

ROHN RIVER ROADHOUSE SITE
MOUTH OF THE TATINA RIVER
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

DRAFT

July 1898

The U.S. Geologic Survey Expedition under the direction of Spurr traverses the Alaska Range via Ptarmagin Pass and discovers the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River. Following the South Fork downstream, the expedition on July 25, names a river which flows into the main drainage. The river is named after Oscar Rohn, a member of the expedition. Rohn, a skilled carpenter, served as camp hand and also substituted as the expedition topographer during this 1898 expedition. (A RECONNAISSANCE IN Southwestern Alaska in 1898; Josiah Edward Spurr, pp. 43,44,119, Map 12)

July 1899

Lt. Joseph S. Herron of the United States Army maps and photographs the "Tateno River". Herron and his party including two native guides from the Susitna area camp at the mouth of the river on July 26, 1899. "Tateno", according to Herron is the Indian name, recognized by the local tribes, spelled phonetically. Herron has crossed the Alaska Range at Simpson Pass, but notes a "Indian Winter Trail" across the Range, at way probably is Rainy Pass and Dalzell Creek. Herron notes "The Indian trail cut-off through the Hayak-Sneedee Pass gives the added advantage of an all land connection with Cook Inlet." (J.S.Herron, Explorations in Alaska, 1899, March 1901, pp36, 51, Photo 14, Expedition Map).

July 1902 Rainy Pass is discovered by USGS expedition led by Alfred H Brooks. The party descends Dalzell Creek and notes following the Tatina River ().

1906

Alaska recognized as a territory, granted representation in U.S. Congress.

Winter 1906-07

Odale party crosses Rainy Pass on the way back from the gold fields.

Winter 1907-08

Ganes Creek Gold Rush occurs. Miners' demand trail work from the U. S. Government.

Walter L. Goodwin of the Alaska Road Commission leads the Seward to Nome Winter Reconnaissance across Rainy Pass and notes "Rohn River R.H." on March 3, 1908.

The party meets two men bound for Seward for medical attention (Reference). Goodwin reports that the route from Seward to Nome is entirely practicable, but he recommends against it Rainy Pass as a mail route because of the difficulty. (Brown pg., 76)

Winter 1908-09

Persons are reported traveling from Susitna to Ophir during late winter of 1908 Utilizing river ice corridors adjacent to Goodwin's route. (BOR Report pg. 20)

Winter 1908-09

Gold is discovered near the Iditarod River on Christmas Day, 1908. The last great gold rush of Alaska is set in motion.

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Summer 1910

Major Wilds P. Richardson, President of the ARC journeys to Iditarod and announces that W.L. Goodwin was to preform work on the Iditarod Trail during the upcoming winter.

Fall 1910

The original roadhouse is constructed at the mouth of Rohn River. First Proprietors is ~~John~~ John O. Strand/ "Big John has a roadhouse at the mouth of Rhone River, 22 miles form the summit and there are said to be other roadhouse by the latter statement lacks verification". (C.M. Brown pg. 35; Iditarod Nugget 12/28/10)

The Iditarod Nugget reports that R. H. Brown of Ophir arrived in Iditarod on and and " Roadhouses are now being located and built between Ophir and Cook Inlet according to Mr. Brown, several having already been completed along the Roan River which the trail follows for a considerable distance. He thinks that by the first of the year, and perhaps before, there will be a continuous line of roadhouses from Ophir to Mile 92 oon the Alaska Railroad." (Iditarod Nugget, October 26, 1910, compiled by S.J. Collins , McGrath).

Winter 1910-11

Travel on the Rainy Pass is "heavy and fraught with hardships" according to most reports by travelers. (Brown pg. 78).

In November of 1910, Bob Griffis, et al. hauls \$250,000 worth of gold from Iditarod to Nome in 37 days. (Brown pg. __). (Spude_____).

W. A Dikeman and Charles Peterson reported by Iditarod Nugget as "First Mushers Over the Iditarod Trail "Taking 45 Days from Seward to Otter, they meet several others on the trail including Harry Johnson and Bob Griffis. (Iditarod Nugget, December 28, 1910, Compiled by S.J. Collins, McGrath.)

In February 1911, Walter L Goodwin of the Alaska Road Commission notes passing Rohn River in his field notes.: "thence up Rohn River valley following the right limit for tow miles, thence up the left limit to the mouth of Dalzell Creek" (reference;)

First woman over the Seward Trail is reported by the Iditarod Nugget. (Iditarod Nugget January 1, 1911, Compiled by S.J. Collins , McGrath)

Bob Griffis meets Ross Kinney, amember of the Goodwin party on Rhon River according to the Iditarod Pioneer. "Kinney was reconnoitering the shortest route to the Pass and the main party was some 10 miles away on a cutoff trail that they had put through from Takotna towards Farewell Mountain. Ross reported the condition of the party and asked for all the Grub that that Griffis could possible spare, which was only 30 pounds". The Goodwin party was caught 20 milkes from rainy pass that left only the tops of the trees in sight.

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Summer 1911

R.S. Giddings, ARC, improves trail for double ender traffic between Rainy Pass and Flat.

Fall 1911

Travel from Iditarod to Seward over the Seward Trail is reported to be "considerable" (Iditarod Pioneer October 7, 1911, compiled by S.J. Collins, McGRATH.)

Winter 1911-12

The proprietor of the Rohn River Roadhouse for this winter is unknown.

Walter L. Goodwin, Supt., if the Seward-Iditarod trail work for the ARC, says the post office Dept. is anxious to make this [Seward TRAIL] a trunk line and eventually it will become the main trail for Alaska. (Iditarod Pioneer November 26, 1911).

U.S. Post Office rejects bids for contract mail carriers over the Rainy Pass Trail. (Brown pp. _____).

Route 20 C (Rainy Pass-Tacotna Trail is completed by Alaska Road Commission in September, October, and November by R.S. Giddings. Work is also Taking place on Susitna to Rainy Pass Trail (Route 20 B). (Report of the Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska, Fiscal Year 1912).

Travel continues to be heavy., 174 People reported on the Rainy Pass Trail during January 1912.

August 1912

Territory of Alaska granted authority for local government.

Winter 1912-13

The proprietor of the Rohn River Roadhouse for this winter is unknown.

June 1913

ARC reports No work done trails 20B or 20 C in FY 1913, (Report of the Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska, Fiscal Year 1913

Winter 1913-14

Joe Vogler is listed as the proprietor of Rohn River Roadhouse (Ruby Record Citizen; March 14, 1914).

Harold Peckenpaugh, describes his trip from the Interior to Seward on the trail across Rainy Pass. He spends a December night at "my friends' cabin at the mouth of the Tatina River". He describes the cabin as being on the main trail, well built and "formerly had been a roadhouse. The cabin was well provisioned and had a supply of meat in the cache". It is likely, from descriptions of other events in his trip that this occurred in this winter, although Peckenpaugh never really says. (Nuggets and Beans, , Harold and Zora Peckenpaugh, pg. 108 and 110.)

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June 1914

ARC reports no expenditures on trail 20B or 20C in FY 1914. (Report of the Board of Road Commissioners Fro Alaska Fiscal Year 1914 pg. 28)

August 1914 The Alaska Engineering Commission sends McPherson to Recon a railroad route between the Susitna River throught the Alaska RAnge to the town of Iditarod. On August 17th, J.L.McPherson makes camp at the confluence of the South Fork and the Tatina Rivers and notes "Not finding conditions suitable for a railroad location through Rainy Pass, I cached all my extra supplies in the unoccupied roadhouse at this point [Rohn River].....(McPherson page 187; Map 16)

Winter 1914-15

Col. H.E. Revelle contracts to carry U.S. Mail between Seward and Iditarod, between Nov. 1, and April 1 for four years. Joe Blanchell is first sub-contractor to carry mail over Rainy Pass. (Brown 35, Alaska Sportsmen,Jan.1966).

The proprietor of the Rohn River Roadhouse for this winter is unknown

July 1915

H. E. Revelle appeals to ARC to improve Rainy Pass/Tatina section of the Iditarod because that section is particularly "troublesome" for mail carriers.

Winter 1915-16

Congress opts to construct U.S, Government Railroad between Seward and Fairbanks in stead of between Seward and McGrath.(Check this reference)

Winter 1916-17

The ARC publishes map in 1916 and lists Rohn River Roadhouse.

Charles Lee Cadwaller stops for lunch at "Rhone River Roadhouse" on April 19,1917. Cadwaller does not describe the roadhouse or name the proprietor.(Reminscences of the Iditarod Trail,_____, pg.____)

Winter 1917-18

Cadwaller overnights at "Rhone River Roadhouse in December 1917. He accompanied the McGrath to Rohn River mailcarrier, Bobby, to Rohn River. The "roadhouse man" is identified as "Richards" and the Tatina River is identified as "Rhone River". Near Pontella"s cabin, Cadwaller meet the two mailcarriers en route to Rohn, "Jack Lean and Charles Smith" (Reminiscences of the Iditarod TRail)

April 1918

Revelle's U.S. Mail Contract not renewed due to lack of use of and poor trail conditions. Rainy Pass route abandoned By post office in 1919-20 in favor of other routes.(confirm dates mail route was run).

Winter 1918-19

The proprietors of the roadhouse is unknown , but it may have been Jones and Davidson Brown pg.35).

Mail route into McGrath; ?

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Winter 1919-1920

Proprietor of Rohn River unknown.

Irving Reed, in his description of traveling "Rainy Pass by Dog Team", describes staying at Rohn River Roadhouse in March 1920. However his description and photograph is actually "French Joe's", the next roadhouse north on the Iditarod Trail. There is no mention of a roadhouse at the mouth of the Tatina River. (Alaska Sportsman, October 1965, pg. 11.).

Winter 1920-21

Mail is routed to McGrath , Takotna, and Iditarod via Ruby rather than Rainy Pass (Brown pg.83)

Proprietor:

1920

Kroll's map of Alaska indicates Rohn River RH

1921

(1920-21 or 1921-22) Robert R. Jones and W. James Davidson assume ownership of Rhon River Roadhouse. (Reference)

Winter 1920-21

Joe Blanchell, proprietor of the Pioneer Roadhouse advertises in the Kusko Times as the "man who blazed the trail for you over Rainy Pass" (Kusko Times January 19, 1921).

Dale E. Stubbs proposes a telephone line between Happy River Roadhouse and French Joe [Blanchell]'s Roadhouse to aid travelers in crossing Rainy Pass. (Kusko Times April 20, 1921).

May 1921

Major Gotwalls , of the Alaska Road Commission warns that roadhouses over Rainy pass will shut down if the U.S. Mail is not re-routed over Rainy Pass.

June 1921

Territorial Delegate Dan Sutherland sends a letter to the Second Assistant Postmaster General advocating a mail contract be issued for the Rainy Pass section and informing the Post Master General that Secretary of Interior Fall is willing to furnish wire for the establishment of a telephone line through Rainy Pass (Kusko Times August 3, 1921).

The Rainy Pass mail route is restored by an order issued by the Post Office, as well as authorization to connect Happy River, Pass Creek Rhone River and French Joe's Roadhouses by a telephone line to aid travelers

Rehabilitation begins on the Rainy-Pass Takotna Trail with a total expenditure of 209.50 reported (Annual report of the Alaska Road Commission Fiscal Year 1921 Part II; pg 32)

"Minor repairs only were made on this [Rainy Pass Mail] route. A contract was let for grading through Dalzell Canyon to avoid traveling through the creek bottom. This was successfully accomplished during the season (1920-21) and greatly aided winter travel over the trail. (Check Annual ARC report for proper reference)

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August 1921

"Robert Jones, James Davidson, and Frank Cioli on the launch Roosevelt left Friday for Salmon River en route to their Perspective headquarters on the Rainy Pass Trail (Kusko Times August 6, 1921).

September 1921

Col Steese of the ARC changes bid proposal to include construction of a 25 Mile telephone line over Rainy Pass and run mail over this route from Nancy, on the Government Railroad between October 1 and April 30) (Kusko Times September 21, 1921)

Winter 1921-22

Harry Stockman is award a contracted to carry mail from Nancy to McGrath via Rainy Pass.(October 1921 to March 1922) Kusko Times October 5, 1921).

"The telephone line on the Rainy Pass mail trail has been laid from Anderson"s roadhouse to the Puntila cabin, a distance of 12 miles, at which point the work seems to have ceased" (Kusko Times January 4, 1922).

Postmistress Clough responds to the Postmaster General inquiry stating that the Rainy Pass route is eight days better than by Ruby and is run as contracted. She recommends continuation of the Rainy Pass route. (Kusko Times January 14, 1922).

1922

Rand McNalley Map lists Rohn Roadhouse pg40-41

Spring 1922

Jones, Davidson, Blanchell [Pioneer Roadhouse] arrive in McGrath on Roosevelt, for indefinite stay.

June 1922

Einar Carlson, "a trapper from the Tatina area" as a passenger in the Redwing bound for Salmon River.from McGrath

The ARC Annual Fiscal year Report documents Minor repairs on the Rainy Pass -Tacotna Trail. The ARC planned complete rehabilitation to be undertaken the following winter , but no further work or expenditures were noted on subsequent Annual Reports for the Rainy Pass segment.(Annual Report of the Alaska Road Commission-Fiscal Year 1922, pg. 66)

Summer 1922

(Check this reference, some refer to 1923)

Jones /Davidson contract with ARC to improve trail in Dalzell Canyon.

Winter 1922-23

Mail routed to McGrath form Nenana. Rainy Pass never used for a mail route again. (Brown 85)Trail falls into disuse as a general route of travel.

Winter 1923-24

W. James Davidson and Einar Carlson operate the Roadhouse.(_____)

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May 1924

According to Kusko Times, Einar Carlson and Bob Davidson arrive in McGrath from their headquarters on the Tatina River (Brown pg60).

February 1924

First Airmail Flight into McGrath (Reference_Brown p 100_)

May 1924-

Fire destroys the original roadhouse (Lynch p.c. M. Mesphelt) (Check Kusko Times 2/21/23)

Winter 1925 - 26

Diary of W.J. Davidson (August 20 through March 21). Using Hell's Gate as a base camp, Davidson records overnight trips to "Rhone", trail work, trapping, whip sawing lumber, sled making, etc. No direct comments about the existence of structures at Rohn River.

Winter 1926-27

Diary of W. J. Davidson (October 9 to April 11) Using Hell's Gate as a base camp discusses trail work, trips to "Rhone River ", cache construction at home, trips to Carl's [possibly Rohn River], trapping, the "Seward Trail", etc.

Winter 1927-28

Diary of W.J. Davidson (August 27 to April 17) Discusses trail and bridge work, trips to Rhone, building dog kennels,, trapping and hunting, the passing of the Anchorage plane, Carl's comings and goings [Probably Einar Carlson], and weather conditions, etc.

Car. F. Lottsfeld, arrived in Seward from the Kuskokwim over the Government Trail taking 49 days . No ARC official had crossed the trail in three years (Nome Nugget February 4, 1928).

Winter 1928-29

Diary of W.J. Davidson (September 20 to January 21) Notes hunting and trapping, bridge making, weather conditions, occurrence of airplane traffic, Carl's trips to Rhone, etc.

Diary of Einar Carlson (January 22 to April 6) Notes "Rohn River line", trapping and hunting, trips to Salmon River and Hell"s Gate, McGrath,.etc. No indication of where base camp was.,

Summer 1929

Diary of Einar Carlson (June 12 to June 21) Notes working on fish wheel, cutting brush and others people in the area, including "Strand downstream"

Cabin rebuilt (Lynch_____)

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Winter 1929-30

Diary of Einar Carlson (August 30 to May 14) Notes weather, river conditions , White Dog Smith, trips to McGrath, Peter Snow,, Peluk, Sullivan, hunting , fishing and trapping, airplane traffic, Hell's Gate as home, trips to Rhon River, income from A.R.C. , work on boats, etc.

Winter 1930-31

Diary of Einar Carlson (October 1 to January 17) Notes Building bridges, hunting trapping , weather, earthquakes (October 25,26,,), airplane traffic, trips to Rhon River, etc.

Kusko times reports arrival of Einar Carlson in McGrath from Tatina River (Brown p.60).

Winter 1931-32

Diary of Einar Carlson (January 1 to May 5) Notes trips to Rohn, trapping, airplane traffic, Earthquakes! (March 25 to 30), ;

"Saturday March 26- To Rohn River. The ground here is all cracked up by the quake. The house is screwgeed, the Anderson cache is down. So is the Vogler cache and the dog-barn. Steady rumbling going on and frequent heavy explosions. The ice on the river is all shattered and the old man of the mountain is gone. 'Oh, boy'"

Winter 1932-33

Diary of Einar Carlson (August 16 to March 2) Notes additional earthquake activity, and tearing down the cabin, starting a new one, putting up posts for a cache, and moving the cache and putting it on the posts (September 27 to October 14). at Rohn River. Also notes airplane activity, hunting travel to Salmon River, weather conditions , etc.

Summer 1933

Diary of Einar Carlson (August 30 to September 11) Notes meeting with hunting guides, airplane activity and weather and river conditions.

1935

T. Eugene Tibbs, game warden from McGrath, reports that airplane use is increasing making use of dog team trails in the area no longer advisable. (Brown pg. 100 _____)

February 1935

An editorial in the Kusko Times recommends that the government exped funds on conspicuous markers on all main air lances, such as McGrath to Anchorage because of all the recent crashes and lost aircraft in the area.

April 1935

Kusko Times reports that "Sam Wagner arrived in Takotna was a mail carrier in the old days on the Rainy Pass Route" Kusko Times April 6, 1935).

February 1938

Alaska Road Commission is interested in locating an emergency airstrip on the north side of Rainy Pass. (_____)

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June 1938

Rainy Pass -Tacotna Trail reported abandoned for first time in ARC reports.(Annual Report of Alaska Road Commission, Fiscal Year 1938 pg.____).

October 1938

M. c. Edmunds, Alaska Road Commission is involved in search for lost aviator and notes the construction of an emergency airfield at the mouth of the Tatina River (50' x 1400')

M.C. Edmunds , Alaska Road Commission, notes the existence of a trapper's cabin at the mouth of the Tatina River.

November 1938

The U.S.Forest Service is interested in assisting the ARC in the construction of emergency landing fields with Civilian Conservation Crew Rhone River is especially advocated as a potential work site (Letter 11/28/38; USFS to CAA)

Inscription on Rohn River #1 "Ernie Mattocnie, AAA, November 2, 1938

June 1939

The Alaska Road Commission plats the Tatina Aviation Field Reserve. shows constructed airstrip, Einar Carlson's Cabin , Dog Barn , Cache, Cache, but does not show the CCC cabin.

November 1939

A 406 acre Air Navigational Site Withdrawal No 131 is made on behalf of the Department of Interior.

The shelter cabin is being constructed by CCC crews.

Early 1950's

Jay Hammond purchases interest in the Rohn River Cabins belonging to Einar Carlson (letter Jay Hammond, Governor _____). Hammond later sell this interest to Bob Curtis.

Einar Carlson cabin is probably is use in 1951; A calendar from that year is located in the cabin in 1980 field exam.

June 1955.

Air Navigational Site 131 is transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Territory of Alaska, Department of Aviation. (Public land order _____0

January 1959

Territory of Alaska becomes State of Alaska

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March 1973

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race

March 1974

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race

March 1975

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

December 1975

Rohn River listed on Alaska Heritage Resources Survey, State of Alaska. (AHRS MCG 007)

March 1976

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

March 1977

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

March 1978

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

July 1978

Rohn River Roadhouse Site is survey by Alice Lynch, BLM.

November 1978

Iditarod trail and associated site under Federal administration included in the National trail System

March 1979

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

March 1980

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

July 1980

Iditarod National Historic Trail Project Team conducts Site Survey at Rohn

March 1981

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

Summer 1981

National Park Service in cooperation with Bureau of Land Management, conducts National Architectural and Engineering Record Survey at Rohn River.

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March 1982

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

March 1983

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

September 1983

Bureau of Land Management repairs roof of CCC building

March 1984

Rohn River CCC Cabin used as checkpoint for Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

Approximately _____ people visit the site within two week period.