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

PARTIAL

The Explorers Club
46 East 70th Street
New York, NY
United States 10021

telephone: +001 212.628.8383
www.explorers.org

Prepared by Morgen Stevens-Garmon, Project Archivist
12 December 2009
**Reference code**  
US NNEC EPB

**Level of description**  
Collection

**Extent and medium of the unit of description**  
6 vols., 4 boxes of lantern slides and approx. 2500 photos

**Name of creator**  
Edward Pierrepont Beckwith

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

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

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

Beckwith died in 1966 at the age of 89.

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

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

**Archival history**  
Unknown.

**Immediate source of acquisition or transfer**  
According to correspondence in Edward P. Beckwith's membership file, materials were donated by Mary P. Beckwith, his sister, in June 1967.

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

Series 1 (temporary designation): Lantern slides

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

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

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

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

bulk 1932. 169 lantern slides and approximately 20 negatives.

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

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

**Subseries 2: Beckwith, Edward P.**  
**Alps and Airships**  
circa 1904 -1911. 35 lantern slides.

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

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

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

**Container list**

**Series 1 (temporary): Lantern Slides**  
**Sub-series 1: Mt. McKinley Cosmic Ray Expedition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Photographer (if known), Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LaVoy, Merl. Muldrow Glacier and Mt. McKinley below first ice fall (7,000 ft).</td>
<td>August 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LaVoy, Merl. Muldrow Glacier at McGonogill Pass, Mt. McKinley.</td>
<td>August 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pearson and Piteff finding Koven's body at head of Muldrow Glacier (10,000 ft).</td>
<td>August 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LaVoy, Merl. Avalanche on Muldrow Glacier taken by LaVoy on Parker-Brown Expedition to McKinley.</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>LaVoy, Merl. Taken from Muldrow Glacier.</td>
<td>August 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>[Snow on mountain.]</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>LaVoy, Merl. Great Siray on Muldrow Glacier (9,000 ft).</td>
<td>August 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Muldrow Glacier below first ice fall.</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>[Snow covered mountains.]</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Karstens Ridge from Muldrow Glacier.</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>North and south peaks of Mt. McKinley and Muldrow Glacier first ice fall.</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>[Glacier.]</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13  Plane with Crosson and Beckwith from 11,000 ft camp on Muldrow Glacier. [view 1] 1932
14  Plane on first flight to Muldrow Glacier (6,500 ft). 1932
15  [Mountain tops.] Undated
16  Snow on mountainside.] Undated
17  [Glacier.] Undated
18  [Tent on mountain.] Undated
19  East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 1] Undated
20  East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 2] Undated
21  [Tent and skis in snow.] Undated
22  East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 3] Undated
23  Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) T. Koven in foreground. 1932
24  Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) - T. Koven. 1932
25  Crevasse on Muldrow Glacier at 9,000 ft, T. Koven. 1932
26  East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). [view 4] Undated
27  Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). Undated
28  [Glacier and mountain ridges.] Undated
29  North and south peaks Mt. McKinley, Great Serac on Muldrow Glacier. T. Koven in foreground (about 9,000 ft). 1932
30  [Man pulling sled up snow.] Undated
31  Crevasse on Muldrow Glacier at 9,000 ft, T. Koven. 1932
32  [Glacier and mountain ridges.] Undated
33  Muldrow Glacier between 1st and 2nd seracs, T. Koven. 1932
34  Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) T. Koven in foreground. 1932
35  Plane with Crosson and Beckwith from 11,000 ft camp on Muldrow Glacier. [view 2] 1932
36  Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) - T. Koven. May 1932
37  [Tent and skis in snow.] Undated
38  [Glacier and mountain ridges.] Undated
39  Muldrow Glacier and Karstens Ridge taken (probably) from Carpe's 11,000 ft camp. 1932
40  [Airplane landed on glacier.] Undated
41  East fork Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).
    [view 5]  Undated
42  [Plane in the air over mountains.]  Undated
43  [Mountain top and sky.]  Undated
44  [Man on glacier, mountains in the background.]  Undated
45  [Snow covered mountain ridges.]  Undated
46  [Glacier and mountain ridges.]  Undated
47  Looking down Muldrow Glacier from 8,000 ft. T. Koven.  1932
48  Mt. Brooks and east fork Muldrow Glacier from Kartsens Ridge.
    Undated
49  Plane on Muldrow Glacier on first flight.  1932
50  Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft) with T. Koven.  May 1932
51  Mt. McKinley and Muldrow Glacier -T. Koven.  1932
52  Muldrow Glaicer between 1st and 2nd seracs, T. Koven.  1932
53  Carpe, Allen [Man walking along snow covered ridge.]  Undated
54  T. Koven on Muldrow Glacier at 9,500 ft.  May 1932
55  Carpe, Allen Just below 1st ice fall on Muldrow Glacier.  May 1932
56  Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).  1932
57  Carpe, Allen [Snow covered mountains.]  Undated
58  Carpe, Allen [Glacier.]  Undated
59  Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).  May 1932
60  Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) -T. Koven.  1932
61  Carpe, Allen [Man with sled.]  Undated
62  Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft).  May 1932
63  North and south peaks of Mt. McKinley, Muldrow Glacier, Karstens Ridge.
    Undated
64  Carpe, Allen Koven on Karstens Ridge, about 13,000 ft.  1932
65  [Snow covered mountain ridges.]  Undated
66  [Airplane landed on glacier.]  Undated
67  Carpe, Allen [Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft) Mt.
    McKinley, Alaska.]  May 1932
68  Plane with Crosson and Beckwith from 11,000 ft camp on Muldrow
    Glacier. [view 2]  1932
69  Mt. Brooks (13,500 ft) from Kartsens Ridge.  Undated
70  Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft).  Undated

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This page contains descriptions and locations of various photographs, along with their dates and captions. The images appear to be related to glaciers, mountains, and aerial views of Alaska. The captions include views from different elevations and locations such as East fork Muldrow Glacier, Mt. Brooks, Mt. McKinley, and Karstens Ridge.
71 Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft), Mt. McKinley, T. Koven. 1932
72 Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft). May 1932
73 [Snow covered mountain ridges.] Undated
74 [Glacier.] Undated
75 Crevasse on Muldrow Glacier at 9,000 ft, T. Koven. 1932
76 Carpe, Allen Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft) -T. Koven. 1932
77 [Glacier and mountain ridges.] Undated
78 [Map] "Survey of Cosmic Radiation location of stations where measurements of intensity are being made." Undated
79 Beckwith, Edward P. [Hand drawn map] Northern Slopes of Mt. McKinley. Undated
80 [Map] "Survey of Cosmic Radiation location of stations where measurements of intensity are being made." Undated.
81 [Topographical map of area around Mt. McKinley.] Undated
82 [Topographical map of area around Mt. McKinley.] Undated
83 [Topographical map of area around Mt. McKinley.] Undated
84 [Plane landed on glacier.] [color] Undated
85 Beckwith, Edward P. [View of plane in air taken from another plane.] [color] Undated
86 Beckwith, Edward P. [Mountains and glacier.] [color] Undated
87 Beckwith, Edward P. [Seated man with spouting water hose.] [color]
88 Beckwith, Edward P. [Seated man with spouting water hose.] [color] Undated
89 [Plane landing. Picture taken from another plane.] [color] Undated
90 [Landscape -green tundra and water holes.] [color] Undated
91 [Landscape with lake and pine trees.] [color] Undated
92 Beckwith, Edward P. Plane fast in snow on Muldrow Glacier at 6,000 ft. T. Koven. [color] 1932
93 Beckwith, Edward P. [Two planes landed on glacier.] [color] Undated
94 [Ponds on Triangle Mt. near Cordova, Alaska.] [color] Undated
95 [Man on skis on glacier.] [color] Undated
96 Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial picture of two men on a glacier.] [color] Undated
97 Beckwith, Edward P. Bonanza Mine (6,000 ft) Kennicott Copper Co., Kennicott, Alaska. [color] Undated
98 Beckwith, Edward P. Muldrow Glacier and North Peak Mt. McKinley, Alaska, from 6,000 ft camp at McGonogill Pass. [color] Undated
99  Beckwith, Edward P. [Interior of room, possibly a kitchen.] [color]  Undated
100 Beckwith, Edward P. [Plane landed on grass.] [color]  Undated
101 Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of peak with partial plane wing.] [color]  Undated
102 [Grassy hillside with lake and pine trees.] [color]  Undated
103 Beckwith, Edward P. [Log cabins and a dirt road.] [color]  Undated
104 Beckwith, Edward P. Richardson Highway near McCarthy, Alaska. [color]  Undated
105 Beckwith, Edward P. Mountains near Cordova, Alaska. [color]  Undated
106 Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of mountains and glacier.] [color]  Undated
107 Beckwith, Edward P. [Colored sky, mountains, and tundra.] [color]  Undated
108 [Snow, mountains, clouds.] [color]  Undated
109 [Sketch diagram of crevasses and footprints.]  Undated
111 Beckwith, Edward P. [Men standing next to plane on glacier.] [color]  Undated
112 Beckwith, Edward P. [Log cabin with green hillside.] [color]  Undated
113 Beckwith, Edward P. [Entrance to mine, railroad tracks.] [color]  Undated
114 Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of ridges including partial plane wing.] [color]  Undated
115 Beckwith, Edward P. [Two tents on glacier.] [color]  Undated
116 Beckwith, Edward P. [Mountains and snow.] [color]  Undated
118 Beckwith, Edward P. [Mountains and snow.] [color]  Undated
119 Beckwith, Edward P. [View of plane in air taken from another plane.] [color]  Undated
120 Beckwith, Edward P. [Plane landed on glacier, man standing by propeller.] [color]  Undated
121 Beckwith, Edward P. [Jagged peaks and rock formations with snow.] [color]  Undated
122 Beckwith, Edward P. [Man skiing in the distance.] [color]  Undated
123 Beckwith, Edward P. [Aerial view of peaks and partial plane.] [color]  Undated
124 [Glaciers and peaks.] [color]  Undated
125 Philip Allen making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.  July 1932
126 Beckwith, Edward P. [Dr. Ralph Bennett making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.] [color]  July 1932
Beckwith, Edward P. [Dr. Ralph Bennett making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska.] [color] July 1932

Philip Allen of Bennett Expedition, Kennicott, Alaska. July 1932

Dr. Dunham making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott Copper Co. July 1932

Dr. Irwin Bramhall making cosmic ray observations Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska. July 1932

Dr. Irwin Bramhall of Bennett's Cosmic Ray Expedition, Kennicott, Alaska. July 1932

Beckwith, Edward P. Theodore Koven on "S.S. Alaska". April 1932


Beckwith, Edward P. Allen Carpe on "S.S. Alaska". [color] 1932

Alaska portrait negatives. Most of the negatives feature images not included in the developed lantern slides. 1932

Negatives from Alaska Rapids Roadhouse on Richardson Highway. Approximately 8 negatives. Most of the negatives feature images not included in the developed lantern slides. 1932

Beckwith, Edward P. Allen Carpe on "S.S. Alaska". April 1932

One bucket, Kennicott Copper Mine, Alaska. Undated

Rock formation at Bonanza mine at Kennicott, Alaska. July 1932

Beckwith, Edward P. Bonanza Mine (6,000 ft) Kennicott Copper Co., Kennicott, Alaska. Undated


[Building with adjacent garden areas.] Undated

[Exterior of log cabin showing window and plant life.] Undated

[Two planes landed on glacier snow.] Undated

LaVoy, Merl. Merl LaVoy on trip to bring back Koven's body from Mt. McKinley Alaska. August 1932

Beckwith, Edward P. Plane fast in snow on Muldrow Glacier at 6,000 ft. T. Koven. 1932

Beckwith, Edward P. Richardson Highway near McCarthy, Alaska. Undated

River from trislle[?] on Copper River and Northwestern Ry. Bennett Expedition, Alaska. July 1932

[Man skiing in the distance.] Undated

Coast and islands from Triangle Mt., Alaska (near Cordova). Undated
151 Andrew Taylor on trip to bring back Koven's body from Mt. McKinley Alaska. August 1932

152 Small pond on Triangle Mt. near Cordova, Alaska. Undated

153 Cosmic ray instrument designed by Dr. Bennett and Prof. Compton. Undated

154 Dr. Ralph D. Bennett and cosmic ray instrument, Bonanza Mine, Kennicott, Alaska. July 1932

155 North and south peaks Mt. McKinley, Great Serac on Muldrow Glacier. T. Koven in foreground (about 9,000 ft). 1932

156 Site of Carpe's camp at 11,000 ft on Muldrow Glacier. Top of tent and sledge pole above snow as found by LaVoy. August 1932

157 Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft), Mt. McKinley, Alaska. (Taken by automatic release.) 1932

158 [Mountains and snow.] Undated.

159 Ponds on Triangle Mt. near Cordova, Alaska. Undated

160 Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven on Karstens Ridge (about 13,000 ft), Mt. McKinley, Alaska. (Taken by automatic release.) 1932

161 Carpe, Allen [Mountains and snow.] Undated

162 Carpe, Allen Carpe and Koven's camp at [illegible] on Muldrow Glacier (7,000 ft) Mt. McKinley. April 1932

163 Carpe, Allen Koven on Karstens Ridge, about 13,000 ft. 1932

164 Carpe, Allen Muldrow Glacier (6,000 ft) and Mt. McKinley. T. Koven. 1932

165 Carpe, Allen T. Koven just below 1st ice fall on Muldrow Glacier (7,000 ft) Mt. McKinley, Alaska. May 1932

166 Carpe, Allen [T. Koven just below 1st ice fall on Muldrow Glacier (7,000 ft) Mt. McKinley, Alaska.] May 1932

167 Carpe, Allen Muldrow Glacier from Karstens Ridge (13,000 ft) Mt. McKinley, Alaska. May 1932

168 Carpe, Allen [Snow covered mountainside and ridges.] Undated

169 Carpe, Allen [Man in the distance standing with pack sled on glacier.] Undated

170 Carpe, Allen [Snow covered landscape.] Undated

**Temporary Series 1: Lantern Slides**

**Sub-series 2: Alps and Airships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Photographer (if known), Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>[Mountaintop.]</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>[Unidentified man standing on rocky terrain with rope tied around his waist.]</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>[Mountaintop with snow in foreground.]</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
[Mountaintop in the distance, pine branches evident on either side of frame.]  
[Mountain range in the distance, pine trees evident along the bottom and one side of frame.]  
[Mountain range, pine trees evident along the bottom of frame.]  
[Pine trees with mountaintop faintly visible in background.]  
[Unidentified older man standing in front of a plane landed on water.]  
[Pine trees with mountain range in the background.]  
[Buildings with mountain range in the background.]  
[Three unidentified men with pick axes and rope seated on rocky terrain.]  
[Rigid airship in flight over a hangar.]  
[Aerial view of valley and town.]  
[Aerial view of buildings clustered directly below camera.]  
[Aerial view of farmland.]  
[Aerial view of buildings and landscape with many paths or roads.]  
[Aerial view of farmland with two rows of buildings.]  
[Aerial view of buildings closely built around a waterway.]  
[Aerial view of tennis courts and formal gardens.]  
[Aerial view of farmland and forest border.]  
[Aerial view of tree tops directly below camera.]  
[Back view of a grounded rigid airship.]  
[People standing in front of open airship hangar.]  
[Aerial view of the rigid airship's shadow over a forest.]  
[Rigid airship inside open hangar.]  
[Women with parasols watch rigid airship in flight.]  
[View out side of flying rigid airship at moving propeller.]  
[Aerial view out of rigid airship cabin at people on the ground.]  
[Side view of Zeppelin "Schwaben" in flight.]  
[Aerial view of open airship hangar. "Baden-Baden" is written on the roof.]  
[Aerial view of forest with clearing for large building, shadow of rigid airship.]  
[Women with parasols watch Zeppelin "Schwaben" in flight.]  
[Two unidentified men look out windows in rigid airship cabin.]
[View of steering apparatus for rigid airship.] Undated

[People gathered around the front tip of the grounded Zeppelin "Schwaben".] circa 1911