



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

John William Hamilton photographs from Alaska

Mattie Lewis

2025

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	John William Hamilton photographs from Alaska
Date:	1887-1890
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.323
Creator:	Hamilton, John William (1845-1934)
Extent:	3 Albumen prints 6 Gelatin silver prints
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection includes 9 albumen and silver gelatin photographs taken by Bishop John William Hamilton from 1887 to 1890 among the Tlingit and Haida communities in Alaska.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Gift of Helene H. Stafford, 1964.

Separated Materials

Blue trade beads were also donated with this collection: [23/4115](#) [24/1133](#)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Mattie Lewis, Archives Technician in 2025.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); John William Hamilton photographs from Alaska, image #, NMAI.AC.323; National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Access to NMAI Archives Center collections is by appointment only, Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment (phone: 301-238-1400, email: nmaiarchives@si.edu).

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Biographical / Historical

John William Hamilton (1845-1934) was born in Weston, Virginia. He completed a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mount Union College in 1865 and a theology degree from Boston University in 1871. He served as a pastor in several congregations across Massachusetts before being elected as secretary of the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society to build schools for freed slaves. He also worked to establish the first Methodist churches in Alaska and Hawaii. After retiring as a Bishop in 1916, Hamilton spent six years as chancellor of American University in Washington, D.C. He passed away in 1934 and is buried at Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains six silver gelatin and three albumen photographs taken in Hoonah, Skagway, Ketchikan, and Juneau, Alaska. The images depict homes, totem poles, and boats in Tlingit and Haida communities.

Images numbers P19894-P19902

Arrangement

Arranged by catalog number.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Alaska -- Ketchikan
- Haida
- Tlingit

Cultures:

- Haida
- Tlingit

Types of Materials:

- Albumen prints
- Gelatin silver prints

Places:

- Alaska -- Fort Wrangell
- Hoonah (Alaska)
- Juneau (Alaska)

Container Listing

Photo-folder 1	P19894: Houses in Hoonah, Circa 1890 1 Albumen print Notes: Albumen print of a row of western-style houses in the Indian village of Hoonah.
Photo-folder 1	P19895: Boat in Hoonah, Circa 1890 1 Albumen print Notes: Albumen print of a boat on a body of water with woods in the background in the Indian village of Hoonah.
Photo-folder 1	P19896: Dock in Hoonah, Circa 1890 1 Albumen print Notes: Albumen print of four Indian women at dock in the village of Hoonah.
Photo-folder 1	P19897: Women sitting, undated 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Silver gelatin print of four women sitting on sidewalk, beside their wares
Photo-folder 1	Boat in Skagway, undated 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Silver gelatin print of a boat anchored in Skagway.
Photo-folder 1	P19899: Totem pole, undated 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Silver gelatin print of a totem pole beside a house.
Photo-folder 1	P19900: Woman and cat, Circa 1887 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Silver gelatin outdoor portrait of an elderly woman seated in front of a wooden structure, with a cat peering over her shoulder. This image is a cropped from a larger post card image of two women- Winter and Pond #215.
Photo-folder 1	P19901: Totem pole mailing card, undated 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Silver gelatin 1.5 x 4 in. mailing card of a totem pole from Winter and Pond
Photo-folder 1	Village aerial view, undated 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Silver gelatin print looking over an unknown village in Alaska.