

Mushing in Alaska Timeline

~2000 BC through today - During winter months humans used sled dogs to travel around the northern regions of North America

1890's - The 'Iditarod Trail' gained active use by people traveling throughout Alaska, looking for gold.

1908 - The first sled dog race to receive national attention, the All-Alaska Sweepstakes, was held in Nome, AK.

1908 - The 'Iditarod Historic Trail', from Seward to Nome, was first mapped and marked by the U.S. Army.

~1900 to ~1940 - Mail was hauled by dog teams across Alaska

1920 - Dog teams started to be replaced with airplanes for bush travel

1920's - Mt. McKinley National Park (now known as Denali National Park) established a kennel of sled dogs to patrol parklands. The kennel is still active today, and is the only kennel operated by the National Park Service for patrolling federal lands.

1925 - Teams of sled dogs and their mushers save the town of Nome from a diphtheria outbreak, carrying serum 674 miles at temperatures as cold as 50 below zero. No other forms of transportation, including airplanes, could be used to get the life saving medicine to Nome due to weather conditions.

1926 - A Statue of Balto, a famous lead dog in the 674 mile serum run that saved the town of Nome the year before, was erected in NYC's Central Park.

1940's - Mushing becomes a less used form of transportation with the improvement of other technologically advanced forms of transportation, such as the snowmachine.

1946 - The Fur Rendezvous World Championship Sled Dog Race debuted in Anchorage, AK, and has been run nearly every year since. A sprint race, teams in the event traveled a short distance (~25 miles) several days in a row.

1946 - The Open North American Sled Dog Race was first run in Fairbanks, Alaska. The Open North American is also a sprint race, with teams traveling 20 miles on day one and two, and 30 miles on day three.

1972 - Dog mushing was established as the Alaska state sport.

1972 - The Iditarod trail was re-opened by the U.S. Army after years of inactivity as part of a training exercise.

1973 - Joe Redington, Sr. and others organize the first Iditarod to finish in Nome. The race is completed by 22 mushers, and won by Dick Wilmarth in 20 days, 49 minutes and 41 seconds.

1978 - The closest Iditarod finish in history - Only 1 second separated champion Dick Mackey from runner up (and later, 5-time champion) Rick Swenson

1984 - The first 1,000 mile Yukon Quest Sled dog race was held, running between Fairbanks, AK and Whitehorse, YT, Canada. The race was established to commemorate the historic use of dog teams on the 'Highway of the North'; the Yukon River. Many prospectors had followed the race route during the 1898 gold rush.

1985 - Libby Riddles wins the Iditarod, becoming the first women to do so. Her run to Nome took 18 days, 20 minutes and 17 seconds.

1986 to 1990 - Susan Butcher claims 4 Iditarod titles in 5 years (1986, 1987, 1988 and 1990), inspiring the slogan: "Alaska, where men are men and women win the Iditarod".

1991 - Rick Swenson wins his 5th Iditarod, becoming the most winning Iditarod musher in Iditarod history (a title he still holds today)

1995 - Doug Swingley breaks the 10-day barrier, winning his first Iditarod title in 9 days, 2 hours, 42 minutes, and 19 seconds.

2002 - Martin Buser breaks the 9-day barrier, winning his 4th Iditarod title in 8 days, 22 hours, 46 minutes and 2 seconds.