

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
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Guide prepared by: Ivy Turinsky, Archivist

TITLE: Laughlin Photograph

COLLECTION NUMBER: B1971.043

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1930–1931

Extent: 1 item

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Kenneth Laughlin

Administrative/Biographical History:

Kenneth Laughlin was born December 19, 1900, and died December 25, 1979. He came to Alaska in 1929 after being recruited by Austin Eugene “Cap” Lanthrop in Oregon to play the organ at the Empress Theater in Dgheyaytnu (Anchorage), Dena'ina Etnena during the silent movie era. When sound films were introduced to Alaska, Laughlin began giving piano lessons and then was hired by the school board to introduce an orchestra class in the schools.¹ He was the organizer and director of the first Anchorage High School orchestra and the school system’s first Music Supervisor. He later worked at the state’s first radio station, KFQD radio, and as advertising manager of The Anchorage Times. Laughlin homesteaded on Upper Fire Lake just north of Eagle River in 1934. He built the original Fire Lake Roadhouse that became the Lodge.² He was married to Ruby Pearl (divorced in 1939), and to Esther and had a stepson, Charles Parker.³

¹ Todd, F. (1975, January 8). Old-Timers Recall City’s Early Days in ‘Histo [sic]. *Anchorage Daily Times*, p. 56

² <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~coleen/lodge.html>

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/30690753/kenneth-laughlin>

Scope and Content Description:

This collection consists of one photographic print of the first Anchorage High School orchestra, 1930–1931.

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: Laughlin Photograph, Anchorage Museum, B1971.043

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information:

Donated by Kenneth Laughlin November 11, 1971, to the Cook Inlet Historical Society. Transferred to the Anchorage Museum.

Processing Note:

Museum accession number 1971.141.

RELATED MATERIALS

B2000.002 Cora Horton Kendall Papers

B2014.023 Cora Horton Kendall Collection

Vertical File: People – Laughlin, Ken

SUBJECTS

Kenneth Laughlin

Anchorage High School

Dena'ina Etnena

Dgheyaytnu / Anchorage (Alaska)

Education – Alaska – Anchorage

Music — Instruction and study – Alaska – Anchorage

Orchestra

Teachers – Alaska – Anchorage

Detailed Description of the Collection

B1/F1

.1 – [back: Anchorage – 1930- 39; Anchorage High School – First orchestra – year of 1930-31; Ecklund; Ken Laughlin, organizer, Director, and the school system’s first Music Supervisor; Bill Harriman; “Heinie” Swanson; Leo Sorrela; Eileen Mathison [(Myrtle Flechenstein crossed out)]; “Tony” Antoinette Shodde Peterson; Paul Howe] [names may be incorrectly transcribed. First Anchorage High School orchestra, 1930–1931. Eight individuals posing in two rows, four holding instruments, likely Dgheyaytnu (Anchorage), Dena'ina Ełnena]

Guide written: September 9, 2003

Guide updated: June 24, 2026