

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Hobart, Claude

Claude Hobart Photograph Collection, 1898-99

PCA 425-6

1 Folder  
37 photos, b&w

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**Acquisition:** Photographs were the gift of John McCarthy, January 2008. (Acc. No. 2008-025)

**Access:** Unrestricted.

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**Processing:** The photographs were described by the donor 50 years ago, deciphered from the photograph versos. Versos were scanned along with the photographs and uploaded to the Alaska Digital Archives. The original notes typed by the donor are included in the collection. The inventory notes for this finding aid are the original donor notes scanned by an Optical Character Recognition software and revised for comprehension.

Scope and Contents Note

Activities of a gold mining party, which landed at Saint Michael, built a steamboat in July of 1898, traveled up the Yukon and Koyukuk Rivers, completed a cabin in early October, and prospected for gold above the Arctic

Circle. Included are photographs of another party of prospectors, the Beaver Party, which followed a similar path, beginning at Saint Michael and wintering above the Arctic Circle. The photographs are not in chronological order.

### Historical / Biographical Note

*Around 1955 an "old gentleman" that lived near us passed away and the woman who lived with him asked me to help her clean up his things – I found and kept the pictures. He was around 85 years old – which puts him in his prime and the right age for the era. He was the type of "gentleman" who took a walk every night with dress shirt and pants – bow tie and dress hat. I knew him pretty well – mowed his lawn, etc. He had worked in Boston as a "civil engineer" (Did not drive – took the bus everyday.)*

*He was "genteel" – just the type of person who could have "seen a lot" and never mention it. The one thing I remember was him saying that "out west" miners drill holes in boulders, filled them with water and when they froze overnight the boulders would split. He was from the mid-west and had no family.*

*Summary: It was his era and he may well have been part of it! As the pictures seem to be related – I suspect he had a specific reason for having them. His name was Claude Hobart (sp?).*

*Notes of John McCarthy, Feb. 7, 2008*

### Subjects

Prospecting parties  
 Gold mining  
 Alatna River (Alaska) [Allekakak River]  
 Yukon-Koyukuk region  
 Arctic City (Alaska)  
 Saint Michael (Alaska)

### Inventory

1. Alaska-Justice
2. A few of the boys, The Beaver Party --
3. Two of the boys who were of the "Beaver Party" -- north for a "Caribou Hunt." Have one on sled -- These are the fellows now in "Frisco" who got \$500 each at "Nome." Temperate -- hard workers and faithful to the end for any kind of trip --

4. The wood "proposition" on a cold day -- If no dry wood can be reached -- Fell a big spruce -- cut up in short lengths and then split off the frozen cap ring which shows in the picture around the edges of the blocks -- -the inner wood is quite dry and burns readily. The old man on the left --

5. This is our 30 foot hole, the deepest we sunk on "Beaver Gulch" on "Marjorie Claim No. 2I" Didn't find a thing on bed levels. Burned two fires a day -- that is every 24 hours -- Then after each fire, go down and pick and shovel out from six inches to two and a half feet of gravel and sand and dirt -- Hole about 6 ft. by 4 ft. We had one hole 50 ft. deep, nearly killed one man by dropping bucket on him.

6. Out for a little fun with my best girl --

7. This is just the way the boys looked when they "wooded up" the steam boat. Everybody file out -- day or night and cut wood -- We burned from 2 to 4 cords a day -- So it was quite a chore --

8. Little Sport-my sled [?] pup that would howl in derision at the cold old moon thru the long cold winter -- grew to be my best friend. Went with me for 5 days over the mountain range hunting by my lonesome -- ate with me out of the same skillet and shared all the joys and sorrows of the campfire, a snow storm above the clouds, and a weary-inspiring reckless climb.

9. A 3- handed game of "Seven Up" in Marjorie cabin -- Hobe [?] you can't imagine the weeks of darkness -- the blessed quiet -- the life so alone and so attractive to me -- It all comes back to me as I jot these little things down -- The lack of sunshine --The presence of night, the cold, the severe conditions often are most welcome however --

10. Some frozen country

11. Andy and old Mac and "Cooky" the dog trying to "figee" out "where the game is at."

12. "Arctic City" as we first saw it in Sept [18]98 -- The year before contained only one cabin which was washed away in the Spring -- Now there are permanent occupants in a few cabins -- Bergman 15 miles north on the Koyukuk is the H.C. Co's station is a larger station than Arctic City.

13. More frozen country.

14. Lunch on the trail -- Hard tack and coffee

15. • • •

16. Saint Michael Harbor June [18]98. Tents on the sand and wet grass [?] We brought our [?] and lumber and engines and lumber and boilers ashore on barges --Then built and launched. A hard job all around.

17. Indian Caribou skins hung up on the willows to dry out just after round up -- The Indians go way up to the Arctic slope to hunt on the divide and trade with the tribes from the far north Arctic coast -- The came back with meat to trade after [?] as the ice broke up.

18. 45 below -- a hell of a bad trail and a dam heavy load - Sport couldn't run in the loose deep snow so put her on the sled load too. The "old man" stands by sled -- did the pushing and swearing at the team, got to be good at that and kept the spirits up to 'G". I'll be damned if that ain't hard work -- We did 15 miles that day -- But I'd like to go again --

19. The old man packs up some grub, 15 miles to the gulch from The "Home sweet home cabin."

20. On the upper Allenkakat River -- Two of the boys stop to do some panning on the gravel bar -- Outfit for a few weeks in skiff -- Pulling boat up stream by a line --- can cover around 7 to 18 miles according to nature of banks for walking, portages around rapids, and and time put in.

21. After the cabin was built.

22. The old man gets a grouse for his dinner -- Just after a heavy fall of snow -- good time to snowshoe about and get a few birds to jolly up your old "sourdough" stomach a bit.

23. Miscellaneous miners at a "miners meeting" Oct. [18]98. Myself over the mountains on a 2 day trip -- 35% of these fellows had scurvy in the winter, some died -- one froze to death -- several lost toes and fingers -- health and everything -- more men drowned than anything else.

24. Tied up for the night on the Yukon -- Everybody tired out - Thoughts of home- etc. -- more thoughts of the icy gulches north - Tomorrow all is new hope and strength for new endeavor.

25. Old Charley froze to death -- This picture taken of the corpse frozen stiff you see just as the boys found him and tied him to the sled and brought him back to his own cabin. The sled is stood up against a tree you see. He was buried in a prospect hole dug by himself.
26. Fatty does an "Alaska washing" -- above the "Circle"
27. On the way to the gulch from "Home Sweet Home Cabin."
28. Sticking up a cabin after it closed up in early Oct [18]98. Chinked and roofed with moss- cakes -- skimmed from the surface of the frozen ground with a spade. Cakes about 2'x3' x 4" to 6" thick.
29. Str. Illinois [?] (our boat) in the background -- launched Str "Luella" and "Argo" this way - "Beaver" boat still on bank. St. Michael, July [18]98.
30. St. Michaels Indians -- cooking by fire -- no timber here at all, you see no bushes even -- burn drift wood -- live in tents and sod houses through the winter -- very unhealthy set -- Weather continually rainy and wet.
31. No floor in cabin -- Built close under the mountains in a thicket of spruce trees. As you see we used to lounge on the pole bed. Poles 3 feet from ground. Covered with spruce boughs, then with dry mountain grass and then with our robes and blankets.
32. This is just the way it looked when we were ready for the water journey from Saint Michael. Our own steamer is in the back ground - This one is a typical outfit -- They reached a point with the craft 100 miles above the Arctic Circle. Ascended rapids by using a powerful steam winch as an aid.
33. Another party we knew at Michaels and all winter above the Arctic Circle -- "The Beaver Boys"
34. A.C. Co.'s warehouses at St. Michael. The "double stacker" is the "Louise" that I went to Dawson City on as fireman and deck hand. \$80 a month and grub -- Work like a son of a **B**-- day and night 6 hours on -- 6 hours off -- good grub -- good Capt. and mates.
35. Up on the pole bed after bacon and coffee, and a few tunes by "Boso"[?] jog your memory way back to the old drill hall and the Frat rooms and dances and you wonder how it all happened and you are where you are - Oh it's a corker Hobe [?] but "I love it just the same." Better come go along in a year or so ??????

36. A little bar prospecting upper Allenkakat?

37. After the frugal meal was eaten – after, we used to take the dirty cards from the shelf over the rickety table -- and pull the hair down over the eyes and be real tough and play 7up by the flickering candle light -- and feed the fire while the air cracked with cold without.