

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Bjornstad, Martin

The Alaska Journal of Martin Bjornstad: The Excelsior Diary of 1898

MS 13-8-1

3 volumes

Processed By: Gladi Kulp
January 2000

ACQUISITION: A typescript and photocopy of the manuscript was donated to the Alaska State Library by Robert W. King, great-grandson of Martin Bjornstad in March 1999 (Acc. # 99-7). The original diary was added to the collection in February of 2009, donated by Robert King (Acc. # 2009-05).

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted.

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

PROCESSING: The typescript and photocopy of the original diary were added to the manuscript collection. The original diary was later added to the collection and placed in a Mylar sleeve.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Martin Bjornstad, Norwegian-born in 1854, came to America as a young man and worked at painting houses in Boston. In 1890 he moved to Bremerton, WA where he was a house painter and restaurateur. Later he moved to Walla Walla, WA and bought an apple orchard; this business venture failed because of a drought. Bjornstad married Katherine (Kate) Jorgensen of Copenhagen. They took in Norwegian orphans from the Seattle area including Ann Birgitte (Ann B.) Bjornstad Hullfish, grandmother of the donor. Bjornstad died in 1933. A more complete biography is included in the journal transcript.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The journal is the account of two trips to Alaska in 1898 by Martin Bjornstad. The first trip, which began in January, is a trip to the Klondike including Skagway and Dyea; Bjornstad stopped short of the gold fields when he realized he was ill-prepared. For the second trip, Bjornstad joined a U.S. Army expedition, led by Capt. W.R. Abercrombie, to explore the Copper River area, from April to November.