

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
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Guide prepared by: Heather McClain, Senior Archivist

TITLE: Joe Redington Sr. Family Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2006.023

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1940 - 2000

Extent: 36 boxes

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Joe Redington Sr., Violet Redington

Administrative/Biographical History:

Joe Redington Sr. (1917-1999) was an American dog musher and kennel owner, who is best known as the "Father of the Iditarod" for helping to the modern Iditarod dog sled race. Redington was born in Kingfisher, Oklahoma on February 1, 1917 and grew up with his father and brothers James and Ray. After living in Jersey City, New Jersey for a year, they settled on a farm in Kintnersville, Pennsylvania in 1930.

In 1940, Redington enlisted in the United States Army, and was stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma where he became part of the infantry and was trained in the Field Artillery Jump School. He was assigned to the Pacific Theatre during World War II and was part of the Special Assault Troops. He was discharged from Fort Dix, New Jersey after the war in 1945 and returned to Pennsylvania.

In 1948, Redington moved to the Knik, Alaska, where he filed a homestead claim along the historic Iditarod Trail and started the Knik Kennels. From 1949 to 1957 with teams of huskies, he helped recover aircraft and personnel from crash sites as part of a contract for the United States Air Force.

On February 18, 1953, he married Violet Redington, and they moved to a new homestead on Flat Horn Lake, Alaska and worked as hunting guides along the Iditarod Trail. The Redingtons also helped to clear the overgrown trail and worked to designate it as the Iditarod National Historic Trail in 1978.

Joe Redington Sr. met Dorothy Page in 1966 and together they planned a 25-mile race in Knik called the Iditarod Trail Seppala Memorial Race, after the champion musher Leonhard Seppala. The Redingtons and Pages then began planning and promoting for the modern 1,000 mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race which would end in Sitkasuaq (Nome) (initially the race was supposed to end in Iditarod, but because of logistics, it was moved to Sitkasuaq). The first race was run in 1973 with a field of 35 mushers. Redington competed in seventeen Iditarod races from 1974 to 1997, including as an honorary musher in the 1997 race.

Redington died on June 24, 1999 and was buried with his favorite dog sled in Wasilla, Alaska.

Scope and Content Description:

This collection consists of photo albums, photographic prints, negatives, slides, letters, correspondence, ephemera, and newspaper clippings related to the personal and professional work of the Redington Family.

Arrangement: Collection was arranged by previous archivists.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research use.

Physical Access: Original items in good condition.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the materials.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

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The Redington heirs retain the right to use images of or in the Joe Redington Sr. Family Collection to develop and market commercial products or use them on a website.

Preferred Citation:

Joe Redington Sr. Family Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2006.23

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by Joe Redington Jr., Ray Redington, and Tim Redington on behalf of the Redington Family in January 2007

RELATED MATERIALS

B2014.027 Paul Felter "Faces of the Iditarod" Collection

B2016.019 Randy Brandon Collection

B2018.009 Iditarod Gold Rush Photograph

B2021.007 Brian and Sharon Davies Collection

B2023.006 Jeff Schultz Collection

SUBJECTS

Redington, Joe Sr., 1917-1999

Redington, Violet, 1924-2006

Redington, Joe Jr.

Redington, Ray

Redington, Tim

Iditarod (Race)

Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race

Sled dog racing – Alaska

Sled dogs – Alaska

Mushers – Alaska

Anchorage (Alaska)

Knik (Alaska)

Nome (Alaska)

Sitjasuaq (Alaska)

Guide written: March 6, 2025