

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Alaskan Hotel, Juneau, Alaska, ca. 1914

PCA 525-14

1 Folder
7 b&w photographs

Processed by: Alea Oien, June 2009
Revised by: Sara Bornstein, Dec. 2013

ACQUISITION: The collection was donated by Thomas E. Torphy to the Alaska State Library Historical Collections May, 2002 and is accessioned as 2002-77.

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted.

COPYRIGHT: Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian. Photocopying does not constitute permission to publish.

PROCESSING: This collection has been described at the item level. All items have been placed in Mylar and into a pH-neutral folder.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Alaskan Hotel was built in 1913.

The donor included a short history of the McClosky family who built and ran the hotel in a letter to Bettye Adams dated April 17, 1995:

Dear Mrs. [Bettye] Adams,

I am the fellow who stopped at your hotel while my wife and I were on a tour of Alaska. I showed you a number of pictures relating to your hotel. My father, Thomas E. Torphy, Sr., was a nephew of the McClosky brothers, two of the hotel's founders, and was a first cousin to Nellie McClosky. Most of the originals of the enclosed photographs were sent from Alaska to my father's brother, Martin Torphy while Tom was spending a year working at the McClosky's cigar stand across Franklin St. from the hotel. Next to the cigar stand were a barber shop and the Germania bar, both also owned by the McCloskys. The cigar stand, bar and barber shop are gone.

[Donor goes on to provide descriptions and numbers for each photograph – see inventory.]

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The Alaskan Hotel collection contains 7 photographs (and 7 copies) of the Alaskan Hotel and the original proprietors. The donor has also included a short history of the McClosky family who built and ran the hotel. The Alaskan Hotel is still operating today.

SUBJECTS

Alaskan Hotel; McClosky family; Juneau, Alaska

INVENTORY

Folder 1 of 1

Donor provided numbers and descriptions for each photograph:

- 1 Hotel as it appeared upon completion in 1913.
 On the back of the original photo the following message was written:
 "October 15, 1913.
 Dear Brother Martin,
 This is a picture of the best hotel in Alaska. How do you like the front? The gray is cement with small gravel stones thrown against it. The little bulbs under the windows are lights. The big sign is an alternate electric. The street in front is paved with planks, as are most of the streets in Alaska. The cigar stand and saloon and barber shop is just across the street. If you fell though the plank, you would fall ten feet. The saloon is built on piles twenty feet high, when the tide is out. When it [*words cut off by photocopy*] tide the water comes within six feet of the floor. The hotel is built on land. The white house up to the left is Uncle James' home. A building is being erected next to the hotel. The sign faces to the docks.
 From Tom."
 The left edge of the copy has been clipped about 1/8th of an inch so that the white house is barely visible.
- 2 The hotel and some adjacent buildings taken in 1918.
- 3 Interior of the Germania Bar.
 On the back of the original a note was written to his brother Martin as follows:
 "The same day. The Germania Bar. Uncle James you know. Mike Joyce is the bartender. The man in front with his pants open in front is an old time actor.
 Behind Jim is Bob, a cook. He helps me at the stand much. He's from Wisconsin. His last name is Marton. I don't know the rest."
 Jim McClosky is the tall man behind the actor. The "stand" referred to is the cigar stand across the street.
- 4 Photo of John McClosky taken in Mount Harel, Wisconsin.
- 5 Portrait of James McClosky on a ship on the way up to from a visit to the lower states. I think my father was with him on this trip to Alaska. [Possibly confused with #6?]
- 6 [Unidentified. Possibly confused with #5?]
- 7 Portrait of Nellie McClosky, daughter of John, who was later married to the man you knew in Alaska. I have forgotten his name. She is no doubt the "Nil" who was one of the group from when you bought the hotel.