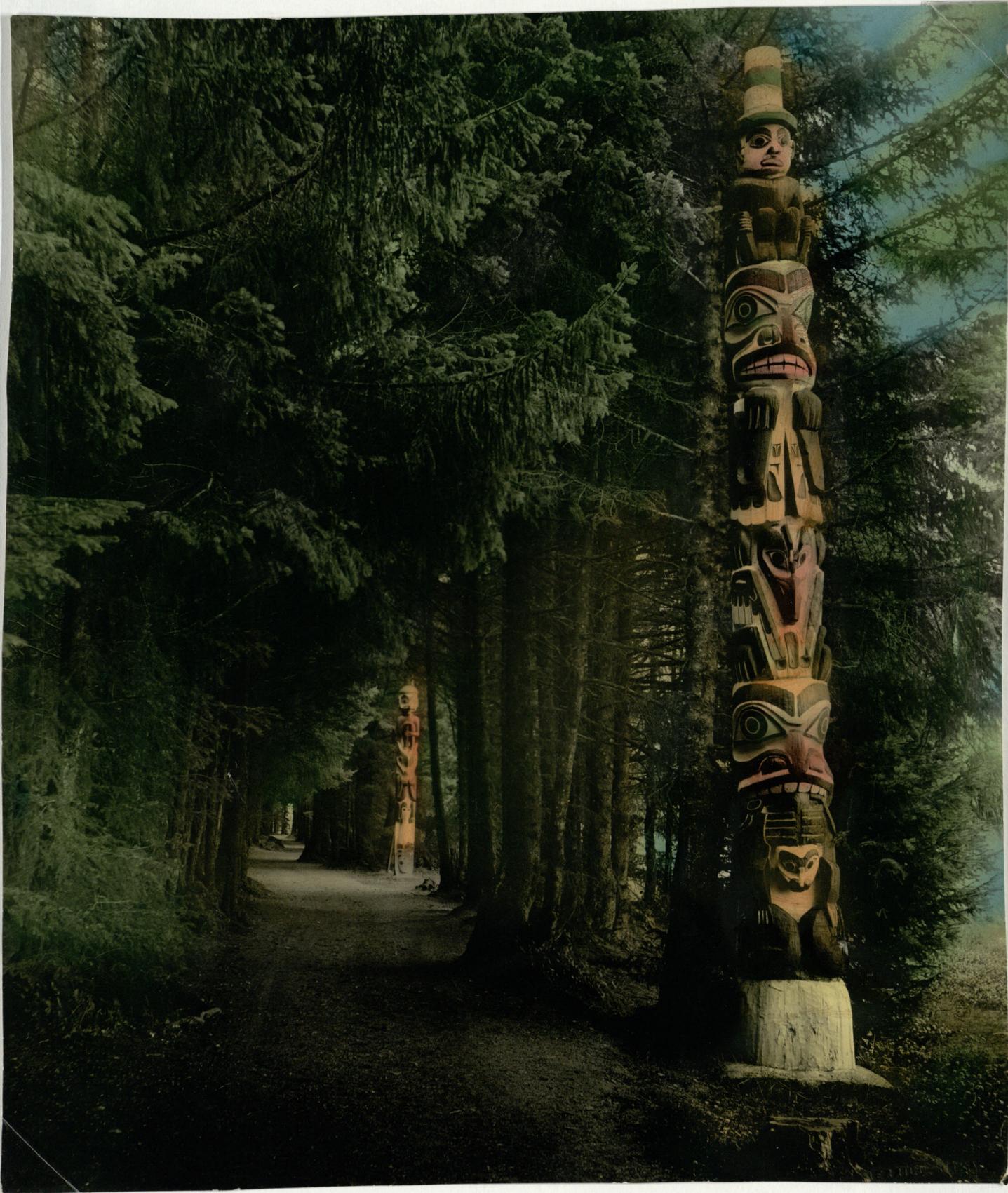


Sitka

PCA 355-208



PCA 355-209



-210



Minnie Fields -  
her Album

- 211



Princess Charlotte  
 about 1925  
 Gilkey's gold dredging  
 outfit in front of  
 105 St Ann's Ave  
 Douglas / Meadwell  
 Roof of 300 Stamp Mill  
 right corner  
 Bldg burned Oct 10<sup>th</sup> 1926

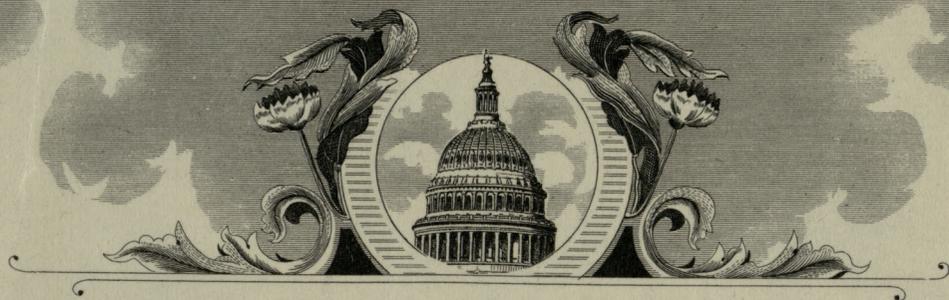
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Minnie Feld with children  
neg. at the Minfeld Home in Juneau.



PCA  
355-213

# NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES WASHINGTON, D.C.



**ONE HUNDRED PER CENT ENROLMENT**

**THIS CERTIFIES THAT**

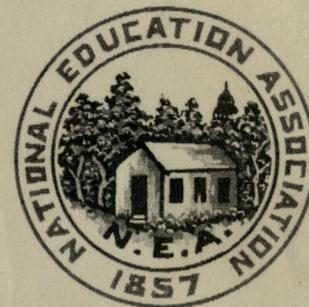
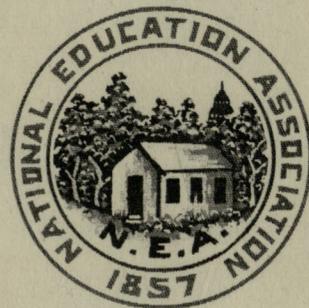
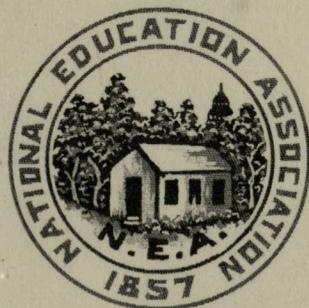
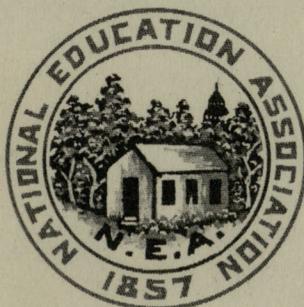
*The National Education Association, organized to advance the interests of the profession of teaching and to promote the cause of education in the United States, Commends*

*Minfield School*

*located in Juneau, Alaska for* HIGH PROFESSIONAL

PCA  
355  
Album  
1

*SPIRIT and for an ENROLMENT OF ONE HUNDRED PER CENT of its teaching force. The honor medal is awarded by The National Education Association as follows:*



PCA  
355-214

September 4, 1923.

My dear Miss Field:

Mrs. Harding wishes to make grateful acknowledgment of all the courtesies that were extended to President Harding and herself during the visit to Alaska, and so asks me to tell you how much your splendid cake had been enjoyed by all their party at Juneau.

Assuring you of Mrs. Harding's cordial thanks and appreciation, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Laura Harlan*

Secretary.

(MINNIE)

Miss ~~Hellie~~ Field,  
Juneau,  
Alaska.

PCA  
355-215

# FORD TIMES



october 1949

MINFIELD HOME

PHOTO \* GUARD # 3224  
LIGHT IMPRESSIONS  
Rochester, NY



photo by J. Malcolm Greany

## Mendenhall Glacier, Alaska

IN THE BALMIEST summer days (Alaska has them), residents of Juneau roll up the windows of their cars and drive out on the Glacier Highway to cut ice from Mendenhall Glacier for home refrigerators. The cold wind off the ice is in contrast to one of the cherished places on route—Minfield. At Mile Post 17 is *The House on the Glacier Highway* (page 2), home of Minnie Field, a great-hearted Irish woman who cares for her waifs and gives visitors “the Number 1 emotional experience in Alaska.” Above are The Glacier and Mendenhall River. ■

# FORD TIMES

October, 1949

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## *House on the Glacier Highway*

by Richard L. Neuberger

photographs by J. Malcolm Greany

*Up in Alaska, near the Mendenhall Glacier, is a house that symbolizes the Territory's conscience. Minnie Field built it to house her brood of orphans and waifs. The story of her kindly soul has moistened many an eye and warmed more hearts than the northern sun.*

**N**ORTHWARD out of Juneau, past the white-columned old mansion of Alaska's Governor, stretches a road. It is the only route by land which leads beyond the city limits of the most far-flung seat of government on the North American continent.

The road ends 29 miles from Juneau. With its loops and spurs, a grand total of 85 miles of motoring is provided. This is modest by state standards but a genuine touring bonanza in the deep fiords of Alaska's southeastern "panhandle." Indeed, it has increased many times the number of cars owned by the people of Juneau; not so long ago all driving bumped into the spruce forest at the edge of town.

The Glacier Highway this road is called, and the name is more than mere rhetoric. The cold breath of the Mendenhall Glacier prompts the cranking up of sedan windows and the turning on of heaters. Settlers drive up and cut ice for home refrigerators from this great bluish tongue forking out of the mountains.

Lupine and firewood fleck the nearby slopes, and pronged



*In front of the Minfield Home sign, two of Minnie Field's charges, Bill Bean (left) and James Kitka pose with their dog.*

summits matted with snow peek above the hills like the antlers of some stag of Paul Bunyan dimensions. Creeks and lakes form below the Mendenhall's three-mile melting face and merge with the salt water of the Inside Passage.

Yet all the appeal of the Glacier Highway is not scenic. Juneau's one road can stir the heart as well as the senses. At Mile Post 17 a sign points the way to the Minfield Home. This is a house famous throughout Alaska. Some consider it a symbol of the Territory's conscience.

Even more, it is a monument to the warmth and courage of a woman: Minnie Field. She came to Alaska three decades ago from Ireland and scrubbed floors and cooked meals in the local jail. The derelicts of the North ate the food Minnie prepared. She wept for them and her tears fell into the split-pea soup for which she was celebrated.

But most of all, Minnie's Irish heart went out to the chil-

*Minnie at the supper table with one of her newest arrivals. She loves caring for children but not having her picture taken.* →

dren of this human flotsam and jetsam. She could not endure thinking what might happen to them on the raw frontier while their parents were in jail. One afternoon she nearly collapsed when two Indian tykes were restored to a mother who was wracked by tuberculosis. Minnie's frantic protests were brushed aside. After that she took the children home to her one room in a Juneau boarding house.

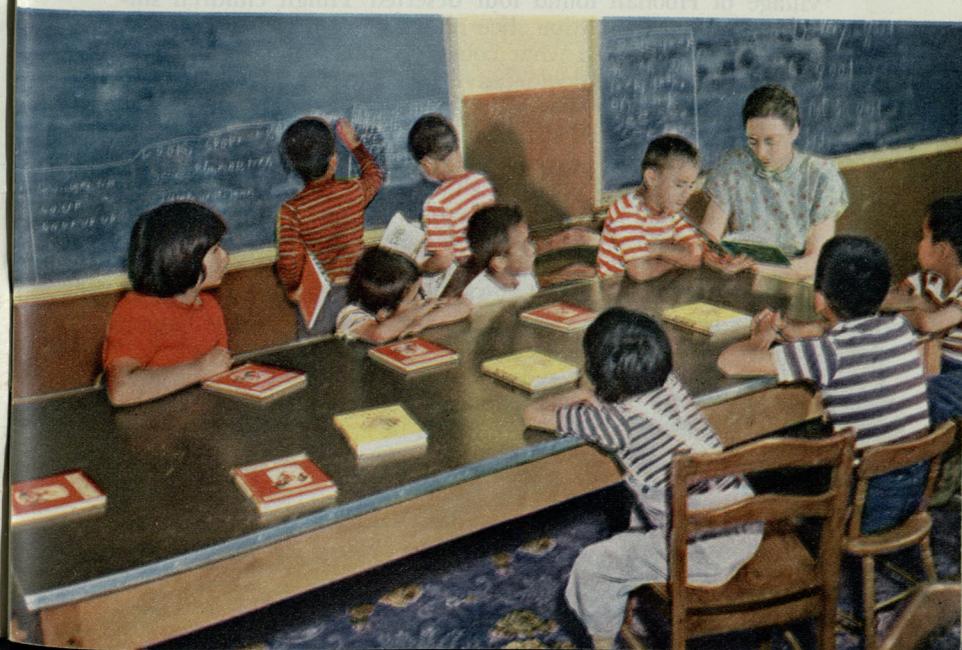
Minnie lost her room when she was sleeping there with six Indian and half-breed youngsters. The children occupied the bed. Minnie slept on a pallet on the floor. She had \$300 in the bank. She emptied the account and trudged into the wilderness to build the Minfield Home. It was on land of the Tongass National Forest and rangers came to her aid. Minnie picked a broad beach fringed with an apron of grass and wildflowers.

To get money at first, she baked cakes and sold them from house to house in Juneau. Salmon fishermen brought her to town on their trawlers. She hawked hot dogs at carnivals and had a cookie booth at church festivals. When she came to Juneau surrounded by dark-skinned waifs, only a merchant with the smallest of souls could refuse her credit, and these never were many in a pioneering country.

Once Minnie raffled off her iron stove to keep the home going and cooked over a campfire. Most of her wards were Indian or half-breed children. Some had been abandoned, others were orphans, still others had been victims of parental abuse and cruelty. Occasionally white youngsters, too, were brought up by Minnie. She treated them all alike and choked up with sobs when they left her at 18 to brave the world of the sub-Arctic on their own.

Today, after a long and lonely struggle to feed, shelter and rear these children of the solitudes, Minnie gets help from the Territorial Department of Public Welfare—\$40 a month for each moppet of school age, \$50 under school age. And two teachers live at Minfield from September until June, educating the fifty-four wards of this open-hearted Irish woman.

*Mrs. Mary Pinkley, born in Juneau, taught school in Alaska fourteen years, now has the first four grades at Minfield.* →



*The older children have charge of the garden and nearly all the vegetables used at the Home come from the plot in the backyard.* →

But Minnie is still the same Minnie who stayed up all night baking caramel cakes to sell in town, so that she might have bread and condensed milk for her children the next day.

She flared up when a social worker suggested that the youngsters eat less expensive food. "If children in their own homes eat the best, then my children will, too," replied Minnie. She then proceeded to cut fifty-four heads of hair, figuring that she saved enough money in this way to buy a good supply of the best.

Minnie is a large woman with stout arms, straggly white hair and steel-rimmed spectacles. When the weather clears, she holds outdoor church services for her tykes on the beach along Favorite Channel. Their cathedral is the distant cordillera of the Chilkat Mountains, towering like granite skyscrapers across the water. For all visitors, Minnie's youngsters recite the Lord's Prayer and give the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

When the Public Health Service nurse visiting the Indian village of Hoonah found four deserted Tlingit children suffering from malnutrition, lice and impetigo her medical superior had no doubt what course to follow. "Send them to Minnie Field," the doctor advised. "She'll scrub them, feed them and make them healthy—and some day, thanks to Minnie, they'll be good citizens."

Minnie's wards never forget her, although nearly 2,000 have gone through the Minfield Home since she quit work in Juneau's jail long ago. A stalwart young half-breed who went into the Army and served with valor in combat sent practically all his pay to Minnie. With typical impetuosity, she used some of the money to charter a bus so the children could ride to Juneau over the Glacier Highway for the Fourth of July patriotic parade.

Each waif also got a dollar to spend on candy, gum and sparklers. Minnie, who steadfastly refuses to reveal her own years, claims her charges "ought to be as well done by as any others their same age." She was scolded by some of her adult

*Minnie built her home beside a creek in the Tongass National Forest. Here a group of smaller children play near the beach.* →



friends in Juneau when a portion of the January food funds went to pay for the violin lessons of 13-year-old Joe, an Athapascan boy.

"Ain't he the right?" queried Minnie.

And she ventured the same rhetorical reply after putting up \$5 apiece for three of her older wards to enter the annual salmon derby.

During her early years in the fastnesses, Minnie had many moments of misgivings. She trembled when George Folta, now Juneau's Federal judge, shot a 1,000-pound brown bear near Mile Post 17. What of a child walking in the woods? But today Minnie is sure the outdoor grandeur aids in the mental and physical rehabilitation of her youngsters. They have been warned about the dark hemlock groves where a big cinnamon might lurk. In fact, the children stick together even on the slanting garden where Minnie has taught the older boys to raise carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, rhubarb and radishes in the long northern hours of summer sunlight.

Practically all visitors to the capital of this vast Territory venture out over the Glacier Highway. Thirty feet in width, generously gravelled and smoothly graded, with bridges of steel and concrete, the road offers Alaska's easiest access to mountains which dip their shaggy shoulders in the sea. Cliffs to rival Yosemite rise precipitously from tidewater.

But Minnie and her children make an impression to match this natural majesty. Doctors are often impervious to sentimentality, but recently a mission of the American Medical Association, sent to analyze Alaska's tragically high death-rate from tuberculosis, drove out to Mile Post 17 with Mrs. Ernest Gruening, the wife of the Governor. They stopped at Minfield, planning to pause a few moments. They stayed more than three hours.

The doctors were misty-eyed when they left Minnie and her brood. "We've been to the Arctic Circle and beyond, but that's our No. 1 emotional experience in Alaska," said Dr. John Tuhy, the leader of the mission.

But Minnie affects Alaskans this way, too. The Public Welfare director asked the recent Territorial legislature to enact a bill licensing foster homes. Much political pressure was lined up behind the proposal. Minnie Field opposed it. She sat in the gallery with her children during the debate. The bill failed. Minnie and her wards returned solemnly to their bus and drove back to Mile Post 17. ■

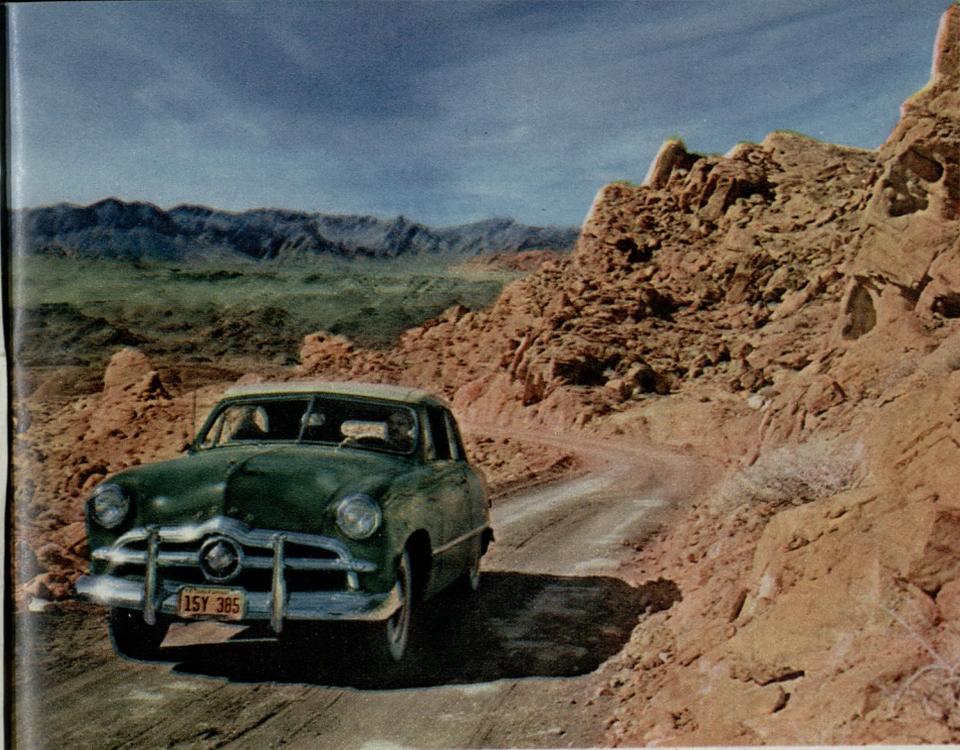


photo by Nora and Mark Wuichet

### *Valley of Fire—a one-picture story*

VALLEY OF FIRE State Park in Nevada may easily be the reddest-looking place in the U. S. Its Jurassic sandstone, of a bloody hue, responds to the sun, especially toward the end of day, in a way that makes the valley's name well earned.

Being somewhat off the more beaten tourist paths, the Valley of Fire is not well known. It was set aside as part of the Nevada Park System only fifteen years ago.

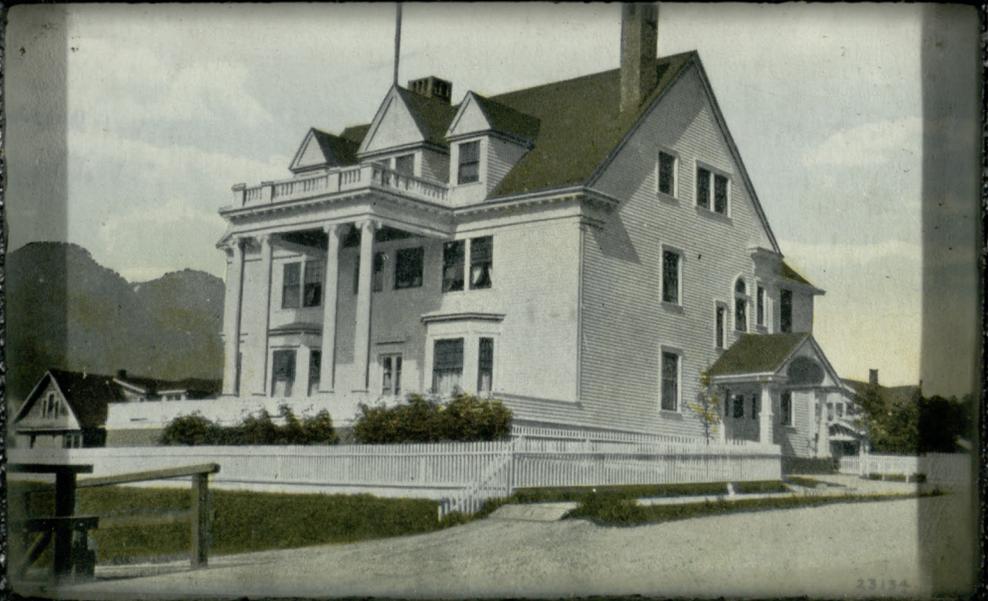
Petroglyphs, or rock writings, left by the Pueblo Indians a thousand years ago, and petrified trees of a prehistoric forest, are well preserved among the strange shapes sculptured by sand-laden winds on the canyon walls.

Valley of Fire has camping facilities. It is near Arrowhead Trail (U. S. 91) 40 miles northeast of Las Vegas. ■

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355-216



PCA  
355-217





# 218



# 219

"Minfield School"  
Juneau, AK



# 220

"Minfield School"  
Juneau, AK

#221

"Minfield's Children's Home, Juneau"



"Minfield School + home, Juneau Alaska." [sic]

"founded by Miss M. Field"  
[home, not school]

#222



#223

Minfield Children's Home





# 224

"Linda, Mary Ann Minfield Home"



# 225

"Girls at Minfield Home"



# 226

"Minnie Field's Doggy"



# 227

Doggy's at Minfield Home.

Juneau

"Part of Mumfield Garden. Juneau"



355-228

Linda & Alma. Mumfield Home



#355-229



THE COOK  
CAUGHT IN THE ACT

PCA 335-231

de  
Minfield  
Pipe



Miss Minnie Field  
Minfield Childrens Home  
Juneau  
Alaska

answered  
6/10/51  
sub-letter  
19/11/51  
cc. card

Mr and Mrs. E. LAWRIE MIFFLIN  
POSSUM HOLLOW AND BROOKSIDE ROADS  
WALLINGFORD, PENNA.

Dec 12<sup>th</sup>  
1949

Dear Minnie Field:

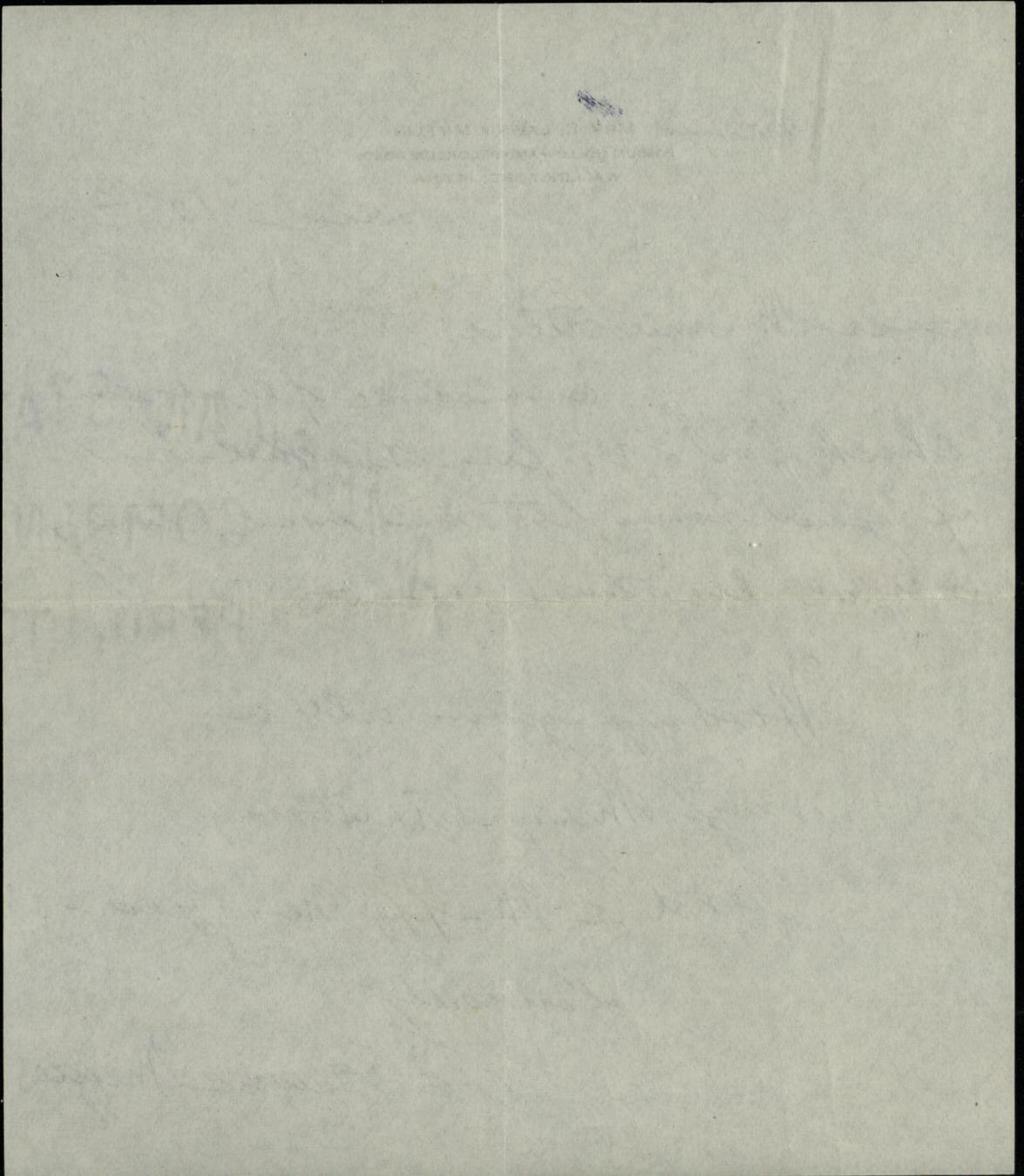
Enclosed please find  
check for \$200, for the children  
of your home, to be used to buy  
useful Christmas presents.

Wishing you all a  
very Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year,  
Sincerely  
E. Lawrie Mifflin

MRS. E. LAWRIE MIFFLIN  
POSSUM HOLLOW AND BROOKSIDE ROADS  
WALLINGFORD, PENNA.



Come down  
to my house  
Slaves



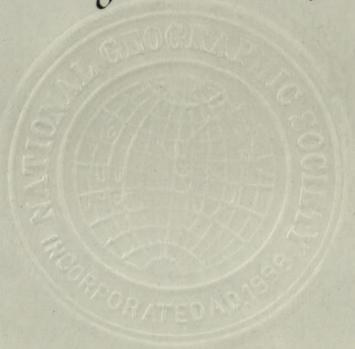


# The National Geographic Society

Through the Board of Trustees at  
a meeting held in Washington District of  
Columbia in the United States of America  
on the fourteenth day of May 1923  
has elected

Miss Minnie Fields  
of  
Juneau Alaska  
a member of that Society

In Witness Whereof, this certificate has been  
signed and presented



\_\_\_\_\_  
*[Signature]*  
Secretary.