

## **Fairbanks Non-Fiction Books (including North Pole)**

**Aghvook, White Eskimo: Otto Geist and Alaskan Archaeology** by Charles J. Keim (1969) 313 pages

With little formal education and an insatiable interest in everything about Alaska, Otto Geist "collected" for the University of Alaska. The biography of an unusual man. Photos.

**Alaska Gold Trails: The Pioneers** compiled by Jim Madonna [first vol. published in 1999, the second in 2001; one more to come]

Between 1987 and 1989, Jim Madonna hosted a weekly talk show on KFAR Radio in which he interviewed Alaskan oldtimers. Encouraged by his listeners, the interviews became books. What makes them especially fun to read is that many of the people interviewed can still be met on the streets 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.

**Anders of Two Rivers** by Joyce J. Anders (1997) 121 pages

Story of the Anders family -- Californians who, in 1959, migrated to Fairbanks and homesteaded near Chena Hot Springs Road

**An Angel On His Wing** by Tay Thomas (1989) 228 pages

Known as the "Flying Bishop" by people throughout Alaska (and as "Go-go" by the priests), Episcopal bishop and pilot Bill Gordon was innovative, dynamic, unorthodox and always on-the-go. Filled with anecdotes of his wife and family, life in the villages, flying, and their years in Fairbanks.

**Arctic Dance: The Mardy Murie Story** by Charles Craighead and Bonnie Kreps (2002) 119 pages

A photo-essay on Margaret and Olaus Murie -- and their love and dedication to each other and to wilderness conservation. Margaret spent part of her childhood in Fairbanks, and was the first woman to graduate from what is now the University of Alaska. Based on the video of the same name.

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

**The Blue Parka Man** by H.C. Landru (1980) 196 pages

In 1905 miners on the trails leading to Fairbanks were being robbed by a man in a blue parka. Written by a historian, the book provides a vivid picture of the justice and law of those early days.

**Bob Bartlett of Alaska: A Life in Politics** by Claus M. Naske (1979) 287 pages

He kept mailing a diamond ring to the woman he wanted to marry and she kept mailing it back to him. But his perseverance paid off then as it did later during his many years as a congressional delegate and as one of the state's first two U.S. senators. Considered to be a prime mover in the Statehood movement, Bartlett grew up in Fairbanks.

**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.

**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.

**A Cheechako Goes to the Klondike** by C.W. Adams (2002) 190 pages

Written from the journals of one of the North's great riverboat captains, Charles W. Adams. Adams was the purser and part-owner of the Lavelle Young when it deposited an angry E.T. Barnette on the banks of the Chena River -- thus he played a major role in the founding of Fairbanks. He later went on to captain the Nenana, and during WWII transported Army supplies and soldiers. Boaters will enjoy this one!

**Cold River Spirits: The Legacy of an Athabaskan-Irish Family From Alaska's Yukon River** by Jan Harper-Haines (2000) 191 pages

Sam and Louise Harper and their ten children lived during a time of great change for Native people. This is the no-holds-barred story of their diverse family and their survival in two worlds. [Flora Harper, mother of the author, was the first Alaskan Native to graduate from the University of Alaska, in 1935.]

**Cold Starry Night: An Alaska Memoir** by Claire Fejes (1996) 320 pages

The author writes of her love for her husband and for Alaska, and their first adventurous years here in the 1940's and 50's. Written and illustrated by a nationally known Fairbanks artist, author, and businessperson.

**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!

**Edward Lewis Bartlett: Memorial Addresses Delivered in Congress** (1969) 113 pages  
Contains eulogies from Bob Bartlett's colleagues in the Senate, as well as obituaries from the News-Miner [for which he was once a reporter] and the Anchorage Daily News and Daily Times. Among the speakers are Ted Kennedy, Margaret Chase Smith, Birch Bayh, Warren Magnuson, Jacob Javits...

**Faces of Alaska** by Jean Lester (1988) 160 pages  
Artist Jean Lester painted 25 portraits of Fairbanksans to help celebrate 25 years of Statehood. Oral interviews followed, and this book is the result -- a unique combination of the portraits, old photographs, and text. [Two "Faces" volumes have been published, and it is the first one (1988) that focuses on Fairbanks people. A third volume will include some Fairbanksans, and is due out in Fall of 2002.]

**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  
Beautifully 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 local 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.

**Farthest North College President** by William R. Cashen (1972) 387 pages

Teacher, then lawyer, then judge, and finally the University of Alaska's first President, Charles E. Bunnell built the college from a single frame dwelling into a modern university.

**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?

**Four Generations on the Yukon** by Kent Sturgis (1988) 80 pages

Captivating story of an Alaskan family whose passion has been boats for over a century. Many photos.

**Frontier Politics: Alaska's James Wickersham** by Evangeline Atwood (1979) 449 pages

It's hard to believe that one person could influence a state as much as Wickersham did. The energetic and very political judge arrived in Fairbanks in 1903. Always full of ideas and great plans for Alaska, he lived to see many of his dreams come true.

**Frozen Assets, or Forty Years At North Pole** by Bill Lewis (1993) 103 pages  
A walk down Memory Lane with Bill Lewis -- and a funny, feisty walk it is!

**Fun on the Farm in Alaska** by Bert Stimple (1962) 165 pages  
Farmer's Loop Road is now dotted with upscale homes, but in 1936 it was open to homesteaders, and the author chronicles 30 years of growing potatoes in the Fairbanks area. Humorous, and filled with colorful people of the era.

**The Gospel According to Peter John** by Peter John (1996) 96 pages  
Peter John was a revered elder and the traditional chief of the Interior Alaska Athabaskans. A strong man with strong beliefs, his philosophy of life was a melding of the traditional Athabaskan ways with Christianity. The Tanana Chiefs office building in Fairbanks was recently renamed in his honor.

**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.

**Home Sweet Homestead: Sketches of Pioneer Life in Interior Alaska** by Joy Griffin (1995) 190 pages

The author and her new husband and 8-year-old twins begin their homesteading life in 1967 on the Elliott Highway, 60 miles north of Fairbanks. Enjoyable reading for all ages.

**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"?

**Jumping Fire: A Smokejumper's Memoir of Fighting Wildfire** by Murry Taylor (2000) 448 pages

With over 20 years of experience in smokejumping, the author shares how exciting and dangerous fighting forest fires can be. Taylor was based in Fairbanks for many years, so much of the book will be familiar territory for Fairbanksans.

**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.

**My Own Trail** by Howard Luke (1998) 112 pages

A fascinating book chronicling the life and beliefs of Athabascan elder Howard Luke. Includes a folded 18x24 inch map of the Tanana River area from Fairbanks to Old Minto (with some Athabascan place names given). A non-folded map may be purchased at the Alaska Native Knowledge Network in Fairbanks.

**Never Too Late To Be A Hero** by Glenn R. Gregory (1996) 321 pages

The author, a pilot and businessman who now lives in the Fairbanks area, has logged more than 2 million miles of flying in Alaska's wilderness. These are some of his adventures...

**Noel Wien: Alaska Pioneer Bush Pilot** by Ira Harkey (1999) 307 pages

"The Lord has his arm around Noel" is what Noel Wien's father-in-law used to say. Wien was a careful flyer -- paying attention to the weather and babying his plane -- and filling his life with 'flying firsts'. The story of a truly remarkable man. [This is a reprint of **Pioneer Bush Pilot: The Story of Noel Wien**, published in 1974.]

**North Country Challenge** by Ernest N. Patty (1969) 272 pages

Anecdotal autobiography of Ernest Patty who arrived in Fairbanks in 1922 to teach mining at the new Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. Resigning after 13 years, he said he needed to see if he could still do the things he had been teaching. And he could, and he did. Eventually he returned to the academic world to become the third president of the University of Alaska.

**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.

**Polar Pilot: the Carl Ben Eielson Story** by Dorothy G. Page (1992) 409 pages

Eielson led a short life, but it was filled with "firsts". Very readable biography of a pilot who foresaw what aviation could do for Alaska.

**Road Song** by Natalie Kusz (1990) 258 pages

Attacked and mauled by a sled dog at the age of seven, the author's life was changed forever -- as were the lives of her family. She tells of the families strength under adversity, their physical endurance, togetherness and laughter and love. This award-winning book is hard to put down...

**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!

**Shadows on the Arctic Snow** by Don Leach and Don Nelson (198?) 138 pages

The path of North Pole's Don Nelson led through Stalag Luft Six where he spent his 21st birthday, and through a problem with alcohol, and eventually through a religious conversion which completely changed his life. This is the story of Don and his wife Gen and the tremendous impact they have made with KJNP.

**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.

**This Old House: The Story of Clara Rust** by Clara Rust and Jo Anne Wold (1976) 262 pages

Clara Hickman came to Fairbanks in 1908 at the age of 18; this is the story of her marriage to Jess Rust and their life together. Much interesting detail on what their daily life was like.

**365 Days of Christmas** by Jan Thacker (1992) 135 pages

North Pole, the home of KJNP and Santa Claus House, is only 12 miles from Fairbanks -- but it has its own very distinct personality. The author describes what makes it a special place.

**Triumph Over Turbulence** by Jim Magoffin (1993) 308 pages

Founded in 1946, Interior Airways became Alaska International Air and eventually MarkAir. This is the remarkable biography of Dot and Jim Magoffin, who saw opportunity and enjoyed every moment of it!

**Two in the Far North** by Margaret Murie (1962=1st ed., with several later editions)

The author, a well-known conservationist, grew up in Fairbanks and was the first woman to graduate from the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines (now the University of Alaska Fairbanks). This is the story of her years in Alaska. Illustrated by her biologist husband, Olaus.

**The Way It Was** by Jo Anne Wold (1988) 165 pages

Delightful stories of the characters and lifestyles of early Fairbanks and the Interior.

**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.

**Wickersham: The Man at Home** by Jo Anne Wold (1981) 27 pages

Very readable story of the years 1900-1908 in the lives of the influential Judge Wickersham and his family. Many photos.

**William D. Berry: 1954-1956 Alaskan Field Sketches** compiled with commentary by Elizabeth Berry (1989) 230 pages

Berry was a nationally known wildlife artist and book illustrator, and many Fairbanksans will remember him working on the mural in the Children's Room of the Noel Wien Library in the late 1970's. [The Children's Room is now known as the Berry Room.] Book contains sketches done during his first three years in Alaska.

**Yearning Wild: Exploring the Last Frontier and the Landscape of the Heart** by R. Glendon Brunk (2002) 316 pages

Autobiography of a man who came to Fairbanks in 1968 eager to experience the Alaskan way of life -- hunting, dog mushing, living in a cabin -- and of his awakening to the importance of wilderness. The last few chapters are thoughtful and thought-provoking...

Prepared by Sylvia Burns  
Updated October 2003