

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
Bob and Evangeline Atwood Alaska Resource Center
625 C Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-929-9235
Fax: 907-929-9233
Email: resourcecenter@anchagemuseum.org

Guide prepared by: Sara Piasecki, Photo Archivist

TITLE: Richard Maximus Bjorkman Photographs

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2008.004

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: circa 1884-1889

Extent: 47 items; 0.2 linear feet

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Richard Maximus Bjorkman

Administrative/Biographical History:

Richard Maximus Bjorkman was born in Sweden on November 18, 1859, to Marie Liedholm and Hampus Bjorkman. In 1875, he ran away from home to join the Swedish Navy. Upon discharge in 1882, he set out for San Francisco, and joined the crew of the clipper *M.P. Grace*. In 1884, he joined the United States Navy and served on the presidential yacht *Dispatch* as well as the *Thetis*. He left the service in 1890, but reenlisted in 1898 and served in the Spanish American War on the *Newark*. After the war, he settled in Nebraska and remained there until his death in 1949.

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of 45 black-and-white photographs mounted on board, taken during Bjorkman's service in the U.S. Navy, primarily with the *U.S.S. Thetis* during its summer 1888 cruise in Alaskan waters. There are also two news clippings about Bjorkman.

Arrangement: Not applicable

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.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

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Preferred Citation:

Richard Maximus Bjorkman Photographs, Anchorage Museum, B2008.004

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by grandson Vincent Feehan and wife Joan Feehan in 2008.

Processing Notes

News clippings photocopied onto acid free paper, originals discarded.

Separated Materials

Navy uniform donated along with photographs transferred to Collections.

Notes

Several photographs bear two similar captions, one often a clarification or correction of the other, possibly indicating the addition of information by one of Bjorkman's heirs.

RELATED MATERIALS

2008.061.001

SUBJECTS

Bjorkman, Richard Maximus, 1859-1949

United States. Navy—Boats

United States. Navy—Military life

United States. Navy—Bands

Thetis (Auxiliary steamer)

Monongahela (Ship)

Ships—Alaska

Shipwrecks—Alaska

Sealing—Alaska

Alaska Natives—Boats

Alaska Natives—Dwellings

Alaska Natives—Clothing

Kodiak / Sun'aq (Alaska)
Ukivok (Alaska)
Saint Paul Island / Tana'x Ami'x (Alaska)
Sitka / Sheet'ká (Alaska)
Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow, Point) (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

- .1 – Bunch of Alaskans. Some of the crew with a few of the [Indigenous people]. Bjorkman [Mattoi?] [This photo was taken during the 1888 summer cruise of the *U.S.S. Thetis*. Crewmen and Natives seated on the ground.]
- .2 – Small boat in Alaskan waters [umiak]
- .3 – An Alaskan village.
- .4 – St. Paul church in Alaska [Kodiak] [Alutiiq / Sugpiaq territory, Sun'aq (Kodiak)]
- .5 – Ship which was saved. It was smoking but another ship got there in time to save it. They pumped water out of it 10 days. [shows wreck of the whaling trader *Jane Grey*]
- .6 – [Indigenous] hut. More [Indigenous] living quarters [This may be King Island]
- .7 – [Indigenous] boys in Sunday clothes [Four Indigenous youth in Western clothing]
- .8 – [Indigenous] hut [shows a log cabin that was used by prospectors going up the Copper River] [View of an Indigenous person crouched in a residence doorframe, possibly Ahtna territory.]
- .9 – Gleiser or iceberg. Glacier in the Arctic.
- .10 – Another, killing them. Killing of seals in the Arctic and skinning of the fur skins
- .11 – Another view of the killing. [shows killing of two-year-old seals]
- .12 – Killing seals, driving them in a group and then club them. In the Arctic killing of seals after driving them in a group [seal killing grounds on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs] [Unanga'x territory, Tana'x Ami'x (St. Paul)]
- .13 – St. Paul Kodiak Island [i.e., St. Paul Island, Pribilofs] [Unanga'x territory, Tana'x Ami'x (St. Paul)]
- .14 – [Indigenous] mud huts [shows Aleut barabaras on St. Paul Island] [Unanga'x territory, Tana'x Ami'x (St. Paul)]
- .15 – Kayac [Indigenous] boat [shows two Native boats, a kayak in front and an umiak in back]
- .16 – [Indigenous people] on ship [Alaska Natives aboard the *Thetis*]
- .17 – [Indigenous people] on ship [Alaska Natives aboard the *Thetis*]
- .18 – Another view of the sunken ship [men working on the wreck of the *Jane Grey*]
- .19 – Another view of the sunken ship [three men standing on the deck of the *Jane Grey*. A pump is working on the bottom left corner. Probably taken in August 1888]
- .20 – Digging coal in the Arctic [sailors loading sacks of coal onto a skiff for use on the *Thetis*]
- .21 – Bringing the body of a missionary home after burial. [Indigenous people] had killed him [crewmen of the *Thetis* with a coffin]
- .22 – X'ind papa. Some of ships crew. Papa shown by check [Ships officers aboard the *Thetis*. The man under the check mark may be Richard Bjorkman. The man in the lower right corner is holding a sextant]
- .23 – Saw mill at Sitka, Alaska [waterfront street view of Sheet'ká (Sitka) in Tlingit territory]
- .24 – [Indigenous] family [Tlingit Indians at Sitka] [At AFN 2025, person with dreadlock hairstyle identified as possibly a Shaman.]

- .25 – Drilling on board [crew members of the *Thetis* at rifle drill. The rifles are probably a derivative of the British Enfield rifle]
- .26 – [Indigenous] hut. Living quarters of Alaskan [Indigenous people] [interior of a Tlingit community house]
- .27 – Another view of killing and skinning them. Skinning of the seals after killing by crew of the ship [shows men salting the fur of seals during a seal harvest. Location is probably St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs] [Likely Unanga territory, possibly Tana Ami (St. Paul)]
- .28 – [Indigenous] dog team
- .29 – [Indigenous] family on board ship [Native women with a child on board a ship at Point Barrow] [Inupiat territory, Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow)]
- .30 – Ship which was saved by the ship which Papa ship was sent to Arctic waters to save. It was icebound. [shows the wreck of the whaling trader *Jane Grey* which was righted and pumped out by the *U.S.S. Thetis* and *U.S.R.C. Bear* in August 1888]
- .31 – Another view of sunken ship pumping water of it. [shows the crew of the *Thetis* working on raising the whaling trader *Jane Grey*]
- .32 – [Indigenous] men with the button on their lip are married men. [Inupiat of Point Barrow] [Inupiat territory, Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow)]
- .33 – Digging coal in the Arctic for use on the ship. [shows men sacking coal to be used on the *Thetis*]
- .34 – [Indigenous] family [(Indigenous) family from Kotzebue Sound region] [Inupiat territory]
- .35 – A bunch of officers were crossing the equator [taken circa March-December 1887 when the *Thetis* sailed from New York to Sitka, with a stop for repairs in San Francisco. Two guitars are on the table in the foreground]
- .36 – Ship's band [band of the *Thetis*]
- .37 – Men mending the cloth. Crew on ship mending clothes & resting in warmer climate
- .38 – A bout. Boxing by some of the ship's crew.
- .39 – Crossing equator. Under the Eng[?] Seal Exposition [sailors reclining on the deck of a ship]
- .40 – Resting. Crew of ship resting in southern waters
- .41 – Dressed ship Washington's birthday, Mare Island Navy Yard. *Monongahela* U.S. Navy.
- .42 – Port Townsend [sailing ship in the harbor at Port Townsend, Washington]
- .43 – Sitka. [view of Sitka from the harbor, Baranof Castle on the left] [Tlingit territory, Sheet'ká (Sitka)]
- .44 – Coal mine in Alaska
- .45 – N[?]a [bridge, possibly in Alaska]
- .46 – Portland, *Oregonian*, news clipping. "Captain Bjorkman of Lincoln meets Sweden's Crown Prince Adolf for whose birth he fired royal salvo."
- .47 – News clipping. "Lincoln man recalls adventuresome seafaring days."

Guide written: January 30, 2013

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