

**MsSC 144****Richard Graham****Background:**

In May, 1900, Richard Graham left his wife and daughter in Santa Clara, CA, and boarded the *S.S. Ohio*, bound for the gold rush at Nome, AK. He arrived in Seattle on 18 May and remained there six days before again boarding the *Ohio* to continue his trip north. At Nome he joined several men in acquiring and working a claim on Buster Creek, about fifteen miles up the Nome River. After six weeks of hard work and little success, Graham and his friends abandoned their dreams of gold and wealth and returned to California.

**Scope and Contents:**

The collection consists of nine “newsy” letters to his wife and child during his Alaskan adventure. He writes his observations of shipboard life and food, and fellow passengers. After arriving on the Buster Creek claim, he writes two detailed letters describing camp life and difficulty of the work and, finally, their decision to return home.

**Inclusive dates:** 18 May 1900-10 August 1900

**Restrictions:** None

**Volume:** 9 letters

**Accession number:** 2000.108.1

Letters:

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| 18 May | Approaching Seattle. Trip was smooth, but “most of the people began to shake their heads and so the Sea Gulls had a good feed.” Comfortable ship, English crew. |
| 21 May | No mail from wife. Taking on 350 more passengers. Many grumbling about food; he’s satisfied and has gained seven pounds.  |
| 22 May | Camped on Lake Washington. No mail from wife. Boat heavily loaded.  |
| 23 May | No Mail from wife. Money matters. Thought he would hear from wife, “but it is the same old game.”   |
| 23 May | (To daughter) Not there for her birthday, so sends special wishes. Expects  |

to be gone four months. Promises to buy a gold watch and a pony and cart when he comes home.

- 24 May (Brief note) No mail from wife. Is “very much disappointed.”
- 4 July At Nome City. Working the claim. Warm weather. A lot of people have gone back. Prices.
- 16 July Hard at work. Should do well if “it turns out.” Five are sharing the claim. “A lot of people have got discouraged and gone home, but we are going to give it a good try and it will prove at the end.” George is making bread.
- 10 August “The claim has proved a failure.” They will, “...Take the first cheap steamer home. The newspaper reports are “all false.” “Nome is no good for the poor man.” “I am glad you did not come, it is no place for a woman or child.” He, “Hates to come home broke, but never mind, have tried hard.”

Envelope, 23 May 1900, with ETC emblem. Mailed in Seattle.