

History of Fairbanks

Amazing Pipeline Stories by Dermot Cole (1997) 224 pages

It took 70,000 men and women to build the pipeline -- and they came in all sizes, shapes and colors, and from all backgrounds. Add \$8 billion to the mixture and you will understand why the stories are indeed amazing! Includes much on Fairbanks.

The Ascent of Denali by Hudson Stuck [First published in 1914; 1977 edition includes the diary of Walter Harper and photos of the mountain by Bradford Washburn.] 188 pages (1977 ed.)

On June 7, 1913, Episcopal Archdeacon Hudson Stuck and his small party stood on top of "the Great One" -- Denali. It was the first recorded successful climb to the top, and this is his account of the trip. The book is considered a mountaineering classic.

Boom, Cash, and Balderdash: A Different Look at Fairbanks During Pipeline Construction by Jerry Fears (1978) 175 pages

The author saw the humor and the pathos of "Two-Street" during the pipeline boom, and his commentary was a regular feature on KFAR radio and TV. The book is a compilation of the best of these commentaries.

A Brief History of Fairbanks by William R. Cashen (1971) 18 pages

Very nicely done history, and yes, it is brief. The author was a mathematics professor.

The College Hill Chronicles: How the University of Alaska Came of Age by Neil Davis (1992) 627 pages

History of the University of Alaska written by a Geophysical Institute scientist. Needless to say, it is well-researched, and filled with politicking stories from the formative years of the small college on the hill.

The Cornerstone on College Hill by Terrence Cole (1994) 393 pages

The many photos and colorful stories make the history of the University of Alaska Fairbanks come alive.

Crooked Past: The History of a Frontier Mining Camp by Terrence Cole (1991) 163 pages

E.T. Barnette. Steamer captain. Entrepreneur. Trader. Risk taker. Adventurer. Mayor. Businessman. Postmaster. Banker. Mexican plantation owner. Ex-convict. Scoundrel. Founder of Fairbanks. [Reprint of **E.T. Barnette: The Strange Story of the Man Who Founded Fairbanks**, published in 1984.]

Crowe's Compleat Guide to Fairbanks and the Alaska Interior by Ronald Crowe (1979) 49 pages

Warm humor about life in Fairbanks.

Dying for Alaska Gold: Gold Miner Deaths and Injuries in the Fairbanks Area, 1904-1916 by Rex G. Fisher (2002) 197 pages

Most of the gold found in early Fairbanks was near bedrock, sometimes 100 ft. or more below the surface. And underground mining was dangerous. The accidents could be horrible -- falls, burns, drownings, cave-ins, explosions, asphyxiations... The book gives a picture of Fairbanks gold mining that is not often thought about, and the index makes it valuable as a "people" finder.

Early History Recorded in Fairbanks Street Names by Sharon Kessey (1998) 141 pages

Ever wonder who the Minnie of Minnie Street was? or the Noyes of Noyes Slough? This UAF master's thesis will give you the answers... Part I is a chronological history of the first 40 years of Fairbanks. Part II is an alphabetical street listing with explanations of who or what the streets were named for. A treasure trove for Fairbanksans!

Fairbanks (1995) 96 pages [Alaska Geographic, v.22, no.1]

The subject of this issue of Alaska Geographic is Fairbanks. A general overview, it would be an ideal introduction to our town for a newcomer.

Fairbanks: A City Historic Building Survey by Janet Matheson (1978) 102 pages

Nicely done inventory of "buildings built in Fairbanks between 1900-1940 which have historic significance to the people of Fairbanks". Photos and sketches. 'Must' reading for history buffs.

Fairbanks: A Gold Rush Town That Beat the Odds by Dermot Cole (1999) 224 pages

Lively history of Fairbanks written by a popular local author, who is a columnist for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. Gives the flavor as well as the facts.

Fairbanks: A Pictorial History by Claus Naske and L.J. Rowinski (2nd ed.,1995) 248 pages

History told by photographs; how Fairbanksans worked and played and coped... [This 2nd ed. updates the 1981 ed.]

Fairbanks, Alaska's Heart of Gold: A Traveler's Guide by Tricia Brown (2000) 94 pages

Overview of Fairbanks area; good reading for newcomers or those about to take the giant step of moving here! Color photos.

Fairbanks Cabbies by Richard W. Robinson (2000) 152 pages

The experiences of cab drivers and dispatchers -- past and present -- as told by themselves. Driving at -60 is a challenge, and so was driving during the Pipeline!

Fairbanks Self-Guided Downtown Walking Tour by the Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau (2002) 44 pages

If you are looking for the perfect way to spend one of our sunny summer evenings, try strolling downtown Fairbanks with this little booklet in hand. Filled with historical tidbits, it is available at the Convention & Visitors Bureau for just \$1 - keep several on hand for your out-of-town visitors!

Fairbanks: The \$200 Million Gold Rush Town; Historical Sketches (1902-1909) by Jo Anne Wold (1971) 42 pages

Written by a local historian, the book is short but charming. Photos.

Fairbanks Through the Smoke by the Fairbanks Fire Fighters (1993) 159 pages

Stories of the experiences, the emotions, the bravery and the humor of our local fire fighters and medics -- told in their own words.

Firecracker Boys by Dan O'Neill (1994) 388 pages

The plan was to excavate a harbor using thermonuclear devices -- a peaceful use for nuclear energy. The harbor was to be on the Alaskan coastline between Kotzebue and Barrow -- but much of the controversy came out of Fairbanks. Carefully researched, the book is a masterpiece of investigative reporting.

First Catch Your Moose: The Fairbanks Cookbook, 1909 Tanana-Yukon Historical Society (1999) 113 pages

Reprint of a cookbook compiled by the women of the Presbyterian Church. Photos and introduction have been added. Marrow dumplings, anyone?

The Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline by Kristy Hollinger / Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (2003) 62 pages

In 1953, construction was begun on a 626 mile (eight inch diameter) pipeline whose purpose was to transport fuel from the port in Haines to Fort Greely, Eielson AFB, and Ladd AFB (now Fort Wainwright). The time was the Cold War, and jet fuel was needed for the planes that were acting as deterrents against possible aggression. Nicely done overview of a pipeline project that played a short but important role in U.S. military history.

Historic Resources in the Fairbanks North Star Borough by Janet Matheson and F. Bruce Haldeman (1981) 120 pages

Filled with both historical and current photos of places that were important in the area's history. Some of the topics are mining, farming, riverboats, and the University. Nice maps of the early trails.

Historical Development of the Chena River Waterfront, Fairbanks, Alaska: An Archaeological Perspective by Peter M. Bowers and Brian L. Gannon (1998) 1 computer cd-rom [not available as a printed book]

This report, also known as the **Barnette Archaeological Project**, is the result of the first scientific study to see what lies beneath Fairbanks -- done to determine the archaeological impact of a proposed bridge across the Chena to connect Illinois and Barnette streets. Prologue by Terrence Cole. Lots of photos. This is a wonderful example of what an electronic format can do that a book cannot! (Note: The cd-rom is a little tricky to get started. Your browser (Netscape or Internet Explorer) must be open.)

History of Alaskan Operations of United States Smelting, Refining and Mining Company by John C. Boswell (1979) 126 pages

An unusual hodgepodge of Fairbanks area mining history especially relating to the USSR&M Co. (known locally as the Fairbanks Exploration Company). Includes nice descriptions of the Davidson Ditch and dredging operations. This book is filled with unexpected nuggets!

The History of Creamer's Dairy, Fairbanks, Alaska by Robin Lewis (1990) 16 pages

Over 1,000 people attended the barn dance celebrating the huge new barn built by the Creamer family in 1938. (Visitors took rides through the barn in not-yet-used manure carts.) Now a migratory waterfowl refuge, Creamer's Field was once a prosperous dairy farm that delivered milk to local gold camps. Photos, but not of the manure carts.

Homesteads on Fort Wainwright, Alaska by Kathy Price / Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (2002) 72 pages

Beautifully done historical report on the land that became Ft. Wainwright. Photos, maps, tables, bibliography, and lots about the tough people who "proved up". Did you know that Harry Badger biked from Valdez to Fairbanks in 1913 - and went on to become the "Strawberry King"?

Letters From Alaska: Hazards and Humor of Life in Subrrrbia by Edith C. Rohde (1979) 192 pages

The letters were a popular weekly column in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, and readers would send them to distant friends and relatives. Woven with bits of philosophy such as "Hassle makes life more fun". Illustrated by Bill Berry.

Northern Defenders: Cold War Context of Ladd Air Force Base, Fairbanks, Alaska, 1947-1961 by Kathy Price and Russell H. Sakett / Center for Ecological Management of Military Lands (2001) 59 pages

Alaska was of strategic military importance during the Cold War, and Ladd AFB watched over the huge area north of the Alaska Range. In addition to its defense activities, Ladd sponsored a wide variety of cold-weather research -- on topics such as frostbite, hypothermia, sewage disposal, airplane and equipment operation. This is a short, no-frills overview of the base during the 1950's era.

O Ye Frost and Cold: A History of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Fairbanks, Alaska, 1904-1979 (1980) 73 pages

The first Episcopal church service was held in a tent building which was the home of the Fairbanks Saloon; the bottles of liquor were covered with a white cloth out of respect. Filled with wonderful anecdotes such as this, the book shows the important role which the church has played in the shaping of today's Fairbanks.

Old Gold Rush To Alaska Diaries of 1898-1900 by Joyce L. Alig (2001) 320 pages

The subtitle says it all: "A true story of Ohioans and their Alaska gold prospecting in the Yukon, Koyukuk, Tanana and Chena Rivers' wilderness, told from their original unpublished diaries, letters and photographs...". Six of the men and their riverboat spent the winter of 1899-1900 in cabins on the Chena River -- along with their diaries and a camera. This is an important pre-Fairbanks book.

Old Yukon: Tales - Trails - and Trials by James Wickersham (1938) 514 pages

The author came north in 1900 as the district judge for the Third Judicial District, headquartered in Eagle and later in Fairbanks. For almost 40 years he was a keen observer -- and a major participant -- in Alaskan events. Fascinating reading! Includes his daily journal of the first recorded attempt to climb Denali (1903).

Our Schools by Robin Lewis and students of Fairbanks area public schools (1989) 80 pages

This history of Fairbanks public schools was done as part of the Silver Anniversary of the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The first part (1904-1951) is a general historical overview, written by Lewis; the second part discusses each school separately, and is done by the students. Many photos. Question: What high school teacher taught English and Science, and was nicknamed the "Flying Professor"?

Pioneering Spirit: The Sisters of Providence in Alaska by John C. Shideler and Hal K. Rothman (1987) 125 pages

Chapter 5 is the history of St. Joseph's Hospital in Fairbanks, a once familiar sight on the river by the "little white church". Operated by Catholic nuns for over 60 years, "St. Joe's" provided medical care to Fairbanks and the Interior -- much of it done without payment.

Rock Poker To Pay Dirt: The History of Alaska's School of Mines and Its Successors by Leslie M. Noyes in collaboration with Earl H. Beistline and Ernest N. Wolff (2001) 712 pages

An intricate weaving of the history of the School of Mines with the history of Fairbanks and the history of Alaskan mining. Much research went into the 57 chapters, 10 appendices, and 16 page bibliography -- making it a valuable resource for local mining buffs. Very readable with many anecdotes and photos.

The Role of the Steamboat in the Founding and Development of Fairbanks, Alaska by Basil Hedrick and Susan Savage (1986?) 120 pages
Similar to **Steamboats on the Chena** (see below)

The Role of Women in the Founding and Development of Fairbanks, Alaska, 1903-1923 by Phyllis Demuth Movius (1996) 166 pages

A UAF thesis about women and their experiences in early Fairbanks. Traces the lives of four women -- all strong, adaptable women from differing backgrounds. Fascinating reading; proof that Alaskan non-fiction is more interesting than fiction!

Steamboats On the Chena: The Founding and Development of Fairbanks, Alaska by Basil Hedrick and Susan Savage (1988) 114 pages

Well documented history of the early years of Fairbanks with an emphasis on the important role that steamboats played. Many photos. Interesting statistics.

Tanana Valley Railroad, The Gold Dust Line, Alaska by Nicholas Deely (1996) 161 pages

Fascinating story of the railroad system which connected the towns of Chena and Fairbanks with the area gold fields during the early 1900's. Thoroughly researched, many photos.

What Happened to Fairbanks?: The Effects of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline on the Community of Fairbanks by Mim Dixon (1978) 337 pages

The result of two years of research, this study takes a close look at the socioeconomic effects of a huge construction project on the small unprepared town of Fairbanks.

Prepared by Sylvia Burns
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