ABOUT PALMER

Palmer sits at the head of the Matanuska and Knik river valleys. For over one thousand years, the Ahtna Athabascan people have lived in the Palmer area. Miners came into the area in the 1890s, looking for gold. One of those miners was named George Palmer. George Palmer owned a small trading post on the Matanuska River.

In 1915, the railroad was built from Seward to Fairbanks. A branch track was built off the railroad to Chickaloon. Miners looking for gold had found coal and needed the train to move the coal around Alaska. With the railroad, farmers called homesteaders started to settle and grow crops.

In 1935, the Matanuska Colony Project brought 203 farm families to the area and built the town of Palmer. The Colonists planted cabbages, potatoes, carrots, and other vegetables. They also built the Palmer Water Tower.

Colony Kids

The 203 colonist families brought many children with them. Those children, and later their children, are called Colony Kids. Colony kids went to school in the big white school that is the borough building today. Growing up on a farm is fun, but they had a lot of chores!
**Matanuska Colony**

In 1935, America was in the Great Depression. President Roosevelt took 203 hungry farm families looking for work and sent them to Alaska. They were called the Matanuska Colonists, and they started many farms around Palmer. The colony built schools, churches, stores, and a hospital.
The Ahtna

The Ahtna Athabascan people have lived around Palmer for over one thousand years. They moved from camp to camp through the year, fishing, hunting, and gathering. The Ahtna call Palmer *Nîl’etse’it’aade (Where boulders come together).*

Giant Vegetables

In Palmer, farmers grow giant vegetables. One cabbage, at 138 pounds, is the biggest cabbage ever grown. Lots of daylight, cool summer days, and rich glacier soil help the veggies grow large and taste sweet.
PARMESAN ROASTED CARROTS

INGREDIENTS:

- 8-10 carrots, peeled
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Place the carrots on the baking sheet, allowing space between each one. Add the garlic to the melted butter. Drizzle the carrots with the garlic butter mixture, turning to coat. Season the carrots with kosher salt.

Roast for 20 minutes (15 for thinner carrots). Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese evenly over the carrots and return to the oven to roast another 10 minutes, or until the cheese is golden brown and crispy and the carrots are tender-crisp. Sprinkle with parsley. Serves 4.

Braided Rivers

Can you follow a raindrop as it flows from the mountains through the braided streams of the river? The Matanuska River is a braided river. Silt from the glacier piles up along the river, creating many braided channels. The Ahtna call the river Ts’itonhna’ (Trail comes out river).
**Mining**

Many people came to Palmer to mine. They panned in streams and dug tunnels for gold in the mountains. After finding gold, people also began mining coal and gravel. You can visit an old gold mine at Independence Mine in Hatcher Pass.

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**The Railroad**

Train tracks run through the middle of Palmer. They were built in 1915 to reach the coal in Chickaloon and Sutton. Before there were cars and trucks, people used the train to get from place to place.