

In 1948, Iris Woolcock, professional photographer, set out to conquer the Alaska Highway. A resident of Putney, Vermont, she had been vacationing with a friend in Key West, Florida, when she decided to undertake this adventure. With a 27-foot trailer in tow, she drove back to her farm in Putney, loaded all her photographic equipment into the trailer, and began her journey across the continent.

After several stops in the northern states, she arrived in Havre, Montana, where she spent several months waiting for adequate road conditions on the Highway. Her first attempt to enter Canada was foiled by the failure of her trailer to withstand the harsh conditions. Directly following was a four-thousand mile detour to Bremen, Indiana, to pick up a 33-foot, custom-built trailer from the Liberty company's factory there. Thus outfitted, she attempted a second entry into Canada, this time succeeding.

Ms. Woolcock's progress along the highway is outlined in her 300+ page diary, which, with 516 photographs, forms the Iris Woolcock Collection (B89.4). The predominant theme in the diary concerns the benefits and hazards of living in and travelling with trailers. Ms. Woolcock was very outspoken about her experiences and encouraged improvements in the design and manufacture of mobile trailers. After she returned to Indiana, she was flown back to Alaska (Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau) by the Liberty company to speak to military and municipal officials about the advantages and possibilities in using mobile trailers as permanent or semi-permanent housing.

In 1948, Lila Woolcock, professional photographer, set out to conquer the Alaska Highway. A resident of Putney, Vermont, she had been vacationing with a friend in Key West, Florida, when she decided to undertake this adventure. With a 27-foot trailer in tow, she drove back to her farm in Putney, loaded all her photographic equipment into the trailer, and began her journey across the continent.

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