

## RAINIER FACT SHEET FOR GUIDES

### Visitors & Climbers

Over ninety million visitors have had the opportunity to visit and enjoy the park since its inception in 1899 & currently, over two million visitors are received at the park each year. Each year around ten thousand climbers attempt to summit (anywhere along the Columbia Crest counts) with about 50% success.

### Glaciers

Mount Rainier has twenty-five glaciers. Put them all together and you get about one cubic mile of ice and glacial debris! **Well-know Rainier glaciers include:**

- Nisqually Glacier
- Cowlitz-Ingraham Glacier
- Emmons Glacier
- Carbon Glacier--Here's a noteworthy ice cube--it has the most volume and thickness of any glacier in the contiguous United States (as mentioned in the US Geological Service fact sheet for Mt. Rainier)

### Who Is?

Grenville F. Allen is the first man to supervise the management of Mount Rainier National Park. These duties are assigned to him in 1901, and are in addition to his national forest management responsibilities in the state of Washington.

Oscar Brown (from Enumclaw) is the first "permanent ranger" (other than a "seasonal", part-time ranger) hired for the park in 1906. He builds the beautiful cabin at the Nisqually Entrance in 1908 that still stands today.

Bill Butler is thought of as the first climbing ranger at Mount Rainier National Park. That wasn't the title of his job when he becomes a ranger in 1936, but climbing has always been a passionate part of his life. Bill participates in all key rescue efforts during his full career with the Park Service. He now lives near Olympia.

Asahel Curtis Famous Pacific Northwest photographer, attracts more public reaction to the development (and lack of development) of Mount Rainier National Park than any other individual during the early park years.

George Davidson leads the US Coast and Geodetic Survey of Puget Sound in 1852-1857. His survey calculates the height of Mount Rainier to be 14,444, not far off the currently accepted height of 14,410 (14,411 by satellite measurement).

John Edgar leads a team that blazes the route over Naches Pass in 1852-53. Road construction is far short of the pass when the wagon train containing the James Longmire family struggles across in the fall of 1853.

Samuel Franklin Emmons arrives in the Northwest in September 1870, hears of the Stevens and Van Trump climb, and (with Allen D. Wilson) reaches the summit on October 17th. They are guided by James Longmire.

Fay Fuller a Tacoma school teacher, climbs to the 8700 foot level of Mount Rainier in 1887. In 1890 she becomes the first woman to reach the top.

August Kautz US Army, is stationed at Fort Steilacoom in 1853. He climbs Mount Rainier in 1857, ascending to within 400 feet of the crest

Susan Longmire energetic granddaughter of James Longmire, becomes the youngest female to climb Mount Rainier when she climbs to the summit in 1891, at the age of 13.

Dee Molenaar knows Mount Rainier from top to bottom, from hot interior to icy surface. Before and after becoming a park ranger in 1950, he climbs and helps others to climb many routes to the crest. His book, *The Challenge of Rainier*, opens the history of climbing on the mountain for all who are drawn to its upper slopes. He currently specializes in illustrating and map making.

William Packwood arrives west of the Cascades in 1844, and settles in the "Nisqually Bottom" area in 1847. He and James Longmire are notable explorers of the Indian trail system, particularly south of Mount Rainier.

Eugene Ricksecker of the US Corps of Engineers, supervises the surveying, design, and most of the initial construction of the road we now use to visit Paradise. Beginning in 1903, the road is sufficiently completed in 1911 for the use of wagons and the first automobile driven to Paradise.

Indian Henry (Sutelik) settles at Mashel Prairie (east of Eatonville) in 1876. He teaches James Longmire much about the trails in the Mount Rainier area, and later becomes his partner in developing the route to what is now the National Park.

Hazard Stevens first climbs Mount Rainier in 1870 (with Van Trump), then again in 1905 at the age of 63.

Isaac Stevens arrives in Washington Territory to assume his position as the first Governor in 1853. His son, Hazard Stevens, accompanies him.

Philemon Beecher Van Trump arrives in Washington in 1867 to serve as private secretary of the current Governor (Marshall F. Moore, Van Trump's brother-in-law). He and Hazard Stevens make the first confirmed successful climb to the summit of Mount Rainier in 1870. They are guided by Sluisin.

## When Did It Happen?

When was the first hotel built in what is now Mount Rainier National Park? The Longmire family began building what was known as the Longmire Springs Hotel in 1888. By the next year it was in use, and it was added on to in several stages until being condemned and burned in 1920.

When was daily transportation to Longmire started? The Longmire family had brought people to Longmire's Springs by pack train (horseback) as early as the 1880s. Wagons could make the trip in the 1890s, but it wasn't until the road to Longmire was improved in 1906 that daily stage service began. The commercial service soon took a back seat to private automobiles as means of conveyance.

When did the first car enter Mount Rainier National Park? The first car was driven into the park in 1907. It was the first National Park to allow visitors to bring motor vehicles inside park boundaries.

When did the first car reach Paradise? There is a dispute regarding the first car to reach Paradise. In the summer of either 1911 or 1912 (the report says 1912, but a government fiscal year began July 1st in those days), a car with the superintendent as passenger was driven to Paradise Meadow. In the fall of 1911, President Taft was driven to Paradise. The car became stuck in several areas of the muddy road and had to be helped by a mule team.

When was a trail (now known as the Wonderland Trail) first completed around Mount Rainier? With help from the Mountaineers, the park completed a trail around the mountain in 1915. About a hundred Mountaineers celebrated by following the entire trail during their summer outing. It was about half again longer than the current trail.

When were the stone structures at Camp Muir (10,000' elevation) built? The public shelter and guide shelter at Camp Muir were built between 1916 and 1921 by joint Mountaineers and park service effort.

When was the Paradise Inn built? Most of the construction occurred in 1917. It was opened for business before all of the planned construction had been completed.

When was the first public campground built in the park? Until 1918 tent camps were run at a price by a number of Rainier park concessions. The construction of free public campgrounds began that year.

When was the first gas station built in the park? Converted barns and 55 gallon drums of petroleum products were used to service gas powered vehicles as early as 1908. The first real gas station was built under government contract by the Standard Oil Company in 1919. It was used during ten summers, then torn down and replaced by the building recently restored at Longmire.

When was the Administration Building constructed at Longmire? Part of the building was constructed and occupied in 1928. The second floor and a jail in the basement was completed in 1930.

When was the Sunrise Lodge built? The Lodge as seen today was built in 1931. It was a part of a grand architectural plan that was never completed for lack of funding.

When was the CCC active in the park? The Civilian Conservation Corps was busily building and repairing park lands and structures from 1933 to 1941. In addition to landscape work, they helped plant over 10,000,000 trout in the lakes and streams.

When was the worst accident causing loss of life on Mount Rainier? In late December 1946 a military plane transporting young service men from a California base to the Puget Sound area became lost in a heavy fog and crashed into Mount Rainier. 32 officers and men lost their lives. The plane wasn't found until the next summer.

When were "flying saucers" first spotted over Mount Rainier? The sighting was recorded in 1947 by the pilot of a private plane while trying to locate the military plane that had crashed the winter before. It is not known what the flying objects were doing near Mount Rainier at the time of his search.

When was the Stevens Canyon Road opened? The road connecting Longmire/Paradise to the east side of the park was opened in 1957. Construction had been underway since the 1930s.

When was the shelter cabin built at Camp Schurman (9702' elevation)? The Camp Schurman Cabin was started in 1958 and completed in 1961 by the Schurman Cabin Association, aided by government funding. It was intended as "an inclement weather shelter." Now used in emergencies and to store rescue equipment.

When was the Wilderness Act passed by Congress? The Wilderness Act, defining land areas by the degree of protection from human development that they are to receive, was passed in 1964.

When did snowfall at Paradise set world records? In the winter of 1971 a world record of 1027 inches of snow fell at Paradise. The next winter a new record was set there with a total of 1122 inches of measured snowfall. Another spectacular snowfall occurred in 1974, when a total of 1071 inches fell.

When was the Paradise Visitor Center built? First called the Paradise Day Use Facility, the visitor center was opened in 1966. In 1987 the building was refurbished and dedicated as The Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center.

When were Mount Saint Helens recent eruptions? Mount Saint Helens eruptions began in May 1980. Mount Rainier has experienced many eruptions, such as a minor pumice eruption approximately 150 years ago and a substantial outburst 500 to 600 years ago, but it hasn't put on a show as spectacular as its southern cousin for about 2300 years.

When was the worst climbing accident on Mount Rainier? In June 1981 a group of 25 climbing guides and clients were caught in a major avalanche in an area above and east of Camp Muir. The avalanche, known as an ice fall because of the gigantic chunks of glacial ice involved, caused the death of 11 of the climbers.

When were llamas used at Paradise? In 1983 llamas were tried out as pack animals by the park in the Paradise area. The creatures were too strong willed, and resisted heavy loads, so they retired to other pastures.

When was the park wilderness plan approved? Twenty four years after the Wilderness Act was passed, the initial Wilderness Plan was approved for Mount Rainier National Park, and park wilderness areas were established in 1988.

When were Back Country Permits first required? When the wilderness areas were first defined, it was recognized that a permit system was needed to monitor public understanding of and use of wilderness areas. Back Country Permits have been required on a year around basis since 1989.

When was the Carbon River Road washed out? The road had been partly eaten away by flooding numerous times since it was first built in 1924, but the flood damage was extreme during the winter of 1995-96. In November 1998 the road was reopened to the public. Before the end of December it was washed out again. It may have to stay that way for a long time.

When do wildflowers bloom? Before the winter snow has completely melted, the wildflowers begin to push their way toward the sun's rays. Only the deep frosts of the emerging winter have the power to shut down their growth. The brilliant color of wildflower carpets changes from week to week during the summer, but blooming goes on for three to six months, depending on their elevation.

## **PARK TIMELINE**

### **Infancy, new businesses in a new park. 1899 -1909**

1899

President William McKinley signs the document creating Mount Rainier National Park on March 2, 1899.

1900

The Longmires, pioneer family that developed Longmire's Springs "erect an inn, barn, two bath houses, one storehouse and two small shacks" on their mineral claim.

1901

Grenville F. Allen (Mount Rainier Forest Reserve Supervisor) becomes the first superintendent of the new park when Secretary of the Interior Ethan A. Hitchcock adds that duty to his national forest responsibilities.

1902

The Longmire Hotel is expanded to a total of 12 guest rooms and a capacity of 30 guests. Tents are erected behind it to take care of overflow of visitors.

1903

John Reese expands his tent camp above Paradise valley. By summer he runs a "tent hotel" comprising of eight tents. He charges guests \$2 per day or \$10 a week for basic accommodations. Mountain guides are furnished at extra expense.

1904

Eugene Ricksecker, Corps of Engineers, moves his "construction camp" to Longmire Springs and builds a cabin to be used as an office. The first contract for construction of the new "Government road" from the park boundary to Paradise is awarded to A. D. Miller.

1905

The Longmire family faces their first competition when the Tacoma Eastern Railroad (subsidiary of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway) is granted a lease and permission to build a new hotel, the National Park Inn, adjacent to the Longmire's private property. Robert Longmire opens a saloon, but it is quickly closed by acting Superintendent Allen.

1906

Repairs to the old road into Longmire Springs are made by railroad workmen. Their National Park Inn (still unfinished) opens to guests on the first of July. A total of 60 guests are given rooms in the hotel and 75 more have tents to sleep in. It is a bit more expensive than the rustic Longmire Hotel.

1907

Ricksecker and the Corps of Engineers are given full responsibility for construction of the much needed Government road when the private contractor defaults. He quickly hires a crew from Tacoma and the area around Mount Rainier. His workmen complete basic construction from the park boundary to Longmire Springs. The first auto enters the park.

1908

The first annual automobile permits for MRNP are sold 7/24/1908 for a fee of \$5 per year. A total of 117 permits are issued that year. Autos are not allowed beyond Longmire, although wagons could go as far as the Nisqually Glacier by late summer.

[View Image](#)

1909

George B. Hall runs a livery business at Longmire Springs. He builds an 80 foot barn, 100 foot shed, residences and storage buildings on his leased property (the area on which the current Longmire Administration Building resides).

### **Teenage adolescence and growing pains. 1910 -1919**

1910

Edward S. Hall replaces Supervisor Allen and assumes duties as the first full-time Superintendent of the park (1/15/1910). He is owner of Rainier Mill Company and a political appointee. Superintendent Hall refers to the log cabin at the park entrance as the "Gatekeeper's Lodge" (Oscar Brown Cabin N-103) and has an addition built to serve as his office.

1911

President William Howard Taft visits the park on 10/8/1911. After lunch at the National Park Inn at Longmire, he made the trip to Paradise Valley and Camp of the Clouds in his touring car. According to Samuel Estes, the park ranger in charge, the President's vehicle is dragged through muddy sections of the road from Narada Falls to Paradise by teams of mules stationed along the way.

[View Image](#)

1912

Members of the new Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, the Tacoma Commercial Club, the Rotary Club of Seattle and the Rotary Club of Tacoma met in March of 1912 to discuss ways to improve the economy within the park, partly by receiving a greater yearly congressional appropriation. A Rainier National Park Advisory Committee is formed.

1913

Elcaine Longmire takes over operation of the ice cream shop, confectionery, and grocery store that has been started by Fred George at Longmire Springs. Government permits are granted for photo galleries and gift shops. James Patterson receives permission to open a barbershop. The area has become a lively commercial center.

1914

Roy Longmire operates an "automobile for hire" in the Longmire Springs area. Traffic congestion is on the increase.

1915

Steven T. Mather, Assistant Secretary of the Interior in charge of National Parks, meets with the Rainier National Park Advisory Committee in Seattle to plan a more efficient system for tourist accommodations. It is agreed that management of concessions within the park must be consolidated under a single company, a "regulated monopoly."

The road above the Nisqually Glacier is opened to autos in June. A 93 mile trail is completed entirely around the mountain. The Mountaineers help with construction of some of the connecting segments, and about 90 members use the new trail during their 1915 outing.

[View Image](#)

1916

The Rainier National Park Company (RNPCo.), formed by Puget Sound businessmen in March, is granted a 20 year "preferential concession" lease by the newly established National Park Service.

A stone shelter is built at Camp Muir for use by climbers.

1917

The RNPCo. made use of their lease by buying the properties and service rights of the wide range of park concessions, some of which have been serving the public for twenty years. The Longmire family retains their private land at Longmire Springs, but gives in to progress. They lease the land to a developer, and sell most of their buildings.

1918

A "free public campground" is opened at Longmire. It immediately overflows with visitors. Seasonal park entry permits cost \$2.50 per auto.

1919

The RNPCo. allows an exception to their commercial control. An automobile service station is constructed by the Standard Oil Company. Gas poared vehicles line up for needed services. Automobile traffic increases from 70 in 1907 to 10,434 in 1919.

## The Roaring Twenties, planning for a rich future. 1920 -1929

1920

During the busy summer park service personnel consist of the superintendent, a chief ranger, two park rangers, five temporary rangers concentrating on traffic duty, three temporary rangers at outpost stations, one clerk, two telephone operators, one lineman, one road foreman with a crew of at least six laborers, a trail crew foreman with a crew of two to ten men, one warehouse clerk, one truck driver/mechanic, one carpenter, and one cook. Most live in tents. During the winter the force drops to the superintendent, the chief ranger, one park ranger, and one clerk. Permanent housing is needed.

1921

Approximately 500 climbers make it to the top of Mount Rainier. On September 7th Edward J. Hamilton of Buckley and Lenore Allain of Auburn marry on the summit.

1922

Electric lights are installed in the Longmire Campground before the summer crowds start arriving, and a Ski Tournament is held at Paradise Valley during the 4th of July three day weekend. The National Park Service starts providing Nature Guides, answering daytime questions and giving slide show lectures on weekend evenings.

1923

The new Superintendent, Major Owen A. Tomlinson reports a total of over one hundred thousand visitors. 27,655 cars and 123,708 people enter the park that year. Bridge access is built across the Nisqually to a new Longmire campground, and another new campground is built 6.7 miles inside the White River entrance.

1924

An effort is made to encourage winter use of the park. The road is kept open to Longmire during the winter of 1923-1924, and sporting events are arranged. The road from Longmire to Paradise is opened to unrestricted traffic on 6/25/1924. A road is completed during the summer from the Carbon River entrance to Cataract Creek, a point near the snout of the Carbon Glacier. Road improvements provide easy park access for all Puget Sound residents.

1925

With the Longmire road open for the second consecutive winter season, the park is advertised as an all-year playground. Toboggan slides, four-horse sleighs, and dog teams are provided by the RNPCo. at Longmire.

1926

The National Park Inn, built at Longmire by the railroad twenty years earlier, is completely destroyed by fire. Its annex building is immediately modified and put to use as the Inn that is still in use today.

1927

Travel doubles in five years. Over 200,000 visitors enjoyed the reduction of automobile entrance fees from \$2.50 to \$1.00 per vehicle. More people are served with less formality. The dining room at Longmire is converted to cafeteria service to accommodate crowds more quickly.

1928

Planning for future growth is introduced. The Mountaineers, National Park Advisory Board, and other planners help the park service develop a long range plan that allows for increases in buildings, roads and trails, while setting aside "road-less areas" in the north and southwestern parts of the park. The Longmire Administration Building is constructed. An attempt is made to seek a balance between development and preservation, a task that continues today.

1929

The RNPCo. is having financial problems. They propose building an aerial tramway from the Nisqually Glacier Bridge to a new hotel site on the glacier rim near Paradise in order to attract more visitors. The park service does not concur.

The ten year old Standard Oil gas station at Longmire is torn down and a rustic station run by the Associated Oil Co. is built to service the public. This building is still standing and is currently converted to a transportation exhibit.

### **A Battle With Depression. 1930 -1939**

1930

A caravan of 300 cars full of press and civic leaders drive up the newly constructed road to Yakima Park (Sunrise) on July 20. The lodge and other buildings are not yet completed, but the view is magnificent. It is a prime site for public recreation and would, hopefully, reduce the crowds at Paradise and Longmire.

1931

The winter trail between Longmire and Paradise is maintained for the protection of the hundreds who use it for winter sports. For the first time park rangers make a complete patrol of the park boundary in the winter season. A "SnoGo" rotary plow is purchased for road maintenance by the park service.

1932

The Seattle Junior Chamber of Commerce hold a winter sports carnival at Paradise on April 3rd. The "SnoGo" is used to keep the road open to Canyon Rim, thus increasing the number of winter visitors. Mather Memorial Parkway is opened for summer and fall use, providing easy access from eastern Washington.

1933

Five Emergency Conservation Work Camps are authorized for the park. They are manned by newly recruited Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) men from various parts of the United States. Training is provided by park service personnel. The CCC use inexpensive skills to build and repair structures, campgrounds, roads and trails.

1934

Paradise becomes the winter playground of the Northwest. The first annual Silver Skis Championship, sponsored by the Seattle PI, brings nation-wide attention to Mount Rainier winter sports. The Community Building and a kitchen keep open for public use at Paradise to shelter those who cannot afford the RNPCo facilities.



1935

Paradise ski racing elevates to the national championship level. Olympic trials bring in the crowds.

1936

On July 30, 1936, the National Parks Association of Japan presents a stone taken from the summit of Mount Fujiyama to the American Ambassador in Tokyo, to be forwarded to Mount Rainier National Park. On October 23, 1936, the park superintendent presents a stone from the top of Mount Rainier to the Japanese Consul in Seattle.

1937

The park struggles to keep the road to Paradise Valley open during the winter. Bad weather cause cancellation of the Silver Skis race. An intense ice slide carries away a part of the Gibraltar Rock route to the summit that has been most popular since the historic climb of 1870.

1938

Although winter business has increased dramatically, the RNPCo. shows a substantial decrease in revenues. Summer income from services provided by the company often fails to meet costs. Tourist bookings decline. An increasing percent of the 382,000 visitors are camping in public campgrounds or driving to and from the park in a single day.

1939

Construction of a new ski lodge at Paradise begins by the National Park Service, but winter attendance decreases.

The 18.2 acre Longmire family claim is purchased by the Federal Government for \$30,000.

As of March 1st, a fee of \$1.00 for every person attempting to climb Mount Rainier is collected to help National Parks become more nearly self sustaining. Climbing clubs protest vigorously. It only lasts one year.

## **World War II, victories and tragedy. 1940 -1949**

1940

Puget Sound news papers fire public interest in a funicular (cable railway) or other means of transporting passengers to areas above Paradise for skiing and sightseeing.

1941

The lightest snowfall on record helps keep the road open continuously to Paradise during the winter of 1940-1941. More than 136,000 visitors come into the park during the five month ski season.

A "constam" (early version of T-bar) ski lift is approved by the National Park Service, but financial problems prevent the RNPCo. from building it.

1942

World War II begins, and public travel restrictions are in effect. Paradise and the upper slopes of Mount Rainier are used by military ski troopers for winter training, using methods developed by the Finnish army and developing new tactics and equipment. A primary user is the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment of the Army's 10th Mountain Division. Aircraft warning stations (a new use of fire lookouts) are manned at the request of the US Army in the fall of 1942.

1943

The number of vehicles entering Mount Rainier National Park falls from the 1940 record of 117,879 to 35,029 because of the unavailability of gas, tires, and other tourist needs. "Two young ladies" are hired as summer rangers to handle checking station duties.

1944

Financially distressed RNPCo. is able to sell their hundreds of tourist cabins at Paradise and Yakima Park. The cabins are hauled out of the park and used for emergency housing. Plans begin for improving visitor facilities after the war ends.

1945

President Harry S. Truman, Governor Wallgren and a party of sixty playful people give short notice before arriving at Paradise on June 22. It takes much effort to clear the snow-blocked Paradise road. RNPCo. employees scurry to open the shuttered Paradise Inn and prepare a luncheon for the President and party. Truman thoroughly enjoyed frolicking in the snow. He is the first president since Taft (1911) to visit the park.

On the Sunday following the surrender of Japan (V.J. Day, 8/19/1945) 3,847 cars and a total of 16,688 people come to Mount Rainier, setting a record for a single day of visitors.

1946

All park accommodations, minimally maintained during the war years, are criticized by the public. Governor Wallgren and the Secretary of the Interior agree that the park's visitor facilities must be improved.

On December 10, 1946 a Marine Corps C-46 transport plane flying from San Diego to Seattle crashes into Mount Rainier. Thirty two officers and enlisted men are listed as missing.

1947

Uncounted Search and Rescue missions comb the Mount Rainier area, seeking the remains of the Marine Corps flight during the first six months of 1947.

On June 24 Kenneth Arnold flies near Mount Rainier in a light Callair aircraft, modified for mountain search and rescue. At about 3:00 PM, Arnold sees nine flying objects approaching the mountain's 9500 foot level at a rate of speed exceeding Mach 1, faster than any recorded flight speed at that time. The objects are relatively flat, and have a curved perimeter. He estimates that each has a length and width of about fifty feet. The objects continue southward, past Mount Adams, until disappearing from sight.

On July 21 Ranger William J. Butler, while climbing the southern slopes of Mount Rainier, spots an unusual reflection high on the mountain and finds the crashed Marine Corps plane. Families of the victims and the park agree to leave the plane and bodies in the glacial ice that already encloses most of the remains. Mr. Butler declines the \$5,000 reward offered for his finding.

On October 2, the Kautz Creek valley at Mount Rainier is blasted by a wall of water, rock, and mud. A glacial dam bursts, the churning flow gouges out the upper valley and covers the lower plain and road to Longmire with up to twenty feet of debris. Most of the trees in its path are uprooted or suffocate by the concrete-like mass.

1948

Studies of the chasm carved by the 1947 Kautz Creek flood reveal that such a flood had happened several times in the past. Similar studies in other parts of the park show that flows of a much greater mass happen at unpredictable periods of time along the drainage routes of all of the major glaciers. Studies begin to seek safer locations for the park headquarters and facilities in the potential path of a flow.

1949

During the winter of 1948-1949 a series of heavy snowstorms cause road closures due to falling trees and avalanches that cover the road with as much as 35 feet of snow and debris. Nearly 200 fallen trees per mile block the trails. Many of the bridges are crushed or swept away. Most of the 295 miles of telephone lines within the park are demolished.

**The National Park Service, a new landlord, develops Mission 66, a plan and funding for park repair and improvement. 1950 - 1959**

1950

On November 3rd a ski area is authorized at Canyon Rim, about a mile past Ricksecker Point. The road is kept open as far as Narada Falls, and a rope tow is operated for skiers. The RNPCo. provides lunch services, car chain rentals, and ski rentals at Longmire.

The Department Of the Interior decides to purchase and maintain the RNPCo. facilities. The financially torn company will still use the buildings and furnish services. Plans are considered for a new hotel at Paradise, to be built by the park service and kept open all during the year.

1951

A record 871,577 people visit Mount Rainier National Park, a 53% increase over the preceding year. On December 15th the ten millionth visitor (estimate of visitors since the park is established in 1899) comes through the park entrance.

Lt. John W. Hodgkin, US Air Force, landed his own Piper Cub airplane on the top of Mount Rainier. It is reported that he couldn't restart his engine. A park ranger rescue party climbs to assist, but finds that Hodgkin had glided off the mountain with a dead engine and safely landed at Mowich Lake. He is tried and found guilty of not abiding by the regulation that prohibits landing planes within the park.

1952

The government and RNPCo., at a February meeting, agrees that transportation equipment would be excluded from purchase of company property. Sale of RNPCo. holdings is completed in August, for \$300,000. Martin Kilian offered his Ohanapecosh holdings to the government for \$80,000. The price is considered too high. Negotiations are also underway concerning the purchase of land held by the two last companies that owned mining claims within the park, The Eagle Peak Copper Mining Co. and the Mount Rainier Mining Company (holder of the Glacier Basin mines).

1953

Skiing facilities within the park are highly criticized as inferior to popular commercial areas in the Cascades. A chair lift is proposed to be built at Paradise.

1954

Public support grows for the chair lift proposal, and for keeping the road open all the way to Paradise. There is enthusiastic local support for construction of a European style tramway. The Automobile Club of Washington publishes "Modernize the Mountain" in the Washington Motorist, and criticizes National Park Service policy as backward. The Mountaineers supports NPS policy, and suggests that winter recreational development be made outside the park. The Secretary of the Interior turns down the proposed winter expansion and construction of a new hotel.

1955

The Mission 66 plan for Mount Rainier National Park is chosen as a national pilot project for upgrading both public accommodations and park preservation. Construction and changes will occur during the next ten years. The road to Paradise is kept open during the winter of 1954-1955 for the first time since 1948-1949. Only 35% of the winter visitors skied. The rest enjoy sightseeing and other forms of snow play.

1956

The Mission 66 plan deals with optimum use of a \$13.5 million appropriation during a ten year period. Accommodations and services are needed to serve an expected increase of visitors to exceed 1,000,000 per year.

Mount Rainier's height is measured 8/8/1956. It is found to be two feet higher than the 1913 measurement of 14,408 feet.

1957

Newspapers report "drastic changes" to the park because of the Mission 66 development program. The majority of the public supports the program.

The Stevens Canyon road is opened to the public 9/4/1957. Construction began in the 1930s.

1958

A seismograph is located at Longmire by the University of Washington on 3/6/1958. It provides better readings of tremors than the station in Seattle.

A million visitors come through park entrances before the end of September.

1959

Congressional and state pressure instigates a study by Jackson Hole Preserves, Inc. of park capability to serve overnight guests. The study concludes that a modern first-class hotel is needed at Paradise. A bill is introduced in Congress to authorize the use of federal funds to build the hotel.

A plane crashes on 9/2/1959 while attempting to make a drop of rescue supplies on the summit of Mount Rainier. It is completely covered by a snowstorm, and is found several days later.

### **Mission 66 in progress, new development and new standards. 1960-1969**

1960

Acquisition of a site for a new headquarters to be built outside the park is authorized by Congressional Act of 6/27/1960.

A new high-level bridge is opened over the Nisqually River near the glacier.

1961

Camp Schurman Cabin (construction started 1958 by the Schurman Cabin Association) is completed at Steamboat Prow at 9,702 foot elevation. It is intended as an "inclement weather shelter for those climbing via the Emmons Glacier route.

Ohanapecosh Campground is expanded and other campgrounds and picnic areas are improved thanks to Mission 66 funding.

1962

World Conference of National Parks is held in Seattle in July. Increased travel to the park is partly due to the World's Fair being held in Seattle. There are 1,905,302 visitors this year, 31,427 in a single day.

1963

More camping space is needed. A new campground is opened at Paradise 8/14/1963. A gigantic rockslide on 12/14/1963, starting near the base of Little Tahoma peak, covers the lower four miles of the Emmons Glacier with an estimated 14 million cubic yards of debris. The flow probably starts by a small steam explosion.

1964

The Wilderness Act is passed by the US Congress and signed by the president.

Land near Ashford is acquired from the Weyerhaeuser Co. for a new park headquarters.

Cougar Rock Campground is opened and Longmire Campground closes. The Clark E. Schurman Memorial Shelter at Steamboat Prow is dedicated in August, and a new Ohanapecosh Visitor Center is dedicated in October.

1965

Winter climbs of Mount Rainier are authorized. Four are attempted, only one successful.

A DC-6 plane, chartered by the US Air Force flies into Mount Rainier at the 10,000 level of upper South Mowich Glacier on 4/23/1965. All five men aboard are killed. A second plane crashes near Pyramid Peak with four aboard. It is not found until 1973.

Paradise Lodge is torn down and burned as the new Paradise Visitor Center ("Day Use Facility") is built. No new hotel is planned.

1966

The park coordinates mountain rescues with Western Air Rescue Center at McChord Air Force Base.

The Paradise Visitor Center (in 1987 dedicated as the Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center), is opened to the public in September.

Plans are accepted for a shift of Park Headquarters from Longmire to Tahoma Woods.

1967

John A. Townsley, the new Mount Rainier National Park Superintendent, concentrates on back country resources.

In September the National Park Service publicizes administrative policies for natural areas. This set guidance for park Master Plans, and introduces methods by which Wilderness Areas within the parks are to be identified.

1968

A cooperative Forest Service/National Park Service exhibit area floods out by the White River in June.

Steam and smoke is seen rising from the west side of Mount Rainier in August.

1969

The Mountaineers present "Recommendations for Future Development of Mount Rainier National Park" to the park service. Closure proposal of West Side Road and the road to Mowich Lake by the National Park Service presented.

### **Record snowfall, time to move. 1970-1979**

1970

The Paradise Meadow Restoration Plan begins with help from dozens of volunteers.

There is a Boy Scout Camporee held in the park.

1971

A world record snowfall of 1027 inches is recorded at Paradise. Fred Harvey sells his Rainier National Park Co. concession interests to Government Services, Inc., a non-profit organization.

1972

A new world record of 1122 inches of snowfall is recorded at Paradise. Rainier Mountaineering Inc. (RMI), run by Lou Whittaker and Jerry Lynch, begin a guide service and management of ski tows at Paradise.

1973

Improvements made to the National Park Inn (Longmire), the Paradise Inn, and the Sunrise picnic area. Night walks are instituted at Trail Of The Shadows (Longmire) and at Reflection Lakes. A New movie, "Fire and Ice," showing geologic history of Mount Rainier is shown at Sunrise Visitor Center.

1974

Total snowfall is measured 1,070.6", only slightly less than the previous record established two winters before. The glaciers are growing for a change.

Mount Rainier National Park Master Plan and Wilderness Plan public hearings are held in January. They are presented to Congress in December. The gasoline shortage limits travel to park for the first half of 1974. Once gas lines are reduced, travel increases again and almost catches up to normal levels by the end of the year.

1975

There is no winter operation of a rope tow at Paradise. No bids are received for the first time since the late 1920s.

A vendor contract for sale of firewood (not cut within park) is tried at Cougar Rock Campground. There is a high demand from campers. The contract is authorized on a bigger scale for the next year. Cougar Rock Campground is damaged by flooding in December.

1976

Congress approves Mount Rainier National Park Master Plan, but not Wilderness Plan. Considerable debate continue regarding the wilderness issue.

Two pet dogs are set free to romp (a no-no in a National Park) at Cowlitz Box Canyon. Freedom is not enjoyed long. In an exuberant chase one jumps over a railing into the canyon and the second follows. Their bodies couldn't be retrieved.

1977

There are over 2 million visitors to the park in a single year. Only 33 more parties climb Mount Rainier than the previous year, but approximately 3,000 more back country permits are issued. Wilderness is considered attractive.

Construction for new park headquarters is underway at Tahoma Woods. Needed repairs to National Park Inn at Longmire begin.

1978

There has been 50 million visitors to Mount Rainier National Park since it is formed in 1899.

Three climbing parties are caught in avalanches during the year. No deaths.

1979

A Cessna crashes on the summit of Mount Rainier. No one is injured. Rescue is made the next day by helicopter. A helicopter also saves the lives of three climbers caught in a storm on the summit later in the year.

Willi Unsoeld, famous climber, and young partner die on the mountain.

It is the last year of operation for the gas station at Sunrise.

### **Bad tempered mountains. 1980-1989**

1980

Mount Saint Helens erupts on 5/18/1980. Employees are busy clearing a layer of ash from roads at Mount Rainier. Climbing is temporarily called off, but shows no decrease in popularity when it resumes. There is little evidence of ash at the higher elevations.

Mountain rescues are helped by Military Assistance To Safety And Traffic (MAST), the 10th Aviation Battalion (Ft. Lewis), and the 92nd Aviation Battalion Reserve from Paine Field, Everett.

1981

At 5:45 AM June 21, 1981 A Rainier Mountaineering Inc. (RMI) climbing party of "5 guides and 20 clients en route to the summit are struck by an ice avalanche killing 11 persons, one of whom is a RMI guide. None of the bodies are recovered nor is it expected that they will ever be."

The Paradise Ice Caves are closed in September due to accidents caused by ice falling from the ceiling.

1982

Washington State has an unemployment level of 14%. Revenue and citizens are depressed. Park visitation is down 23% from previous year, but back-country use of the 41 designated trailside camps (including climber camps) is down only 7%.

8,358 climbers register to climb Mount Rainier, nearly 500 more than the 1979 record turn out. 4961 make it to the top, compared to 4143 in 1979.

1983

A Bull Market drives stock values to new records (in the 1200 range). The local economy is still down.

Fort Lewis holds a team relay, running all the way to Paradise and carrying their company guidon (small flag or streamer), on June 25th.

There are 14 deaths on the mountain, 5 as result of a Navy plane crash.

1984

31 Search and Rescue missions are made on Mount Rainier, a relatively low total. This expensive and risky approach to human endangerment (endangering the rescuers as well as those who needed rescuing) is increasing at an alarming rate. It is feared that there is a "growing lack of respect for safety while climbing" (many climbers are spotted un-roped and with improper equipment). Also noticed is an attitude that members of a climbing party "are not responsible for each other's well being. In a particularly ugly incident, members of a climbing party "left a fellow climber on the Muir Snowfield with an injured knee. Once they reached Paradise they requested rangers to go get their partner while they went to dinner at the Paradise Inn."

1985

Since 1982, climbing and other back country use declines. A just-completed three year study, "Human Impact In Alpine Zone," by Dr. Ola Edwards leads to changes in planning for limiting pollution high on Mount Rainier caused by human waste and refuse. Solar toilets tested the year before, are in use at Camp Muir. The park joins the Nisqually River Planning Task Force in studying and planning prevention of flood damage along the Nisqually River and nearby streams.

1986

Climbing is on the upswing again. Further studies are made of damage caused by the large number of climber populating the higher levels of Mount Rainier. "Human Impact in the Alpine Ecosystem" leads the list.

Past five year visitor use of the Hiker Information Center continues to decline.

1987

The Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center is dedicated (formerly called the Paradise Day Use Facility and the Paradise Visitor Center).

Guest Services Inc. contract for serving the public is renewed for 25 years.

Paradise ice caves are closed in September due to falling chunks of ice.

1988

Cecelia Carpenter compiles Indian legends for the park.

The park Wilderness Plan is enacted. Mount Rainier National Park Wilderness Area is established on 11/15/1988. A Wilderness Management Plan and a Comprehensive Hazardous Waste Plan are drafted, and both an Ozone Monitoring Project and re-vegetation of high human impact areas begin.

A "Mass Transit" system to and within the park, including linking with Northwest Trek, is proposed. A public survey and feasibility study commences.

1989

Back Country Permits are now required all through the year.

Refurbishing of the National Park Inn (Longmire) begins, and a "Meadow Stompers" (stay on trails) program is initiated at Paradise.

Geothermal resource evaluation of Mount Rainier is initiated by Bureau Of Land Management, and a four year study of debris flows/flooding at Tahoma Creek begins.

### **Looking forward. 1990-1999**

1990

The 100th Anniversary of Fay Fuller's climb is celebrated. An update to the park's General Management Plan begins.

In November 14" of rain fall in five days. The West Side Road is washed out above Fish Creek.

1991

The Nisqually Glacier Study (discontinued 1985) restarts. The glacier has been melting rapidly since 1983.

1992

News releases encourage public participation in park planning. "Gateway" communities are invited to participate.

The park Interpretation Division is reorganized. Landscape Architect and Historical Architect positions are added to park staff.

City of Tacoma project "Train to the Mountain" starts.

1993

An issue is raised concerning recovering mounting Search and Rescue costs from those rescued.

Sale of gasoline within the park discontinues.

Transportation Feasibility studies begin by BRW Inc., Denver.



1994

Historic building, Sunrise Lodge, is a candidate for the wrecking ball. The Seattle Times publishes the issue and generates public support for preservation of this building.

1995

A new park General Management Plan (including 15 year projections) is prepared. The issue of limiting vehicular transportation within the park and excluding it from certain existing roads is considered. A Congressional budget impasse causes a brief closure of Mount Rainier and other national park areas due to lack of operating funds.

1996

An extensive stretch of the Carbon River road is washed out during the winter. It is closed to auto traffic at the entrance station. Bicycles are allowed to transport visitors the five miles to Ipsut Creek Campground. Beyond that point, foot travel only.

The Cayuse Pass highway (Washington State Route 123) is severely damaged by winter weather. There are at least four washouts along a 600 foot stretch. One-way traffic is able to get through the damaged area during the summer.

The entrance fee to Mount Rainier National Park doubles to \$10.00.

1997

Record snow depths in the Cascade Mountains delay opening the Cayuse Pass part of the road around the mountain. Chinook Pass (Highway 410) opens June 12. The Mowich Lake Road is still closed until mid July.

Public meetings are held regarding the proposed General Management Plan for Mount Rainier National Park.

1998

Preparation for the Centennial starts in earnest. The former gas station at Longmire is converted to a transportation history exhibit. Work begins refurbishing the "crown jewels" areas of rich human history within the park, especially in the Sunrise area. Internet Web pages are developed for access to historical and current park information.

The Carbon River road is repaired, and reopened in November from the entrance to Ipsut Creek Campground.

Within a month of opening, new flooding destroys repair work on the Carbon River Road. The road is closed.

1999

Mount Rainier National Park officially 100 years old on March 2nd. Check the Web site for festive occasions.

On March 2nd a Centennial exhibit, "Sunrise to Paradise: The Story of Mt. Rainier National Park" opens at the State History Museum in Tacoma.

## THE GUIDE SERVICE

The RNPC took over the guide service without any difficulty. Mountain guides who had formerly held individual permits under the Secretary of the Interior simply went to work for the RNPC. In 1917, the RNPC hired Asahel Curtis as its first chief guide. He was followed by Otis B. Sperlin in 1918, Joseph T. Hazard from 1919 to 1920, Frank A. Jacobs from 1921 to 1924, and Harry B. Cunningham from 1925 to 1932. The guide department employed several guides each season, including two Swiss brothers, Hans and Heinie Fuhrer, and a few women such as Alma D. Wagen, a Tacoma high school teacher who was later described as "unique at the time, dressed colorfully, and.. .most competent on the glacier tours of that day." [28]

Summit climbs increased in popularity as word of the guide service's professionalism spread. Approximately 300 people reached the summit of Mount Rainier in 1919, 400 in 1920, and 500 in 1921. [29] In addition to summit trips, the guide service offered regular trips onto the Nisqually and Paradise glaciers, one rock-climbing trip in the Tatoosh Range, and horseback trips such as the "Skyline Trail" around the rim of Paradise Valley. Most of the guides were teachers or college students, and they tried to inform their clients about the natural history of the park as well as lead them safely over the mountain terrain. In this respect, the RNPC's guide service prefigured the nature guide service which the Park Service began to provide in 1922. [30]

The RNPC housed the employees of the guide service in a steep-roofed dormitory building called the Guide House, built in 1919-20. This building, located near the Paradise Inn, also served as an auditorium for slide shows and evening lectures, a cache for search and rescue equipment, and a gathering place for all guided trips out of Paradise. In the early years, it was a hub of activity second only to the inn itself. [31]

After a surge of interest in climbing to the summit of Mount Rainier in the early 1920s, this activity attracted no more than a few hundred people each season. [32] The most popular route was the Gibraltar route, pioneered by Stevens and Van Trump on their historic first ascent in 1870. The route featured a traverse of Gibraltar Rock by way of a long, narrow ledge. In 1936, a section of this ledge avalanched away, making the route impassable, and from that year forward a variety of other south-side routes were used. [33] Still, the basic pattern of the ascent remained the same: climbers departed from Paradise at mid-day and hiked up alpine meadows, scree and snowfields to Camp Muir, at 10,000 feet elevation. Starting out from there a few hours before sunrise, climbers proceeded to the summit before the snow turned soft in the heat of the day, and then retraced the full distance back to Paradise by nightfall.

Most summit climbers were either experienced themselves or accompanied by experienced guides. The few amateurs who tried to climb the mountain on their own, usually without suitable equipment, caused the park administration grave concern. In December 1927, the president of The Mountaineers, Edmond S. Meany, alerted Superintendent Tomlinson to the fact that one Lionel H. Chute planned to take his troop of Boy Scouts on a foolhardy winter ascent of Mount Rainier. Despite the entreaties of both Meany and Seattle Boy Scout Executive Stuart P. Walsh that he cancel the trip, Chute intended to go anyway. Tomlinson wrote to Mather that there was an urgent need for a regulation authorizing the ranger force to prevent visitors from undertaking hazardous stunts like this. Not waiting for a reply, the superintendent advised Chute that all trails to the summit were closed. This action prevented Chute from going and may have saved lives. Before the next summer season, the park had rules for summit climbers. [34]

The climbing rules required all parties to register with the district ranger. Parties which did not have a professional guide or were not affiliated with a recognized mountain club were required to show evidence that they were competent and properly equipped. Required equipment consisted of climbing boots and crampons (or their equivalent), woolen clothing, colored glasses, gloves or mittens, alpen-stock or ice axe, and climbing rope. [35] The rules were strictly enforced, particularly after climbing accidents claimed the lives of two men in 1929 and another man in 1931. Even so, improperly equipped parties sometimes gave rangers the slip. In 1931, rangers spotted through binoculars an unregistered party on the summit dome. Confronting the climbers that afternoon at Camp Muir, they found that the group of five had only one alpen-stock between them and that they were all shod in tennis shoes. [36]

Mount Rainier began to draw increasing numbers of climbers after World War II. The number of summit attempts approached 300 in 1947, the most since the NPS began to keep accurate records. The number of summit attempts reached 400 in 1951, and 500 in 1956. The popularity of the climb increased steadily through the early 1960s, then jumped into the 2,000-3,000 range after 1965--boosted, it was thought, by the publicity which Mount Rainier received as a training ground for the first American assault on Mount Everest in 1963. [64]

The growing popularity of summit climbs raised two issues for the park administration. How was the park ranger force going to protect these visitors from mishaps or rescue them when accidents inevitably occurred? And how could a professional guide service be provided to the public most advantageously?

## Development of Search and Rescue

As Americans pursued the sport of mountain climbing in record numbers after World War II, there was a significant increase in the number of mountaineering accidents nationwide. In the summer of 1947, for example, there were eleven mountaineering fatalities in the United States. This was a smaller total than in the European Alps during the same period, but relative to the number of climbers on either continent it constituted a much higher accident rate than Europe's. The American Alpine Club tracked this "startling increase," and committed itself to a national mountaineering safety campaign. The club's directors voted on October 4, 1947, to form a Safety Committee of the American Alpine Club, whose purpose was to investigate the causes of mountaineering accidents and formulate a program of accident prevention. It is unclear whether the American Alpine Club directly prompted the Park Service to action, but a copy of the club's report did find its way into Mount Rainier National Park's files. [65]

When the Park Service's four regional directors met in January 1948, they proposed that the NPS establish mountain climbing and rescue training schools for NPS rangers and cooperating agencies. Director Drury approved the proposal on April 19, 1948. When it was decided that the Western Region should initiate the first school, Regional Director Tomlinson naturally picked Mount Rainier for the site. It had the most suitable terrain as well as a number of qualified instructors already on staff. [66]

Mount Rainier National Park hosted the nation's first mountain safety and rescue training school on September 13-17, 1948. The course drew participants from numerous national parks as well as the Forest Service, Army, Navy, Coast Guard, National Ski Patrol, and Seattle Mountaineers. Instructors for the course included nine Mount Rainier rangers--William J. Butler, Gordon K. Patterson, Robert Weldon, George Senner, Robert W. Craig, Bruce Meyers, Forrest Johnson, Cornelius Molenaar, and Dee Molenaar--as well as former Mount Rainier ranger Charles Browne. At least two of these instructors had trained on Mount Rainier with the 10th Mountain Division in World War II. [67]

The training school included half-day and full-day courses in ice work, rope work, rock climbing, improvisation and movement of stretchers, and accident prevention. Rangers from eleven national parks and monuments attended. Many of these men were already skilled mountaineers, and the object was to train these key men so that they could give instruction to their fellow rangers when they returned to their respective areas. An additional benefit of the school was to create closer ties between the park staff and other organizations with an interest in search and rescue, including The Mountaineers, National Ski Patrol, and various public agencies. [68]

Tomlinson considered holding another training school in 1950, but decided it was not necessary to repeat the school on a service-wide basis that often. He based this decision primarily on the cost of such intensive training, but pointed out also that the kind of rock and ice training to which Mount Rainier lent itself was more appropriate for some national park areas than others. It might be more worthwhile, Tomlinson suggested, to conduct mountain safety and rescue training in each region. [69]

While this was the end of Mount Rainier's role as a mountaineering and rescue training center for the entire national park system, the close relationship between Mount Rainier's ranger staff and the local climbing community continued to flourish in the 1950s. Park rangers participated in the establishment of the Mountain Rescue Council, with headquarters in Seattle, and prepared a search and rescue organization plan for the Council's use. The Mountain Rescue Council drew participants from an ever-widening circle of organizations. [70]

The large number of cooperating entities meant that the park had no shortage of volunteers when climbers got into trouble or turned up missing. Indeed, the outpouring of civic support for search and rescue operations created its own set of problems. In the summer of 1956, for example, the park administration mounted two search and rescue operations that involved several hundred volunteer workers, and in the summer of 1957 there were two more searches in which volunteers assisted. Such operations were unwieldy and themselves hazardous. Superintendent Macy raised the question of whether the government was liable for volunteers who were injured during search and rescue operations. Was the government liable for volunteers who were injured while under the supervision of a park ranger? Was it liable for injuries to a person under volunteer leadership, but involved in a search and rescue operation under the overall direction of the park administration? Did the government's liability extend to injuries which might occur while a volunteer was in NPS quarters or an NPS vehicle? Macy also pointed out that there was a tendency to accept too much volunteer assistance. "Because of humanitarian considerations," he explained, "it is very difficult to state the minimum personnel needs for individual rescue operations." [71] Acting Regional Director C.E. Persons agreed. "To accept or refuse the assistance of volunteer help requires the exercise of considerable judgment and tact on the part of the search leader," he advised the director. "To refuse the offer of volunteers to locate a small child could no doubt lead to disastrous adverse publicity against the Service." [72] This made the question of liability all the more problematic.

Macy also raised questions about the costs of search and rescue. Should it be standard policy to feed volunteers at government mess or to provide them with sleeping bags? Could emergency volunteers be hired on a similar basis as firefighters on a forest fire, and if so, would the costs be reimbursable from service-wide contingency funds? The regional office relayed these points to the director, stipulating that the problem of large numbers of volunteers mainly pertained to searches. (A search was defined as the activity of locating a missing person, while a rescue was the activity of transporting a person or persons to safety.) But the Washington office preferred to keep a loose rein on search and rescue operations, which it saw as a local concern. To Macy's specific request for reimbursement of \$1,788 for emergency search and rescue operations from the service's contingency fund, it replied that such payments would not be automatic but would be considered on a case by case basis at the end of the fiscal year. [73]

## **The Guide Service Becomes a Separate Concession**

During World War II there was little climbing activity on Mount Rainier and the RNPC suspended its guide service. After the war, the Park Service converted the guide service concession into a separate, one-year permit, which it offered to a series of informal climbing partnerships. Veteran climber Ed Kennedy became chief guide in 1946, assisted by Gordie Butterfield, Jim Nussbaum, and international ski racer Bil Dunaway. Dunaway continued the operation in 1947 with Bob Parker, Chuck Welsh, and Dee Molenaar. The following year Dunaway and Parker went to Europe, Molenaar became a park ranger, and the park was once again without a guide service. Welsh took over the guide service in 1949, with assistant guides Bob Craig and Bob Kuss, both of Seattle. All of these men belonged to a local climbing fraternity; a number of them had served in Italy in the 10th Mountain Division.

In 1950 two French mountaineers and skiers, Roby Albuoy and Ollie Chiseaux, headed the guide service. Dunaway took it over again in 1951, recruiting for his assistant guides Jim and Lou Whittaker--young twins from Seattle who were destined to have a long association with the mountain. The Whittakers held the permit in 1952, turned it over to Paul Gerstmann and Dick Krizman in 1953 while they served in the army, and resumed their guide service in 1954. [74]

Dee Molenaar describes the Whittakers' accomplishments in his book *The Challenge of Rainier*:

During 1938-42, and after the war until 1951, guided parties chiefly used the Kautz [Glacier] route. When the Whittakers began guiding in 1951 they concentrated on developing routes that could again utilize the cabins at Camp Muir. The twins reopened Gibraltar as a guide route in 1951 and thus virtually ended use of the Kautz by the guide staff.

The Whittakers were the first of the postwar generation of climbers to guide on the mountain. Many young mountaineers followed in subsequent years, both as guides and future participants in major expeditions to all parts of the world... Doubtless the most widely heralded has been Jim Whittaker, who in 1963 was the first American to plant Old Glory on the summit of Mount Everest.

The Whittakers continued guiding during the summers after their return from the Army, then went into the outdoor and recreational equipment business. Eventually Jim became general manager for Recreational Equipment, Inc. in Seattle while Louie opened Whittaker's Chalet, an outdoor-equipment store chain in Tacoma. Both men continue to climb Rainier and Louie currently (1970) serves during the summer as chief guide. [75]

During these years the mountain guides worked under a simple concession permit that authorized the permittees to lead park visitors on summit trips, glacier trips, and ski mountaineering tours, and to offer ski instruction. The NPS permitted the guide service to occupy the shelter at Camp Muir and one end of a duplex in the Paradise campground. The permittees were responsible for hiring qualified guides, registering their clients for all summit attempts, and lending support for rescue operations on the mountain. The NPS approved a modest schedule of rates and charged the guides a permit fee of \$50 per year. [76]

### **Lou Whittaker described the guide service in his memoirs:**

In the fifties, we charged \$28 for a two-day guided climb to the summit. Today, that same climb costs a little more than \$300. In 1950, we also charged \$4 per person to go to the ice caves. It was our most popular trip. The ice caves were a series of tunnels on the lower mountain, formed at the outlets of a few streams that emerged from the end of the Paradise-Stevens Glacier. Back then, we'd climb to the summit maybe twelve to fifteen times during the summer, but we'd go to the ice caves twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We'd take anywhere from three to forty people each time. It was a three-hour round trip, and our biggest source of income. The ice caves were closed around 1970, because they had melted back and grown smaller. [77]

In 1956, the Whittaker brothers turned the guide service over to Dick McGowan and went into the recreational equipment business. That same year, Paul Sceva expressed a willingness to handle the guide service as a subcontract to the RNPC's concession. The NPS duly modified the RNPC's concession agreement in 1956. [78] Superintendent Macy did not like the new arrangement, but the guide service nevertheless remained a part of the main concession for sixteen more years. [79] McGowan served as chief guide for the RNPC from 1956 until 1965. [80]

### **Rainier Mountaineering, Inc.**

In the 1960s the guide service developed into a significant commercial enterprise. By the end of that decade a handful of mountain guides were leading hundreds of clients to the summit each year. Park officials saw no reason to curtail this public use of Mount Rainier; Superintendent Daniel J. Tobin, Jr. observed that without a professional guide service many visitors would be denied the opportunity to attempt a summit ascent. "To climb the mountain," Tobin wrote, "is a compelling reason to visit and use the Park." [49] It only made sense to separate this growing and highly specialized enterprise from the lodging and food service provided by the RNPC.

The Park Service found two willing entrepreneurs in Lou Whittaker and Jerry Lynch. Whittaker had been guiding on Mount Rainier since 1951; Lynch had had a long association with the RNPC as horse guide and manager of the Paradise Inn before establishing a law practice in Tacoma. They were already partners in an outdoor equipment store in Tacoma called Whittaker's Chalet. In 1968, Whittaker and Lynch formed Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (RMI). Their partnership was highly successful and the new company showed promise. In 1972, Whittaker got out of the outdoor equipment retail business and Lynch became an equal partner in RMI. "We made him president and me vice president," Whittaker wrote. "Jerry did the paperwork and I did the guiding. He's always been the detail man, I've always been the personality out front, hawking clients and guides... It's been a natural division of labor for us, and a longtime friendship." [50]

Whittaker and Lynch worked aggressively to secure their position in Mount Rainier National Park, pressing the NPS for a five-year contract. When GSI bought Fred Harvey's interest in the RNPC in 1972, an opportunity appeared to present itself GSI announced that it wanted to divest the RNPC of all guide service, equipment rental, and the ski tow operation. That spring, while the Park Service was beginning to prepare a prospectus for the new guide concession, Whittaker and Lynch produced a flamboyant new brochure for RMI. The brochure angered Superintendent Townsley, who thought it was premature and in poor taste. The brochure embarrassed the Park Service because it made the Park Service's efforts to put a new concession prospectus out for bid look rigged. Moreover, the Park Service had not yet decided whether to roll the winter operation and the guide service into a single prospectus. This took Whittaker and Lynch by surprise for they did not want to operate the ski tow. [51]

After going full throttle into the guide business in 1972, Whittaker and Lynch had to run RMI on a yearly permit for three more years while they awaited the Park Service's prospectus. The main reason that the NPS delayed issuing a prospectus was that an environmental assessment of the prospectus raised the question of whether the busy corridor between Paradise and Camp Muir would be recommended for wilderness protection. This led NPS officials to postpone issuing the prospectus until after the park's new master plan and wilderness proposal had gone through the public review process.

RMI finally obtained its first five-year concession contract in 1975. It received another five-year contract in 1980, and a seven-year contract after that. In 1985, some climbers formed an organization called "Open Rainier" to protest what they perceived to be RMI's unfair climbing monopoly in the park, and park staff held at least two formal meetings with the organization to hear its concerns. But the park received only one application for the guide concession other than RMI's and it had no difficulty determining that RMI was the stronger candidate. In 1993, the concession contract was rewritten such that the concessioner would have to provide more help in search and rescue operations, environmental cleanup along the concessioner's primary guiding route, and funding for an engineering study for Camp Muir rehabilitation. The new contract was still pending in the spring of 1995. [52]

The number of visitors who attempted to climb Mount Rainier grew fairly steadily through the 1970s and 1980s, subject to variations in the amount of good climbing weather each summer. By the mid to late 1980s, RMI was leading about 2,000 clients on summit attempts each summer, with the success rate hovering around 60-65 percent. [53] Guided climbs accounted for approximately one fourth of all summit attempts. The guides not only provided a service to these many clients, they frequently helped park rangers rescue non-guided or "independent" climbers too. [54]

RMI placed a strong emphasis on client safety. Fatalities were rare. But on June 21, 1981, ten RMI clients and one guide were killed by an icefall on the Ingraham Glacier. Survivors of the tragedy said that they saw a big serac collapse about 1,000 feet higher on the mountain, triggering a massive avalanche. Half of the party got away; half were swept into a crevasse and buried under tons of ice. The event occurred shortly after sunrise. At 6:20 a.m., Superintendent Briggles was banging on Whittaker's door in Ashford, telling him there had been an accident on the mountain. Whittaker rode with Briggles up to the Guide House at Paradise, where rescue operations were already underway and the families of the victims would shortly begin to gather. The survivors, bruised and shaken but not badly injured, straggled in at midday. It was the worst climbing disaster in North American history. Weeks later, following a detailed investigation by park officials and a team of glaciologists, it was found that RMI's guides had acted in a reasonable manner and that the icefall had been an act of God. [55]

RMI guides generally served a three-year apprenticeship before they were given responsibility for whole climbing parties. An apprentice guide would work with two experienced guides, and if the new guide did not progress during the first season he or she would not be hired back the following spring. RMI looked for "people skills" as well as climbing ability; guides had to be perceptive toward their clients' level of confidence and fatigue. Apprentice guides could lead a rope of four or five clients, but RMI did not put them in charge of a whole climbing party. In 1994, RMI had nearly thirty guides who were qualified to lead parties to the summit. [56]

RMI's operations changed relatively little over the years. The Guide House at Paradise, Camp Muir, and the Ingraham Glacier-Disappointment Cleaver route to the summit were the concessioner's principal stamping grounds. The most significant changes occurred at Camp Muir, which RMI's guided parties used for an overnight stop on the way to the summit. In the early years, clients bunked with the guides in the stone shelter at Camp Muir known as the Cook Hut, or the guides would pitch tents on the ridge. But tents could not hold up in bad weather at that elevation, and needed to be repaired or replaced several times each summer, so the Park Service permitted RMI to build a "temporary" client's shelter at Camp Muir in 1970. RMI had the prefabricated structure airlifted to the site in pieces by helicopter. Thereafter, the guides occupied one room in the shelter, the clients the other, and the Cook Hut was used for meals. RMI hired "cabin girls" to do the cooking. [57] In 1981, the park administration shut down RMI's meal service at Camp Muir because the sanitary conditions could not meet U.S. Public Health Service standards for a food service facility; henceforth clients had to prepare their own meals, which generally consisted of freeze dried packages. [58]

Despite growing concerns about the water supply and human waste at Camp Muir (see Chapter XIX), the concession received average to high performance ratings from the park administration year after year. In 1986, RMI became the first guide service and climbing school to obtain accreditation by the American Mountain Guides Association. Superintendent Guse hoped that accreditation would help the guide service obtain affordable liability insurance--an overhead cost that was becoming increasingly expensive for high-risk outfits like RMI. [59]