

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

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TITLE: Kenneth M. Roberts Negatives

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2015.024

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1942-1944

Extent: 1 box; 0.5 linear feet

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Kenneth M. Roberts

Administrative/Biographical History:

Kenneth M. Roberts was born 9 January 1920 in Sandy, Oregon to Grace (France) and John I. Roberts. He graduated from Oregon State College with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. Upon graduation he was called to active military duty and joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 42nd Engineer Construction Battalion. He served from 25 July 1942 until 3 April 1946 and was stationed in both Alaska and the Philippines during the Aleutian Island and the Luzon Campaigns.

Roberts was stationed in Alaska from 5 November 1942 until 4 July 1944. During this time he was responsible for the supervision of the construction of water and sewage systems, permanent and semi-permanent type Army buildings, and pile type bridges. He also supervised construction work on the extension and relocation of the Alaskan Railroad from Whittier to Portage Junction. Following this he served in the Philippines, and at date of discharge he had achieved the rank of Captain. He worked for Mobile Oil for 37 years post-World War II. Roberts passed away 31 March 2008.¹

¹ Kenneth M. Roberts' Certificate of Service; Army of the United States; 3 April 1946.

Kenneth M. Roberts' Separation Qualification Record; Army of the United States; 3 April 1946.

Lewis Funeral Chapel, "Ken Roberts Obituary", last updated 2009: <http://www.lewischapel.com/obituary/Ken-M.-Roberts/Silverdale-WA/523911>.

Scope and Content Description:

This is a collection of 105 photographic negatives taken by Kenneth M. Roberts during his military service in Alaska from 1942 to 1944. Subjects include: military construction; Alaskan scenery and animals; various locations in Alaska (Whittier, Cordova, and Attu); and numerous shots of glaciers. The main project assigned to the 42nd Engineer Construction Battalion was the railroad spur and tunnel connecting the bay at Passage Canal through Portage Pass which also involved building the townsite of Whittier. A large portion of this negative collection details this project and the scenery of Portage Glacier and Whittier. This collection also documents the building of a dam and water reservoir in Cordova.

Arrangement:

Negatives have been arranged according to locations and construction job when known.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

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

Physical Access: Original items in good condition.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the materials. A light box may be used to view transparencies.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

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Preferred Citation:

Kenneth M. Roberts Negatives, Anchorage Museum, B2015.024

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information:

Collection was donated by creator's daughter, Catherine Giovinco, on July 30, 2015. A set of 68 negatives that documented Roberts' service in the Philippines have been separated and were transferred to The Institute on World War II and the Human Experience at Florida State University.

Processing Note:

All captions were provided by donor from creator's scrapbook. Locations have been listed as written by creator, and project locations provided by processor when known.

RELATED MATERIALS

William Niemi Collection, B1996.031
 Charlotte Hazelet Turtainen Photographs, B1998.012
 Vern Brickley Collection, B1998.014
 Candy Waugaman Collection, B1998.025
 William M. Svensson Collection, B2008.008
 George Cartter Photographs, B2008.048

SUBJECTS

Roberts, Kenneth M., 1920-2008
 United States. Army
 United States. Army. Corps of Engineers
 United States. Army—History—World War, 1939-1945
 United States. Army—Military posts
 United States. Army—Alaskan Department
 United States. Army—Military life
 Alaska Railroad
 World War, 1939-1945
 World War, 1939-1945—Campaigns—Alaska—Aleutian Islands
 Attu Island (Alaska)
 Cordova (Alaska)
 Portage Glacier (Alaska)
 Whittier (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection:

B1

Whittier Series (November 1942 – Spring 1943)

- .1 – Kenneth Roberts, Whittier [portrait]
- .2 – Kenneth Roberts, Whittier [portrait, Roberts is wearing his Army uniform]
- .3 – Kenneth Roberts, Whittier [portrait, similar to .1 with different pose]
- .4 – Kenneth Roberts, Whittier [portrait, close-up in uniform]
- .5 – The Working Man, 1943 [Roberts is standing on train tracks]
- .6 – Kenneth Roberts & Lt. Wictorin, Whittier [portrait of two men in uniform]
- .7 – Sgt. Boudreau, Rackley, Lt. Wictorin, Whittier [exterior winter scene of three men in uniform]
- .8 – 1st Sgt. Phillips, Whittier [two men in uniform standing in front of military tent building]
- .9 – Capt. Stanley reading the news sheet, Whittier [outdoor scene of man laying against wooden floorboards; name could possibly be for Capt. E.K. Staley instead]
- .10 – Two Olsens (sic), 1943 [two men in overalls pose on train tracks; most likely these are Ohlsons, one of which (Otto) managed the Alaska Railroad Corporation]
- .11 – [three men in uniform pose along railroad tracks]
- .12 – Part of crew, Mess hall Whittier [close-up of four men in uniforms standing in front of wooden building]
- .13 – Concrete crew, Whittier [men in uniforms stand around concrete truck]

- .14 – Tent camp, Whittier [row of wooden cabins without tent-roof coverings]
- .15 – “Home” in Whittier [exterior view of wooden cabin with tented-roof]
- .16 – Erecting Quonset, Whittier [five men are visible with Quonset framing]
- .17 – New mess hall, Whittier [exterior of wooden framing and three men working]
- .18 – Chow line, Whittier [row of men in tent camp]
- .19 – Lt. Victorin & Sgt. Pietrantonio fixing washing machine; Capt. Stanley, Laundress (picture taken about 10:30 PM- June) [two men working on washing machine tub, tent buildings visible in background]
- .20 – 177th Engineers [distance view of railroad cars full of men; 177th Engineers were also assigned to work on Whittier tunnel and railway line in 1943]
- .21 – Near tunnel mouth [scenic of mountains and buildings]
- .22 – Mainline track (tunnel in background), 1943 [view of railroad, men, and a military truck]
- .23 – [railroad track and tram car]
- .24 – Track ready for ballast [view of railroad tracks with one man on left-hand side]
- .25 – Hauling aggregate up the tramway [view of railroad bridge with man near camera]
- .26 – More track laying, 1943 [men working on railroad tracks]
- .27 – Winter Operations, 1943 [crew of men working on railroad in snow]
- .28 – Down the Home Stretch, 1943 [four men laying railroad tracks]
- .29 – Completed track [view of railroad tracks and military vehicle]
- .30 – Close-up, Last Spike, 1943 [man holding railroad spike above tracks]
- .31 – Last Mainline Spike, Whittier-Portage Junction, Alaska Railway System, 1943 [similar to image .30, further out, team of men crowd around man hammering spike]
- .32 – Looking across the bay, Whittier [scenic of coastline and mountains]
- .33 – Looking down the bay, Whittier [scenic similar to .32]
- .34 – View toward mouth of bay [scenic overlooking Whittier coastline]
- .35 – Billings Glacier, Whittier [scenic view from boat deck]
- .36 – Blackstone Glacier (Whittier) [scenic view from boat deck]
- .37 – Glacier [scenic view of coastline and glacier]
- .38 – Whittier Glacier [scenic of glacier and mountainside]
- .39 – [scenic of snow covered mountain]
- .40 – [scenic of winter landscape]
- .41 – [scenic of mountains and glacier]
- .42 – [scenic of mountain range]
- .43 – Driving highway bridge, 1943 [two men are visible on large wooden construction]
- .44 – Ship aground, Whittier
- .45 – [scenic of townsite]
- .46 – Lumber for townsite, 1943 [exterior shot of piles of lumber in front of mountains]
- .47 – Clearing area for pole line [scenic of mountains, trees, and one telephone pole]
- .48 – Clearing area for pole line [scenic of mountains and trees]
- .49 – View of Whittier, not all cleared [overlooking Whittier townsite, still very tree-covered]
- .50 – View of Whittier further along [similar to .49, less trees and buildings are visible]
- .51 – Construction further along [same overlook of Whittier, similar to .50]
- .52 – Still more progress, Whittier [different view of Whittier’s construction, similar to .45]
- .53 – Dock at Whittier, 1943 [view of dock from water]
- .54 – Portage Glacier [scenic]

- .55 – Portage Glacier [scenic]
- .56 – Portage Glacier [scenic and building along left-hand side]
- .57 – Glacier Ice, Portage [scenic]
- Cordova Series (Summer 1943 – Summer 1944)**
- .58 – Capt. Baker, Cordova [exterior shot of Baker standing with a dog (similar to a Corgi) and Suzie the bear (appears to be a black bear cub)]
- .59 – Hank Sauter & Dentist, Cordova or Pigot Bay [portrait of two men, wintertime]
- .60 – The little “bear” behind Cordova [bear following man through woods]
- .61 – Suzie & Friend, Cordova [bear standing on box by dog (same as .58 and other Cordova scenes)]
- .62 – Suzie in front of mess hall, Cordova [Suzie and dog in front of barrels and building]
- .63 – “Suzie” playing Hide & Seek, Cordova [Suzie the bear standing behind box]
- .64 – Feeding Suzie, Cordova [Suzie stands on her back legs by soldiers]
- .65 – [wintertime, tent in woods]
- .66 – Lookout Below [wooden building on top of hillside]
- .67 – Main Street (Pigot Bay or Cordova) [scenic of road stretching into distant mountains]
- .68 – Home Sweet Home, Cordova [winter, cabin in woods, sign besides door reads ‘Lt. Roberts; Lt. Akin; Lt. Sauter’]
- .69 – My Bunk, Cordova [interior of building, bed can be seen as well as photographs]
- .70 – Trail through Camp CO “E”, Cordova [wintertime, trail through woods]
- .71 – Old Trapper’s Cabin, Me & Lt. Hank Sauter [winter, two men in winter uniforms stand in front of log cabin]
- .72 – Trapper’s Cabin, Cordova [exterior view of back of cabin]
- .73 – Unused Site [scenic woods and stream, potential site for dam]
- .74 – Proposed site for dam [terraced waterfall in woods]
- .75 – Small waterfall [another terraced waterfall]
- .76 – Before work began [waterfall in woods]
- .77 – Water source [waterfall]
- .78 – Temporary dam [men working on wooden pilings in forest]
- .79 – Temporary dam [men working on wooden dam, different view than .78]
- .80 – Dam building [looking down into trench on soldier and metal scaffolding]
- .81 – Dam construction begins [six men assembling large logs]
- .82 – Dam tunneling started [crew of men walking around worksite]
- .83 – Pouring dam [men standing on top of wooden scaffolding]
- .84 – Pouring dam [men standing on top of wooden scaffolding, different view than .83]
- .85 – View from dam site [scenic of mountains and woods]
- .86 – View from dam site [different scenic of mountains and woods]
- .87 – Another dam view [looking down onto top of wooden scaffolding dam]
- .88 – Looking across dam [similar scene as .87]
- .89 – Site of proposed waterline [scenic of wooded hillside]
- .90 – Clearing for waterline [woods with downed trees in foreground]
- .91 – Bypass construction [men working over ditch in forest]
- .92 – Bypass for water (Dam Project) [men working on shoreline of river]
- .93 – Dam bypass [man sitting on wooden fence barricade]
- .94 – Excavation for water tank [men digging near hoses and wheelbarrows]

- .95 – Covering over reservoir [wooden scaffolding structure]
- .96 – Lake covered with snow, Cordova [scenic, winter scene of lake and woods]
- .97 – Glacier near Cordova [scenic]
- .98 – Taken on glacier near Cordova [scenic]
- .99 – Ship in background [scenic of forest]
- .100 – [scenic of forest and mountains]

Attu Series (Winter 1942 or 1943)

- .101 Highest Point, Attu [man (possibly Roberts) with dog pointing at top of snow column]
- .102 A tired dog, Attu [same man and dog as .101, man still pointing at snow, dog is looking depressed and walking away]

Pigot Bay Series (Summer 1943)

- .103 Mountains, Pigot Bay '43 [scenic of coastline, forest, and mountains]
- .104 Pigot Bay, Summer '43 [scenic of coastline]
- .105 Wild Black Bear, Pigot Bay [black bear in woods]

Guide written: August 6, 2015