

**CARRIE M. MCLAIN MEMORIAL MUSEUM**

---

223 Front Street  
Box 53  
Nome, Alaska 99762

**“McDaniel Family Collection” Donated  
To Nome’s Museum**

*A Gold Mine of Information Returns Home to Nome*

**For Immediate Release**

Friday, November 16, 2001

**Contact: Laura Samuelson**

**Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum  
907-443-6630**

Nome, Alaska — The City of Nome’s Museum Commission is pleased to announce the receipt of a major donation for the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum. The family of Wilfred A. McDaniel has generously donated all the memorabilia collected by Wilfred and his brother, Edmund McDaniel during their adventures in Nome, Alaska from 1899 to 1908. The **“McDaniel Family Collection”** includes over 225 Nome Gold Rush and Eskimo artifacts, over 350 original photographs and negatives, 40 original letters and assorted journals, diaries, albums and postcards as well as the entire contents of the traveling exhibit “Alaska Gold: Life on the New Frontier”. The donation is valued at over \$200,000.

The City of Nome Museum Commission credits the donation to the foresight of Jim West Sr. and Jim West Jr., proprietors of the Board of Trade Saloon. According to Director Laura Samuelson, “Back in 1998 as we were planning for the Nome Centennial

Celebration, we discovered that the McDaniel Family's "Alaska Gold " exhibit could be had for a \$5,000 fee. Without hesitation, Jim West Sr. and Jim West Jr. gave the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum \$5,000 to pay for the rental of the exhibit. Their wise investment three years ago reaped great benefits for the citizens of Nome and the Museum. Nome is the recipient of this incredible donation because of the generosity of Jim West Sr. and Jr. Thanks to the West's, all of Wilfred McDaniel's precious memories are back in Nome where they were created!"

The "**McDaniel Family Collection**" was protected and preserved by Wilfred and later by his two children and their spouses for the past 93 years. In early August, Museum Director Laura Samuelson traveled to San Jose, California to accept the gift from Robert and Irene McDaniel Johnson and Irene's brother, Wilfred and Lois McDaniel Jr. This is the largest donation of its size received by the Museum and the City of Nome since the Clara Mielke gift in 1979.

The Museum is opening a limited exhibit today. The "**McDaniel Family Collection**" will be organized and cataloged over the winter. The photographs are being preserved in Seattle. In the summer of 2002, a larger exhibit will be unveiled with Wilfred's daughter, Irene and her husband in attendance. The exhibit portion of the donation has been traveling all over Alaska and California since it left Nome in 1999. It will arrive in Nome in the fall of 2002.

## Background

Wilfred and Edmund McDaniel found it profitable to stay away from the frenzy of the Nome Gold Rush. Their claims were staked 10 – 15 miles west of Nome in the vicinity of the Penny and Sinuk Rivers. They became friends with the Eskimo people who lived in that area. Wilfred McDaniel's photos and diaries exquisitely document their lifestyles as well as his own gold mining adventures. The “**McDaniel Family Collection**” holds a wealth of information about Nome's early gold rush history as well as the life of the Eskimo people at the time.

More specifically, the collection includes the following: A group of artifacts including but not limited to Bering Strait Eskimo tools, cooking utensils, hunting & fishing implements, ivory bow drill, ivory pieces, basket, toys, walrus jaw cup, ivory tusks, animal parts and fossils; gold mining artifacts including ruby sand, gold scale, gold wedding rings, shotgun; Eastman Kodak enlarger. Approximately 350 original negatives, contact proofs, 16 glass negatives, assorted original prints, 40 original letters and assorted journals, diaries, albums and postcards as well as the entire contents of “Alaska Gold: Life on the New Frontier, 1898 – 1908” exhibit including framed vintage photographs, sketches and enlarged copies from the photographic negatives.

For more information please contact Laura Samuelson, Director of the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum at 907-443-6630.