

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Pillsbury, Arthur C., 1870-1946

Arthur Clarence Pillsbury Photograph Collection, 1898

PCA 230

Biographical Note

Arthur Clarence Pillsbury was born Oct. 9, 1870 in Medford, Massachusetts, son of Harlin H. and Harriet Foster Pillsbury. He graduated from Stanford University in 1897 with a degree in mechanical engineering and came to Alaska in 1898 to work the gold camps in Alaska and the Yukon during the Klondike Gold Rush. He had headquarters in Wrangell, Juneau, Sitka and Skagway. He returned to Seattle and ran the Pillsbury Panoramic View Co, then went back to California and in 1903 worked as photographer for the *San Francisco Examiner*.

He married Sara Aetheline Banfield in 1906 in San Francisco and they adopted 3 children. He started the Pillsbury Picture Co. in Oakland and operated a studio in Yosemite Valley from 1907-1927. In the course of his career, Arthur Pillsbury "...built the first panorama camera, taking it to the Yukon to record the gold towns from the headwaters of the Yukon River to the ocean. ...chronicled the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire...[and] photograph[ed] its rebuilding from a balloon anchored on a tug in the bay. In 1914 he would build the first microscopic motions picture camera. In 1917 he would build the first X-ray motion picture camera. These would be followed by the first underwater motion picture camera in 1930. He would take that camera to Pago-Pago and himself film the first underwater movie." Arthur C. Pillsbury died in Oakland, California March 5, 1946. [From: the Arthur C. Pillsbury Foundation web site. Accessed 26 December 2002: <http://www.acpillsburyfoundation.com/index.html>]. *updated web site address 12/6/2010* : <http://www.acpillsburyfoundation.org/>

Scope and Contents Note

White Pass and Yukon Railroad; Klondike Gold Rush: S.E. Alaskan Indians. 1898.

Inventory of Photographs

- 1 White Pass and Yukon R.R. Crossing Skaguay River. Oct. 26. 98. [Train with two steam engines, a 'box car, and four passenger cars on the trestle. #407.
- 2 Chilkoot. Summit Alaska. From the Scales. [A view on the summit of the Chilkoot trail showing a small cabin with sign "Scales, Restaurant" and a large tent with "Beds" printed on its side] #368.
- 3 Railroad Climbing Skagway Canyon [looking down canyon]. #405.
- 4 Visiting Chilkats Watching Dance at the Klukwan Potlach. Oct. 11. 98 [Large groups gathered in boats at the water's edge. [American flag, much in evidence on all the boats]. #421.
- 5 Dancers at the Klukwan Potlach. Oct. 14. 98. [Group of dancers on beach in dance costume; some with painted faces]. #424.
- 6 Dancers at the Klukwan Potlach. Oct 14. 98 [group of dancers on beach in costume, mast with left profile to the camera]. #422.
- 7 Section of Muir Glacier. [Icebergs foreground, Glacier beyond.] Photograph located in oversize photograph drawer.
- 8 Forest and tramway from Chilkoot Trail, Alaska [two tram cars, center, with trees cut beneath them; mountain peaks beyond]. (no. 377)
- 9 Halfway House Between Canyon City and Sheep Camp, Chilkoot Trail , Alaska [building, left center; river, right]. (no. 374)
- 10 Dyea, Alaska [overall view from opposite side of river]. (no. 379) Fading print.
- 11 Stamp operation, Treadwell Mine, Alaska [long row of stamp machines].