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@anchoragemuseum.org

Guide prepared by: Bruce Merrell, Museum Volunteer

TITLE: Copper River & Northwestern Railway Album

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2012.028

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1909-1911

Extent: 305 items, 1.3 linear feet. Some of the same images occur two or three times and duplicates are noted in the detailed description below.

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Unknown, E. A. Hegg, M. A. Jacobson, _____ Manning

Administrative/Biographical History:

The Copper River & Northwestern Railway was built between 1906 and 1911 and connected Cordova with the Kennecott Copper Mines near McCarthy, 196 miles to the northeast. The railroad was built primarily to haul high-grade copper ore down to the port of Cordova, where it was shipped to a smelter in Tacoma. In operation from 1911 to 1938 when the mines closed, the railroad followed the Copper River north to Chitina and then east to Kennecott, and included at least six tunnels and a temporary trestle across the Copper River near Chitina that was allowed to wash out each year—it was cheaper to rebuild it than to put in a permanent structure. The most famous feature of the railroad was the "Million-dollar

Bridge," a steel bridge across the Copper River with glaciers discharging into the river on either side.[1]

This collection is a mixture of commercial photography and images taken by an unknown photographer, perhaps the man in image .304 (and featured throughout the collection) who wrote on its reverse: "Did I send you one of these before? They are not good," and signed it "A.A.D." On the reverse of image .303 he wrote: "Guess I have sent you some cards like this before but have no others at present as everything is torn up yet so have been unable to make any more," implying that he was taking and developing the photographs.

Scope and Content Description:
The collection consists of a photo album containing 308 black & white photographs. Only a few photos have captions printed on them. Five photos had been separated from the album and have messages penciled or inked on the reverse, signed by "A.A.D." Some of the mounted photos have loose corners and messages partially visible on the reverse, apparently sent by "A.A.D." while he worked on the railroad in 1909-10. There is little order to the mounting of photos in the album and there are some images of non-Alaskan subjects, such as scenes identified as being in Wallace, Idaho, and a few non-Alaskan railroad images.

Highlights of the collection include Copper River Natives wearing beadwork and regalia, railroad construction activities such as grading roadbeds, steam shovels operating, snow removal, and bridge and trestle construction, as well as images of railroad rolling stock and the paddlewheel steamboat *Nizina*.

Arrangement: Not applicable

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

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

Physical Access: Original in items in good condition except for some partially torn images.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the materials.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

---

[1] Lone E. Janson, *The Copper Spike* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing, 1975); Howard Clifford, *Alaska/Yukon Railroads: An Illustrated History* (Arlington, WA: Oso Publishing, 1999), pp. 179-202; and Cathy Gilbert, Paul White, and Anne Worthington, *Cultural Landscape Report: Kennecott Mill Town* [Anchorage?]: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska, 2001), pp. 3-5.

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:
Copper River & Northwestern Railway Album, Anchorage Museum, B2012.028

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information
Donated by James C. White of Ithaca, New York in 2012. The album was acquired by the donor's father about 1915 from someone he knew—perhaps the recipient of the photos?.

SUBJECTS
Copper River and Northwestern Railway
Ahtena Indians
Eyak Indians
Railroads—Snow protection and removal
Steam shovels
Steamboats
Kennecott Copper Mine (Alaska)
Childs Glacier (Alaska)
Copper River (Alaska)
Wallace (Idaho)

Detailed Description of the Collection

.1—[winter scene, buildings in distance?]
.2—[two young Native men outside tent, man at left with only one leg, crutches propped between men, snowshoes in background. At AFN 2015, men identified as possibly Ahtna]
.3—[winter scene, snow drifted over railroad grade?]
.4—[winter scene, blasting near railroad grade?]
.5—[dog (?) swimming in river]
.6—[frozen waterfall on hillside, early spring; see also image .186]
.7—[man standing in open doorway of log cabin; same as image .281]
.8—[snow-covered buildings in forest]
.9—[Native family standing outside tent; same as image .20]
.10—[avalanche over railroad tracks]
.11—[woman wearing button blanket]
.12—[group of seven Native children playing]

.13—[group of 22 Natives; same as image .140; at AFN 2014, identified as Ahtna based on clothing, man standing at left tentatively identified as Doc Billum]
.14—[Native man with regalia; same as image .27. At AFN 2015, tentatively identified as Eyak, possibly Stickloo or Stiklu of Katalla]
.15—[Native man with regalia, octopus bag; at AFN 2014, tentatively identified as Chief Charley Sanford]
.16—[Native man with regalia. At AFN 2015 and 2024, individual was tentatively identified as being form Yaakwdáat (Yakutat).]
.17—[Native children, one wearing button blanket]
.18— [ca. 1909-1911] [Indigenous man and two children standing outside tent] [Likely at camp.] [At AFN 2025 or prior, individuals identified as possibly Ahtna people.]
.19 — [ca. 1909-1911] [Native woman with two children, coffee pot, outside tent] [Indigenous family at camp] [At AFN 2025 or prior, individuals identified as possibly Ahtna people.]
.20 – [ca. 1909-1911] [Native family standing outside tent; same as image .9] [Indigenous family at camp. At AFN 2025 or prior, individuals identified as possibly Ahtna people.]
.21—[railroad tracks through melting avalanche area; same as image .117]
.22—[paddlewheel steamboat underway]
.23—[Childs Glacier and beginning of construction on Million Dollar Bridge, looking downstream from Miles Lake]
.24—[shore, lake, mountain; same as image .111]
.25—[tent, mountains]
.26— [ca. 1909-1911] [Native family outside tent; same as image .139] [Indigenous family at camp. At AFN 2025 or prior, individuals identified as possibly Ahtna people.]
.27—[Native man with regalia; same as image .14]
.28— [ca. 1909-1911] [group of six Natives; same as image .138; at AFN 2014, woman at right identified as chief's daughter based on her dress and regalia. At AFN 2024, it was noted that the individual second from right has been identified on other images. At AFN 2025 or prior, individuals identified as possibly Ahtna people.]
.29—[group of five Natives]
.30— [ca. 1909-1911] [six Native children and Caucasian man; same as image .76] [Indigenous children posed with man; girl near center wearing dentalium jewelry. At AFN 2025, individuals identified as possibly being Ahtna.]
.31—[Native boy outside tent]
.32—[railroad construction camp]
.33— [Ahtna or Eyak man with rifle and snowshoes] [Indigenous man posed outside with outdoor gear]
.34 – [ca. 1909-1911] [Native woman with three children outside tent; same as images .73 & .108] [Indigenous family at camp. At AFN 2025 or prior, individuals identified as possibly Ahtna people.]
.35—[two Native girls]
.36—[Natives and dog outside tent; same as image .71. At AFN 2015, identified as Ahtna. At AFN 2024, the individual in the middle was identified as possibly Chief Goodletaw.]
.37—[woman wearing button blanket. At AFN 2015, identified as Tlingit]

.38—[two men lounging on hillside, one with camera case; see also images .83 and .300]
.39—[Caucasian man standing, same as in image .7]
.40—[Native man with regalia]
.41—[Native man with regalia]
.42—[Native family standing in snow; same as image .82]
.43—[Native girl in white dress with kitten]
.44—[ice cave]
.45—[winter scene]
.46—[ice cave]
.47—[five-dog team pulling freight sled]
.48—[construction camp, large tent with sign: "Laundry and Baths"]
.49—[construction camp, tents with signs "Tiekel Store and Reading Room" and "Restaurant"]
.50—[overview of Camp Tiekel at Mile 101 (same image published in Lone Janson, *The Copper Spike*, p. 96)]
.51—[Tiekel Store and Reading Room; same as image .124]
.52—[railroad tracks—along Copper River?; same as image .232]
.53—[lake, forest, mountains]
.54—[glacier, mountains]
.55—[construction camp, winter]
.56—[construction camp, winter]
.57a—[construction camp, winter]
.57b—Kennicott Pot Hole [river rapids]
.58-.61—[Childs Glacier]
.62—[bears in camp]
.63—[dogs]
.64—[trestle under construction, winter]
.65-.68—[steam shovel operating]
.69—[haystacks, people, not in Alaska]
.70—[sled dogs and two men in winter]
.71—[Natives and dog outside tent; same as image .36]
.72—[Natives outside tent]
.73—[Native woman with three children outside tent; same as images .34 and .108]
.74—[Native boy and leg-hold trap outside tent]
.75—[Native girl outside tent; same as image .107]
.76—[six Native children and Caucasian man; same as image .30]
.77-.80—[scenes along the railroad]
.81—[Childs Glacier]
.82—[Native family standing in snow; same as image .42]
.83—[two men lounging on hillside; see also images .38 and .300]
.84—[construction camp, railroad tracks and snow; same as images .110 and .154, see also image .171]
.85-.87—[winter scenes]
.88—[railroad tracks and river]

.89—[scene with railroad tracks]
.90—[scenery]
.91—[two men with cameras]
.92-.95—[scenes along railroad; .93 is the same as image .256]
.96—[pile driver; similar photo in *The Copper Spike*, p. 97 is captioned "A pile driver at work on the crossing of the Tiekel River"; see also image .131 and .143-.145]
.97-.98—[winter construction of approach trestle—Kuskulana River?]
.99-.102—scenes along railroad
.103—[train stopped on approach trestle to Kuskulana River bridge, under construction]
.104—[Copper River crossing just east of Chitina, mile 132—temporary trestle was replaced each year after ice went out]
.105—Kuskalina [Kuskulana] Bridge
.106—[Native woman and children outside tent]
.107—[Native girl outside tent; same as image .75]
.108—[Native woman with three children outside tent; same as images .34 and .73]
.109—[construction tents and boxcar]
.110—[construction camp, railroad tracks and snow; same as images .84 and .154]
.111—[Shore, lake, mountain; same as image .24]
.112—[four engines on trestle]
.113—[trestle next to frozen river; same image as .163]
.114—[horse teams grading fill; see also image .165]
.115—[two men atop log cache]
.116—[railroad grade on hillside above river]
.117—[railroad tracks through melting avalanche area; same as image .21]
.118—[steam shovel loading rail cars; same image as .128]
.119a—[steam shovel loading rail cars]
.119b-.121—[rotary plows and men clearing tracks]
.122—[man with camera case standing in front of windowless log structure]
.123—[view of construction camp with railroad tracks and trestle; one tent marked with an "X"]
.124—Tiekel Store and Reading Room; same as image .51
.125-.127—[mountains, lakes]
.128—[steam shovel loading rail cars; same image as .118]
.129—[steam shovel loading rail cars; burnt forest in background]
.130—[man walking between rails on large steel bridge—Million Dollar Bridge?]
.131—[pile driver; similar photo in *The Copper Spike*, p. 97 is captioned "A pile driver at work on the crossing of the Tiekel River"; see also images .96 and .143-.145]
.132-.134—[bear cub]
.135-.137—[man standing in ice cave]
.138-.139—[Native families]
.140—[group of 22 Natives; same as image .13]
.141—[dog in front of frame house]
.142—[scene along railroad—Copper River?]

.143-.145—[pile driver; similar photo in *The Copper Spike*, p. 97 is captioned "A pile driver at work on the crossing of the Tiekel River"; see also images .96 and .131]
.146—[frame house in deep snow]
.147—[Native family; man holding porcupine carcass or skin bag]
.148—[railroad construction camp]
.149—[Native tents, sled; same as image]
.150—Kuskalina [Kuskulana] Camp
.151-.153—[mountains, lakes]
.154—[construction camp, railroad tracks and snow; same as images .84 and .110, see also image .171]
.155—Bonanza Ore Bunkers [Kennecott mill and manager's house, very early]
.156—Making Camp [erecting pole tent frames]
.157—[trestle work in winter, Gilahina Bridge?]
.158-.160—[mountains, scenery]
.161—[bridge, waterfall—not Alaska]
.162—[railroad tracks and snowshed]
.163—[trestle next to frozen river; same image as .113]
.164—[burnt cityscape—probably Wallace, Idaho in the aftermath of "The Great Fire of 1910"[2]]
.165—[horse teams grading fill; see also image .114]
.166—[paddlewheel steamboat underway on lake, springtime]
.167—[paddlewheel steamboat *Nizina* at rest on Copper River; same as image .277]
.168—[railroad flatcars loaded with men, at construction camp]
.169—[railroad cut; same image as .189]
.170—Teikel (Tiekel) Camp / C.R. & N.W. Ry
.171—[construction camp, railroad tracks and snow; see also images .84 and .110]
.172-.174—[Native families]
.175—[boys in trees—not Alaska?]
.176—On the St. Joe's River [not Alaska?]
.177—N[orthern] P[acific Railway] Flume [not Alaska]
.178—Plasser [Placer?—snowy town in valley, not Alaska]
.179—[roadbed and unfinished tunnel]
.180—[roadbed with steamboat at landing in distance]
.181—[pedestrian bridge over water]
.182—Upper End of Wood Canyon Copper River—E. A. Hegg
.183—[railway along river]
.184-.185—[scenery]
.186—[frozen waterfall on hillside, early spring; see also image .6]
.187—"October Morning" Copper River, Alaska / Copyright 1909 / E. A. Hegg

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Fire_of_1910

.188-.190—[roadbed and cuts]
.191—Court House [Wallace, Idaho]
.192—N[orthern P[acific Railway] Depot [Wallace, Idaho]
.193—[frame house, not Alaska?]
.194—Sixth St—Wallace [Idaho]
.195—[construction camp in winter]
.196—[winter scene]
.197—[opening to small cave or tunnel]
.198—[building—warehouse?—in winter; see also image .252]
.199-.200—[cows, log building, family—not Alaska?]
.201—[turreted building—not Alaska]
.202—[temporary trestle crossing Copper River?]
.202-205—[scenery; .205 is same image as .233]
.206—[railroad bridge—not Alaska?]
.207—[sailing ship at anchor—not Alaska?]
.208—[men working loaded sleigh through ice next to river]
.209-.211—[scenery]
.212—[snowed-in tunnel; same image as .216]
.213—Chitina River
.214—[ice cave]
.215—[man looking down ravine to broad river valley; same image as .219]
.216—[snowed-in tunnel; same image as .212]
.217—[snowed-in roadbed and tunnel]
.218—[snowed-in roadbed; same image as .270]
.219—[man looking down ravine to broad river valley; same image as .215]
.220—[two people on sled pulled by horse]
.221—[snowed-in flatbed rail cars of the Copper River Ry. Co.; camp in background]
.222—[rotary snowplow in action; same as image .287]
.223—[trestle and cut]
.224—[wooden trestle, under construction]
.225—[river scene]
.226—Childs Glacier
.227—[overview of town next to river—not Alaska? Photo credit: M. A. Jacobson]
.228—Crossing Copper River [men placing logs across melting ice]
.229-.231—[scenery]
.232—[railroad tracks—along Copper River?; same image as .52]
.233—[scenery; same as image .203]
.234—[rotary snowplow in action?]
.235—[railroad grade above river]
.236—[waterfall]
.237—[construction camp]
.238—[Natives and tents; same as image .149]
.239—[tents on edge of lake]

.240—[railroad tracks]
.241—[scenery]
.242—[tents and log cabin]
.243—[mountain stream; same as image .269]
.244—[horse teams grading fill; same as image .165]
.245—[man in parka and fur mittens]
.246—[man in parka wearing snowshoes; see also image .291; image has hole in it]
.247—[log buildings under construction—Chitina?]
.248—[confluence of Chitina River with Copper River?]
.249—4/16-09 / Beginning erection of superstructure / 300' span / Manning [Million Dollar Bridge]
.250—[buildings on edge or large river]
.251—[railroad grade, mountains]
.252—[building—warehouse?—in winter; see also image .198]
.253—[railroad trestle in distance, above Copper River?; same as image .268]
.254—[winter scenery]
.255—[tents and railroad tracks in winter]
.256—[rock wall above stream; same as image .93]
.257—[river gorge—Kuskulana?]
.258—[scenery—Copper River delta?]
.259—[shacks with American flags—not Alaska?]
.260—[railroad grade during construction; same as image .285]
.261—[horse teams grading fill]
.262—[scenery]
.263-.264—[ice caves]
.265—[locomotive and cars underway]
.266—[railroad grade under construction]
.267—[railroad tracks and river]
.268—[railroad trestle in distance, above Copper River?; same as image .253]
.269—[mountain stream; same as image .243]
.270—[snowed-in roadbed; same image as .218; image is torn]
.271—[man with rifle, winter]
.272—[snowed-in railroad bed, telephone pole]
.273—[construction camp, winter]
.274—[ice cave]
.275—[scenery]
.276—[scenery]
.277—paddlewheel steamboat *Nizina* at rest on Copper River; same as image .167]
.278—[scenery]
.279—[construction camp, group of men, locomotives meeting?, late winter]
.280—[horse teams grading fill]
.281—[man standing in open doorway of log cabin; same as image .7]
.282—[trestle above river]

.283—[scenery]
.284—[railroad tunnel next to river]
.285—[railroad grade during construction; same as image .260]
.286—[construction camp in winter]
.287—[rotary snowplow in action; same as image .222]
.288—[rotary snowplow and men with shovels]
.289—[man seated in front of tent with wooden door]
.290—[man standing in forest]
.291—[man in parka seated in snow, wearing snowshoes; see also image .246]
.292—[steamboat *Nizina* at landing above Abercrombie Rapids; see p. 76 of *The Copper Spike*]
.293—[rails and tunnel]
.294a—[locomotive and cars on trestle; this is one of the four American Locomotive Company engines acquired in 1907 and used on the Copper River & Northwestern Railway (see Howard Clifford, *Alaska/Yukon Railroads: An Illustrated History* (Arlington, Washington: Oso Publishing, 1999), pp. 199-200]
.294b—[man with hat]
.295—[scenery]
.296—[railroad tracks]
.297a—[scenery]
.297b—[railroad tracks]
.298—[locomotive and cars on trestle, crossing a stream]
.299—[Log Cabin Saloon; writing on reverse says "this is a photo of one of the saloons in Chitina the new town . . .]
.300—[two seated men, one with camera; see also images .38 and .83]

The remaining five images have been separated from the album and have partially legible messages on the reverse:
.301—[postcard]: Constructing steel bridge, Round Island Channel, Copper River Ry., April 19, 1909; [penciled message on reverse from A.A.D., dated 12/6/09; see also image .249]
.302—[scenery; message on reverse, signed by A.A.D.]
.303—[postcard: man standing in snow, sent from Cordova 1/11/10]
.304—[postcard: man standing with one foot on wooden box labeled "ELAINE OIL," railroad trestle visible in background, signed by A.A.D.]
.305—[postcard: hand-written on front "Making for Cordova," image is of a small steamship underway]

Guide updated: October 26, 2016; July 15, 2025; October 5, 2026