



PIONEER ROAD BUILDER—Col. W.P. Richardson, president of the first Board of Alaska Road Commissioners, is shown left, posing for a photograph in 1925. The photograph was released by Mrs. Phyllis Nottingham, Alaska Historical Library librarian, who said the library welcomes all types of Alaskana, including published, manu-

script and archival material. The Library recently received 20,000 photographs and 15,000 negatives showing the activities of the Alaska Road Commission throughout Alaska from the U.S. Bureau of Public Raods.

—ALASKA ROAD COMMISSION Photo

Big Road Commission Archives

The Alaska Historical Library has received an extensive collection of Alaska Road Commission photographs and publications, 1905-1956, from the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads.

There are an estimated 20,000 photographs and 15,000 negatives showing the activities of the Alaska Road Commission throughout Alaska, according to the librarian, Phyllis Nottingham. These photographs are arranged in albums, numbered and captioned for indentification.

A subject index prepared by Bill Cameron of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads covers such subjects as cities and towns, bridges, rivers and lakes, road-houses, and airports which will make the photograph collection of real value to Alaska historians and researchers.

In 1905 the U.S. Congress created the Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska under the Department of War with former Army officers as road commissioners. Under their direction wagon roads, bridges and trails were constructed and maintained.

The annual reports describe such activities as surveying for a wagon road from Valdez to Fort Egbert in 1905, completion of plans for a bridge over Chena Slough, Fairbanks in 1916, etc.

Funds for roads were limited to 70% of the "Alaska Fund," monies derived from liquor, occupation or trade licenses outside incorporated towns.

By 1932, when the Alaska Road Commission was transferred to the Department of the Interior, the road systems con-

sisted of some 2200 miles of roads.

While the work of the Commission did much toward developing a transportation network the demand for more roads is evidenced throughout the Commission's publications.

The Golden Anniversary of the Alaska Road Commission was held May 14, 1955 in Juneau. The banquet program stated:

"Tonight let us eat, drink and be merry, for Monday there are roads to be built."