

**REFERENCE CODE:** AkAMH

**REPOSITORY NAME:**

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center  
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Guide prepared by: Sara Piasecki, Photo Archivist

**TITLE:** Alaska twins portrait photograph

**COLLECTION NUMBER:** B2011-003

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Dates: ca. 1919

Extent: 1 photograph

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Unknown

**Administrative/Biographical History:**

Mary and Helen McDannel were born to John Casey McDannel and Mary McDannel in Anchorage on December 4, 1917, the first recorded set of twins born in the town. John Casey had come to Anchorage in 1915 and was employed by the Alaska Engineering Commission in food service. He held the concession for dining and sleeping cars, including the "Seward," which traveled between Anchorage and Seward. His travels to Seward acquainted him with Jack Stotko, owner of several bars in Seward. Stotko had been one of the founders of Seward, settling there in 1903.

When Stotko and his wife Lavonia gave birth to Seward's first set of twins, Jack and Bill, shortly after McDannel's twins were born, McDannel reportedly threw a party for the children (see Barry, Mary J. *Seward, Alaska: a history of the gateway city*. Anchorage, AK: Barry, 1986-1995). That party may have been the occasion for the portrait photograph.

According to Rosemarie Levine in her paper "Hope: a history of the town and the surrounding area" (1969), the Mathison family had arrived in Hope in 1899 and built the first school in 1902. They owned the Mathison Mining & Mercantile and a sawmill, and operated a ferry service between Anchorage and places along the Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet. Levine does not

mention the birth of the Mathisons' twins or their names. Presumably, news of the twins' birth traveled quickly up and down the Inlet as the Mathisons made trips back and forth.

**Scope and Content Description:**

Posed studio portrait photograph. Caption on verso of print: "McDannel twins 1<sup>st</sup> borne in Anch. Stockto [sic] twins from Seward. Mathisen twins from Hope." Caption on mat reads: Mrs. Casey McDannel seated with first twins born in Anchorage and on the left the Stotko twins from Seward, and the Mathison twins from Seward [sic]."

**CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE**

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

Physical Access: Photograph in good condition.

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

**Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:**

The Anchorage Museum is the owner of the materials and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the Anchorage Museum before any reproduction use.

**Preferred Citation:**

Alaska twins portrait photograph; Anchorage Museum, B2011-003

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Acquisition and Appraisal Information**

Donated by Linda Sonnen on May 30, 2011. Photograph found by Sonnen's sister-in-law, a realtor, in a house she purchased in American Falls, ID. The house was sold by the estate of the deceased former owner. Photograph bears stamp of John D. McDannel, Primrose, Anchorage, AK.

**Processing Notes**

Glass from original frame destroyed during shipment to Museum. Frame discarded.

**RELATED MATERIALS**

B1979-1.33

**SUBJECTS**

Osborne, Helen McDannel, 1917-2009

Patterson, Mary McDannel, 1917-

Stotko, Jack

Stotko, Bill

Mathison family

Twins - Alaska