



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

June and Farrar Burn photographs from Alaska

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2018

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	June and Farrar Burn photographs from Alaska
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.131
Date:	1920-1921
Extent:	12 glass plate negatives 13 copy negatives
Creator:	Burn, Farrar, 1888-1974 Burn, June, 1893-1969
Language:	English
Summary:	This collection includes negatives from June and Farrar Burn's time in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska between 1920 and 1921. The Burns were granted teaching appointments from the Bureau of Education in the Alaska School Service and assigned to Gambell where they lived for a year, working closely with the Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) community there.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Purchased by the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, along with 71 ethnographic items, from Farrar Burn in 1923.

Provenance

The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation made copy negatives (acetate) of the glass plate negatives in the 1960's as part of a large preservation project. Contact prints were also made at this time.

Separated Materials

The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation purchased 71 Alaskan ethnographic items from Farrar Burn which are now in NMAI Ethnology collection with catalog numbers 11/6726 - 11/6795.

Related Materials

The June and Farrar Burn Papers, 1921-1969, can be found at Western Washington University, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies.

Processing Information

Processed by Rachel Menyuk, Processing Archivist, in 2018.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); June and Farrar Burn photographs from Alaska, Box and Folder Number; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

June Burn was born Inez Chandler Harris on June 19, 1893, in Anniston, Alabama. June met Farrar Burn (born September 22, 1888), a World War I veteran, while living in a cabin near Washington, D.C., and the two were wed in 1919. The couple began homesteading on the San Juan Islands in the Puget Sound before being granted teaching appointments from the Bureau of Education in the Alaska School Service and assigned to Gambell, St. Lawrence Island in Alaska in June, 1920. For a year they lived and worked closely with the Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) population there. When June became pregnant with their first son North they returned to the San Juans.

The Burns continued to travel extensively with June writing for various periodicals and eventually publishing her own autobiography "Living High: An Unconventional Autobiography" in 1941. Later in their lives Farrar traveled the country lecturing on and June taught for a short while at the University of Washington. In 1967, June and Farrar moved to a small farm near Fort Smith, Arkansas – Farrar's home town. June died there in 1969, followed by Farrar in 1975.

Content Description

This collection consists of 12 glass plate negatives and 13 copy negatives that depict June and Farrar Burns' year long teaching appointments in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island with the Alaska School Service between 1920 and 1921. This primarily includes photographs of the Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) community with whom they were living and working. The majority of the photographs were shot outdoors of men, women and children outside of their homes, with their sled dogs, and hunting. There are also several images of June Burn teaching her young students as well as group portraits of the children in her class. The glass plate negatives appear to be copies made sometime between 1921 and 1923 of originals that were likely nitrate negatives shot by Farrar Burn.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Indians of North America -- Alaska
Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Cultures:

Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Geographic Names:

Alaska

Container Listing

- Box 236 N08085: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) School Children, 1920-1921
1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative
[Image\(s\)](#)
Group of Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) school children standing outside in the snow in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]
- Box 236 N08086: Sepillu, Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Caribou Herder, 1920-1921
1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative
[Image\(s\)](#)
Portrait of Sepillu, a Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Chief caribou herder in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. He is holding two young caribous and wears sunglasses or snow goggles.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]
- Box 236 N08087: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Houses and Dogs, 1920-1921
1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative
[Image\(s\)](#)
Outside view of Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) houses and dogs in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]
- N08088: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Houses, 1920-1921
1 copy negative
Outside view of Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) houses in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska with walrus-hide rope drying out front.

Glass plate negative missing.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]
- Box B25 N08089: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Men Marking Caribou, 1920-1921
1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative
View of two Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) men marking a caribou by clipping its ears in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]
- Box 236 N08090: Portrait of Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Child, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative

[Image\(s\)](#)

Outdoor view of a young Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) child in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. A man and two young children can be seen on the ground in the background.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Box 236

N08091: June Burn with her Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Students, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative

[Image\(s\)](#)

Outdoor portrait of June Burn with her Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) students in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Box 236

N08092: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Men Walrus Hunting, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative

[Image\(s\)](#)

Outdoor view of two Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) walrus hunters with their catch amidst floating ice in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Box 236

N08093: June Burn with her Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Students, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative

[Image\(s\)](#)

June Burn teaching her class of Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) children outdoors in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Box 236

N08094: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Dogs and Houses, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative
1 copy negative

[Image\(s\)](#)

Outdoor view of Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) dog teams and houses in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Box 236

N08095: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) Family with Dogs, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative

1 copy negative

[Image\(s\)](#)

Outdoor portrait of a Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) family outside a home with sled dogs in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Culture: Yuit (Siberian Yup'ik) [St. Lawrence Island]

Box 236

N08096: Steamship Towing Whales, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative

1 copy negative

[Image\(s\)](#)

View of a steamship towing two whales into weighing station in Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Box 236

N08097: RESTRICTED: Walrus Skull, 1920-1921

1 glass plate negative

1 copy negative

Walrus-skull with three tusks that was used as a shrine on top of mountain from St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. Now in the collection of the Bronx Zoological Park, New York City. RESTRICTED.

Culture: Yup'ik (Yupik Eskimo)