

T H E

ALASKA

1942 - 1992

HIGHWAY

**HISTORIC
MILEPOST**

A MILE BY MILE GUIDE



~ BRITISH COLUMBIA ~

Historic Mile 0 Dawson Creek/Start of Alaska Highway, Dawson Creek Flight Strip, Public Roads Administration, R. Melville Smith Camp, U.S. Engineers Camp, M.H.K.C.B. Construction Co. Camp, Area No. 1 & 2 Army Camp, Dowell Construction Co. Camp, U.S.Q.M.C., Headquarters Alaska Highway
In the spring of 1942, the "end of steel" became a major terminus for troops and supplies arriving from Edmonton and destined for the north.

Historic Mile 2 Cantel Repeater Station

Cantel telephone-teletype lines stretched from Alberta to Fairbanks, Alaska, making it one of the world's longest open wire toll circuits at the time.

Historic Mile 21 Kiskatinaw Bridge/Wallace A. MacKey Ltd.

A 162-meter curved structure, one of the first of its kind in Canada, is the original timber bridge built along the highway that is still in use today.

Historic Mile 35 Taylor and the Peace River Bridge/1st Main Army Camp 341st Engineers

Before the Peace was bridged in 1943, the ferry from Taylor served as the major link across the river. The original Peace River suspension bridge, the longest bridge on the highway, collapsed in 1957.

Historic Mile 47 Fort St. John/"Camp Alcan"

In 1942 Fort St. John "exploded." What had been home to 200 became a temporary base for more than 6,000.

Historic Mile 49 Camp Alcan and the Public Roads Administration

Headquarters/Okes Management Contracting Headquarters - Standard Salt & Cement Co., Coghlan Construction Co., M.G. Astleford Co., Southern Minnesota Construction Co., Art Bolier, Sorenson & Volden, R.M. Smith Headquarters
As the southern sector headquarters for the United States Military and Public Roads Administration, Fort St. John was the site of two large construction camps with pyramid tents and Quonset huts - erected in open fields just outside of town.

Historic Mile 52 Charlie Lake Mile 0 Army Tote Road

Site of a major distribution camp for workers and supplies heading north. Three American soldiers also drowned here in 1942 while crossing the lake aboard "pontoon barges."

Historic Mile 73 Beatton River Flight Strip

One of the four gravel air strips constructed in northern B.C., Yukon and Alaska to provide emergency landing facilities for American military aircraft heading north.

Historic Mile 101 Blueberry Control Station

Site of the Blueberry Control Gate, a 24-hour military checkpoint operated by U.S. army personnel through the war years.

Historic Mile 148 Suicide Hill

One of the most treacherous hills on the original highway noted for its ominous greeting: PREPARE TO MEET THY MAKER.

Historic Mile 191 Trutch Mountain Summit (Elevation 4134 ft.)

The second highest summit on the original highway. Completed in 1987, the bypass route circumvented the mountain, eliminating the steep, winding climb to the top.

Historic Mile 234 Adsett Creek Highway Realignment

Completed in 1992, this major rerouting eliminated 132 curves on the stretch of highway that originally ran between Miles 234 and 275.



Historic Mile 300 Fort Nelson End Sect. "E" Start Sect. "D"/Start of Don Construction Co. Ltd. Contract

Called "Zero" by the troops because it was the beginning of the roads to Whitehorse and Fort Simpson. Home to approximately 2,000 troops during construction.

Historic Mile 392 Summit

At 1,295 m (4,250 ft.), this is the highest summit on the highway. At Mile 397, crews had to blast through the rock to create a road.

Historic Mile 422 Toad River/Camp 138 Jupp Construction

The community was established by Dennis and John Callison who, upon leading Public Roads Administration surveyors into the area in the winter of 1941, saw opportunities there and staked their claim.

Historic Mile 456 Muncho Lake/Refueling Stop, Checkpoint

The road around the lake was a particular challenge. Workers had to cut their way through the lake's rocky banks and use horse-pulled stone boats to haul the rock away.

Historic Mile 496 Liard Hot Springs

Site of a major construction camp. The natural hot springs were used by the troops daily, although once a week they cleared out, leaving the hot springs to the women of the camp.

Historic Mile 588 Contact Creek: B.C./Yukon Border Crossing

Named by the soldiers of the 36th Regiment from the south and 340th Regiment from the north, who met here September 24, 1942, completing the southern sector of the U.S. military road.

Historic Mile 627 B.C./Yukon Border Crossing

Between Contact Creek and Mile 627, the highway crosses the B.C./Yukon border seven times. Mile 627 marks the official border crossing.

HISTORIC MILEPOST INTERPRETIVE SITES



~ YUKON ~

Historic Mile 635 Watson Lake/The Northwest Staging Route

During the early years of World War II, the existing Watson Lake airfield was upgraded to accommodate the steady stream of fighter aircraft en route from the U.S. to Russia. The aircraft flying along this Northwest Staging Route were the result of a lend-lease agreement between the two countries to assist in the Soviet war effort.

Historic Mile 710 Rancheria/Highway Lodges

For a number of years after World War II, travel along the Alaska Highway was restricted and services for the casual traveller were few and far between. Highway lodges sprung up along the route to serve travellers' needs. A few of the original lodges, like Rancheria, are still in operation today.

Historic Mile 804 Teslin/Deisleen Áayi (Tlingit name meaning "long narrow waters")

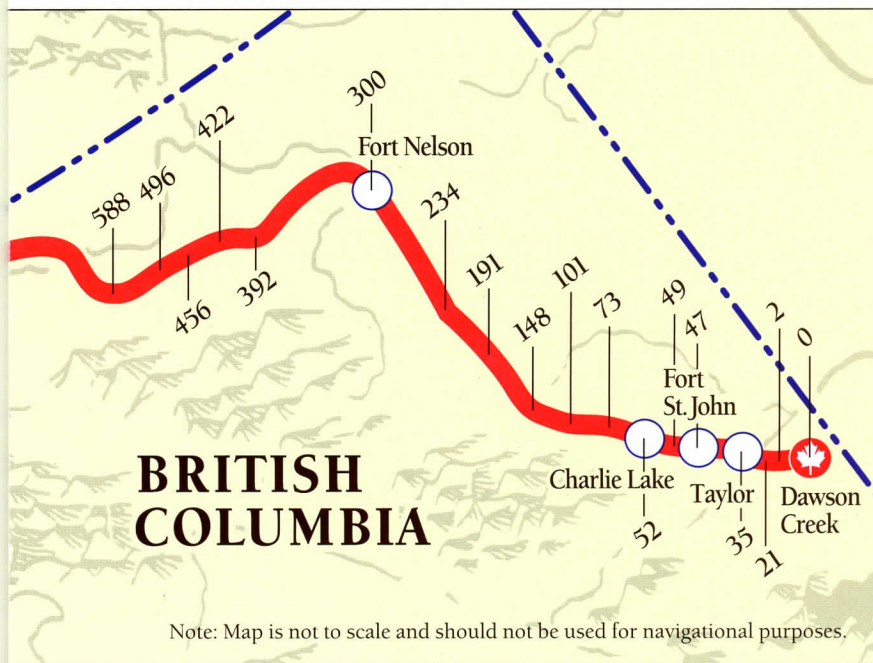
The construction of the Alaska Highway brought a new way of life to the Yukon's native people. The impact on the people of Teslin is a good example of the benefits and drawbacks associated with development.

Historic Mile 836 The Canol Project

The Canada Oil Project was conceived to provide a secure oil supply that would support the Northwest Staging Route and transportation along the Alaska Highway. Oil fields at Norman Wells were developed and a refinery was built in Whitehorse, while 600 miles of pipeline and related support facilities were constructed in between.

Historic Mile 910 McCrae

McCrae originated in 1900 as a flag stop on the newly-constructed White Pass and Yukon Railway. During World War II, this area served as a major service and supply depot, a major construction camp and a recreation centre.



[Historic Mile 974 Champagne/Shadhāla ra](#) (Southern Tutchone name meaning “sunshine mountain camp”)

When the American army soldiers pushed the “pioneer road” for the Alaska Highway through the Village of Champagne in 1942, they were crossing ground that had been occupied for over five thousand years.

[Historic Mile 1016 Haines Junction](#)

The Haines Road is a 160-mile (257 km) link connecting the Alaska Highway at Haines Junction, Yukon with the seaport of Haines, Alaska. Today the road is well known as a scenic attraction and along with the coastal ferries, forms a major route through the Yukon.

[Historic Mile 1053 Silver City/Lake Freighting](#)

Long before the Alaska Highway was built, there was a wagon road between Whitehorse and Silver City. Once travellers reached this point at the end of the road, they took boats to various locations on Kluane Lake. The American soldiers building the highway tote road in 1942 also used boats to freight their construction materials.

[Historic Mile 1061 Soldiers’ Summit](#)

Near this site on November 20, 1942, a ribbon-cutting ceremony in -35° weather was held to officially open the Alaska Canada Military Highway. Follow the path from the parking lot to the original signing site to see and learn more about this ceremony.

[Historic Mile 1083 Destruction Bay/Relay Stations](#)

Driving the early Alaska Highway was difficult and often dangerous, causing wear and tear on both man and machine. Destruction Bay was one of the many relay stations spaced at 100-mile intervals to give truck drivers a break and a chance to repair their vehicles.

Historic Mile 1093 *Burwash Landing/Łù'an Mǎn* (Southern Tutchone name meaning "place of fish")

After months of rough camp life, American soldiers were surprised and delighted when they reached this prosperous little settlement which seemed like an oasis in the wilderness. Burwash also became the home of Father Eusebe Morisset, an Oblate Missionary, who served as an auxiliary chaplain with the American Army.

Historic Mile 1117 *Lieutenant Small Memorial Site/The 18th Engineers*

The members of the 18th Regiment built over 300 miles of road from Whitehorse to the Alaska border. They marveled at the spectacular scenery and cursed the arduous conditions. First Lieutenant Roland Small died in a jeep accident near this site in 1942.

Historic Mile 1130 *The Donjek River Bridge*

Glacial rivers, like the Donjek, posed a unique problem for the builders of the Alaska Highway. These braided mountain streams would flood after a heavy rainfall or rapid glacial melt, altering the waters' course and often leaving bridges crossing dry ground.

Historic Mile 1202 *Beaver Creek/The Final Link*

Near this Yukon community, American soldiers encountered extensive permafrost. When builders scraped off the insulating layer of overburden, they transformed the permafrost into an ice-bottomed mud bog. On October 28, 1942, the 97th Engineers met the 18th Engineers here, forming a continuous link between Dawson Creek, B.C. and Fairbanks, Alaska.

Klondike Highway Mile 66 *Carcross*

During World War II, Carcross played an important role in the Alaska Highway construction. The connection here between the White Pass rail and water transportation systems gave the U.S. Army access to the Yukon's interior.

Haines Road Mile 48 *The Haines Road*

The road constructed by the U.S. Public Roads Administration between Haines Junction, Yukon and Haines, Alaska was a challenge to build and to drive. The narrow roadway and hairpin turns wound through a mountain pass infamous for severe storms. Various measures were taken to make the road travel-safe, including five staffed checkpoints along the road.

~ ALASKA ~

Historic Mile 1271 *The Alaska Skyway*

Alaskan airfields, like the Northway strip a few miles from here, played a significant role in the development of the Alaska Highway.

Historic Mile 1292 *Dusenberg Camp No. 2*

This camp, on the shores of Midway Lake, was operated by E. M. Dusenberg Co. of Iowa. They were just one of about 50 civil road construction contractors or "dirt pushers" working on the highway in 1943.

Historic Mile 1352 *The Father of the International Highway*

For Donald MacDonald, the construction of the Alaska Highway was the realization of a long-held dream.

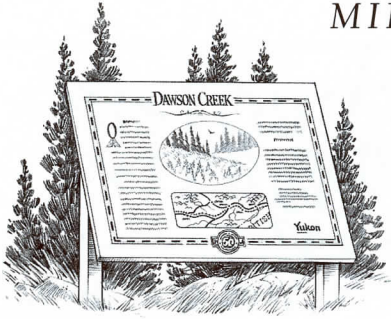
Historic Mile 1376 *"The Crooked Road"*

The road builders were under pressure to finish the road "with all the physical capacity of the troops."

Historic Mile 1409 *"After the War"*

The Alaska Highway "exposed Alaska to all the good and all the bad in the civilization we always thought was so far away." The Alaska Highway broke the territorial shell of isolation and helped make Alaska into the 49th state in 1959.

MILEPOST



During your drive along the Alaska Highway look for historic mileposts and interpretive panels. Not only have these mileposts identified points of interest for

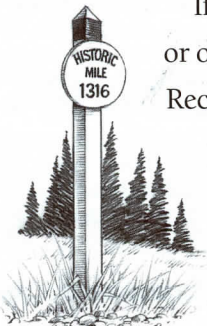
highway travellers along this popular route for decades, but they are used by residents to direct mail, identify businesses and guide guests. In commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the construction of the highway, British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska have together restored some of the historic markers.

The province, territory and state have selected a number of sites along their respective sections of the highway where special construction-related activities occurred. 183 of these sites are identified by an historic milepost. In addition to mileposts, 58 of the more notable sites also have an historic sign. The 38 most significant sites carry an interpretive panel as well.

Please stop and learn more about this highway that links British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska together. Bear in mind that these highway markers identify the original highway mileage and are no longer an accurate gauge of distance. Also, they may not have been restored to their exact location.



If you want more information about the highway or other points of interest, just stop off at the Visitor Reception Centres along your route. Good luck on your historical journey!



Funded by British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Yukon Tourism, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and Peace River Alaska Highway Tourist Association.