

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

**Guide to Collection**

**Caldwell, Frank and Brownie**

**Frank and Brownie Caldwell Photograph Collection, 1905**

**PCA 249**

1 box (0.58 linear ft.)  
191 glass lantern slides, some hand tinted.  
Box camera, used in creation of slides

**ACQUISITION**

Series I and II were donated by M.J. Caldwell (Acc#1985-007). Series III, which includes the original hand painted glass lantern slides, was donated by Beverly J. Caldwell Smith (Acc#2009-59).

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

In 1905 Frank and Brownie Caldwell of Indianapolis, Indiana traveled to Alaska and the Yukon on their honeymoon. On this trip, Mr. Caldwell was an "advance man-lecture manager" for Reverend John P. D. John, a Methodist minister who wanted to bring religion to the gold camps. The Caldwell's also gathered stories, photographs and information for a travelogue series. Mrs. Caldwell took photos with a small box camera which were used to make hand-colored glass projection slides for the travelogue which was published in extensive newspaper accounts.

Travel in Alaska included towns from Ketchikan to Juneau, Sitka, Skagway, the White Pass Route, by river steamer to the Yukon, Circle City and Nome. The story of their travels is told in extensive newspaper accounts in the scrapbook. Frank Caldwell also teamed up on his lecture series with Eli Smith, an Alaska mail carrier, who mushed his dog team 8,000 miles from Nome to Washington, D.C., in 1907, winning a \$10,000.00 wager on this feat. Frank Caldwell wrote a book about a sled dog team led by a wolf, based on Eli Smith and his leader. The book, Wolf The Storm Leader, was published by Dodd & Mead in 1910 and reprinted in 1937.

The Caldwell family presented the collection to the library in April 1985. It also includes a small photograph album titled, "1905 Album of Mrs. Frank Caldwell ('Brownie')," and transparencies made from the lecture series.

M. J. Caldwell, family historian, of Leesburg, Florida arranged the scrapbook and prepared a listing of the transparency series with help from his sister, Mrs. Frances Dickens. Their efforts in arranging his parent's Alaska material greatly assisted the library.

### **The Birth of a Book**

By Fenton Caldwell

I am putting down here in print some of the background leading up to the writing of a book "Wolf The Storm Leader", written by our father, Frank Caldwell, which was in publication by Dodd Mead thru many publications for over fifty years.

During the early part of the year 1905, while we were living at 929 Udell Street in Indianapolis and while Margaret, Roy and I were under the care of Aunt Matilda and Laura, Dad was traveling, as advance agent, for Dr. John P.D. John, a professor from Depaw University. Dad was making arrangements for speaking engagements where Dr. John gave his lecture called, "Did God make man or did Man make God?" I knew very little about this lecture or its contents but I do remember that the mention of this title always gave me a disturbed feeling.

During this period, Dr. John made frequent visits to our house and I remember him as being a large man, with a very large, partly bald head. He had a pink complexion, large piercing eyes and a booming voice. He wore a derby hat, a black overcoat with the most beautiful velvet collar and soft light colored leather gloves with a gold headed cane. He was always kind and gentle with us children but, as a boy of nine years, I still remember him with a great sense of awe.

In the late spring of 1905 two very important projects were in the making around our home altho (sic) I do not remember that I was aware of either of these great events. Dad was about to take in marriage our "Mom", Brownie Gauld who was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. A.B. Gauld, the druggist two blocks down the street from our house. Dad was also arranging for a speaking tour, by Dr. John, thru the northwest and on into Alaska, which was to be a combined business trip and a honeymoon. This was very soon after the great gold rush in Alaska and the Klondike and a trip to that area was a real adventure.

Dad was a fine looking man at this time, with an impressive moustache (just a bit red in color), a pleasing personality and an insatiable curiosity to learn more about people, places and things. Because of this he gathered together a great deal of material during this trip which was later to be put together in an illustrated lecture called "Beyond the Klondike". Mom took along on this trip a small box camera from Grandpa Gaulds store and they took many pictures, all in black and white of course since color was not yet invented.

Back at 929 Udell St. things were going along in their normal routine and I do not remember of ever having Aunt Matilda or Laura sit down and explain to Margaret or me just what was going on. I recall that I had a feeling that, from remarks here and there, things were going to be different.

When Dad and our new Mom returned there were great things going on at our house. People I had never seen before, coming and going, trunks and suit cases and boxes arriving with all kind of strange things. There was a beautiful white fox fur, little skin Omiaks and Kyaks, (boats), hideous totem poles and above all I remeber a quart jar of "blubber oil", which may have been either whale or seal or walrus but when it was opened in the house everyone made a hurried exit and for months it was kept out under the back porch steps. I soon learned that my little friends were not particulary interested in stories about Alaska or the many curios but when I took those little boys out under the back porch on a hot

summer afternoon and opened that jar of “blubber” and the aroma drifted off across the back yard, I immediately gained stature in the neighborhood.

During the summer of 1905 many adjustments were being made in our household. Aunt Matilda and Laura soon left. Margaret and I were getting acquainted with new Uncles, Aunts and cousins and a most likeable new Granpa and Grandma. There were problems with Roy, in the adjustment and many others which I probably never knew about, but a project was soon under way at our house which took our interest for some time to come.

The many hundreds of pictures which Mom had taken with the little box camera had been developed in black and white. After sorting and selecting certain pictures they were transferred on to small squares of glass until we had about 300 Alaskan pictures on glass slides. Then for several days a lady came to our house and spent many hours at our dining room table putting colors on these glass slides under the direction of Dad and Mom. Along about this time there came to our house a Magic Latern projection outfit which was of great interest to a boy of 9. There was a large metal box affair with hoses and brass valves and legs to stand upon. Also there were two large metal cylinders which we were told held hydrogen and oxygen. When Dad hooked up the hoses, turned the valves just right and lit a match in the box there was loud pop and then a brilliant light projecting the colored pictures on to a sheet hanging in our parlor. There were white snow-capped mountains, blue water, dark colored Eskimos in fur clothing and hideous totem poles all showing up on our parlor wall in color.

With the pictures ready, Dad soon got under way with a lecture tour thru Lyceum Bureaus and other types of booking. His lecture was called “Beyond the Klondike” and during the showing of these pictures in theatres, Chatauqua Tents, Auditoriums and School rooms, he would give a running narration about Alaska. Safety engineers, today, would shudder at the manner in which this showing of pictures was conducted. Everything needed for the lectures went along with Dad by train or buggy from town to town and there was the problem of buying cylinders of Hydrogen and Oxygen which when blended together in the wrong manner are explosive enough to send the latest rocket to the Moon. Quite often this prjection machine, with the two cylinders of gases would be set up in the middle of an auditorium with several hundred people completely around it but I do not remember of there ever being any serious accidents. I remember very well the thrill it gave me to be allowed to help fold the adverting circulars which were mailed out from our house in advance of certain lectures. These circulars had a picture of Dad on the front page showing him in a Prince Albert coat and with a heavy mustache.

In December of 1906, after Dad had been on the lecture circuit for several months, he happened to be walking down the street in St Louis when he noticed in the display window of a large department store a team of dogs, a large sleigh and a weather-beaten man all dressed in furs. It did not take Dad long to get inside the store and make the aqqaintence of Eli Smith, an Alaskan mail carrier on his way from Nome, Alaska to Washington, D.C. Eli was showing his Dogs in the store window in order to pick up a little extra cash and dog-food to help defray his expenses. In a very short time Dad was getting the story of Eli’s trip and trying to make plans for a collaboration with Eli for lectures together and it was from this meeting there was born a most interesting and memorable association between Dad and Eli.

At this point it might be well for me to explain how it happened that an Alaskan mail carrier was in St. Louis with about two-thirds of a most unusual trip finished. Eli Smith was a native of Wisconsin, who for many years had been carrying the US Mail by do-sled out of Nome, along the Alaskan trails. One cold nite, while drinking (tea) in the Malamoot saloon, Eli entered into a wager of \$10,000.00 that he could deliver, within a certain number of months, a letter from the Postmaster of Nome to the Post Master General in Washington, D.C. The only means of carrying this letter was to be with Eli’s dog-team and sled, except that he could take a boat from Valdez to Seattle. Otherwise the trip was to be on

snow, where he found it, or on wheels under the sled, where there was no snow. Eli left Nome on November 24, 1905 and in Arctic winter made the 1530 miles to Valdez in 37 days. I am quoting here below a few excerpts taken from Eli's diary; "Dec. 6, 1905 – On Yukon ice, thermometer about 60 below. Ran across two men fetching badly frozen man in to Tanana, and bad trail, men and dogs played out. Sledged frozen man into Tanana and sent back fresh team for others. Frozen man and Gus Brown died next day." "Dec. 9 – On Tanana ice about 50 below. Overtook man dragging sled by yoke. When made camp found both his hands frozen; he didn't know it before. Thawed them out with snow and warm water; they didn't blister, but turned brown. Knew they were gone, so roped him around waste to the back of my sled to hold him up and keep him moving - \*\*\*\* headed for the fort. Sugeon chopped his hands off for him". – Dec. 19 – Met Sourdough Mary going into Dawson from her Copper River placers. Fine team. Said she'd been delayed a week thawing out four men she'd found freezing on the trail and there dogs played out. Gave her some dog moccasins."

After arriving in Valdez the Boat trip to Seattle was made without incident. He then headed east with the nine dogs and sled toward Washington 3,000 miles away and while that portion of his trip may not have been as hazardous as in the arctic it was not without delays, trouble and problems. Two of his dogs were poisoned and so he made the rest of the trip with a team of seven. Frequent delays were caused by his passing close to chicken pens when the whole team took off with sled and Eli thru thru the fences and in to the "kill". This meant the settling with some farmer for dead poultry, untangling a mess of dog harness, repairs to the sled and gathering together the scattered equipment. Also, in passing thru the larger towns, where crowds would often gather to see such and unusual sight, the press reports indicate, that there were some rather tumultuous disturbances when seven half wild dogs and a rough old Sourdough became too intimately mixed up with civilization.

Now getting back to St. Louis where Dad had just met Eli; --

Three lectures were scheduled for Dec. 7th and 8th in Tomlinson Hall, Indianapolis and Eli agreed to be there to go on stage with his outfit but he must go overland. I feel sure that, from reading Dads scrap book he must have had some rather nervous moments wondering if Eli would make this first appearance on time. I quote a letter written by Eli on hotel stationery bearing pictures of the St Louis fair dated Nov. 22, 1906. "Mr. Frank Caldwell, Dear Sir; I take the pleasure of wrighting to you with regards to what we ware talking about wile you were in St. Louis in giving that lecture in Indianapolis on Alaska and what you could do with the dogs. I have arrived in Springfield and if you make arrangements wright to me and let me know. I will bee hear until next Thirsdlay hoping to hear by return mail, Yours ever, Eli. A. Smith, U.S. Mail carrier, from Nome, Alaska, address Springfield, Gen. Delivery."

Also a telegram dated Dec. 4th from Decatur, Ill. reads; - "Mr. Frank Caldwell, Indpls, Ind. Roads are bad will leave today, Eli A. Smith, 1220 PM."

It also appears, from press reports, that Eli made it from Decatur to Indianapolis in three days and, before a large audience, during an intermission of Dads lecture the lights came on in Tomlinson Hall and from the wing of the stage seven Alaskan dogs came lunging out with the loaded sled and Eli in all his furs at the pole yelling "Mush-Wolf - Hya Sport- Mush-On – Pasco"

From this time on, for several months, Dad and Eli wrestled with the problems of getting 300 glass slides, oxygen, hydrogen and Dad (by train), 7 dogs, sled and Eli by road in to the proper auditorium at the right time and thus it was all the way to Washington. They appeared in towns of various sizes including Dayton, Ohio, and finally in February they appeared in the Columbia Theatre in Washington.

Upon Eli's arrival in Washington he was greeted at the White House by President Teddy Roosevelt and then went on, with dog team to the Post Office Department and delivered the letter from Nome to the Post Master General, Mr. Cortelyou. As to whether Eli ever collected the \$10,000.00 I have no knowledge but he and Dad did make a number of lecture appearances and during this period Dad was getting a great deal of first hand information and Alaskan lore which went in to the book he was about to write.

I have a rather vivid memory of Eli because he came out to our house at 929 Udell St. with his dog team and sled and spent Friday nite Dec. 7, 1906, putting his dogs to bed in our back yard. Eli was not a large man but seemed to be all muscle and sinew. His face was like Cordaven leather, his hands were rough and bony and his voice was rasping. I never felt at ease in his presense and those dogs terrified me.

The lecture tours continued for awhile but I have always had the opinion that they were not a financial success and before long Dad was at home a great deal. I would hear him early in the morning and late at nite writing on the old Underwood typewriter on the dining room table. He would read papers about Eli and the dog team and Wolf the Storm Leader became a rather familiar phrase around our house. Then there were trips he made to New York and one day when the nice new books appeared at our house I realized that it was a book that Dad had written and which had been published by Dodd Mead & Co. (I must confess at this point that I never actually sat down and read the book thru but evidently it has given some measure of pleasure to many girls and boys.) "Wolf the Storm Leader" went thru many editions since 1906, is found in most libraries and many schools and paid royalties for all those years, altho I never knew what this amounted to in the early years.

After Dad passed away the royalties went to Mom until she was gone. At that time we eight children, Margaret, Fenton, Roy, Anna May, Marion, Frances, Herbert and Martha all signed papers granting Marion the right to receive the royalties. Marion, in turn, sent each royalty payment on to Dads grandchildren in chronological order according the date of their birth. Some of these grandchildren, now grown, may remember a new bicycle, a new dress or other extra which came from "Wolf the Storm Leader". At the point let me give an expression of sincere thanks from all of we other children, to Marion and Lucille, for their handling of these payments over the many years.

The final edition of "Wolf the Storm Leader" has now been published and so all that remains are the memories of a most interesting episode in the life of the Frank Caldwell family.

Fenton Caldwell

## INVENTORY

## I. Publications, clippings, etc.

1. Scrapbook.  
(A-C) Includes photographs of sled dogs, Eli Smith (various places: Washington D.C., White House, etc.), Dawson; newspaper clippings; Travelogue brochures; letters from Eli Smith (Alaska mail carrier/dog musher); W. J. Holland (Carnegie Museum); Sheldon Jackson, Frank Waskey (Alaska delegate to Congress); biographical data on the Caldwells; "Eight Thousand Miles by Dog Sled", by Marilyn Caldwell and Robert Caldwell Wilson (ALASKA JOURNAL, Spring 1984).
2. Book: WOLF THE STORM LEADER, by Frank Caldwell. New, enlarged edition. c.1937; 1957 printing. N.Y., Dodd, Mead & Co.
3. (Oversize) Reproduction of THE SUNDAY STAR (Indianapolis), March 18, 1906, p. 39. Story titled "Arctic dog, man's best friend in the land of the midnight sun."

## II. Photographs, transparencies, etc.

1. Photograph album: Alaska trip, 1905. 43 photos.
2. Transparencies (35mm Kodachrome).  
These transparencies were made from the original photos and glass slides used in Travelogue presentations titled, "To the Klondike"; "Beyond the Klondike"; "Land of the Midnight Sun"; "Two Thousand Miles on the Yukon"; etc. M. J. Caldwell prepared this list based on his recollections and data in the scrapbook.

Main series (84)

- 1 Map of North America.
- 2 Alaska, How Big?
- 3 Ocean Steamer to Alaska.
- 4 Inside Passage.
- 5 The Glacier.
- 6 Ketchikan.
- 7 Eskimo Newspaper.
- 7B Eskimo Newspaper.
- 7C Eskimo Newspaper.
- 8 Sitka--Old Russian Guns.
- 9 Russian Orthodox Church.
- 10 Inside the Church
- 11 Russian Icons.
- 12 Bishop Innocence, of the Church.
- 13 Graveyard of the Skull
- 14 Totem Poles.
- 15 Bear Paw Totem.
- 16 Gov. Brady with Frank Caldwell.
- 17 Gov. Brady inspecting drying fish.
- 18 Drying Salmon.
- 19 Dominion Day at Dawson(?) 1905.
- 20 Dominion Day.

Main series (cont.)

- 21 Chilkoot Pass (a drawing)
- 22 White Pass & Yukon Railroad
- 23 The Rail Bridge
- 24 Whitehorse
- 25 Re-fueling the boat
- 26 River boat on the Yukon
- 27 Map--Dawson to Nome--via the Yukon
- 28 River Barge
- 29A One way to load
- 29B A river boat
- 30 City hall
- 31 Hub Restaurant
- 32 Prices at Dawson
- 33 Travelers Hotel
- 34 Presbyterian church
- 35 The "Honeymooners"
- 35B Old Miner and his cat
- 36 Gold Nugget, from 1905
- 37 Klondike, miners & pack dogs
- 38 [No picture available.]
- 39 Any yellow dirt?
- 40 A strike?
- 41 Frank Caldwell, panning
- 42 Bigger machinery
- 43 Gold "in the banks."
- 44 Brownie at the nozzle
- 45 Sluice box
- 46 A Coal mine
- 47 [No picture available.]
- 48 Eskimo greeting at the Boat
- 49 Eskimo greeting at the Boat
- 50 Eskimos with Frank Caldwell
- 51 Children at Play
- 52 Eskimo Salesladies
- 53 Salmon drying
- 54 An Umiak shelter
- 55 Mrs. Caldwell with Eskimo mother and child
- 56 Frank Caldwell with Eskimos
- 57 A Potlatch celebration
- 58 Ivory carved knife
- 59 Walrus tusk paper-weight
- 60 Carved paper-weight
- 61 Eskimo baskets (1905)

Main series (cont.)

- 62 An Eskimo school
- 63 The Woolly Mammoth
- 64 Frank Caldwell with Mammoth tusk
- 65 A Mammoth tooth
- 66 The Giant Ox skull (now at Pittsburg Carnegie Museum-see album)
- 67 Frank Caldwell with Government dogs
- 68 Dog sleds on roof, for storage
- 69 A dog team
- 70 Eli Smith, of the 8,000 mile trip, in furs
- 71 Nome, where the trip started
- 72A Eli, sled on wheels
- 72B Eli, sled on wheels
- 73 Somewhere en-route
- 74 Eli Smith at White House
- 75 Eli at White House, with Pres. Teddy Roosevelt's son, Quentin in sled
- 76 The President's note
- 77 Dogs at stage door
- 78 The Midnight Sun. Why?
- 79 The Midnight Sun
- 80 The Midnight Sun
- 81 The Midnight Sun

Eskimo Series (26)

No. A through Z. A Series of Eskimo Photos--no attempt to identify.

Scenery (31)

A1 through A31. No identification.

Dog Pictures and vegetation (15)

B1 through B15. No identification.

Unidentified and unnumbered (15)III. Glass Lantern slides, papers

Lantern Slides 188 original hand colored slides, which are the source of duplicates listed in Series II.

Papers

Slide Show. Inventory of lantern slides. Organization by M.J. Caldwell, 1979. (The arrangement of this inventory is distinctly different from the inventory of Series II duplicates.)

Programs. 2 sheets with titles of slides being presented. 1907.

Birth of a book by Fenton Caldwell. Typescript, 5 pages.

Arctic Dog Man's Best Friend in the Land of the Midnight Sun. Article from the Indianapolis Sunday Star, March 18, 1906.

The Spinning Wheel by Beverly Caldwell Smith. Newspaper clipping.

Box

Kodak camera, used by Brownie Caldwell in production of lantern slides.