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Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Moss, Ray W. (Ray Winthrop)

Ray W. Moss Papers, 1907-1908

MS 4-1-1

1 box (0.4 lin. ft.)

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HISTORICAL NOTE

Ray Winthrop Moss worked as a draftsman, surveyor, and photographer for the Katalla Company building the Copper River and Northwestern Railway.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The papers are primarily personal letters written by Mr. Moss to his fiancée, Elsie Krey in Duluth, Minnesota. Elsie, the daughter of John Krey who is chief engineer for the Katalla Company, later joins her parents in Katalla. These letters concern the life of R.W. Moss at Katalla and Cordova, his job and activities. The file includes miscellaneous letters, maps, and meteorological records of Katalla in 1907. Related photographs may be found in PCA 11. The images include construction of the railroad, Katalla, Cordova, survey teams and other people working for the Katalla Company, and views of Alaska Natives of the area.

INVENTORY

FOLDER 1. March 23, 1907 - May 25, 1907. 12 letters (#1-12), April 19, 1907 letter (#7) diagrams camp, showing Krey home, commissary, and bunk house; May 5 letter (#9) relates work, arrival of chief draughtsman, office, etc.; May 25 letter (#12) tells of new work for Moss and sketch of Civil Engineering Office.

FOLDER 2. June 2-6; August - October 20, 1907. 9 letters (#13-24). Elsie Krey comes to Katalla, June-August, Ray Moss takes and develops company photographs. September 26, 1907 letter (#19) describes problems at office and Moss almost resigns also, the doctor has several nurses helping him. Undated letter (#20) says Mr. Krey has left and others may go also. October 6, 1907, letter (#21) describes terrible weather, vessel SANTA CLARA either rammed by the SWAN or struck a rock- short of supplies, hospital being built and new draftsman arrived. October 13 letter (#22) says men drown in storm, out of kerosene and food almost gone, scow out of commission, the SWAN wrecked, and tells of the situation with the company, etc. October 28, letter (#24) says ships not getting into Katalla and all tents at Camp 2 levelled.

FOLDER 3. November - December, 1907, 8 letters (#25-32). Boats not getting in regularly. Moss photographed Katalla the best he could from behind the beer kegs which fill the streets. November 10 letter (#26) relates arrival of OLYMPIC with 30 sacks of mail. Bering River Line should reach coal during winter if men stay, rock cuts in Mile 1 & 2 are being worked on and others washed out by the sea; a new bank, hotel, and several saloons built in town; new school erected back of Colonel Barrett's house with Miss Rice as teacher, land set for a church and Presbyterian Board asked to send minister; local complaint of storekeeper Newman employing so many family members. November 15 letter (#27) notes vessel YUCATAN brought instructions that work close on the Copper River Line, Hawkins and employees to go to Cordova. Bering River Line said to be kept going. November 19 letter (#28) mentions uncertainty of whether travel will be to Cordova or Seattle, bad storms. Copper River Line is dead - only men on it are Bennett, two men at Camp 7, and a few watchmen, The Bering River

Line going okay. Things calm in town, maybe to facilitate construction. November 2A letter (#29) says four draftsmen left: 2 to Cordova and 2 to Seattle, 3 men are left in Katalla and Mr. Rodgers asked Moss if he wanted to leave: he did not so Rodgers recommended Moss be kept on. Mentions other people staying and busy taking photographs.

FOLDER 4. Letters, December 1907 - January 1908. 10 letters (#33-42), December 12 letter (#33) says Mr. Hawkins came in from Cordova and alone with Mike Sullivan says strict orders given for boats to call at least once each trip and stay at least 12 hours. Four draftsmen to go: Moss, Helzer, and Smith stay. January 1, 1908 letter (#36): Moss tells of others leaving, but Moss holds some land for the Company in his name and that, with his knowledge of maps, may have helped in his staying. January 5, 1908, letter (#37) relates working on land maps and bill for materials for trestles across the flats. Mr. Hawkins proposes to get some of the idle Seattle lumbermen into the woods at Katalla. Work progressing on the Bering River Line. January 21 letter (#40) tells of bad weather, but ability to land 150 muckers; two vessels in with mail - Matheany's group and commissary force packing up to leave; rumors about personnel, Guggenheim interests; Bennett and engineers to sound Bering Lake and breakwater site; mail now to be brought from Cordova as ship contract expired. January 28 letter (#42) mentions plan to go east for several month visit in March/April.

FOLDER 5. February - April, 1908. 12 letters (#43-54). February 3 letter (#43) says Mr. Bennett and party are rounding Bering Lake, pets are being driven over Katalla River, woodcutting gang at work, Moss goes back East and sees Elsie Krey and his Parents. April 25 letter (#53) mentions plans to leave on SANTA CLARA for Katalla, talks of people at the company offices in Seattle.

FOLDER 6. May - June, 1908. 12 letters (#55-66). May 2 letter (#55) from Cordova tells of heavy rains- Mr. Williams says for Moss to see Smith at Katalla about work or return to Cordova and work for Williams, Assistant Chief; Smith is mapping: coal land litigation slowing things up- company offices are in an old cannery in Cordova. May 3 letter (#56) mentions ALTONA being repaired and cut down one deck, will go up Copper River to Alganik before arriving at Camp 7. Cordova paper calls Katalla "the deserted village", tells of people who have come and left Katalla, describes offices of Heney in the old cannery, buildings and area May 5 letter (#57) describes trip on ALTONA: Mr. Henery is on board and trying to reach Camp 7, Mr. Wernecke expects his wife to come to Katalla as putting up cottages. May 11 letter (#58) relates that Mr. Caswell and Mr. Smith hire Moss and he writes about various people in Katalla and their work. May 24 letter (#61) letter mentions Moss has been doing some off-hours work for U.S. Surveyor, Mr. Hubbell, and Moss has been to doctor for tonsillitis. June 14 letter (#63) says rush work and late hours have taken all of Moss' time as he is alone in the general office: all 15 of Gabriel's men are camped out on the line; everyone gets along, except for the auditor, Walker, whom everyone dislikes.

FOLDER 7. July - August, 1908. 11 letters (#67-77). Moss interested in finding work in the East, July 21 letter (#69) mentions earning \$125/month from Katalla Company and discusses various job possibilities, Mr. Eccles and a party of coal owners and mining engineers in Katalla for a week. August 5 letter (#71) relates Moss' travels to Strawberry Point on a survey, where he ran the transit, did more mapping and developed film for Mr. Davis; town is dead, saloons closing, and only one restaurant still open, with many stores closed. August 6 letter (#72) tells of rains which may decimate the terrible multitudes of bugs--Moss has cheesecloth over windows and tent about his head; going with Mr. Smith into the coal country. August 15 letter (#74) reveals Mr. Hawkins said everything to close down for two years or until there is a satisfactory understanding with coal owners; all is to be taken to Cordova except for a few watchmen and engineers, Moss can stay until December 1 at least, August 16 letter (#76) mentions general opinion that coal owners refuse to pay for a long haul to Cordova and possibility of Rodgers coming in with another outfit. August 23 letter (#77) says Mr. Bennett and his gang are going to make surveys for Clark Davis and his company; Moss gets letter from Mr. Daugherty in the East, asking lowest wage he would consider for a job and would give him the next opening.

FOLDER 8. September - December, 1908. 12 letters (#78-89). September 7 letter (#78) mentions return from Controller Bay coal fields, September 14 letter (#79) tells of trip with Mr. Caswell, the Division Engineer, and Bill Thompson, a boatman and guide, to Camp 11, Carbon Creek to Priest's mine camp of the English Company, Archie MacLaren's camp and mine on Kushtaka Lake (sp?), Gabriel's camp, Bering River by canoe to Camp 11, townsite of Stillwater being surveyed, September 23 letter (#80) tells of making another trip to Camp 11 and running into two Indian camps; also tells of a problem with one of Ben Durkee's former wives and efforts to get his two children from her; camped at the Pacific Coal and Oil Company warehouse at Chilcat (managed by Mr. More), and back to Katalla. September 25 letter (#81) says Mr. Hawkins arrived and most everyone relieved of their jobs except Moss and two others. October 7 letter (#82) tells of bad weather which prevented SANTA CLARA getting in with the mail; only a Jewish storekeeper and three men left in the construction department; Moss is paying \$35 for board; Crandell is to leave and the assistant auditor, like Crandell, are foolish and worthless people; rumors that the November meeting in New York will find new people and contract changes in Cordova. October 21 letter (#84) says PORTLAND got in with the mail, Katalla Company cut out special rates for employees and board allowance of \$25 doesn't cover actual cost of \$35, October 23 letter (#85) tells of E. C. Hawkins in Cordova contacting Katalla to see if Moss could be spared and sent to Cordova on the first boat ... which will be the BUTLER, on November 1. November 9 letter (#86) says still in Katalla as bad weather and wireless station burned up its generator; hopes to get on the BUTLER or PORTLAND. November 24 letter (#87) with news of telegram from Cordova saying going to Seattle on SANTA CLARA. December 13 letter

(marked "Oct, 13"; #88) says Moss is not feeling well, walked out from Katalla with Ed Sullivan, also exhausted from work, etc. December 14 letter (#89) reports at Cordova all was to be closed down until March. Had trouble getting to Cordova, missing boats due to weather, so started out on foot and took four days, Wireless was out and didn't get message from Williams not to come and when Moss got there 90% of people laid off. Traveled to Juneau and down inside passage. Mrs. Daly and others behind Rodgers are thinking of developing Kanak Island and its harbor. Surveys were made there by both the Katalla Company and Rodgers. Eccles looked into it and New York office called for plans.

FOLDER 9. Miscellaneous letters and recommendations. 4 letters (#90-93). December 6, 1908, telegram to Mrs. F. F. Moss from Seattle on coming home. July 10, 1907, letter from Elsie Krey in Katalla to "Lena", describing her trip to Katalla with 70 head of cattle on board that were out of water and couldn't land in bad weather, so on to Valdez. Railroad had just begun but have six engines and a lot of cars. Mentions "battle" of railroads around July 5 over a crossing, but Katalla Company won and reports were exaggerated. Two letters (#92, 93) of recommendation for Ray Moss from the chief draftsman and division engineer of the Katalla Company.

FOLDER 10. Maps and meteorological records. 4 items: 1. Copper River and Northwestern Railway; 2,3. Katalla Company Meteorological record, September and December 1907; 4. C.R. & N.W. Ry graphical meteorological record, Katalla, Alaska 1907. Includes condition of sky, precipitation, maximum and minimum temperatures, barometric movements, maximum velocity and direction of wind and conditions of sea. 1 rolled map.