Guide to Collection

Lomen Brothers

Lomen Brothers Photograph Collection, ca. 1903-1920

PCA 028

258 photographs: b&w

Biographical Note

The five Lomen brothers, Carl Joys, Alfred Julian, Harry, George, and Ralph lived an active life in Nome in the early 20th century. They helped create a reindeer industry, outfitted the Norwegian explorer Raold Amundsen, and participated in the birth of bush aviation in Alaska.

Carl and his father, Judge G.J. Lomen of St. Paul, Minnesota, moved to Nome after vacationing there in the early 1900's. In 1903, the rest of the Lomen family joined them. The entire Lomen family, including his wife, Julie Joys Lomen, the five sons and one daughter, Helen, took part in civic affairs, followed prospecting and placer gold mining, and became interested in various commercial ventures. In 1908, the Lomen brothers bought a photograph studio and though they were equal partners, Alfred took most of the pictures. In 1935, he was hired to photograph the wreckage of Wiley Post and Will Rogers. The brothers purchased a drugstore in 1909.

In 1913, when Siberian reindeer were introduced to provide food and jobs for the Eskimos, the Lomens purchased rights to a reindeer herd and formed a corporation, Lomen and Co. By 1916, they were shipping meat to the states. They organized the Lomen Transportation Company to meet the problem of insufficient ocean refrigeration. The reindeer venture ended soon after the Great Depression, however, and in 1934, Congress took over the industry and outlawed ownership of reindeer by non-native peoples.
The Lomen brothers had purchased some of the studios and glass plate negatives of earlier Nome photographers, including B.B. Dobbs, Charles H. Milot, A.B. Kinne and F.H. Nowell. In September of 1934, a fire destroyed their business along with 25-30,000 negatives and 50,000 commercial prints. Approximately 3,000 negatives were salvaged. The Lomens never reopened their photography business. [From: Alaska History, Vol. 5, Spring, 1990, and The Lomen Brothers' Photographic Collection, Glenbow Archives, Calgary, Canada.]

Scope and Contents Note

This collection contains a broad coverage of northern Alaskan people and activities, including sled dogs and racing (the All Alaska Sweepstakes), arctic explorers, portraits of Eskimos, Eskimo hunters, Eskimo traditional activities, beach mining activities, Nome activities and businesses, reindeer herds and herders, and views of various Alaska towns.

The Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Canada, acquired a large collection of Lomen photographs in 1956. A published inventory of that collection, Lomen Brothers' Photographic Collection, Nome, Alaska, 1900-1935, which includes more details of the Lomen family, is available in the Alaska State Library (TR653.G54 1968). The photographs in PCA 28 collection were renumbered, the original Lomen numbers are included in parentheses, whenever possible.

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http://www.library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/finding_aids/PCA028.pdf
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65. Actual size of Alaska’s largest nugget, found by Pioneer Mining Co. On No. 5. Bench Off Discovery Anvil Wt. 182 oz. Value $3276.00 Nome September 8, 1903. (No. 767)

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http://www.library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/finding_aids/PCA028.pdf
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167. [Portrait of an Eskimo man dressed in a hooded rain jacket made from the lining membrane of the intestine of a seal or walrus.] (No. 122)

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172. Approach to Eskimo "eni" at Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska. [Low opening with furs and other items on each side.] (No. 128)
173. Looking east from the foot of Lane's Way - after the big storm, Nome, Ak. 1913. [Four men looking at partly destroyed building. Postcard size.]

174. After the big storm, 1913. First Ave., Nome, Alaska. [Small wooden building with front tipped up]

175. The Mighty Bering. [Large pieces of snow covered ice pushed up on shore. Nome buildings in background.] (No. 724)

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178. [Young Eskimo child in fur parka and fur mukluks]

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180. United States mail team, Nome - Teller route, Alaska. [Main on loaded sled with team of reindeer hitched to it.] (No. 1121)

181. [Dog team hitched to a sled, men on snow bank in background.]

182. [Envelope for negatives used by Lomen Brothers in Nome.]

183. [Full face portrait of a young Eskimo woman wearing a fur parka. Hood has large fur ruff.] (No. 2)

184. [3 Eskimos on small hand car which is being pulled by 6 dogs running on-the railroad tracks. Probably Nome.]

185. The Midnight sun [Sun near horizon] (No. 810)

186. Behring sea after a storm at Nome. [Waves and swells, Clouds in sky] (No. 840)

187. Interior church, Holy Cross [view of altar showing icons, statuary, candles and flowers]. (No. 877)

188. First Ave., Iditarod, Alaska [block long row of stores with people on wooden sidewalks in front of the stores]. (No. 868)

189. The schooner Challenger ashore at Nome, Alaska [man at right walking toward ship aground; rough surf.]. (No. 114)

190. Front St. - Ruby, Alaska [stores on either side of unpaved street; groups of men and women along street].
191. [Seven men standing behind gold bricks which are arranged on a table; Nome.] (No. 1436).


193. [Large room with fireplace at far end; long table and chairs, center; arm chairs, right-] (#319)


195. Start of F.M Ayer entry; Ninth All Alaska Sweepstakes, Nome, Alaska, April 11, 1916 [Crowds on either side of dogs, partially hiding them].


197. Start of Fay Delzene entry in the Solomon Derby, Nome, Alaska, March 2, 1914 [team being readied to start with crowds on either side of the street]. (#218).

198. Start of Mrs. Johnson entry, Fifth All American Sweepstakes, Nome, Alaska, April 4, 1912 [people on either side of team].

199. Mrs. L. Stevenson entry, Mrs. F.M. Ayer, "Burden"; winners, first place, Camoogan Burden Handicap Race, Nome to Council, Alaska, April 1917. [10 dog team; 2 people near sled]. (#1951)

200. Sleds made by Catholic Eskimos for Stefannsson's exploring expedition, The Rev. Bellarmine La Fortune, S.J., is on the left. [Eight Eskimos are grouped among the 10 or 12 sleds.]

201. [Portrait of young Eskimo lady with long hair in braids. Dressed in a parka.]

202. Eskimos out "in the wilderness". Nome, Alaska, [Two adults, two children & a dog.]

203. Two Little-Eskimo Maids. [Same children in PCA 28-3]

204. Eskimo Ivory Carver-Drilling. [Eskimo man with head bent down over the mouthpiece of the drill.]

205. [Eskimo woman, with baby strapped to her back, bent over fleshing out an animal.]

206. [Eskimo lady in lightweight parka with a baby strapped to her back.]

207. [Eskimo lady in full winter regalia with baby strapped to her back.] Copyright 1903 by Lomen Bros.
208. [Eskimo lady in winter parka, a toddler standing in front of her.]
209. [Little Eskimo girl in winter garb.]
210. [Eskimo holding the reins of a sled harnessed to a reindeer.] 586A.
212. [Two young Eskimo children seated on the grass.]
213. St. Patrick's Mask Ball -- Flat City -- Camp A.B. no. 26 [Large group of men, women and children, some in costume; U.S. flag on wall behind group.]
214. [Pipes for thawing ground, foreground, with gold dredge behind them; Nome area.
215. Alaska Reindeer, Kotzebue Herd No. 2 [Large herd of reindeer; low hills in background.] #695C and 1167.
216. [Eight members of the Black Wolf Squadron with a group of Nome residents beside plane. 1920.]
217. Looking Down Snow Gulch, Showing Glacier Benches in the Distance, N.W. Alaska [small groups of building in distance]. (no. 812)
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226. [Eskimo woman in hooded, fur parka.]
227. The Dress of the Coronation Gulf Eskimo. [back view] (no. 233)
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229. [Ice fishing]
230. Interior Eskimo eni, Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska [Man, woman, and girl seated inside eni]
231. [Eskimo with reindeer]
232. [Man and woman (Eskimo?) standing outside of skin dwelling]
233. [Young man and woman (Eskimo?)]
234. [Eskimo viewing walrus after a hunt]
235. [Four dressed in fur, pushing oomiak into icy ocean]
236. The S.S. Victoria bucking heavy seas in Bering. Photo. taken 8 p.m. (no. 901)
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252. [High snow banks on edge of town. John J. Sesson Co. visible]

253. Walrus asleep on an ice floe in Bering Sea. (No. 984)

254. [Seven reindeer, 3 men with sleds in snow]

255. [Reindeer herd]

256. [Man with sled and sled dogs]

257. [Eskimo seal hunters in on ice floes; seal and harpoon on ice.] (No. 1146?)


Addition: Acc. 2006-11


Verso: Nome to Safety 22 miles. Time 1 hour, 50 min 30 seconds. Won a silver cup each.