

**Drawing of proposed Copper River & Northwestern Railway route from Miles 130-131, Chitina Branch, C.R. & N.W. Ry. Definite Location 1909. Copied from original linen rolls in the Cordova Museum in 1992 by Rolfe Buzzell, Office of History & Archaeology.**

ALFRED O. QUINN

The Epic Triumph of Erastus Corning Hawkins

ALASKAN COPPER

TO

IRON RAILS

and rock slides, although involving the heaviest maintenance costs at present, should ultimately become settled and result in a comparatively low and uniform upkeep expense."

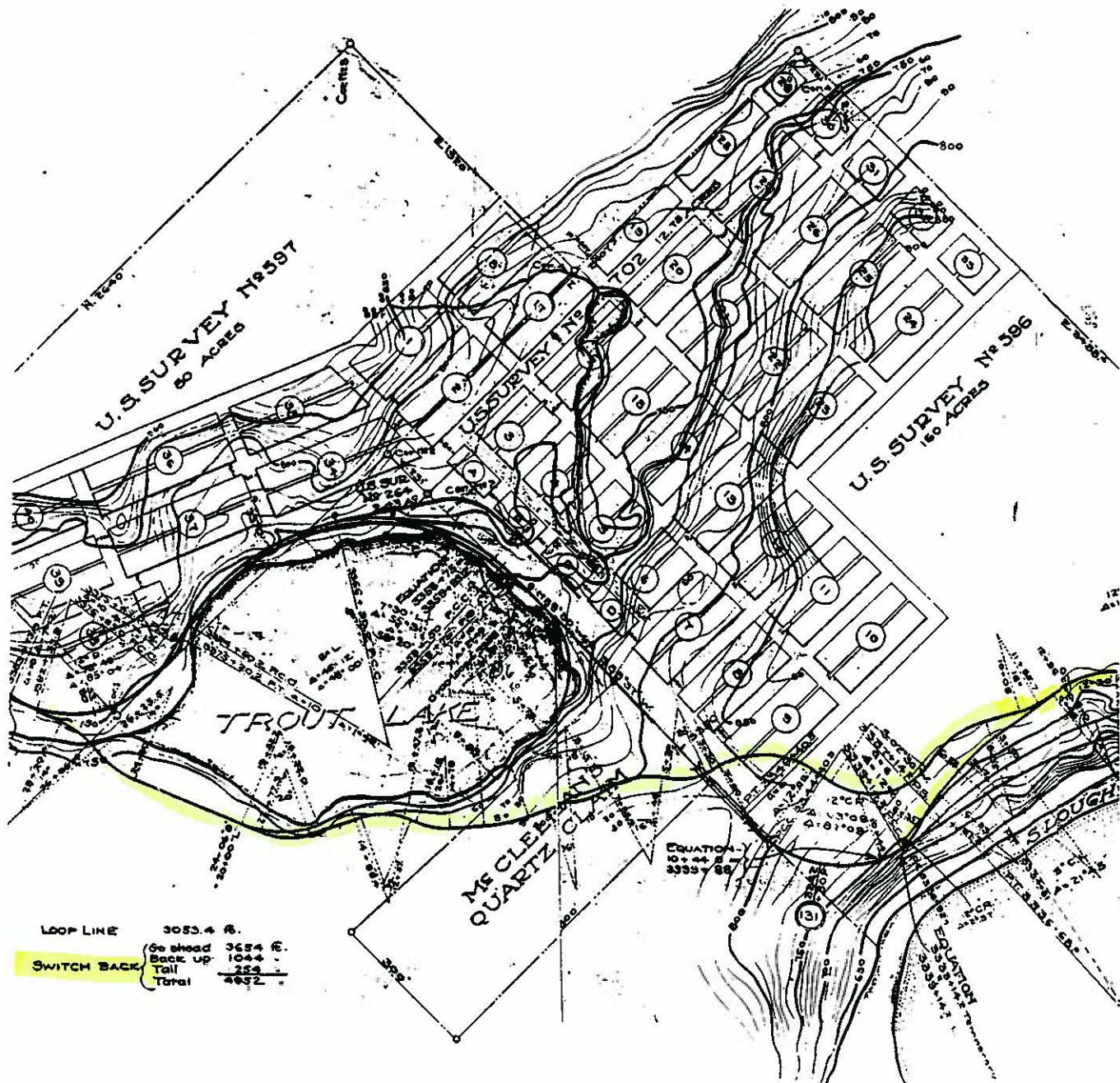
### Bridge at Mile 132

A major bridge across the Copper River approximately mile 132 above the confluence of the Chitina River into the Copper was necessary. The projected route along the east-west flowing Chitina River was on its north bank.

The site selected called for bridging across the river using two large sand bars which had developed from the flow of the Katsina River which empties into the Copper from the north. The distance across the Copper River was about 3000 feet and the

### Route— Chitina-Kennecott

From Chitina the road passes through a short tunnel and comes out on a small hill on the west side of Copper River.



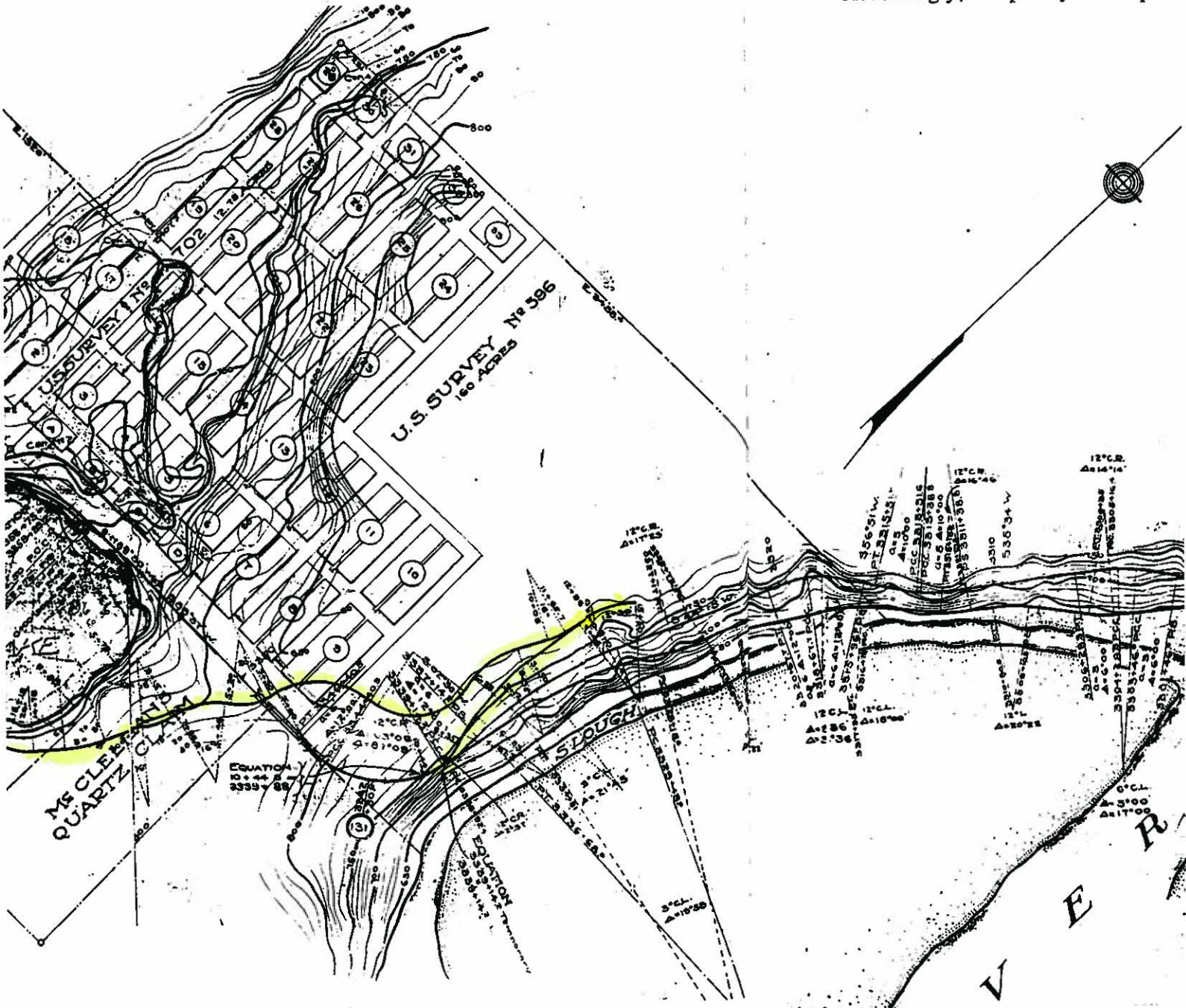
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proposed steel bridge would require each 360 feet in length and three spans. The engineers estimated that such a cost about \$650,000.

Hawkins rejected the plans for two major reasons: one, he felt it more economical to put in temporary at this time and plan to replace those would be swept away by the spring pay the interest on this heavy investment, he believed that more hydrology the river and its flood conditions should. Accordingly, temporary wood pilin



## Iron Rails to Alaskan Copper

proposed steel bridge would require seven spans each 360 feet in length and three spans of 175 feet. The engineers estimated that such a bridge would cost about \$650,000.

Hawkins rejected the plans for the steel bridge for two major reasons: one, he felt that it would be more economical to put in temporary wood trestles at this time and plan to replace those portions which would be swept away by the spring floods than to pay the interest on this heavy investment, and second, he believed that more hydrological data about the river and its flood conditions should be obtained. Accordingly, temporary wood piling trestles were

driven during the winter of 1910-11. The elevation of the tracks across the temporary bridge was 70 feet lower than the original design and approaches from each bank were in four percent grades.

True to expectations, portions of the temporary structure were demolished each spring and bridge rebuilding crews became adapt in making rapid replacements. In spite of their diligence, it was not

Below:  
Plan and topography for the railroad at Chitina.  
From CR&NW RR files.

