Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Greve, John Paul
John Greve Photograph Collection
Building the Alcan Highway, ca. 1944
PCA 527

168 black and white images
Set of color postcards

Processed by: Gayle Goedde
December 2009

ACQUISITION: The collection was donated by Sharon A. Campbell in 2009 (Accession number 2009-21).

ACCESS: The collection is available for viewing.

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

PROCESSING: The photographs were removed from album pages and sleeved in Mylar for preservation purposes. The original order was maintained as much as possible; however, many images had come loose, and the exact order was lost.
BIODGRAPHICAL NOTE

Provided by Sharon A. Campbell, John Greve’s daughter.

John Paul Greve was born on April 9, 1898, in Irwin, Iowa. He was the second oldest son of eleven children born to German immigrant parents from Schweig-Holstein. Throughout the 1920s, John Greve worked in wholesale hardware for Marshall Wells in Duluth, Minnesota, where he enjoyed a comfortable social life. That all ended when the Depression hit and work dried up. For ten years, employment was spotty. He said, that he knew how it felt to be really hungry. That changed when he was drafted in 1942 at the age of 44. He was discharged later that same year for being over age; but, in the Army, he heard about employment opportunities in the Yukon Territory. He left a job in Minneapolis that paid $.82 an hour and went to work in the Yukon for $1.50 an hour, nearly doubling his salary. He absolutely fell in love with the Yukon; and, from there, he fell in love with Alaska.

John Greve’s first job was in Whitehorse, Canada, where he worked for Marvin Tinker on a regular carpenter crew during the building of the Alcan Highway. This photograph collection dates from that period. When the contract ended, he applied to and was hired by Ladd Field in Fairbanks in May of 1944, and he was employed there until August 19, 1949. In 1946 he had married Nancy Lee Scott, the 41-year-old secretary to the Fairbanks High School principal. The following year, John was surprised to become a father at the age of 50. The asthmatic baby, Sharon, needed a more moderate climate and mom and daughter moved outside Alaska. John worked one more year before taking the same difficult step himself. In later years, he was never able to speak of Alaska without a break in his voice. He always assumed he would return, but the opportunity never came.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

John Greve assembled this collection of postcards and personal photographs to chronicle the building of the Alcan Highway when he was on the scene in 1944. Most of the images show views along the Alcan, with prominent lakes, mountains, and buildings. Also shown are scenes of construction personnel and road-building equipment. There is one set of small commercial photographs of Jasper National Park and one set of color postcards depicting scenes from British Columbia and Southeast Alaska.
INVENTORY

When descriptions were written on the front or back of the photograph, these are noted. The images were numbered consecutively throughout the collection.

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1

1-9 [Small, 2 ¼ x 1 ½-inch unidentified black and white scenery shots, including one of a black bear on a graded road and one of a man in overalls, standing by a sign that reads] “Small Bridge, 1st Lt. Roland Small”

10 Lake Victoria


12 Dog team

13 Maintenance on airport

14-22 [Small black and white photos (same size as 1-9), including another one of the same black bear as above and many shots of construction trucks working in a shallow river;] the final shot in this series is labeled “Indian Village”

23-42 [3-inch-square photographs showing men working on construction projects; locations and buildings are unnamed]; a few men’s names are on the back, including: John Brooker, Bob OConner, Leo McDound?, and Jim Scriver?

43-52 [Small, 2 ½ x 4-inch tourist cards with scenes of Jasper National Park]

53 [Snow-covered, river valley landscape, with contours indicating past construction activities]

54 Dog team [three dogs pulling a sled with two people along a wide trail]

Folder 2

55 Alcan

56 Fuel camp where river boats refuel up river
57  Buoys on Lake Bennett
58  [River boat at] Whitehorse dock; on verso: “On to Dawson”
59  Old time [train] engine, Carcross
60  Carcross Indian village, Lake Bennett
61  Lake Bennett
62  [Three men fishing in a river]
63  Swimming pool behind the Indian School, Carcross
64  Alcan [road under snow, with building and tall flagpole on right]
65  Lake Bennett
66  Australian Point, [Lake Bennett]
67  Ben-Ma-Chree [Lake]
68  Lake Aishikik (Indian Country)
69  Jakes Corners and Alcan Highway, 4000’ elevation
70  Jakes Corners, 4000’ elevation
71  Lake Tagish
72  Lake Tagish
73  Trading Post and mink farm at Tagish, Y. T. [Yukon Territory]
74  White Pass and Yukon Railroad [wooden bridge in foreground; buildings on other side]
75  Carcross, Lake Bennett
76  Carcross Inn
77  TUTSHE passenger boat, plying between Carcross and Ben-Ma-Chree
78  [View of bridge on] Lake Bennett; [Carcross visible through trees]
79  White Pass and Yukon Railroad

http://www.library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/finding_aids/PCA527.pdf
Carcross, Y. T. [Yukon Territory]; [Carcross was originally known as Caribou Crossing]

Whitehorse Depot

Supplies coming up to Army and Construction companies at Whitehorse from Skagway, Alaska [on the train]

Rainbow Lake

[Three men unload fuel drums from plane] YUKON SOUTHERN, CF-BMW

Plane coming in

Lake Aishihik, Indian Country

[Small 3 ½ x 2 ¾ -inch souvenir photographs of various scenes from the] White Pass and Yukon Route

Folder 3

Narrow Gauge Railroad, 36”

Drilling for gold in gold fields

Indian graves

Indian graves

72 Below, Whitehorse, 1943

Graves

[Graves]

Construction camp [Quonset huts]

Buzz saw Jimmie, Whitehorse, Y. T.

Highway in Yukon before Alcan [looks like a streambed]

Ice breaking up on Yukon River

Breaking [ground for] Alcan

Marsh Lake
Whitehorse Dam

Whitehorse

Typical log house, Whitehorse

[Boats line up along] docks at Whitehorse

R. C. M. P, Mountie

Mountie checking on Indians [Officer with four people, standing outside log cabin]

Old R.C. M. P. barracks at Carcross

Mountie checking on Indians [Officer, holding map, visits with two people outside tent]

Mountie bringing in his man [prisoner on horse, followed by pack horse, mountie, and fourth horse]

R. C. M. P. tennis courts, Dawson [next to river]

St. Mary’s Hospital, Dawson City, Y. T.

YUKON ROSE at dock

Lewes River; on verso: Yukon River

Shooting Whitehorse Rapids

Miles Canyon, where Robert Service wrote; on verso: Miles Canyon, where Robert Service wrote many poems

The following, 133-162, are Alcan Highway postcards

Alcan Highway

Trout River, Alcan Highway

Watson Lake, Alcan Highway

Trapper’s plane at Ft. Nelson, Alcan Highway

Liard River, Alcan Highway

P. R. A. camp on Alcan Highway

http://www.library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/finding_aids/PCA527.pdf
139 Liard River, Alcan Highway
140 Liard River in the Rockies, Alcan Highway
141 Cable bridge over Miles Canyon
142 Summit Lake, Alcan Highway
143 Summit Lake Alcan Highway
144 Alaska Highway
145 Rocky Mountains, Alcan Highway
146 Military, Alcan Highway
147 Fort Nelson, B. C. C., Alcan Highway
148 Alcan Highway
149 Alcan Highway
150 The First Mile, Alcan Highway
152 Original Fort St. John, B. C. C., Peace River, Alcan Highway
153 Peace River, Alcan Highway
154 Dawson Creek, B. C. Canada, Alcan Highway
155 Alcan Highway
156 Mancho Lake, Alcan Highway
157 Alcan Highway
158 Pack train, Alcan Highway
159 [Men and large crate of gear in the mud], Alcan Highway
160 Steamboat Mountain, Alaska Highway
161  Alcan Highway

162  The midnight sun, Yukon; Photo made at 15 minute intervals as seen from the Alaska Highway, Whitehorse, Y. T.

Folder 4, loose photographs and postcards

163  Alcan Highway [road construction signs]

164  [Map of ] Alaskan Highway

165  [Fold-out, color postcards]

C. N. R. S. PRINCE RUPERT and PRINCE GEORGE
The Mendenhall Glacier and Auk Lake
Beautiful Lake Bennett on the White Pass Route
Dawson, heart of the famed Klondike gold fields
Whitehorse, head of navigation on the Yukon
Main Street, Skagway, famous in gold rush days of 1898
Juneau, capital of Alaska
Wrangell, Alaska, fishing headquarters
C. N. R. S. PRINCE RUPERT
Ocean Falls
Prince Rupert, B. C.
Ketchikan, Alaska, fishing center
Idyllic Ben-My-Chree, a garden at the foot of a glacier
Miles Canyon and Whitehorse Rapids, five miles long
Taku Glacier
Five Finger Rapids

166  Ice breaking up [along river]

167  Pan American Ship [Pacific Alaska Airways]

168  Ice breaking

169  Grouse hunt; [grouse hanging from line along outside of building]