

**REFERENCE CODE:** AkAMH

**REPOSITORY NAME:**

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center  
Bob and Evangeline Atwood Resource Center  
625 C Street  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone: 907-929-9235  
Email: [resourcecenter@anchagemuseum.org](mailto:resourcecenter@anchagemuseum.org)

Guide prepared by: Heather McClain, Archivist

**TITLE:** Alex Family Photograph Collection

**COLLECTION NUMBER:** B1980.098

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Dates: c. 1937

Extent: 54 photographic prints

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Unknown

**Administrative/Biographical History:**

Mike Alex (1908-1977) was born in Eklutna in 1908 and was a Nulchina or Sky Clansman. His mother, Matriona, came from Susitna, and his father, Bel K'ikghil'ishen Vecilia Alick<sup>1</sup> "Eklutna Alex" (1865-1952), was born in Hutnaynut'I, a Dena'ina village in the area of Bodenbergs Butte.<sup>2</sup>

Alex made his living as a commercial fisherman during the summers and worked for the Alaska Railroad as a section foreman during the other parts of the year for 28 years. His fish site on the north end of Nutul'iy (Fire Island) for 50 consecutive seasons and was known as one of the best fishermen in Cook Inlet. He always put up a lot of fish, hunted moose, and kept a garden for his family.

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<sup>1</sup> Aaron Leggett, "Bel K'ikghil'ishen (Eklutna Alex)," Cook Inlet Historical Society, *Legends and Legacies, Anchorage 1910-1940*. Accessed July 20, 2022, <https://www.alaskahistory.org/biographies/bel-kikghilishen-eklutna-alex/>.

<sup>2</sup> Kari, James. 1978. "The Heritage of Eklutna: Mike Alex, 1908-1977." Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Alex was also well known to many Indigenous Alaskans who attended the Eklutna Vocational School in the 1920s and 1930s because he was regularly involved with school projects. In addition to all his jobs and chores, Alex always put up lots of fish and hunted moose, and kept a garden for his family. He hunted, fished, and travelled throughout Upper Cook Inlet, and knew the country, especially Eklutna Lake and Eagle River, in great detail. His knowledge of Indigenous place names extended into the Anchorage area and Knik Arm.

He was also the warden of the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church at Eklutna and was known for the restoration of the old Eklutna church and helped to build the new church in Eklutna with his sons.

Alex passed on August 26, 1977.

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of 52 black-and-white photographic prints of Eklutna, Alaska and Southcentral Alaska in general, taken circa 1937.

Arrangement: Not applicable.

## **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:

The Anchorage Museum is the owner of the materials and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the Anchorage Museum before any reproduction use. The Anchorage Museum does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners.

Preferred Citation:

Alex Family Photograph Collection, Anchorage Museum, B1980.098

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by Nancy Alex in June 1980.

## Processing Note

Two items missing as of 2022, .9 and .31.

## RELATED MATERIALS

B1980.026, Eklutna Vocational School Collection

B2013.065, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mapping Squadron Photographs

B2019.003, Eklutna and Anvik Collection

## SUBJECTS

Alex, Mike, 1908-1977

Beq'e Nuqeydghela Tukda, Chief Ephrim

Alaska Railroad

Anchorage (Alaska)

Eklutna (Alaska)

Eklutna River

Eklutna Vocational School

Fur Rendezvous

Palmer (Alaska)

Susitna (Alaska)

## Detailed Description of the Collection

### F1

.1 – Eklutna, Alaska. 19 [one Indigenous man standing in the doorway of a building with three stretched hides leaning against the side. At least two sets of snowshoes leaning against the corner to the left]

.2 – Eklutna, Alaska. 3 [ a group of women and men standing next to a train station with a sign that says, “Eklutna”]

.3 – Boats and boating. “Whitworth” – Cannery trader owned by Al Soeneke – general Fish Co. Skipper – Bill Lind – circa 1937 [boat on the water with at least three people onboard]

.4 – Eklutna, Alaska. 25 [two people working between steel beams, possibly for a bridge]

.5 – Palmer, Alaska. A50 [view of downtown Palmer with the water tower in view to the left, a platform near center, and a group of people near the platform to the right]

.6 – Eklutna, Alaska. 14. EK School [view of Eklutna Vocational School with trees and mountains in the background]

.7 – Alaska Railroad, Equipment [Alaska Railroad cars with people standing and walking on the platform. Automobiles parked to the right. Lettering on railroad car reads, “The Alaska Railroad, 303”]

.8 - Alaska Railroad, Equipment [Alaska Railroad cars with people standing and walking on the platform. Lettering on railroad car reads, “The Alaska Railroad”]

.9 – [missing]

- .10 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 012 [a crowd of people standing on sidewalks as a dog team turns a street corner covered in snow. Alaska and United States flags are strung across the street. Business signs read left to right: Quality Market and State Mercantile]
- .11 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 012 [a crowd of people standing on sidewalks as a dog team turns a street corner covered in snow. Alaska and United States flags are strung across the street. Business signs read left to right: Hamm’s Beer Chill, Quality Market, D&D, Bar-Café, and State Mercantile]
- .12 – Anchorage. A11 [one white woman sitting in the back seat of a jeep while a white man drives, possible as part of a parade. A crowd of people stand on the sidewalk in front of buildings. The sign in front of one building reads: J. Vic Brown & Sons]
- .13 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 012 [two Indigenous women and four Indigenous men dressed in fur parkas are posed with a white woman standing in snow in the middle of a street. A crowd of people stand on the sidewalk in front of and on the roof of buildings in the background. The signs in the windows of the buildings read, Victory Cocktails and J. Vic Brown & Sons. Similar to .14 and .15]
- .14 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 012 [two Indigenous women and four Indigenous men dressed in fur parkas are posed in snow in the middle of a street. A crowd of people stand on the sidewalk in front of and on the roof of buildings in the background. The signs in the windows of the buildings read: Victory Cocktails and J. Vic Brown & Sons. Similar to .13 and .15]
- .15 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 012 [two Indigenous women and one Indigenous man dressed in fur parkas are posed with a white woman standing in snow in the middle of a street. Two of the men from .13 and .14 stand facing away from the camera in the foreground. A crowd of people stand on the sidewalk in front of and on the roof of buildings in the background. The signs in the windows of the buildings read, Victory Cocktails and J. Vic Brown & Sons]
- .16 – Anchorage. 25 [parade possibly on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk. Signs of businesses read: 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank, Crocker’s Department Store]
- .17 – Anchorage. 25 [parade with marching band possibly on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk. Signs of businesses read: Crocker’s Department Store]
- .18 – Anchorage. 25 [parade with group of men in suits presenting flags possibly on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk. Signs of businesses read: Crocker’s Department Store]
- .19 – Anchorage. A11 [automobile in a parade possibly on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk and sitting on roof of building. Signs of businesses read: Food Center, Ship Creek Meat Co.]
- .20 – Anchorage. 602 [street view possibly of Fourth Avenue with a dogsled team in the road and people standing on the sidewalk. Business signs read left to right: “Fly Seattle,” “D&D Bar and Café”]
- .21 – Anchorage. 602 [decorated automobile in a parade on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk and sitting on roof of building. Business signs read left to right: Food Center, Ship Creek Meat Co.]

- .22 – Anchorage. A11 [decorated automobile in a parade possibly on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk and sitting on roof of building. Business signs read left to right: Food Center, Ship Creek Meat Co. Similar to .21]
- .23 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 112 [dogsled team running down Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk. The 4th Avenue Theatre sign is in the background]
- .24 –13, #17 EK School. Eklutna, Alaska. 15 [winter scene with people standing in the background next to unknown piles]
- .25 – Riverboats [riverboat sitting on a riverbank to the left with a building to right]
- .26 – Anchorage. 460 [Indigenous woman standing in parka and mukluks for a photo. Business signs read left to right: Blondie’s Hamburgers, Alley Cat Bar]
- .27 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 460 [sled dogs on Fourth Avenue with sled out of view. People standing on the sidewalk watching. Hewitt’s Drugs building in the background]
- .28 – Susitna, Alaska. 4x5 copy [view with at least four log cabins to the right with upturned canoes in front and to the left]
- .29 – 9, #16 EK River and water. Alaska Railroad – Anchorage to Matanuska, Eklutna [view of a bridge with railroad tracks over Eklutna River]
- .30 –Riverboats [riverboat sitting on a riverbank]
- .31 – [missing]
- .32 – Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous. 012 [street view possibly of Fourth Avenue with a dogsled team in the road and people standing on the sidewalk. The federal building is the background at left. Business signs read left to right: Smart Shop Ladies Apparel, The Gitchell, Anchorage Jewelers, Lee’s Mens Wear, Food Center]
- .33 – Anchorage. 460. 4x5 copy [street view possibly during Fur Rendezvous with people on the sidewalk and at least three white men and one white woman in the street on cross-country skis next to a parked automobile. Business signs read right to left: H. Seidenverg Clothier, Walt’s Transfer, Wilson’s Café, Koslosky’s Mens Wear, Quality Market, D&D Bar and Café Sport Center]
- .34 – Anchorage. A50 [decorated float in parade on Fourth Avenue with at least five people posed with an American flag. The federal building is in the background and people on the sidewalk. Banner on the side of the float reads, “Sons of Norway, Anchorage Local No. 46.” Float number 21.
- .35 – Anchorage. A11. [decorated automobile in a parade on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk and sitting on roof of building. Federal building is the background at left. Business signs read left to right: Smart Shop Ladies Apparel, The Gitchell, Anchorage Jewelers, Lee’s Mens Wear, Food Center]
- .36 – Anchorage. Fur Rendezvous. 012 [street view of Fourth Avenue with two sled dog teams and people standing near the teams and on the sidewalks]
- .37 – Anchorage. A50 [decorated automobile in a parade on Fourth Avenue with people standing on the sidewalk and sitting on roof of building. The federal building is the background at right.]
- .38 – Anchorage. Fur Rendezvous. 012 [street view of Fourth Avenue with a dogsled team and musher heading east toward the Chugach Mountains]
- .39 – Athapaskan Indians [Indigenous man standing in western dress with several pelts in his left hand]

- .40 – 12. Eklutna, Alaska. Eklutna Vocational School, Eklutna Village, 1924-1945 [view of Eklutna Vocational School Building with Chugach Mountains in the background]
- .41 – Eklutna, Alaska. No, possibly Anchorage. D4 [view of park area with fountain and trees. Buildings to the left]
- .42 – Eklutna, Alaska. No, this is the Matanuska Valley Farmer’s Cooperative Garage in Palmer, Alaska. Jim Fox [parked cars in front of a garage. Business sign reads: Co-op Repair Shop Service Station]
- .43 – Here’s Tom and our dog team [One man sitting on the back of a sled with two dogs in harness. Building in the background]
- .44 – Unidentified. 37 [view of dock area with boats pulled up on shore and building to the right]
- .45 – Students at Eklutna Vocational School. Eklutna, Alaska [Young Indigenous woman in western dress standing in front of a building and holding a camera]
- .46 – Eklutna School, bread making class. Eklutna, Alaska. 4x5 copy [four young Indigenous woman standing behind a table full of bread in western style dress covered by aprons]
- .47 – “Alaska Home Sweet Home.” McKinley Park. Copyright 1939, Maud Hosler. Back, Mount McKinley National Park. 4x5 copy neg [view of a cabin in winter with light shining through the window. Cabin is located in Denali National Park]
- .48 – Students at Eklutna Voc. School. Eklutna, Alaska [two Indigenous young women in western dress from Eklutna Vocational School standing in snow]
- .49 – People [one white man in a hat and formal dress kneeling next to a building. He is holding a beaver up by his front paws]
- .50 – Christmas at Eklutna Community Hall. Eklutna, Alaska. 1. Ben Ezi, 2. Pauline Chilligan. 632E. 35 mm slide. On note: Head of the table, Ben Enzi; Right side face of Nicholi Stephen; left side Alex’s David? [at least 12 people seated at a table with plates and silverware. One woman is standing at left and one woman is standing and reaching towards a table at right]
- .51 – Christmas at Eklutna – Community Hall. Eklutna Alaska. Left to right: Nick Begich, Steve Prokopeuff, George Allen. 632E. 35 mm slides [One Indigenous man standing next to a table with at least five white men and maybe one white woman seated. A group if people are standing and seated at a table in the background who are also pictured in .50]
- .52 – Chief Nikoli. 18?, Died 1920. Athapaskan Indians. Mac’s 1003. 4x5 copy neg [In 2023, identified as Beq’e Nuqeydghela Tukda, Chief Ephrim from Susitna Station. He is standing in western dress next to a building with snow on the ground]
- .53 – Paul Chief, Dirk. Athapaskan Indians. 4x5 copy neg [two Indigenous youth in western dress standing at the entrance to a canvas tent]
- .54 – McKinley Park Hotel, Alaska, P25. Back, Mt. McKinley National Park [view of park hotel in Denali National Park]

Guide written: July 18, 2022

Guide update: January 30, 2023; October 6, 2023