

**REFERENCE CODE:** AkAMH

**REPOSITORY NAME:**

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**TITLE:** Story of a Whale Hunt Album

**COLLECTION NUMBER:** B2019.005

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Dates: circa 1905

Extent: 1 box; 1 linear foot

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Suzanne Rognon Bernardi

**Administrative/Biographical History:**

Susan R. Bernardi was a teacher at Wales and Nome sometime between 1902 and 1910. She produced several photo albums with varying photographs telling the "Story of a Whale Hunt" which she gave to her friends.

**Scope and Content Description:**

This collection consists of one album measuring 11" x 7.25" containing 41 photographs. The title "Story of a Whale Hunt" is written on the first sheet, and the attribution "S.R. Bernardi, photographer" appears on the inside back cover. Please see photo list for specific photograph information and the text of the narrative.

Arrangement: Not applicable

**CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE**

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research use.

Physical Access: Original items in good condition.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the materials.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

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Preferred Citation:

S.R. Bernardi, Story of a Whale Hunt Album; Anchorage Museum, B2019.005

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated in February 2019 by Brent Petrie for Dr. Joyce Herold, who purchased the item in an antique store in Colorado.

Separated Materials

Publication "Alaska the Wonderland," circa 1900-1910, transferred to cataloging.

**RELATED MATERIALS**

Burchett Collection, B1991.025

McBride Collection, B1996.009

Wright Collection, B1997.019

**SUBJECTS**

Bernardi, Suzanne Rognon

Alexander (Steam bark)

Whaling—Alaska

Inupiat—Alaska

Reindeer herding—Alaska

Wales (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

.1 – Kingegan, an Eskimo settlement at Cape Prince of Wales the most westerly point of American continent, is the home of 350 Eskimos, remnants of a famous tribe of Kingetmutes, the most aggressive Eskimos known of [bird's eye view along coastline]

.2 – in the traditions of those people. Early in the spring boys of the village expecting to take their first whale hunt have a dance in the underground kozga or club house. The only entrance in through an underground tunnel and up through a hole in the floor [two boys wearing fur parkas dancing in qargi, four others looking on. Entrance hole in floor marked with x at left]

.3 – The old grandmother tries to console her [woman wearing fur parka with walrus tusk gussets]

.4 – little grandson by telling him that nãh nãh´ koo (bye bye) he can go to hunt óch´ a vook (whale) [young boy wearing skin parka, gloves, and mukluks standing outdoors]

.5 – The older men dance and sing of past glories of the hunt, accompanied by the beat of drums; the performance continues all night with fasting and sweat baths over seal oil lamps [bare-chested men dancing in qargi, men with drums in background]

.6 – Overlooking the sea on the mountain side at Kingegan are hundreds of prehistoric pits made of hewn granite. These were filled with small stones until recently when an ethnological research discovered them. The myth attending these pits is – a youth wishing to prove his courage as a hunter must go to the mountain alone, throw a stone into a pit and say to the evil spirit living in it “here is seal meat, eat it” [pit]

.7 – Having proven his courage by joking an evil spirit, he is allowed to help put new walrus hide on the whale boat and [umiak frame, cache in background]

.8 – help whittle canoe paddles, meat hooks, harpoon handles. On the last day of April all boats are placed on exhibition. May is the only month whale are caught in Bering Straits [two men with dogs standing underneath umiak on rack, harpoons on top of umiak]

.9 – The father quits hunting hair seal, [man wearing parka, fur pants, and mukluks carrying pole on his back, pulling seal carcass on rope]

.10 – the boy lets the young ptarmigan fly in peace; young and old now watch from the village for signs of whale [boy wearing skin parka aiming bow and arrow on tundra]

.11 – The shavings from new paddles are saved and some old woman burns them. The ashes are strewn over the path where the whale boat is being taken to open water about  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles from shore usually. This is [woman standing at cooking fire, boardwalks behind her, canvas floats on windbreak in background]

.12 – done to scare away evil spirits. The Eskimo in performing his ceremonies attending the opening of the whaling season resembles the American Indian in his dancing & superstitions etc. [captioned “Witch Doctor’s Cache,” man standing in right background]

.13 – Female member of whaling crew [woman holding jigging poles, wearing striped parka cover over fur-lined parka, carrying infant on back, harpoon in ice at left, ice scoop next to pile of tomcod fish on ice at right]

.14 – The skull of some animal is suspended over the whale boat for luck. A line is drawn around the boat (at water line) with native graphite to keep evil spirits out. A graphite mark is drawn down each hunter's nose [men climbing into umiak on ice, harpoons lashed into tripod over umiak]

.15 – The boats are loaded with harpoon, bomb gun, and inflated seal skins tied to harpoon line to indicate location of whale after harpoon has entered the body [men and women standing next to loaded umiak]

.16 – while 6 or 8 boats patrol Bering Straits as many more camp on the shore ice waiting their turn to hunt, for now there is no night; the midnight sun being in evidence [crew paddling umiak in open water]

.17 – While hunting, they see in the distance a steam whaler whose crew have [three-masted sailing ship with steam funnel anchored at ice edge]

.18 – wounded a whale and are waiting for it to break water. The steam whaler *Alexander* in the distance is tied to the Russian *Diomedé*, the small boats being on the international boundary [white whaling crew in five small boats between *Diomedé* Islands. The *Alexander* was wrecked in 1906]

.19 – When this whale bone was taken aboard it was found to be worth \$10,600, the slabs being as long as 9 feet. Five men stood abreast between the jaws. There are 780 slabs in the upper jaws and are used to strain the water for small jellyfish. The bowhead whale [close-up of baleen]

.20 – has no teeth. As soon as the Eskimo crew kills a whale they tow it to the shore ice. The boat steerer cuts a small strip of skin from tip to tip of the fluke or tail, ties it around him runs to the village & into the innies or houses to tell the woman to bring dogs and sleds to haul carcass to meat cellars [man standing on top of semi-subterranean dwelling, cache at right]

.21 – A sloping runway is cut off shore ice. A thong is tied to the whale's tail. Everybody lends a hand to haul it as far as possible on to the shore. Seal skin buoys hold the head out of water [large group of men and women pulling rope on ice, dogs lying in foreground next to sled, other dogs eating off ice]

.22 – Native butchers with one piece waterproof suits cut small hole in the stomach. The[y] get in the hole and proceed to cut the meat promiscuously. The women gather it as it is thrown out to them & [man wearing gut suit standing chest-deep in whale, holding meat in mouth, women standing next to carcass]

.23 – pile it in rudely constructed tubs of snow cakes. A thirty foot whale has blubber about 14 in. thick. The outer skin is quite thin & can be easily cut with small pocket knife [two men in gut suits leaning over carcass, woman sitting at right]

.24 – The upper jaw bone is bow shaped and from this fact comes the name bowhead whale [chunks of whale meat on ice, people standing in background]

.25 – Inside of mouth view of whale bone showing fibre used for straining food [large chunk of jaw with baleen on ice, rope in foreground, seal floats in background]

.26 – Siberian tent made of walrus hide [skin tent, sled frame at left]

.27 – Reindeer herder [portrait of Inupiat family, with woman and man holding infant]

.28 – Six weeks old fawns [reindeer and calves on tundra]

.29 – New horns in April and May [reindeer calf]

.30 – December horns [reindeer]

.31 – Seluktoona (very ancient beads) [portrait of woman wearing print parka cover and carrying infant on back, holding small can, wearing beaded bracelet and beaded necklace]

.32 – All furs are covered with drill or calico parkies. All cloth to the Eskimo is calico [woman wearing striped parka cover carrying infant on back]

.33 – Koozren, Kootegweena, Ongnahok, Oomeseuk, Ongnoluk [portrait of five young women sitting on tundra, all wearing print parka covers]

.34 – Kobuk River Eskimos [woman, man, and three boys sitting on ship]

.35 – Man's hunting sled for ice on the sea. All female garments have 1 seam on the back of the head, with peak on top. Male garments have 2 seams on hoods [two people wearing fur or gut parkas with dog team pulling sled on ice]

.36 – Siberian pups, Nagozruk & Tom [young boy holding cat sitting in entrance to building, five puppy dogs sitting at right]

.37 – Wolf dog (Kimoogn) [dog portrait. Kodak No. 2 circular print]

.38 – Nora Norwadluk Ooteena, Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska [portrait of woman. Kodak No. 2 circular print]

.39 – Most westerly white man's house in America [five young men standing on beach, building on hillside in background. Kodak No. 2 circular print]

.40 – The youngster laughing thinks he is not having his picture taken but is only holding the other who feels the seriousness of his position [two young boys standing on wooden board, one wearing reindeer fur parka, one wearing oversized Western coat and knitted cap]

.41 – School girls [three girls seated with other children, one wearing fur parka, two wearing print parka covers]

Guide written: February 25, 2019