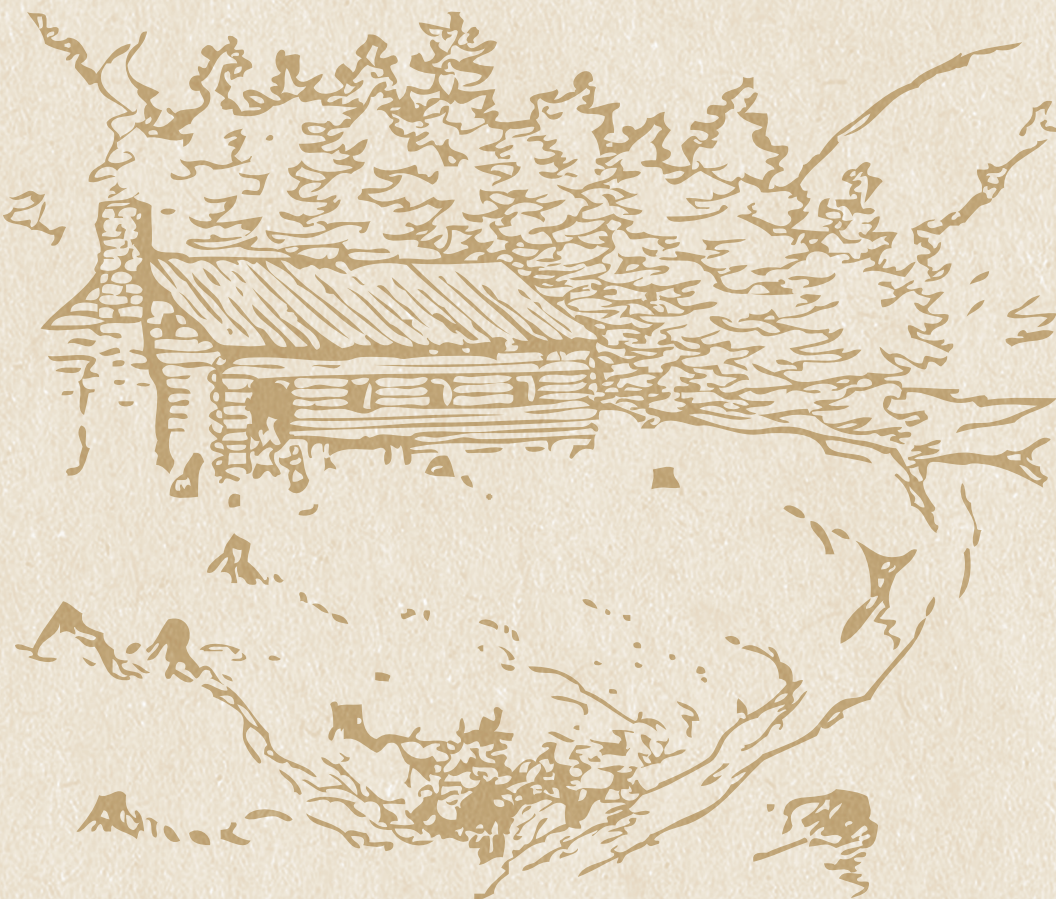


NORTHERN SUSITNA INSTITUTE

— PRESENTS —

TALKEETNA HISTORY QUEST



45-60 MINUTES

WELCOME

A **QUEST** is a fun treasure hunt written in rhyme and created by local people to share special places in their community. To complete this **QUEST**, follow the clues as you walk through town. If you get confused, check the map or ask a local person. We hope you enjoy learning about Talkeetna from the insider's perspective!



STOP 1

Here at the end is where we begin.
Talkeetna, unlike other places you've been.
Natives and pilots, hippies and miners
Dreamers and tourists and mushers and climbers.

Learn some history while you take your vacation.
A first building here was the old train station.
Two stations are here now, the new one way yonder.
Now you're off to the trestle, a fun place to wander.

NUMBER CLUE How many letters are in the third word of this sign?

9

LET'S MOVE!

Head north, round the park and then straight ahead.
Pass through the parking lot; don't be misled.
Follow *One Way* so you veer to the right
Find a path through the woods in the leaf-filtered light.
You'll come to the bridge that carries the train,
Stop, look around, and take in the terrain.

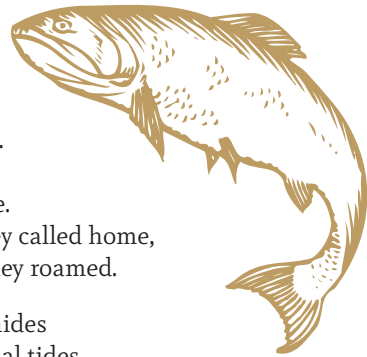
THE FOURTEEN-MILE SPUR ROAD WAS
BUILT IN 1964 TO LINK TALKEETNA TO
THE ALASKA HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

STOP 2

The Talkeetna River is what you can see,
But on the horizon, two rivers make three.
Chulitna, Susitna, and Talkeetna all bore
The native Dena'ina in boats to this shore.
"Where-Food-Is-Stored River" is what they called home,
And south of Denali is the place where they roamed.

Imagine canoes made of birch bark and hides
Heading north and south with the seasonal tides.
For thousands of years they lived off the land
And thrived or declined with supply and demand.
Hunting game, fishing streams, picking berries for years,
The "Original People" were the true pioneers.
Fish harvests were stored in large pits by the water.
The birch bark and stone held their mid-winter's fodder.

The intrusion of miners, explorers, and more,
Disrupted the Native traditional core.
The plague that took many in 1918
Was the worst influenza Alaska had seen.
They died one by one, but a small band survived,
Along with their culture, rich and revived.



NUMBER CLUE ! How many horizontal slats are there on the outside barrier of the walkway, including the top handrail?



This "Let's Move" clue is optional. You may skip ahead to the "Let's Move" clue in #3.

LET'S MOVE!

Look out at the river where tales are still told.
Cross over the trestle, you need to be bold.
Tread carefully here and look straight ahead
Though high over the water, there's nothing to dread.
Try not to linger, but please do not run.
Relax, take a breath and enjoy; this is fun!
There is nothing to fear if you hear the train's whistle,
But you may feel the hairs on your neck start to bristle!
Some wilderness trails start off 'round the bend,
But this "Move" will conclude when you reach the far end.

STOP 3

These rails were built from Seward's beach,
South to north its path would reach.
Talkeetna grew a hundredfold.
And trail to rails began to unfold.
The tracks ended right at this riverside,
Where a boat made the crossing to the other side
In '23 steel beams bridged the gap
And rails were laid without mishap.

Along this wilderness railroad route
Live hardy families (and one old coot).
Sparse homesteads lit by kerosene light,
Where woodstoves warmed the long winter night,
And outhouses are a frequent sight.
Just make it fast — it's cold at night!

Those living along this railroad trail
Come in to town for news and mail.
Our flagstop train, last of its kind,
Will never leave your "wave" behind.
Or, travel any way you like,
Cycle, walk, four-wheel, or hike.
In winter, after summer's rush,
Use snow machine, or ski, or mush!

IF YOU TRAVEL ON THE
HURRICANE TURN TRAIN,
YOU CAN STOP THE TRAIN
ANYWHERE ALONG THE ROUTE
WITH A WHITE FLAG. NEARLY
50 PEOPLE HAVE FULL TIME
HOMES "UP THE TRACKS"
TODAY.



LET'S MOVE!

Retrace your steps, leave the bridge, down the trail
To the parking lot, now don't derail.
At the park, a road veers to the right.
Walk till you see the green and white.
"Raise your glass!" might be a clue.
It's everyone's *second* favorite view!

STOP 4

After tireless digging and panning for weeks,
The *Fairview* was a must after leaving Cache Creek.
Frontier towns were known for “mining the miners,”
The Fairview included, just ask the old timers.
See bachelors on auction, coin paid for nice bod,
Where the odds are all good and the goods are all odd!

NUMBER CLUE ! Find the date on the building. Subtract the third digit from the second digit.

LET'S MOVE!

Staying too long could punish your liver,
So get out of here and head north toward the river!
Stumble down Main Street until you meet B,
Left at the corner, Walter Harper you'll see.



STOP 5

The park service building standing right here
Exists because the MOUNTAIN is near.
Each year teams of climbers to Talkeetna will come
To scale Denali, which means “The High One”.
They fly to base camp with modern gear,
Far better than that of yesteryear,
For climbers of old, wool was all they could get.
It kept them warm, but was heavy when wet!

The race for “First Summit” always was great,
And sparked a passionate debate.
Claims of reaching the top were often disputed.
And one of those claims was soon refuted.

In 1913, a team of four
Did what no man had done before.
They struggled through snow and land uncharted,
And 93 days from when they had started,
First to reach the peak was a Native Alaskan,
Young Walter Harper, an Athabaskan.
They had reached their goal and made the world news.
And soon others aspired to claim the same views.



Mountaineering would grow, things would soon change.
More people would come with the arrival of planes.
A new route by Washburn in '51
Assured a new era had begun.

NUMBER CLUE !

How many letters are in the first name of the first person to summit Denali?

LET'S MOVE!

Now, to get you started, don't delay,
Take the left alley, this is your way.
No playing *baseball*, don't stop at the old school,
“Don't Park in the Alley”, that's the rule.
Look both ways, then straight ahead,
A place with no windows, painted all red.
Look up at the sign, and you will see
A community landmark is where you should be!

STOP 6

In nineteen hundred and thirty-eight,
Aircraft began to handle freight.
To fly an hour, not walk a week,
The bush rats thought was mighty sleek.
Mail from loved ones, homestead supplies,
And mining tools all came out of the skies.

Pilot Don Sheldon was one of the bolder,
Landed on rivers and glaciers much colder.
Cliff Hudson became his greatest of rivals,
Trading choice words with many reprisals.
They hauled climbers to glaciers, with crampons and gear.
The summit was closer when starting from here.

In nineteen hundred and fifty-three
Don's hangar opened for all to see.
A dance was held for every age
'Til the squeezebox player fell off the stage!
Now it's a place with much to do,
Music, dancing, and theater too.



NUMBER CLUE ! Above the double, black entrance doors on the timber-frame truss, how many letters are in the second word on the sign?

LET'S MOVE!

The Village Strip is active still,
Hop on a flight to get quite a thrill.
Turn south and you'll see the old airstrip.
Swing round a bit more, be careful, don't trip.
The old **red** schoolhouse contains much lore,
Go stand on the ramp, next to the front door.

STOP 7

This school for kids was just one room,
Plenty of space for minds to bloom.
Later it saw a transformation,
A museum for everyone's education.

By the Pelton Wheel, upon the tree
There's a home for a bird, you will see.
At the avian house, to the left of the walk,
Stop, and open, and then take stock.

Grab a seat to pause and to think.
Express your thoughts of Talkeetna in ink.
Throughout our town the stories abound.
What is your tale? Is it plain or profound?



TO DO

1. Open the birdhouse.
2. Take an impression with the rubber stamp.
3. Select a postcard and address it to yourself or a friend.
4. On the postcard, write about your experience in Talkeetna.

NUMBER CLUE ! Each town's unique code ensures that your mail finds you no matter where you live. What is Talkeetna's special code? Fill in the blanks below with the number you discovered on your **QUEST**.

STOP NO.

6

1

2

4

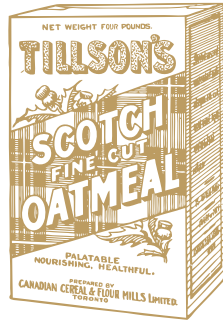
5

LET'S MOVE! >>>

LET'S MOVE!

Go behind the hangar, for one last stop.
Away with your card, to the Post Office drop.
Of Talkeetna's story, you now are a part
And may this place reside in your heart.
Now that you've come to the end of your **QUEST**,
Please know that you've been our most welcome guest!

SUPPLIES, NEWS, AND
LOVE LETTERS WERE ALL DELIVERED
TO THE POST OFFICE IN EARLY YEARS.
TODAY, PEOPLE STILL GATHER HERE TO
CATCH UP ON COMMUNITY
NEWS AND EVENTS.



IN 1974, THE ONE-ROOM
SCHOOLHOUSE WAS
TRANSFORMED INTO THE
TALKEETNA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MUSEUM AND A
NEW SCHOOL WAS BUILT ON
THE TALKEETNA SPUR ROAD.

SCHOOL WAS LET OUT EARLY FOR
SUMMER ONE YEAR, BECAUSE OF A FEUD
BETWEEN THE SCHOOL TEACHER AND LOCAL
PILOTS. IMAGINE HAVING LOUD PLANES
LAND AND TAKE OFF RIGHT OUTSIDE YOUR
SCHOOLROOM WINDOW!



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Denali National Park and Preserve



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