

# Guide to the William Palmer Kodak Views of the Pribylov Islands, Bering Sea, Alaska

WA Photos 1065



Sarah Lerner

April 2020

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## Collection Overview

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**CALL NUMBER:** WA Photos 1065

**CREATOR:** Palmer, William, 1856-1921, photographer

**TITLE:** William Palmer Kodak views of the Pribylov Islands, Bering Sea, Alaska

**DATES:** 1890 June-August

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.67 linear feet (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** 194 photographs taken by William Palmer--with a Kodak Brownie Number 2--for the United States National Museum depicting the Pribilof Islands (formerly the Northern Fur Seal Islands), a group of volcanic islands off the coast of mainland Alaska, in the Bering Sea, 1890 June-August. The collection's title card suggests that Palmer organized the photographs into 5 categories: scenery, seals, sealing, birds, and miscellaneous. Images are chiefly of seals and sea lions, but also include Palmer's trip from Washington, D. C., to San Francisco, California, via the Union Pacific Railroad; unidentified Alaska Natives fishing or ferrying materials; and seabirds, including murre, cormorants, kittiwake gulls, albatross, sandpipers, geese, and perouquet auk. Saint Paul Island, "Walrus Island", and Unalaska are among the identified locations.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

- b. box
- f. folder

## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Kuenzig Books on the Arthur Corbitt Hoskins Memorial Fund, 2013.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

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File titles have been transcribed from manuscript photograph captions; numbers assigned to photographs are listed in parentheses.

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## Biographical / Historical

William Palmer (1856-1921), taxidermist, ornithologist, and natural history collector for the Smithsonian Institution (originally organized as the United States National Museum), moved from Penge, England, to the United States at age 12. In 1872, William's father, Joseph Palmer, became a taxidermist at the National Museum, remaining until his death in 1913. In 1874, William also joined the taxidermic staff--he remained with the Smithsonian until his own death in 1921.

William Palmer's first specimen collection trip for the museum took place in 1883; subsequent trips included Funk Island in 1887, Alaska in 1890, and Mexico in 1904.

## Scope and Contents

194 photographs taken by William Palmer--with a Kodak Brownie Number 2--for the United States National Museum depicting the Pribilof Islands (formerly the Northern Fur Seal Islands), a group of volcanic islands off the coast of mainland Alaska, in the Bering Sea, 1890 June-August.

The collection's title card suggests that Palmer organized the photographs into 5 categories: scenery, seals, sealing, birds, and miscellaneous. Images are chiefly of seals and sea lions, but also include Palmer's trip from Washington, D. C., to San Francisco, California, via the Union Pacific Railroad; unidentified Alaska Natives fishing or ferrying materials; and seabirds, including murre, cormorants, kittiwake gulls, albatross, sandpipers, geese, and porpoise. Saint Paul Island, "Walrus Island", and Unalaska are among the identified locations.

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## Arrangement

Arranged by image number (indicated in parentheses). Image numbers are primarily written on the upper right corner above the image, with the caption written below the image.

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Geographic Names**

Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Bering Sea  
Pribilof Islands (Alaska) -- Pictorial works  
Saint Paul Island (Alaska) -- Pictorial works  
Unalaska (Alaska) -- Pictorial works  
Walrus Islands (Alaska) -- Pictorial works

### **Subjects**

Alaska Natives -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Indians of North America -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Railroad travel -- United States -- Pictorial works  
Scientific expeditions -- Alaska  
Sea birds -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Sealing -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Sea lions -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Seals (Animals) -- Alaska -- Pictorial works

### **Genres / Formats**

Gelatin silver prints  
Photographic prints  
Photographs

### **Corporate Bodies**

Smithsonian Institution  
Union Pacific Railroad Company  
United States National Museum

### **Acquired From**

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