

**Alaska State Library
Historical Collections**

Booher, Benjamin Wesley

Benjamin Wesley Booher Photograph Collection, 1900-1904

PCA 250

26 photographs

ACQUISITION: The collection was donated by Alma Booher Bender, daughter of Benjamin W. Bender, on behalf of the Booher family, in May, 1985. Manuscripts form a separate collection, MS 13-06. (Acc. # 1985-009.)

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

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

PROCESSING: The photographs are sleeved in Mylar and numbered. Some of the images are faded. Descriptive information supplied by the librarian is enclosed in brackets.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In 1900, Ben Booher (Guthrie Center, Iowa) joined his wife's uncle, George Cheever Hazelet, (Omaha, Nebraska) and A. Jack Meals (O'Neill, Nebraska) on a prospecting expedition to Alaska. Booher's diary lists fourteen additional men in the party that departed from Seattle, Feb. 1, 1900, on the vessel *Excelsior*, and arrived in Valdez Bay, Feb. 13. They prospected in Copper Center, Valdez, Chisna, Chitna, Gulkana and Gakona. Booher's diary (MS 13-06) gives an account of their daily lives and the people they met on the pack trail. During his trip, Booher wrote to his wife in Iowa describing his days and adventures. Booher came back to Alaska in 1904 then returned home and worked as a farmer and carpenter. In addition to Iowa, he lived in Montana, Oregon and Washington State. He died in Kent, Washington in April 1975, at age 102.

George C. Hazelet and Jack Meals stayed in Alaska and were active in community affairs at Valdez. In 1908, Mr. Hazelet moved to Cordova where he helped survey the townsite and also served as Mayor after running against Judge Wickersham. He died in Cordova in August 1926. The Journal Of George C. Hazelet, an account of his 1898 journey from Nebraska to the Copper River Basin over the Valdez Glacier is available in the library (F912. C7H3).

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The photographs collected by Ben Booher record his time in Valdez, on the trail and in the camps of the prospecting group.

INVENTORY

- 1 [Passenger ship *Excelsior* (?) in Valdez harbor.]
- 2 [Valdez Glacier from water.]
- 3-6 [Street in Valdez; Hotel St. Elias, left.] Similar views.
- 7 1st camp out of Valdez up Lowe River, Mar 1900 [group of men in cleared area, trees beyond].
- 8 4th of July 1900 between Tonsina and Copper Center [group of men on grassy slope including B.W. Booher].
- 9-14 [Camps and camp activities; unnamed locations.]
- 15 [Three sled dogs near log cabin.]

- 16-17 [Sleds, with load of logs; snow shoes; tent in distance; snowy flats, mountains in distance] Similar views.
- 18-19 [Camp on Chisna River with tents, center; Mt Jumbo (?) in distance.] Similar views.
- 20 [Two sleds loaded with logs being pulled by dog teams; 2 drivers-, building beyond sleds.]
- 21-22 [Log cabin; men playing musical instruments beside cabin] Similar views.
- 23 Mill near Chisna camp [man near unfinished wooden structure; hilly terrain].
- 24 [Choppy water; mountains in far distance; probably Valdez area.]
- 25 [View from above of men on well-used trail.]
- 26 [Men in mining camp.] Very faded image.