

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

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TITLE: Chester and Leah Webster Peterson Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2008.005

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1939-1973

Extent: 4 boxes, 2 audio reels, 6 film reels; 2.4 linear feet

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Leah Webster Peterson, Chester Peterson, Ward Wells, Robinson Studios, Mac's Foto, W. O. Johnson, Arctic Studio, Wilnora, Photo Shop Studio, Joe Huber, Dedman's Photo Shop, E. O. Goldbeck, Schallerer's Photo Shop, W. L. Brewington, Granville

Administrative/Biographical History:

Chester Peterson was born February 1, 1906 in Wisconsin, and graduated from the Colorado State College of Education in Greeley, Colorado, in 1935. He served as teacher and principal in various schools in Idaho from 1924-1935, and served as postmaster in Boise, Idaho, from 1935-1939. Leah Webster was born August 9, 1908 (or 1909; sources vary), in Idaho, and also graduated from the Colorado State College of Education in Greeley, Colorado, in 1935. She taught in various schools in Idaho from 1929-1939. The couple married in 1930.

From 1939-1941, Leah and Chester Peterson were teachers with the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Karluk on Kodiak Island. In 1941 they moved to Anchorage where they both served in the Anchorage School District. Chester also worked in real estate and other business enterprises, including the development of the Peterson Tower at 510 L Street, which had been the Peterson's home address for decades.

Leah remained in the Anchorage school system for 42 years and served as a classroom teacher, remedial reading specialist, supervisor, curriculum coordinator, elementary director and the first female principal in Alaska. She was teacher of the year in 1948. She published *This is Alaska*, a social science text and workbook for third and fourth grades that was adopted by the State of Alaska in 1959. For more than 30 years, Leah actively served on the Board of Trustees for Alaska Methodist University and was a member of the College Fellows, University of Alaska. Leah was a Worthy Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star, state founder of Delta Kappa Gamma, and a charter member of Zonta Club of Anchorage.¹

Chester died in 1972, and Leah died in 2007.

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of photographs (negatives, color transparencies, prints, panorama), moving image films (8mm), audio recordings (magnetic reel), personal papers (correspondence, diaries, reports, ephemera), and publications (directories and monographs) created or collected by Chester and Leah Peterson, primarily during their time in Alaska, 1939-1973. For more information, see Detailed Description of Collection.

Arrangement: Arranged by format and then by subject into series: 1. Photographs: a. Prints. b. Negatives. c. Transparencies. 2. Personal papers. 3. Publications. 4. Audio recordings. 5. Moving image films.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

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

Physical Access: Original items in good condition. Sound of audio materials not verified at time of processing. Twenty-one film reels spliced together onto six individual reels.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the printed materials. Slide box might be used for transparencies. Audio recordings on magnetic audio reels, and films on 8mm reels, require additional equipment for use.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

The Anchorage Museum is the owner of the materials and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the Anchorage Museum before any reproduction use. The Anchorage Museum does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners.

Preferred Citation:

¹ "Leah Webster Peterson." Alaska Women's Hall of Fame. Web. Accessed May 13, 2013.

Chester and Leah Webster Peterson Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2008.005

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by the estate of Leah Webster Peterson in 2007.

Processing Note

Photographs of personal vacations not retained. Materials pertaining to Chester and Leah's teaching careers in Idaho transferred to the Idaho State Historical Society. Original order retained when possible. Unordered photographic materials loosely sorted into subjects. Moving image materials rehoused and consolidated in January 2013 as part of NEH grant. One additional reel located in August 2013 and not rehoused at time of collection processing.

Separated Materials

Objects and original pastel drawing transferred to Collections. Audio and films stored with other films in oversize shelving. Panorama shelved with panoramas.

RELATED MATERIALS

B2008.006 Robert and Josephine Crumrine Liddell Collection

B2013.008 Leah Peterson Sound Recordings

1971.119.1-10

2007.055.1-35

SUBJECTS

Peterson, Leah Jane

Peterson, Chester, 1906-1972

Benson, John Ben, 1913-1972

Schools—Alaska

Teachers—Alaska

Alaska Earthquake, Alaska, 1964

Earthquakes—Alaska—Anchorage

Karluk (Alaska)

Anchorage (Alaska)

Sitka (Alaska)

Skagway (Alaska)

Point Hope (Alaska)

Huslia (Alaska)

Ninilchik (Alaska)

Whittier (Alaska)

Homer (Alaska)

Barrow (Alaska)

Kotzebue (Alaska)

Circle (Alaska)

Fort Yukon (Alaska)
Fairbanks (Alaska)
Eagle (Alaska)
Ketchikan (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series 1: Photographs: Prints

B1/F1

Chester and Leah Peterson (.1-.32)
Formal portraits and snapshots

B1/F2

School Photos (.33-.60)
Most unidentified, dates circa 1941-1967. Includes Anchorage Central School and Chugach School

B1/F3

School Albums (.61-.107)
Album 1 includes many student names, but schools unidentified. Dates circa 1960-1961
Album 2 from Woodland Park Elementary, 1968-1969

B1/F4

Chester Peterson, World War II (.108-.110)
Three images from a theater event:
.108 - Chester Peterson with three men, one in uniform
.109 – audience
.110 – girls on stage

B1/F5

Point Hope and Huslia (.111-133)
Color prints (and associated 35mm negatives) of a trip to Point Hope, and to Huslia, circa 1960s
.115 – [woman in multicolored print parka, headscarf, and curlers at camp, with meat pile and tent in background; at AFN 2013, woman identified as Suuyuk Eunice Lane, location as Point Hope]
.116 – [whaling camp, with tents, snowmachines, whalebones, and flagpoles; at AFN 2013; identified as west side of Point Hope, noted that seven American flags indicate seven whales had been caught]
.117 – [women sitting cutting meat, whaling camp in background; at AFN 2013, woman in red parka identified as Esther Frankson, location as Point Hope]
.118 – [three young Native Alaskan girls playing outdoors next to small pipeline, buildings visible in background; at AFN 2013, identified as government housing in Point Hope]

.119 – [man and woman frying Eskimo doughnuts at whaling camp, blue tarp strung up behind them, bowl, teakettle, cookies, paper towels and other supplies around them; at AFN 2013, woman identified as Aileen Frankson, location as Point Hope] [Inupiaq Territory, Tikigaaq (Point Hope). At AFN 2022, noted that Aileen Frankson is making fry bread.]

.120 – [whaling camp, women cutting meat in left foreground, people holding smokers at left; at AFN 2013, woman in printed parka and headscarf standing at right identified as Lily Agnin Oktolik, location as Point Hope] [Inupiaq Territory, Tikigaaq (Point Hope).]

.121 – [flagpole with Welcome sign and whalebones at whaling camp; at AFN 2013, identified as west side of Point Hope, dated to late 1960s or early 1970s based on the commercial floats pictured]

.122 – [woman cooking at whaling camp; at AFN 2013, woman identified as Easter Lane Henry, location as Point Hope] [Inupiaq Territory, Tikigaaq (Point Hope). At AFN 2022, noted that Easter is from Kotzebue.]

.123 – [Chester and Leah Peterson with two other Caucasians standing next to milepost sign in Point Hope]

.124 – [man standing near pile of whalebones and flagpole, smoker tent in background; at AFN 2013, identified as Point Hope, with flags indicating six whales taken]

.125 – [three women cutting whale meat, two outhouses in background; at AFN 2013, woman seated at left identified as Easter Lane Henry, woman standing at right as Lily Agnin Oktolik, location as Point Hope] [Inupiaq Territory, Tikigaaq (Point Hope). At AFN 2022, it was noted that Easter Lane Henry is from Kotzebue. Woman in yellow is Ester Outwater from Kotzebue.]

.126 – [woman cutting meat at whaling camp; at AFN 2013, identified as Aggie Rank Frankson at Point Hope]

.127 – [woman cleaning fish outside next to log cabin, basins, barrels and other supplies visible; at AFN 2013, woman identified as Lydia Simon of Huslia] [Koyukon Territory]

.128 – [Chester Peterson and woman standing outside Huslia Post Office next to truck; at AFN 2013, woman identified as Lydia Simon]

.130 – [Leah Peterson and woman with two children standing next to small airplane; at AFN 2013, woman identified as Lydia Simon]

.131 - [Leah Peterson posed with woman on tundra; at AFN 2014, location identified as Point Hope. At AFN 2015, woman tentatively identified as Lily Walker] [Inupiaq Territory, Tikigaaq (Point Hope). At AFN 2022, woman on right confirmed Lily Walker.]

.132 – [Leah Peterson posed with woman holding muktuk; at AFN 2014, location identified as Point Hope. At AFN 2015, woman identified as Laura Vincent] [Inupiaq Territory, Tikigaaq (Point Hope)]

.133 – [Chester and Leah Peterson, Leah holding camera, watch a woman cut meat at whaling camp; at AFN 2013, location identified as Point Hope]

B1/F6

Sitka and Skagway (.134-.152)

Three snapshots and 16 postcards

Removed to oversize

.153 – [Panoramic photograph] Anchorage, Alaska & vicinity, 1948. Goldbeck Photo 82348, Natl. Photo & News Service, San Antonio, Texas [looking north from near Third Avenue and Eagle Street, Alaska Railroad yards and Ship Creek in foreground]

B1/F7

Series 1: Photographs: Negatives

.154 – [students posed outside a brick building, Idaho?]

.155 – [village on river with pedestrian bridges; at AFN 2013, identified as Karluk]

.156 – [village on river; at AFN 2013, identified as Karluk]

.157 – [schoolchildren posing with dead eagle; at AFN 2013, location identified as Karluk, two students tentatively identified as Charles Christensen (fifth from left, back row) and Sofie Naumof (far right, back row); at AFN 2014, young man holding eagle identified as Alex Brown Jr., by standing to right of Charles Christensen as Oscar Novel, girl standing to left of Sofie Katelnikoff as Gladys Lukin, boy looking away from camera second from left as Sonny Noya, girl in second row, far left, as Eunice Naumof; at AFN 2015, man second from left in back row identified as Gust Reft, boys at far right as Jacob Aga (left) and Sam Lukin (right), girl looking away from camera next to Aga as Zoya Shugak, young boy far right front row as possibly Eli Wassillie]

.158 – [young man holding dead eagle, with woman at left, possibly schoolteacher; at AFN 2014, young man identified as Alex Brown Jr. For other identifications, cf. .157]

.159 – [school children posed outside school with dead eagle, Karluk? ca. 1939-1941] [similar to .157; at AFN 2014, girl standing third from right in back identified as Zoya Shugak] [At AFN 2022, Boy holding eagle head is Alex Brown Jr., boy holding eagle wing at right is possibly Eli Wassillie, fifth child from the left with face obscured is Sonny Noya, and third boy from left in back row is Gust Reft.]

.160 – [exterior of church, Church of the Ascension of Our Lord; at AFN 2013, identified as Karluk, Church of the Ascension]

.161 – [two women on boardwalk next to building, Karluk?]

.162-.167 – [skiers, Anchorage?]

.168-.189 – [photographs of unidentified friends and family]

Series 1: Photographs: Transparencies

.190 – [bird's eye view of river over waterway with buildings on near shore and mountains beyond, Southcentral. 2.5" x 3.5" transparency]

B2

[color 35mm slides]

.191-.196 – [Chester and Leah Peterson]

.197-.219 – [Peterson home at 510 L Street, Anchorage, circa 1941-1960s]

.220-.237 – [Chateau Cheleah at Kenai Lake]

- .238-267 – [Anchorage circa 1949-1962, including Providence and Alaska Native Service hospitals, post office, businesses, schools, residences, gardens, Cook Inlet, Muktuk Marston and William Egan at airport]
- .268-.283 – Fourth of July, Anchorage [no date, circa 1950s-1960s]
- .284-.307 – [Alaska Railroad circa 1949-1960s, including Tunnel, Portage, Bartlett Glacier, Deadman Glacier]
- .308-.319 – [1964 Alaska Earthquake, including damage to Anchorage Hardware, Fourth Avenue, J.C. Penney, other businesses, and roadways]
- .320-.327 – [trip in Chugach National Forest, circa 1960s]
- .328-.386 – [Southcentral Alaska circa 1949-1966, including Turnagain Arm, Matanuska Valley, Matanuska Glacier, Ninilchik, Chugiak, Eklutna, Homer, Portage Glacier, Whittier, Mile 14 Courts]
- .387-.395 – [Valdez area circa 1949-1950s, including S.S. *Valdez*]

B3

- .396-.409 – Coles visit 10,000 Smokes Summer 1970 [including Chester with pilot of Cessna airplane N6574A, boys repairing fish net, 510 L St., fishing, Southcentral]
- .410-.420 – [Barrow, 1965]
 - .410 – [woman wearing glasses carrying child past building; at AFN 2013, identified as Cora Tikluk]
- .421-.438 – [Kotzebue, circa 1950s]
 - .425 – [two women in printed parkas, one carrying child and wearing saddle shoes, the other carrying child and wearing mukluks, walk with two other children past Wien Alaska Airline ticket office; at AFN 2013, location identified as Front Street in Kotzebue; at AFN 2014, people identified as Mae Henry carrying Jack Henry, Pauline Henry holding Mae's hand, and Diana Viveiros? holding Pauline's hand] [Inupiaq Territory, Qikiqtaġruk (Kotzebue). At AFN 2022, it was noted that "Mae Henry did not have child named Jack, but did have son named Paul. Little girl previously named as Pauline Henry is maybe Marie Henry or younger daughter? Pauline Henry was same age as Diana Viveiros."]
 - .427 – Mary at Kotzebue [woman wearing kuspuk and holding stick standing on beach, houses in background. At AFN 2015, woman identified as Davidovics]
 - .429 – [woman holding child, smiling at two other children standing outside house, boardwalk and barrels visible; at AFN 2013, woman tentatively identified as Pauline Field; at AFN 2014, location identified as Noorvik, with Pauline Field holding son David and standing with children Vernita and William in front of their home] [Inupiaq Territory, Nuorvik (Noorvik). At AFN 2022, William and Vernita possibly also Field children.]
 - .430 – [Kotzebue?] [little girl standing outside house; at AFN 2015, identified as surname Harris] [Likely Inupiaq Territory]
 - .432 – [woman wearing sunglasses standing outside house; at AFN 2014, identified as Elsie Barger]
 - .434 – Said I could take a picture if I didn't make fun of her. [Kotzebue?] [woman in striped parka with fur trim; at AFN 2013, woman tentatively identified as Elsie Adams.

At AFN 2015, woman tentatively identified as Susie Hunnicutt] [Inupiaq Territory. At AFN 2022, identified as Suzie Hunnicutt with a Seafood plant/cannery in the background.]

.438 – [woman wearing parka and carrying infant standing next to building, young boy at left. At AFN 2015, woman identified as Jesse Nash Gallahorn]

.439-.449 – [Circle and Fort Yukon, 1949]

.446 – [white woman with Alaska Native woman and young girl next to building; at AFN 2013, woman identified as Mariah Thomas of Fort Yukon]

.449 – [young girl standing next to two-story log cache, white tents in background; at AFN 2013, identified as Esau Williams' cache in Fort Yukon; in 2016, residents of Fort Yukon identified it as Silas Alexander's cache]

.450-.463 – [Sitka, 1961]

.469-.497 – [Other locations circa 1940s-1960s, most unidentified, including Fairbanks, Eagle, McKinley National Park, Richardson Highway and Interior Alaska, Ketchikan and possibly other Southeast, Northwest coast; subjects include fishing, hunting, White Pass & Yukon Route, Roald Amundsen Cabin, possibly Order of the Eastern Star retreat]

.498-.578 – Winter fun [circa 1940s-1960s, slides of various winter activities and scenes, including Anchorage, Cook Inlet, Matanuska Valley, Kenai Peninsula; subjects include dogsledding, skiing, snowshoeing]

[Commercial slides]

.579 – [Steve McCutcheon standing next to floatplane painted with "Mac's Foto, Anchorage, Alaska" tail number N5633M]

.580 – 324, Mac's Foto Service [aerial of unidentified Southcentral or Southeast town on bay]

.581 – 353, Mac's Foto Service [Sitka, with Pioneer Home and U.S. Navy ship at dock]

.582 – 357, Mac's Foto Service [small boat harbor at Juneau, with *Donjac* in foreground]

.583 – 370, Mac's Foto Service [Mount McKinley?]

.584 – 479, Mac's Foto Service [aerial of Anchorage looking east to Chugach Mountains with Delaney Park Strip at right, Ship Creek at left, pre-1964]

.585 – 508, Mac's Foto Service [aerial of unidentified school building]

.586 – 518, Mac's Foto Service [school building in Anchorage, with Chugach Mountains behind, automobiles on road in front]

.587 – 519, Mac's Foto Service [automobiles and truck parked next to school building in winter, Anchorage]

.588 – 520, Mac's Foto Service [passengers outside Anchorage International Airport]

.589 – 1A. Dedman's Photo Shop, Skagway, Alaska [map of Alaska]

.590 – 26. Dedman's Photo Shop. White Pass & Yukon Route train on shore of Lake Bennett

.591 – 46. Dedman's Photo Shop. Lynn Canal

.592 – 100. Dedman's Photo Shop. Skagway from Heart Mountain

.593 – 108. Dedman's Photo Shop. Trail of '98 [marker in rocks]

.594 – 144. Dedman's Photo Shop. Sawtooth Mountains on White Pass

.595 – 57. The Photo Shop Studio, Sitka, Alaska [aerial of Sitka, with Sheldon Jackson College]

.596 – 60. The Photo Shop Studio [Mount Edgecumbe]

.597 – 92. The Photo Shop Studio [scene near Sitka]

- .598 - #1. Ketchikan, Alaska, Tongass Narrows. Schallerer's Photo Shop, 212 Front Street, Ketchikan, Alaska [bird's eye view of town]
- .599 - #2. New town, Ketchikan, Alaska. Schallerer's Photo Shop [bird's eye view of waterfront]
- .600 – 4A. Ketchikan business district. Schallerer's Photo Shop [aerial of waterfront and downtown]
- .601 – W.L. Brewington, Box 135, Anchorage, Alaska. Snow along hiway, Moose Pass [cabin buried in snow]
- .602 – C171. Sitka, Alaska. Wesco Color Slide [waterfront with Pioneer Home]
- .603 – Granville. Benny Benson, Kodiak Airways mechanic, designer of Alaska flag, 10-16-54.

B4

Series 2: Personal papers

- F1: Preparation for Karluk, 1939
- F2: Personal correspondence [Karluk, 1939-1941]
- F3: Karluk, Northland Adventure and Geographic Sketches
- F4: *The Story of Karluk* [2 copies]
- F5: [Karluk notebooks]
- F6: [Karluk ephemera]
- F7: Personal correspondence [Anchorage, June 1941-December 1944]
- F8: Ryan Letters, Bethel [1948]
- F9: [Educational ephemera, 1935-1973]
- F10: [Peterson account ledger, 1939-1957]
- F11: [Photographic ephemera]
- F12: [News clippings]

Series 3: Publications

Anchorage School District publications, including:

- Anchorage Independent School District Directory*, 1956-57, 1957-58, 1958-59, 1960-61, 1961-62, 1962-63, 1963-64, 1964-65, 1965-66, 1966-67
- Alaska Educational Directory*, 1960-61, 1961-62, 1962-63, 1967-68, 1968-69

Order of the Eastern Star publications, including:

- New ritual*, 1940 [2 copies]
- Ritual*, 1953
- Book of Instruction*, 1948
- Roster*, Anchorage Chapter No. 8, 1952, 1955, 1964

Delta Kappa Gamma publications, including:

- Initiation Banquet*, 1955, 1956, 1957
- Roster*, Anchorage Alpha Chapter, 1956-1963, 1965-1969
- Constitution*, 1962, 1958

Anchorage Women's Club *Yearbook*, 1953-1954

Zonta Club of Anchorage publications, 1965-1967

Series 4: Audio Recordings

Reel 1: "Eskimo dance." Scotch plastic backing ¼", 150 ft.

Reel 2: "Eskimo dance." Scotch plastic backing ¼", 600 ft.

Series 5: Moving image films

22 reels on 6

Loose notes in original box include slips for:

- "Boise to Seattle, Seattle to Ketchikan, Ketchikan, Juneau, Seward, Alaska Nell."
- "Last part of goat picture, house scene (flowers), Honolulu"
- "Fishing, trip down river, unloading frt."

Reel 1: "First part of goat hunt with Nyberg, front yard, 1113 11th, Honolulu section winter scenes." Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, 8mm

Reel 2: "Three bears and [?] seals." [no date] Approximately 100 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 3: [No notes, no date] Approximately 150 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 4: "Trip to Karluk Lake." [circa 1939-1941] Approximately 175 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 5: "Fishing at Karluk." [circa 1939-1941] Approximately 150 ft., monochrome and color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 6: "Dog racing, 1947 Summer [?], Mt. Everett, Seattle home." Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 7: [No notes, no date] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 8: [No notes, no date] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 9: "Ward Gay & Chet, moose picture, 1946." Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 10: "Early days in Anchorage & pictures of 1113 11th Ave. house." [no date] Approximately 150 ft., color, silent,, 8mm.

Reel 11: "Wild horse at Uyak, around Island, Woody Island. Add to Karluk reel." [circa 1939-1941] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 12: "Boise to Seward." [no date] Approximately 175 ft., monochrome, silent, 8mm.

Reel 13: "Tustumena Lake, goat." [no date] Approximately 200 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 14: Hawaii, Rose Parade." [no date] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, Kodachrome 8mm.

Reel 15: [No notes, no date] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, Kodachrome 8mm,

Reel 16: "Indian Creek, ski run." [circa 1945] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, Cine-Kodak 8mm.

Reel 17: [No notes, postmarked 1954] Approximately 25 ft., color, silent, Cine-Kodak 8mm.

Reel 18: "Misc. Lee's dog at [?]" [circa 1948] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, Cine-Kodak 8mm.

Reel 19: "Summer 1949 trip to Valdez, caribou at Circle, Mt. McKinley, porcupine." Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, Cine-Kodak 8mm.

Reel 20: "Moose, Thunderbird Falls, Fishing, Lee birthday." [no date] Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, 8mm.

Reel 21: "Xmas 1945, dog races, ski jump, Fur Rendezvous 1946." Approximately 50 ft., color, silent, Cine-Kodak 8mm.

Reel 22: [No notes, no date, appears to be boat approaching dock] 8mm.

Guide updated: November 4, 2022