

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

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TITLE: Whitehead-McDannel Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2012.018

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: circa 1908-1987

Extent: 0.1 linear feet

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): J. Casey McDannel, George L. Johnson, Florence Kling Harding, Alaska Railroad, Chace, Gilbert Whitehead

Administrative/Biographical History:

John Casey McDannel was born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1864. He participated in gold rushes in Alaska and Nevada, and also established hotels in Tonopah, Columbia, Bullfrog and Goldfield, Nevada. In Goldfield he built the Casey Hotel, which was considered the largest and best in the state of Nevada at that time.

In the spring of 1915, he returned to Alaska and found a job with the Alaskan Engineering Commission in the commissary and mess hall. He later had the concession for the railroad dining cars and sleepers from Seward to Fairbanks until the Curry Hotel stopover was built. Undaunted, he opened the Twins Café in Anchorage, which name was later changed to the Merchants Café. He operated the restaurant in conjunction with the Twins Hotel at 931 4th Avenue. In 1923 John was asked to operate the railroad dining car for President Harding when he came to Alaska to drive the golden spike at the completion of the Railroad.

McDannel married Mary Davis (1878-1955) in 1921. Mary had previously been married and had twin girls, Helen and Mary, reportedly the first set of twins born in Anchorage. They

became part of the McDannel family. The couple had two more children, John Casey, born in 1922 and Lucy, born in 1923. Lucy married Gilbert Whitehead, and they had no children.¹

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of 38 black-and-white photographs, correspondence, ephemera, and publications collected by J. Casey McDannel and his daughter, Lucy McDannel Whitehead. Many of the materials document the 1923 visit of President Warren G. Harding to Alaska. Other materials pertain to McDannel's and Whitehead's careers with the Alaska Railroad.

Arrangement: Arranged by subject, format, and date.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

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

Physical Access: Original items in good condition. *Alaska Dispatch Golden spike edition* fragile; limited copying.

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. The Anchorage Museum does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners.

Preferred Citation:

Whitehead-McDannel Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2012.018

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by Lucy McDannel Whitehead.

Processing Notes

Many items removed from scrapbook, with remnants of black paper on photo backs and corners. *Alaska Dispatch Golden spike edition* fragile with many torn pages.

RELATED MATERIALS

B2011.003 Alaska Twins Portrait Photograph

SUBJECTS

Harding, Warren G. (Warren Gamaliel), 1865-1923—Journeys—Alaska

¹"McDannel, John Casey and Mary. Legends & Legacies web site Accessed July 27, 2012. <http://www.alaskahistory.org/detail.aspx?ID=125>

Harding, Florence Kling, 1860-1924—Journeys—Alaska
McDannel, J. Casey (John Casey), 1864-1930
Whitehead, Lucy McDannel, 1923-
Long, Harry A., d. 1950
Van Curler, Charles Delavan, 1895-1969
Pittman, Key, 1872-1940—Correspondence
Quigley, Fannie, 1871-1944
Alaska Railroad
Henderson (Transport)
Alaska (Steamboat)
Road-rail vehicles
Seward (Alaska)
Cordova (Alaska)
Fairbanks (Alaska)
Anchorage (Alaska)
Curry (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

F1

Harding Visit, 1923

- .1 – [View along top of steam locomotive with second car visible]
- .2 – [View along tops of railroad cars as train crosses trestle bridge]
- .3 – [1920s automobile converted to rail car; served as transport for President Harding]
- .4 – [President Harding and party in automobile on Seward dock, having debarked from the *U.S.S. Henderson*; an armed escort ship visible in background, not *Henderson*?]
- .5 – [President Harding and party walking on Seward dock, having debarked from the *U.S.S. Henderson*, visible in background]
- .6 – [President Warren and wife Florence Harding standing with uniformed officer and another man, possibly Col. James Steese, on railroad tracks]
- .7 – [President Harding takes gloves from railroad workman standing on rail car; boxes of green beans sit on the ground at Harding's feet; man on top of rail car taking photograph]
- .8 – [President Harding and unidentified man, possibly Col. James Steese, help woman onto the train, as she steps up off of box of green beans]
- .9 – [President Harding stands next to train talking with men and women]
- .10 – [President Harding and party stand on railroad tracks; woman pats dog]
- .11 – [President Harding stands with unidentified man and woman]
- .12 – [President Harding and three men stand on rear of observation car]
- .13 – [President Harding stands with group on rear of observation car]
- .14 – President Harding 1923 in Cordova, Alaska
- .15 – President Harding in the new empire, Anchorage, Alaska, July 17, '23, c. by Geo. L. Johnson, Anchorage
- .16 – President and Mrs. Harding, Cordova, Alaska
- .17 – President Harding driving the golden spike, 1922 [sic]
- .18 – [Unidentified man helps Florence with her coat while President Harding stands by next to rail car]

- .19 – [President and Florence Harding stand with woman with three children next to train; Interior Alaska?]
- .20 – [President Harding inspects a dog team come out to meet the train near Cantwell]
- .21 – [Florence Harding stands on the runner of a railroad automobile; unidentified woman stands on the opposite side of the car]
- .22 – [President Harding and group stand talking with woman and two children with sled]
- .23 – [reindeer, with presidential group standing in background]
- .24 – [Welcome arch and view down street in Fairbanks during Harding’s visit; flags and banners hang over street]
- .25 – [Crowd gathered to watch the driving of the golden spike at Mears Memorial Bridge]
- .26 – [Navy destroyer, escort to President Harding; *U.S.S. Corry?* Resurrection Bay?]
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed, Florence Kling Harding to J. Casey McDannel, Anchorage, January 22, 1924. Note card and envelope edged in black
- Program. *The Alaska Railroad and river boat service: the new Golden Belt Line Tour. Bulletin of information for the Presidential Special, July 13-19, 1923.* 16 pages
- Newspaper. *The Alaska Dispatch. Golden spike edition.* 1922. [24] pages
- Clipping. “Harding dies at 57.” [1923]
- Clipping. “Death followed weary president’s Alaska trip.” *Anchorage times.* No date

F2

Miscellaneous photographs

- . 27 – [*S.S. Alaska* at dock]
- .28 – Kenai, George Johnson dog
- .29 – Dad when he had diner on ARR 1922. Right, man in white shirt J. Casey McDannel who operated the dining car from Seward to Fairbanks before the Curry Hotel was built [two men stand on rear of observation car]
- .30 – Curry Hotel 1923 [interior of hotel, showing armchairs by fireplace and stairs to second level]
- .31 – Curry Hotel 1922-23 [exterior of hotel with railroad tracks in front]
- .32 – Don’t know how old this is [A.R.R. 1 locomotive at Fairbanks depot]
- .33 – Les Lind on R.R. car, August Seabury (Hazel’s father) foreman for ARR, 1939 or 1940 [man sits atop rail passenger car sitting on flatbed car in yard with large crane at right preparing to load or unload]
- .34 – Harry Long being presented a gold watch by Del Van Curler. L to R Louise & Oren Nichols, Harry Shorty Long, Beth Long. 1948 or 1949? At the U.S.O. Log Cabin at 5th & G St. [people sit at head table, “Roll of Honor” on wall behind; Anchorage]
- .35 – Harry Long’s retirement party, Old Legion bldg at 5th & G St. Front table right Gib & Lucy Whitehead, Mer Attebury and Bob Attebury, Maurice Scott & wife, across table Roy Boyd & wife. Left table Frances Healy, Jerry Allen & Mary Allen, J. Casey McDannel & Shirley McDannel, Leonard Johnson & wife. Back rear table --, Pete F[?], 6th person Jim R[?], Dick Bruce & wife Mabel. U.S.O. log cabin at 5th & G St. [stamped:] Photo By Chace.
- .36 – Lucy Whitehead, ticket cashier, 1949, Railroad Depot [stamped:] Photo By Chace
- .37 – Accounting branch of the Alaska Railroad location 1st Ave & C St. 1954. Front row Clifford Smith. Photo taken by Gib Whitehead
- .38 – General office employees of the Alaska Railroad 1954. Photo taken by Gib Whitehead [most shown identified on back]

Correspondence

- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Franklin Knight Lane, Secretary of the Interior, to General James S. Clarkson, New York City, March 7, 1914. Re letter of J. Casey McDannel to J.S. Clarkson regarding Alaska Railroad bill. 1 page
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Francis S. Newlands, Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, to J. Casey McDannel, San Francisco, February 28, 1914. Re Alaska Railroad bill. 1 page
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Key Pittman, Senate Committee on Territories, to J. Casey McDannel, Anchorage, January 16, 1918. Re photographs sent. 1 page
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Key Pittman, Senate Committee on Industrial Expositions, to J. Casey McDannel, Seward, February 17, 1921. Re menu sent. 1 page
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Key Pittman, Senate, to J. Casey McDannel, Anchorage, March 22, 1922. Re development of Alaskan resources. 1 page
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Dan Sutherland, House of Representatives, to J. Casey McDannel, Anchorage, January 15, 1923. Re free fares for children on Alaska Railroad. 1 page
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed C.F. Curry, House Committee on the Territories, to J. Casey McDannel, Anchorage, March 6, 1923. Re Curry Hotel, Alaska trip of Secretary of War Weeks. 2 pages
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Key Pittman, Senate, to J. Casey McDannel, Anchorage, October 8, 1928. Re letter sent. 1 page [Photocopy]
- Correspondence. Typescript letter signed Gertrude Mulcahy to Lucy Whitehead, December 12, 1972. Re J. Casey McDannel. 2 pages

Ephemera and clippings

- Menu. *The Alaska Railroad Dining Car service luncheon and dinner menu*. [1920s?]
- Ticket. "The Alaska Railroad Transfer Celebration, Nenana, Alaska." January 5, 1985
- Flier. "Anchorage's 75th Anniversary." Includes photocopy of typescript letter signed W.P. Richardson, War Department Office of the Chief of Engineers, to J. Casey McDannel, Anchorage, December 12, 1922. Re railroad fares.
- Clipping. "First guests at Hotel Casey." [Hotel on corner of Main and Miner streets, Goldfield, Nevada; 1908?]
- Clipping. "Casey popular man." [party at Moose Hall, Anchorage]
- Clipping. "Dempsey-McDannel." [wedding announcement. 1921]
- Clipping. "Casey generous." [party at Mears home]
- Clipping. "Casey M'Daniel is Alaska booster." [Nevada newspaper, *The Bonanza*]
- Clipping. "Bathing beauties pleasing feature." *Anchorage daily times*, June 26, 1929 [Lucy McDannel wins fifth prize at bathing girl contest]
- Clipping. "Keeping house in Alaskan wilds." *The Detroit news*, Sunday September 29, 1929 [Fannie Quigley]
- Clipping. "Mt. McKinley, home of the great sun." *The Detroit news*, Sunday October 13, 1929.
- Clipping. "Fannie Quigley." *Great lander shopping news*, August 4, 1971.
- Clipping. "'Team' ends rail careers." *Anchorage daily times*, Friday June 29, 1973 [Lucy Whitehead and Casey McDannel]

- Clipping. "McKinley Explorer: luxury travel in the last frontier." [after 1986]
- Clipping. "Sourdough memories." *Anchorage daily news*, Tuesday February 17, 1987 [Lucy Whitehead and historical exhibition during Fur Rondy]

Guide written: July 2012