

## Archival search for felt reports for the Alaska earthquake of August 27, 1904 [Part A]

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Version 2: October 14, 2016

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### Overview

These notes are an addendum to *Tape et al.* (2017). They are available at the [Scholarworks@UA](http://Scholarworks@UA) website and can be cited as *Tape* (2016). There are two pdf documents part of the collection. This is Part A, which documents a search for archival records that mention the 1904-08-27 Alaska earthquake (*Tape et al.*, 2017). Part B contains seismological history, as well as some additional details on the felt reports for the 1904 earthquake.

Very few written records are preserved from this (albeit large) region for this time period. Table 1 lists all 27 that we found that might have mentioned an occurrence like an earthquake. There are a total of five “felt reports” of the 1904-08-27 Alaska earthquake (*Tape et al.*, 2017): one from a diary *Wickersham* (1904), two from weather observers (*Lawson*, 1904; *Howard*, 1904), and two from newspapers (*Nome Semi-Weekly News*, 1904; *Yukon Valley News*, 1904). Chances are, there are more felt reports out there, and these reports could help improve our understanding of the 1904 earthquake.

Some of the geographic names mentioned in the archival records are difficult to locate. *Orth* (1967) is useful for connecting geographic names with longitude and latitude coordinates (e.g., Becharof Creek, Gazzam Creek, Elliott Creek). For searching newspaper records in Alaska, the compilation of *Nicolson and Slemmons* (1998)—available online<sup>1</sup> is critical.

### **The archivists and searchers made this effort possible; their names are listed in the section headers.**

I also want to thank the following archivists for their feedback: Paul McCarthy, Rosemarie Speranze, Flora Grabowska, Bruce Parham. And thanks to Dermot Cole and Terrence Cole for their feedback.

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<sup>1</sup>As of 2017, the book is available online and is split into different pdf files. The branching diagrams from “Appendix 1: Chronologies of Alaskan and Regional Newspapers” are available as separate files, while the main text is available in two pdfs: Newspapers Listed by Title and Newspapers Listed by Place of Publication.

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# 1 The setting: 1904 in central Alaska

Writings and reports from the era—many of which are available online—provide a perspective on life in Alaska in 1904. Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1857, though Russia maintained a strong presence through its established communities and churches in coastal Alaska. Alaska did not become a territory until 1912. Alaska was governed by a federally appointed Governor, which was John Green Brady in 1904. The governor's annual reports provide a useful overview of the developing state of Alaska in this time, including the dynamically changing population regions, as the Gold Rush boomed and busted. For context of life during the Gold Rush in central Alaska in 1904, see *Paige* (1905); *Cole* (1981, 1999).

The Governor's reports include useful tabulations and discussion of the population. For example, for our purposes, we might be curious as to how many literate people were in Alaska during this time, since this would give us a starting point for understanding how many people might be writing something down about day-to-day life events (such as an earthquake). According to the 1900 census (*Brady*, 1901), there were 63,592 people in Alaska, categorized as 30,507 White and 33,085 Colored (including 29,536 Native). Among the white population, there were 27,307 men and 3,200 women, reflecting a 9:1 ratio that is probably comparable to other gold rush settings<sup>2</sup>. Among the native population the ratio was close to 1:1, as expected for a stable population. The total number of literate males, 21 or older, was 27,221. The census is taken every 10 years, yet Alaska's population was rapidly changing in areas. The 1904 Governor's report estimated the white population as 26,550, with the largest concentrations in the regions of Fairbanks (8000), Juneau (5000), and Nome (5000) (*Brady*, 1904). These populations changed seasonally and rapidly along with the gold prospects.

The most detailed geographic map of Alaska was unveiled in a National Geographic fold-out in 1904 (*Brooks*, 1904). The Yukon river was the Gold Rush highway from St. Michael in western coastal Alaska to Dawson, Canada. An excellent summary of the river traffic and culture is in *Cantwell* (1902). Missionaries from many churches were active in 1904, including Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Catholic/Jesuit, Moravian, and Baptist. (Also still active was the Russian Orthodox Church, especially in Aleutian and coastal communities.) Many of their letters have been preserved and provide rich details on their lives. There are also summary documents, for example, the Presbyterian efforts in central Alaska (*Boyd*, 1910?) or the Baptist efforts in southern Alaska (*The Woman's American Home Baptist Mission Society*, 1905). Disease outbreaks were prevalent in Alaska in the early 1900s, especially within some of the Native communities. From the documents cited here, the diseases mentioned include smallpox, measles, diphtheria, typhoid, influenza.

Communication from and to parts of Alaska experienced a major change with the construction of Washington–Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS). For details, see the reports from the U.S. Chief Signal Officer (*Greely*, 1904, 1905) and the summary in National Geographic (*Mitchell*, 1904). The impact of the telegraph system on the local newspapers is dramatic: prior to 1904 in most communities, the news is strictly local; after the telegraph was established, we see many outside-Alaska news stories, many of which appear simultaneously in different newspapers<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>The Governor wrote this in his 1904 report, defending the stagnant population numbers between 1900 and 1904: "There is no criticism to be made on the character of the population, save only that it is made up too little of families and groups of families. For intelligence, bravery, and endurance it is much above the average of any State. The conditions have not been inviting to the weak and infirm. An influx of good New England girls would be a very acceptable addition to our numbers."

<sup>3</sup>The St. Michael felt report (*Nome Semi-Weekly News*, 1904) was the 2nd wireless telegraph message ever received by the Nome newspaper. The U.S. Chief Signal Officer (*Greely*, 1904) provides a detailed description of the telegraph site at St. Michael, which transmitted the news across Norton Sound to Nome.

In the late summer of 1903 the Norton Sound bases were established. At Safety Harbor and St. Michael there were built portable houses, in which were installed engines, batteries, and wireless instruments, supplemented by two masts at each station 210 feet high, between which are suspended fan-shaped antennae, consisting of 125 copper wires 1 foot apart; The motor power consists of a 5-horsepower gasoline engine and a 3-kilowatt motor dynamo, 60-cycle alternator. At each station is a transformer 'stepping up' from 500 to 20,000 volts, and at the other 'stepping up' from 500 to 25,000.

These poles, the highest ever erected on the Pacific coast, and antennae were installed through the resourcefulness and professional skill of Mr. R. D. Ross, a civil engineer employed for this purpose.

## 2 Summary by archive

### 2.1 The internet

Lots of published materials from around 1904 are available from google books or other scanned collections.

### 2.2 UAF Rasmuson Library Alaska & Polar Regions Archives, Fairbanks, Alaska (Nicholas Evans)

#### 2.2.1 Newspapers (Table 2)

Looked good, but no scans:

- Nome Gold Digger - Jumps from May 18, 1904 to June 29, 1906
- Mining Journal (Ketchikan) - Jumps from Nov. 8, 1902 to July 1, 1905.
- Alaska Forum (Rampart) - Jumps from July 9, 1904 to Oct. 15, 1904. "Enforced suspension."
- Seward Gateway - Guide says 1904, reels start 1905.
- Daily Record-Miner (Juneau) - Jumps from July 18 to Sept. 14.

Time spent preparing to start newspapers, went through the "Alaska Newspapers on Microfilm, 1886-1998" guide and checked the UAF holdings dates against the list of newspapers in the 1904\_newspapers\_ChronicleAmerica file. I also gathered all the call numbers so that next week when I go to look for newspapers I can do that quickly without fussing with the guide.

The amount of things that has to be ruled out looks bleak, but what little is left has very complete holdings from mostly big papers, so that's good. The guide also indicates that there were a few other newspapers operating in 1904 that are not listed on the Chronicle list. Those are at the bottom of this document.

The following newspapers that you rated a "1" I have deemed less of a priority than other "1s" due to the UAF library having incomplete holdings for these papers, within the date range that we are looking at.

- Seward Gateway: Incomplete holdings, only dates for 1904 are Aug 19, Sep 16, Oct 21-28, Dec 9 (is listed twice in document)
  - Daily Record-Miner (Juneau) - Incomplete holdings, only dates after quake for 1904 are Sept 14, 19-21, 26, 29-Oct 1, Oct 3, Nov 1-4, 7-16
  - Daily Morning Alaskan (Skagway): The newspapers listed as having been microfilmed in 1904 are Jan 5, Jan 7-Feb 28.
  - Alaska Forum (Rampart): Film holdings after the quake for 1904 are Oct. 21-28, Nov 11-25, Dec. 23.
  - Alaska Transcript (Juneau): There are no microfilm copies preserved from before January 14, 1905. The guide indicates that the newspaper did not start publication until Oct 17, 1904.
  - Alaska Sentinel (Wrangell) : There is a gap in the microfilm holdings between April 16, 1903 and January 5, 1905.
  - Orphanage News Letter (Kodiak): Holdings for 1904 only include January and July.
-

The following newspapers that you rated a "2" I have deemed less of a priority than other "2s" due to the UAF library having incomplete holdings for these papers, within the date range that we are looking at. Please note: this is almost everything you marked a "2."

Dyea Press: Holdings only from 1898 and 1899.

Dyea Trail: Holdings only from 1898.

Seward Weekly Gateway: Starts in November, 1905.

Daily News-Miner (Fairbanks): Starts in 1909.

Yukon Press (Fort Adams): Newspaper skips from April 20, 1899 to November 11, 1905.

Aurora Borealis (Healy): Only one holding in 1899.

Skagway Weekly Budget: Guide does not list a newspaper by this name.

There is a Skagway Daily Budget but it ends in 1900.

Ghost Town Gazette (Chitina): This is from the 1950s.

Bare bear facts (Noorvik): No newspapers are listed for Noorvik  
(under any of its variant spellings) in the guide.

Point Hope News: From the 1960s.

Eskimo Land (Shishmaref): No listed newspapers from Shishmaref.

Northern Lights News (Shishmaref): "

Arctic Village Echoes: Starts in 1969.

Nunachiak News (Buckland): Nothing listed under Buckland or Nunachiak.

I will double check on this one as I believe

I have seen it before in a past microfiching project.

Council Evening Bulletin: Starts in 1915.

Council News Bulletin: Starts in 1918.

Hooper Bay Starlights: Guide lists no papers from Hooper Bay.

Elicarat qanemeiit (St. Mary's): Nothing from St. Mary's.

Tanana weekly: Only from 1976.

Shungnak School News: No newspapers from Shungnak listed in the guide.

I think I might know an archival collection that has originals though.

I will double check next week.

The Icy Sentinel (Fort Gibbon): 1902 only.

Alaska Missionary Herald (Ft. Wrangell): 1901 only.

Bering Sea blat (Gambell): Nothing listed from Gambell.

Bethel City News: 1966.

The Spieler (Tok): Starts in 1972.

The Tok Bugle: Starts in 1974.

The Aniak Paper: Starts in 1990.

The Rampart Whirlpool: 1899 only, no film copies anyway.

Porcupine Nugget (Porcupine City): 1901:

Chena Herald: June, 1904 only.

Daily Bulletin (Valdez): Starts in 1920.

Fairbanks Shopping News: Starts in 1938. These were just ads, anyway.

Yakutat Weekly: Starts in 1930.

Native News Bulletin and BIA Bulletin (Juneau): Not listed.

The BIA might have copies, or maybe the Southeast Native corporation.

Juneau Journal: Ends in 1903.

Alaska Truth: 1899-1900.

Eielson Friendly Times: 1950s.

Fairbanks Gazette: 1982-1983.

Fairbanks Miner: 1903.

Tanana Valley Socialist: 1912.

Polar Bearings (St. Michael): Nothing from St. Michael.

Nenana Daily Bulletin: 1918.

Helm Bay and Ketchikan Miner: 1900.

Attu Morning Sun: 1945.

Adak Daily Sun: 1953-54.

Inlet News Advertiser (Homer): 1953.

Sitka Sun: 1920

Sentinal (Stewart, B.C.): Starts in 1983.

Sea Gull (Pelican): 1962–63.  
Daily Nome Industrial Worker: Starts in 1913.  
Arctic Weekly Sun (Nome): 1900 only

Also note: In the 1904\_newspapers\_ChronicleAmerica document, some things are listed twice with alternate descriptors like “microform” etc. - these items are duplicates, because almost all of the newspapers will be on microfilm anyway.

There are several visual chronologies of newspapers in Alaska in the back of the book. Looking through them, I think we should add these to our list: Atlin Claim (Atlin, BC), Yukon Daily Morning World (Dawson), Alaska Prospector (Valdez), Whitehorse Star (Whitehorse).

### 2.2.2 Personal Collections (Diaries, etc.)

- George M. Pilcher Papers, 1898–1933 (see also Appendix B):  
Double checked diaries. No mention of earthquake or aftershocks for entire month afterwards. On 1904-9-11 he mentions having sent personal correspondence but correspondence is not in collection. Apparently he wrote several articles about occurrences (social, weather, etc.) during his time here. Will look up articles when I move out to newspapers.  
  
1912-7-6: No mention of earthquakes on this day or aftershocks in following days. Was in Shageluk region, so it is possible he might not have been able to feel an earthquake from the Denali area.<sup>4</sup>  
  
1929-1-21: No mention of earthquake. Looks he might have been travelling and returned home on this day—his diaries get more sparse and more difficult to read this late in his life. No mention of quake in following days either, but he does mention the weather.  
  
1929-7-3: No mention of earthquake here, called it a pleasant day but full of gnats. So, I am not sure why the Pilcher collection is tagged as having to do with earthquakes. I have found no mention of any quakes anywhere.
- RC Force Papers, 1900–1906:  
Lived in either Eagle or Fairbanks at time of quake, was a photographer. Figured maybe there would be photographs of potential damage. Photographs are mostly of people. There was some correspondence, dated 1904, only from July, regarding his leaving from St. Michael to Fairbanks, and a combination lock safe he left in St. Michael that needed to be opened. No mention of earthquake despite having been connected to both of these places.
- Frederick E Willard Diary and Account Book, 1904–1908:  
Willard was a Department of the Interior worker stationed at Fort Yukon, starting Aug 14, 1904. His journal indicates that its entries range from 1904 to 1908. Unfortunately everything from before 1906 is just account information, miscellaneous math, Willard’s doodles, and what appear to be hand-written copies of Robert Service poems. Detailed daily journal entries do not start until 1906.
- Joseph Herman Romig Family Papers, 1862–1955:  
Joseph (Jr.) was travelling around Southwest and Midwest Alaska at the time of the quake. He had left Alaska in 1903 and had just returned to the state in July of 1904 and it is not clear how long he was here. Nothing in collection dated 1904; no mention of earthquake.
- Lynn C Denny Albums, 1900–1934:  
Denny was a photographer and news editor living in Nome at time of quake. Was there from June 1904 to sometime 1910, but did not work for the newspaper at the time of the quake, which is what I was hoping to see. No photographs or scrapbooks in collection make mention of quake, most material is from 1908-ish, with not much from as early as we want

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<sup>4</sup>[Carl Tape] Shageluk is within the felt region of the 1912 Denali earthquake, according to *Carver et al.* (2004). Shageluk is 77 km west of Iditarod, where shaking intensities of MMI 5 were reported.

- Anthony J Dimond Family Papers:  
Dimond was here living in Fairbanks and studying law in 1904 but no material in the collection is that old. He had just moved from Valdez (possibly during 1904). I had already worked extensively on this collection and figured if any material went back this far, this would be a good place to look. Unfortunately it mostly starts with his political career, not law.
- Albert Kinne:  
Kinne was a (pioneer? prospector? photographer?) who lived on the Seward Peninsula and seemed to travel around during early 1900s. Would definitely have been there during time of quake, probably in Nome but it is hard to tell. Unfortunately the collection is just photographs of Native fish camps and gold mines, and the gold mining section makes no mention of a quake.
- St. Lawrence Island Journals:  
Includes many very detailed journals from Gambell, on St. Lawrence Island, between 1898 and 1906. I was not sure if St. Lawrence Island could have felt quake, but the collection was very small so I looked at it anyway. There is a gap between June 30, 1904 and July 1, 1905, so no mention of any earthquake.
- Frank Buteau:  
Buteau lived in Fairbanks in 1904 and was a businessman, but all the materials in the collection are all later than that, except for one story from 1887.
- Andrew Nerland:  
Nerland opened a store in Fairbanks in 1904 (he had lived here a while) but none of the material in the collection is that old.
- William Atwood:  
Finding aid said that the collection supposedly had material from two weeks after the quake. Finding aid was vague but it looked like something regarding state news. Atwood's collection mentioned daily goings-on in Alaska so figured it was worth a look. Whatever this material was it was not in the collection, but is available on microfilm in the general library. Will look at those on Thursday.
- William Sherwin:  
Lived in Fairbanks (but travelled around a lot) in 1904 and was involved in the mining industry, seemingly on the more administrative end. Collection has correspondence (both business and personal) from around this time but not much is as early as the quake. No mention of it anywhere. Collection is mostly love letters and earthquakes aren't terribly romantic, so now that I have read these letters I am not surprised that he did not mention it.
- Clarence Andrew:  
Writer, photographer, customs officer, teacher, etc. who lived in Alaska in many different places. Was in Eagle during 1904. Kept plenty of diaries and notebooks, which detailed occurrences and anecdotes from each day. There are multiple entries at the end of August / start of September, but no mention of earthquakes or aftershocks. He had another, separate diary (the collection calls one a notebook and the other a diary but they are pretty much the same even though they're in two places), which mentioned that he had some personal visitors on the 27th, and that it was cloudy on the 28th. Other entries around these dates do make note of the weather. No mention of the quake.
- Robert Claus:  
Collection concerns a very important and well-known store in Fairbanks history (Pinska's clothing) that would have broken ground, been constructed, and opened its Fairbanks location in 1904. Business correspondence from 1904 and insurance records from early 1905 make no mention of quake or quake damage. Was not sure if insurance records would detail earthquake history. Seem to only be concerned with fires, which is weird for an earthquake and flooding prone city.

- William Ballou:  
Ballou was a gold prospector who lived in Rampart at the time of the quake. He has lots of letters of a personal nature, but the closest one to the quake is October 14, 1904. He is responding to his brother's letter from August so I was hopeful, but it mostly details the construction of his cabin and making of his life, plus a bank robbery and shooting. No mention of the quake. Checked the follow up letter to his mother (first one since Aug 23, though, maybe?) and it's all just personal familial stuff about siblings etc. and more about his now completed cabin's construction. No mention of the quake (although I know from former experience with this collection he censored his life in his letters to his mother; he might not have wanted to mention anything dangerous).
- Harry Postlethwaite:  
Huey Postlethwaite was a professional photographer who lived in Alaska at the time of the earthquake, somewhere in regions that should have felt it (it is not clear - he lived in Fairbanks, Nome and St. Michael, but most of his photographs are of Natives or mining and mining camps. Nothing regarding earthquake damage.
- Charles Farnsworth (Farnsworth Family Papers):  
Charles Farnsworth was stationed at Fort Gibbon, which would have been in close correspondence with Fort St. Michael (Gibbon was the next post up the river). The exact times that he was in different places is not clear, as it seems the STAR record is incorrect looking at the collection, but it seems likely from his correspondence that he was either at Fort Gibbon or in correspondence with the Fort's major goings-on at the time, and correspondence details monthly reports, progress on military activities, personal anecdotes, stories from military life and what it was like to be in Alaska. Unfortunately there is a gap in correspondence between late 1902 and 1905.
- Oates Family Papers:  
Joseph Oates Sr. came to Alaska in 1890 and lived here the rest of his life, and had children with a wife from Huslia. He was a miner and traveller but unfortunately the collection is very sparse and despite the fact that he lived in Eagle at the time of the earthquake, there is no material in the collection from before November 1905.
- Fred G Kimball Papers:  
Kimball lived in Nome at the time of the earthquake. He was a deputy U.S. Marshall in 1904 and also was involved in mining and was apparently a professional landlord. There is a letter to his mother dated August 28, 1904, in which he mentions having returned to town the day before. There is no mention of the earthquake, he is just talking about his financial troubles in the gold plots. The next letter is from November, addressed to his brother, and is also financial, and he mentions that he has been building a cellar in the house he rents out. No earthquake mentions. You would think Nome + mining + construction + lots of letters would mean something.
- Daniel and Minerva Dixon:  
This couple lived in Teller (and Nome) in from 1900 to 1910. They lived in Teller in 1904, but the diary included in the collection only goes up to 1901.
- Herbert Heller:  
Herbert Heller's collection has some correspondence belonging originally to a Lynn Smith who lived in Rampart in 1904. She wrote a letter to her mother on Aug 29, 1904, from Rampart, detailing some of the recent events in her life, how she was doing and living, etc. and there is no mention of the quake.  
  
Also in this collection is other miscellaneous correspondence from other members of the Smith family to Lynn when she lived in Rampart and when she lived in Fairbanks. There are no letters in this section from 1904, however.

- **JMJ Lyons Diary:**  
Diary supposedly mentions daily goings on of ships and military activities and correspondence with family members. It says he was in the Navy but I'm starting to have a hard time believing that no military records from this time mention the quake, so I figured I'd look since it was so small. I find that very strange. Diary only goes up to 1882, despite being described as going from 1882 to 1906.
- **Archibald Linklater:**  
Archibald Linklater lived, according to the STAR record, somewhere near Old Crow, Yukon, so possibly out of range of quake, but his diaries indicate that his hunting and trapping took him very far. His diaries have a gap between March 21, 1903 and December 1, 1905. Otherwise his diaries are more detailed in their description of weather and natural phenomena than most others I have looked at. If the quake range was as big as you hypothesize, he could have felt it, but there's no indication as to why the diaries have a gap.
- **Clara Hickman Rust:**  
Not so much a diary as a overfilled notebook detailing a narrative account of events in her life and the life of her father. It is not 100% clear but she seemed to live in Tanana with her father from 1899 to 1910 (her father left in 1905). No mention of the earthquake between the two closest given dates (1899 and 1905). More concerned with the details of her father's flopping business. The narrative notebook is not necessarily 100% linear so I looked around at relevant passages and found nothing. No mention in entries between 1902 and 1904, or between 1904 and 1906. Most events are from 1908 forward, when she started considering moving to Fairbanks. Not a whole lot before that; no mention of OUR quake. However, about one-third of the way through Notebook 1, (Box 8, Folder 1), there is a mention of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, as it related to a family renting out a room in their house. That comes not too long after a mention of an event that occurred in October 1904 but which she attributes to August 1904, the launching of the Battleship Nebraska (Wikipedia's date differs from hers). It is not clear if she was there in Seattle at the time of its launch, but if she was, then she would not have been in Tanana to feel the quake. She does seem like the kind of person who might have mentioned it in her narrative though, so I am assuming she was gone.
- **Tom Scott:**  
Tom Scott was a photographer in Alaska (and his collection for some reason also contains older photographs from another collection - so the dates are screwy, but at least some are from the time of the quake) and there are photos of all over interior Alaska, including Fort Egbert, Eagle, Tok, and Circle. Some of the photos are newer than we care about but some date back to 1899. There are many photos of buildings, residences, mining equipment, construction projects, military construction, military buildings, etc. but nothing showing any kind of earthquake damage.
- **Dan Cadzow:**  
Looked briefly because at this because it mentions having photographs from "Rampart House" - didn't realize that "Rampart House" was in the Yukon. However, the STAR record mentions that he moved to Alaska in 1899 and worked as a prospector, so I assumed that some photographs might be of his mining adventures. Unfortunately nothing in the collection is identified, there are no dates or locations, and there are no photos that look like earthquake damage.
- **Webster Brown:**  
Brown documented his trips to Alaska. The STAR record mentions only having been here in 1905 and 1906, but there is Alaska related material in the collection from both before and after those dates. Unfortunately there is nothing in collection from 1904.
- **Franz Heinrich Koenig:**  
Ran out of time (had to go to impromptu meeting) - will look at this on Tuesday. Also planning to look at teacher diaries (I have looked at these many times - they are surprisingly varied and detailed

and cover wide areas), a few remaining personal collections, and will start with the big businesses and trading companies etc.

- John P. O'Callaghan:  
Finding aid says he was in Eagle, on military and then later personal business, at time of earthquake and later. There is not much material - collection title says it starts in 1900, but there is nothing from before 1906.
- Meals Family Papers:  
STAR record indicates that the meals family worked in Interior Alaska, in Chistochina and farther north along the Richardson eventually, during the 1900s. Unfortunately everything in the collection pertains to the son of this man, who was only in 5th grade and lived in Valdez during 1904, and there is not really much dealing with his father's surveying and mining, who I assume as a US Surveyor would have noted any geologic disturbances.
- Cecil Hunter Clegg (Loftus Family):  
Was a US Attorney in Fairbanks from 1903 to 1907. Collection description mentions that the collection consists of scrapbooks, but most everything is from 1912 or later.
- Dorothy Pattinson:  
STAR record indicates that there are photographs of earthquake damage (!!!) in Interior Alaska, AND that the collection spans the time that we are looking at (it is a collection, not papers, so it's all over), but unfortunately the earthquake photos are from a quake in 1937. Damn. Had high hopes for that one.

### 2.2.3 Religious and Church Collections

#### Protestant Episcopal Church ... Alaska Records, 1884-1952

1. Charles and Lisa recommended looking at Alaska Churchman (PER MFILM 984) which lists Episcopalian communities in Alaska, their foundation dates, and the earliest dates during which they had people stationed there. Looked at this to get a sense of where not to look. Originally had planned to look at everything from regions or from 1904, now can narrow it down to both.  
  
Churchman lists most earliest incorporations as having been around 1906. Only places listed as being there by 1905 or earlier are Anvik (oldest), Fairbanks, and Point Hope. Will still look briefly at nearby 1906 correspondence in case of mislabeling (there was a significant amount).
2. People in Anvik (not far from St. Michael)
  - a. Reverend John Chapman  
  
Letter from Aug 27, 1904 mentions major diphtheria outbreak in the area, causing Anvik to have been mostly evacuated. Possible that this outbreak kept news of the earthquake from having been focused on. It is not clear how far this diphtheria outbreak spread (Hudson Stuck mentioned it when he was in Fort Yukon, which is very far away) but it seems that it reached at least a few villages that should have felt the quake along the Yukon. He mentions that many people left and the ones who stayed were very sick.  
  
Chapman + others were doing a land survey for the building of some structure (possibly a church) at this time. Surprised that there is no mention of area instability in relation to the quake.
  - b. Bertha Sabine Possibly a sister. Living in Anvik at time of quake. Her section contained very few letters, all financial in nature. No mention of quake / no letters near time of quake - there was a very long gap in correspondence.
  - c. FB Evans Role unclear, but also living in Anvik at time of quake. Unfortunately there were no letters mentioning the earthquake (this section also had a gap in correspondence where the earthquake would have been).

### 3. People living in Fort Yukon

a. Lizzie J. Woods Was living either in Fort Yukon or Circle at time of quake - it is not clear which (both presumably might have felt it). No mention of earthquake in letters - correspondence is all of a financial persuasion.

Churchman also lists a "Charles E. Rice" as having lived in Circle at this time, but the collection has no correspondence from anyone of that name.

### 4. People living in Fairbanks:

a. Reverend Hudson Stuck Reverend / Archdeacon of the Yukon - his letters talk about meteorology and weather conditions. There is some indication of the importance of a barometer and possibly other weather equipment. Not clear if he was going to be studying the weather or not. Letters from a few days after indicate that a new hospital was up and running as of Aug. 29, 1904, but no mention of the earthquake (see Hudson Stuck notes from Day 2, also).

b. Isabel Emberley Role unclear, but definitely lived in Fairbanks at this time. Seems to have been travelling quite a bit. Big gap in correspondence between June 1904 and June 1905, for some reason. No mention of quake.

c. Reverend John E. Hunh Living in Fairbanks at time of quake. No letters from 1904 (stops in 1903, starts in 1905 again). No mention of quake.

### 5. People living in Rampart: a. John Emery Role unclear. Writing from Rampart and sending personal correspondence on Sept. 3, 1904. No mention of earthquake.

### 6. People living in Point Hope: John Driggs Reverend / clergyman of the Church. Letter postmarked August 31, 1904 (possibly written earlier) talks about the start of the Ecclesiastical New Year, which starts on Sept. 1, apparently. This theme seems to dominate letters from around this date. This letter is only about how proud Driggs is of the religious people in the town. Some sort of outbreak of an illness, possibly diphtheria again, hit this region also.

Letter from Aug 26 - Driggs was in Nome, is on his way to St. Mary's. No mention of having encountered earthquake on his next letter, dated Oct 24, 1904. He left Nome the day after the quake on Aug 28. His letters covered the details of the travel and a few complications he encountered - surprised no mention of quake.

### 7. Articles from Alaska Churchman Note: did not spend long on this because of the dates but figured I'd look quickly anyway. The Churchman has a list of all articles published and I looked at the following ones to see if they had any information on the quake:

Historical Data on Allakaket - v14, May 1920, pages 88-89 Anvik in Years Gone By: The Fire, v2 Feb 1907, p 5 Anvik of the Past and Present, Sabine, v 6 Aug 1912 p21-22 Rev John Chapman, 25 years of Alaskan missions, v5, MAY 1911, p3-4 Earthquakes, Note, v32 1937 Fort Yukon, Historical Data, v14 May 1920 p 86 Nome, Founding of the Church, v1, Nov 1906, p4 (n) Nome, A retrospect, v7, Aug 1912, p18-20 Nome, Historical Data, v14, May 1920 Point Hope, Historical Data, v14, MAY 1920, p82 Tanana Historical Data, v14, May 1920, p82-83

### Episcopal Church in Alaska:

Hudson Stuck's 1904 diary was unfortunately very sparse. Aug 27 he mentions leaving Eagle that night, en route to Circle City the next day. Eventual destination Lower Yukon. He gave services in Eagle on the 27th, then in Circle on the 28th. If he was on the water at night, given the time of the earthquake, it is possible he did not feel it at all. There are no further mentions of quakes or aftershocks in the following weeks.

### Hudson Stuck Papers:

Nothing in this collection is from the relevant time period. After the results from above it is not surprising. I did look at a manuscript about travelling along Alaska's rivers but that seems to have been

more of a book about travelling in general than a personal account of his experiences. Steve Estes' notes indicate something (it is not clear what because the PDF does not really describe the citation) in one of his other books (*Ten Thousand Miles With a Dog Sled*, p250). I figured I would look at the typed copy and the manuscript copy while I was in this collection. There is no mention of the earthquake on either of the pages marked 250 (they are different)

## Jesuit records

About half of the collection's ~100+ reels are related to the work that mission linguists did with Native languages, so I skipped those. There are two guides to the the remaining microfilms as they are considered two separate collections. I spent a lot of time in those guides as they are very comprehensive.

The first one (Alaska Mission Collection, AK MFILM 3611, Guide is E78 A3 G84 AK) is broken up by reel location and then later by name of pastor. There is information about each reel, the people it discusses, the location it covers, and the time span it addresses. It is very much a detailed finding aid. Most of the collection does not cover the areas or times we are looking at. Using this information I narrowed down the larger of the two collections down to a few reels.

Note: Almost every reel that starts a new location has a document in it called "Historia Domus" - many of these are the only things old enough in the reel collection to matter to us. Unfortunately, they are all in Latin. I did not scan them because, well, they're in Latin. Historia Domus means Church History and they all seem to pertain to the founding story of each mission, not details like earthquakes (I skimmed for the different Latin words that could mean earthquake).

### COLLECTION 1:

- Akulurak Collection (Rolls 3 and 4): "House Diary" - Weather snippets from each day. There are no reports for August 27th. No mention of quake on other days. (See scans).

"Annual Report of St. Mary's Mission." - Not exactly sure what this is supposed to be - it is just a list of dates. It is so dark as to be unreadable but appears to have something to do with openings and closings per year.

- Eagle Collection(Roll 7):  
"History Manuscript" - Prose account of history of the founding of the Eagle mission. Last information is from June 20, 1904.

Finances / Land Information 7 - Nothing from 1904. Most material on roll is later than that.

- Holy Cross (Roll 8):  
"Historia Domus" - in Latin, again.  
Mission Diary - No mention of earthquake - see scans though; handwriting is difficult to read.

- Nome (Roll 17):  
"Historia Domus" - in Latin, again.  
"House Diary" - No mention of quake. After the 23rd, just says "rest of August ... gloomy and rainy." See scans.

- Nulato (Roll 19):  
"Ministry Diary of St. Peter Claver Mission" - These entries are in Latin. Not sure if they mention an earthquake or not. Doesn't look like it given my limited Latin experience.

- St. Michael (Roll 24):  
This is the roll where there should be a house diary / ministry diary for St. Michael, but the diary dates skip between 1897 and 1946. Everything else is correspondence from the ~1950s. I searched around in the other collections and could not find a diary for these missing dates.

- Tanana (Roll 25):  
“Documents regarding mission land claims, 1904” - A letter from July, 1904.  
After the locations, this section is broken up by names of people involved with the church. These reels are not described in great detail but seem to be more biographical in nature. I did not think they looked particularly useful, but here are the ones I thought looked best:
- Frances Barnum (Roll 26):  
Correspondence: No correspondence in 1904. Jumps from April 30, 1900 to September 5, 1905, in one section, and includes notes from 1901 in another.
- Joseph Crimont (Roll 28):  
“Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1895-1930s” - Jumps from 1898 to 1907.
- Julius Jette (Reel 32):  
  
“Correspondence to Jesuit Missionaries” - Jumps from August 9, 1904 to July 9, 1906.  
“Correspondence to Jesuit Superiors”: Jumps from July 5, 1902 to July 12, 1906.
- Anthony Keyes (Reel 36)  
“Correspondence, 1901–1927” - Jumps from February 14, 1902 to January 1, 1914.

COLLECTION 2: The second of the two collections is the “Alaska Mission Records” (AK MFILM 3614 - no guidebook on shelf, just on Microfilm cabinet) is also organized by place. There are 21 reels and it looks like it has multiple duplicates of what is in the collection above. Most of this collection is from years after the quake. This finding aid is also pretty detailed so I was able to narrow down possibly useful reels to the following:

- Holy Cross (Reel 3):  
Mission Diary - (Same diary as the Holy Cross one above, unfortunately - already scanned, so I didn't scan this one).
- Holy Cross (Reel 4):  
“Account Book, 1901-1927”: June-July-August-September of 1904 all grouped together. No mention of earthquake related expenses. . . looks mostly like food + necessities + payroll.
- Holy Cross (Reel 5):  
Diary, 1904: - This is all filmed backwards, in negative, and is written in French. The microfilm states that it was originally written backwards so this is a correct filming. Nowhere in the diary are specific dates mentioned as far as I can see. The handwriting is so slanted that I cannot make out the word “Aout” (August) anywhere. Most of the diary does not bother with specific dates, only years.  
“Special Diary of Sisters, 1889–1915” - Once again, this is all in French and written backwards. This one has more specific dates but nothing (that looks like it is) from August, 1904. I'm not the most qualified to read this, though.
- Nulato (Reel 8):  
Nulato Diary, 1898–1920: This is the same Nulato diary from the other collection, which has already been scanned.

#### **2.2.4 Government and Military Collections**

- U.S. Army Continental Commands, Record Group 393. Selected Alaskan Records. 1821-1920:  
Details commands, mostly regarding personal assignments and military construction progress, for Fort St. Michael and Fort Gibbon. Thought maybe if either Fort felt the earthquake they would

mandate inspections, etc. Unfortunately, despite being labeled as as having this huge range of years, all the material is from 1899-1900.

- Climatological Data for Alaska, 1897–1989:

I know climatologists might not have been concerned with quakes but if they were the only government researchers in the area, they might mention it. I looked only at towns or villages who were identified as having data for 1904. Since there were so few, I figured I'd look at them all, regardless of location.

Barrow: There is a gap in the data between April 30, 1904 and Sept. 1, 1910. This data was filling the “miscellaneous phenomena” every day during 1904.

Kotzebue: There is no page here for August, 1904. It jumps straight from July to September. Many of the surrounding months have only temperatures taken and the rest of the table, covering precipitation and other “miscellaneous phenomena” are scribbled on and marked “NOT TAKEN.”

Nome: August 27, 1904, is not unusual in any way. Average readings (temperature, snowfall, barometric pressure) compared to other days, “miscellaneous phenomena” left blank, no mention of earthquakes under “Remarks” for month.

Tanana: Even though the data is indicated as ranging from 1900-1909, it does not start until January, 1905.

Fairbanks (University Experiment Station): Once again, thee sheet says the data starts in 1900, but the earliest entry is for September, 1904. No mention of aftershocks at all in “Remarks” for that month.

- City of Fairbanks Historical Records:

First record after earthquake is August 29, 1904. Mentions that Town Council is meeting “in special session” late at night and there is a bill being introduced by a W. H. Robertson “for labor trying to save Bridge” priced at \$621.75 and then a mention of a bill owed by Archie Burns for “balance on Bridge” for \$1000, both of which were ordered paid. There is no mention as to what caused the damage on the bridge, but it is very possible that an earthquake two and a half days prior could have necessitated immediate bridge repairs. The cost seems awfully high (given inflation, \$1621.75 total is equivalent to \$48,886.06 in 2015, according to CPI). The rest of the meeting covers miscellaneous smaller bills.

The next meeting is a regular session on Sept. 7, 1904, and makes no mention of anything we might find interesting.

There is a special session meeting on Sept. 9 which is written in full prose and states the details of the calling of the special session. The one from August 29 is very sparse, written in notes, and detailing only bills briefly, and not as concerned with normal RROR kinds of things, whereas this is much more detailed. It seems like on Aug 29 they were in more of a rush. Just conjecture, of course, but still interesting to note the difference.

- Fort St. Michael Photograph Album:

Date range was listed as “circa 1890s to 1910s” with little information in STAR record. Photographs are mostly of groups (don't look like families; all male usually) and military life and military structures. Nothing is identified at all and the photographs are in bad shape, some difficult to discern, but definitely aren't building damage.

## 2.2.5 Organizations and Companies

- Western Alaska Construction Company Records:

Bit of a long shot, to end the day, this company was doing a variety of construction work in Western Alaska in 1904, in areas that would have been affected by the quake. North of Bethel, Norton

Sound, Nulato, Seward Peninsula, etc. The collection was not well described and only consisted of a ledger regarding business expenses and the notes for their causes. Nothing about the quake.

- Donohoe-Ostrander-Dimond Records:

Very big and important law firm in Valdez, but they handled cases all over the state. Don't know if they were the most important but they were up there. I have worked with this collection before so I knew in advance that they had a wide variety of materials from all over the state dealing with any manner of thing, not just legal disputes. They had clients living in quake-affected (presumed) areas in 1904, but I could find no correspondence that mentioned cases or clients dealing with the earthquake.

- Alaska Commercial Company Records, 1868–1967:

The Alaska Commercial Company was, historically, probably the most important entity in Alaska, so I had high hopes for this one. They operated almost all of the shipping and store ownership, mercantilism, etc. in rural Alaska for a very long time. They had village stores everywhere, served mining camps, etc. and they had their fingers in a lot of other pies too - car dealership, courthouses, post offices, department stores, law firms - you name it. Their records are huge and I thought if any company would mention earthquakes, they would, because they were everywhere. However, weirdly, almost all of the material we have is from BEFORE the quake. Late 1890s, mostly. A lot of the other material from after that is cash vouchers, shipping notes, etc. I looked through multiple boxes of correspondence (but still a very tiny portion of the collection since I came in the afternoon on my "break") but unfortunately all of the correspondence in the collection was incoming. It's all correspondence being sent to Alaska by the corporate headquarters in California, and then sometimes having that information relayed from hub communities to smaller company outposts. There were also many gaps in the correspondence but for the most part it was all the nitty gritty of business. No earthquake mentions at all, which is not surprising since none of what looked relevant turned out to be from Alaskans. I think next week I will return to this collection again, along with some of its related companies, because I refuse to believe that the correspondence was all incoming at this time.

- Alaska Steamship Company Records:

The only things from 1904 are advertisements. Weird.

- Northern Commercial Company:

I thought I'd already looked at this (Alaska Commercial Company owned them, so I figured these records would be in that collection.) but I found out these are separate. The only things from 1904 are relating to the fur trade - there's one "fur book" that covers what furs the company shipped in and out and one "expense book" which has no notes or details on expenses, just dollar amounts. I figured it was a long shot, but what the hell.

### **2.3 UAA Archives, Anchorage, Alaska (Bruce Merrell)**

- MYRTLE ASHBY. Scrapbook; 1899–1950. 0.1 cubic feet. hmc-0063. Scrapbook compiled by the sister of an early miner in Alaska.

Nothing. Collection includes undated clippings, obituaries, news articles about Tacoma & Seattle, song lyrics and poems.

- Alaska-Pacific Consolidated Mining Company records; 1885–1989. 69.2 cubic feet. hmc-0023. Records of the mining company that ran Independence Mine at Hatcher Pass and other gold mines in the Willow Creek Mining District.

Nothing. Collection includes photocopies of newspaper articles from various Alaska newspapers, identified by researchers in the 1980s who were working to establish Independence Mine as a state park. Box 50, Folder 5 had a few clippings from 1904 but nothing around the time of the earthquake.

- CLARENCE LEROY ANDREWS (1862–1948). Papers; 1890–1942. 1 cubic feet; 2 reels, microfilm. Inventory. hmc-0059. Papers and photographs of a government official and advocate of Eskimo rights.  
Nothing. Papers don't begin until 1905; most of collection is photos from UAF and Sheldon Jackson College collections.
- Barnett and Stevens family papers; 1901–1928, 2014, bulk 1901–1928. 0.25 cubic feet. hmc-1167-ahs. Correspondence of a missionary who worked at the Jessie Lee Home with Albert Newhall.  
Nothing. Folders 1, 2, and 6 were examined, only 1904 item is an original poem titled "Pop Newman's Spotted Cow." Most of collection originated in Unalaska.
- WALTER BLUE. Papers; 1869–1975. 2.3 cubic feet. Inventory. hmc-0071. Publications and other papers gathered by an Alaskan military historian.  
Nothing. Mostly copies of publications.
- Mable Crawford papers; 1892–1978. 0.7 cubic feet. hmc-1158. Papers and photographs of a long time Alaska resident.  
Nothing. Mable Crawford was born in 1905; earlier items are family records.
- Frederick John Date papers; 1833–1938. 1.2 cubic feet. hmc-0379. Papers and photographs of a miner, Alaska Road Commission employee, and railroad man.  
Nothing. Frederick Date worked in Valdez and throughout the Interior of Alaska but there is no diary in the collection. There are a few photos from 1904.
- Barbara D. Dimock family papers; circa 1865–2004. 3.6 cubic feet. hmc-0895. Politician, women's rights advocate and operator of the Bethel Roadhouse.  
Nothing.
- Rusty Dow papers; 1886-1989. 3.7 cubic feet. hmc-0397. Papers and photographs of an Alaskan artist and drayage operator.  
Nothing. Rusty Dow came to Alaska in 1934. Earlier records are family photos.
- Erickson family papers; 1903–1971. 1.20 cubic feet. hmc-0356. Papers and photographs of a family who lived in Anchorage and owned Crow Creek Mine.  
Nothing. Earliest items are postcards, written in Swedish. (Crow Creek Mine is near Girdwood, 40 miles southeast of Anchorage.)
- Charles O. Farciot papers; 1858–1988. 0.5 cubic feet. hmc-0463. Papers and photographs of a photographer while he was living in Alaska and Arizona.  
Nothing. Was only in Alaska from 1882 to 1886, working on the earliest Yukon River steamboats.
- Fred Wildon Fickett (1857-1928) papers; 1858–1989. 5.1 cubic feet. hmc-0108. Soldier and member of the army exploratory expedition to the Alaskan interior in 1885.  
Nothing. Was only in Alaska from 1882 to 1885; accompanied Lieutenant Henry Allen on his epic expedition on the Copper, Tanana, Yukon and Koyukuk Rivers.
- Edwin F. Glenn papers; 1898–1917. 1.1 cubic feet. hmc-0116. U. S. Army officer in charge of explorations in southcentral Alaska in 1898 and 1899.  
Nothing. Was only in Alaska in 1898 and 1899.

- George T. Harper papers; 1803–2004. 12.1 cubic feet. hmc-0686. The papers of historian who researched African American history in Alaska.  
Nothing. Mostly photos and photocopies of publications, earliest material is about Harper family history.
- Christine A. Heller papers; 1895-1982. 15.4 cubic feet. hmc-0367. Papers of an Alaskan botanist and nutrition researcher.  
Nothing. One 1895 photo, other pre-1910 materials are copies of botanical reference works and notes.
- H. H. Hildreth papers; 1898–1922. 0.5 cubic feet. hmc-1132. Papers related to early Seward and mining in southcentral Alaska.  
Nothing. 1904 materials include bank deposit slips and coal mining claim documents. The one diary in this collection covers 1/29/07 to 7/26/07 only, describing activities on the Kenai Peninsula.
- CHARLES G. HUBBARD, II (1869-1969). Papers; 1897-1916, 1982-1987.25 cubic feet. Inventory. hmc-0141.  
Nothing. One photo of Hubbard in 1904, no letters between 1902 and 1906. Hubbard was active on Elliott Creek; see Isaac M. Preston collection, below.
- M. Walter Johnson papers; 1902–1989. 0.80 cubic feet. hmc-0932. Tuberculosis related papers of an Alaskan public health physician. Nothing. Only pre-1950 items are copies of articles about tuberculosis.
- Jane Macdonald diary copies; 1900-1904. 0.25 cubic feet. hmc-1118-ahs. Copies of trip diaries written by a gold prospector in Ophir and Council.  
Nothing. Last diary entry is for June 21, 1904.
- Annah H. Mullikin letters; 1904–1905. 0.1 cubic feet. hmc-0742. Letters written by a young mother while living in Sitka.  
Nothing. Collection includes letters written at Sitka on 7/21/04 and 1/19/05.
- Isaac M. Preston journal; 1904. 0.01 cubic feet. hmc-0477. Account of a trip to evaluate mining claims at Elliott Creek northeast of Chitina.  
[See my email and attachments dated March 14, 2016.] Diary covers July 8, 1904 to October 7, 1904.
- Julius Rahmstorf papers; 1904–1919. 0.02 cubic feet. hmc-0835. Correspondence to a fur trapper/trader in Rampart, Alaska.  
Nothing. All about business affairs, nothing about conditions.
- Peter Trimble Rowe letters and portraits; undated, 1898-1920. 0.1 cubic feet. hmc-0796. Auto-graphed letters and portraits of the Episcopal Bishop of Alaska from 1895 to 1931.  
Nothing. No letters between January 1903 and December 1920.
- HARRY I. STASER FAMILY. Papers; 1891–1977. 9 cubic feet. List. hmc-0233. Primarily copies of photograph albums of an Alaskan miner and deputy marshal.  
Nothing. Arrived in Alaska in 1910; earlier items are family photos and correspondence.
- David and Jenny Strandberg family papers; 1897–1970. 2.20 cubic feet. hmc-0357. Papers of a family who lived in Anchorage and operated mines throughout Alaska.  
Nothing. Early items are mostly incoming correspondence on postcards, in Swedish.

- Alfred P Swineford papers; 1884–1920. 0.2 cubic feet. hmc-1015-AHS. Alaska territorial governor and newspaperman in Southeast Alaska.  
Nothing. No letters between May 10, 1904 and August 26, 1906. Lived in Ketchikan in his later years, died in 1909.
- Archie Templeton letters; 1898-1906. 0.02 cubic feet. hmc-1016-AHS. Letters of a South Dakota man who traveled to Alaska during the gold rush.  
Nothing. No letters between June 1898 and June 1906.
- Elizabeth A. Tower papers; 1986–2010. 9.0 cubic feet. hmc-1076. Research materials and writings of an Alaskan historian.  
Nothing. Primarily book manuscript drafts.

### 2.3.1 Martin, Preston, Herning diaries (Carl Tape notes)

- George C. Martin diary.  
Martin was a USGS geologist whose field notebooks were examined in Section 2.12. His diary places him at Becharof Creek in Alaska Peninsula, and his entry on 1904-08-27 is this: “We went back to Mr. Casey’s camp in the morning. In the morning(?) we rode down to the beach. Lawrence and I took a tramp over the hills during the afternoon. We found that Stanton, Stone and Brown had been kept on the other side of the bay by the storm for five days with two days provisions. They hunted berries and salmon.”  
I consider Becharof Creek to be a not-felt report for the 1904 earthquake. It seems like Martin would have mentioned an earthquake, had he felt it.  
(Interesting that Stanton does not mention any hardship in his field notebook (Section 2.12).)
- Isaac Preston diary.  
Isaac Preston was a prospector on Elliott Creek, northeast of Valdez. His entry for 1904-08-27 is: “Elliott Creek. Cloudy & Rain all day. 38° 6 AM Could not go out. Men did a little drilling on the Guthrie & Albert Johnson, and posted all assessment notices. Dean said there was 8 to 10 inches of new snow up to the head of the creek.”  
On 1904-08-31 he writes, “Felt 3 Earthquake shocks last night.” So we know that Preston would probably have mentioned the 1904-08-27 earthquake, had he felt it. Therefore I consider Elliott Creek to be a not-felt report for the 1904 earthquake.
- Orville Herning diary.  
Herning lived near the Wasilla region. He has lengthy diary entries (mainly about business), but only on August 24th and August 29th, with no mention of the earthquake.

### 2.4 Alaska State Archives, Juneau, Alaska (Anastasia Tarmann)

- Jorgen Mortenson diary 1900–1904 St. Michael  
MS 4-39-1: Jorgen Mortensen Journal, ca. 1903–1907  
No mention [of earthquake] in Mortensen’s diary<sup>5</sup>—it’s all about gold and his escapades.
- Diaries of Francis X.A. Eble and correspondence of the Northern Commercial Co., 1900-1904.  
Eble and the N. Commercial Co. correspondences are only from 1900-1-1 to 1902-4-8 and 1903-8-18 to 1904-2-24, respectively.
- I did thoroughly look through any promising diaries, journals, and documents for evidence of the earthquake, with no luck.

<sup>5</sup>[Carl Tape] The Mortenson source is more like a manuscript. It is not a daily diary.

## 2.5 National Archives and Records Administration: DC (Phil Assmus)

I wrote to NARA via email. I also asked Phil Assmus to undertake an in-person search of the records in DC.

### NARA response from Paul Harrison

This is in response to your inquiry requesting to obtain information pertaining to records of Fort St. Michael, AK during 1904 and specifically, as it relates to accounts of an earthquake that hit St. Michael, AK on August 27, 1904.

We searched Record Group 94: Records of the Adjutant General's Office under National Archives Microfilm Publication M617: *Returns from U. S. Military Posts, 1800-1916*.

We were able to identify Post Returns pertaining to Fort St. Michael, AK covering the time period of September 1897-December 1916. Post returns pertaining to Fort St. Michael are available online at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

In addition, we searched Record Group 393: Records of United States Army Continental Commands (1821-1920), Part V: Military Installations (1821-1920).

We were able to identify post records pertaining to Fort St. Michael, Alaska covering the time period of 1897-1922. Thus, the information you are seeking may also be identified in the post records pertaining to Fort St. Michael, Alaska. Enclosed is a complimentary paper copy of the inventory pertaining to Fort St. Michael, AK.

### Phil Assmus notes

Fort St. Michael (403)

See [Fort\\_St\\_Michael\\_Description.jpg](#) for an overview of when the Fort was active and who was stationed there.

- 393-5; Entry 1 – Name and Subject Indexes to Letters, Endorsements and Telegrams Sent  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1133998>  
Volume 1 – June 2, 1889 to June 5 1901  
Volume 2 – June 6 1901 to April 3, 2905  
No entries under “earthquake.” Quick flip through 1904 entries did not reveal any leads but it’s probably easier to review the correspondence, which will be arranged chronologically.
- 393-5; Entry 2 – Letters, Endorsements and Telegrams Sent  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1133999>  
Volume 1  
Volume 2 – June 6, 1901 to April 3, 1905  
No entries for August 27, 1904. Letter related to fort supplies on August 24. Letter related to mileage reimbursement on August 30. No mention of the earthquake in correspondence reviewed through mid October.  
Volume 3  
Volume 4
- 393-5; Entry 5 – Letters and Telegrams Received  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1134002>  
Volume 1 – 1889 to 1901  
Volume 2 – 1902 to 1904  
These were loose bundles of messages, often jumbled and harder to review. Initially promising because they appear to include internal correspondence at the fort. But then I didn’t find anything relevant on or around the date of the earthquake. This does, however, suggest that it might be worthwhile to review other records of correspondence received for mention of the earthquake.  
Volume 3 – 1905 to 1906

- 393-33; Entry 33 – Index to Register of Patients at the Post Hospital  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1135629>  
Did not review. Thin document. Will only include names of patients listed in the register.
- 393-34; Entry 34 – Register of Patients at the Post Hospital  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1135629>  
Patient with hand abrasion admitted on August 29, 1904. “Caused while on fatigue at Fort St. Michael August 26, 1904.” In other words – nothing.

#### Fort Gibbon (167)

See [Fort\\_Gibbon\\_Description.jpg](#) for an overview of when the Fort was active and who was stationed there.

- 393-5; Entry 1 – Letters and Endorsements (Surgeon)  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/749186>  
Nothing earthquake-related in 8/27 to 10/1 range
- 393-5; Entry 3 – Register of Letters Received and Endorsements Sent  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/749192>  
Nothing noteworthy aside from the beef hash recommendation on 9/13/04
- 393-5; Entry 11 – Index to Register of Patients  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/749209>  
Arranged alphabetically so not useful.
- 393-5; Entry 12 – Register of Patients  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/749214>  
Fun to read but nothing earthquake related from August through October.
- 393-5; Entry 14 – Miscellaneous Records  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/749216> [note that “Miscellaneous Records” is an alternative name for this collection titled “Reports, Returns, and Orders”]  
Nothing. No documents within range of 8/27/1904 to 10/1/1904

#### Fort Egbert (140)

See [Fort\\_Egbert\\_Description.jpg](#) for an overview of when the Fort was active and who was stationed there.

- 393-5; Entry 1 – Letters Sent  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/729774>  
Nothing. Latest correspondence record is 2/10/1904

## **2.6 National Archives and Records Administration: Seattle (Debby Rutherford and NARA’s Patty McNamee)**

### **2.6.1 Meteorological records**

Meteorological Observations 1904, Box 6.

- found earthquakes noted for  
Coldfoot: July 8, Aug 27 “earthquake 30 seconds”  
Coal Harbor: April 28  
Sunrise: April 22, 6 pm  
March 30 7 am “sharp earthquake”  
August 25, 8am  
August 27, 11:30 am

October 4, 8 pm  
December 16, 7 pm  
December 30, 10:30 pm “sharp earthquake”  
took photos of all records

- took photos of all records
- nothing else of significance found

### **2.6.2 Agricultural records**

- agricultural records: Office of Experiment Stations Dept. of Agriculture examined all boxes covering 1904, including:  
Letters Recd from Dept of Ag, 1900–1927 (entry 59)  
Copies of Letters Sent, 1898–1927 (entry 66)  
Personal Letters sent by Charles C. Georgeson, 1900–1920 (entry 69)  
Personal Letters recd. by Charles Georgeson, 1902–1909 (entry 70)  
Journal 1900–1907 (entry 73)  
Letters received from Alaska Headquarters, 1904–1925 (entry 101)  
Records of Kenai Substations, letters received 1899–1908 (entry 89)  
Appropriation Journal of Expenditures (entry 79)  
Property Inventories, 1900–1908 (entry 84)  
Reference Files, 1901–1926 (entry 85)
- nothing of significance found
- 7 agricultural stations, located in Sitka (1898), Kenai (1899), Rampart (1900), Copper Center (1902), Kodiak (1907), Fairbanks (1908), Matanuska (1917)

### **2.6.3 Customhouses records**

reviewed all custom house records for 1904, nothing of relevance found

“records of Alaska Customhouses” RG36 1867-1939

thoroughly examined entry/box#: 25/98; 25b/100;64/124 (lots of fascinating letters); 65/128 (telegrams); 67/131; 68/134; 72/136; 74/137; 76/138;77/139; 79/141; 80/29; 81/142; 84/143; 85/144; 88/145; 89/145; 90/146; 92/147; 93/148; 129/175

includes letters sent, letters recd., complaints filed, tariffs imposed, telegrams, duties paid or due on everything from tobacco to sled dogs, illegal human transport, smuggled liquor, imported horses, tea ruined thru excessive moisture and improperly stored on boats, “misrepresented” goods, property taken off bodies, stowaways, improper use of Native labor on boats, exportation of moosehorns

## **2.7 Library of Congress**

I wrote to the Library of Congress to ask if they had any copy of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner for 1904.

### **Response from Roslyn Pachoca**

Dear Carl,

Thank you for contacting the Library of Congress.

Unfortunately, we do not have holdings of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner during the time of the earthquake. The only newspapers we have from the Alaska/Yukon area from 1904 are:

Daily Alaska Dispatch (Juneau) The Alaskan (Sitka) The Alaska Prospector (Valdez)

I took the liberty of checking a few of the issues published after August 27, 1904 for each of these newspapers and was unable to locate any mention of the earthquake. Please note that we did not have August 28-29 for the Daily Dispatch as they were missing and were not included on the microfilm. I was able to check the the August 30-31 issues of this newspaper. As for the two latter publications, I was able to check the September 3 issues for both, as they were both published weekly and the September 3rd issue would've been the next issue produced after the earthquake. I wish I had better luck on this end.

You might already be aware, but a handy way to find other Alaska area newspapers would be to search within our U.S. Newspaper Directory available on Chronicling America. You can search by location and time period to find out which newspapers were being published there at that time. To search, click on the link below:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles/>

The resulting list of newspapers contains anything that might have been published in that time period. This means that it sometimes contains newspapers when we weren't sure of when it began or ended (as noted by question marks in the dates)—and therefore might not be relevant to you. Each newspaper title is a link to a record with more information on the publication of the newspaper. At the top of each record is also a link to a list of libraries that might have copies of that newspaper. If you are interested in seeing any of the newspapers that you find in your search, take a look at the libraries that have copies.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if I can answer any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Roslyn Pachoca,

Newspaper & Current Periodical Room,  
Library of Congress

## **2.8 Church archives**

### **2.8.1 Orthodox Church of America, Syosset, New York (Alex Liberovsky)**

- (2016-01-06) Thank you for your message. Unfortunately, I can find no mention of this 1904 earthquake in the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America. I will forward your message to the diocesan archivist in Kodiak to see if there might be some information in that collection. I will let you know if I receive any response.
- (2016-01-06) Our collections contain no daily records from any church communities. From Alaska, we have some correspondence and reports from the diocese and from church communities. There is also information in church periodicals.

I will let you know if there is anything at the diocesan archives in Kodiak.

- (2016-01-20) They have no information . . .

### **2.8.2 Moravian Church National Archives, Bethlehem, Penn. (Tom McCullough)**

- Thanks for your message. The following resources were evaluated in relation to your request:

Periodicals:

Periodical Accounts, 1904, 1905

Missions-Blatt der Brüdergemeine, 1904, 1905

Moravian Missions, 1904, 1905

Minutes:

Society for Propagating the Gospel (Bethlehem), 1904

Station diaries:

Bethel

Ogavik

Correspondence:

Letters from Alaska, 1904

Reports from Alaska, 1904

Although a variety of potential sources were available, an earthquake was not mentioned. In volume II of the Bethel Diary, containing entries from 1902-1910, the following entry revealed some interesting details for August 17 to 27, 1904; the subsequent entry for August 28 is concise but shows little alarm:

“Brother Stecker and the Finns started out for the mountains to bring the Finns off. It rained & stormed all the time, water very high. Br. Stecker returned Aug. 27 from [Nunalianahak?] after he had seen the Finns off. Here the big Prow & Swan had been driven on shore. Mr. Redmeyer & Hedly have come on Aug. 25 and are here. [August] 28: Nice.”

It would appear from this entry that the missionaries in Bethel (and also Ogavik) were unaware of an earthquake. If you'd like, I'd be happy to recommend a local researcher-for-hire that is familiar with our collections.

- Thank you for your message. Attached is a German map of the southern part of Alaska, where the mission stations at Ogavik and Bethel are shown. This map is from 1908 and was featured in a number of publications, including *The Moravian Missionary Atlas* (London: Moravian Church and Mission Agency, 1908).

There are no entries in the Ogavik mission diary in August 1904, due to a personnel change in the missionaries stationed there.

- I went through late 1904 minutes of the Moravian Church's Provincial Elders' Conference (PEC) today and unfortunately, they do not evidence the earthquake in any form. I am able to see through the minutes when all correspondence was received from Alaska (in batches). The missionaries struggled to establish a post office and distribute medical supplies to their stations; this is evidenced over the course of several months in PEC minutes. As I noted, the earthquake is never discussed.

I did read on one occasion, that some missionary correspondence from Alaska was being sent to Berthelsdorf. This was the seat of the Unity Elders' Conference in Germany (a higher-up administration of the Moravian Church). This was problematic for church authorities here in Bethlehem, as they thought they were missing out on news with mail going directly to Germany. For this reason, we can be sure that some 1904 correspondence from Alaska was deposited at the Moravian Archives in Herrnhut, Germany. The records, if they exist, would likely have been deposited in the Missionsdirektion, 1899–1945, or with R.15.W – Alaska, 1887–1908. The Moravian Archives in Germany may be contacted at [unitaetsarchiv@ebu.de](mailto:unitaetsarchiv@ebu.de). Their website is <http://www.archiv.ebu.de/startseite/>.

### 2.8.3 Moravian Archives, Herrnhut, Germany (Olaf Nippe)

I looked through several annual reports of the Moravian mission stations and through letters from Alaska around that date of the earthquake. I saw a lot of information about the landscape, the weather and the fishes – but nothing about the earthquake. They are letters, written 2 or 3 days after the 27th, but the earthquake is not mentioned. According to the other problems they had in the stations the earthquake maybe wasn't interesting or strong enough to report . . . I don't know. Unfortunately we cannot be a bigger help for your research.

## 2.8.4 Episcopal Church National Archives, Austin, Texas (Ellie Miller)

### Emails from Ellie Miller

- (2015-11-24) Thank you for contacting The Archives of the Episcopal Church. We are happy to try to help. We have exhausted our easily-accessible sources here (we have checked for any mention of the earthquake in The Spirit of Missions and in Bishop Rowe's report to the Board of Missions for both 1904 and 1905) but we were unable to find even a mention of it. The logical next step would be to search in the correspondence of the Alaska missionaries. We have done a cursory check for any correspondence we may have from Revs. Huhn and Chilson, who are the only two missionaries listed by name at Rampart and St. Michael's respectively, but we do not have correspondence from them for 1904.

There are two options left, in terms of what we have available in our collections. Our Alaska Mission Records collection would be the final place to look for any correspondence from missionaries that might mention the earthquake. This correspondence is between the missionaries in Alaska and the home office in New York, and is largely of a logistical nature, but it is possible that in 1904 something was mentioned. This correspondence exists in microfilm form at U.A. Fairbanks, but we can also do the research for you here.

- (2015-11-24) You are correct in thinking that we didn't encounter a daily log of any sort; those records, if they exist, have the best chance of occurring within the missionary correspondence (though they are unfortunately somewhat unlikely to be there as well, given the nature of that collection).
- (2016-02-23) We consulted our original copy of this letter and it is very little better, but it is legible (Archdeacon Stuck must have been very pressed for paper indeed to have done this to his readers). After a thorough reading of the letter we can tell you that it is a very lyrical description of the Inside Passage but it does not contain a single mention of the earthquake.

The last email is regarding a barely legible letter written by Hudson Stuck on 1904-08-29. (Nicholas Evans came across a copy of the letter at UAF (Section 2.2.3).) Stuck seems to have written the letter while on a boat on the Yukon. He also seems to have been short on paper, because it looks like he wrote twice (in two directions) on the same paper.

## 2.8.5 Presbyterian Church National Archives, Philadelphia, Penn. (Gail McCormick)

Several names targeted below were identified from *Boyd* (1910?).

### PRIORITY 1

- Papers, 1904-1911 Call number: ARCHIVES RG 270  
by Campbell family; Campbell, Edgar O. (Edgar Omer), b. 1867; Campbell, Louisa K. (Frances Louisa Kellogg), b. 1879. Box 1, Folder 2: Journal, 1901-1905; Gambell, St. Lawrence Is – Alaska; "Kept by Edgar O. Campbell, M.D., and Louisa Kellogg Campbell"

p. 15

Thur, Aug 26 "Anchored off the Teller Reindeer Station but it is too rough to go ashore." Traveling on the "Thetis"

p. 16

Fri, Aug 27 "About noon Mr. and Mrs. Frank Kleinsmith came from Teller City in the gasoline launch. Mr. Brevig was with them. We took lunch aboard and then Mr. & Mrs. K – insisted that we go ashore and spend the night with them. It was quite rough until we got into Grantly Harbor where it was quite smooth. We had a pleasant afternoon and evening."

Sat., Aug 28 Visited the Presbyterian Church at Teller; went on to Reindeer Station; overnight on ship

Sun Aug 29 “Early this morning left Port Clarence for Lost River, just beyond Cape York, where there are some rich tin (p. 17) deposits now being examined by Mr. Arthur J. Collier and his party, of the U.S. Geological Survey. We picked up the party consisting of Mr. Collier, Mr. Washburn, and Mr. Hutchinson, the last a part owner in the mine. From here we left for Nome where we dropped anchor about 9 P.M., again too late for services. During the day we had a pleasant companionable song service with Mr. Collier’s party and some conversation on religious subjects with some of the ship’s company. Our St. Lawrence Is. boys were very glad to see us.”

Mon. Aug 30 “Busy on shore perfecting my purchases and getting them aboard. Sea getting quite rough.” More details of business transactions.

GRM: Collier’s work is cited in the Prindle/Hess report on the Gold Placer Region, but that book does not seem to reference this Geological Survey party in the field at the same time. Pages 16-19 were photographed, including the August 27 entry.

- Sheldon Jackson Papers Call Number: RG 239

GRM: The original papers in this collection include only incoming correspondence. The geographic and chronological card index relates to this correspondence. In addition to a search of the time period, relevant places and dates were also checked in the card index. Original outgoing correspondence is in the collections at Princeton University. However, Box 8 of the PHS collection includes a “Typed, edited transcript of incoming and outgoing correspondence” See notes below.

Box 7

Folder 13: May 1904 - Aug 1904: Last entry Aug 23, 1904 [Chronological card index notes an incoming letter of 24 August that was not in the original folder.] Folder 14: Sept 1904 - Nov 1904: Responses to a letter/s sent September 2, but nothing mentioning an earthquake through September. Scheduled to speak at Union College in Schenectady, NY, on Thursday, September 29; other topics: reindeer work; establishing post offices, etc.

Box 8

Folder 1D: Typescript of correspondence, 1901-1908 Reviewed the group identified as “‘Letters’ Jan 16, 1904 to Aug 29, 1904”. Letter book pages 1-17 were in order, but no letters of those specific dates were included; none were post-earthquake. Reviewed the group identified as “‘Letters’ Sept 2, 1904 to April 7, 1905” First letter (p. 1), October 4, 1904; the rest were later; no reference to quake.

Card index to places mentioned in Sheldon Jackson incoming correspondence: Alaska [relevant subheadings below]

“Earthquake” f. 18: Letter of July 6, 1905 from Charles Hallock, Plainfield, Mass. P 2-3: “And now, I wish you would ask some person in the Bureau of Education (who ought to know everything) and who has studied “spherics” what part or proportion of the globe’s superficial space an area of 4,000 square miles may be? This was the space devastated by the Alaska cataclysm of Sept 10, (1900?) according to the report of the occurrence which was fortunately printed in the “Scientific American” at the time; otherwise its history would be as obscure and uncertain as that of the Noachian Deluge.”

GRM: The parenthetical question about the year is included in the original manuscript letter. He obviously meant the 1899 quake, which was written up in the Scientific American, as noted above.

- All of these towns were checked in the card index: St. Michael’s – all references were too early (no Fort St. Michael) Kaltag – no listing Tanana – no listing; (no Ft. Gibbon) Rampart – all references too early or too late Fairbanks – all too early; too late Nome – all too early; too late Yukon – all too early; too late (no Ft. Yukon) Wiseman – no listing; no listing for Coldfoot camp Eagle – all too early Dawsonno listing Kenai, Hope, Sunrise – no listing [a Point Hope, but all too early] Juneau – all too late Sitka – too early; too late Skagway – too early; too late Klawack – all too early Saxman – too early; too late Klukwan – no listing

- Woman's Missionary Society minutes 1899–1906 Call Number: UPPERVAULT V MI46 Si87fw by – First Presbyterian Church (Sitka, Alaska) Woman's Missionary Society minutes, Sept. 27, 1899-Feb. 28, 1906 (1 vol.)

Reviewed minutes of August through October 1904 (covering just two composition notebook pages), but only references were to program details; discussions of mission work in Japan and among Mormons.

- Woman's Missionary Society minutes 1899-1906 Call Number: VAULTFOLIO BX 9211 .A49835 F56

by – Woman's Missionary Society, First Presbyterian Church, Sitka, Alaska. Reviewed folio volume, but the August through October entries were identical to those in the composition notebook above.

- Presbytery of Alaska [microform] Call Number: MF3 a.f12ma

Minutes, 1884-1966 The meetings of the Presbytery were in April of each year, so there were "Proceedings of The Presbytery of Alaska, April 4, 5, 6, 1904" and "Proceedings of the Presbytery of Alaska in Session at Haines, Alaska, April 7 & 8, 1905." The 1905 proceedings were reviewed. They included references to relevant locations, but the topics were church and missionary business only. A "Relief fund" was identified as a budget item, but there was no record of any church requesting or receiving funds due to earthquake damage.

- Biographical Vertical Files RG414

These files consisted mostly of correspondence with Presbyterian Church headquarters related to the gathering of historical, biographical, and/or employment information.

Young, S. Hall

Biographical sketches; most skim over the time of the quake Notes made in 1935 from Board of Home Missions minutes, citing June 1904, then March 1907 as the next important entry. Copies of mostly 1920s and 1930s correspondence. Reference to the Nome "stampede" of 1904, but no earthquake reference. In addition to Alaska Days with John Muir, the folder lists "Adventures in Alaska" by Young (1919); see <https://archive.org/details/adventuresinalas00youn>

Kirk, James Wollaston

only two brief biographical sheets

Campbell, Edgar O.

Most of the file consists of formerly restricted personnel recommendations; also some correspondence and application forms, all pre-1904

Ensign, Charles

Pension forms; one article by Ensign about his ministry, June 1903

Frank, Howard

Applications for mission work, 1920s, miscellaneous biographical information, assignment requests, etc. Brief Assembly Herald article on "Home Missions" as pastor in Fairbanks, 1907; 1906 article including request for help in the Fairbanks area mission field; trials of the missionary in Alaska a dominant theme. From biographical sketch written to the Fairbanks Church from his wife, submitted to Fairbanks church for "50th Anniversary of Yukon Presbytery" booklet, 1949: appointed in May 1904 to Chena, Alaska for 3 years; "log cabin manse"; Frank walked the ninety mile circuit from Chena to Golden; "a strenuous life." His wife notes, "The town had about five hundred people when we landed at Chena in July 1904, but by the time we left in 1907 there was a population of 10,000 in Fairbanks and as many more on the creeks and surrounding country."

Marsh, Horatio

at Point Barrow; file includes some published letters, but prior to August 1904 or well after. Biography written by daughter from Washington State, 1949, simply states that the Marshes were in

Barrow in summer of 1901 to the fall of 1904, when they returned to “the States.” Notes the family returned to Illinois sometime after the summer of 1902 and came back to Alaska in the spring of 1905; had gone to Illinois for Mrs. Marsh who had been affected by snow blindness. Back to Barrow in 1907. Marsh was a physician in the remote regions of Eskimos; dealt with several Arctic winter tragedies. File includes a copy of a letter published in Home Missions Monthly, August 1904, p. 235, from Point Barrow; likely well before the earthquake, but he mentions that he will be leaving for his family’s sake (see above); Spriggs to remain (assistant minister); the letter complains of very harsh conditions and lack of supplies. Spiritual success the main concern. Other articles too early.

Hosack, Herman M.

Blank “Whos Who” sheet only

Spriggs, Samuel

Board Missionary, 1904–1908 (nothing about this period)

Barrow, 1900–1902; Assembly Herald article, 1908.

Koonce, M. Egbert

Published articles all too early; brief biographical sketch; missionary at Rampart Valley, Alaska, 1902–1906.

- United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Board of National Missions Department of Work in Alaska Records, 1874-1972 Call Number: RG 301 MFPOS 1395 (41 reels)

Reel 4: [Original Box 1, folder 37]

Campbell, Louisa K. (Gambell), 1903-1909 Typescript of Edgar Campbell letter from Wales, AK, Aug 7, 1904; the next one is from 1908, when they were back in Nome, Alaska after a furlough; extensive description of work in all letters. One typescript letter copy (July 9, 1908) has penciled in at the top “Mrs. Campbell’s Work at [typed inside address] Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, [signed] by her”.

Reel 17: [Original Box 4, folder 29 (In oversize box 10)]; Description notes the span dates of 1890–1909, but there is no document in this file between 1902 and 1909.

## PRIORITY 2

- Records 1902-1981 Call Number: ARCHIVES 03 1104a 47F by – First Presbyterian Church (Klukwan, Alaska) “Sessional Minutes of the Thlinget Presbyterian Church, Klukwan, Alaska” Pages 1-3, history of the church: “Missionary in charge at Klukwan, from May 1, 1902 to June 10, 1919”; records important data for history; no reference to quake. Session minutes, August 10, 1904 (Haines, AK) and a reference to a service on Sep 11. Next set of minutes, 11 Feb 1906.
- Session records 1899-1910 Call Number: V MI46 Sk142s by – First Presbyterian Church (Skagway, Alaska) 1904: Aug 7; Sept 1, 4, 8; all local business. Sep 8 only discusses sending hymnals to Dr. Young in Fairbanks. Next one, Oct 30; more of the same.
- Session minutes and registers 1901–1967 Call Number: UPPERVAULT V MI46 K68s by – Presbyterian Church (Klawock, Alaska) Volume 1: Session minutes and register, 1902-1925 No minutes between August 21 and October 9 (pages 34-35) Congregational business and register of baptisms, marriages, etc. only.
- Session minutes and register 1902–1933 Call Number: UPPERVAULT V MI46 Sa98s by – Presbyterian Church (Saxman, Alaska) Session minutes, 1904: Feb 11, June 18, Nov 5, Nov 26 only (Rev. Edw. Marsden) Nov 5: “The meeting opened with prayer, after which the happenings and doings of the members of the church from July to the present were noted. It is with gratitude the brethren testified to the faithfulness of the members, but regretted that the law of the land which permitted Sunday fishing had compelled many of the members to work on that Holy Day for their living.” Nov 26: membership information only

- **MISSIONARY PUBLICATIONS** Since letters written by missionaries appeared in clippings from the following magazines, the September 1904 issues were reviewed for any reference to the August earthquake.

Home Mission Monthly (publication of Women's Home Mission Board)

September 1904: Includes photos of "view from the living-room window in the home of our missionary at Klawack, Alaska, in summer" and "from the same window in winter" (no related story); and brief paragraph about mission in Alaska (p. 264); no reference to earthquake.

Assembly Herald (publication of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church)

September 1904: Most articles deal with the impact of war on the Japanese and the mission effort in Japan.

### **2.8.6 American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta, Georgia (Janet Winfield)**

I have looked through our Alaska mission information but can find no mention of an earthquake in 1904. At that time there were only two mission projects, and the missionary at Kodiak had returned to the states in early August of 1904. I also looked in the annual reports of mission work, but damage from, or even the occurrence of, an earthquake was not mentioned. One of the mission magazines had a whole issue on Alaska in February of 1905<sup>6</sup>, but there was no mention of an earthquake in any of the articles.

### **2.8.7 Jesuit Oregon Province Archives, Spokane, Wash. (David Kingma and Brenda Mandt)**

- I have a couple of perspectives to offer about how our records may, or may not, support your research: First, the "house diaries" that your grad student looked at were composed to document pastoral matters and/or internal community news within the Jesuit residence, so it's not surprising that there's no mention of the quake of 1904. External events sometimes were noted, but on average it was the rare Jesuit who took the time to record such things. (It would have been better for your research if their house had fallen down, or there had been major loss of life in the village). Second the *Historia Domus* reports tend to be quite general in nature too, and predominately concerned with pastoral successes or challenges. I recommend you not pay undue concern to getting these translated. Third, the Jesuits were indeed actively involved in seismological monitoring, but this did not become an established activity in the Pacific Northwest until the 1920s.
- My student has just completed her survey of records here. She's an aspiring historian and extremely thorough, so I have full confidence in her work. She also examined all the materials I would have thought to consider had I done the review myself. The news is disappointing: we simply can find no reference to the 1904 quake whatsoever. This includes records in Latin and Italian, having used the terms for "earthquake" in those languages as red flags.

I think you can safely rule out the Akulurak Mission. The House diarist there was consistently remarking on weather patterns during the time of the quake, yet gives no mention of anything unusual happening despite his attention to the physical environment. Another promising lead, Fr. Francis Monroe, also provided nothing. He was an active observer and recorder of events, but unfortunately departed Eagle in Spring, 1904, so his account stops at that point.

I wish I had better news to offer. As you go forward with your research, I recommend you keep in mind the names of these two Jesuits who were stationed at Nulato in Fall, 1904: Jules Jetté and Crispin Rossi. Jetté in particular was a keen observer and recorder of daily life. I will continue to keep my eyes open here as well, in case I stumble on some unconsidered resource. It's also possible that the Diocese of Juneau Archives has correspondence of Bp. Crimont that we don't have here. He had been appointed to the bishop role only a little earlier, and so there may simply just be little correspondence produced yet at that point. If there's any intersection with your research subject

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<sup>6</sup>*The Woman's American Home Baptist Mission Society* (1905)

along that vein, it would most likely be as a stray reference in a letter to him from “the field,” esp. Jetté and Rossi. You may also want to keep Monroe’s name in mind . . . it seems he went to Fairbanks after leaving Eagle.

### **Fales Library and Special Collections, New York (Lexi Kennard and Emily King)**

I’ve looked through the Elizabeth Robins papers for any mention of the earthquake from 1904. Below you will find my notes on what I have found in the specific folders that Emily identified. I should note that I am a student, and a lot of the letters that I went through were very difficult to decipher. Below is information that I found after going through the folders.

- Box 33, Folder 138  
No mention of earthquake or O’Hare in any of the letters addressed to Miss Robbins. Many of these letters were dated in the 1910s or later.
- Box 42, Folder 217  
No mention of Earthquake or O’Hare in any of the letters addressed to Miss Robbins.
- Box 43, Folder 2  
In a letter addressed to Miss Robins from J.V. O’Hare S.J., dated September 4, 1900, there is mention of “A great sickness that was raging in these parts when you passed through.” And later this same letter mentions “Unless Uncle Sam is very diligent in getting around relief supplies before the close of navigation.” and finally “The same weather that you found on your trip up the lower Yukon is with us yet”. I realize this is dated before the earthquake but I thought I would note this.

### **2.9 Museum of History and Industry, Seattle, Wash. (Debby Rutherford)**

The Sophie Frye Bass Library is part of the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) and contains the archives for the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society (PSMHS). Debby Rutherford searched the PSMHS archives.

Carl reviewed a scanned version of *Fragmentary Records of the Custom House, St. Michael, Alaska, 1894-1917*, which was assembled by Willima L. Taylor and published by the PSMHS in 1963. This book is indeed what the title sounds like: miscellaneous letters pertaining to goods and tariffs on the river. There are documents on 1904/8/25 and on 1904/12/2 (and 1905/2/24), but nothing in between. There is a nice summary of the activities during this time period, including names of ships on the Yukon. One of the records is a program for an Arctic Brotherhood meeting

#### **2.9.1 Debby Rutherford notes**

- Searched 6 large boxes of mostly uncategorized materials pertaining to “the Yukon”. Lots of clippings, occasional letters. Nothing relevant to August/Sept 1904, no mention of earthquake.
- The “Knudsen Collection” included here documents the building and histories of several steamwheeler boats on the Yukon at the turn of the century. Factual information about materials, costs, measurements, hauling capacities. Scant information of social interest.

### **2.10 University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Seattle, Wash. (Debby Rutherford)**

- John Francis Pratt photo collection 1870-1910 BOXES 1-3 #PH0567. officer US Coast Guard and Geodetic Survey, including Alaska boundary. Fascinating photos but nothing relevant.
- John F Pratt papers, accession #0039-001 0039-002 7/28/04-6/29/05. Personal papers, corporate records. nothing relevant.

## **2.11 Historical Societies**

### **2.11.1 Nome Historical Society (Cheryl Thompson)**

I am not aware of any records like you are seeking but you might check with the Weather Service here in Nome. Also, the Kegoayah Kozga Library, here in Nome has newspapers on microfilm. They may be able to check around that date to see if anything is mentioned there.

### **2.11.2 Hope/Sunrise Historical Society**

After finding the felt report by the volunteer meteorological observer "A. Lawson" in Sunrise, I wrote to the historical society to ask about him.

#### **Diane Olthuis**

In Mary Barry's *A History of Mining on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska*<sup>7</sup> page 47 she reports that there was a Captain Lawson was on Turnagain Arm in the summer of 1895. Capt. Lawson "returned to Tacoma, Washington the preceding fall." Lawson's feelings about the goldfield are in *The Alaskan* (newspaper), Feb. 8, 1896. On page 146, Barry reports that "Adolph Lawson sold seven placer mining claims on Sixmile to . . . on October 1, 1914."

#### **Mike Pickett**

Diane sent me a copy of your request about the quake of 1904. I'll take a shot at it. . .

In the 90's my wife and I did an immense study of the diaries of the USFS boat folks and the head of the USFS, William Hunt. Our goal was to document the incredible relationship Hunt and his folks had with the miners of the region, particularly in the matter of forest fire control. Hunt used to visit William Fairman's claims on Quartz Creek during their tours of the region. . . and stayed there quite frequently. My mining partner and I reopened those claims in '66 and he, being a professor of Mining history as well, were quite interested in the history of the area.

Mind you, I'm drawing this from my memory, not having our notes in front of me. . . but here's the deal. At that time USFS was headquartered in Cordova. . . and they actually had a FLEET of boats that traveled to Seward. . . and another set of boats that plied the Kenai Lake out of what was to become one of their stations down below Mary Carey's lodge. . .

The boat captains, and Hunt all kept diaries with copious notes on their travels. My wife and I concentrated on Hunt's diaries, our quest being what I described above.

I'm pretty sure that in 1904 they were still traveling out of Cordova. . . recall that at that time the Copper mines were exploding in the White Mountains and up at Kennicott. . . I don't think they established headquarter at Seward until about 1908, but I'm not sure at this moment.

The main thing is that you need documentation, and I'm betting that you'd find far more information in those diaries about that quake.

At the time (1994-5) we were going through the captain's diaries and Hunt's, they were all stored in the Federal Archives in the bottom floor of the Anchorage Courthouse. . . and easily accessible. I had a letter from Governor Hickel giving us total access to all Archives in Alaska, so it was easy to do our research. I heard that the Archives were moved to Seattle, but don't know for sure. Quite frankly I'd say that those diaries belong in the basement of the museum in Seward. . . they have a HUGE body of information there from the days of the Sunrise Mining District. . . I did a lot of research there, too. . .

SO. . . I would say. . . look for those diaries. . . they were dated, and had daily entries. . . if they are in Seattle, I'd initiate something to get them transferred to Seward where they belong.

None-the-less, I'd also go to the Seward Archives and plow through any of the dated Sunrise Mining District records and see if anyone mentioned the quake. . . .

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<sup>7</sup>[Carl Tape] Diane is quoting the 2nd edition (Barry, 1997). I discuss Lawson in Appendix A.0.1 and A.0.2.

I had a family friend who arrived in Alaska on the last trip of the Cutter Bear to Homer. . . back in 1908. . . he worked on the survey of the Seward Meridian, the railroad bed, and the military road. So by 1908, there was sufficient activity at Sunrise and it's region to warrant a military road, and a railroad. . . that implies that there would have been at least SOME recordation of the effects of that quake.

## 2.12 USGS Alaska Science Center, Anchorage, Alaska (Carl Tape & Matt Haney)

Table 3 summarizes the USGS field notebooks that were examined. Several of these notebooks included entries on the date of 1904-08-27; however, none of them mentioned the earthquake. In general, the content in the notebooks is strictly geological, with occasional mentions of things like the weather (which of course is pertinent to the fieldwork). In the case of George C. Martin, we have examined his personal diary as well (Section 2.3); he did not mention the earthquake.

Two USGS parties were within or close to the felt region for the 1904 earthquake. The diary of Campbell mentions encountering Collier, Washburne, and Hutchinson near Nome (Section 2.8.5). Washburne's field notebook has entries on 1904-08-24 and 1904-09-01, where he labels the anchored *Thetis* boat, also mentioned by Campbell (Section 2.8.5).

The Rampart newspaper mentions the party of Prindle and Hess—even within the same newspaper that mentions the earthquake (*Yukon Valley News*, 1904). Prindle's fieldbook entry on 1904-08-27 includes a few notes with a map of Quail and Troublesome creeks. Hess's fieldbook entry on 1904-08-27 has detailed geologic notes and a map containing Gazzam, Quail, and Troublesome creeks. The work of Prindle and Hess was published in *Prindle and Hess* (1906).

T. W. Stanton has a brief, barely legible entry on 1904-08-27 that starts with "Weather moderate and rain ceased about now." He is mentioned in G.C. Martin's diary (Section 2.3.1) as being stranded on "the other side of the bay" from Becharof Creek, which would put him close to Fetherly Creek. Both creeks are near the southwest end of Becharof Lake.

F. E. Wright has a lengthy entry on 1904-08-27 and discusses his impressions of the landscapes but makes does not mention the earthquake; he was near "Kloochman Canyon," which appears to be close to Telegraph Creek, British Columbia (his field notebook is entitled "Wrangell to Telegraph Creek").

## 3 Summary by type of information

### 3.1 Newspapers (Table 2)

- The authoritative reference for newspapers in Alaska on microfilm is *Nicolson and Slemmons* (1998). Much of this reference is available on-line, though I think the branching diagrams, showing the evolution of newspapers in each region, are only found within the published book.
- Table 2 summarizes the newspapers with preserved pages from the time of the earthquake.
- Carl searched the digital Seattle Times for Aug and Sept 1904 and found only one hit for the search term "Alaska earthquake" on 1906/9/17, but it was not about any particular earthquake.
- A search of Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>) finds a mention of Alaska earthquakes in May 1904 from a Hawaii newspaper reporting news out of Seattle.

### 3.2 Maritime records

We have found no maritime records with the kind of writing that would mention a notable earthquake. Based on *Cantwell* (1902), we can assume that there were dozens of ships each day on the Yukon river, and some of these would have been docked at the time of the earthquake. It seems like a captain or crewmember of such a ship might mention the earthquake. We found zero such diaries or log-like entries. This included searches at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle (Section 2.9).

### Alaska Commercial Company records at Stanford

<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf8d5nb390/admin/?query=alaska%20commercial%20company>

Series 1. Subseries B.

Box 2, Folder 12

39 Russian Church (Rev. Korchinsky)- St. Michael 1902-1904

Box 2, Folder 10

36 Johnston & Reuben- St. Michael 1900-1905

Box 5, Folder 8

139 A. Fredericks- St. Michael 1904

Box 5, Folder 13

149 A. Belkoff- St. Michael 1901-1915

**Tim Noakes**, Head of Public Services at the Stanford Library Special Collections, kindly examined these folders and wrote this: “I was able to locate these boxes and go through the folders in question. In doing so, I found that they constituted only business transactions with no reference to the earthquake. Very sorry, but at least you were able to cross off these from your list.”

### 3.3 Church records

We found no felt reports of the 1904 earthquake in church records from the Episcopal Church, the Catholic Church (Jesuit missions), the Presbyterian Church, the Russian Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church of America), and the Baptist Church.

### 3.4 Diaries and correspondence

Diaries make up several entries in Table 1, including the Wickersham felt report. Diaries offer on the of the best opportunities for having an entry on the day of interest. This remains the a promising category for finding future felt reports.

### 3.5 Military records

The military records for Fort St. Michael, Fort Gibbon (Tanana), and Fort Egbert (Eagle) turned up nothing (Section 2.5). But, then again, these are military records, not personal diaries. Unless buildings were damaged or people were injured and admitted to the hospital, we would not expect to find anything (this insight is in hindsight).

### 3.6 Weather records and agricultural experiment records

- The volunteer weather records, reviewed by Brian Brettschneider, yielded two felt reports (*Tape et al.*, 2017).
- The agricultural experiment records yielded nothing (Section 2.6.2).

### 3.7 Notebooks of scientists and explorers

- Andrew Jackson Stone, 1859–1918.

According to the Nome newspaper on 1904-08-30 (p. 3), Stone, “a famous naturalist,” was in Nome.

I think he was working for (or supported by) the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

A collection of his works are at the Berkeley library: “Andrew Jackson Stone diaries and papers, 1896-1919.” Much of his journals were synthesized by Margaret Frisina into the 2012 book, *Journals of A. J. Stone* (Safari Press).

Margaret Frisina wrote: “A J Stones journals end in 1903.” Too bad, because Stone did write about earthquakes in Alaska, notably the October 1900 earthquake in the Cook Inlet region (1903, Scribner’s, “An Explorer-Naturalist in the Arctic”).

- Alfred Geddes Maddren, 1875–1958 [Appendix C].

According to Jill Schneider, the Maddren records at USGS start in 1905. A full collection from UAA is dated as 1906–1914:

<https://consortiumlibrary.org/archives/FindingAids/hmc-0166-APU.html>

It appears that Maddren went from the Smithsonian expedition in 1904 to working for USGS in 1905.

- Table 3 summarizes the field notebooks of USGS geologists in Alaska in 1904.

A search of the USGS photo archives (<http://library.usgs.gov/photo/>) with “1904 Alaska” returns 302 photos. Many of these are from the scientists listed in Table 3. It was the folks at USGS Denver who directed me to the field notebooks at the Alaska Science Center in Anchorage.

What is needed are personal journals from these scientists and explorers.

## 4 Future possibilities

The 1904 earthquake was felt over much of mainland Alaska. Chances are, there are more reports out there than the five that we have. But the grand total of 27 written records (Table 1) shows how little information we found from a massive search. Here are some thoughts about future search directions:

- Russian church records:

There was a Russian Orthodox Church in St. Michael in 1904. I have not seen any records from the church. Someone who can read Russian could perhaps discover something.

A tip from Bruce Parham: “My late friend, Barbara Sweetland Smith, completed several guides relating to the records of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska. Most of their records were microfilmed by the Library of Congress ([http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMfer02.xq?\\_id=loc.mss.eadmss.ms011165&\\_faSection=overview&\\_faSubsection=did&\\_dmdid=](http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMfer02.xq?_id=loc.mss.eadmss.ms011165&_faSection=overview&_faSubsection=did&_dmdid=)), which collected the original records around 1940. I am aware of a set of the microfilm at the University of Alaska Anchorage’s Consortium Library, and there are probably sets of microfilm deposited in Fairbanks and Juneau.”

- Jesuits: Julius Jetté, Crispin Rossi, Francis Monroe, Joseph Crimont. Perhaps there are more records (Juneau archives?) than those that were searched in Section 2.8.7.
- Rev. John Chapman, longtime cleric in the Anvik, Shageluk area. He and Jetté actually corresponded occasionally. So that’s definitely a name that should be looked for, if you do your search for other Episcopal related records at UAF. Other names include Rev. Jules L. Prevost, stationed at St. James Mission, Tanana; Rev. [Deacon] J.E. Huhn, (Rampart/St. Stephens Village); and Rev. [Deacon] Reginald Hoare (Circle City/Eagle).
- There were dozens of ships a day on the Yukon river in 1904. I would have suspected that ship captains would have daily logs about the weather and related matters. You might not notice the earthquake on the river, but the boat might be docked, or you might hear people talking about the earthquake.

- Diaries of explorers would seem to be ideal. The USGS geologists didn't mention anything in their field notebooks, but perhaps some of them have personal journals. Alfred Geddes Maddren (Section C) probably felt the earthquake, but we have no correspondence or journals from him from this time.
- The most disappointing search was that nothing turned up on the records from Fort Gibbon (Tanana) and Fort St. Michael (St. Michael), two places that would have felt the earthquake. Perhaps a more extensive search of military records (or journals/correspondence) from stationed folks would turn something up.

The report by *Antonson* (1976) (Appendix D) implies that there were some written accounts from soldiers and that there was a weather station at St. Michael.

Judy Tripplehorn, former librarian at UAF's Geophysical Institute, once visited the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and examined a large set of 1860–1910 weather records written by Surgeon's at U.S. outposts in Alaska. She was specifically looking for mentions of earthquakes and found numerous, however, none more from 1904.

- A few names of people of interest:

- Dr. Clifford H. Gibbons in Rampart
- surgeon and assistants in Fort Gibbon
- Major William Langdon Buck, head at Fort St. Michael  
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/wlbuck.htm>
- Fr. Francis Monroe.

David Schienle wrote: "Fr. Francis Monroe, SJ arrived in Fairbanks in July 1904 to start building Immaculate Conception Church. He did not keep a house diary during his time in Fairbanks. I took a look at other house diaries around the Diocese. The house diaries for Nulato, Holy Cross, Akulurak, Hooper Bay<sup>8</sup>, and Nome do not mention an earthquake on that day.

You may find information from the Society of Jesus Alaska Mission Collection. Fr. Monroe letters and documents are on microfilm rolls 38 and 39. UAF archive has a copy of the microfilm. There is a guide that microfilm collection that is in the UAF library."

- It's possible that there are reports from teachers from various parts of Alaska. I wrote to Patty McNamee at NARA in Seattle, and she responded:

There are two ways to look at Education Records mentioned in your recent email.

One is Records of the Office of Education, Record Group 12. The only records we have at the National Archives at Seattle are from 1953-1979 and deal with Project Reports. Most records for Record Group 12 are at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Records of the Office of Education, Letters Sent by Commissioner of Education, 1870-1909, is available on Microfilm Publication M635. We believe the microfilm was transferred from the National Archives at Anchorage to the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. You can get a brief overview by looking at the Guide to Federal Records in the National Archives of the United States. Here is a link:<https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/012.html>

Our other thought is the early Bureau of Education falls under what is now the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Alaska Division was originally established in 1885 in what was the Bureau of Education. The only records we have relating to Alaska, Bureau of Education for the early time frame is on microfilm and was transferred to the University of Alaska,

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<sup>8</sup>[Carl Tape] I was not aware of a house diary in Hooper Bay.

Fairbanks. It is Microfilm Publication, M1333, Records of the Alaska Division of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Concerning Metalakatla.

If the Bureau of Indian Affairs records under the Alaska Division have not been micro-filmed, they are at the National Archives at Washington, D.C. Attached is the headquarters finding aid. Their email is [archives1reference@nara.gov](mailto:archives1reference@nara.gov).

All other Bureau of Indian Affairs records held in Seattle, earlier than 1912, are allotment and land transaction files.

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## A Lawson on the Kenai Peninsula

### A.0.1 Adolph Lawson from Sunrise, Alaska

The felt report of the 1904 earthquake from Sunrise, Alaska, is signed “A. Lawson” (*Lawson*, 1904). Observations of the stream flow from Sixmile Creek near Sunrise were attributed to “Adolph Lawson” in *Ellsworth and Davenport* (1915, p. 129):

KENAI PENINSULA

SIXMILE CREEK AT SUNRISE.

A gage was installed on Sixmile Creek on August 27, 1913, on the left bank about one-half mile above the mouth, and was read twice each day until November 30. On December 2 the stream was reported as having frozen over except in the rapids.

The discharge measurements were made at a section of the stream opposite the Sunrise post office, about three-eighths of a mile below the gage. Very little drainage comes in between the two points.

Two tables of numbers are listed in *Ellsworth and Davenport* (1915). The second table shows daily measurements of gage height and discharge from August 27 to November 30, 1913, made by Adolph Lawson. This measurement-taking Adolph Lawson seems undoubtedly the same “A. Lawson” who took daily weather observations in 1904.

*Barry* (1997, p. 146) notes that “Adolph Lawson sold seven placer mining claims on Sixmile to Charles E. Herron and L. H. French on October 1, 1914. Herron and French sold the claims to the Sunrise Dredging Company the next month (the company, no doubt, was organized by them).” *Barry* (1997, p. 47) also mentions “a Captain Lawson” who spread news of the Cook Inlet gold discoveries in fall 1895. The full newspaper story is copied below in Section A.0.2.

It is possible that “Captain Lawson” is the same person as “Adolph Lawson,” but this is speculative. Adolph Lawson was a gold miner in Sunrise, Alaska, with a penchant for scientific observations, from weather (including earthquakes!) to stream gages and perhaps much more that went unpublished.

Lawson is not listed in the first edition of the book (*Barry*, 1973).

### A.0.2 Captain Lawson: Transcription of *The Alaskan* (1896)

Capt. Lawson and other miners who have returned to Tacoma from Cooks inlet, Alaska, are telling stories of Alaska’s richness in gold which have aroused the deepest interest of all miners and bids fair to induce hundreds to go north next spring.

The biggest strike on Cook inlets [sic] was made in July at Canon creek, thirty-five miles from tidewater, where golden sands were found of such richness as to actually dazzle old prospectors who had been content to clean up \$5 to \$10 a day. Not only did some of the men find dirt which went \$50 to the pan in gold, but there was a large quantity of it.

This land was divided up without dispute and many men worked night and day until the season closed in September. Part of the miners came out, bringing large sacks of gold with them, and others will winter there in order to start work early in spring.

Capt. Lawson says one man came out with \$40,000. He had spent two seasons on the Yukon river and on at Cooks inlet. All the Alaska miners did well this season, he says, and it is only the men who stayed around steamer landings and never struck a pick into the earth who complain about the country.

Ben Pilcher reports that one man took out \$1,800 in three days at Cooks inlet, but says only experienced miners should go there. All returning miners will go back next spring.

Louis Houge says that fully 1,000 men will winter in the Yukon basin. He has spent three years there, and says that the prospects for next season are very bright.

Ex-deputy Sheriff Eugene Duval not only made a good summer’s pay on the Yukon, but explored alone as far east as the lower Mackenzie, 400 miles from any settlement, taking only a compass, gun,

and prospecting tools. He says the Rocky mountains on the divide between the Yukon and the Mackenzie rivers are the source of supply of the richest gold fields in the world. From there comes the gold in the placer miners of the Yukon, Fraser and Mackenzie rivers, which latter river he believes is the richer than either of the other two.

“The most desolate scene I ever beheld,” said he, “was when I climbed the hills west of the Mackenzie river and looked over toward Hudson’s bay. The mountains are not in ranges, but rise in sharp peaks, with deep gorges and lakes between. I could see hundreds of miles, and it was mountains all the way. Those mountains are undoubtedly rich in gold.—San Francisco Chronicle

## **B The diaries of George C. Pilcher (Carl Tape)**

In the words of *Hunt* (1972), George C. Pilcher was a “woodcutter, homesteader, trapper, trader, engineer, miner, journalist, artise, and inventor.” He lived on the lower Yukon river from 1898 to 1933, and he recorded his daily on-goings within 21 volumes that are housed in the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library at University of Alaska Fairbanks. As far as I know, no one has transcribed these diaries, perhaps due to the somewhat mundane nature of the entries or because Pilcher was not well-known outside his region of Alaska. (By comparison, U.S. Judge James Wickersham’s diaries have been transcribed and photographed.)

My main purpose for examining Pilcher’s diaries was to see if he mentioned the 1904-08-27 Alaska earthquake. He did not: the entirety of his entry for that day is “very fine Day.” This is somewhat perplexing, given that he was either in, or very close to, St. Michael on the day of the earthquake. My secondary purpose was to understand the likelihood that he would or would not have mentioned an earthquake. Finally, his diaries provide an impressive portrayal of what life was like for someone living on the Yukon in 1904. Given the challenges of Pilcher’s daily life, I can understand why most people did not take the time to write in diaries.

Other entries of Pilcher’s diary, including for the 1912-07-12 Denali fault earthquake (*Carver et al.*, 2004), were examined by Nicholas Evans (Section 2.2.2). He found no mentions of earthquakes.

### **B.1 Transcription of Pilcher diary, 1904-08-15 to 1904-11-03**

The time period is contained within a diary volume entitled “No 5 Nov 1. 1903 to June 30. 1905”. The first page says, “This Memorandum is opened 50 miles below Russian Mission on the Yukon River, Alaska, Nov 1st 1903.” Fifty miles downriver on the Yukon is in the vicinity of the mining village Marshall (or Fortuna Ledge), where gold was discovered on Wilson Creek in 1913. We’ll use the location of Marshall (longitude -162.04, latitude 61.87) as an approximation for Pilcher’s residence. (He mentions

The transciption below was done by me (Carl Tape). Experts on the topics (1900s sailing, trading, Alaska) or on Pilcher’s handwriting could improve the transciption. Pilcher begins with a boating trek down the Yukon to St. Michael, he spends time in St. Michael—including capturing 11 “pirates” who had stolen a steamship, then he begins the arduous return up the Yukon (“Poling, Rowing and Sailing”) to his home, and finishes with some adventures (and sickness) while preparing for winter.

#### **August 1904**

MONDAY 15th

Find day. Slight South East winds; I got all fixed up and started for St. Micke at 3.P.M. am anchored to-night near Sugarlode Mountain. will fool around part of tomor looking after quarts.

TUESDAY 16th

Stormy and high winds. I climbed three miles up a mountain side and found a large ledge of either granite or milling quarts. it looks to hold silver and a little gold.

WEDNESDAY 17th

A wild day of wind and and rain. from SW. I made about 10 miles and laid in

THURSDAY 18th

Cold and rainy, but winds was fair and I made about 60 miles. am anchored tonight 30 miles below Andreafsky.

FRIDAY 19th

I Beat about two(?) miles against a fierce wind and rain, then I took shelter in the mouth of a slough and lay-in all day. The Yukon Roled like Berhing Sea. SATURDAY 20th

Had fair winds but bumpy(?) with Rain Squalls. Got Stuck on a Sand bar in mid river, was two hours getting off. Got thoroughly wet. But made 60 miles. Am anchored at Kotlek tonight. Hungry.

SUNDAY 21st

Howling South winds. I visited with Mr. Brunell. And too Supper with him. He is going over to St-Mike with me to-morrow.

MONDAY 22nd

Mr. Brunell and I started from Kotlik at 8 a.m. with fair winds, had a fine cruise to Romanoff ... there a fierce strom set in, and we made shelter in the canal with one sail set under reef(?).

TUESDAY 23rd

Got into St. Mike at 10 am. Find the city quiet but lots of old sourdoughs are in evidence

WEDNESDAY 24th

windy and Rainy. I located some of my stolen property in possession of a halfbreed and a sailor from Juneau

THURSDAY 25th

windy and Bold. Poor disheartened pilgrims are returning from Mitens(?) Creek. I Searched the quarters occupied by the two robbers and found lots of my goods. Frank Tucker is here making a great ass of him-self.

FRIDAY 26th

Fine day. Nothing new

SATURDAY 27th

very fine Day

SUNDAY 28th

Very fine day. I got my Snap Shots developed and 17 of them are fine.

MONDAY 29th

Cloudy by pleasant. Brunnell and Booper came from Nome last night.

TUESDAY 30th

Fierce Southwester with rain, Str St-paule came in from Friseo. I got mail from home. A man was drown off the gasoline go-devil<sup>9</sup> at the afoon(?) mouth.

WEDNESDAY 31st

August closes drizzly and almost calmer. Nothing unusual happened.

### **September 1904**

THURSDAY 1st

Fine day, Am deputized to go tonight, After the pirates who stole the Steamer "City of Bradford"

FRIDAY 2nd

Out all night. Captured the Steamer and Eleven men. Towed them back Filled the Jail, and am wore out and dead for sleep. Fine Balmy Day.

SATURDAY 3rd

Bright balmy day. Stout north winds.

SUNDAY 4th

Clear with Fierce Nor west winds. Susie arrived from Dawson. Rock Island departed.

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<sup>9</sup>The Go-Devil is a gasoline-powered ship.

MONDAY 5th

Clear and fierce North winds. "Fram"(?) parted both anchor lines and went ashore last midnight. Seems not to be damaged However. Worked hard all day Getting her in shape to launch. Am in it as departs Marshel again tonight.

TUESDAY 6

A Fierce 24 hours of Blow, but clear. got the Fram(?) off the beach in the darkness last night. Too Stormy for the police liast night as their men are across the bay. I am moored in the lea of a sunken barge

WEDNESDAY 7th

Calming down. Mr Brun ?ill with the Gasoline "Go-Devil. arrived at 6 P.M.

THURSDAY 8th

Warmer and quite calm Cloudy an Drizzling tonight Busy all day trying to get up my anchors and catching burglars. Has prart of the gang in Jail who robed my house in July. Str Oil City came in

FRIDAY 9th

Somewhat rainy, Got a credit of N C Co. And began buying.- my winters Stock.

SATURDAY 10th

Rainy and bad. I bought my Stock and am fixed to load up

SUNDAY 11th

Fine day. was busy writing letters.

MONDAY 12th

Cold and Blowing. I loded up and left St-Mike at 5 P.M. Am at anchor in the Slough tonight.

TUESDAY 13th

Only got about two miles.

WEDNESDAY 14th

Reached the South? End of the canal after a hard days work.

THURSAY 15th

A roaring Southwester

I layed in

FRIDAY 16th

Fine day but not Strong winds. left the canal at 7 a.m am anchored off the beacon lights at the Yukon tonight.

SATURDAY 17th

Clear and Strong. Nowest winds I got stuck and made but 20 or 25 miles

SUNDAY 18th

Froze hand last night

was clear today and a crackerjack wind from the No East. and much as I regret to work on Sunday I was compelled to use this wind and am anchored tonight 5 miles below the Kuselveck(?).

MONDAY 19th

Earth Froze hard. Clear cold day. Slight winds down Stream

Made 20 miles. Met Daple(?).

TUESDAY 20

Clear and Not much wind. I rounded the point of the big bend below Andreafsky. And winds came dead ahead. I stopped, sick with cold and headache.

WEDNESDAY 21st

Winds dead ahead. I couldn't move. is Setting in to rain tonight. I discovered today that I was loaded with greybacks<sup>10</sup>.

THURSDAY 22

Cloudy but warm. Headwinds Still. and I am reading novel

FRIDAY 23rd

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<sup>10</sup>greybacks is a slang term for lice

Foggy and Rainy. did not move an inch. The Explorer passed up at 9am

SATURDAY 24th

Got a tolerably favr wind part of the dat and I made about 30 miles. The Steamer Mis Bruce, passed up, "Kentuckey Red" was aboard

SUNDAY 25th

Cold and cloudy. a Slight wind in my favor and I Sailed around the bend for about 6 miles. I am now half way between Andrafsky and Bluff village.

MONDAY 26th

I Started at 5 a m and Stopped at 6 P.M. and made about 5 miles by working hard all day. Poling, Rowing and Sailing

TUESDAY 27th

Cold, and headwinds that wer fierce. I moved about 2 miles at peep o'day and two miles since dark. It is clearing up and will freeze hard tonight. I took in \$8. from the Rockoluff villagers. The Steamer "Leah" and three barges passed down.

WEDNESDAY 28th

Lite winds but fair. I made about 30 miles and am within 15 miles of home. It Froze Earth one inch(?) deep. and made ice up to noon today.

THURSDAY 29th

Froze hard again last night. A beautiful autumn day. No wind. I killed 2 grouse

FRIDAY 30th

South East winds and a Slight mist at times. I got a Slant on the wind this afternoon and made 5 or 6 miles. Am only 8 or 10 miles from home. And have a Straight run. Saw another large Bear track to-day. This has been the most disagreeable trip I have ever had. am now 18 days our of St-Michaels. Happily, there has been no rain to Speak of.

### **October 1904**

SATURDAY 1st

I did not move an inch. winds Slight but dead down Stream, Current very Swift. the day was cloudy and cool but not freezing(?)

I shot a rabbit and a grouse and read novels.

SUNDAY 2nd

Becalmed I lay

This bright autumn dat

With its mountains and

forest all yellow and Brown

And all I Seene

One the Placid Sheene

was the ???ed old "Explorer" go roaring Down.

MONDAY 3rd

I got a little N-W whiff this morning and ??? to within 5 miles of home fine weather. Str Herman . . .

TUESDAY 4th

Thank heaven I am home to-night and I got home scarce too soon. For Ice froze at Shore of the river last night. And the ground froze so that it did not thaw out all day in peaces though the day was clear and Balmy. Mice have Slaughtered my Stock of flour.

WEDNESDAY 5th

Lovely day. bright balmy and calm But it froze properly - last night. I unloaded the Fram today.

THURSDAY 6th

Rainy and almost freezing. I put the Fram in the winter quarters one Steamer with barges passed down

FRIDAY 7th

Rained all night and part of today. The soaring grinlet? Explorer. Came up, with a cargo of Sealoil. I passed the day fixing things up.

SATURDAY 8th

Rainy. I did Some trading.

SUNDAY 9th

Drizzly and N-W winds. the Str "Levta" passed up. I Baked, Cooked and did about \$30.00 worth of trading.

MONDAY 10th

Misty till noon. Then with two native boys I Started for a propsecting trip and Bear hunt. We went to camp at 6 P.M. at the foot of Terrance Mountain.

TUESDAY 11th

Rained all night but a nice day. I mushed(?) up above the clouds. Found an innormeous body of either quarts or porfehny(?). Saw lots of bear tracks and lots of cariboo horns. it is growing cold tonight.

WEDNESDAY 12th

A very cold night. Our boat and canooks(?) are froze in the Slough. Ground froze from 1 to 2 Inches and I nearly froze in the tent last night. We broke camp and broke our way through Ice to the Yukon, and I am home tonight. while my pick and shovel is there miles up a mountain side 15 miles from home

THURSDAY 13th

Cloudy but pleasant. I nursed a bad headache all day.-for Yesterdays wetting(?)

FRIDAY 14th

Fierce upstream winds

I Smugged(?) the "Fram" in for winter. did a fair days trading

Sent two natives to my ??per camp to build a hut for wood choppers, Saw a large Bear track near the village.

SATURDAY 15th

Snowting. The last geese are going South. I fixed up my ax and Saw to begin wood chopping Monday.

SUNDAY 16th

Froze quite hard last night. but a pleasant day. I broke the main Spring of my winchester the result of trying to fix her up, on Sunday

MONDAY 17th

I began wood chopping today.-but old "Calabou" (?) arrived from down river and reports that he and another native Named "Chickluck," found a lot of goods ?? ?? cashed about 20 miles below here

So I took an Interpreter and went down.

TUESDAY 18

Arrived after dark and found the goods in the village where the natives wer cleaning them up and drying them out. They were in bad condition consisting of.

One pair lite Blankets

One pair heavy miners Shirt(?)

One Blue cotton Shirt

One Blue dirl? Sleeping bag

One Set of 4 mirrors 4 x 6"

One 32 caliber winchester

-13 inch baked(?) moddle(?) 1873

One Single bbl(?) breech loading Shotgun, very Heavy, but of all octagon.

two pair ??? canvas

three can openers

two pair new strap hinges  
one smoothing plain  
one taper file  
24 No. 2 Shot Shells Bros  
1 box of Shells and lead and balls  
1 lot of Stryshine(?)  
1 ball ?? twine

And other mines articles

All of these I took and I have the native "Chickluck" one Blanket, 1 or 2 lbs of lead, one pair Shoes, one mirror, two Sets leging ?? one pound powder. one blue dress shirt.

Caliboo ?? to 1 lb powder. 1 mirror 40 cartridges

Calibook Says Chickluck gave him the Powder, Mirror and Cartridges, and Chickluck says Caliboo took them

Evidently the natives confiscated many other articles. I have "Chickluck" one Dollar to Show me where the goods wer found. It was in a hole in a cliff about 40 or 50 feet above the water of the Yukon on the South West Spur of Terrace Mountain. I got home at 4 P.M. Badly ???ckid out. Paid the natives \$2.00 for going with me. "Caliboo" will return the property taken by him.

WEDNESDAY 19th

Snowing and Freezing

I Chopped wood hard all day. River very low but no Ice yet. Old "Caliboo" coffered up the Powder and Cartridges to-night.

THURSDAY 20

warm and Snowing. Bud and Black Jack finished their hut at Jokor(?) and Returned are full of ????? to go back and Batch it.

FRIDAY 21st

quite a Snow last night. Freezing all day. Yet the Yukon is clear of Ice. I went up to Jokor??? to Inspect the wood camp.

SATURDAY 22

Clear and calm, was within 12 degrees of zero at Sunrise. I chopped till noon and then daubed(?) up the crannies in my cabin. A thin Skin of Ice is running and Solid till(?) 1 1/2 inches thick is on the creeks and dead water.

SUNDAY 23

Freezing; A Strong upstream wind has driven the thin Ice to a mush along the Shore. I did my laundry and baked as usual

MONDAY 24th

Scarcely Freezing and Snowing

considerable Ice running. I Set the Siwast(?) to chopping at the lower camp. I chopped this afternoon. and got wet.

TUESDAY 25th

Snowing and 20° above zeros. Ice running in real earnest. I chopped wood.

WEDNESDAY 26th

Snowing and Thawing at noon. I chopped and Shot four Rabbits on my work.

THURSDAY 27th

Calm and barely freezing

I chopped till 10 and clear pegged out.

FRIDAY 28th

Spent a most miserable day with Rheumatism and plurioty(?) and a billiore(?) headache. think it is the Lagriffe. Every bone in my body aches and I cant eat.

SATURDAY 29th

Am Somewhat Improved but Still have to hiar(?) my wood and water fetched. I am using

Steam baths.

SUNDAY 30

Fine weater, 20° above zero

River two thirds full of Ice and I am barely able to get out and do my chores

MONDAY 31st

7° above zero. River Chuck a block with Ice and Hardly moving

I am much improved.

October has been a queer month for me. Two weeks ado I was pating myself on the back. I

felt So Strong, So anxious to Swing myself. today I am a physical wreck

probably will be all winter

**November 1904**

TUESDAY 1st

3° above zero. River Stopped at 1 PM and Raised (backed up from a gorgle below) 2 feet

while I feel Some Stronger I am far wide of being A Sounds man

while I am able to walk about and do go out after my wood and water. but I feel the evil effect

of it very plainly. My Chest, my left Side and my head are what hurts me the most

WEDNESDAY 2nd

8° above zero. Slight wind and clear. I am Still Sick.

TUESDAY 3rd

ZERO. natives crossing on the Ice. first overland visitor. I am some better. but ??? Sore

## **C The Smithsonian Institution expedition of A. G. Maddren**

Ellen Alers at the Smithsonian Archives sent letters from Collection 31, Box 45, Folder 5, discussing Maddren's expedition. One letter is copied below. This letter, as well as Maddren's published account (*Maddren*, 1907), indicate that Maddren left Kaltag on 1904-08-14 and reached "an Eskimo village called Isaac's on Norton Bay" on 1904-09-14.

Maddren was apparently late in submitting the report on his expedition to the Smithsonian. A letter from the Smithsonian Head Curator of Geology on 1905-03-14 indicated that he was not happy about the delay in Maddren's report: "Finally, an unexpected and somewhat irritating delay has been met with in the matter of illustrations. Mr. Maddren's negatives were largely ruined through the upsetting of his canoe, and it has been necessary to draw on other sources."

### **Letter from A. G. Maddren to George P. Merrill**

Fort Gibbon, Alaska, Mouth of Tanana River, August 5th, 1904

Dr. George P. Merrill.

Dear Sir:—

As I wrote you in June I ascended the Porcupine River. My trip extended to the Old Crow River and up that stream one hundred and seventy-five miles. The Old Crow River flows through a Plistocene basin of large extent which contains abundant remains of mammoth and contemporaneous mammals such as bison and horse.

Owing to a severe epidemic of diptheria among the Indians of the Porcupine valley I was unable to obtain natives to guide me to a locality near the head of the Old Crow River where there is a mammoth skeleton together with remains of bison and horse lying exposed. However, I gathered enough evidence in the form of scattered bones, carried down by the ice when the stream breaks in the spring, to show the existence of a large deposit of the remains, and I also satisfied myself that a large collection may be

brought out of there in boats. The thorough investigation of this locality in itself will occupy a whole summer season.

Being unable to secure Indians I was compelled to travel in a small canoe with the one man I brought with me and I could not bring out any great weight of bones with me. I am shipping you a box of bones gathered along the banks of the Old Crow River from here. These are all I was able to carry in the canoe.

There is another basin of Plistocene deposits extended along the Porcupine River at the mouth of the Coleen River and up the Coleen to near its head. The Sheenjik River, another tributary of the Porcupine, also contains mammoth remains as I found teeth on the gravel bars at its mouth that have been carried down by the ice.

I shall proceed from here to the "bone yard" thirty-five miles below, and thence to Nulato and Kaltag. From Kaltag I am going overland to examine the Unalaklik, Ungalik, Unglutalik, and Tubatulik rivers.

I expect to arrive at Nome early in September where I shall write you further.

Yours sincerely,  
(Signed) A. G. Maddren.

## **D Antonson (1976)**

The best discussion of history in St. Michael that I have come across is *Antonson (1976)*. Although a pdf of the original document is available online, the scan is of poor quality, making it difficult to read. I have copied it out below.

### **DESCRIPTION**

St. Michael Island, 36 miles long and 8 miles wide, is located along the southern coast of Norton Sound. The townsite, on the southeast portion of the island, adjacent to St. Michael Bay, is the closest deep sea port to the mouth of the Yukon River and offers some protection from the open sea. On the boggy, unforested island the Russian American Company established a redoubt, Mikhailivoski, in 1833. Redoubt St. Michael served as the major supply and fur depot for the vast Yukon-Kuskokwim region under both Russian American and Alaska Commercial trading companies. Also, the site was the western base for expeditions in to the interior of Alaska, and a stopping point for naval expeditions in northern waters.

Prior to establishing a military post at St. Michael in 1897, the United States Government operated a weather station, school, and post office at the site. Records from the weather station exist from 1874. The highest summer temperature recorded that year was 53.6°F in July, the winter temperature averages -2.3°F, and the island received 14.6 inches of snow and rain. By 1885 a government school operated. And, prior to 1898 only two post offices operated between Dawson and the Bering Straits, one at Circle City the other at St. Michael.

General Order 59, issued by the War Department on October 20, 1897, declared St. Michael Island and all land within 100 miles of the flagstaff a military reservation. The order specified that buildings on the reserved land at the time would not need to be removed, and new structures could be built after securing permission from the War Department. The fort was surveyed the next year, U.S. Survey 4100, and the buildings constructed.

U.S. Fort St. Michael was a complex of yellow and white frame buildings with the warehouses covered with metal siding. The main complex was northwest of the Russian redoubt site, Russian Orthodox Church properties, and Northern Commercial Company (formerly Alaska Commercial Company) buildings. The flagstaff, however, was placed just south of the Northern Commercial Company structures. The military used four separate locations around the island for its operations. The main complex included several warehouses, barracks, an armory and jail that were clustered from the waterfront north and cut the community of St. Michael approximately in half. Southwest of the main complex, along the waterfront, was the shipyard and quartermaster's depot. On the eastern tip of the island was the Washington-Alaska

Military Cable and Telegraph System station and post cemetery. Target ranges were northeast and northwest of the village. The military installation was connected by wide boardwalks. The Army also constructed a railroad track leading north from the waterfront and Army warehouses, along the west end of the main complex, that curved east behind the military buildings, and headed toward the wireless station.

In 1920 St. Michael's population was recorded as 371—down about 100 people from the 1910 count. After the post closed in 1925 the other government operations at the village were gradually discontinued. The transportation companies left. By 1930 the population had shrunk to 147.

Today, St. Michael is a predominantly native village of less than 200 people. Few buildings from the town's boom days remain. One waterfront warehouse, the armory, jail, and evidence of the railroad remain of Fort. St. Michael. The jail is used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for storage, the others stand empty, still federal property. The warehouse and armory, both boarded up, are rectangular structures covered with metal siding. They parallel the shore—the warehouse is along the waterfront, the armory is approximately 150 feet north. The jail is at the northwest corner and armory at the southwest corner of what was the main complex of Fort St. Michael. The white, frame, rectangular jail building still has the bars on the window frames and iron doors to the individual cells intact. The jail is half the size of the other two buildings.

When river traffic declined with the completion of the Alaska Railroad in 1923, a number of roads were abandoned at St. Michael. The rusting iron along the waterfront is testimony to the boom days of the town and the importance of the Yukon River traffic. Some new buildings stand among the remains. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has constructed a number of homes around the sites. A new Northern Commercial Company store was built in 1974 to replace the former structure that burned. The earlier store, reportedly, had been constructed before 1900. At the east end of the island Standard Oil tanks were recently built to serve the few boats that still operate in the northern waters.

In 1974 the residents petitioned for a townsite survey. The original U.S. Survey was conducted in 1898 to establish the military post boundaries. Inside Lot 1 of the 1898 survey, 4100, is the Bureau of Indian Affairs school. No improvements have been made on the land surveyed in 1937, U.S. Survey 2252, for the school reserve that is east of the present location. The village has used Lots 7 and 8 of Survey 4100 for a generator and storage tanks. Adjacent to the southeast side of the survey, a Catholic Church stands. Again, that group has not improved their surveyed tract that lies northeast of the Northern Commercial Company buildings. The land on the island, except for the air strip, has been filed for by the St. Michael Village Native Corporation.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

### **Significance**

The all-water route from Seattle or San Francisco along the Yukon River to the Klondike and Fortymile gold districts proved to be the easiest, although the longest, route to the interior. The island of St. Michael, 80 miles from the entrance to the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, was the closest deep water port. Thus, at the site, travellers and supplies were transferred from ocean vessels to sternwheelers. The village, initially a Russian supply center and fur depot, was in the process of becoming a transportation center when the 1897 rush to the gold fields began. The increased activity as a result of the gold rush hordes convinced the United States Government to establish a military post at St. Michael to maintain order. Because of its location, Fort St. Michael was selected in 1900 as headquarters for the United States Army Department of Alaska. However, the location later proved to be of little strategic military significance, moreso after the Alaska Railroad was completed that provided a year-round supply route to the interior. In 1925 the fort was abandoned. Since, the site has been a small native village. Little remains today of the military post—three buildings and evidence of the railroad. The residents have petitioned for township status, and in accord with the Native Claims Settlement Act, filed for land that exempts only the airstrip on the island.

## Historic Background

When news of the Klondike gold discoveries spread in 1897, large numbers of people headed north. The all-water route from Seattle or San Francisco, to the west coast of Alaska, then along the Yukon River, was the longest, but easiest route to the gold fields. As ocean-going vessels were blocked from direct entry to the Yukon River by shallow waters off the mouth, passengers and freight had to transfer to shallow draft sternwheelers. The closest deep sea port to the river mouth was at St. Michael, 80 miles north. Consequently, the site became the transfer point, and later, a river steamer construction center. Private enterprises rapidly organized and built hotels and warehouses at St. Michael. One hotel, Healy's, reportedly could accommodate 500 guests. Estimates of people who wintered at St. Michael awaiting transportation to or from the gold field have extended as high as 10,000. The bulk of supplies to the interior were transported by the all-water route between June and October. From St. Michael to Dawson the fare was \$125 per passenger, \$85 per ton of freight. Yukon river traffic, thus St. Michael, flourished until the Alaska Railroad that made available year-round service to the interior was completed in 1923.

River traffic along the Yukon, however, had begun before the gold rush. After the Alaska Commercial Company took over the Russian American Company operations in 1868, St. Michael continued to grow at a steady rate. When the Alaska Commercial Company purchased the tiny steamer *Yukon* in 1869, regular river service formally began. The first prospectors from San Francisco reportedly arrive at St. Michael aboard the *Dora* in 1880.

On August 4, 1897, Captain P. H. Pay and Lieutenant W. P. Richardson were sent to Alaska to investigate the conditions, especially related to the gold rush, and make recommendations. At St. Michael they found 430 prospectors who had little hope of getting to the Klondike that season, and heard that at least that many more people were on ships heading for the town. Meant as a temporary emergency measure to maintain order among the gold seekers, the U.S. Army sent Lieutenant Colonel George M. Randall, 8th Infantry, with 2 officers and 25 enlisted men to St. Michael during September, 1897. On the 20th of October the War Department officially established Fort St. Michael. The island and all land and islands within a hundred mile radius of the flagstaff at the site were declared a military reservation. When the War Department created the Department of Alaska, January 19, 1900, Fort St. Michael was selected to be the headquarters. Initially, two posts at the terminal points, St. Michael and Eagle, were thought to be sufficient to establish and retain order along the Yukon.

The significance of the post at St. Michael was reassessed several times. By Executive Orders on April 13, 1899; October 27, 1899; and July 8, 1906 the reserve was reduced. However, an Executive Order on May 16, 1907, restored all the land. One to three companies of infantry were regularly stationed at Fort St. Michael. Accounts by soldiers at St. Michael agree that they saw little reason for the Army to be there. Occasionally a party would be sent to explore or help a stranded group. Several reports tell of the quantities of unused outdated supplies that seemingly had only one purpose, to be inventoried annually for inspection. The only way to get through the long winters, from soldier's stories, was to drink. In the summer there was some activity with ships arriving and departing.

Fort St. Michael became the western terminus for the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System constructed by the United States Signal Corps beginning in 1900. The communication system linked military garrisons in Alaska with each other and Washington, D.C. The land cable stretched from Fort Egbert near the United States-Canada border to St. Michael, and an underwater cable crossed Norton Sound to connect Fort Davis near Nome with the system. Four construction crews were often(?) serving at St. Michael. In 1903 both underwater and overland cables that connected St. Michael were replaced by radio communication. WAMCATS western headquarters were transferred from St. Michael to Fort Gibbon in 1913, and the radio operator at St. Michael was removed.

After the communication office was discontinued the major reason to maintain Fort St. Michael was gone. Ten years later when the Alaska Railroad was completed, the town rapidly declined in importance. Seasonal river traffic along the Yukon could not compete with the year-round railroad service. Finally in 1935, the United States Army closed the fort. By Executive Order, issued January 22, 1925, the Secretary of the Interior was given control of the disposition of land at St. Michael, "the same having become useless for military purposes," with the exception of the post cemetery at the east end of the island. In 1929, the

fourteen bodies at the cemetery were moved to the National Cemetery in Sitka. Executive Order 7049(?) issued on May 21, 1935, placed the cemetery land under the control of the Secretary of the Interior. The Customs House at St. Michael closed in 1930. Reports during the 1940's and 1950's from people on the few ships that continued to stop there mention the same empty buildings. Today few of the structures remain. The village is predominantly native. Almost all evidence of the thriving community on the west coast of Alaska that required military supervision to maintain order during the gold rush days is gone.

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<sup>11</sup>[Carl Tape] I could not find this reference, but it might be this one: Greely, A.W., *Handbook of Alaska; its resources, products, and attractions in 1924*, 3d ed., 1925

Table 1: Summary of archival records from near the time of the 1904-08-27 earthquake in central Alaska. This lists all written records that may have mentioned the earthquake, had the writer felt it. There are 5 felt reports, 11 maybe-not-felt reports, and 11 not-felt reports. See Figure 1 for locations. See also *Tape et al.* (2017).

Type	Location	Longitude	Latitude	Source
FELT	Fairbanks	-147.71	64.84	Wickersham diary
FELT	Rampart	-149.98	65.40	Rampart newspaper
FELT	St Michael	-162.11	63.48	Nome newspaper
FELT	Coldfoot	-150.19	67.23	FE Howard weather
FELT	Sunrise	-149.58	60.91	A Lawson weather
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	St Michael	-162.11	63.48	George Pilcher diary
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Holy Cross	-159.82	62.19	Jesuit house diary
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Nulato	-158.29	64.69	Jesuit house diary
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Akulurak	-164.55	62.55	Jesuit house diary
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Council	-163.68	64.89	newspaper
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Wasilla	-149.44	61.58	Herning diary
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Bethel	-161.79	60.79	Moravian mission diary
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Featherly Creek	-156.12	57.77	USGS Stanton
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Becharof Creek	-155.96	57.79	USGS Martin diary
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Gazzam Creek	-149.70	65.33	USGS Hess
MAYBE-NOT-FELT	Telegraph Creek	-131.16	57.90	USGS Wright
NOT-FELT	Nome	-165.42	64.52	Nome newspaper
NOT-FELT	Dawson	-139.41	64.06	Dawson newspaper
NOT-FELT	Teller	-166.37	65.26	EO Campbell diary
NOT-FELT	Elliott Creek	-144.28	61.72	IM Preston diary
NOT-FELT	Valdez	-146.35	61.14	Valdez newspaper
NOT-FELT	Valdez	-146.35	61.14	Camicia TarrMartin1912
NOT-FELT	Skagway	-135.29	59.45	Skagway newspaper
NOT-FELT	Juneau	-134.41	58.32	Juneau newspaper
NOT-FELT	Douglas	-134.43	58.30	Douglas newspaper
NOT-FELT	Sitka	-135.32	57.05	Sitka station register
NOT-FELT	Atlin	-133.69	59.58	Atlin newspaper
NOT-FELT	Whitehorse	-135.06	60.72	Whitehorse newspaper

Table 2: Newspaper pages obtained for the time period 1904-8-27 (Saturday) to 1904-9-10 (Saturday). A ‘O’ indicates that a newspaper page is preserved (on microfilm). A ‘X’ indicates that the newspaper mentions the earthquake. A ‘-’ indicates that no newspaper page was printed or preserved. Other papers that may have been and print and may be preserved (somewhere) include: Nome Gold Digger, Mining Journal (Ketchikan), Daily Record-Miner (Juneau), Seward Gateway, and the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

newspaper	location	frequency	S 27	S 28	M 29	T 30	W 31	T 1	F 2	S 3	S 4	M 5	T 6	W 7	T 8	F 9	S 10
Yukon Valley News	Rampart	Wed	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nome News	Nome	Tues, Fri	-	-	-	X	-	-	O	-	-	-	O	-	-	O	-
Council City News	Council	Sat	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	O
Valdez News	Valdez	Sat	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	O
Daily Alaska Dispatch	Juneau	Mon-Sat	O	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-	-	O	O	O	O	O
Daily Alaskan	Skagway	Mon-Sat	O	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-	O	O	O	O	O	O
Douglas Island News	Douglas	Wed	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	-
Whitehorse (Daily Evening) Star	Whitehorse	Mon-Sat	O	-	O	O	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yukon Daily Morning World	Dawson	Tues-Sun	O	O	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-	O	O	O	O	O
Atlin Claim	Atlin, B.C.	sporadic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	O	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3: USGS field notebooks examined by Matt Haney and Carl Tape in this study. The list was provided by Jill Schneider and Beth Drewes, Alaska Science Center. See Section 2.12.

geologist	title	notes	FN#
Hess, Frank Lee	Alaska Note Book #3, Rampart District	8/21-9/26/1904, see FN-57	FN-0056
Moffit, Fred H.	Kenai Peninsula / Turnagain Arm	8/7-10/3/1904	FN-0090
Prindle, Louis Marcus	Camp 44 to Hoosier Creek	8/6-8/31/1904	FN-0073
Stanton, T.W.	Mesozoic and Tertiary of SW AK	5/7-9/5/1904	FN-0354
Washburne, Chester Wesley	C. Lisburne and Point Hope	7/8-9/1/1904	FN-0088
Wright, Charles W.	Ketchikan and Wrangell Districts	8/16-8/30, 1904	FN-0182
Wright, Charles W.	Wrangell District	8/24-9/3/1904	FN-0179
Wright, Frederic E.	Wrangell to Telegraph Creek, B.C.	8/26-9/6/1904	FN-0146
Wright, Frederic E.	Wrangell to Telegraph Creek, B.C.	8/26-9/6/1905	FN-0389
Martin, Lawrence	Cook Inlet and Alaska Peninsula	8/20-9/30/1904	FN-0194
Martin, Lawrence	Cook Inlet and Alaska Peninsula	5/31-10/3/1904	FN-0193
Paige, Sidney; & Purington	Methods and Costs–Book 5	June-October, 1904	FN-0082
Paige, Sidney; & Purington	Methods and Costs–Book 6	7/18-9/15/1904	FN-0083
Purington, Chester W.; & Paige	Discharge Measurements–Book 2	8/4-8/28/1904	FN-0080
Purington, Chester W.; & Paige	Methods & Costs of Placer Mining	8/16-10/6/1904	FN-0077
Spencer, Arthur Coe	Juneau Alaska–Office Notes	1904, see FN-159	FN-1471
Stone, R.W.	Port Graham to Kayak	6/4-10/2/1904	FN-0096
Martin, George Curtis	Alaska Peninsula–Book 2	Summer/1904	FN-0199
Martin, George Curtis	Controller Bay–Book 3	Summer/1904	FN-0211
Martin, George Curtis	Cook Inlet and Alaska Peninsula		FN-0196
Wright, Charles W.	Admiralty Island	Summer/1904	FN-0048

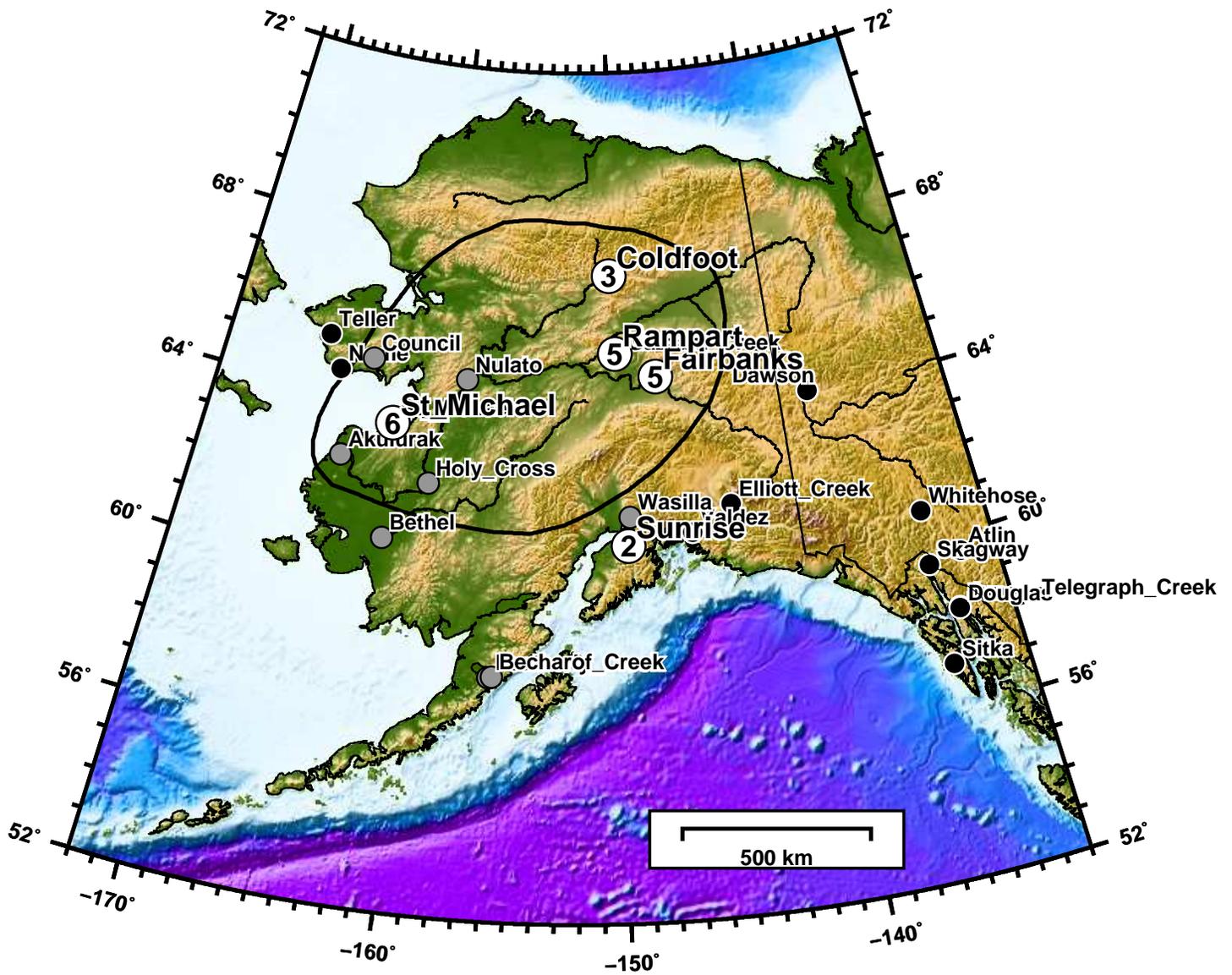


Figure 1: Map of Alaska and western Canada, showing the felt reports (white circles with numbers), maybe-not-felt reports (grey circles), and not-felt reports (black circles) for the 1904-08-27 Alaska earthquake. The estimated felt region (technically, the region of shaking intensity MMI 3) is outlined from *Tape et al.* (2017). The locations are listed in Table 1.