

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Lewis, Margaret A.

**Margaret Lewis Collection:  
Images from a Cruise to Alaska, 1950**

PCA 546

53 b&w photographs on CD  
10 images of travel brochures  
DVD of an 8mm film plus film clips

Processed by: Gayle Goedde  
December 2011

**ACQUISITION:** Margaret A. Lewis donated the collection October 17, 2011. Accession # 2011-023.

**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 original photographs, taken by F. Garland Swain in 1950, are not available. Margaret Lewis, F. Garland Swain's daughter, scanned the original 4x5 photographs in BMP file format, restoring them to minimize scratches and blemishes. The original 8mm film and film clips were also restored by Margaret Lewis and transferred to digital Windows media.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

F. Garland Swain was born in California in 1908 and died of cancer in 1965 at the age of 57 years. His main occupation was as a real estate appraiser, but he was also an amateur photographer for most of his life, setting up his own darkroom for developing his film and photographs, all in black and white medium. He had a natural eye for composition, and his subjects included his four children, his grandchildren, relatives, vacations, homes, and landscapes. Margaret Lewis's mother died in 2001 at the age of 89, and the extended family continues to live in California. Margaret has returned to Alaska with her husband on three cruises and five fishing vacations, all "wonderful experiences." Her brother, who was able to spend so much time in the wheelhouse of the S. S. Alaska on the family's 1950 cruise, continued to be involved with all kinds of boats, both sailing and power. Their family adventure in Alaska was "a memorable trip for all."

## SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

All of the photographs and film clips in this collection were taken during a 12-day cruise aboard the S.S. ALASKA, August 3-15, 1950. The following notes are from material provided by Margaret Lewis.

The F. Garland Swain family boarded the S.S. ALASKA at the recently opened Pier 42 of the Alaska Steamship Line in Seattle, Washington. "There were eight family members in our group, including my parents, my grandparents, my sister (age 16) brother (13), younger sister (7), and myself (age 9 but celebrating my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday on board the ship.

We stayed in four rooms, each having bunk beds and a sink, with toilets and showers down the hall. Our four rooms were across from one another, sharing a common corridor. The ship could accommodate about 220 passengers in all, and the main dining room could seat about 140 people, including the ship's officers. Our family shared a table for eight. One night we hit rough seas, and my brother and I were about the only passengers to make it down for dinner that night.

Activities on the ship included shuffleboard, quoits, bingo, jigsaw puzzles, and other games played in the social hall on the upper deck near the front of the ship. Besides looking at the beautiful scenery and taking tours in some of the towns, my favorite pastime was watching the crew unload and load freight in each port.

My brother, who was befriended by the entire ship's crew, got to pilot the ship and talk with the various officers and staff. He was even allowed to scrub the deck with an electric power scrubber (no labor or liability concern back then). He also watched the crew drop crab pots off the stern of the ship when we were in port.

We got off the ship in most ports and walked into the small towns or took more extended tours, usually escorted by ship officers. The ship stopped at Ketchikan, Petersburg, Juneau, Seward (where we took a train to Anchorage, returning by bus), Valdez, and Cordova. My brother remembers that 'the train to Anchorage had a coal burning engine, and when you stuck your head out the window, lots of soot would get in your face and eyes.'

We went close to the Columbia Glacier and watched the glacier calving when the ship's captain blew the horn (not legal now). We also saw the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, and my brother and I remember being able to climb onto the edge of the glacier. We also visited the Saxman Village totem park in Ketchikan, toured a salmon cannery in Petersburg, and viewed an aurora borealis one night.

My souvenirs from the trip consisted of a drum, which I won playing quoits, a pair of fur moccasins, a small diary, and a small beaded pin of miniature moccasins. We also brought back two small ivory totem figures, and we kept some of the ship's menus. I still have all but the larger moccasins.

### SUBJECTS

Alaska—Description and travel; Inside Passage—Description and travel; Cruise ships—Alaska; Alaska Steamship Company; Ships; Steamboats; Ship equipment & rigging; Ocean travel; Passengers; Piers & wharves; Waterfronts; Glaciers

### INVENTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1 Seattle Pier No. 42 [View of passengers on upper deck at stern of ship S. S. ALASKA]
- 2 Seattle Pier No. 42 [Passengers look on as automobile is hoisted onto S. S. \ ALASKA in a sling]
- 3 F. Garland Swain family on steamship S. S.ALASKA
- 4 Swain family on board ship
- 5 Cargo hold on the S. S.ALASKA steamship; two automobiles in background
- 6-8 Shuffleboard on deck of the S. S.ALASKA
- 9 Quoits [game] on deck of S. S.ALASKA
- 10-12 On board ship
- 13 Swain boy and crew, scrubbing deck
- 14 Swain family in Seward, accompanying ship's radio man to see salmon
- 15 Children at train stop en route to Anchorage; glacier in background
- 16 Train to Anchorage, stopping at Alaska Nellie's Roadhouse

- 17 Valdez waterfront; sign on building reads, "Valdez, Coastal Terminus of Alaska's Highway System, Distribution Center to Interior Alaska"
- 18-20 Columbia Glacier [View from deck of the S. S. ALASKA]
- 21 Juneau waterfront, showing sawmill
- 22 Juneau waterfront, showing Alaska Coastal Airlines building and seaplane docks
- 23 Juneau waterfront, showing Juneau Cold Storage facility and fishing boats
- 24 Juneau waterfront, showing close-up view of Alaska-Juneau Gold Mining mill
- 25-28 Mendenhall Glacier
- 29 Mendenhall Glacier from Chapel by the Lake
- 30 Mendenhall Glacier from deck of the ALASKA
- 31-32 Wrangell Narrows
- 33-34 Petersburg waterfront
- 35 Kayler -Dahl Cold Storage and fishing boats, Petersburg
- 36 Interior view of women working line at Petersburg salmon cannery
- 37-40 Ketchikan waterfront
- 41 Passengers on Ketchikan dock and boarding the S. S. ALASKA
- 42-43 Swain family members at the Saxman Village Totem Park, Ketchikan
- 44 Captain Henry Burns, officer of S. S. ALASKA
- 45 Pilot, Swain boy, and 2<sup>nd</sup> officer
- 46 Pilot, Swain boy, and quartermaster
- 47-48 Swain boy and radar specialist
- 49 Ship's radio man
- 50 Ship's pilot, Scotty, at the wheel
- 51-52 Ship's pilot, Scotty, and Swain boy at the wheel

## 53            Wheelhouse of S. S. ALASKA

**INVENTORY OF BROCHURES AND OTHER MATERIALS**

- 1        Itinerary for August 3-15 trip on S. S. ALASKA through Inside Passage; also, list of officers on S. S. ALASKA Northbound Voyage 27, 1950
- 2        Alaska trip summary, written by Margaret Lewis on October 14, 2011.
- 3        Cruise brochure (front) for Alaska Steamship cruises and tours in 1950.
- 4        Brochure describing 1950 summer season cruise schedule, accommodations, and rates
- 5        Guide to Alaskan cities and sightseeing
- 6        Brochure, *Your Alaska Steamship Company Ship*, with chart showing routes and connections
- 7        S. S. ALASKA ship layout
- 8        Alaskan drum, winning prize for winning game of Quoits
- 9        S. S. ALASKA breakfast menu
- 10      S. S. ALASKA dinner menu

**FILM FOOTAGE**

DVD of 8mm movie taken by F. Garland Swain on the Swain family's 1950 trip through the Inside Passage on board the ALASKA.