

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Ratto, Scipio G., 1869-1951

Diaries and other material concerning travel to the Klondike
and work at Dawson, Yukon Territory, 1897-1901

MS 13-03-01and02

2 folders

Processed by: Staff

Updated by: Jacki Swearingen, Oct. 2016

ACQUISITION: This collection was donated to the library in May 1979 by Vivian and Pauline Ratto, daughters of Scipio G. Ratto. Acc. # None

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Scipio G. Ratto was born in San Francisco, April 14, 1869, the only son of Mary Cuneo and pioneer Bartholomew Ratto who migrated to the United States from Italy in 1849. Bartholomew Ratto settled in California in 1852, arriving in San Francisco on S.S. GOLDEN GATE after traveling across Isthmus of Panama via muleback. He had a general store in Mother Lode country, Calaveras County. Later he owned and managed two bakeries in San Francisco, one located in the downtown area on Post-Street (present site of Olympic Club), another on Dupont Street (now Grant Ave.) Subsequently lived with son, Scipio, in historical old Montgomery Block in San Francisco and managed building in late 1890s.

As a boy and young man, Scipio Ratto came to Sausalito on family picnics and club gatherings (south end of Sausalito). He grew to love the town, its quiet atmosphere, its scenery, and the blue waters of San Francisco Bay.

Ratto journeyed to Alaska and Yukon Territory with his cousin Ernest Ratto, during the gold rush of 1897. They left San Francisco on S.S. UMATILLA on Sunday, July 25, 1897. While in Alaska and the Yukon, they prospected for gold. He also worked in stores of J. Timmins and George Bieber [Biber] in Dawson City.

Upon his return from Alaska, he became accountant for J. Sbarboro and Co., (Washington Street, San Francisco), a grocery establishment owned by a pioneer San Francisco family.

On June 7, 1904, he married Angelina L. Antoni of Washington, D.C. and San Francisco. Their two daughters, Pauline and Vivian, were born in Sausalito. Both are school teachers and live in the family residence built in 1912 in Sausalito.

In 1905 Ratto became a partner with J. Mecchi in a food store on Water Street, (later renamed Bridgeway, main business street in center of Sausalito.) In 1911+, after purchasing land and having blueprints drawn, the partners moved the business into their newly constructed brick building at 667-669 Bridgeway, also in the heart of business district. He remained in business in this location until his retirement in 1935. He died in San Francisco December 22, 1951.

His community activities included:

- Member, Old Town Social Club, 1910
- Assistant Fire Chief, Sausalito Volunteer Fire Dept., 1912
- Member Sausalito School Board, 1922-42
(during his term of office, the new Central School was built. Now known as Sausalito Civic Center)
- Secretary-Treasurer, South Sausalito Improvement Club, 1925.
- Charter member, Sausalito Lions Club
- Charter member, Sausalito Chamber of Commerce
- Member, Native Sons of Golden West, Seapoint Parlor for more than 40 years;
held all offices.
- Member, Fraternal Order of Eagles

Member, San Rafael Elks Club
 Member, Marin County Grand Jury, 1944.

This biographical information was provided by Vivian and Pauline Ratto, daughters of Scipio G. Ratto.

INVENTORY

The Diaries often have entries for several years on the same page. Not all entries are dated or follow chronological order.

Folder 1

Vol. 1

- July 25, 1897. Begins at San Francisco. Start for Alaska on Steamer Umatilla, transfer to the City of Topeka. Stop at Juneau.
- Aug. 7, 1897. Almost lost provisions with rising tide at Dyea. Treadwell party starts out.
- Aug. 12, 1897. Packed 1,200 pounds of provisions in seven trips up trail to Sheep Camp and Pleasant Camp.
- Aug. 27, 1897. Indians charge 38¢ (pound) for packing from Dyea to the lakes. Indian girls, boys and women are packing. Reached stone house, scales, summit - working on cabin.
- Sept. 13, 1897. Transported outfit across Lake Crater at 1¢ per pound; also Long Lake, and Deep Lake for ½¢ per pound, Lake Lindeman.
- Sept. 28, 1897. Whipsawing lumber for boat.
- Oct. 17, 1897. Launched boat "Louisa" and headed toward Lake Bennett and Lake Tagish.
- Oct. 24, 1897. Passed Custom House inspection, paid \$43.30 duty.
- Oct. 29, 1897. Boat of J. Nicholas, Frank Anthony, and F. Murphy wrecked in Whitehorse Rapids and Anthony drowned.
- Oct. 30, 1897. Rattos made it through rapids. Packing to Big Salmon River.
- Nov. 20, 1897. Captain Norwood, Inspector of Mines, got caught in ice jam on Lewis River on 17th and lost 5,000 lbs. provisions and one man drowned. He asked everyone camped at Big Salmon River etc. to contribute as much stores as could be spared and would return them in spring. Listed contribution of flour, apples, bacon & spuds.
- Nov. 23, 1897. Working on cabin.
- Jan. 2, 1898. Tent nearly destroyed by fire - nothing else burned.
- Jan. 7, 1898. Brown and S. Ratto appointed to divide outfit between four partners.
- Jan. 9, 1898. Brown, Regan, Atchison and S. Ratto start for North Fork of river with one month's provisions. Ernest Ratto stays in cabin working on another sleigh.
- Jan. 25, 1898. Out of provisions - abandoned sleigh about 3 miles from cabin as too weak to haul.
- Jan. 26, 1898. No indication of gold upriver unless you go 100 miles and snow too deep.
- Feb. 9, 1898. Report of strike at Walsh River.
- Feb. 10, 1898. Started for Walsh River and heard there was no strike and will go to Dawson with outfit on sleigh.
- March 7, 1898. At Lewis River received a letter from Lena - first letter since leaving home.

March 28, 1898. Little Salmon Post - Arizona Charley and party of five arrived from Dawson.
Saw a plate full of nuggets worth about \$2,500.

April 5, 1898. Ernest Ratto has scurvy

April 6, 1898. Bathed Ernest's leg with spruce leaves

April 26, 1898. Traded a loave of bread to Indians for moose meat - first fresh meat since Nov. 18, 1897

May 5, 1898. Trade rifle for a shot gun with an Indian.

May 7, 1898. Went bird hunting

May 12, 1898. Little Salmon Post. Capt. Steams and police outfit arrived. Left post with Ernest and Billy in one boat; Scipio and Alec (Mac) in second boat.

May 15, 1898. Yukon River - Camp 3. Saw a boat wrecked on iceberg - saved everything but a bag with \$4,000.

May 17, 1898. Received letter from father (B. Ratto) dated Dec. 23, 1897. Met Harry Purdy. Flour worth \$10/50 pounds.

May 18, 1898. Dawson City. Met Jack O'Brien and Ned Butterfield.

May 19, 1898. Dawson City. Baked bread and looking for work.

May 24, 1898. Got a job in the A.C. Company Sawmill at \$1.00/hr or \$10.00/day.

May 25, 1898. Ernest has a job - \$1.50/hr. or \$15.00/day.

May 27, 1898. Alec returned from Colorado Creek and staked claim for Ernest, Billy & Scipio.

May 28, 1898. Job paid \$50.00 in gold dust. Part of hospital burned down.

June 2, 1898. Met William Castle. Put in application for clerk in A.C. store.

June 19, 1898. Lost job at sawmill.

Vol. 2

July 21, 1898. Ernest started to work for Tom LeMar.

July 7, 1899? Dawson - Started to work for George Biber & Company.

July - August, 1899? Letter received or written

December 1899. Entries - some prospecting, references to letters received.

January 10, 1900. Dawson City - fire broke out in Monte Carlo Building and destroyed about ten buildings.

Feb. - March, 1900. Mostly reference letters received or written.

May 5, 1900. Balloon ascention and parachute jump by Professor Leonard at Dawson City, 9:00 P.M.

June 15, 1900. George Biber and Company went out of business.

July 2, 1900. Started to work for J. L. Timmins.

September 19, 1900. Ernest left for San Francisco.

Sept. - Dec. 1900. Mostly references to letters written or received.

Jan. 1901. Dawson - references to weather & letters.

Folder 2

- Item 1 [Bill or sale to B. Ratto] The Red Front Clothiers and Furnishers, San Francisco. 1897. 1ℓ
- Item 2 [Bill of sale to E. Ratto] The Ames & Wilkens Mercantile Co., Dawson Y.T., Nov. 10, 1898. 1ℓ

Item 3 [Playing cards] White Pass and Yukon Route with photograph scenes. 1 deck.

Items 4-5 [Photographs, John L. Timmins Grocery, Dawson, Y.T.] [Interior of George Bieber [Biber]store, Dawson, Y.T.] 1900

Item 6 [Panorama, 7 ½ x 47 ½] Dawson, Y. Ter. July 5, 1901. Photo by Goetzman
(*Located in MS X-Oversize Map Case in Vault*)