



Maurice Morino and Mount McKinley

Although it's estimated that a total of 245 citizens of Roasio have emigrated to the U.S.A throughout our history, the documents in our archives are scarce, and the reason is very simple. As opposed to those who emigrated to Africa or other parts of Europe, people who emigrated to the other side of the ocean, rarely made the long and difficult trip back home. Once they reached their Country of choice they would put down roots and settle into their new life. With the passing of time, names and surnames would undergo a metamorphosis and adapt to the language of the place they were in. Also, with generational changes, contacts with relatives back home would slowly start fading, until they were completely interrupted and eventually lost.

Of the character we wish to talk to you about today, we have a lot of information, and this is because his life has not only fascinated us, but the people of the place he settled in too. If you don't believe us, type 'Maurice Morino McKinley Park' in any search engine, and see what comes up!

Maurizio (better known as Maurice) Morino, was born in Roasio, in the hamlet of Santa Maria, on the 27th of October 1870. Although his emigration story began in Africa, in the Belgian Congo, at the service of the colonial army, as soon as he learned about the gold rush, he immediately changed continent and headed to Nome, Alaska. We don't know whether or not he ever found gold, but we do know that, being from Roasio and thus having an innate business sense, he immediately realized that gold diggers needed essential goods to carry out their job. He therefore started supplying them with food, medicines, and everything else they might have needed, going back and forth with his dog sled.

In 1910 Morino moved to the foot of Mount McKinley, on the trail that connected Anchorage to Fairbanks. As luck would have it, soon after his arrival, this area was proclaimed National Park, and in 1914 the government granted him a concession for a piece of land. On it Morino built a small roadhouse for travelers and fur hunters. His business experienced a big boost with the construction of the "Transalaska" railroad, and his little roadhouse, soon gave way to a second building, the "Mount McKinley Hotel". Opened on Thanksgiving day 1921, it hosted travelers from all walks of life, among which, in July 1923, then American President Warren Harding. Sadly with time, the Hotel lost its glory, and ended up being closed in the 1930's. Twenty years later, what remained of the building, was burned down by a fire.

Maurice Morino never returned to his hometown of Roasio, and died in Washington on the 6th of March 1937. His last wish was to be buried at "McKinley Park", the place he so dearly loved.



Here we see him inside "McKinley Park" (Now Denali National Park and Preserve) with his first roadhouse.