

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Souvenir of Alaska and Tribute to M. J. Heney, 1898-1900

PCA 340

56 photographs  
15 hand lettered pages  
(1 album, leather)  
(0.5 linear ft.)

Processed: 1994  
By: India Spartz,  
Ellen FitzGerald

**ACQUISITION:** The album was donated in 1992 by the Cordova Historical Society. The Society found the album in their holdings after a survey of materials in 1986. No provenance is available concerning the original owner. The album was presented to Michael J. Heney in 1900 by friends and colleagues. Acc. No. 1992-031.

**ACCESS:** The photos may be viewed. However, they 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 numbered and the album was placed in a clamshell box. The leather cover is in good condition. Some silvering on the photographs is occurring. A finding aid is available.

### Biographical Note

Michael J. Heney was known as "Big Mike" to his railroad crews and the "Irish Prince" in the financial and social circles of Seattle, San Francisco, New York and London; to his friends he was simply "MJ." He ran away from his Pembroke, Ontario home at age 14 to work on the Canadian Pacific Railroad and learned to measure grades, blast cliffs, build tunnels and estimate costs. His natural talent to inspire working men established him as a railroad contractor by age 21. He worked on railroads in the Northwest, permanently establishing himself in Seattle. Then in 1897, he went to Alaska and the next 12 years, worked to build the White Pass & Yukon Route and the first hundred miles of the Copper River & Northwestern, his dream of building a railroad up the Copper River. Both railroads involved "insurmountable engineering and construction difficulties." He never married. He died at age 45 on Oct. 11, 1910, of pulmonary tuberculosis and left an estate of over one million dollars to relatives, associates, Catholic charities, and the Alaskan Indians in care of Episcopal Bishop Rowe. The mountains overlooking Cordova were named for him. [From: *Big Mike Heney, Irish prince of the iron rails, builder of the White Pass and Yukon, and Copper River Northwestern Railroads*, by Elizabeth Tower, 1990.]

### Scope and Contents Note

A commemorative album presented to Michael J. Heney by his friends and employees of the White Pass and Yukon Railway (WP&YRR). The photographs are by H.C. Barley, WP&YRR's official photographer, hired in 1898, the same year that Heney went to work on the railroad. The album contains photos of the White Pass & Yukon and the Copper River and Northwestern railroads, railroad employees, railroad construction. The album also contains 15 pages of poetry, tributes to his work and signatures of the people who worked with and for him, hand-lettered and illustrated in red, blue, green and black ink.

### Inventory

1. A Souvenir of Alaska and a Tribute from his Friends to the Man, M.J. Heney, 1898-1900 [hand lettered and colored dedication page].
2. Rock Workers on Tunnel Mt. H.C. Barley, photographer [workers on hillside].
3. 'His' Work [statistics on roadwork for rail line between Skagway and Whitehorse, hand lettered].
4. His Eminence [M.J. Heney and another man on hillside].
5. Companions in labor [Heney and another man with hand trucks].
6. The Toast [hand lettered poem].
7. At Lunch H.C. Barley, photographer [row of men on both sides of dining table].

8. Nearing the Tunnel. H.C. Barley, photographer [train engine coming around bend].
9. [Continuation of tribute and dedication; page 1 missing.]
10. [Four men and two dogs in front of tent cabin, two other figures inside cabin door.]
11. 'Our' share of the work [signatures and positions of railroad personnel].
12. Driving the Last Spike in the W.P. & Y.R. at Caribou, July 29, 1900. H.C. Barley, photographer.
13. [Signatures continued].
14. Track Laying. H.C. Barley, photographer [line of workers with track].
15. [Signatures continued].
16. [Roadbed with roadcut hill behind; putting railroad ties in place.]
17. [Laying track.]
18. [Signatures continued.]
19. [Heney and four other men seated around table, one standing behind, in tent cabin.]
20. [Signatures continued.]
21. Hugh Foy, Dr. Whiting, M.J. Heney, E.C. Hawkins, S.H. Graves, J. Hislop. H.C. Barley, photographer [men standing in front of tent cabin].
22. The First Train [hand lettered poem].
23. Cutting Grade on Tunnel Mountain Near White Pass. H.C. Barley, photographer [line of men on hillside with mountain in background].
24. [Poem continued.]
25. The Beginning of the Road. H.C. Barley, photographer [laying track, townsite in background with Hotel Brannick on left and Hotel Rosalie on right].
26. [Poem continued, in memoriam to Robin Brydone Jack Hugh Foy.]
27. Clifford Sifton Running the Rapids of Miles Canon, copyrighted by H.C. Barley, July 1900 [steamboat in canyon].
28. The Result Nov. '98 [hand lettered poem].

29. [Three men and one dog with a pack sled.]
30. [River and snowy banks.]
31. [Poem continued.]
32. The Fire Brigade [man holding log on braces].
33. "Excursionists" [Excursionists] [two horses pulling a wagonload of people through the work site.]
34. The Water Works [yoked horse with man behind; faded view].
35. Waiting for the Dinner Bell, Bruin [bear in the woods].
36. [View of people and horses with a sled.]
37. [Train engine at end of tracks, two people to the right.]
38. Timber on the Skaguay. H.C. Barley, photographer [man on horseback in tall trees].
39. [Flatbed cars full of workers behind new track.]
40. [Workers laying track.]
41. Indian Crossing. H.C. Barley, photographer [river rushing through canyon].
42. The End of the Race. H.C. Barley, photographer [Native man and woman by tent].
43. Sweet, sweet home [sign for Home Restaurant, building in background].
44. [Two children on tracks, tent cabins along both sides of track.]
45. A Double Team of Dogs, Klondike. The "Past" [eight dogs pulling sled with four men in background].
46. The "Present", Lewis Lake Trestle. H.C. Barley, photographer [men seated on boxcars on trestle].
47. S.S. City of Seattle. H.C. Barley, photographer [steamer in front of docks].
48. [Lake or snowfield.]
49. [Man in suit standing to left of line of railroad ties.]
50. [Stand of stripped small timber.]
51. Birch Bark, an arctic product [colored drawing of a man on birch bark].

52. The Origin of the Testimonial [typed commemorative].
53. The Zig-Zag Trail up Tunnel Mountain. H.C. Barley, photographer.
54. [Signatures from commemorative.]
55. [Barge on a river carrying house and logs.]
56. [Steamer on a river.]