

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Dowell, Elizebeth Davis Lewis

Elizebeth Davis Lewis Dowell Diary and Photos, 1897-1900

MS 4-38-6

1 Diary - typewritten  
1 Recollections document - typewritten  
10 black and white photograph reprints

Processed By: Alea Oien  
June 2009

**ACQUISITION:** The collection was donated by George S. Earl to the Alaska State Library Historical Collections and is accessioned as 2002-83. George S. Earl, donor, is the son of Catherine Wealthy Dowell.

**ACCESS:** The collection is unrestricted.

**COPYRIGHT:** Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian. Photocopying does not constitute permission to publish.

**PROCESSING:** This collection has been described at the item level. All items have been placed in mylar and into pH-neutral folders.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

David Lewis was a coal miner and his wife Catherine ran a boarding house for men near Blue Canyon, on Lake Watcom, Washington. They had an adopted daughter, Elizebeth Davis Lewis.

In about 1892 Stephen (Steve) Layton Dowell and his brother John Edward Dowell moved from Nova Scotia, Canada to Blue Canyon. The brothers boarded with the Lewis family. They had a contract to build stringers in the coal mines. Steve met Elizebeth and they were married January, 29, 1893.

They then moved to Black Diamond, Washington where their first daughter, Catherine Wealthy Dowell was born, November, 21, 1893. The new family moved to Cumberland, British Columbia where their second daughter, Alice Mae was born, October 3, 1895. The brothers made a trip to Alaska and Elizebeth and daughters moved to Renton, Washington.

While in Alaska the brothers built a cabin in Skagway. Steve then sent for his family. While they were all living in Skagway in 1897 the brothers built the White Pass Hotel on White Pass Trail. In about 1898 or 1899 Steve sent his family back to Renton. He then did many different things to make a living.

At one time he had a slaughter house on a barge on Lake Bennett, Yukon Territory and sold beef to the gold rush participants. He also did a little prospecting for gold. He tried selling overalls, but a storm came up on a lake he was traveling on and the lake ended up littered with overalls.

Steve's next adventure was going into partnership with a Mr. Valentine. They bought two schooners and packed them full of goods and their families and set sail for the gold rush in Nome, Alaska in 1900. Elizebeth Dowell kept a diary of her trip to Nome.

In her diary Elizebeth tells of her experiences and daily happenings aboard ship and in Dutch Harbor, Alaska and in Nome. She tells of the problems her husband had with the hired ship's crew and names the people she met and visited along the way and in Nome. She and her daughters then returned to Washington state where she gave birth to a baby boy. Her husband joined them six weeks later. [From: Recollections of Catherine Wealthy Dowell (Cassie) Earl – written as part of an oral history program of the Port Townsend, WA., Historical Society and Museum, and the donor's notes].

### SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

This collection contains a diary kept by Elizebeth Davis Lewis Dowell during her voyage to Nome, Alaska and back to Seattle, Washington in the summer of 1900. There are 10 pictures of Stephen Layton Dowell's gold rush ventures and his family's trip to Nome. Also included in the collection is Elizebeth and Stephen's daughter Catherine (Cassie) recollections of her life from 1897 to 1900 written at the age of 78.

### SUBJECTS

Alaska, Gold Rush History, Skagway, White Pass Hotel, slaughter barge, Watcom County, Washington, Blue Canyon, Scott Cordelle Bone, Governor, Nome, Dutch Harbor

### INVENTORY

#### Folder 1 of 1

Diary of Elizebeth Davis Lewis Dowell summer of 1900

Recollections of Catherine Wealthy Dowell (Cassie) Earl

Photographs - *Photo descriptions taken from list supplied by donor.*

Photographs - Klondike Gold Rush:

1. Two little girls and sled on White Pass Trail:  
To the left of the sled Elizebeth Davis Lewis Dowell. Kneeling is Stephen Layton Dowell. Little girl on left of sled is Catherine Wealthy Dowell Earl, Little Girl on right is Alice Mae Dowell Jones.
2. The White Pass Hotel:  
Built, owned and operated by Stephen Layton Dowell possibly in partnership with his brother, John Edward Dowell.
3. Side View White Pass Hotel:  
Steven Dowell is reportedly the figure in the White Parka.
4. Slaughter Barge:  
Probably Lake Bennett, Yukon Territory. The figure on the near corner of the barge with rolled-up sleeves is Steven Layton Dowell, 1898 or 1899.
5. Cattle on the Beach:  
No one identified. Shape of barge is the same as the Slaughter Barge above. Assume these were the cattle that were slaughtered and the carcasses hanging on the Slaughter Barge.

Photographs - Nome Trip summer 1900:

6. "Ruby E. Cousins"  
Schooner Steven Layton Dowell owned and traveled on. Photo from newspaper clipping.
7. "Martha W. Tufts"  
Schooner owned by Steven Layton Dowell sailing with the Ruby E. Cousins from Seattle to Nome.
8. Family aboard "Ruby E. Cousins"  
Elizebeth Davis Lewis Dowell center with daughters Alice Mae Dowell Jones and Catherine Wealthy Dowell Earl behind. Catherine Lewis, adopted mother of Elizebeth Dowell second from right. Mrs. Woods, mother of Dick Woods traveling with the family, at the right. Departure from Seattle.
9. Family Aboard "Martha W. Tufts":  
Elizebeth Dowell with daughters Catherine and Alice. Mrs. Thompson, wife of Mr. Thompson Master of the "Martha" behind.
10. Bydarky (Kyak)  
Natives who came to the "Ruby E. Cousins" to trade.