

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Tilton, Winfred Scott

Winfred Scott Tilton Photograph Collection, 1951-1960

PCA 542

Photographic prints
Slides

Processed by: Anastasia Tarmann
September 2014

ACQUISITION: This photo donation to the Alaska State Library was made by Bruce Campbell on behalf of Mrs. Joyce Tilton (Willie), widow of Winfield Scott Tilton (Tilt). The Bruce Campbell collection was donated at the same time.

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted.

COPYRIGHT: Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian.

PROCESSING: The collection arrived in three binders containing: 1. Prints made from slides. 2. Slides 3. Slides not printed, from the main collection.

BIOGRAPHICAL or HISTORICAL NOTE

Tilt was born on March 28, 1929 in Pittsfield Maine where he grew up and later attended the University of Maine. He graduated in 1951 as a Civil Engineer. After graduation he accepted employment with the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) in the ARC's Anchorage District.

Upon arriving in Anchorage he was assigned to survey and inspect the placement of new asphalt pavement on the about to be completed highway from Anchorage to Seward on the section from Anchorage to near Girdwood. The portion between Anchorage and the National Forest boundary near Girdwood was administered by the ARC. The remaining portion through the National Forest to Seward was administered by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). The ARC crew that supervised this paving took up residency in the Indian Creek Valley about 35 miles south of Anchorage. They lived in old cabins and tents. Norman E. Smith was the ARC resident Engineer. The BPR section around the end of Turnagain Arm was still under initial construction and wasn't opened until late in 1951. Ribbon cutting ceremonies at Girdwood were held to celebrate the opening of this major new road.

In the spring of 1952, Tilt was assigned to inspect two replacement bridges on the Glenn Highway; Caribou Creek mile 106.8 and Little Nelchina Hiver at mile 138. Tilt and Bob Litzell, another ARC engineer, took up residence in a tent at mile 118. (The old road construction contractors' camp, which is now the site of Majestic Valley Lodge.).

During the winter of 1952-53 Tilt was stationed in the Anchorage ARC District office at the east end of Fourth Avenue. In early 1953 he worked on the Fort Rich bypass project. Prior to the construction of the bypass all traffic entering or leaving Anchorage had to drive through Fort Richardson and check through two guard gates.

In the spring Tilt returned to finish the construction of the Caribou' and Nelchina bridges. He was then transferred to the Fairbanks District and was assigned to the reconstruction of a portion of the Alaska Highway between Tok and Northway (Alaska C-1) as a surveyor and inspector. Tilt lived in Tok until late October and then was transferred to the Bridge Design Section at ARC headquarters in Juneau.

The ARC office in Juneau was located at the corner of 4th and Harris in a new building built for the ARC. The headquarters staff were on the the lower two floors and bridge design and road design sections were on the top floor. I was also transferred to Bridge Design and Tilt and I rented #705 in the Mendenhall Apartments.

In the spring of 1954 Tilt was assigned as resident engineer on the reconstruction of the approach spans to the Knik River Bridge on the Glenn Highway. (Now referred to as the Old Glenn) and took up residence in Palmer. When the project was completed in October 1954 he drove back to Maine in his newly acquired 1951 Ford and returned to the bridge design office in Juneau in December.

Tilt was joined by Vern Cusack (another bridge engineer) and me and we rented a house on the North Douglas Highway. In March we moved to 1202 of the Mendenhall Apartments. In April we all left for work assignments on various ARC projects in the interior. Tilt was assigned as Resident Engineer on the construction of the Teklanika River Bridge in McKinley Park and returned to Juneau in October 1955. The same group rented a house just uphill from the ARC Building on Harris St. This house belonged to Fred Lappi who owned Scotty Creek Lodge on the Alaska Highway just west of the Canadian-U.S. border.

Tilt met a Canadian nurse, Joyce Willerth (Willie) who was employed at St. Ann's Hospital on Sixth Street in Juneau and lived in the St Anns Nurse's house directly across 6th street from the hospital and next door to Dr. Whitehead's home on the NW corner of Sixth and Harris. In March of 1956 Tilt returned to McKinley Park and continued as Resident Engineer on other bridges on the Denali Highway between McKinley Park Station and Kantishna, namely Sanctuary, Upper Igloo, and Toklat. In November 1956 Tilt and Willie were married in Indian Head Saskatchewan, Willie's home town where she was born on June 23, 1932.

In September 1956 the ARC ceased to exist, as the 1956 Federal Highway Act provided that the BPR take over all of the ARC operations. Tilt was now a BPR employee. Tilt and Willie returned to Alaska in early 1957 and spent the remainder of the winter in Fairbanks, returning to McKinley Park in May where Tilt was the Resident Engineer on the reconstruction of the Stoney River Bridge. They lived in a house trailer just west and upstream of the bridge. Their daughter Cheryl was born in late 1957. In October 1957 they returned to Juneau and resided in the Senate Apartments over Mary Joyce's Top Hat Bar. Tilt was again working in Bridge Design but now for the BPR with offices on the second floor of the Simpson Building over Belle Simpson's Nugget Shop.

In 1958 they returned to the Park where work continued on the bridges that were started previously and on the Rock Creek Bridge replacement. When Stoney River was completed, the Tiltions moved into the park headquarters area and continued to reside in their house trailer. The winter of 1958-59 was spent in Anchorage; they lived in an apartment on 15th Ave. overlooking Chester Creek Flats where the local sled dog races were held.

In 1959 work in the park involved completing the Rock Creek Bridge and beginning the reconstruction of the Denali Highway between the Park Station and Savage River. After another winter in Anchorage the Tiltions returned to McKinley Park where Tilt supervised the construction of the last replacement bridge at Ghiglione Creek and the completion of the road reconstruction to Savage River. The photos that Tilt took during his 1955-1960 assignments in McKinley Park were donated to Denali Park in September 2010.

In 1959 Alaska became a State and took over the Highway function. However Tilt elected to stay with the BPA and transferred to Connecticut in the fall of 1960, never to return to Alaska.

This brief history is provided to supplement the photo donation. By knowing where Tilt was at various times when he was taking photos with his Argus C-3 35 mm. camera one can determine dates and locations of the photos with reasonable accuracy.

--Bruce A. Campbell, February, 2011

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

Photographs taken in Alaska by Winfred Scott Tilton, between 1951 and 1960, while he was employed by the Alaska Road Commission and later the Bureau of Public Roads.

SUBJECTS

Alaska Road Commission
Bureau of Public Roads

INVENTORY

Folder 1 (Binder 1): Index for W.S. Tilton Photos and 3 color photos:

Palmer, 1954

PNA DC-4, Juneau, 1958

PNA DC-4, Juneau, 1958 (c. 2)

Folder 2 (Binder 1): Photos taken in McKinley Park [Denali] by W.S. Tilton, Alaska Road Commission and Bureau of Public Roads Resident Engineer, 1955-1960.

Donated to Denali Park, August 2010. Part I

Folder 3 (Binder 1): Tilt's Photos Part II McKinley/ Denali

Folder 4 (Binder 2): Tilt's Photos Part I

Folder 5 (Binder 2): Tilt's Photos Part II

Folder 6 (Binder 3): Part I

Folder 7 (Binder 3): Part II

Folder 8 (Binder 4):