

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Booher, Benjamin Wesley, 1872-1975

Papers of Benjamin W. Booher concerning Hazelet-Meals expedition from Valdez to the Copper River-Chisna area, 1900-1975 (bulk 1900-1904)

MS 13 - 6

ACQUISITION: Alma Booher Bender donated the collection to the library by on behalf of the Booher family May 20, 1985. Photographs form a separate collection, PCA 250 (Acc. No. 1985-009.)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In 1900 Ben Booher (Guthrie Center, Iowa) joined his wife's uncle, George Cheever Hazelet, (Omaha, Nebraska) and A. Jack Meals (O'Neill, Nebraska) on a prospecting expedition to Alaska. Booher's diary (p.96) lists fourteen additional men in the party who arrived in Valdez Feb. 1, 1900 on the vessel *EXCELSIOR*. They prospected in Copper Center, Valdez, Chisna, Chitna, Gulkana and Gakona. Mr. Booher's records the daily work of the party and people met on the trail. He also wrote to his wife in Iowa during the expedition. Ben returned to Alaska in 1904 and worked as a farmer and carpenter. He died in Kent, Washington in April 1975, at age 102.

George C. Hazelet and Jack Meals stayed in Valdez and were active in community affairs. In 1908, Mr. Hazelet moved to Cordova where he surveyed the townsite and also served as Mayor. He died there in August 1926. *THE JOURNAL OF GEORGE C. HAZELET* is available in the Library (F912. C7H3).

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

Poem, letters to Mrs. Booher, obituary of Benjamin Booher, Chisna Mining and Improvement Co. stock certificate, genealogy, handwritten diary, dated 1900, 1901.

INVENTORY

- Folder 1. Booher family biographical data.
Includes a genealogy chart for Benjamin W. Booher and wife Mary Elizabeth Tuffin.
Newspaper clippings: "Benjamin Booher is 100" from KENT NEWS JOURNAL, Oct. 25, 1972 and "Benjamin Booher, 102, dies" from GLOBE-NEWS JOURNAL, April 9, 1975.
- Folder 2. Diary, 25 Jan. 1900 - 14 Oct. 1901.
Original and copy. Travel from Iowa to Valdez and Chisna area of Alaska. Details difficulty and modes of packing over trail, prospecting endeavors, names of associates, people on the trail, supplies and wages.
- Folder 3. Letters to wife, Mae [Mary] E. Booher; Albaton, Iowa. 1900 6 letters (photocopies).
Includes 2 letters enroute to Alaska; one aboard vessel EXCELSIOR and letters written on the trail.
- Folder 4. Letters to wife, Mary E. Booher, Guthrie Center, Iowa 1901 3 letters (photocopies).
Includes one letter from Chisna and two letters from Valdez where Ben mentions putting in a bid to dig wells for the Valdez Fire Dept.
- Folder 5. Letters to wife, Mary E. Booher, Panora, Iowa. 1904. 7 letters (photocopies).
- Folder 6. Letter to Ben Booher from his brother-in-law, Ernest Tuffin dated Feb. 23, 1904, Seattle.
- Folder 7. Miscellaneous. 3 items.
Stock certificate for 227 shares of Chisna Mining and Improvement Company stock dated Dec. 7, 1901. (photocopy)
Poem: "Chisna Land," by Ben Booher.
Cassette tape of Ben Booher interview in 1965 (age 93) with his nephew, Dick Tuffin.
Ben describes some experiences in Alaska with his diary as a guide. Note: tape has variable audio quality.