

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

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TITLE: Nenana Ice Classic Photographs

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2013.073

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: circa 1940s

Extent: 13 items

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): North Star Photography

Administrative/Biographical History:

Lee Rensch was born in 1911 in South Dakota and relocated to Alaska in 1938. He died August 11, 2001.

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of fourteen commercially-produced black-and-white photographs, 2.75” x 4.5”, sold as a souvenir set titled “Complete Action Picture Story, Nenana Ice Classic.” The photo mailer is addressed from Mary Jean, Nenana, to Lee Rensch, Anchorage. This set is missing photograph number 5.

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:

Nenana Ice Classic Photographs, Anchorage Museum, B2013.073

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by Gail and Ron Jerve in October 2013

RELATED MATERIALS

SUBJECTS

Nenana Ice Classic (Alaska)
Alice of St. Michael (Steamboat)
Airplanes—Alaska
Festivals—Alaska
Nenana (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

1. The Tanana River, flowing WNW, Nenana, Alaska visible to left of Alaska RR bridge on near bank, Nenana airport in foreground [aerial]
2. Upriver view of the Tanana, Nenana, Alaska on right bank between ARR bridge and Nenana River which flows in from lower right [aerial]
3. Nenana, Alaska, the Alaska Railroad's connecting point with it's [sic] riverboat service to towns on the Tanana and Yukon Rivers. Located 50 miles WSW of Fairbanks, it is home of annual Ice Breakup Classic, begun in 1917 [aerial]
4. Downstream view of Tanana and Nenana, Alaska, business section and ARR depot left center, Nenana River flows in from upper left, ice breakup tripod is visible just off center of photo [aerial]
6. Ice breakup comes without warning: photo taken 2 hours before and altho all Alaska focuses attention on this annual event, only handful of spectators were present until after ice started moving [aerial]
7. Ice action begins upstream from Nenana as huge ice pan breaks loose and it's [sic] tremendous weight starts it's [sic] forcing movement down the Tanana. Thawing ice and snow must raise river level 6 feet or more to release anchor ice [aerial]

8. Nenana Classic tripod on Tanana River ice, flag bedecked rope running to tower. When rope breaks, clock in small building to left stops, recording official breakup time. Tripod was moving when this photo was taken [Nenana Ice Pool watchtower in foreground]
9. This is the minute tens of thousands of winter weary Alaskans have tried to guess. The rope has broken, stopping the clock and the Nenana Ice Classic has marked the official beginning of another season of activity [view of tripod on river]
10. Nenana Ice Classic breakup time is flashed to all Alaska by Fairbanks radio K-F-A-R crew as crowd gathers to watch the awesome sight of jammed ice heaving and grinding its way down the Tanana. Man at extreme left is peering at time recorded on official clock in window [group in front of Nenana Ice Pool shack]
11. Cameras click as tripod moves downstream: one spectator runs back to note time on official clock. Small bewildered Native boy in foreground decides he'd better, too [people on riverbank, with tripod on ice]
12. Spectators watch ice clear out of Tanana as another Nenana Ice Classic breakup becomes history [group on dock with Alaska Railroad bridge in distance]
13. One of Alaska Railroad's two remaining sternwheelers steams up in preparation to load at the Nenana dock for another season of supplying river towns on the Tanana and Yukon rivers [sternwheeler *Alice of St. Michael* at dock]
14. Day after the Nenana ice breakup, Alaskan bush floatplane takes off on first of it's [sic] summer operations [airplane taking off from Tanana River, just below Alaska Railroad bridge]

Guide written: November 6, 2013