

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

**Guide to Collection**

**Brewster, Lyman, 1900-1983**

**Papers concerning work as General Reindeer Supervisor at Nome, Alaska, 1932-1934**

**MS 053**

2 boxes  
0.7 linear ft.

Processed By: Staff

**ACQUISITION:** The collection was purchased from Lyman Brewster May 12, 1981. Photographs form a separate collection, PCA 206.

**ACCESS:** The collection is unrestricted.

**COPYRIGHT:** Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian.

**PROCESSING:** A published guide is also available in the Historical Collections, "An Inventory of the Lyman Brewster Papers and Photographs Concerning the Reindeer Industry and Life in Nome, Alaska, 1932-1934."

## Biographical Note

In 1932, Lyman Brewster, a young attorney and Montana cattleman, was appointed General Reindeer Supervisor by the U.S. Department of Interior. His work station was in Nome, Alaska, with travel to Point Barrow, Nunivak Island and other locations. The government was interested in resolving the problems and controversy regarding the Lomen Reindeer Corporation and Eskimo owned reindeer herds. Brewster's knowledge of the business of cattle raising and recommendation from a congressional investigation committee to reorganize the reindeer industry led to his appointment in 1932 and a [From: "An Inventory of the Lyman Brewster Papers and Photographs Concerning the Reindeer Industry and Life in Nome, Alaska, 1932-1934."] meeting with Governor Parks enroute to Nome.

Mr. Brewster returned to Montana in March 1933 to marry Anne Burke in Helena and following several weeks work at the U.S. Department of Interior in Washington, D.C. and meeting with Governor in Juneau, the Brewsters arrived in Nome in May 1833.

## Scope and Content

The papers are largely comprised of letters written to family in Montana detailing Brewster's work and experiences as the reindeer official at Nome. The controversy fed by Ernest Wilker Sawyer's report to the Congressional Reindeer Committee with accusations against the Lomen Reindeer Corporation and other problems are topics in the papers. The Brewsters were very active in Nome social life and their letters tell of daily events in Nome and people there. Lyman is asked to give the high school commencement address which is included with the letters of June 2, 1933. There are also details of MGM filming of THE ESKIMO at Teller and Nome. Brewster meets Peter Freuchen, the movie crowd and gives his impressions in various letters beginning Nov. 28, 1932. Later the MGM movie crew assisted with a Nome theatrical production at the Eagle Hall in which Brewster demonstrated rope spinning tricks.

The papers also include a copy of Brewster's official report on reindeer and a personal account of his experiences with reindeer, newspaper clippings and miscellaneous material. Audio tapes were made to accompany motion picture footage taken by Brewster and are also part of the papers.

## Inventory

### BOX 1

- Folder 1      Biographical data from newspapers, articles.
- Folder 2.    Newspaper clippings relative to Brewster's work in Alaska.
- Folder 3.    Reindeer in Alaska (report) and night letter (Roy Nash to Glavis.)
- Folder 4.    "Reindeer and I."  
               Biographical information and Brewster's account of events leading to his work in Alaska and its reindeer industry.

- Folder 5. Letters to family (Montana) -- June 16, 1932--July 8, 1932. 7 letters.
- Folder 6. July 9, 1932--Aug. 14, 1932. 9 letters.
- Folder 7. Sept. 1932--Nov. 11, 1932. 11 letters.
- Folder 8. Nov. 19, 1932--Feb. 15, 1933. 11 letters
- Folder 9. June 2, 1933--August 13, 1933. 12 letters.
- Folder 10. Sept. 17, 1933--Jan. 1, 1934. 9 letters.
- Folder 11. Letters to Government Officials. 2 letters (photocopies).  
 Letter dated Oct. 24, 1933 to Senator J.B. Kendrick, Washington, D.C.  
 (Brewster reviews the conditions and situation in Nome relative to the reindeer industry, government officials, Lomensl etc. The lack of specific boundaries with free roaming herds, economic situation and other factors are pointed out as not making for a viable industry.)  
  
 Letter dated Jan. 7, 1934 to E.K. Burlew, Asst. Sec. of Interior, Washington, D.C. (A personal report on travel in Arctic Alaska and the "psychology" of the region, misconceptions, and situation Brewster faced in his work.)
- Folder 12. Miscellaneous. 7 items.
1. Telegram, dated Feb. 9, 1933 sent to Mrs. John Arnold telling of his appointment as General Reindeer Supt.
  2. Professional License no. 35-063, Territory of Alaska presented to Lyman Brewster for the profession "Attorney at Law," issued for the year 1935.
  3. St. Valentine Best Wishes to Lyman Brewster from Ralph Aden, Feb. 14, 1933 at Shishmaref, Alaska (a poem titled "Memories of Sunday, Jan. 8, 1933. Shishmaref, Alaska) photocopy.
  4. Photocopy of postal cachet of 1st flight from Fairbanks to Juneau.
  - 5-7. Photocopies of drawings of George A., AhgupOk, Shishmaref.
- Folder 13. Photocopy of photographs taken and collected by Brewster, (PCA 206)  
 Includes many individuals and places referenced in the letters to family.
- Folder 14. Correspondence relative to the library's acquisition of the Brewster Collection and photos of the Brewster's in 1981.
- 13 items.  
 Includes biographical data, recollections of the Brewster's experience at Nome.
- Folder 15. Article "The New City of Nome and how".

BOX 2      Includes 3 audio tapes describing events in motion picture film footage taken by Lyman Brewster and other recollections.  
                 1 reel (7") of 16 mm film showing reindeer.