

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
Bob and Evangeline Atwood Resource Center
625 C Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-929-9235
Email: resourcecenter@anchagemuseum.org

Guide prepared by: Heather McClain, Senior Archivist

TITLE: Whittington Photographs

COLLECTION NUMBER: B1965.004

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1920

Extent: 67 items

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): L.L. Brown, Elbridge W. Merrill

Administrative/Biographical History:

Nothing is known about the donor Harriet Whittington at the time of processing.

Scope and Content Description:

The Whittington collection consists primarily of photos of a snow slide in 1920 and of a train stalled and packed in as a result of that snow slide. The photographs of the snow slide include photos of a snowplow clearing the snow slide, a temporary track, an engine, train cars, and views of the slide. Other photographs in the collection include Spencer Glacier, a photo of where the Portage Bay tunnel now begins from 1920, Child's Glacier, Port Armstrong, Whaling, a Labor Day Parade with the ARR commission float and Shriner's Float, Shakan, Tenakee Inlet frozen over, Kodiak, Ft. Liscum, Valdez, a blizzard, and Sitka. Also in the collection are photos of Joe Magill and Mrs. Magill. Steamship photographs include the Estebeth, Algonquin, and Alaska. The collection is housed in the photo file. Photographers of the collection include L.L. Brown and Merrill.

Arrangement: Collection arranged by previous archivist.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research use. Restricted items noted in the finding aid. Please contact ARC staff for details.

Physical Access: Original items 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. 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:

Whittington Photographs, Anchorage Museum, B1965.4

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated to Cook Inlet Historical Society by Mrs. Harriet Whittington in 1965.

RELATED MATERIALS

B1966.010 CIHS Anderson

B2009.061 Robert Acheson Collection

SUBJECTS

Wood, Fred B.

Magill, Joe

Alaska Railroad

Alaska Steamship Company

Algonquin (Ship)

Anchorage (Alaska)

Canneries – Alaska

Child's Glacier

Ketchikan (Alaska)

Kichxáan (Alaska)

Kodiak (Alaska)

Seward (Alaska)

Shakan Bay (Alaska)

Sheet'ká (Alaska)

Shix'áan (Alaska)

Sitka (Alaska)
Spender Glacier
Sun'aq (Alaska)
United States Coast Guard
Valdez (Alaska)
W.J. Erskine Company
Whaling – Alaska
Whaling stations – Alaska

Detailed Description of the Collection

- .1 – 3/24/20 Clearing the snow-slide [snowplow engine clearing snow from tracks with mountains in the background, March 24, 1920]
- .2 – Our mountain in the continuous chain between Seward and Anchorage only about 5000 feet of the mountains is visible. The wind is blowing about 50 miles an hour and from every direction. The apparent fog at left is a snow-spout or whirlwind and flying snow, 3/24/20 [snow covered mountain, likely in the Chugach Mountains or Kenai Mountains, March 24, 1920]
- .3 – 3/25/20 - Glacier at Mile 51, - taken from moving train – the ice is so vivid peacock and robin's egg blue [frozen water and snow in front of Spencer Glacier, March 25, 1920]
- .4 – 3/25/20 – A small part of the face of Spencer Glacier. The colorings are wonderful. Taken from moving train – Mile 55 [brush and frozen water in front of Spencer Glacier with mountains in the background, March 25, 1920]
- .5 – 3/29/20 – One of the pleasures of railroading in Alaska. A temporary track built around a snow slide [view of temporary train tracks with inscription reading “Main Line, 505 ft.” with arrows pointing where main tracks lie beneath the snow, March 29, 1920]
- .6 – 3/29/20 - On our way to the arrow where we spent 2 hellish days – note blizzard coming [view of trestle bridge with supplies underneath in the distance and a hand-drawn arrow at right, March 29, 1920]
- .7 – 3/29/20 – Stalled again – snowing like – well look at the mountains in the background – (?) they're there. Engine trying to get to us [two individuals on tracks and two individuals standing on snow burn at right of engine on tracks, March 29, 1920]
- .8 – 3/29/20 – Looking down from where we stalled. [view of mountains with snow and an inscription with an arrow that reads “Mile 52.” March 29, 1920]
- .9 – 3/29/20 – Where Portage Bay tunnel (4 miles) will begin [view of Portage Valley with possible ice fog and Chugach Mountains in the background, March 29, 1920]
- .10 – 3/29/20 – Looking up the “Hell hole” from mile 52 - between Anchorage and Seward [view of structure and trestles in the background with snow covered mountains, March 29, 1920]

- .11 – 3/29/20 – Ice pack in Turnagain Arm [wood pilings in the foreground with Tutl'uh (Turnagain Arm) and Chugach Mountains in the background]
- .12 – 3/30/20 And here they are about to rescue us [view of snowplow engine clearing snow from train tracks with mountains in the background, March 30, 1920. Has negative]
- .13 – 3/30/20 – Found a pool way back in this tunnel frozen over. Found a pick axe and chopped a hole, so could get water for cats(?). The bricked brigade is under way in other pictures [view of train tracks and tunnel with snow on the ground and debris on the side, March 30, 1920]
- .14 – 3/30/20 – Here they come to dig us out. This our busy rotary. [view of snowplow engine on train tracks, March 30, 1920]
- .15 – 3/30/20 – This is far more beautiful to me than it is to you. It's our relief in sight and coming to us. Note snow shooting out from rotary [view of train on tracks and trestles with snow and mountains, March 30, 1920. Has negative]
- .16 – 3/30/20 – Enroute between Anchorage and Seward. Four engines to haul seven cars [view from train car with engines at the front, March 30, 1920]
- .17 – 3/30/20 – The sun is shining again. But we are still stalled [view of stalled train car on tracks with snow and mountains in the background, March 30, 1920]
- .18 – In the long picture the section between the two red marks at the left has just fallen as shown by the white line at surface of water and is entirely submerged. In this picture the resultant wave is shown traveling obliquely upstream against a current of about 8 miles per hour. Crest of wave about 25 ft. high Will be glad to loan you films if you wish [two individuals on shore with glacial lake and glacier in the background. Calving point indicated with red marks top left]
- .19 – The enclosed pictures are sent apropos of your recent issue showing Child's Glacier as perhaps being of interest and not with the idea of their having any monetary value. They were taken by me from about the same point as you published, about 3p.m. 9/11/15. L.L. Brown [at least six individuals on shore with glacial lake and glacier in the background. Photographer L.L. Brown]
- .20 – Entrance to Port Armstrong Bay. No lights here. It takes some navigating to come through that narrows after dark [view of water with shoreline and trees on either side]
- .21 – Whaling station at Port Armstrong, Alaska [view of docks and structures with mountains in the background]
- .22 – They wash clothes even at the whaling stations – that is not a barrell of beer – it's rain water [building with barrel on porch and laundry draped on log railing in the foreground]
- .23 – Just a idea of how the snow was piling down the mountain. The air was so full of snow that the engineer could not see ahead and he ran full tilt into the slide while it was crossing the track, 3/24/20 [view from engine facing railroad tracks with snow, March 24, 1920]

- .24 – Going up – 4% grade on railroad and 20% as you see it, bee-line. [landscape view with inscription “Mile 56” and “We are stalled here, Mile 48” with arrows indicating the locations]
- .25 – This is what our engine looked like after the slide had stopped, the blizzard ceased and the sun shown up again. The snow is packed all around the engine as hard as ice. It took a big gang of men 4 hours with picks to dig the engine out from the rear end forward. It was hauled away and the rotary took up the job of cutting a canyon through the snow. 3/24/20 [view of train in the snow with inscription “Top of Stack” with mountain in the background, March 24, 1920]
- .26 – This is what the cars looked like when the slide stopped. Most of its force was ahead of the train. It is quite a drop down the mountain on the other side of the train, but we didn’t go down. [view of train on tracks with snow on the slope. Inscription, “Follow the curves in 3 miles of tracks -2.3 grade. Help. Flaguson? Coming back”]
- .27 – Front of our engine after we had been rescued and hauled back 4 miles. I had a fine ride in the cab [train engine with snow on the front with mountains in the background]
- .28 – This picture taken about a quarter of a mile from where the other one was snapped. The trestle is on a 14 degree curve. Speed of train 10 to 15 miles per hour [landscape view of trestle and snow covered mountains]
- .29 – We went through one 4200 foot tunnel and seven smaller ones also over a whole gang of trestles and loops getting down 1100 feet on this mountain. Distance traveled to get to train in distance about 7 miles. Mountains, Trestles [landscape view of trestle and snow covered mountains with inscription, “Train on trestle” and “Trestles” with arrows pointing to train on tracks. Similar to .28]
- .30 – 4/18/20 – In Chatham Straits returning from Sitka – This was just before we wet? what you see approaching. Our tangling with it was quite an event. The boat is 60 ft. long. [view from boat or ship of water with land in the background, Sheet'ká (Sitka), Sheet'ká K̄wáan. April 18, 1920]
- .31 – Sitka [view of individuals walking on boardwalk, possibly in Sheet'ká (Sitka), Sheet'ká K̄wáan, with carved pole and possibly clan hít in the background]
- .32 – They strand when the tide ebbs and are ten shot with high powered rifles. This gives a fine idea of the whole story except the nets. Beluga whales [one individual with at least four beluga whale carcasses on mudflats]
- .33 – Nets which are thrown across entrance of twin channel after beluga whales have come in at high tide to feed on small schools of fish preventing whales from returning to ocean. They strand on flats at low water and are then shot and killed [nets sitting on top of log fences]
- .34 – Ketchikan Dock, 1920 [parked automobiles and buildings on docks in Kichx̄áan (Ketchikan), Sanyaa K̄wáan]
- .35 –Ketchikan 1929 [people on docks at Kichx̄áan (Ketchikan), Sanyaa K̄wáan, with Alaska Steamship Company building to the right. Has negative]

- .36 – Mrs. Magill and Jim MacGonaghey about to start on dog team trip. 3/24/20 at Anchorage [two individuals with dog sled team and buildings in the background, March 24, 1920]
- .37 – Float in Anchorage Labor Day Parade [automobile decorated for parade procession, Anchorage, Labor Day, 1919. Same as B1966.010.11. Has negative]
- .38 – Alaska R.R. Commission Float. Anchorage – Labor Day [Alaska Railroad wagon decorated and pulled by four horses, Anchorage, Labor Day, 1919. Same as B1966.010.3. Has negative]
- .39 – Shriner’s Float – Anchorage, Labor Day [individuals standing on and next to Shriner’s float, Anchorage, Labor Day, 1919. Same as B1966.010.12. Has negative]
- .40 – Yes – they have a band in Anchorage [people standing on sidewalk as band walks down the street with a dog to the right and buildings in the background]
- .41 – [Restricted because of sensitive content]
- .42 – Salvation Army, Barracks of Shekan, Alaska [Shix’áan (Shakan Bay and village site), Hinyaa K̄wáan]
- .43 – Salvation Army, Barracks at Shekan – note difficulties in way of attending meetings [view of stairs and buildings, Shix’áan (Shakan Bay and village site), Hinyaa K̄wáan. Same as .42]
- .44 – One of the pleasures of night riding – Icy Straights [iceberg with water and mountains in the background. Likely S’íx’ Tlein (Icy Straits), Xunaa K̄áawu]
- .45 – postcard, Tenakee. Blankenberg Photos. Back, Tenakee – Alaska. Tenakee Inlet frozen over, February 1920, before any boats got to her. Notice the fierce glare ice. Sour skating. Note small building at land end of dock and just beside it. It is a log shack and the sign in another picture is ouch. [people on the ice at T’ainaageey (Tenakee Inlet), Xunaa K̄áawu, with docks and buildings in the background, February 1920]
- .46 – Kodiak, 1937 [view of wharf in Sun’aq (Kodiak) with bay and mountains in the background. Building at center has sign that reads, “W.J. Erskine Co.” Has negative]
- .47 – McKonehey Cannery at Kodiak next to W.J. Erskine Store [boats docked with building and mountains in the background. Possibly McConaghy Company, Sun’aq (Kodiak)]
- .48 – Kodiak Harbor, 1938 [boats in the water with logs and a boat in the bottom right, Sun’aq (Kodiak)]
- .49 – Frozen bay and mountains near Valdez. Ft. Liscum in middle foreground [view of frozen water with Fort Liscum structures, to the left and snow covered mountains in the background, Suacit (Valdez)]
- .50 – 4/1/20 – Street scene in Valdez at a busy moment. This is the main street at 11a.m. [snow piled up with walkway outside of buildings, Suacit (Valdez), April 1, 1920]
- .51 – Town of Valdez and bay frozen over – Coast Guard boat “Algonquin” getting up stream. It took 4 hours for the “Alaska” to break her way through the ice to get to town. [view of Suacit (Valdez) townsite and docks from the water, possibly from United States Coast Guard cutter (USCGC) *Algonquin*]

- .52 – These are the dogs which wouldn't pull the sled. That is no baby in the sled. The brute is 6 ft. 4" high. [Sled dogs with one individual sitting in sled in the snow]
- .53 – postcard, Picture of an Alaskan Blizzard as it really looks to a man in it. These [Chinese men] are trying to move a dog sled which the dogs refused to haul and face the storm [two individuals pulling a sled with wood through snow]
- .54 – 4/17/20 – On board the "Estebeth." Those round poles in the middle foreground aren't poles. That is merely ice and snow on the stays. Note size of stay where ice is broken off – just below the apex windows [ship "Estebeth" covered in ice with water in the background, April 17, 1920]
- .55 – Just one of the tribulations of the mail service in Alaska – the mail boat iced down [ship covered in ice anchored offshore. Similar to .54. Has negative]
- .56 – 4/18/20 – Coming back from Sitka on board "Estebeth." Our steam heating plant came in handy for keeping warm - even on deck. Max Humphrey of the Alaska Supply with me [two individuals, one identified as Max Humphrey, standing next to a pipe on deck warming their hands]
- .57 – Leo – that's all [one individual posed in fur coat next to a covered lifeboat with lettering on the side: S.S. Alaska, No. 10, 20 person]
- .58 – "Baluga" Joe Magill and his wife [two individuals standing on deck, identified as Mrs. Magill and Joe Magill]
- .59 – The boss of the Magill household [one individual, likely Mrs. Magill from .58, in a fur coat posed on ship deck]
- .60 – Showing the hardihood of Joe Magill – He should care that we are stuck in the ice – Coast Guard cutter "Algonquin" in offering [one individual identified as Joe Magill in suit and newsboy cap standing in profile on United States Coast Guard cutter (USCGC) *Algonquin*]
- .61 – Leo and Mrs. Magill looking like an Alaskan homecoming [two individuals identified as Mrs. Magill and Leo standing on deck with lifeboat in the background]
- .62 – Just a halibut fisher in the Gulf of Alaska [view of fishing vessel from deck]
- .63 – Sgt. Wise of the 21st Infantry has captured a king salmon at the beluga whale grounds with King Salmon [one individual standing with a fish on the ramp and a cat smelling it, with a second individual sitting on raised porch of the structure behind]
- .64 – [view of train tracks with at least two cars on the tracks and a building in the foreground, and water and mountains in the background]
- .65 – postcard, Merrill Sitka [Sheet'ká (Sitka), Sheet'ká K̄wáan. Elbridge W. Merrill, photographer]
- .66 – postcard, Merrill Sitka [Sheet'ká (Sitka), Sheet'ká K̄wáan. Elbridge W. Merrill, photographer. Has negative]
- .67 – Canneries [view of cannery from shoreline with ship at dock]

Guide written: February 7, 2025