

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

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TITLE: Gilbert and Lucy Whitehead Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2013.062

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: circa 1905-1988

Extent: 3 boxes; 3.125 linear feet

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Gilbert and Lucy Whitehead

Administrative/Biographical History:

Gilbert ("Gib") and Lucy McDannel Whitehead are long-time Anchorage residents. A 1992 article¹ on Gib's slideshows includes the following information:

Berger's tiny niche in Anchorage history is one of many stories told in the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous film, "The Way It Was," by lifelong Alaskan Gib Whitehead... Whitehead borrowed 400 photographs from 14 pioneer families in order to identify 237 photographs that would best tell the city's story. The show is a 30-minute production using 35mm slides and three computer-controlled projectors linked to a sound system... This was Whitehead's 37th production. After retiring as an accountant for the Federal Aviation Administration 13 years ago, he began making training and historical films including a documentary on Cordova where he grew up before moving to Anchorage in 1940. Whitehead has taken pictures since he first had access to a camera in the Navy during World War II. He earned photography degrees from the Brooks Institute and freelanced in the 1950s...

According to Wikipedia, multi-image presentations were created by using multiple slide projectors and one or more screens, with projections synchronized by audio tracks. Multi-image was known for its use of the wide screen panorama, in which precisely overlapping

¹ Klouda, N.W. "Filmmaker offers rare view of a youthful Anchorage." *Anchorage Times*, Feb. 18, 1992, p. B2.

slides were projected in such a way that they blended seamlessly on the screen to create a panoramic image. Animation effects were created by cutting and dissolving between images in the projectors.²

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of 878 35mm slides, 242 black-and-white copy prints, and six audiocassettes. The copy prints include 74 images of Cordova (with Eyak Lake, Nirvana Park, schools, and businesses); 32 images of other Alaskan locations (including Sitka, Anchorage, Copper Center, Katalla, Chitina, Kennecott, and unidentified places); 74 images of the Copper River & Northwestern Railway; 11 images of ships (including the S.S. *Northwestern*, *Altona*, *Thlinket*, and *Seward*); 7 aviation-related images (including airplanes with tail numbers USCG V144, NC 9774, and NC 1426[8?]); 26 images of people, posed and in action (most unidentified but including the Cordova High School girls basketball team, Ben Durkee, and Copper River Natives); 18 scenic images of unidentified locations; and 1 map of Alaska.

The slides and cassettes are from five different multi-image slide presentations:

- “Anchorage, the way it was” (235 slides, no audio): primarily black-and-white copy slides of historic photographs of early Anchorage, including A.E.C. and Hewitt’s Photo Shop photos, as well as other commercially-produced images and snapshots of unknown origin.
- “Potter Marsh” (234 color slides and one audiocassette): probably dating from the 1980s, the images show the marsh, wildlife, Rabbit Creek Rifle Range, the Seward Highway, and homes on the Anchorage hillside.
- “Autumn in Denali” (151 color slides and two audiocassettes): also likely from the 1980s, with images of flora and fauna.
- “Beachcomber” (134 color slides and two audiocassettes, dated 1/10/1988): documents a group trip on a Harbor Air Service airplane to beachcomb and shows marine debris.
- “Autumn-Autumn” (74 color slides and one audiocassette, dated 12/1988): images of the Anchorage area in the fall, including flora and fauna, the city skyline, log cabins, and the Captain Cook Hotel.

Arrangement: Arranged in three series by format: 1. Slides. 2. Audiocassettes. 3. Copy prints. Original order of slide shows maintained. Prints further arranged into subjects.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

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

Physical Access: Original items in good condition. Slides are somewhat cloudy.

² Wikipedia contributors, "Multi-image," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Multi-image&oldid=673987885> (accessed August 12, 2015).

Technical Access: A light box might be use to view individual transparencies. Recreation of the multi-image slide presentations would require specialized equipment and software.

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Preferred Citation:

Gilbert and Lucy Whitehead Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2013.062

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Materials donated by Gilbert and Lucy Whitehead in August 2013.

Processing Note

Eight original slide carousels of three types retained, others discarded. Slide shows titled "Down Under" (travel in Australia) and "The Search" (European ski trips) not retained. Thirty-eight duplicate photo prints discarded.

Separated Materials

Moose hide-bound copy of Robert Service's *Spell of the Yukon*, donated along with photographic materials, transferred to cataloging. Objects transferred to Collections.

RELATED MATERIALS

Lucy Whitehead Photograph, B2008.049

Whitehead-McDannel Collection, B2012.018

Little Moose Party Photograph, B2013.014

SUBJECTS

Copper River and Northwestern Railway

Ships—Alaska

Airplanes—Alaska

Beachcombing—Alaska

Marine debris—Alaska

Anchorage (Alaska)

Cordova (Alaska)

Denali National Park and Preserve (Alaska)

Eyak Lake (Alaska)

Sitka (Alaska)

Copper Center (Alaska)

Katalla (Alaska)
Chitina (Alaska)
Kennicott (Alaska)
Copper River Valley (Alaska)

Guide updated: August 12, 2015