

THE SPIRIT OF OLD MAIN  
A HISTORY OF THE MAIN SCHOOL (1932-1995)  
by  
Chris Allan



## Acknowledgments

Without the help of numerous people in the Fairbanks community the human history of Main School would have been lost to me. Local historians, teachers, and school district employees all helped to inject life into what would otherwise have been simply the history of a building. I would like to thank: Phyllis Movius for her advice and help in locating photos and hard-to-find information at the University of Alaska archives, Rufus Bunch for an informative tour and his expert opinion on the possible future of the building, Lois Meier for her enthusiastic support of the project and for sharing her story, Terence Cole for his advice and support throughout, Jim Moody for his excellent suggestions and insights into Fairbanks history, Patrick Cole for his consistent support and for the opportunity to pursue this publishing project, Superintendent Rick Cross for sharing his memories of Main School during its time as headquarters for the school district, the wise and hard-working tutors at the Writing Center of the University of Alaska Fairbanks for their friendly advice and encouragement, Orea Haydon for permission to borrow her memories of class time in the early days, Robin Lewis and the contributors to *Our Schools* for a leg-up school district history, Judy Larreau and Toni Welch at the Correspondence School for sharing their memories, Mary Jo Stanley at Howard Luke Alternative High School for her enthusiasm and background information on F.A.H.S., and Jerry Hassell and the old-timers at June's Cafe. This project would not have been possible without their help and the help of many more generous Fairbanksans.

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## Fairbanks' First Schools

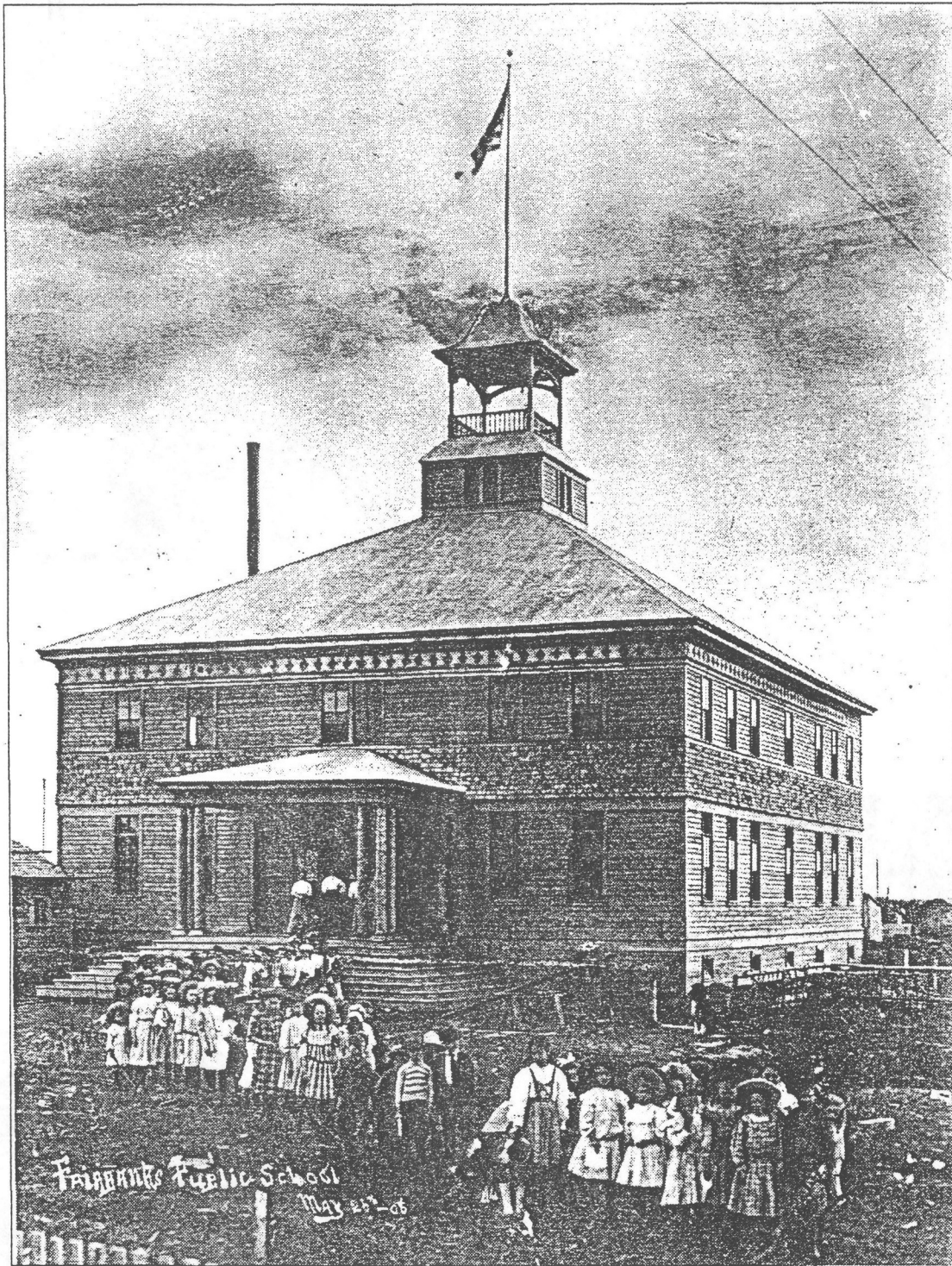
Within a year of Felix Pedro's 1902 gold strike, local residents were already planning for the incorporation of the nascent community of Fairbanks. Many saw the move as the only way to insure that the area's youngsters would have a permanent schoolhouse. While the community awaited approval, a man named William Wooldridge began private classes for some thirteen eager pupils, including a fifty-year-old French woman who was learning English. Following the incorporation of Fairbanks in November 1903, the citizens elected a city council and a three-member school board to serve the newly-formed city. An early edition of *The Pathfinder* magazine records, "The town of Fairbanks was barely a year old when the first public schoolhouse was built, in 1904, to accommodate the 50 pupils who were already on the ground and with true pioneer spirit were helping their parents to develop the interior of Alaska." The first school building was a one-story building located between Lacey and Noble Streets. Due to the rigorous conditions of life in the gold rush community, only ten children finished seventy-four days of school and were present for the closing ceremony. The following year, a second story was added to the two-room school, and two additional teachers were hired. By the end of that year, the overflow of eager students forced some classes to be taught at the Masonic Temple. In 1906 roughly 150 students were attending classes on a first-come-first-serve basis, and a class of eighth graders received diplomas printed on moose hide at Fairbanks Public School's first graduation ceremony. Although the rush for gold was slowing in 1907, the number of families in the area had increased, and after some debate over the possibility that Fairbanks might become a ghost town, the city council approved funds for a new, two-story schoolhouse.

The construction went as planned, and in late December, while carpenters were still bolting desks to the floor, Fairbanks' school children began their first day of classes in the new school. The handsome building, built at a cost of \$19,000, was the source of pride for the people of Fairbanks who were overjoyed to have a well-constructed building to replace what some had described as a "little old ramshackle

hovel." The building featured a belfry with a flag pole and observatory from which, as an early *Daily Times* article explained, "[students could enjoy] the magnificent view of the town, the surrounding country and the mountain ranges to the south." The school had four rooms of equal proportions on the first floor and a heated basement suitable for students to play in on the coldest days. Five large windows and twelve electric lights provided light in the classes, and steam heat could be regulated from the individual rooms. At first the students were sorely in need of text books and the administration of office equipment, but fund raisers supplied the money to begin a library and purchase texts. The original "Old Main" served Fairbanks' children well for twenty-five years until it was destroyed by fire on December 4, 1932.



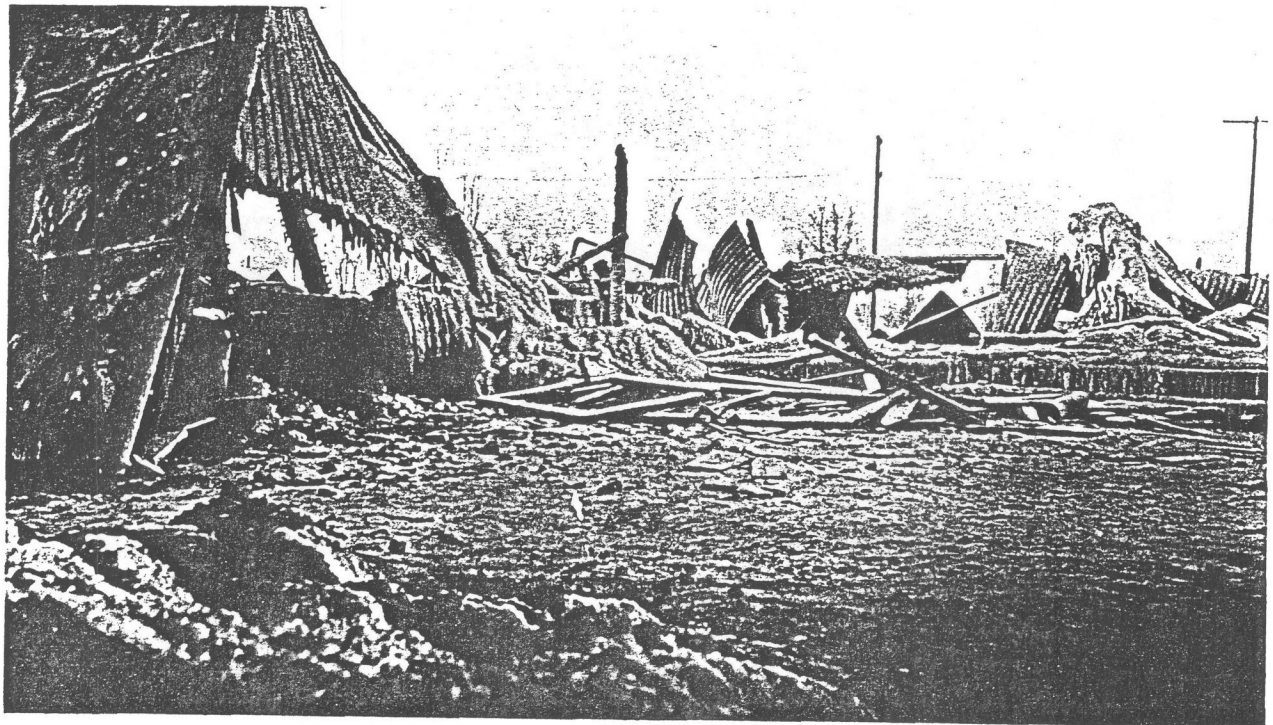
Fairbanks' first public school was a two-story, wooden building completed in November 1907. Two elementary grades occupied each of four large rooms. The heated basement was used for a play area during cold weather.  
(Romig Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, UAF)



Fairbanks' first public school was a two-story, wooden building completed in November 1907. Two elementary grades occupied each of four large rooms. The heated basement was used for a play area during cold weather. (Charles Bunnell Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, UAF)



The young Carl Parker noticed smoke pouring from the building in the early morning of December 4, 1932. He notified his father, Deputy Marshal Fred Parker, who sounded the alarm. Within minutes the school building was engulfed in flames. (Norma Hoyt Collection)



Twisted, corrugated iron and glowing embers were all that remained. Local firemen managed to save several nearby houses though the heat blistered paint and melted snow on roof-tops for more than a block. (Norma Hoyt Collection)



## The Spirit of Old Main:

### A History of the Main School (1932-1995)

In the early morning of December 4, 1932, many Fairbanksans awoke to the sight of firelight dancing on the curtains and walls of their bedrooms. They rushed into the streets, many poorly-clothed for the minus-forty degree weather, and watched in horror as the public school building at Cushman and Eighth Avenue was consumed in flames. The unexplained fire had smoldered for hours in the basement near the boiler room until firefighters punched a hole through a window in an attempt to spray fire retardant into the building. The sudden addition of oxygen to the volatile mixture of gases in the wooden structure caused an explosion that blew storm windows from their hinges and knocked down firefighters standing as much as forty feet away. Dry timbers and sawdust insulation fueled the fire, and soon flames engulfed the classrooms and connected gymnasium. Within moments the two-story schoolhouse, Fairbanks' only school for twenty-five years, was reduced to a smoking heap of cinders and twisted iron roofing.

#### **Tumultuous Beginnings**

The fire left all 340 of Fairbanks' school age children without a place to attend classes or supplies with which to begin anew. It destroyed the school's textbooks, \$1500 worth of band instruments, two pianos, a new mimeograph machine, and the school's only Victrola record player. The only notable item that survived the fire was the safe of Superintendent Harry Moore that some boys found while poking through the wreckage. The next day, in a surprisingly upbeat caption under a photo of the school, the *Daily News-Miner* announced, "Readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic will be taught no more in the building to which Fairbanks school children have trooped for the past quarter century." That same day, Mayor J. F. Bryant called a special session of the city council to meet with the school board to discuss the possibility of temporarily moving the students to the Alaska College or of renting rooms in club halls owned by local fraternal organizations.

In a meeting on December 13, the school board quickly agreed on the need to order new textbooks and desks, but a debate over where to place the children soon exploded into a feud between the school board, headed by President Louis Joy, and Superintendent Moore. The conflict was fueled when, on the following Wednesday, the school board announced that the high school students would commute by chartered gasoline rail car to classes at the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mining (now the University of Alaska Fairbanks). Superintendent Moore first found out about this decision from a *Daily News-Miner* article and was incensed. In a speech to the Fairbanks Parent-Teacher Association the next day, he declared, "In view of the responsibility which has been placed on my shoulders, I should have something to say about it." Before School Board President Louis Joy could respond at a board meeting on the following Tuesday, Moore used a large newspaper advertisement to call a meeting of "all patrons of the school, all taxpayers, and all others who are interested in the welfare of the Fairbanks Public School." In an hour-long speech, Moore made his case for keeping all students in the downtown area, citing the high cost of transportation to the College and the need to maintain organization and morale by keeping the students closer together. Moore went on to question the judgment of the school board for excluding him from the decision-making process. He also used the opportunity to deny a number of rumors that had been circulating about his alleged incompetence as a superintendent. At the next board meeting, School Board Clerk Forbes Baker urged the board to ask for Moore's resignation and charged Moore with being "disloyal and disobedient" and with having exceeded his authority as superintendent by calling the public meeting without first consulting the school board. The motion was not seconded, and the issue was dropped until mid-January of the following year when the school board hired V. H. DeBolt as the new superintendent.

Despite this battle of personalities, the school board later adopted Moore's original proposal to rent club halls in the downtown area. On December 19, after

# EMPRESS

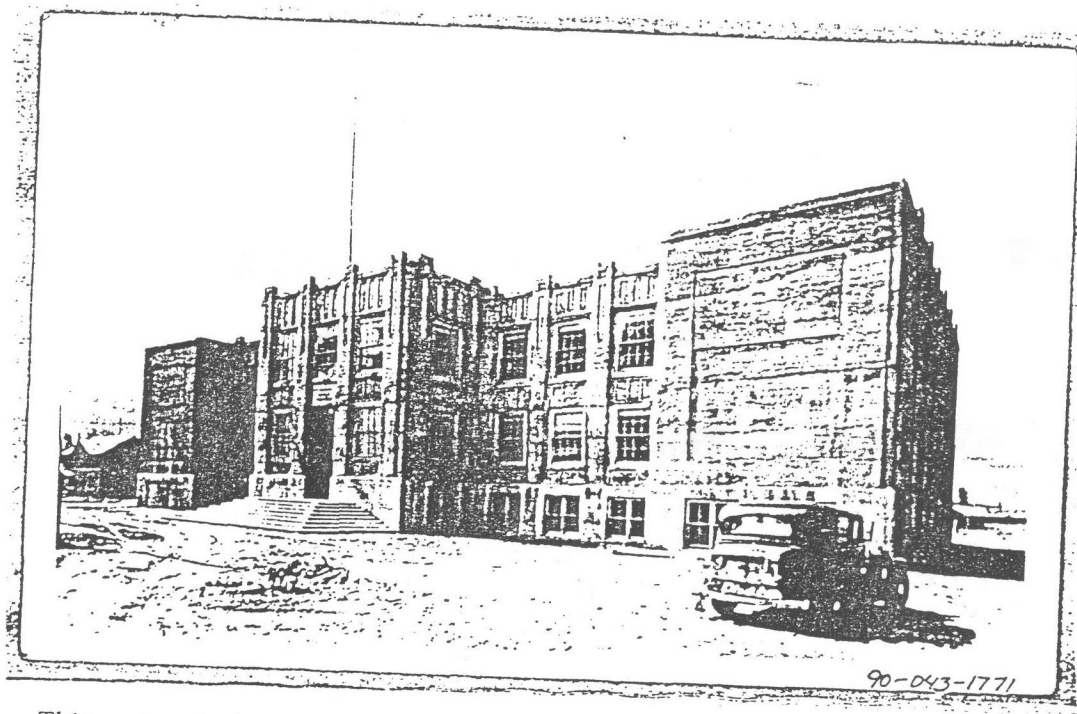
TONIGHT AT EIGHT O'CLOCK AT THE  
EMPRESS THEATRE, HARRY E. MOORE,  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, WILL  
SPEAK CONCERNING THE PRESENT  
SCHOOL SITUATION.

## MR. MOORE

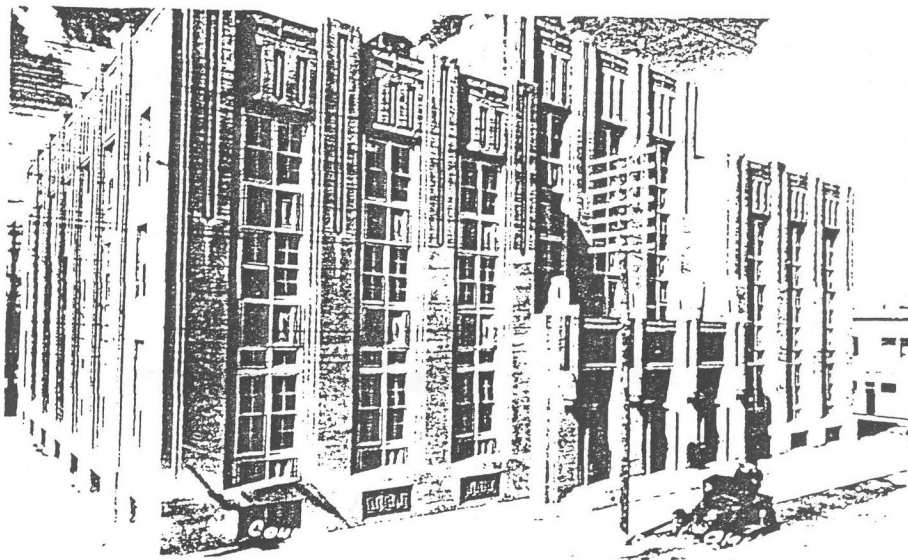
EXTENDS AN INVITATION TO THE MAY-  
OR AND CITY COUNCIL, THE FAIRBANKS  
SCHOOL BOARD, ALL PATRONS OF THE  
SCHOOL, ALL TAX PAYERS AND ALL  
OTHERS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE  
WELFARE OF THE FAIRBANKS PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS TO HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO  
SAY

NOTE: PUPILS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL  
THIS YEAR ARE NOT INVITED

Superintendent Moore's surprise move. This newspaper ad fanned the flames of enmity between Moore and the school board during the debate over where to locate the students left without a school after the fire. Moore later called the charge of insubordination for calling the meeting "a compliment that I shall always treasure." (Daily News-Miner)



This postcard photo shows the Main School before landscaping or parking lots were completed. In its time, the school was the only modern, concrete school in the Territory of Alaska. (Romig Collection)



The Federal Building soon after its construction in 1933-34. The design for the combination courthouse and post office heavily influenced City Engineer Boyer's plans for Main School. The imposing Art Deco facades of both buildings struck quite a contrast in a town of primarily log and clapboard structures. (Reuel Griffon Collection, UAF Archives)

only two weeks of canceled classes, temporary classrooms were established in the Moose Hall (first, second, and third grades), the American Legion Hall (fourth, fifth, and sixth), and the Eagles Hall (high school and junior high). When needed, additional classes were held at the Masonic Temple or the Presbyterian Church across Cushman Street from the devastated school. Several days before classes were to begin, the *Daily News-Miner* ran an article asking students to "bring all text books and library books owned by the school with them" and instructed grades first through sixth to bring two sharpened pencils, an 8"X10" writing tablet, a No. 16 Crayola set, and a small Artgum eraser to class that Monday. Because the old school bell had been destroyed in the fire, arrangements were made with the owners of the Northern Commercial Company to blow their whistle at 8:40 each school day morning to call students to their nine o'clock classes.

While the school children of Fairbanks would ultimately spend fifteen months striving to make the best of their temporary and often challenging new quarters, work on proposals for a new school building began immediately. Within five days of the fire, Joseph Boyer, the inspecting engineer of the nearly-completed Federal Building, and building inspector Walter Kuban presented the city council with plans and estimates for the construction of a three-story, reinforced concrete school building. They estimated the total cost of construction to be \$127,000, a sum extrapolated from the final costs of the new Federal Building. The plans called for classrooms accommodating 400-500 students, some one hundred more than was needed at the time. Former mayor and territorial house representative Andrew Nerland approved of the design, stating, "I expect to live to see the day when there will be that many students [in Fairbanks]."<sup>1</sup> With plans in hand, the city applied to Congress through Delegate James Wickersham for permission to bond itself for \$150,000 to fund the school's construction.

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew Nerland lived to see nearly 3,000 students in Fairbanks schools by the time of his death in 1956.

The rising number of school age children in the area and the recent loss of the wooden school building, which many had admitted was a "veritable firetrap," seemed to demand a larger, more fire resistant building. However, many residents balked at the \$127,000 estimate of Boyer and Kuban and resisted the \$100,000 bond proposal finally approved by the city council. Public meetings and letters-to-the-editor warned of higher taxes and demanded that the city explore less expensive options. A debate ensued over the possibility of erecting a less expensive wooden building (with a detached furnace room) or a concrete block structure. Several editorials in the *Daily News-Miner* pointed out that given the insurance costs for a wooden building that concrete would cost less in the long run and avoid the embarrassment of possibly losing a second school to fire. An advocate of reinforced concrete construction, Territorial Representative Alton Nordale introduced a bill in Juneau requiring new Alaskan schools with more than one hundred students to be built of concrete, stone, or brick. On March 1, the *Daily News-Miner* ran an editorial reminding area residents that the bond issue did not involve the selection of building materials. The article began, "To Be Or Not To Be! That Is The Question! Does Fairbanks Want A School Building?" and went on to urge that residents look to the future and vote yes. Despite these efforts and the pleas of the city council, the bond proposal failed on March 13 with 196 in favor and 137 opposed, a favorable majority but not the sixty-five percent necessary to pass.

Although the city council did its best to convince area residents that the selection of construction material was secondary to the need to approve the school bond, council members had been planning on concrete construction since their first meeting following the fire. In fact, the plans drawn up by Boyer and Kuban were sent to the architectural firm of Tourtellotte & Hammel of Portland, Oregon a full month before the bond issue vote. Even after the voters failed to approve the bond, council members distributed the architects' drawings in six states to facilitate bids by contractors. They even printed the building's

specifications in a newspaper announcement, indicating to local contractors that the plans were available at the city clerk's office. By the time the bond issue for Main School would finally be passed, momentum toward a concrete school had been building for more than four months.

On April 4, council member Arnold Nordale was elected mayor of Fairbanks. The new mayor strongly favored a concrete building and used his new position to push for the new bond proposal. At his first council meeting as mayor, Nordale insisted that "the building will be of concrete material and that, including excavation, well, and equipment, it shall not cost in excess of \$150,000." On the day before Nordale's election, a small fire in the basement of the concrete Federal Building was contained and easily extinguished, demonstrating the advantage of a fireproof building material. A severe earthquake in Los Angeles that destroyed wooden schools and adobe homes also helped to turn public opinion in favor of the sturdier concrete option. A second bond proposal, this time for \$98,000, passed on April 15 with a vote of 262-116. Between the bond and the \$50,000 of insurance money from a policy on the original public school building, the city had enough to finance the project. After four months of promotion by the city council, Fairbanks area residents had at last made up their minds to build the new Fairbanks Public School.

## **Construction**

In May 1933, following a single round of bids, the William McDonald Construction Company of St. Louis won the building contract with a low bid of \$117,836 and began hiring sub-contractors and laborers for the job. Just two days later, on the site of the original school, the company began excavating a basement for the new building. By September, much of the concrete, mixed with gravel hand-shoveled from Chena Slough, had been poured into forms for the foundation. The construction company followed the plans proposed by City Engineer Joseph Boyer and drawn up by the Tourtellote & Hummel architecture firm. Boyer favored the modern Art Deco style and borrowed heavily from the

design of the newly-completed Federal Building. Six years earlier, Alaska tycoon Austin "Cap" Lathrop debunked the myth that concrete would crumble at fifty-below zero when he built the Empress Theater, the city's first reinforced concrete building. The Art Deco-style Federal Building followed in 1933 as the city's second substantial concrete structure. Popularized during the 1925 Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts, Art Deco attempted to imitate the symmetry of the machine age by utilizing sharp angles and curvilinear forms. During the 1920s and 1930s, the combination of reinforced concrete and Art Deco design had become very popular for schools and government buildings across the country. The innovative design of the new public school contributed an additional modern flair to the former gold rush community made up primarily of log and clapboard buildings.

Set roughly 150 feet back from Cushman Street, the building's facade included rows of two and three bay windows separated by concrete spandrels with bas-relief detailing. Like the Federal Building, concrete piers rising above the roof line flanked each set of windows. Stone workers used Alaskan marble quarried on Prince of Wales Island to finish the front entrance and lobby. A roof-mounted, wooden flagpole rose over the entryway, and a cast bronze plate above the front doors read "Fairbanks Public Schools 1933." The sharp corners and column-like piers gave the building an imposing presence. In an article describing the construction of the building, the *Daily News-Miner* pointed out that "Seventy men, in round numbers, will find work at the school during the various stages of construction. Carpenters, electricians and other specialized tradesmen already have been at work."

The interior, characterized by its high-ceilinged corridors and exposed heating pipes, followed a general U-shape that allowed occupants access from the front offices and classrooms to the rear gymnasium and auditorium. In all, Main School had thirty-three rooms, not including a spacious basement. The much-awaited 4,000 square-foot gymnasium, the largest in the state, was designed to



hold as many as 200 spectators and to accommodate all types of sporting events. In 1934, the building was the most modern school facility in the Territory of Alaska and was a source of pride for Fairbanksans wanting to create a permanent urban landscape in what had once been a waterfront mining town.

### **Main School Opens**

Main School opened its doors to 16 teachers and 318 students on January 22, 1934. It was fifty-six degrees below zero that day, but inside, as the children were exploring their new classrooms, two hefty coal boilers were pumping out steam, ensuring that the building would be comfortably warm. The equipment that the school board had ordered soon after the 1932 fire was already in place and, even before the plaster had dried on all the walls, classes were taken up without confusion. The first and second grades were taught in basement rooms, third through eighth met on the ground floor, and high school classes occupied the upper level of the school. Following the arrival of more tables and chairs, the kindergarten also moved from its room in Lumpkin Hall at the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church into the new school building.

The final touch, a railroad car full of planks for the gymnasium floor, did not arrive until a week after the school's grand opening. Once the Alaska Railroad delivered the wood, workers went to work, and soon the bleachers of the gym were filled with fans eager to cheer at Main School's first basketball game. According to the *Daily News-Miner*, at one of Main School's first games, the undefeated Elks team was scheduled to play the "newly organized DeMolay basketeers." In a show of strength, future Fairbanks legislator John Butrovich scored eleven points, leading the Elks to victory with a final score of 41-15. In February 1934, the city's "Committee for Promotion and Supervision of Activities" suggested that proceeds from athletic events go to funding the construction of a stage for plays and musical performances in the gymnasium. Fairbanksans' passion for the games played between the College, High School, Elks, and DeMolay teams quickly paid for the construction of the wooden stage. In addition

to attending basketball games, theater productions, and an occasional political debate, local residents could entertain themselves during the winter months by skating on an improvised rink in front of the building. The rink was the brainchild of elementary school teacher Rosamund Weller who encouraged her students to bring their skates and to get their daily exercise skating at the school. The children changed their shoes for skates and warmed up their hands in a small hut equipped with a drum stove and benches. In summer, after being transported by tractor, the same hut was used as a bullpen for baseball games at Griffin Park.

The official dedication of the new school was held on February 12 at an open house organized by the local Parent-Teacher Association. The festive occasion included Mrs. L. F. Huffman singing "My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair" and "My Lover is a Fisherman" which a *Daily News-Miner* reporter said "rang pleasantly through the long halls of the beautiful new school building." Freshman girls put on a "miniature style show" of their dresses from home economics, and Mrs. Harriet Hess narrated a brief history of Fairbanks schools from 1904 to 1934. Toward the end of the evening, Elizabeth Duckering gave an address entitled "For the Sake of the Child," urging "a greater understanding on the part of both teachers and parents of the need of the child for opportunity to live in the present." Bonnie Barrack, the daughter of former school board member John Barrack, had the honor of lighting the candles on a birthday cake celebrating Fairbanks Public Schools' thirtieth anniversary.

Having moved from Washington state to Fairbanks in 1936, Orea Haydon clearly recalls her first year as a seventh grader at Main School. "I studied hygiene, arithmetic, English, reading, geography, history, spelling, art and music," she explains in a 1994 article in *Heartland Magazine*, "[and] my thorough education provided me with a good foundation to raise my family and perform jobs throughout my life." In keeping with the education philosophy of the time, academics were rigorous and discipline rigid. She explains, "My strict homeroom teacher, Thema Hunt, kept me after school for such infractions as dropping

pencils on the floor." Haydon also mentions Mrs. Josephine Tupper who taught the Bishop Method of penmanship, "I remember another student being ruler-slapped across the hands for not holding the pen correctly." She also recalls Annabeth Ferguson's music appreciation classes, "We listened to phonograph records and were expected to identify each [composition] by title, composer's date of birth and death, country of origin, and history." In basketball classes she and the other girls were required to wear black shorts, white blouses, and "tennies." In order to get to school, even on days when the temperature reached fifty or sixty-below, Haydon wore mukluks, long stockings, heavy coats or parkas, mittens, hats, and scarves. She says, "I ran to school carrying a sack lunch." Orea (Johnston) Haydon was part of the graduating class of 1941.

The opening of the school ushered in a new era not only for the city's children but for the demographic face of Fairbanks. Chatanika School, the last of the rural schools in mining camps around Fairbanks, closed in the mid-1930s. Mining families were forced to house their children with families in the city or to "winter in town" in order to give their children a chance to attend school. Within a few years, the population of Fairbanks had jumped to nearly three thousand. Unfortunately, cramped quarters in the city also allowed a flu epidemic to sweep through the population in November 1935, reducing the number of children attending school that month by half. In 1936, a similar outbreak of scarlet fever closed the school, keeping young children home nursing fevers and sore throats.

In 1939, the halls and classrooms of Main School were overflowing, a situation that forced the city to add a 12,350 square-foot wing to the south side of the building. The addition wrapped around the rear of the building, creating a large auditorium which opened up into the gymnasium. The addition, a third again the size of the original building, was financed as a Public Works Administration project and provided Main School with six additional classrooms as well as a cafeteria. The exterior of the new south wing doubled the length of the southern facade and matched perfectly the building's Art Deco design.

That same year, a young school teacher named Lois Meier heard through the University of Washington that Fairbanks needed a teacher of the commercial arts; eager for adventure, she jumped at the opportunity. Meier, then teaching at a small school in North Bend, Washington, packed her bags and boarded the S.S. Baranof en route to Seward, Alaska. In those days, female school teachers were expected to remain single<sup>2</sup>, and Lois Meier recalls the thrill of being young, independent, and on her way to the Last Frontier. On board, she met several teachers returning to Fairbanks and was befriended by Rosamund Weller, then the elementary school principal. The two women shared quarters on the boat and later, with another teacher named Hildegarde Olson, shared an apartment on Third Avenue. Meier remembers being impressed by the sheer size of newly-expanded Main School.

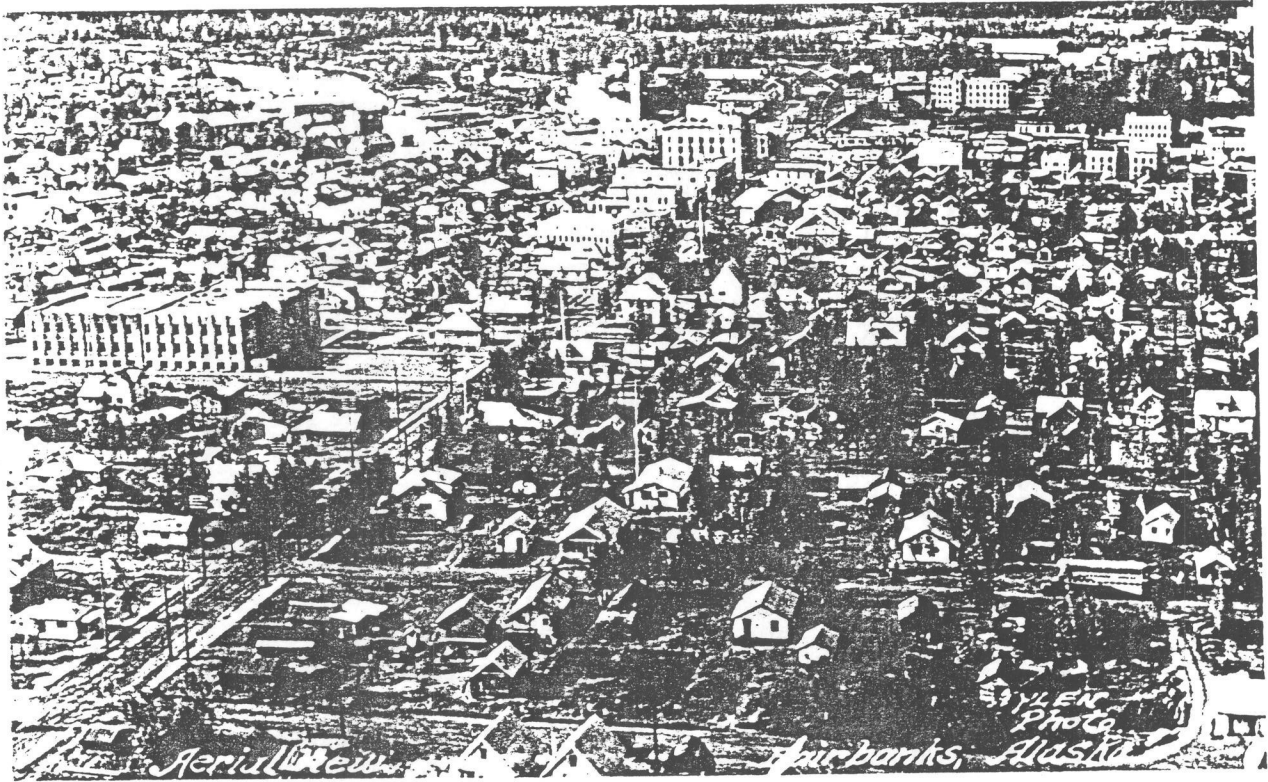
She soon became one of the six teachers who instructed classes of between twenty and twenty-five high school students. Many future community leaders passed through her classes in business administration, shorthand, typing, and accounting. In 1940, twenty-seven students, many of them veterans of Miss Meier's "commercial" classes, graduated and went on to contribute to the economic and political character of the city. Lois Meier taught for a total of sixteen years at Main School. In 1955, she shifted posts and moved into the teaching quarters for the newly-completed Lathrop High School. She later took a two-year leave of absence and joined the Peace Corps to train teachers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. After returning to Fairbanks and working as a school counselor for ten years, she retired in 1977.

### **The War Years**

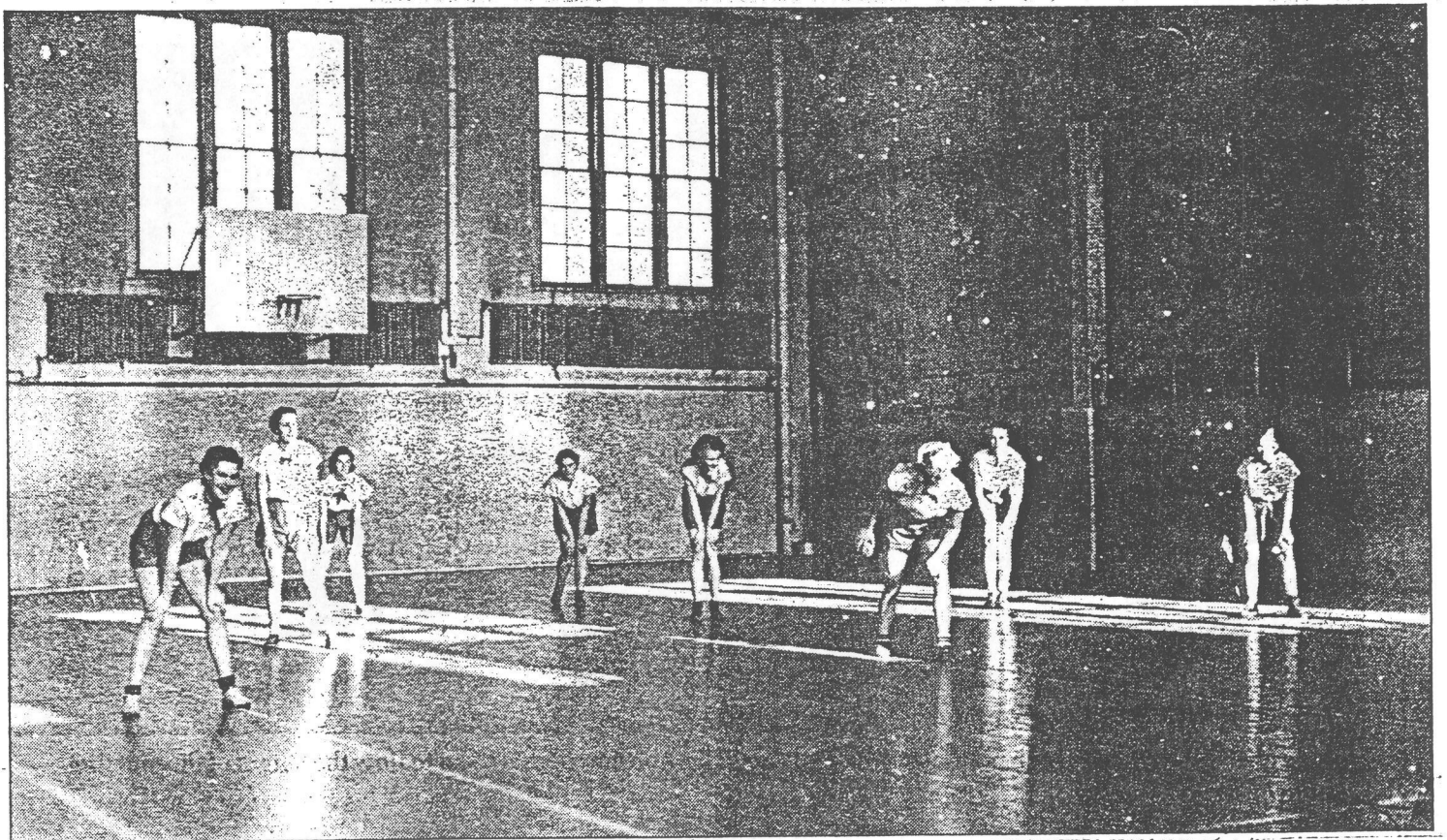
When on December 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor,

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<sup>2</sup>Teaching contracts at that time noted specifically, "Marriage before the beginning of school or during shall be regarded as a termination of the contract." This practice was in part due to the economic pressures of the Great Depression which demanded that there be only one bread-winner per family.



An aerial view of Fairbanks (circa 1940) shows the newly-completed south wing of the school on the far left. The 1939 addition doubled the length of the southern facade. The Federal Building and Chena River appear at top center of photo. (Candace Waugaman Collection)



Dressed in obligatory black shorts, white blouses, and "tennis," girls in gym class plays softball. The 4,000 square-foot gymnasium was also the site of regular basketball games and school performances. (Courtesy of Orea Haydon)



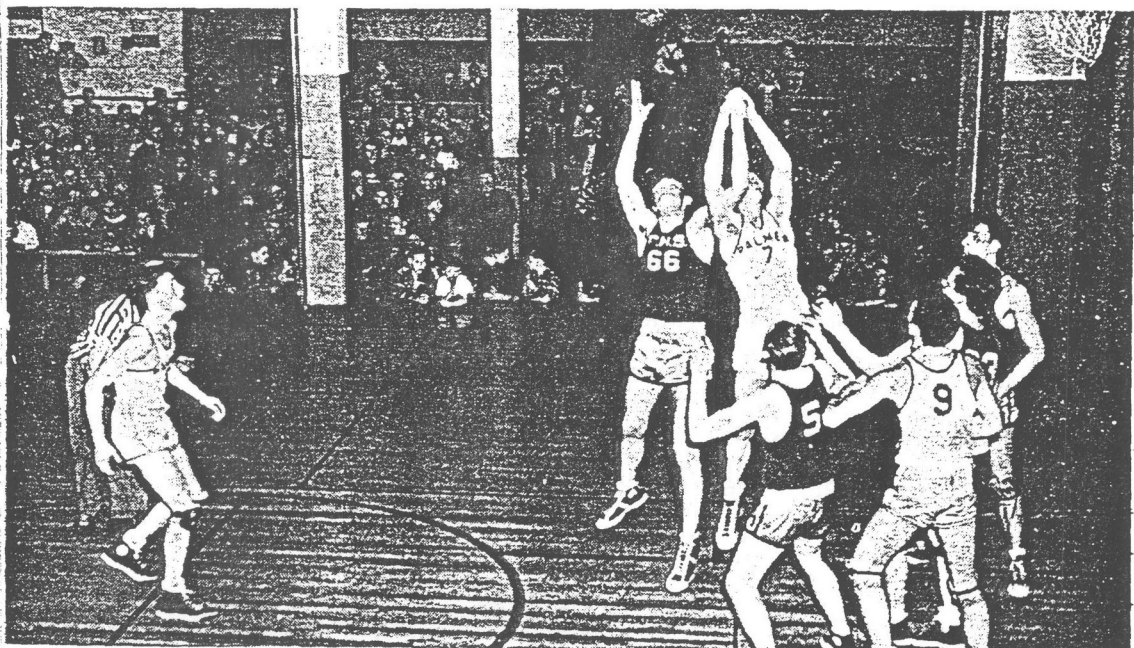
Instructor J. Hubert Miller (history, public speaking, dramatics, and English) teaches during the height of World War II. The banner supplied by the state department reads, "Every Minute Counts." (F.H.S. Cache yearbook, 1943)



A vision of diligent study, this third grade class was photographed around 1938. Beginning on the far left are [unidentified], Dennis "Cooper" White, Rebecca Aarand, Patsy Tyler, and two unidentified youngsters. In the center row are [unidentified], Aarand Hershy, Jerry Hassel, Deloris Kessel, and the rest are unknown. In the right front seat is former city mayor James Nordale. (Courtesy of Jerry Hassel)



Basketball games at Main School provided Fairbanksans with a chance to come together socially and to shake off the gloom of extremely long winters. This gymnasium scene from 1946 shows the enthusiastic crowd at one of the city's many tournament games. (F.H.S. Cache, 1946)



Fairbanks and the Interior as a whole was transformed. In the ensuing years, the Army, Navy, and Civil Aeronautics Administration would spend over \$400 million to develop Alaska into a strategic launching point for both the War in the Pacific and the Lend-Lease Program that transported aircraft to the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1942, seven Army Engineer regiments and forty-seven contractors employed by the Public Roads Administration began an aggressive push to build a land link between the contiguous United States and Alaska. Harsh weather and exhausting terrain faced the soldiers who struggled to penetrate the wilderness. Despite these challenges, they opened the Alaska-Canada Military Highway (now known simply as the Alaska Highway) after only nine months and six days. The boom in military spending in the area and the war itself had profound effects on the students at Main School. Many young men joined up and left Fairbanks for training and combat in both the Pacific and Europe. The 1943 *Cache* yearbook was dedicated to the alumni of Fairbanks High School who were serving in the Armed Forces. The epigraph read, "Today when actions speak louder than words, it is with pride that we consider the fair, democratic, unselfish actions of all of you men." By 1945, the Student Body Association had erected a "service flag" with a gold star for each high school graduate, either male or female, who was serving in the Armed Forces. A second flag, called a "Minute Man" flag, flew at full mast only when ninety percent of the student body had purchased government stamps and bonds on "Stamp Day" each Wednesday.

### **Suburban Growth**

Throughout the 1940s, the population of the district continued to grow, eventually taxing the space and resources of Main School. City residents who had always accepted rural students as a matter of course became concerned about the rising number of students coming in from nearby areas. In the spring of 1947, concerned residents gathered enough signatures to bring to a vote the question of forming a larger school district in order to collect taxes from families in surrounding areas. The proposed district covered roughly 250 square-miles



with a northern boundary seven miles from Fairbanks and a southern one roughly five miles from the city. The western cut-off line included Ester, and in the east, the line was drawn at fourteen miles, excluding the Army Air Corp's Ladd Field (now Ft. Wainwright) which had its own school.

The new school district would have a five-member board rather than the three members that had sufficed for the city district. With the election set for July 7 by District Judge Harry Pratt, all three former board members and six new individuals signed up as candidates. The plans for an expanded school district already had considerable support in the community by the time the *Daily News-Miner* ran an editorial promoting the plan: "The idea is that all those who benefit help pay the cost . . . [that] all the residents, inside and outside the town, get together and build a school system big enough for all." The vote went ahead as planned, and on July 23, Judge Pratt validated the election results, an overwhelmingly positive 492-41, and declared the Fairbanks School District operational. Louis Joy, Frank DeWree, and Frank Conway were reelected from their city school board posts while Forbes Baker and George Meyers joined them, filling the remaining two seats.

Because of the school district's expanded responsibilities, Main School soon found itself cramped for space, and in 1948 the school board decided to add an additional wing onto the north side of the building. Larger than the south wing, the new addition nearly doubled the original building's size and added nine new classrooms. Over the years, the asymmetrical floor plan caused by both major additions has earned the building a reputation as a labyrinth of narrow stairways and perplexing side hallways, so perplexing in fact that local police have used the building for tactical exercises. A popular joke during the school's heyday suggested that any senior who was able to find his or her way from the center of the building to the outside should be handed a graduation certificate.

Overcrowding continued to be a problem for the district, and by the late 1940s several elementary classes were forced to meet in the basements of

nearby churches. Main School began "doubleshifting" with one set of students attending in the morning and a second in the afternoon. Understandably enough, surrounding communities that paid taxes to the school district also wanted schools closer to home. In January 1950, in response to these pressures, the school board put forward a bond to finance the construction of new schools. The first school to be built under the new plan was Denali Elementary, designed to serve the residential neighborhood growing near the Weeks Field airstrip on the west side of town. In order to develop the Weeks Field area for the new school and additional housing, the city set a closing date of October 1951 for the small airport. From 1949 to 1951 the new Fairbanks International Airport was under construction and eventually replaced Weeks Field.

Before construction of the new elementary school could begin, the Fairbanks area was faced with the threat of a polio epidemic. In late September 1950, the viral disease reached the unsuspecting city after sweeping the rest of the country. Within a month, two people had died of the disease, and City Health Officer Dr. Robert Goman closed all public schools in order to slow the spread of the disease. The only exception was the Eielson Air Force Base school which was isolated enough to avoid the outbreak. Dr. Goman explained, "Fairbanksans must realize that we are in the grip of a dangerous epidemic. . . . Extremely strict measures must be taken by parents and children alike, if the disease is to be held within present bounds." He later attempted to avert widespread panic by reminding parents that the confirmed cases of the disease were few and that, for the time being, closing the school was only a precautionary measure. Among the hardest hit was twelve-year-old Jo Anne Wold who was stricken with the virus and had to be assisted by a mechanical respirator in order to breathe. In all, the polio virus afflicted seventeen Fairbanksans, many of them pre-school children, and left the community fearful of another outbreak. Classes resumed on October 16, and the *Daily News-Miner* reported that "Fairbanks streets came alive . . . with shouts of school kids, barking of pooches and the plop of snow balls." Dr. Goman's

announcement that the chain of the disease had been broken released the city's children from the confines of their homes and reduced their parents' fears of the debilitating disease.

After hiring the former state commissioner of schools James Ryan as superintendent in March 1951, the school district went ahead with plans to design and build a new elementary school. In October 1951, Denali Elementary School accepted 590 students in grades first through seventh. And in November 1955, Austin E. Lathrop High School opened its door to 534 students, leaving the renamed "Main Elementary School" with its share of 838 students in grades kindergarten through eighth. In rapid succession, Nordale, Hunter, Barnette, and Joy elementary schools were built for younger children outside the downtown area, but there were plenty of young children to keep Main Elementary in operation until 1958. In 1959, grades kindergarten through sixth moved into satellite elementary schools, and Main Elementary became known as "Main Junior High School."

When in 1959 Alaska became the forty-ninth state, its constitution called for the formation of state-wide boroughs. However, for four years this plan was largely ignored. In 1963, the Alaska State Legislature passed the Mandatory Borough Act obligating the eight most populated areas of the state to form organized boroughs by January 1, 1964. Although many in the Fairbanks area resisted the push for a borough as an example of "big government" meddling, the issue was at last resolved, and the borough surrounding Fairbanks became a reality. Students from Hunter, Barnette, Denali, Nordale, and University Park elementary schools as well as Monroe High School selected "North Star Borough" as the borough's new name from dozens of suggestions from area residents. John Schleppegrel was elected the first borough assembly chair, a post that came to be called "Mayor," and six of the seven school district officers ran for and won seats on the new Fairbanks North Star Borough School District school board. The most significant effect of the new borough was the consolidation of state-run

schools (grammar schools in North Pole, Two Rivers, and Salcha) with the schools of the former Fairbanks School District. The school boards of all the area schools merged and began working to provide the best education possible for their students. "In a lot of ways," commented Nell Miller who was president of the North Pole school board, "we were kind of glad [that the borough was formed] because kids were going to bigger, nicer schools, and we would have more room and more teachers."

In mid-August 1967, after a week of non-stop rain, the waters of the Chena River began to rise and did not start to subside until much of the city was under six feet of water. Thousands of Fairbanks residents either fled the area or retreated to the high ground of the University of Alaska campus. One individual who held her ground was Dr. Martha Kowalski, a doctor at St. Joseph's Hospital, who helped evacuate the hospital's patients to the Bassett Army Hospital at Ft. Wainwright and then spent four and a half days attending to flood victims at an improvised first aid station at Main Junior High School. In an article she wrote for the Alaska State Medical Journal, Dr. Kowalski recalls the stressful situation with some fondness, pointing out the cooperative spirit and minor victories during her time as "The Doctor" at Main School. The need for extra health care providers during the flood made her presence particularly important. She recalls, "I was ushered [in] with as much pomp as I would expect to be awarded a king or a president." With the help of a public health nurse named Phyllis Wolfe, Dr. Kowalski set up a sick bay in an empty classroom by sweeping it out and hanging a "No Smoking" sign on the chalkboard. In addition to treating people for minor scrapes and distributing sedatives to those suffering from acute anxiety, Dr. Kowalski performed some minor acts of heroism. She used a sterilized pair of children's scissors, one of the emergency station's few supplies, to remove sutures from a dog. After boiling them again, she used the scissors to remove dental sutures, and later to clip the umbilical cord of a new-born baby. She describes the scene in vivid detail, "Patient number 50 . . . was a 24-year-old

woman who calmly walked in and waited her turn to be seen and announced, 'I think I am in labor' When I examined her there was no doubt." Dr. Kowalski helped 127 more patients before she was done, and all the while she maintained a positive attitude and boosted the morale of her fellow evacuees. She describes peering out of the window and feeling as if the school were resting peacefully in the middle of an enormous lake. By the time the water began to recede, she was reunited with her own children. "We looked out the window at the beauty and made plans for the future."

### **The Oil Boom Era**

On January 23, 1974, after nearly six years of anticipation by Interior Alaskans, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior approved the right-of-way permit for the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. That summer, the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company took on the monumental task of crossing nearly 800 miles of Alaskan wilderness with 48-inch steel pipe. A staggering 22,000 workers were employed during the height of construction, some 16,000 of whom were hired out of Fairbanks union halls. The economy of Fairbanks boomed as the city became the Alyeska Company's administrative center. Prices, population, and construction in the city skyrocketed, and the already crowded Fairbanks schools began once again holding morning and evening shifts to accommodate over one thousand new students. "Doubleshifting" continued until May 1976 by which time three new schools were finished and the pipeline was nearly complete.

In 1976, following the completion of the Ben Eielson Junior-Senior High School, Tanana Junior High School, and West Valley High School, Main School finally closed its doors to public school classes, and the administration offices of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District moved in. That same year, soon after the passing of a law guaranteeing the option of home schooling to Alaskan residents, the Fairbanks Correspondence School opened in the north wing of the Main School building. The correspondence school staff of two assisted roughly ninety home-schooled and rural students in grades kindergarten

through twelfth. Tom Ohlund, formerly of the state correspondence program, and teacher Judy Larreau took up the task of preparing learning packets and responding to letters from throughout the borough. Within a few years, the number of correspondence students had jumped to nearly four hundred. Approved and accredited by the Department of Education, these courses allowed virtually anyone to earn a high school diploma regardless of their location. The program catered to General Education Degree students, rural students, handicapped and discipline-problem students, and those whose families preferred one-to-one teaching at home. During the 1970s, about one percent of Alaska's total student population, roughly 2,000 students, used the program. In 1987, the school board was on the verge of cutting the correspondence school budget by half, a move that would have crippled the program. Local residents responded by sending numerous letters to the *Daily News-Miner*, encouraging the board to reconsider their decision. The school program was saved by parents who valued being able to have more control over their children's education.

In Fall 1977, the Fairbanks Alternative High School moved from its location in the basement of the former Y.M.C.A. building and began offering individualized instruction for 129 students needing flexible schedules or one-to-one help with certain subjects. Known to the students as "Joe T," Principal Joe Tremarello worked with eight teachers to provide a supportive and challenging environment for students whose needs were not being met by a traditional high school setting. Later, math teacher Mike Thibodeau took over as principal. According to Mary Jo Stanley, a counselor for the alternative school since 1971, the school provided a chance for students take control of their education. "F.A.H.S." (pronounced "faaz" by the students) was accredited by Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and occupied the northwest corner basement of Main School. In a single open learning area, students came in for several hours at a time to work on a project or to receive help from an instructor. The remainder of the day they often held jobs or took courses at the Hutchison Career Center near the

university. The Cooperative Vocational Education Program also allowed students to receive three elective credits for supervised, on-the-job work with related instruction in the classroom. Because the small school lacked a child care center, students with children would occasionally bring their child to school with them. Another unique opportunity at F.A.H.S. was the chance to participate in the school's Outdoor Experience Program. Each semester students and teachers organized expeditions to Quartz Lake, the Pinnell Mountain Recreation Trail, or Denali National Park. In the Fall, the students hiked with full packs for several days of camping, and in the winter they went skiing. In 1989, the F.A.H.S. moved out of Main School and into the modern Howard Luke Building. Although the new school still has many of the same teachers and interesting programs, many students look back fondly on their days in the building that has become known as "Old Main."

### **Era of Neglect**

As early as 1972, the borough had been investigating various possibilities for the continued use of the Main School building. Administration offices utilized only one half of the building's rooms, and the cost of heating the building year-round was prohibitively expensive. The mechanical and electrical systems were obsolete and did not meet the current building codes, and the confusing configuration of rooms, corridors, and stairways violated fire and handicapped access codes. An inspection conducted by the State of Alaska determined that "Old Main" needed a sprinkler system, modifications to corridors to make exiting easier, and better provisions for emergency evacuations before it would be safe for public use. Proposals for funds to extend the useful life of the building ranged from a two-year plan costing \$280,000 to \$1.7 million for ten years.

Condemnation and demolition were also proposed, but in the end \$350,000 was approved to bring the building up to building and fire code approval. The debate over what to do with the aging structure would continue for the next twenty years.

In 1985 the city hired the John Graham & Company architectural firm to

perform a cost analysis and feasibility study on two options: extensive renovation and demolition. The company recommended renovation at a cost of \$13.5 million, a plan that provided 70,000 square-feet of usable office space. Lack of community support cause the plan to be scrapped. In 1987, the discovery of asbestos insulation around heating pipes in the basement caused Alternative High School students to be temporarily relocated to the far side of the building. After the exposed asbestos insulation was sealed over, certain areas of the basement were boarded up and designated off limits to the public. The discovery of asbestos and broken water pipes again placed the school in violation of city building codes. During the next few years the Main School continued to deteriorate, and in 1989, the City Fire Inspector and Building Inspector completed a two-day comprehensive inspection which turned up numerous new code violations. The need to do something with the building was obvious and immediate.

By the mid-1980s the editorial page of the *Daily News-Miner* was already full of urgent appeals to, among other things, act on plans to gut the building and renovate the interior from scratch. However, far from approving the \$10.7 million needed to revitalize the ailing structure, Fairbanks voters consistently turned down all funding requests from the school district, an idea for a joint School District-Borough Headquarters, and a \$2 million bond issue for up-keep. On September 27, 1990, Main School was added to the National Register of Historic Places after a recommendation by the state-wide Historical Sites Advisory Committee. Like Creamer's Dairy and the Lacey Street Theater, the old school was selected as a landmark significant to the historical character of Fairbanks. Despite this honored status, many development-oriented Fairbanksans continued to think of the building as an eyesore and a waste of valuable downtown real estate. After the school was added to the register of historic places in 1990, federal tax credits became available for renovations, but by that time it was too little, too late. In 1992 it was listed as one of the Alaska Association For Historic Preservation's "Ten Most



Endangered Historic Properties."

### **Old Main in New Hands**

In July 1993, the North Star Borough School District offices packed up and moved to their present Fifth Avenue location. Main School was boarded up and the heat turned off, a move that soon caused significant water and frost damage. On August 26, 1993, the school district decided to cease using the building for educational purposes and allow the ownership of the building to revert to the city. Without the \$20 million needed to renovate the building, the city had no choice but board up additional windows and attempt to minimize the costs of heating and basic maintenance. In July of the same year, graduates in the class of 1953 toured the building and were discouraged to see the windows covered with sheets of plywood. "I think it's a shame," commented graduate Shirley Burnett, "I hope they never tear this building down. Its a landmark." This sentiment was echoed by many of the alumni as they explored the vacant hallways and swapped stories about the good old days. While the glory days of the school have long passed, it seems clear to many long-time members of the Fairbanks community that the spirit of the sixty-one year old building has not.

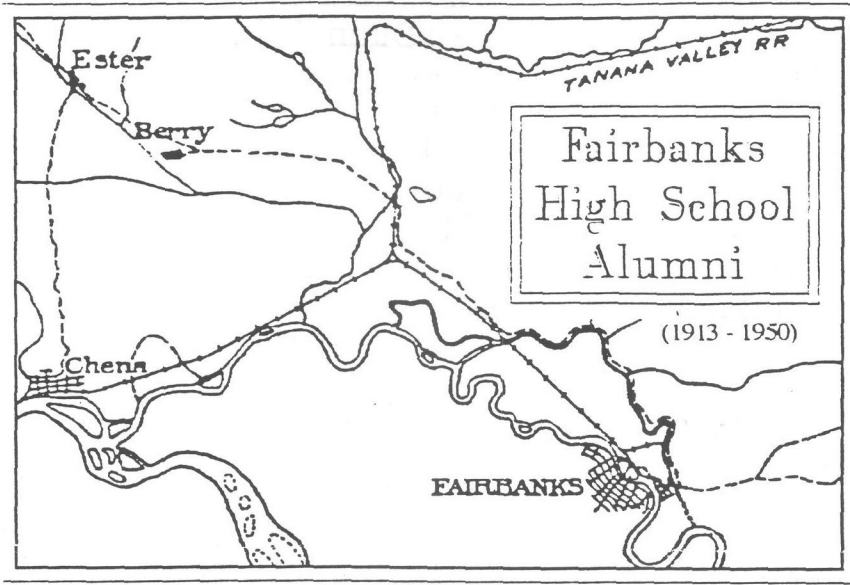
On December 19, 1994, the employees of several city offices packed up their equipment in the City Hall complex and, by the end of the month, had moved into seven former classrooms on the ground floor and six office spaces on the upper floor of Main School. By pitching in to paint the newly-finished walls, the city workers speeded the transition and claimed as their own the former school. Rufus Bunch, Fairbanks' City Engineer in charge of the remodeling, not only took on the challenge of transforming classrooms into offices for the mayor and city manager, but he also began to look into the future to a time when the city might decide to gut the building and completely renovate. Mr. Bunch views the water damage and failing heating and electric systems as surmountable problems on the way to creating, as some locals have suggested, a one-building hub for city services.

The one-stop idea for the city's administration and utilities appeals to many but would mean the destruction of the gymnasium and classrooms that many residents value. One approach put forth by Design Alaska at a cost of \$21 million involved opening up the building's interior to support a modern police station, keeping only the shell of the original school. Although this plan would preserve the building's exterior, such proposals raise the hackles of area residents who would like the building to remain intact as a reminder of over sixty years of tradition. Still, defenders of Old Main agree -- any use for the old school would be better than the alternative of demolition.

Whatever its fate, Main School will always hold a special place in the hearts of the Fairbanksans whose lives have been intertwined with the building for over sixty years. Not only did hundreds of Fairbanksans attend Main School, but the building also served as a community center. Basketball games, plays, and activities for elementary school children made the school an essential part of a community gripped by cold for much of the year. As Fairbanks' population swelled, Main School adjusted to accommodate new students. And when finally new schools made the building obsolete for regular public school classes, Main School became a headquarters for important services like the correspondence school and the alternative high school. Main School has stood during much of Fairbanks' history as a monument to the innovation and progressive vision of the community. Suggestions to use the building for a police station, city administration center, museum, or medical center carry on this tradition of innovation while preserving Fairbanks' complex history.

### **Afterward**

Over the past few months, the offices of City Hall have been gradually moving into the Main School building. The offices that currently occupy the building include: City Engineering, the City Manager, the Mayor's office, the City Attorney, Risk Management, City Surveyor, Right-of-Way, City Personnel and the City Clerk. Council chambers are being constructed on the second floor, but handicap access remains a problem. The city plans to install an elevator that would provide access from the basement floor to the second story. Due to the building's strange layout, this would open up much but not all of the building to handicapped persons. Within the next month, the City Finance Department, Building Department, and possibly the City Sanitarian will be moving in for what appears to be a long-time stay in Main School.



James V. Lavery  
 Mary R Miller  
 Donald A. Morgan  
 Dorothy H. Roth  
 Murray C. Smith  
 Hugh M. Smith

1923  
 Prank DeWree  
 Clarence Isberg  
 Harold Jestland  
 Dorothy McCarty  
 William McCarty  
 Albina Miller  
 Florence Roth  
 Mary Shaffer

1924  
 Lucy L. Buteau  
 Nettle E. DeWree  
 Thomas L. Gray  
 Vivenne M. Hamilton  
 Eldora G. Hardy  
 William L. Hering  
 Selma E. Lappi  
 Harriett B. Lazelle  
 Pauline A. Miller  
 James G. Morre  
 Genevieve A. Parker  
 John R. Schoeser  
 Mary L. Schoeser  
 Elvin Leonidas Vernon

1925  
 Richard P. Anderson  
 Richard M. Boyd  
 George W. Butrovich  
 John D. Clark  
 Lois G. Hamilton  
 Earl P. Parsons  
 Franklin R. Shaffer  
 Albert C. Visca

1926  
 Doris Cameron  
 Warren Clark  
 Calvin Franklin  
 Helen Franklin  
 Donald MacDonald

1913  
 Percy Blanchfield  
 Howard Rolston  
 Jean Sutherland  
 Anna Winecoff

1914  
 Eliza Hatch  
 George Hering  
 Hjalmer Nordale

1915  
 Helen Bentley  
 Johanna Miller  
 Willis Nicely  
 Arnold Nordale  
 Edgar Woolridge

1916  
 Ruth Woolridge

1917  
 Edny Davis  
 Earl Foster  
 Rodney V. Johnson  
 Alta Porter

1918  
 George Bentley  
 Wilma Carlson

Georgia Johnson  
 Alton Nordale  
 Amante Tonseth

1919  
 Edna M. Lewis  
 Anita M. Nordale

1920  
 Ethel Bailey  
 Russel Bellerby  
 Eva Delaney  
 Margaret Gillette  
 John Lloyd Pinkerton  
 Thomas Tonseth  
 Margaret Wilson

1921  
 Bessie Blaker  
 Margaret H. Collins  
 Aphild Thelin

1922  
 Edward L. Bartlett  
 Dorothy F. Billson  
 Thelma D. Blaker  
 Clarence Burglin  
 Roden S. Davis  
 Frances D. Hillary  
 Jack M. Holser

Helen MacDonald  
David Maddocks  
Martha Rathgens  
Herman Schumaker

1927

Robert Boyd  
Sigurd Bredlie  
Jean Bunnell  
Arthur Hering  
Thomas Hunt  
Edna Kramer  
Fred Kubon  
Walter Kubon  
Ben McFarland  
Charles McGrath  
Max Miller  
Howard Romig  
Ben Twitchell

1928

Harold Bentley  
Billiam Burns  
Lottie Cameron  
Norma Clausen  
Joe Dunn  
Roberta Ferguson  
Donald Hering  
Hazel LaZelle  
Josephine Miller  
Eleanor Morgan  
Hortense Morgan  
Maxine Sheldon

1929

John Butrovich  
Charles Preston  
Henry Miller  
Alaska Stewart  
Paul Solka  
Agnes Hering  
Clarence Carlson  
Christine Verneti  
Flora MacDonald  
Lucille Lavery

1930

Frank Burns  
Gebbs Austin

Patricia Hering  
Josephine King  
Amy Dramer  
Thomas Long  
Charlotte Lynn  
Harold Newton  
Kathleen Newton  
Fred Parker  
Marie Quirk  
Lawrence Rogge  
Harold Schmidt  
Lois Spencer  
James Stewart  
William Thompson  
Louise Wehner

1931

Edith Clausen  
Ellen Clausen  
Eugene Crossett  
Ethel Ghezzi  
Carra Harlan  
Jean Hunter  
Helen Junes  
Margaret Kramer  
Helen Linck  
Lila Rust  
Virginia Rivers  
Betty Scheffler  
Leonard Thompson  
Helen Wood

1932

Muriel Anderson  
Frances Burnett  
Marie Carlson  
Mildred Harkness  
George Henton  
Clara Hoover  
Reine Huttula  
Roger Menadelook  
Muriel Rivers  
Cora Rust  
Edward Stevens  
Joe Visca  
Barbara Woodward

1933

Arnold Anderson

Gladys Brewis  
Virginia Brown  
Edgar Clausen  
John Dunn  
Gordon Hunter  
William Hunter  
William Huttula  
Frank Johnson  
William Kramer  
Donald Linck  
Dorothy Mitchell  
Emma Miller  
Alice Nordale  
Elsie Olson  
Carl Parker  
Mary Preston  
Kathleen Reap  
Catherine Roberts  
Kathryn Scheffler  
Sylvia Schmidt  
Elisabeth Spencer  
Timothy Twitchell

1934

Clarence J. Carlson  
Clifford Carlson  
Helen Dunn  
Jack Eagan  
Allen Elliott  
Walter Hering  
Edgard Jonnson  
Verla Johnson  
Bill Joy  
Ruth Joy  
Ruth Larson  
Winifred MacDonald  
George Miscovich  
Arthur Norlin  
John Norlin  
Katherine Peterson  
Edna Steel  
Margaret Stewart  
Eugene Uotila

1935

Philip Anderson  
Barbara Brewis  
Robert Burns  
Carl Erickson





Francis Harper  
 Elaine Hemen  
 Bell Hoeler  
 Frances Hoover  
 Hudla Huttula  
 Eugene Karstens  
 Mary Ellen Knudsen  
 Marjorie MacDonald  
 Terrence MacDonald  
 Alfred Mayo  
 Bob Miller  
 Eva Miscovich  
 Elizabeth Reap  
 Jane Rinyon  
 Sigrid Seppola  
 Dick Thompson  
 Nancy Traub  
 Jack Wilbur

1936

Edward Avakoff  
 Adriana Black  
 Helen Carlson  
 Mary Eagan  
 Betty Hering  
 Edith Hopkins  
 George Hunter  
 Lois Joy  
 Lee Linck  
 Richard Mierhart  
 Bob Mitchell  
 Billy Miller  
 Dorothy Moore  
 George Preston  
 Bert Rynearson  
 Mortin Sather  
 Frances Scheffler  
 Eddie Stroecker  
 Guy Rivers  
 Margaret Wagner  
 Bob Wagner  
 Bob Wann

1937

Helen Aase  
 Barbara Buzby  
 Manley Carls  
 John Cooley  
 Elmer Erickson

Robert Gallagher  
 Larry Gasser  
 Clyde Geraghty  
 Alfred Gezze  
 Margaret Gilbert  
 John Harper  
 Dorothy Heath  
 John Kessel  
 Harvey Marlin  
 Hazel Marlin  
 Minnie Motschman  
 Menifee MacDonald  
 Jerenne Osbornne  
 Joan Peterson  
 Josephine Ratts  
 Elmer Ringstad  
 Frank Raivo  
 Fern Rivers  
 David Ross

June Rust

Kenneth Schrank  
 Harry Spencer  
 Eileen Sturgell  
 Frances Woodward

1938

Alcoyn Anderson  
 Virginia Berry  
 Henery Brewis  
 Betty Buzby  
 Dan Eagan  
 Agnes Erickson  
 Shirley Harkness  
 Patricia Hunter  
 Naimy Jackson  
 Helen Marlin  
 May Mayo  
 James Miller  
 Ann Miscovich  
 Dorothy Murphy  
 Patty MacDonald  
 Nolan Phillips  
 Kenneth Ringstad  
 Pierre St. Amand  
 Billy Stroecker

1939

Mary Jo Allen  
 Betty Bachner

Evelyn Abker  
 Dorothy Brennan  
 Marie Durwachter  
 Nell Eagn  
 Elam Ericksen  
 Lewis Fravel  
 Mildred Hering  
 Geraldine Holm  
 Marjorie Larsen  
 Colin MacDonald  
 Florence Milligan  
 Laura Motschman  
 Robert Redding  
 Dick Rivers  
 Paul Sather  
 Alfred Steger  
 Bell Tewkesbury  
 Harry Wilson

1940

Irene Anderson  
 Lorn Anderson  
 Lois Craig  
 Don Creamer  
 Leona Crouch  
 Merrilynn Denver  
 Keith Duke  
 Joan Forman  
 William Growden  
 Robert Hanson  
 Bert Hardy  
 Dorothy Hering  
 Marion Huntington  
 Betty Johnson  
 Olga Miscovich  
 Viola O'Halloran  
 Floyd Ohlsen  
 Mark Ringstad  
 Douglas Saure  
 Alvert Seaber  
 Marguerite Smith  
 Loren St. Amand  
 Olga Steger  
 Billy Stewart  
 Marian Stroecker  
 Rollin Van Der Vart  
 Charles Wehner

1941

Forbes Baker  
Margaret Berry  
Bill Borland  
Dick Braafladt  
Blanche Burns  
Ned Carr  
Jerry Church  
Elizabeth Crites  
Chester DeLong  
Betty Driscoll  
Patricia Eagan  
Vera Erickson  
Theresa Gorman  
Robert Growden  
Ruth Hutchison  
Orea Johnston  
Sallie Love  
Howard Miscovich  
Patrick McDonald  
Bruce Morris  
Bill Murphy  
Sutha Peterson  
Ted Peterson  
Florence Preston  
Agnes Simmons  
Allan Steele  
Lee Williams  
Dick Wood  
Jane Wood  
Thornton Wright  
Edwin Zapel

1942

Betty Ahoe  
Helen Baker  
Margaret Buckmaster  
Esther Buzby  
Ronald Carden  
Mary Crites  
Dick Cox  
Bob Dunn  
Shirley Fravel  
Katherine Gillespie  
Marie Gorman  
Barbee Hall  
Stanley Hanson  
Marion Hutchison  
Audrey Johnston

Bob Kelly  
Dick King  
Virginia Leptic  
Dallas Kien  
Bonnie Martin  
Pat McDonald  
Andrew Miscovich  
Betty Murphy  
Ted Spencer  
Melvin Duke  
Muriel Marsh

1943

Daniel Agbaba  
Otis Berry  
Beverly Ann Barrack  
Jack Driscoll  
Margaret Mary Eagen  
Marian Fravel  
Robert Russel Ginther  
Annabelle Hall  
Helen Aileen Jarvi  
William A. O'Loane  
Donald Raats  
Patricia Rieten  
Merl Thomas  
Elizabeth June Tribble  
Donald Turnbow  
Claire Marie Schroeder  
Lester Groseth

1944

Vella Bingle  
Gertrude Gorman  
Ruth Maxine Burglin  
Lee Burmaster  
Billie Carter  
Amy Kathryn File  
Grace Geraghty  
Leslie Glasser  
Arnold Hansen  
Robert Lee Hall  
Charles R. Hoyt  
Mabel Lorene Johnson  
Mary R. Lewis  
Joyce Eileen McDonald  
Lyle Morris  
Jerry Nerland  
Audrey Purkeypile

Dick Rongy

Beth Rust  
Gordon Springbett  
Ruby Sullivan  
Yvonne Waxberg



1945

Ethel Chute  
Clifford Burglin  
Helen Carlson  
Sarah Coursen  
Earle Grandison  
Ilene Harwood  
Dorothy Hering  
Kay Huber  
Evalyne Isberg  
Millie Miller  
Octavia Pratt  
Marybelle Smith  
Eddie Steger  
Dorothy Williams  
Juanita Wrights

1946

Steve Agbaba  
Garth Anderson  
Erling Arend  
Nita Carter  
Doris Driscoll  
Mary Lorraine Galvin  
Charley Gray  
Andy Growden  
Clara Johnson  
Dave Johnson  
Quentin Johnson  
Don Loftus  
Nellie Miller  
Dorothy Moeller  
John Preston  
Lyman Sands  
Connie Sherman  
Quida Ward

1947

Bud Anderson  
Palmer Bahls  
Adeline Bergman  
Elwood Carroll  
Bill Corey

Jane Crawford  
David DeLong  
Paul Greimann  
Muriel Harris  
William Humphries  
Pat Mackey  
Martha Hupprich  
Donna Myatt  
Bob Phillips  
David Purkypile  
Charles Wells

1948

Duane Albin  
Marvel Allyn  
Merwin Anderson  
James Bingle  
Johnnie Biedermann  
Ida Blankenship  
Roger Brandt  
Wally Burnett  
Beulah Butcher  
Harvey Carnet  
Sara Chapman  
Ronald Coble  
Bill Corey  
Mary Deignan  
Florence Diamond  
Verla Estes  
Harold Gillam  
Leah Gray  
Katherine Greimann  
Laura Hamburg  
Eugene Hill  
Shirley Holstrom  
Aileen Hughes  
Gloria Hutchcroft  
Mildred Isberg  
Brian Kidney  
Bill LaFon  
John Lund  
Margaret McDowell  
Dannie Morrissey  
Marion Morrison  
Marnie Overhoff  
Jeannine Persinger  
Doris Preston  
Lyle Reed  
Jack Rudser

Dorothy Springbett  
Bobbie Stone  
Bill C. Taggart  
Bob Tait  
L. G. Waxberg  
Merril Wien  
Alfred Young  
Leo Hardway

1949

Dewey Anderson  
Rebecca Arend  
Kenneth Benshoof  
Richard Cooper  
Mary Dallosto  
Pauline Davis  
Frances Deignan  
Patricia Dill  
William Gillespie  
Gerald Hassle  
Gerald Hemen  
George Hemen  
Donald Jenkins  
Curtis Johnson  
Dolores Kessel  
Richard Krebs  
George La Charite  
Vivian Palmgren  
Larry Papke  
Laverna Payton  
Elizabeth Simonson  
William Smith  
Harvey Stryken  
Frances Tonseth  
Jarry Van Lenten  
Gray Wangelin  
Jim Watt  
Lawrence Wright

1950

Norbert H. Adams  
Richard Kuhn  
Millard Henry Aubey Jr.  
Mary Anne Link  
L. Bruce Benson  
Nancy Lorraine Loftus  
Danny Douglas Boyd  
Ronald S. McMahan  
Sharon Joanne Boyle

Douglas G. Millard  
Samuel L. Buzby  
James E. Moody  
Donna Mae Carpenter  
Cleo Carolyn Morris  
Harry Earl Carter Jr.  
Virginia Marie Myers  
Robert M. Compeau  
Andrew Ronald Nerland  
Mose Joseph Dallosto  
Helene Renee Patton  
Dudley Duvall Jr.  
Ralph Allen Persinger  
Rich W. Geraghty  
John Linn Ragle  
Malcolm E. Greimann  
Earl L. Seeley  
Frank Gusky  
Mary Ellen Sloan  
Walter M. Hawes  
Roy Eugene Traxler  
Laura Anne Herning  
Beverly Ann Vermeier  
Rose Marie Hutchison  
David Franklin Vincent  
Leonard J. Isberg  
Merle E. Weisinger  
Stephana Lee Jacob  
Richard Kramer Woodward  
Reynold T. Johnson  
Frank Lee Granite  
Ruth Eleanor Johnson  
Robert N. Hill  
Dorothy Jones  
Larry R. Kamper  
James Katsandres  
Vincent Don Kirschner



1951

David H. Baker, JR  
Clarence B. Baldrige  
Diane Ballor  
Bette J. Boseman,  
Gary E. Brodale  
Charlotte A. Burnett  
Donald Burnett  
Glenn R. Carnet  
Eleanor Davis  
Marlene K. Dennis  
Dixie Y. Denver  
Donald F. DeWree  
Aaron H. Downing  
Richard A. Eidem  
Gayle A. Erickson  
Larry C. Fontaine  
Robert L. Gardner  
Floyd Gilbert  
Judith Greimann  
Tekla H. Hagberg  
Lois A. Hanson  
Mary E. Hawes  
Ralph N. Hosley  
Douglas Hudson  
Charles A. Jack  
Linda J. James  
Elizabeth B. Kansky  
Stanley J. Kardanoff  
Edward T. Kirschner  
Jack E. LaFon  
William W. Leonard  
Gilbert W. Martin  
Vernon F. Miller  
Richard F. Momarts  
Robert S. Morton,  
George W. O'Leary  
Gale Page  
Ralph W. Perdue  
Andrea L. Pratt  
Julian R. Rivers  
Bert M. Sharp  
Barbara A. Sidell  
  
Patricia A. Smith

Lenaya D. Traxler

1952

Robert Almquist  
Bernice Anderson  
Alfred Baumeister  
Richard Becker  
Loyal Burkett  
Elizabeth Carney  
Betty Lou Carpenter  
Richard Church  
Charlyne Compeau  
Marinda Covic  
Georgia Davey  
Allen Davis'  
Geraldine Davis  
Dorothy DeWree  
Ronald Dodson  
Robert Douglas  
Roger Ensley  
Patricia Fairchild  
Joseph Granite  
Rudy Gruber  
Bertram Hackenberge  
Muriel Hagberg  
Leslie Haskell  
Tom Hill  
Howard Isberg  
Clara Jorgensen  
Janice Leach  
Barbara Lewis  
Lloyd Lounsbury  
James Lucidi  
Marida Martin  
Patricia McNavish  
JoAnn Meyers  
Katrina Moore  
Margaret Morgan  
Cecelia Myers  
Charles O'Halloran  
Carlotta Patton  
Marlene Pollard  
Juliette Smith  
Wilbur Vehmeier, Jr  
Marilyn Vincent

Willa Walker  
Theodore Wallace  
William Watt  
Lois Weber  
Jeanne Williams  
Joanne Williams  
Sue Wood  
Jules Wright

1953

Margot Acres  
Ralph Amouak  
Ronald Anderson  
Wesley Banks  
Patty Bonifay  
Barbara Bennet  
Dale Blackwell  
John Boswell  
Glenda Briggs  
Shirley Burnett  
Gary Butcher  
Irene Carlson  
Shirley Carlson  
Delbert Carnes  
Shirley Chaddon  
Betsey Collier  
Carolyn Cromwell  
Kenneth Drennan  
Robert Dulmage  
Jerald Eidem  
Glen Gardner  
Jean Gilbert  
Jim Growden  
Phil Haluptzok  
Ronald Hardy  
Robert Harman  
Ruth Hering  
Bernard Holtrop  
Lee Hoover  
Shirley House  
Dora Howard  
Clifford Isberg  
Richard Johnson  
Lucille Jones  
Gene Kidman



Ann Koonz  
Ray Kosola  
Buddy LaFon  
Betty Lefler  
Margie Lemm  
Jim Leveque  
Gerald Lizotte  
Jules Loftus  
Carl Lundquist  
Gary Luther  
Pat Lynch  
Curtis McDonald  
Edna Matson  
Gene Moree  
Frank Morrison  
Clifford Nelson  
Seward Olson  
Richard Persinger  
Therrell Powell  
Joyce Powers  
Joyce Rivers  
Georgia Rogers,  
William Sager  
Marge Sarsten  
Jack Scott  
Robert Seppi  
Betty Slater  
Frank Stewart  
Alberta Stout  
Fred Stubbings  
Robert Szymd  
Joe Tremarello  
Virginia Trembus  
Thomas Vaughn  
Jean Voigt  
Richard Wien  
Dan Wilken  
Joan Wise  
Nancy Witt

1954

Robbie Adams  
Mary E. Agbaba  
James E. Anderson  
Kenneth D. Bell, Jr.

Pearl Brasker  
Elizabeth Burnham  
Teddy Butcher  
Ruth Buzby  
Ronald Buzby  
Helen Cameron  
Arthur Carroll  
Irma Cloud  
Beverly Cohoe  
Jewell Collier  
Philip Curtis  
Betty Davis  
Joyce DeBow  
Margaret Dill  
Sharon Ellingson  
Thomas Elvey  
Bobbie Erquitt  
Karen Fredricks  
Michael Gatzkiewicz  
Werner Goodrich  
Nancy Hair  
Mary Hajdukovich  
Denis Hardenbrook  
Raymond Hardy  
William Hennessy  
Lois Hill  
Vernell Horn  
Bob Hoth  
Jane Idom  
Raymond Keturi  
Shirley Kidd  
Marie Koenig  
Richard Kornfeind  
Charlein Lander  
Donald Lizotte  
Ronald McDougal  
Maureen McNealy  
James Miller  
Ray Monsey  
Guy Myhre  
Delbert Niemi  
Thomas Noskoff  
Helen O'Halloran  
Delbert Primmer  
J.D. Rank  
Lois Ray

Donald Ritchie  
Rolland Ross  
Ray Sandbert  
Myrtis Sands  
Leo Scholotfeldt  
Robert Seaborn  
Robert Seely  
Leta Seitz  
Gerald Shira  
John Sims  
Joyce Smelcer  
Ronald Stearns  
Vivian Thomas  
Cliton Tweedy  
Lamar Underwood  
Karen Vehmeir  
Charles Voigt  
Joseph Vondra  
Grace Walker  
John Walsh  
Jack Williams  
Shirley Woodford  
Bruce Wright  
Eugene Yurkovich

1955

Robert Allen  
Karen Anderson  
Wilda Mae Bahlka  
Bruce Barber  
Maureen Bauer  
Joanne Bentley  
Hugh Blackwell  
David Brandholm  
Sig Bredlie  
Julianne Browne  
Irene Bruland  
Charlotte Calhoun  
George Carlson  
Tom Davey  
Carolyn Demientieff  
Joan Fanning  
Bob Flennaugh  
George Gale  
Larry Gatzkiewicz

Loretta Gibler  
June Grantham  
Anna May Grenac  
Karen Grill  
Penny Hackenberger  
Wayne Hanson  
Lawrence Hicks  
Vernon Hines  
Earl Hix  
Edward Hoch  
Jewel Hoeth  
Anna Horton  
Anna May Huckabay  
Jack Jackson  
Bill Jacob  
Geraldine Jewel  
Jeanette Johnson  
Kathryn Kozloski  
Darrell Kuhn  
Howard Kuhns  
Boyd Lahdenpera  
George Landry  
Jean Marie Lee  
Kenneth Allen Leslie  
Robert Linde  
Barbara Anne Lyons  
Ted Manville  
Arlene Marshall  
Colleen Martin  
Sherwood Mathis  
Sally Louise Mayo  
Madge McNavish  
Neil Moeller  
Suzanne Morton  
Sally Myers  
John Nielson  
Terry Olsen  
Marjorie Oskam  
Cacy Patton  
Jerry Pearson  
Stanley Porter  
Judith Ann Reed  
Richard Robinson  
Donna Rohrbaugh  
Bill Ross  
Dennis Ryan

Sue Anne Schlotfeldt  
Janice Scott  
Robert Luther Shaner  
Gail Sharp  
Jack Raymond Skaw  
Donna Smith  
Marilee Smith  
Noel Smith  
Jacquelyn Spelhaug  
Jackie Stoner  
Donna Swift  
Sandra Terry  
Barbara Thomas  
Charles Thomas  
Rita Mae Thomas  
Gary Todd  
Dorothy Tonseth  
Joseph Usibelli  
Darlene Vogt  
Barbara Faye Waddell  
Girard Williams  
Kay Wold  
James Dunn  
Ernest Glauco  
Jim Lindsey  
Lucy Maldonado  
Ann Nesbit  
Robert Shull

## About The Author

Chris Allan is an undergraduate at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and is close to graduating with degrees in history and English. He is a life-long Alaskan who was born in Anchorage and has lived in the Aleutians, Southeast, and the Interior. His love for Alaska and its history make writing about Fairbanks' Old Main an ideal project.

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Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
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