

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Caldwell, Frank, b. 1867

Frank Caldwell Papers: Unpublished novel, Diomeda

MS 259

.5 cu. Ft.
Manuscript, 450 pages

Processed by: James Simard, Dec. 2010

ACQUISITION: Donated by Beverly Caldwell Smith, the granddaughter of Frank and Brownie Caldwell. Accession #2010-065. The donation included a first edition of *Wolf the Storm Leader*, autographed and inscribed to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Morgan, which was placed in the Historical Collections general book collection. Lantern slides, used in Frank Caldwell's lecture series, constitute a separate collection, PCA 249.

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted.

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

PROCESSING: The unbound manuscript was copied on acid free paper. The original typed pages were housed in an acid free enclosure.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In 1905 Frank and Brownie Caldwell of Indianapolis, Indiana traveled to Alaska and the Yukon on their honeymoon. On this trip, Mr. Caldwell was an "advance man/lecture manager" for Reverend John P. D. John, a Methodist minister who wanted to bring religion to the gold camps. Frank later presented a lecture and travelogue series, in partnership with Eli Smith, with lantern slides created by Brownie Caldwell. See: *The Birth of a Book* by Fenton Caldwell, contained in the Guide to Frank and Brownie Caldwell Photograph Collection, 1905 PCA 249.

Frank Caldwell was the author of the novel *Wolf the Storm Leader*, published in 1934 by Dodd, Mead, & Co. Told in the voice of the dog, this book recounts the life and adventures of Wolf, the leader of Eli Smith's well traveled sled dog team.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

Unpublished manuscript of a novel: *Diomedea*, by Frank Caldwell and John W. Sluss, begins with the purchase of Alaska. Secretary of State William H. Seward, under direction from President Johnson, requests a Colonel Warren to travel to Alaska to carry out an economic survey on the new territory and to decide on locations for new army posts. The Colonel is to be accompanied by, among others, his wife and his wife's sister. They are living in Louisiana, and so the prospect of leaving the comforts of home to spend two or more years in Alaska is a daunting proposition; the sister, however, is comforted to know that Captain Darren will be accompanying them. The book covers the journey to Sitka, and continues with explorations of Kodiak and the Aleutians. Diomedea, of the title, is a baby born to an ivory carver and his wife, who is part Russian. The medicine man tells the couple they must give up their baby because the circumstances of her birth break a terrible taboo; but, instead of killing the baby, the father takes her away and hands her over to the now Mrs. Darren. She somehow manages to keep the baby's true identity a secret, even from her husband, and raises the child as their own. As Diomedea matures, Mrs. Darren worries about whether nature or nurture will win out. There is much discussion of the science of evolution and what it means to be civilized. The manuscript's ending seems abrupt, and perhaps there was to be more.

Beverly Caldwell Smith

INVENTORY

1. *Diomedea*, by Frank Caldwell and John W. Sluss

2. Alaska Journal article; *Eight Thousand Miles by Sled Dog*, by Marolyn Caldwell and Robert Caldwell Wilson. Story recounts the travels of Eli Smith, the lecture series of Smith and Frank Caldwell, and the creation of Brownie Caldwell's hand tinted glass lantern slides which were the centerpiece of the lectures.

3. Letter from Justus O'Reilly, a friend of the Caldwell family, to Merle Caldwell, March 15, 1944.