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TITLE: William Milne Cruise Journal

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2014.014

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1938

Extent: 1 box, 1 linear foot

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): William Milne, Jacobs

Administrative/Biographical History (written by Frazier Manfull, April 2019):

William Milne was a teacher of Industrial Arts in the Portland, Oregon school district. He was born in Scotland in 1877 and immigrated to the United States in 1904 or 1905. His wife, Agnes, was born in Scotland in 1876 and immigrated to the US in 1899. They were married in 1909 and lived in Portland until their deaths in 1957 (William) and 1960 (Agnes)¹. In 1938, the Milnes were passengers on the Alaska Steamship Company's Arctic Cruise. The Arctic Cruise, also called the Arctic Adventure Cruise or the Arctic Vagabond Cruise, was an annual "special" cruise offered between 1934 and 1940. The cruise sailed from Seattle and stopped in Nome, the Pribilof Islands, and Cape Dezhnev, Siberia, in the USSR.

¹ 1930 United States Census, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, Enumeration District 0516, "William Milne," "Agnes L Milne," <https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/HQA>. 1920 States Census, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, Enumeration District 170, "William Milne," "Agnes Milne," <https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/HQA>. 1910 United States Census, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, Enumeration District 0327, "William Milne," "Agnes L Milne," <https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/HQA>, William and Agnes Milne, grave marker, River View Cemetery, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, *FindaGrave.com*.

In 1938, the Milnes were among 48 other Arctic Cruise passengers, constituting just over half of S.S. Denali's passengers. 1938 was the first sailing of the Arctic Cruise on the Denali, having taken over for S.S. Victoria ("Old Vic"). The remaining passengers were travelers destined for Nome (28), Unalaska (8), Teller (1) and St. Michael (1). Only one other passenger was from Portland, another Arctic Cruise tourist. The only passengers from Seattle, where the cruise launched from, were non-cruise passengers headed for Nome and St. Michael. Most passengers were from farther afield, predominantly California but with some passengers hailing from British Columbia, Arizona, Texas, Pennsylvania, and New York. One Arctic Cruise tourist had his home listed as "Field Artillery, USA," indicating his military background. Father Bernard R. Hubbard, "the Glacier Priest," was another of the passengers on the 1938 Arctic Cruise. He was likely picked up at King Island rather than Seattle as he had "spent this season on the island taking pictures of native life for Hollywood Educational Films."² Father Hubbard gave several lectures on the history of the King Island Iñupiat for passengers.³ Alaska Steamship Company literature often did not give advice on how passengers should reach Seattle, but Union Pacific would advertise Alaska Steamship cruises, alongside their "low summer fares to Seattle."⁴

The Arctic Cruise was a retooling of the Alaska Steamship Company's Bering Sea Cruise. The Bering Sea Cruise, a cruise to Nome or St. Michael, was marketed as being "without the many scenic features encountered in making tours and cruises hereinbefore mentioned."⁵ The Arctic Cruise added the stops in Siberia and the Pribilofs and marketed itself as being for real, red-blooded explorers, "those more adventurous men and women who like to get completely off the beaten path for their romance and adventure in travel."⁶

This would have been only one of the only chances for tourists to visit the famous seal rookeries in the Pribilof islands. The Arctic Cruise in 1934 was the first tourist visit to the Pribilof Islands.⁷ The Siberian stop, similarly, would have been one of the only chances for American tourists to visit the Soviet Union, even briefly. In 1938, due to weather, the Denali was unable to land at the designated stop and had to land at another village in Cape Dezhnev. This disrupted the planned festivities. According to a stewardess on the 1938 cruise, one of the earlier cruises "had been royally entertained at dinner in Russian style, had visited the school and had the children sing for them, had been able to buy pottery, carvings and table linen," and had been greeted by a "reception committee of aviators from Moscow."⁸

The Milnes recorded their experience in a scrapbook titled "Notes from the North." This scrapbook was bound in a handmade album. This reflects both William Milne's background as an Industrial Arts educator and how important memorializing this trip was to

² William Milne, *Notes from the North* (William Milne Cruise Journal, Anchorage Museum, B2014.014), 10.

³ Milne, 11-12.

⁴ Union Pacific, *On Our Way to Alaska* (1939).

⁵ Alaska Steamship Company, *Summer Cruises* (Seattle: Alaska Steamship Company, 1928), 16.

⁶ Alaska Steamship Company, *Alaska's Magic* (Seattle: Alaska Steamship Company, 1935), 20.

⁷ Frank Norris, *Gawking at the Midnight Sun* (Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History, 1985), 70.

⁸ Milne, 14.

the Milnes. Creating and keeping a scrapbook is already an investment of time and effort, creating the book by hand only heightens that.

Scope and Content Description:

"The Arctic Tour," by William Milne, is an illustrated typescript account of a 1938 cruise taken by Milne and his wife Agnes aboard the S.S. *Denali* from Seattle with stops at Akutan, Dutch Harbor, the Pribilofs, Nome, St. Michael, Teller, Tin City, and Siberia. The journal consists of 26 leaves bound into a handmade skin album, 11 x 9", with the title "Notes from the North" and the author's monogram burned into the front cover. The narrative details the four-week journey, which began on August 16th with the departure of the Alaska Steamship Company's *Denali* from Seattle. The text is illustrated with original photographs, clippings, and other ephemera. Milne notes at one point in the narrative that "The natives turned their backs on the cameras but some pictures of the children were to be had by bribing them with candy."

Of particular interest is a description of the trip to St. Michael, "the ghost city of the Arctic;" Milne writes that "a treasure hunt was arranged through the Old Northern Navigation Co. building. Some of the tourists carried off the most ridiculous treasures imaginable: Large maps of the river, the company's invoice books of doubtful historical value, office equipment and transportation tickets." Also in his chapter on St. Michael, Milne first mentions Father Hubbard's presence among the group, and his lectures on Alaskan history and culture.

When the passengers landed in Siberia, Milne found that the "Soviet-Esquimos seemed to be servants for the soldiers." Upon departure, the Russian authorities "kept our passports with our Russian names and descriptions to be forwarded to Moscow so that we dare not set foot on Soviet soil again."

On the homeward journey, the cruisers happened upon the 1938 Smithsonian Institution Archaeological Expedition the Aleutian Islands. Milne writes: "Armed with an old Stilson wrench, we prodded around in the black loam. After about an hour's searching, I unearthed what appeared to be a large well preserved bone.... Two fellow explorers from Kansas finished the job and brought with them a section of vertebrae about twelve inches long and as large around as a man's body. This was hollowed out and smooth and according to Father Hubbard, probably used for containing food. We also found hollow stones that had been used for dishes but left them as they would have been too burdensome to carry."

The journal ends abruptly with the processing of two whales at the Akutan station during the return trip. For more information, see Detailed Description of Collection.

Arrangement: Not applicable

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

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

Physical Access: Original item in good condition.

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

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Preferred Citation:

William Milne Cruise Journal, Anchorage Museum, B2014.014

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated to the Museum in May 2014 by Mary Thorsell, whose father received the journal from Milne.

Processing Note

Original photographs assigned individual accession numbers.

SUBJECTS

Milne, William

Hubbard, Bernard Rosecrans, 1888-1962

Alaska Natives—Social life and customs

Whaling—Alaska

Sealing—Alaska

Alaska—Description and travel

Akutan (Alaska)

Dutch Harbor (Alaska)

Pribilof Islands (Alaska)

Nome (Alaska)

Saint Michael (Alaska)

Ukivok (Alaska)

Teller (Alaska)

Siberia, Eastern (Russian)

Detailed Description of the Collection

[Page 1]

- Clipping. Photograph of S.S. *Denali*

[Page 2]

- Clipping. Graphic with map of Pacific Northwest Coast and Alaska, captioned "Two Cruises Above the Arctic Circle to the Land of the Midnight Sun in 1937"

[Page 3]

- Typescript title page. "The Arctic Tour by Wm. Milne"
- .1 – Photograph. Passengers on deck gathered around man in caribou parka, cot and bear skin in foreground
- .2 – Photograph. Passengers on deck, some sitting on lifeboat, two men in caribou parkas in foreground

[Page 4]

- Clipping. Cover of Alaska Steamship Company menu, with Sydney Laurence painting

[Page 5]

- Menu, S.S. *Denali* Farewell Dinner, Sunday September 11, 1938

[Page 6]

- Clipping. Specifications for S.S. *Denali*, with photomechanical print of ship
- Clipping. Itinerary for "The August 7th Cruise"

[Page 7]

- Typescript. Chapter headings: "S.S. Denali," "On Board the Denali," "The Entertainment"

[Page 8]

- Certificate. "The Royal Court of Aurora Borealis ... Be it known that I hereby summon and command Mrs. Wm. Milne to appear..." Awarded for crossing latitude 66° 32' North on September 1, 1938

[Page 9]

- .3 – Photograph. Ceremony on ship deck, man in striped suit next to barrel marked "Arctic Ice Water" at left, man in costume seated in deck chair at center, man reading from paper at right
- Membership card. Agnes P. Milne, Honorary Order of Arctic Adventurers, 1938 Arctic Cruise.

.4 – Photograph. Passengers on deck

[Page 10]

- .5 – Photograph. Men in caribou parkas seated in front of man dressed in Neptune costume
- .6 – Photograph. Captain and passengers gathered on deck

[Page 11]

- Typescript. Continuation of chapter, "The Entertainment," start of chapter "Our First Landing"
- Clipping. Photomechanical print of Akutan Whaling Station by Carp

[Page 12]

- Clipping. Illustration of Alaska Native boy holding puppy

[Page 13]

- Typescript. Continuation of chapter, "Our First Landing"
- Clipping. Photomechanical print of Alaska Native boy in fur parka

[Page 14]

- Clipping. Photomechanical print of village, possibly Akutan, seen from water
- Clipping. Photomechanical print of cannery complex and fishing boats, possibly near Akutan

[Page 15]

- Typescript. Chapter heading "Dutch Harbor (Aleutian Islands)"

[Page 16]

- .7 – Photograph. Seal rookery
- .8 – Postcard. "A baby seal. 1012. Jacobs. Nome."

[Page 17]

- Typescript. Chapter heading, "The Pribilofs"

[Page 18]

- .9 – Photograph. Man and woman standing on ship deck, man's head truncated from image

[Page 19]

- .10 – Photograph. View of village from ship deck, possibly St. George or St. Paul
- Typescript. Continuation of chapter, "The Pribilofs," start of chapter "Our Visit to the Island"

[Page 20 – blank]

[Page 21]

- Typescript. Continuation of chapter, "Our Visit to the Island," start of chapter, "Nome, August 26th"
- Clipping. Photomechanical print of aerial of Nome

[Page 22]

- .11 – Postcard. Foot race on Nome street, past signs for Polet Branch and North Pole Bakery
- .12 – Postcard. "The seal hunter returns." Attributed to Jacobs, Nome

[Page 23]

- Typescript. Chapter heading, "Nome"

[Page 24]

- Clipping. "Winter sport at Nome – a prize winning dog team on Bering Sea"
- Clipping. "One of the large gold dredges at Nome"
- Clipping. "Eskimos arriving at Nome via reindeer sled deer to attend annual fair"

[Page 25]

- Program. "Entertainment sponsored by the Northwestern Alaska Chamber of Commerce, Nome, Alaska, Thursday, August 25, 1938"
- Clipping. "A bathing scene in Bering Sea at Nome"
- Clipping. Photomechanical print of two arctic fox in pen
- Clipping. "Pontoon planes land on the beach at Nome"

[Page 26]

- Stamp. "Transferred at St. Michael. A.Y. Nav. Co. to A.S.S. Co."
- Ticket. Northern Navigation Co. to St. Michael

[Page 27 – blank]

[Page 28 – blank]

[Page 29]

- Typescript. Chapter heading, "St. Michael"

[Page 30]

- .13 – Photograph. Woman patting dog on porch outside building, St. Michael
- Book cover. "Rules and regulations for the guidance of officers and employees of the Transportation Department of Northern Navigation Co."

[Page 31]

- .14 – Photograph. Woman feeding dog on ship deck
- .15 – Photograph. Passengers on ship deck
- .16 – Photograph. Man and woman talking on ship deck
- .17 – Photograph. Girl and dog on ship deck
 - Clipping. “Father Hubbard with two of his dogs”
- .18 – Photograph. Girl with dogs on ship deck
- .19 – Photograph. Man with dog on ship deck, possibly Father Hubbard
- .20 – Photograph. Woman on ship deck
- .21 – Photograph. Man with dog on ship deck, possibly Father Hubbard

[Page 32]

- Clipping. Photomechanical print of two hunters in umiak near ice floe, one aiming rifle
- Clipping. Photomechanical print portrait of Alaska Native woman
- Clipping. Photomechanical print of King Island cliff houses
- Clipping. Photomechanical print portrait of Alaska Native man
- Clipping. Photomechanical print of three Alaska Natives standing next to large skin tent on beach, sled frames and drying skins propped against tent, large umiak and double-masted sailing ship in background

[Page 33]

- Typescript. Chapter heading, “Father Hubbard Lectures on the King Islanders”

[Page 34]

- .22 – Photograph. Young Alaska Native girls seated on house stoop
- .23 – Postcard. “Jacobs. Nome.” Alaska Native children standing on street, elder woman wearing print parka and eyeglasses seated at right
- .24 – Photograph. Four children standing outside doorway to wooden plank building
 - Clipping. Photomechanical print of ship’s bow with furled sail, anchor swinging out, herd of walrus at right
 - Clipping. Photomechanical print of dog
 - Clipping. Photomechanical print of four walrus heads
 - Clipping. Photomechanical print of three young Alaska Native boys sitting near skin tent, carving ivory, all with St. Lawrence Island hairstyles with shaved upper heads and longer hair around close-cropped area

[Page 35]

- Typescript. Continuation of “Father Hubbard’s Lecture”

[Page 36]

- .25 – Photograph. Alaska Native women and children on street, Nome
- .26 – Postcard. Bird’s eye view of caribou herd crossing river
- .27 – Photograph. Close-up of bottom of long caribou fur parka and footwear worn by passers-by on boardwalk, Nome

[Page 37]

- .28 – Photograph. Distant view of village from ship, probably Teller
 - Typescript. Chapter heading, “Teller”

[Page 38]

.29 – Postcard. “Seal hunter. Jacobs. Nome.” Alaska Native man pulling seal carcass across ice, harpoon and snowshoes strapped to his back

.30 – Photograph. Passengers and children on beach, possibly at Teller

.31 – Postcard. “Jacobs. Nome.” Three reindeer in wooden enclosure

[Page 39]

.32 – Photograph. Passengers being lightered off S.S. *Denali* on two small boats

- Typescript. Chapter headings, “Tin City, August 31st” and “Siberia”

[Page 40]

- Menu. S.S. *Denali* “Hard Time Dinner,” Thursday, September 1, 1938

[Page 41]

- Typescript. Continuation of chapter, “Siberia”

[Page 42]

.33 – Photograph. Scenic of sunset/sunrise

.34 – Photograph. Passport portrait of Agnes Milne

.35 – Photograph. Scenic of low-lying land on horizon

.36 – Photograph. Passport portrait of William Milne

.37 – Photograph. Scenic of sunset/sunrise

- Clipping. “Barrow, Aug, 24 (AP). The Kellems party returned from Oliktuk, where they dragged the waters of the Arctic Ocean unsuccessfully in search for the Russian plane...” on the search for Levanevskii

- Clipping. “Sourdough Stationery... now available at the *Nugget* office.”

[Page 43]

.38 – Photograph. Scenic of sunset/sunrise

- Typescript. Continuation of chapter, “Siberia,” chapter, “The Return Trip to Nome, Sept. 3rd”

- Clipping. Letterhead logo, U.S. Mercantile Co., Nome

[Page 44]

- Clipping. “Welcome to Nome Arctic cruisers on S.S. *Denali*”

- Clipping. “Mrs. Wiley Post...” with photo

- Clipping. “Nugget weather forecast”

- Clipping. “Post-Rogers Memorial party to make search for lost Soviet plane”

- Clipping. “Tuesday afternoon pilot Jack Jefford made a flight to Golovin. Passengers included...”

- Clipping. “Published every Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Single copy 25 cts.”

[Page 45]

- Typescript. Chapter heading, “Dutch Harbor, Sept. 4th”

- Clipping. “Brailing salmon from a trap”

[Page 46]

- Clipping. Photomechanical print of unidentified cannery, possibly at Akutan

- Clipping. “The glacier-carved Inside Passage”

[Page 47]

- Typescript. Chapter heading, “Akutan, Sept. 5th”

- Clipping. “Typical Aleutian Island formation”

[Page 48]

- Clipping. "List of passengers. Officers. Passengers for Unalaska"
[Page 49]
- Clipping. [List of passengers] "Arctic Cruise"
[Page 50]
- Clipping. [List of passengers] "Arctic Cruise"
[Page 51]
- Clipping. [List of passengers] "For Nome"
[Page 52 – blank]

Guide updated: May 3, 2019