Lars Degen Nelson Photograph Collection, 1920s-1950s

PCA 596

Digital collection only
2 albums containing:
79 b&w and color photographic prints
39 (8x10) b&w photographic prints
1 (8x10) color photographic print
1 (7x9) b&w photographic prints
35 (5x7) b&w photographic prints
2 (3 ¼ x 4 ½) b&w photographic prints
1 (5x7) color photographic print

5 Documents
1 Oral history interview
1 Book with 23 b&w photographs

Processed by: Brittany Dugger
April, 2017
Updated by: Jacki Swearingen,
Feb. 2019

ACQUISITION: This collection is a gift of Mary L. Dinon, daughter of Lars Degen Nelson. Acc. #2017-004.

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted. This collection has been digitized and is available to view via Alaska’s Digital Archives (VILDA).

COPYRIGHT: Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian.
PROCESSING: All photos have been digitized and retained in digital storage at the Alaska State Library, Historical Collections. Original photographs and albums were returned to the donor. This collection has been described at the item level. Descriptions come from the Donor’s notes.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Lars Degn Nelson was born on December 28th, 1927 at the Scandinavian Cannery. The cannery was located at Snag Point Alaska, which is now known as Dillingham. His parents were August Nelson and Ella (Nielsen) (Nelson) Adkison. August Nelson was the winter watchman at the cannery. He drowned in a storm when Lars was four years old.

Lars was in the first graduating class of the territorial school in Dillingham, in the year 1949. He was drafted into the army in 1950 for the Korean War and served his time at Fort Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska.

In 1958, Lars met Mary Teresa "Terry" (Coady) Nelson while working at the Kanakanak Hospital. Despite an order by the Hospital Nursing Director that Terry was not to “fraternize with the local native boys,” she fell in love with Lars and married him on October 30th, 1959. They lived on the local hospital compound until 1964, and then built a basement home on Lars’ native allotment where they raised their children.

Lars worked as a fisherman, a maintenance worker at Kanakanak Hospital, as ground crew for Wein Air Alaska, a Dillingham Jail Guard, and finally, he retired in the early 1980’s with his wife. Lars passed away Sunday, November 16, 2014 in Palmer, Alaska.

Biographical information pulled from obituary.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

This collection contains 2 Albums which hold 79 b&w and color photographs of the Dillingham area, the Scandinavian Cannery, P.A.F. (Pacific American Fisheries) Cannery, and family and friends of Lars Degn Nelson, from the 1920s through the 1950s. Also included is an oral history provided by Harlan Adkison, obituaries for Lars Degn Nelson and his mother Ella Adkison, as well as a book titled: “The Last of Yesterday.” The book was created by Dillingham high school students in 1972. It describes the local commercial, religious, and social history of the Dillingham and Bristol Bay area.
SUBJECTS

Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Canneries, Southwestern Alaska.

INVENTORY

Album 1


2. Portrait of Lars Degn Nielsen (Ella’s Dad) [sic].

3. Helen Spaugh [with Baby Nora or Ella.]

4. Helen (Mom) Nielsen, 1917, with Robert and Ella [sic].

5. [Grave site and cross of Lars Degn Nielsen.]

6. [Replica of photograph number 4.]

7. Ella and August Nelson with Lars circa 1930 or 1931.


9. Mrs. Peter Nelson.

10. August "Gust" Nelson, Born 1899, Died 1932 [father of Lars Degn Nelson.]

11. Lars (about 4 years old), Rudy “August Rudolf” with mom and dad, and Ella’s sister Nora Nielsen, 1931 [sic].


14a. Two page document: “How Lars Learned to Write His Name.”

15. Rudy and Lars sitting on porch.
16. Lars Degn Nelson, late 1920s.

17. Ella and Milo Douglas Adkison (Lars’ stepfather) in Dillingham, AK [sic]. On boardwalk P.A.F. cannery.

18. Ella Adkison [with daughter Arlene Adkison and Audrey Roberts.]

19. Mike “Milo Douglas Adkison” aboard a train [sic].

20. Mike Adkison with son, Harlan Adkison 1930s.

21. Mike Adkison and Oscar Nerguson.

22. Mike Adkison, [standing in front of car wearing a flat cap.]


24. Arlene Adkison (half-sister to Lars) in the snow [sic].

25. Arlene Adkison.

26. Moose head with baby [most likely Arlene Adkison.]

27. Ella wearing a black dress.

28. Mike wearing a parka and standing by dogsled.

29. Perry and Harlan Adkison wearing caps.

30. Ella with Adkison children [Perry, Harlan, Arlene.]

31. Lars-top left, Rudy-top right, Arlene- bottom left, Perry- bottom-center, Harlan-center-right.

32. L to R. Harlan Adkison, Rodney Sampson, and Perry Adkison, circa 1940 [sic].

33. Mike posing with dead moose, snowshoes, and huskies.

34. Bottom-left-Murphy Knutsen, Bottom (sitting), George Smith [sic], Mike standing on float.

35. Dillingham Schoolhouse.
36. Dillingham school children posing with their teachers at the schoolhouse.
   Back row, left to right: Unknown, Teacher-Mrs. Ott, Walter Noden, Alice (Nelson) Downey, unknown girl, Vera (Johnson) Fortune, Kallan Mulkiet, unknown girl, Boice Osterhaus.
   Second row, left to right: Unknown boy, unknown girl (plaid shirt), Mike Hoseth, Johnny Mulkiet, Fred Hoseth (white shirt), Neil Fenno, Ruthie Petersen (Black coat, long boots), Ella (Johnson) Barrett.
   Front row, left to right: Elizabeth? Osterhaus (girl in mukluks), Nelda Larson, Doty Petersen, August “Rudy” Nelson, Chuck Nielsen, Marie (Larson) Tennyson, Katherine McGill, Lars Degn Nelson.

37. “Rudy” Nelson [in uniform.]


40. Perry [Dillingham sweatshirt and a ball cap with wild pet bird on shoulder.]

41. Ella’s brother, Robert Nielsen, posing with one of his sled dogs in the snow.

42. Ella Adkison and Emma [Mulkeit] Nunn.

43. Top-left- Nora Doleman, bottom-left- Ella, Mike, Katherine McGill.

44. “Unknown” young boy standing by animal skin being tanned.

45. Charlie Nielsen standing on porch [Ella’s older brother.]

46. Robert Nielsen outside a cannery [Ella’s younger brother.]

47. Harry Doleman sitting in the grass.


49. Peter Nelson, Millie, Annie P. Nelson, Alice, Carlie Boy, Peter, Esther. Lars uncle’s family.

50. [Unidentified group of cannery workers sitting on porch, smoking and drinking.]
51. Left to Right: George Smith, Dick Armstrong, John Smith, Eddy Brandon, Billy Brandon, August "Rudy" Nelson, Arthur Brandon. Picture taken approx. 1949 in Dillingham.

52. [Group of schoolchildren standing outside Dillingham Schoolhouse with their teacher.]

Album 2

1. Marriage certificate of Charles Nelson and Helen Spaugh.

2. Typed information on Marriage Certificate and Certificate of Baptism. Includes witnesses and pastor information as well as an official signature by a U.S. Commisioner.

3. Obituary for Ella Adkison.


7. Sailboats lined up at the base of P.A.F. cannery in Dillingham.

8. Enlargement of photograph number 7.


10. Scandinavian Cannery, 1939.


15. Dillingham Garbage dump, 1939.

17. Bluff at Snag Point looking toward P.A.F. cannery.

18. Dock at P.A.F. cannery. [Marked #16 on back of photo. Smoke pouring out cannery chimney.]


21. Left to right: Jack Gillis, Sig Johnson [holding up a large salmon.]


23. Ella May Nielsen in fur coat with husband, August Nelson, 1930-1931. Taken in Dillingham, AK. Small boy is Lars Degn Nelson.


25. Lars Degn Nelson with Millie and Grace Gardiner.

26. Nora Doleman, right [standing with a group of people.]


29. 1939 [Lowe Trading Company building with men standing out front.]

30. P.A.F. Cannery, 1939. [Marked #10.]


32. Kanakanak Hospital, 1939.
