Alaska Dept. of Highways

Dedication of

BROTHERHOOD BRIDGE

Oct. 18, 1965

The Dedication Ceremony

Brotherhood Bridge at the Mendenhall River

Juneau, Monday, October 18, 1965

2:50 p.m. Officials and distinguished guests assemble on platform at the paved scenic lookout.

2:50 p.m. Traffic is halted and ribbon placed across north end of bridge.

3:00 p.m. Dedication Program:

Introduction of guests.

Introduction of Wm. J. Niemi, Regional Engineer BPR, and his remarks.

Introduction of Secretary of State Hugh J. Wade by Commissioner McKinnon.

Dedication address by Secretary Wade

Response by Frank Peratrovich for Alaska Native Brotherhood.

Secretary Wade cuts the ribbon.

3:30 P.m. Bridge is opened to traffic.

Dedication of Brotherhood Bridge

Platform Invitation List

Secretary of State Hugh J. Wade

Highway Commissioner Donald A. McKinnon

Senator Frank Peratrovich, Klawock

Senator Richard L. Peter, Juneau

Representative Elton E. Engstrom, Juneau

Representative Bill Ray, Juneau

BPR Regional Engineer William J. Niemi

Alfred Widmark, Klawock, Grand President, ANB

Mrs. Lottie Nannauk, Kake, Grand President, ANS

Andrew J. Wanamaker, Sitka, Oldest Member, ANB

John Hope, Ketchikan, Past Grand President, ANB

Amos Wallace, Juneau, President, Juneau Camp, ANB

Roy Peratrovich, Sr., Juneau, B.I.A.

Roy Peratrovich, Jr., Juneau, Bridge Designer

Tom Paddock, Juneau, Contractor

Historical Notes on the Lower Mendenhall River Crossing

The Record-Miner newspaper, on April 29, 1903, reported:

> "For many years the miners and prospectors going to the Montana Creek country have had to wind their way over cliffs and swim streams, but it is now a thing of the past. During the last year or two Supt. Day, of the Mansfield Mining Co., has cut several miles of trail in that country, and now he completes the job in good shape by building a bridge across Glacier River. By building this bridge he not only makes all the upper country on Glacier River easily accessible, but shortens the distance several miles by a cut-off. The trade of all this country is tributary to Juneau, and the business-men of the place appreciating the enterprise of Mr. Day in opening up the whole country at an expense of many thousands of dollars in order that he might reach that of the Mansfield Co., joined with him in the expense and today handed over to him $250 as part payment of the expense in building the bridge. The total cost of the bridge will be about $700, but Mr. Day not only gladly pays the balance but will expend nearly a thousand dollars more on the road. He has 14 men engaged at the work now and he says the bridge is to be completed in 10 days. This will enable one to drive a carriage to Mendenhall Glacier, 16 miles out of Juneau."

This first structure of record was washed out during unprecedented high water in September, 1918. According to the report of the Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, the bridge was on Route 2A, the Auk Bay extension connecting at Mile 10 of the Juneau-Eagle River Road. Construction of a new timber truss bridge on new location commenced in November, 1918 and was completed in March, 1919. The second structure comprised 3 spans of 74 feet each, on pile piers driven to a depth of 15 to 20 feet, filled with rock. The total construction cost, including 3,000 feet of new, relocated road, was $18,323.63. Financing was a cooperative effort by the Alaska Road Commission ($5,000), the Department of Agriculture ($10,000), and the Territory of Alaska ($5,000).

The third bridge, now being removed from the site, was built in 1931. Two truss spans with a total length of 283 feet, provided about 19 feet of roadway width and could safely carry 10 tons.

Data on Brotherhood Bridge

Drainage Area. Area drained, including ice fields, is 113 square miles. Length of Mendenhall River is about 7 miles.

Structure Details. A reinforced concrete slab is supported by welded steel plate girders. Total length 319 feet, includes girder spans of 95.5, 124.3 and 95.5 feet, supported in turn on reinforced concrete piers and abutments, founded upon concrete-filled steel shell piles. Piles penetrate as much as 100 feet into silty glacial sands of the river bed, and each of the 76 piles is capable of supporting 45 tons. The structure is designed to carry the maximum loads permitted by law.

Roadway width is 30 feet, curb-to-curb. Two sidewalks, each 5 feet wide, are provided. Roadway is approximately 30 feet above stream bed.

Alaska Native Brotherhood Crest. Ten bronze medallions, two feet in diameter, reproductions of the crest of the ANB, are the focal point of the bridge. This crest, which commemorates 50 years of brotherhood, is symbolic of the two great Indian clans, the Raven and the Eagle, standing firmly together on the rock that is the Alaska Native Brotherhood.

The Eagle is shown on the left and the Raven on the right, the difference between the two being in the beak and wing details. The eye on the wings and tails, and the face on the rock accent the Alaska Indian belief that the Spirit manifests itself in all forms, both animate and inanimate.

The Raven and Eagle were selected as symbols of the clans not only because of this belief, but because the innate characteristics of the birds paralleled some of the Indian ideals which regulated their ethics and customs. The Raven represents shrewdness, coupled with great knowledge. The Eagle represents power, courage, and integrity.

Just as a rock is solid, so is the foundation of the union of these two clans - the Alaska Native Brotherhood. In 1912, through the influence of Christianity, this organization was founded.

The old rivalries which had previously prevented unification were forgotten in their united battles for "equal rights", better education, and more opportunities.

The following is the "purpose" of this organization as stated in the Constitution of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood:

"The purpose of this organization shall be to assist and encourage the Native in his advancement from his Native state to his place among the cultivated races of the world, to oppose, to discourage, and to overcome the narrow injustice of race prejudice, to commemorate the fine qualities of the Native races of North America, to preserve their history, lore, art and virtues, to cultivate the morality, education, commerce, and civil government of Alaska, to improve individual and municipal health and laboring conditions, and to create a true respect in Natives and in other persons with whom they deal for the letter and spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and laws of the United States."

Road Details. Total length of project, including the bridge, is 4,184 feet or 0.79 miles. Roadway width of 40 feet includes two traffic lanes of 12 feet each, surfaced with bituminous concrete, and two shoulders of 8 feet each, which have bituminous surface treatment.

The scenic parking area, from which Mendenhall Glacier can be observed, is 100 by 200 feet in size, and is surfaced with bituminous concrete.

Project Costs. Construction cost of the project, exclusive of engineering costs, is approximately $820,000. Of this sum, about $400,000 is invested in the structure.

Project Contractor. General Contractor for the project is Cole and Paddock Company of Juneau. Green Construction Company, and Joseph Smith, were sub-contractors for paving and earthwork items, respectively.

341,500 pounds of low-alloy structural steel were furnished by Fought and Company, of Seattle. 620 feet of ornamental railings were fabricated by Seidelhuber Iron and Bridge Works, of Seattle. Hildre Sand and Gravel Company supplied almost 1,000 cubic yards of structural concrete.

Text for Historical Marker:

BROTHERHOOD BRIDGE

This bridge is named in honor of the Alaska Native Brotherhood which was organized in 1912 for the preservation and advancement of Alaskan native culture. Bronze plaques symbolize the two great clans, Raven and Eagle, standing firmly on a rock - the foundation of A. N. B.

Upstream from this bridge is Mendenhall Glacier, one of 16 large glaciers flowing from 1,000 square miles of the Juneau Icefield. Originally called Auk Glacier by the Tlingits, it was two miles closer in the 1700's and is now receding 90 feet yearly.

SOURCE: "NAMES AROUND JUNEAU"

MENDENHALL Glacier - a tongue of the Juneau icecap, the face of which is 10 miles northwesterly from Juneau and is reached by Glacier Highway and the Mendenhall Loop Road. Named in 1892 by the U.S. Coast Survey for its superintendent, Professor Thomas Corwin Mendenhall. John Muir called this Auk Glacier when he visited the area in 1879 and this name was used by Richard Harris in 1880 and by other early miners.

Mendenhall was born October 4, 1841, near Hanoverton, Ohio. He became professor of physics and mechanics at Ohio State University in 1873 and in 1878 accepted the chair of physics at the Imperial University in Tokyo, Japan, where he was one of the founders of the Tokyo Seismological Society. In 1881 he returned to Ohio and perfected the state weather service and in 1884 was called to the U. S. Signal Service in Washington, D.C., as a consultant on weather observation and recording. In 1886 he became president of Rose Polytechnic Institute at Terre Haute, Indiana, and three years later was appointed superintendent of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. In 1894 he left the Survey to become president of Polytechnic Institute at Worcester, Massachusetts, serving there until 1901. Mendenhall spent the next 11 years in Europe. Upon his return he wrote books and articles on scientific subjects making his home at Ravenna, Ohio, where he died in 1924.

MENDENHALL Lake - at the face of Mendenhall Glacier, from which it takes its name. The lake is constantly increasing in size as the glacier recedes. In 1909 the miners of the area called this McCush Lake for Neil McCush who had mineral property near there.

MENDENHALL River - enters Gastineau Channel just north of the Juneau Airport, eight miles northwest of Juneau. The river drains Mendenhall Lake and Mendenhall Glacier, from which it takes its name. The early miners called it Glacier River. It presented a considerable impediment to their travel to mining properties to the north. The name Mendenhall River came into use about 1903. In that year the river was first bridged by the Mansfield Gold Mining Company which built a wagon road from tidewater to its property on Montana Creek.

SOURCE: UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE

HUGE ICEFIELD IS SOURCE OF MENDENHALL GLACIER

Mendenhall Glacier was once named after the Auke Indians, a village group of Tlingits who live in the Juneau Area. In 1892, the name was changed in honor of Thomas Corwin Mendenhall, Superintendent of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, under whose administration the Alaska coast was surveyed during 1886 to 1894.

Its source is the Juneau Icefield, comprised of upwards of 1,000 square miles of inter-connected glaciers extending into Canada. From the southern half of this icefield stem 16 glaciers, including the Mendenhall Glacier. Since 1946, the Juneau Icefield has been the scene of systematic scientific studies.

One of the principal aims of this program is to keep track of glaciological changes, for glaciers are the most delicate indicators of climatic change, and the Juneau Icefield is one of the most climatologically-sensitive icefields in the world.

Based upon data collected so far, it is believed that the North American continent is just at the end of a 45-year warm phase. By 1970 or 1974 all the northern part of the United States should be experiencing a return to the deep snow and lower temperatures that prevailed during the years between 1880 and 1920.

Mendenhall Glacier is unique in that it is the only glacier in the region that is readily accessible by highway the year around to visitors. It is an example of a receding glacier, which means that its ice face is slowly retreating because the ice is melting faster than it is moving forward. Although the present forward movement of the Mendenhall Glacier ice mass ranges between a few inches to about 5 feet a day, the glacier face has been receding at an average rate of 90 feet a year, or about 1 mile since 1910. The point of maximum advance of the glacier face was reached in the 1700's, to a position about 2 miles from the glacier's present face. The rocks on which the Visitor Center is erected were exposed in the last 25 years.

Mendenhall Lake began to form about 1900. It is now about 1-1/2 miles long by 1 mile wide and about 115 feet deep near the center of the glacier face.

The ice you now see on the face fell as snow about 200 years ago in the Juneau Icefield at approximately 4,000 feet elevation. The distance to this icefield from the face (called "depth" by glaciologists) is about 12 miles. The glacier face is now approximately 1-1/2 miles wide and from 100 to 200 feet high at different points.

The Mendenhall Glacier is a study in contrasts--between the sparse lichen-covered terrain around the glacier face and the dense vegetation of the older rainforests down valley and on the mountain slopes. The lichen-covered areas typify terrain found in the arctic wilderness 600 to 800 miles north.

From this study in contrasts, ecologists and botanists have charted timetables for both the advance and retreat of the glacier by measurements of the relative size of the lichens and trees, thus determining the rate of movement.

The area is also a virtual garden of wildflowers, which flourish because of the area's moderate marine climate. The long sunlit days during the summer speed the growth of all vegetation. The time pattern of the blooms, however, is similar to that of other forest regions in the United States--the yellow of the skunk cabbage heralds their coming, only to give way to the purple of the lupines at the peak of the summer, followed by the deep magenta hues of the fireweed as summer draws to a close. These, of course, are only the blooms that predominate at such intervals, for a myriad of other flowers whose hues run the full gamut of the color spectrum are to be seen.