

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Stuart, John Alexander

John Alexander Stuart Photograph Collection, 1899-1911

PCA 524

9 black and white photographs
5 post cards
1 copy print

Processed by: Jim Simard
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Alexander Stuart was born in the town of Forres in the county of Moray, Scotland. He arrived in Alaska sometime around 1909. He did not stay long. There is a postcard from him in Alaska dated February 1911. The next certain date for him was his marriage, in Scotland, in 1913. He was a baker to trade and he established a bakery in the town of Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, Scotland after his marriage.

This family business continued until 1965 when he retired. He can be seen in the accompanying copy of a photograph of his wedding.

Unfortunately Stuart's experiences were never properly documented. He set out prospecting for gold in the Yukon area. He went over the infamous Chilkoot Pass. He described one occasion where an 'old timer'

warned him not to cross a frozen river due to the condition of the ice. Two of his traveling companions did not heed the advice and vanished with their dogs and sledges when the ice gave way.

After failing to find his fortune he worked for a mining company where he lost two fingers while trying to free a jammed rock drill. He seems to have made some money since he was able to set up in business on his return to Scotland. He used to assure us that the 'winters were so bad in Alaska that people would shoot themselves to escape the cold'.

John Stuart Brown

HISTORICAL NOTE

Arctic City was once one of the largest Koyukuk Indian villages on the river. It was named "Moses Village" for the Indian chief "Moses", by prospectors about 1897. Archdeacon Stuck (1917, p. 328) wrote "a road-house and a store turned it from 'Moses Village' to 'Arctic City' when the mail trail from Tanana reached the Koyukuk at that point, but store and road-house and Indian are alike gone some twelve miles up (to Allakaket)." Site of Indian village, on right bank of Koyukuk River, opposite mouth of Kanuti River. – Orth's Dictionary of Alaskan Place-names

Bergman (historical) was named by prospectors for the operator of the trading post; reported in 1899 by T. G. Gerdine (in Schrader, 1900, pl. 60), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The locality maintained some prominence during the height of the Koyukuk gold rush because it was a transfer point for supplies and was situated near the head of navigation for the larger riverboats on Koyukuk. Bergman is shown as abandoned on 1913 map. Bergman was a village on N bank of Koyukuk River NE of its junction with Kanuti River, 7.5 mi. SE of Allakaket; Hogatza High. – Orth's Dictionary of Alaskan Place-names

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

Photographs of Arctic City, Holy Cross and Bergman, Alaska, 1899. The photos were probably collected by John Alexander in approximately 1911.

INVENTORY

1. [Riverboats, Luella and Fulton, possibly at Bergman. A crowd is assembled near a make-shift boxing ring.]
2. Camp of the Arctic Pugilist, Bergman, Alaska. Apr: 8, 1899. Photographer: J C Cox
3. Home Sweet Home. Bergman Alaska, Apr: 3, 1899.
4. Tea Party Bergman Alaska, Apr: 7, 1899.
5. Arctic City Alaska, Apr: 4, 1899 [five man in front of log building]

6. ? Arctic City Alaska Apr: 5, 1899. [side view of building in #5. Six men]
7. [interior of building in #5 and #6. Two men cutting cards. Bartender behind bar.]
8. Old Holy Cross Trading Post
9. [Group of twenty men, with a dog. Possibly the Beaver Party. See Claude Hobart Photograph Collection, 1898-99. ASL-PCA-425-6]
10. [Postcard] 11480. Treadwell Mine, "Glory Hole," Looking East. Published by W.H. Case, Juneau, Alaska. [Addressed to the mother of John Stuart, 11/2/1911.]
11. [Postcard] 12196. Treadwell Mine. 300 Stamp Mill, Vanner Room. Published by Purity Pharmacy, Juneau, Alaska.
12. [Postcard] 300 Stamp Mill Treadwell, Alaska. A.E. Mova
13. [Postcard] 12189. Silver Bow Placer Mine, Juneau, Alaska. Showing 7-Inch Nozzle at Work. Published by Purity Pharmacy, Juneau, Alaska.
14. [Postcard] 1201 \$1 200 000 in Gold An Alaska Cleanup
15. [Copy of a photograph, showing John Alexander Stuart on his wedding day.]