

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Romeo, John

John Romeo Photograph Collection

PCA 342

[1911 U.S. Navy Alaskan Wireless Expedition from California to Alaskan coastal communities including Cordova, Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands. Includes views of Southeast Alaska, and sinking of the PRINCESS KATHLEEN in 1952 near Juneau, ca. 1911-1952]

1 2-1/2" legal box  
0.2 linear feet

Processed: June 1993  
By: Marilyn Kwock

**ACQUISITIONS:** Charles F. and Lucille Noll (niece of John Romeo) donated portions of a photograph album (108 views) about the 1911 U.S. Navy Alaskan Wireless Expedition. Their son, Rick Noll, donated 44 photographs of the PRINCESS KATHLEEN shipwreck and Southeast Alaska, which had belonged to the Romeos.

**ACCESS:** The collection is unrestricted.

**COPYRIGHT:** Request for permission to publish material from the collection must be discussed with the Librarian.

**PROCESSING:** The views of the U.S. Navy Alaskan Wireless Expedition are in fair condition but fragile and were removed from black album pages, scraped, and kept in order. Some are fading. Two cyanotypes are included. Views of Southeast communities and the PRINCESS KATHLEEN were reorganized placed at the end of the collection.

### Biographical Note

John Romeo, an enlisted hospital corpsman, served a U.S. Navy Alaskan Wireless Expedition in 1911 to improve navigation and communication along the Pacific coast. The expedition is described in detail in the accompanying article, "Cruising in the land of the Midnight Sun," by K. W. Sherman (see #153). Romeo, an amateur photographer, documented the four month voyage to Nome, the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands and Southcentral Alaska, where the crew installed three wireless stations and repaired existing ones. John and Christine Romeo had a daughter, Marie.

### Scope and Content Note

The views of the U.S. Navy Alaskan Wireless Expedition are in fair condition, but fragile, having been removed from an album. Some of the views are fading, and include two cyanotypes. John Romeo also photographed and collected general views of other Southeast communities. These include views of the wreck of the PRINCESS KATHLEEN near Juneau in September 1952, and the subsequent rescue effort. These views are in good condition.

### Inventory

#### *U.S. Navy Alaskan Wireless Expedition, 1911* (#1-108)

1. [Men in skiffs next to unfinished pier?]
2. [Watching a skiff leaving shore.] (no. 56)
3. [Constructing tramway on a small pier.]
4. [Wheelbarrow runway on beach.]
5. [Catch of fish in a small boat.] oval crop
6. [Two circular tents.] cropped
7. [Fish catch on ship's deck.] (no. 26)
8. [Two native men and a wheelbarrow.]
9. [Men on pier with boats alongside.] blurred
10. [Piles of construction materials around tramway to beach.]
11. [Panoramic view of a station under construction.]
12. [Panoramic view of a windswept beach.]

13. [Four men in raingear.]
14. [Two small buildings under construction, with tents and lumber.] (no. 4, 63)
15. [Same site from opposite direction, looking toward beach.]
16. [Same site; men and barrels around the buildings.]
17. [Man feeding chickens.] paper affixed on image
18. [Men on end of pier in stormy weather; putting up a tower?.]
19. [Similar to #18.] discoloration of image
20. [Panoramic view of men on end of pier among large waves.] discolored
21. [Bird's eye view of buildings and sheds, with tramway at right.]
22. [Rocky pinnacles in surf.] oval crop
- 23-24. [Rocky shoreline.]
- 25-26. [Panoramic views of rocky shoreline and pier.] #25 wrinkled
27. [Two skiffs rafted together and under tow.]
28. [Men on end of pier in big waves.]
29. [Panoramic view of men on end of pier.] wrinkled
30. [Beach at low tide; barge and men at left.] (no. 53) cyanotype, torn
31. [Looking down on men constructing pier.] (no. 90)
32. [Similar view.] (no. 91)
33. [Men on end of tramway pier.] (no. 84)
34. [Seven men standing in a row.] (no. 100)
35. [Tramway and construction materials; ship in background.] (no. 93)
36. [Two men in boxing ring.] (no. 101)
37. [Two men boxing in ring.] (no. 103)
38. [Two boxers in ring.] (no. 105)

39. [Similar view.] (no. 108)
40. [Two boxers.] (no. 110)
41. [Two boxers.] (no. 106)
42. [Nine men in apple-eating contest.] (no. 112)
43. [Men lined up for a race.] (no. 115)
44. [Men watching long jump contest.] (no. 113)
45. [Rear view of men in wheelbarrow race.] (no. 114)
46. [Four men at base of a tower.]
47. [Nine men sitting on building steps.]
48. [Four men working with tools and wheelbarrow.]
49. [Five men with wheelbarrows on a beach.]
50. [Four men in a small tent.] cropped
51. [Ship; head-on view.] oval crop
52. [Two ships in the distance.] (no. 48)
53. [Similar view.] oval crop
54. [Two ships in distance.] (no. 48a)
55. [Quarter view of a ship.] wrinkled
56. [Men at work.]
57. [Two men and equipment.] fading
58. [Three men working at base of a tower?]
59. [Eleven men sitting on building steps.]
60. [Man butchering two pigs.]
61. [Wide view of community and wharf on windswept shore; Alaska Commercial Co. at left.]
62. [Panoramic view of ocean and ship's deck.] (no. 24)

63. [Distant view of mountainous island across the water.] oval crop
64. [Four posts on a barge? emerging from sea next to the ship, attached by cables.] (no. 40)
65. [Man standing on submerged barge? alongside of ship.] (no. 31; 43 is crossed out)
66. [Broadside view of steamer.] double circle crop
67. [Boat towing a barge.] corners cropped
68. [Boat towing a barge.]
69. [Men and lumber on barge under tow.] (no. 43a)
70. [Man and tower next to a tent.]
71. [Man wearing earphones, next to equipment; interior view.] (no. 98?)
72. [Moving lumber from barge onto land by tramway.]
73. [Two small boats on ship's deck.] (no. 20)
74. [Dog sitting on deck.] round crop
75. [Station surrounded by barrels and lumber.] oval crop
76. [Overall view of windswept hills and village.]
77. [Four men in uniforms and dog, on ship.]
78. [Machinery in tent.]
79. [Overall view of station and two towers.] faded
80. [Ship's deck and stormy waves.] (no. 79)
81. [Dutch Harbor; N.A.C. Co. store and buildings on beach.] corners cropped
82. [Looking down at man on boat's bow.]
83. [Two men working underneath a dry-docked barge.] (no. 18)
- 84-86. [Views of men racing with sheep.] (last view is no. 23)
87. [Dutch Harbor; looking down tram tracks on pier toward N.A. Co. buildings.] (no. 47)
88. [U.S.S. BUFFALO anchored in harbor.] faded

89. [Newly built house with lake in background.] round crop
90. [Machinery.] (no. 116)
91. [Panoramic view of construction area.] (no. 86)
92. [Chickens in coop.]
93. [Group of men sitting under a ship's sail.] (no. 10)
94. [Ship's stacks from deck.]
95. [Ship's deck.]
96. [Pigs in pen.] faded
97. [Dog sitting on deck.]
98. [Small steamer, head-on view.] oval crop
99. [Mess hall, ready for a meal.]
100. [Looking past station construction toward beach.] cyanotype
101. [Apparently hoisting a steer from shore to ship.]
102. [Steers in pens on ship's deck.] (no. 41)
103. [Building under construction.]
104. [Large group of men posed in front of a building.] (no. 165) folded corner
105. [Crowded cabin interior; men relaxing around small stove.]
106. [Panoramic view of tram pier and beach.] faded
107. [U.S.S. BUFFALO at large T-shaped wharf; wind-swept coastline.]
108. [Wireless station with two towers.] (no. 148)

### **End of album**

### **SOUTHEAST ALASKA (including the PRINCESS KATHLEEN) (#109-152)**

109. [On board PRINCESS KATHLEEN (written on margin); seated passengers wearing life vests at left.]
110. [10 miles off course (written on margin); rescue boats alongside PRINCESS KATHLEEN.]

- 111-112. [Passengers wearing life vests inside ship.]
113. [Aerial view of PRINCESS KATHLEEN wreck.] Lu-ek's Photo Shop, Juneau
114. [Bow of PRINCESS KATHLEEN above water.] Lu-ek's Photo Shop. Folded, torn corners
115. [Similar view.] folded corners
116. PRINCESS KATHLEEN, Pt. Lena, Alaska. 9-7-52 [side of ship with ladder down to beach; same as #119.] Trevor Davis (no. 3)
117. PR. KATHLEEN - Pt. Lena, Alaska. 9-7-52 [port side.] Trevor Davis (no. 6)
118. S/S PRINCESS KATHLEEN Lena Point...9-7-52 [(sic); side of sinking ship with lifeboats]. Lu-ek's (no. 4)
119. PRINCESS KATHLEEN, Pt. Lena, Alaska. 9-7-52 [same as #116]. Trevor Davis (no. 3)
120. [Last of the PRINCESS KATHLEEN sinking under the waves; see #122.]
121. [Sinking deeper...]
122. [Cropped version of #120.] folded corners
- 123-125. [Chilly survivors of the wreck on the beach.]
126. Bow of PRINCESS KATHLEEN - Pt. Lena, Alaska. 9-7-52. T. Davis (no. 8)
127. [Passengers loading onto rescue boats from PRINCESS KATHLEEN.]
- 128-129. [PRINCESS KATHLEEN survivors on the beach.]
130. Juneau, Alaska [overall view from Douglas Island]. T. Davis (no. 799)
131. SS PRINCESS ELIZABETH [port side]. (no. 174)
132. [Overall view of visitors at Mendenhall Glacier, Juneau.]
133. [Mendenhall Glacier, Juneau.]
134. [Mendenhall River, with glacier in left background.]
135. [Visitors at Skater's Cabin, Mendenhall Lake, Juneau.]
136. Sawtooth Range, White Pass & Yukon Route [railroad tracks curving at left]. tinted

137. Wrangell Totems.
138. Mendenhall Glacier, Alaska. Trevor Davis (no. 861)
139. Alaska Totem Poles [Sitka National Historical Park?] (no. P-1402)
140. Alaska Totem [next to a building]. Trevor Davis (no. 471)
141. [Mendenhall River; same as #134].
142. [Distant view of a lighthouse.]
143. [Buildings on shore across water.]
144. Juneau, Alaska [from rock dump area; A-J Mine at right].
145. Sitka, Alaska [looking over rooftops downtown].
146. Auk [Auke] Lake and Mendenhall Glacier. retouched
147. Ketchikan, Alaska [view from water].
148. Valdez, Alaska [looking along wharf toward town].
149. Wrangell, Alaska [bird's eye view].
150. Buoys along a channel - Alaska [islands].
151. Petersburg, Alaska [aerial view].
152. Trolling Fleet at Ketchikan, Alaska [at dock].

### **Account of the Expedition**

153. Sherman, K. W., "Cruising in the land of the midnight sun," from OUR NAVY, 5(8): 21?-32. Non-photographic material; a very descriptive account of the Alaskan Wireless Expedition, April 30-August, 1911, on the U.S.S. BUFFALO. Describes conditions, terrain, and the inhabitants of Kodiak Island, Cordova, the Pribilof and Aleutian Islands, Nome and Sitka. They returned to San Francisco in late August 1911.

hl\PCA342.inv  
8/93