

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Bradley, Leslie L., 1901-1962

Letters from the Pribilofs written by Leslie L. Bradley, 1948-1949

MS 4-28

99 leaves: typescript

Processed By: Staff

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ACQUISITION: This collection is the gift of B. Irene Bradley Barrett M.D. who is the sister of Leslie L. Bradley. Mrs. Barrett sent the letters to Bob DeArmond who brought them to the Alaska State Library in September, 1980.

ACCESS: Open to research according to the policies of the Alaska State Library.

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PROCESSING: The letters have been housed in Mylar and placed in an acid free folder.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Born May 5, 1901, in Montezuma, Iowa, Leslie Bradley attended colleges in Iowa and Colorado, majoring in forestry. During World War II he served in the U. S. Air Force in Europe and received the Distinguished Flying Cross and other decorations. The last seven years of his life, he worked at the Boeing plant in Seattle in the wind tunnel. Mr. Bradley died on December 6, 1962, at Puyallup, Washington.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

Leslie L. Bradley worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on St. George and St. Paul Islands. This file of letters, covering several years, were written to B. Irene Barrett, Leslie's sister, in St. Petersburg, Florida.

INVENTORY

Synopsis of letters

Page	Subject
1-3	Arrival and first impressions of the Pribilofs, seals and birds.
4	Description of native boat – bidarrh [bidar].
6-7	Description of St. George and surrounding area.
8-9	Visit to nearby rookery.
10	Description of leming, indigenous to St. George.
11	Aleuts attitude towards children.
12	Russian massacre of Aleuts, and Aleuts subsequent conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church.
13	Religious habit of the Aleuts.
13-14	Surnames and first names.
14-15	Aleut language and translation to English.
18-21	Burial customs; funeral for "Johnny."
22	Approach of autumn; description of sky and clouds.
23-25	Leaving St. George on the PENGUIN, returning the men home to Unalaska, Bjorka, Sand Point, Akutan, King Cove for the winter (apparently they work at or out of St. George and St. Paul during the summer; the letters do not indicate doing what).
26-28	May, and Bradley is returning to the Pribilofs again; had sunshine during the ship's stop in Ketchikan; description of voyage and birds during the cruise.
29	Landing in St. George.
30-33	Job interview with Peter, a resident of St. George.
33	Mention of Easter services being held in Aleutian instead of the usual Russian. Note on bottom of page indicates date to be 1951.
34-35	Foxes in the village.
35	The native boys hunt "chootskies" or Least Auklets with sticks.
36-38	Native Boys playing games with foxes.
39-41	Typical spring day in St. George.
42-44	Descriptions of flora and fauna, including rookery, on St. George.
45-46	Memorial Day festivities.
46-48	A dance to dedicate the new hall and for pre-sealing.
48	Town's water supply and how to drink the local water.
49-53	A wedding in the village.
54-55	Arrival of spring.
55	Visit of the "health ship" which makes the rounds of the out-of-the-way villages and checks the people for TB.

- 56 Upcoming sealing season, end of school year, arrival of murre birds.
- 57-63 Description of a day spent with the walruses and a visit to the largest bird rookery in the northern hemisphere.
- 64-67 Observations of native assimilation of white culture.
- 67 Fourth of July celebration and dance.
- 68 The “jail” on St. George.
- 69 Kwaas or quass, an alcoholic beverage and its origins.
- 69-70 How to land a six-foot halibut.
- 71-73 Trip over to St. Paul and brief description of the island.
- 73-78 Expedition to Walrus Island, which was fogged in so the captain navigated by smell.
Description of island, sea lions and birds which inhabit the island.
- 79-82 Fire in the village, minor damage but very entertaining.
- 82-84 St. Paul’s day, a holiday for the natives.
- 84-85 Wandering over the tundra and exploring the island. Two cemeteries, one for the natives and one for the whites. In the white cemetery is a monument to three seamen from the USS LINCOLN who drowned in 1896.
- 86-88 End of seal killing season celebration and discussion of the near extinction of the sea otters.
- 89-91 Further discussion of the seal rookery.
- 92-93 Various gastronomical experiments with native foods.
- 94-95 Leaving in November on the “ PENGUIN.”
- 96-97 Docking in St. George and Unalaska on the trip south.
- 98-99 Continuation of the trip south including description of a “sea monster’s” head also going to Seattle.

Note: References to Leslie Bradley’s arrivals and departures can be found on microfilm in the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Pribilof Island Logbooks (see Ar6, Roll 18 in Alaska Historical Library). There are at least three references, as follows:

August 5, 1948 – Leslie Bradley, carpenter, arrives on the USS THUBAN.

Nov. 27, 1948 – Leslie Bradley, carpenter, leaves for Seattle aboard the FWS PENGUIN.

May 9, 1949 – Leslie Bradley, carpenter, arrives on the FWS PENGUIN.

There is an entry on May 10, 1950 which may pertain to Leslie Bradley. It reads: “Mr. Bradley visited St. George for several hours and went to St. Paul.”

There may be more references which were overlooked.