

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Alaska Highway Construction Photograph Collection, ca. 1942-1943

PCA 193

198 photographs

Processed by: Various

Revised: 5/5/2005

ACQUISITION: These photographs were donated in December 1981 by the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, Fort Worth, Texas (Richard Norris, Curator of Collections.) The Museum was unable to supply additional information from the original donor, whose late husband worked on the highway during WWII. Acc. No. 1981-020.

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

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

PROCESSING: Photographs are organized in series: Construction, Dedication, and Miscellaneous Views. They are individually numbered and sleeved in Mylar.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Alaska Highway was built during World War II for military transportation to Interior Alaska. It traverses over 1400 miles through Canada and Alaska, from Dawson Creek, Canada to Fairbanks, Alaska.

Workers from seven Army regiments, contractors (employing over 15,000 men) and the Public Roads Administration began construction March of 1942. Crews worked south from Delta Junction and north from Dawson Creek. It was completed in November, in eight months, when they met at Kluane Lake.

According to reports, the Alaska Highway was intentionally built with many crooks and turns so that convoys of supply trucks and equipment could not be entirely wiped out by enemy bombers attacking in a straight line.

Total construction cost for the 1422 miles was \$115 million. After WWI, the project was turned over to civilian contractors for graveling the rough-cut road, widening, replacing log bridges with steel and rerouting, which continues today. *[From: Alaska Almanac, c. 2003, p. 13,14 and www.themilepost.com]*

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The collection includes 4 x 5 photos of the construction of the Alaska Highway (the ALCAN), the opening of the highway and dedication. Includes images of riverboats, rafts, railroads, military truck convoys, bridges, equipment, camp life, military personnel, businesses and views of Fairbanks, Dawson Creek, B.C., and Yukon Territory.

The photographs are arranged by in series: A: Road Construction, B: Opening and dedication, and C: Miscellaneous views. Photographs are individually numbered.

INVENTORY

A. ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- 1 Tree clearing prior to construction: Pictures numbered 1-7.
- 2 Road construction equipment: Pictures numbered 8-25.
- 3 Laying down roadbed: Pictures numbered 26-33.
- 4 Pack train--riders and horses: Pictures numbered 34-37.
- 5 Bridge construction: Pictures numbered 38-48.
- 6 Bridges (Peace River, #54): Pictures numbered 49-54.
- 7 Personnel: Pictures numbered 55-69.

- (#55: Major Blaisdell)
- (#56: Major Blaisdell and staff officers)

8 Scenics: Pictures numbered 70-79.

B ROAD OPENING DEDICATION AND ROAD USE

- 1 Road opening ceremonies: Picture numbered 80-86.
- 2 Truck convoy: Pictures numbered 87-90.
- 3 Command car on road: Pictures numbered 91-96.
- 4 Miscellaneous vehicles on road: Pictures numbered 97-112.
- 5 First cargo to cross Peace River Bridge: Pictures numbered 113-114.
- 6 Miscellaneous views of road: Pictures numbered 115-129.

C MISCELLANEOUS

- 1 Camp flag ceremony: Pictures numbered 130-137.
- 2 Camps and camp life: Pictures numbered 138-155.
(#149: Swift River Camp)
- 3 Troop train: Pictures numbered 156-157.
- 4 Road signs and signposts: Pictures numbered 158-163.
- 5 Street scenes including Dawson Creek, B.C., Whitehorse, and Fairbanks: Pictures numbered 164-175.
(#164-166: Fairbanks, #167-170: Dawson Creek, #171: Whitehorse)
- 6 Miscellaneous buildings including District Headquarters: Pictures numbered 176-187.
- 7 Bear, planes, oil storage, trains, riverboats: Pictures numbered 188-198.