

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Johnson, Albert J., Photographer

Albert J. Johnson Photograph Collection, ca. 1908-1918

PCA 113

51 photographs

Processed by: Staff

ACQUISITION: Provenance is unknown.

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted.

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PROCESSING: The photographs are sleeved in Mylar. An item-level inventory is available.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Albert Johnson was born in Denmark in 1880 and immigrated to America as an orphan. He worked and lived at a New York bakery, sleeping in the ovens during the winter to stay warm. It is unknown how he came to be in Fairbanks, where he lived from 1905 to 1914. He also lived

in Nenana, 1916 to 1918. From 1916 to 1918 he was one of the official photographers for the Alaska Engineering Commission and worked on a special assignment, documenting the very beginnings of the town of Nenana. He met and married Jennie Landers with whom he had a daughter, Alice. In 1914 they moved to McKinleyville, California, and later to Oakland where he operated a successful portrait gallery, however he returned for a time to the North to work.

Johnson documented Eskimo life near Nome, walrus hunting, village activities and modes of travel by coastal Natives. His wife and daughter also became favorite subjects. He traveled often, photographing everyday life with an 8 x 10 inch field camera but also worked in other sizes. His photography skills and his love of Alaska are reflected in the images he created.

In Fairbanks, the Johnson Studio was first located at 290 1st Avenue, and later moved to 3rd Avenue near Cushman Street. Johnson was one of the official photographers for the U.S. Alaska Engineering Commission. Johnson died in California at age 47, in 1926. Other Johnson photographs may be found in the Alaska Engineering Commission Collection, PCA 131. [From: Peter Palmquist, *Alaska Journal*, 1981.]

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The views in this collection include Fairbanks street scenes, mining activity, agricultural produce, the U.S. Agricultural Experimentation Station, Athapascan Indian portraits and culture, and the Catholic church and hospital in Fairbanks.

INVENTORY

- 1 Old Silas [Portrait of Athapascan Indian]
- 2 Chena Belle [Portrait of Athapascan Indian]
- 3 [Portrait of Athapascan Indian woman holding baskets]
- 4 Native woman [carrying baby on back and child at side]
- 5 [Two native women seated in front of tent, cooking area and racks in view]
- 6 [Athapascan village]
- 7 Native basket maker and family [Two women and three children in front of tent]
- 8 Chena Joe [China Joe?][Portrait of Athapascan Indian]
- 9 [Athapascan Indian woman with two children seated in open tent]
- 10 Venus the Milo in solid gold cast by the Washington, Alaska Bank of Fairbanks, Alaska by J. Adams, assayer. Gold produced from 2 Below Ester owned by H.G.C. Baldry Value -\$49,750.
- 11 First coal mine on Lignite Creek. April 5th, 1918. [Interior view of shaft showing tools and whellbarrow] (A.E.C. photo 112)
- 12 First coal mine on Lignite Creek. April 5th, 1918. [Two miners and equipment outside shaft entrance] (A.E.C. photo 111)

- 13 Discovery Cleary Creek. [Hydraulic mining operation with flumes in view] (D24)
- 14 No. 10B Cleary Creek [Mining shack and flumes in view] (D.26)
- 15 Victor Group, Vault Creek. [Mining activity] (D.87)
- 16 Open cut mining on Gold Stream [Four miners in foreground, mining buildings and supplies in background] (D.88)
- 17 No. 10 Gold Stream [Hydraulic mining activity] (D.28)
- 18 No. 7 Gold Stream [Cable car dropping dirt onto pile, flume in center] (D. 78)
- 19 Mrs. Brandt's home. Fairbanks, Alaska. [Mrs. Brandt standing in front of house, greenhouse and other buildings at left, many flowers surround house and adjoining garden] (D.93)
- 20 D.T. Kennedy's Fairbanks Valdez Relay Stages leaving Fairbanks. [Men, horses and sleds on a residential street]
- 21 Fire Department Fairbanks, Alaska. [Firemen and horse drawn equipment leaving City Hall building, garages]
- 22 Deputy Marshal A.H. Hanson leaving Fairbanks for the Arctic Slope after body of J. D. Clark. Distance covered 1700 miles.
- 23 D. T. Kennedy's pack train loaded for Glacier and Miller Creeks.
- 24 Produce exhibit. Fairbanks, Alaska.
- 25 Cornfield. Hot Springs, Alaska. [Men wearing suits standing among cornstalks] (D-75)
- 26 Squash. Hot Springs, Alaska (D73)
- 27 John Scharle's Strawberry Ranch, Fairbanks, Alaska. [Man standing among strawberry plants]
- 28 [Farm scene with man, horses and barn in view]
- 29 Mr. Blaser's Garden. Fairbanks, Alaska. [Man standing among garden flowers, greenhouse in background]
- 30 Digging potatoes, Fairbanks, Alaska. [Men at work in field]
- 31 [Field of haystacks]
- 32 [Field of haystacks with farm buildings in background]
- 33 The Government Farm. Fairbanks, Alaska. [Men wearing suits, walking through wheat field] (D.69)
- 34 Government Farm. Fairbanks, Alaska. [Side view of No.331 (D.65)]

- 35 A Sourdough Home [Man seated on rocker in front of log cabin surrounded by flowers and cabbage garden. (D 20)
- 36 Hinckley's Dairy Cows [Cows grazing with farm buildings in view]
- 37 The Government Farm. Fairbanks, Alaska. [Men in suits measuring the height of wheat] (D.68)
- 38 Erickson's Ranch, Fairbanks, Alaska. [Haystacks in field]
- 39 [Men inspecting the Government farm]
- 40 [Field and small pond]
- 41 First Quota National Army Local Board No. 17, Fairbanks, Alaska. Inducted June 27th, 1918. [Group of men posing in front of bank building]
- 42 Hauling coal from Lignite Creek. April 5th, 1918. [Winter scene. Horses pulling coal cars through snow] (A.E.C. no.115)
- 43 Annual Midnight Ballgame photo taken at 12 o'clock.
- 44 Aaron Buzby's Ranch. Fairbanks, Alaska. [Men pitching hay onto horse drawn cart. Two boys standing at side of cart.]
- 45 D.T. Kennedy's packtrain for Valdez Creek, June 12, 1908. [Crowded Fairbanks street scene. First National Bank, Chisholm & Hall Books & Stationary Suters, H.C. Davis Factory, Anderson's Drug Store in view]
- 46 Harvesting at Young's Ranch, Fairbanks, Alaska. [Man seated on horse drawn harvester with man on horse drawn carriage in background] (D.64)
- 47 Pile dam across Lost Slough, April 8th, 1918. [Small tin shack and pile driving structure and people on skids; horse on right.] (#121)
- 48 Catholic church and hospital, Fairbanks, Alaska [Wooden fence and greenery in front of buildings; Chena Slough on right.]
- 49 Garden at U.S. Experimental Station. Copper Center, Alaska. [note on back of photo: *The Alaska Journal, Down Through the Years.*] [from HC backlog]
- 50 In the "salmon season" Tanana natives. Photo by Johnson. [from HC backlog]
- 51 Indians at Copper River. [from HC backlog]