

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Shotridge, Louis

Tlingit Indian Genealogy Notes & Information, ca. 1915-1926

MS 37

3 boxes
1 folder
0.63 linear ft.

Processed by: Staff
Revised by: Jacki Swearingen, June 2015

ACQUISITION: The material in this collection was donated to the Alaska State Library and Museum in 1962 by Mrs. John O'Daniel (Lillian), daughter of Louis Shotridge. The accession included the note cards and the field case in which they had been kept along with a number of objects. The cards and the metal case were transferred to the Alaska Historical Collections library in 1976. Accession #62-82 (Collection #III-0-305). In 1986 Lynn Wallen acquired a copy of Mr. Shotridge's map detailing his travel in Alaska. The copy map was transferred from the Alaska State Museum in 1993 and added to this collection.

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

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

PROCESSING: This collection has been described at the folder and item level. The material was placed in acid free folders and archival boxes.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Louis Shotridge ("Stuwaka") was born about 1882, into a high-ranking family of the Chilkat Tlingit Indians in or near Klukwan, Alaska. He married an educated woman, Florence ("Katkwachsnea"), of the Chilkoot Tlingits. When Florence was selected to demonstrate Chilkat blanket weaving at the Lewis & Clark Exposition at Portland, Oregon in 1905, Louis accompanied her with Tlingit masks and other objects. There, Louis met George Gordon, curator at the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. Shotridge began to collect Alaska Indian objects for the Museum, and eventually joined their staff as assistant curator. The Shotridges documented Tlingit culture in oral recordings of traditional songs and stories as well as through objects. They headed the John Wanamaker expedition to Southeast Alaska in 1916, to gather "ethnological specimens" of Alaska Indians and to continue documenting the Tlingit culture. Florence had contracted tuberculosis and died in Alaska during this trip. Louis later remarried twice, but outside of Tlingit custom.

With his insider's knowledge, Shotridge developed one of the most extensive collections of Indian culture at the University Museum. The value of his work was in his meticulous record-keeping, which recorded the history, context and identity of the objects. Some of the objects he bought from his people caused much controversy. Shotridge's efforts to remove artifacts from the Klukwan Whale House caused a deep distrust. Toward the end of his museum career he had begun to question his own actions in having removed important cultural objects from his own people.

Louis Shotridge was found in 1937 with a broken neck near his cabin at Redoubt Bay south of Sitka. After the incident, which led to Shotridge's death, no witnesses came forward. Some believed his mortal injury was made to seem accidental by Klukwan Natives. The true circumstances were never revealed.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

This collection includes Louis Shotridge's notes on 5x7 cards with information concerning such subjects as Tlingit clans, genealogy, hostage/slave, Lhich-Naedi House, Shungoo-Kaedi House, geographic names, photographs, specimen (Tlingit artifact descriptions), warfare, and the itinerary of Louis Shotridge while gathering information from 1922-1924. Also included is a copy Shotridge's map of study sites and a letter of the map's transfer from the University of Pennsylvania Museum. *See also:* The Louis Shotridge Digital Archive at: <http://www.penn.museum/collections/shotridge/> .

INVENTORY

Box 1: Tlingit Indian genealogy notes and information (*Photocopies*)

Folder 1:

Itinerary cards - 1923-1924, Photographs cards - 1922-1924

Genealogy cards - 1922

Specimen cards - 1922-1926

Folder 2:

The Tlingit subdivisions cards

Genealogy cards - 1915-1926

Geographic Names cards

Box 2: Shotridge's note cards. [Fragile. Use photocopy or microfilm MFMS 63]

Box 3: Metal field case that held original note cards.

Folder: #2A-B located in MS X-Oversize Map Case in Vault

2A. Facsimile copy of the original U.S.G.S. map of S.E. Alaska with Shotridge's study sites marked, 1919. 20 x 24" (2 c.)

2B. Letter of Mary Anne Kenworthy, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, transmitting the map copy, dated February 28, 1986.