

Finding aid to the
Edward Pierrepont Beckwith Collection
circa 1904-1945

PARTIAL

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Reference code

US NNEC EPB

Level of description

Collection

Extent and medium of the unit of description

6 vols., 4 boxes of lantern slides and approx. 2500 photos

Name of creator

Edward Pierrepont Beckwith

Historical note

Edward Pierrepont Beckwith graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1901. He soon went to work for General Electric, conducting some of the first experiments with tungsten as a filament for electric lamps.

Exploration and travel were both part of his work and one of his passions. An avid mountaineer, Beckwith spent two seasons climbing in the Swiss Alps in 1904-5 and in the Austrian Dolomites in 1906. He also had an interest in aviation, obtaining his pilot's license in 1915.

When Beckwith applied for membership in The Explorers Club in 1930, he had already retired. In the next decade, he was an observer, navigator and photographer on a number of further expeditions, including the Carnegie Institute's Mount McKinley Cosmic Ray Expedition in 1932, the Rainbow Bridge-Monument Valley Expedition of 1937 (which mapped 2000 square miles in southern Utah and northern Arizona), and the 1939-40 Fairchild Tropical Expedition in the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies.

Beckwith died in 1966 at the age of 89.

Scope and content note

This collection contains several diaries and photographs related to the expeditions of Edward Pierrepont Beckwith. The majority of the collection documents Beckwith's expeditions in Alaska during the 1930s.

System of arrangement

The collection has not been fully processed, but there currently appear to be three series: diaries, lantern slides and photographs. Series groupings appear to reflect original order insofar as it is indicated on transfer documents, although many items delivered now appear to be missing.

Archival history

Unknown.

Immediate source of acquisition or transfer

According to correspondence in Edward P. Beckwith's membership file, materials were donated by Mary P. Beckwith, his sister, in June 1967.

Conditions governing access

Collection is open to the public by appointment. To make an appointment or request permission to publish, please contact Curator of Research Collections. Contact information is available on The Explorers Club website: www.explorers.org

Preferred Citation:

Edward Pierrepont Beckwith Collection, Series #, File# or Item #, The Explorers Club Research Collections.

Conditions governing reproduction

Scanning, digital photography, and/or photocopying is permitted at curator's discretion and performed by curatorial staff or other professionals as time permits.

Language of material

English

Finding aids

Item level lists of the lantern slides were previously created

Related Collections/Units of Description

The following collections are known or believed to contain related information:

- the Archives of The Explorers Club (at The Explorers Club)
 - *Rainbow Bridge/Monument Valley Expedition Archives*; Fowler Museum of Cultural History, Archaeology Collections Facility; UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.
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Access points

Name

Beckwith, Edward P.

Series Descriptions

Series 1 (temporary designation): Lantern slides

c. 1904 -1911, and 1932. 204 lantern slides and approximately 20 negatives.

The Lantern Slides series is divided into two sub-series according to subject matter. The first sub-series concerns the Mount McKinley Cosmic Ray Expedition of 1932, and the second combines mountaineering photographs and pictures from a rigid airship flight.

Titles for slides are taken directly from the label on each slide. For unlabeled slides, a descriptive title was created based on handwritten inventories generated during original processing. Created titles appear in brackets. Titles in quotations use wording as it appears within the image.

**Subseries 1: Beckwith, Edward P., Allen Carpe and Merl LaVoy.
Mt. McKinley Cosmic Ray Expedition**

bulk 1932. 169 lantern slides and approximately 20 negatives.

In April 1932, Edward P. Beckwith flew to Mount McKinley with Theodore Koven and Allen Carpe as the first unit of an expedition to observe cosmic rays. Soon after setting up camp, Beckwith and pilot Joe Crosson flew to Nenana, Alaska to meet the remaining members of the expedition team and get more supplies. Koven and Carpe set up camp at a higher altitude. Before Beckwith and fellow expedition members Nicholas Spadavecchia and Percy T. Olton, Jr. could join them, Koven and Carpe suffered fatal accidents. Members of the Liek-Lindley Mt. McKinley climbing expedition reported the mens' deaths to Beckwith. This news compounded with several mishaps caused the remaining members to abandon the expedition. In August of 1932, Merl LaVoy and Andrew Taylor led an effort to recover the bodies of Koven and Carpe.

Beckwith wrote a detailed account of the expedition for "American Alpine Journal." (See Publication notes).

The bulk of images in this sub-series were taken in April and May 1932. Images include ground and aerial views of Muldrow Glacier and surrounding area. Photographs taken by Carpe were recovered and provide a record of Carpe and Koven in their last days. Items 135a and 135b consist of approximately 20 photographic negatives most of which feature images not included in the developed lantern slides. Also included are pictures of cosmic rays observation equipment and images captured by LaVoy during the recovery mission.

Subseries 2: Beckwith, Edward P.

Alps and Airships

circa 1904 -1911. 35 lantern slides.

This sub-series is divided by subject matter. Slides 1-11 focus the Alps, and slides 12-35 concern airship flight.

Edward P. Beckwith made at least two climbing trips to the Alps, one in 1904-1905 and another in 1906. According to information provided on his membership application, Beckwith lectured on mountain climbing in the Alps using slides created from his own photographs. It is possible that slides 1-11 were used in these lectures. Included are images of unidentified climbers, mountains, and surrounding landscape.

In December 1911 Beckwith lectured on his experience aboard a Zeppelin airship. Slides 12-35 consist of images of airships, airship hangars, and aerial views of countryside. Beckwith may have flown aboard the Zeppelin "Schwaben" as several images feature that airship.

Container list

Series 1 (temporary): Lantern Slides

Sub-series 1: Mt. McKinley Cosmic Ray Expedition

Item #	Photographer (if known), Title	Date
1	LaVoy, Merl. Muldrow Glacier and Mt. McKinley below first ice fall (7,000 ft).	August 1932
2	LaVoy, Merl. Muldrow Glacier at McGonogill Pass, Mt. McKinley.	August 1932
3	Pearson and Piteff finding Koven's body at head of Muldrow Glacier (10,000 ft).	August 1932
4	LaVoy, Merl. Avalanche on Muldrow Glacier taken by LaVoy on Parker-Brown Expedition to McKinley.	1912
5	LaVoy, Merl. Taken from Muldrow Glacier.	August 1932
6	[Snow on mountain.]	Undated
7	LaVoy, Merl. Great Siray on Muldrow Glacier (9,000 ft).	August 1932
8	Muldrow Glacier below first ice fall.	Undated
9	[Snow covered mountains.]	Undated
10	Karstens Ridge from Muldrow Glacier.	Undated
11	North and south peaks of Mt. McKinley and Muldrow Glacier first ice fall.	Undated
12	[Glacier.]	Undated

13	Plane with Crosson and Beckwith from 11,000 ft camp on Muldrow Glacier. [view 1]	1932
14	Plane on first flight to Muldrow Glacier (6,500 ft).	1932
15	[Mountain tops.]	Undated
16	Snow on mountainside.]	Undated
17	[Glacier.]	Undated
18	[Tent on mountain.]	Undated
19	East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 1]	Undated
20	East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 2]	Undated
21	[Tent and skis in snow.]	Undated
22	East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 3]	Undated
23	Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) T. Koven in foreground.	1932
24	Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) -T. Koven.	1932
25	Crevasse on Muldrow Glacier at 9,000 ft, T. Koven.	1932
26	East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 4]	Undated
27	Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).	Undated
28	[Glacier and mountain ridges.]	Undated
29	North and south peaks Mt. McKinley, Great Serac on Muldrow Glacier. T. Koven in foreground (about 9,000 ft).	1932
30	[Man pulling sled up snow.]	Undated
31	Crevasse on Muldrow Glacier at 9,000 ft, T. Koven.	1932
32	[Glacier and mountain ridges.]	Undated
33	Muldrow Glacier between 1st and 2nd seracs, T. Koven.	1932
34	Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) T. Koven in foreground.	1932
35	Plane with Crosson and Beckwith from 11,000 ft camp on Muldrow Glacier. [view 2]	1932
36	Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) -T. Koven.	May 1932
37	[Tent and skis in snow.]	Undated
38	[Glacier and mountain ridges.]	Undated
39	Muldrow Glacier and Karstens Ridge taken (probably) from Carpe's 11,000 ft camp.	1932
40	[Airplane landed on glacier.]	Undated

41	East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 5]	Undated
42	[Plane in the air over mountains.]	Undated
43	[Mountain top and sky.]	Undated
44	[Man on glacier, mountains in the background.]	Undated
45	[Snow covered mountain ridges.]	Undated
46	[Glacier and mountain ridges.]	Undated
47	Looking down Muldrow Glacier from 8,000 ft. T. Koven.	1932
48	Mt. Brooks and east fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge.	Undated
49	Plane on Muldrow Glacier on first flight.	1932
50	Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft) with T. Koven.	May 1932
51	Mt. McKinley and Muldrow Glacier -T. Koven.	1932
52	Muldrow Glacier between 1st and 2nd seracs, T. Koven.	1932
53	Carpe, Allen [Man walking along snow covered ridge.]	Undated
54	T. Koven on Muldrow Glacier at 9,500 ft.	May 1932
55	Carpe, Allen Just below 1st ice fall on Muldrow Glacier.	May 1932
56	Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).	1932
57	Carpe, Allen [Snow covered mountains.]	Undated
58	Carpe, Allen [Glacier.]	Undated
59	Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).	May 1932
60	Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) -T. Koven.	1932
61	Carpe, Allen [Man with sled.]	Undated
62	Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).	May 1932
63	North and south peaks of Mt. McKinley, Muldrow Glacier, Karstens Ridge.	Undated
64	Carpe, Allen Koven on Karstens Ridge, about 13,000 ft.	1932
65	[Snow covered mountain ridges.]	Undated
66	[Airplane landed on glacier.]	Undated
67	Carpe, Allen [Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft) Mt. McKinley, Alaska.]	May 1932
68	Plane with Crosson and Beckwith from 11,000 ft camp on Muldrow Glacier. [view 2]	1932
69	Mt. Brooks (13,500 ft) from Karstens Ridge.	Undated
70	Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft).	Undated

71	Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft), Mt. McKinley, T. Koven.	1932
72	Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).	May 1932
73	[Snow covered mountain ridges.]	Undated
74	[Glacier.]	Undated
75	Crevasse on Muldrow Glacier at 9,000 ft, T. Koven.	1932
76	Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) -T. Koven.	1932
77	[Glacier and mountain ridges.]	Undated
78	[Map] "Survey of Cosmic Radiation location of stations where measurements of intensity are being made."	Undated
79	Beckwith, Edward P. [Hand drawn map] Northern Slopes of Mt. McKinley.	Undated
80	[Map] "Survey of Cosmic Radiation location of stations where measurements of intensity are being made."	Undated.
81	[Topographical map of area around Mt. McKinley.]	Undated
82	[Topographical map of area around Mt. McKinley.]	Undated
83	[Topographical map of area around Mt. McKinley.]	Undated
84	[Plane landed on glacier.] [color]	Undated
85	Beckwith, Edward P. [View of plane in air taken from another plane.] [color]	Undated
86	Beckwith, Edward P. [Mountains and glacier.] [color]	Undated
87	Beckwith, Edward P. [Seated man with spouting water hose.] [color]	
88	Beckwith, Edward P. [Seated man with spouting water hose.] [color]	Undated
89	[Plane landing. Picture taken from another plane.] [color]	Undated
90	[Landscape -green tundra and water holes.] [color]	Undated
91	[Landscape with lake and pine trees.] [color]	Undated
92	Beckwith, Edward P. Plane fast in snow on Muldrow Glacier at 6,000 ft. T. Koven. [color]	1932
93	Beckwith, Edward P. [Two planes landed on glacier.] [color]	Undated
94	[Ponds on Triangle Mt. near Cordova, Alaska.] [color]	Undated
95	[Man on skis on glacier.] [color]	Undated
96	Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial picture of two men on a glacier.] [color]	Undated
97	Beckwith, Edward P. Bonanza Mine (6,000 ft) Kennicott Copper Co., Kennicott, Alaska. [color]	Undated
98	Beckwith, Edward P. Muldrow Glacier and North Peak Mt. McKinley, Alaska, from 6,000 ft camp at McGonogill Pass. [color]	Undated

99	Beckwith, Edward P. [Interior of room, possibly a kitchen.] [color]	Undated
100	Beckwith, Edward P. [Plane landed on grass.] [color]	Undated
101	Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of peak with partial plane wing.] [color]	Undated
102	[Grassy hillside with lake and pine trees.] [color]	Undated
103	Beckwith, Edward P. [Log cabins and a dirt road.] [color]	Undated
104	Beckwith, Edward P. Richardson Highway near McCarthy, Alaska. [color]	Undated
105	Beckwith, Edward P. Mountains near Cordova, Alaska. [color]	Undated
106	Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of mountains and glacier.] [color]	Undated
107	Beckwith, Edward P. [Colored sky, mountains, and tundra.] [color]	Undated
108	[Snow, mountains, clouds.] [color]	Undated
109	[Sketch diagram of crevasses and footprints.]	Undated
110	[Map] "Department of the Interior. The Alaska Railroad: scenic route to Mt. McKinley National Park and interior Alaska."	Undated
111	Beckwith, Edward P. [Men standing next to plane on glacier.] [color]	Undated
112	Beckwith, Edward P. [Log cabin with green hillside.] [color]	Undated
113	Beckwith, Edward P. [Entrance to mine, railroad tracks.] [color]	Undated
114	Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of ridges including partial plane wing.] [color]	Undated
115	Beckwith, Edward P. [Two tents on glacier.] [color]	Undated
116	Beckwith, Edward P. [Mountains and snow.] [color]	Undated
118	Beckwith, Edward P. [Mountains and snow.] [color]	Undated
119	Beckwith, Edward P. [View of plane in air taken from another plane.] [color]	Undated
120	Beckwith, Edward P. [Plane landed on glacier, man standing by propeller.] [color]	Undated
121	Beckwith, Edward P. [Jagged peaks and rock formations with snow.] [color]	Undated
122	Beckwith, Edward P. [Man skiing in the distance.] [color]	Undated
123	Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of peaks and partial plane.] [color]	Undated
124	[Glaciers and peaks.] [color]	Undated
125	Philip Allen making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.	July 1932
126	Beckwith, Edward P. [Dr. Ralph Bennett making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.] [color]	July 1932

127	Beckwith, Edward P. [Dr. Ralph Bennett making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.] [color]	July 1932
128	Philip Allen of Bennett Expedition, Kennicott, Alaska.	July 1932
129	Dr. Dunham making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott Copper Co.	July 1932
130	Dr. Irwin Bramhall making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.	July 1932
131	Dr. Irwin Bramhall of Bennett's Cosmic Ray Expedition, Kennicott, Alaska.	July 1932
132	Beckwith, Edward P. Theodore Koven on "S.S. Alaska".	April 1932
133	Beckwith, Edward P. Theodore Koven on "S.S. Alaska". [color]	April 1932
134	Beckwith, Edward P. Allen Carpe on "S.S. Alaska". [color]	1932
135a	Alaska portrait negatives. Most of the negatives feature images not included in the developed lantern slides.	1932
135b	Negatives from Alaska Rapids Roadhouse on Richardson Highway. Approximately 8 negatives. Most of the negatives feature images not included in the developed lantern slides.	1932
136	Beckwith, Edward P. Allen Carpe on "S.S. Alaska".	April 1932
137	One bucket, Kennicott Copper Mine, Alaska.	Undated
138	Rock formation at Bonanza mine at Kennicott, Alaska.	July 1932
139	Beckwith, Edward P. Bonanza Mine (6,000 ft) Kennicott Copper Co., Kennicott, Alaska.	Undated
140	Jumbo Mine, Kennicott Copper Co. Kennicott, Alaska.	July 1932
141	"Long Tom", sluice for placer mining. Nenana, Alaska.	May 1932
142	[Building with adjacent garden areas.]	Undated
143	[Exterior of log cabin showing window and plant life.]	Undated
144	[Two planes landed on glacier snow.]	Undated
145	LaVoy, Merl. Merl LaVoy on trip to bring back Koven's body from Mt. McKinley Alaska.	August 1932
146	Beckwith, Edward P. Plane fast in snow on Muldrow Glacier at 6,000 ft. T. Koven.	1932
147	Beckwith, Edward P. Richardson Highway near McCarthy, Alaska.	Undated
148	River from trisle[?] on Copper River and Northwestern Ry. Bennett Expedition, Alaska.	July 1932
149	[Man skiing in the distance.]	Undated
150	Coast and islands from Triangle Mt., Alaska (near Cordova).	Undated

151	Andrew Taylor on trip to bring back Koven's body from Mt. McKinley Alaska.	August 1932
152	Small pond on Triangle Mt. near Cordova, Alaska.	Undated
153	Cosmic ray instrument designed by Dr. Bennett and Prof. Compton.	Undated
154	Dr. Ralph D. Bennett and cosmic ray instrument, Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.	July 1932
155	North and south peaks Mt. McKinley, Great Serac on Muldrow Glacier. T. Koven in foreground (about 9,000 ft).	1932
156	Site of Carpe's camp at 11,000 ft on Muldrow Glacier. Top of tent and sledge pole above snow as found by LaVoy.	August 1932
157	Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft), Mt. McKinley, Alaska. (Taken by automatic release.)	1932
158	[Mountains and snow.] Undated.	
159	Ponds on Triangle Mt. near Cordova, Alaska.	Undated
160	Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft), Mt. McKinley, Alaska. (Taken by automatic release.)	1932
161	Carpe, Allen [Mountains and snow.]	Undated
162	Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven's camp at [illegible] on Muldrow Glacier (7,000 ft) Mt. McKinley.	April 1932
163	Carpe, Allen Koven on Karstens Ridge, about 13,000 ft.	1932
164	Carpe, Allen Muldrow Glacier (6,000 ft) and Mt. McKinley. T. Koven.	1932
165	Carpe, Allen T. Koven just below 1st ice fall on Muldrow Glacier (7,000 ft) Mt. McKinley, Alaska. May	1932
166	Carpe, Allen [T. Koven just below 1st ice fall on Muldrow Glacier (7,000 ft) Mt. McKinley, Alaska.]	May 1932
167	Carpe, Allen Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft) Mt. McKinley, Alaska.	May 1932
168	Carpe, Allen [Snow covered mountainside and ridges.]	Undated
169	Carpe, Allen [Man in the distance standing with pack sled on glacier.]	Undated
170	Carpe, Allen [Snow covered landscape.]	Undated

Temporary Series 1: Lantern Slides

Sub-series 2: Alps and Airships

Item #	Photographer (if known), Title	Date
1	[Mountaintop.]	Undated
2	[Unidentified man standing on rocky terrain with rope tied around his waist.]	Undated
3	[Mountaintop with snow in foreground.]	Undated

4	[Mountaintop in the distance, pine branches evident on either side of frame.]	Undated
5	[Mountain range in the distance, pine trees evident along the bottom and one side of frame.]	Undated
6	[Mountain range, pine trees evident along the bottom of frame.]	Undated
7	[Pine trees with mountaintop faintly visible in background.]	Undated
8	[Unidentified older man standing in front of a plane landed on water.]	Undated
9	[Pine trees with mountain range in the background.] [color]	Undated
10	[Buildings with mountain range in the background.]	Undated
11	[Three unidentified men with pick axes and rope seated on rocky terrain.]	Undated
12	[Rigid airship in flight over a hangar.]	Undated
13	[Aerial view of valley and town.]	Undated
14	[Aerial view of buildings clustered directly below camera.]	Undated
15	[Aerial view of farmland.]	Undated
16	[Aerial view of buildings and landscape with many paths or roads.]	Undated
17	[Aerial view of farmland with two rows of buildings.]	Undated
18	[Aerial view of buildings closely built around a waterway.]	Undated
19	[Aerial view of tennis courts and formal gardens.]	Undated
20	[Aerial view of farmland and forest border.]	Undated
21	[Aerial view of tree tops directly below camera.]	Undated
22	[Back view of a grounded rigid airship.]	Undated
23	[People standing in front of open airship hangar.]	Undated
24	[Aerial view of the rigid airship's shadow over a forest.]	Undated
25	[Rigid airship inside open hangar.]	Undated
26	[Women with parasols watch rigid airship in flight.]	Undated
27	[View out side of flying rigid airship at moving propeller.]	Undated
28	[Aerial view out of rigid airship cabin at people on the ground.]	Undated
29	[Side view of Zeppelin "Schwaben" in flight.]	circa 1911
30	[Aerial view of open airship hangar. "Baden-Baden" is written on the roof.]	Undated
31	[Aerial view of forest with clearing for large building, shadow of rigid airship.]	Undated
32	[Women with parasols watch Zeppelin "Schwaben" in flight.]	circa 1911
33	[Two unidentified men look out windows in rigid airship cabin.]	Undated

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| 34 | [View of steering apparatus for rigid airship.] | Undated |
| 35 | [People gathered around the front tip of the grounded Zeppelin "Schwaben".] | circa 1911 |