on a seasonal basis.

During the 1880s, some of the Katmai residents were known to have traveled southwest along and across the Alaska Peninsula to hunt and trade. Katmai villagers were noted in the ACC Wide Bay station account books and also traded at the seasonal Sutkhum store. After 1867 people were free to move about and to resettle in old village sites. It is likely that a few Katmai villagers moved down the coast to Wrangell. Both Savonoski and Katmai residents traveled to the Cold [Puale] Bay store, located 35 miles southwest of Katmai, as well as to Kanatak, Becharof Lake, Egegik and to Naknek, at least by the early 1900s. People also moved into Katmai; the 1890 census noted that of Katmai’s 132 inhabitants, 51 people were not born there, but had moved from somewhere else.

Seasonal Camps

Several seasonal camps and other habitation sites were used at least intermittently by the Sugpiat/Alutiiq and the Savonoski people during the Russian and Early American time periods. Most sites were located around the Naknek Lake drainage and along the Shelikof Strait side of the peninsula.

Seasonal caribou and or fishing camps were located around the Naknek Lake drainage in the Savonoski River, Lake Grosvenor, Lake Coville, and Brooks River areas. Archaeological investigation showed that at least one house excavated by Brooks River might have been used during the winter. Ukak was another traditional hunting and fishing camp used by the Savonoski people up until 1912. This camp was located up the valley of the Ukak River near the foot of Mount Katmai.

Seasonal camps and other habitation sites were located along the Katmai coast and used, at least on an intermittent basis, during the Russian and American periods. For the most part, the exact location of these sites is not known and little archaeological investigation has been done.

During the end of the early American period, if not earlier, Savonoski people were traveling to the coast via the Hallo Bay or Douglas pass routes. One of their camps was located on the north shore of Hallo Bay.

Single barabaras were noted during the 1901 Afognak priest’s visit to Douglas. The ship crossed the strait and anchored at Hallo Bay (eight miles from Douglas), then moved closer to Douglas, which was located in a small bay. “Here near a small river stands the lone barabara of the Aleut Petr Anignan who speaks Russian rather well. Having rested in his barabara and drunk tea, we set off farther in the baidarkas...in the evening we safely arrived at Douglas and stopped in the barabara of the Aleut Inokentii.”

Although Russian and early American maps identified a settlement with various names (including “Kayayak” and its variants) at Swikshak Lagoon, this was most likely a seasonal camp. According to Katherine Arndt, there was probably a continuous seasonal occupation of one or more sites here.
during the Russian and early American periods. According to the ACC Douglas station manager Stafeev's log books from 1889-1895, the Douglas people had a summer camp, that included barabaras, called “Pahliak” at the locality of Swikshak.97

The vicinity of Dakavak Bay, Amalik Bay, Takli Island, and Cape Atushagvik was probably used throughout this period at least on a seasonal basis. This was the closest point of land from which people would travel in boats across Shelikov Strait to reach Kodiak Island. Structures are probably located in the area, as people often had to wait several days or weeks before weather was calm enough to allow for crossing the Strait.98

During 1895, the Kodiak priest on his travel from Katmai north by baidarkas noted two or three barabaras at “Togaly Bay” (possibly Dakavak Bay), where the Katmai people gathered in the summer to dry humpback salmon. Four hours from that location, they "landed on a tide flat to drink tea and have lunch in a little place called Attushalvik [possibly Cape Atushagvik]. This is the narrowest place in Shelikof Strait [30 miles]. From here in baidarkas they usually cross it."99

**Hunting Parties and the Declining Fur Trade**

The Alaska Commercial Company organized hunting parties similar to the Russian-American Company by provisioning the hunters and providing baidaras to transport them and their kayaks to the hunting areas. The height of the fur trade was 1885 and the number of sea otters rapidly declined after this time.100

Right: Copy of March 1, 1901 drafted agreement between the Douglas Chief and the Alaska Commercial Company, Douglas Station Manager. If signed, the Douglas Chief agreed to keep his men hunting for furs and to turn all furs gathered by the villagers over to the Douglas Store in return for provisions. Due to the demise of the sea otters, the Douglas store closed that summer. UAF, ACC Douglas Station records, Box 5 folder 66.

During the late 1880s, the ACC Douglas Station agent, John W. Smith, noted the arrival of men from Katmai and Kukak to form hunting parties. A January 1887 entry by the station manager noted that he was “getting the parties ready to hunt had a good talk with the People about hunting and the AC [Alaska Commercial Company].” Other journal entries noted people arriving from “Kamashak” on foot to trade and several Bristol Bay people, including some with bidarkas on sleds,
to hunt from Douglas. Hunters also tried to get to a place name Reglarawak (later spelled Rreglarawak), which the store manager later visited and arrived back to Douglas within two days.\textsuperscript{101}

Kamishak Bay was an important hunting region. During the 1880s and 1890s, Bristol Bay area Natives migrated each spring to the area to hunt sea otter for the ACC Nushagak agent John W. Clark. Many camps were spread out along the shores from Augustine Island south to Cape Douglas. The hunters took the seal and otter pelts to the ACC Fort Alexander warehouse.\textsuperscript{102} From 1883 to 1893, the ACC Iliamna Station supplied a party that hunted sea otters in Kamishak Bay.\textsuperscript{103}

Hunters were also known to occupy nearby islands. Afognak sea otter parties hunted on Shaw Island and “Ikuk Islet;” the latter was probably one of the Shakun Islets.\textsuperscript{104} The 1890 census noted,

Small camps of otter hunters exist on the low, barren islands near the southern shore [of Kamishak Bay]. Low structures of rocks, canvas, and drift logs are anchored with chains and cables to the rocky surface, to prevent them from being swept away before the constant gales: and here the hunter watches for weeks and months, bereft of all comforts, unable to stand erect within his lowly dwelling, while the force of the wind prevents him from doing so outside, waiting for a day’s or even a few hours’ lull between storms to visit his nets or to shoot sea otter from his boat.\textsuperscript{105}

Schooners traveled around the Cook Inlet and other stations. They arrived at the Douglas station to deliver goods and to pick up the furs. Sometimes they brought in or picked up hunting parties. This might have occurred more often as the hunters had to range farther for the disappearing sea otters.

Most likely the decline of sea otters caused the ACC to close its Kukak store in 1888. By 1890, the Eleventh Census taker note that the Douglas station otter trade had significantly declined:

The only settlements in the vicinity of Cape Douglas consist of a small trading post, with a few native houses, and the village Kukak, with less than 100 inhabitants of the Kadiak Eskimo tribe. Formerly this vicinity was looked upon as one of the most important sea-otter hunting grounds, but of late years the trade in these valuable skins at Douglas station has become insignificant, and the natives are obliged to seek distant hunting grounds with the assistance of the traders. The natural food supply of these people is quite abundant. The sea teems with codfish and halibut, the streams with salmon, and hair seal are plentiful along the shore during the winter.\textsuperscript{106}

This same census noted fewer than 200 people living at Katmai, with a continuing orientation to the sea, and habit of purchasing goods at the trading store:

The settlement of Katmai . . ., and its population, consisting of less than 200 . . ., depend upon the sea otter alone for existence. The men could have reindeer in plenty by climbing the mountains that rear their snow-covered summits immediately behind them, but they prefer to brave the dangers of the deep and to put up with all the discomfort and inconvenience connected with sea-otter hunting, and in case of success purchase canned meats and fruit from the trading-store . . .\textsuperscript{107}
The poor economic conditions and epidemics led to further depopulation in the Katmai region. An epidemic in the Douglas area occurred in May 1888, when the ACC Douglas Station agent noted that the people were all sick and that one baidarka arrived from Kukak to take medicine back. By June, a total of 18 people had died.\(^{108}\) The Kodiak priest, in his 1895 visit to the Alaska Peninsula settlements, stopped at Pualale Bay (then called Cold Bay) and noted the barabaras used by Katmai inhabitants during the summer sea otter hunts, "Now, none of the inhabitants could be found. Here, as in all the bays of Alaska, there are burial mounds and crosses, under which lie the poor and much-grieved bones of Aleuts."\(^{109}\) Another priest visit noted accounts of starvation during the winter of 1897-98 at Douglas and other settlements.\(^{110}\)

In 1890 the Douglas area consisted of "one trading post, a chapel, and a few native houses...the inhabitants who, together with those of Kukak, numbered 85." During 1895, the priest tried to visit Kukak Village but he discovered that the inhabitants had moved to Douglas. Travelers between Douglas and Katmai, however, continued to use Kukak as a rest stop and hunters out of Douglas camped there as well.\(^{111}\)

By 1890, Katmai included "132 inhabitants making up 37 families and occupying 17 houses....all but one white man were Kodiak Eskimo."\(^{112}\) At Savonoski for that year, the population was 94 (47 men; 47 women). The Russian Orthodox Church continued to be an integral part of the Katmai settlements, and the chapels at Savonoski, Katmai, and Douglas were active until 1912. Part of the mission activities included education, which appeared to be going on in the Katmai settlements to varying degrees. In 1900, Savonoski was listed as having a primary school.\(^{113}\) At Douglas, education took place on a more informal basis with the ACC manager at Douglas, Vladimir Stafeev, noting in 1892 that someone from each household could read and write.\(^{114}\)

In August 1901, the ACC closed the Douglas store. The priest who visited the settlement a few weeks later believed that the store closure was going to be a hardship for the people. The following year, however, the priest noted that no deaths had occurred among the population of 55 and that the people had returned to their original food.\(^{115}\)

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Katmai experienced an influx of winter travelers who were using the Katmai Pass route to get to the Nome gold fields. To accommodate these prospectors, the local trader built a "Bunk House" located away from the village.\(^{116}\) In 1903 the Katmai store...
closed. The ACC planned to sell the posts and assessed one building at Douglas at $25.00 in 1906. That same year, the ACC trading store at Katmai was offered to Omar J. Humphrey for $150.00, although the sale did not take place.

### Population Gravitates to Commercial Fishing Industry

By the late 1800s, the economic focus was shifting away from fur hunting and trading activities and towards the rising commercial fishing industry. The trading posts were closing and sea otter hunting was prohibited by law in 1911.

The population at Savonoski in 1900 was 100 and ten years later there were 74 people. At the time of the 1912 volcanic eruption, two families were living at Savonoski, with the rest having moved to the mouth of the Naknek River looking for employment in the fishery. At that time, Savonoski consisted of fifteen sod covered barabaras with several rough hewn log caches, one log chapel that was dedicated to St. Mary, and Mrs. Palakia Melgenak’s store. American Pete, the chief of Savonoski village, was using his houses at both Savonoski and at the seasonal camp of Ukak.

Along the coast, the Sugpiai/Alutiiq people gravitated to the growing commercial fishing industry. By 1912, the fishing town of Chignik had replaced Katmai as the primary population center on the Alaska Peninsula pacific coast. The Karluk cannery was sending over steam tenders to gather salmon at Kukak Bay by 1890. For a couple of years, Kaflia had been the site of a saltery and store that was maintained by a man by the name of Foster from Kodiak. Villagers from Katmai and Douglas camped at Kaflia during the summer and fished for their own salmon use, as well as to earn cash working for the saltery. Harry Kaiakokonok, a former resident, remembered the fishing at Kaflia.

*That’s the fellow [referring to Foster] they work for summertime, salt salmon, the bellies; smoke the backs…. All men. Men cutting and salting. Men fishing. The fish in that Kaflia bay, inside, that inner harbor. And they make the hauls, they pull them up to the beach.*

In June 1912, there were at least five Natives employed at the Kaflia fishery. Evidently, Harry Kaiakokonok and his family had recently moved to Kaflia and were living in barabaras at the time.

### Novarupta Erupts and Forces Katmai Residents to Leave

In early June 1912, Douglas and most Katmai villagers were already gathered at Kaflia for the summer fishing season. Strong earthquakes that began a few days prior to the eruption sent the remaining six Katmai residents fleeing down the coast towards Cape Kubugakli. The earthquakes also caused individuals from Katmai to Cape Douglas to abandon their camps and gather at Kaflia. On June 6, the Novarupta Volcano, located about twenty miles northwest of Katmai, erupted with such force that it is considered one of the largest volcanic explosions ever recorded. Harry Kaiakokonok, a child at the time, remembers parents calling their kids home and that for three days the sky stayed dark and the people hid inside their houses.
It get hot in those barabaras. We pull off all our clothes. We soak them in water and put them over our face. Those peoples who have mosses in their barabara pour water over those mosses and put them over their nose and mouth so they can breathe. After while we open door and try to see out. All black, everywhere. A little bird fly into barabara. He can't see where he go. We children wash his eyes with water and he stay in barabara with us.130

The volcanic burst sent ash into the upper atmosphere where it spread out in all directions. The prevailing eastward blowing winds spread the ash over the eastern portion of the Alaska Peninsula, and across the Strait to cover Afognak Island, the northern half of Kodiak Island, and parts of the Kenai Peninsula.131 Three kayakers paddled from Kaflia Bay to Afognak for help. In response, the United States Revenue Cutter Service's Lieutenant W.K. Thompson piloted the borrowed cannery tug, the Redondo, and sailed to Kaflia Bay to rescue the people. They found Kaflia village buried in volcanic ash to a depth of three feet.132

Harry Kaiakokonok remembered the rescue,

After long time, about three days, it start to get light. Everybody go outside. That stuff all over, like deep snow. Couldn't even see the bay. Bay was like land.... Hard to breathe.... Then we see that boat coming up the bay. Gee! Was funny feeling. Boat was like coming across dry land. All those stuff was floating on bay, about six feet deep. Dead whales and sea lions and salmons were all mixed up in those stuff floating on top of the bay.133

The people, maybe about 100, were taken to Afognak. The U.S. Revenue Cutter Service had heard reports that Katmai residents had left the area prior to the eruption. On June 15th, Service personnel sailed the Redondo to Cape Kubugakli, stopping at Katmai, but did not find anybody in the village or in the area. They sailed on, looking for a family that typically lived at Dakavak Bay during the summers. The house was seen, but not the people, who it is believed had not yet arrived for the season.134
A short time later, the Katmai coastal population left Afognak and eventually established the new community of Perryville, located about 165 miles southwest of Katmai along the Alaska Peninsula coast. Ninety-two of the Katmai refugees took part in establishing their new village. The importance of the Russian Orthodox Church in the people’s lives is highlighted by fact that “The local chief reported that the people were dissatisfied because they had no church and no bell.”

Most Savonoski residents were in the Naknek area at the time of the eruption except for two families who saw the volcanic explosion and fled shortly after the eruption. “American Pete,” Chief of Savonoski, was near Ukak at the time, as he was in the process of gathering equipment from his barabara there, when the first explosion occurred. He was quoted as saying,

*The Katmai Mountain blew up with lots of fire, and fire came down trail from Katmai with lots of smoke. We go fast Savonoski. Everybody get in bidarka [skin boat]. Helluva job. We come Naknek one day, dark, no could see. Hot ash fall. Work like hell.*

Reportedly, the two families tried to return to live at Savonoski, at the head of Iliuk Arm, almost immediately after the eruption. The dust and residual heat, however, made for impossible living conditions. “American Pete” remembered his village fondly in a 1918 interview,


The former Savonoski villagers soon established another village, called New Savonoski, located along the south bank of the Naknek River and about five miles east of Naknek. In 1918, 54 people were living there when the flu epidemic hit. In 1953, 19 permanent residents were living there. By 1961 there were three persons living at the village, and at some later date it was abandoned.

The cataclysmic eruption of Novarupta and subsequent ash fallout, flooding, heat and dust, made it impossible for the Katmai people to return to their homes. The landscape significantly changed as ash and pumice choked rivers and streams and thereby altered channels, bays, and water tables. As a result, the historic properties may have been scoured, buried, saturated by rising water tables, and eroded by tidal action.
Historic Properties Summary and Recommendations

Along the Katmai Coast (from south to north):

Katmai Village (AHRS Site No. XMK-014). There have been two documented site visits to the Katmai village area.

In 1915 the National Geographic Society expedition, led by Robert F. Griggs, visited the Katmai area, taking photographs of barabaras, the ROC chapel, graveyard with a wrought-iron fence, and at least two log or wood frame buildings, one of which might have been the trading store. Griggs also discovered signs of a flood that had swept through Katmai village and noted its affect on the buildings and structures. “The Orthodox chapel, through reasonably intact, had been swept off its foundations and bore a high water mark of 5 1/2 feet above the ground. Many barabaras were completely filled with water-borne ash, and the heavy roof of one had been floated away....”

In 1953, archeologists from the University of Oregon visited the site. Wilbur A. Davis and his co-workers found excavating nearly impossible since ash and pumice covered the former village to a depth of 2-1/2 to 5 feet. In addition, the “debris-choked beds of nearby streams had raised the water table so that the former settlement was a series of grass-covered hummocks separated by pumice flats” under which the water rose to within a few inches of the surface. The crew did
identify a graveyard with some crosses still standing as well as the chapel remains and the trading post, although the ash and pumice covered the building up to its eaves. It is recommended that the site be visited to see if the ground is now stable enough to permit an archeological investigation.

Dakavak Bay (AHRS Site No. XMK-049). This site “Archaeological Site 49 MK10” was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its prehistoric significance. Archeological investigations also noted one post-contact dwelling at Dakavak Bay. In 1912, a family was known to have seasonally lived in a dwelling at Dakavak Bay. Recommend further historical archeological investigation at the site.

Takli Island, Amalik Bay, and Cape Atushagvik vicinity: This region was probably used at least intermittently, throughout the Russian and American periods. In 1895, the Kodiak priest had left Katmai and was travelling north when he mentioned stopping at a barabara on the way to the narrowest point of land for taking off to Kodiak Island. Undoubtedly other structures are located in the area. Recommend further historical archeological investigation.

Kaflia (AHRS Site No. XMK-007) is located close to Kaflia Bay. Wendell Oswalt’s 1954 archeological investigation at Kaflia revealed the remains of four historic semi-subterranean houses, including
some with tunnel entrances. The suggested occupation dates are circa AD 1500-AD 1912. This site could be related to the seasonal fishing camp and fishery, that included a saltery and store, which was active prior to the 1912 eruption. There has been some vandalism at the site. Recommend further historical archeological investigation.

Kukak Village (AHRS Site No. XMK-006), located on the north shore of the bay, is listed on the National Register for its prehistoric significance. Archeological investigation that did not focus on the historic material, discovered some historic remains and artifacts including a collapsed structure made of boards, bricks, bottle glass and a gun barrel. No archaeological investigation has been done since the 1960s. Roy Fure, a trapper in the Katmai area during the early 1900s, stated that prior to the eruption, only trappers were living in the Kukak area. Recommend historical archeological investigation. Site is on ROC land.

At nearby Old Kukak (AHRS Site No. XMK-015), archeological site visits noted several mounds that could be the remains of dirt-floored cabins that were standing at the time of the 1912 eruption.

Northwest of Kukak (AHRS Site No. XMK-046). Archaeological testing in 1964 identified six house size depressions and determined that the site was occupied during post-contact times and probably for a short duration. Recommend historical archeological investigation for all three Kukak sites.

Hallo Bay. Roy Fure saw about nine houses in this area in 1914. This was the terminus of a route across the peninsula to Savonoski and Naknek. Recommend historical archeological investigation.

Douglas (Kaguyak) (AHRS Site No. AFG-043). Listed on the National Register of Historic Places for both prehistoric and historic significance. Archeological investigations identified the remains of several historic properties including the Russian Orthodox Church chapel, a cemetery, thirteen historic houses, tent frames, outbuildings, a kazhim, and possible cabin foundations. A 1964 site visit noted that the church had been vandalized and burned. Recommend working with the ROC owner to reinvestigate the area with an historical archeological focus. Some vandalism has already occurred at the site. Recently, the ROC has been leasing this land to a tourism operator. The ROC should be encouraged to work with NPS and other appropriate groups, namely the Katmai descendants, to protect this site that includes a cemetery.

Swikshak (AHRS Site No. AFG-044), near Swikshak Lagoon. A 1989 site visit by archeologist noted a historic midden. Recommend further historical archeological investigation.

Cape Douglas: There is potential for finding historic sites related to sea mammal hunting camps located along Kamishak Bay to the south of Cape Douglas. There may also be a trading post located around the Cape Douglas headland. Recent archeological investigations around the Cape Douglas headland documented the following sites:

(AHRS Site No. AFG-202) on the southwest side of the cape. The 1994 NPS SAIP archeological investigation noted an historic settlement consisting of three
house depressions. One house is rectangular (4 m x 3m) with horizontal milled floorboards and vertical posts.

(AHRS Site No. AFG-108) on the north shore of Cape Douglas. A 1989 archeological investigation noted two rectangular, historic cabins outlined with sod berm. Foundations are 3m x 4m with clear entryways.

(AHRS Site No. AFG-107) on the east end of Cape Douglas. 1989 archeological investigation noted a possible structural depression.

(AHRS Site No. AFG-171) on the southeast end of the cape. A 1990 archaeological investigation documented two houses. One house has a large chamber with multiple siderooms that indicate similarities with late prehistoric and early historic periods on Kodiak Island. The second house is considered to be post-contact with its associated vertical posts that were cut with a metal saw. It is also considered to have been a ruin prior to the 1912 eruption. Located nearby were historic debris that includes stove parts, a pickaxe head, iron spikes, cut nails and iron fragments. All iron is heavily rusted. The site may be associated with a Sugpiat/Alutiiq occupation and perhaps sea mammal hunters.

Ashivak (AHRS Site No. AFG-037). This is not the location identified on modern maps, but is closer to Cape Douglas along the coast. This is considered an historic site with chipped knife blade and scraper. Recommend further historical archeological investigation.

Naknek River Drainage:

Savonoski (AHRS Site No. XMK-001). This former settlement is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its prehistoric and historic significance. Photographs from the National Geographic Society’s expedition of 1916 showed several barabaras lined up along the river with elevated wooden caches behind the houses, one house made out of peat moss blocks, and the log Russian Orthodox chapel. A 1953 archeological investigation of Savonoski revealed many historic properties including fifteen semi-subterranean houses, filled in by sand and pumice, with split cottonwood log frames and rectangular
shapes. The high water table level prevented excavation of the kazhim. Little remains of the site today.

**Savonoski River Archaeological District** (AHRS Site No. XMK-053) includes two sites. This district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for prehistoric and historic significance. Evidence of the historic period was found during the 1964 archeological investigation at Kanigmiut (AHRS Site No. XMK-003) which revealed about nine house depressions.

**Grosvenor Site** (AHRS Site No. XMK-004). Roy Fure reportedly visited this site in 1914 and saw three barabaras on the stretch of land between Grosvenor and Coville lakes. Archeological investigations in 1963 noted several surface depressions in the area.

**Brooks River Archaeological District** (AHRS Site No. XMK-051). This is a National Historic Landmark site that includes caribou hunting and fishing camps with more or less continuous occupation until about AD 1820. The site include an AD 1900 historic house depression (AHRS Site No. XMK-037).

**Alagnak River Drainage:**

**Alagnak River Russian Orthodox Chapel** (AHRS Site No. DIL-036). A 1997 archeological investigation identified and documented the remains of a log ROC chapel. The chapel consisted of a vestibule and nave with a bay. There is a stack of three ROC grave markers at the site. Recommend ethnographic study, and research of Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records as related to the Nushagak Mission to reveal the history and use of this chapel.
Endnotes

1 Black, “The Russian Conquest of Kodiak,” *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska*, 24, numbers 1-2, 177.

2 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 114

3 Davydov, *Two Voyages to Russian America*, 191. Davydov provided this description of the hunting posts: “At various places along the coast of the island [Kodiak] there are small posts in which groups of hunters live—this is called an artel, and is supervised by a baidarshchik. The baidarshchiks receive their orders from the manager and pass them on to the [natives]. In addition to artels, in some places there will be one promyshlennik [Russian hunter] living with several Americans..., and such an organization is called an odinochka [one-man post].”


6 Davydov, *Two Voyages to Russian America*, 1802-1807, 191.


8 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 250. The 1880 U.S. census stated Katmai’s importance: “Under Russian rule, Katmai controlled the trade of the upper Naknek area and into Bristol Bay, Nushagak and ‘Kolmakoosky’ areas” (Ivan Petroff, U.S. Census Office, *Tenth Census*).

9 Davydov, *Two Voyages to Russian America*, 1802-1807, 192.

10 As noted by Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 157. In 1791, Shelikhov’s men from the Kenai post retaliated to the Alaska Peninsula inhabitants for participating in the destruction of the Katmai crew. The Katmai post was established in 1794 according to VanStone, *Russian Exploration in Southwest Alaska: the Travel Journals of Petr Korsakovskiy (1818) and Ivan Ya. Vasil’ev (1829)* (Fairbanks, The University of Alaska Press, 1988), 67.


12 *Russian Orthodox American Messenger (ROAM)*, 1(4):57-58, 1896, “From the Travel Journal for 1895 of a Priest of the Kodiak Resurrection Church-Tikhon Shalamov,” translated by Richard Bland, May 1999. All *ROAM* articles used in this study were translated by Richard Bland, May 1999. According to Katherine Arndt (personal communication, 30 July 1999), the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records state that Katmai was located between mountains.
13 Khlebnikov, Notes on Russian America, 40.


15 Khlebnikov, Notes on Russian America, 40.


17 Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 96.


19 Ibid, 38.

20 Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 105.

21 Langsdorff, Remarks and Observations on a Voyage Around the World from 1803 to 1807, 30 and 140.

22 Ibid, 140.

23 Gideon, The Round the World Voyage of Hieromonk Gideon 1803-1809, 141. The Alaska Russian Orthodox Church Records will undoubtedly provide more information about the Savonoski settlements during the Russian and early American time periods.

24 Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 168.


26 Katherine Arndt, University of Alaska Fairbanks, a noted scholar of the Russian-America period who is currently preparing a Katmai ethnography; personal communication, 8 June 1999. Although this figure is listed in Fedorova, The Russian Population in Alaska and California: Late 18th Century-1867, (Kingston, The Limestone Press, 1973), 200, Arndt clarifies that this was a mistranslation and should be read as the collective population figure for the villages within the jurisdiction of Katmai. As these six settlements were listed for the Katmai jurisdiction in 1830 or 1831, it is likely that these same settlements existed in 1818.

27 Katherine Arndt, citing Alaska Russian Orthodox Church Records, personal communication 7 June 1999. It is also possible that Naushkak, was the same settlement located on modern maps as “Kaguyak,” since Orth’s Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, 484, includes “Naouchkak” as a name variant for Kaguyak.
Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 108-109. Hussey states that it is not clear how Vasiliev acquired this interior name, and that it is also possible that another “Vasiliev,” who traveled with Etoin and Khromchenko in 1921-1922, may be responsible for reporting the name “Naugeik.”


*Ibid.*, 139-140.

One such example of a Suqpiat/Alutiiq hunting party was noted by Khlebnikov: A sea otter party formed by the Katmaiskaia odinochka, consisting of 15 baidarkas of Aliaskans and two baidarkas from Sutkhumskaia odinochka and hunting on the east shore of the Aliska Peninsula from Kamyschak Bay to Sutkhum odinochka, obtained eight sea otters, five young sea otters and two pups. Office Manager V. Kaschevarov. (Khlebnikov, *Notes*, 362.)

Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 143-146. The 1820 register for native men at Fort Ross included the Village of Katmaiskoe, Fedorova, *Ethnic Processes*, 12. Marina Ramsay’s translation of Richard Pierce’s *Documents on the History of the Russian-American Company*, 121-122, provide specific references about Katmai toions in Sitka in the 1800 instructions to Baranov by V.G. Medvednikov (who was in charge of Novo-Arkhangel’sk). Medvednikov encouraged the rewarding of native hunters, including “the Katmai toion Gavril” and that when the main party arrived from Kodiak, to order the hunters, “the Katmai toion Efim, Nunalkudak and Kumyk to disclose and show the best hunting spots to the south which they know.”


Source of census figures for 1792, 1800, 1821 and 1825 are Khlebnikov, *Notes on Russian America Parts II-V*, 7-8; source for 1818 – Arndt, personal communication 8 June 1999. Source for Katmai 1862 is Arndt, citing Church records based on Katmai visit by priest that year. Of note, a population figure given for Katmai (which may be for the Katmai jurisdiction) for 1860 or 1863 was 457 as noted in Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 157 (citing Tikhmenev II). Source for 1850 is Dumond, *Demographic Effects of European Expansion*, 16. Source for 1861 is Arndt, citing Church records based on the visit by a priest of that year, personal communication, 30 July 1999.

In 1844 there were two Savonoski settlements listed in the ROC records called Ikak and Alinak. Two settlements continued at least through 1865 and were listed in the Church records as 1st and 2nd Severnovskoe settlements (“Info on the Severnovski Settlements from Alaskan Russian Church Archives,” compiled by K. L. Arndt, May 1999, Katmai HRS).
Although it is not clear how many settlements were located in this area and for what length of time periods, there does appear to be some continuity of a settlement being located at the head of Naknek Lake (eastern end), at the end of Iliuk Arm, throughout the early American period. According to the Alaska Russian Orthodox church records, this settlement was known primarily as “Iqkhagmiut” from the mid 1870s through the early 1900s, for a couple of years its was “Severnovskoe,” and from 1910-1912 it was listed as “Nunamiut.” What follows is a further discussion on these settlements and names gathered from Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 203-233, 128, 180, and Katherine Arndt’s “Info on the Severnovski Settlements from the Alaskan Russian Church Archives,” May 1999, Katmai HRS. Hussey noted that early American maps showed that the settlement located at the head of Naknek Lake was best known as “Ukak.” In 1872, Alphone Pinart’s map showed two settlements: one at the head of Iliuk Arm as “Haknik” and the other located to the north and at the end of the Katmai trail as “Ikak.” In 1880, Petroff reported “Ikkhagmute” as the name used by its inhabitants for the settlement at the end of Iliuk Arm. Hussey noted that from 1890 forward the name “Savonoski” or its variants appeared more consistently. Arndt’s research of the Alaska Russian Church archives about these settlements revealed the listing of one settlement called “Iqkhagmiut from 1876-1897, which was listed as “Severnovskoe” from 1895-1897. J.E. Spurr’s report of his 1898 trip through the area noted that name for the village located at the head of Naknek Lake “is Ikkhagamut, or Savonoski, as it is now commonly called.” Spurr also noted that a former Native settlement called “Naouchlagamut” was located about 15 miles east of Naknek Lake near the Savonoski River (place name variation is “Nauklak” according to Orth, Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, 677). Arndt’s research found reference to the existence of two settlements in 1898 by the priest Vladimir Modestov who referred to the Severnovskoe settlement and the upper Severnovskoe settlement or out-settlement located 10 miles from the former. The Church records also showed a listing for the upper settlement called Kanigmiut from 1902-1912 and that the other Severnovskoe settlement was referred to as “Nunamiut in 1896, “Iqkhagmiut” through 1909, and Nunamiut from 1910-1912.
Various maps have shown the name “Kaguyak” located four miles north of Cape Chiniak on the Alaska Peninsula. According to Katherine Arndt, the initial error stems from transliteration and placement errors on Teben’kov’s map, as there was an established Kaguyak village on the southeastern shore of Kodiak Island. Arndt’s research of the Alaskan Russian Orthodox Church and Alaska Commercial Company records, show that settlement(s) at this location never used the Kaguyak name, but consistently used the Douglas name from the mid 1870s on. Additional confusion has been caused because the church records used three different names Kaymyshak Bay, Cape Douglas, Douglas. The church/clergy registers, however, show that the name changed and not its physical location that was consistently the same distance from Kodiak. (Arndt, “The Location of Douglas Settlement and the Alaska Commercial Company’s Douglas Station” compiled by Arndt, 2 March 1999 and “Minimum Number of Burials at Douglas,” compiled by Arndt, 20 May 1997; both on file at NPS-LAKA Studies Center).


Katherine Arndt, comp., “The Location of Douglas Settlement and the Alaska Commercial Company’s Douglas Station,” unpub. mss., 2 March 1999, on file at NPS-LAKA Studies Center. Author’s Note: there is some possibility that a trading post was located close to the Cape Douglas headland, but the historic records are inconclusive. Some recent archeological investigation in the area revealed historic foundations that might be related to a trading post or to sea mammal hunting – see Historic Properties summary section.

Arndt, personal communication, 30 July 1999.


64 ACC Douglas Station Accounts, Box 4 folders 47-56 (inventories for stock on hand for the years 1881, 1883, and 1894).


66 ACC Douglas Station, Douglas Weather Journal, June 23, 1885 to April 16, 1887, Box 5 folder 67.

67 ACC Douglas Station Accounts, Box 4, and Box 5 folder 64.


69 The remains of one other ROC chapel is located within the park along the Alagnak River. This former chapel is probably related to the Nushagak mission. Ethnographic investigation and research into the Alaska Russian church records could provide more information.

70 Dumond and VanStone, “Paugvik,” 11.

71 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 220. Hussey cited Petroff’s 1880 account where he noted that the Savonoski villages preferred to travel to Katmai to trade including the chapel keeper, “a party going over the pass to Katmai included the keeper of the local church who needed to buy fifty cents worth of nails [to fasten the church door] at the Katmai trading store.” Petroff also commented on the fact that the Savonoski villages apparently were “assigned [to the Nushagak mission] without regard to locality or convenience.”

72 Arndt personal communication 6 June 1999, citing Alaskan Russian Orthodox Church and clergy registers.


74 *ROAM*, 2(17): 508-509, 1898.

75 ACC Douglas Station records, box 5, folders 67 and 68.

76 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 222. Hussey's source is the Eleventh census taken in 1890.

77 Arndt, personal communication 8 June 1999, citing Alaska Russian Orthodox Church Records.
Arndt noted that the Church records list the Katmai chapel as being completed in 1904; personal communication, 30 July 1999.

In 1953, W.A. Davis in the *Archeological Investigations of Inland and Coastal Sites of the Katmai National Monument*, pages 49-50, provided a description of the last Douglas chapel, “The church is a rectangular building 7.85 m in length, 5.95 m wide, and having a vestibule 3.4 x 2.1 m. The walls...are made of 20 mm square, hand-hewn, dove-tailed timbers. The exterior corners of the building are squared and the wall covered with horizontal cedar siding. The vestibule is a rough timber frame covered with cedar siding and a shed roof. The rafters and sheathing of the hip roof are of rough fir lumber; the roof is shingled. The roof is surmounted by a Russian Orthodox cross. The south and east walls have two windows each, the north wall one. Sod was piled against the outside walls to a height of one meter.”

Arndt, personal communication, 8 June 1999; *Russian American Orthodox Messenger*, 2(17):508-509, 1898). Note: A 1893 invoice Douglas Station invoice for Douglas Church to the ACC included 500 feet Saiding (siding?), Red boards, 60 Afognack boards, shingles, iron tacks, brass hinges, and screws. In 1953, W.A. Davis in the *Archeological Investigations of Inland and Coastal Sites of the Katmai National Monument*, pages 49-50, provided a description of the last Douglas chapel, “The church is a rectangular building 7.85 m in length, 5.95 m wide, and having a vestibule 3.4 x 2.1 m. The walls...are made of 20 mm square, hand-hewn, dove-tailed timbers. The exterior corners of the building are squared and the wall covered with horizontal cedar siding. The vestibule is a rough timber frame covered with cedar siding and a shed roof. The rafters and sheathing of the hip roof are of rough fir lumber; the roof is shingled. The roof is surmounted by a Russian Orthodox cross. The south and east walls have two windows each, the north wall one. Sod was piled against the outside walls to a height of one meter.”


Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 261, citing Alphonse Louis Pinart’s 1871 visit to Katmai in which Pinart noted that “quite a large business” in furs was carried on with villages in the interior and on Bristol Bay by way of a portage up the Katmai River.”

Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 244.

Morseth, *The People of the Volcanoes*, 48. Wide Bay is located 70 miles southwest of Katmai Bay.
Morseth, *The People of the Volcanoes*, 76; Tollefson to Superintendent, Katmai National Monument, April 13, 1977 memo with attached transcript from October 22, 1975 oral interview with Harry Kaiakokonok, page 9, in AKSO, Regional Park Katmai files. According to Harry Kaiakokonok, “In Puale Bay there was a man by the name, John, he had a store. People go from Katmai to there to buy some stuff and people from Savonoski go there to buy until he got killed.”


*ROAM, 6*(20):431-433, 1901.

Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 232-234. Hussey notes the confusion caused by Petroff’s *Tenth Census*, that identifies an Ashivak population and provides a map that identifies Douglas near the Cape Douglas headland and Ashivak about 12 miles to the coastal north. There is no indication that Petroff physically visited these sites. Arndt believes these two sites should have been placed farther south with Ashivak being located at today’s Swikshak and Douglas being located at today’s Kaguvak. Arndt’s research indicates that Ashivak was a summer camp of the Douglas people and Petroff mistakenly recorded this as the permanent settlement of the same people. Arndt, “The location of Douglas settlement and the Alaska Commercial Company’s Douglas Station, compiled by Katherine L. Arndt, 2 March 1999, on file at NPS-LAKA Studies Center.


*Russian Orthodox American Messenger, 1*(7):118-119, 1896.


ACC Douglas Station records, Box 5 folders 67 and 68.


Arndt, “References to Activities in Kamishak Bay out of Iliamna Station, found in the Alaska Commercial Company collection,” compiled by K.L. Arndt, 11 February 1999, on file at NPS-LAKA Studies Center.

Porter, Population and Resources of Alaska, 72.

Ibid, 72.

Porter, Population and Resources of Alaska, 72.

ACC Douglas Station records, Box 5, folder 68.


Russian Orthodox American Messenger, 3(3):91, 1899.

Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 241; Russian Orthodox American Messenger, 1(7):118-119, 1896; Arndt, personal communication, 7 June 1999.

Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 227.


Griggs, The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, 267.

Arndt, personal communication, July 30, 1999.

Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 187.

Dumond, Demographic Effects of European Expansion, 16.


Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 253-254, 368; Griggs, The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, 17.


Porter, Population and Resources of Alaska, 72.

125 Partnow, “The Days of Yore,” 143-144.

126 Tollefson to Superintendent, Katmai National Monument, April 13, 1977 memo with attached transcript from October 22, 1975 oral interviews, page 12, in AKSO, Regional Park Katmai files.


129 Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 19. Norris notes that at this time, the site of the volcanic eruption was believed to be Mount Katmai. It was not until 1954 that a scientific investigation determined that the primary explosion site was Novarupta, located seven miles west of Mount Katmai.

130 June 12, 1961 letter to Dr. L.S. Cressman from Mr. Tom Jessee, former resident of Perryville, who wrote down the story as told to him by Harry Kaiakokonok during the late 1950s, on file at NPS-Alaska Support Office, Regional Park-Katmai file.


132 Ibid., 356.

133 June 12, 1961 letter to Dr. L.S. Cressman from Mr. Tom Jessee, former resident of Perryville, who wrote down the story as told to him by Harry Kaiakokonok during the late 1950s, on file at NPS-Alaska Support Office, Regional Park-Katmai file.


135 Ibid., 367.


137 Dumond, “People and Pumice,” 385.


139 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 368.

140 Environmental and Natural Resources Institute, *Archaeological Overview and Assessment of Katmai National Park and Preserve*, 1993, 36.

141 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 386; National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions collection at UAA Archives and Manuscripts Department.


144 *Ibid.*, 243-244.

145 SAIP is an acronym for Systemwide Archeological Inventory Program.
P.R. Hagelbarger, member of the National Geographic Society's 1918 expedition to Katmai, taking a photograph of fumarole number 3, 1918. Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collections, Box 4, 3700.
EARLY SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS and researchers were drawn to the Katmai region to study the effects of the 1912 volcanic eruption. From 1915 to 1919, Robert Fiske Griggs led the National Geographic Society’s expeditions to Katmai. Their observations and documentation of the area, especially of the fumaroles, led to the creation of the Monument. For the most part, the expedition members set up temporary campsites. They did, however, build two storage cabins at their base camps, one located near Savonoski and the other on the west side of Katmai Bay. Some of the Society members also built rock cairns for surveying purposes. One other building related to scientific research is the Baked Mountain cabin that the University of Alaska’s Geophysical Institute built in 1965.

Prior to Russia’s sale of its American colonies to the U.S. Government, the scientific world had little interest in the Katmai area. The 1867 purchase of Alaska sparked an interest in knowing more about Alaska’s resources, which spurred several investigations led by the Coast Survey and the Smithsonian Institution. The 1895 Becker-Dall expedition is considered to be the first attempt at a systematic investigation of the Alaska Peninsula’s mineral resources. This was one of the first U.S. Geological Survey studies in Alaska.¹

In 1898, the USGS expedition led by geologist Josiah Edward Spurr covered over a thousand miles, which included traveling from the Nushagak to Naknek Lake and on to Katmai. Spurr’s report provided the only known geological observations of the Upper Ukak River valley prior to the 1912 eruption.²

National Geographic Society Expeditions

In July 1912, the first of several National Geographic Society (NGS) investigations of Alaskan volcanoes began. George C. Martin, a USGS geologist, visited the Katmai coast by stopping at Douglas; he did not, however, venture inland.³ The following year, NGS botanist Robert F. Griggs
traveled to Kodiak to study revegetation of the ash deposits. An independent exploration by William A. Hesse, of Cordova, and Mel A. Horner, of Seward, also occurred in 1913. That summer the two men made a reconnaissance of the Katmai area and were close enough to the edge of the volcanic district to convince Griggs upon their return that they had gotten a glimpse of thousands of small fumaroles.

Between 1915 and 1919, the National Geographic Society sponsored five scientific expeditions to the Katmai area. Robert Fiske Griggs led four of these trips. Griggs, a Ph.D. from Harvard University, spent a great portion of thirty years devoted to exploring, promoting and protecting Katmai National Monument. As NPS historian John A. Hussey has summarized, "It is safe to say that during that period... no other man so greatly influenced the course of events in that vast scenic and scientific wonderland."

The goal of the 1915 National Geographic Society expedition was to make a reconnaissance of the country west of Shelikof Strait. Griggs and two companions sailed from Kodiak to Katmai Bay. They visited Katmai village and noted the effects of the ash, pumice and the Katmai River flood on the buildings and structures. Their explorations took them to the lower slope of the Aleutian Range, from which they viewed the line of volcanoes including Martin, Mageik, Trident, and Katmai.
The following year, Griggs led an expedition of four men back to the Katmai mainland. One of the group members was Walter Metrokin, a one-handed bear hunter from Kodiak. They set up a base camp near Katmai Village. This expedition was significant for the discovery and documentation of fumaroles in the valley west of Katmai Pass. As Griggs recalled,

> Even from this hasty examination we were able to make on the day of discovery, we could see that the vents must be counted by the tens of thousands. And from this first impression came the name, The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.

Griggs summarized his belief about the area.

> "I recognized at once, that the Katmai district must be made a great national park accessible to all the people, like the Yellowstone. To make it known, to have it set aside as a National Park, and to secure the means necessary for its development would, I foresaw, require a tremendous amount of effort."

This expedition provided the first purely scientific writings from observations made at Katmai.

The 1917 NGS Katmai investigation consisted of ten men and included a chemist, a zoologist, a topographer, and two assistant botanists. The men focused their scientific efforts on the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. A base camp was set up at on the west side of Katmai Bay, with supplies being transported across the lagoon. Goods were then carried over the south side of Katmai River and on up to the pass. They set up three subsidiary base camps on the western side of Katmai Pass and established a system of relay camps. The spent a month on the west side of Katmai Pass and traveled as far north as the end of the ash flow (which was almost to Savonoski). The thousands of fumaroles were an awe-inspiring sight; as expedition member James S. Hine, a zoologist, commented,

> Having reached the summit of Katmai Pass, the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes spreads out before one with no part of the view obstructed. My first thought was: We have reached the modern inferno. I was horrified, and yet, curiosity to see all at close range captivated me. Although sure that at almost every step I would sink beneath the earth's crust into a chasm intensely hot, I pushed on as soon as I found myself safely over a particularly dangerous-appearing area. I didn't like it, and yet I did."
The work of 1917 provided material for the report that led President Woodrow Wilson to proclaim Katmai a national monument on September 24, 1918.

The 1918 summer expedition consisted of only two men, Jasper D. Sayre and Paul R. Hagelbarger. They journeyed from Seward via the steamship *Dora* to Naknek and then up the river to the eastern end of Naknek Lake. Their goal was to study whether the fumaroles were as active as before and to ascertain the fumaroles' temperatures as well as to survey the area for a topographic map. While in the

The National Geographic Society Katmai expedition members built rock cairns to use as survey reference points. This photo is titled "Station 24," which is believed to have been at or near the summit of Dumpling Mountain, 1918. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 4, 3614.*
Naknek Lake area, Sayre and Hagelbarger visited the former Savonoski settlement and also built a rock cairn at or near the summit of Dumpling Mountain for use as a survey reference point. The men explored the foot of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, the slopes of Mageik and hiked over to Novarupta. They took back the first accurate temperatures of the fumaroles.

The largest NGS Katmai expedition occurred in 1919. That summer, Sayre and three of Griggs' students traveled with the bulk of the supplies to Bristol Bay with the assistance of Naknek Packing Company boats, then ascended Naknek River and crossed to the east end of Naknek Lake. Soon after arriving, they set up a base camp, named "Savonoski." The camp was located on the southern shore of Iliuk Arm, about a mile west of the Ukak River, among a few surviving black spruce. The camp consisted of several 12' x 16' mosquito-proof tents. They also built a rectangular shaped cabin, measuring 14' x 16', with local hewn spruce logs and covered it with a metal roof. This was used for storing their provisions and supplies.

In the meantime, Griggs led the rest of the party from Kodiak to the Katmai coast. Newcomers to the expedition included two chemists and a petrologist from the Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution. They set up the Lagoon base camp located on the western side of Katmai Bay and built a storage cabin using plywood boards. Since they could not live off the devastated land, the group had to bring in all their supplies. They established a series of relay camps across the peninsula by which they transported their supplies by backpacks.
As Griggs explained the process,

*We would proceed half a day’s march from our base, then establish a new camp at the terminus, returning each night to the starting point, until enough provisions had been accumulated to permit another move forward. In this way the packers drew their sustenance altogether from the rear camp, leaving the advance supplies intact for future use.*\(^5\)
The base camps were, in a relative sense, more elaborate setups that included larger tents and the building of two cabins. For the most part, the other camps consisted of canvas pup tents supported by walking sticks or rifles, although at least a portion of a cabin was built at Ukak Camp. The expedition members also made use of local prospectors' or trappers' cabins around Naknek Lake, and they used a rock cave in Geographic Harbor for shelter as well.\textsuperscript{16}

The Baked Mountain Camp was no doubt one of the expedition's toughest places for a campsite because of ferocious windstorms. The crew was blown out several times, and prior to the final storm they attempted to reinforce the tents. As Griggs noted,

\begin{quote}
The frame of the grub tent had been strengthened by a multiplicity of poles and braces sunk deep in the ground until it formed a veritable cage, inside of which we had patched together parts of four tents. Fully a thousand feet of cord had been used in lashing the structure together.

All the guys were anchored to boulders as big as a man could roll, deeply buried in the ground. On every side except the front there were at least two thicknesses of cloth to protect us from flying pumice. A heavy duck tarpaulin had been thrown over the second tent and buried in the ground on the windward side, to reduce its resistance and prevent the wind from getting in under the eaves.
\end{quote}
Despite their efforts, a storm blew through, shedding their tents and snapping poles until the five men were left huddling together in the grub tent with sharp pumice stones raining down. They eventually managed to walk out of the area and down to the Ukak Camp although Griggs, for one, was literally picked up and sent flying through the air before the wind dropped him into a gully.

The NGS party provided some basic geographic knowledge about the area. As a member noted about Lake Grosvenor, “That so large a body of water could have remained entirely unknown is significant testimony of how little is known of the geography of the Alaska Peninsula.” The NGS scientific expeditions made contributions in the fields of volcanology, geology, biology, and other subjects as well.

Later Research Efforts

Other scientific related activities have taken place in the park, although there are no historic properties related to them. During the 1920s-1930s, Father Bernard Rosecrans Hubbard, S.J. made several expeditions into the Katmai region. Hubbard, the famed “Glacier Priest,” was a geology professor, explorer, filmmaker, lecturer, and author. In 1929, Hubbard, along with a group of university students and a film crew, successfully entered the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes by way of Katmai Bay and over the pass. In 1932 he made the first wintertime ascent of Mount Katmai.

In 1940 the National Park Service, having recognized the lack of information about Katmai’s wildlife, sent biologist Victor Cahalane and Mount McKinley Superintendent Frank Been to Katmai. This was the Service’s first concerted effort to have an inventory taken of the area’s biological diversity. An additional NPS investigation, with a grant from the Office of Naval Research, took place during 1953-1954; it was known as the Katmai Project. The first year, a team of scientists included geologists, volcanologists, geomorphologists, archeologists, and a geographer, biologist, mammalogist, parasitologist, and entomologist. A surprising determination from the season’s research was that Novarupta, not Mount Katmai, was the primary vent of the June 1912 eruption. Additional research done the following season included the finding that the thicker ashfall was located around Novarupta instead of Mount Katmai. This research cinched the conclusion made the previous year.
Katmai also served as a unique training ground for U.S. astronauts. During the summers of 1965 and 1966, astronauts trained in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. It was believed that the ashen landscape was similar to the surface of the moon.  

One other building in the park associated with scientific research activity is the Baked Mountain cabin. In 1962, the University of Alaska’s Geophysical Institute commenced earthquake research, both seismic and volcanic, in Katmai National Monument. A few years later, Institute personnel wanted to expand their research activities to involve four scientists on the site at a time. To accommodate their housing, the Institute gained permission from NPS to build a field base camp just south of Baked Mountain. In 1965, staff built a 8’ x 20’ prefabricated plywood residence and workroom along with a 7’ x 10’ generator hut. The staff also installed two seismometers, one located just north of Baked Mountain and the other just south of the confluence of the Savonoski and Grosvenor rivers. At a later date, a storage shed was constructed at Baked Mountain and a third seismometer was installed in the Geographic Harbor area.

In 1981 the University of Alaska Geophysical Institute established a short-period seismic station at Cape Douglas. In 1988, the station was taken over by the Alaska Volcano Observatory. As of 1992, this was the only AVO-operated seismic station in the park. In 1987, the USGS established an additional 12 seismic stations. In 1993, 16 stations were actively being used to collect data.

**Historic Properties Summary and Recommendations**

The National Geographic Society’s Katmai expedition built Savonoski Cabin and Lagoon Camp Cabin. Following the expedition’s use of the Savonoski cabin, trapper Richard Mitchell used this cabin as his residence in the mid-1930s (see Chapter 8). In 1940, Mitchell’s cabin was visited by NPS personnel Frank Been and Victor Cahalane and was noted as being in good shape. In 1945,
Grant Pearson's NPS report included the aerial observation of a log cabin with a tin roof located near the mouth of the Ukak River. The river, however, was cutting into the site and it appeared that cabin would eventually be washed out. No site visit to the Lagoon Cabin has been recorded. The NGS also built at least a portion of a cabin at Ukak Camp, ten miles south of Savonoski village. It is recommended that historic archeological investigations search for remains of the 1919 NGS cabins built at Savonoski, Ukak, and Lagoon camps.

**Rock Cairns:** The National Geographic Society Katmai Expedition members built rock cairns for surveying purposes. It is recommended that field notes that were used by members from 1915-1919 be researched to determine where rock cairns were built. A survey of these structures is then recommended to investigate what remains of them. One such survey marker was known to exist at, or near, the summit of Dumpling Mountain.

If historical archeological remains exist for the above features, it is recommended that a Multiple Property Documentation form be prepared to nominate these historic resources to the National Register of Historic Places. Such a form provides a streamline method for organizing and registering properties.

The Baked Mountain cabin, located just south of the mountain, was built by the University of Alaska's Geophysical Institute as a base camp for conducting their earthquake investigations in 1965. Twenty-five years later, in 1990, the cabin complex was refurbished. As this appears to be the only historic building within the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes related to scientific research, a site visit is recommended to help determine if the structure is maintaining its historic integrity for possible future listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
Endnotes


7 Griggs, *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes*, 192.


11 University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 6, 5661, 5901, 7451.

12 Griggs, *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes*, 79.

13 University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 6, 595; Box 7, 6254X; Box 8, 6575.

14 Griggs, in *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes*, 333, credits Kodiak storekeeper W. J. Erskine with supplying their whole outfit for two of the expedition years and Frank B. Petersen, president of the Naknek Packing Company, and his associates for assisting the 1918 and 1919 parties with their transportation and supplies via the Naknek River route.


16 University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 6, H377, 5169, 7335, 7366, 7372, 7373, 7397; Box 7, 6305. The specific location of Ukak Camp is not known. Contemporary maps suggest it was located either in T20S, R36W, Sec. 31, SW1/4 or T20S, R37W, Sec. 36, SE1/4.


18 University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 5, 7142.


21 Ibid., 385-386.

22 Ibid., 386-387.

23 Ibid., 392.
TRANSPORTATION LINKS

TRAVELING IN AND AROUND the Katmai region has long been a formidable task. Weather in the Shelikof Strait, notoriously stormy, has made transportation along the park’s eastern coastline difficult both to past and present travelers. Just inland from the coast lies the rugged Aleutian Range, which is broken only occasionally with traversable passes. To the west, the various large lakes ease transportation somewhat; between the lakes and the Bristol Bay coastline, however, most of the major waterways have rapids and other impediments.

Despite all of those obstacles, Katmai’s Native peoples used natural geographic corridors to travel across and along the Alaska Peninsula coast. The best known of these routes was the trail that surmounted Katmai Pass; it ran from Katmai Village, on Shelikof Strait, northwest to Iliuk Arm on Naknek Lake. Using kayaks and baidarkas, Native people traveled great distances along the Katmai coast or across the 26-mile Shelikof Strait to travel to Kodiak or Afognak islands.

In later years, Euroamericans patterned their travel with methods similar to those of the Native Americans. Russian fur traders, priests, and explorers sometimes traveled in Native watercraft, while other Euroamericans arrived in ships associated with exploration, fur hunting, and trading activities. Schooners, steamers, fishery tenders, and mailboats all plied the coastal waters. The violent winds and high seas of Shelikof Strait made crossing dangerous and caused numerous shipwrecks and accidents.

More recently, the advent of airplanes has resulted in an increased access to the area and has provided a significant boost to tourism development. Air transportation continues to be critically important today. This dependence on air access is in large part due to the lack of road mileage; the only significant road in the present park, in fact, is a sightseeing road that connects Brooks Camp with the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Properties associated with transportation within Katmai National Park and Preserve include overland trails, a road, one or more shipwrecks, and an airfield.
Sketch by Norman Dawn showing the Katmai Pass route into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Part of a 1925 motion picture expedition, following in the footsteps of National Geographic Society's Katmai expeditions. Seward Gateway, December 5, 1925.
Trails

Katmai's Native inhabitants used natural overland corridors to traverse the Alaska Peninsula. Groups along the Shelikof Strait traveled inland for seasonal subsistence purposes as well as to trade with the Bristol Bay Natives from whom they obtained walrus tusks for creating fishing hooks and spearheads. The two best known routes were the Hallo Bay and Katmai Pass trails.¹

The Hallo Bay trail, also referred to as the Douglas Pass trail, led from Naknek Lake eastward up the Savonoski River through the Aleutian Range, then down the Ninagiak River to Hallo Bay. The trail was used throughout the Russian and early American periods.² According to Wilbur Davis, who interviewed former Savonoski residents in the early 1950s, the Savonoski people used the Hallo Bay trail to get to the coast:

> The people who lived in the lakes area used to go across to the Shelikof Strait coast to hunt sea otter and gather shellfish. They went across the Hallo Bay pass or Douglas pass, but not the Katmai pass, keeping their kayaks and gear on the coast side. One of their camps was on the north shore of Hallo Bay. They used both the umiak and kayak and one and two-bladed paddles.³

There is one other reference to the Douglas Pass. In 1880, Ivan Petroff, the U.S. census taker, reported that "Douglas [listed as Kaguyak on modern maps], being the primary sea otter hunting center on the coast at this time, was located at the terminus of a portage to Bristol Bay."⁴ It is not clear, however, what route constituted the Douglas Pass trail, although it may have used portions of the Hallo Bay trail.

The Katmai Pass trail, beginning just south of the Hallo Bay trail, followed the Naknek Lake system to the mouth of the Ukak River. It then ascended the drainage to its headwaters at Katmai Pass before descending through the cliffs and canyons of the Katmai River to Katmai village.

During the Russian and early American time periods, the Sugpiat/Alutiiq and Savonoski people continued using these established routes for fur trading and hunting as well as for their own subsistence activities. By the late 1790s, the Russians had learned about the pass as well; in response, the Russian-American Company capitalized on the trading ties between the interior and coastal Native peoples by establishing a trading store at Katmai. Two decades later, in 1818, the Russians established the Nushagak trading post. Russian traders at Katmai reacted to the action by employing some of the local villagers to portage goods westward to Nushagak and furs from there back to Katmai.⁵

By 1845, traders and hunting parties routinely headed into the interior of the peninsula and used the Katmai trading post as a base camp. To a lesser extent, they also used the old Hallo Bay portage. But neither trail was a heavily used trade route. To supply their depots along the shores of Bristol Bay, Kodiak-based Russian traders avoided the area. Some sailed around the Alaska Peninsula, while others traversed the peninsula on trails that crossed either Iliamna or Becharof lakes. The trails, both of which were easier than the Hallo Bay or Katmai Pass trails, were located outside of today's park boundaries.⁶
Well into the early American period, the Katmai Pass trail continued to be used for subsistence and trading activities. Following in the footsteps of the Russian American Company, the Alaska Commercial Company maintained similar fur trading activities with its store at Katmai. In 1871, Alphonse Louis Pinart visited Katmai and noted “quite a large business” in furs was being carried on with villages in the interior and on Bristol Bay by way of a portage up the Katmai River, past “Lake Naknik,” and down Naknek River to the sea. Former Katmai resident Harry Kaiakokonok remembered his dad, who was born in Savonoski, telling him that the Savonoski people used to travel to Katmai by dog teams.

The mountainous Katmai Pass route was strenuous and dangerous. The fact that the Savonoski people preferred to take the arduous mountain route to trade at Katmai as opposed to taking the easier water route to the Bristol Bay stores is a testament to how strongly they preferred trading with people at Katmai.

By the 1870s, the number of trade goods traversing Katmai Pass was declining. But the route gained new popularity when census taker Ivan Petroff published an account of his crossing in 1881. He characterized his voyage, taken from west to east during a four-day period in October 1880, as “tedious and difficult.” His progress, for example, was slowed by the “crossing of eight turbulent streams, each from knee to waist deep and of considerable width,” and the day he crossed Katmai Pass “was employed entirely in crossing glaciers and passing through rocky defiles at the summit of the range.” He even bemoaned the “exceedingly rapid and precipitous” descent to the wooded lower valley of the Katmai River, in which he was forced to cross “innumerable” branches of the stream and carve a path through seemingly interminable thickets.

A decade later, an expedition sponsored by Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper scrambled over the pass. In a remarkable wintertime trip, a party headed by E. H. Wells headed southeast from Nushagak in early 1891. That February, the party reached what was most certainly the mouth of the Ukak River. From there, Wells noted their progress as follows:

The way at first led up through a dreary, rock-bound cañon, narrow and half-filled with snow and ice. Over the treacherous surface we passed in safety, and curving upward among the peaks, snow-robed and desolate, reached at length a small frozen lake which marked the summit of the “divide.” All about us was a wild array of peaks bare of any semblance of vegetation and wearing a wild, Arctic aspect. The roar of water could be heard in several cañons, and in one place the torrent had washed away its heavy coverlet of snow leaving a thirty-foot cliff of that material on either bank. In the strata we noticed several red streaks, indicating that at some time or other the red snow of the Arctic regions had fallen upon these mountains.

A month later, the remainder of the Frank Leslie party followed a similar route, and as expedition leader A. B. Schanz described it, the party started “on a veritable stampede over the dangerous Katmai pass” on March 7. Prior to leaving Savonoski village, the party had spent two days waiting out a blizzard. The weather that day turned out to be no better than before; despite that obstacle, Schanz wrote, the men and dogs maintained so great a speed that it was all Stepan and I could do to keep out of their way. When we got over the hot sulphur pools on the top of the “divide,” and the descent began with a gradual
slope over a snow-covered glacier, the dash assumed a semblance of recklessness which shook one’s nerves.... The descent might eventually have ended disastrously, had not several bald spots of ground, where the Pacific sun had already driven away the snow, intervened and acted as brakes.... Then Stepan and I started the grandest coasting experience in the history of sled-traveling.... We got down without an accident, and camped at sea-level, about eight miles from Katmai, at half-past four in the afternoon. We had made a trip, which had taken days, in five and a half hours."

Use of the Katmai Pass increased with goldseekers headed for Nome on the Seward Peninsula. It is not clear how many prospectors crossed through Katmai Pass, although a bunkhouse was built at Katmai to accommodate the travelers. The trail was used especially in the wintertime when the Bering Sea route to Nome was inaccessible.

Rex Beach’s book *The Silver Horde* detailed crossing the pass when strong winds tossed rocks about. In his February 1901 visit to Katmai, Beach noted the Alaska Commercial Company trader’s comments about the pass:

*Petellin admitted that the place was too windy for him. “It would never become popular,” he said.... Katmai Pass had a reputation as a “man-killer.” About forty lives had been lost on the Katmai trail, the trader said, and at that moment the settlement was in mourning for two natives who about a week earlier had been caught in the open by a storm while crossing from the north. One had died, and the other “never would be much good to his family.” Once when he had been overtaken by a storm in the pass, Petellin related, the wind had picked up a heavy cast-iron kettle and whisked it away “with the speed of a cannon ball.”*”

In 1900 the Postmaster General sent an expedition to investigate the possibility of using the Katmai route for its overland service to western Alaska. As a result, the U.S. Post Office Department began using the route during the winter of 1900-1901. It is not clear how long the Katmai Pass route was used. Charlie Carter carried the mail from Nome to Katmai one winter. Dr. Griggs interviewed Carter about the country prior to the volcanic eruption and was told that

*on the upper part of Naknek Lake the ice was very treacherous, sometimes thawing out when the air temperature had not risen above 15 degrees F, which clearly indicated to him the presence of hot springs somewhere in the vicinity.*

Left: Charlie Carter, shown here in 1917, formerly carried the mail through the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and crossed Katmai Pass on a dog sled. UAA, Consortium Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai expeditions collection, Box 2, 1019.
We now travelled for 3 or 4 miles along the bank of a creek into the pass which is about from 20 feet to 20 years wide the little creek frozen hard now falling through it in snow. Each side the high stony mountains about 2,000 feet high on either side & a head a top about 10,000 feet high & a volcano, up up this we went till we passed between the big mountain & right under the edge of the volcano. . . . We went over a little lake now covered deep in snow & out of which the little booklet rose up which we ascended & crossing it another made its exit. We began to descend but the storm was terrible, gale very strong we could hardly stand, snowing, drifting & freezing hard. I could not see the man in front of me at all at times & he was only 4 or 5 paces ahead. I had taken the precaution to make the guide walk a head of me. We stopped a little for the other sleds & when they came in sight we moved on, it was down down down. I could see nothing on account of the storm & the cold was intense, N.E wind but lucky to our backs. Thus we travelled for a time, but I noticed our guide getting nervous & continually changing his course in a nervous way. I stopped and asked what was the matter through Paul - & the man told him we were close to the bad place he thought. All right go on & then we shall be there instead of near so on he reluctantly went. As we decended, luckily the mist rose & drift stopped for about 3 minutes & now we saw 3 glacier canons about 60 yards wide & from 80 to 100 feet deep. We were however lucky in getting over all right & the road is difficult at this point as the course of these curious cracks with water runing in the bottom is curious, but really beyond this one place, & the severe weather there are no more dangers as they represented - Merely hard work & steep walking - We were very cold, eyes ears & all full of drift snow & our faces touched with frost so we hurry up or rather down & leaving the valley come to a bank nearly perpendicular which looks into the valley of Katmai. I sat on my snow shoes & down I slide like on a toboggin took the dogs out & down came the sleds & men some getting awfull falls in the snow & Billy & his sled turning over but no one hurt. Dogs all down & harnessed again & off we went into the bush to camp & wait for the other sleds having completed a long hard bitter days walking at 3.30 about 25 miles. For two hours it turned warm & the wind stoped & everything got wet but at 7 it was blowing again & 20 below zero. We waited & waited but no news of the other sleds.

11 February At about midnight the wind was blowing such a terrible gale that we had to use every contrivance to tie the tent down & a regular blizzard blowing. Pauls tent was only 10 yards off but we could not see it. All next day it continued so moveng was Impossible. We had no fish for dogs so I gave them the last of my bacon about 6 of a lb each but the other dogs had none & as they had all had but one fish each since leaving Sevenosky the poor brutes were thin & starving & being so eat all the Babiche out of the sleds & snow shoes they could reach. I was very annoyed to find my sled all eaten up too as I had told Paul to cover it with brush...

12 February A lovely morning but every one the worse for the cold & freezing two dogs never to pull anymore. We harnessed & away & three hours down the picturesque valley bounded by gigantic cliffs & mountain landed us at the little village of Katmai, the end of our dog travelling thank God safe & sound & none the worse - ...We cam 19 miles today in 3 hours ...& dog driving is over....
The geologist J. E. Spurr's United States Geological Survey exploration and subsequent report of 1898 provided the best source of information on the condition of the Katmai Pass trail prior to the 1912 volcanic eruption. Spurr’s expedition provided the only known detailed map of the route and photograph of the pass prior to 1912. Spurr’s account is as follows:

The trip from the lake to the seacoast occupied three and one-half days, an average of nearly 20 miles a day, all of which we made on foot, largely through swamps and deep moss. On the 16th of October [1898] we crossed the mountain pass and descended to the other side.

This pass lies between two extinct volcanoes and is high, snowy, and rocky, and has no definite trail. The wind is often so cold and violent here, even in summer, that the natives do not dare to cross except in calm weather, for the gusts are so powerful that stones of considerable size are carried along by them.

On the sea side of the pass we came to a considerable stream of hot water which emerged from the side of one of the volcanoes and flowed down, steaming, to reach the cooler water of the other mountain drainage. … On the 17th of October we arrived at the Aleut village of Katmai, where we found a Russian trader.

The June 1912 eruption had a major impact on the trail; it buried most or all of the route between Iliuk Arm and Katmai village in volcanic ash, in places several feet deep. But because the pre-1912 trail had never been a specific, identifiable pathway, the overall route remained as before.

Reuse of portions of the trail began with the National Geographic Society expeditions. In 1916, after his third expedition effort, Robert E. Griggs, explorer and botanist for the Society, finally reached the summit of Katmai Pass. From the summit, Griggs saw the fumaroles in the valley below for the first time.

The sight that flashed into view as we surmounted the hillock was one of the most amazing visions ever beheld by mortal eye. The whole valley as far as the eye could reach was full of hundreds, no thousands—literally, tens of thousands—of smokes curling up from its fissured floor.

This discovery led to the establishment, two years later, of Katmai National Monument.

A few tourist trips followed in the footsteps of NGS expeditions. Most tourists sailed from Kodiak to Katmai Bay and followed on foot the route leading up to Katmai Pass, although other adventurers, such as Naknek schoolteacher Alyce Anderson, approached the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes via Savonoski and the Ukak River valley.

After the 1920s, the trail was ignored for the next several decades, but in the 1960s, recreational hikers rediscovered the route. For those beginning their journey at the Three Forks Overlook, the summit of Katmai Pass has been, in the words of one guidebook, a “destination for most hikers in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.” Few, however, seek out the east or west ends of the Katmai Pass trail. The Hallo Bay trail has seen little twentieth century use, save for Savonoski-area Natives who, as late as the 1930s, returned to the Savonoski River valley on annual bear hunts.
Roads

Prior to the June 1912 eruption, virtually no roads existed on the Alaska Peninsula. This state of affairs was unsurprising, considering the small population levels, the rugged topography, the relatively easy travel afforded along the seacoast or across lakes, and the difficulty of securing funds in Alaska for road construction.

The establishment of the monument, in 1918, publicized the area to some extent, and Robert F. Griggs, the National Geographic Society’s expedition leader, saw roads as a key aspect of monument development. He noted that “only 50 or 60 miles of automobile road is needed to open up all the wonders of the area to the public. When that is constructed, the traveler may tour the Katmai National Monument as easily as he now visits the Yellowstone.” The Alaska Road Commission, in response, visited the area in 1921 and made an informal survey for a thirty-mile road heading west from Geographic Harbor. The report from that survey, however, was pessimistic that any road could be built in the monument, for both technical and economic reasons. The report stated that

> It appears that a road from any Pacific entrance would be prohibitive in cost, if not impossible. The deep ashes mentioned drift around like snow with every wind. It lies on the steep slopes like so much ground coffee and is always ready to slide when disturbed. Until vegetation has again penetrated it, and formed a sod or soil as a binding, it will not pack and can not be held in place.

Later recommendations for roads came from NPS officials. Roads, for example, were urged as part of the park’s first master plan, completed in 1942, and shortly after the establishment of the Alaska Recreation Survey, in 1950, planner George Collins advocated the construction of “a short section of road” that would connect the south end of Iliuk Arm with the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. But because Katmai, with its remote location and light visitation, was low on the agency’s priorities, road construction projects were never funded. The only road that was constructed during this period was a short, rough road between Brooks and Naknek lakes, built during the early 1940s.

In 1956, the NPS began work on its Mission 66 program, a servicewide program to upgrade the parks’ infrastructure by funding the construction of roads, visitor centers, campgrounds, trails, and other improvements. An April 1956 prospectus revealed that the agency, at Katmai, planned to spend “about $680,000 for new buildings and about $80,000 for improved roads and trails.” In the latter category, the agency envisioned limited road projects (“these will be principally jeep routes,” the prospectus said) from the mouth of the Ukak River to “Valley Junction” and from King Salmon to Lake Camp. By April 1957, the final Mission 66 program somewhat revised the above priorities; it called for the construction of two jeep roads, one a twelve-mile route from Iliuk Arm up the Ukak River valley to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, the other from Brooks Camp to the site of a proposed airstrip. Compared with other Mission 66 projects, however, the Valley road was not a top priority; an employee headquarters, a visitor center, and an airstrip were all deemed more important.

The idea of a road to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, like previous plans, seemed destined to remain in the proposal stage. But in February 1961, a meeting in Washington, D.C. radically changed that scenario. Northern Consolidated Airlines head Ray Petersen met with NPS and legislative officials and was told that, because of opposition from the “Sierra Club or other
preservationists," there was little likelihood that a road would be constructed in Katmai in the near future.

Petersen was taken aback by the statement because a year earlier, Director Conrad Wirth and other top bureaucrats had promised verbal support for a road connecting Brooks Camp with the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes if Petersen undertook a large development program. So in response, Sen. Ernest Gruening (D-AK) agreed to arrange a meeting with both Petersen and Wirth. At that meeting, Gruening got so angry at Wirth that the NPS director reluctantly agreed to fund road construction. The 22-mile "Valley Road," which cost slightly over $150,000, was built during the summer of 1962, and tours up the rough dirt road began in 1963. Trips from Brooks Camp to Three Forks Overlook (at the southeastern road terminus) have been a staple of the Katmai tourist experience ever since.

No sooner had the NPS agreed to build the Valley Road than the State of Alaska, which was in the planning process for its ferry system, began to press for further road development in the monument. On March 6, 1961, less than a month after the Gruening-Wirth meeting, the Alaska House of Representatives passed a resolution asking "that a road be planned and constructed by the state and the federal government from the Bristol Bay area through the Mount Katmai National Monument to the southern coast of the Alaska Peninsula" and "that the Kodiak-Homer ferry system be extended by the state to include a terminal at the east end of this road...." On March 30, the state senate passed the same resolution. This action was followed a year later by a plea for even more construction. In February 1962, the Alaska House passed two more resolutions: one for a road from the outlet of Naknek Lake (where the existing road ended) to the Lake Brooks terminus of the Valley Road, the other from Three Forks Overlook to Kukak Bay, where a state-sponsored ferry terminal was to be built.

NPS Director Conrad Wirth, upon hearing of the resolutions, threw cold water on any road construction ideas. Recognizing the Service’s limited budget for Alaska construction items, and because had just funded a major road project in the lightly visited park, he told Senator Gruening that Katmai roads ranked lower than long-delayed capital projects in the Mount McKinley and Glacier Bay park units. Gruening himself reflected a similar set of priorities.
These objections did not dissuade Alaska legislators from advocating road construction in the monument, and resolutions to that effect were passed during both the 1963 and 1964 legislative sessions. The Good Friday Earthquake forced legislators to pursue more immediate interests for the next several years, but in 1967 and 1968, road-construction advocates were back with a vengeance, urging roads to either Kukak Bay or Geographic Harbor. These pleas eventually reached the desk of NPS Director George Hartzog who, in January 1968, told state officials in unequivocal terms that any new roads “would be particularly destructive to park values.” Road advocates made one last try in the mid-1970s, during the planning process that preceded the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The result of that process, however, was ultimately discouraging to its advocates, and the creation of huge wilderness areas when ANILCA became law doomed any future attempts for a long-distance road in the present park.

**Water Transportation**

People have been traveling by water along the Katmai coast for hundreds if not thousands of years. The coastal Sugpiat/Alutiiq, Russian fur traders and priests, and Euroamerican explorers crossed the treacherous Shelikof Strait using kayak and baidarkas. Katmai coastal inhabitants traveled great distances along the Alaska Peninsula for trade and for sea otter hunting. Later craft appearing along the Katmai coast included schooners and other wind-driven vessels; they, in turn, were replaced by steamships and mailboats. Many of these craft, particularly the smaller early boats, attempted to increase the safety of trips between the Katmai coast and Kodiak Island by waiting long periods before calm weather permitted a crossing. Even the most careful, however, sometimes succumbed to unexpected storms. Numerous shipwrecks, as a result, have taken place.

Ships operated by the Russian-American Company traveled between Kodiak and the company’s Alaska Peninsula posts. Katmai was one of the primary depots, ships anchoring there provided supplies and picked up furs. One of the Russian ships, the Tri Sviatitelia, wrecked in Kamishak Bay in 1796. Unable to repair the ship, the men scavenged the iron parts and bolts and burned the rest. During the early American period, the Alaska Commercial Company and rival trading firms operated schooners to make the station rounds. The Douglas Station apparently had more marine traffic than did the Cook Inlet posts. The ships would deliver merchandise, pick up furs, and transport sea otter hunters. Shirpser, Haritonoff and Company used the Clara L. West as a tender for its Douglas Station, making stops several times a year. During the 1870s, this ship was replaced by the Petaluma and then by the Urania schooner, which was wrecked in 1875. After the firm became the Western Fur and Trading Company, the Douglas Station manager used a smaller schooner, the Diomedes Herman, to make the rounds of the smaller villages and scattered sea otter hunting camps. In 1883, the Alaska Commercial Company purchased the Western Fur and Trading Company’s property, although two schooners were not included in the purchase.

The area’s second known shipwreck occurred in November of 1886, when John W. Smith, the Alaska Commercial Company’s Douglas Station manager, put his wife and five children on board the schooner Flying Scud bound for Kodiak. The Flying Scud never reached Kodiak. It was not until five months later that another schooner, the Kodiak, arrived at Douglas with the news. No evidence of a shipwreck was ever located, so it can only be assumed that all hands were lost during the Shelikof Strait crossing.
During the 1898 gold rush, the so-called “Moran Fleet,” consisting of twelve river steamers, sailed from Seattle to St. Michael. To increase the safety factor, the vessels stayed close to the shoreline. On June 29, 1898, some of the steamers traveling west from Kodiak through Shelikof Strait were forced to anchor at Katmai Bay because of hurricane winds. Several of the steamers were beached at Katmai Bay including the *Pilgrim*, the *D.R. Campbell*, the *F.K. Gustin*, the *Robert E. Kerr*, the *Tacoma*, the *St. Michael*, the *Mary F. Graff*, the *Western Star*, and the *Seattle*. Seven of the nine steamers were immediately refloated. *The Pilgrim*, however, required repair work, and with the help of local villagers it was repaired at Katmai Bay. The *Western Star* was not so fortunate. It became a total wreck; some parts were scavenged, while others were auctioned off. It is highly doubtful if any parts remain in situ from this vessel, though the site has not been surveyed for this purpose.

By the early 1900s, the sea otter population was declining, and shipping activity dropped off as a result. With the rise of commercial fishing, however, maritime traffic began to rise again. The canneries at Karluk, on the west side of Kodiak Island, sent cannery tenders to Kafalia Bay to pick up salmon from the bay’s fishery. Some of the Alaska Steamship Company vessels, traveling from Kodiak and Karluk to Unalaska, would occasionally put in at Katmai Bay to deliver mail.

Following the 1912 volcanic eruption, only seasonal fishermen and perhaps some prospectors still traveled to the coast by boat. Some shipping activity occurred during 1915 and 1919 as the National Geographic Society’s Katmai expeditions shuttled between Kodiak and Katmai Bay. The NGS’s expeditions to Bristol Bay, undertaken in 1918 and 1919, used cannery boats to take participants up the Naknek River, perhaps as far as the rapids.
On June 29, 1898, the Pilgrim and several other steamers in the Moran Fleet were beached at Katmai Bay. The Pilgrim after repairs, sailed away, but a sister ship, the Western Star, was wrecked beyond repair. Photograph courtesy of Moran Brothers Collection, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle, WA.
One known shipwreck occurred along the Katmai coast in 1929. On September 5 of that year, the steamship *Golden Forest* ran aground at Cape Ilktugitak, located between Amalik and Dakavak bays. The *Golden Forest*, an Oceanic and Oriental Steamship Co. freighter, was carrying general merchandise en route from San Francisco to Yokohama when it ran aground at Avatanaik Island, just east of Unalaska. It was refloated at Akutan Island, and was being towed back to Seattle when it got hung up on two sharp rocks at Cape Ilktugitak. The event generated great interest among the locals, who hoped that the ship would break up so its goods could be salvaged. The ship, in fact, was never moved; the merchandise, however, ending up being purchased by the H. T. Erskine Co., which owned several general stores on Kodiak Island. A 1984 coastal survey noted that a large assemblage of rusted parts remained both above and below the high tide line.

During each of the next two years, additional shipwrecks occurred. On August 13, 1930, a gas screw named the *GoGet* was destroyed by fire at the Seashore Packing Company dock (which was owned at the time by the Hemrich Packing Company) in Kukak Bay. Just a year later, another gas screw named the *Mary C. Fisher* was wrecked on the rocks about three miles east of Cape Kubugakli; it foundered and sank in strong, storm-tossed seas. So far as is known, no additional shipwrecks have befallen the Katmai coast since the early 1930s.

During the 1940s, shipping in the area continued with private shipping companies, particularly the major fish packers, sailing between the Lower 48 and the various Bristol Bay canneries. The Alaska Steamship Company served the villages located on both sides of the Alaska Peninsula.

With the establishment of salmon and clam canneries at Kukak and Swikshak bays, shipping resumed along the Katmai coast from the 1920s into the 1950s. Docks and wharfs were built at Swikshak and Kukak bays to accommodate the tenders that arrived to pick up the fisheries' products.

The result of one shipping mishap at Amalik Bay led to the legend of Katmai's wild horse. In September 1956, a barge carrying sixteen horses from Kodiak to Puale Bay started taking on water. The skipper pulled into Amalik Bay, off-loaded the horses and hurried on to Kodiak. The horses, abruptly left on their own, were ill-prepared to fend for themselves in such a wild, hostile environment, and fifteen of the sixteen horses, not surprisingly, did not survive the first winter. The one surviving bay gelding became a living legend as passing fishermen and pilots would see the horse year after year. A fisherman found the horse's bones, surrounded by wolf tracks, in 1974. It is estimated that the horse had lived 25 years, 18 of those years having been spent around Amalik Bay.

At the western end of the monument, the NPS and the concessioner established a presence at Brooks Camp in the spring of 1950. No sooner had the camp buildings been erected than the agency began to plan for the possibility of accessing the site by water. As part of the Alaska Recreation Survey, plans developed for a transportation system that included concessioner-operated boats on Lake Grosvenor as well as a possible route across Naknek Lake as well. Five years later, however, the NPS abandoned those plans and concluded that planes were better suited to Katmai than boats. In the meantime, NPS Katmai rangers were using boats to patrol the monument with boat docks under construction at Brooks Camp in 1963. In 1965, the agency became reinvigorated about boat transportation when its master plan declared that "a program must be devised to permit
access to the Monument for greater numbers of people by means other than float plane," and it proclaimed the need for a large boat that would shuttle passengers across the lake. Those plans, however, were squelched because the water in the Lake Camp area (where a major boat dock was proposed) was too shallow. In response, officials moved their proposed dock to the northwestern end of the lake in its 1971 and 1973 master plans. As late as 1976, NPS officials were convinced that boat transportation would eventually replace float planes, at least on Brooks Camp service. And that summer, Wien Air Alaska investigated the practicality of a Naknek Lake boat service. But the company quickly turned down the idea. As part of its 1983-86 master planning process, the NPS proposed that “boat service on Naknek Lake, provided by private enterprise, would be encouraged.” That proposal, however, was doomed to remain on the drawing boards. Neither the NPS nor the concessioner has ever established a commercial boat service on Naknek or any other lake within the present-day park.

Air Transportation

Because maritime shipping is so treacherous, and because roads—for both economic and technical reasons—have been so hard to construct, the advent of air transportation was a boon to the Katmai country and other areas inaccessible by Alaska's poorly developed road system. Aircraft began arriving in the monument well before the NPS began active management, and it has long been the chief method by which tourists and park managers have traveled to and within the park unit.

So far as is known, the first airborne travelers who considered the monument a visitor destination came in 1929, when Anchorage Air Transport debuted tourist flights to the area in the form of a one-day tour. For $265—a king's ransom in those days—the company offered to fly visitors into the still-active volcanic area and provide them eight hours for exploration and sightseeing.

Of the few who visited Katmai during the 1930s and 1940s, most came by air. Lou Corbley, the first NPS staff person to visit the monument, arrived by chartered plane in 1937; three years later, Mount McKinley Superintendent Frank Been, along with biologist Victor Cahalane, flew over the monument before making a more extended boat-based survey. Military men stationed at Naknek Air Base flew into the monument to fish for rainbow trout, and airplanes also attracted cannery personnel, wealthy sportsmen, and Fish and Wildlife personnel to the area.

Given that context, it perhaps should not be surprising that the individual most responsible for “opening up” Katmai to visitors was an airline official. Ray Petersen, head of Northern Consolidated Airlines, had been an Alaska pilot since 1934; he had first become acquainted with the Katmai country during World War II, and he been NCA's head since 1945. By agreeing to open up five area fishing camps, two of which were located in Katmai National Monument, Petersen provided both tourist accommodations and tourist access. The company opened its fishing camps in the late spring of 1950, and ever since, virtually every Katmai visitor who has ventured east of Lake Camp has entered the park by airplane.

Petersen's initial plans called for each of the camps to be accessed by floatplane, but in the spring of 1954—a year before his concessions contract was due to expire—he began to lobby for an airstrip near Brooks Camp. Arguing that NCA wanted to access the camp directly from Anchorage as well
as from King Salmon, Petersen also felt that having an airstrip would be safer for incoming pilots. He darkly hinted, moreover, that his acceptance of a new contract might be linked with getting an airstrip approved. Conrad Wirth, however, didn’t accept Petersen’s arguments and urged that further study be undertaken first. An informal study, conducted in 1955, located two sites near Brooks Camp that would be acceptable for an airstrip; both were in the Beaver Pond area. The Mission 66 program, unveiled in April 1956, did not initially call for an airstrip, but the final plan, issued a year later, included provisions for such a facility. Another site survey, urged by Mount McKinley Superintendent Duane Jacobs, followed in the spring of 1958; regional NPS officials, however, fought the idea and instead urged that the airstrip idea needed further study.

Petersen, naturally, was miffed that the NPS had refused to agree with his plans. Even before he received his first response from Wirth, however, he proceeded with airstrip development plans in another location. In the spring of 1954, at the same time that he laid out his Brooks Camp airstrip plans to NPS officials, he also decided to carve out an airstrip near the company’s Kulik Camp facility. Here, on Bureau of Land Management land, he encountered no bureaucratic stumbling blocks—he applied for a public airport lease to secure legal use of the 80-acre parcel—and construction of a 1,500-foot airstrip began that summer. The following year the strip was extended out another 500 feet, and by August 1956, workers had completed a usable if rough road between the camp and landing strip. By this time, Petersen was well aware that the NPS had little interest in a Brooks Camp airstrip; perhaps as a result, he brought a sawmill into Kulik Camp and commenced construction that year on the large, wooden Kulik Lodge. The lodge was completed in 1958 or 1959.

No sooner was the lodge complete than he began to develop more sophisticated plans for Kulik Camp. In the fall of 1958, NCA acquired the first of several Fairchild 40-passenger propjets, which were intended to move a larger number of passengers in greater comfort than the airline had been previously able to do. In conjunction with that purchase, the airline chose the Kulik airfield to fulfill the role of intermediate stop on the Anchorage-King Salmon run; in so doing, they hoped to stimulate visitation to the newly-enlarged camp. But the new airplanes required a longer runway, so in 1958 NCA added an extra 2,000 feet to the existing airstrip. Propjet service to Kulik Lake began in 1959. But by 1963, NCA officials had reluctantly concluded that propjet service to Kulik Lake was not a paying proposition, and traffic thereafter was limited to small bush planes, most or all of which came from either King Salmon or the other NCA camps.

The need to establish a Brooks Camp airstrip flared up again in 1966, when NCA officials began contemplating the need to purchase its first jet airplanes. Shortly thereafter, plans were announced to merge NCA with Wien Air Alaska, another Alaska-based regional carrier. NCA officials, at the time, reasoned that if access restrictions at Brooks Camp could be eased, greater site development would ensue. And although they ideally wanted a runway 5,000 to 6,000 feet in length, they were willing to settle on a 3,000 to 3,500-foot runway, enough to land a Twin Otter or Skyvan SC7. NCA officials presented their proposal to the NPS in March 1967. Two months later, however, agency officials rejected the idea yet again, reasoning that an airstrip would change the “wilderness atmosphere and the feeling of isolation and remoteness that it now has.” The airstrip idea, having been spurned three times in fourteen years, was by now effectively dead. The monument’s wilderness plan, issued in 1974, reaffirmed the existing state of affairs, noting that “no aircraft landing strips are
planned within the monument.” Today, the proposal remains on the back burner, although the area designated for the proposed airstrip remains one of the few areas in the present-day park that has not been recommended for the National Wilderness Preservation System.47

In 1980, Kulik Camp and its nearby airstrip were included within the boundaries of an expanded Katmai National Park and Preserve. The inclusion of those two parcels within an NPS-managed area brought immediate controversy between the agency and the Wien Air Alaska, the camp’s concessioner, because the concessioner had long claimed that the airstrip was private. That claim had caused the BLM to investigate the situation in 1978; the report emanating from that investigation had recommended that the airport’s lease (which had been renegotiated in 1974) would be cancelled if Wien did not allow public use of the strip. When the NPS began managing the surrounding area, agency officials demanded in even stronger terms that the airstrip be made public. To that, Wien officials made an about-face and stated that the company “recognizes and understands the right of the public to use the runway.”48

Affairs remained placid regarding access to the Kulik Lake airstrip until the fall of 1982 when a new company, KatmaiLand, Inc., became the concessioner for the various Katmai-area camps. Shortly after the properties changed hands, one of the new owners, Raymond F. (“Sonny”) Petersen, made it known that he intended to make the airstrip private. NPS officials had no immediate reaction to Petersen’s announcement. It did, however, learn that the airstrip, having been lengthened in 1958, was not entirely within the confines of the 80-acre public airport lease; the airstrip’s eastern end was on public (NPS) land. The public, therefore, was entitled to land at the airstrip so long as it remained east of the 80-acre parcel.

NPS officials became more actively involved in the matter in 1986, when a U.S. Geological Survey employee was refused permission to land at the airstrip. (His work needs demanded a large plane that needed the entire airstrip.) Tensions further rose when Katmailand officials intimidated or threatened private pilots using the airstrip. Following those incidents, a three-year tug-of-war ensued between the NPS and the concessioner. The fight, which involved lawyers on both sides, resulted in an agreement that Katmailand pilots had the legal right to use the entire airstrip and that the public could legally use the airstrip’s eastern half. But the NPS has not maintained its half of the airstrip and has left it in a state of benign neglect.49

**Historic Property Summary and Recommendations**

The two major historic trails in the present-day park and preserve are the **Hallo Bay Trail** and the **Katmai Pass Trail**. Both trails were used off and on for hundreds if not thousands of years. So far as is known, neither trail was used so often that an identifiable surface tread was ever imprinted, and obvious impacts were made by the June 1912 eruption. A survey is recommended that would document both of these trails, perhaps as part of a cultural landscape inventory.

Another surface route of some note is the **Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes Road**. This route, constructed in 1962, is the only long-distance road in the park and the only road of any length that was built after the NPS began actively administering the area. For more than 35 years, it has been the only practical way in which tens of thousands of visitors have accessed the volcanic landscape
created by the eruption of Novarupta, and it is a key element in the park’s interpretive program. It is the park’s most significant Mission 66 built feature. At some point in the future, park personnel may wish to nominate this feature to the National Register of Historic Places. The road should be considered as a contributing property of a Tourism theme Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Several shipwrecks are found along the park shoreline, the most significant of which is the *Golden Forest shipwreck* (XMK-125). Other shipwrecks that took place in areas currently under NPS control include the *Western Star*, wrecked in Katmai Bay in 1898; the *GoGet*, which was wrecked at the cannery dock in Kukak Bay in 1930; and the *Mary C. Fisher*, which was wrecked three miles east of Cape Kubugakli in 1931. There is no evidence, however, that any remains of these three ships still exist. Of note, the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987 gives the state title to significant historic shipwrecks that are within state waters. Any preservation or management efforts would need to coordinate with the State of Alaska, Office of History and Archaeology. Recommendation for the *Golden Forest* shipwreck is benign neglect.

Also of note is the *Kulik Lake Airstrip*, located just southeast of Kulik Camp. This 4,000-foot airstrip was bladed out in 1954, 1955, and 1958. The only airstrip in the present-day park and preserve, it reflects the changing needs of the park’s concessioners and development of tourism. It is also a case study of the difficult, often contentious relationship between a concessioner, whose primary aim is serving its clientele to the exclusion of all others, and a federal bureaucracy, whose sole aim is broad public access. Recommendation for the airstrip to be considered as a contributing property within a Tourism theme Multiple Property Documentation Form.
Endnotes

1 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 87.


5 Arndt, personal communication, 30 July 1999.


8 Tollefson to Superintendent, Katmai National Monument, April 13, 1977 memo with attached transcript from October 22, 1975 oral interview with Harry Kaiakonok, page 8-9, in AKSO, Katmai files.


13 Griggs, *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes*, 267, 301.

14 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 305.


17 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 293.

18 Quoted in Griggs, *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes*, 268. The “considerable stream of hot water” noted in 1898 had been replaced, during the post-eruption period, with many streams of warm water.


22 Arno Cammerer to Scott Bone, January 5, 1923, in File 42, RG 101, Alaska State Archives.


28 *Ibid*.

29 ACC Douglas Station records, Box 5, folder 68, UAF.


32 See the following *Anchorage Daily Times* articles, all from 1929: July 25, p. 1; July 26, 1; August 6, 1; August 16, 1; September 13, 1; September 18, 1; September 26, 1.


37 Mount McKinley National Park, Superintendent’s reports for August and September 1963.


41 Ibid., 56-57, 61-62, 68, 73.


44 Ibid., 101-05.


49 Ibid., 106-10.
MINERAL EXPLORATION AND MINING

Early Prospecting Activity

RUSSIAN MINING ENGINEER Petr Doroshin made the first exploration of the Katmai country with an eye toward its mineral possibilities. In 1852, he headed westward from Kamishak Bay to Iliamna Lake and on to Bristol Bay. On his return trip, he ascended Naknek River to Naknek Lake and continued on to the “Mishket River” (probably the Ukak River), then returned to the Pacific Coast via Katmai Pass. Hearing of enticing possibilities for coal extraction, he dispatched a party to investigate “Kanikagluk Bay,” which was probably either Amalik Bay or Kukak Bay. He was enthusiastic over the results, regarding the deposit as the best in Alaska. (The Russians, by this time, had established Coal Village at the southwestern tip of the nearby Kenai Peninsula, but they had not yet begun to develop the local coal deposit.) Doroshin and other Russians sought coal-development locations in order to supply the new California market. But before he could develop the deposits along the Katmai coast, he explored other coastal areas for their coal potential. By the time he returned to Russia, he had become convinced that the deposits near Coal Village had the most development potential. By 1865, the Russians had found evidence of petroleum near Katmai Bay, but due to a lack of interest it remained undeveloped.¹

Few prospectors entered the Katmai country in the years following the American purchase of Alaska. The first known prospectors to visit the area crossed over Katmai Pass in 1890, and later that decade a ragtag army of prospectors headed over the same route on their way to the Nome gold fields. But so far as is known, none found “pay dirt” along the way.

The U.S. Geological Survey began surveying the coastline in 1895. William Healy Dall and George Becker were dispatched to search for gold and coal potential; they found no gold, but found two pockets of coal. Near Cape Douglas they found minor coal deposits. Along the shore of Amalik Bay—probably in the same place identified by Doroshin’s investigators more than forty years earlier—they found “three seams of a pretty good coal,” although “the small dimensions of the seam ... forbid anticipating any commercial future for it.” Ralph Stone, who visited the same
stretch of coastline for the agency nine years later, provided much the same conclusions for the Cape Douglas coal seams; he found that “because of their small extent and bony character” they had no commercial value.

In 1902, interest in the area’s petroleum potential was raised again when an oil well was drilled near “Cold Bay” (now known as Puale Bay), just south of the present park. The discovery brought a bevy of activity to the area, but the initial well was not successful and by 1906 the area had been practically abandoned. The U.S. Geological Survey, hoping to lend a hand, sent geologist George Martin to survey the area for its petroleum potential. His report regarding the Katmai coastline was glum to an extreme. “The geology of the coast … between Douglas River and Katmai [village],” he wrote, “does not warrant in the slightest degree any petroleum prospecting.”

The 1912 eruption in the Mount Katmai area created a thick ash layer over hundreds of square miles of the surrounding landscape. Some mineral resources, therefore, were doubtless lost, but others were created; the USGS’s George Martin returned to the Katmai coast during the summer of 1912 and was effusive about the commercial possibilities for the coastal ash deposits.²

The eruption affected prospecting activity only slightly; a prospector by the name of Bob Scott reportedly fled the area with the Savonoski residents.³ Others, however, began trickling into the area soon afterward. Perhaps that same year, Charlie McNeil and Norman B. Cook found copper-bearing veins about 17 miles inland on a stream running into a “southwest bight” of Kamishak Bay. (The stream was probably McNeil River.) Z. T. and C. D. Halferty located seven claims in the Kuliak
Bay area in 1913 and 1917. In 1915, Fred and Jack Mason discovered placer gold along a small stream, locally called Lonesome Pine Creek, just south of Cape Kubugakli. Two years later, Robert Griggs discovered that “There are some places where one can gather crystals of sulphur, almost free from impurities, by the bushel.” In 1918, Alex Grant found placer gold on American Creek; he made several attempts to work the gravels but failed. The same year, the Geological Survey encountered the Shelikof Mining Company working at its copper prospect near Kukak Bay. Of those discoveries, only the Mason claim, which produced a small amount of gold, tin, and molybdenum over an eight-year period, ever witnessed ore production.

The Monument Proclamation and Its Impacts

In 1916, the National Geographic Society began to lobby various governmental officials to create a national monument in the ash-laden area surrounding Mount Katmai. In order to placate territorial authorities, the officials who roughed out the initial boundaries were careful to exclude known areas with commercial development potential; the southern boundary, in particular, was drawn so as to exclude the Cold Bay (Puale Bay), Cape Kubugakli, and Gas Creek mining properties. The relative lack of activity within the proposed boundaries encouraged park advocates to push for the creation of a monument that prohibited mining. The USGS, which was asked for its opinion regarding the proposed withdrawal, indicated that it would not intercede against it, but neither could it muster much enthusiasm for it. Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane, asked to make a final decision, conditionally agreed to the reservation despite the USGS’s objections. Lane apparently felt that the land should be withdrawn pending a geological investigation; if that reconnaissance showed high mineral values, all or part of the monument could be returned to the public domain.

In February 1920, Congress decided to open Alaska’s public lands to oil prospecting again after a ten-year hiatus, and development interests responded by filing a flurry of oil leases in any areas in which USGS officials had shown petroleum potential. Thus in the Puale Bay area, oil leases blanketed the area to such an extent that some leases stretched all the way north to the monument’s southwestern boundary. North of the monument, oil seeps had been discovered on the shoreline of Kamishak Bay; as a result, leases were scattered along the bay’s southwestern shore and also went
ten miles up the Kamishak River. The flurry of excitement, however, was all for naught. The only successful wells in the Cold Bay field were more than twenty miles southwest of the monument, and no drilling ever took place on the margins of Kamishak Bay. The oil leases were eventually cancelled.9

A small mineral development on the west shore of Shelikof Strait was responsible for the first alteration of Katmai's boundaries. In the early 1920s, John J. Folstad began working a coal seam on the western shore of Amalik Bay, opposite Takli Island. (This was probably the location that had been discovered by Becker and Dall in 1895.) In response, Folstad petitioned the government for a permit to develop the site. The NPS, recognizing the value of coal, knew that the petition might well result in pressure to open the entire monument to mining. The agency, therefore, felt it better to remove the area from the monument. On September 5, 1923, President Calvin Coolidge issued Executive Order No. 3897, which excluded 10 acres from the monument.10

In 1923, the long-expected Geological Survey expedition finally took place, when both Walter R. Smith and Kirtley F. Mather led survey parties into the Katmai country. Smith's party described and mapped much of the existing monument, and also fanned out to areas as far west as Dumpling Mountain and as far southwest as Becharof Lake. Mather's party surveyed the area to the north. It covered each of the coastal drainages from Paint River south to Cape Douglas, and also headed inland to survey the Savonoski River, Kulik Lake, Battie Lake, and Moraine-Funnel Creek drainages. The geologists found several mineralized areas in their surveys, most notably in the Paint River drainage and the Cold Bay area. The area within the monument, however, was “very little mineralized.” Regarding the reputed petroleum deposits near Kamishak Bay, Mather could muster only a tepid enthusiasm. He felt that a search for petroleum was justified “throughout such of the southeastern portion of the Kamishak Bay region,” but urged prospective drillers to first exploit the Cold Bay field first, where the geological structures appeared to be more favorable.11 For the remainder of the decade, no other mining activities took place either inside the monument or in the immediately surrounding area.

In November 1930, Robert F. Griggs spearheaded an effort to extend Katmai National Monument's boundaries to the north and west. In a letter to an Interior Department official, Griggs gave a broad rationale for expanding the park and noted that there were “no minerals of value” except for a worked-out gold placer at Cape Kubugakli. As part of his expansion recommendations, he took care to avoid the oil-bearing tracts which surrounded Puale Bay.12

The following January the NPS, in consultation with Griggs and the Interior Department, laid out the boundaries of the proposed monument expansion. The Geological Survey, when asked its opinion of the area's economic geology, offered a dim view of the area's suitability as a park. The agency, advocating for known or suspected mineral locations, gave an optimistic analysis of the area's petroleum and gold potential. In addition, it noted that:

> Regarding the area north of the present monument in the Kamishak Bay region, [geologist Kirtley F.] Mather reports a number of metallic mineral deposits in those places where igneous activity not related to recent volcanism has been intense. Conditions analogous to those described by him probably also occur in parts of the unsurveyed regions west and southwest of Cape Douglas, which is included within the boundaries of the enlarged monument.13
The Service, in response, offered to pare the size of its proposed expansion, and the final boundary line that was signed in President Hoover’s April 1931 proclamation was a painful compromise between the NPS and the USGS. A tacit effect of the expansion was its reincorporation of the 10-acre parcel that had been removed from the monument in 1923. (Folstad had long since lost interest in his coal claim.)

During the 1930s, as noted in Chapter 8, a small but stubborn group of trappers resided in various parts of the monument. Some prospectors doubtless also entered the monument, and a few of the trappers also prospected from time to time. As a result, three mining sites were located on the margins of the monument. Roy Fure and Martin Mickelson, both of Naknek, found a cinnabar vein in 1934 while traveling up Gorge Creek. Mickelson retorted about 200 pounds of the Gorge Creek vein but found that the mercury it contained was not of sufficient value to develop further. Fure, who continued to prospect in the area, found several more deposits just north of the original find. In 1938, along American Creek, Bill Hammersly found additional placer gold deposits in the same general area where Alex Grant had prospected twenty years earlier. Hammersly continued to work the stream gravels each summer until 1941, by which time he had located eighteen placer claims that stretched one to two miles upstream from the monument boundary. He found extensive bench gold deposits; its quantity, however, was insufficient to sustain extended operations. The only other reported gold deposits were located along the shores of Lake Brooks. These deposits, located inside the boundaries of the monument—and thus extracted illegally—were apparently discovered in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Only small amounts were ever found.

The situation was much the same along Shelikof Strait. As noted in other chapters, those who were attracted to the area were either trappers, fishermen or fox farmers. Once there, however, they sought whatever means they could to scratch out a living. On the north shore of Takli Island, W. E. Baumann located several placer claims beginning in 1931. There is no evidence, however, that either he or others in the area found anything of economic significance.

In 1941, J. C. Roehm, an investigator from the Territorial Bureau of Mines, visited the Naknek Lake region and investigated the mining possibilities for various area properties. Roehm visited the American Creek claims and attempted but failed to visit those along Gorge Creek.

**Pumice Extraction**

The Katmai area, in all likelihood, would have had little mineral extraction activity had demand been limited to hard rock minerals. What Katmai had in abundance was siliceous volcanic ash, otherwise known as pumicite. The 1912 eruption had extruded over five cubic miles of the material, enough to cover a 3,000-square-mile area a foot deep. The ash, at that time, had no commercial value, and almost no one felt slighted when the 1918 proclamation placed most of the ash deposits within the monument’s boundaries.

The value of pumicite, however, began to increase during World War II. Both the army and navy needed base materials in the construction of roads and airfields, and military personnel found pumicite superior to sand and gravel. After the war, Alaska faced an unprecedented demand for materials in the building construction industry, and various private sector interests recognized that
pumicite might fulfill those needs. One Anchorage-based company began to extract ash deposits from Augustine Island, but it was soon discovered that the ash was an inferior material for the products they were producing. Casting about for an alternative, they visited Takli Island (within Katmai National Monument), took samples, and found them to be well suited to their needs.\textsuperscript{20}

Pumice developers knew that Takli Island was located in Katmai National Monument and was thus off-limits to mining, but they hoped that the region's need for building materials might allow a legislative solution. So, beginning in April 1947, they began what proved to be a long-running campaign to allow pumice development. The campaign eventually involved the NPS Director, the Secretary of the Interior, and even the Attorney General's office. By the time it ended in April 1954, the pumice developers had been granted the legal right to extract pumice from the shore of Geographic Harbor, but by that time, the market had changed and pumice was no longer a sought-after material.\textsuperscript{21}

Despite the Herculean efforts made by both developers and legislators to tap into Katmai's pumicite deposits, few on-the-ground impacts ever resulted. Takli Island was the site of a small operation during 1947, and Geographic Harbor witnessed some activity in 1950 and 1951. The latter operation, which took place along the west shore of the upper harbor, was never very sophisticated; major on-site equipment consisted of a barge, a Caterpillar, a duck (a large, amphibious truck) and a shack on skids. The shack remained for years afterward, but by 1985 all that remained was a large pumice berm, two four-foot pilings, and a few scraps of metal.\textsuperscript{22}

**Recent Mineral Development**

In addition to the push to develop the monument's volcanic ash deposits, some hard rock extraction efforts were taking place as well. On November 14, 1948, pilot Bill Smith flew Charlie "Red" Robinson, trapper Jim Marlette, and a planeload of supplies to the eastern end of Lake Grosvenor. The location of the ore body, which supposedly held "rock mineral of high value content," is not known; it may have been the cinnabar deposits along Gorge Creek. Their entry into the area, however, was not discovered until the following April. Carlos Carson, the Dillingham-based fish and wildlife agent and deputy NPS park ranger, suspected that their entry was illegal and deduced that their mining activities were as well. Armed with a stack of regulations, Carson may have asked the miners to cease their operations, or perhaps the miners gave up on their own.\textsuperscript{23}

Scattered amounts of other mining activity surfaced during the postwar years. In 1947, George Hadden occupied a cabin on the north shore of Takli Island; he was probably prospecting the same claims that W. E. Baumann had located back in 1931. (Takli Island had been absorbed into the monument in 1942. Mining claims made before that date, however, could still be developed.)\textsuperscript{24} Marlette continued to prospect as well as trap, and had another camp along the Kulik River, north of the existing monument. His cabin was later eliminated by Northern Consolidated Airlines personnel, who had established a fishing camp on the river's north side, just west of Kulik Lake, in 1950.\textsuperscript{25}

In 1954, the U.S. Geological Survey assigned A. Samuel Keller and Hillard N. Reiser to make a new investigation of the monument's geology and mineralogical potential. Their study also included a
broad surrounding area, including Becharof Lake, Kulik and Nonvianuk lakes, the Kamishak River drainage, and the upper King Salmon River drainage. Keller and Reiser, who were primarily interested in the area's oil and gas deposits, gained the data for their study primarily by examining aerial photography and perusing existing reports, not by extensive field investigation. To those who wanted to mine or drill, their conclusions were not encouraging. They were able to locate three broad bodies of coal-bearing rocks—west of Cape Nukshak, south of Geographic Harbor, and north of Dakavak Lake—but downplayed the monument's coal mining potential. In a similar vein, they described the location of several known or purported oil and gas seeps, but concluded that "it is unlikely that favorable petroleum strata can be reached at practical drilling depths on most of the structures that could be drilled."

Another 1954 report dealt more specifically with the monument’s hard rock mineral potential. G. Donald Eberlein, a mineral deposits geologist with the USGS, noted that the most promising mineral find was the gold deposit near Cape Kubugakli. Beyond that, however, Eberlein was pessimistic. He concluded that "we cannot rule out the possibility of ultimately finding additional deposits in the Monument ... although the likelihood that such deposits occur is not very great."

When NPS officials, in the early 1970s, began to consider the expansion of Katmai National Monument and its conversion into a national park, they had to incorporate into their plans the proposed area's mineral values. Prior to August 1971, four copper and gold claims had been located along the south shore of Kulik Lake and six others were clustered in the upper Strike Creek drainage. A site containing an unknown mineral was also located in the upper Douglas River drainage, but no claim had been made there. In one of the NPS's three proposed "areas of environmental concern," there was also a series of unpatented lode claims, known collectively as the Pfaff claim, which were located on 1800 acres of land northeast of Battle Lake. None of the four mineral areas within the proposed park were patented. In addition to the mineral claims, the proposed park addition contained 224 current oil and gas leases and one current oil and gas lease application, all located north of the existing monument. Based on the information in Keller and Reiser's study, however, the NPS felt that it was "unlikely that practical drilling operations in many areas will be able to reach structural and stratigraphic traps that have the potential for containing oil."

When asked for their comments, in April 1974, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines did not like the idea of an expanded Katmai National Park. The two agencies again noted the "high grade" deposits near Kulik Lake and Battle Lake, the high geothermal properties of the area, and continued to stress the high (though unproven) mineral potential of various geological structures in the area. But NPS officials were unmoved by such arguments, and the Final Environmental Statement continued to nominate for park status each of the known mineral potential areas that had been proposed in the draft document.

In addition to those who responded with written comments, Ernest Pfaff spoke directly to NPS officials of the need to keep a portion of the proposed northern addition open to mining. Pfaff, a Naknek prospector who also held claims northeast of Battle Lake, told NPS staff that he had been prospecting in the area, particularly in the Kulik Lake drainage, since 1950. He had found five or six mineral deposits in the drainage during that time, but had recorded none of them. In the fall of
1972, he located what appeared to be a paying prospect north of the upper end of Kulik Lake, but because of the land freeze, he was unable to stake a claim.32

Soon after the Katmai enlargement, NPS personnel tried to ascertain the number of mining claims in the newly-expanded area. Their search revealed a total of eight claims—four lode and four placer—in three claim groups. They included four placer claims in the Sugarloaf Association group, the Dog #5 lode claim, and three lode claims which comprised the Pfaff claim group. None of the unpatented claims had records of previous mineral production. The Bureau of Land Management investigated these claims and found that the claimants to the Sugarloaf Association and Dog #5 claims had no legal rights to their properties, and by the end of May 1983 the agency had declared both claims null and void.

The Pfaff claim, therefore, was Katmai’s only active mining claim group. Ernest Pfaff had discovered the lode, located four miles east of Battle Lake camp, in 1964. The mineralized vein, which straddles the border of the park and preserve, consisted primarily of gold- and chalcopyrite-bearing quartz, and also contained malachite, pyrite, and an unidentified silver-sulphosalt mineral. An undetermined amount of ore was shipped during the next several years.33 By July 1984, Pfaff had apparently abandoned his interest in the property, so he transferred his interest in the claim to Hawley Resource Properties, owned by Charles Hawley. The new claimant, however, made no further moves to develop its claim. In 1988, the claimant let its interest in the claim lapse, and on May 5, 1989, the Bureau of Land Management declared the claim null and void.34

**Historic Property Summary and Recommendations**

**Cape Kubugakli Gold Placers:** In 1915, Fred and Jack Mason discovered placer gold along a small stream, locally called Lonesome Pine Creek, just south of Cape Kubugakli. The Mason claim, which produced a total of 160 ounces of gold along with tin and molybdenum over an eight-year period, was the only early hard-rock mine in the present-day park that has ever produced commercial quantities of ore.35

As part of its operation, the brothers probably established a sod house along the Kashvik Bay shoreline. In 1917, members of the National Geographic Society expedition
visited and photographed that house. That same summer, those involved in the mining operation met the NGS expedition and were photographed at the NGS’s Katmai Bay base camp, where they purchased provisions with gold dust.36

So far as is known, NPS staff has not visited the location of the Mason brothers’ placer mining operation, nor have they located the “prospectors’ sod house” that NGS expedition members visited and photographed in 1917.

**Takli Island Gold Claims:** On the north shore of Takli Island, W. E. Baumann located several placer claims in 1931. (Joe Tanzer took out a fur farm lease in September of that year, and Baumann and Tanzer may have been working together.) Sixteen years later, George Hadden occupied a cabin on the north shore of Takli Island; this was the same cabin that trapper John A. Smith had used during the late 1930s and early 1940s. (Takli Island had been absorbed into the monument in 1942. Mining claims made before that date, however, could still be developed.) Hadden probably staked the same claims that Baumann had located previously. Neither Baumann nor Hadden produced commercial amounts of gold, and there is no evidence that either prospector worked the deposit that they had claimed.37 The location or condition of these claims is not known.

**Takli Island Pumicite Extraction Site:** Anchorage developers spent much of the decade following World War II attempting to extract pumicite from Katmai’s beaches. A focus of early concern was the extensive pumicite deposit on Takli Island. In 1947, Anchorage residents Don Goodman and Harold Swank formed the Pumice Block Company, and soon afterward they sent a small crew which “was active in developing deposits” on the island. That crew, which worked illegally, was probably on site for only a short time. During much of the long-running debate over securing legal access to these deposits, Takli Island was designated by legislators as an area that would be open to extraction if legal access was secured. But when a bill allowing access finally passed the U.S. Congress (H.R. 1529 in the 83rd Congress), the only site allowed for legal pumicite extraction was Geographic Harbor, ten miles to the northwest.38

The exact location of the 1947 pumicite operation is not known, and it is similarly not known if any evidence remains of either the extraction process or any equipment and supporting facilities associated with that operation.

**Folstad Coal Prospect:** The existence of coal on the western side of Amalik Bay was first identified in 1852 by a party under the direction of Russian mining engineer Petr Doroshin. For a short time, Doroshin thought that the site was the best coal deposit in Russian America. Later, however, he found a more promising coal development site on the Kenai Peninsula. More than forty years later, William H. Dall and George Becker returned to the spot. They found “three seams of a pretty good coal,” but they were quick to note that “the small dimensions of the seam … forbid anticipating any commercial future for it.” Development did not follow either of these early reports. But in the early 1920s—several years after the area had been withdrawn as a national monument—John J. Folstad rediscovered the coal seam. Folstad was so optimistic about the site’s development possibilities that he petitioned the government for a permit to develop the site. The NPS, recognizing the value of coal, knew that the petition might well result in pressure to open the entire monument to mining. The agency, therefore, felt it better to remove the area from the monument. On September 5, 1923, President Calvin Coolidge issued Executive Order No. 3897, which excluded 10 acres from the monument.39 Folstad was therefore given free license to develop the coal site. But before long,
he began to recognize what others before him already knew, that the site did not have long term
development potential. He abandoned his claim, and in April 1931 the ten-acre parcel was reab­sorbed into Katmai National Monument.40

**Amalik Bay Copper Prospect:** When National Geographic Society investigators, in the summer of 1919,
made a reconnaissance of various bays and coves along Shelikof Strait, they visited and photographed a so-called “copper mine in upper [northern] Amalik Bay.” Details about the prospect are unknown. This may be the same prospect as that referred to in the U.S. Geological Survey’s annual report for 1918; it noted that the Shelikof Mining Company’s work “was continued” that year at its copper prospect “near Kukak Bay.” Nothing more was heard from the company after that year. No structures are known to be associated with this prospect.41

**Geographic Harbor Pumicite Extraction Site:**
As noted in the discussion of the Takli Island Pumicite Extraction Site (above), developers and bureaucrats engaged in an eight-year battle over whether and how pumicite mining would take place along Shelikof Strait within the monument. At first the development interests showed little interest in Geographic Harbor because the site’s pumicite was inferior in quality. Despite that admo­nition, however, surreptitious development took place there during the early 1950s. In the summer of 1950 John Grove, who headed the Stock and Grove Company of Anchorage, brought a crew of six into Geographic Harbor and extracted pumicite; the following year, the company repeated the process in the same location.” The company appears to have operated legally by working below the high tide line (this zone was technically out of the NPS’s jurisdiction), but they kept their equipment and a shed above high tide, which was illegal without a special use permit. Although territorial officials were immediately aware of the operation, the NPS did not learn of it until the following winter. In the summer of 1951, agency planner George Collins visited the site; shortly afterward, the NPS issued Grove a cease and desist order and shut it down.42

In the meantime, developers and bureaucrats continued to battle over legalized access to the monument’s beaches. A solution was not reached until the 83rd Congress passed a bill, which was signed by President Eisenhower on April 15, 1954, allowing pumicite extraction only on “those lands within one-quarter (’) mile of mean high tide in Geographic Harbor at latitude 58° 08’ N., longitude 154° 36’ W....” Shortly after the enactment of the above legislation, one company at­tempted to remove pumice from the described area, but they were unsuccessful in developing a market. And to their further discouragement, they lost one of their barges in a storm on Shelikof Strait. This was the only attempt to develop the pumice.43
Regarding site improvements, the USGS 1:250,000 map for the area, published in 1951, shows a cabin along the west side of upper Geographic Harbor in T24S, R33W, S12. In 1984, a fisherman told an NPS ranger that he remembered a small shack at this location “a long time ago.” But by the mid-1980s, all that remained at the extraction site was a large pumice berm, two four-foot pilings, and a few scraps of metal.44

McKinley National Park superintendent, agent Jack Benson noted that “at one time there was a quartz prospect in Hafferty [sic] Bay, the second indentation north of Kinak Bay. Remains of the old camp were found during my last trip to the coast. It is understood that a man by the name of Hafferty was pleased with his prospects, but has since died and no one has taken over.” So far as is known, no NPS personnel have visited or commented on either the prospects or the buildings in Kuliak Bay.

Kuliak Bay Prospecting Complex: In 1913, and again in 1917, Z. T. and C. D. Halferty made located several mining claims on the slopes overlooking Kuliak Bay. (Kuliak Bay is the first deep, double-pronged indentation south of Kaffia Bay.) Most if not all of those claims were 1’ to two miles west or northwest of the bay.45 They called this bay (which may have described just the southern indentation of Kuliak Bay) “Montaigne Bay;” later observers, however, called it “Hafferty Bay” in misspelled deference to these prospectors. Little is known about activity there prior to 1919, when a National Geographic Society expedition visited the bay. That year, however, the Halfertys “sent seven feet of shaft 6’ [deep] x 4’” [in diameter] during a twelve day period. This labor was probably related to a copper, gold, and silver prospect that had been located in 1917.46 That same year, NGS expedition members photographed two buildings related to the prospecting operations: a long (three-room) milled-wood building situated just above the high tide line, and a smaller milled-wood cabin up the hill slope. The former building was probably a headquarters for various prospecting operations in the bay, while the latter structure may have been adjacent to one or more of the prospects. Judging from the buildings they constructed, the Halfertys were either wealthier or more optimistic than most prospectors; they were certainly willing to invest more than a minimal sum in their quest for hard rock minerals.47

Nothing is known about any operations after 1919. Years later, part of the fate of the prospects came to light in a letter from an Alaska Game Commission agent. In a letter to the Mount Gorge Creek Cinnabar Prospect: In 1934, prospectors Roy Fure and Martin Mickelson found a cinnabar vein while traveling up Gorge Creek, a tributary of Hardscrabble Creek (east of Lake Grosvenor) near the monument’s northern border. Fure, at the time, spent his winters at his Bay of Islands trapping cabin and his summers in Naknek, while Mickelson lived in Naknek. After their discovery, Mickelson retorted about 200 pounds of the Gorge Creek vein but found that the mercury it contained was not of sufficient value to develop further. Fure, who continued to prospect in the area, found several more deposits just north of the original find. The site was forgotten for more than a decade. The years following World War II, however, brought an increased interest in the area, and two men made a renewed effort to tap the resource. On November 14, 1948, pilot Bill Smith flew trapper Jim Marlette and Charlie “Red” Robinson, along with a plane load of supplies, to the eastern end of Lake Grosvenor. None of the three publicized which ore body they hoped to develop, but this “rock mineral of high value content” was probably the cinnabar deposits along Gorge Creek. Their entry into the area, however, alarmed Carlos Carson, the Dillingham-based fish and wildlife agent and deputy NPS park ranger, because he suspected that the ore body was within the monument boundary; if so, any mining activities would be illegal. What took place next is unknown; Carson may have asked the miners to cease their operations, or perhaps the miners gave up on their own. It is not even known if Marlette and Robinson extracted any ore at the site. Either way, the cinnabar site was abandoned and no known development activities have taken place since then.48

![View of Kuliak Bay with Halferty's Cabin off to the right, 1917. UAA, Consortium Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions collection, Box 5, 5201.](image-url)
So far as is known, no NPS personnel have visited the cinnabar extraction site. Discovery of its location along Gorge Creek is of more than trivial interest, because the southwest side (right bank) of the creek was inside of Katmai National Monument's boundaries in both 1934 and the late 1940s while the northeast side (left bank) was part of the public domain.

**Battle Lake Claims:** Ernest Pfaff, a longtime Naknek resident, had been prospecting in the mountains east of Naknek, and particularly in the Kulik Lake drainage, ever since 1950. (Pfaff Peak, located southwest of Battle Lake, became a recognized geographic name when a U.S. Geological Survey map of the area was published in 1951.) In 1964, Pfaff located what appeared to be promising prospects in the mountains northeast of Battle Lake. The site, located four miles east of Battle Lake camp, consisted primarily of gold- and chalcopyrite-bearing quartz, and also contained malachite, pyrite, and an unidentified silver-sulphosalt mineral. Pfaff located a series of lode claims, totaling 1,800 acres. Pfaff shipped an undetermined amount of ore during the next several years but never moved to patent his claims.

When NPS officials, in the early 1970s, began to consider the expansion of Katmai National Monument and its conversion into a national park, they first proposed placing Pfaff's claims into one of three “areas of environmental concern.” Later, however, they dropped that designation, and upon the recommendation of Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, President Carter opted to include the area within an expanded Katmai National Monument, which he designated on December 1, 1978. Two years later, Pfaff's claims were included within the boundaries of Katmai National Park and Preserve; they straddled the border between park and preserve land.

Interior Department personnel, asked to verify the authenticity of the various mineral claims in the areas that had become conservation units because of the Alaska Lands Act, determined by May 1983 that the three Pfaff claims were Katmai's only valid mining claims. Just a year later, in July 1984, Pfaff transferred his interest in the claim to Hawley Resource Properties, owned by Charles Hawley. The new claimant made no further moves to develop the property. In 1988, Hawley let his interest in the claim lapse, and on May 5, 1989, the Bureau of Land Management declared the claim null and void.50

NPS cultural resource personnel, as part of the Mining Inventory and Monitoring Program, visited the mine site in August 1989. They observed just two bulldozer scrapes at the three claims; in addition, a thirty-foot wanigan and a 1500-foot airstrip were located 1.5 miles northeast of the claims. All three of these resources probably date from the 1960s.

**American Creek Gold Prospects:** In 1918, prospector Alex Grant—who apparently had a cabin along the Brooks River and may have trapped in that area—found placer gold on American Creek. He made several attempts to work the gravels but finally gave up after facing many “adverse conditions.” Twenty years later, Rufus “Bill” Hammersly found additional placer gold deposits in the same general area. Hammersly continued to work the stream gravels each summer until 1941, by which time he had located 18 placer claims. Both Grant's and Hammersly's mining was legal; when Grant was active, Katmai National Monument had not yet been designated, and when Hammersly was prospecting, the monument's boundaries were one to two miles downstream from his placer claims. Hammersly found extensive bench gold deposits; the quantity of those deposits, however, was insufficient to sustain extended operations.51 So far as is known, NPS personnel have not relocated or evaluated these claims.
As the various site descriptions indicate, only two of the eight identified mining sites in Katmai National Park and Preserve have been visited and described by NPS personnel. Therefore, it is recommended that cultural resource personnel make a systematic effort to locate and describe these sites. The existence of just eight known mineral production sites within the 4.1 million-acre expanse of Katmai National Park and Preserve certainly suggests that the area's potential mineralization is small in comparison with other mountainous areas in Alaska; moreover, the mining sites that have been developed do not appear to follow easily identifiable chronological or spatial trends. Therefore, it does not appear that a thematic study of the park's mining sites, with an eye toward a multiple property National Register of Historic Places nomination, is warranted at this time. Individual properties, however, may well be considered for the National Register if evidence obtained from site visits reveals adequate supporting data.
Endnotes

1 Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 112-13, 312.

2 *Ibid.*, 375; L. W. McFarland (James H. Rhodes and Co.) to *National Geographic Magazine*, February 21, 1917, in Box 24, Griggs Collection, NGS.


Ibid., 1-3, 10.


Norris, Isolated Paradise, 356-65.

Herbert Maier (Acting RD/R4) to Dir. NPS, August 7, 1951; George Collins, August 19, 1951 memo in pencil; both in File 609-01, Box 312, RG 79, NARA SB; Melanie Neuman and Kim Heacox, Katmai National Park and Preserve, Katmai Coast Field Season Report, 1985 (King Salmon, NPS, 1985), 50.

C. M. Carson to O. A. Tomlinson (RD/R4), April 19, 1949, in File 609-01, Box 312, RG 79, NARA SB; Grant Pearson to C. M. Carson, April 27, 1949, in File 208, Box 311, RG 79, NARA SB; O. A. Tomlinson to C. M. Carson, April 28, 1949, at KATM.


Director USGS to Director PNRO, May 15, 1973, in Box 13, NARA ANC.


29 Alaska Planning Group, Proposed Katmai National Park, Alaska, Draft Environmental Statement, December 1973, 129-30; Alaska Planning Group, Final Environmental Statement, Proposed Katmai National Park, Alaska, 1974, 97; NPS, “Distribution and Density of Mineral Entries, Proposed Katmai National Park Additions,” December 1, 1977, Box 15, NARA ANC. Both the 1974 and 1977 reports noted that a small, active small gold placer operation and gold-copper operation were located on Crevice Creek, 22 miles west of the mouth of McNeil River. The mine site, however, was later discovered to be outside of the proposed park.

30 Alaska Planning Group, Proposed Katmai National Park, Alaska, Draft Environmental Statement, December 1973, 135; BLM, “Historical Index” sheets for various townships in the area of the proposed addition, located at BLM State Office, Anchorage.

31 Alaska Planning Group, Final Environmental Statement, Proposed Katmai National Park, Alaska, 1974, 33, 252-55, 259-63, 315-16, 394; Director USGS to Director PNRO, May 15, 1973, in Box 13, NARA ANC.

32 Al Henson (Project Leader, ATFO) to Asst. Director, Cooperative Activities, WASO, March 13, 1973; NPS, “Katmai National Park, Statement on Special Problems,” n.d. (1973); NPS, “Minerals,” in “Katmai EIS Comments” folder, n.d. (1974?); all in Box 13, NARA ANC. Pfaff had first become known to NPS officials back in May 1949, when he wrote the agency and asked if the monument was open to uranium prospecting. He received a kind but firm negative reply. Jackson E. Price, (NPS Office of the Chief Counsel, WASO) to Ernest Pfaff, July 25, 1949, at KATM.


34 SAR for 1985 (p. 7) and 1986 (pp. 6-7); BLM, Serial Number AA-025641 through AA-025643, Alaska State Office, Anchorage.

35 Norris, Isolated Paradise, 351; Hussey, Embattled Katmai, 418.

36 National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Photo Albums, 1917, Box 2, Photos 831-33, UAA Archives.

37 Norris, Isolated Paradise, 356, 367.

38 Ibid., 357, 365-66.


41 National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Photo Albums, 1919, Box 6, Photos 5512-13, UAA Archives; Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 351.


43 Oscar T. Dick (Supt. MOMC) to Paul Arpin, San Jose, Calif., April 7, 1965, in DENA Collection.


46 Ibid.

47 National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Photo Albums, Box 5, 5301, and Box 6, 5512 and 5516 (all taken in 1919), UAA Archives.

48 Jack Benson to Frank Been, March 17, 1941, DENA Archives.


50 Ibid., 375-78.

51 Ibid., 351, 355-56.
ODAY, BRISTOL BAY is widely known as having the world’s most plentiful stocks of wild sockeye (red) salmon, and the Naknek River system that flows out of Katmai National Park has long been known as one of the primary contributors to the bay’s salmon stocks. The upper reaches of the Alagnak River drainage system also boast healthy salmon populations, though not to the extent of the Naknek River system. Along the eastern edge of the park, the many streams that flow into Shelikof Strait also had healthy salmon runs, and along Katmai’s coastline—from Hallo Bay to Cape Douglas and also in Kashvik Bay—lie some of the state’s most productive clam beds. Commercial fisheries interests, not surprisingly, were quick to respond to the area’s abundant salmon and clam populations, and the legacy of that response is a number of abandoned canneries and a long record of fish and shellfish harvesting in and around park waters.

Early Fisheries Activity

Area activity related to fishing or shellfish harvesting began soon after the United States government acquired Alaska from the Russians. In 1880, just two years after the establishment of Alaska’s first two salmon canneries, two “fishing establishments” were located on Kodiak Island. Two years later, Kodiak Island’s first salmon cannery—the Smith and Hirsh cannery—was opened at salmon-rich Karluk Spit. As Patricia Roppel has made clear in her volume *Salmon from Kodiak*, salmon canning soon became a highly successful industry on Kodiak and nearby Afognak and Raspberry islands, and the Smith and Hirsh facility was the first of more than thirty cannery sites on those three islands.

Meanwhile, commercial interests were eyeing Bristol Bay’s remarkable red salmon resource. Commercial fishing boats entered the bay in 1882, and a year later the Arctic Packing Company established a salting station on the Nushagak River at Kanulik. That operation, in 1884, was expanded into a cannery, and by 1887 three more canneries had been established along the Nushagak. Cannery
interests also investigated the salmon runs elsewhere in the bay, and in 1891 a packing operation was built along the Ugashik River, 50 miles south of the mouth of the Nushagak.

To a large extent, the capital as well as much of the labor that operated the canneries and salteries of Kodiak Island and Bristol Bay came from outside Alaska. Companies based in Seattle, Portland, or San Francisco typically financed these facilities. The managers and skilled craftsmen hailed from the U.S. or western Europe, and the fishermen in the company's employ were Scandinavians or southern Europeans. In some locations, the cannery crews were primary of Chinese or Japanese extraction; but elsewhere, local Natives participated as well. (Natives, less often, also worked as fishermen.) The crews arrived in late spring, lived in marginal and isolated conditions during their time in Alaska, and returned to a West Coast port as soon as the salmon run had passed. People affiliated with canneries had few opportunities to intermingle, or do business, with local residents.

By 1890, fishing interests had established a toehold in the immediate vicinity of the present-day park when two salteries began operating along the lower Naknek River. Five years later, that presence increased when the Arctic Packing Company and the Naknek Packing Company built canneries along the Naknek. By the close of the century, additional canneries had been built in new Bristol Bay locations: at Koggiung, Egegik, and elsewhere. Ever since that time, the salmon industry has been by far the dominant industry Bristol Bay, and for more than a century at least one cannery has been in operation along the Naknek River. The presence of this industry, not surprisingly, has had a tangible effect on the health of the salmon populations that have returned each year to the lakes and streams in Katmai National Park and Preserve.

After the turn of the century, Native participation in the area's commercial fishing industry began to increase. Two reasons account for the change: first, canneries offered the lure of a cash economy, and second, Congressional anti-immigration laws (such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904)
forced cannery interests to look elsewhere for labor. By June 1912, therefore, it was noted that “a
goodly proportion of the working force” at the Naknek salmon packing plant “evidently came from
[the Native village of] Savonoski on the upper Naknek River drainage.”

Natives living on the Shelikof Strait side of the Alaska Peninsula after the turn of the century were
also tied to the commercial fishing industry. Kaflia Bay, just south of Kukak Bay, became the site of
a seasonal saltery and store, and in response, Katmai and Douglas villagers flocked to the site and
beach-seined for salmon. The saltery was apparently so successful that by 1912, many local resi-
dents (in the words of archeologist Don Dumond) “were actually in the informal process of being
relocated at Kaflia Bay.”[7] The eruption of Novarupta in June 1912, however, abruptly ended that
activity; ash from the volcano buried Kaflia Bay village to a depth of three feet on the level and
forced all the villagers to flee.[8]

Clam and Salmon Canneries on Shelikof Strait, 1921-1951

Several years later, a new industry—clam processing—began to emerge as a significant industry
along the eastern coastline of the park. The commercial production of clams, predictably, had
begun in southeastern Alaska; then, in 1916, the Cordova area witnessed the territory’s first large-
scale clam cannery. Just three years later, the Surf Packing Company built a cannery at Snug Harbor
on the southwest side of Chisik Island. This site was north of Katmai, and was just east of Lake
Clark National Park.). The Snug Harbor facility was a salmon cannery, but it made an experimental
pack of clams. It continued clam production the following year. In 1921, still harvesting salmon as
its primary income stream, the company also harvested an estimated $9,940 in clams; that total
comprised the entire Alaskan pack of canned clams that year. This combination of clam and
salmon canning was to characterize fisheries operations along the west side of Cook Inlet (and
adjacent Shelikof Strait) for the next thirty years.[9]

In 1922, the Kamishak Canning Company brought the industry closer to the park when it built a
salmon cannery at Kamishak Bay. It put up only one pack, however, and was not used again.

A year later, the Hemrich Packing Company opened a clam-canning operation at Kukak Bay. The
year after it opened, it also went into business as a salmon cannery. In 1925, the company leased its
facility to the Seashore Packing Company, which put up a pack for the next three years. The
Hemrich Packing Company operated the salmon and clam cannery on its own in 1928, but leased it
again to the Seashore Packing Company for the 1929 through 1931 seasons. In 1932, the Pioneer
Packing Company leased the cannery. The plant was closed for the next two years, but Surf Canner-
ies purchased it processed clams there in 1935 and 1936. By 1936, Kukak Bay had a clam and
salmon cannery appraised at $89,000, while Swikshak Bay (where the clams were harvested) had
“fishing cabins, docks, and other improvements” valued at $2,000.[10] The two sites were abandoned
after the 1936 season. The Kukak Bay facility differed from most of the other canneries in that it
did not employ fish traps as part of its operations.[11]

The salmon that were processed in the various Kukak Bay operations were harvested from the
Shelikof Strait and other nearby areas. The clamming beds, as noted in a 1923 Hemrich Packing
Company brochure, were located at “Swickshak Beach” (Swikshak Bay).[12] These beds were used
intermittently for the remainder of the decade. As time wore on, however, workers discovered that high quality clam habitat could be found along much of the 50-mile stretch of beach between Kukak Bay to Cape Douglas. By 1931, Kashvik Bay was being harvested as well. Hemrich and its lessees were the sole users of the mainland beaches during the 1923-1932 period. When the facilities at Kukak and Swikshak bays closed down, however, a Kodiak Island packer moved in.13

The clamming facilities, and most of the clam beds, were located outside the original (1918) boundaries of the monument. When Katmai’s boundaries were expanded in April 1931, both the canneries and the clamming beaches were absorbed into the monument. Because of an oversight, the language of the 1931 proclamation did not specifically address the rights of existing users. It was not until the mid-1930s that clamming interests discovered the error; a June 1936 presidential proclamation was issued that recognized the rights of all those who had used the land prior to the boundary expansion. Surf’s management intended to follow up on the proclamation by obtaining a patent to its lands. The company’s operations, however, were shut down in September 1936 when a fire swept through and destroyed the Swikshak Bay facilities. The company made no further attempts to patent its properties and, as noted above, appears to have abandoned its interests at both Kukak and Swikshak soon afterwards. By 1941, fire had destroyed the Kukak Bay cannery, and both the wharf and pilings there were found to be “in a bad state of repair.”14

In 1944, the Kodiak-based firm of Kester and Kline operated a clam cannery in Swikshak Bay. The cannery was allowed to operate to supply the U.S. Army. The NPS permitted the operation as a part of its wartime program. That permit remained in force through late 1945.15 The following March 1946, the firm changed its name to the Cape Douglas Canning Corporation (CDCC) and continued harvesting Swikshak Bay clams.16 Late in 1946, CDCC applied for a clam harvesting permit; after some initial hesitation, the NPS issued them a five-year permit, and in 1947 the company harvested both clams and salmon at its Swikshak Bay facility.17
The company, which changed its name to Mainland Fisheries in 1948, relocated its salmon canning operations to Kukak Bay that year. It continued to operate a cannery there until 1951. But it also obtained a permit to a 2.7-acre site on the east bank of Swikshak Lagoon for clam harvesting purposes. At Swikshak Bay, Mainland Fisheries built a 40-foot by 40-foot Quonset hut for a cannery building, placing it on piles on the site of the old Surf Cannery which had been destroyed in the 1936 fire. Mainland also built a 40-foot by 110-foot dock adjacent to the cannery and a 30-foot by 100-foot platform to the rear. A mess hall, store-supply building, and bunkhouses that had not been destroyed in the fire were rehabilitated.

In January 1950 a new company—the Whiz Halferty Cannery Corporation—asked the NPS if it could put clammers’ cabins on the shore of Swikshak Bay. Fourteen months later, over Mainland’s objections, the NPS gave the company a five-year permit to put up clam diggers’ cabins on a five-acre parcel at Swikshak Bay. There is no evidence, however, that the company constructed any cabins there.

**Shelikof Strait Clam Harvesting Activity, 1951-present**

During the early 1950s, clam digging took place at Kaguyak Bay, probably in conjunction with Mainland Fisheries’ Kukak Bay operation. Lowell Sumner, a biologist from NPS’s Region Four office, noted that “the clam diggers sail their fleet of skiffs in here” [to Kaguyak Bay] each summer. The six shacks they occupied comprised the “village” of Kaguyak. Kaguyak, at that time, still boasted a Russian Orthodox church which dated from the pre-1912 era. By 1952, however, little was left of the 20 remaining barabaras where the former residents had lived. By 1965, the church had apparently been burned by clam diggers who had taken up residence in it.

Mainland Fisheries, in 1951, went into receivership and ceased operations. Whiz Halferty remained inactive as well. In June 1954, however, an official of the latter company, now known as Halferty Canning, wrote the NPS and requested that Mainland’s twenty acres of Kukak Bay cannery buildings be added to Halferty’s permit. Assured by company officials that the plant was planning to
operate again, the BLM gave the company a permit to use its facilities at Swikshak Lagoon, Swikshak Bay, and Kukak Bay. The permit was valid from February 1956 until February 1961. It is not known, however, if the company actually harvested clams (or used its facilities) during this period.

On October 15, 1959, Halferty Canneries transferred its clam-harvesting interests to the Alaska Packers Association (APA). In December 1960, the new company requested a new five-year special use permit, and in May 1961, the BLM gave the APA a permit which ran until December 1965. APA cited four frame buildings at Swikshak Lagoon as its headquarters.

The APA was an active clam harvester. During the summer of 1961, the company deployed 76 men to Katmai's beaches and yielded 410,117 pounds of razor clams. The company was probably also active in the monument in 1962, but not afterwards. Where production took place during those two summers is not known. One place it probably occurred was Kasvak Bay, because a contemporary map identifies an Alaska Department of Fish and Game cabin in the area. That cabin was probably used to monitor an ongoing clam harvesting operation.

A 1963 planning report provided this overview of the Katmai coast's clam resources:

Kukak Bay has long been the site of a commercial cannery which sometimes lapses into disuse only to again be reactivated, for such commercial activities are marginal on the Katmai coast, owing primarily to distance and secondly to weather. This particular site is abandoned at present, but a larger cannery at Swikshak Bay is still in operation. This one is only about 5 miles from a major clam digging stretch of bay at Kaguyak.

Little remains of the facilities that were associated with the various commercial clamming operations built in the 1940s or 1950s in Kukak and Swikshak bays. At Kukak Bay, portions of the old cannery on the southeast shore had burned down by 1941. In 1947, however, Alfred Kuehl's photographs show that the mess hall, bunk houses, manager's house, store, oil tank and wharf were clearly intact. By 1953, however, an NPS report recommended that the "old cannery" be destroyed. By the time Superintendent Blinn arrived, the structures were "pretty well collapsed." He advocated their destruction in 1973, but could not raze them until ownership could be determined. They still stood in 1985; the site that year was recommended as a tidewater ranger station. At Swikshak Bay, 1947 photographs show that Cape Douglas's cannery complex contained one or two bunkhouses, a mess hall, and a wharf. As indicated by the APA's application to the BLM, four buildings were still intact in early 1961. By April 1972, however, Katmai personnel deemed them hazardous and unsightly, and they destroyed them all.

Beginning in 1963, concerns about poisonous shellfish led the Alaska Department of Health and Welfare prohibited commercial use of clams, mussels, and similar shellfish taken from all Alaskan beaches. That prohibition remained until 1970. Once that ban was lifted, an active (if minor) clam harvesting industry continued on Katmai's beaches for another fifteen years. As noted below, however, the facilities associated with that industry were both temporary in nature and small in scale.
Katmai's clam industry roared back to life soon after health officials deemed the beaches as healthy again. A major factor contributing to the activity level was that the Swikshak area was one of only three beaches in the state that had been cleared for clam harvesting. By 1971, approximately 200,000 pounds of razor clams were being harvested per year in the monument. The beaches, by this time, had become littered with shacks, wood stoves, debris, and discarded car bodies. In order to prevent the problem from reoccurring, all commercial clam permittees beginning in 1972 were required to erect only temporary shelters at their Swikshak Bay camps and were also required to remove all structures. In 1973, harvesters visited both Swikshak Bay and Kamishak Bay. At the end of the 1973 season two structures remained standing at Kamishak. The first was a cabin used by Alaska Department of Fish and Game personnel who monitored the clamming operations (the cabin was apparently built that same year), and the second was that of a tardy clammer. In order to clean up the accumulated refuse along Katmai's beaches, the monument's superintendent paid one of the clam diggers $10,000 to barge the materials (including the Kamishak clammer's shack) back to Kodiak Island.

Clamming permits issued in the following years contained a proviso prohibiting the construction of beach cabins; harvesters were required to live on a houseboat or barge. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, meanwhile, requested permission to build a permanent structure for its research and...
monitoring operations at Swikshak; this cabin was apparently built sometime during the mid-1970s. Clamming operations during that period were restricted to Swikshak Bay.

By 1977, the monument issued only one permit for clamming operations, to Daniel Konigsberg. The state maintained an active presence that year; it held a permit, valid until 1979, which allowed it to maintain a cabin at Swikshak for purposes of razor clam research. From 1978 to 1981, the only clamming permit was issued to Jesus Briones, of Kodiak, who harvested at Swikshak Bay. Briones and Bruce Swanson, who applied for a joint one-year permit in 1982, were the last legal permittees. In 1985, an illegal clam operation took place at Hallo Bay. The operators were cited, and they left soon afterwards.

**Historic Property Summary and Recommendations**

As the narrative above has suggested, the beaches along Katmai's eastern shoreline have been the site of commercial salmon and clam harvesting for more than three-quarters of a century; many miles of Katmai's coastline have witnessed clam harvesting, and canneries have been located in several bays and lagoons. But both in southwestern Alaska and elsewhere, fish processing facilities have proven temporary, due both to environmental factors and the transient nature of the industry. A brief discussion of specific sites within the present park boundaries follows.

Kaflia Bay was the site of a seasonal saltery and store (AHRS site number XMK-014) in the years leading up to the June 1912 volcanic eruption. Katmai and Douglas villagers camped here during the summer and beach-seined for salmon. The site, however, was buried by volcanic ash and has been uninhabited ever since.

Along the southern shore of Kukak Bay, a salmon and clam cannery (XMK-060) was constructed in early 1923. Operations continued off and on for more than a decade. But the site was abandoned after the 1936 season, and by 1941, fire had partially destroyed the Kukak Bay cannery. Both the wharf and pilings there were found to be “in a bad state of repair” although the mess hall, bunkhouses,
manager's house, store, oil tank and wharf were still intact. A new cannery operation commenced at
the site in 1948 and continued until 1951, and by the early 1970s the structures were "pretty well
collapsed." A 1989 survey noted remains of several collapsed and partially standing buildings
including the cannery facility (with plank flooring, ceiling and roof beams, and corrugated tin
roofing), a possible bunkhouse (a long, narrow building with a row of rooms from end to end), and
numerous historical artifacts such as steamers and gear mechanisms, a bed frame and a possible
stove with chimney. Due to the lack of structural integrity at the site, a historical archeology survey
is recommended.

At Swikshak Bay, clam harvesting and both salmon and clam processing has taken place on the
southeastern shore of Swikshak Lagoon. Clams were harvested there throughout the mid- to late
1920s, and during the 1930s, a salmon cannery was in operation. A September 1936 fire swept
through and partially destroyed some of the Swikshak Bay facilities, although a mess hall, store-
supply building, and bunkhouses survived the blaze. Cape Douglas Canning Corporation, which
changed its name to Mainland Fisheries in 1948, operated the Swikshak cannery site (AFG-109).
The company processed clams and later salmon and began operating on the same site in 1944. In
the late 1940s a Quonset hut and other improvements were added at the site. In early 1961, four
buildings at the site were still intact. By April 1972, however, NPS personnel deemed them hazard­
ous and unsightly, and they destroyed all remaining standing structures. A 1989 survey, however,
noted historic remains including a building foundation, burned timbers, concrete slabs, bottle glass
and cans, a Jeep and two flatbed trucks. Due to the lack of structural integrity at the site, a historical
archeology survey is recommended.

Katmai's coastline has had a number of other structures associated with fish processing, but
most were temporary or too recent to be considered for nomination to the National Register of
Historic Places. Perhaps a typical one was a small shack located along the northern shore of Kukak
Bay in T21S, R31W, Sec. 36, NE\4. An NPS report compiled in the late 1960s described a "one
room cabin ... erected probably by fishermen [and] constructed of plywood and gasoline cans." A
ranger report written in 1984 included a photograph of the site and gave this description: "A
wooden frame supports sheet metal walls and roof and inside an old wooden box, bed springs, and
associated garbage remains." Five years later, historical archeologist Ty Dilliplane visited the site,
calling it the "Point Jane Hut" (XMK-062). He described it as "a small possible hunter's hut, mea­
suring roughly 9' x 7' ... the structure has a corrugated tin roof, plywood walls, wire nails, and
wooden flooring. The structure also has a small window and a doorway to the right of the window.
A single-size bed frame was found inside, along with a Wein Consolidated stub." (This last item may
help date the cabin, inasmuch as Wein Consolidated Airlines operated only from 1968 to 1973.)
Endnotes


9 Unrau, *Lake Clark* 155, 185; MacDonald, “Chronological History,” 1951, 77.

10 James McBurney (Surf Canneries) to Harold Ickes, February 4, 1936, in “General 1930-38” file, KNM Box 1, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC.


14 Robert F. Griggs to Ernest W. Sawyer, November 22, 1930, in National Geographic Society Collection; Hillory A. Tolson (Acting Director NPS) to Director USF&WS, February 24, 1944, in RG 79, Box 313, “Katmai - Concessions” file, NARA SB; Herbert Maier (Acting RD/R4) to Director NPS, December 14, 1949, in “Katmai-Permits” file, Box 313, RG 79, NARA SB; Fred W. Johnson (BLM) to Director NPS, August 28, 1946, in File 601, KNM Box 2, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC; A. C. Kinsley (USDI Division of Investigations) to Dale B. Whiteside, August 11, 1941, in File 602, Box 311, Entry 7, NARA SB.

15 Frank L. Beals (Under Refuge Manager, Alaska Game Commission, Fish and Wildlife Service) to Herbert Maier, NPS, November 1, 1944, in “General 1930-38” file, KNM Box 1, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC; Hillory A. Tolson (Acting Director, NPS) to Mr. Crouch, F&WS and Clinton H. Hartsstrom, April 30, 1945, in “Katmai-Permits” File, Box 313, RG 79, NARA SB.

16 Hillory A. Tolson to Jones, March 27, 1946; Tolson to Clinton H. Hartson, April 9, 1946, at KATM.

17 Tolson to Jones, March 27, 1946; Warner W. Gardner (Assistant Secretary of the Interior) to Director NPS, December 12, 1946; Cape Douglas Canning Corporation to Acting Director, NPS, December 21, 1946; Warner W. Gardner, “Permit,” January 28, 1947; all in File N1423 (“Fish, 1946-1959”), KATM; also see File 40-10 (1933-52), RG 101, ASA.


19 Walter A. Fuhrer to Julius Krug, September 2, 1948, in “Katmai-Concessions” folder, Box 313, RG 79, NARA SB.

20 Hillory A. Tolson (Acting Director NPS) to E. L. Bartlett, February 15, 1950; G. P. Halferty (Whiz Halferty Canneries, Inc.) to E. L. Bartlett, February 23, 1951; both in Bartlett Collection; Dale E. Doty (Asst. Sec. of Interior) to G. P. Halferty, March 16, 1951, in Item 3, Breedlove, 1969; MacDonald, “Chronological History of Salmon Canneries in Central Alaska,” 83. Trade and Manufacturing Site Permit number 055515 was listed as BLM serial number ANC 018180.

21 Lowell Sumner, “Magnificent Katmai,” *Sierra Club Bulletin 37* (December 1952), 39; Darrell L. Coe, “Katmai National Monument,” *National Parks Magazine 40* (June 1966), 6; Paul Schumacher (Regional Archaeologist, WRO) to Supt. MOMC, July 30, 1965, in File A2623, Ranger Patrol Reports, 1965-69, DENA. William C. King, of Kodiak, may also have been an active Katmai clam digger in 1950. King to A.C. Kuehl, March 13, 1950, in File 208, Box 311, KNM, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA SB.

22 BLM Permit 032198, at BLM State Office, Anchorage.


Jack Benson (Kodiak AGC agent), notes on USGS, “Kamishak Bay-Katmai Region” (map), 1923, in File 601; also File 503 (photographs); both in KNM Box 2, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC.


HFC photo; SAR, 1973, 4; Melanie Neuman and Kim Heacox, Katmai National Park and Preserve, Katmai Coast Field Season Report 1985, 54. On Kukak Bay’s north shore was also found a one-room cabin constructed of plywood and gasoline cans. The cabin was thought to have been constructed “by unknown individuals, probably fishermen.” (It was probably unrelated to the old cannery.) By 1969, NPS personnel had recommended that the eyesore be destroyed and removed. What has become of it is unknown; it may have burned down at about the time of the 1969 report. Item #17, “Inventory of Backcountry Facilities and Structures,” in Breedlove, 1969. Scattered reports note that many crude structures have been built by fishermen in recent years. NPS personnel, when they encounter them, have torn most of them down.


Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.

Wallace H. Noerenberg (Commissioner, Dept. of Fish and Game) to Gov. William A. Egan, November 1, 1971, in File NR/1-6, Series 88, RG 01, ASA; SAR, 1972, 2.

Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.

SAR, 1974, 2; Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.


SAR (KATM), 1982; “Clam Digging” file, KATM; Morris interview, November 2, 1989.

40 Craig Breedlove, “Inventory of Backcountry Facilities and Structures,” in Preliminary Draft, Basic Data, Advance Master Plan/Wilderness Research, Katmai National Monument, Shelikof Strait-King Salmon, Alaska (Anchorage, NPS), June 1969; Stroud and Fuller, 1984, 17; AHRS Site Form XMK-062.
TRAPPING AND OTHER SUBSISTENCE LIFEWAYS

In many parts of Alaska during the early twentieth century, trapping was an important source of income for thousands of rural residents. The area in and around present-day Katmai National Park and Preserve was similar to much of the rest of Alaska in supporting these activities. From the 1920s through the 1940s, a number of individuals trapped in the rich fur-bearing Katmai country in the winter and worked as salmon fishermen at various Bristol Bay canneries during the summer.

To support their trapping lifestyle, these hardy, self-reliant individuals built cabins, ancillary structures, and traplines near lakes and rivers. Most of this construction took place in the northern and western portions of today's park. A 1931 expansion of the monument boundaries brought the trappers' way of life into conflict with the National Park Service's natural resource protection policies. This action eventually brought an end to the Katmai trappers' lifeway, and little trapping activity has taken place during the past fifty years. Although the time in which they were active was relatively brief, trappers were able to develop almost fifty cabins or cabin complexes within the present park and preserve boundaries. But evidence of their activity has been fleeting, and NPS cultural resources personnel have thus far identified in the field fewer than twenty of those sites.

Historical Trapping Patterns

Trapping and hunting in Katmai region has been traced back to prehistoric times, and during the historic period, trapping doubtless formed an integral part of the subsistence lifestyle of Katmai, Douglas, Savonoski, Kukak, and other area communities. (Some residents of those communities lived elsewhere during the summer; at the Brooks River mouth, for example, some Savonoski residents had long had a fish camp to take advantage of the remarkable salmon run.) Hunting, trapping, and fishing patterns in the Katmai region were dramatically altered by the June 1912 volcanic eruption. All settlements and camps were subsequently abandoned. Most residents no longer used monument resources, but those who were relocated to New Savonoski may have
eventually drifted back into the monument and once again carried elements of their subsistence lifestyle. Other local residents, such as those from Naknek, never stopped coming to Katmai in order to participate in long-established traditional activities.

Most of the early National Geographic Society expeditions to Katmai approached the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes from Shelikhof Strait, and in so doing they avoided the prime trapping country west of the Aleutian Range. But in 1919, an expedition visited the newly-designated monument from the west, and on that trip, participants identified two rude trappers' cabins. One belonged to a man named Buckley at “Island Bay” near the portage to Lake Grosvenor, while the other cabin, belonging to “Mr. Grant,” was located on the portage between Naknek and Brooks lakes.1 (Alex Grant may have been the man being referred to; in 1918, Grant discovered gold along American Creek.) The expedition members that year built a log cabin at the head of Naknek Lake to store goods during their trek to the volcanic area. That cabin remained for more than twenty years; more than a decade later, it was used by at least one trapper.

Before long an increasing number of men, primarily local residents, were attracted to the Katmai area’s trapping possibilities. As noted in chapter 9, fur prices began to rise during and shortly after World War I, and the Katmai lake country—particularly the country surrounding Naknek and Brooks lakes—promised high trapping yields; as longtime Naknek resident Melvin Monsen noted, “In the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, fur trapping was a more lucrative activity than was commercial salmon fishing in Bristol Bay waters.”2 By 1925, Stephen M. Scott had relocated to the area just south of Brooks River to commence trapping, and during the next six years four additional men—Verner Eckman, Roy Fure, John Hartzell, and John Monsen—also became actively engaged in the trade.3 These men, all recently arrived immigrants, built one or more cabins as base camps for their itinerant lifestyle. These men typically trapped only during the seven- to eight-month winter when the pelts (commonly beaver and fox) were in peak condition. They would then return to Naknek. They would sell their furs at the R. Davey General Store,4 and after the area’s canneries reopened, they would spend the summer working as commercial fishermen. (Scott, in fact, was known as “Portland Packer Scotty” because he was affiliated with the Alaska Portland Packers cannery, which operated along the Naknek River from 1919 to 1933.5)
In April 1931, a proclamation signed by President Herbert Hoover more than doubled the size of Katmai National Monument. The proclamation stated that the expansion was needed to protect "features of historical and scientific interest and for the protection of the brown bear, moose, and other wild animals." The monument, at that time, had almost no visitation; thus the proclamation had no immediate effect on the monument's megafauna populations. The monument's new boundaries were moved sufficiently far west that each of the five trappers noted above were included. But they and other Naknek residents had scant knowledge of the monument expansion, and conditions continued as before.

High fur prices, and a continuing, active cannery presence, induced other local residents to trap in the Naknek Lake country. In the next five years, at least nine new trappers became established. Those nine included Gunnar Berggren, Paul Chukan, Alfred Cooper,
Harry Featherstone, John “Frenchy” Fournier, Sigurd Lundgren, Richard Mitchell, Martin Monsen, and a man named Karvonen. These men were both Natives and non-Natives, and both recent and long-term U.S. residents. Most if not all were Bristol Bay residents who divided their year between the trap lines and the canneries.6

Trappers Leave the Monument

The trappers’ lifestyle became endangered, however, beginning in 1936. Early that year an Alaska Game Commission (AGC) agent out of Dillingham, Hosee R. Sarber, visited Naknek and was surprised to find that “quite a number of trappers” were operating in the Naknek Lake-Lake Grosvenor country, most of whom were unaware that they were doing so within a national monument. Spurred on by that discovery, the AGC began patrolling the monument’s Shelikof Strait coastline and found “several violators operating in and adjacent to the park.” Word of the violations eventually found its way to NPS Director Arno Cammerer, but neither he nor anyone else could react to the problem until the Mount McKinley Superintendent agreed to dispatch a ranger to the area. But the visit was just a one-day flyover, and the trapping problem remained. As additional reports of violations continued to pour in, so the NPS asked the General Land Office to look into the matter. In January 1938, investigator A. C. Kinsley undertook the task. He visited Naknek that July and completed his report the following January. Kinsley, giving the trappers the benefit of the doubt, said that all those who had settled into the area prior to the 1931 proclamation had the legal right to continue living in the monument, even though they had never filed for legal rights to the land. But in an ironic twist, they were prohibited from trapping because that activity violated NPS regulations. Those who had entered the monument after the proclamation had no legal basis to either live or trap in the monument.7

When Supt. Frank Been and biologist Victor Cahalane visited the monument in the summer of 1940, they were pleased to discover no signs of active trapping; on the contrary, they saw several stripped cabins and abandoned caches. The trappers had apparently moved out of the Bristol Bay side of the monument. But as Cahalane soon discovered, the situation was different along Shelikof Strait. The biologist, along with an AGC agent, spent several days patrolling the coastline. He made no specific mention of active trappers; he did note, however, that it was “perfectly feasible for poachers to base their operations on any one of the numerous [offshore] islands … while they may trap on the mainland of the monument with greatly enhanced chances of escaping detection.” Cahalane, hoping to separate the legitimate fox farmers from any illegal trappers that might be in the area, suggested that the monument’s boundary be extended two miles east into Shelikof Strait. But before the agency finalized its recommendation, it drafted the GLO’s A. C. Kinsley to study the situation. Kinsley got the job in April 1941, and before long he discerned that only two men had any legal claims to the offshore islands: Earl Butler, whose Kiukpalik Island fox farm was legitimate (though of marginal economic benefit), and John A. Smith, who had acquired no foxes and otherwise seemed uninterested in fulfilling his fur farm lease. Kinsley, who relied for his information on visits by AGC agents, reported that Smith, under the guise of a fox farmer, was illegally trapping along the Shelikof Strait coastline. As a result of that investigation, Smith lost his fur farm lease in April 1942, and on August 4 of that year, President Franklin Roosevelt added all of the offshore islands to the monument. Those actions eliminated the trapping problem along the monument’s eastern shoreline.8
Meanwhile, officials were beginning to discover that in the country west of the Aleutian Range, the quashing of trapping had been only temporary. With the onset of World War II and the resulting reduction in NPS funding, agency personnel had virtually no opportunity to see the monument for another five years, and in early 1947, a Fish and Wildlife Service agent informed the NPS that four men—one of whom was longtime trapper Stephen M. Scott—were living and trapping inside of the monument. The F&WS agent, with the NPS’s blessing, arrested all four of the trappers, who pleaded their innocence based on their lack of knowledge of the monument’s boundaries. All were released, but the following year additional trappers—Kirk Adkinson, Henry Nelson, and Jim Marlette—were spotted and arrested. Adkinson, furthermore, was convicted and incarcerated. When an F&WS agent returned in 1949, trapping was as active as in previous years, and he found one cabin that had been extensively used for trapping. But the activity was clearly winding down.

NPS officials have noted few problems with illegal trapping since 1950, when they established an on-site management presence at Brooks Camp.

The monument, which was managed on a bare-bones budget until the late 1960s, may well have hosted illegal trapping activity from time to time, although there was little economic incentive to harvest furs during this period. During the 1970s, a resurgence of fur harvest took place throughout Alaska, fueled both by rising prices and a newly-emerging “return to the land” syndrome; historian Melody Grauman notes that the latter condition resulted “from an environmentally conscious society and a recognition of [the] lost values of self-sufficiency and rugged individualism.” One person, in pursuit of those values, settled just outside of the monument and spent most of the decade trapping in the American Creek watershed. But when President Carter’s 1978 proclamation incorporated huge new areas into the National Park Service system, more than a million acres on the margins of “old” Katmai National Monument were closed to trapping, and the recently-established trapper was obliged to leave. Carter’s proclamation and the subsequent passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act meant, quixotically, that trapping would be prohibited in both the old (pre-1978) and new portions of Katmai National Park; the activity could continue, however, in the newly-designated Katmai National Preserve. Since 1950, few if any illegal trappers have operated in the park; thus trapping has had few significant impacts on park resources.
As the above discussion has suggested, trapping activity took place in many parts of the present-day park and was prevalent for many years, particularly between 1925 and 1940. Perhaps the best known of these is Fure’s Cabin complex, built by Roy Fure in 1926, which in 1985 was entered onto the National Register of Historic Places. In recognition of its historic value, the NPS restored the cabin in 1987-88 and the remainder of the complex in 1993-94. Almost all of the remaining cabins, however, have severely deteriorated, and the site of many former trapping cabins has not yet been relocated. Because trapping was centered on three geographical loci, the various trapping sites will be discussed in that context.

**Trapping Along the Shelikof Strait Coastline**

1) **Kamishak River Cabin:** At or near the mouth of the Kamishak River is a cabin site. Evidence of the site was published in a July 1929 newspaper article, which mentioned that two brothers from the Iliamna country, Walter and Ole Wassenkari, would “throw out trap lines” in the vicinity of Kamishak Bay that winter. Ole Wassenkari, the article noted, would live “in the cabin at the Big Kamashak [i.e., Kamishak] River.” In his later years, Mr. Wassenkari (1899-1984) lived along Ole Creek (a tributary of the Kvichak River) just west of Iliamna Lake; he worked as both a “Bristol Bay fisherman and a Kvichak-Iliamna trapper.” The cabin was probably used for trapping for a short time, if at all. The specific location of the cabin is not known, and nothing is known of the cabin’s condition. As has been noted in Chapter 6, there was a flurry of oil-lease activity along Kamishak Bay and the Kamishak River in the early 1920s; the cabin may have been built as a result of that activity.

2) **Cape Douglas Cabin:** On the northwest side of the Cape Douglas headland is located the ruins of a sod and plank cabin. Nearby is a storage cache or shed, built of upright wooden planks, along with a possible second cache. The house ruin consists of a 4 x 5-meter rectangle of low sod walls banked against vertical planks, with stumps of upright posts. Loose, horizontal planks from the roof or walls of the house are scattered across the foundation and outside. The boards contain drawn wire nails. A small cast iron stove with a square flue sits inside the house. The complex dates from the 1940s or 1950s; who built the structures, or why, is unknown. Archeologists discovered the site in 1994; it is now registered as AHRS Site No. AFG-199.

3) **Chiniak Lagoon Cabin:** George Stroud and Lynn Fuller, in their 1984 report, noted that one map of the area showed “a cabin on the peninsula one mile northwest of Cape Chiniak.” The two did not visit the cabin, however, and no other records about the cabin are known to exist. Should remains of the cabin still exist, they are probably located near the end of the spit north of the lagoon mouth. Who built the cabin, or why, is unknown.

4) **Hallo Bay Cabin #1:** A cabin was built along the western shoreline of Hallo Bay, approximately 1 mile south of where the Ninagiak River debouches into the bay. Who built the cabin, or why, is unknown. In June 1976, park interpreter Carolyn Elder visited and photographed the cabin, which was located in an alder patch. She also learned during an interview in Kodiak that “a gentleman by the name of Gene Weaver” had the cabin; his probable residence was a community on Kodiak Island. The cabin photo is located in the park collection.
List of Trapping Cabins

Shelikof Strait Coastline:
1) Kamishak River Cabin
2) Cape Douglas Cabin
3) Chiniak Lagoon Cabin
4) Hallo Bay Cabin #1
5) Hallo Bay Cabin #2
6) Kukak Bay Cabin
7) Kulik Bay Fish Camp
8) Takli Island Trapping Complex
9) Kashvik Bay Cabins

Naknek River Basin:
10) Monsen Cabin Complex
11) Featberstone Cabins
12) Griggs-Mitchell Cabin
13) Chukan's Research Bay Cabin
14) Scott-Furnier Cabin Complex
15) Grant Cabin
16) Melgenak Cabin Complex
17) Angasan Cabin
18) Osberg-Lundgren Cabins
19) Chukan's Naknek Lake Cabins
20) Shapsnikoff Cabin Complex
21) Berggren Cabins
22) Eckman Cabins
23) Monsen Line Cabin
24) Fure's Bay of Islands Complex
25) Buckley Cabin
26) Hartrell's Lake Coville Cabin
27) Fure Line Cabin
28) Hartrell-Fure Cabin Complex
29) Lake Grosvenor Cabin

Alagnak River Basin:
30) Marlette Cabin
31) Neilsen Cabin
32) Murray Cabin
33) Agate Point Tent-Cabin Complex
34) Hammersly Cabin Complex
35) Peterson Cabin
36) Guide Camp Cabin
37) Apokedak Cabin Complex
38) Estrada Cabin Complex
39) Andrew Cabin Complex
40) Lower Alagnak River Cabin Complex
5) **Hallo Bay Cabin #2**: A cabin was built on the south side of Hallo Bay. The location of the "old cabin" has been variously described as being "1/2 mile from beach" and simply "south side Hallo Bay." These two photo captions probably describe the same cabin; if so, its probable location is on a small rise just south of a large pond in T20S, R29W, Section 34, SE 1/4. Who built the cabin, or why, is unknown. Park interpreter Carolyn Elder, in 1976, learned that Gene Weaver had both this and the other Hallo Bay cabin. In May 1978, ranger Rollie Ostermick visited and photographed the cabin. Two cabin photos with that date are located in the park collection.17

6) **Kukak Bay Cabin**: As part of a series of tape recordings she made during the mid-1970s, Carolyn Elder learned that Jake Amuknuk had a cabin at the head of the bay. Mike Tollefson's 1977 report notes that the man hailed from Kodiak.18 No information is available about the cabin's location, history, or condition.

7) **Kuliak Bay Fish Camp**: As part of his operation, John A. Smith (see below) had a fish camp just north of Kuliak Bay, at the head of the peninsula just south of Cape Gull. It was probably active in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Smith probably never constructed more than a tent and a series of fish racks at this site.19

8) **Takli Island Trapping Complex**: As noted in chapter 9, federal authorities administered this site (AHRS site number XMK-073) as a fox farm. In actuality, however, the only known site occupant used the complex as an illegal trapping headquarters. Fur farm leases were taken out for the island in December 1928 and July 1931, but neither act was followed up by on-site settlement. Then, in 1937, John A. Smith applied for a fur farm lease. Smith soon built a cabin and two caches on the island's northeastern quadrant, and in 1939 his lease was approved. But instead of establishing a fur farm, he illegally hunted mink, marten, beaver, and fox within Katmai National Monument. As a result, he lost his lease in May 1942. Eleven years later, an NPS aerial photo showed a large cabin, a smaller cabin or shed, and a shed built into the hillside; all were probably erected by Smith during his five-year tenure on the island. These structures deteriorated over the years; they were still standing during the early 1970s, but by 1991 all had collapsed. It is recommended that NPS cultural resource personnel conduct a survey of the site's historical archeology.20

9) **Kashvik Bay Cabins**: In 1917, a National Geographic Society group stopped at Kashvik Bay as part of a Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes expedition. Photographs taken from that trip show two cabins in the bay: a "prospector sod house" and a "cabin on Moose Creek." The locations for both structures are indefinite, inasmuch as the sod house was not further identified and the name Moose Creek is not an official name for any watercourses in the bay's drainage. The only suggestion regarding who built them is found in Mike Tollefson's 1977 letter in which he noted that "Freddie Grindell's father" had cabins at Kashvik and other bays along the Shelikof Strait coastline; he trapped foxes in the vicinity of those bays (according to his son) in the 1920s and 1930s.21 Perhaps the Moose Creek cabin was used for trapping, while the "prospector sod house" was used in conjunction with the Mason brothers' gold extraction activities along Lonesome Pine Creek, near Cape Kubugakli. (See Chapter 6.)
Trapping in the Naknek River Drainage

10) Monsen Cabin Complex: John M. Monsen, a part-Native resident locally known as “Johnny,” was born about 1904. He moved into the Katmai country to trap in either 1926 or 1930 and reportedly hunted and explored the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes with Harry Featherstone during this period. Who built his longtime cabin at the east end of Iliuk Arm is uncertain; once source says that John “Frenchy” Furnier built it and lived there before Monsen moved in, while another source says that he, his brother Martin, and Alfred Cooper built it. Throughout the 1930s he resided at his cabin for seven months (August through March) each year. Over the years, he built a complex that included a cabin, fish house, storeroom, and bathhouse.

There is some dispute, however, about both the location and other specifics of Monsen's cabin complex. A. C. Kinsley, the Interior Department investigator, wrote that his four-structure cabin complex (as specified above) was located at the south bank of the mouth of the Savonoski River and that his cabin was 14’ x 20’. (Kinsley did not include Featherstone or his cabin in his report. He erroneously states that John Monsen and Martin Monsen were alternate names for the same person; Martin Sr., in fact, was John's father, and Martin Jr. was his brother.) But Frank Been, who visited the site in September 1940, clearly mentioned that Monsen's headquarters was on the north side of Iliuk Arm, approximately 1 1/2 miles northwest of the Savonoski River mouth. He further stated that the cabin's dimensions were 10’ x 30’—clearly different from what Kinsley had written. Been noted that Monsen's cabin was constructed of logs and had a tin roof; it was in good condition and showed active usage, although the tenant was absent. Been noted that Monsen's complex had four (not three) outbuildings and caches, all of which were in fair shape. A short distance from the cabin were salmon drying racks, Been observed.
Perhaps the discrepancy in the description of the two camps can be addressed by evaluating the authenticity of the two source materials. Kinsley, unlike Been, did not visit the site but relied on others for his information, and Been had the further advantage of being shown the site by a local (and presumably knowledgeable) fisheries agent. One plausible scenario, therefore, is that the camp that Kinsley described as being Monsen’s was, in fact, Featherstone’s. This scenario, including Kinsley’s description of “Monsen” having a remote line cabin, is consistent with other information that has been compiled about Featherstone.

Monsen, a dedicated trapper, was slow to leave the monument. Although he clearly knew that trapping was illegal, he appears to have remained at his cabin until March 1940, when Alaska Game Commission warden Carlos Carson arrested him. (His father, Martin Monsen, and fellow trapper Alfred Cooper were arrested at the same time.) When Been arrived in early September 1940, he noted that the cabin “showed active usage although the tenant was absent.” But when he returned two weeks later, he discovered to his surprise that “the cabin and premises had been stripped of everything of value.” Been, conversing with his pilot about the matter, mentioned that Carson, when he arrested him six months earlier, had ordered Monsen to “give up his cabin” but that other priorities had intervened in the meantime. Been noted that Monsen had stripped the cabin on or about September 15th.

After leaving his cabin, Monsen joined Mike Shapsnikoff at his cabin on the upper King Salmon Creek for awhile. But by 1950, he was living in Naknek, lobbying to have the monument opened to trapping. He may, for a time, have trapped out of a cabin at the mouth of Headwaters Creek, at the southwestern end of Lake Brooks (see Ostberg-Lundren Cabin). Monsen died in 1955.

What became of the cabin is uncertain. Government biologist Victor Cahalane has said that Monsen “partly wrecked” his cabin shortly after abandoning it. Naknek resident Elmer Harrop, testifying in 1983, stated that “Johnny Monsen had a cabin toward the head of Naknek Lake which was destroyed” and implied that personnel from either Northern Consolidated Airlines or the NPS were responsible. But the cabin was apparently still standing as late as the 1970s, because NPS personnel during this period located it and removed a number of Monsen’s books to the monument museum. The cabin’s present condition is unknown.

11) Featherstone Cabins: Nothing is known of Harry Featherstone prior to 1926, but it may be surmised that he had become familiar with the Katmai country and the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes by that date. Early that year (if his residency application is to be believed) he began building a cabin along the north side of Naknek Lake’s Iliuk Arm. In May of that year, he and

Both Harry Featherstone (left) and Roy Fure trapped in the monument during the 1930s. Photograph taken in 1923 by Alyce C. Anderson, a Naknek teacher. Alyce C. Anderson, Collection, LACL, courtesy of Theodore W. Anderson.
building a cabin along the north side of Naknek Lake’s Iliuk Arm. In May of that year, he and Roy Fure guided schoolteacher Alyce E. Anderson from Naknek to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and back; along the way, the party stopped at Featherstone’s completed cabin, which Anderson photographed. He apparently continued to trap in the area for another decade, expanding his operations during that time.

In 1936, Alaska Game Commission agent Homer Jewell noted that of the trappers who were operating inside of the newly-expanded monument, “Weatherspoon” [i.e., Featherstone] was “the most aggressive. Our information shows that [he] has several trapping cabins at or near the head of the Naknek Lakes located just outside the old [1918] boundary lines of the Park.” Featherstone was known to officials for two other actions as well. First, he had decorated his cabin with 35 carved wooden masks that he had removed from beneath a sheltered overhanging cliff near Old Savonoski. Second, it was reported that he had constructed a platform near the mouth of a salmon spawning stream on Naknek Lake from which he would shoot brown bears; he sold the bear hides to Bristol Bay fishermen to cover themselves while resting on their fishing boats.

Featherstone apparently abandoned his cabin soon after 1936, because he is not noted in the 1938-39 Kinsley investigation. Unfortunately, a specific location was not described for any of Featherstone’s cabins; Jewell merely noted (as shown above) that his various cabins were located “at or near the head of the Naknek Lakes,” and none were identified on contemporary maps. The better-known Monsen cabin is located in the same general area, but inasmuch as both were simultaneously active, and because they were not known to be partners, it is highly doubtful that the two men occupied the same cabin. (Note: see “John Monsen Cabin Complex” above for further clarification.) The location of all of Featherstone’s cabins is unknown today; the conditions of those cabins are thus unknown, though they are in all probability in a collapsed condition.

12) Griggs-Mitchell Cabin: In 1919, Robert Griggs led his fourth National Geographic Society expedition to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Most of the group accessed the valley by way of Shelikof Strait and Katmai Pass, but four expedition members arrived at the east end of Iliuk Arm by circling around the Alaska Peninsula and ascending Naknek River. As part of that trip, the expedition established a base camp near the mouth of the Ukak River. As numerous photos taken that year show, it was primarily a tent camp, but expedition members also constructed one cabin. Its dimensions, according to varying sources, were either 13’ x 16’ or 14’ x 16’. Frank Been, who visited the site in September 1940, called it “a tight cabin of spruce logs.” He wrote that “it was nicely situated in shelter of high sand dune and close to lake shore. Its size and condition make it practical for reconditioning and it will serve excellently as a base camp. It is quite a fortunate facility.” He did not indicate whether the cabin was east or west of the Ukak River mouth, but inasmuch as a trail led from the cabin to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, it was probably located just west of the river mouth. An NGS map drawn from the 1916-19 expeditions suggests that this “hut” was located approximately 1 1/2 miles west of the river mouth.

The cabin was probably unused between 1919 and 1935. That October, 30-year-old Richard Mitchell moved into the cabin in order to trap. He remained there for only three months, however, and did not return. By 1939, Mitchell was living in Snag Point, near Dillingham.

The cabin was a popular destination of later explorers. Victor Cahalane, who accompanied Been in 1940, told Been that the cabin was “close to the beach” and “in a good state of preservation.” J. C. Roehm, who visited the following year, indicated that the cabin was uninhabited; the trail between cabin and the upper Ukak River valley was grown up and “cannot be followed with any
great degree of success.” Grant Pearson, a 1945 visitor, injected a worrisome note when he wrote, “Near the mouth of the Ukak River we located a log cabin with a tin roof, but as the river had cut in the timber and streams were flowing on both sides, it looked as if the cabin might be washed out by the river.” In 1954, geologist G. Donald Eberlein made an area reconnaissance; his description of the cabin, however, suggests that he did not make a site visit.¹²

So far as is known, no one in recent years has visited the cabin. Its exact location is not known, and its condition cannot be evaluated.

13) **Chukan’s Research Bay Cabin:** Paul Chukan, a Native American, was born in Naknek on July 5, 1901. In 1933, Chukan used a cabin located on the west side of Research Bay, at a stream mouth; it is not known if he built the cabin. In a questionnaire he filled out in the late 1930s, Chukan noted that he used the cabin only once, but others apparently used it as well because Frank Been, during his 1940 visit, noted that the cabin “showed evidence of recent use but it did not appear to be used as a year round habitation. Perhaps the occupant was a trapper, hunter, or fisherman.” NPS personnel during the 1970s were able to locate the cabin and take photographs of it. Its condition in recent years is unknown.³³

14) **Scott’s Cabin Complex:** Stephen M. Scott was born in Australia about 1883. It is not known when he arrived either in the United States or in the Naknek area, but it is probable that during the early half of the 1920s he became affiliated with the Alaska Portland Packers cannery, which operated along the Naknek River. (He soon earned the nickname “Portland Packer Scotty.”) Then, in August 1925, Scott moved into the lake country and settled down midway between Naknek and Brooks lakes, just south of Brooks River. Before long he had erected an 11 1/2’ x 13’ cabin and two caches: one 8’ x 10’, the other 6’ x 8’. Based on those improvements he recorded a claim to the site in either 1929 or 1930.

In 1936, Scott—still an alien—learned that his trapping operations were illegal because of the westward extension of the monument boundaries. He responded by firing off a letter to
monument’s trappers had to be evicted. Compensation was warranted, Scott pointed out, because “I leave a full year’s supply of provisions ahead every year … equipment costs quite a large sum to get in there and [an even] larger expense to move back to salt water.” Dimond, however, was unable to help. Kinsley’s investigation, which began two years later, determined that Scott (and other pre-1931 trappers) had the legal right to live in the monument, but they were prohibited from trapping because NPS regulations forbade it.

By 1939, therefore, Scott was well aware that his activities were illegal. Scott, however, responded by acquiring a partner: longtime area resident (and fellow non-citizen) John “Frenchy” Furnier. Perhaps in response to that partner, several additional feet were added on to the cabin.

In mid-May 1940, Alaska Game Commission agent Carlos Carson visited the cabin, apprehended the pair, and told them that it was time to abandon their operation. Carson noted that the two men received the news differently: “Furnier wanted to release the skins [and told] Scott that he knew sooner or later they would get into trouble in the park. But Scott is an old offender and would not hear of it.” Carson confiscated a total of 61 skins, which included lynx, wolverine, mink, otter, fox, and beaver; he also confiscated 42 fresh pairs of beaver castors. (Castors come from a beaver’s perineal glands and are used in perfumes and perhaps for other purposes as well.) Scott and Furnier left, though grudgingly; they did not, however, take their equipment and personal belongings with them.

Frank Been, in September 1940, gave an extensive description of the site: “We came upon a cabin with 2 caches, dog houses, and some odds and ends of paraphernalia. ... The cabin was about 12 x 18 feet and 10 feet high at the gable sloping to less than a man’s height at the eaves. Although apparently originally built of logs, the structure was covered with flattened 5-gallon gas cans in front, and with earth thrown high against the sides. Roof was galvanized corrugated iron. One cache contained equipment such as snow shoes, moccasins, etc. The other appeared little used. In the enclosed porch of the cabin were scores of steel traps. I was told by one of the boys attending the salmon counting weir at Brooks Lake that Scott had said he was not going to live in the cabin this winter. Apparently Wildlife Agent Carson’s activity this spring has discouraged Scott from making an illegal living in the monument.”

Scott was not gone from the area for long. By 1945, he was considered “the only poacher in the area,” although he was gone when an NPS official dropped by. Two years later, however, Carson once again caught him living and trapping in the monument, and he was quickly arrested and hauled
the area,” although he was gone when an NPS official dropped by. Two years later, however, Carson once again caught him living and trapping in the monument, and he was quickly arrested and hauled off to Naknek for a commissioner’s hearing. He still, however, felt that he was being wronged, and he fired off another letter to Dimond (who was now a Federal court judge) complaining that he had been denied a trapping license because of his alien status. Scott finally left the cabin for good; he died during the 1950s.

George Eicher, who as part of the Fish and Wildlife crew was a frequent visitor from 1940 through the mid-1950s, noted that “Scotty and Frenchy had a very elaborate layout at the outlet of Brooks Lake. It was an unusually lavish layout for trappers. They had a big cabin which really was quite nice. They had kennels for the dogs in a long line made of poles and logs so that each dog had an individual kennel to go into. They also had several outbuildings for various purposes, out sheds for putting fish in and all those sorts of things…. When we went in there first, in 1940, it looked like they had just left…. They had a large collection of National Geographic magazines and intellectual books such as a complete library of ‘Bulwer’s Works’ by Lord Bulwer-Lytton. We perused most of these in our spare time. Strangely, [the two men] went away leaving virtually all of their posses-

BELOW: Trapper Stephen Scott drew this map of his cabin complex and the surrounding area in the late 1930s in hopes of legalizing his claim. KATM files, NARA DC.

Draw diagram of your homestead or entry below showing cabin and improvements corner posts and distances.
sions, including stocks of canned food. It may have been that they received eviction notices while away and simply did not return.”

During the 1940s, the cabin complex was located along the old road that connected the Lake Brooks field laboratory with the Brooks River fish ladder. Later, however, that road was abandoned, and in recent years the site has become surrounded by the encroaching forest. In 1975, Robert Carper of the NPS visited the site; he noted two cabins (one $12\frac{1}{2}' \times 20'$, the other $8' \times 10'$) and added it to the agency’s List of Classified Structures inventory; information for the LCS file was updated after a 1993 visit. In June 1999, the NPS completed a Determination of Eligibility form for the property (AHRS Form No. XMK-123) and urged that it be considered eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A; a month later, Alaska’s State Historic Preservation Office concurred with that finding.

15) Grant Cabin: By 1919, a man named Grant had built a cabin near Brooks River. National Geographic Society expedition members that year mentioned that he was “a character” and that his nickname was “Old Man Grant;” he was probably Alex Grant, an area prospector who in 1918 had discovered gold along American Creek. The NGS team took three photographs of the cabin, which was “located on the portage between Naknek and Brooks Lakes.” Unfortunately, no other information is available, either about its specific location or its use patterns. The photos suggest that the cabin was a little more than an A-shaped framework of parallel logs, perhaps five feet high at the apex, covered with dirt. It is unlikely that either Stephen Scott, the Melgenak family, or the Angasan family used this cabin during their residence in the area.

16) Melgenak Cabin Complex: Various sources refer to either one, two, or even three cabins clustered in the small area between the Brooks River mouth and the Beaver Pond. Most of the available information pertains to the Melgenak Cabin, but all cabins in this area will be discussed in this section.

According to Trefon Angasan, Sr., who testified about the area’s cabins in September 1985, “American Pete” had constructed a cabin near the mouth of Brooks River during the early twentieth century. He and his wife, Palakia, stayed in that cabin. “American Pete” died in 1918, and a year later she married Nick Melgenak, the new chief at New Savonoski, who was commonly known as “One Arm Nick.” At some point the cabin caved in, so Mr. Melgenak rebuilt it. There is some controversy regarding the age of that cabin, however; Mike McCarlo testified that Nick rebuilt that cabin before 1925, but an NPS ecologist, using tree-ring dating techniques, stated that the cabin was constructed “sometime after August 1931.” Another cabin was constructed in the area somewhat later; according to the tree-ring expert, this second cabin was built “no earlier than the summer of 1936.”

Mike Tollefson, who interviewed Mike Shapsnikoff in the mid-1970s, reiterated that “One Arm Nick’s cabin was located in the grove of trees near the tern spit on the south side of Brooks River,” but he also noted that “Frenchy [Fournier] may also have lived in one of these cabins from time to time.”

Frank Been visited a “fishing village at Naknek Lake near the outlet of Brooks Creek” in early September 1940. Been further noted that “the place is hardly a village because it consists of two cabins. When the Aleuts arrive to fish, they pitch tents. One-Arm Nick occupied the desirable cabin which was quite comfortable.” The only other improvements he noted were “a number of fish drying racks” that were “scattered along the stream bank.”
1936, indicated to NPS officials “that the cabins in the woods near the ponds were down when he ‘came into the country.’” Mike Tollefson noted three collapsed cabins in this area in his 1977 report, but NPS investigators in 1984 located only two structures, both of which were in ruins. Unlike several other cabins in the monument, no evidence has been suggested that any of these cabins were razed by either NPS or Northern Consolidated Airlines officials.

17) Angasan Cabin: Trefon Angasan, Sr. was a longtime user of the fish camp at the mouth of Brooks River. According to Angasan’s testimony as well as that of several other observers, he constructed a cabin on the north side of Brooks River sometime between 1925 and 1950; during this period, he and his family stayed there when putting up fish. Neither the date of construction nor the cabin’s location, however, is known, and no architectural details are available. (The cabin was probably not built before 1925 because Mike McCarlo, in 1985, testified that during the early to mid-1920s Angasan stayed in One Arm Nick’s cabin south of the river.)

There is conflicting evidence that this cabin, which was at or near the site of the NCA complex at Brooks Camp, was sacrificed as part of the concessioner’s expanding camp operations. Ray Petersen, who founded the camps in 1950 and helped manage them until the late 1960s, averred that an old cabin existed at the site but that his company never tore it down. In May 1983, Petersen testified that “There was one cabin, apparently an abandoned trapper’s or poacher’s cabin, which contained two bunks and was occupied occasionally by employees of our camp. No other structure or evidence of one existed on north side of river…. No buildings or structures have been removed or destroyed by our operation on the north side of the Brooks River to my knowledge.” Furthermore, he noted that no Brooks Camp structure had been built where the trapper’s (or poacher’s) building had been located.

Others, however, disagree with Petersen’s assessment. Trefon Angasan himself, who testified just three weeks later as part of the same case, stated that “My cabin was there until NCA bulldozed it,” and Elmer Harrop similarly testified that “Trefon Angasan’s cabin on Naknek Lake was destroyed.” Darrell Coe, who served as Katmai National Monument’s Management Assistant during the summer of 1966, tersely noted in his report for June of that year that “One abandoned cabin razed near mouth of Brooks River.” Because no other “abandoned cabins” were known to exist north of the river (and there is little reason why a cabin south of the river would be considered), it appears likely that either the NPS or the NCA demolished the Angasan cabin in 1966.

18) Osberg-Lundgren Cabins: This cabin is located on a small bluff just south of where Headwaters Creek debouches into Lake Brooks. Rongald Osberg built the 14’ x 15’ cabin in 1930, and he recorded a claim for the site in 1931. He continued living at the cabin, on a seasonal basis, and as part of his trapping operations he built three 10’ x 12’ line cabins. Osberg died in 1934.

Some sources note that Axil Erling, a 39-year-old local resident, occupied the cabin shortly after Osberg’s death; Erling lived there only a short time before Sigurd Lundgren occupied the site, and he never claimed the property. Other sources state that Lundgren, in 1934, purchased the four cabins from Osberg’s administrators (and omitted any mention of Erling). Lundgren, who had arrived in the U.S. just the year before, trapped out of the cabin until 1938, when investigator A. C. Kinsley evaluated his claim. Kinsley’s report, published in 1939, concluded that he had no valid rights to either live or trap in the monument. Lundgren apparently added on to the cabin during this period.
Trapper Sig Lundgren is seen with 42 foxes and two otters that he and Gunnar Berggren harvested. This 1939 photo was taken in Naknek. *NPS-LACL Photo Collection, courtesy of Dorothy Berggren.*
Frank Been visited the cabin in early September 1940 and discovered it to be "in good condition and showed active use. Its dimensions were 12' x 24'. Corrugated tin covered the roof. Close-by was a cache made of logs. In it were miscellaneous articles of winter apparel and equipment and several steel traps and a beaver pelt. Five roughly constructed dog houses were scattered about the premises. The site was nicely located on a high bank over the streams and close to the lake but protected from high winds by a screen of trees. On the opposite shore of the stream was a crumbled cabin and cache which we assumed had been used by Lundgren before he built the present abode.... Lundgren has another cabin about 15 miles up the stream and well outside the park." Been, upon returning to Naknek, hoped to talk to him so as to coax him to leave his cabin; he met him but was unable to talk to him about his activities in the monument. Been found that he had "quite an aggressive manner." Lundgren took the meeting as an opportunity to lobby the NPS official about opening up the local area (outside the monument) to moose hunting "so that this source for fresh meat will be available."

Lundgren apparently took Been's cue and left the monument, but the cabin was later used by several other trappers. Shortly after World War II, Kirk Adkinson (a 32-year-old fisherman) and Henry Nelson decided to trap in Lundgren's old territory. Protection officer Carlos Carson, upon hearing rumors of that activity, warned them to stay out of the monument, but during an overflight in early March 1948 he "noted much activity. Investigation showed the cabin full of all trapping equipment, grub, 2 beds, stove, stretchers, etc. etc. Fresh tracks in the snow revealed one occupant had recently left; following this track for 150 yards a fox, recently killed was in a trap on the bank of the river. A short distance farther on were several sets right by a beaver house. Although we tracked him for several miles, we returned to the plane owing to the time of day, but left note in cabin, telling them what we took and for them - or him, to remain until we called for them."

Of the two men who were involved in the operation, Henry Nelson stated he had not used the cabin but was using the cabin six miles up the creek. (This was probably one of the line cabins that Osberg had built in the early 1930s.) Adkinson, in Carson's words, "took all the blame, pled guilty, said he knew he should not have done it." The commissioner in Dillingham tried them later that month and gave Adkinson 30 days in jail with five months suspended. Nelson was not penalized. Adkinson apparently heeded Carson's admonitions and left the monument, and so far as is known, the cabin was never used for trapping again.

The cabin thereafter deteriorated fairly quickly. In March 1949, Carson described the cabin in "fair condition;" that assessment was reflected in a photograph that Victor Cahalane took of the cabin in 1953. By 1977, ranger Mike Tollefson (somewhat overstating the case) claimed that "to the best of my knowledge, nothing remains of it today." In June 1986, NPS employee Christopher Ryan made a site visit and noted that the only reminders of the old cabin were ten or twelve logs, "most of [which] were being covered over by mosses."

In order to accurately evaluate trapping in this portion of Katmai, an investigation should be made of a total of five sites. These include the cabin noted above, an earlier cabin that was constructed on the opposite site of Headwaters Creek, and Osberg's three line cabins. Two of these cabins have been geographically identified in the existing literature; one (noted in the late 1930s) was located "fifteen miles up the stream," while another cabin (noted in the late 1940s) was "six miles up the creek." Both of these cabins, of which no other information is known, were located outside of the monument boundaries as established in 1931; they therefore may have been legally used until Congress expanded the monument's boundaries yet again in December 1978.
19) Chukan's Naknek Lake Cabins: Paul Chukan, a Native who was born in 1901, spent some time at a cabin on the Research Bay shoreline in 1933 (see “Chukan Research Bay Cabin,” above) and also was a frequent visitor to the Brooks River mouth to harvest salmon. Sometime during the 1930s or 1940s (according to the List of Classified Structures report), he constructed a small cabin near the southwestern end of Naknek Lake. The cabin was constructed of plywood on logs, with a tin roof; adjacent to the cabin are a sauna, outhouse, saw-buck, and similar materials. The complex is located a few hundred feet from a small creek; the site is approximately one mile south of Naknek Lake and is located in T18S, R43W, Sec. 25, NW 1/4.

The cabin, which Alex Alvarez probably also used, was apparently abandoned long ago. When visited and photographed in 1993, the entire complex was in ruined condition. The cabin is still standing, though portions of both the roof and walls are missing. (See the LCS file for AHRS Site No. NAK-066.) These improvements appear to be located on the Native allotment of Anna Chukan; Paul Chukan applied for a Native allotment elsewhere in Katmai National Park. According to Mike Tollefson's report, Paul Chukan is reputed to have a “small cabin or tent frame” along Naknek Lake that he used for trapping. The map that accompanies his report suggests that it is near the Naknek Lake shoreline, perhaps five or six miles east of the cabin complex described above. The site of this cabin, however, has not been verified in the field.

20) Shapsnikoff Cabin Complex: Mike Shapsnikoff moved into the Naknek area from Dutch Harbor in 1936, and he built a cabin on the northeast side of Northwest Arm (at the northwest end of Naknek Lake) in 1948 or 1949. (He and his partner,
Johnny Monsen, lived in a nearby tent frame “several miles up from the beach.” The two spent the next several winters (September through April) using the cabin as a trapping headquarters. After Monsen died in 1955, Shapsnikoff apparently began to assume control over Monsen’s cabin on upper King Salmon Creek (outside of the present park), but continued to spend considerable time at the Northwest Arm cabin. In 1969, his cabin became part of Katmai National Monument when the boundaries were extended west to include all of Naknek Lake. He continued to use the monument for subsistence purposes off and on up through 1974, although it is not known whether the Northwest Arm was his base of operations throughout that period.

The cabin complex consisted of a cabin, perhaps 10’ x 25’ in size, and a series of six dog houses. Tollefson and Shapsnikoff visited the site in July 1975; at that time, both the cabin and the dog houses were still standing. Tollefson photographed the cabin as part of that visit.

NPS personnel have visited this site in recent years, but so far as is known, cultural resource personnel have not been there or evaluated its condition.

21) Berggren Cabins: Gunnar Berggren was born in Brammen, Norway, in November 1898. He came to the United States in 1927 and established residency in the United States in 1933, in Anchorage. Three years later, he moved into the Katmai country and built a 12’ x 14’ cabin on the west side of the Naknek Peninsula, just south of the isthmus. According to Interior Department investigators, Berggren thought that his cabin was outside of the monument. But a Fish and Wildlife agent charged him with trapping in the monument and confiscated all his furs. He therefore moved west and built a 10’ x 12’ cabin on the south side of Pike Lake (which is two miles north of Northwest Arm). Kinsley, in his 1938 investigation, declared that Berggren did not have the right to either live in or trap from his first (Naknek Peninsula) cabin, but because he had apparently vacated that cabin a year earlier, Kinsley’s verdict had no effect on Berggren’s lifestyle. If letters he wrote to Delegate E. L. Bartlett are any indication, he apparently remained a seasonal resident at his Pike Lake cabin until the early 1950s. (He spent his summers in Naknek.) As late as
January 1969, he apparently still kept an interest in his Pike Lake cabin, because he protested the boundary expansion that absorbed his property into Katmai National Monument.\(^48\) Berggren died in Naknek on January 9, 1981.

Unfortunately, no information is available about either the exact location or the condition of Berggren's cabins. Ray Petersen recalls having seen the Naknek Peninsula cabin on flights between the various NCA camps during the 1950s, but neither Mike Tollefson nor any other NPS personnel have recorded a site visit. Several photographs of the Pike Lake cabin have been recently published in John Branson's volume, *Bristol Bay, Alaska*, but so far as is known, NPS personnel have not visited the cabin site.

22) **Eckman Cabins:** Verner Eckman was born in Finland in 1886. He moved to Alaska in 1921, and before long he moved to the Naknek area, where he worked for many years as a commercial fisherman. In 1930 he began to work as a trapper along the north shore of Naknek Lake. He was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1936.

By 1938, Eckman had constructed four cabins in the area. None of these cabins have been located in recent years, however, and available sources have provided different descriptions of their location. A map that Berggren provided to Kinsley during the 1938 investigation suggests that his main (largest) cabin was at the mouth of the unnamed creek that drains Idavain Creek, and Mike Tollefson's report states that "his cabin is located on a ridge near the peninsula 5 miles east of the Naknek Peninsula." Most likely, however, the main cabin—plus an adjacent smaller cabin—are located approximately ten miles east of the Naknek Peninsula isthmus, where the 1:250,000 Mount Katmai USGS map indicates two "ruins." (The 1:63,360 map shows three ruins at the site.) These ruins are located in T17S, R40W, Sec. 25, SW\(^1/4\). According to the description he gave Kinsley, Eckman had both a 13' x 16' cabin and a 10' x 14' cabin at this site; the third structure, therefore, may be an outbuilding.

According to Kinsley investigation data, Eckman had two other cabins. One was a 10' x 12' cabin east of his main camp and near the northeastern corner of North Arm; the other is another 10' x 12' cabin due north of his main camp. Both were probable line cabins for his trapping operation. More specific locations for both of these cabins are not available.

Eckman apparently continued to trap in this area until the spring of 1940, when Carlos Carson arrested both Eckman and a man named Karvonen for trapping inside of the monument's boundaries. He apparently left the area soon afterward and did not return. By the 1950s he was living in the newly-established community of King Salmon; then, in 1959, he moved into the Alaska Pioneers' Home in Sitka, where he died on Christmas Day, 1962.\(^49\)

23) **Monsen Line Cabin:** As noted elsewhere, John Monsen's primary cabin complex was located on the north side of Iliuk Arm near the mouth of the Savonoski River. Two references, however, note that Monsen also had a line cabin that has been various described as "about 15 miles from the main cabin" and "15 miles to the northwest of the other cabins." If the latter claim is true, the most likely location for this cabin is on the north side of Naknek Lake, approximately five miles due north of Brooks Camp. Less likely, these directions would point to a cabin being located along the south side of North Arm, west of the Bay of Islands. No other information is available about this cabin, which was constructed sometime between 1926 and 1938.\(^50\)
24) **Fure's Bay of Islands Complex**: Roy Fure was born in January 1885 and grew up in Lithuania. He arrived in Alaska from Siberian Russia in August 1912. He soon made his way up to the Naknek area, and beginning in 1917 he began working in the fisheries, first in a cannery and later as a fisherman. He married a Native woman, Anna Johnson, in 1919.

In January 1926, Anna Fure gave birth to a girl named Marian, and later that year Roy built a one-room, 15’ x 20’ log cabin along the north shore of Naknek Lake in the Bay of Islands area. The family moved into the cabin late that summer and continued to use the cabin as a wintertime residence for years to come. Before long, Fure constructed an outhouse, a lumber storage shed, and a windmill nearby. The cabin and the surrounding countryside was absorbed within Katmai National Monument in 1931, but the NPS did not move to evict existing residents until the late 1930s. The Fures, however, continued to live in their cabin until 1940, when Roy was arrested for violation of the game laws. In response, he either built or moved into a new cabin outside of the monument’s boundaries; this cabin was located on the east bank of American Creek, approximately seven miles from where it flows into Lake Coville.\(^{51}\) Despite his arrest, however, he continued to use the Bay of Islands as well as the American Creek cabin; this use certainly continued into the early 1950s and may have continued for the rest of his life.\(^{52}\)

Fure died in Portland, Oregon in October 1962. When he died, many personal items remained untouched in the cabin, but the following summer a bear broke in to it; as a result, an NPS ranger stored a number of those items in a nearby cache and made a number of ad hoc repairs.
1969, the agency was using the site as a patrol cabin and was proposing the site for future visitor development. The cabin remained unused and abandoned until 1975, when NPS architect Robert Carper visited the site as part of a List of Classified Structures inventory. Soon afterward, NPS officials photographed the site and placed “several items from the cabin” in the monument’s small museum. In recognition of the value of both the cabin and the artifacts it contained, and knowing full well that the cabin lay along an increasingly popular canoe portage, the NPS moved to document and preserve the cabin. Specialists visited the site in both 1982 and 1983. NPS cabin builders, in 1987 and 1988, disassembled the structure, replaced unsound logs, and then reassembled it. Five years later, similar restorative work was completed for the windmill and outbuildings.

In February 1985, Fure’s Cabin (AHRS Site No. XMK-050) was entered onto the National Register of Historic Places. Based on additional research, new material was added to the National Register nomination, which was accepted by the Keeper of the National Register on May 19, 1989.

25) Buckley Cabin: When the National Geographic Society explored the lakes west of the newly-designated monument in the summer of 1919, they visited the Bay of Islands area. While there, they discovered a cabin, built by “Mr. Buckley,” which was located “on Island Bay near Portage leading to Lake Grosvenor.” The expedition used the cabin as a temporary camp while surveying the area and took nine photographs of the rude cabin. So far as is known, no visitor since 1919 has made note of this cabin, and available documents have provided no additional information about Mr. Buckley. The site of this cabin, which is almost certainly collapsed by now, is in the general vicinity of Fure’s Bay of Islands Complex.

26) Hartzell’s Lake Coville Cabin: John Hartzell was born in Finland about 1891 and moved into the Naknek area about 1927 and began working as a commercial fisherman. According to data compiled as part of A. C. Kinsley’s investigation, Hartzell moved to a site on the north shore of Lake Coville on August 4, 1930 and soon afterward constructed a 22’ x 24’ cabin. For several years thereafter, he lived on the land each winter. By 1936 he had built another cabin along American Creek (see Hartzell-Fure Cabin).
Kinsley, in his 1939 report, ruled in Hartzell’s favor and stated that he had the legal right to live (though not trap) at his Lake Coville cabin. Hartzell apparently responded to Kinsley’s investigation by abandoning that cabin. Sometime during the late 1930s he may have moved his operations up to his American Creek cabin, which was outside of the national monument; or, alternatively, he may have abandoned both of his cabins and left the area. Details of Hartzell’s later life are unknown.

No information is available to positively identify the cabin’s location. The information he provided to Kinsley indicated that his Lake Coville cabin was along the lake’s northern shore; the map that accompanied his application, however, shows the cabin as being several miles north of the shoreline, midway between the east and west ends of the lake.

27) Fure Line Cabin: As noted elsewhere, Roy Fure built a cabin in the Bay of Islands area in 1926 and lived there until 1940. But when he was arrested that year for trapping in the monument, he was forced to move elsewhere. In response, he moved to American Creek and lived in a cabin approximately seven miles from Lake Coville. This line cabin, which is located near a slough not far from the American Creek mouth, was probably built shortly after he moved to his American Creek cabin. It was probably used on an intermittent basis until Fure’s death in 1962.

Mike Tollefson, who visited and photographed the site in July 1975, described the cabin as “a very small structure built in the same style as the others” (i.e., the same style as Fure’s two other cabins. He made this statement, however, despite not having seen Fure’s larger American Creek cabin.) He noted that “although it was not measured I would guess it is about 7’ x 7’ square.” Later, in 1994, a List of Classified Structures survey (XMK-088) recorded a 9’11” x 8’ log cache resting on the ground at this spot.

28) Hartzell-Fure Cabin Complex: As noted elsewhere, John Hartzell built a cabin along the Lake Coville shoreline in 1930 and began a wintertime trapping lifestyle. By 1936, he had expanded his operations to the point that he had constructed a new 17’ x 21’ cabin “several miles up American Creek” and had also established a 15’ x 30’ garden. (His questionnaire to Kinsley, ironically, says he worked the garden each year from 1931 to 1935 even though he worked as a commercial fisherman and made no attempt to claim that he spent his summers at the American Creek cabin). Hartzell appears to have responded to the Kinsley investigation by either abandoning his Lake Coville cabin in favor of his American Creek abode or by abandoning the area entirely. Inasmuch as no later information has surfaced about his activities along American Creek, he may well have vacated both locations by 1940.

The same investigation that caused Hartzell to move also affected the lifestyle of Roy Fure, who lived on Naknek Lake at the southern end of the Bay of Islands portage. Fure, in response to his 1940 trapping arrest, sought a location just outside of the monument boundaries, and by 1941 he had relocated to a cabin along American Creek. Fure himself stated that he built the American Creek cabin. But based on both the size and location of Hartzell’s American Creek cabin (as stated to an Interior Department investigator in the late 1930s), Hartzell may well have been the cabin’s actual builder.

As has been alluded to elsewhere, Fure’s move from his Bay of Islands cabin to his American Creek cabin was by no means permanent, and for the next two decades, Fure appears to have divided his time while in the lakes country between these two cabins. Fure (or possibly Hartzell) added a root cellar and sauna at the site. Fure continued to use this cabin, on at least a part-time
basis, until his death in 1962. The cabin lay unused for the remainder of the decade.

In 1971 Naknek resident John T. Graham began to occupy it. Graham, who for obvious reasons soon became known as “Trapper Jack,” spent the next several winters as a squatter there, using the two-room cabin as a fur-processing site as well as a dwelling. Graham, who was known to NPS officials throughout this period, added a trap shed and outhouse to the existing improvements. He continued living there until 1977, when NPS personnel told him that he would need to leave the property. The agency gave two reasons for its decision. First, he had no legal rights to the land, and second, because Congress was proposing to include the area surrounding the cabin as in an expanded park, it was unlikely that the cabin site would be open to trapping again. Given that ultimatum, Graham left the area and returned to Naknek, and the cabin has remained vacant ever since.58

The cabin complex, because of its relatively recent use, is relatively easy to locate (it is approximately seven miles upstream from Lake Coville) and has recently been recorded onto the List of Classified Structures (AHRS Site No. XMK-087).

29) Lake Grosvenor Cabin:
Virtually nothing is known about any trappers, trapping cabins, or trapping activity that may have existed along Lake Grosvenor. The only suggestion of such activity is contained in a single item of government correspondence from the spring of 1940. In that memo, F. A. Davidson of the Bureau of Fisheries warned the NPS that “winter trap-line cabins are at present established ... on the northeastern shore of Grosvenor Lake” as well as other sites in the monument. No information was provided as to where along the shoreline a cabin site may have been located.59

Trapping in the Alagnak River Basin

30) Marlette Cabin: Jim Marlette, a trapper and prospector, first came to the attention of NPS authorities in March 1948 when Fish and Wildlife Service agent Carlos Carson alerted the Mount McKinley National Park superintendent that Marlette had “a sizable illegal beaver cache in [the monument] – and which he is expecting to get out soon. Of course they were caught in the park.” Carson did not indicate where the cache was located, and there is no indication that Marlette (who had an airplane) had a cabin in or near the monument. Later that year, Carson also heard about Marlette’s apparently successful prospecting activities inside the monument boundaries. Marlette, during this period, was apparently basing his activities along the mile-long Kulik River that connected Kulik and Nonvianuk lakes. In 1983, during the Melgenak hearings, Elmer Harrop testified
that “During the 1950s, the Eskimo people were run off their land by Northern Consolidated [Airlines] and the NPS. I know that Jim Marlett [sic], who had a cabin on the Kuklik [Kulik] River, had his cabin destroyed in about 1950. He was the first person I know whose cabin was destroyed.”

31) Neilsen Cabin: Prior to the passage of the Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act, Johnny Neilsen established a Native claim along the north shore of Nonvianuk Lake, approximately six miles west of Kulik Lodge. A decade or so later (i.e., during the early 1980s, according to the List of Classified Structures report), Neilsen constructed a milled-log, 8’ x 10’ cabin and an adjacent outhouse in a protected cove on his allotment. After working out of his cabin for awhile, however, Neilsen came to the realization that the area was not good trapping territory, so he abandoned the cabin and let his allotment application lapse. The cabin and outhouse were evaluated by LCS personnel in 1993. The two buildings at that time were judged to be in good condition, and the report suggested that “the park would like to maintain the cabin as a cultural resource.”

32) Murray Cabin: Sam Murray was an early area trapper. He was apparent well acquainted with the Nonvianuk River and American Creek drainages (Murray Lake, upstream from Hammersly Lake in the American Creek drainage, is named for him.) In June 1933, an Anchorage newspaper noted that he was “working as a cook for hunters flying into the Kulik Lake area for bear hunting.” Four months later, he was flying along with another hunting party that narrowly escaped disaster; their plane was forced to land in a remote area, and Murray “struck out” from there and helped rescue the remainder of the party.

Murray built a cabin along the southern shore of Nonvianuk Lake (AHRS Site No. XMK-086); its specific location is just west of the mouth of a small stream in T14S, R37W, Sec. 9, SE1/4. As noted in a List of Classified Structures survey, the site consists of a log cabin (approximately 10’ x 34’), two caches, and a lumber scatter. The LCS survey, conducted in 1994, does not suggest a date for the cabin; considering the additional historical data that has become available and general trapping trends, it is likely that the cabin dates from the 1930s or late 1920s.

33) Agate Point Tent-Cabin Complex: In June 1983, an NPS ranger located “one old log cache and two tent cabin frames” along the north side of Nonvianuk Lake, just west of Agate Point.
(This point, the name of which is not recognized by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names, protrudes southward into the lake approximately four miles northeast of the lake’s outflow into the Nonvianuk River.) The specific site of the cabins is T13S, R37W, Sec. 17, SW1/4, while the cache is located in Sec. 18, NW1/4 of the same township. “Bill” Hammersly (see below) may have lived at this site prior to 1945, when he settled at the “Hammersly Cabin” site adjacent to where Northern Consolidated Airlines would later establish one of its concessions camps.

34) **Hammersly Cabin Complex:** Rufus Knox “Bill” Hammersly came to Alaska in 1926 and immediately settled in the Iliamna country. By 1933, he was known as an “Iliamna trader,” in large part because he ran a store at the lower end of Iliamna Lake, at Igiugig. For the next few years he trapped and prospected around the Bristol Bay country; during that period, in 1938, he discovered a new placer gold deposit along American Creek, near where Alex Grant had first found “colors” in 1918. In early 1945, he settled at a site on the right bank of the Nonvianuk River at the outflow of Nonvianuk Lake. According to the land records, he remained there for ten months each year until 1952. During that time he built a 12’ x 20’ cabin (later expanded to 20’ x 20’ dimensions), a cache, and a root cellar.

In 1950, Northern Consolidated Airlines established a fishing camp just below his cabin complex. Beginning that year, the company hired him as a promoter of its fishing camps, a big-game hunting guide, and the Nonvianuk Camp manager. The following year, a guest at the camp noted that Hammersly had a “cozy log cabin … and Bill had a barabara under construction. The log framework was already up and part of the sod in place.” Hammersly apparently severed his affiliation with Northern Consolidated after the 1952 season, but he continued living at his cabin at least a few months each year. He died at the Veterans’ Administration Hospital in Los Angeles, California, in June 1959.

The establishment of the Nonvianuk concession camp, and the crowds it attracted, may have hastened the deterioration of Hammersly’s cabin complex, particularly after his death. In the 1990s, the cabin (AHRS Site No. ILI-082) was visited by List of Classified Structures surveyors, who noted that the main building in the complex had dimensions of 8’6” x 26’, to which was attached a 14’6” x 14’6” main living area. Portions of the cabin’s roof and walls are missing.

35) **Peterson Cabin:** Barbara Peterson has a cabin on the right bank of the Alagnak River. The cabin, locally known as a trapper’s cabin, is located in the middle of her Native Allotment. NPS personnel visited and photographed the cabin in 1984 and 1987; those photos show that the cabin was constructed of rude logs and a corrugated metal roof. No information is available about who
constructed the cabin or when that construction took place, although it probably predates 1950. The cabin is standing but is in deteriorating condition.

36) Guide Camp Cabin: Near the north end of Barbara Peterson's allotment is a plywood, shed-roof building that NPS personnel have described as being associated with a guide camp. Agency personnel visited and photographed the site in 1984 and 1987. No information is available about who constructed the cabin or when that construction took place, although its condition and construction style suggest that it was built in the past thirty to forty years.

37) Apokedak Cabin Complex: Nick Apokedak has a historic cabin and cache on his Native Allotment near the right bank of the Alagnak River. NPS archeologists visited, mapped, and photographed the site in June 1997 (see AHRS Site No. DIL-160). No architectural or historical details about the cabin are known.

38) Estrada Cabin Complex: On the Agnes Estrada Native Allotment are located a cabin, boat house, shed, outhouse, trash pit, mound, and the “outlines” of previous rectangular buildings or other disturbances. Ms. Estrada's main cabin is clearly visible and is easily identified by those passing by on the Alagnak River. The complex was visited and photographed by NPS personnel in 1984. Thirteen years later, an archeological team surveyed the site (AHRS Site No. DIL-163) in search of prehistoric and historic resources. Neither visit, however, gleaned information about the
history of the structural complex. An area guidebook notes that a “landmark” along the Alagnak River is “Agnes Estrada’s rustic log cabin,” where “you may see caribou antlers hung over the door.” It stated that Estrada lived in the cabin for most of her life, snaring animals until she was nearly 90 years old.  

39) **Andrew Cabin Complex:**  
Two miles downriver from the Estrada Cabin Complex is a cabin on Wassillie Andrew’s Native Allotment. This cabin, like Estrada’s, is along the river’s right bank and a sign on the cabin wall plainly identifies the cabin’s owner. The cabin’s walls are composed of rough-hewn logs, while its roof is corrugated metal. At least one outbuilding lies nearby. The cabin was visited and photographed by NPS personnel in 1983, 1984, and 1987. Nothing is known about the history of the structures on the property.

40) **Lower Alagnak River Cabin Complex:** In 1997, NPS archeologists located and identified a complex of historic and prehistoric items (AHRS Site No. DIL-161) along the right bank of the Alagnak River, near the lower end of the Alagnak Wild River. Historic resources included a cabin, two outhouses, a shed, collapsed sauna, and historic debris. This site, unlike the other five along the Alagnak, is not located on a known Native allotment. The investigators noted that the cabin “appears to have been built circa 1940 and has seen occasional use but is currently in a state of disrepair, and the outbuildings are in a deteriorated condition.”

**Historic Property Summary and Recommendations**

Because several of the listings above refer to more than one cabin site, the list gives reference to a total of some forty-nine trapping or subsistence cabins. Of that number, however, only nineteen of those sites have been visited and documented by cultural resources personnel, and the exact location of most if not all of the thirty remaining properties is unknown. Therefore, the first priority related to this theme is to rediscover as many of these sites as possible (either by additional historical research or by field investigation); once discovered, they need to be surveyed and evaluated by cultural resources personnel.

Once the survey and investigation has been completed, it is recommended that a Multiple Property Documentation Form be prepared that would include a trapping and subsistence lifeways context. Such a form provides a streamline method for organizing and registering properties and it facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations.
It is also recommended that the history of Katmai-area trappers be documented through an oral history project. The NPS's LAKA Studies Center has cassette tapes of interviews with trappers including Mike Shapsnikoff, Paul Chukan, and Jake Amuknuk; these tapes need to be transcribed. Other trappers and their descendants need to be interviewed as well.

Regarding the Alagnak River, which is a relatively recent addition to the National Park Service system, little historical information has been collected. In light of what may well be a long chronicle of protohistoric and historic activity in that area, it is recommended that an ethnographic research study be undertaken.
Endnotes

1 National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Photo Albums, 1919, Box 6, 7, and 8, UAA Archives.

2 Melvin Monsen interview by John Branson, July 9, 1998, as noted in Branson, Bristol Bay 104.

3 Norris, Isolated Paradise, 51-52, 55-59.

4 Been, Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection 4-5.


6 Norris, Isolated Paradise, 59.

7 Ibid., 55-59.

8 Ibid., 62-64.

9 Ibid., 71-78.


11 Ibid., 200.

12 Ibid., 341-43.


14 NPS, “Systemwide Archeological Inventory Program Survey Field Notes, 1994.” In CSI files, AKSO, Anchorage.

15 George Stroud and Lynn Fuller, Katmai National Park and Preserve, Katmai Coast Field Season Report, 1984, p. 20.

16 Mike Tollefson to Supt. Katmai, March 21, 1977, in “KNM Cabins” file, KATM AH Collection; LAKA Slide Collection; Carolyn Elder to Frank Norris, email, July 22, 1999.


“Kamishak Bay-Katmai Region” map (with notations by Jack Benson), to accompany Benson’s January 16, 1941 report on Smith’s activities; in RG 79, Series 7, KNM Box 2, NARA DC.

Norris, Isolated Paradise, 64; AHRS form XMK-073; “Fur Farming” file, KATM HRS Collection.

Mike Tollefson to Supt. Katmai, March 29, 1977, in “KNM Cabins” file, KATM AH Collection; National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Photo Albums, 1919, Box 2 (photos 831-33) and Box 3 (photos 3092-93), UAA Archives.

Been, Field Notes 13; Branson, Bristol Bay 106.

Branson, Bristol Bay 103-04.

Anchorage Weekly Times, April 26, 1940, 4.

Been, Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection, 1940, 13, 38, 42.

Branson, Bristol Bay, 105.


Branson, 102-03; Homer Jewell to Harry Liek, May 8, 1936, in KNM Box 1, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC.

National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Photo Albums, 1919, Box 6, photos 5658-61, 5664, 7451-53, and 7468-69, UAA Archives.


Ibid; Tollefson to KATM Supt., March 21, 1977, #11.


National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Photo Albums, 1919, Box 7, photos 6363, 7396-97, UAA Archives; Norris, Isolated Paradise, 31, 351.


46 Ibid., #3.


48 Berggren to E. L. Bartlett, June 4, 1950; Berggren to Bartlett, January 3, 1954, both in E. L. Bartlett Collection, UAF; Berggren to Howard Pollack, January 29, 1969, in National Parks folder (1969), RG 01 (Governor’s Correspondence), ASA.


51 Fure, in documents he provided to Interior Department and Immigration and Naturalization investigators, stated that he constructed the American Creek cabin. But the cabin that John Hartzell built prior to 1938 is so similar to Fure’s cabin, in location and dimension, that Hartzell may well have built the cabin in which Fure lived after being evicted from his Bay of Islands cabin.

52 Bonnie Houston, “Written Historical and Descriptive Data, Roy Fure’s Trapping Cabin, KATM (HABS No. AK-18),” in “Fure’s Cabin N.R. Form” folder, NRHP Collection, AKSO.


56 National Geographic Society, *Katmai Expedition Photo Albums*, Box #6 (photos 4734 and 7366-7370) and Box #8 (photos 6712-14).


59 F. A. Davidson, Director (Seattle office), Bureau of Fisheries, to National Park Service, D.C., April 16, 1940, in File N1423 (“Fish 1946-1959”), KATM; also found in File 205, KNM Box 311, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA San Bruno.


61 NPS, LCS Field Inventory Report, Johnny Neilsen Trapping Cabin, May 17, 1993, AKSO; NPS, Case Incident Report 830009 (June 1983), KATM.

62 *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 12, 1933 and October 14, 1933.

63 NPS, Case Incident Record No. 830009, June 29, 1983.

64 *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 25, 1933.

65 The land records (Case File A 031289) indicate just three structures on the property, but a photo taken ostensibly in 1945 (published in John Branson, *Bristol Bay, Alaska*, p. 105) shows four frame structures.


REINDEER HERDING AND FOX FARMING

At the extreme ends of Katmai National Park and Preserve are located the remains of operations related to two distinctly different primary economic activities. At the northwestern end of the park are the dilapidated remains of a reindeer corral, while along two offshore islands in Shelikof Strait are ruins associated with former fox farms. Both activities began in Alaska in the late nineteenth century, and the legacy of both activities can be seen in many areas outside of the park boundaries. In the Katmai area, the primary impacts of the reindeer industry were felt in the early to mid-1930s, while fox farms (at least in an administrative sense) were most significant in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Reindeer herding will thus be considered first.

Reindeer Herding

Sheldon Jackson, the General Agent for Education for Alaska, was almost single-handedly responsible for the initial growth of Alaska’s reindeer industry. Jackson, acting on a tip from a Revenue Cutter Service captain and a zoologist—both of whom were familiar with conditions in the Native villages of western Alaska—began importing Siberian reindeer in the early 1890s. Persistence eventually paid off, and by 1900 Alaska’s reindeer population—owned and cared for, for the most part, by Alaska Natives—was doubling every three years.1

By 1904, reindeer herds had spread from the Seward Peninsula (where the first successful herds had propagated) to Bethel, and a happenstance event beginning in December of that year brought reindeer to the Katmai area. An Alaska Reindeer Service employee named Hedley E. Redmyer announced his intention to drive 300 Bethel-area reindeer 500 miles east to Copper Center, a small town north of Valdez. Having only a vague idea of how to proceed, Redmyer and his crew made it only as far east as the Lake Clark-Iliamna area. There he stopped, stymied by wolf country, rugged terrain, and the lack of moss for forage. He asked for, and received, permission to establish a
government reindeer station at Kakhonak, on the south shore of Iliamna Lake. The population of, and prospects for, Alaskan reindeer continued to grow, and by 1906 the Kakhonak reindeer population had almost doubled. The herd had grown geographically, too, some of the herd grazing south to Kukaklek Lake, within today’s Katmai National Preserve. So bountiful was the reindeer population that, in 1909, a portion of the herd was driven to Koggiung, at the mouth of the Kvichak River, where a new station was established. In 1913 the Kakhonak herd was divided again when a new station was established at Iliamna Village, at the east end of Iliamna Lake.

By the 1920s, herds were being managed in many areas in and around the present-day park. By 1926, herds were being tended at both Egegik and Ugashik, southwest of the park, as well as in the Iliamna area; three years later, the same three locations boasted reindeer herds. No information is available regarding herds being managed within the park; in their effort to improve the Natives’ lot, government agents appear to have brought the reindeer herds to Native villages rather than locate herds in remote areas that may have offered superior browse.

Reindeer management remained a vital aspect of life in southwestern Alaska villages during the early to mid-1930s, and it was during this period that the only known incursions of reindeer into Katmai National Park took place. According to Frank Been, who visited the park for several weeks in 1940, a herd of 10,000 reindeer had been brought “to the vicinity of the Naknek River ... sometime within the past 10 years,” and that a portion of that herd “could graze into the north west corner of the park”—that is, in the area west of Lake Coville and north of Naknek Lake. At least one reindeer station was established in the monument at this time; it was located on Northwest Arm, near the northwestern end of Naknek Lake.

The area’s reindeer population apparently remained healthy until 1936; it then declined dramatically. Two reasons have been given for the change. First, the December 1936 death of one of the area’s chief reindeer herders meant that the herd was cared for less skillfully than before. A more plausible explanation, however, was that wage rates at the Bristol Bay-area canneries brought area Natives sufficient income that they did not have to depend on reindeer herding, a far less lucrative occupation. Within just two to three years, as a result, reindeer herding in the Iliamna-Katmai region was abandoned and the animals either assimilated with the wild caribou herds or were transferred to other stations. By 1940, the herd had dissolved so completely that Frank Been, the 1940 visitor, was assured by his Fish and Wildlife Service host that there were no reindeer in or near the monument. Reindeer have not reentered the country since that time.

Fox Farming

Meanwhile, an activity of a far different sort—fox farming—was taking place at the opposite end of the monument. Fox farming, like reindeer herding, had begun in Alaska in the late 19th century; the first Alaska fox farm began in the Semidi Islands, southwest of Kodiak Island, in the 1880s, and by the mid-1890s an operation had begun on Long Island, along Kodiak Island’s eastern coast. Because of a rising interest in the fox trade, the Long Island operation was being copied in other parts of the territory as well, and by 1900, 35 islands in southcentral and southeastern Alaska were being leased from the government. But in 1903, fur prices began to bottom out and many islands were abandoned. They remained low until about 1913, then they continued to rise for the next several
years. By 1919 or 1920, prices had become sufficiently attractive that fox farming entered its “golden age,” and throughout the 1920s, Alaska boasted several hundred fur farms. Most of these farms were on offshore islands, because an island was the easiest environment to manage a fox herd. Others, however, were located inland, usually in lacustrine or riverine environments.

During fox farming’s “golden age,” the first farms began to appear on the margins of the present park. In 1922, John Brodtkorb established a blue fox farm on Kiukpalik Island, a 390-acre island that was ten miles east of Swikshak Bay and slightly more than two miles from the coast. By 1924 he was living full time on the island, and in 1927 he filed for a fur farming lease in accordance with a recently-passed congressional act. By this time, he stated that he had invested more than $10,000 in improvements on the property. In 1929, he obtained a ten-year fur farm lease for the island. About two years later, however, he left the island, only to be replaced in 1936 by Earl L. Butler, a Kodiak resident. The following year, the U.S. government issued to Butler a ten-year fur farm lease.

Shortly after Brodtkorb became established on Kiukpalik Island, another island off the Katmai coast became a potential fur farming site. In December 1928, Peter J. Voth obtained a ten-year fur farm lease for Takli Island, a 1,050-acre island located in Amalik Bay. Voth, however, never established a fox farm there, and in July 1931 the lease was canceled. A year later, Joe Tanzer filed a new application for a fur farm lease for the island. The lease application process, however, was never completed, and in June 1935 it was rejected.
Two years later a more serious applicant, John A. Smith, received a fur farm lease. But just a year later Interior Department investigator A. C. Kinsley visited the island. He discovered that the island lay less than a mile off the Katmai coast “and that it was possible that fox might escape to the mainland in severe Winters when ice may form sufficiently to permit the fox to escape,” and he further discovered that Smith had not yet purchased any foxes. In order to satisfy the terms of the lease, Kinsley ordered him to do so, but when he and local Fish and Wildlife Agent Jack Benson returned to the island in July 1941, they found no evidence that such purchases had ever been made. They did, however, find considerable evidence of mink, marten, beaver and fox trapping. Kinsley noted that although Smith protested vehemently to the contrary, “Wildlife agent Benson is of the firm opinion that Mr. John A. Smith has simply used the fur farm lease for Takli island as a base for depredations upon the fur within the Katmai National Monument.” Kinsley agreed with Benson’s assessment.

The National Park Service, which had had authority over the coastline adjacent to Takli Island since 1918 and the Kiukpalik Island coastline since 1931, knew little about what had been going on in the monument during the 1920s and 1930s. But in 1940, two NPS officials spent several weeks in the monument, and while on that trip they became aware that trapping was taking place along the Shelikof Strait coastline. Kinsley’s investigation, therefore, merely reconfirmed what had long been suspected.

Victor Cahalane, one of the Federal officials, had a ready solution to prevent further trapping: extend the monument’s boundaries to include the offshore islands. Both he and Been suggested that the line be extended two miles offshore; that proposal would have excluded Kiukpalik Island, because an active fox farm had been operating there for a number of years. Kinsley, asked to comment on the NPS’s proposal, noted that John Smith and Earl Butler were the only two people who claimed land along the offshore islands. Smith, he noted, had failed to live up to the terms of his lease, and “Mr. Butler’s success with this island [Kiukpalik] has been small.” Based on Kinsley’s report, Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes, in November 1941, recommended a five-mile boundary extension, which would include both Takli and Kiukpalik islands. He noted that “it would in no way be harmful to potential business enterprises in that general part of Alaska” because, he reasoned, the monument’s extension would not affect existing fur farm leases. That recommendation was forwarded to President Roosevelt, who signed a proclamation on August 4, 1942 reflecting Ickes’s proposal.

Although Roosevelt’s proclamation had no direct effect on either Smith’s or Butler’s fur farm leases, neither operation remained for long. Based on Kinsley and Benson’s investigation, Smith was exposed as a trapper masquerading as a fur farmer, and soon afterward the two officials recommended that Smith’s lease be cancelled. He lost his lease in May 1942. Butler, for his part, lost interest in his fur farm for entirely different reasons. By 1941, economic opportunities related to the World War II buildup had lured Butler to move to Kodiak Island, where he was engaged in construction work at the navy base. A medical condition also forced him to be away from the island. Those factors, plus his admittedly small success in the fur farm business—fur farms throughout the territory were faring poorly during this period—caused him to abandon his operation. Butler probably vacated the island either during or shortly after the war, although the Bureau of Land Management did not close his fur farm license until October 1950.
Historic Property Summary and Recommendations

The above sections detail activity that surrounded three park sites: one reindeer herding complex and two fox farming sites. But inasmuch as the Takli Island “fox farm” should more accurately be categorized as a trapping cabin, site information regarding Takli Island’s historical resources are included in Chapter 8 which relates to the park’s trapping context.

The Northwest Arm reindeer corral and cabin is located near the northern shoreline of Naknek Lake. The streamside complex, as suggested above, was near Mike Shapsnikoff’s cabin site. It was active during the 1930s and was doubtless abandoned by 1940. According to Mike Tollefson, a Katmai National Monument ranger whose 1977 study was based on interviews with local experts, more than one corral may have existed here; Steve Behnke, a subsistence specialist, notes that Pete Olympic was one of several reindeer herders who had used the facility. NPS personnel, thus far, have only an inexact idea regarding the complex’s specific location. It is highly unlikely, however, that any standing structures remain. It is therefore recommended, after the site has been located, that NPS cultural resource personnel conduct a survey of the site’s historical archeology.

The Kiukpalik Island Fox Farm (AHRS site number AFG-192) is located near the island’s western shore and toward its northern end. In 1927, the applicant for the island’s fur farm lease noted that the island had 100 blue foxes and that $10,000 in improvements had been expended there. No specifics are available, however, regarding those improvements, and no evidence has surfaced that the following lessee, provided further improvements. When NPS biologist Victor Cahalane visited the island in 1953, he noted two residences, including a two-room cabin; three small structures for feed, pelt...
storage, etc., all in poor condition; and the remains of a 100' x 150' enclosure. A 1985 NPS coastal survey noted that the island's "cabins are still standing." But by 1990, these resources had significantly deteriorated. An archeologist that year noted six to eight remnants of buildings plus ancillary equipment, domestic artifacts, fence remains, and a few remnants of the former water and power system. Heavy vegetation, however, obscured many of the remaining cultural features.
Endnotes


4 Frank T. Been, *Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection* (November 12, 1940), 8.

5 Unrau, *Lake Clark*, 316-17.


Today, Bristol Bay is widely known as having the world's most plentiful stocks of wild sockeye (red) salmon, and the Naknek River system that flows out of Katmai National Park has long been known as one of the primary contributors to the bay's salmon stocks. The many streams that flow eastward from the park into Shelikof Strait, and the upper reaches of the Alagnak River drainage system, also boast healthy salmon populations, though not to the extent of the Naknek River system. Commercial fisheries interests, not surprisingly, were quick to respond to the area's abundant salmon populations, and in order to preserve the salmon's long-term abundance, government scientists and regulators have had a long-term management presence in the Naknek drainage. These activities are manifested in the Lake Brooks Field Laboratory, the Brooks River fish ladder, and other cabins and structures that have been related to fisheries research and management.

Initial Management Activities

As noted in Chapter 7, the first area canneries were located on Kodiak Island (east of the present-day park) and along the Nushagak River (northwest of the park) during the early 1880s. By the mid-1880s, the remarkable Bristol Bay salmon resource was becoming widely recognized, and in the 1890s salteries and canneries were located along the Naknek River, just west of the present park boundaries.

Shortly after World War I, fisheries managers began to enter the Katmai area. The U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, a predecessor agency to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, decided to undertake a predatory fish destruction program in the various major Bristol Bay tributaries. The agency undertook such a program because salmon, at that time, was the only fish desired by local canneries. Therefore, any species that preyed on salmon was considered undesirable, and trout were specifically identified for destruction. As part of that survey, the Bureau sponsored a broad survey of fish populations; the agency studied the Naknek River system as well as other major Bristol Bay drainages. In early June of 1920, a four-man party headed by A. T. Looff of the College of Fisheries, University of Washington, began its Naknek Lake investigations.
Looff and his crew quickly surveyed the margins of the lake and found that “practically all the fish entering [upstream into] Naknek Lake either pass up Kidawik Creek [Brooks River] or Simenoffsky [Savonoski] River.” Kidawik Creek, in particular, was judged to be “an ideal salmon stream with fine spawning bottom ... where good numbers of lake trout and some Dolly Vardens were taken.” The party camped at the creek mouth, then ascended to “a waterfall from 5 to 8 feet high, over which it would be impossible for fish to ascend during low-water stage.” In an attempt to improve its spawning possibilities, the crew proceeded to modify the north side of the falls. By using “several stone-cutting gads, a steel bar, top maul, hammer and pick,” they made a cut “10 feet in width, sloping back about 15 feet, through which the fish could easily pass.” The following year, a better-equipped crew returned to the site and used dynamite to widen the slot. 

Brooks River, at this time, was not part of Katmai National Monument.

Fisheries crews returned to Naknek Lake and the Brooks River each year from 1920 through 1925; in 1924 and 1925, they also included Lake Coville and Lake Grosvenor in their investigation. During that time, they killed more than 13,000 sport fish, primarily rainbow trout, lake trout, and Dolly Varden. The Bureau of Fisheries ignored Naknek Lake for the next decade. Below the lake, however, the Bureau remained active. In 1928, it established a fisheries station five miles upriver from Naknek, and maintained a salmon-counting weir at the site until 1932.

In 1936, biologists showed renewed interest in the Lake Brooks area, which had been added to Katmai National Monument five years earlier. They noticed that Brooks Falls was not a block to red salmon under normal conditions. During seasons of low water, however, they observed that many died unspawned below the falls, presumably because of injury caused in attempting to negotiate them. Based on that overview, they made plans for “blasting steps in the falls” in the spring of 1937. Those plans, however, were put on hold for the time being.

In 1938, concern about Japanese offshore fishing in the Bristol Bay area brought about a renewal of interest in Katmai’s fisheries resource. Congress directed an investigation of the salmon fisheries of Bristol Bay. The plan, conceived in 1938, was to have one team of investigators in the bay tagging and marking fish, while land-based teams would set up operations along the five major bay drainages. The following year the Naknek River received a three-man team, which made a survey of the river system’s major spawning grounds. In 1940, the Bureau of Fisheries decided to concentrate their Naknek basin research efforts along the mile-long Brooks River. Fisheries personnel were well aware of the stream’s abundant fish runs and felt that the stream was representative of others draining into Bristol Bay.
Construction of Management Facilities

Because of the agency's decision to concentrate on the Brooks River fish runs, the first government building was constructed in what is now Katmai National Park and Preserve. As has been described in more detail below, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 1941, began building a field laboratory at the eastern end of Lake Brooks. (That same year, F&W personnel also built and began operating a second station just below the Naknek River rapids, a few miles southwest of Lake Camp.) Construction on the center section of the log Lake Brooks field laboratory was completed by the close of the 1943 field season. In addition, the agency constructed a salmon-counting weir and a rough road connecting Brooks and Naknek lakes. Based on those improvements, the agency carried on a successful fish research and management program, one that was to last at that location for more than thirty years.

Fisheries research in the Naknek drainage continued during World War II. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel at the Brooks River weir counted escapements into Lake Brooks of 97,496 sockeye salmon in 1940, 125,948 in 1941, 360,899 in 1942, 272,929 in 1944, and 184,319 in 1945. Construction of a wooden weir each year allowed fisheries personnel to make an exact fish count; the weir was set up and removed each season.

At war's end, F&W biologists began tagging studies on Brooks River and aerial spawning ground surveys on the entire Bristol Bay watershed. "Index areas" were identified on each of the main river systems and photographed each year. Researchers then counted fish in the photographs and, as before, developed annual statistics. Throughout this period, the National Park Service had only the vaguest idea of what Fish and Wildlife Service personnel were doing along the Brooks River and elsewhere in the monument.
No sooner had the F&WS become involved in managing the Naknek River drainage's fish runs than they also became active managers of the salmon resources along the monument's eastern shoreline. The U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, the F&WS's predecessor agency, had established a Kodiak office in 1924, and ever since, the agency had made intermittent studies of the salmon spawning areas along the monument's eastern shoreline. The U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, the F&WS's predecessor agency, had established a Kodiak office in 1924, and ever since, the agency had made intermittent studies of the salmon spawning areas along the monument's eastern shoreline. In 1941, the Alaska Game Commission agent at Kodiak noted that the Bureau of Fisheries (which had become part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the year before) had two watchman's cabins on the south side of Kafalia Bay. Why they were located there is uncertain; because there were no fish traps in the area, the cabins were probably associated with a salmon research study. As noted above, salmon (and clams) had been processed at nearby Kukak Bay from 1924 to 1932 and from 1935 to 1936; thus agency management activities were probably related to that commerce.

The Fish and Wildlife Service made no overt moves to manage the fishery along the monument's eastern shoreline for the remainder of the 1940s. The agency, instead, focused its management activities at its Lake Brooks field laboratory and at other sites within the salmon-rich Naknek River drainage. Recognizing the value of the Brooks River salmon run, agency personnel made repeated attempts to construct a fish ladder to circumvent eight-foot-high Brooks Falls. As noted above, the Bureau of Fisheries had initially proposed a fish ladder in 1937, and in the early 1940s new plans emerged for the project. But the latter attempt was foiled due to a reduction in personnel caused by the onset of World War II.

In 1947, engineers and biologists at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Montlake Laboratory at Seattle unveiled a new proposal for a Brooks River fish ladder. Unencumbered by financial or personnel difficulties, the agency's proposal was quickly put into action. The following year, a four-man crew arrived at the site and began constructing a ladder on the south side of the falls; the ladder had seven pools, each one foot above the other. Construction took more than two years, and the ladder opened on August 7, 1950. Willie Nancarrow, who was serving as Katmai's NPS ranger that summer, reported that "in the next week a marked increase in the number of fish going through the weir could be seen." Some NPS officials were chagrined that the F&WS had built the facility without the NPS's permission; Regional Director Owen Tomlinson, for example, protested that "this structure hardly complies with Park Service principles relating to the preservation of natural
structures." But the F&WS insisted upon the right to continue using the structure. The fish ladder remained in operation for more than twenty years.

For the remainder of the 1950s, the agency vacillated from year to year in the interest it showed toward Bristol Bay research efforts. Funding during some years allowed tagging programs, foot and photograph surveys, and similar research efforts. But during other years, the F&WS decided to focus its Alaskan research efforts away from Bristol Bay. The Brooks River weir counts continued, but most other western Alaskan investigations were placed on hold. Regardless of funding levels, the agency continued to staff the Lake Brooks field laboratory and maintain the adjacent weir.

The first scientific look at the sport fishing potential of and assessment of sport fishing pressures in the area came in 1954. At the request of the NPS, John Greenbank of the F&WS did a sport fish survey of Katmai National Monument. Greenbank and assistant Ronald Lopp worked through the summer of 1954 and described monument waters, examined fish distribution and abundance, sampled fish populations, and conducted creel censuses in various locations. Overall, the survey found fish populations high and fishing pressure light. Most fishing within the monument occurred in Brooks River. In retrospect, the work was particularly significant because neither the NPS nor the F&WS conducted significant research into Katmai's sport fish populations in the two decades following Greenbank's survey work.

**Diversification of Fisheries Research**

In 1960, commercial fisheries research in the monument underwent a major change when the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries decided to expand its fisheries research from Brooks River to the entire Naknek drainage system. The Lake Brooks field laboratory became a coordinating center, and to provide for its expansion, new housing was needed. Just south of the field laboratory, the BCF constructed two 28' x 36' four-room log cottages along with a 12' x 20' log garage.

By 1962, studies were being conducted at remote sites within the monument, and to support those studies, the agency built several remote cabins in the monument. By 1965, the agency had built one at the east end of Lake Coville, just west of NCA's Grosvenor Camp, and it had occupied another cabin located two miles above the mouth of American Creek. A third BCF cabin, located at the southeastern end of Lake Grosvenor, was built in the late 1960s. In 1969, it was described as a plywood one-room tent frame type cabin with two adjacent storage sheds which was being used for anadromous fish research. All three temporary camps were still active in 1971. The BCF, during the 1960s and early 70s, also had fish weirs and counting fences on Hardscrabble Creek and at the outlet of lower Kaflia Bay. Therefore, the agency probably erected rude shelters of some sort at those locations. By 1971, each of these shelters had probably been abandoned. Meanwhile, the salmon counting activities along the Brooks River were discontinued after the 1967 season, and the fish weir was removed for the last time; those activities had been the mainstay of the BCF's work for more than 25 years.

A continuing sore point that marred relations between the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service throughout the 1950s and 1960s was the Brooks River fish ladder. Throughout the 1950s, for example, the NPS wanted to get rid of it, while the F&WS defended it. In the mid-
1960s, the NPS formalized its principles of aquatic management, which led to an immediate push to do something about the Brooks River fish ladder. The F&WS fought the prospect. Park Service field personnel, however, continued to raise the issue, noting in 1970 that when the ladder was open it greatly reduced the number of salmon that could be seen trying to leap the falls. In 1973, they blocked the ladder’s upstream exit with wood planks. It remained blocked for years afterward. But some water now passes through the ladder, and intermittent fish passage occurs.

In 1970, the Fish and Wildlife Service split into two parts: the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The work at Katmai, which had been administered by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, was transferred to NMFS. The new agency continued the work of the old. In 1973, NMFS conducted the second year of a Naknek Lake salmon incubator project and also conducted limnological and biological sampling of the lake system. The following winter, however, the incubators froze and the project was abandoned. NMFS did not staff the Lake Brooks field laboratory in 1974 or thereafter.

To a large extent, NMFS ignored the monument during the mid-1970s. In 1976, the agency began allowing NPS personnel to use the Lake Brooks cabins. The following spring, it decided to transfer its facilities to the Park Service. In 1979 the NPS, under the direction of interim superintendent Roy Sanborn, rehabilitated the two Lake Brooks cottages, and the Lake Brooks field laboratory—then known as the Lake Brooks National Marine Fisheries Research Station—was converted into a residence. That summer, and each summer since, NPS personnel have used the buildings.

The various remote NMFS structures have not fared as well. The primitive cabin at the east end of Lake Coville remained active as part of a salmon fisheries research project until 1972. By the following year, however, it was “not fit for habitation without minimal repairs” and was abandoned. In 1985, NPS rangers lived in the cabin, which by then was dilapidated. The cabin was torn down the following year. Along American Creek, the former BCF cabin remained active from 1963 through 1970 but was afterward abandoned. The cabin at the southeast end of Lake Grosvenor was also used for only a short time. It was abandoned in the early to mid-1970s.

Although most of Fish and Wildlife’s facilities in Katmai were established on the Bristol Bay side of the monument, the bureau was also concerned with the Shelikof Strait fishery. Prior to statehood, it claimed jurisdiction of all areas below the mean high tide line. (It also, as noted above, claimed jurisdiction over commercial fish throughout the monument.) It carried out occasional patrols in the strait during the 1950s. In addition, the F&WS made scattered attempts to monitor the fisheries resources on the monument’s eastern shore. The agency still maintained its watchman’s cabins on Kafelia Bay, and in the summer of 1953 the agency stationed a salmon-stream guard in a tent about one mile south of the Kaguyak Village site. Both improvements may have been erected in conjunction with a nearby fish trap. The agency, during the 1950s, may also have been active on other portions of the coastline.

After statehood, much of the fisheries management along the Shelikof Strait was transferred to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The ADF&G sought a site from which it could manage, survey, and patrol the salmon and clam fisheries along the monument’s eastern coastline, and in March 1962 it obtained a ten year Special Use Permit from the NPS for a site on Kashvik Bay, up to
three acres in extent, in which to erect one or more field structures. By June, the ADF&G had decided to erect a weir, cabin, and storage shed at the site. Agency personnel used the cabin for the next several years as a base camp for monitoring and patrolling the area.27

At Amalik Bay, twenty miles northeast of Kashvik, the state erected a small fueling station in 1962.28 That may have been the same structure as a 16' x 16' cabin that the ADF&G built during this period in the bay's northwestern cove. Supervisory fish biologist Jack Lechner, then stationed at Chignik, used the cabin to establish a field headquarters for the studying of salmon smolt each spring. Ever since that time, Kodiak-based fisheries agents have used the cabin each March to perform pre-emergent salmon smolt counts. Its continuing utility was reinforced by the decision, in 1985, to replace the cabin's roof, reinforce several walls and to perform other cabin rehabilitation activities.29

Since the mid-1970s, both the National Park Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game have undertaken a wide range of fisheries management projects within Katmai's boundaries, and additional research into the area's offshore fisheries resources has been undertaken by both the NPS and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Most of those studies, however, required nothing more than temporary tent camps by agency field personnel, and no permanent buildings have been constructed in recent years to support fisheries research or management activities.

Historic Property Summary and Recommendations

As has been noted in the above chronology, the chief federal and state fisheries agencies—the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the USBF's successor), the National Park Service, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game—have conducted numerous fisheries management activities, over the past eighty years, within the boundaries of present-day Katmai National Park and Preserve. Most of those research, survey, and monitoring projects have required only a minor, temporary staff presence, and as a result most structures related to fish management activities are either rude cabins, wooden outbuildings, or tents, or weirs. (Examples include the Brooks River fish weir and the Kashvik Bay fisheries cabin.) Two structures, however, warrant more serious consideration because of their size, permanence, and central role in area fisheries management. Those structures are the Lake Brooks Field Laboratory, near Brooks Camp, and the Brooks River fish ladder.

The Lake Brooks Field Laboratory, also known as the Lake Brooks National Marine Fisheries Research Station, is located on the eastern shore of Lake Brooks, just 35 yards south of the Brooks River. (It is known as NPS building number BL-3 and Alaska Heritage Resources Survey Site XMK-124.) It is situated among spruce, willow and other vegetation, approximately 60 feet back from the lakeshore. The building initially served as a headquarters, staging area, laboratory and residence for the crews involved in the Bristol Bay Investigation. Early laboratory use was related to specific salmon research in the Naknek-Brooks lake area; it then expanded to include various Bristol Bay watersheds. Personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the National Park Service have lived and worked in the building over the years.

In 1938, Congress directed an investigation of the salmon fisheries of Bristol Bay, including the Naknek River system, in response to concerns about Japanese offshore fishing. The Lake Brooks area was selected as the headquarters site for the Investigation because it was centrally located in the
Bristol Bay freshwater area, permitted aircraft access in most weather, it had good runs of sockeye salmon, and provided a good subject area for specialized research. (George Eicher, a former director of the laboratory, has noted that the main purpose for the Bristol Bay Investigation—one that was kept quiet for decades—was to show the effects of Japanese fishing. Somewhat later, the laboratory’s primary purpose became one of providing data to buttress the U.S. position during the development of the 1953 North Pacific Fisheries Treaty. This purpose was revealed to the investigators only after the treaty had been implemented.\textsuperscript{30}

The Fish and Wildlife Service, in consultation with the NPS, designed this cross-shaped 59’ x 29’ log building. It reflects the Rustic Style that the NPS developed and used to guide park development during the 1920-40s. The Rustic Style design ethic encouraged making buildings look as if they were constructed by frontier craftsmen using primitive hand tools and using natural materials of the same scale as the surrounding landscape. To fit the Rustic Style, the Laboratory building was designed to keep in scale with the surrounding landscape, and to look as if were constructed by frontier craftsmen using primitive hand tools and natural materials.\textsuperscript{31}

Framing lumber for the building was shipped from Seattle to Naknek on the F&WS vessel \textit{Scoter} in 1941. In preparation for constructing the Laboratory, the Bureau of Fisheries employees cut outside logs from around the Mount Kelez area, and placed them to dry in 1940. That same summer, crews transported materials for building the cabin and the Lake Brooks fish weir from the old Fish and Wildlife station along the Naknek River (near today’s King Salmon) to the Brooks River. To haul materials to the Laboratory, a road was developed (that continues to be used today) from the mouth of Brooks River at Naknek Lake to the cabin site.

Once the materials had arrived at the building site, summer fisheries crews worked on the laboratory in sections over time. Most of the 17’ x 29’ central portion was completed by 1943, although the impressive fireplace and chimney constructed in the middle of the center section was not begun until 1942. World War II slowed construction and research activities. In 1947, the agency decided that the building would begin serving as a deployment and service center for biological crews working in other Bristol Bay areas. In order to create space to process samples, therefore, work on the laboratory began again. (Recognizing the amount of time that would be needed to complete the building addition, the agency also constructed a small temporary structure, set up to the east of the laboratory building, that was used for processing samples until the north wing addition was completed.) The fireplace and chimney were completed in 1953; planned wings, measuring 14’ x 21’, were completed for both the north and south ends of the center section in 1957.
Varied materials were used in constructing the laboratory. Most of the outside walls were constructed of peeled round spruce logs. The 1943 center section and the north wing of the building were constructed using horizontal logs with double saddle notching. The imposing fireplace and chimney is made entirely from local river cobbles and boulders; the stovepipe from the wood cook stove is attached to this chimney. The original foundation is concrete and rubble rock. The materials and craftsmanship used in erecting the wings complements the central section so well that the entire building appears to have been built at the same (1940s) time period.

To enhance the building’s rustic appearance, false rafter ends and purlins were part of the original plan. The false rafter ends were constructed using round logs at each rafter end. The false rafter ends were notched and attached to the milled Douglas fir rafter ends. In the center section at the gable ends, false log roof purlins were installed that extend 2'6" into the room. False purlins were also installed in the north and south wing gables.

The Lake Brooks laboratory is significant because it served as one the major Bristol Bay-area fisheries research headquarters for more than thirty years. The Bristol Bay Investigation's consistent research philosophy and activities provided for a continuity of records, which were used to manage the Bristol Bay fisheries and to provide data for development of the North Pacific Fisheries Treaty of 1953. In addition, Laboratory personnel constructed and used the Lake Brooks weir and the Brooks Falls fish ladder for specific salmon research in the Naknek-Lake Brooks area. The fisheries laboratory is the oldest substantial building in the present-day park, and the first building in the park built by a public entity.

The building served as an administrative center for staging local operations and for studies. Fish and Wildlife Service biological crews arrived at the station and were deployed into the Bristol Bay area. Over the years, the crews gathered a wealth of salmon data. Investigations conducted from the laboratory included collecting scale samples at canneries and streams, aerial and ground surveys of spawning grounds, tagging and crowding studies, and fingerling sampling. Additional activities included tagging salmon, marking juvenile salmon, making spawning ground surveys, and performing aerial spawning ground counts of salmon, including photographic coverage of index areas in all of the major Bristol Bay watersheds.

Beginning in 1961, the Bristol Bay Investigation changed its research direction and expanded its activities to the entire Naknek drainage system. The Field Laboratory expanded its coordinating activities, and for more than a decade, fisheries management agencies—first the Fish and Wildlife Service, later the National Marine Fisheries Service—built additional cabins, weirs, and counting fences in Katmai National Monument. While the agency maintained counts, studies shifted to on-the-ground experiments. This change in management philosophy eventually de-emphasized the need to maintain a strong central headquarters presence. Fish counts along the Brooks River were stopped in 1967, and in 1974 NMFS decided that the laboratory no longer needed to be staffed. The National Park Service acquired the building in 1979. The new agency decided to use the building for employee housing, and several modifications (including a metal instead of a shingle roof) have recently been effectuated consistent with that purpose.
The building is part of the Brooks River Archaeological District National Historic Landmark (AHRS # XMK-051) and has been judged as a non-contributing element to that NHL. Recognizing its historical importance, however, it is suggested as part of this study that the Lake Brooks Field Laboratory is significant under National Register Criterion A (for "properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history"). This significance has been suggested even though Criterion G applies (for properties that are either less than 50 years of age or for properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years). Park contract personnel recently completed a Determination of Eligibility for this building. The State Historic Preservation Office's response to that study determined that the property was eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places; the agency did, however, have some concerns that needed to be addressed before formal listing could take place.

The other major historic property in Katmai National Park and Preserve related to fisheries research and management is the Brooks River fish ladder. This structure is one of the few fish ladders in southwestern Alaska and one of the few (perhaps the only) fish ladder within a National Park Service unit.
As noted above, Bureau of Fisheries personnel became concerned about aiding fish passage over Brooks Falls in 1920. Using hand tools at first, then dynamite, they smoothed out a rough pathway around the north end of the falls during the summers of 1920 and 1921. Fifteen years later, the agency first considered and planned the installation of a fish ladder around the falls' south side. For the next ten years, agency personnel periodically sought the funds to construct the facility. Throughout this period, the falls were located within the boundaries of the newly-expanded Katmai National Monument, but the USBF—which became part of the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1940—made no mention of its plans to the National Park Service, because they apparently thought that the NPS would be unconcerned about such a minor structure.

In 1947, F&WS engineers designed the fishway, and in 1948 materials for the ladder were flown to Lake Brooks or extracted locally. Three U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees—John Hurst, Mike Michel, Mike Wold, and Jerry O’Neil—blasted and hewed the ladder from solid rock to make it as natural-appearing as possible. Ten feet in width, the ladder had seven pools, each one foot above the other. A headgate metered water into the topmost pool. The fisheries employees completed the ladder, except for the bottommost pool, in 1949. The remaining portions were completed early the next summer, and the ladder opened on August 7, 1950.

The first NPS employee to become aware that a fish ladder was in the offing was Alfred Kuehl, a landscape architect in the agency’s regional office in San Francisco. Kuehl visited the site in August 1948, while F&WS engineers were still finalizing plans for the ladder. Kuehl, accompanied by the regional office’s assistant regional director Herbert Maier, returned to the site a year later during the midst of construction work. Neither protested the construction, either during or immediately after their visit. But in June 1950 another NPS employee, George L. Collins of the Alaska Recreation Survey, arrived at Katmai. Collins, quite clearly, was perturbed at what he saw and demanded to know who had allowed such a travesty to be built in an NPS unit. The NPS, in turn, asked the F&WS why it built the ladder without authorization. The F&WS, in response, admitted that it had never asked for permission to build the ladder; it noted, however, that neither Kuehl nor Maier had expressed any objections while visiting the construction site. The mixed messages that the NPS was conveying, combined with the obvious fact that the fish ladder was an accomplished fact, prevented the NPS from stopping the new facility. The incident, however, rankled feelings between the two agencies for years afterward.

When the construction of the fish ladder began, the Fish and Wildlife Service was the only federal agency with an active, ongoing presence in Katmai National Monument. As such, fish management (lacking other activities) was a primary governmental function in the Lake Brooks and Brooks River area. But in 1950, Northern Consolidated Airlines constructed five fish camps in the country west of the Aleutian Range; one of these camps was located at the mouth of Brooks River. As a result of this development, and the commencement that same year of an active presence by an NPS seasonal ranger, the focus of activity at the monument began to change.

Throughout the 1950s, the primary activity in the Brooks River area was the seasonal operation of the NCA fish camp, and the NPS presence was minimal. NPS officials made continued protests about the ladder, but the F&WS, which strongly supported its existence, rebuffed them. But by the early 1960s, the F&WS began to change its philosophy toward fish management, and Katmai
National Monument began to attract visitors in large numbers who had little interest in sport fishing. Based on these trends, the fish ladder became increasingly anachronistic. In 1973, the National Marine Fisheries Service (the successor to the F&WS) vacated the area; that same year, NPS personnel blocked the fish ladder. Although the NPS’s action did not succeed in preventing some water—and some fish—from using the ladder, the facility has been largely unused in recent years.

Because the NPS and the various fisheries agencies have had strongly differing attitudes toward the utility of the fish ladder, the facility has been the focus of several studies over the years. Perhaps predictably, studies sponsored by fisheries agencies have concluded that the fish ladder has had a significant effect in boosting the success of the Brooks River salmon run. NPS studies, by contrast, have concluded that the river’s salmon run had been successful for hundreds of years before humans had ever intervened and that the fish ladder’s “success” has been either inconsequential or irrelevant to NPS management goals.

The Brooks River fish ladder, therefore, is significant because of its relative (perhaps absolute) rarity among fishery-enhancement facilities within an NPS unit. It is also significant because it has been both a symbol of contention between the management philosophies of the various federal agencies toward fisheries management, and because it also symbolizes the changing role of fish ladders in the research process within federal fisheries agencies. It is thus worthy of consideration as a property to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, which identifies properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. It is recognized that other NPS policies—both management policies and natural resource management policies—frown on either the physical modification of streambeds or on habitat manipulation. As a physical feature, however, the Brooks River fish ladder appears to have potential historical importance.
Endnotes


2 U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, *Alaska Fishery and Fur-Seal Industries* (Washington, GPO) for 1920 (p. 32) and 1921 (p. 17); NPS, *Draft Environmental Assessment, Brooks Falls Fish Ladder, Katmai National Park and Preserve*, May 1987, 16. Many sources have stated that the original cut was located where the fish ladder was later built. Both the USBF and Frank Been's *Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection* (p. 11), however, confirm that the 1920-21 activity took place across the river from the fish ladder.


6 Eicher, April 25, 1967, 1. Later it was discovered that Lake Brooks was the least typical of the Bristol Bay spawning and nursery areas.

7 Revised figures are from Eicher, 1971, as quoted by Carl Burger, with James Lundeen and Anders Danielson, “Biological and Hydrological Evaluations of the Fish Ladder at Brooks River Falls, Alaska” (draft report), U.S. F&WS, National Fishery Research Center, Anchorage, June 1, 1985, copy in AKSO-RNR files. No count is available for 1943.

8 Eicher, April 25, 1967, 7.


13 O. A. Tomlinson (RD/R4) to Director NPS, July 31, 1950, in File 714, KNM Box 312, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA SB.

14 Eicher, April 25, 1967, 10-12.


17 NPS, Master Plan Brief for Katmai National Monument, 1965, 17 (map).


19 NPS, Draft Environmental Assessment, Brooks Falls Fish Ladder, KATM, May 1987, 18. But Superintendent Gil Blinn, who arrived in September 1969, recalled that the weir was “discontinued about my first summer or so.” Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.

20 George J. Eicher’s analysis, “The Effects of Laddering a Falls in a Salmon Stream,” (unpublished mss., USF&WS), c. 1956. Eicher ascribed the post-ladder sockeye salmon decline to overfishing in Bristol Bay and not to the presence of the fish ladder. He argued that the population of three salmon species—pinks, cohoes, and chums—were healthier in the 1950s (after ladder construction) than in the 1940s. But the average numbers of those three species (both before and after ladder construction) were less than one-tenth of one percent of the red salmon population. Contemporary biologists consider any differences in the number of pinks, cohoes, and chums to be so small as to be insignificant and inconclusive.
Darrell L. Coe (Management Assistant, KNM) to Supt. MOMC, March 27, 1967; George A. Hall (MOMC) to Assistant RD, WRO, August 19, 1967; both in AKSO-RNR files.


NPS, Final Environmental Statement, Katmai Wilderness, Katmai National Monument, Alaska, June 13, 1974, 29; SAR for 1973 (p. 2) and 1974 (p. 2). Harry Reitz, the NMFS Alaska Director, noted in 1978 that the agency “had not maintained an active research program there since 1972.” Reitz to RD/PNRO, March 20, 1978, in “Buildings” file, KATM.

“Brooks Lake General Correspondence” file, BCF folder, AKSO-RCR Collection; SAR 1978, 6; Morris interview, November 2, 1989.

Carper, List of Classified Structures Inventory, 4-5; Janis Meldrum interview, June 9, 1993.

Cahalane, A Biological Survey of Katmai National Monument, 178.

Samuel A. King (Supt. MOMC) to Dexter F. Lall (ADF&G, Kodiak), June 22, 1962; Special Use Permit KATM-1-62; both in Item 13 (“Special Use Permits”), Breedlove 1962; NPS, Master Plan Brief for Katmai National Monument, 1965, 17 (map).


NPS, Katmai Coast Field Season Reports for 1984 and 1985.

George Eicher, former Laboratory Director, unpub. mss. dated September 1, 1989, in Box 4, KATM/ANIA NPS Collection.

Laura Soullière Harrison, Architecture in the Parks National Historic Landmark Theme Study (Washington, NPS, Nov. 1986), 7-8.

Eicher, September 1, 1989.


Alfred C. Kuehl to Assistant Regional Director, Design and Construction, Region Four, August 21, 1951, in File N1423 ("Fish, 1946-1959"), KATM; George J. Eicher to Dean Paddock, March 21, 1987, in AKSO-RNR files.
36 Alfred C. Kuehl to Assistant Regional Director, Design and Construction, Region Four, August 21, 1951, in File N1423 (“Fish, 1946-1959”), KATM.

37 George L. Collins to RD/R4, NPS, July 19, 1950, in “Katmai NM” folder, Box 312, RG 79, NARA SB.

38 O. A. Tomlinson (RD/R4) to Director NPS, July 31, 1950; Hillory A. Tolson (Acting Director, NPS) to Director, F&WS, August 25, 1950; M. C. James (Acting Director, F&WS) to Director NPS, September 27, 1950; all in File 208, KNM Box 311, RG 79, NARA SB; Eicher, September 1, 1989.

TOURISM AND EARLY PARK MANAGEMENT

HE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM in Katmai is intertwined with the active management of Katmai National Monument by the National Park Service (NPS). Beginning in 1950, the park concessioner's development of fishing camps and visitor services served, directly or indirectly, as a catalyst for NPS to establish its first ranger in the monument, thirty-two years after the monument's creation. The original concessioner's fishing camps were comprised of wall tents that were later replaced with prefabricated wooden cabins. NPS's first permanent (all-wood) buildings in Katmai were a ranger station and a boat house, both located at Brooks Camp.

Between 1956 and 1968, the major tourist-related improvements that are seen in the park today were erected. The concessioner improvements included new lodges and guest cabins at three camps and one lodge at a fourth camp. During the summer of 1962, NPS Mission 66 funding provided for a 22-mile road from Brooks Camp to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes; three Panabode cabins used for housing, and a fourth Panabode placed at Three Forks Overlook as a visitor facility; and the construction of various short trails leading from both Brooks Camp and Three Forks Overlook. While Katmai's visitors during the 1940s and 1950s were almost exclusively sport fishermen, the construction of the so-called Valley Road helped attract non-fishing tourists and signaled the beginning of Katmai as a significant general-purpose tourist destination.

Early Tourism Patterns

Katmai National Monument was proclaimed in 1918, primarily as a scientific preserve at the behest of the National Geographic Society. Because the monument was remote from existing transportation routes, it had few visitors, and because the monument's resources were in little danger of degradation, the NPS completely ignored the area. Prior to the 1960s, the budget for all of the country's national monuments was minuscule, and for more than thirty years after its establishment, virtually no money was spent to develop or manage Katmai National Monument.
During the 1920s, a handful of Katmai visitors used Kodiak as a jumping off point, just as the earlier National Geographic Society expeditions had done. Tourists typically crossed the forty-mile wide Shelikof Strait in small boats. Despite NPS plans to develop an access road in the mid-1920s, funding did not follow. The advent of aviation provided new opportunities for tourists to fly into the monument beginning in the late 1920s. Early tours of volcanic country were provided by Anchorage Air Transport and Anchorage-based Pacific International Airways. Beginning in the late 1930s, Bristol Bay Air Service and independent pilot John Walatka offered tours as well.

Pressure for NPS to take a more active role in the monument began following the 1931 monument boundary expansion. Reports of illegal hunting, trapping and fishing activities in the monument brought about a cooperative agreement that delegated hunting and trapping enforcement regulations to the Alaska Game Commission. In 1937, the first NPS Katmai patrol occurred; it amounted to a one-day flyover in which landings were made at Lake Brooks and at Savonoski. With lack of funds to provide a ranger staff, NPS had to rely on the cooperation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to patrol Katmai for many years. Three years later, Mount McKinley National Park Superintendent Frank T. Been and wildlife biologist Victor Cahalane visited the monument on a more extensive trip. In a report on that trip, Been made a particular note about the Katmai country’s beautiful lakes and splendid trout fishing; he also noted, however, that its remoteness precluded it from becoming a tourist center for many years.²

What Been could not have foreseen was the influx of military personnel that would soon be using the monument. In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps established Naknek Air Base at a location fifteen miles east of Naknek. (This site was renamed King Salmon Air Station in the 1950s.) Before long, two military recreation camps were constructed as well. Naknek Recreation Annex No. 1, also called Rapids Camp, was located and at the foot of Naknek River Rapids, while Annex No. 2, called Lake Camp, was located near the western outlet of Naknek Lake. The growth of these camps had little effect on the monument’s fish populations, but the new access created by the air base brought hundreds of military and construction personnel into the monument; they flew in on small floatplanes to access rainbow trout fishing areas throughout the upper Naknek drainage. Charter aircraft services, particularly after the war, also flew growing numbers of sportsmen into the monument.³ Despite that upswing in interest, the Katmai country prior to 1950 attracted only the hardiest, most independent fishermen.
Establishing the Concession Camps

Throughout this period, the National Park Service’s presence in Katmai was limited to occasional site visits, hampered as it was by lack of funding and agency direction. The agency was under an increasing amount of pressure to develop the monument in some aspect. The movement to supply visitor services and accommodations, however, came not from the NPS but from an airline executive, Raymond I. Petersen, who in late 1949 laid out a plan to set up a series of five tent camps in the lake country west of the Aleutian Range. Two of those camps—at Brooks River and Lake Grosvenor—would be located in the monument. The NPS wisely recognized that Petersen’s proposal offered both tourist accommodations and access, and in March 1950 it signed a five-year concessions contract for his fledgling Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA) tourism business. In less than three months, Petersen built all five tent camps; Brooks Camp, the linchpin of his system, opened its doors to its first visitor on May 31, while guests arrived at Coville Camp somewhat later. The other three camps—Battle Lake Camp, Kulik Camp and Nonvianuk Camp—were located outside the monument boundaries; they were absorbed into Katmai National Park and Preserve when the Alaska Lands Act became law in 1980.

Petersen intended that the five tent camps would appeal to fishermen, primarily if not exclusively. The camps, therefore, were essentially rustic facilities—a series of tent frames covered by olive drab-colored G.I. tent material. Most of the construction materials were precut elsewhere before being flown into the camps.4

Brooks Camp, the largest of the NCA camps, was located just north of the Brooks River mouth, on Naknek Lake. The camp began as an eight- or nine-tent guest and employee complex. Most of the guest tents were nine feet square. As visitation grew during the decade, the number of guest tents grew, and by the end of the decade the camp boasted 22 buildings, including a 32’ x 16’ cookhouse, a bathhouse, a powerhouse, a storage shed, and a root cellar. Brooks, alone among the NCA camps, offered running water, flush toilets, and shower baths.5

Coville Camp, located along the narrow peninsula separating Coville and Grosvenor lakes, originally consisted of one 16’ square cookhouse, at the south end of camp, along with one large and four smaller guest tents, a pump house, and a root cellar. In 1954, Dr. Gilbert Hovey Grosvenor—the longtime editor of the National Geographic Magazine and a major player in proclaiming the original (1918) monument—visited the site, and to commemorate their visit, Petersen changed the facility’s name to Grosvenor Camp. The site has borne that moniker ever since.

Kulik Camp was originally located along the western shoreline of Kulik Lake, just north of its outflow into Kulik River. Due to prevailing high winds at the site, however, the camp was abandoned after its first year of operation and moved to its present site, a 10.64-acre tract located south of Kulik River and along the eastern shoreline of Nonvianuk Lake. (Ruins of the original camp may still be found.) The present camp, consists of one 16’ square mess hall and kitchen, two other 16’ square sleeping quarters, four 9’ square sleeping quarters, and a root cellar.6

Battle Lake Camp, on a 3.98-acre site at the northern tip of the present park, originally consisted of one 16’ square mess hall and kitchen, 2 other 16’ square sleeping quarters, five 9’ square sleeping
quarters, and a pumphouse. The camp is located on the northeastern side of Battle River at the Battle Lake outflow.

Nonvianuk Camp is a 2.36-acre parcel located at the western end of Nonvianuk Lake. It is the smallest of the five NCA camps and the only one that is presently in Katmai National Preserve. NCA established the camp adjacent to the Hammersly Cabin complex; prospector Rufus K. “Bill” Hammersly had operated out of the site since 1938, and he helped operate the camp during its first few seasons. Facilities at the camp originally consisted of one 16’ square tent, which served as a mess hall and kitchen, and two 9’ square sleeping quarters.

During the spring of 1950, Northern Consolidated Airlines was not the only entity preparing to establish a presence in Katmai National Monument. Once the concessions contract had been signed, NPS officials recognized that the agency needed to establish a presence there both to provide information and to ensure that monument users followed NPS regulations. The Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park, in response, budgeted $2,000 for Katmai operations, and assigned a seasonal ranger, William Nancarrow, to patrol Katmai. Nancarrow arrived at Brooks Camp about July 1. As one of his first tasks in his new assignment, Nancarrow built a two-room wall tent, a cache, and a well. All were located at the present Brooks Camp campground, which is one-half mile north of the Brooks River mouth.

Facilities Development During the 1950s

Ray Petersen, NCA's president, and John Walatka, the company’s superintendent of camp operations, cooperatively managed the five Katmai-area camps. The duo quickly recognized that the camps were commercially successful, and visitation to the camps grew consistently between 1950 and 1960. The three southernmost camps—Brooks, Grosvenor, and Kulik—were better suited for tourism growth than the other two, and in recognition of that fact, Petersen and Walatka decided to undertake a gradual improvement program.

Three primary elements constituted NCA's improvement program. First, most if not all of the camps' wall tents were replaced by plywood boards, then overlaid by asphalt shingling; second, new wooden buildings were constructed either of prefabricated, simulated log “Panabode” material or of locally-planed lumber; and third, attempts were made to improve access to the camps.

Structures made of Panabode material were constructed at several camps. In 1956 at Brooks Camp, NCA erected a combination store, office, and manager's quarters; it measures 20’ x 24’ and remains today. The following year, NCA constructed a similar Panabode structure at Grosvenor Camp. The combination manager's office, residence, and lounge measures 32’ x 22’. By early 1960, further improvements at Grosvenor Camp included a bath house, two cabins of Panabode-styled cedar, four log buildings, six tent-covered structures, and a power house. At Kulik Camp, NCA officials decided not to construct new buildings out of Panabode material; instead, they installed a sawmill and planing mill in 1956, and before long they began to prepare the materials to be used in the camp's large lodge building. The lodge was completed by 1960. The wood used in the camp’s store and garage, completed somewhat later, also came from the nearby sawmill, as did the lumber for the Nonvianuk Camp lodge, located at the far end of Nonvianuk Lake.
In order to improve access to the camps, NCA applied pressure along two fronts. At Brooks, it made repeated attempts to build an airstrip south of Brooks River. In 1954, it notified NPS officials that it demanded an airstrip in order to justify the construction of an expanded lodge facility. NPS Director Conrad Wirth, however, demurred. The construction moneys promised by Mission 66 gave renewed hope that an airstrip might be built, but agency officials were unwilling to expend funds under this program in such a remote, little-used monument. At Kulik, however, NCA had better luck. The company, because its facility was located outside of Katmai National Monument, had no difficulties in obtaining permission from the Bureau of Land Management to build an airstrip. In 1954 it roughed out a 1,500-foot gravel airstrip, which was lengthened to 2,000 feet the following year. Several years later, NCA decided to fly Fairchild F-27B propjets into Kulik, so it doubled the runway’s length. Company officials were well aware that the new, longer runway exceeded the 80-acre allotment for which NCA had originally applied, but they waited several years before taking any action to legally justify its existence.  

The National Park Service, partly in response to NCA’s increasing presence, also moved to establish new facilities in the monument. Most were located in or near Brooks Camp. Facilities constructed during the 1950s included a ranger station and a boat house.
NPS plans to build a ranger station began during the summer of 1954 when logs were cut, peeled, and placed to dry for use the following spring at Brooks Camp. By February of 1955, NPS ordered building materials from Seattle and arranged for delivery to King Salmon by a Fish and Wildlife vessel. In July 1955, NPS personnel completed the ranger station, and soon afterward, the seasonal ranger in charge of monument operations, Dick Ward, disassembled the wall tent and cache where he had been living (one-half mile north of Brooks Camp) and moved into the new facility. At this time, the interior plumbing and cabinetry work had yet to be completed. This was the National Park Service’s first permanently built structure in Katmai and its first ranger station, thirty-seven years after the monument had been established.

During the late 1950s, NPS staff added a generator shed, storage cache, fuel tank and weather instrument shelter at Brooks Camp. The log storage cache was placed in front of the ranger station, and although the original is gone, a replacement stands in the same location. The rangers also constructed two trails nearby.

NPS Katmai rangers built the boat storage house around 1960. During summer 1958, the rangers secured and stored building materials in sufficient quantity to construct a "small warehouse" at Brooks Camp for the following year. The boat house was probably built during the summer of 1959, inasmuch as the building was complete when Ranger-in-Charge Robert Peterson first arrived at Brooks Camp in the spring of 1960. The Boat Storage House provided needed storage space and has taken on multi-use functions over the years. It has served as a winter storage area for agency watercraft, in the summer of 1963 it was used for visitor interpretive talks, and in 1964 it was being used as a VIP residence. Later uses include a visitor contact station and its current function as a ranger station.

The ranger station (BR-1) and boat house (BR-38), as originally constructed, complement each other in several ways: they are approximately the same size and shape; they exhibit the same use of materials (local logs painted or stained dark brown, with green metal roofs that were later changed to natural color wood shingles); and they have the same type of windows. The cabins, consistent with
the Rustic Style, reflect similar cabin construction, materials and colors found in other national parks, including those at Mount McKinley National Park (now Denali National Park and Preserve), from where Katmai rangers were assigned.

Expansion of Improvements Since 1960

Both the NCA and the NPS erected gradual improvements during the 1950s. During the winter of 1959-1960, however, NCA president Ray Petersen met with Mount McKinley Superintendent Samuel King and announced that in return for a twenty-year contract, he intended to “plan and finance substantial improvements of facilities in the Monument in order to accommodate the rapidly expanding tourist demand.” King liked the idea of a twenty-year contract and gave that opinion in a letter to his superior. Petersen, meanwhile, got ready to move building materials to the Monument while the ice on the lakes still held. (Higher-ups, it turned out, refused to accept Petersen’s contract idea; a year later, the NCA and the NPS signed a five-year contract.)

NCA spent much of the summer of 1960 constructing new facilities. By the spring of 1961, company personnel had completed building the mess hall portion of Brooks Lodge (BRC-19), which measured 50’ x 24’. (A 20’ x 20’ kitchen was added on soon afterward.) The construction project
also included seven 12' x 14' guest cabins (BRC-20-27) at Brooks Camp and one cabin at Grosvenor, as well as "a large approved cess pool," a power plant, and a new water system. A combination comfort station and bathhouse was constructed in the summer of 1961.

New NPS improvements took place in and around Brooks Camp in 1962, in large part because of a discussion held in February 1961 between NCA President Ray Petersen, NPS Director Conrad Wirth, and Alaska Senator Ernest Gruening. Before that meeting, the NPS had made no moves to expend Mission 66 funds on Katmai, one of the least-visited units in the NPS system, in part because Petersen's company held such influence over the monument. Gruening, however, angrily told Wirth that "you don't treat a constituent [Petersen] like this," and Wirth reluctantly agreed to fund certain improvements. Central to Petersen's plan was a 22-mile road that would allow Brooks Camp visitors to easily access the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. That road was constructed during the summer of 1962. In order to house the construction workers, three Panabode cabins were built in Brooks Camp that year, and a warehouse was built in 1963. Other improvements that followed in the wake of road construction included a 24' x 28' reception center at Three Forks Overlook (at the southeastern end of the Valley Road) and various area hiking trails.

As a direct result of the facility upgrade at Brooks Camp, and the construction of the Valley Road, Katmai began to appeal to general visitors as well as sport fishing enthusiasts. Annual visitation began to increase dramatically—from less than 350 in 1962, to more than 1,000 in 1967, to more than 10,000 in 1970. These new visitors demanded the construction of a number of new structures; those built in the 1960s included a ten-unit guest-cabin complex (called the Skytel), constructed in 1964-65, and two NPS employee guest cabins, built in 1967. Another structure worked on in 1967 was the reconstruction of a prehistoric house (the Brooks River barabara) just west of Brooks Camp. Only two or three additional buildings were constructed at Brooks Camp during the 1970s: they include an auditorium and a generator building. Few buildings were constructed at the other Katmai camps during the 1960s or 1970s. Since 1980, many additional buildings have been constructed at Brooks Camp and the other Katmai camps—some by the concessioner, others by the NPS—but they will not be discussed here.
During the 1960s, the NPS became aware of two new camps in the area. As noted above, the Army Air Corps had established two camps near its King Salmon facility during the 1940s: Rapids Camp, along the Naknek River, and Lake Camp, at the western end of Naknek Lake. Facilities at Lake Camp, over the years, grew to include a 16' x 40' Yakutat hut (presumably used as a barracks), two Quonset huts, several corrugated metal shop buildings, a dock, and a building used as a barracks, mess hall, and recreation hall. The camp, therefore, had been developing for more than twenty years when Congress, in January 1969, decided to expand Katmai's boundaries to the westward to include portions of Lake Camp. The monument expansion apparently had no effect on the camp or its activities. When the camp closed, in 1976, the buildings were abandoned. Two years later, on December 2, 1978, most of Lake Camp's buildings were destroyed by fire, apparently in reaction to President Carter's national monument proclamation the day before. The remaining camp buildings have since fallen into varying states of collapse.\textsuperscript{11}

The other Katmai-area camp that came to the NPS's attention during the 1960s was Enchanted Lake Lodge, located a mile south of Nonvianuk Lake. In 1964, Edwin Seiler began constructing a lodge complex at Enchanted Lake; he completed two guest buildings in 1965 and a lodge in 1966. By the end of the decade he had also constructed a warehouse and a mile-long road connecting his property to Nonvianuk Lake. Additional structures have arisen on the site since 1970.\textsuperscript{12}

In recent years, NPS officials made two decisions that have negatively impacted tourist-oriented buildings in the monument. In 1984, they ordered Katmailand (which was then the park concessioner) to demolish or move the remaining asphalt-shingled cabins at the original Brooks Camp site. They did so because the original camp, situated as it was in the lowlands near the mouth of Brooks River, was subject to periodic flooding and because the site was a primary travel route for the area's brown bear population. Katmailand, in response, demolished some cabins and moved others in 1985 and 1986; as a result, the only two "original" Brooks Camp structures have not only been modified by the addition of asphalt shingling, but they have also been moved.

**Historic Property Summary and Recommendations**

As the narrative above has suggested, the first structures in the monument that are related to a tourism theme were constructed in 1950, when NCA officials decided to build five fishing camps in the lake country west of the Aleutian Range. From south to north, these five were Brooks Camp, Coville (later Grosvenor) Camp, Kulik Camp, Nonvianuk Camp, and Battle Lake Camp. The camps, not surprisingly, started modestly; their first structures were either tents or wall tents. Most if not all of these tents were soon replaced with structures featuring asphalt shingling over a wooden frame. By the mid-1950s, however, both the National Park Service and NCA began building wooden structures: the NPS's first structures were crafted from local lumber, while NCA constructed Panabode-style buildings. (By 1962, the NPS was also using the Panabode style in its new Brooks Camp buildings.)

The various camps, therefore, are an amalgam of buildings. Each camp still boasts several asphalt-shingled tents; these are the oldest buildings, but all have been modified from their original wall-tent construction, and in Brooks Camp's case, the two remaining buildings of this style are no longer on their original footings. The second oldest set of buildings, all of which are still standing, are the two
log buildings that the NPS built during the 1950s (the ranger station and the boat house, both located at Brooks Camp) and the concessioner’s first two wooden buildings (the manager’s office at Brooks Camp and Grosvenor Camp, respectively, both in the Panabode style). Next in order of importance, chronologically speaking, are the various buildings that the concessioner built from local lumber at Kulik and Nonvianuk camps, the most prominent being Kulik Lodge; these were built between 1958 and the early 1960s. Buildings erected during the same general time period, but of a different style, include Brooks Lodge, the various guest cabins, and the combination comfort station and bathhouse; these are all of Panabode-style construction. Of final note are the various NPS structures that were built during or slightly after the construction of the Valley Road; these include three employee cabins, a warehouse, and the Three Forks Overlook reception center.

Of this retinue, perhaps the most significant are the NPS’s Brooks River Ranger Station (NPS Building No. BR-1, AHR Site No. XMK-093), which was built in 1955, and the nearby boat storage house (BR-38, XMK-094), which was built circa 1959. They are considered significant because they represent the early period of tourism and park management in Katmai National Monument, and
because their Rustic Style of construction hearkens back to styles found in other national park units. For both of these buildings, the National Park Service submitted a report to Alaska's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), requesting a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) to the National Register of Historic Places. In July 1999, the SHPO responded by agreeing that both buildings were eligible to the National Register under Criterion A. This determination was made despite the fact that during the summer of 1998, an addition to the Ranger Station's east elevation dramatically changed its historic appearance. The modification is, however, considered reversible inasmuch as the original station walls and roof structure remain largely intact.

As the discussion above has shown, the Northern Consolidated Airlines camps erected various styles of buildings between 1950 and the early 1960s. Each of the structures built during this period has the potential for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. It is recommended that the historic buildings in these five camps—constructed by both the concessioner and the National Park Service—be further investigated for National Register eligibility. This investigation should include a field survey, further documentation, and subsequent data evaluation. Because they are manifestations of the early tourism industry in Katmai National Monument, these properties should all be nominated under a tourism theme, although a conservation theme may also be considered for properties erected by the NPS. And because of both historical and architectural similarities, it is recommended that a Multiple Property Documentation Form be employed. Such a form provides a streamlined method for organizing and registering properties, and it facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations.
Endnotes


2 Been, *Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection* 12, 30-31, 47.


10 The origin of the name “boat house” is uncertain, as there is little information regarding boats that the NPS used during this period (See Chapter 5). The “boat” being referred to may have been the small craft that staff used to cross Brooks River, or it may have referred to a Mission 66 proposal that would have brought visitors from Brooks Camp to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes via a combination boat service (to the mouth of the Ukak River) and a ten-mile road.


13 Judy Bittner to Deborah Liggett, July 6, 1999, in LAKA cultural resource files.
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Katmai Village building. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 1, 3944.*

Roy Fure, a longtime trapper, fisherman, and prospector, is shown with several traps hanging on the cabin wall behind him. *NPS-LACL Photo Collection.*

Katmai barabaras covered with volcanic ash, 1915. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expedition Collection, Box 1, 3946.*

Map used on the front and back covers is adapted from the “Katmai National Monument, Alaska, Surveyed by the Katmai Expeditions of the National Geographic Society 1917-1919.” *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.*

Roy Fures cabin at Bay of Islands. *NPS-AKSO.*

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