

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Parks, George A., 1883-1984

George A. Parks Papers, ca. 1912-1984

MS 091

2 ft.

Processed By: Staff
Revised By: Jacki Swearingen
Nov. 2011

ACQUISITION: The Governor George A. Parks Collection of papers (Manuscript 91) and photographs (PCA 240) were received through donations beginning in 1984 from his niece, Betty Valentine (Mrs. Carl) of Piedmont, California.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The following briefly highlights George A. Parks' work record and service to Alaska:

- 1883 May 29 - Born in Denver, Col., son of Mr. and Mrs. James Parks.
- 1906 - Graduated with an E.M. degree from Colorado School of Mines.
- 1907 - Arrived in Alaska and worked as a mining engineer for private companies.
- 1909 May 8 - Appointed as a practical miner, General Land Office, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.
- 1918
 - Entered military service.
 - First lieutenant of engineers, Fairbanks.
 - Captain, Chemical Warfare Service, Camp Lee, VA.
 - Reassigned to Ninth Div. of Alaska as gas officer to train troops in gas warfare.
- 1919 May 12 - Appointed Chief of the Alaska Field Division, General Land Office, Juneau.
- 1924 April 9 - Appointed Assistant supervisor of Surveys and Public Lands.

- 1925 June 16 - Appointed Governor of Alaska by President Calvin Coolidge.
1929 Oct. 1 - Reappointed Governor for a second term by President Herbert Hoover,
terminating April 3, 1933 with his resignation to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
1934 June 14 - District Cadastral Engineer, Alaska.
1936 Jan. 1 - Regional Cadastral Engineer, Alaska.
1948 June 20 - Retired from federal service with forty years of service to the Territory.
1948-1984 - Continued living and working in Alaska until his death on May 11, 1984 in
Juneau just a few weeks short of his 101st birthday.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

These materials provide special insight into an Alaskan pioneer and Territorial Governor whose service and life in Alaska covered seventy-seven years.

The Governor George A. Parks papers include a scrapbook kept by his mother of clippings, articles, etc.; a daily journal for 1916 briefly recording appointments and work for the General Land Office with some personal references; a small file of letters received including letters from three U.S. Presidents, Bishop Crimont, Ben Eielson, and various officials; the Governor's remarks at laying the cornerstone of the present day Capitol building; a history of the Alaska flag; invitations and miscellany including several identification cards when employed by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior.

The photograph collection of about 600 photographs includes nearly 300 photos taken by Mr. Parks in interior and northwestern Alaska in 1911-1914 when he worked for the General Land Office. Other photos of note include an album of 92 photos recording an inspection trip taken by Governor Parks, Malcolm Elliott (Pres., Alaska Road Commission) and R.J. Sommers (Territorial Highway Engineer) in May and June 1928. The trip of 2,500 miles to northern and interior Alaska was the first extensive trip that an Alaskan governor had made by airplane. There are some official photos of cabinet members; also formal and informal views of the 1929 U.S. Navy Alaska Aerial Survey Expedition.

INVENTORY

Box 1.

Scrapbook: Newspaper clippings, magazine articles, telegrams, news releases, etc. This scrapbook engraved with George A. Parks' name, was compiled by Mary L. Parks, mother of George A. Parks. The material is not in chronological order, but some items are dated. It includes some Alaska activities in the early 1900s with the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, service in the U.S. Army, primarily his appointment and service as governor and later as the first District Cadastral Engineer in 1934. There are also Alaska clippings kept for general interest relating to sports, a badge for the 1916 Fairbanks Potlatch, etc.

Box 2.

Folder 1. Daily Journal, 1916. (Appointments, interviews, work for General Land Office and some personal references.) Daily Journal, June 15-16, 1925; photocopy excerpt only noting his thoughts on assuming duties as governor.

Folder 2. Invitations to the White House (1927 and 1932); invitation of Governor Parks inviting the Commandant/Officers of the German cruiser Karlsruhe to a reception and dance, May 26, 1932 and acceptance.

Folder 3. Letters received and letters sent.

1. Letter dated July 29, 1918, Wash., D.C., from Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane. (re. joining military service.)
2. Telegram dated Dec. 15, 1924, Anchorage from Feltz. (Instruction to report to Wash., D.C., for conference.)
3. Letter dated March 7, 1929, Wash., D.C., from President Herbert Hoover. (Acknowledging letter of support and best wishes from Alaska.) Letter dated May 2, 1929 from Secretary of the Interior Ray L. Wilbur, Wash., D.C. (Not planning to make changes at present time and would Governor continue his duties.)
5. Letter dated Sept. 28; 1929 from Bishop Crimont, Juneau. (Catholic bishop sending regards on Gov. Parks re-appointment.)
6. Letter dated Oct. 8, 1929 Fairbanks from Ben Eielson. (Thanking Governor for the maps, not much hope of finding Merrill alive with no trace of plane, congratulations on reappointment.)
7. Letter dated Dec. 10, 1929 from Pearce Family, Douglas. (Congratulations for re-appointment.)
8. Letter dated Jan. 26, 1933 from Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Warm Springs, GA. (Inviting Governor to the inaugural luncheon, and to be in the parade)
9. Letter dated Mar. 2, 1933, from Pres. Herbert Hoover, Wash., D.C. (Thanking Governor Parks for service and friendship as the President leaves office.)
10. Letter dated March 6, 1933, Juneau to the President. (Gov. Parks noting his term will soon expire and he awaits any instructions from the President until successor is appointed.)
11. Letter dated March 9, 1933 from Pres. Franklin Roosevelt, Wash., D.C., (Thanking Governor for letter of congratulations.)
12. Letter dated March 27, 1933 from Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, Wash., D.C. (Acknowledging letter of Mar. 6 and commending Governor on prompt action regarding banking emergency in Alaska.)
13. Letter dated April 3, 1933 from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Washington, D.C. (Accepting Governor's resignation and appreciation for his service and best wishes.)
14. Letter dated May 6, 1938 from Dr. J.A. Sutherland, Fairbanks. (Noting improved mail service and invitation to go greyling fishing.)
15. Letter dated June 28, 1982 from Secretary of the Interior Jim Watt, Wash., D.C. (Congratulations on his 99th birthday.)

16. Letter dated May 4, 1983 from Senator Ted Stevens, Wash., D.C. (Happy 100th birthday.)
17. Letter dated May 18, 1983 from President Ronald Reagan, Wash., D.C. (Happy Birthday.)
18. Letter dated July 29, 1983 from Senator Frank Murkowski, Wash., D.C. (Comments on 100th birthday printed in CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.)

Folder 4. [Speech] Remarks of the Governor when the cornerstone was laid for the Alaska Federal and Territorial Building, 1925. (Now Capitol building.) 11 1. (typescript.)

Folder 5. History of Alaska's Flag. Prepared by Gladys Forrest for special Flag Day program at Juneau Chapter (?), Eastern Star, June 10, 1941. 6 1. (typescript) with 2 photos of Governor Parks presenting the Alaska flag to Postmaster General New. One photo also includes Charles Bunnell (college president), Dan Sutherland (Alaska Congressional delegate), E.K. Burlew, General Richardson (Alaska Road Commission), Charles Flory, Major Malcolm Elliott (Alaska Road Commission).

Folder 6. [Miscellaneous]

1. U.S. Department of Interior Identification Card no. 47 dated Feb. 1, 1925 noting George A. Parks, Division Inspector.
2. Alaska Travel Control Permit no. PM-312 dated Nov. 5, 1943, issued to George A. Parks, District Cadastral Engineer, by command of Lt.-General Buckner, signed by M. Briggs Hunt, Provost Marshal.
3. Golfing mementos, Thane Golf Links, score card, April 20, 1930 when Governor became member of the Canada Dry Hole-In-One Club; membership card for Juneau Sandblasters Golf Club; 2 clippings.

Folder 7. Newspaper clippings, 1925. 27 items.

Includes stories on the appointment of George A. Parks as governor, the first Alaskan ever appointed. THE NEW YORK TIMES, March 8, 1925 tells how the Governor came to be known and selected. Mr. Parks escorted President Harding and party in Alaska and he so impressed the Secretaries of Interior and Commerce that they suggested his name for consideration based on his knowledge of Alaska. Clippings are from various U.S. papers and a Spanish newspaper. The file includes the ALASKA DAILY EMPIRE, (Juneau issue of June 16, 1925 account of the Governor's inauguration with no special ceremony.

Folder 8. Miscellaneous articles. 1912-1942

1. "Our President is Dead". FAIRBANKS DAILY NEWS-MINER, Aug 3, 1923. (Front page story on President Harding; 3 copies.)
2. "Geo. A. Parks, prominent alumnus visits Denver". COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES MAGAZINE, Jan. 1929.
3. "George A. Parks Recently Appointed Governor of Alaska". PATHFINDER.
4. "Alaska, Home of the Air Minded", by Governor George Alexander Parks. SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS, July 10, 1929, v. 19, no. 2, p. 12-13, portrait.

5. "The Dog Race of Nome - 1912", poem by Esther Darling. FAIRBANKS WEEKLY TIMES, Dec. 2, 1912.
6. Newspaper clipping, (Dec. 1942), reporting death of Dr. Hubert Work, Sec. of Interior under Presidents Harding and Coolidge.

Folder 9. Newspaper articles about Governor Parks. 1925-1974. 20 items.

Contents include: Governor Parks and first golf tourney trophy he won at Thane, bowling, appointment as governor, governors receive Boy Scouts of America Silver Beaver Award (1950), "Governor Parks and the Capitol Building", by Lew M. Williams. SOUTHEASTERN LOG, Feb. 1974.

Folder 10. Newspaper articles on Alaska/Yukon.

Partial contents: article by Will Rogers on Nome epidemic (San Francisco, Feb. 15, 1925). "Bone's Ouster A New Whack At Old Guard". (ILLUSTRATED DAILY NEWS, Feb. 16, 1925), "Alaskans honored for Contributions to 49th State", (ANCHORAGE DAILY TIMES, Oct. 9, 1967).

Folder 11. Publications.

1. U.S. COAST GUARD DESTROYER FORCE BUGLE, Feb. 1930. Bear Number. 28 p., illus. Includes article "The Bear Picture", by Lt. D.P. Marvin (p. 6-7) with a brief history on the Revenue Cutter and a photo of a painting of the vessel made by New York artist Charles R. Patterson.
2. "Three Months At eleven Thousand Feet Above Alaska", by Lt. Comdr. A.W. Radford, U.S.N. Reprinted from THE AERONAUTICAL REVIEW, Dec. 1929. (The story with photos of the second Naval Alaskan Aerial Survey Expedition and its work.)
3. "Message of the Governor to the Alaska Legislative Assembly Eleventh Session 1933." Message of Governor George A. Parks to the Eleventh Session of the Alaska Territorial Legislature.
4. "Glimpses of Alaska From 1728 to the Present Date"; Issued by the Governor's Office Juneau 1928.
5. [Photograph of Governor George A. Parks and dedication to him in the 1931 Taku]

Folder 12. Certificates of appointments, awards, efficiency ratings.

Items 1-3, 7, 10, 11 are filed with Parks Photograph Collection – **PCA 240 Oversize**

1. Certificate of appointment as governor of Alaska signed by President Calvin Coolidge and Secretary of Interior Hubert Work. Signed Feb. 18, 1925.
2. Certificate appointing Governor Parks as Ex-officio commissioner for Alaska for the Dept. of the Interior signed by Hubert Work, Mar. 14, 1927.
3. Certificate of appointment as Governor of Alaska signed by President Herbert Hoover and Secretary Wilbur dated Oct. 2, 1929.

4. Certificate: Distinguished Service Award, U.S. Dept. of the Interior signed by Secretary Krug, dated Dec. 15, 1948.
5. Honorary Life Membership in the Alaska Historical Society signed by Pres. Wm. W. Jorgenson, dated Nov. 2, 1974.
6. U.S. General Land Office. Efficiency rating "Excellent" as District Cadastral Engineer 1942; Regional 1946 & 1948 and payroll change notice 1946.
7. Certificate of appointment as First Lieutenant in the Engineer Section of the Officer's Reserve Corps of the Army of the United States, dated January 28, 1918. Signed by Assistant Secretary of War and Adjutant General.
8. Certificate of appointment as Captain, Engineer Section, Officer's Reserve Corps of the Army of the United States, dated May 1, 1919. Signed by the Assistant Secretary of War and the Adjutant General.
9. Certificate of life membership of:
 - Alaska Lodge of Perfection,
 - Alaska Chapter of Rose Croix,
 - Alaska Council of Kadosh,
 - Alaska Consistory,
 Of the Co-ordinate Bodies, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, dated April 10, 1933.
10. Certificate of permanent contributing membership to the maintenance fund of the Shriner's Hospitals for Crippled Children. (No date.)
11. Certificate of award of The Founder's Cross for the Order of Demolay, dated December 15, 1937.

Folder 13. Colorado School of Mines honors

1. Certificate of life membership of the Colorado School of Mines Alumni Association, dated Aug. 1, 1973. Signed by Pres. David R. Cole. Accompanying letter, dated Aug. 20, 1973 from Wendell W. Fertig, Executive Secretary.
2. 100th birthday salute from David M. Crawford, Executive Director Alumni Association.
3. 100th birthday salute from his Alma Mater, the Colorado School of Mines, dated May 3, 1983. Signed by Guy T. McBride, Jr., President.
4. A half-century diploma from Colorado School of Mines, dated May 23, 1956. Signed by M.I. Signer, Dean; John W. Vanderwilt, President; Max W. Bowen, Secretary, Board of Trustees; and Lester C. Thomas, President, Board of Trustees.
5. "Fifty Years After" –Golden Anniversary Reunion of ten of the living members of the Class of 1906. Short (1/2 page) biography of Geo. Parks. Group photo of George Parks and the other 9 attending members.

Folder 14. Establishment of the George Parks Highway

1. News release from the Office of the governor on Gov. Hammond's acceptance of the recommendation of a special committee and the ordering of the Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway to be designated the George A. Parks Highway, dated July 2, 1975.
2. Letter of official notification from Gov. Hammond to George Parks announcing the designating of the highway, dated July 23, 1975.
3. Three photographs of the unveiling of the plaque.
4. Newspaper clipping; ANCHORAGE TIMES, May 30, 1978. "Parks Marks 95th Birthday", and photo of the plaque.
5. Newspaper clipping; THE FRONTIERSMAN, June 1, 1978, page 1. Photo of Mayor Pat Hjellen of Wasilla and Waino E. Hendrickson, former territorial Secretary of Alaska at the dedication. Two copies.
6. Newspaper clipping; THE FRONTIERSMAN, June 1, 1978, page 13. Two photos of the dedication of the highway. Two copies.
7. Newspaper clipping; ANCHORAGE TIMES, May 27, 1978. "Parks Plaques To Be Dedicated".
8. Telegram from Mildred and Les Nerland to George Parks, congratulating him on his 95th birthday and for the plaques on Parks Highway.
9. Report of completion of Job 205 - Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway, Cantwell, Alaska, dated December 1975.
10. SENATE JOURNAL, Alaska State Legislature, Tenth Legislature, Second Session. June 2, 1978. Contains an article on pages 1202-1203 by Joe La Rocca - "On Senator John Butrovich", with reference to Senator Butrovich representing George Parks at the dedication ceremonies for the new Fairbanks to Anchorage highway.

Folder 15. Birthday tributes to George Parks.

1. Letter from Lieutenant Governor Terry Miller, June 12, 1979.
2. Letter from Governor Jay S. Hammond, May 18, 1981.
3. Letter from Governor Jay S. Hammond, May 28, 1982, and photograph of Gov. Hammond, George Parks, and Mayor Overstreet seated by birthday cakes.
4. Letter from Governor William A. Egan, May 30, 1973.
5. Letter from Associate Justice Robert Boochever, June 1, 1973.
6. Letter from all members of the Alaska State Senate, signed by John Rader, President of the Alaska State Senate, May 27, 1977.
7. Letter from members of the Tenth Alaska State Legislature, signed by Senator John L. Rader, President Alaska State Senate, May 26, 1978.
8. Photocopy of the front page of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, May 25, 1983 containing a proposal for resolution introducing George A. Parks Day.
9. Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 52 - 1975. Honoring George Parks on his 92nd birthday. Passed by the Senate and the House May 29th, 1975.
10. State of Alaska Executive Proclamation by Jay Hammond, Governor proclaiming May 29, 1978 as "Governor Parks Day".

11. State of Alaska Executive Proclamation by Jay Hammond, Governor proclaiming May 29, 1979 as "Governor Parks Day".
12. State of Alaska The Legislature "Honoring - Governor George A. Parks.", May 19, 1978.
13. Proclamation from the City and Borough of Juneau proclaiming May 29, 1983 as Governor George Alexander Parks Day. Signed by Mayor W.D. Overstreet.
14. Proclamation of the City and Borough of Juneau proclaiming May 29, 1981 as Governor George Parks Day. Signed by Mayor W.D. Overstreet.
15. Resolution of the City and Borough of Juneau, Alaska, serial No. 853, proclaiming May 29, 1982 as Governor George A. Parks Day.
16. THE VISITOR, Annual Report Issue, June 1983. Contains an article "A Tribute to George A. Parks on his 100th Birthday".
17. SOUTHEAST ALASKA EMPIRE, May 29, 1973. Front page photo with caption, of Gov. Parks, his niece, Mrs. Carl Valentine, and her husband during tree planting ceremonies at the Alaska State Museum.
18. Newspaper clipping, JUNEAU EMPIRE, May 27, 1983. "Gov. Parks Celebrates 100th year".
19. Newspaper clipping; ALASKA EMPIRE, June 3, 1969 of photo of George Parks and Governor Keith H. Miller seated by a birthday cake.
20. Newspaper clipping from ALASKA EMPIRE, June 6, 1979, of photograph of George A. Parks and Lt. Gov. Terry Miller.
21. Letter from Gerald H. Phipps, June 7, 1983.

Folder 16. University of Alaska Honorary degree.

Filed with Parks Photograph Collection - *Located in PCA 240 Oversize.*

1. Doctor of Public Service degree, May 9, 1975
- 2-8. Seven letters concerning the honorary degree.
- 9-10. Certificate of Honorary membership of the University of Alaska Alumni Association with accompanying letter.
11. Newspaper clipping; DAILY NEWS-MINER, May 5, 1975. "Honorary Degrees Planned" with photo of George Parks and the other five recipients.

Folder 17. Death/funeral of Governor Parks.

1. Funeral Service program
2. Photocopy of newspaper clipping; USA TODAY, May 14, 1984. "Alaska Territory Chief George Parks is Dead."
3. JUNEAU EMPIRE, May 14, 1984. Front page article with photo. "Former Gov. Parks dies at 100."
4. Newspaper clipping; THE ANCHORAGE TIMES, May 14, 1984. EDITORIALS "George A. Parks."
5. Newspaper clipping; ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS, May 26, 1984. OBITUARIES "George Parks."
6. Newspaper clipping; NEW YORK TIMES, May 14, 1984. "George A. Parks, 100; Was Alaska Governor."
7. Newspaper clipping; S.E. CHRONICLE, June 14, 1984. "George Parks."

8. Newspaper clipping; THE WASHINGTON POST, May 14, 1984. DEATHS ELSEWHERE "George Parks."

Folder 18. In Memoriam

1. The Alaska Legislature - In Memoriam - George A. Parks; May 17, 1984