

# HOMESTEADS ON FORT RICHARDSON, ALASKA



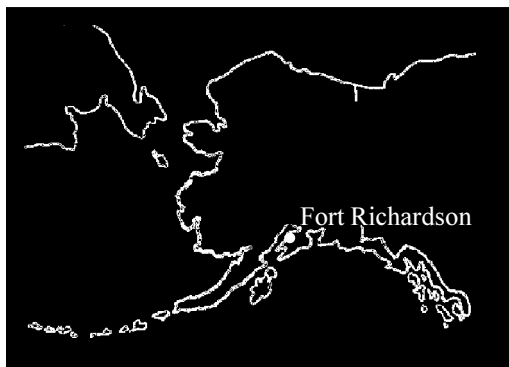
*Lake Otter—Anchorage, Alaska*

March 2001

CEMML TPS 01-4



# HOMESTEADS ON FORT RICHARDSON, ALASKA



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March 2001

CEMML TPS 01-4



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# CHAPTER 1.0 Introduction

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Today we know Fort Richardson as an important and busy Army fort. The sizeable installation is sprinkled with office buildings, homes, training facilities, and laced with roads. Access to and from Anchorage is speedy and effortless by way of the Glenn Highway. Just sixty years ago, however, this area was dramatically different. The landscape was largely an undeveloped expanse of forest and brush, broken up only by the occasional homestead. Roads were at a premium, houses were small, and there were no public utilities available for those living that far out of town.

Homesteading was a program initiated by the government to open up federal lands to agricultural development and push settlement westward. In Alaska, homesteaders were presented with unique challenges when compared to the rest of the United States. Alaska homesteading regulations evolved over the years to account for these differences. Homesteading on what is now Fort Richardson began with John and Daisy Whitney in 1914, and ended in 1941 and 1942, as the land was acquired for the establishment of a military base during World War II. Those who had received patent (title to the land) by fulfilling the homestead requirements were obligated to sell their land to the government. Those still in the process of obtaining a patent on claims (known as “proving up”) sold their improvements on the land.

The bulk of the homesteaders on Fort Richardson applied for entry from 1937 to 1939. Most did not have enough time to prove up on the land before it was withdrawn. Though they had but a few years, most were involved in constructing extensive improvements such as cabins, roadway clearings and clearings for cultivation purposes. One must assume that the withdrawal of the land for military purposes came as quite a shock to many who had put so much work into the area.

This study is intended to be a companion to the *Elmendorf Air Force Base Homestead Study*, though its scope and focus are somewhat different due to the later date at which the majority of homestead applications were filed in this area. Fort Richardson probably received less initial homestead settlement because it was further away from Anchorage.

The intent of this study is to document the history of homesteading in the area and establish a historic context of the time period. This is necessary in order to accurately identify, document and manage any cultural resources related to homesteading that may exist within the military boundaries. Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 mandates this process.

This study focuses on those who were homesteading in the Fort Richardson area during the land withdrawals and those whose land and improvements were subsequently purchased by the government. The study is further focused on those homesteads that received patents, were close to receiving patents, or those that had built on or improved the land to some extent. It should be noted, however, that others

may have homesteaded in the area and given up their claims for various reasons before the 1940s. Homesteading was a labor-intensive endeavor. There were those unable or unwilling to meet the requirements necessary in order to gain patent to the land.



## CHAPTER 2.0 Methodology

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This study generally used the *Elmendorf Air Force Base Homestead Study* as a model in procedure. Research began with examination of maps from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and investigation of old audit files pertaining to land transactions. Audit files provided a wealth of information relating to individual homesteaders, buildings they constructed, and the land disposal history, including purchasing price of claims.

This information provided an excellent foundation on which to build further research, and allowed for the identification of all people who had homesteads when the Army acquired the land in the early 1940s.

After people were identified, the next step was determining when they lived on the land. Information about homestead entry dates, whether a parcel was patented, and when a homestead closed, was found in case abstracts at the Bureau of Land Management public room. Histories of land transactions on patented homesteads were usually found in the Corps of Engineer records and confirmed in the Alaska State Recorder's Office, grantor-grantee indices. The Alaska State Recorder's Office has recording information on patent dates, quitclaim deeds, warranty deeds, and title transfers. Another source of information was the National Archives, which holds court case records in contested land purchases with the government. The National Archives also held files on many homesteaders with information pertaining to the history of the government's purchase of land and/or improvements constructed. Appendices A and B outline all information relating to land transactions on patented homesteads, and filing and closing dates on unperfected entries.

The next step in the research was adding a personal dimension to the homesteaders' histories. An obituary search provided excellent information on individuals – generally including birth dates, place of birth, occupation, marital status and names of surviving relatives or children. Every effort was made to locate any surviving family members. Unfortunately, it was determined that the majority of people who homesteaded on Fort Richardson had passed away. Many were bachelors with no known relatives in Alaska. For those whose obituary could not be located in the Anchorage Daily Times index, an on-line search of the Social Security Death Index was conducted to determine where and when a person had died.

Several living homesteaders were located with the help of John Bagoy, a longtime Alaskan who was a child during the Anchorage homesteading era. Mr. Bagoy also remembered details about a number of other people who had passed away. The 1920 U.S. Census served as another source of personal information about individuals. Many of the Fort Richardson homesteaders did not file for entry until the late 1930s and therefore did not show up in the 1920 census. Personal interviews with homesteaders or their children proved to be invaluable.

The final phase of the project was the location, identification and evaluation of any homestead remains. This was accomplished through aerial survey and examination of aerial photographs of the fort to discern visible traces of buildings and/or fields, and by consulting with people who are familiar with the Fort Richardson landscape. Bill Quirk, who has worked on the post for many years, was essential in locating the remaining buildings and field traces.

## CHAPTER 3.0 The Environment

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Fort Richardson consists of 61,000 acres of land immediately east of Elmendorf Air Force Base and west of Eagle River. It extends from Knik Arm south across the Chugach Mountains and approximately two miles south of Anchorage. On the eastern border is one of the largest parks in the country, Chugach State Park. The adjoining areas are largely free of development and combine to create a long stretch of undisturbed wilderness. The fort encompasses a range of geographical features and environments, though the majority of the land lies within the Anchorage lowlands 500 feet above sea level.

The different environmental zones of Fort Richardson can largely be distinguished on the elevation of the land. At the lower elevations, a zone of white and black spruce forests covers the majority of the undeveloped land. Forests are broken up by areas of brush near lakes and creeks and between the tree line and tundra areas. The tree line for the Chugach Mountains is at 3,500 to 4,000 feet. Above the tree line is a zone of arctic tundra consisting of low-lying shrubs, heavy moss, grass, and several varieties of berries. The highest elevations are a zone of barren rock with no vegetation.<sup>1</sup>

The fort is dotted with many lakes, creeks and rivers of various sizes. Most notable are Eagle River and Ship Creek, which flow from the mountains into Knik Arm, and Otter Lake located in the northeastern area of the post. Marshes are found along Knik Arm, near Eagle River, and around lakes and ponds throughout the post.

The Anchorage climate is moderate year round except for the occasional cold snap in winter. Mild weather can be attributed to the mountains of the Alaska Range which prevent the influx of extremely cold air into the area. Temperatures in Anchorage range from 4 degrees Fahrenheit to 66 degrees Fahrenheit.<sup>2</sup> Average annual precipitation is fifteen inches. Forty percent of the precipitation falls in summer and forty percent in winter, averaging 72 inches of snow per year. The short autumn and spring seasons remain relatively dry.<sup>3</sup>

A wide variety of wildlife is found on Fort Richardson, which may have been even more extensive before the establishment of the fort. Small mammals such as vole, lemming, shrew and squirrel are abundant. Larger animals such as black bear, brown bear, moose, rabbit, fox, wolf, and Dall sheep are also found.<sup>4</sup> Waterfowl are plentiful, particularly on the Eagle River Flats. The flats are an extremely important estuarine salt marsh for many varieties of ducks, birds, geese and ptarmigan. Salmon

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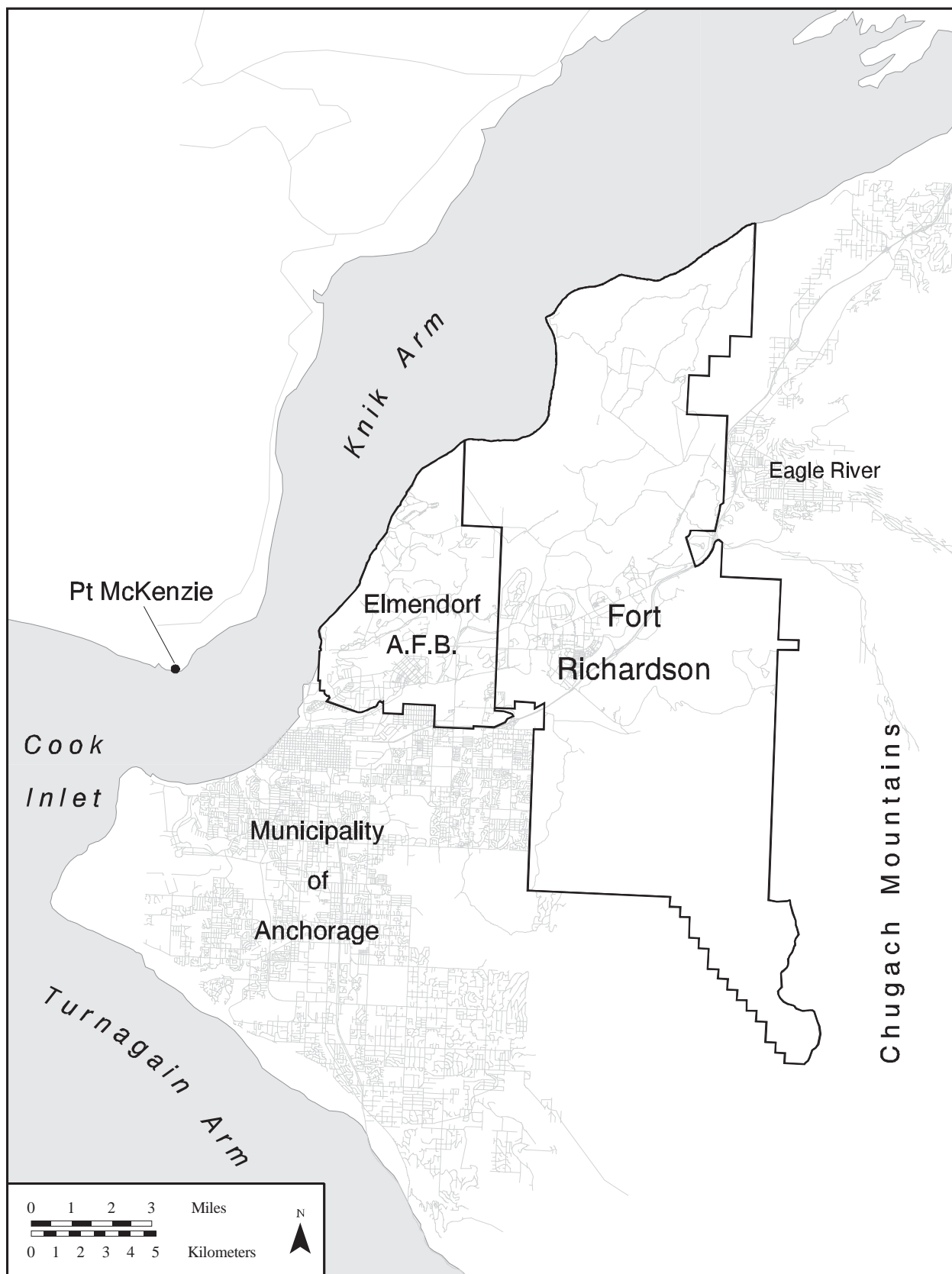
<sup>1</sup> Julia Steele, *Archaeological Survey and Cultural Resources Overview, Fort Richardson, Alaska* (Alaska District: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1980) p. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Paula Daugherty and Becky Saleby, *Elmendorf Air Force Base Homestead Study* (Alaska Support Office: National Park Service, 1998) p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan 1998-2003* (U.S. Army Alaska, Volume 2-Fort Richardson) p. 7-12.

<sup>4</sup> Steele, *Archaeological Survey and Cultural Resources Overview, Fort Richardson, Alaska*. p. 5.





**Map 1.** Fort Richardson and Vicinity.

are abundant in Ship Creek, as are trout and grayling in Campbell Creek and Chester Creek. Much of Fort Richardson is undeveloped and provides prime habitat for wildlife. This is tempered to some degree by the increasing population of the Anchorage Bowl area, and the environmental pollution that frequently accompanies such development, as well as disturbance from military training activities.

The topography of the land is largely a product of five glacial episodes of the Quaternary period, beginning two million years ago. The last glaciation, Naptowne, was significant in forming the present day features of the land. The Naptowne glaciation began approximately 25,000 years ago, and ended around 9,500 years ago. During this cold period, ice simultaneously flowed from the western mountains of the Alaska-Aleutian Range and from the Matanuska, Susitna and Knik valleys, inundating the Cook Inlet trough.<sup>5</sup> The U-shaped valleys and cirques of the Chugach Mountains are a result of the passage of heavy ice flows over the land.<sup>6</sup>

The Anchorage area was locked in ice and did not become suitable for human habitation until the retreat of the Naptowne glaciation. The landscape soon after the retreat was very different from what we find today. Approximately 13,700 years ago when the ice first began to melt, the only vegetation consisted of herbaceous tundra and low-lying shrubs in ice free refuges. As temperatures gradually increased between 13,700 years ago and 10,500 years ago, dwarf birch trees and willow shrubs began to appear. Finally, 9,500 years ago, trees like alders and poplars inundated the lowlands, establishing the modern day vegetation.<sup>7</sup> Immediately following the glacial retreat, Knik Arm was formed through rapid erosion and flooding of the land. The coast surrounding Knik Arm continues to erode today, structuring steep cliffs and bluffs.<sup>8</sup>

The soil quality on Fort Richardson is varied. Overall, though, it is a product of the glacial era. Silt loam permeates the land with varying degrees of thickness. Forested areas are generally acidic.

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Reger and DeAnne Pinney. "Late Wisconsin Glaciation of the Cook Inlet Region with Emphasis on the Kenai Lowland and Implications for Early Peopling" in *Adventures Through Time: Readings in the Anthropology of Cook Inlet, Alaska* (Anchorage, Alaska: Cook Inlet Historical Society, 1993) pp. 15-21.

<sup>6</sup> Steele. *Archaeological Survey and Cultural Resources Overview, Fort Richardson, Alaska*. p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Reger and Pinney. "Late Wisconsin Glaciation of the Cook Inlet Region with Emphasis on the Kenai Lowland and Implications for Early Peopling" p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Steele. *Archaeological Survey and Cultural Resources Overview, Fort Richardson, Alaska*, p. 7.





## CHAPTER 4.0

## Early People

It is thought that the earliest people probably arrived in the Anchorage area over sea from the south and from the southwest by land and by sea. Travel from populated western spots in the Tanana and Nenana River valleys through the Alaska Range was likely limited until about 9,500 years ago because the mountains would have been choked with ice. The earliest archaeological site in the upper Cook Inlet area is found at Beluga Point. Cultural material found at Beluga Point dates back at least 4,000 years, and geologic evidence suggests the site may be at least 8,000 or 9,000 years old.<sup>9</sup>

More recently the entire Cook Inlet area, encompassing about 41,000 square miles, was traditionally home to the Dena'ina. The Dena'ina are thought to have arrived in the vicinity about 1,650 years ago.<sup>10</sup> The large land base of the Dena'ina "is the most environmentally varied of any Alaskan Native peoples."<sup>11</sup> It includes both interior and coastal environments, flatlands, rivers, lakes, creeks and towering mountain ranges. The territory is grouped into two main geographic areas, Upper Inlet and Lower Inlet, distinguished by dialectic differences.<sup>12</sup> Fort Richardson falls in the territory of the Upper Inlet Dena'ina.

The extensive Dena'ina territory allowed for diverse resource exploitation. To this end, they traditionally practiced a subsistence, hunting and gathering lifestyle that necessitated seasonal relocations. The Dena'ina in the Anchorage vicinity fished for salmon in the Matanuska and Knik rivers, and hunted in the Chugach and Talkeetna mountains.<sup>13</sup> Marine resources of the Knik Arm, such as beluga and harbor seals, were also an important contribution to the food base.<sup>14</sup> The Dena'ina had a well-developed trail system throughout their territory. It traversed mountain ranges and glaciers, connecting all the land for trading and visiting purposes. The Dena'ina also made use of boat travel, particularly to go back and forth across Cook Inlet.<sup>15</sup>

First contact with the Dena'ina probably did not occur until Captain Cook explored the area in 1778. Early Russian presence in the Upper Inlet region is not well documented.<sup>16</sup> Their interest was likely limited until seal populations in the west were completely decimated. There may have been a Russian post at the head of Knik Arm. Whether it was a permanent settlement is unknown.<sup>17</sup> Contact for reasons other than trading was likely not extensive.

<sup>9</sup> Reger and Pinney "Late Wisconsin Glaciation of the Cook Inlet Region with Emphasis on the Kenai Lowland and Implications for Early Peopling" pp. 28-31.

<sup>10</sup> James Fall, *Patterns of Upper Inlet Tanaina Leadership, 1741-1918*, (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D., 1981) p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> James Kari and Priscilla R. Kari, *Dena'ina Etnena Tanina Country* (Alaska Native Language Center: University of Alaska, 1982) p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> James Fall, *Patterns of Upper Inlet Tanaina Leadership, 1741-1918*, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>15</sup> Kari and Kari, *Dena'ina Etnena Tanina Country*, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Michael R. Yarborough, " 'A Village Which Sprang Up Before My Very Eyes' An Historical Account of the Founding of Eklutna" in Nancy Y. Davis and William E. Davis (eds.) *Adventures Through Time: Readings in the Anthropology of Cook Inlet* (Anchorage, Alaska: Cook Inlet Historical Society, 1993) pp. 111,112.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



A smallpox epidemic devastated much of the Dena'ina population from 1836 to 1840.<sup>18</sup> As did an influenza epidemic in 1918.<sup>19</sup> Tuberculosis also contributed to many deaths well into the twentieth century. The main area of recent occupation is the village of Eklutna, known for its historic St. Nicholas Church dating from 1897.<sup>20</sup> Few Dena'ina were found in Anchorage by the time homesteaders entered the Fort Richardson area. There were some fish camps on the mouth of Ship Creek and cabins near Bootleggers Cove before the Anchorage population boomed with railroad construction.<sup>21</sup>

Homesteading was open to Alaska natives under the Alaska Native Allotment Act of 1906. This act allowed individual natives to apply for up to 160 acres of land if they could demonstrate sole use. It is important to remember that homesteading was a program at odds with traditional native lifestyles. The two main requirements of homesteading are establishing a permanent residence and cultivating the land. The Dena'ina needed to be mobile and have open access to a wide ranging territory in order to effectively exploit their resource base. They were hunters and gatherers, not farmers. Sole use, of course, is not sensitive to the traditional extended family cooperation that is practiced in native communities. The program was not much of a success in Alaska.

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<sup>18</sup> Fall, *Patterns of Upper Inlet Tanina Leadership, 1741-1918*, p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>20</sup> Yarborough, " 'A Village Which Sprang Up Before My Very Eyes' An Historical Account of the Founding of Eklutna," p. 120.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Carberry and Donna Lane, *Patterns of the Past: An Inventory of Anchorage's Historic Resources* (Municipality of Anchorage: Community Planning Department, 1986) p. 177.





## CHAPTER 5.0

## Anchorage

The history of homesteaders on Fort Richardson is inextricably tied to the history of the city of Anchorage. As the city grew, homesteading increased correspondingly. Before the Alaska Engineering Commission (AEC) arrived to survey possible rail routes in 1914, there were very few people in the area. Within a few years, as railroad construction began in 1915, nearly 5,000 people would arrive and make Anchorage their home.<sup>22</sup> The population over the next thirty years would rise and fall until World War II brought a large influx of permanent development and settlement.



**Figure 1.** Tent city, Anchorage, 1915. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art, B94.26.3.

Anchorage started as a railroad town. President Woodrow Wilson officially announced the railroad route on April 9, 1915. It would extend from Fairbanks to Seward, running through the new Ship Creek town site. Many had correctly anticipated the course and were already settling in the area. A “tent city” sprang up seemingly overnight on the northern side of Ship Creek in what is now Government Hill. People flocked into the area hoping to get jobs working for the railroad or to supply goods and services for the workers building the line from Anchorage to Seward.<sup>23</sup>

Tent city was disorderly at first. Trash was disposed of on the outgoing tides of Cook Inlet. There were no sewers. Officials were concerned that drinking water would become contaminated if things were not cleaned up. The land office stepped up the pace of surveying the new 350-acre town site on the south side of Ship Creek. On July 10, 1915, the auctioning of town lots began. Within a few days, 655 lots were sold for a grand total of \$150,000. The AEC, the federal agency in charge of Anchorage for the first five years, instructed the people to move off the Ship Creek flats to the new town site by August 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>24</sup>

People began flooding into the new town and erecting permanent structures. In 1916, wide concrete sidewalks were built down Fourth Avenue and the AEC installed a power plant for electricity. By 1917, between 6,000 and 7,000 people were living in Anchorage, though only 4,000 were permanent residents.<sup>25</sup> Many of the early settlers were immigrants from Greece, Russia, Norway, Sweden and Den-

<sup>22</sup> Orlando Miller. *The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Carberry and Lane. *Patterns of the Past: An Inventory of Anchorage's Historic Resources*. p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Tower. *Anchorage: From Its Humble Origins as a Railroad Construction Camp* (Fairbanks: Epicenter Press, 1998) pp. 28, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Ann Chandonnet. *Anchorage, Early Photographs of the Great Land* (Whitehorse, Yukon: Wolf Creek Books, 2000) p. 38.

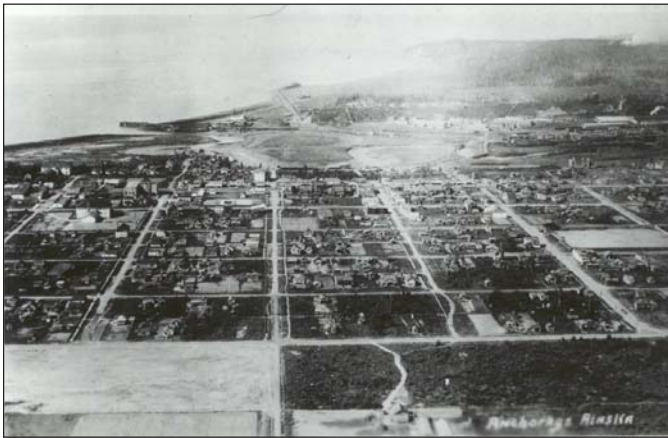


mark who were seeking work on the railroad. Conditions and pay were poor enough in the beginning to cause many workers to protest in 1916. Concessions were quickly made and the disputes dissolved.<sup>26</sup>

It was initially construction of the Alaska Railroad that brought people to Anchorage and stimulated homesteading ventures. As Carberry and Lane state,

With the railroad three positive measures were brought about which encouraged homesteading. First, the rectangular land survey was completed along the rail belt. This provided a systematic layout under which homestead land could be entered. Second, in 1916 the Alaska Engineering Commission created a Land and Industrial Department. This agency promoted agricultural development through homesteading. Third, the growth of Anchorage and other railroad communities provided a market for the produce of the homesteaders.<sup>27</sup>

World War I caused problems for the Alaska Railroad as men left the territory to join the military. By 1918 the railroad was suffering a severe labor shortage. The number of workers was cut in half from the 1917 work force of 5,675 men. An influenza epidemic further depressed the economy in 1919. By 1920, there were only 2,000 people in the city of Anchorage.<sup>28</sup>



**Figure 2.** Anchorage, 1925. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art, B83.146.19.

“There were good times during the Roaring ‘20s, but not in Alaska.”<sup>29</sup> The AEC gave up its management responsibilities of Anchorage, and the town was officially incorporated on November 23, 1920. The economy faltered when men did not return to Alaska after World War I. Gold and fish prices dropped, and the Alaska Railroad was losing money at an alarming pace. The new managers of the town found problems of crime and alcohol to be widespread. Prohibition had been in effect since 1918, yet Anchorage was said to be a very wet dry town. Bootlegging was one of the few profitable ventures, if one was willing to take the risk of jail sentence and a one thousand dollar fine if caught!<sup>30</sup>

The Alaska Railroad was completed in 1923, and Otto F. Ohlson arrived in 1928 to take over its management. At that time the railroad was losing at least \$100,000 a month, quite a hefty sum in the 1920s. The government threatened to shut the line down if it did not start turning a profit soon.<sup>31</sup> By 1930, the population was still stagnating: there were only 5,400 people in Anchorage, Seward and Fairbanks combined. There simply was not enough business in the territory for the railroad to be

<sup>26</sup> Evangeline Atwood. *Anchorage, Star of the North* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Continental Heritage Press, 1982) pp. 37-39.

<sup>27</sup> Carberry and Lane. *Patterns of the Past, An Inventory of Anchorage's Historic Resources*. p. 185.

<sup>28</sup> Tower. *Anchorage, From Its Humble Origins as a Railroad Construction Camp*. pp. 44-49.

<sup>29</sup> Atwood. *Anchorage, Star of the North*. p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-65.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.



profitable.<sup>32</sup> Ohlson tried, as had his predecessor, Noel W. Smith, to stir interest in agricultural development of the Matanuska Valley to increase freight opportunities for the Alaska Railroad. He set up an office in Chicago to promote immigration to the area. M.D. Snodgrass was in charge of the experimental farm at Matanuska and traveled the country searching for people to relocate to Alaska. The area received little attention or success until the mid 1930s.<sup>33</sup>

The 1932–33 Alaska Directory and Gazetteer provides this description of Anchorage in its introduction:

Anchorage

Pop. 2277. An incorporated town at the head of Cook's Inlet. One of the most modern towns in the territory, with its own telephone, water, electric light and sewer systems, public schools, banks, churches and beautiful homes. Here are the shops and headquarters of the Alaska Railroad, 114 miles from Seward, its terminal. Anchorage is the center of many industries such as quartz and placer mining, coal mining, fishing and fish canning, some fur trapping and fur raising.<sup>34</sup>

Though the town was not the bustling beehive of activity it once had been, things were tolerable enough in the 1930s. Anchorage did not suffer from the Depression as severely as the rest of the country. The Territory benefited from several federal relief projects and increased gold mining activities in Talkeetna. The New Deal's relocation of farmers to the Matanuska Valley brought more people to the city and stimulated some business for the railroad.<sup>35</sup>

In all, the booms and busts of Anchorage populations are reflected in the number of homesteaders found in the Fort Richardson area from 1914 to 1941. Railroad construction initially brought people to the Anchorage area. Then as the population, economy and railroad activity declined in the 1920s and early 30s so too did homesteading activities. The Anchorage population would not significantly increase until the late 1930s, when World War II played a major role in stimulating permanent growth and development of the territory.

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<sup>32</sup> *Alaska Railroad History Timeline*. Available: <http://www.akrr.com/History/timeline.html>

<sup>33</sup> Miller. *The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony*. pp. 28-30.

<sup>34</sup> *Alaska: Directory and Gazetteer, 1932-1933*. Published in Seattle, Washington.

<sup>35</sup> Tower. *Anchorage, From it's Humble Origins as a Railroad Construction Camp*. pp. 67-68.





## World War II and Fort Establishment

# CHAPTER 6.0

The Anchorage population underwent a rapid population explosion in the late 1930s and early 1940s. When World War II started in 1939 with Hitler invading Poland, the Chilkoot Barracks was the only active military base in Alaska. Only eleven officers and 286 enlisted men staffed the Barracks near Haines. Territorial delegates had earlier pointed out Alaska's strategic position and urged military reinforcements, yet the warnings went largely unheeded until the war started in Europe.<sup>36</sup> Once a threat was identified, however, the military moved very quickly. There were 8,000 troops in Alaska by 1941, 60,000 in 1942 and 152,000 by 1943.<sup>37</sup>

The military presence in Alaska would bring unprecedented numbers of people into the territory. Development began at a breakneck pace from 1939 and continued throughout the War. A cold-weather test facility was started in Fairbanks, now known as Fort Wainwright.<sup>38</sup> Glenn Highway construction began in the spring of 1941 and was completed in October 1942. The Alaska Highway, connecting the territory with the rest of the United States was built in 1942 by U.S. Army Engineers and finished in just eight months. Many other large construction projects throughout Alaska were completed during the war years. In all, the government spent over a billion dollars on military activities and construction projects in Alaska from 1941 to 1945.<sup>39</sup>

The 1940 Anchorage population of 4,000 more than doubled within a year and a half, as military personnel and construction workers for the Army base flooded into



**Figure 3.** Troops exercising in front of tents. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art. B94.26.3.

the city. Anchorage quickly became an important center of operations due to its strategic location between the Aleutians and the southeast coast.<sup>40</sup> In 1939/1940, Executive Orders 8102 and 8343 were issued by presidential decree and withdrew 45,939 and 40,563 acres of land respectively for the establishment of Fort Richardson. Several other major land acquisitions expanding the reservation boundaries occurred up until 1949<sup>41</sup> (See Appendix C). Construction for Fort Richardson was started on June 8, 1940, and continued throughout the long winter. Building was only stopped when nails could no longer be driven through frozen wood.<sup>42</sup> Many troops were housed in tents at first while permanent barracks were built.<sup>43</sup> Two runways, hangars and parking areas for Elmendorf Field were completed by October of 1941, as well as barracks for the troops.<sup>44</sup> Fort Richardson served

<sup>36</sup> Public Information Officer. *The U.S. Army in Alaska*. Pamphlet 360-5 (Alaska: U.S. Army, July 1972) p. 85.

<sup>37</sup> Miller. *The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony*. p. 180.

<sup>38</sup> John H. Cloe. "The Legacy of War" in Ann Chandonnet's (ed) *Alaska at War, 1941-1945* (Anchorage, Alaska: Alaska War Committee, 1995) p. 393.

<sup>39</sup> Public Information Officer. *The U.S. Army in Alaska*. p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> Cloe. "The Legacy of War" p. 395.

<sup>41</sup> *Installation Commander's Annual Real Property Utilization Survey, 1985*. 172D Infantry Brigade (Alaska) Fort Richardson. p. 5-1.

<sup>42</sup> Talley & Talley, "Building Alaska's Defenses in World War II." p. 61

<sup>43</sup> Jean Potter. *Alaska Under Arms*. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1942) p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> Talley and Talley. "Building Alaska's Defenses in World War II." p. 61.

as the rear support base for units moving to occupy forward positions.<sup>45</sup> The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, changed life dramatically for the citizens of Anchorage. Many feared that Alaska would be the next target, and family members of military personnel were urged to evacuate the territory. Strict blackout regulations were enforced at night. Anchorage was tensely preparing for the worst as “gas masks were carried; fire-fighting equipment was distributed; guards were placed at key utilities; vehicles were given white camouflage painting; [and] warning were issued concerning possible sabotage.”<sup>46</sup> New military personnel continued arriving at a steady pace throughout 1942 as pressures mounted.

On June 3, 1942, the Japanese attacked Dutch Harbor. They then quickly directed their energies towards the Aleutians, occupying the islands of Attu and Kiska. The U.S. military further stepped up its operations to regain the lost territory. The Army and Navy eventually retook the islands in 1943, though it tied up nearly 150,000 American and Canadian troops in the process.<sup>47</sup> From that point, the threat of invasion decreased and the military scaled back its presence. In 1945, there were 60,000 troops in Alaska. By 1946 the number had decreased to 19,000.<sup>48</sup>

The overall impact of World War II in Alaska was to have lasting effects on the territory. “Never before, not even at the time of the gold rushes, was the Territory so advertised... The side and residual benefits to the civilian economy and the development of Alaskan communications, transportation and land use were tremendous and lasting”<sup>49</sup> (USARAL, 85). The growth brought on by the military would bring large numbers of permanent settlers to the territory and eventually help provide a basis for the statehood of Alaska.<sup>50</sup>

The W. W. II buildup of military activities in Alaska was not good news for many homesteaders. Fort Richardson was established on land that was originally occupied by homesteaders or people in the process of “proving up” on homestead claims. The government’s acquisition of the area caused discontent among some of the landowners. People were frequently dissatisfied with the price offered by the government for the land. There was little recourse for those still in the process of proving up on homestead claims. Since they had not yet met the homestead requirements, they did not own the land they were living on. Such people were compensated for the buildings they had constructed, but received no money for the value of the land. Many people living on Fort Richardson were extremely close to receiving patent when the land was withdrawn. This resulted in some problems and confusion over acquisition rights, which the government tried to resolve as quickly as possible. Those who had patent owned their land and could refuse the initial government offer. The U.S. government then sued on the grounds that the land was needed for the fort’s establishment. Three appraisers were hired, one independent of the proceedings and one by each the defendant and plaintiff in the case. Often the three appraisals differed significantly and several court cases dragged out until the 1960s.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Public Information Officer. *The U.S. Army in Alaska*. p. 88.

<sup>46</sup> Public Information Officer. *The U.S. Army in Alaska*. p. 88.

<sup>47</sup> Cloe. “The Legacy of War” p. 395.

<sup>48</sup> Tower. *Anchorage, From Its Humble Origins as a Railroad Construction Camp*. p. 85.

<sup>49</sup> Public Information Officer. *The U.S. Army in Alaska*. p. 85.

<sup>50</sup> Cloe. “The Legacy of War”. p. 397.

<sup>51</sup> Daugherty and Saleeby. *Elmendorf Air Force Base Homestead Study*. p.13.





Fort Richardson was originally what is now Elmendorf Air Force Base. The U.S. Air Force was officially established as a separate service on September 18, 1947.<sup>52</sup> In 1950, the Army transferred 13,000 acres of land on the eastern end of the reservation to the Air Force and constructed a new fort within its modern boundaries.<sup>53</sup> The area now known as Elmendorf Air Force base had more patented homesteads and more court battles over the land. Fewer patented homesteads in the Fort Richardson area contributed to a less complex acquisition of the land for the government. A handful of the homesteaders were sued by the government. Most cases were quickly resolved in 1942 and 1943. Though not all people could be traced after leaving their homesteads, it appears that many stayed on in Anchorage and Alaska through the war years.

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<sup>52</sup> Air Force History. *United States Air Force: A Chronology*. Available: <http://www.misawa.af.mil/orgs/ho/history/chrono-3.htm>.

<sup>53</sup> *Installation Commander's Annual Real Property Utilization Survey, 1985*. p. 5-2.







## CHAPTER 7.0 Homesteading

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Homesteading began with the Homestead Act of 1862 signed by President Lincoln. It was a program initiated by the federal government to stimulate settlement and development within the public domain lands. Interested parties had to be U.S. citizens (or a person intending to become a citizen) and age 21 or older, or the head of a household. Individuals were allowed to claim up to 160 acres of land. Gaining title to the land required the homesteader to live on the parcel for five years. During that time they had to build a habitable house and cultivate a prescribed area of the land. A habitable house was defined as a permanent structure that one could live in year round. At the end of the five years, it was time to “prove up”. Proving up meant showing the government you had met the necessary residence and cultivation requirements for the issuance of patent (title to the land).<sup>54</sup> The other way to obtain a patent on the parcel was by exercising commutation privileges. Under this process a person could purchase the land for \$1.60 an acre for entries over 80 acres, or \$2.50 an acre for entries under 80 acres. The one requirement for commuting was that there be no absences greater than six months.<sup>55</sup>

Homesteading quickly proved to be a popular venture. Soon after the Homestead Act<sup>5</sup> was signed, many homestead claims were filed. Much of the country’s most desirable farmland in the Midwest was settled in this way. Soon only areas that were not highly suitable for agriculture were left open to entry. As settlers were pushed into marginal areas, many were unsuccessful in their homestead bids, as they could not meet the cultivation and/or residence requirements. The Homestead Act was amended several times with these difficulties in mind.<sup>56</sup>

### 7.1 Homesteading in Alaska

Homesteading in the lower 48 ended in 1934 with passage of the Taylor Grazing Act. At the time, however, homesteading was still flourishing in Alaska. This remained the only place in the country where individuals could gain title to large tracts of federal land. Homesteading successfully continued in Alaska until the 1960s when the Interior Department initiated a land freeze. Then in 1974, homesteading was officially closed under Public Land Order 5418.<sup>57</sup>

Homesteading was opened to Alaska in 1898 under Public Law 95.<sup>58</sup> Homesteading in the territory presented unique challenges to the new settlers, due to the isolation and climate of the land. Over twenty years, the homestead requirements in Alaska were repeatedly modified to account for the differences and difficulties of farming in the northern latitudes.

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<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. *Homesteads*. p.1.

<sup>55</sup> Duncan A. Harkin, James B. MacDonald, et. al. *A Study of Federal Land Laws and Policies in Alaska*. Volume 1. University of Wisconsin, School of Natural Resources, Center for Resource Policy Studies and Programs for the Public Land Law Review Commission. Reproduced by the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia, 1970.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. *Homesteads*. p.1.

<sup>57</sup> Carberry and Lane. *Patterns of the Past, An Inventory of Anchorage’s Historic Resources*. p.184.

<sup>58</sup> Harkin et al. *A Study of Federal Land Laws and Policies in Alaska*. p.262.



The Alaska Homestead Law of 1898 reduced the acreage allowed for homesteads from 160 acres to 80 acres. Under widespread dissatisfaction, this restriction was changed a few years later. In 1903, the Alaska Homestead Act was again amended, this time to expand the maximum acreage allowed to 320 acres. The acreage requirements went from too little to too much, as evidenced by the large number of claimants who didn't make it to final proof. It took a number of years before suitable regulations were fine tuned to meet the needs of Alaskan homesteaders.<sup>59</sup>

The fine-tuning began in 1912 when further legislation was passed. First, the residence requirements on the homestead were reduced from five years to three years. Absences from the homestead of up to five months were allowed. However, 14 months of continuous residence were necessary to gain patent. Second, a provision stipulating that residence must be constructed within the first six months was added. Third, and most significant, cultivation requirements were reduced. By the beginning of the second year, a homesteader had to cultivate one-sixteenth of the land. By the beginning of the third year, a total of one-eighth of the land had to be cultivated. On a typical 320-acre homestead, this meant 40 acres of land had to be cleared and cultivated within two years.<sup>60</sup>

In 1919, Public Law 257 was passed, outlining the homestead requirements that would be in effect when Fort Richardson homesteaders filed their claims. Under this legislation, the maximum allowable acreage of homesteads was reduced to 160 acres as clearing 40 acres of land in two years proved to be too difficult. Another important provision allowed for the establishment of homesteads on unsurveyed lands. This was extremely beneficial in Alaska, as most of the territory was not yet surveyed. Previously, a homesteader had to pay for a land survey out of his own pocket when making a homestead claim in an unsurveyed area. This was quite an expensive process. One final change allowed individuals the option of taking four or five years to prove-up on the homestead, with six and five months of residency respectively per year. This allowed greater flexibility in leaving the homestead for extended periods to pursue other means of employment.<sup>61</sup>

Filing a homestead claim began with a person becoming familiar with the area of land they were interested in. This necessitated "a visual inspection by the applicant."<sup>62</sup> The most crucial aspect of a homestead claim was choosing a good location. Water accessibility, soil quality, distance from main roads, and even the denseness of trees were all factors to take into account when choosing a spot to live for the next few years.

Claims were then officially made by filing an application, or settling on the land. With settlement, applicants were required to file notice in the land office within 90 days of occupation. If the claim was on unsurveyed land, notice was then "posted on the land in order to protect the entryman's rights."<sup>63</sup> Claims by application required a boundary description of the land in reference to survey plat. If the land was

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<sup>59</sup> Carberry and Lane. *Patterns of the Past, An Inventory of Anchorage's Historic Resources*. p.183.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp.183, 184.

<sup>62</sup> Harkin et al. *A Study of Federal Land Laws and Policies in Alaska*. p.265.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



unsurveyed, a physical description of boundaries was given through relating the parcel to natural and permanent markers by metes and bounds.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, issuance of patent was accomplished by filing final proof or commuting the land. Commuting allowed a person to purchase the claim for \$1.25 an acre after living on the land for at least 14 months. Filing final proof required a person to demonstrate that they had met the residence and cultivation requirements. This was accomplished by appearing, with two witnesses, before the head of the district land office. Notice was then posted in the newspaper and on the homestead for nine weeks to allow adverse claims to be filed. If none came forth within 30 days, the patent was issued.<sup>65</sup>

“It has been said that the Homestead Act was a wager in which the government bet a man he could not live on the land for three to five years.”<sup>66</sup> In Alaska, it was a bet the government often won. Many homesteaders gave up their claims and moved back into urban areas or left Alaska all together.

As more and more people arrived in the Anchorage area, homesteading ventures grew correspondingly. There were only about 500 people in the Matanuska Valley, and 130 homesteaders in 1910. After 1915, when construction for the Alaska Railroad began, a veritable homesteading boom was set in motion. In 1917, there were 400 people homesteading in Anchorage and the Matanuska Valley. The boom was temporarily thwarted by W. W. I when many left to join the military. The number of homesteaders was cut in half, but increased slowly at the war’s end.<sup>67</sup>

Homesteading was a program set up specifically for *farming* purposes. In Alaska, the growing season is famously short, leaving at least six months of winter in which no crops can be cultivated. Many homesteaders in Alaska did not make use of farming as a primary occupation or source of income. Most men had other jobs in town, worked for the railroad, or had some other seasonal type of work. In the early days, homesteading was limited “to gardening and potato growing by men who looked upon their tracts as occasional residences between periods of employment and mining, trapping, freighting and prospecting. Most of them were bachelors, accustomed to life in sparsely settled regions and familiar with the techniques necessary for living with that mixture of occupations.”<sup>68</sup>

A few crops grow in the long Alaskan summer daylight hours with great success. Homesteaders quickly discovered that farming here did not come without its good share of tribulations and basic hard work. Clearing the land was generally a laborious and time-consuming process. Most of the homesteaders had land in heavily timbered areas, and there was a decided lack of machinery to ease the clearing work.

Trees had to be felled and the logs skidded away. Stumps had to be removed with grubbing hoe and ax, or sometimes with fire. The larger stumps might be pulled with chain and block and a team of

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp.265, 266.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp.266, 267.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.262.

<sup>67</sup> Carberry and Lane. *Patterns of the Past, An Inventory of Anchorage’s Historic Resources*. p. 185.

<sup>68</sup> Miller. *The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony*. p.24.



horses or oxen, but the majority of settlers who had no work animals had to use heavy, homemade windlass arrangements turned with a twenty -or thirty -foot pole. Slashing, felling, and skidding, stump pulling, windrowing debris, and burning stumps and roots did not end the labor. A blanket of dense, springy moss, often two- to three-feet thick and laced with roots of trees and low, creeping bushes, had to be removed.<sup>69</sup>

Many cleared the absolute minimum in order to get patent on the land. Agriculture in the Fort Richardson area was further hampered by the high acidic content of the soil. Often food could be more easily and effectively acquired by hunting, trapping and fishing.

Perhaps the best remembered homesteaders in Alaska are those from the Matanuska Valley. Several projects over the years, including the Matanuska Colony and the Experimental Farm at Matanuska, were started to stimulate settlement and agricultural development in the area. It should be remembered, however, that homesteading was taking place throughout Alaska. Indeed nearly the entire Anchorage Bowl area (outside of the city) was at one time or another open to, or settled by, homesteaders.

Homesteading in Alaska required independence, a sense of adventure and often a lot of hard work. The beauty of the land and life, however, made it all worthwhile.

## 7.2 Fort Richardson Homesteaders

The area that is now Fort Richardson was quite sparsely populated in the early homesteading years. Limited road access probably contributed to the lighter development and interest in the area. Most homesteads were clustered on what is now the western border of the base. There they were closer to Anchorage, main roads and the conveniences of “civilization”.

Homestead residences varied in size and complexity. In the Fort Richardson area, most built small log cabins and a few outbuildings with the occasional barn. No public utilities were available, and wood stoves were the sole source of heat in winter.

This study focuses on the 40 homesteads or claims that were still in existence at the time of government land withdrawals for W. W. II base establishment. (See Table 1 for a complete list of names and land transaction dates) Of the 40 parcels, only 16 were patented homesteads. The rest were still in the process of proving up on their claims. About half of the homesteaders in this study did not file for entry until the late 1930s. Many were quite close to receiving patent when the government acquired the land.

A number of the homesteaders were single men with no known family in Alaska. Unfortunately, this contributes to a lingering mystery regarding their personal lives and intended use of the homesteads.

Homesteading on Fort Richardson is divided into three main time periods in this report. 1914 to 1919 represents the initial phase of homesteading on Fort Richard-

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.21.



son. Anchorage was just established as an important railroad town. The population boomed in a very short time as people flooded into the area for work. From 1920 to 1929, homesteading activity decreased as the population declined due to World War I and economic problems. From 1930 to 1939, activity gradually picked up again, making this the busiest period for homestead entries. Many claims were filed in the last few years of the decade, and were cancelled or given up with little

**Table 1: Land Transactions of Fort Richardson Homesteaders**

| NAME                | Application Filed | Patented | Sold To/Date               |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Whitney, John D.    | 1914              | 1922     | USA/1941                   |
| Wilson, James H.    | 1915              | 1926     | J. Campbell/1926; USA/1941 |
| Folberg, Christ     | 1917              | 1924     | J. Mannick/1938; USA/1942  |
| Kulin, John Eric    | 1917              | 1922     | USA/1942                   |
| Carlson, Victor     | 1919              | 1926     | T. Price/1935; USA/1943    |
| Thompson, John H.   | 1919              | 1928     | USA/1944                   |
| Weaver, WM H.       | 1920              | 1931     | USA/1943                   |
| Zinis, Fred         | 1920              | 1923     | USA/1944?                  |
| Hogland, John R.    | 1923              | 1930     | USA/1942                   |
| Hunter, Gus         | 1931              | 1941     | USA/1941                   |
| Clarence, Donald    | 1933              | 1943     | USA/1943                   |
| Nieminen, Leopold   | 1936              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Porlier, Leon L.    | 1936              | 1942     | USA/1943                   |
| Sly, Samuel E.      | 1936              | 1940     | S. Keist/1940; USA/1942    |
| Fenton, Claude L.   | 1937              | --       | claim cancelled            |
| Harder, Victor      | 1937              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Harpham, Clarence   | 1937              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Harpham, Frank E.   | 1937              | --       | claim cancelled            |
| Hitchcock, Benson   | 1937              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Kenote, John        | 1937              | 1942     | USA/1942                   |
| Murray, James       | 1937              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Prizer, Robert      | 1937              | ?        | USA/1942                   |
| Chambers, WM        | 1938              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Kjoson, Edvard      | 1938              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Meier, Alvin        | 1938              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Meier, Edwin L.     | 1938              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Ogren, Victor       | 1938              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Stolt, WM A.        | 1938              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Harrington, John J. | 1939              | 1941     | USA/1942                   |
| Hoserud, Albert     | 1939              | --       | claim cancelled            |
| Johnston, George    | 1939              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Kennedy, James W.   | 1939              | --       | claim cancelled            |
| Kolp, George        | 1939              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Krueth, Harry       | 1939              | --       | gave up claim              |
| LaMothe, Henry S.   | 1939              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Otto, Ray           | 1939              | --       | gave up claim              |
| Kinney, Keith       | 1940              | --       | claim cancelled            |
| Nettleton, Clyde    | 1940              | --       | gave up claim              |
| O'Malley, Warren    | 1940              | --       | claim cancelled            |



compensation when the government withdrew the land for military purposes in the 1940s.

The following chapter contains biographical information about the homesteaders as well as descriptions of the buildings they constructed, and the years they lived on the land. Biographical information was gathered from a number of sources including personal interviews, obituaries, the 1920 US Census, and books. Building information was obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers archive audit files. Information about homestead entry dates and patent was found in the Bureau of Land Management, public room. The selling price of homesteads or claims was generally found in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers audit files or at the Alaska State Recorders Office in the grantor/grantee indices. Only obituaries, books and personal interviews will be credited in the footnotes.

### 7.2.1 1914 – 1919

Between 1914 and 1919, six homesteads were applied for. All received patent. Four were immigrants from Finland, Sweden and Russia. All but two of them were bachelors, and none, as far as we know, had children. Transportation to and from town would have been difficult for these early homesteaders. It is unlikely that anyone owned a car: the Model T Ford was still quite a new invention. The Whitneys used a horse-drawn wagon to get into town. (See Fig. 5) Others may have had dog teams, or simply walked. Eventually the 18-mile “Loop Road” was completed, providing relatively reliable access from the mouth of Ship Creek into the homesteaders’ territory. Still, roads branching off into an individuals claim had to be cleared and maintained. The first homesteaders to settle on what is now Fort Richardson included the Whitneys, James Wilson, Christ Folberg, John Erik Kulin, Victor Carlson, and John H. Thompson. Their stories presented in the following narratives.



**Figure 4.** Daisy and Bud Whitney. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art. B98.2.10.

#### *John Doran (Bud) and Daisy Olive Kincaid Whitney*

The first homesteaders on Fort Richardson were John and Daisy Whitney. John and Daisy were married in 1903 in Candle, Alaska. They worked in various mines throughout the territory before moving to Ship Creek in 1911.<sup>70</sup> When the Whitneys settled on the upper part of Ship Creek in 1914, there were only a few other people living in the area. Within a couple years, however, they would witness the dramatic growth of Anchorage into a bustling railroad town.

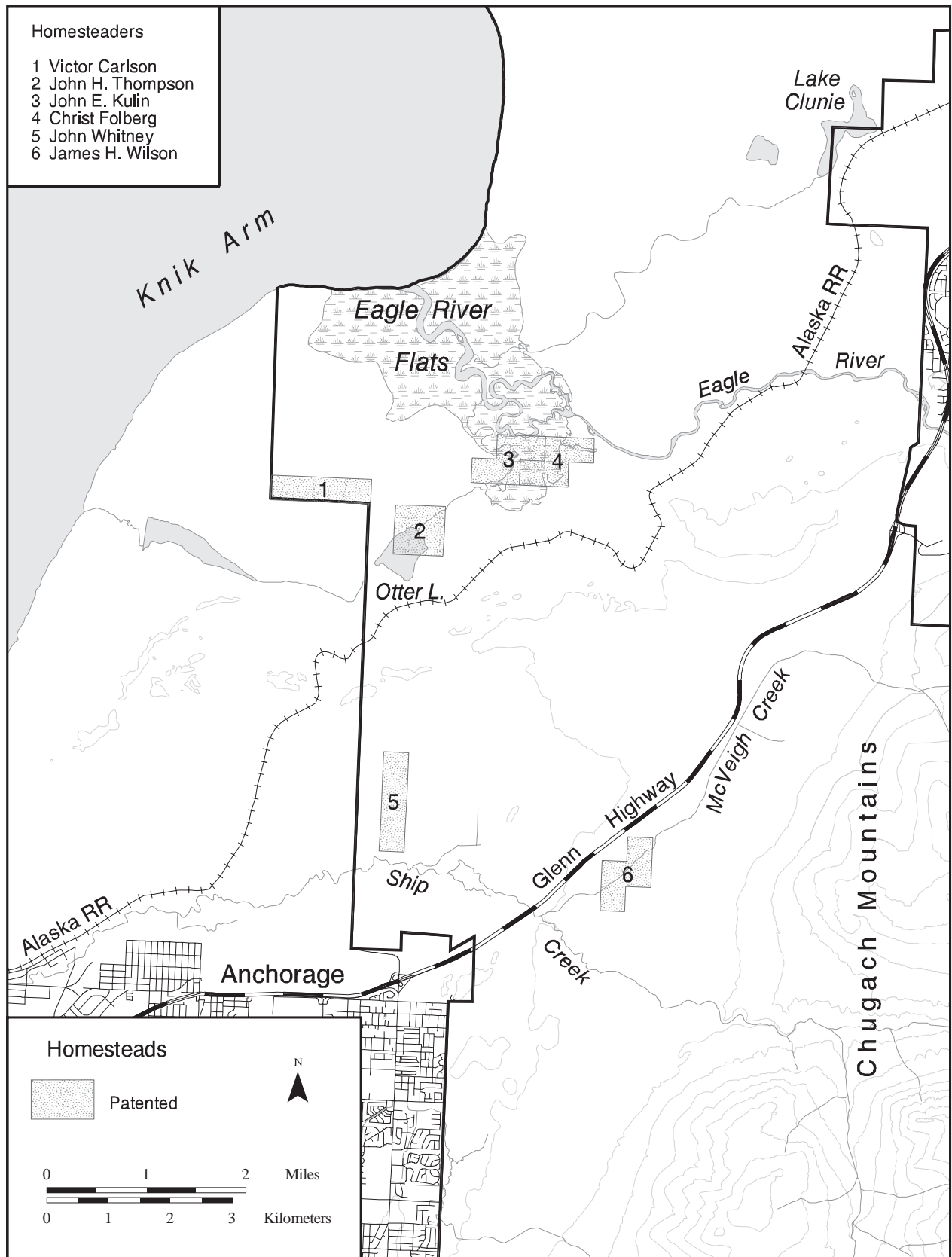
“Throughout their time on the homestead, the Whitneys made their living from the land. Until Anchorage became established as a commercial supply point, they had to support themselves entirely by cultivating a garden, raising livestock, or hunting.”<sup>71</sup> Many people used their “ranch” as a picnic and hiking spot. They had a three room log house on the property that was still in excellent condition in 1941. There was also a smaller, 10’ x 12’ log cabin that was in poor condition. In 1918, an Alaska Railroad stop near the land was named Whitney Station in their honor.

<sup>70</sup> Daugherty and Saleeby. *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Homestead Study*. p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.







**Map 2.** Homesteads 1914–1919.



**Figure 5.** Bud Whitney taking fresh pork to the market. October 1918. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Anch RR Collection.

In 1941 the Whitneys sold their land to the government for \$5,100. They stayed in Alaska until 1946 and worked for the Anchorage jail. John and Daisy then moved to Ashland, Oregon. John died in 1955 and Daisy in 1979.<sup>72</sup>

#### *James H. Wilson*

James Wilson had a homestead east of the Whitney place. He filed for application in 1915 and was granted patent in 1926. James sold the land to J. R. Campbell the same year of patent. His health was deteriorating and he could no longer care for the place. He was about 66 years old when he sold the homestead. James was born in Illinois in 1860. He lived in Hope before moving to Anchorage. The 1920 U.S. Census listed his occupation as farmer. It is probable that James, like the

Whitneys, entirely made his living off the land. He moved “outside” for two years after selling the homestead in order to improve his health. He then moved back to Alaska and passed away in 1929 at the age of 71 from heart troubles. James is buried in the Anchorage Cemetery. He was a bachelor.<sup>73</sup>

#### *Christ Folberg*

Christ Folberg filed for homestead entry in 1917 and received patent in 1924. There is a “Christ Folbig” listed in the 1920 census. It is assumed that this is Folberg misspelled. Folberg was born in Russia. He immigrated to the United States in 1908 and became a naturalized citizen in Pennsylvania. He was a bachelor. According to census information, Folberg could read and write English and he was a railroad laborer and approximately 41 years old the year he filed for homestead entry in 1917. He sold his homestead to Jack Mannick in 1938 for \$300.

In 1940, when the government inspected the land, it was thought that the tract was abandoned. Folberg apparently moved to Seattle after leaving the homestead. Four buildings were identified on the homestead in 1942 when the government purchased the land including: a three room 10' x 30' log house still under construction, an older 16' x 24' house, a 16' x 18 tool shed, and a 16' x 46' barn. All the buildings except for the three room log house (see pp. 50, 51) were likely constructed by Christ Folberg.

#### *John Erik Kulin*

John Kulin applied for homestead entry in 1917 and received patent in 1922. In 1942, he sold his homestead to the government for \$3,000.00. Census records state that Kulin was from Sweden and became a naturalized citizen in 1918. His homestead was located about half a mile from Loop Road on the Eagle River Flats. He built a 16' x 20' log house with a 16' x 22' addition. There was also a large barn, 16'

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times* 22 Jan. 1929: 5.





x 32', which had fallen into disrepair by 1942. Approximately 35 acres of the land was under cultivation. What crops were grown is unknown. Kulin's occupation was listed as fisherman in the 1934–35 Alaska Directory. He would have been about 64 years old when his homestead was acquired by the government. Kulin never married. He died in 1946 and is buried in the Anchorage Cemetery.

#### *Victor Carlson*

Victor Carlson filed for homestead entry in 1919 and received patent in 1926. Carlson came to Alaska around 1905 and lived there for 30 years. In 1935 he sold the homestead to Thomas C. Price, the U.S. Commissioner. He passed away that same year in the Anchorage hospital at the age of 55. He had been ill for three years before his death. Victor never married.<sup>74</sup>

In 1941, a small, 10' x 10' frame cabin with an 8' x 10' corrugated iron kitchen lean-to was found on the property along with a 20' x 20' corrugated iron barn with an 8' x 10' log stable lean-to. All the structures were in very bad condition by 1941. It is likely that Carlson, not Thomas Price, built these buildings.

#### *John H. Thompson*

John H. Thompson was born in 1867 in Finland. He arrived in Anchorage in 1890, and became a U.S. citizen in 1916.<sup>75</sup> Thompson had a homestead on Otter Lake where he lived from 1919 until the government acquired his property in the 1940s. He was granted patent to the land in 1928. The homestead was used as a summer resort for locals. There were a few small cabins that he would rent out to families in the summer. Many people also picnicked on Thompson's homestead, as he had tables set up and several rowboats to rent for day use. Otter Lake was a popular spot for swimming, berry picking and fishing and is used to this day for recreational purposes by military personnel. Thompson was known to be a moonshiner.

He rarely went into town, and when he did, he walked carrying a backpack.<sup>76</sup>



**Figure 6.** John Thompson's cabin, on the shores of Otter Lake. From collection of John Bagoy.

There was probably little agricultural activity on the homestead as much of the land was gravelly and unsuitable for farming. Thompson lived in a small, 9' x 12' log cabin. (See Fig. 6) The house had two rooms – one for a bed and supplies and another with a stove and table for cooking.<sup>77</sup> A larger 10' x 20' “L” shaped house with a 10' x 18' wing along with two other cabins (16' x 22' and 8' x 15') were rented out to visitors.

The army purchased the land and its improvements in 1942/44(?) for approximately \$6,000. This was one of the highest prices paid for

<sup>74</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times* 21 June 1935. 12.

<sup>75</sup> Sitka Death Register

<sup>76</sup> John Bagoy, personal interview, 23 June 2000.

<sup>77</sup> William and Lily Stolt. (1997). *Bill and Lily, Two Alaskans*. Anchorage, Alaska: Publication



homesteads on Fort Richardson, and can be attributed to its desirable lake front location. Thompson moved into town on 15<sup>th</sup> and East after his homestead was acquired.<sup>78</sup> He passed away in 1951 at the Sitka Pioneer Home. He was there for less than a year.

### 7.2.2 1920 – 1929

Only three men, William H. Weaver, Fred Zinis, and John Hoglund, applied for homesteads in the 1920s. James R. Campbell purchased a homestead from James Wilson. Little information is known about these four people. All were likely quite elderly when their land was acquired by the government in the 1940s. All except for James R. Campbell were bachelors.

#### *William H Weaver*

Nothing is known about William Weaver other than the dates of his homestead entry and patent. He applied for entry in 1920 and received patent in 1931. Weaver was still living on the land when it was acquired by the government in 1943. He was paid \$2,200 for the homestead.

#### *Fred Zinis*

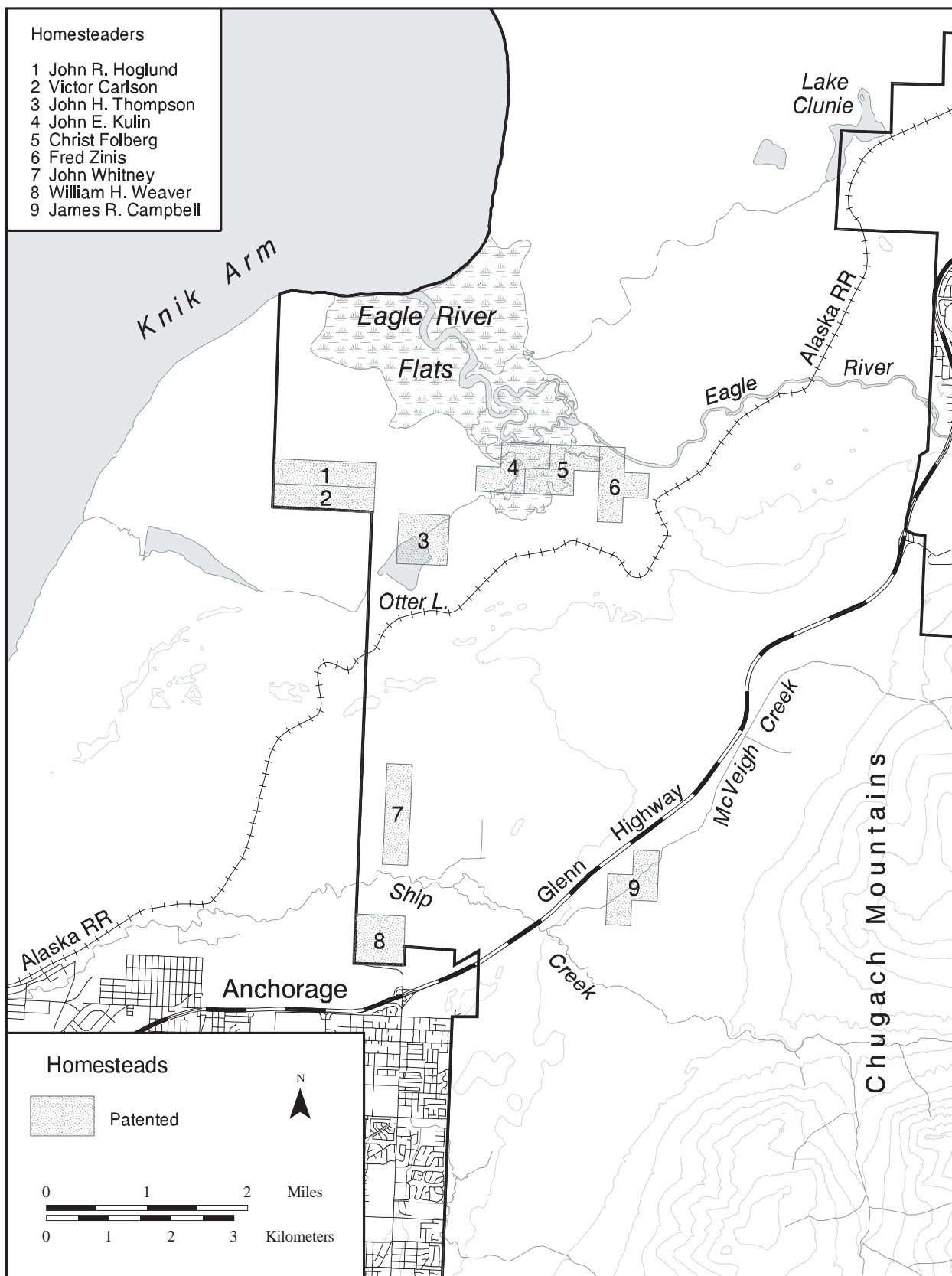
Fred Zinis filed for homestead entry in 1920. He was granted patent in 1923. Little personal information about Zinis is known. His homestead was located near Eagle River. He built a 12' x 18' log house with a root cellar and a 16' x 20' barn with a 16' x 20' shed attached to it. All the buildings were in poor condition by 1942. The 1942 property appraisal conducted by the War Department stated that the house was “on a beautiful lake at the foothills of the mountains.” The Loop Road was two and a half miles from the cabin. The area was accessed by a narrow trail – on foot or on dog sled. Cars were not drivable. Zinis was a bachelor while living on the homestead.

Zinis abandoned the homestead a few years before the government acquired it. His reasons for doing so are unknown. The United States issued a Declaration of Taking to acquire the land in 1943. When proceedings were initiated, Zinis could not be located and was presumed dead. No heirs or family members were found. Administratrix Mary E. Fasnacht handled all court proceedings and the sale of his estate. The government paid \$1,050 for the homestead in 1943. This was one of the lowest prices paid for a patented homestead.

In 1945, it was discovered that Fred was alive after all. He was living in Portland, Oregon, and had apparently sold the land to a Gust Nelson. The deed was recorded in the Deed Records of Anchorage Precinct on June 4, 1945. Gust attempted to initiate proceedings voiding the government’s purchase of the homestead. He was unsuccessful in this attempt. Gust was advised to contact the administratrix of the estate to attempt recovering the \$1,050 paid for the land. It is unknown whether he, or Fred Zinis, recovered any money for the homestead.

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<sup>78</sup> Anchorage City Directory, 1950.



**Map 3.** Homesteads 1920–1929.

John Hoglund filed his homestead application in 1923 and received a patent in 1930. Little is known about Mr. Hoglund other than that he was a bachelor and had a 12' x 12' log cabin on the 160-acre property. He died of pneumonia not long after the government acquired the land. Hoglund sold his homestead to the government for \$2,700 in 1941.

*James R. and Anna S. Campbell*

James and Anna Campbell bought their land from James H. Wilson in 1926. They had a business, the Panhandle Café, in town. It is not known whether they lived on the homestead or maintained a residence in town. Since they purchased the land, they were not required to reside there. There was a log cabin on the property that was in very poor condition by 1941. The previous owner, James Wilson, may have built the cabin. There was also a well and about 80 acres of tillable land. James and Anna sold the homestead to the government for \$5,000 in 1941.

### 7.2.3 1930 – 1939

The 1930s were a decade of increased homesteading activity in the Fort Richardson area. Over this ten-year period, approximately 30 people filed for homestead entry. Only about six of the entries went to patent, however. Most people filed from 1937 to 1939 and did not have enough time to fulfill the homestead requirements. More of the homesteaders in the 1930s were married and had families. Still, many were bachelors.

*Gus Hunter*

Gus Hunter filed his homestead entry in November of 1931. He received patent in 1941, and sold the land to the U.S. government the same year for \$3,500. Gus Hunter (nickname “Shorty”) was a single man from Illinois. Though he officially filed for entry in 1931, he probably had been in the area for some time. He kept horses and chickens on his homestead. Hunter would frequently take people up Ship Creek Canyon to hunt for mountain sheep. They would pack the meat out on horseback.<sup>79</sup> Hunter constructed several buildings on the land including a log cabin, large barn, and shed.

*Clarence L. and Katherine Donald*

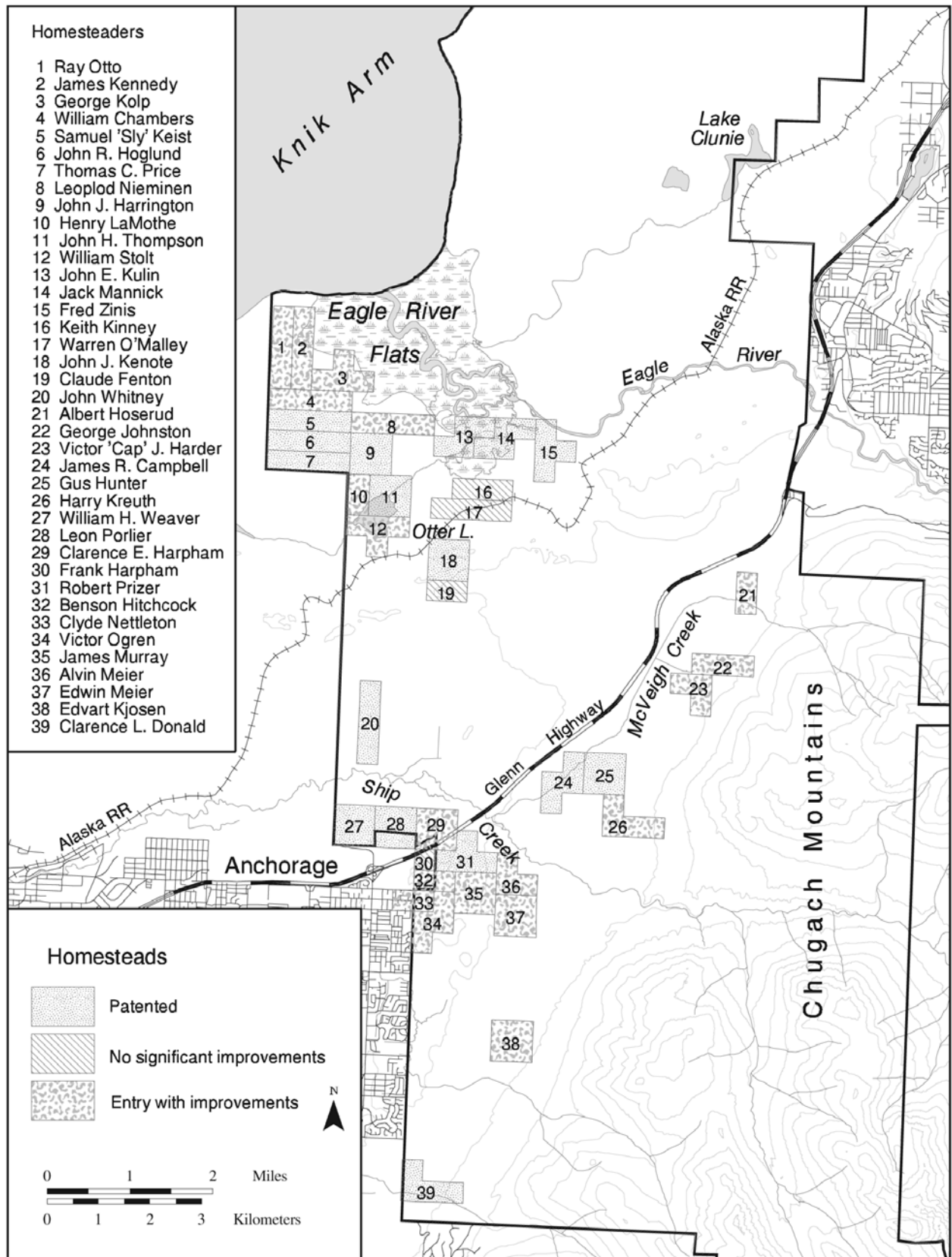
Clarence L. Donald was born in Michigan in 1897. He served in World War I as an infantry sergeant and moved to Alaska in 1930. In 1933, he filed his homestead application and records state he received patent on January 2, 1943. Clarence Donald was married to Katherine Donald, but little information about the couple could be located. Donald was a fisherman, logger and farmer – and may have also had cattle on his homestead. He left Alaska soon after the government purchased his property in 1943 and returned to Michigan where he died in 1963.<sup>80</sup>

*Thomas C. and Lois Price*

Thomas and Lois Price acquired the former homestead property of Victor Carlson in 1935. Thomas was born in Grizzly Gulch, Montana, on April 14, 1874. He stud-

<sup>79</sup> John Bagoy, personal interview, 23 June 2000.

<sup>80</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 18 July 1963, p. 2.



**Map 4: Homesteads 1930–1940.**



ied law through correspondence courses, while working during the day at a plumbing business to support his wife and his father's family of seven. He studied law under several early prominent Alaska attorneys and passed the bar exam in 1915 in Valdez. Thomas was one of the first residents of Anchorage. In 1935, he became the U.S. Commissioner, a position he held for many years. Thomas was a well-known and respected citizen. His obituary relates an interesting account of his personality

The struggles of his early days were reflected in the tolerant yet judicial method in which he handled hearings as local commissioner. He knew how to be tough with repeated offenders but when some dirt-grimed lad of 12 appeared before him the juvenile law breaker would usually be sent home, not instilled with a hatred of the law, but rather with the desire not to misplace the gray-haired judge's confidence in him.<sup>81</sup>

Thomas was a charter member of the Elks and the Chamber of Commerce. He and wife Lois had one daughter, Louis Ethel Haverstock, who was living in Washington when Thomas died in 1944. Lois was born in San Francisco. She moved to Bothell, Washington after her husband's death, and passed away in 1964.<sup>82</sup>

The Prices probably had another residence in town and only used the land for recreational purposes. On the property was a small 10' x 10' frame cabin with an 8' x 10' corrugated iron kitchen lean-to. There was also a 20' x 20' corrugated iron barn with an 8' x 10' log stable lean-to. All the buildings were in very bad condition by 1941. These were likely constructed by the previous owner, Victor Carlson. The Prices were sued by the U.S. government in 1941. The final judgment was in favor of the plaintiff. The government paid \$2,500 for the land.

#### *Leopold and Minnie Nieminen*

Leopold Nieminen was born on November 13, 1882. He applied for homestead entry in 1936. He and his wife lived on the land for a few years, building some temporary structures and clearing approximately five acres of land. Leopold was committed to a home for incompetents at an unknown date in Portland, Oregon. His wife, Minnie, was appointed the guardian of his estate. Minnie relinquished the land to the U.S. government in November, 1943 for \$1,500. Leopold died in Troutdale, Oregon on May 15, 1967.<sup>83</sup> No further information about the couple was found.

#### *Leon and Pearl Porlier*

Leon Porlier filed for homestead entry in 1936 and received patent in 1942. In 1943, he sold the land to the government for \$3,795. His wife, Pearl, was born in 1902 in Vancouver, British Columbia. Pearl moved to Alaska from Seattle in 1924. She and Leon married in 1940 – it was Pearl's second marriage. When Pearl first arrived in Alaska, she worked for the post office. Later she became part owner of a

<sup>81</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 21 Aug. 1944. p. 1, 8.

<sup>82</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 15 May 1964. p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Social Security Death Index.



beauty shop in downtown Anchorage. Pearl and Leon had two children, Gary Lee and Laura Lee. Both were infants when their mother died in 1944 at the age of 42.<sup>84</sup> Gary Lee may have lived on the homestead for a very short time before it was acquired by the government. Leon Porlier passed away in 1995 in Enumclaw, Washington. He was 97 years old.<sup>85</sup>

The Porlier homestead was five miles from the city limits of Anchorage and was accessible by the Oil Well Road year round. They built a log house and 30-foot well that required hand pumping. The cabin was 20' x 24' with front and back porches. The interior of the house consisted of a living room, bedroom, and a kitchen combined with a dining room that had built-in cupboards, "all very neatly finished."<sup>86</sup> Six acres of the property were cultivated for hay, potatoes, berries and other garden crops.

#### *Samuel Sly*

Samuel Sly was born in 1858. He applied for homestead entry in 1936 and was officially granted patent in 1940 after his death. He sold the homestead to Sam and Nora Keist in 1939 before he died. Samuel is buried in the Anchorage Cemetery. He had never married.

#### *Victor John Harder*

According to records, Harder never officially filed for homestead entry as required in the district land and recorders office. Harder built an 11' x 15' log house and a 9' x 15' log barn on the property and apparently lived there from December of 1937, to July of 1940. He was married, but his wife's name is unknown. She did not live on the claim. Mrs. Harder was a substitute teacher in town. She made occasional visits on the weekends. Harder was born in 1901. He was a W. W. I veteran from Canada, having served with the Royal Air Corps, and later with the U.S. Army. Harder was charged with failure to comply with the homestead recording, cultivation, and residence requirements and the claim was acquired at no cost to the government. Harder died in 1946 and is buried in the Kenai Cemetery.

#### *Clarence E. Harpham*

Clarence Harpham applied for homestead entry in 1937. He gave up the claim to the U.S. government for \$825 in June of 1941. Clarence built a house and was in the process of clearing and farming the land. His claim lies on what is now the border between Fort Richardson and the city of Anchorage – with half the land being in Fort Richardson. No personal information about Clarence Harpham could be found. His claim lies on the northern border of Frank E. Harpham's and it is likely that these two men were related. They both filed for homestead entry in the same year. Frank Harpham's homestead entry was cancelled and acquired at no cost to the government.

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<sup>84</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 22 March 1944. p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Social Security Death Index

<sup>86</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Richardson, audit file no. ALS-1-0028





**Figure 7.** Benson Hitchcock, 1942. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Liston Passport photos, B89.16.



**Figure 8.** Kathryn Hitchcock, 1942. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Liston Passport photos, B89.16.

#### *Benson and Kathryn Hitchcock*

Benson and Kathryn Hitchcock were married in April of 1941. Benson applied for homestead entry in 1937. The government purchased the improvements for \$850 in June of 1941. Their parcel of land was smaller than most homesteads, being only 38.12 acres. Benson was a licensed Alaskan guide.<sup>87</sup> Little further information regarding the couple is known.

#### *John Joseph Kenote*

John Kenote applied for homestead entry in 1937 and was granted patent in 1942. He built an 18' x 18' house on the homestead.

The house had a combination living room and bedroom, with a kitchen and dining room. Kenote was not married at the time. He now resides in Washington. John Kenote declined to participate in this study.

#### *James Murray*

James Murray had a homestead on the western border of Alvin and Edwin Meier's claims. He filed for entry in 1937 and relinquished the claim for \$690 in 1941. Murray was a bachelor and was well acquainted with the Meier brothers. The three of them built the Oil Well Road leading to their homesteads, taking over two years.

Murray had a dog team of eighteen to twenty dogs. The dogs were malamute and wolf crosses. Edwin Meier Jr. recalls that when the dogs made too much noise, Murray would go outside and crack a bullwhip to quiet them down. The whip crack could be heard a mile away at the Meier homestead.<sup>88</sup>

Murray was a trapper and did some commercial fishing in the summers. He did not have a car and walked into town whenever he needed to.<sup>89</sup> Murray built a 12' x 14' cabin on the property along with several outbuildings. It is not known what happened to him after he relinquished the homestead claim.



**Figure 9.** Prizer's first house on the homestead, later converted to a garage. From collection of Ruth Pihl.

#### *Robert and Florence Prizer*

Robert Prizer was born in 1886 and Florence Prizer was born in 1885. Both were originally from Kansas. The couple had three children, all born in Kansas: Irene born 1914, and twins Robert and Ruth born in 1918. The Prizer family moved to Alaska from Oregon in 1935. Robert and Florence were teachers. Mr. Prizer had arranged for a job in the Anchorage High School before moving to the territory. For the first few years the Prizers and the twins lived in town.

<sup>87</sup> John Bagoy, personal interview, 23 June 2000.

<sup>88</sup> Edwin Meier Jr., personal interview, 10 July 2000.

<sup>89</sup> Doris Meier, personal interview, 12 July 2000





**Figure 10.** The Prizer log house. From collection of Ruth Pihl.

The children attended high school. Meanwhile, Irene Prizer taught school – one year in the Aleutians and one year in Wasilla, before marrying Fred Braun in 1938. In 1939, Ruth Prizer married Maurice Pihl. Robert Jr. remained single.

The Prizers filed for homestead entry in 1937. They lived continuously on the land until 1941, when the government purchased the homestead for \$7,000. This was the highest price paid for a homestead in the Fort Richardson area. The Prizers never received a patent to the land, but were on the verge of doing so when Executive Order 8102 was issued. Thus all requirements for the issuance of patent had been met. Initially, the Prizer family lived in a frame tent. Eventually,

they erected two houses. First they built a small, 14' x 18', one room house that was later converted to a garage.

A year later they built a 25' x 29' log house, with five rooms. It had a bath, fireplace, hot air heating system, full basement, water system and a small garage. There were two wells on the property, one 32-feet deep and another that was 70-feet deep.

The Prizer daughters, Ruth and Irene, were married and had homesteads quite near to their parents' land. Robert Prizer Jr. lived on the homestead with his parents. Mr. Prizer worked as an industrial arts teacher and basketball coach at the Anchorage High School. His teaching wage served as the family's main source of income. Mrs. Prizer maintained the house and gardens where they cultivated crops such as carrots and cabbage.

The Prizer homestead was about five miles from town. Weather permitting, they could drive from town up the partially graveled road to the house. In the spring and fall, they often had to leave the car on the road and walk in, sometimes through very deep mud. In winter, Robert would sometimes hike into the homestead on snowshoes. Robert Prizer Jr. had a dog sled team of malamutes. Having a dog team was practical as well as fun, for Robert used them to go back and forth from town in the winter. Robert Jr. worked for the Alaska Railroad.

Robert Prizer was an excellent carpenter and built most of the furniture for the homestead. The family took a native Alaskan boy as a boarder who was in poor health, as he needed to see a doctor every week. He lived with the family for ten years. His mother was a teacher in the bush, and he stayed with her in the summers.

After the government acquired the land in 1941, the Prizer family moved to the Spenard area. Robert and Florence spent the remainder of their lives in Alaska. Robert retired from teaching in 1950 and passed away in 1962. Florence died in 1975. Fred and Irene Braun also stayed in Alaska and still reside there. Ruth and



**Figure 11.** Ruth Pihl in front of her homestead. From collection of Ruth Pihl.



**Figure 12.** The Prizer's boarder. Name unknown. From collection of Ruth Pihl.

Maurice Pihl moved to Washington in 1942, not long after their first daughter was born. They are still living there today.<sup>90</sup>



**Figure 13.** Florence Prizer on cabin steps with the family pets. From collection of Ruth Pihl.



**Figure 14.** Robert M. Prizer. From collection of Ruth Pihl.



**Figure 15.** Front view of the Prizer log cabin. From collection of Ruth Pihl.

### *William Chambers*

Chambers filed for homestead entry in 1939. There was some initial confusion over the legality of his entry, as a Thaddeus McGrath had filed on the same parcel. Chambers' entry should never have been allowed. Fortunately, McGrath filed a relinquishment in 1939 when he learned someone else was interested in the land. McGrath had filed in 1934 and made no efforts to improve his entry.

<sup>90</sup> Ruth Pihl, personal interview, phone, 6 July 2000.

Chambers built a 12' x 18' log house with a 6' x 12' front porch and an 8' x 16' wood shed (see p. 60). Ten acres of the claim had been cleared; two of which were used to grow strawberries. Chambers signed a quitclaim in 1942 and was paid \$1,050 for his improvements. He was a single man, and it is not known if he stayed in Alaska after relinquishing the claim.



**Figure 16.** Edvart Kjosén, 1934–35. Courtesy of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

#### *Edvart Kjosén*

Edvart Kjosén was a Norwegian born in 1894. He arrived in Alaska sometime around 1930 and became a citizen in 1936. Mr. Kjosén filed his homestead application in 1938. A year before he could prove up on the land, the area was withdrawn by Executive Order 8102, and Kjosén sold his improvements to the government for \$500 in 1942. Little is known regarding Mr. Kjosén's specific activities on the homestead. He was a bachelor and provided much of his living through fishing. In the summers he worked for the railroad as did many other Anchorage homesteaders at the time.<sup>91</sup>

Edvart Kjosén was a skilled skier and taught many Anchorage residents the sport. He was involved in the state's earliest organized skiing endeavors and, along with several others, was instrumental in setting up the first ski jump in Alaska.<sup>92</sup> Before his death in 1944, Kjosén was also operating a riding stable on East Second Avenue.<sup>93</sup>

#### *Alvin "Lovey" and Doris Meier*

Alvin and Doris Meier had a homestead claim directly above Edwin and Bertha Meier's claim. Alvin and Edwin were brothers. Alvin was born in 1907 in Montana. His father was born in Saxony Germany and married Odile Arcotte, of New Hampshire, in 1900. The family, with six boys, moved to Alaska in 1923 and to Anchorage in 1925.<sup>94</sup>

Doris Meier was born in 1915 in Lancaster, California. She moved to Alaska with her Mother, Ethel Reynolds, at the age of fourteen. Ethel worked as a cook in the Eklutna industrial school for Natives. They stayed at the Eklutna School for about two years and then moved to Eklutna Lake. There, Ethel worked as a cook for men installing a dam for the electrical company. Doris went to boarding school in Seattle for her first year of high school. Mother and daughter then moved to Anchorage, where Ethel found employment in the Anchorage Hotel owned by Frank Reed. Doris also worked waiting tables at dinnertime to earn her room and board. She finished high school at the Anchorage High School.

Doris and Bertha Meier were good friends, and Bertha introduced Alvin and Doris at a dance. The couple married in June of 1933, on the same night that Doris graduated from high school. They had four children, two boys and two girls. The boys, Alvin and Arthur, were born in 1934 and 1935 respectively. Their first daughter, Judy, was a baby while living on the homestead. Their other daughter was born after they moved back into town.

<sup>91</sup> John Bagoy, personal interview, 23 June 2000.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 4 Feb. 1944, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Pioneer Families Exhibit, Anchorage Museum of History and Art.







**Figure 17.** Alvin “Lovey” Meier.  
From collection of John Bagoy.

Alvin Meier was a mechanic for the Alaska Railroad. He was “one of the top ones,” according to Doris. He worked there for twenty-three years and retired on disability due to severe allergies. Alvin was hard of hearing from a childhood accident in Montana. His lack of hearing was not a handicap while working for the railroad, as it was always so noisy anyway. Being hard of hearing didn’t stop Alvin from playing several instruments. He played the tuba in a band with his brother, Edwin, and could play piano and trombone.

Doris and Alvin filed for homestead entry in 1938. They built a 32' x 24' two room log cabin and cultivated a garden with many vegetables (see pp. 50, 51). They dug a well next to the cabin. Prior to the well, they had to pack water in cans. Alvin built all the furniture for the cabin with wood from the land. They found an abandoned Essex in the forest and Alvin, being a mechanic, was able to fix it up in fine condition. Later, they also had a model A Ford truck. Before a stove was hooked up, Doris and Alvin heated their daughter’s bottle on the engine of the car.

The Meier family got all the meat they needed by hunting, trapping and fishing. They ate salmon, moose, bear, waterfowl, rabbit, ptarmigan and spruce hens. Doris canned a lot of the meat, as there was no indoor refrigeration. The only way to keep fresh meat cold was by putting it outside, usually in holes dug during winter. They also kept a barrel in the trees to hold meat, so the bears couldn’t get to it.

Doris recalls having a large bell outside on the back of the cabin, next to a window. If a bear came near the house, it usually hit the bell and warned the family they had a visitor. Often bears would be right at the window looking into the cabin. Doris said though, “That’s one thing we never feared. We never worried about animals.... They never seemed to bother anybody.”

The Meiers relinquished their homestead claim in 1941, for \$750. They were very close to receiving patent. Doris believes the house was occupied by the military for many years after they left. Indeed one year she and Alvin were invited to their former home for Christmas and Thanksgiving dinner by the military people who were occupying the land. Doris said, “They cooked a big moose in the ground for us – and it was real nice!”

After the government acquired the homestead, the Meiers moved into town. They lived in a tent while a new house was built for them on F Street. Edwin and Bertha Meier had a house nearby, across the Park Strip. Alvin Meier passed away in 1972. Doris is still living in Anchorage today. She remembers the homestead years as being a wonderful time.<sup>95</sup>

#### *Edwin and Bertha Meier*

Edwin and Bertha Meier filed for homestead entry in 1938. In 1941, they relinquished the claim to the government for \$850. They were very close to receiving patent. Edwin was born in 1910 in Montana and had five brothers. The Meier family moved to Alaska in 1923. Edwin’s brother, Alvin, had a homestead bordering the northern boundary of his claim. Edwin worked as a printer and was also an

<sup>95</sup> Doris Meier, personal interview, 12 July 2000.



**Figure 18.** Left to right: Alvin Meier, friend of family (Lee), Edwin Meier, Arthur Meier, and Bertha Meier, on cabin foundations. From collection of Edwin Meier Jr.

accomplished musician. He played the drums in an early Anchorage band. In 1939, Edwin accidentally cut himself at work and got lead poisoning and was unable to work. The family lived off of \$125 a year for two years while he recovered. When Edwin was well, his wage from a printing job in town served as the family's main source of income.

Edwin's wife, Bertha, was born in 1916 in Washington. She moved up to Alaska with her parents at the age of three. Edwin and Bertha married in 1932. They had one son, Edwin Meier Jr. who was born in 1934. He lived on the homestead from the age of three and was nearly six years old when they left.

The Meiers constructed a one room 16' x 24' log cabin their first year on the land. The following summer, they built on a 14' x 16' addition that served as a bedroom. There was a spring directly next to the cabin, providing water year-round. The Meiers had a large garden where they grew potatoes and other crops. They had about 24 acres under cultivation in all. Edwin had planned to start growing vegetables to sell, but the area was purchased by the government before they could put the plan to action.



**Figure 19.** Edwin and Bertha Meier's cabin, stocked with firewood for the winter. From collection of Edwin Meier Jr.

Edwin, along with his brother Alvin and fellow homesteader James Murray, cleared trees to build the Oil Well Road leading to their properties. All the work had to be done by hand. It took almost two years to build the road. The Oil Well Road went up to the front of their cabin. Bertha used to say she could see anyone coming from the top of the road and by the time they reached the house the coffee was ready.

A wood stove served as the main source of heat in the Meier cabin, as well as being used for cooking. There was a large forest fire in 1924, the burned wood from which served as an important source of ready firewood. The

Meiers had a Model T Ford pickup for transportation. Edwin and Bertha were involved in many activities in town. Edwin was a Mason and a member of the Elks and Moose. Bertha belonged to the Women of the Moose, the Auxiliary and was active in the Episcopal Church. Edwin Meier Jr. did not begin attending school until after leaving the homestead. He graduated from the last class at Anchorage High School in 1953.

Edwin Jr. recalls spending his days on the homestead playing, catching rabbits in snares, bringing in firewood, and fetching water. He would visit the Prizer homestead and have cookies about once a week.

One day he went out into the woods to cut a tree down and forgot to bring the ax home. His father, unbeknownst to him had picked up the ax and brought it back with him that afternoon. Later that evening, he asked his son where the ax was, and Edwin replied that he must've left it in the woods. So he was sent out to find it in the dark, with a lantern made from a candle and a one pound coffee can. Edwin remembers scaring himself with an overactive imagination, "every moose and bear was out to get me!" he said. Of course he didn't find the ax in the woods and went home empty-handed – where his father said, here it was all along.

The Meiers had a house in town, on F Street, which they rented out while living on the homestead. When the government acquired the homestead, they moved back to that house. Edwin continued playing in bands on the weekends and eventually started a printing shop from his house. He passed away in 1996. Bertha Meier died in 1984.

Edwin Meier Jr. is still living in Alaska today. He served in the National Guard in the early 1950s, and remembers training on Fort Richardson where the homestead used to be. The cabin had been totally destroyed by artillery fire. It was probably used for target practice. Only one wall was left standing.<sup>96</sup>



**Figure 20.** Edwin Meier Jr. age three. First snowfall on homestead, October 1939. From collection of Edwin Meier Jr.



**Figure 21.** Meier cabin in winter. From collection of Edwin Meier Jr.

### *Victor and Elizabeth Ogren*

Victor and Elizabeth Ogren filed for homestead entry in 1938. They built a 12' x 12' log cabin on the property. They relinquished the claim for \$380 in 1941. No other information about the couple could be found.

<sup>96</sup> Edwin Meier Jr., personal interview, 10 July 2000.



### *William and Lily Stolt*

Bill was born in Boston on July 5, 1900 to Finnish parents. His father became ill not long after his birth and moved the family back to Finland, where he soon died. Bill spent the first ten years of his life in Finland. Bill's mother worked in weaving factories to support them until a strike caused her to be blacklisted. She relocated to America to find work. Bill stayed behind with his grandparents. In 1910 his mother remarried a man in Seattle and Bill moved to America to be with them. In 1913 his new stepfather moved the family to Juneau for a construction job on the Gottstein building. They moved to Anchorage a few years later to work on the Alaska Railroad. Bill attended Anchorage High School, graduating in 1920. Throughout his school days Bill worked at a number of jobs to help out the family. He worked for an office supply store repairing machinery after school, and in the summer of 1919, he started survey work for the Alaska Railroad.<sup>97</sup>

Lily was born in Superior, Wisconsin in 1907, also to Finnish parents. She grew up in Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington, and moved to Anchorage, Alaska, with her family in 1920 at the age of thirteen. She too attended Anchorage High School, graduating in 1924. In the summer of 1923 Lily worked for the Disbursing Office of the Alaska Railroad.<sup>98</sup>

Lily and Bill both attended Washington State College – Bill to study electrical engineering and Lily economic science. They met in Anchorage and dated throughout college. Bill and Lily married in 1929 and lived in the lower 48 for a few years before returning to Alaska.<sup>99</sup>

Bill and Lily were prominent citizens in early Anchorage. They still reside there. Bill has just celebrated his 100th birthday. The Stoltz family owned several businesses over the years, most notable being “Bill’s Electric Shop”. Bill also served as mayor of Anchorage from 1941 to 1943.<sup>100</sup>

Bill and Lily remember an early encounter they had with John Dorn Whitney, the earliest homesteader in the area. In 1928, they decided to take a drive out the Loop Road to the Whitney house. The Whitneys had an area on their homestead where visitors could stop and snack. Bill and Lily thoroughly enjoyed the first part of the country drive. Then about a mile from the Whitney house, their car got stuck in deep mud. Bill walked up the road to ask for some help and found Mr. Whitney to be rather annoyed with him. Bill said, “he harnessed up his horse and was already coming toward me—cussing like a trooper. I couldn’t hear everything, but did hear him mention something about some blanky-blank young fool driving on his soft road and tearing it up.”<sup>101</sup>

Bill and Lily often visited Otter Lake for recreation. Bill was acquainted with John Thompson, who had a homestead on the upper half of the lake. He would sometimes stay with John in the winter to hunt and trap. In 1938 he searched the land

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<sup>97</sup> Stolt, *Billy and Lily, Two Alaskans*, p. 9-27.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35-46.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62, 63, 74.

<sup>100</sup> Evangeline Atwood, *Anchorage, All American City*.

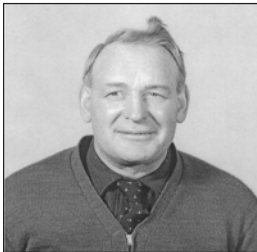
<sup>101</sup> Bill and Lily Stolt, *Bill and Lily, Two Alaskans*, p. 121.



records and found that the area on the lower half of Otter Lake was open for entry, and decided to file a claim, moving there in the same year.<sup>102</sup>

Bill's brother, Paul, cut trees for the homestead cabin. Then they hired a Finnish carpenter to build the house. Water was piped in from a spring on a hill close to the house, providing running water for home and garden. The Stolts reached the cabin by rowing a boat across Otter Lake rather than walk around its perimeter.<sup>103</sup>

Bill relinquished the homestead to the government in May of 1942. He left that summer with the intention of returning at a later date to move his house and all personal property off the land. However, moving the heavy cabin across land and lake was eventually deemed too difficult. When Bill went back to the homestead in October of 1942 to collect his belongings, he found military personnel had severely damaged the cabin. The front door and screen were missing. The windows and their frames were removed. The ceiling of the cabin had been taken off and the plumbing was gone! A number of other things were also missing; including the kitchen sink, a rocking chair, beds, silverware, floor linoleum and a forty gallon water tank. The Stolts received \$1500 from the government for the value of the cabin in 1943. In a brief phone conversation, Lily Stolt said that the cabin was destroyed in a fire soon after they were paid. The family felt a great loss at losing their Otter Lake claim, which they had so enjoyed.



**Figure 22.** John J. Harrington, 1942. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Liston Passport Photos.

#### *John J. Harrington*

John Harrington was from Newfoundland, Canada, and lived in Alaska for 26 years, beginning in 1930. He filed his homestead application in 1939 and received patent in 1941. The government purchased his land the same year of patent for \$4,414. He built an 18' x 20' log cabin with a full basement on the homestead. Another cabin was built before this one. It was, however, completely destroyed by fire in 1941. Harrington was a bachelor and spent much of his life as a mechanic. He served in W.W.I and died in Anchorage at the age of 67 in 1959.<sup>104</sup>

#### *Albert Hoserud*

Albert Hoserud was born in 1856 in Iowa. He filed his homestead application in 1939, after the government had issued Executive Order 8102. According to a Certificate of Inspection and Possession conducted by the Real Estate director of the Army in 1943, no habitable improvements were made on the land. Thus, Hoserud's homestead entry was cancelled and the land acquired by the Army at no charge. Hoserud *did* apparently have a cabin on the land though, where he passed away in 1942. He lay in the cabin for three months before his body was discovered by neighboring homesteader, John A. Bisson. Hoserud was 85 and a bachelor with no surviving relatives. He was involved in mining and had lived in Alaska for 20 years.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 133-135.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 24 Feb. 1956. p. 9.

<sup>105</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 7 March 1942. p. 1.





### *George Johnston*

George Johnston filed for homestead entry in 1939. He built a 10' x 20' log cabin and 8' x 12' barn on the 120-acre parcel. He relinquished the claim for \$750.00 in 1941. No further information about Johnston could be found.



**Figure 23.** Sam Keist. From collection of John Bagoy.

### *Sam and Nora Keist*

Sam and Nora Keist acquired their homestead in 1939 from Samuel Sly. Samuel Keist was born in Jessup, Iowa, in 1881 and arrived in Alaska around 1907. He lived in Juneau for a time and was the owner of a candy shop there. He also owned the Palace of Sweets shop in Anchorage.

In 1942, the Keists sold their property for \$3,000 to the U.S. government. There was a large, 18' x 28' log house on the land with a 10' x 12' wing used for a bedroom, and a porch across the front of the cabin. Their land was about one half of a mile from the Loop Road leading to Anchorage, which would have made the spot relatively accessible. Water for the homestead was acquired from a nearby spring. Agricultural activity appears to have been limited to small garden plots for strawberries, raspberries, potatoes and hay. Sam passed away in 1949. The Keists did not have children.<sup>106</sup>



**Figure 24.** James Kennedy's frame tent. Courtesy of the National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region. Box 166, BLM 49 File No. A-09637.

### *James Kennedy*

James Kennedy and his wife came to Alaska in 1936 from Wyoming. James was an immigrant, but it is unknown what country he came from and when. When he first arrived in Alaska, he occasionally worked in the mines and fished in the summers.

Kennedy built a 15' x 12' frame tent on the property and cleared several acres of road. He was acquainted with the other homesteaders near his claim, George Kolp and Ray Otto. Kennedy's tent was only 60 or 70 feet away from George Kolp's residence. They helped

each other clear roads to their houses and haul supplies out to the area. James did not clear any land for cultivation.

During 1942 court proceedings, Kennedy stated that his wife was sick and unable to live on the claim with him. Kennedy himself only lived on the claim from September of 1939 until the spring of 1940. After that, he worked for the military for about 16 months. He was sixty years old at the time.

The government initiated a contest against Kennedy in 1942. The proceedings resulted in favor of the government, and his claim was cancelled and acquired at no cost to the government. The balance of the argument against Kennedy concerned

<sup>106</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 8 July 1949, p. 3.

his short habitation on the claim and his lack of substantial improvements. It is unknown what became of James Kennedy after his homestead was acquired.

#### *George Kolp*

George Kolp filed for homestead entry in 1939. His homestead was located on the Eagle River Flats next to James Kennedy and William Chambers' claims. Kolp was acquainted with all the homesteaders in the immediate vicinity of his claim. He and Kennedy worked together to clear the roadway from town leading to their entries (Kennedy testimony).

Kolp built a 10' x 12' log house on the land. He was planning to build a new house before the area was acquired by the government, and had cut the logs for it. Water was obtained from a spring near the house. Five acres of the land had been cleared for cultivation. According to the war department's records, "This clearing necessitated considerable work on the part of the owner" as the land was covered with very thick brush. Kolp relinquished the claim for \$800.00 in 1942.

A 1980 archaeological survey by Julia Steele identified a deteriorating cabin in the Eagle River Flats that may have belonged to Kolp. A variety of military equipment was found in and around the cabin remains. This suggests that the house was occupied by the military after Kolp vacated the premises. Further investigation is needed to definitely determine whether this is indeed George Kolp's old cabin.

#### *Harry Krueth*

Harry Krueth filed for homestead entry in 1939 and relinquished the land to the U.S. government in 1941 for \$500. He arrived in Alaska in 1935. Krueth was the owner of "Canteen Taxi" and a longtime member of the Elks Club in Alaska. He was a charter fisherman. He died at his home in Homer in 1970. Krueth was a bachelor. Little information about Mr. Krueth and any activities he may have carried out on his homestead are known.<sup>107</sup>

#### *Henry S. LaMothe*

Henry LaMothe had a homestead in the Otter Lake area, which he relinquished in whole to the government in 1942. LaMothe was born in Montreal, Canada, in 1892. He worked as a boilermaker at sea in his early days, and later for the Alaska Railroad. LaMothe owned rental property in the Anchorage area until 1972 when he moved to the Pioneers Home in Sitka. He died there in 1973, a bachelor.<sup>108</sup>

#### *Jack Mannick*

Jack Mannick purchased the former homestead of Christ Folberg in 1938 for \$300. No personal information about Mannick is known, other than that he was a bachelor. Four buildings were identified in 1942 when the government purchased the land including: a three room 10' x 30' log house still under construction, an older 16' x 24' house, a 16' x 18 tool shed, and a 16' x 46' barn. All the buildings, except for the three room log house, were likely constructed by the former owner, Christ

<sup>107</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 8 July 1970, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 13 June 1973, p. 2.



Folberg. Mannick sold the land to the U.S. government for \$3,000 in 1942. The 10' x 30' log house was recently discovered in a ground investigation (see pp. 50, 51).

*Ray Otto*

Ray Otto filed for homestead entry in 1939. He lived on the claim from November of 1939 to May of 1940. Ray worked as a fisherman in the summer months. Little further information about him is known. He relinquished his claim in whole in 1942.

*Clyde Nettleton*

Clyde Nettleton was born in Wisconsin and came to Alaska in 1910. He worked for the Alaska Railroad, the Forest Service and later as a carpenter on Fort Richardson. Nettleton applied for homestead entry in July of 1940. It is unknown why his application at such a late date was permitted. Nettleton built a 12' x 24' frame house along with a 10' x 12' tent frame house and 15-foot deep well on the land. He died in March of 1941 at the age of 50. His heirs relinquished the claim to the government on March 15, 1943, for \$500.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Obituary, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 8 March 1941. p. 1, 8.





## CHAPTER 8.0 National Register of Historic Places

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The National Register of Historic Places was instituted with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The purpose for its creation is to contribute to the identification, evaluation and preservation of important cultural resources in the United States. The National Register is the list of significant historic properties in the United States. As such, it is

the national repository of documentation on the variety of historic property types, significance, abundance, condition, ownership, needs and other information. It is the beginning of a national census of historic properties.<sup>110</sup>

A property becomes eligible for inclusion in the National Register if it meets the criteria for evaluation. The criteria are written broadly to allow incorporation of a wide variety of building and property types. The criteria are applied within a property's historic context. Historic context is the time, place and theme during which a property/place was constructed or used. There are four criteria that may then be used to determine a property's eligibility. The property must be associated with one or more of the following requirements:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>111</sup>

Buildings listed in the National Register must also retain their historical integrity. For a property to retain its integrity it must include most original aspects of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.<sup>112</sup> Listing in the National Register provides uniform recognition that an area or property is of significance to the nation, state or community.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior. National Park Service, Cultural Resources. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. National Register Bulletin. p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. p. 44.

<sup>113</sup> National Register of Historic Places (Online) Available: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/about.htm>.



## 8.1 Eligibility

Today there are few visible remains of the homestead era left on Fort Richardson. Several deteriorating cabins have been located as well as cleared areas, which are probably related to homestead agricultural activities. It is likely that most of the homestead buildings were destroyed by military activities. The ready cleared fields and building sites would have held attractive potential to military personnel when selecting building or training sites. Interview testimony, historic records, and current investigations all provide evidence that the military occupied, destroyed or dismantled many of the homestead buildings. The need for raw materials and rapid construction of buildings in war times leads to such activities.

It is possible that some of the few remaining homestead traces are eligible for the Register under criteria A or C. In order for a homestead property to be eligible, it should have been patented or had significant improvements constructed on the land. The minimum requirements of patent (under the homestead regulations of 1919) were: living on the land for three, four, or five years – with seven, six or five months of residence respectively per year; building a habitable house; and cultivating one-sixteenth of the land by the second year and one-eighth of the land by the beginning of the third year. In order for properties to be eligible under this context, the residence, with historic integrity, must be in place and some trace of cleared fields should be evident.

The following patented homesteads have the highest potential for being eligible: John Whitney, James H. Wilson, Christ Folberg, John E. Kulin, Victor Carlson, John H. Thompson, William H. Weaver, Fred Zinis, John Hoglund, Gus Hunter, Clarence L. Donald, Leon Porlier, Samuel Sly, John Kenote, Robert Prizer, and John J. Harrington.

Homesteads that did not make it to patent, but still had substantial improvements and cleared fields are also possibly eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These include the unperfected claims of: Leopold Nieminen, Victor Harder, Clarence Harpham, Benson Hitchcock, James Murray, William Chambers, Edvart Kjosen, Alvin Meier, Edwin Meier, Victor Ogren, and William Stolt.

Properties without significant improvements are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under the homestead context. It was usually, but not always, possible to find records of what a claimant built on the land. When the records were not available, the cancellation of a claim at no cost to the government was taken as proof that no substantial improvements were constructed. As such, the following unperfected homestead claims are ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places: Claude L. Fenton, Frank E. Harpham, Albert Hoserud, James Kennedy, Keith Kinney, Warren O'Malley. Also ineligible under the homesteading context are buildings constructed by a person who purchased a patented land. Anything built by James Campbell, Jack Mannick, Thomas Price or Samuel Keist are not eligible due to this restriction.

Aerial investigations of several sites, correlated with aerial photographic maps, yielded no significant finds on the following homesteads: Edwin Meier, Albert





Hoserud, Robert Prizer, John Thompson, John Kenote, George Johnston, Victor Harder, Gus Hunter, Harry Krueth, James H. Wilson, James Murray, Benson Hitchcock, Victor Ogren, Clyde Nettleton, Clarence Harpham, Leon Porlier, William H. Weaver, John Whitney, William Stolt, and Henry LaMothe. Since these homesteads no longer retain integrity, they are not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Further investigation (both aerial and ground) is needed to determine whether significant remains exist on the following homesteads: John Hoglund, Samuel Sly, Leopold Nieminen, John Harrington, Fred Zinis and John Kulin, John Harrington, Victor Carlson, Ray Otto, James Kennedy, and George Kolp.

A 1980 archaeological investigation conducted by Julia Steele identified cabin remains on George Kolp and William Chambers entries. A small, standing cabin with no roof (ANC-264) was found on Kolp's land. The cabin had a variety of military rubbish around it. Steele determined the cabin was not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This is likely a correct assumption. The absence of a roof compromises the integrity of the building and has probably led to further deterioration. ANC-265 on William Chambers' land is the remains of a cabin or tent platform with an excavated cellar. There is some rubbish about the site as well as a trash heap, pit, plank table and kitchen goods. The site was in an advanced state of deterioration, and Steele deemed it to be ineligible in 1980.<sup>114</sup>

The following two sites were examined on ground and have substantial physical remains. What follows is a description of what was found on the sites and a discussion of eligibility.



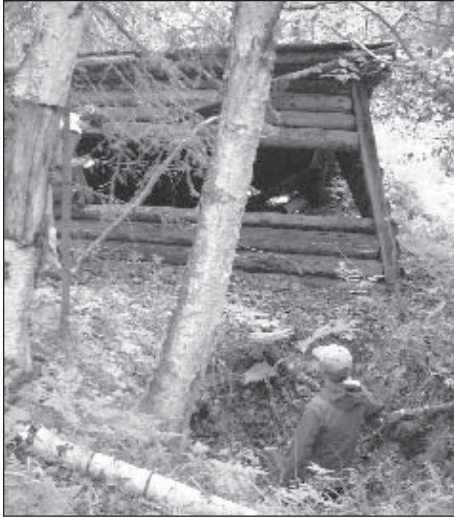
**Figure 25.** Side view of Alvin Meier's cabin. From collection of USARAK.

#### *ANC-1166*

Alvin and Doris Meier's cabin is located in a mixed spruce and hardwood forest on a very clean site with no visible artifacts or rubbish. The cabin was approximately 34' x 22' and consisted of two rooms and a 20' x 20' shed. The cabin has a shed roof, with shiplap and tar paper roofing. It has open box corners with the logs nailed into vertical lumber. The logs still have the bark on them. There is no chinking. The logs were chinked in the past, and cardboard was tacked to the interior walls to control drafts. There are two large windows and a door on the east side. All window sashes and doors have been removed. The interior walls of the cabin are

now unfinished and there is a dirt floor. Doris Meier said there was a lumber floor when they lived there, which must have been removed at some point by the military.

<sup>114</sup> Steele, *Archaeological Survey and Cultural Resources Overview, Fort Richardson, Alaska*. p. 38-43.



**Figure 26.** Front view of Meier cabin. Bill Quirk standing in storage pit to right. From collection of USARAK.

The roof of the cabin has collapsed, and the back and side walls have fallen. An eastern portion of the land appears to have been cleared for fields and is presently maintained as moose habitat by the army. Very few trees in the immediate vicinity of the cabin were cut down. Building logs were probably obtained from the road being built and the garden clearing a small distance from the cabin. In front of the cabin is a six-foot deep wood framed pit that was used for meat storage.

The cabin is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It was inhabited for approximately three years and, according to Doris Meier, used by the military after their departure. The Meiers did not have enough time to “prove up” and receive patent before the land was withdrawn. The cabin is deteriorated and collapsed. Its appearance was altered by the military in removing all interior fixtures, chinking, flooring, doors, and windows. The site no longer conveys integrity of design, feeling, association, materials or workmanship. The site contains no artifactual material that would provide information important to our understanding of the history of homesteading



**Figure 27.** East view of Mannick cabin. From collection of USARAK.

#### *ANC-1167*

ANC-1167 is the former homestead of Christ Folberg. The land was entered in 1917, and patent was issued in 1924. Folberg sold the homestead to Jack Mannick in 1938 for \$300. Field survey found a cabin that matches the one the war department’s closing sheet describes as under construction in 1942. It was probably built by Jack Mannick.

This is a 10' x 30' three room log house. It and the surrounding area is very clean with little cultural debris. The cabin is in good condition except for part of the north gable which is gone. Remaining elevations and corrugated tin roof are intact.

The building is constructed with full dovetail notching, from full and two-sided logs. The walls are pegged. Canvas and burlap were used for chinking. On the long, east side of the cabin are two windows centered in the two end pens and a large opening in the center pen. The opening was infilled down to a single personal door. This infill has fallen to the ground. The south elevation is gabled end and has a small, single sash window in the gable wall. An infilled door is to the right of the elevation’s center. The east side has a window centered in each room.

The floor of the cabin is 2 x lumber with log joist. There are three rooms: one clearly a kitchen and one a bedroom. It is less obvious what the south room was used for. The flooring in the northern room has been removed. The center room has a hole in the roof for the wood stove, and a table hinged to the south interior wall. There is some debris scattered about the room, mostly old cans and cooking items.





**Figure 28.** South view of Mannick cabin.  
From collection of USARAK.

The south room has four bunk bed frames attached to the walls: two on the south wall and two on the west wall. It appears that the bunks were added later, as they cover the window and infilled door. Evidence of military occupation is found in the form of graffiti carved into the logs on the interior and exterior walls. This cabin is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under the homestead context. Though the building is still in good condition and its integrity has not been compromised, the cabin was not constructed by the original homesteader Christ Folberg. It was not used to ‘prove-up’ for issuance of patent. The cabin was still under construction in 1942 according to war department records. It is possible that the military finished the cabin after Mannick sold the property. Thus, the building is not related to the homesteading context.



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## APPENDIX A: Acknowledgements

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Sincere appreciation to John Bagoy, Doris Meier, Edwin Meier Jr., and Ruth Pihl for sharing their homesteading memories. The information, photographs, and personal stories they provided were invaluable.

Second, thanks to Steven Drake and Tom Ruzycki for providing the maps used in this publication and to Bill Quirk for helping to locate all the homestead remains. Finally, special thanks to Russ Sackett for his tireless editing, expert advice, and generous assistance in every aspect of this report.







## APPENDIX B:

### Records of Fort Richardson Land Transactions on Patented Homesteads

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The properties in this appendix are arranged in chronological order according to date of the homestead application filing. Each record begins with a legal description of the property, including the township, range, section, aliquot and total acreage of the claim. The first 'Land Transfers' section displays grantor, grantee information along with the year of patent and patent number. The grantor in this case is always the U.S. government. The grantee is the person who filed the homestead application. The second land transfers section shows the following land transactions which occurred. Usually, the land went directly back to the U.S. government, but in several cases, patented homesteads were sold to other private individuals, and then sold back to the government.

The 'remarks' section displays any further comments, generally relating to court proceedings if any occurred.



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP** 13N, 14N

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE** 3W

**SECTION** 1                    **ALIQUOT** E2NW

**SECTION** 36                **ALIQUOT** E2SW

**TOTAL ACRES** 160

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** John D. Whitney

**YEAR** Patent number 877302 filed on November 1, 1914, and granted on August 23, 1922. Recorded Jan. 4, 1928, in Precinct Book 15, page 191.

**GRANTOR** John D. Whitney

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated June 27, 1941, recorded in Precinct Book 18, page 283.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$5,100.00

**Remarks**

None



**Fort Richardson**  
**HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP** 13N

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE** 2W

**SECTION** 5                    **ALIQUOT** N2SE, SEN2, SWSE

**TOTAL ACRES** 160

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** James H. Wilson

**YEAR** Patent number 983551 applied for on October 18, 1915, and granted on August 6, 1926. Recorded on August 25, 1926, in Precinct Book 12, page 85.

**GRANTOR** James H. Wilson

**GRANTEE** James R. Campbell

**YEAR** 1926

**AMOUNT PAID** unknown

**GRANTOR** James R. Campbell

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated May 15, 1941, recorded August 26, 1941, in Precinct Book 18, page 207.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$5,0000.00.

**Remarks**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 17            ALIQUOT SWNW**

**SECTION 18            ALIQUOT N2SE, SENE**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE Christ Folberg**

**YEAR** Patent number 930936 was applied for on October 12, 1917 and granted on January 31, 1924.  
Recorded April 24, 1924 in Precinct Book 11, page 246.

**GRANTOR Christ Folberg**

**GRANTEE Jack Mannick**

**YEAR** Warranty deed dated January 11, 1938. Recorded in Precinct Book 15, page 401.

**AMOUNT PAID \$300.00**

**GRANTOR Jack Mannick**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated August 10, 1942. Recorded October 13, 1942 in Precinct Book 20, page 77.

**AMOUNT PAID \$3,000.00**

**Remarks**

None



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 18                    ALIQUOT N2SW, SWNE, SENW,**

**TOTAL ACRES 154.48**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE John Erik Kulin**

**YEAR** Patent number 857297 filed on October 12, 1917, and granted on April 4, 1922. Recorded August 21, 1942, in Precinct Book 19, page 337.

**GRANTOR John Erik Kulin**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated August 28, 1942. Recorded November 4, 1942, in Precinct Book 20, page 99.

**AMOUNT PAID \$3,000.00**

**Remarks**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 14            ALIQUOT S2S2**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** Victor Carlson

**YEAR** Patent number 982569 applied for on September 19, 1919, and granted on July 22, 1926. Recorded May 9, 1927, in Precinct Book 12, page 165.

**GRANTOR** Victor Carlson

**GRANTEE** Thomas C. Price

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated June 3, 1935, recorded in Precinct Book 13, page 378.

**AMOUNT PAID** unknown

**GRANTOR** Thomas C. Price

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Declaration of taking filed November 7, 1941.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$2,500.00.

**Remarks**

The government sued Thomas Price in November, 1941. His land was needed for the construction of Fort Richardson. Final judgement for case A-2710 was issued on November 15, 1941 when it was determined that \$2,500.00 was just compensation for the land. The final opinion in the case was issued on June 12, 1943.



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 24                    ALIQUOT NENW, NWNE, SWNE, SWNW**

**TOTAL ACRES 149.12**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE John H. Thompson**

**YEAR** Patent number 1012757 was applied for on September 19, 1919 and granted on February 24, 1928. Recorded January 25, 1922, in Precinct Book 8, page 79.

**GRANTOR John H. Thompson**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Declaration of taking filed October 3, 1942.

**AMOUNT PAID \$5,670.00**

**Remarks**

John Thompson was sued by the U.S. Government in October, 1941. His land was needed for the construction of Fort Richardson. Thompson was initially awarded \$4,210.00 and received an additional \$1,460.00 in court case A-2997. The total 'fair, just and reasonable compensation' paid for the taking of his lands was \$5,670.00. The final opinion in Thompson's case was issued on October 14, 1944.

Proceedings were somewhat complicated by the fact that Thompson had leased land to Edward and Esther McElligott. They were paid \$1,500.00 by the government for the .333 of an acre leased.



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP** 13N

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE** 3W

**SECTION** 12            **ALIQUOT** NW

**TOTAL ACRES** 160

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** William H. Weaver

**YEAR** Patent number 1045068 applied for on November 16, 1920, and granted on March 26, 1931. Recorded June 15, 1931, in Precinct Book 13, page 56.

**GRANTOR** William H. Weaver

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Warranty Deed recorded April 29, 1943, in Precinct Book 21, page 22.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$2,200.00

**Remarks**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 17            ALIQUOT E2SW, NWSE, SENW**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** Fred Zinis

**YEAR** Patent number 908830 applied for March 29, 1920, and granted on June 13, 1923. Recorded November 10, 1942, in Precinct Book 20, page 119.

**GRANTOR** estate of Fred Zinis

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Declaration of taking filed July 23, 1943

**AMOUNT PAID** \$1,050.00.

**GRANTOR** Fred Zinis

**GRANTEE** Gust Nelson

**YEAR** Warranty deed recorded June 1945. Recorded June 1945, in Precinct Book 23, page 162.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$10.00

**Remarks**

Fred Zinis moved to Portland, Oregon and could not be located when the government withdrew his land for construction of the military base. He was presumed dead, and the sale of his land was handled by Mary E. Fasnacht. Fasnacht was appointed administratrix of the Estate of Fred Zinis on July 21, 1942. In case A-3206, the estate of Fred Zinis was sued by the government in July, 1943. Final judgment was entered on November 23, 1943 when it was determined that \$1050.00 was just compensation for the land. This sum was paid to the administratrix Mary Fasnacht in the absence of any known heirs. The final opinion for the case was issued on January 3, 1944.

In 1945, it was discovered that Fred was alive and claimed to have sold his homestead to Gust Nelson. Gust was also a resident of Portland, Oregon. The sale was recorded on June 1, 1945 in Precinct Book 23, page 162. Gust Nelson hired a lawyer to argue the case that the probate proceedings and sale of the land were void by virtue of the fact that Fred Zinis was not deceased. The government advised that the only possible recourse for Gust Nelson to pursue would be against Fred Zinis. It is unknown whether Gust Nelson was successful in recovering any money for the land that he had erroneously purchased.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 14            ALIQUOT N2S2**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE John R. Hoglund**

**YEAR** Patent applied for on November 3, 1923, and granted on April 28, 1930. Recorded August 26, 1939, in Precinct Book 16, page 74.

**GRANTOR John R. Hoglund**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated August 30, 1942. Recorded January 5, 1942, in Precinct Book 19, page 39.

**AMOUNT PAID \$2,700.00**

**Remarks**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP** 13N

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE** 2W

**SECTION** 4            **ALIQUOT** N2SW, S2NW

**TOTAL ACRES** 160

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** Gus Hunter

**YEAR** Patent number 1112445 applied for on November 2, 1931, and granted on October 31, 1941. Recorded October 8, 1941, in Precinct Book 18, page 262.

**GRANTOR** Gus Hunter

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated May 15, 1941. Recorded October 18, 1941, in Precinct Book 18, page 262.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$3,350.00

**Remarks**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 31            ALIQUOT NESW, NWSE**

**TOTAL ACRES 159.45**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE Donald Clarence**

**YEAR** Patent number 1115295 applied for on April 13, 1933, and granted on January 2, 1943. Recorded January 2, 1943, in Precinct Book 20, page 192.

**GRANTOR Donald Clarence**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated July 29, 1942. Recorded January 2, 1943, in Precinct Book 20, page 193.

**AMOUNT PAID \$6,275.00**

**Remarks**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 14 ALIQUOT S2N2**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE Samuel E. Sly**

**YEAR** Patent number 1107952 applied for on July 13, 1936, and granted on April 24, 1940. Recorded June 21, 1940, in Precinct Book 16, page 362.

**GRANTOR Samuel E. Sly**

**GRANTEE Samuel O. Keist**

**YEAR** 1940, Recorded June 21, 1940 in Precinct Book 16, page 363.

**AMOUNT PAID \$1.00**

**GRANTOR Samuel O. Keist**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated August 20, 1942. Recorded October 13, 1942, in Precinct Book 20, page 78.

**AMOUNT PAID \$3,000.00**

**Remarks**

None



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 12            ALIQUOT NE**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** Leon L. Porlier

**YEAR** Patent number 1114823 applied for on November 24, 1936, and granted on October 8, 1942. Recorded December 22, 1942, in Precinct Book 20, page 174.

**GRANTOR** Leon L. Porlier

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated January 1, 1943. Recorded March 9, 1943, in Precinct Book 20, page 256.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$3,795.00.

**Remarks**

None



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 7 ALIQUOT N2SW, NESW, SWNE**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE Robert Prizer**

**YEAR** Application filed on October 11, 1937.

**GRANTOR Robert Prizer**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated August 30, 1941. Recorded November 12, 1941, in Precinct Book 18, page 318.

**AMOUNT PAID \$7,000.00**

**Remarks**

Prizer filed final proof of his homestead entry on May 31, 1941. All requirements for the issuance of patent had been met. Though he never officially received patent to the land, Prizer was paid for the land and buildings as if it were a patented homestead.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 19            ALIQUOT SESW, SWSW**

**SECTION 30           ALIQUOT NENW, NWNW**

**TOTAL ACRES 151.55**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR U.S. Government**

**GRANTEE John Kenote**

**YEAR** Patent number 1113986 filed on November 15, 1937, and granted on May 23, 1942. Recorded November 5, 1942, in Precinct Book 20, page 109.

**GRANTOR John Kenote**

**GRANTEE U.S. Government**

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated November 6, 1942. Recorded November 7, 1942, in Precinct Book 20, page 111.

**AMOUNT PAID \$3,000.00**

**Remarks**

None



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 13            ALIQUOT SW**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**Land Transfers**

**GRANTOR** U.S. Government

**GRANTEE** John J. Harrington

**YEAR** Patent number 1111762 filed on August 8, 1939 and granted on August 4, 1941. Recorded August 28, 1941, in Precinct Book 18, page 223.

**GRANTOR** John J. Harrington

**GRANTEE** U.S. Government

**YEAR** Warranty Deed dated August 30, 1941. Recorded January 5, 1942, in Precinct Book 19, page 42.

**AMOUNT PAID** \$4,414.00

**Remarks**

None



## APPENDIX C: Records of Unperfected Fort Richardson Homestead Claims

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The records in this appendix are arranged in chronological order according to homestead application filing date. None of the applicants in this section had enough time to “prove up” on their homesteads, and thus never received patent to the land. Each record begins with a legal description of the claim, including the township, range, section, aliquot and total acreage of each parcel. The ‘Applicant’ is the person who filed the homestead claim. ‘Filed’ refers to the date on which the application was made. ‘Closed’ refers to the date on which the claim was given up to the government, either by cancellation or the signing of a quitclaim deed. Under the ‘Remarks’ section are comments relating to the cancellation of claims or any court proceedings that were initiated by the government.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 13            ALIQUOT S2NE, S2NW**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**APPLICANT** Leopold Nieminen

**FILED** September 26, 1936.

**CLOSED** Minnie Nieminen, guardian of the estate of Leopold Niminen, gave up the claim to the U.S. government for \$1,500.00 in a quitclaim deed dated November 30, 1943.

**REMARKS**

Leopold Nieminen was declared an incompetent and committed to an institution. His wife, Minnie Nieminen, was appointed guardian of his estate.





**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 7                ALIQUOT NW, N2NW**

**TOTAL ACRES 155.78**

**APPLICANT** Clarence E. Harpham

**FILED** February 11, 1937.

**CLOSED** Harpham gave up his claim to the U.S. government for \$825.00 in a quitclaim deed dated June 9, 1941.

**REMARKS**

None



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 12            ALIQUOT NESE**

**SECTION 7            ALIQUOT SWSW**

**TOTAL ACRES 78.02**

**APPLICANT** Frank E. Harpham

**FILED** April 28, 1937

**CLOSED** August 5, 1942

**REMARKS**

A contest was initiated against Frank Harpham, charging that he had not complied with the homestead requirements. Harpham failed to respond to the charges, and therefore the entry was cancelled and acquired at no cost to the government.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 7                ALIQUOT S2SE**

**SECTION 18            ALIQUOT N2NE**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**APPLICANT James Murray**

**FILED May 24, 1937**

**CLOSED** Murray gave up the claim to the U.S. government for \$690.00 in a quitclaim deed dated May 27, 1941.

**REMARKS**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 30            ALIQUOT S2NW**

**TOTAL ACRES 76.03**

**APPLICANT Claude L. Fenton**

**FILED August 6, 1937**

**CLOSED August 18, 1942**

**Remarks**

This entry was cancelled and acquired at no cost to the government.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 7            ALIQUOT S2SW**

**TOTAL ACRES 38.12**

**APPLICANT** Benson Hitchcock

**FILED** October 11, 1937

**CLOSED** Benson gave up his claim to the U.S. government for \$850.00 in a quitclaim deed dated June 12, 1941.

**REMARKS**

None



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 24            ALIQUOT N2SW, NWSE, SESW**

**TOTAL ACRES 125.22**

**APPLICANT William Stolt**

**FILED July 8, 1938**

**CLOSED May 12, 1942**

**REMARKS**

A protest was initiated against Stolt for failure to comply with the homestead laws. Stolt gave up the claim in a relinquishment signed May 12, 1942. He was paid \$1,500.00 by the U.S. government.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 18            ALIQUOT E2NW, SWNW, NWSW**

**TOTAL ACRES 151.80**

**APPLICANT** Victor Ogren

**FILED** August 11, 1938

**CLOSED** Ogren gave up the claim to the U.S. government for \$380.00 in a quitclaim deed dated August 26, 1941.

**REMARKS**

None





**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 1            ALIQUOT S2**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**APPLICANT** Edwin Meier

**FILED** August 13, 1938

**CLOSED** Meier gave up the claim to the U.S. government for \$850.00 in a quitclaim deed dated August 29, 1941.

**REMARKS**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 8                ALIQUOT S2SW, NWSW**

**TOTAL ACRES 120**

**APPLICANT** Alvin Meier

**FILED** August 15, 1938

**CLOSED** Meier gave up the claim to the U.S. government for \$750.00 in a quit claim deed dated August 30, 1941.

**REMARKS**

None



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 20            ALIQUOT SW**

**TOTAL ACRES 116.54**

**APPLICANT** Edvart Kjosen

**FILED** September 18, 1938

**CLOSED** Edvart Kjosen gave up his claim to the U.S. government for \$500.00 in a quitclaim deed dated October 12, 1942.

**REMARKS**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 9            ALIQUOT N2NE, NENW**

**SECTION 4            ALIQUOT SESW**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**APPLICANT** Harry Krueth

**FILED** January 16, 1939

**CLOSED** Krueth gave up his claim to the U.S. government for \$500.00 in a quitclaim deed dated August 29, 1941.

**REMARKS**

**None**

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 34            ALIQUOT N2NE**

**TOTAL ACRES 78.02**

**APPLICANT** George D. Johnston

**FILED** 1939

**CLOSED** Johnston gave up his claim to the U.S. government for \$750.00 in a quitclaim deed dated September 8, 1941.

**REMARKS**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 27            ALIQUOT E2NE**

**TOTAL ACRES 80**

**APPLICANT** Albert Hoserud

**FILED** June 1, 1939

**CLOSED** June 6, 1944

**REMARKS**

Albert Hoserud died in 1942 with no known heirs. On June 15, 1944, a statutory expiration notice was issued and received no response. His homestead claim was therefore cancelled and acquired at no cost to the government.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 11            ALIQUOT E2NW, E2SW**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**APPLICANT James W. Kennedy**

**FILED September 11, 1939**

**CLOSED November 27, 1942**

**REMARKS**

A contest was initiated against James Kennedy, charging that he had not complied with the homestead laws. A trial ensued, and Kennedy's claim was cancelled and acquired at no cost to the government.



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 12            ALIQUOT SWSW**

**SECTION 11           ALIQUOT E2SW, SWSE**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**APPLICANT** George Kolp

**FILED** September 11, 1939

**CLOSED** George Kolp gave up his claim to the U.S. government for \$800.00 in a quitclaim deed dated August 28, 1942.

**REMARKS**

None

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 11            ALIQUOT W2NW, W2SW**

**TOTAL ACRES 160**

**APPLICANT Ray Otto**

**FILED November 3, 1939**

**CLOSED June 1, 1942**

**REMARKS**

A contest was initiated against Otto for failure to comply with homestead laws. He relinquished the entire claim to the U.S. government in deed dated June 1, 1942. It is unknown whether he received any money for improvements constructed.

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 13N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 13            ALIQUOT N2NE**

**SECTION 18 ALIQUOT NWNW**

**TOTAL ACRES 80**

**APPLICANT** Clyde Nettleton

**FILED** June 15, 1940

**CLOSED** March 15, 1943

**REMARKS**

Clyde Nettleton died March 7, 1941. His heirs gave up the claim to the U.S. government for \$571.75 on March 15, 1943.



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 19            ALIQUOT S2N2**

**TOTAL ACRES 155.77**

**APPLICANT Warren O'Malley**

**FILED July 29, 1940**

**CLOSED May 12, 1942**

**REMARKS**

A contest was initiated against O'Malley for failure to comply with the homestead laws. His claim was cancelled and acquired at no cost to the government

**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 19            ALIQUOT N2NE, NENW**

**TOTAL ACRES 116.54**

**APPLICANT Keith Kinney**

**FILED September 26, 1940**

**CLOSED June 19, 1942**

**REMARKS**

Keith Kinney relinquished his homestead claim in whole on June 19, 1942. The land was acquired at no cost to the government.



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 2W**

**SECTION 34            ALIQUOT S2NW**

**SECTION 34            ALIQUOT NESW (?)**

**TOTAL ACRES 120**

**APPLICANT** Victor J. Harder

**FILED** 1937?

**CLOSED** August 12, 1944.

**Remarks**

According to an investigation and protest initiated against Victor J. Harder, no homestead was ever filed for in the district land and recorder's office. Harder built a cabin and log barn on the property and apparently lived there from December of 1937, to July of 1940. Harder's wife was a teacher and lived in their other home in town. Harder was found to be in violation of the homestead laws because the claim was never recorded as required, residency was not established and maintained to the exclusion of a home elsewhere, and none of the land was cultivated.



**Fort Richardson  
HOMESTEAD RECORD**

**Property Description**

**TOWNSHIP 14N**

**SEWARD MERIDIAN**

**RANGE 3W**

**SECTION 24                    ALIQUOT NWNW**

**TOTAL ACRES 40**

**APPLICANT** Henry S. LaMothe

**FILED ?**

**CLOSED** May 28, 1942.

**REMARKS**

BLM records indicate that a purchase application was requested on March 29, 1934. LaMothe relinquished the claim on May 28, 1942. It is unknown whether he constructed improvements on the land or whether he was paid any money by the government.





# APPENDIX D:

## Land Acquisition and Disposal History of Fort Richardson<sup>115</sup>

### Acquisition

1. Army Air Corps base in Anchorage, Alaska authorized by congress on August 1935. Executive Order (EO) 8102 withdrawing 40,564 acres of land and Executive Order (EO) 8343 withdrawing 5,230 acres of land for construction of Fort Richardson and its Elmendorf Field were issued in 1939 and 1940.
2. May 16, 1941, EO 8755 issued withdrawing 16,733 acres for extension of the reservation to the north and east. June 1941, EO 8788 issued adding another 160 acres to the western portion of Elmendorf Field.
3. Between January 1941 and February 1944, 9,382 acres were purchased at a total cost of \$325,440.03.
4. March 12, 1943, Public Land Order (PLO) 95 issued withdrawing 6,212 acres to increase training areas in the northeastern portion of the reservation.
5. December 7, 1944, PLO 253 issued withdrawing another 76,215 acres to the south.
6. January 7, 1949, PLO 546 issued withdrawing 135 acres.
7. In 1950, 13,000 acres transferred from Fort Richardson to Elmendorf Air Force Base when the Air Force was established as a separate branch of the military. The Army acquired additional lands under PLO 1673, and established a new cantonment area within the modern Fort Richardson boundaries
8. In 1958, the Army announced plans to establish NIKE Hercules missile sites in Alaska. Nike Site Summit was established on 80 acres withdrawn under PLO 2698, January 11, 1962.
9. In 1965, two parcels of land were acquired from the BLM under special use permits. One 880-acre parcel in the Arctic Valley Ski Bowl area (later reduced to 240 acres under co-op agreement) and one 4,795-acre parcel for use with the Davis Range.
10. At one time, Fort Richardson was comprised of nearly 162,004 acres. Changes through the years in the Army's mission and the increasing need for developable land in the Anchorage Bowl area led to the reservation decreasing to its current size of 61,142 acres.

### Disposal

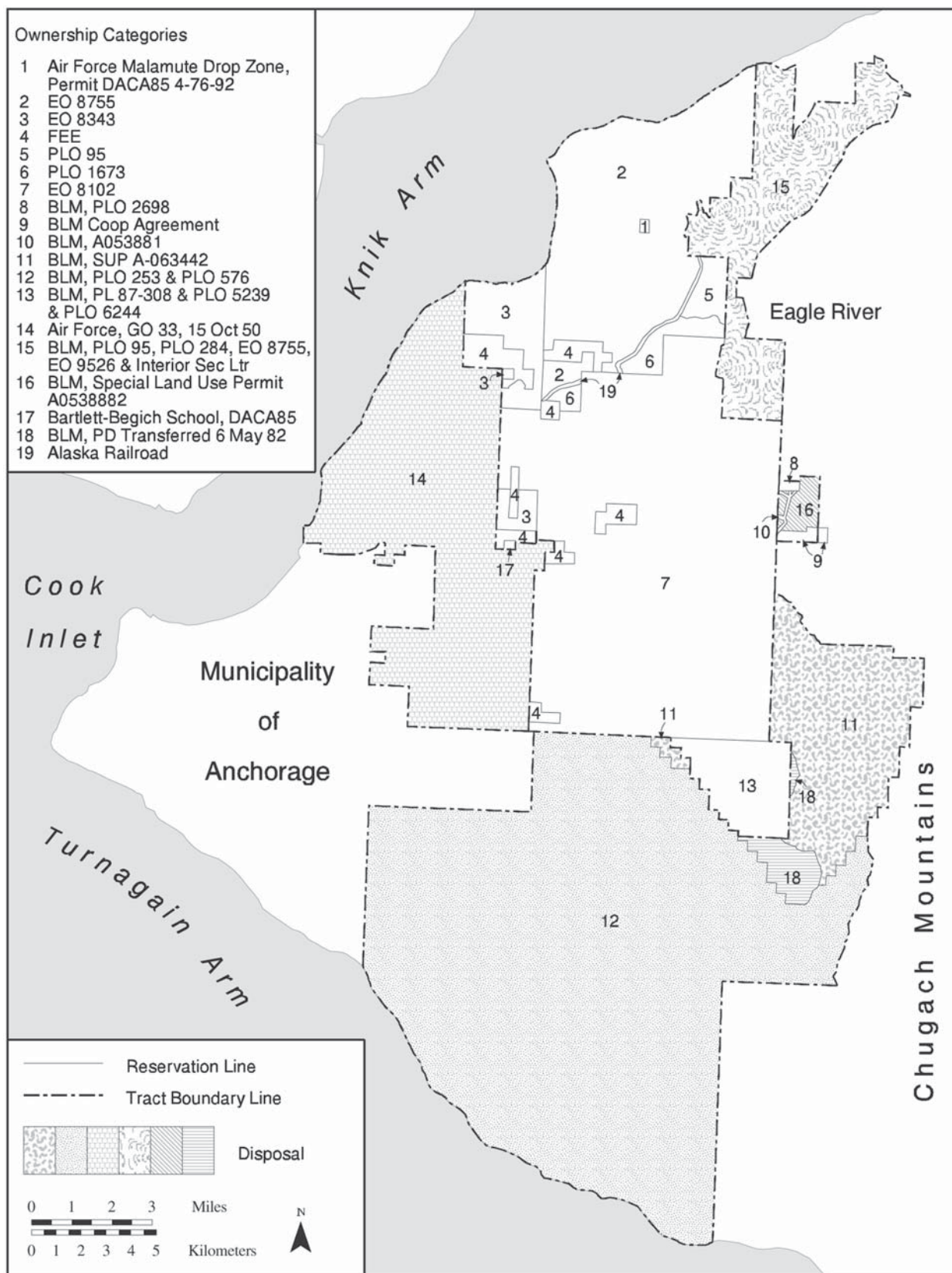
1. In June 1946, 8,733 acres were relinquished to the Department of the Interior/BLM. An additional 122 acres of fee land in the Fire Lake area were relinquished to BLM, and 159 acres of fee land were transferred to War Assets Administration (WAA).
2. In June 1947, 79,826 acres of public domain land in the Eagle River training area, Mountain View and Campbell Creek maneuver training areas were relinquished to BLM. 160 acres of fee land in the Campbell Creek maneuver training area were transferred to WAA.

<sup>115</sup> Installation Commander's Annual Real Property Utilization Survey, 1985. 172nd Infantry Brigade (Alaska) Fort Richardson.



3. 480 acres of fee land were released to WAA in 1948 from the Government Hill and Muldoon areas.
4. Approximately 85 acres were transferred to the Department of the Interior/Alaska Railroad in 1949 from Government Hill and Ocean Dock.
5. In 1950, the reservation was divided into two military services – Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson. 13,022 acres of land in the western portion of the reservation were transferred to the USAF in October of 1950. In December, 160 acres from the old Elmendorf Field reservation area were released to BLM.
6. Between 1951 and 1966, land in the Ocean Dock, EAFB, Government Hill, and Muldoon areas were released. Approximately 60 acres near Ocean Dock were reassigned to the Whittier/ Anchorage Pipeline, USARAL Petroleum Terminal.
7. In January 1970, a special use permit for 880 acres in the Arctic Valley Ski Bowl area was terminated. 240 acres were re-acquired in 1979 under a co-op agreement with BLM.
8. In 1971, 4,759 acres bordering the southeastern portion of the reservation (near the Davis Range) were released to BLM. In October, 118 acres were disposed of and transferred to the Anchorage Area Borough for school purposes.
9. In August, 1973, 56 acres along the Glenn Highway and GAAB property were disposed of with the original intention that the land would be used for highway purposes. However, the lands were conveyed to the Cook Inlet Region, Inc., under conditions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.
10. In 1980, 30 acres of public domain land in the Campbell Creek area were transferred to the state.
11. In 1981, 39 acres comprising the Fort Richardson Post Cemetery were excessed for transfer to the Veteran's Administration. The cemetery was officially transferred to the Veteran's Administration by Public Land Order 6534 on May 17, 1984.







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