

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Greany, J. Malcolm

J. Malcolm Greany Papers and Photographs: Aleutian Islands, 1941

MS 253

1 box (21 b&w prints, 25 col. slides, 23 col. prints, papers) Processed By: Gayle Goedde
0.42 linear ft. November 2009

ACQUISITION: This collection was purchased by the Alaska State Library Historical Collections in November 2009. (Accession number: 2009-43).

ACCESS: The collection is available for viewing; however, the photographs may not be photocopied.

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PROCESSING: Photographs were numbered by staff and housed in Mylar; notes, journal entries, and writing were filed in pH-neutral folders; newspaper articles were photocopied. The collection is described at an item level.

HISTORICAL NOTE

During the summer of 1941, J. Malcolm Greany traveled to the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge aboard the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service boat *Brown Bear*. As a wildlife photographer for the Alaska Game Commission, Greany was along to photograph the populations of colonial nesting birds, marine mammals, and other wildlife indigenous to the Aleutian Islands and their adjacent waters. The westernmost Aleutian Island visited on the journey was Attu, where, in addition to photographing wildlife, Greany photographed the local people, their homes, church, and baskets. Less than a year later, in June of 1942, the people of Attu were captured by Japanese invading forces, shipped to Japan, and interned for the duration of the war. 22 individuals from Attu did not survive their imprisonment in Japan. The 25 survivors were resettled in Atka; a community was never re-established on Attu. The photographs and notes in this collection document the last days of the Attuans.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The following information is taken from Greany's autobiographical notes, which are included in Folder 3.

Ten years before, I was interested in Archeology, in fact so much so that I spent too much of my time studying this subject and not enough time [on] my school subjects –much to the concern of my teachers who worried more about these outside interests than I did... After graduating by the skin of my teeth, I started for Harvard University. I had note books bulging with information I had dug up from many sources. Surely if the good professors saw that I was really interested in Archeology, they would give me a chance to study it. Several good friends very earnestly told me that unless I had a college education, I could expect to get nowhere in actual field work...

With high hopes I arranged a consultation with the noted anthropologist Dr. Ernest A Hooton... Dr. Hooton asked the questions. What kind of marks did I get in school? How much Latin did I have? And, how much money did I have to see college through? My answers were not very encouraging either to him or to me. Poor marks. No Latin, except 20 lessons after which the teacher said I was wasting my time and hers. And no money. Of course I could wash dishes, or even stuff birds for the college museum. I had done both before. But the Doctor just shook his head. Poor marks, no Latin, not a chance.

The blue-blooded and cultural city of Boston had suddenly become drab and lonely. I headed south for the University of Pennsylvania. There I looked up a lady anthropologist with whom I had carried on considerable correspondence, Dr. Frederica de Laguna. I told her I was coming and we met in the hallway of the University Museum. I noticed that she wore a puzzled expression and finally smiled as she said, "I was looking for an old man with a beard." We both laughed and went into the museum exhibit rooms to view her collection from Prince William Sound. The hours passed quickly...

The next day I made an appointment to see the registrar. He did not ask about my school marks. He sent for them. In the meantime, I was given a series of tests... One written question in particular

had me stuck. It read something like this: If you were late for a lecture and there was one empty seat way up in front, would you walk up and take the seat or stand up in the back? Placing myself in the [examiner's] place, I could realize his impression of either answer. If I said I would walk up and take the front seat, he would consider me as bold and inconsiderate. If I said I would stand up in the rear of the hall, he would consider me timid and shy. I answered that I would stand. Evidently, the answer was wrong...

At school, I was captain of our debating team; I had pinch hit for the teacher in Field Biology and in two years time had over 30 one-hour lectures to my credit. And yet, according to the answer I gave I was classed as timid and shy... By this time, my marks from school had arrived. The registrar called me into the office. Slowly he shook his head and said that even though I was recommended highly by the school principal, my marks proved otherwise...

So I headed south to the National Museum at Washington and the Smithsonian. Perhaps if I could not go to college I could at least get a job in a museum, working around the subject I had such an interest in... With my last lead gone, I went back to Detroit and got a job in an automobile factory. I was still going to Alaska [but] my interest in Archeology had to give way to practical interests. I learned my lesson, you can't get any place just on interest...

I left for Alaska in the spring of 1936 and in due time arrived in Juneau. And then, quite accidentally, was taught the fundamentals of photography by Leonard Delano. In turn, [I] helped him with what he taught me. Later in the year, I had the opportunity of joining Fr. Bernard Hubbard's expedition up the Taku River and onto the snow caps of S. East Alaska. My knowledge of photography was extended, and I saw the chance of getting into something I did not need a college education for. I also realized how much there was to photograph; so, after the expedition was over, I went back to the states.

I spent two years working in a large eastern camera store. Spent my evenings doing commercial work. Took time off to photograph a zoological expedition to the southwest. A year later, got married to a girl who corrected my spelling in school before I handed my composition to the teacher... Spent our honeymoon traveling with another couple by car through the Rockies. We camped and photographed to our hearts content. In due time, we arrived in Seattle and took passage to our future home –Alaska. I obtained a job doing wildlife photography for the Alaska Game Commission and, several years later, came my chance to make the semi-annual patrol voyage of the *Brown Bear* of the Fish and Wildlife Service to the Aleutian Island Wildlife Refuge.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The collection contains original color slides, dating from J. Malcolm Greany's 1941 visit to Attu; other photographs include color print copies of the slides, and also black and white prints taken on Attu. In addition, there are field reports, journal entries, and numerous papers relating to Greany's work for the Fish and Wildlife Service and to his drafts of two articles: "Island Trail to Asia" and "The Last Days of Attu." Finally, there are photocopies of newspaper articles relating to the experiences of the Aleuts during World War II, and a copy of a magazine article, "They Came to Attu," by Corey Ford.

21 black and white prints
 25 color slides
 23 color prints
 Papers

SUBJECTS

Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, U. S. M. S. *Brown Bear*, Attu, the people of Attu, and the removal and internment of the Attuans by the Japanese during World War II.

INVENTORY

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1, Photographs: black and white prints

- 1 [Man leaning against the door frame of a barabara, covered in native grasses]
- 2 [Two young women, weaving baskets]
- 3 [Close-up view of hands, weaving a small, bottle-shaped basket with lid]
- 4 [Tightly woven cylindrical basket, tapering at the top to a lid with a recessed knob]
- 5 [Framed doorway leading into a barabara, covered in native grasses]
- 6 [View of ceiling structure inside Aleutian dwelling]
- 7 [Interior of Aleutian dwelling, showing wooden bed frames, grass bedding materials, table, stools, shelves, animal traps, axe, and chopping block]
- 8 [Doorway into room, framed in wood; grasses on floor, two blocks, i.e. block and tackle, hanging on side of room]

- 9 On verso: Sequla [Interior view of Aleutian dwelling, showing bunk with grass bedding, animal traps hanging along support post, kitchen table and utensils, alarm clock, lanterns, and matches]
- 10 On verso: Amchitka –S. Side [Distant view of man standing next to doorway of barabara; curve of the coastline visible at upper right]
- 11 On verso: Signal Corps, U. S. Army, Official Photograph; File No. 4-472-45 [Single-lane dirt road curves around to wooden houses close to beach; low, treeless mountains behind, with melting snow]
- 12 On verso: Signal Corps, U. S. Army, Official Photograph; File No. 4-473-45 [Wooden buildings near beach, boat on shore, canoe on beach]
- 13 Church at Attu, July 1941. [View of outside of white church, with dome and Greek Orthodox cross; small grave house and small white crosses mark graves to right of church]
- 14 Interior of church at Attu, July 1941 [Altar view, showing chandelier; large candles on pedestals; religious tapestries and paintings, including the Sacred Heart and the Last Supper]
- 15 [Aleutian harbor with ships at anchor]
- 16 Sign: “CHICHAGOF HARBOR: Before the Nippon occupation, Chichagof Harbor was the home of the native Aleuts. During the occupation it served as location of Japanese Force Hdqrs. It was into this Valley the Japs withdrew when pressure was exerted by United States forces from North and South.”
- 17 Sign: “ATTU VILLAGE: In this Village the Aleuts made their home. It consisted of about nine buildings to house the population, and a Greek Orthodox Church. The Village had a Priest and a School Teacher. The Teacher was also the Village Doctor.”
- 18 [Man inspecting the partially hidden entrance to an Amchitka barabara roofed in tall native grasses; wild celery plants flourish alongside]
- 19 [Island shoreline in Aleutians; road, communication poles, jeep visible on shore]
- 20 [Curving shoreline of Aleutian Island; wooden buildings at lower left]
- 21 [Young Aleut boy and girl on beach, Attu?]

Folder 2, Photographs: color slides

- 1 Attu Natives, July 23, 1941 [Mike Hodikoff, Chief of the Attu Islanders, with woman and baby]

- 2 Attu, July 23, 1941 [Young Aleut boy and girl]
- 3 [Aleut boy]
- 4 Attu, July 23, 1941 [Three Aleut boys in zip-up jackets and jeans]
- 5 [Attu woman with baby]
- 6 Atka, July 19, 1941 [Young woman sitting on in tall grass, surrounded by cut lengths of dried grass]
- 7 [Young Aleut boy]
- 8 [Two boys from Attu, holding baby blue foxes]
- 9 [Portrait of Mike Hodikoff, Chief of the Attu Islanders]
- 10 [Close-up of two people weaving Attu baskets]
- 11 [Five cylindrical Attu baskets of varying sizes and decorations, with lids and knobs]
- 12 [Five cylindrical Attu baskets of varying sizes and decorations, with lids and knobs; one is tipped to show the design details of the lid and bottom of the basket; a Mercury dime leans against one basket, giving size perspective]
- 13 Attu, summer, 1941 [Two Attu baskets, held in someone's hands; one tipped on side to show details of the knob and lid]
- 14 Attu basket, July 9, 1941 [Basket, with lid, in the process of being woven around bottle; close-up view of basket in someone's hands]
- 15 Attu baskets, 1941 [Three baskets of various shapes and sizes, from large to very small; all with lids and knobs]
- 16 Attu, July 23, 1941 [Four homes and a Greek Orthodox Church; stream in the foreground, steep hills behind]
- 17 Amchitka, summer, 1941 [Entrance to a barabara, hidden in tall grass and vegetation]
- 18 [Salmon and meat hanging from a long wooden pole, drying; in front of two buildings and a flagpole flying a U. S. flag on Attu]
- 19 [Close-up view of drying salmon on Attu]
- 20 Attu, July 23, 1941 [Close-up view of drying salmon]

- 21 [Vessel (possibly Brown Bear?) offshore the village of Attu; houses and Greek Orthodox church visible behind]
- 22 Sanak Song Sparrow, Atka Island, July 1941 [Baby bird held in two hands]
- 23 Attu, July 23, 1941 [Baby Sanak Song Sparrow perched on someone's fingers]
- 24 Attu, July 23, 1941 [Baby Sanak Song Sparrow sitting on palm of hand]
- 25 Attu, July 23, 1941 Baby Sanak Song Sparrow enclosed between cupped hands

Folder 2, Photographs, Copy 2: color prints made from slides 1-23 (listed above)

Folder 3, Papers: Autobiographical

- 1 J. Malcolm Greany's autobiographical notes regarding his journey to becoming a photographer for the Alaska Game Commission.
- 2 Notes for an article, "Big Worlds in a Small Space," on how having an enjoyable hobby or interest can make life more fulfilling.
- 3 "The Camera in Geological Research"
- 4 Photographic opportunities in Alaska

Folder 4, Papers: Patrol assignment on the *Brown Bear*

- 1 Appointment as field assistant on the U.S.M.S. *Brown Bear*; schedule of travel and lists of wildlife to be photographed.
- 2 M.S. *Brown Bear* crew list; Captain John Sellevold
- 3 Log notes on the "Patrol of M.S. Brown Bear to the Aleutian Islands," June 7th to Sept. 13, 1941, J. Malcolm Greany, Field Assistant, Alaska Game Commission, Juneau, Alaska.
- 4 Inventory of all island groups, with latitudes and longitudes for each individual community.
- 5 "Photographic Activities on the Aleutian Islands: U.S.M.S. *Brown Bear* Patrol of the Aleutian Island National Wildlife Refuge, June 7 – Sept. 13, 1941," by J. Malcolm Greany, Field Assistant, Alaska Game Commission, Juneau, Alaska.

Folder 5, Papers: Aleutian Islands

- 1 "Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge," 14 pages, annotated.

- 2 Descriptive notes on the Aleutian Islands
- 3 Sketches of Poa Island, Tangik Island, and unnamed island
- 4 “Kagamil: The Island of the Dead”
- 5 Description – Easter Island – Robt. J. Casey
- 6 Notes on “Photo Documentary Series,” and “Value of Blue Foxes in Aleutian Economy”
- 7 “Aleut Natives”

Folder 6, Papers: Attu

- 1 “The Island Trail to Asia,” by J. Malcolm Greany, two-page draft
- 2 “The Island Trail to Asia,” three-page draft
- 3 Meeting Mike Hodikoff and the Attu Islanders
- 4 Frank Beals and Greany look on the village of Attu; reflections on being in a land thousands of miles from nowhere
- 5 “The savagery of man would rival the savagery of nature up and down the Aleutian Chain”
- 6 Note regarding the fates of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jones

Folder 7, Papers: Correspondence with Robert (Bob) Henning

- 1 Letter from Robert A. Henning to Malcolm Greany, Dec. 14, 1981
- 2 Draft of letter to Bob Henning
- 3 Draft of letter to Bob Henning

Folder 8, Papers: General

- 1 Ideas for articles and photographic essays
- 2 Reflections on backpacking with camera gear along a glacier in Southeastern Alaska
- 3 Journal notes from Sept. 29 to Oct. 2, 1944 Polycrome Pass, Alaska

Folder 9, Papers: Preliminary notes, “The Last Days of Attu”

- 1 Outline for “Last Days of Attu,” including transcript of conversation with Mike Hodikoff regarding suspicious Japanese activities in the area.
- 2 Introduction to “Last Days of Attu”; six pages of notes
- 3 Aftermath to Attu story
- 4 Envelope of numerous small notes on the topic of Attu

Folder 10, Papers: Drafts, “The Last Days of Attu”

- 1 “The Last Days of Attu;” early draft with editing comments
- 2 Attu baskets, 4 pages
- 3 “The Last Days of Attu,” by J. Malcolm Greany

Folder 11, Papers: Corey Ford article

- 1 “They Came to Attu,” by Corey Ford, with photographs possibly taken by Malcolm Greany; published in *Collier’s*, August 8, 1942.

Folder 12, Papers: Newspaper articles

- 1 “Jap prisons fatal to 22 Attu people,” *Daily Alaska Empire*, Juneau, November 30, 1945
- 2 “Aleuts fight newest enemy: change,” *Sunday Oregonian*, September 20, 1981
- 3 “Internment in Japan bitter memory,” *Sunday Oregonian*, September 20, 1981
- 4 “WWII uprooting, abandonment of Aleuts ‘outrageous,’” *Sunday Oregonian*, September 20, 1981
- 5 “Endangered goose finds inter refuge on coast,” *The Oregonian*, November 4, 1982
- 6 “Japan to build monument on Alaska Island,” *The Stars and Stripes*, June 23, 1987