

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Newhall, Albert W., 1872-1929

Papers of a Medical Missionary in Alaska, 1911-1928

MS 106

1 box
0.2 linear ft.

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ACQUISITION: This collection of papers was donated by Frank Newhall, nephew of Dr. Albert W. Newhall. He contacted various family members and friends in an effort to better document Dr. Newhall's life and work in Alaska. The collection includes correspondence of Frank's father, Chester, with his brother, Albert Newhall.

Biographical Note

Albert Warren Newhall was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on February 6, 1872. He graduated from the University of Vermont and the Union Missionary Training School in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1898 Dr. Newhall married Agnes Sowle, superintendent of the Jesse Lee Home at Unalaska. Since 1895 she had worked at the Jesse Lee Home for orphans which was established by the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Church. Following their marriage, Dr. Newhall settled in Unalaska as a medical missionary. In 1902 he succeeded Mrs. Newhall as superintendent of the Jesse Lee Home. Agnes Newhall died in 1917 at Unalaska where she is buried. In 1922 Dr. Newhall married Emma Supernaw. He continued his work at the home until 1925. At that time, the church decided to move the home from Unalaska to Seward, and Dr. Newhall was not in accord with that decision.

The Newhalls work at Unalaska was well recognized. Their work helped many orphans lead successful lives, including Simeon Oliver, an Aleut who authored several books on Alaska (SON OF THE SMOKEY SEA and BACK TO THE SMOKEY SEA) and who also became a well-known concert pianist.

Departing Unalaska in late 1925, Dr. and Mrs. Newhall moved to Barrow, Alaska. He worked for the Presbyterian Board of Missions until his death on March 18, 1929.

Scope and Contents Note

The papers include a compilation of letters and writings of Dr. Newhall during his years in Barrow. Frank Newhall prepared an index listing to this material. Additional material not listed by Frank Newhall is included in separate folders. This includes Dr. Newhall's recollections on Simeon Oliver, a trip to the whaling station at Akutan, and other writings. The collection includes some miscellaneous material and writings of others, including an incomplete manuscript describing the flu epidemic in 1918 and 1919. There is limited material on the years at Unalaska.

Inventory

Folder 1. Papers, 1926-1928; a compilation of letters and writings of Dr. Albert Newhall. An index/listing was prepared by Frank Newhall, son of Chester Newhall.

<u>Section Title</u>	<u>Page (lower left corner)</u>
1 Obituary of Dr. Albert W. Newhall	1
<u>(Letters)</u>	
2. To Chester Newhall (brother), 9/23/26	2
3. To Chester Newhall (brother), 11/9/26	3
4. To Chester Newhall (brother), 2/4/27	4
5. To Frank Newhall, son of Chester Newhall, 5/7/27	6
6. To Frank Newhall, (brother), 2/6/28	7
7. To Frank Newhall (son of Chester Newhall), 7/13 /28	8
8. To Frank Newhall (son of Chester Newhall), 9/28/28	9
9. (Undated, unattached) Dated 7/21/26...page 3, summer activities	11
10. To Frank Newhall (son of Chester Newhall), 12/12/28	
11. To Mrs. C. A. Newhall (wife of Chester Newhall), 12/12/28 (after death of Chester Newhall)	12
<u>(Letters or articles written to a number of people; distribution unknown)</u>	
12. (12/31/25) General letter on living conditions in Pt. Barrow five months after Dr. Newhall's arrival	13
13. (4/22/26) "Going to Meeting at Point Barrow"	19
14. (Undated) "Getting in the Ice Supply at the Mission Barrow Alaska"	21
15.(1926, Summer?) "A Summer in the Arctic"	24
16. (12/6/26) "Down the Coast with Tito"	28
17. (2/14/27) "On the Trail with Argalik"	
18. (1927) "Spring Time at Barrow Alaska"	39
19. (9/25/28) "The Ice Floes of Barrow Alaska"	43
20. (Christmas period - undated - 1928?) General letter about Christmas	47
21. (1928) "Christmas in the Arctic"	51
22. (1928) "The Airplanes at Barrow Alaska"	56

Folder 2. Newhall, Albert W. Letters to Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Lawrence (possibly in Chicago). Unalaska, 1920-1923. 9 items.

1. Oct. 2, 1920 (family activity; Jesse Lee Home).
2. Feb. 17, 1921 (death of 17 year old Hilda Lee from measles - 170 cases at Unalaska).

3. Sept. 26, 1922 (Albert and Emma married one year; Edith is teaching at government school, Miss Winchell and others working at Jesse Lee Home are mentioned).
4. March 7, 1923 (Newhalls will be travelling to the states in June).
5. March 26, 1923 (travel plans).
6. Nov. 8, 1923, Syracuse, New York (homeward bound today).
7. Undated (Jesse Lee Home moving, resigned effective May (1925) after a service of 27 and more years in Unalaska; going to Barrow aboard the vessel HERMAN).

Folder 3. Newhall, Albert W. Letters to Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Lawrence in Edwardsburg, Michigan. Barrow, 1925-1928. 9 letters.

1. June 3, 1925 (comments on resignation, did not want to see children removed from Unalaska).
2. July 9, 1925 (sent trip letter - with writings).
3. Sept. 20, 1925 (Newhalls like Barrow and the people, how the Eskimos rescued the mission coal piled on the beach from being lost in a storm, transport of the coal, mission activity). 3 p.
4. Sept. 24, 1925 (mentions family doings and Simeon Oliver).
5. Oct. 1, 1925 (same as Item 3). 3 p.
6. Nov. 27, 1925 (note and birth announcements, including that of their son, Warren Blake Newhall, born Dec. 4, 1925 at Barrow). 3 p.
- 6a. Posted Dec. 31, 1925 (winter and church in Barrow, 180 mile dog sled trip by Dr. Newhall). 7 p.
7. Feb. 5, 1926 (mentions family and Simeon Oliver recitals).
8. April 23, 1926 (son Warren Blake died).
9. Sept. 30, 1927 (Newhall's 6th anniversary and recollections of their wedding; Edith Drugg and husband now living in Sitka where he is in charge of the electric power station; Chester will graduate as an
10. Feb. 2, 1928 (family and travel plans).

Folder 4. Jesse Lee Home activity. 3 items.

1. Work of the Jesse Lee Home, by A. W. Newhall, Supt. 3 p.
Home escaped calamities such as the volcanic eruption that damaged the Baptist Mission at Kodiak. He talks about children at the home, classes, assistance to village, needs of the home.
2. Some customary duties of the present superintendent of Jesse Lee Home. 2 p.
3. Untitled - an account of the fire at the Jesse Lee Home, by A. W. Newhall. 3 p.

Folder 5. Newhall, Albert W. Writings and miscellaneous. 11 items.

1. SIMEON OLIVER. 3 p.
Written on Feb. 10, 1926, Dr. Newhall tells about the arrival in 1904 of Simeon Oliver, then aged two, who lived at the Jesse Lee Home for sixteen years. Mrs. A. C. Goss, a resident of Unalaska provided free piano lessons to the children. Simeon began piano lessons at age nine and after a slow start, progressed well, played the organ at church and took part in musical entertainment. He took music training in the east, appeared on tour and in the summer of 1925, a broadcasting trip was made to the western states where he received much public recognition.
2. Untitled. 3 p.

A trip on the S.S. VICTORIA and visit to the Akutan whaling station with details on processing the whales.

3. THE TRIP UNALASKA TO BARROW. 1925. 4 p.
Farewell from Unalaska and trip on the vessel CHARLES BROWER, stops at Gambell and talks to Seppala at Savoonga.
4. Untitled. 5 p.
Comments on Nome, churches, preaching through an interpreter who is Ad-loo-at's brother. Dr. Newhall meets Duffy O'Conner, a pioneer, and describes him; mentions people at Little Diomedes, Eskimos at Point Hope. Notes various ships that have been caught or lost in the ice.
5. NALUGATAK. 3 p.
Written July 21, 1926, Dr. Newhall describes the celebration of Nalugatak, meaning "jumping on the walrus hide," that takes place after whaling season. He also describes Eskimo whaling and division of the catch as well as hunting activity.
6. Untitled. 1 p.
Describes Christmas party at the home [Jesse Lee Home]. Sixty-five children had the mumps, but last case recovered two weeks before Christmas.
7. Untitled. 1 P.
Christmas program and gifts received by children at the home.
8. 1928 Christmas program, Presbyterian Sunday School, Barrow. 1 p.
9. AN EPISODE. 1 p.
An evening church service was interrupted as the delegation heard Koopak was on the way to the hospital to have a baby. The people watch her being pulled on a sled.
10. Untitled. 1 p.
Incomplete, brief comment on the shipwreck of the U.S. Revenue Cutter TAHOMA.
11. YARN NO. 2. 1 p.
Siberian Eskimos hold a shipwrecked whaler in captivity.

Folder 6. Letters received, 1911-1926. 5 letters.

1. Letter from Warren A. Sowle (Ad-loo-at), Wales, Alaska, dated Oct. 19, 1911. 1 P.

Ad-loo-at was a Jesse Lee Home boy who also lived for a time with Dr. Newhall. He tells of his family and work.
2. Letter from Warren Sowle (Ad-loo-at), Wales, Alaska, dated June 25, 1913. 1 p.

Acknowledging gifts sent to his children; work of Wales Improvement Club.
3. Letter from W.W. Johnston (President of the Alaska Sulphur Co.), dated Aug. 18, 1920. 1 p.

This letter was addressed to the President of Northwestern College as a recommendation for Simeon Oliver, noting his fine character and work at the Alaska Sulphur Co.

4. Letter from Mrs. Nellie Carlson, Sanak, Alaska, dated Jan. 17, 1926. 1 P.

A former Jesse Lee Home girl commenting on her feelings for the mission and Mama Newhall.

5. Letter from David Se-pil-ler, Savoonga, n.d. 1 p.

Asks Dr. Newhall to help the people at Gamble, tells of his home and church activity in Savoonga. Dr. Newhall adds a note that David is forty years old, an island leader and Christian who holds prayer/church services for his people.

Folder 7. Letters/writings received from Agnes O. [Ad-loo-at] Kiome. Wales, 1920; 1923. 4 items.

1. Letter dated Aug. 4, 1920. 2 p.

Agnes is the oldest child of Ad-loo-at. She sends her measurements for getting shoes, etc.

2. Letter dated Aug. 14, 1923. 2 p.

Thank you for a dress and gives names of her two children.

Folder 8. Writings from unidentified sources. 2 items.

1. Incomplete manuscript which is likely recollections of Ad-loo-at. 5 p. Primarily a Christian testimony.
2. CHAPTER XII THE FLUE (Flu). 12 P.

An account of the 1918 and 1919 flu epidemic. Ad-loo-at was teaching at Shishmaref and heard his family in Kingegan was sick and returned to help them. He died of the flu. Mention is made of "Mama Newhall" who is buried in Unalaska and her grave monument inscription.

Folder 9. Nasenius (Hanson), Mary. Letters received from Dr. A.W. Newhall, 1926-1928, and 1 letter from Joseph Nasenius, dated Dec. 16.

Note: This photocopy file was obtained from a bookseller. Dr. Newhall wrote the letters to Mary at False Pass, Alaska.

Includes copy of 3 envelopes addressed to Mary and Joseph Nasenius, False Pass, Alaska.

1. Letter of Joseph Nasenius to Mary Hanson, dated Dec. 16th (no year). 5 p.
2. Letter from Dr. Newhall, Unalaska, Alaska, dated Oct. 1, 1915. 1 p. Mentions new children and illness at the home.
3. Letter from Dr. Newhall, Barrow, Alaska, dated November 126 (sic), 1926. 1 D. News of mutual friends.

4. Letter from Dr. Newhall, Barrow, Alaska, dated December 12, 1928. 1 p. News of mutual friends and travel plans to New York.

5. Letter from Unalaska, dated Aug. 4, 1919. 5 p.

Describes trip by train cross country to Seattle; working on a voyage of the VICTORIA north; meeting father and friend at Akutan; description of whale processing operation; boat travel to Unalaska.

6. THE COMING OF THE AIRSHIPS TO BARROW. 4 p.

Dated June 21, 1926. A Detroit Arctic Expedition plane made trips between Fairbanks and Barrow. The pilot expected, but did not find gasoline in Barrow, so attempts were made to bring fuel by dogsled from Fairbanks. Amundsen passed over Barrow in a dirigible.

7. Letter from Dr. Newhall, n.d. 3 p.

Flu epidemic in Unalaska, "aided" by crew of Coast Guard Cutter UNALGA.

8. Letter (incomplete) from Dr. Newhall, n.d. 4 p.. Describes incidents and life at Jesse Lee Home.

9. ALONG THE ARCTIC COAST IN EARLY WINTER, n.d. 4 p.

Travel by dogsled to visit villages, describes religious services, incidents with polar bears.

10. Letters (incomplete).

1925?. 1 p. Notes on five Arctic vessels and shipwrecks.

N.d. 1 p. Description of a marriage journey by dogsled.

N.d. 1 p. Retells incidents of the past summer - flu epidemic, moving coal by dog sled, Sunday school.