

People of Fairbanks

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!

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 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.

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 Athabascan-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.

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.]

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.]

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Mercy Pilot: the Joe Crosson Story by Dirk Tordoff (2002) 254 pages

Joe Crosson saw his first airplane in 1913 when he was 10 years old, and it was love at first sight! His story is an integral part of Fairbanks and Alaskan aviation history. Photos are from Mrs. Crosson's collection. Beautifully done book.

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.

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...

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.

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.

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.

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
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