

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Choris, Louis, 1795-1828

Louis Choris Photograph Collection

PCA 139

42 color slides.
71 color photographs.

Processed by: Staff

ACQUISITION: The images were copied from a collection of Choris' prints acquired by the Alaska State Museum.

ACCESS: The collection is available for viewing; however, the photographs may not be photocopied.

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PROCESSING: The photographs are numbered and sleeved in Mylar.

Biographical Note

In 1815, Louis (or Ludovik/Ludwig) Choris (1795-1828) was living in St. Petersburg, Russia, when he was selected to be the official painter to accompany Captain Otto von Kotzebue's expedition to find a northwest passage through North America. Although only 20 years old, Choris had acquired a reputation in the Moscow art community as a botanical artist from an earlier Russian scientific expedition to the Caucasus Mountains. Twenty-seven people sailed aboard the ship *Rurik*, including Captain Kotzebue, scientist Adelbert von Chamisso, and Choris. The expedition left Europe July 3, 1815, sailed around South America and crossed the Pacific to Kamchatka where they wintered. During the summer of 1816, they explored the Bering Strait and Unalaska in the Aleutians. In October, they anchored in San Francisco Bay to stock up on food. Choris painted the region's inhabitants. From Nov. 1816 to Mar. 1817, they sailed the Hawaiian Islands before returning to the Arctic. The *Rurik* returned to St. Petersburg Aug. 3, 1818, after visiting Guam, the Philippines, South Africa, and London. From the paintings he made while on the trip, Choris published *Voyage Pittoresque autour du monde....* in 1822. He pursued a successful art career and produced another collection of lithographs in 1826. On March 22, 1828, he was attacked and killed by robbers on his way to Mexico City from Veracruz. [Portions from the American Journeys web site: americanjourneys.org]

Scope and Contents Note

The collection includes slides and photographs made from plates in Choris' book, *Voyage Pittoresque Autour du Monde* and Choris' second collection of lithographs, *Vues et Paysages des Regions Equinoxiale*. The detailed images include the inhabitants, tools, baskets, sea birds and animals and scenic views of St. George, St. Paul and St. Lawrence Islands (Pribilof Islands), the Aleutians, Kamchatka Peninsula, Kotzebue Sound, Unalaska. The slides are identical to [some of] the photographs.

Photos correspond with plates from two section of the Choris atlas:

Kamtchatka, le Golfe de Kotzebue. Terre de Tchouktchis
Iles Aléoutiens

Inventory

Plate numbers and corresponding PCA139 inventory numbers are:

Kamtchatka, le Golfe de Kotzebue. Terre de Tchouktchis

I	#26
II	#27
III	#28
IV	#29
V	#33
VI	#30
VII	#31
VIII	#32
IX	#36

X #35

Iles Aléoutiens

I #20
II #21
III #19
IV #18
V #45
VI #42
VII #43
VIII #44
IX #23
X #22
XI #25
XII #24
XIII NO IMAGE
XIV #53
XV #52
XVI #50
XVII #41
XVIII #40
XIX #39
XX #40
XXI #47
XXII NO IMAGE
XXIII #46

Slides

2a-c [same as 33]

3a-c [same as 29]

4a-c [same as 39]

5a-c [same as 32]

6a-c [same as 42, reverse image]

7a-c [same as 44]

[missing?]

9a-c [same as 28]

10a-c [same as 27]

11a-c [same as 36]

12a-c [same as 41]

13a-c [same as 50]

14a-c [same as 53]

15a-c [same as 22]

[missing?]

17a-c [same as 45]

Photographs

18 [Aleuts, man and woman]

19 [3 women, inhabitants of the Aleutians (Aleuts?)]

20 [View of a volcano, Aleutians]

21 [Mountain range, Aleutians]

22 [woven baskets from the Aleutians]

23 [costumes seen on the Aleutians, man and woman]

24 [seabird]

25 [distance view, port of Unalaska]

26 [inhabitants of the Gulf of Kotzebue (Kotzebue Sound) - 4 Alaskan Natives in furs, with labrets]

27 [man(?) and woman from "Kamtschatka" (Kamchatka) Peninsula in the Russian federation.

28 [utensils, spears, basket, etc. from the Bering region]

29 [etchings /carvings on bone]

30, 31 [human skull]

- 32 [seal (drawing)]
- 33 [carved items from Kotzebue region, sea otter, bear, loon, horse (?), man, etc.]
- 34 [map of the "Grand Ocean" (Pacific) and surrounding continents; showing Siberia, the coast of North America, and more]
- 35 ["Tchouktchis" - Siberian equivalent of the Eskimo - man, woman, child with tent and others in background]
- 36 [scenic, Gulf of Kotzebue]
- 37 [bear]
- 38 [sea bird, black and white]
- 39 [spears and woven spear holder, Bering region]
- 40 [model: frame and completed canoe, St. Lawrence Is.]
- 41 [interior of a house on St. Lawrence Is.]
- 42 [human skull]
- 43 [Aleuts in qajaqs (kayaks); Unalaska in the background]
- 44 [Aleutian qajaq (kayak), frame and complete]
- 45 [drawings of sea animal on an Aleutian hat]
- 46 [black and white sea bird]
- 47 [black and white sea bird]
- 48 [Aleut in a qajaq (kayak) off the coast of St. Paul; sea lions on the beach; large sailing ship in background]
- 49 [large tree on coast, Kamtschatka" (Kamchatka) Peninsula]
- 50 [inhabitants (three men) from St. Lawrence Island] 51 [sea bird]
- 52 [Sea lions on the rocks, St. Paul Island]
- 53 [Sea lions, St. George Island]

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