

A HISTORY OF THE NOME, ALASKA, PUBLIC SCHOOLS: 1899 TO 1958 FROM THE GOLD RUSH
TO STATEHOOD

A THESIS

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During the time of organization of the Tanana-Yukon Valley Historical Society, in Fairbanks in 1961, my eleven year old son, Jack, and I became charter members at the first meeting, when Mr. Irving McK. Reed talked about his life in Nome, where he arrived with his family at the age of ten, in 1900. In the fall of 1962 I went to Nome to teach in the high school, and inspired by Mr. Reed's accounts of the local history, began to delve into the beginnings of the Nome public school system.

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A History Of The Nome, Alaska, Public Schools: 1899 To 1958

From The Gold Rush To Statehood (An Abstract)

The history of education in Alaska under the Russians, and under the American administration after the annexation through transfer in 1867, emanated from both missionary and government concern which developed the framework for the establishment of a general system of public schools, loosely organized until 1917, when the Alaska Territorial Department of Education was established by an act of the legislature.

Against this background, in the early years of the great gold rush on the Seward Peninsula, the Nome Public School System had its origin, first as a volunteer missionary-community effort, then as a school supported by the United States Bureau of Education, and finally as an incorporated city school district under local City of Nome auspices.

The early years were characterized by a struggle between the city council and the board of education for control of tax monies supporting the schools, with the ultimate victory of the council and the loss of fiscal independence by the board, a pattern that has persisted to this day.

Under the Nelson Act of 1905, the city schools were for white children and children of mixed blood leading a civilized life. In 1947, a non-discrimination act passed by the territorial legislature terminated this segregation, causing a large increase in the enrollments of the Nome Public Schools, with consequential problems of an acculturational nature accompanied by multiplied costs for plant expansion and operation.

The decline of gold production before World War I and the resulting loss of white population, reduced the school enrollment to its lowest point, 66, in 1923-24, with a gradual growth up to 166 in 1940-41, a general level that remained until the first voluntary action toward integration was made in 1945-46, leading to a total enrollment of 700 by 1957-58, the last year before statehood.

The school system has not been sufficiently supported under the rule of fiscal dependence, and the results have been disastrous in terms of the educational product. A change is needed in the basic plan of support. This paper suggests total fiscal support by the State Department of Education, with the locally elected school board acting as the sole, independent agent of the State Department in all matters of Nome Public Schools concern.

Chapter I

Backgrounds: Russian and American

The history of the Nome Public Schools can be better understood in the context of a summarization of the general political history of Alaska and the development of its school system, both under the Russian and American administrations, up to the year 1901, when the City of Nome was incorporated.

On St. Elias Day, July 16, 1741, an expedition under the command of Vitus Bering, a Danish navigator in the service of the Russian crown, sighted a great mountain range on the continental coast of Alaska. The commander named an eminent peak Mount St. Elias, marking the discovery of Russian America. Four days later Kayak Island was discovered to the west of Mount St. Elias, and Bering's men went ashore to get fresh water. They were the first known Europeans to stand on Alaskan soil.¹

In the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century the explorers of three other nations, France, Spain, and England, cruised the waters of Alaska and claimed the land for their sovereigns, but only the Russians made settlements in the new discovery. Primarily the interest of the Russians was vested in the fur trade, but associated with the colonization a zealous priesthood of the Russian Orthodox Church established missions and opened schools,

principally for the Russian and creole families in the employ of the Russian American Company, on the islands and coastal areas encompassed by the company trade.²

Gregor Shelikof, a founder of the Russian American Company, organized the first school in 1784 at Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island, the first permanent Russian settlement in America. A church was erected there in 1796. Between 1824 and 1867, schools were opened in the chief trade centers, in the main by missionaries who established the schools in connection with their larger missions. Schools were founded in this period at Sitka, Kodiak, Unalaska, Belkovski, Nushagak, Amla in the Atkha district, St. Michael, Unga, Unimak, Akutan, and a number of other places.³

Besides these mission schools the Russian American Company maintained a colonial academy or institute at Sitka, for training Russians and Creoles in technical and commercial occupations in order to provide the company with surveyors, navigators, cartographers, engravers, accountants, shipwrights, and skilled craftsmen for every community need. When the United States purchased Alaska, her leading native born men were able to read and write in the Russian language and conduct all the necessary business of a colony.⁴ A number distinguished themselves in exploration, cartography, and in the Russian Orthodox priesthood for which they were trained in a theological school and seminary at Sitka during the 1840's.⁵ In that same decade, which has been called "the golden age of Sitka," Lady Etolin, wife of the governor, founded a school for girls there. The young ladies were taught such essentials as needlework, geography, history, and household arts.

Russia's defeat by England and France in the Crimean War in 1856 exposed her inability to defend Alaska. The Russian inhabitants of the territory had never numbered more than 600, with few more than 1500 creoles, and an estimated aboriginal population of 24,00 to 29,000. There was some talk in the Canadas in the period of the Crimean War of seizing Alaska to add it to the territories of the proposed Canadian union. Discoveries of gold in British Columbia added an even greater peril, the threat of a gold rush and the loss of Russian authority to a horde of American prospectors as had been the experience of the government of Mexico in California in 1849. Pragmatism dictated that Russia dispose of her American colonies.⁶ England was her foe; Russia preferred to thwart British expansionism in the Northwest by selling her territory to the United States. A treaty of cession was signed March 30, 1867, in Washington, D.C., by Secretary of State William H. Seward and Baron Edouard de Stoekl, the Russian envoy. The purchase price of Alaska was set at \$7,200,000.

Alaska was made a military district and nominally governed by the War Department from 1867 to 1877, with posts at Sitka and Wrangell. From 1877 to 1879, by reason of withdrawal of the army units to quell an Indian uprising in Utah and Nevada, government was left by default to a lone customs collector under the Treasury Department at Sitka. A dangerous situation arose from threatening Tlinget Indians, and a Canadian warship answered an appeal for help from the citizens of Sitka in 1879. The United States government then turned over the affairs of the military district to the Navy Department which exercised control until 1884, when Congress by the first organic act created the District of Alaska. This seventeen year initial period of American ownership of Alaska as an unorganized area has been called by Ernest Gruening, Alaska's former great governor and United States Senator, "The Era of Total Neglect."

Without civil government of any kind after the transfer, the citizens of Sitka in 1867 took matters into their own hands and organized a city government by consent without the force of constitutional law. A school was opened, but taxes were hard to collect and after a stormy ten years both city government and the school died in 1877, a pattern to be repeated in essence over twenty years later at Nome.

Fortunately, the Russian government continued to subsidize its missions and schools, providing education for children of Russian and mixed descent and for some natives.⁷ Prior to 1844 eleven religious groups of the United States had set up mission stations with schools supported by private contributions. Two schools were maintained under lease terms in the seal islands, the Pribilofs, by the Alaska Commercial Company. The Russian church continued to provide seventeen schools at their mission sites.⁸ But no permanent schools had yet been established for white children of American descent.

The Organic Act of 1884 initiated the rule of Alaska under the United States Department of the Interior that continued until statehood seventy-five years later. The act provided for the appointment of a governor; a district court clerk; four commissioners with jurisdiction of courts at Sitka, Juneau, Wrangell, and Unalaska; and a United States marshal who would appoint a deputy for each of the commissioners' jurisdictions. The governor, attorney, judge, marshal, clerk, and commissioners would be appointed by the President of the United States, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. However, the act explicitly denied representation in Congress or any direct redress to it by the statement, "---there shall be no legislative assembly in said district, nor shall any Delegate be sent to Congress therefrom." The district was also declared a land district, with a land office located at Sitka. Questions of Indian possessory rights to lands were reserved for future legislation by Congress; provisions were made for education of children of school age; the importation, manufacture, and sale of intoxicating liquors, except for restricted uses, was prohibited; and the act was to be administered as an adjunct to a civil and criminal code, "the general laws of the State of Oregon now in force, so far as the same may be applicable and not in conflict with the provisions of this act or the laws of the United States."⁹

John H. Kinkead, the first governor of the district under the new act, made his initial report in the time required by the law, in 1884, only twenty-six days after his arrival at Sitka. Kinkead, a former governor of Nevada, had lived at Sitka shortly after the acquisition of the territory and was, therefore, familiar with the enormous difficulties to be confronted in the immense ungoverned colony.

Attempting to fulfill the duties of his office under the act of 1884, Governor Kinkead reported briefly on basic industries. Gold had been discovered near the present city of Juneau in the summer of 1880, and across Gastineau Channel near the present city of Douglas a year later. Kinkead reported that gold mining reduction works were near completion and that the future of the industry looked promising. Fisheries had already assumed large proportions; timber was only useful locally and interest in agriculture was at low level; the Alaska Seal and Fur Company was operating in the Pribilofs; mail was irregular and he recommended that service be increased to twice a month. All travel and transportation was by water; no land routes had been developed.¹⁰

There existed no civil government in Prince William Sound, the report continued, or on Cook's Inlet. The people, who were descendants of Russian and Aleut families, claimed to be Christians and members of the Greek church. They regretted that they had been overlooked by the government and were eager to be placed under civil authority. For that purpose the number of commissioners and local magistrates should be increased to permit local civil government. The customs service was without revenue cutters although smuggling and illicit traffic were extensive; a revenue cutter should be constantly cruising Alaskan waters.¹¹

"The subject of education," the Governor stated, "is one of great interest and importance to all. At present the District is literally without schools for the education of white children. Here and at Juneau this want is, to my own knowledge, severely felt....The children are all growing up in total ignorance...." He suggested further some control of liquor and a tax on the sellers to keep up a police force, and for the repair of streets and sidewalks.¹²

Kinkead summarized: "The immense extent of country to be supervised, the varied, complex, and to some extent conflicting interests to be brought under control, necessitate substantial aid from the home government."¹³ He suggested that successful government for Alaska entailed a solution of her geographical problems: the governor must have a ship for his transportation; mail service must be instituted; and seaways must be charted and fitted with aids to navigation. Also there were racial problems to solve: enlightenment and education of the natives and control of the liquor traffic. To prevent international complications from the gold discoveries in the British Columbia hinterlands adjacent to the southeastern panhandle, a joint British-American commission should survey the Alaskan approaches to the interior. The problem of maintaining civilized institutions for the few white inhabitants of Alaska was compounded by both the absence of taxation and representation.¹⁴

During the ensuing fourteen years appointed officials made some efforts to conduct the affairs of Alaska in accordance with the act of 1884. The governors in that era were J. H. Kinkead, 1884-1885; A. P. Swineford, 1885-1889; L. E. Knapp, 1889-1893; and James Sheakley, 1893-1897. By the end of Governor Sheakley's term of office destiny turned north, dramatically expressed by Jeannette Paddock Nichols in her superb historical work *Alaska*:

In August of 1896, there leapt out from an obscure creek on the upper Yukon near Dawson, Canada, a tiny tongue of flame—a flame not of fire, but of gold and the news of gold. It quickly grew, and mounted high enough for all the world to see, and spread far enough for countless men to feel the desire to come and enjoy the warmth of it. It crossed the boundary into Alaska (1897), ran down the Yukon, and circled the sands at Nome (1899). In Alaska other flames of gold had appeared and would appear; but none quite as strange and bold as this. This startling phenomenon was to have a far-reaching effect upon the industrial and political future of Alaska.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the organization of public education under the Organic Act was set in motion. Specifically, the act provided:

That the Secretary of the Interior shall make needful and proper provision for the education of children of school age in the Territory of Alaska, without reference to race, until such time as permanent provision shall be made for the same, and the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary is hereby appropriated for this purpose.

As no one knew how to distribute the money, none of it was spent.

The Secretary of the Interior drew up rules and regulations which on March 2, 1885, gave the general management of the public schools to the United States Commissioner of Education, and also provided for a territorial board of education of three members: the Governor, the judge of the United States Court, and a general agent, who, with the approval of the commissioner, had the authority to appoint teachers, prescribe their duties, fix salaries, and make rules and regulations for the operation and administration of schools.¹⁶ Appointment of a man of the highest administrative ability to the position was essential to success in organizing a territorial school system over an area so vast and with stringent means.

Sheldon Jackson, a missionary agent for the Presbyterian Church, had first visited Alaska in 1877 and had identified himself with the region through his letters to the Department of the Interior and by widespread press comment on his activities.¹⁷

"Prior to the consecration of P. T. Rowe as Bishop of Alaska for the Protestant Episcopal Church in America (1896)," says Jeannette P. Nichols, "Sheldon Jackson was for all practical purposes the sole recognized guardian of education, of the Protestant faith, and of the uplift of the natives in Alaska."¹⁸ Dr. Jackson was the man selected by Commissioner of Education John Eaton, in April, 1885, as general agent for education in Alaska. Sixteen years hence, Dr. Jackson would establish the first tax supported public school in Nome, a city yet unborn.

With the cooperation of missionary groups, Dr. Jackson aided new and already established American mission schools with government contracts. Although his method aroused controversy, it was pragmatic, and by the winter of 1887-1888, there was the slender beginning of a far-flung school system in Alaska.¹⁹ In southeastern Alaska sixteen schools were functioning, only four of them independent public schools established through civic initiative. To the westward across the Gulf of Alaska, other than the Russian mission schools and the two government schools on the Pribilof Islands, public schools were in operation at Kodiak, Afognak, and Unga. Mission schools were active along the Kuskokwim River, at Unalakleet and St. Michael on Norton Sound, and elsewhere in the north and northwest. Although government contracts with church sponsored schools were

withdrawn in 1893, on constitutional grounds of separation of church and state,²⁰ the use of mission buildings and teachers through federal subsidy was a prime mover in the immediate establishment of an operational territorial system of schools.

By 1894, from an estimated 10,000 children of school age only 1,438 were enrolled in the 24 schools functioning in the territory. Some mission schools continued on their own resources and some were closed, but more than 20 of them were taken over by the Bureau of Education to be managed directly by the agents of the federal government.²¹ Little change was to be made from this time until the gold rush of 1898 and the subsequent long overdue laws necessary for change that would be wrested from Congress.

Mounting dissatisfaction with federal neglect culminated, in 1890, in a non-partisan convention in Juneau. Hoping to seat an elected delegate in Congress, the convention drew up a memorial to Congress reciting Alaska's wrongs:

We are denied representation in Congress. Our jurisprudence is a distortion. Our judicial system is faulty. We have no title to land. We have no voice in the control of public schools. We have neither local self-government, nor the means by which to establish it. Our liquor law is obnoxious. Our postal service is inefficient. Our government buildings are in decay or altogether lacking.²²

Although commercial interests, mining, fisheries, and trading and transportation companies largely ruled the Territory by lobby in Washington and opposed home rule of any kind, the rush to the Klondike in 1897, and the greatest stampede of all to Nome in 1899-1900 were to bring in a wave of Americans that could not be suppressed.²³

"Within the past three years," wrote Sheldon Jackson in his report of 1898-1899 to the Commissioner of Education, "thousands of white men have settled in Alaska, many of them taking their families with them. The population of the older settlements has largely increased and several new towns have sprung up which are clamoring for school facilities. If Congress regards it as the duty of the Secretary of the Interior to continue to provide schools for the white population of Alaska, I cannot state too emphatically that it is absolutely necessary that the appropriation for education in Alaska be largely increased."

Jackson suggested \$60,000 for education for the 1899-1900 budget, a figure doubling the meager congressional allotment of the reported year.²⁴ Typifying the indifference of official Washington, his advice went unheeded.

Pressed by strong public opinion and an Alaska lobby growing out of gold rush conditions, Congress enacted three important laws for the new American treasure-house that Alaska had become between 1898 and 1900. Provisions for the acquisition of land for townsites and commercial purposes had been incorporated in a rider to the Timber Culture Act of 1891 and remained, until 1898, the only law under which title to land in Alaska could be obtained.²⁵ In 1898 a Transportation and Homestead Act was enacted; a Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, the Act of March 3, 1899, instituted a tax system on all businesses and repealed the liquor prohibition of the Organic Act of 1884 with a high license on dealers and saloons, but all monies derived reverted to the United States Treasury. As representation in Congress was still denied, this Act created great dissatisfaction and added impetus to the movement for home rule.²⁶

The third of these enactments, The Act of June 6, 1900, A Civil Code and Code of Civil Procedure, provided for Alaska an entire legal system for the prevention of crime and the enforcement of civil rights. It included provisions for the government of municipalities in an incorporation law, restricted municipal indebtedness to one percent of the valuation of property, and made provision for schools, both municipal and district. Fifty percent of the tax monies collected from business licenses within each corporation was to be used for school purposes under the direction of the city council.

Section 28 of the Act stated:

The Secretary of the Interior shall make needful and proper provisions and regulations for the education of the children of school age in the district of Alaska, without reference to race, and their compulsory attendance at school, until such time as permanent provision shall be made for the same.

Governor Brady reported to the Secretary in October, 1900, "Juneau and Skagway have become incorporated and their funds for all school purposes will be ample." Showing estimates of the municipal income of these two incorporated towns, the first under the new law, the Governor stated the problem induced by the law with regard to unincorporated towns and district schools,²⁷ which then included Nome:

Here, then, we will have two towns spending as much money for schools as Congress is willing to vote for all the rest of Alaska. This is hardly fair to the children beyond incorporated limits. If 50 per cent of the license money which is collected, excluding the amount from incorporated towns, could be used by the Secretary of the Interior, he could nearly comply with the law in furnishing the proper educational facilities for the children of school age who should be in school. If Congress will not adopt this method of providing the expenses of schools, it is recommended, then, that it be urged to increase its appropriation to \$75,000.

Trouble was in store. Congress appropriated \$30,000, contrary to the Governor's thoughtful advisement, for Bureau of Education schools under Dr. Jackson's domain for the 1900-1901 budget year.

Against this background the lusty young mining camp of Anvil City now burgeoned into a city of more than 12,000 and officially christened Nome by the consent government, struggled with its growing pains: crime, litigation, development, a corrupted district court, and impeded efforts to secure incorporation and support for a public school for its children.

CHAPTER II

Gold Rush Nome Settlement, The First Schools and Incorporation

When rich deposits of alluvial gold were discovered by Jafet Lindeberg, John Brynteson, and Eric Lindblom on Anvil Creek, a tributary of the Snake River near Cape Nome, on the Seward Peninsula, September 20, 1898, prospectors from nearby mining areas soon pitched their tents on the beach at the mouth of the river and settled down to wait out the winter. But the magnitude of the strike and the ease with which the coastal gold fields could be reached from the states by sea, would, within two years, give rise to the largest city in the Territory and almost double the population of Alaska.¹

Lindeberg named Anvil Creek on account of a peculiarly shaped rock formation on the top of a low mountain rising above his discovery claim and having the appearance of a huge anvil. The mountain which bears the same name is a prominent landmark overlooking the tundra and the sea. Lindeberg's party is also credited with naming the Snake River, descriptive of its winding course.²

In accordance with the mining laws which provided that miners might organize a district, elect their own recorder, and make rules and regulations having the force of law insofar as they are reasonable and not in conflict with the federal statutes, the discoverers returned to Golofnin, a mining camp some 70 miles to the east, where they formed a party with J.W. Price, Dr. A.R. Kittleson, and Johan Tornenson. The Cape Nome Mining District was organized and Dr. Kittleson was elected recorder.³

Learning of the discovery, the Lyng brothers and Messers Inglestad and John Dexter hurried to Cape Nome to locate claims, also staking out town lots, one of the Lyngs driving the first stake. All locations were 320 by 660 feet. It was then too late in the year for mining, but claims on some 7,000 acres were filed by about 40 men. Nearly all who located for themselves also located by power of attorney for their friends. From the abusive staking of land by the discoverers and organizers of the district arose the first serious controversy among the miners.⁴

Late in June, 1899, when the first ship from Puget Sound, the Garonne, reached the new camp, its passengers found a population of about 400 men from other parts of Alaska and the Klondike who had also responded to rumors of the rich discoveries and had arrived during freeze-up by overland trails, namely by way of the Tanana-Yukon river valley. During the summer the population of the camp increased to nearly 3000.⁵

Even the early winter arrivals in 1899 found that most of the immediate region had been staked, and ugly disputes over claims burst into a threat of violence by mid-summer. An attempt was made at a miners' meeting in Murphy and Rickard's Northern Saloon, July 10, to have all the claims staked up to that time invalidated to permit a general restaking of the creeks. The anger of the American miners assumed a patriotic guise, as they alleged that staking of many of the first claims, including the discovery ground, by aliens was illegal. Second Lieutenant Oliver L. Spaulding, Jr., commanding officer of the army troops detailed to the area, averted mob action by clearing the saloon and ordering that original locators would work their claims until civil authorities whom he could support should adjust the matter.⁶

Discovery of gold on the beach by John Hummel created a respite, although Nome was to see violence, litigation, and scandal in high places regarding ownership of mining claims within the first two years of its robust life. Meaning while, the disgruntled miners rushed to the beaches, and within the next two months 2,000 men took out more than \$1,000,000 in fine gold dust from the black ruby sands.⁷ This was the activity viewed by General Agent of Education Sheldon Jackson on his first visit to the camp.

Dr. Jackson noted in his journal for July 26, 1899:

At 10:50 a.m. we anchored abreast of Anvil City the new village which has sprung up in connection with the Cape Nome placer mines.... Nome (Anvil City) is a conglomeration of tents, with half a dozen frame houses or shanties, and two or three iron warehouses in process of erection by the transportation and trading companies. The ocean is staked out with claims for from 10 to 20 miles. We saw men panning out gold on the beach in front of the most densely populated part of the place. Some fine teams of horses were being used in hauling.⁸

He reported in August, "The place was wild with the large returns being received both in the gulches and the black ruby sands on shore."⁹ On August 24, he noted, "Met Judge Johnson, of the United States District court of Alaska, and was present at the opening of the first court at Anvil City. Saw some citizens with regard to a block of ground for school purposes."¹⁰

That was about the extent of Jackson's educational business in Anvil City in 1899, but the dearth of children had not yet made the matter critical. It was a man's town.

Among the 143 businesses, professional services, and social institutions listed by The Nome News in November, 1899, twenty of them were gambling saloons, the two most prominent being The Northern, operated by Murphy and Rickard, and The Dexter, under a partnership of Charles E. Hoxie and the notorious gunman Wyatt Earp. Earp made his debut in the local papers by his arrest on a charge of drunk and disorderly. The popular Tex Rickard later became a famous prizefight promoter and built the new Madison Square Garden in New York, where he managed world championship matches in the Dempsey-Tunney era. Many men in all walks of life who later became prominent in national affairs, business, professions, and the arts, emerged into public notice at Nome in this early period. The saloon-gambling halls were the popular gathering spots for socializing.

When the new criminal code and tax laws went into effect, July 1, 1899, Judge Charles S. Johnson, the United States district judge residing at Sitka, took his court by way of the Chilkoot Pass and the Yukon River to the new gold strike town of Anvil City. He arrived in August and held court, although his primary mission was to acquaint the mining communities with the license features of the new Act and to appoint commissioners, while the marshal would appoint deputies under the authority of the Act. Knowing that legislation was pending in Congress that would create new district courts and make the incorporation of towns possible, Judge Johnson did not attempt to stay and determine the issues of mining claims in dispute, but admitted several attorneys to the bar and began many suits.¹¹ He advised the leading men of the town to form an interim local municipal government by popular consent for mutual protection.¹²

A mass meeting was held on September 13, 1899, and a committee of seven men was elected to draw up a city charter and to serve as a city council until such time as Congress should pass laws permitting incorporation. The designation of the camp as Anvil City was officially changed to Nome, and Thomas D. Cashel was elected mayor. The Nome News reported in its first issue, October 9, that 1418 votes were cast in the election.

From the start the consent government had problems compounded by limited powers and authority. The crowded sprawling settlement, largely tents and frame shacks of small dimensions, was so closely jammed together along the beach and bordering tundra that the ropes of adjacent tents were crossed. The News editor opined that the streets would have to be straightened and widened before arrival of the next year's boats and thousands of people. Lot jumping was a big problem; men defended the sites they lived on with their lives, and there was much burglary and wood stealing. A typhoid epidemic laid low the notable pioneer missionary Dr. S. Hall Young, who spent the winter convalescing in the hospital – an institution aided by the zealous fund raising of the local ladies, among them Mrs. Wyatt Earp.¹³

While a furious November storm piled the town high with snow and the breakers pounded the over-populated beach, the city council fixed a tax rate. The levy was to be one and three-fourths percent on a total community property evaluation of \$1,556,650.¹⁴ A month later the council declared that of \$29,000 in taxes levied only

\$8,000 had been paid. The News warned of the weakening of the consent government if taxes were not collected. The following month, February of 1900, in order to save money, the council abolished the offices of the city attorney, Key Pittman (later Senator from Nevada), and the street commissioner.¹⁵ There was much bickering among the members over payments of warrants for salaries and for hospital services for indigent patients. The matter of appointing a public administrator for business efficiency was postponed.^{16*}

Dissatisfaction with the consent government resulted in two branches of opposition by March. The inhabitants of the sandspit, which lies between the Snake River and the sea, held a meeting and sent a delegation to ask for separation of the sandspit population from the consent community. A petition was circulated by an anonymous group led by the Reverend Mr. Raymond Robins of the Congregational Church asking for the appointment of a "committee of safety" composed of leading business men who would manage municipal affairs in lieu of the council. Both moves failed; the latter brought the taunts of the press on Mr. Robins when his promotion of the petition was discovered. Clergymen were advised to stick to their pulpits.¹⁷ However, both the mayor and the treasurer were accused by other council members of grafting and misuse of funds in office. The treasurer resigned but Mayor Cashel, a man of sterner stuff, defended himself vigorously and stayed on, repaying a deficit in his account of something under \$400.¹⁸

Halcyon days in February, following warm Chinook winds from the Pacific, melted the snow. Two feet of water stood on the sea ice and streams flowed through the town. Although the weather was delightful and the balmy air saved the expense of heating fuel,¹⁹ the thaw revealed some shocking sanitation conditions. In a March 3, published report on drainage and sanitation, the mayor announced that "The alleyways between some of the prominent saloons on Front Street are almost three feet deep with a glacier of urine.." He appealed once more for the diligent prosecution of collection of delinquent taxes.²⁰

What the consent government could not do was done by the business men of the city through the formation of a chamber of commerce. The chamber raised \$5400 in cash for a drainage and sanitation system. Judge Ransom reflected that "the burden of running a mining camp of this size, when government was vested in consent, was too great a burden to be borne unless backed up by federal law. If the present government went out of power and a new one came in, the same conditions and demands for sanitation would exist."²¹ Late in April drainage ditches were being dug by forty men and the work was being pushed vigorously under the aegis of the chamber of commerce.²²

While Nome was foundering in the stormy waters of consent government, someone thought of the children. "A public school is needed in Nome," editorialized John F.A. Strong, a future governor of the Territory, in The Nome News of February 2, 1900. "There are some twenty or more children of school age and one should be provided."

A public meeting was held by the Reverend Raymond Robins and the trustees of St. Barnard's Congregational Church on February 26, in the church sponsored library building, for the purpose of taking steps to establish a public school. Judge Walter Church, chairman, S.A. Keller, Mayor E.S. Ingraham, D.W. McKay, secretary, and J.V. Logan were elected as a school committee. Miss Rosa E. Lamont, a young woman of the mission, well known for her activities in social and cultural circles, volunteered her services as teacher without remuneration. A room in the library building was offered by the trustees for a schoolroom. Captain Conrad Siem donated a blackboard, but other supplies, including school books and coal, were dependent on the success of the committee in raising funds by popular subscription. They also hoped to be able to pay the teacher, but the decision was made to start the school at once.²³

Editor Strong optimistically reacted:

The News believes that a fund can and should be raised not only to defray the actual running expenses but to compensate the teacher as well. Government aid for the purpose of erecting a school building and maintaining a school will without doubt be forthcoming next summer, but until that time the cost and

responsibility of maintaining a school rests with the citizens of Nome and we are confident that the movement will meet with hearty support.²⁴

The school was opened on Wednesday morning, February 28, with an attendance of twelve pupils. The hours were scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to noon from Monday through Friday. A month later a supply of school books was received from Golovin where the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant operated a mission school.²⁵

In mid-June Dr. Sheldon Jackson arrived on the U. S. Revenue Cutter Bear to meet with the local school committee. "On June 9," he reported, "although it snowed hard all day, Judge Church and myself tramped over all sections of the city in search of a suitable place for a future school building." A sub-committee on the location of school sites recommended three locations in different parts of the city two days later, and Dr. Jackson returned to the ship.²⁶ By mid-summer he had selected a district commission for a government school in Nome. Appointed on June 11 were Judge Church, the Reverend D.J. Elliott, J.W. Brynteson and Dr. S J. Call; on July 10, D.W. McKay, S.A. Keller, Major E.S. Ingraham, and J.V. Logan.²⁷ Dr. Jackson had one more school to squeeze under the ceiling of his seemingly fixed \$30,000 annual budget.

On May 1 the population of Nome stood at 1850, although many who had spent the winter in the town had gone to prospect or work on their claims.²⁸ The output of gold reported by the San Francisco mint for Alaska in 1899 was \$5,602,000. Of that amount \$2,400,000 came from the mines at Nome.²⁹

In May The Nome News commented on the provisions of the Alaska Civil Code bill which was being considered in the United States Senate in February.³⁰ The community could look forward within the next few months to a district court in Nome, and the possibility of full legal status of an incorporated city. However, almost a full year would elapse before that dream would be fulfilled. Nome had yet to share more of the old agony of Alaskan cities elsewhere.

The painful experience of disenfranchisement long had been endured by every older community in the Territory. The Civil Code of 1900 brought no less than a feeling of freeing from universal bondage:

Visiting congressmen found public opinion greatly stirred over the question of civil law, education, the Canadian boundary, and local self-government. But the worst vocal dissatisfaction of all arose over the desire for local self-government in Juneau, Skagway, and Ketchikan. These young Pan-handle towns had populations of 3,000; 3,117; and 800, respectively, but they were without any legal form of municipal government, were struggling to perfect townsite title, and had ambitions to become modern communities... However, both the faith and hope were giving out with the strain upon public patience at the time when the congressmen arrived at these places.³¹

Nome rocked in the flood-tide of change at the turn of the century. The city indebtedness for the winter stood at \$14,000 in June, with cash assets of only \$3,000. In frustration Treasurer Bean resigned. But the first steamer, the whaler Alexander, piloted by Captain Talbot, arrived on May 21, breaking the long winter isolation. The great stampede of 1900 was on. By the first of August, 162 steamships and 70 sailing vessels had arrived, debarking 18,000 of the 20,000 passengers who were landed before freeze-up.³² Excitement and hopes were high.

The ships anchored in the roadstead, a mile out from the unprotected shore, presented the spectacle of an amphibious invasion by steam and sail. They came from the west coast ports via Dutch Harbor from breakup to freeze-up, to disgorge their passengers and cargo onto lighters and launches which deposited man, beast, and cargo, wet or dry, without guarantee, onto the fabled sands at the water's edge. The sandspit and the adjoining beaches were piled high with lumber, boxes, and baggage of all kinds. Machinery littered the shoreline which had become a tent city miles in length. Crowds of men and the few women who had braved the adventure

milled around the landing areas searching for their possessions. Few of them knew where they wanted to go, but faced the present necessity of finding a place of shelter. How they did was like the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Hundreds of people were being landed every hour and there was no apparent shelter for them anywhere.³³ The weak, the disgruntled, the improvident, the lazy, and the faint of heart soon left for home.³⁴

Those who stayed viewed the prospects with varied emotions. Young Carl Lomen, 19, who would win fame as the "reindeer king of Alaska," arrived in Nome with his father, Judge J. Lomen in June, from Minnesota. As he gazed at the thousands of new white tents pitched on the littered beach and at the treeless tundra with snow covered jagged peaks in the distance, he was swept with himesickness. He recalled, "If I had known that I was to spend my life in this uncivilized territory, I am certain that I would have booked passage back to the States."³⁵

Mrs. May Kellogg Sullivan, who made a nineteen day voyage of 3139 miles from San Francisco, through heavy ice fields in the Bering Sea, remarked that their cluttered destination looked very good, in spite of the perilous trip ashore and no comforts in the town. She described the camp: "Crowded dirty, disorderly, full of saloons and gambling houses, with a few fourth-class restaurants and one or two mediocre hotels, we found the new mining camp a typical one in every respect. Prices were sky high. One even paid for a drink of water...." Mrs. Sullivan fortunately found friends she had known in Dawson who took her in.³⁶

Lanier McKee, a young lawyer from New York, cogitated that "had it not been for the chance discovery of gold in that remote spot, one passing along the coast would have considered it barren and forlorn, 'a dreary waste expanding to the skies.'" From the ship it was indeed a white city, "tents, tents, tents....almost as far as the eye could see."³⁷ But ashore, scattered about looking for an opportunity to steal, were "as tough a looking lot of rascals as one could meet." The whiteness viewed from afar disappeared as one entered the congested part of the town; it was a case of the "whited sepulcher." Loads of stuff drawn by horses and dog teams passed through the narrow, crowded ways, and miners with heavy packs on their backs were starting out for the claims on the creeks and into the unknown interior, "but the 'bar-room' miner was far more in evidence."³⁸

However, McKee was impressed with the central figure, the 'hero' of any gold stampede. "It did not take long to learn that the real American miner, the man who undergoes hardships and endures privations such as few people can know or understand, is a fine, intelligent, and generous citizen, whom it is a pleasure to know."³⁹ These men told him that of all the principal mining camps they had visited in recent years, Nome was the "toughest proposition" they had ever encountered.⁴⁰ But, McKee concluded, "even the dirt in those miserable Nome streets contained 'colors', or small particles of gold; and it is an incongruous thought that, of all the cities of the world, Nome City, as it is called, most nearly approaches the apocalyptic condition of having its streets paved with gold."⁴¹

McKee observed that the matter most to be reckoned with was the lack of sanitary conditions, the total absence of any sewerage. He gave credit to General Randall, who immediately upon his arrival, took measures to improve sanitation, for the development of a remarkably healthy camp. The installation of good water conveyed from the streams beyond, later in the season, prevented a repetition of the typhoid epidemic of 1899.⁴²

The young lawyer soon measured up the legal situation:

The place was really under martial law. The town government, useless and corrupt, was practically nil; and as it was believed that the federal judge, with his staff of assistants, would not arrive until August, it was the plain duty of the military to preserve order and, so far as possible, leave legal matters in status quo until the advent of the civil authorities as provided by the laws which had been recently enacted for Alaska.⁴³

At the time of the negotiations for the transfer of Alaska, Americans and other aliens in Russian America numbered about 300 among an entire Russian, Creole, and native population estimated at fewer than 31,000.⁴⁴ In the 1890 census, 23 years after the purchase, the population was enumerated at 32,052. Ten years later, as a result of the gold stampedes particularly, the inhabitants had increased to 63,592; 48% of this figure is listed in the census report as "white", and 52% as "colored," meaning native and other non-white races.⁴⁵

Nome became the metropolis of Alaska in the first year of the new century with 12,486 inhabitants. In comparison, Skagway had a population of 3,117; Juneau, 1,864; and Sitka, 1,396. Only six other settlements exceeded 500: the largest, Wrangell, with 868; St. Michael, 857; Douglas, 825; Point Hope, 623; Kogiung, 533; and Treadwell, 522.⁴⁶ Nearly three-fourths of the population were males as few of the miners brought their families to Alaska with them.⁴⁷

Although Nome was only an embryonic city when the great rush of 1900 began, it possessed great warehouses and all the characteristics of an American business community by the winter of 1899. On June 22 of that year the J.B. Kimball Company, merchants and carriers, established the pioneer business house of Nome, under the management of Captain Conrad Siem. By November the town boasted more than 110 businesses and services, among them six bakeries, twenty saloons, four wholesale liquor stores, four barber shops, two printing offices, four hotels, twelve general merchandise stores, six restaurants, four bath houses, a brewery, a hospital, a bank, and a water works. There were also sixteen licensed lawyers, eleven physicians, two dentists, a mining engineer, two surveyors, and skilled operators of every type of shop useful to construction, transportation, and mining enterprises. One Protestant Church and a Roman Catholic Church held services regularly.⁴⁸

Before the end of the season the following year, 127 lawyers, drawn by multitudinous gold claim disputes, had been admitted to practice;⁴⁹ five newspapers were being published, and the whole economic structure of the new community had burgeoned in proportion, including a United States postoffice.

The first year of life in Nome was fairly orderly, but with the advent of thousands of fortune hunters, most of them not miners, the camp began to suffer the backlash of a primitive fight for survival among the human jetsam cast on its "golden strand." The easy access to the camp by ship and the proven munificence of the Seward Peninsula treasure trove drew not only the honest worker and his business and professional fellow men, but also the riffraff and criminal element of the country who came to prey upon them. The underworld and "fast buck" crowd were everywhere in evidence – the shyster lawyer, the gambler, the confidence man, the small crook, the thief, the thug, the drifter, the desperado, the grafter, and the prostitute.⁵⁰

Under the hard weather and struggle for existence in a small compact community, the weeding out process for most of the lawless element was quick. But for two years, 1900 and 1901, the problem was continuously displayed by the newspapers, which faithfully reflected the face of the town. Said Fred A. Healy, proprietor of The Nome Daily Chronicle, in October 1900, in trenchant editorial tones, "There is more felony in Nome than in the average city of half a million inhabitants."⁵¹

Blaming much of the crime on the lack of street lighting, The Chronicle suggested the advantages of lights to the businessmen:

For a short distance along Front Street there are sidewalks and the lights from the saloons and restaurants afford all the illumination necessary, but this is only a very small portion of the town, so small, indeed as hardly to be reckoned. The rest of the camp is shrouded in darkness as black as a stygian horror.

Through the Egypt-like gloom pedestrians are compelled to pick their way, trusting to their sense of touch to keep on the single plank, which, stretching over a sea of mud, forms about the only roadway from one place to another.

This darkness, moreover, is a great help to the enterprising footpad whose labors are pursued to advantage and profit with the help these shadows afford....I hardly a morn dawns but it brings its tales of robbery the night before...52

However, a growing civic pride in the accomplishments of the lusty, contentious young settlement was not to be denied as it grew apace:

Day after day the sound of the hammer can be heard ringing out upon the damp air and every little while some new structure rises to completion and takes its place among the permanent habitations of Nome....

A year or two ago Nome was nothing. The name conveyed an idea of a dreary, barren, wind-swept cape, with a miserable Esquimo hut or two on its shores as its only signs of human habitation.

Today Nome is a city with a population of thousands and numbers among its mercantile establishments structures that can compare favorably with some of the most pretentious on the outside.

Alaska will have other, and probably larger, cities. But every sign seems to point to Nome holding her own and keeping among the permanent places of the territory.53

At the end of August, the Chronicle published information on the population trends:

Mr. Hecker, late government census enumerator says the number of people in the country last winter was 3,000, of whom 2,500 were residents of the camp proper....

Steamship agent Mr. D.J. Grauman says that the total arrivals from Outside was, in round numbers, 16,000, with 1,500 more from Dawson, making a total of 17,500; that of this number 9,000 have already left the country, and 5,000 more will go by the end of the season. According to Mr. Grauman's estimate, therefore, between 5,000 and 6,000 people will winter here.54

Those hardy souls who did stay for the winter made up a concentrated settlement of strangers of every class and condition. As if in a gigantic experiment in human dynamics, almost immediately the sorting out began. Birds of every feather found their own kind in professions and labor, by state or country, in fraternal organizations, in business and civic interests, in churches and welfare work, in politics and government, and in the exclusive society of the elite, or the plebian hobnobbery of the saloons. Winter gave time for finding oneself in the idle pleasures of the social order.

Meanwhile the social life of the camp developed speedily. Soon the "poor man's clubs," the saloons, with their spit-stained floors, gambling tables, and fighting cards, were supplemented by the variety theater's shows and opera, and the dazzling social life of the favored and the rich, labeled unblushingly "Nome's 400" by the Daily Chronicle's able illustrator Arthur Buell. On June 23, 1900, the Nome News announced that "Robert Blei, the well-known theatrical man, has secured Brown's Hall and the L & L Building and will open variety theatres at once."

Miss Emma Steiner appeared in the camp's first opera, "The Little Hussar," on August 31, at the Standard Theatre. It was a sell-out, and Arthur Buell gave flattering full-page pictorial coverage of the eminent citizens and their ladies who attended the event. Among those present was the newly appointed, and recently arrived, district federal judge, Arthur H. Noyes, whose short career in Nome was fated to become a classic of judicial corruption.

Early in the summer, with the passage of the Alaska Bill which became law on June 6, 1900, a serious development took place. Every claim of any value, and many that were of none, was disputed by rival claimants to discovery. Lanier McKee commented on the new law and the new judge of the district:

By it Alaska was divided into three judicial divisions, and that which embraces northwestern Alaska and the new gold-fields was allotted to Arthur H. Noyes of Minnesota, formerly of Dakota. If ever a position demanded an honest, able, and fearless man, it was this judgeship, which should be a guaranty of good civil government, establish a court, and disentangle and dispose of, among a mixed population largely composed of unscrupulous elements, and indescribable mess of legal matters, already accumulated and ever increasing.⁵⁵

Contrary to expectations, Judge Noyes immediately put the most valuable mines into the hands of a receiver, Alexander McKenzie, in what proved to be a bold conspiracy to appropriate by abuse of the legal system the riches of the Seward Peninsula. The ring involved men in the highest levels of the federal government through whose influence Judge Noyes was appointed as a willing tool. Until the breaking up of the plot, in November, through the determined opposition of Charles D. Lane, a millionaire California mining operator and builder of the Wild Goose railroad, in the Nome district, the new camp was in a turmoil of economic disruption.

Under the Alaska Law incorporation of towns was made possible. The sporting element, influenced by the popular saloon proprietors, opposed organized government with the taxation it entailed, and Judge Noyes found it to this interests to obstruct the granting of an election for incorporation. A reception was given for the judge at the Golden Gate Hotel on August 23, ostensibly a move by the responsible citizens to make him more amenable to the town's needs for incorporation, schools, and fire protection. At the Nome Progress Club's meeting two days later it was announced that the judge had agreed to the election for incorporation, but he would slowly select members of the election board.⁵⁶

The election was held on Monday, November 6, but it was preceded by public apathy, and municipal incorporation failed at the polls.⁵⁷ The Chamber of Commerce again took over the consent government. A voluntary tax of \$15.00 on its members was not generally supported and minimal expenses could not be met. By the new year, 1901, the experimental administration was "busted."⁵⁸

In the meantime, the school started by a citizens' committee in the library of St. Bernard's Congregational Church and taught by Miss Rosa E. Lamont, from February 28 to an indeterminate date that spring, was continued with two government teachers under the auspices of the United States Bureau of Education and the local board selected by Dr. Jackson in the summer of 1900. The records of Miss Lamont's voluntary school possibly no longer exist, but a formal report by Jackson to the U. S. Commissioner of Education for the school year 1900-1901, shows that the Nome Government School had a total enrollment of 63 pupils, who had an attendance record approximating 72% for an official term of eight months, from September through April.⁵⁹

General Agent Jackson Summarized the developments of that term and appended a letter from one of the teachers:

Nome – Miss Cora B. Young and Miss Florence Mauzy teachers; enrollment 63, population, white. In April 1901, Nome became an incorporated town, and from that date the school has not been under the Bureau of Education, but under a local board of education.

In regard to the school year previous to that date Miss Mauzy writes:

When we came to Nome in August, 1900, we began school in the library of the Congregational Church, which we were expected to vacate on demand at any time. We commenced with three pupils, but after days of street canvassing and calling from house to house, we built up a school of some numbers. At

times, because of lack of funds for fuel, we felt that we should be compelled to suspend work; but this problem was solved for us, when in November the church needed the room we occupied and the school was closed until another building was secured.

A vigorous effort was then made to raise by subscription enough money to buy fuel, pay a janitor, and rent a building. The response in actual money was not very satisfactory, but a building was donated and coal furnished free of charge.

We have enrolled over sixty pupils and almost every State in the Union has been represented. We have had but two Eskimos and they remained in school but two days. While it has been real pioneer work we have taken great interest in building up as good a school as possible, and on the whole have found it a pleasant task.⁶⁰

Incorporation was hard come by. But public interest was shocked into action by the failure of the November election to authorize legal government. The Daily Chronicle stated:

When the voters of Nome killed incorporation, they at the same time put it out of their power to select those who should govern them. They now find that by their childish proceeding at the polls they did not do away with the need of government, but simply transferred to the Chamber of Commerce their right of selecting the men who shall handle the public funds.⁶¹

The Chamber of Commerce formed a joint committee to lay down a definite course of action on the local government problem. They planned to arrange for fire and police protection and hospital facilities, and to appoint a health officer. A delegate, Dick Dawson, asked Judge Noyes, in January 1901, "If a petition for incorporation were presented to you, would you grant it?"

"As soon as this camp satisfies me that it wants incorporation, I shall be pleased to listen to a petition," the Judge replied. "But I must be better satisfied than I am today."⁶²

That "satisfaction" came within a week. A second petition was circulated and was signed by voters from all segments of the community led by the prominent business and professional men, among them the popular saloon owners, Tex Rickard and Charles E. Hoxie, who responded to the winds of change.⁶³ Judge Noyes approved the petition and selected an election committee which, on April 3, set the date and place of the election, April 9, 1901, at the Golden Gate Hotel. Only male citizens of the United States or one who had declared his intention to become a citizen, of the age of 21 years, and a bona fide resident of Alaska for one year, and of the proposed corporation for six months preceding the election date, were qualified to vote for members of the council and the school board. To vote for or against incorporation, the elector was required to be also the owner of property in the corporation of the value of \$1,000 or more.⁶⁴

Incorporation passed by a landslide vote of 695 to 188. The Chronicle editor voiced the enthusiasm of the town:

A long step was taken Tuesday, when the voters elevated Nome from its obscure position as a camp to the dignified station of an incorporated municipality. For the first time in its brief history this rapidly growing town is placed on a basis that is recognized as stable and the benefits that may be expected in the immediate future are great, and may concern every individual member of the community.⁶⁵

Elected to the city council were Tex Rickard, Captain W.E. Geiger, J.B. Harris, J.F. Giese, S.H. Stevens, Jr., W.H. McPhee, and Charles E. Hoxie. Elected to the school board of directors were Miner Bruce, Colin Beaton,

and Dr. J. J. Chambers. Judge J.H. Stevens swore in the new officers. Judge Noyes was due for an appearance before the United States Court of Appeals in San Francisco, to answer charges of unethical judicial procedures and contempt of the Court. His co-conspirator in seizure of the Seward Peninsula mines through court injunctions and theft by attempted appropriation of the gold, Alexander McKenzie, was sentenced to prison for one year. Noyes was censured by the Court, subsequently recalled from his appointment as a federal judge, and fined \$1,000. An able, honest judge, James Wickersham, made equitable settlements of pending litigation within the following months, and confidence in the court was restored in the mining and business community.⁶⁶

In the school term under the Bureau of Education there had been several difficulties. There was no school building, space in the church library was cramped and desks and blackboards were in shortage. The children were using their chair seats for writing tables.⁶⁷ While the government supplied teachers, books and supplies, and fuel by guarantee, yet there was no money on hand for heating the temporary quarters loaned first by the Congregational Church and then by an interested citizen, J.S. Brown.⁶⁸ The community also had the responsibility of paying the janitor. The Chamber of Commerce council refused to pay D.W. McKay, a member of the presidentially appointed school board, a bill of \$200 for school repairs, on the grounds that it was a government obligation to defray the expenses of its own establishments. Dr. Hill stated that he saw no reason why the chamber should foot the government's school bills any more than they should pay Judge Noyes's salary.⁶⁹

Following the move from the church library, in November, to Brown's Hall on Front Street, conditions improved.

The building provided enough room for the expected winter enrollment, which reached 63, the light was good, and the ceiling was high. Children and teachers were glad to get back to school after the few days of enforced vacation necessitated by the change.⁷⁰ Captain Siem was the generous donor of the coal, and to raise the required \$60 per month for the janitor, the ladies interested in the school met at Mrs. Miner Bruce's house to arrange for a benefit entertainment to take place on Lincoln's birthday.⁷¹ Following incorporation, the newly elected school board assumed the payment of the salary of the janitor, and the citizens of the town were relieved of further donations on that account.⁷² The chartering of the town on April 26, 1901, marked the formal beginning of the City of Nome's public school system under full local control.

CHAPTER III

Establishing the Schools And The Struggle for Fiscal Control

Shortly after the incorporation of the city, the school board directors, Miner Bruce, Colin Beaton, and Dr. J.J. Chambers, met in the latter's office and discussed the building of three schools, subject both to the funds they would have in the summer and a thorough canvass of the town after the influx of people in the spring. A notice of bids was published, May 2, 1901, for the erection of three separate school buildings to be completed by August 25. The main building was to be large enough to accommodate 200 pupils, and each of the smaller buildings was to have accommodations for 40 pupils. Locations were to be on the sandspit, in the central part of the city, and in the east end.¹

When incorporation succeeded, a question arose between the council and the school board as to which had legal control of the school funds. Under the civil code of 1900, liberal provisions for educational purposes were made. From taxes of \$10 annually on general businesses, \$1500 on saloons, and \$2000 on wholesale liquor dealers within municipal corporations, 50 percent was allotted to the school fund. However, the law provided that after necessary school expenses, the surplus could be, by order of the district court, converted into the city treasury for municipal purposes. Compounding the possibility of contention, the city treasurer was also ex-officio treasurer of the school board. The council maintained that all bills contracted by the school board should first be authorized by the council. The school board asserted its legal rights to have complete management of its own affairs. This disagreement stemmed from the uncertain language of the law.²

Refusal of the city treasurer to honor warrants issued by the school board, and failure of the council to honor contracts for construction of the school buildings, resulted in a stoppage of school business transactions from May to November.³ When the city council ordered the city treasurer, as ex-officio treasurer of the school board, to draw warrants in his favor for \$50.00 a month, on the school fund, Judge James Wickersham ruled that under the Civil Code of Alaska of July 6, 1900, the school board alone could draw warrants on the school fund, except that under provisions of the Code as amended, March 3, 1901, monies from the fund in excess to the needs of the school budget could be paid over to the city council by order of the district court for use by the city council.⁴ This ruling started a struggle for control of the local school budget, in a series of lawsuits and changes in statutory law that terminated in the complete loss of fiscal independence by all school boards in the Territory and State of Alaska.⁵⁻⁶

However, the 1901 decision of Judge Wickersham released the funds for the rental of a building for a small one room school on the sandspit for primary children and construction of a larger school on Third Avenue east of Steadman Street, for students in primary, grammar grades, upper grades, and first year of high school. The larger building with four rooms, was 30 x 76 feet and two stories high, furnished with modern desks and appliances, and electric lights. Nearly \$3,000 was expended for school books, furniture, and equipment. The building itself cost \$9,600. Of the \$42,738.26 derived from licenses for school purposes, \$30,949.44 was expended for educational purposes, \$3,728.38 was kept in the treasury for operational expenses for the balance of the fiscal year, and \$7,962.00 was transferred to the city treasury.⁷

The board report urged Congress to immediately change the law so as to make a specific percentage of the license monies to be turned over to the city treasury for municipal purposes, thereby removing the basis of antagonism between the school board and council inherent in the principle of reversion of left-over school funds to the corporation.⁸ The suggestion was taken by an amendment, March 2, 1903, to the act of June 6, 1900, as amended March 3, 1901, and provided that all the license monies collected by the clerk of the district court should be turned over to the city treasury, but was "to be used for municipal and school purposes in such proportions as the court may order, but not more than fifty per centum nor less than twenty-five per centum

thereof shall be used for school purposes, the remainder thereof to be paid to the treasurer of the corporation for the support of the municipality....".⁹

The amendment of April 28, 1904, provided that the school board should consist of a director, a treasurer, and a clerk, thereby removing the city treasurer from his dual position of ex-officio treasurer of the school board, but it also provided simply that the license monies paid over to him were "to be used for school and municipal purposes within the town."¹⁰

In a later court case, January 7, 1905, the Nome School Board began action in Judge Moore's district court, at Nome, seeking a writ of mandamus issue against the city council compelling it to turn over to the treasurer of the school board of the Nome school district all monies in the defendant's hands available for school purposes.¹¹

The school board charged that the common council was dissipating the tax monies collected in the district for school and municipal purposes, endangering the funds necessary to the school budget obligations estimated by the board to be \$11,461.20 for the maintenance of the schools for the period beginning October 1, 1904, and ending April 1, 1905. The alternative mandamus alleged that the treasurer of the board, Harry Storey, had been bonded in the amount directed by the common council, but that only \$2,000 had been transferred by the city to the board treasurer.¹²

In the final allegation of facts, the petition stated that the plaintiff did not have "a plain, speedy, and adequate remedy in the ordinary course of law."¹³

The common council returned the writ, denying that the funds were being dissipated and admitted having on hand a sum of money largely in excess of the amount of the entire school budget. However, the council alleged that it had exercised its discretion in not turning over to the school board treasurer the entire amount of the school budget, which was in excess of the treasurer's bond of \$10,000, quoting section 4, subd. 12, of the act of Congress entitled "An act to amend and codify the laws relating to municipal corporations in the District of Alaska," approved April 28, 1904, c. 1778, 33 Stat. 532.¹⁴

The council further alleged that the expenditures of the school board for teachers were excessive and unnecessary to the efficient operation of the schools; that the night school was unwarranted and unnecessary; the janitors were overpaid; and that the treasurer had been paid a salary fixed at \$100 per month during the school year without legal authority, as well as large sums for school books and supplies. The council maintained that it had transferred to the board \$6,000 since August 22, 1904, in addition to the \$2,000 already mentioned.¹⁵

The council requested a written opinion of the court to the question:

"Is it within the power of the school board to dictate what constitutes the necessary funds for the maintenance of schools? Or is such power vested in the common council of the municipality of Nome, under the act of April 28, 1904?"¹⁶

Judge Moore ruled that the power to dictate the amount of the school district needs was not granted by necessary implication to either the common council nor the school board by the act of 1904, but that Congress evidently meant to leave the power where it was lodged by the act of 1903, "to wit, in the district court whose jurisdiction includes the municipal territory." The court thus reached the conclusion that the plaintiff had not shown a good cause of action, and the mandamus was refused, and the action dismissed.¹⁷

The implication of the judgment was clearly that the common council had acted with discretion and could continue to transfer school monies in installments to the school board. If not direct control, it meant that every

annual budget planned by the school superintendent and approved by the board could be challenged at pleasure by the city council in whole or in part, in the district court. In effect, the fiscal independence of Alaskan school districts was dead. This was made certain by Section 4 of the Nelson Act of January 27, 1905, which gave to the common council of the incorporated towns power to provide the necessary funds for the schools, without reservation. What the council could provide, it could conversely deny by limitation. L. D. Henderson, the first territorial commissioner of education, evaluated the situation in 1924:

All school boards in Alaska are fiscally dependent. In incorporated towns the common council approves the school budget and has the power to reduce the amount requested for any item. School boards are required by law to render a monthly report of expenditures for school purposes to the common council. Such fiscal dependence is far from sound although it has worked out practically without detriment to the schools due to the fact that in the majority of instances the members of school boards and common councils work in harmony.¹⁸

Other schoolmen have found that "harmony" too often was bought at the price of professional futility, school plant obsolescence, and the deterioration of educational standards. The Nome Public School System itself is representative of that truth. Although it was well begun under liberal laws and visionary men, it fell prey to the evils of fiscal dependence from time to time, as it has today.

Dr. Sheldon Jackson's report of 1902, reflected the advantages of provisions for the support of schools within incorporated towns, in comparison with those under his jurisdiction, and also exposed a critical problem arising from racial discrimination in the "white" towns:

The town of Nome (incorporated) received for school purposes \$42,738.26, while only \$35,902.41 was received for the 27 public schools outside of incorporated towns. The other incorporated towns also received much larger sums than the schools of corresponding character under control of this office. With these larger sums of money at their disposal they have been able to erect larger and more comfortable buildings, employ a larger number of teachers in proportion to the number of pupils, and pay them better salaries.

Complaints have been received by this office that the school boards of Juneau and Ketchikan (incorporated towns) have refused to receive native children of Indian or Eskimo descent into existing schools or to open school for them. The school board at Nome also neglected during the past year to make provision for the Eskimo children within their limits, although they had a school fund larger than they needed, \$7,962.00 of the same being turned back into the city treasury and used for other municipal purposes.¹⁹

For the first 47 years of its existence the Nome Public Schools system practiced de facto segregation with regard to Eskimo enrollment. Along with other communities populated principally by white Americans, Nome citizens regarded the native people as uncivilized and unfit culturally for education in their schools. When Senator Knute Nelson, of Minnesota, toured Alaska with a senatorial fact-finding committee in the summer of 1903, he was made aware of the strong feeling directed toward separate schooling for the native population. In the act of Congress of 1905, which bears his name, segregation of native and white schools was written into the law, section 7, stipulating:

That the schools specified and provided for in this Act shall be devoted to the education of white children and the children of mixed blood who lead a civilized life. The education of the Eskimos and Indians in the district of Alaska shall remain under the direction and control of the Secretary of the Interior, and schools for the Eskimos and Indians of Alaska shall be provided for by an annual appropriation, and the Eskimo and Indian children of Alaska shall have the same right to be admitted to any Indian boarding school as the Indian children in the States or Territories of the United States.²⁰

The Nelson Act of 1905, together with the Civil Code of 1900 with its amendments, and the district court decisions previously discussed, formed the framework of the Alaska public school system in white communities until 1917, when the Department of Education of the Territorial government was organized by authority of an act of Congress. Under the Nelson Act, the governor served as ex-officio superintendent of public instruction.²¹

Because the school funds were not released to the school board by the district court order until November 4, 1901, the high school was constructed in winter under great difficulties. The small bridge school, a rented one room building, on the sandspit across the Snake River bridge, was occupied by the primary pupils, who were taught by Miss Florence Mauzy, and older children attended classes taught by Miss Cora B. Young in the library building on Second Street. As the number of pupils had doubled over that of the previous year, another division was made and a school was opened over the Lobby Saloon on Steadman Avenue for all the pupils east of Hunter's Way. Miss Mauzy and Mr. J. A. Riley, the first principal, taught here, while Miss Young continued to teach in the library building and Mrs. Alice L. Staples had charge of the Bridge School on the sandspit.²² On moving to the new building, sometime around the first of the year, all the pupils were housed there except Mrs. Staples's primary class at the Bridge School. In 1905, the Bridge School was discontinued and the pupils from the west end of town were transported by sleigh to the single large school, which remained as the only school building in the Nome Public School system until it was declared obsolete, in 1934, and a new building replaced it in 1935.

The course of study was solid matter. Writing instruction in the primary classes was given on the blackboard and practiced on paper and in copy books, with attention to language usage involving capital letters, the period, comma, paragraphing, sentence building, and composition work. Appleton's First Reader and Baldwin's Second Reader provided reading practice and word lists for spelling and sentence work. The first grade learned addition and subtraction combinations to 12 and reading and writing numbers to 100; the second grade the multiplication tables through the 5's, counting by 2's, 3's and 5's, and addition and subtraction in easy combinations. The children also learned by memory recitations, quotations, and rules of politeness, as well as lessons in the art of conversation on topics of history and patriotism manners and morals, and kindness to animals. The third grade also studied primary geography. Mrs. Ada M. Whaite, the music teacher, gave them singing lessons.²³

Mrs. Staples's Bridge primary department had an enrollment of three girls and 13 boys in the first and second grades. Miss Mauzy's primary department in the high school building included the first three grades with a total of nine girls and 25 boys.² Sitting in the front row in overalls, and with a no-nonsense expression on his face, was the smallest boy in Miss Mauzy's class, five year old Jimmy Doolittle, beginning the long preparation that would make him a national hero and a lieutenant-general in the United States Air Force.

Miss Young's grammar department enrolled 15 boys and 18 girls in the fourth and fifth grade levels. The course of study included, in the fourth grade, reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, nature study, music, and English grammar supplemented by reading, dictation, and "reproduction (oral and written)" – which presumably was memorization assignments.²⁴

Professor J. A. Riley taught the principal's department, numbering 13 girls and 14 boys, including as a supplement to his seventh and eighth grade curriculum a course of first year high school subjects for a few students. In the seventh grade, reading was based on Tom Brown at Rugby and Tom Brown at Oxford and selections from "the best authors." Milne's Standard Arithmetic and Robinson's Revised Arithmetic texts were used; Maxwell's Advanced Grammar and dictation, exercises, short essay writing, and orthography; McMaster's History of the United States to the Revolution, supplemented by other works; Peterman's Civil Government, Steele's Physiology and Hygiene; the Prang elementary drawing course; a full course in music; and geography, completed the program.²⁵

Professor Riley's geography course was oriented toward Alaska, covering the areas of natural advanced geography, plants and animal life of Alaska, general resources of the country, mining and other industries, ocean currents and their influence on climate, and in the eighth grade, physical geography, including map drawing. The eighth grade program was largely a completion of the seventh grade courses with the addition of bookkeeping and a change in reading to selections from English and American authors, and surveys of Roman and English history. The high school courses offered were algebra, literature, general history, rhetoric, bookkeeping, geometry, Latin, and music.²⁶

Professor Riley's curriculum exemplified a high quality of educational program for a pioneer school system. He was supported by a board of unusual men, all of them fitted by education and public experience in Alaska to understand the potentials of the free public schools. The educational philosophy of the board was clearly defined in their first report:

The Board would urge further upon Congress the importance of a most liberal law for education in Alaska. The experience of the present Board during the past winter has demonstrated the fact that great good can be accomplished by extending to the public the most liberal educational facilities possible. The long winter, extending over a period of seven months, and the severity of the weather, confine within a small territory a large number of people who are prevented from engaging in any kind of manual labor, and the opportunities for attending school are quickly and eagerly embraced.

The policy of the present School Board has been most liberal in this direction. Early in the winter a night school for adults was inaugurated, which had an attendance of thirty-five pupils of both sexes. A class in bookkeeping, which had an attendance of fifty-three men and women, was in operation most of the winter.

In the large hall of the high school building once each week a literary society has held regular sessions, the School Board furnishing lights and fuel free of cost; and the interest in this direction was so great that the capacity of the hall was not sufficient to accommodate the large number who desired to attend.

Early in January arrangements were made for a series of lectures, to be given in the High School building, upon geology, mineralogy and assaying. The interest felt in these lectures was so great, and the attendance so large, that it is the hope of the Board that the coming year will see inaugurated a special department for instruction in these branches. It should embrace the erection of a building, provided with proper appliances for the study of geology, mineralogy, chemistry and assaying. These appliances should include the best text books procurable, an ample supply of necessary chemicals, and the apparatus for a thorough demonstration of chemistry and assaying.

We believe such an institution will be a valuable acquisition to this part of Alaska. A winter course of study, with competent instructors would equip men with knowledge to prospect this vast region of Alaska intelligently, and perhaps be the means of making valuable discoveries.

There are many settlements in this section of Alaska not large enough to support a municipal form of government, and, consequently, they have no money for the maintenance of public schools. The past winter has demonstrated that as soon as the mining season closes many families will come to Nome each winter in order to take advantage of the excellent school system here established.²⁷

There can be little question that when the school board report was published, it struck a mild epidemic of terror among the rugged economy minded men of business on the city council. The report was presumably written by board member Miner Bruce, who was well known for his History of Alaska and published articles on Alaska.

When the Nelson committee arrived, in July 29, 1903, to hold their hearings in Nome, the senators were particularly interested in correcting the inadequacies of the Territorial educational dilemma. Nome was their first stopping place since leaving Dawson where there were any considerable number of women. The reception was hospitality itself. The formal reception that evening was a dress ball given by the ladies of the "400" in the tastefully decorated Arctic Brotherhood hall, the social center of the leading families of the town. The following evening a banquet for the senatorial party, in the entirely redecorated hall, was attended by one hundred and twenty-five of the important men of the community, again in full dress. Suggestions and requests prepared by the citizens on desired legislation by Congress were formally presented. J. S. McLain, a Minneapolis editor travelling with the committee observed:

The extremely favorable impressions created the previous evening were strengthened by this well-conducted and creditable affair. It is doubtful if anything observed or experienced during the entire trip of the senatorial party did more to promote the interests of Alaska than these social events at Nome, so well calculated to create the most favorable impressions with regard to the character of the people who are developing the resources of the great country, of whose natural wealth the general public has such inadequate knowledge.²⁸

It is reasonable to conjecture that Section 3 of the Nelson Act, which led to the fiscal dependence of school boards, and Section 7, establishing separate school systems for white and native children, were written into the law largely through the influence of the citizens of Nome. As a result of the Act, integration of the two systems in towns was blocked until 1947, when the territorial legislature, under the urging of Governor Ernest Gruening, passed a nondiscrimination act opening public school attendance to all alike.

Certainly the school board was not frugal in meeting the opportunities offered by a brand-new vigorous community, under a favorable system of tax support that was an educator's dream. A corps of teachers was employed to meet the needs of the children and of the economic base as well. The monthly salaries were set as follows:

J. A. Riley, principal and teacher of the high school class, \$250.

Cora B. Young, teacher of the grammar grades, \$150.

Florence Mauzy, primary teacher in the main school, \$150.

Alice L. Staples, primary teacher in the Bridge School, \$150.

Martha Steele, teacher of the adult night school, \$125.

Ada M. Whaite, teacher of music, \$75.

M. N. Kimball, teacher of bookkeeping, \$125.

R. W. James, lecturer on geology, \$10 per lecture.

J. Potter Whittren, lecturer on mineralogy, \$10 per lecture.

P. Esch, lecturer on practical mining and assaying, \$10 per lecture.

Three janitors were also employed: E. A. Ludlow, at \$60 per month; Harvey Brace, at \$50; and George Nolen, at \$50.²⁹

Perhaps no other American frontier school had enjoyed such an auspicious beginning, like Pallas Athene springing full-blown from the brow of Zeus. However, the feat could not have been accomplished without a colossal headache.

CHAPTER IV

The Golden Years Rise and Decline of the Schools 1902 – 1918

Following the raucous seasons of her boom years, 1899 to 1902, Nome settled into the organized life of "a good, solid, substantial mining center, with interests that radiate to every part of the Seward Peninsula."¹ The town had a summer population in 1904, of about 5000, and 3200 winter residents, who owned property with a taxable valuation of one and a half million dollars.² A third beach line was discovered by J. C. Brown that year, and dependence on hand mining gave way to hydraulic and dredge operations by large companies, in the main.³ At the peak year of production, 1906, the output of gold on the peninsula was \$7,500,000. After that time the yield began to decline, and with it the town, until in 1916, the total output was only \$2,950,000,⁴ and the 1920 population was 852.⁵ But in the twenty years between the first prospecting in the region in 1897, and 1916, the gold taken from the Seward Peninsula, almost all of it from the placer mines, amounted to \$74,292,100.⁶

These years of industrious toil and simple pleasures marked the golden era hallowed in the memory of the Alaskan sourdough. Doors were left carelessly unlocked, without insecurity. A miner near Nome used a five pound lard pail, into which he poured his daily cleanup of "dust", as a summer time doorstep – to hold the door open.⁷ As most of the inhabitants were single men in the prime of life, the saloons and gambling rooms were acknowledged as acceptable social necessities by the city government. A licensed district of prostitutes, known as "the tenderloin", thrived in a reserved block of town, behind an enclosure. That too was accepted.⁸ Though not without vigorous editorial protest.⁹

Family life and interests also thrived in the prosperous economy. The socially inclined and gregarious had available the many fraternal and cultural diversions that had early found root among, and across, all classes. Private teachers of music, dancing, and singing presented their pupils in recitals. The new school system as well offered entertainment and intellectual cultivation and certain types of business and vocational training in night classes. The school facilities were used regularly by literary, debating, and dramatic groups. After the building of the gymnasium in 1905, basketball tournaments were held there.¹⁰ Touring lecturers and stage artists also enlivened the summer scene. A balloonist made an ascent in 1902.

Across the expanses of the territory, staked dogsled trails led from settlement to settlement, and from camp to camp, with solitary roadhouses breaking the long stretches for the traveler. It was possible to travel from Nome to Fairbanks and Valdez or Seward without carrying dog food and without spending a night out in the open.¹¹ After the freeze-up, the mail service came over the trails by dog team. A natural development was the famed dogteam races of the time, and the popular winter sports of skating, skiing, and bobsledding.

Living in Nome in the early days was a difficult life, that built durable character traits in the young, who learned by participation in the struggle the balance between effort and achievement. Work meant basic survival and comfort, a common denominator of responsibility whether in the youngsters' household chores and keeping the coal fire going, in the mother's homemaking, or the father's essential breadwinning labors which frequently needed supplementing through family effort. To bridge the employment gaps of the long winters, the boys commonly worked, too. Franklin Munter, at the age of five, sold popcorn in the saloons and sang songs to bolster trade. Jimmy Doolittle sold papers for the Nome Nugget¹² and delivered laundry for his mother's home laundry service, and Harrison Loerpabel, at the age of eight, sold his mother's bread and pies to miners who paid him in raw gold.¹³ It was not a society for abetting the weak or indifferent.

The architecture of the town was late Victorian. The tents, crossed guy ropes, and tilted pipe chimneys had been replaced by new, substantial structures. The large businesses and warehouses, which had to store enough provisions to supply the community from the last ships in October until the first to arrive in June, dominated the city's profile. The steepled belfries of the churches, the hospitals, fraternal lodges, hotels, courthouse, the

mining company offices and shops, and the impressive new high school building also rose against the sky, while in the distance the huge mining machines and pay dirt dumps fanned out over the tundra, along the creeks, and on the hillsides.

The planked main streets were narrow and overhung by the jutting parlors of second story apartments above the places of business. The private residences were all new, built with cedar siding and bay windows, with ornamental windows set at a diamond angle, and decorated with finials, roof crowns, and all the nooks and gingerbread dear to the heart of that baroque age. Almost all the houses were two stories high and built close together, for land in suitable locations was scarce. The interiors of the homes were small as expense and the problem of heating dictated house architecture on a two-thirds scale, but often they were provided with lavish woodwork: artful staircases, arched doorways between living and dining rooms, corniced pilasters bracketing wall-divider bookcases, wainscoting, and fancy mouldings. Before the many fires, storms from the sea, and the decay associated with economic decline destroyed the original structures, Nome was a picturesque and imposing community. Its romantic gold-rush image drew visitors from every part of the world. Many of the public figures of the early twentieth century were its guests: explorers, statesmen, financiers, writers, entertainers, clergymen, junketing officials, or just the rich and the curious. To the sequestered citizens of Nome they gave as much diversion as they received.

Much like their elders who had developed an organized city from the chaos of a camp of strangers, the children in the first schools of Nome were confronted with the problems associated with getting acquainted and developing an esprit de corps. The first graduation – from the grammar department – gave one of those identifying experiences. Irving Reed and Mabelle Niebling were graduated to high school in ceremonies at the Golden Gate Hall, on Friday afternoon, May 29, 1903. Irving delivered an oration entitled "The American Flag," and Mabelle sang a solo, "Alaska Harvest Song," and recited a reading, "Old Actor's Story." James Doolittle, now seven years old, gave a reading "On Whippings." Others who took part in the program were: Frank Burley, Margaret Hadley; Olga, Nora, and Ina Dahlstrom, Everett Hastings, Henry Cole, George Baldwin, Don Brown, Vesta Storey, Etta Wolfe, Lela McPherrren, Ella Smithson, Irving Bogan, Laura Jaycox, May Murray, Dorothy Winslow, Genevieve Kennedy, Ruth McCormick, Edith Modini, Thomas Simpson, and two groups of elementary boys and girls. George Wilkinson, a first year high school student, spoke on "Physics."¹⁴

These youngsters, their friends, and younger brothers and sisters, together with the stream of incoming school-fellows who joined them were the pioneers. Ralph Lomen and Lucius Boardman were the first high school class of 1906. Of the original enrollees in the 1901 incorporated city schools, just two would have had all their schooling from entrance to graduation in Nome. These were Mildred Lehmann, class of 1912, and Hilda Johnson, class of 1913. Only five others who entered at that time remained to finish:

Lucius J. Boardman, 1906
Irving McKenny Reed, 1907
Vesta Storey, 1908
Harrison Loerpabel, 1910
Branson Telley, 1910

The year 1916 marked the last high school graduation class of the first generation of the Nome Public Schools. Thirty-five graduates shared in this honor in the fifteen-year period.

The long, sharp struggle among the city father, both on the city council and the school board, did not go unnoticed by the older students of the school. With the cry for financial retrenchment by the hard pressed city government, the establishment of a high school was seriously threatened. The dogged efforts of the first school board were rewarded with total rejection at the polls in April, 1902. Editor Strong of the Nugget pronounced that ".... neither the law nor the people ever intended that two or three men should use the money so provided in

a reckless and extravagant manner. We venture the prediction that the school accommodation already provided will be quite sufficient for some time to come. We also will make another prediction: The next school board will profit by the errors and extravagances of their predecessors."¹⁵

The immediate effect of the change in boards, in compliance with the demands of the public leadership, was the discharge of the night school teachers, Mrs. F. A. Steele and M. N. Kimball.¹⁶ With another month of school to go, the city treasurer's report showed a balance of only \$68.79 in the school fund, \$15.75 in the special street fund, and the largest amount, \$122.90, in the city attorney's fund.¹⁷ These figures obviously did not reconcile with the solvent condition reported by the outgoing school board.¹⁸

The second school board proved to have as much mettle as the first, but its public relations were better. An inspection of the high school building was made and improvements planned to utilize the attic as a storeroom with a stairway to be built up to it. A petition received from fifty signers led to the continuation of the night school at public expense, under the instruction of Professor J. A. Riley, who was succeeded as principal of the school by Professor Will Henry. However, the first request by a teacher, Alice L. Staples, for a salary increase was refused.¹⁹ In the spring elections of 1903, the school board asked for reelection. In a close ballot, only one member of the board, Colonel L. L. Sawyer, a man well respected by the mining community for his integrity of character, survived.²⁰

It is significant of the quality of the Nome population that the school boards in the early years hired the school staff mainly from local applicants. J. A. Riley had organized the schools on a firm basis in 1901-1902; and until its discontinuance in the spring of 1905, he contributed forcefully to adult education in the night school. Will Henry strengthened the first year high school course in 1902-1903, and won an editorial admission from Major Strong, "In justice to the first school board be it stated, that the system was a comprehensive one, and quite equal to any that could be found in towns of similar size in the states."²¹ Professor Henry was educated in Ohio and began his teaching career in 1873. After serving as principal of the Pueblo, Colorado, public schools and superintendent of the Pueblo County public schools, he had come to Nome in the rush of 1900. His special field was mathematics.²²

Now the establishment of a high school was in danger. Colonel Sawyer stated, in July 1903, that only two high school students had been enrolled in the past school year; he favored limiting the school system to an eight grade grammar school until the number of students warranted a high school. He proposed that the grammar department teacher be the school principal, adding that dispensing with a high school was in accord with "vox populi" in the spring election, although he further remarked, "This was said amid election excitement and at a time when the city was regarded as bankrupt, and the issue was to place Nome upon a sound financial basis. Retrenchment became the slogan as loud as that of a Scottish highland clan. The public schools were attacked in order that the city should receive more money from the school fund." The inference of Colonel Sawyer's published statement was that the board would have preferred more constructive action.²³ His boldness opened old wounds, but it polarized the latent strength of domestic opinion in the community's households. "Cornelia's" children, whether in ancient Rome or on the far shores of the American Bering Sea, were still her jewels and not to be denied their patrimony.

Fortunately, a school population explosion occurred in the fall of 1903, forcing the high school issue to a positive conclusion. From the previous year's enrollment of 121, the figure reached 183, with an average daily attendance of 142.²⁴ Although, as Colonel Sawyer had pointed out, there were only two students at the high school level in 1902-1903, there were now nine enrolled and thirteen others ready to be graduated into high school in the year beginning in September, 1905. Clearly, the high school could not be discontinued, but must be well provided for in the immediate future. Professor Delmar Harry Traphagen, an experienced educator "highly endorsed by the leading teachers of Seattle and of the Pacific coast," was employed by the board in the summer of 1903, to succeed Professor Henry as superintendent.²⁵ It fell to his lot to make many needed changes under adverse conditions.

To take care of a large class of fifth and sixth graders, the board had fitted up a large room 20 x 40 feet in the upper story of the central building.²⁶ When shortly before Christmas, J. Potter Whittren, a Harvard graduate and mineralogist, visited the school and classrooms, Professor Traphagen reviewed the curriculum with him.

Whittren, well impressed, thought the program a little "advanced" over the usual course of study of "outside" schools, but he found the new attic room poorly ventilated, odorous, and a hardship on the pupils and teacher. He thought that an addition to the building would have been a better investment.²⁷ That, however, was not the kind of report the city fathers had expected of J. Potter Whittren, an erstwhile critic of the school management.

In November, Judge Alfred S. Moore allotted 45% of the license tax receipts to the school board and 55% to the city government, much less than the council had requested. The Nugget advised that the Judge was acting wisely in wanting to know how the council would budget monies turned over to it by the court,²⁸ but went on to say that the city was now in need of an aggregate sum of \$13,290 for operating expense, which would be covered by the court allotment, but also had an indebtedness amounting to approximately \$30,000.²⁹ During the school board's fiscal year the original budget receipts of \$14,189.95 from the court grew to \$20,884.31, and the tempers on the city council were becoming short. Budget cutting was in the air – especially school budget cutting – by council suggestions of discontinuing the popular night school and consolidating the Bridge school pupils with the central school, and by reducing teachers' salaries.³⁰ Major Strong characterized the night school and salary cuts as a "peculiar brand of economy" on the part of the council.³¹

To the contrary, the school board contemplated more progressive plans. In the annual board report of March 31, 1904, just before the annual elections, the board charged that the annual change of teachers and board members, and neglect of needed supplies, had been detrimental as the school was compelled to open without the necessary supplies and equipment. The board had caused to be formulated a detailed course of study to correct deficiencies in all grade school work, including the fifth and sixth grades which had previously been disregarded. A four year high school course in harmony with the best standards in the United States was also developed by Professor Traphagen with the board's approval. The night school, a part of the school system, had increased its enrollment to a peak of 75 students. All books and supplies were furnished without cost to all children and adults attending the day and night classes, respectively. The building ventilation had been improved and a steam heating system installed on the first floor.³² This was hardly the gloomy picture projected by Colonel Sawyer the previous summer, but it was a testimonial to the responsible courage of the Colonel and his colleagues of the board, Captain Harry Storey, and A. H. Moore.

Morale is an intuitive response to environmental situations which sparks the will to action in the human race. The arrival of Professor Taphagen, the determination of the school board, and the increasing number of the student body served to motivate the creative drives of the Nome school youth, as well as the teachers. Excellent public presentations were given by all grades and classes at Christmas time and at the closing of the school year.³³ A notable contribution to school history was the first publication of the Nome High School Aurora, an octavo annual booklet of 28 pages with class pictures, editorials, articles of general interest, student feature essays, anecdotes, personalities, and supporting advertisements. Wilda Moore and Mabelle Niebling were the founding editors. Ralph Lomen, the manager, contributed the first of a succession of histories of the school by student historians.³⁴

The young lady editors felt that the high school possessed literary talent and were ready, after five months of diligent study, to show that they were "now capable of publishing a superior pamphlet containing contributions of Alaskan genius." They acknowledged some leanings towards women's rights and avowed that "unlike our local contemporaries, we are 'fearless and independent.'" The deficiency of school spirit was mourned but understood:

The lack of loyalty and spirit here is largely recent organization of the school, the passing population, the cosmopolitan nature of the pupils, and old school ties not fully severed...

If pupils anywhere ought to be loyal, those in the Nome School certainly should, for they are subject to so many attacks, both malicious and otherwise. There should be a strong feeling existing among the pupils to stem this tide of ill will.³⁵

One year later, editor-in-chief Lutie J. Boardman proudly announced a reversal of that condition, "The enrollment in the High School has increased ninety per cent, but the High School spirit among the pupils, we are glad to say, has increased in far greater proportion."³⁶

The young ladies further thanked the school board for the good work they had done in establishing the high school and weighed that they might continue their good work. Ralph Lomen noted that the combined weight of the four high school boys and five girls would aggregate 1206-1/2 pounds, sufficient proof that they were living in a healthy country.³⁷ At an average weight of 134 pounds, it must be admitted that these youngsters were not undernourished.

Professor Traphagen's aim was to put Nome High School on the list of schools having academic standards approved for college entrance by American universities.³⁸ His tenure was too short, only two years, for the achievement of that goal, but his students were offered a substantial curriculum of Latin, physics, English and literature, ancient history, geography, algebra, geometry, music, drawing, physical education, and professional encouragement in the pursuit of excellence.³⁹ Night school classes offered incentives for self-improvement to many foreign born adults and others who wished to supplement their knowledge after working hours. Courses were made up for any subject in which a class could be gathered, as well as regular courses in reading, writing, orthography, language, mathematics, history, geography, and bookkeeping.⁴⁰

Mr. Ray Wallingford coached the girls of the high school in basketball at the Arctic Brotherhood hall. Soon their games were attracting the public, and the boys took up the game.⁴¹ The pretty young ladies who made up the first Nome high school team were Marie Odean, Grace Fisher, Olive Storey, Mora Parkinson, Arlene Wheeler, Rowena Lewis, Vesta Storey, and Alice Clum. The boy's team were Lutie Boardman, Alfred Lomen, Irving Reed, Frank Burley, Russell Jeffreys, and student manager Richard Beale. Team captain and Aurora editor Boardman remarked that none of the boys had ever played before, but that with another year of such improvement they would be able to compete for the championship of Alaska.⁴² He also commented, "Skiing and tobogganing are the natural sports of this country. Any boy or girl who cannot slide down hill on a pair of skis is behind the times."⁴³

In the fall of 1904, Professor Traphagen's second year as superintendent, the battle of the city council for control of the school funds broke out with renewed fury. Needing funds, the school board issued a writ of mandamus against the council with the resulting judgement of Judge Moore, detailed previously, that the court should decide the division of the license tax funds between the city and the schools. Although the court was reasonably liberal in favor of the board, the position was one of fiscal dependence on the court. The passage of the Nelson Act in 1905, further weakened the fiduciary independence of the school boards of the entire Territory of Alaska and the early promise of free school boards receded into total dependence on city councils for school budget approval. Nome was the ground on which the legal contest was waged. The outcome was a detrimental loss to the development of educational excellence in the schools of Alaska, that has persisted in degree to the present time.

Major John F. A. Strong's keen editorial interest in public affairs reflected the Nome school system issues with the lucidity of value judgement that he later turned to statesmanship as a great governor of Alaska, when many beneficial changes were made, including the enabling act of 1915, providing for the present state university, and the territorial education act of 1917, establishing a territorial public school system. Major Strong's continuous

support of the Nome public schools in the Nome Nugget from 1900 until his departure in 1905, remains in the archives of the newspaper as a tribute to his valuable service to the education of the children of Alaska.

Major Strong editorialized:

The public school system must be maintained to the highest possible state of efficiency, and should be among the last to suffer from lack of financial aid. A mistake was apparently made in passing over to the municipality the control of all monies collected from licenses and other revenues. Under the old system, the schools had enough and to spare, but if the present policy of the city government is maintained, school warrants will be at a discount.⁴⁴

When the council sent an "expert" to examine the schools for negative evidence, Strong took exception on the grounds that the schools were the business of the school board, and were doing an excellent job as the public was able to see in the exercises performed for them by the school children.⁴⁵

The school board budget of 1905 showed the astronomical figure for the fiscal year to be \$21,255.92 in funds defraying expenses incurred.⁴⁶ Editor S. H. Stevens of *The Gold Digger* indignantly compared the annual cost of 130 children in Nome at \$150 per capita with the per capita cost in Colorado, "the highest in the union for common schools," at \$7.50 for each school child.⁴⁷ Although nobody suggested that the economy would permit the education of 130 children for \$930 per year, as in Colorado, retrenchment demands again dominated the spring electioneering. The handwriting was on the wall for an excellent board that would soon be replaced by three council henchmen. Facilitating the change was a rumor that all the teachers, janitors, and the superintendent were forced to "kick back" a percentage of their salaries to the board members to hold their jobs.

Sworn affidavits were published in the city newspapers by the professional staff and the custodians of the schools denying the accusations and exonerating the previous boards of such wrongdoing. Lutie J. Boardman took time from his basketball and scholarly activities to write a letter to the editors asking retention of the teachers at their usual salary rates, and the reelection of the present efficient board. Lutie said that he spoke for his schoolmates.⁴⁸

While six new candidates for the school board published statements, a new note was struck in the political history of Alaska. City attorney George D. Schofield advised that separate elections must be held for city offices and school board offices, as subdivision 12 of section 4 of the federal Act of 1904, pertaining to Alaska, provided that school board members are to be elected annually by all adults who are citizens of the United States or who had filed their first papers declaring their intention of becoming citizens. Obviously the women were not excluded from voting, although they were denied suffrage in general elections by prior statutes. The school board election was separated and deferred a month.⁴⁹ Miss Kitty Cordon, "an old time resident whose many charitable acts endeared her to all," became the first woman in Nome to run for public office.⁵⁰ She was defeated, but not alone. J. W. Wright, E. T. Baldwin, and S. T. Jeffreys, all sycophants of the city council, won the school board seats. Morale in the schools rivaled Mudville's on the day that mighty Casey struck out. A request was signed by 43 citizens for continuation of the night school under Professor Riley, stating on the petition "we have derived great benefit therefrom."⁵¹ But that era was over.

Youthful exuberance set in motion and encouraged by good leadership for two years carried over into the administration of the new superintendent, D. W. Jarvis, an able educator with 17 years of experience in the Portland, Oregon schools. The Bridge school was discontinued, as was the free night school, but a new gymnasium was added, as a friendly gesture of the city council, to the high school building. The cost of the annex was paid from the school funds, but the board did not have to formally request the payment and the three members thoughtfully deducted the amount from their annual budget, reflecting a reduction of \$3,375 in their spring report. Other savings were gained by curtailing the consumption of water, although the athletic program had grown in popularity; one teacher was dropped, which caused the exclusion of chemistry, physics, drawing,

and music from the curriculum and no natural science was taught whatever. The closure of the school for six weeks in mid-winter resulted in more economy by lowering fuel bills.⁵²

In spite of the conscientious efforts of the new school board to effect these economies, some dissent was voiced. The Nugget editor asked several questions:

Are the schools stripped of supplies? Are the teachers paid with general fund warrants cashable at not more than 5% discount at the banks? Are the small savings on water and school supplies worth the loss in efficiency? Is the school board treasury as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard, like the city treasury? If so, why did the board let the city use up its funds so that it has no running expense money? More light is needed on matters closely connected with administration of its duties by the school board.⁵³

Whatever the purposes of the board might have been, a shocking condition of deterioration in school control had set in. By election time in April, 1906, S. H. Stevens of *The Gold Digger* urged a careful selection of the new board member as "the possibilities open to a corrupt board for graft and mismanagement are great and far reaching."⁵⁴ A. A. "Scotty" Allan, the renowned Alaska Sweepstakes dog team driver and a parent of school age children, won a resounding victory for the vacancy. Mr. Allan served the community well for six years and helped to regain for the board a favorable reputation. However, the bond of the treasurer was raised to \$40,000. Mayor Copley, on retiring from office, struck a happy note by stating that there had been no litigation with the school board during the year, but the board and the council had worked together harmoniously.⁵⁵

On September 13, 1905, a disastrous fire destroyed fifty business places in Nome, at a cost of \$250,000. In November, the grand jury was informed by the school board that their account books had burned in the fire and a financial report on the schools could not be given. The grand jury also reported that the school had no provision for ventilation and urged that fire escapes be installed.⁵⁶ Although E. T. Baldwin, secretary of the board, denied that the accounts and school records had been lost, but were in his possession,⁵⁷ none of the materials of the Nome Public Schools records up to that time, with the exception of a few teachers' classroom attendance books, are known to exist.⁵⁸ In fairness to the school board, it might be said that almost certainly the consequences of the great fire imposed burdens on them that could not be satisfactorily resolved. Transportation was nearly closed for the winter and the city's disaster problem was immense.

The school board, with Mr. Allan replacing Judge S. T. Jeffreys, announced in *The Aurora* that the superintendent was authorized to revise the course of study, giving to physics and chemistry an important place in the curriculum; that apparatus had been ordered and would be installed during the vacation. The Latin course would be extended to four years and a three year German course introduced.⁵⁹

A literary group, The Borean Society, became an institution in the high school in 1906, under the guidance of the English teacher, Miss Nell E. Blodgett. The object of the society was to promote social and literary culture and to discipline its members in self-government. A literary program composed of orations, debates, and musical features was given about every three weeks.⁶⁰ For the next ten years the Borean Society developed the cultural and social talents of its members and entertained local speakers and distinguished visitors from the outside world who shared their knowledge and experience with the students, several of whom themselves became notable personages in adult life.

Lucius J. Boardman and Ralph Lomen were graduated as the Class of 1906, on June 1. Lucius was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1885. He went to the Klondike in the gold rush of 1897, with his father, and made the arduous trip down the Yukon in the fall of 1899, to become one of the Nome pioneers. He entered the sixth grade in 1900, having been out of school for five years. He distinguished himself in his high school career in academic achievement, leadership, and athletics.⁶¹

Ralph Lomen was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1887. He arrived in Nome in 1903, and entered high school. Ralph had served as a page in the Minnesota state senate, and in Nome he dropped out of school one year to work in the office of the clerk of the United States district court. He also participated with distinction in all phases of high school life.⁶²

At the graduation ceremonies the two young men delivered orations, and Superintendent Jarvis presented each of them a dressed sealskin diploma with illuminated lettering, the work of a Mr. Wirth and Elmer E. Reed.⁶³

Professor Jarvis instituted the new course of study in the fall of 1906, that led Ben Morris, editor of *The Aurora*, to write with pride:

The Nome High School, although it has only been established four years, and is the most northern high school in the world, now fits students for entrance to the leading colleges and universities in the United States.⁶⁴

The course included four years of Latin, four years of mathematics, four years of German, four years of English; physics, chemistry, history, civics, physical geography, bookkeeping, and physiology. The largest incoming freshman class, from 18 grammar school graduates, was expected the next year. They had an excellent academic curriculum to anticipate.⁶⁵ Irving McKenny Reed, the sole graduate of the high school class of 1907 and captain of the basketball team, would try his mettle in higher academic fields.⁶⁶

The 1907-1908 school year was one of great vigor and excitement for the students, but it was also the turning point to defeat in the board's fight for fiscal independence from the city council's control of school funds, which has been explained earlier in detail. The renewal of hostilities had begun on September 30, 1907, when the board submitted its annual budget in the amount of \$18,275. The council reduced the request by \$900, the salary of the clerk of the board, and approved the balance of \$17,375, with the stipulation that only the prorated sum up to the expiration of the present council's term in April would be paid by it and the newly elected council would be responsible for providing the remaining prorated portion of \$3,050 needed for operational expenses to conclude the school year.⁶⁷

The plan of the council to divide the payments to the school board for the year's budget by proration between the outgoing and the incoming councils for periods in office covered by the school year and services appeared to negate the continuous character of the city government as being one of men, not of laws. The board obligated itself for the salary of its clerk in the amount of \$350 in the original budget, and sued to recover that amount from the council.⁶⁸ To the question as to whether the council "has to give the school board any money it requires and asks for school operations," the answer of the court was that the school board had already received all the monies necessary for the maintenance of the schools for the year.⁶⁹ It was clearly a victory for the council, reducing the school board essentially to a working advisory school committee fiscally dependent on the city council and limited in budgetary planning by its pleasure.

The Nome Pioneer Press reported that 194 pupils were enrolled by November, and that although there were 78 less people in Nome than in the past year, there were 35 more pupils in the public schools. It also pointed out the unusual feature that the higher grades had larger enrollments than the lower ones, just the reverse of conditions existing in all outside schools and contrary to all precedent in Nome.⁷⁰ The enrollment grew to 202 during the year and was the highest in the history of the school for the next 38 years. Irene Hannagan, Crit Tolman, and Vesta Storey graduated from high school in the spring.

The boy's basketball team won glory for the school by defeating every team in the city, losing only one game against the Arctic Brotherhood, and won the Shaw-Brewster trophy for the championship of Alaska. The boys were popularly known as "the tall kids" as they averaged six feet in height. Twenty boys tried for the team but the successful players were Crit Tolman, captain; Jess White, forward; Chet Tolman, forward; Claude Shea,

guard; and Charles Thompson, guard. They wore white v-neck jerseys, red pants, and red sox as their uniforms. Branson Telley and Harry Bloomfield were substitutes, and Alex Smith the "trainer." Benny White was the team's mascot.

In the years 1906 and 1907, some of the first Alaska born children were entering the schools. The predominance of larger classes in the higher grades reflected the fact that most of the pupils had come from the states outside. However, the feeling of identity that had been missing five years before was firmly established and strengthened by a more stabilized population and pride in the school's excellent academic program and its cultural and athletic attainments. The cosmopolitan backgrounds of the older students abetted high standards in the school society that were lost a generation later. This was a good era.

Professor Edgar E. Grimm, a former instructor at the Oregon State Agricultural College, served four years, from 1907 to 1911, as superintendent of schools. Professor Grimm had joined the faculty of the high school in 1906, in Professor Jarvis's administration, as a science and math teacher, continuing to teach in both these fields until the time of his resignation. Grimm's long tenure, in spite of his making controversial changes in the curriculum, was supported by a strong board led by the respected Scotty Allan. It is probable that Mr. Allan himself was the board's main strength while he served on it, as he was a man of rugged determination and the energetic vitality of the great sportsman that he was.

Apparently Scotty Allan did not recognize the signs of defeat in the recent court decision favoring the city council. The board had contracted a complete renovation of the school building during the summer; a new floor was laid in the gym; fire escape ladders were installed from a window in each room; a ventilation system was installed, as well as new doors; walls were repapered; the lavatories were renovated; the engine room was enlarged; the steam heating plant remodeled; the building's supports in the foundation were replaced; and it was announced that the outside of the large building would be painted before the opening day of school. The costs of the work added up to \$2,500 before the painting was done.⁷¹

When the council refused to pay \$3,000 which the board requested for its expenses, the board took their budget to the district court. Judge Moore decided in favor of the school board and apportioned 50% of the license monies to it. The council appealed the decision to the San Francisco Court of Appeals, where it was thrown out by the circuit court.⁷² But the council still received school funds and doled them out to the board, causing constant friction.

A lighter incident was the receipt by the mayor of a letter of non-payment of debts contracted by "a certain publication"⁷³ put out by the high school students. The mayor referred the bill to the school board for payment.⁷⁴

In 1908-1909, the high school reached its zenith enrollment for the pioneer period, a figure of 55 students, which it would not again attain until 1955. A dropping off in the town was in sight. The Fairbanks Times was quoted by the Nugget that "Nome is still here, still buoyant; a little disfigured, perhaps, but still in the ring," in 1910. But more people were leaving the city than were coming in, and by 1919, the high school had dwindled to three students.⁷⁵ In 1909, one student, Charles Deyette, was graduated.⁷⁶

In 1909-1910, a manual training department was initiated for the boys of the seventh and eighth grades and the high school. A skilled manual arts teacher, Mr. W. C. Davidson, who had taught at the Oakland Polytechnic High School, was employed as instructor. As music and drawing were dropped, and part of the gymnasium was partitioned off to make room for the new subject, repercussions of dissent were heard that increased in volume for the following two years. The students wanted their playing area returned⁷⁷ although by the winter of 1910, the high school had the only basketball teams in Nome. The city fathers wanted to drop the manual arts department to save money. The program was soon embroiled in the contention of local politics.

Following the decreasing values of gold production, the population of Nome had begun to decline. In 1900, there were 12,488 inhabitants; in 1910, there were 2,600; and in 1920, only 852.78 When the city council met in late July, 1910, it found that taxable city property evaluations had dropped 40% in the past year, and levies reduced from \$35,007.94 to \$22,711.85. Although the previous school budget had approximated \$17,000, the board suggested a school budget for the current year of only \$14,000, to be practicable by reducing the school term by one month of time in December and January.⁷⁹ Was this cooperation, victory, or defeat? And for whom? Perhaps nobody knew. The council filed the budget request without comment.⁸⁰

Contemporary middle class attitudes toward education entered public opinion. Reminding its readers that music and drawing had been cut from the curriculum for economy, the Nugget stated that there was no justification for a manual arts department, with a teacher at \$150 per month; it was a luxury – a fad of the principal:

If manual training is to be taught to half a dozen boys, at an expense of \$150 for an instructor alone, let us demand a like salary for instruction in stenography and bookkeeping for the same number of girls. There is just as much justice in one proposition as there is in the other.⁸¹

The editor demanded that the school should carry a full nine months term, without manual training, and bear an equal portion of the city budget reduction. He quoted the superintendent of the schools of a large midwestern city as saying that "there is something wrong with the American school system. It fails to work as it should. A quarter of a million children are dropouts before the eighth grade. There is a great deal of talk about domestic science, schools for stammerers, night schools, and mechanical departments, and all that rot, but little about the essential three R's."⁸² The training in the application of the three R's was apparently not the proper function of education in the public schools, according to this philosophy.

Eight months before the school board election of 1911, the Nugget cast a seed for change:

There is a great dearth of suitable candidates for the school board. There ought to be more candidates for these places, men of affairs in various walks of life who would have a sincere ambition to leave the school system better than they found it.⁸³

Although the school year seems by the records to have been productive, most of its basic problems resting on the perennial over-economizing, one of those minor incidents occurred in the spring that border on the ridiculous but often are turning points in human affairs. Three third and fourth grade pupils and a high school girl who had attended a dance at the Odd Fellows hall with their parents, were expelled by Professor Grimm, who said that they were unfit and not in proper condition to be in school, even though they were not tardy in the morning. Several others, first grade pupils, were not expelled. Professor Grimm stated that he was going to make an example of children whose parents allowed them to stay out late at night at dances and other affairs. An angry mother accused the teachers of going to dances and staying out as late or later than two o'clock, coming to school late, and maintaining low efficiency in the grade school. Mr. Grimm offered no excuse for the three teachers who had been at the dance, but he asserted that he would make examples of other children for failing to heed his warning.⁸⁴

Mrs. Minnie B. Crowder, the teacher of the three younger children, had washed their mouths with soap before sending them home at the superintendent's orders. Mrs. Crowder was an old fashioned teacher who never went to dances herself, but in the words of the interviewing reporter "set a good example." She looked on the punishments as unjust and had washed the children's mouths with soap, not for going to the ball but for telling lies. The reporter added that Mrs. Crowder was esteemed as the model teacher in the building. He was not opposed to the mouthwashing, but opined that it should not have been done with the school soap, which was unsanitary.⁸⁵

Professor Grimm was now fair game. A letter from a 1910 graduate, Helen Kreps, in California, cast a reflection on the standards of the high school:

Well, Bob, we aren't in Stanford after all, though we hoped to enter there this semester.. The cause, briefly, is that they wouldn't accredit the high school... Consequently we have to graduate again from high school here before we will be allowed to go to Stanford...It was a terrible disappointment to us. So you see for yourself that they do not teach up to the standard methods up in Nome.⁸⁶

Mrs. Sara E. Schofield, the wife of the city attorney, ran for the vacant position on the school board and became the first woman to hold an elective office in the city. The two other members at this time were A. A. Allan and J. Y. McCune. At a widely attended board meeting on June 8, the salaries of teachers were discussed, showing that Professor Grimm was paid a salary of \$225 per month; Miss Fannie Brayton \$166.65; and all other teachers, \$150 per month. Mrs. Schofield spoke for better salaries to get better teachers. The Nugget reported:

Several times during the evening the questions were leading into quicksand when the standard of the school and the efficiency of the teachers were led up to, and once Yorkey /Sykes/ broke out and expressed what he believed was the popular belief of the conditions of our high school, but the least said the sooner mended so we will not publish what he had to say.

Before adjourning to visit the school building in a body it was agreed that the school board make out an estimate of the amount needed to operate the school for the coming year and cut down the appropriation, if possible.⁸⁷

In a following meeting a week later, the board was divided, the two men opposed to Mrs. Schofield, on several questions. Mrs. Schofield used fine tact in countering the proposal to rehire Professor Grimm by asking that it be deferred to a public meeting.⁸⁸ Grimm's resignation was accepted the next day, with the resignations of five teachers and two remaining. The board announced that teachers of music, drawing, French, and German, the subjects neglected of late years, would be sought.⁸⁹

The editor of the Nugget, commenting on the resignations, mentioned that Professor Grimm was an able instructor in chemistry, but not a disciplinarian. It was largely in the lack of control reported by parents that the dissatisfaction lay. He concluded:

If the council will assist the board by granting them the amount asked for the new budget, or within a thousand or fifteen hundred of their estimate of the cost of running the schools, the public may have every reason to be thankful to the present board.⁹⁰

Actually, Professor Grimm was not an unpopular man. He served four years in the superintendency, twice as long as any of his predecessors and longer than any board member other than Scotty Allan, up to that time. Following his resignation from the schools, he was elected as city clerk and won reelection many times. He also served as a member of the school board from 1915 to 1918. It might have been said of him, as it was in tribute to old Colonel L. L. Sawyer who died in February of 1911, that he had a good influence on the public schools and was "kind and charitable, and always willing to lend a helping hand."⁹¹

In the 1907-1911 school era the students continued to report their interests and activities in The Aurora. In 1909, Harrison Loerpabel wrote an excellent illustrated article entitled "Gold Mining in Alaska." Claude Kell reported on "Dog Days in Nome, " the story of Scotty Allan winning the Alaska Sweepstakes that year. Money earned from a vaudeville show, \$200, given in 1908, was used to order reference books and novels for the library. There were seven seniors graduated in the Class of 1910; Nora Kreps, Helen Kreps, Barbara Stipek, Claude Kell, Harrison Loerpabel, Branson Tolley, and Jess White. None were graduated in 1911.

In 1911, The Aurora featured a dedication picture of the high school staff inscribed: "To Professor Grimm, Miss Brayton and Mr. Johnson, in appreciation of their ever willing services, we the Nome High School, affectionately dedicate this issue of the Aurora." The format, typography, picture coverage, and value of school historical recording for the year made this 64 page issue an important contribution to the historical researcher. Mae Mayer, editor, and her staff, William Sellers, Earl Modini, Mildred Lehmann, and Anna Wittenberg, gave credit to their classmates, "Never before have the combined efforts of the students been so much in evidence."

On the 18th of February the school produced Goldsmith's comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer." It was a tremendous success, enabling the students to pay the debt of a previous year, amounting to \$106, that had been jocularly forwarded by the mayor to the school board in midsummer of 1910. Miss Brayton and Mr. Johnson directed the cast of players, Don Brown, Anna Wittenberg, Mae Mayer, Helen Lomen, Faxon Lewis, Ray Broste, Charles Brown, Christian Hansen, and a number of minor characters. A luncheon party was given by Professor Grimm for the players and directors at Modini's Cafe, celebrating their success.⁹²

Having had enough of trouble for a span, the town was ready to put its best foot forward in school matters in reception of a new administration. The board was assisted by the University of Washington in finding a well qualified superintendent. He was a young man, about 26, Frank X. Karrer, a graduate of Ellensburg Normal School, with a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Washington, and successful teaching experience.⁹³ Also employed were Miss Lucile Wilson and S. R. Wilson, the son and daughter of the president of Ellensburg Normal School. Miss Wilson would teach English, art, and music; Mr. Wilson would instruct the Latin, history, and economics classes. Professor Karrer himself would be the instructor in mathematics, science, and German. Teachers in the grade school were: Emma Lee Orr, first and second; Catherine Dunn, third and fourth; Mrs. Minnie B. Crowder, fifth and sixth; Mary G. Ryan, seventh and eighth.⁹⁴

When Professor Karrer and Mr. And Miss Wilson arrived, the school building had been renovated and painted. The gymnasium had been remodeled and fitted with swinging rings, flying rings, horizontal bars, and a climbing rope. Professor Karrer soon revised the course of study; the library books, references and texts, were catalogued and new books were added. New laboratory tables for the physics and chemistry courses were on hand and new equipment was on order. Rhetoric was to be taught as part of the English program and each student in high school would be required to learn public speaking and make two speeches a year. Although physical education would be given in a regular training program, the public was assured that it would not interfere with regular work. Scholastic standards were to be raised to highest quality and in another year the course of study would equal the best in the states.⁹⁵ Professor Karrer kept his promises.⁹⁶

This was to be a year of personal discipline – and some added private expense. Pupils would have to pay for writing pads, pencils, and personal supplies, with the exception of textbooks and laboratory chemicals. No pupil was to be entered in the primary grade after the third week of school, and all children fifteen minutes late were to be "warmed up" and sent home for the day.⁹⁷ The method of "warming up" was not specified.

By this time the school board had grown accustomed to having their expenses doled out on request to the city council from time to time. The Nugget editor stated that "this is a good board," crediting Scotty Allan, who put up a good argument with his requests, as peppery and sharp and "knows the school finances."⁹⁸ Undoubtedly, the influence of the charming and intelligent Mrs. Schofield contributed much to harmony between the two agencies, also. The city was solvent due to the liberality of the federal government with its license tax refunds, so that the retiring council was able to turn over \$20,328.32 to its successors the following April.⁹⁹ The school budget of \$15,475 for the year was also apparently adequate.¹⁰⁰ The pattern was one of "feast or famine."

The effect of young Professor Karrer and his youthful assistants, the Wilsons, was an electric surge of enthusiasm and high morale among the students. No teacher was out on social affairs after 10:00 p.m. on school night, and one of Karrer's students recalled over fifty-five years later that "he piled on the homework and was a real disciplinarian." Helen Allan wrote to her in 1914, from the University of California, that "it isn't any harder

here than it was in our junior and senior years at Nome." The informant, Mrs. Carrie M. McLain, concluded, "I'm really grateful for what Professor Karrer did for us."¹⁰¹

The athletic program was revived and games were played with new teams sponsored by the army at Fort Davis and the Nome Kennel Club. The boys on the school team were Don Brown, Minor McLain, Faxon Lewis, James Bogan, Earl Modini, and Eugene Kell, with George Allan their mascot, and Mr. Wilson coach. The Borean Society gave some delightful programs, and class parties abounded throughout the year. Margaret Moldt was chosen queen of the All-Alaska Sweepstakes Race which Scotty Allan again won. Five seniors were graduated in June: Mildred Lehmann, Anna Wittenberg, Mae Mayer, Lillian Simson, and Linda Davison, a Negro girl, brilliant and lovely, the first of her race to graduate from this "white" high school.¹⁰²

1912-1913 was the most peaceful year of council-school board relations in the history of Nome. Three prominent and respected citizens, S. N. Carman, Mrs. Schofield, and Ward Estey constituted the board. In the school, Professor Karrer gathered up the shards of past school records and organized them neatly in a large ledger showing accurately the scholastic standing of every high school student. He also plotted out a chart of the complete course of study divided into two branches, a general course and a college preparatory course, with intensive subject coverage in each. A German language club, Der Deutsche Verein, and a mathematics club were organized. Professor Karrer entertained each of the high school classes at his home during the year, and enjoyed a personal popularity that is accorded by the young only to a great leader.

The girls enjoyed the spotlight of the basketball season, as intra-city games seem to have fallen off that year, eliminating competition for the boys. The girls team, dressed in pleated bloomers and middie blouses, were Hilda Johnson, Euphemia Allan, Carrie Stipek, Helen Allan, and Sadie McDonough. After a sleigh ride, in January, the boys challenged the girls to a basketball game and were held to a tie score. The Aurora society section described the season's end:

One of the prettiest and best planned receptions ever held in the gymnasium was given by the losing side of the Girls' Basketball Team to the High School, coaches, referee and umpire. The gymnasium presented a beautiful parlor scene and five charming hostesses aided wonderfully in producing such a pleasing effect. A splendid program was cleverly given. Late in the evening games and dancing were in vogue. At the seemingly early hour a delicious luncheon was served. It may honestly be said that no moment escaped without holding its own share of fun.¹⁰³

At the graduation exercises a new ceremony was introduced noted as "the pick and shovel oration," and explained in the 1914 yearbook:

The pick and shovel are the implements with which the Alaskan miners dig and toil laboriously for gold. They symbolize in school the tools with which we delve for knowledge.

The pick and shovel are made of copper, beautifully hammered. These were made by Mr. Charles Schifferle and presented to the High School.

In a very appropriate speech, the President of the Senior Class presents to the President of the Junior Class the pick and shovel, admonishing the Juniors, in their work as Seniors, to use these implements wisely. The Junior representative replies in a fitting manner.¹⁰⁴

Among the graduates of 1913 was Hilda Johnson, the last of the children of Mess Florence Mauzy's pioneer primary grade in the old Congregational Church library in 1901. Her five classmates were Harold Lyle, Rose Cameron, William Sellers, Carrie Stipek, and Euphemia Allan. These were representative of Nome's finest youth, justifying the community efforts in establishing and providing the support of the public schools that had brought them to the fulfillment of this day.

Significant of the mellowing relationship between the council and the school board, in June, a committee of the council inspected the foundations and boilers of the school, on invitation of the board, and agreeing that the requested repairs were necessary, they pledged \$3000 for the job – although the city had only half that amount in the treasury.¹⁰⁵ But a curious act preceded the pledge by a day – the school board announced that it would not furnish free textbooks the next term.¹⁰⁶ Crusading boards were out of fashion, and half a loaf was better than none.

In October of 1913, a great storm created a "terrible disaster" in Nome, accelerating the decline of the town. Homes, businesses, and properties were wiped out on a large scale by massive waves from the sea, resulting in losses estimated as high as one and a half million dollars. The storm began on Sunday, the fifth. Glass began to crash in sea front buildings, electrical power faltered erratically, and the sea burst into the first lines of buildings. By Monday morning the buildings were being destroyed and washed to sea, crushed, or tossed inland across the streets. Docks were demolished, the buildings on River Street were undermined and toppled over.

The native village on the sandspit vanished, and the old Bridge school building, lifted by the fold, descended on a residence and crushed it. The two graveyards were torn up and over fifty coffins littered the tundra. Corpses were spilled and scattered along the banks of the Snake River. The whole waterfront for a mile and a half was a continuous mass of wreck and ruin.¹⁰⁷

Appeals were made by the chamber of commerce to the leading newspapers of the west coast and to the Portland chamber of commerce for economic aid. The Alaska delegate to congress and others in congress were asked by the city council, the chamber of commerce, and influential citizens to pass a relief appropriation for Nome.¹⁰⁸

Although some of the destroyed businesses were rebuilt "in shortened buildings" from the wreckage, many business men, and families who had lost their shelter, departed for the outside. May sold their houses for amounts of \$50 to \$300 to the homeless Eskimos and left.¹⁰⁹ From this time the "white" identity of the community began to change relentlessly, until eventually it became an Eskimo settlement, called by a travelling government Health, Education, and Welfare Department representative in 1967, "an oversized native village."¹¹⁰

Academically, the high school was in excellent condition, as shown by an article, "Public Schools in Alaska," in *The Aurora*, 1914:

High School students who complete the regular Course and who present, in addition to their diploma, a recommendation, covering their work in detail, from the present superintendent will be admitted without examination to the University of California at Berkeley, Leland Stanford Junior University at Palo Alto, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis, the University of Washington at Seattle, the University of Oregon at Eugene, the Washington State Normal School at Los Angeles. This should indeed, be gratifying to people who are truly interested in the welfare of the Alaskan schools.¹¹¹

Professor Karrer had done his work well, always in the interest of his students and inclining their ideals of life and work to high standards. Every year of his tenure *The Aurora* had been dedicated to him: "To Professor Karrer Our Friend and Counselor..." He expressed his intention of leaving for the States. "We are sorry," wrote Helen Allan, "to lose such an earnest and excellent teacher and friend who has done so much to advance our schools."¹¹²

Three boys, James Bogan, Eugene Kell, and Jerome Simson were graduated as the class of 1914. James gave the "pick and shovel" oration and Helen Allan made a speech of acceptance of the trophies for the new Senior class.¹¹³

After the beginning of World War I, in 1914, editorial interest in the public schools dropped off, leaving only occasional and scanty coverage in the press. The Aurora, in its last printed edition to be found in the present study, appeared in 1915. With it, the details of the student life fade for a number of years. The staff of the annual that year included editor Elizabeth Neuman, Katie Bongard, Helen Allan, Sam Wittenberg, George Wanger, Fred Haering, and Peter Sather. Elizabeth, Helen, and Sam received diplomas as the class of 1915.

Expressing appreciation to C. W. Baird, their superintendent, and to Miss Rannie Baker, their English teacher, for their untiring aid in preparing The Aurora for publication, the editor commented on the conditions under which the work was done, and their hopes as concerned student citizens:

Few outside the school realize the amount of work which falls to the lot of each individual pupil in the preparation of press material. To you, dearest schoolmates, who have labored to make this Aurora a success and whose co-operation has made the editor's work pleasure instead of drudgery, warm and heartfelt thanks...

For some time letters have been coming in from different exchanges asking questions about life in Alaska, school, sports, etc. We are gratified at the interest evinced and pleased to answer directly whenever possible, but wish to remind our correspondents, that if letters are written during the winter, it takes at least six weeks to have them reach us, and as many more for the answer to go out. The mail has to be carried by dog team over heavy trails, through storm and blizzard, all the way between Southeastern Alaska and Nome, and for a couple of months before the opening of navigation no letters can be sent. The staff has always striven to make the Aurora thoroughly representative of the school and country; consequently it may serve to answer some of the questions of our outside friends.

It is rumored again that the school appropriations is going to be reduced. This would necessitate the elimination of some subjects from the High School course. Were such a thing to happen, it would be doing Nome a serious injury. In order to secure school advantages children would have to be sent away from their homes, at the time when home influence is most necessary. "Alaska for Alaskans" is the slogan but "Alaskans for Alaska" might well be. Ought not her people do something for her, who does so much for them? Surely her sons and daughters are entitled to a good education, so that they may become intelligent patriotic Alaskan citizens.

We hope that not only will the High School be continued, but that in the near future, Alaska can boast as her own a college which will equal the best in any part of America.¹¹⁴

C. W. Baird served as superintendent of schools from 1914 to 1916. He was succeeded by Charles W. Thompson whose tenure from 1916 to 1918, ended what might be considered the pioneer era, as at that time the children of many of the early students were enrolled in the elementary grades – a new generation. The economic impetus of the Seward Peninsula area had declined, war conditions had caused a general exodus – including young men going into the armed services – and in the spring of 1918, apparently none of the five seniors of the nine enrolled in the fall finished the requirements for graduation. The 1916 class, the last to graduate in this period, consisted of four students: Catherine Bongard, Fred Haering, George Wanger, and Amandas Johanson. By 1919, the grade school enrollment was 102, but the high school was almost out of existence with only three students.

CHAPTER V

Under the Territorial Department of Education Formative Years of a New Era: 1917 to 1940

A territorial law of 1917 reorganized the entire school system, ending the old non-system of almost complete local autonomy and bringing in the sweeping changes of a new era that extended in evolutionary process through the next half century preceding statehood.

After the passage of the Nelson Act in 1905, which established the system of schools for white children, Congress approved a bill for the election of a non-voting delegate to Congress from Alaska, in 1906, and in 1912, passed an Organic Act, creating a territorial government.¹

By the terms of the Organic Act, the territorial legislature was prohibited from passing any laws affecting schools insofar as their establishment and maintenance was concerned, and from appropriating territorial money for the support of schools. This restriction was removed by an Act approved on March 3, 1917, entitled "An Act to authorize the Legislature of Alaska to establish and maintain schools, and for other purposes."²

The territorial legislature was convened the same month and enacted a Uniform School Act, made necessary by a "Bone Dry Law" ending the legal sale of liquor and terminating the saloon licenses which had been the main support of territorial schools.³

A territorial Board of Education was provided, composed of the Governor and four senior senators, one from each judicial division, who selected a Commissioner of Education, Lester D. Henderson, to head the school system of the Territory. The Commissioner was vested with extensive powers in the general supervision of all territorial educational institutions, having authority to prepare general rules and regulations regarding the conduct of the schools, to formulate courses of study for all the schools, examine and certify teachers, authorize all school expenditures, audit the accounts of all school boards, and to be generally responsible for the standardization and coordination of the educational activities of the Territory.⁴

Rural schools were to be completely supported by the Territory, but incorporated city schools would receive 75% refunds of their expenses up to \$15,000, exclusive of capital outlay on buildings, which still remained the responsibility of the local boards.⁵ An Act for the establishment of citizenship night schools at the expense of the Territory was also passed.⁶ In the 1919 session the legislature provided for the creation of a textbook commission and the adoption of a uniform set of textbooks for the development of a territorial course of study by the new Department of Education.⁷ A five dollar school tax on all male citizens of voting age was also enacted.⁸

In his first report, Commissioner Henderson made a general statement on school conditions in 1917. Previous to the appointment of a Commissioner, he said, each school district was in a high degree sufficient unto itself; schools situated inside incorporated towns derived their support entirely from local revenues and were not subject to central authority, and there was no uniformity of textbooks or curriculum. The Alaska Fund for a number of years was inadequate for the number of schools dependent of it, creating vocational education curtailment and limiting instruction to the formal type.

Comparatively good salaries, the Commissioner continued, and the lure of the North made it possible for school boards to employ good teachers, but the turnover was high, with resulting lack of stability or progress in curriculum; administration turnover was also inefficient through frequent changes of school policy. A few schools had prepared courses of study and offered manual training, music, commercial education and domestic science, but physical education suffered through lack of gymnasiums and equipment. Each school was a unit in itself, and also the whole, as it did not feel any relationship to any other school. Commissioner Henderson

concluded, however, that the condition of the Alaska schools to 1917, was generally creditable, reflecting the character of the residents of the Territory and their belief in public education in spite of difficult conditions.⁹

Alaska was the first of the governments of states and territories to accept legislative responsibility for the major costs of its school system. Governor John F. A. Strong suggested the outline of the legislation needed for an efficient educational organization in the Territory. Perhaps his years of close association with the public school problem at Nome fitted the Governor with keen judgment in the field. In Dr. Henderson the Governor appointed a great administrator who set the Department of Education on a firm foundation in his twelve years as commissioner. He first visited Nome in the summer of 1918, a year after taking office, as it was his policy to make tours of inspection by areas in order to acquaint himself personally with local school matters that would require his advice and decision.¹⁰ Henderson's first report reflected that he had gathered correct information on his visitations and had acquired thereby the intuitive understanding useful to coordinating the operations of his vast domain. It needed all the assistance he could give it.

By 1923, the courses of study for elementary and high school had been completed and revised, and printed for distribution to the schools. During the time of preparation, as sections of the manuals were finished, they were duplicated and sent to the schools for tentative trial. The published high school manual and course of study was 116 pages in length, and that for use in the elementary school contained 148 pages. The latter manual also contained an outline of Alaska civics, a brief historical sketch of Alaska, and information concerning the territorial principal industries.¹¹ Dr. Henderson's manuals remained in use for the better part of twenty years, when in 1938, revision of the elementary course of study was begun by Dr. James C. Ryan of the University of Alaska.¹²

Dr. Henderson called a Teachers' Institute at Ketchikan August 29 to September 11, 1922, where for the first time in Alaskan history most of the teachers of the Territory met to share their professional concerns. The Alaska Education Association was organized at that time "to elevate the character and advance the interests of the profession of teaching and to promote the cause of education in the Territory of Alaska."¹³ Nome alone was not represented, presumably because the ships destined for the Seward Peninsula crossed the Gulf of Alaska directly from Seattle, and did not touch at Southeastern ports. Subsequently, the teachers of Nome participated fully in all the important actions of the association.

Nome school children had never been tested for measurement of achievement in comparison with standard norms. During the school year 1923-1924, the Stanford Achievement Tests, primary and advanced, were given to all elementary schools in the Territory. The tests covered a range of subject matter divided into nine parts: reading – paragraph, sentence, and word meaning; arithmetic – computation and reasoning; nature study and science; history and literature; language usage; and spelling from dictation.¹⁴

The Commissioner commented that "an age-grade study... shows that the majority of pupils, especially in incorporated town schools are normal or in the grade which their chronological age would indicate proper. This lends support to the statement that the achievement of Alaska school children is superior as shown by the tables of results of the Stanford tests."¹⁵

In the two tests given, showing growth in achievement after one semester, Nome grade school ranked sixth among 14 schools tested in the "A" test and eleventh in the terminal "B" test, showing a gain of 10.3 percent in the median scores. The highest gain in the Territory was 24.6 percent, and the lowest results were a loss in one school of 7.2 percent. Dr. Henderson further explained, "A study of growth in educational age for the various grades shows progress in incorporated towns, ranging from a growth of four months in grade four to twelve months in grade six... In interpreting these results, one should bear in mind the fact that growth for a period of four and a half months, or for one semester of school work only was measured."¹⁶

The tests demonstrated conclusively that the Nome schools were competitive and achieving standards equal to or above the national average. When the results are considered, it must also be kept in mind that Nome, as well as other incorporated cities, had schools enrolling only white or non-native children and children of mixed blood "leading a civilized life," having a heritage of American culture, and speaking English as their "mother tongue." There were few exceptions. But the small cloud of change was on the horizon before 1920. Dr. Henderson commented, "During the school year 1917-1918, twenty percent of the children enrolled in the schools were of Native blood. The larger part of these are in the schools in the Seward Peninsula, Cook's Inlet and Aleutian Islands regions."¹⁷ The problems of acculturation were to wreak havoc in the educational standards of the Nome schools in years to come.

Except for the school years between 1919 and 1921, when the Nome school budget increased and held at an average of \$3000 above the 1918 level, the time from the creation of the territorial school system up to 1932 was one of general stasis. With small variations, the 1918 budget of \$13,204.97, and the 1932 budget of \$13,505.00 were little different. The increases that appeared sharply in the cited years, and another increase in 1925, could be credited to a change in the fall of 1919 to free textbooks for the children, purchased by the board under the new territorial subsidy. Library volumes were augmented from the old number of approximately 200, in the independent school, to 600 in 1920, to 1500 in 1921, 2024 in 1923, and 2954 in 1925. By 1933, only 750 of the volumes were usable, which might indicate the appreciation of constant usage by young readers.¹⁸ Neglected library books don't depreciate.

Under a territorial law of 1917, establishing citizenship night schools, such classes were held between 1917 and 1920, at full territorial expense. Twenty-week sessions, with one instructor, were given in three two-hour classes per week in reading, writing, arithmetic, English, American history, and mineralogy. In the third year, total attendance was reported as 21 students, 15 men and 6 women.¹⁹

From 1918 to 1930, seven administrators headed the schools: Emma Lee Orr, 1918-1920; Mrs. Frederick Bockman (Helen Southard Moore), 1920-1921; Mr. T. Collins, 1921-1922; Lars E. Rynning, 1922-1925; D. W. Davis, 1925-1926; Leo W. Breuer, who later served two years as Commissioner of Education, 1926-1928; and Luther Dunbar, 1928-1930. Administrators were required to sign an affidavit on the territorial Department of Education Annual Report "A" signifying personal knowledge and responsibility for the content of the report. In high dudgeon, Mr. Collins, whose one year contract was not renewed, refused to sign the Report in 1922, but appended his opinion across the face of it:

Board having full control of funds (record hereon furnished by secretary) certification by Principal out of question. Before certification – even before financial report is made out by Principal, he or she should have access to all bills and records of expenditures. The present system is ridiculous.

/s/ Collins

In small school systems, tight board control – often obstructive – was the usual rule in Alaska, so much so that Commissioner of Education William K. Keller, in 1932, abolished all rural advisory school boards, which were not reestablished until after statehood, when politicians in the State legislature reinstated them.²⁰ In an incorporated community, operating its own schools, a school board is a patent necessity, but in a small community it is inclined to extend its powers into the area of administration, which creates a problem for the administrative officer whose work it is to plan and coordinate the educational program and to select teachers and workers for final approval under board policy. The interesting game of selecting teachers for the administrator from among the many applications has been one factor of disagreement in board-administrator relationships, to cite an example.²¹ Where an unusual turnover rate of administrators prevails, as was mainly the situation in Nome until 1944, in the pre-statehood era, an unsatisfactory board-administrator relationship is indicated.

From 1930 to 1944, five superintendents served, with an average tenure of three years showing improvement in school system leadership by the board. Superintendents in this period were: E. J. Beck, 1930-1934; William H. Bloom, 1934-1936; Calvin E. Pool, 1936-1939; A. A. Ryan, 1939-1943; Frank A. Smola, 1943-1944. With the employment of William L. Angell as superintendent in 1944, the cooperative relations of the board with its executive officer reached the peak of its history. Mr. Angell served from 1944 to 1959 (with the year 1951-1952 on leave filled by Oliver G. Boe), a tenure of fourteen years. In the best of systems this would be an enviable record of operational harmony.²² It is significant that in these years of temperamental stability, the melding of the native school population into the city schools was accomplished, a subject that will be dealt with further in due course.

In the meanwhile, regardless of adult tensions, the era in which the school was numerically small was a pleasurable one for the children of Nome. With a total enrollment as low as 56 in 1922, and not holding at above 100 until the mid-thirties, the pupils enjoyed close personal ties with their classmates and the five teachers. The school was fortunate in having inherited a good gymnasium from more affluent times. Indeed, it was one of only seven schools in the Territory having gym facilities for just 40.7 percent of all enrolled pupils.²³ At times the high school boys and girls could barely raise a team, but the junior high could always come to the rescue with another player, and groups of the townspeople could supply competition. Academic life, too, was zestful from the first grade to the top high school class. Contests and organized cultural interests were a combination of learning and entertainment, just as they had been in the pioneer days. It was, in fact, still a frontier school, but comparatively well endowed with the gifts of the past and the human resources of a promising future. All were captivated by the thrilling air age emerging from beyond the dog trails and brought to Nome by heroic men in flimsy planes daring all dangers and seasons.

A series of five annuals, *The Aurora Borealis*, were issued beginning in the spring of 1926, and continuing until 1930. Other mimeographed publications were issued in 1924, and at other times.²⁴ The historical value of the new *Aurora Borealis* compared favorably with the best of *The Aurora* published by the former generation. The curriculum of the high school included Latin, physics, algebra, and four years of English, and general science, with upper classes in algebra and geometry. Commercial arithmetic, modern history, and typing were also taught, and manual training, cooking and sewing, at times. Variations occurred from year to year, such as the decrease of English by one year and the substitution of Spanish in place of Latin, in 1929. New superintendents rearranged the curriculum but always in conformance with Department of Education minimum requirements, or varied the mode of instruction between departmentalization and class standing. Departmentalization was discontinued by Superintendent Dunbar in 1929, when the high school enrollment totaled fifteen students.²⁵

In the '20's fifteen students were graduated from high school. Una Sitton, in 1923, was the first graduate since 1916, although 58 children had finished the eighth grade since the latter year.²⁶ Ten of the high school graduates entered college: Alvin Bahlke, Jack Hamlyn, Emily Polet, and Kristie Sather of the class of '24; Emerson Fromm, '25; Alvin Polet, Robert Lyle, and Eunice Sears, '27; and Russell Maynard and Frances Ross, '28. Ada Arthurs, '25, who later married Noel Wien, the aviator, went to business college.

Throughout their history, the Nome schools alumni maintained a high average in percentage of college matriculation.

From 1922, when the United States Army Air Corps fliers made the first flight to Nome, the new age of aviation gripped the imagination of its youth. Joseph E. Walsh, a junior, wrote a report on a thrilling ride in an airplane entitled, "A Trip to the Clouds," in 1929. "You can imagine my feelings," wrote Joe. "A propellor was whirling in front of me, signifying that in but a few seconds I should be traveling in space."²⁷ The thrill was permanent – Joe made a career with Pan American World Airways.

Grace Swanberg, a freshman, noted that "the Wien Alaska Airway Company has helped much in the development of Nome in the last two years. The airplane offers a quick and safe means of transportation. Now!

Wien's flight to North Cape, Siberia, will always be an outstanding point in the history on Nome. It marks the first time a plane has ever crossed Bering Straits over into Russia."²⁸ But in that same area, in November, Colonel Ben Eielson and his mechanic, Earl Borland, crashed at East Cape, Siberia. Joe Walsh, now a senior, and Mildred Maynard, a junior, composed a detailed article on the death of the great pioneer aviator and his companion. Titled "The Air Tragedy of the Arctic," the report revealed the deep feeling of personal involvement that moved the younger generation to a sense of the drama of their times.²⁹

In the business community, the Northwestern Alaska Chamber of Commerce published an advertisement variously promoting Nome as:

The Distributing Center for Seward Peninsula
The Gateway to Siberia
The Airplane Port for all Arctic and Around The World Flights
Seward Peninsula The Land of Opportunities

At that time the Lomen Reindeer Company was also in business. The city council still held the school board budget at a minimum, even with 85% basic territorial support, and the city share of the 1929 budget of \$12,845.98 was \$1969.55, or \$23.17 from local resources for each of the 85 pupils. In Alaska parlance, about the price of a fifth of whiskey for every taxpayer. But in this time of national prohibition there was no Miner Bruce, no Colonel Sawyer, Captain Storey, or Scotty Allan on the scene to challenge the inequitable domination of the city fathers over school affairs. There was peace at very little cost – if at a price. Perhaps they had forgotten the difference and nobody knew, except the revolving professional staff.

The 1930's were to see great changes in Alaska and the world. The great depression began with the crash of the stock market in November of 1929, and a Democratic Party administration came into power with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. In an effort to stem the rising tide of unemployment and business collapse, President Roosevelt initiated far reaching economic aids for the assistance of communities in developing public works projects. Federal monies were to come to the aid of the Nome Public Schools in the most vital way.³⁰

Local support for the schools had never been sufficient for more than "keeping school" up to the minimum standards required by the Department of Education in the decade of the 1920's. The old school building, after three decades of service in a hard climate, was falling into a state of decay and unserviceability. Undoubtedly, the high incidence of teacher loss was related to the unattractive teaching environment, regardless of the attractiveness of the children who made up the school. The effect of the minimal educational environment was soon measured by the Commissioner of Education. Unsurprisingly, his survey showed a success or failure correlation, over the Territory, almost directly in proportion to local community economic support of school budgets.³¹

In a survey of success of college students from Alaska high schools, based on appoint system of 5.0 as average, 5.5 as high, and 4.5 or less as low, graduates from only four Alaskan high schools out of 13, rated above 4.5, the standard set by the University of Washington as low. Nome graduates placed eleventh from the top, rating 3.1, while Petersburg rated 5.8; Juneau, 5.4; Douglas, 4.7; and Skagway, 4.6. The survey extended over a five year period between 1925 and 1930. The suggested reasons for the failure of Alaskan high schools in preparing graduates adequately for college were high turnover of teachers and administration, and poor buildings and equipment.³² A further report four years later showed that four cities provided more in percentage of city income for school support than did the City of Nome, while ten provided less – an amazing correlation between the two sets of figures.

At this time Nome provided 39% of its tax income for school purposes, a median figure, while the top four cities provided up to 80.8% of income and the lower ten contributed as low as 11.2%³³ The Nome per capita cost of child education in 1935-1936 was \$137.07, compared with a territorial average cost of \$121.95.³⁴ Under

territorial law, these costs were 85% reimbursable to the Nome school board. Significantly, the largest item of the territorial budget, from the establishment of the Department of Education in 1917, to the present, has been the appropriation for education, which frequently, before statehood, exceeded 50% of the biennial expenses of government.³⁵ The legislature accepted as a responsibility the support for local education that city councils seemed to share grudgingly as a duty in a majority of Alaska's incorporated cities. Perhaps the early dependence of councils on federal license fees for support was the source of the tendency to look to higher government levels for school funds. It can be observed impartially that local school systems have never been supported in a basic measure by local effort, a fact tacitly recognized in the State constitution which calls education "a function of the State," and leaves the possibility open for the eventual total assumption of local school financing and control by the State Department of Education.

However, the local school officials and teachers worked with what they had. Commissioner of Education William K. Keller reported in 1932, "Efforts to improve the standings of the high schools of the Territory have been made... Nome has also improved and broadened the work being offered, and will probably be recommended for accreditation at an early date."³⁶ The high school was accredited three years later by the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools at the annual meeting in Spokane, Washington, in April, 1935, attended by Commissioner Anthony E. Karnes, who represented Alaska.^{37*}

As a result of a disastrous fire which destroyed the central business district and its surrounding residential areas in the fall of 1934, the City of Nome was not able to meet its share of the school board budget. The 1935 Legislature passed a special appropriation of \$10,000 to assist the city in the operation and maintenance of the school for the 1934-1936 biennium, and generously augmented the sum with \$25,000 for use in helping to construct and equip a new school building.³⁸

Available federal monies had already made the desired acquisition of a replacement for the old school building feasible in 1933. In that year application was made through the Governor's office to the newly created Federal Public Works Administration for a grant of funds, to be put with \$30,000 appropriated by the Legislature, for new school buildings and additions in Alaska. An overall grant requested by the Territory of \$175,000 was approved in January, 1934, by the federal government.³⁹ This amount was to cover construction of 21 rural school buildings and an eight room building at Nome, for which \$50,000 was set aside.⁴⁰ Appropriations were held up on the Nome project until the summer of 1935, pending applications for additional funds for building a combination gymnasium and auditorium in the new school.⁴¹

A contract for the construction was awarded to the Peterman Construction Company,⁴² and work was started in November of 1935, and completed in the fall of 1936.⁴³ With the establishment of the new colony at Palmer, it was sound unnecessary to construct the rural school building at Matanuska, and the amount left over from the earmarked fund was assigned to supplement the construction at Nome.⁴⁴ Other funds of \$8000 were authorized by PWA for new equipment.⁴⁵ The total cost of the project amounted to \$88,182.68. Of this amount, the Federal government paid \$59,187.21; the Territory, \$22,045.67; and the City of Nome, \$6,949.80.⁴⁶ In 1939, the Legislature appropriated another \$10,000 for building and addition to the school of two rooms for manual training and home economics.⁴⁷

In contrast to the generosity of the territorial and federal governments, one last display of the parsimony of the city government will be reviewed. At a city council meeting reported on May 27, 1933, the school board, composed of Mrs. Effie Baldwin, Mrs. Tolbert Scott, and Lars Rynning, a former superintendent of schools, presented a budget of \$18,889.55 for the ensuing school year. The council school committee met with the board to discuss the budget and reduced it by the amount of \$1978.73 to a total of \$16,910.82.⁴⁸ On a system of 85% reimbursement by the Territory, the schools lost \$1683 in much needed funds, at a saving to the city of \$296 of 15% support. The contribution of the Territory to the new budget amounted to \$14,374, in round figures, and that of the city to \$2537. As the population of the town had grown from 852 in 1920, to 1213 in 1930, so small a local contribution reflected a strange attitude toward the values of education, indeed. Meanwhile, when

disaster by fire struck in September, and the local share of the budget was covered by the Legislature from a grant for the biennium the council approved the free 1934-1935 budget of \$17,101.90, in open meeting, without demur.⁴⁹

The council was willing to trust the judgment of the school board when someone else paid the bills.

During the years of school building and educational improvement of 1934 to the end of the decade, Lars Rynning served on the board the first year, and throughout the more active period to 1940, Mrs. Baldwin, Mrs. Carrie M. McLain, and Elmer Rydeen served continuously. Michael J. Walsh, a member of the Territorial Board of Education, represented the school interests effectively in enlisting the active participation of Governor John Troy in gaining federal aid and urging legislative priorities in making allotments to Nome.⁵⁰

CHAPTER VI

Integration of the Schools: Backgrounds of Acculturation

James A. Michener, author of "Hawaii", has said in substance, that in times when the gods change there is trouble and suffering. The Americans, no less than the Russians before them, brought a "changing of the gods" after the transfer of the Territory to our possession. First, the Native peoples were required to abide by laws foreign to their custom; their historic land and sea areas were invaded, occupied, and hunted, sometimes almost to depletion of vital food-animal resources; and a small army of Christian missionaries assaulted the ancient beliefs and cultural ritual entertainments that had long given zest to the native mode of life. Along with the demands for conformity to the foreign culture, all the newcomers regarded the Native as an inferior being. Racial prejudice, the inheritance of the American from his economic competition with the Negro and the Indian, was no stranger to the situation.

The Native was regarded by the missionary as a benighted heathen, a lost pagan child of wicked ways, with a soul to be saved. To the commercial interests, he was producer of certain natural wealth to be exploited, and a source of labor, necessary but disdained for his indifference to the disciplines of the white man's work. In the new city of Nome, as in other Alaskan cities, the Native was despised as a social embarrassment and a problem because of his lapses into drunkenness and his proneness to a new variety of diseases that forced him onto community charity. The Native walked in a blackout of white social blindness to his innate worth. But slowly in the years to come he would work in many ways his own acculturation on the white population and gain their recalcitrant respect for his abilities. In the meantime, white prejudice found expression.

In 1899, the Eskimos made a settlement on the sandspit outside the Anvil City encampment. There a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Gordon, probably a white man with a native wife, on December 9, 1899. The Nome News announced the event as the first birth in Nome.¹ On January 1, 1900, Mr. and Mrs. J. Ginivan announced the birth of their son, "the first child of pure Caucasian blood," to be born in the camp.² There is reason to believe that neither of these children was the first, but the order of racial precedence was established by their arrival. The white boy was named Nomie, and later appeared in the school rolls, but young Gordon's future is unknown.

The sandspit natives complained in February that the white men had left them no wood. Indeed, the beaches were thoroughly cleaned of the primordial masses of driftwood that had been used by the natives as a perpetual supply of fuel.³ The editor excoriated them for their improvident ways and absolved the encampment of all responsibility. Patsy, an Eskimo, reported the murder of two miners in the Kougarok to Jerry Galvin. "Patsy is said to be a thoroughly reliable native, if any are to be relied upon," commented the editor.⁴

But the natives were useful, too. They arrived in large numbers at times, brought in for urgent heavy labor. "A number of the young men, in fact, were here last summer, when they were employed by the captain /Conrad Siem/ in unloading vessels, and were taken home /to King Island/ in the fall on the Albion," the Chronicle reported on August 31, 1900.

Sometimes the "trouble and suffering" was passed off as a vehicle for barroom wit, "A jocular individual entered the Second Class /Saloon/ and touched a match to an Indian's hair. Had the Indian died, the crime might have been termed 'passing the buck.'"⁵ The Eskimo had company, however: "A Jap who applied for his first citizenship papers last week, was properly informed that his race was tabooed as far as the granting of U. S. citizenship is concerned."⁶

In 1904, the school board was strongly anti-Eskimo on the question of enrolling native children in the city schools.⁷ When William Hamilton, assistant superintendent of the Bureau of Education in Alaska, visited the

city in 1905, and suggested that it was the duty of the city to furnish educational facilities for resident natives, and to care for the sick, he was vigorously opposed.⁸ A soldier at Fort Davis married an Eskimo girl, and his commanding officer wired the War Department in Washington for advice on suitable disciplinary action. He was ordered to discharge the soldier immediately.⁹ However, the city health officer, on reading a government report that 40% of the Alaska natives had syphilis, expressed the opinion that for Nome the report was exaggerated. He admitted the existence of 18 cases of active tuberculosis in the native community.¹⁰

In 1917, during World War I, the Nugget published, with comment, a press exchange:

A recent number of the Seward Gateway announces that the "natives of Nome" have organized a home guard and are receiving military instructions by the officer of Fort Davis and drilling three times a week in the "gymnasium." Some patriotic savages up in this neck of the woods.¹¹

When a respected newspaper editor in a city of hardly more than a thousand inhabitants, not more than half of them members of the dominant race, makes a prejudicial statement about the other half of the population, it is reasonable to assume that he represents the opinion of his local readers. Certainly, in the following issues of the Nugget no contradictory word or reprimand appeared over the signature of saint or sinner. But in the second war, in 1942, the Eskimo women of the Seward Peninsula sold slippers at Nome to raise money for the Red Cross, and were praised by the Nugget for doing so.¹²

Meanwhile, the Eskimo was insinuating himself into his new way of life by his cultural and commercial contributions. Eskimo fur clothing was better and warmer than wool and leather for the winter climate. Soon the white children were commonly wearing native parkas and mukluks to school. The beauty of these garments made them popular with high school students. In 1908, the basketball team, "the tall kids," were photographed for the Aurora in gym suits and short parkas. In 1941, most of the high school were dressed in native outdoor garb at the sweepstakes races and at an outing on the ice. The parka became the mode of Alaska winter wear.

Eskimo eventually began to compete in the dog races. Their splendid ivory carvings and art work were much sought after, and some of them became prominent in the reindeer business. However, the low literacy of the Native, his odor of rancid oil and fish – which was offensive to the white people – his lack of "soap and water" sanitation, and the poverty in which he lived, retarded his social acceptance on the level of public equality. In time, his qualities would make the Eskimo one of the most admired races of the world. But acculturation from a stone age hunting society into a highly structured, educationally based, economic order is by its nature a complex process in a racially and culturally segregated system. The first major breakthrough would be integration in the schools. This was accomplished, at the insistence of Governor Ernest Gruening, in 1947, by the passage in the territorial legislature of a non-discrimination act.

In 1907, following the division of white and native schools by the provisions of the Nelson Act of 1905, the United States government took complete control of native schools in the Nome area. As the natives were semi-nomadic in their dependence of hunting and fishing for a livelihood, the average attendance in school, from 1907 to 1918, was only 33% of the average annual enrollment of 63 pupils in the government school at Nome.¹³ The first native schoolhouse was a small building on the west end of the sandspit, but later the old court house on Steadman and Third Streets, near the Nome Public School, was used as the government school. In 1932, a conventional school structure with a standard gymnasium was built on "D" Street, between First and Second Avenues, and was used until 1947, when the Eskimo children were enrolled in the city schools.¹⁴

The custom of enrolling but not attending regularly was reinforced by the barrier of language, and made progress slow except in classes where manual skills were foremost.¹⁵ A factor in the tremendous drop in enrollment in rural schools composed of natives and mixed-blood children, was the lack of adaptation of subject matter taught in the grades to the needs of the pupils. Tikhon I. Lavrischeff remarked:

It is too much to expect that a primitive people will have the same zeal for the education provided by generations of civilization to the white children that will be manifest by the parents or children of the people for which this education is designed. Education, if it is to be effective must be adapted to the children it seeks to assist, and no amount of effort will make it effective under any other condition.¹⁶

Although this situation prevailed at Nome in the native school, it is also a pragmatic consideration that educational subject matter of any kind is sure to fail unless young healthy children are compelled to attend regularly. Here the customs of the Native often did not, and often still do not serve the best interests of his children. The early years were periods of adjustment for all concerned.

By 1935, most native schools in the Arctic and sub-Arctic Alaska had been in operation for at least thirty years. The United States Department of Education authorized a survey to be made under the direction of Stanford University to determine the effectiveness and success of the educational program for the natives of Alaska. A thorough survey was made by H. Dewey Anderson and Walter C. Eells, and the results were published in 1935.¹⁷

The Anderson and Eells survey showed a high percent of retardation for villages of the Seward Peninsula and adjacent areas, demonstrated by the following selected data on grade placement in elementary schools:¹⁸

Elementary Schools	Total Tested	Retarded	Normal	Accelerated
Nome U.S.B.E. (native)	11	100%	0	0
Nome Public School	42	17%	47%	36%
Area School averages	283	54.4%	34.3%	11.4%

After consolidation of the white and native schools in Nome, ten years following, in 1956-1957, testing results from Nome school records indicated some of the synthesis:

Total Elementary Enrollment	Retarded	Normal	Accelerated
539	40.8%	54.8%	4.4%

Mrs. Wilson commented, "The areas surveyed are not identical, but the trends in achievement are similar. This area /Nome/ continues to be one of low production in school achievement.²⁰ As estimated by the residents of Nome, at that time, the school population was approximately 85% native and 15% non-native, i.e., non-aboriginal stock.²¹

It has been previously noted that as early as 1917-1918, 20% of the school children of Alaska enrolled in territorial schools were of native blood. In Nome, 17 children of mixed-blood were enrolled in a total of 123 pupils, or 13.8% of the whole. In 1927, the first of these students to be graduated from the high school was Charles Becker, and the second was his brother, Edward, in the class of 1928. The first girl of native origin to be graduated was Frances Nicholas, in 1930. While native students were accepted in the high school through the qualification of "leading a civilized life," and of graduation from the eighth grade, they suffered the embarrassment of segregation in the town movie theater, and were refused service in some restaurants, until the passage of the non-discrimination act of 1947. In school they enjoyed equality, participating fully in all activities.²² Between 1927 and 1958, the last class to receive territorial diplomas, 62 students classified as native completed the high school course in the Nome Public Schools.²³ In prior years there were none.²⁴

The rising number of native enrollments in the territorial school system gave alarm to the territorial Department of Education, because of the cost entailed. Revenue for the territorial school system came mainly from two sources, by far the greater from the Federal endowment of education from revenue derived from public lands, and from territorial taxes earmarked for the schools.²⁵ Seeking additional funds to offset the increased enrollments, the Commissioner of Education, in 1934, voiced the consensus of the territorial Board of Education:

The Act of Congress approved January 27, 1905, provides that "schools for and among the Eskimos and Indians of Alaska shall be provided by an annual appropriation." The Federal Government later defined a native as one whose blood is one-quarter or more Indian or Eskimo. There are those who contend that this definition does not apply to natives who have become citizens /sic/. The fact that the Federal Government continues to appropriate moneys for schools and hospitals and medical care for the natives in Alaska must mean that its officials do not take this stand....It is the contention of this department that the Federal Government's obligations should begin in accordance with its own laws and definitions.²⁶

On the local level, the economic complaint was much the same. The natives owned very little taxable property, were considered "wards of the government," and were therefore not generally welcomed as a group into the city school system. But world-wide political events were forming that would accelerate changes in social patterns and force the breaking up of old sociological orders in Alaska and even in the controversial issues involving the schools at Nome. When the change came, it came suddenly, and the matter of financial support followed almost as an afterthought to the central fact of the civil right of the Native to enjoy the full benefits of citizenship without restriction. The development came to Nome in a dramatic way.

In the 1929 *Aurora Borealis*, Grace Swanberg observed that "the Eskimo population is much larger than that of the whites." As the 1930 census figure for Nome was 1213, it is probable that no other incorporated city in Alaska, with the possible exception of Sitka, had an equal number of native residents. During World War II, natives from more than twenty towns and villages of the Seward Peninsula and adjacent areas sought employment in Nome, and many remained as permanent residents, making the population predominantly Eskimo.²⁷

To keep abreast with the war-time trend of migration from the villages to the larger towns and cities, as it affected school statistics, the Department of Education, in 1944, required a report annually of the number of students of native blood enrolled in all public schools.²⁸ The first Nome school report of that year showed that 71% of the enrollment was of native origin, but only one of full blood parentage in the grade school and four in the high school.²⁹

Wisely, the territorial Department of Education formulated a policy of transferring Bureau of Indian Affairs schools to the territorial system, under a favorable government support plan, wherever circumstances were mutually suitable. Following the department policy, a plan for closing the government school was agreed upon by the directors of the Nome schools and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.³⁰ At the time this was done, Mrs. W. F. Baldwin, W. J. Dowd, and A. C. Steinwandel constituted the membership of the school board.

Under the plan, in the fall of 1945, grades five, six, seven, and eight were transferred from the B.I.A. school to the city school and the lower grades from one to four were transferred the following year. In the fall of 1947, after the passage of the non-discrimination act, the government school remained closed and the Bureau of Indian Affairs abdicated further responsibility for the educational support of its former pupils now under the aegis of the Nome school board. It was a shock. The federal government offered no financial help, nor any assistance by way of a replacement for the native school building which they had condemned.³¹ With a sudden total enrollment increase of 84.5% of the enrollment before the transfer began,³² consisting of children from various village cultural and dialectical backgrounds, the Nome public school system had assumed an acculturation problem of great magnitude that would challenge its efforts for many years to come – a challenge that has never been adequately met.

In a remarkable study made by Alice S. Wilson in 1958, at Nome, "to determine the degree of acculturation attained by the natives, the forces and drives which have caused these changes, and the extent to which the schools meet the educational needs of natives in this period of adaptation to Western Culture," a number of incisive analyses are made and conclusions drawn that it would be useful to summarize.

"Culture," quotes Mrs. Wilson, "refers to the social heritage or entire social tradition of a people."³³ The elements of a culture may be put in three categories:

1. Universals or things generally accepted by the members of a society.
2. Specialties requiring special skills entailed in a division of labor.
3. Alternatives: elements in a culture permitting individual choice – the growing edge of the culture where accretions may occur by invention or by cultural diffusion.

Further, "when a child enters school, he is already educated as a member of his society. On the first day of school, he brings the language, the ideas, ideals, aspirations, social techniques, mechanical skills, attitudes, and disposition that are fostered by his home environment...In the light of his cultural background, he will interpret all school situations."³⁴

From the gradual change in a static society, the transition from one culture to another usually brings feelings of insecurity to an individual or a small group, but if the group is large enough to prevent rapid changes in the basic cultural pattern, a feeling of acceptance and belonging to the group sustains the character of the member.³⁵ In practice, this means that the standard of achievement in a school will be compelled to conform in a measure to group resistance.

Mrs. Wilson continues:

Since our own culture is undergoing rapid change, the period of transition to the Western Culture creates an unusual number of adjustments for the natives of Alaska. It is not enough for our schools to teach facts. "There is a need of guidance, orientation in values, and an understanding of the meaning of choice."³⁶

To present a meaningful and useful program to native boys and girls, she maintains that the schools must establish contact with the homes. The information obtained there concerning the cultural background of a child and his society should serve as a foundation for integrating his learning.

"As he advances from the known to the unknown, his progress will depend upon his ability to evaluate new ideas and integrate them into his thoughts and conduct."³⁷

Pointing out in conclusion that theoretically all children have equal school opportunities, she states that the wide range in scholastic achievement between natives and non-natives remained in 1958. Whereas the enrollment of the Nome school was 7.4 times as large as the number enrolled in 1930, yet the number of students graduating from high school each year had not shown any consistent pattern of increase over the period of twenty-seven years.³⁸ Also, that the number of eighth grade graduates was increasing, but not in percentage – as a percentage of total enrollment, the number of high school graduates showed a downward trend.³⁹

The towns of origin of the Nome pupils in grades two through eight, in the acculturation study, were Nome, 38%; villages of the Seward Peninsula and adjacent areas, 54%; and the United States and foreign countries, 8%.⁴⁰ In terms of group pressure bearing upon the standards of achievement, the implications point up the enormous task of administrative planning and continuous evaluation of curricular effectiveness in every classroom. Except for a three year period, under Superintendent Conrad Potter, beginning with statehood, this has been almost entirely lacking. Acculturation of native students in the Nome public schools deserves recognition as a "two-way street." All the acculturation does not proceed from the teacher in front of the chalkboard; he is not immune to the cultural forces facing him – if he is to be successful. But with no denial of the many failures of the school system, the amazing reality is the undeniable fact of the rising success of the schools commonly demonstrated in the able citizenry of the alumni engaged in a multiplicity of occupations in the town or elsewhere. "Rome wasn't built in a day," but it was built progressively and with persistence. The Nome Public Schools must continue to be built to higher, more effective standards by every available means.

The human elements is of good quality. The cost and the effort to develop it to potential is fully justifiable as a contribution of the Nome community to the high interests of American society.

CHAPTER VII

Of War, Teachers, and the Tide of Change

The coming of World War II split the past of Nome from the future like an axe blow on a seasoned block of wood. The graduating class of 1940, three girls – one of them half-native – and six boys, matriculated into the excitement of the world crisis, where two of the boys were to play heroic parts, Bob Scott in the South Pacific, and Fred Bockman in the campaign in Italy.

Soon after the declaration of war with Japan on December 7, 1941, soldiers arrived at Nome, and major construction of an army base was started in 1942.¹ Temporary barracks were erected in scattered areas to house the troops until the permanent quarters were completed. The local citizens participated with enthusiasm in the social entertainments arranged for their military guests, and lured by the novelty of stirring change and economic opportunity, the natives of the surrounding villages began a migration into Nome that has never entirely stopped. The war, in truth, revitalized the town.²

However, the Commissioner of Education, in his 1944 report, noted that war shortages were detrimental to building programs, limiting activity to minor repairs. Increased enrollments in large cities taxed facilities to the utmost, and the use of gyms by the military prevented use of them by some students.³ There were also the negative factors of reductions in enrollment and attendance, especially in the secondary schools, caused by work opportunity, induction and enlistment of older boys, and employment of both parents outside the home.⁴ Also, the maintenance and replacement of school staffs with qualified personnel became increasingly difficult, as the competition of business and government agencies for teachers and school employees at higher pay affected acutely the instruction in mathematics, science, business, the arts, and physical education;⁵ and most of the young male teachers eventually went into the military services.

The program of studies was oriented by the Department of Education toward military applications in math and science. International relations and domestic problems such as inflation, rationing, labor relations, production and conservation of food were emphasized in English and social studies classes.⁶ Participation by teachers in the war effort in civil defense, the Alaska Territorial Guard, Red Cross, United Service Organizations, bond drives, and first aid instruction made great demands on the energy and ability of school personnel.⁷

Summing it up in his report of 1946, the Commissioner said:

The schools of Alaska during the period covered by the report have made progress although activities have been restricted and made less affective by conditions resulting from the war. The school, no less than industry and business, has felt the impact of the national social and economic situation. A spirit of unrest which seems to have permeated our whole social structure was evident in the schools, creating personal and pupil problems which have not been encountered in former years. Unsatisfactory housing facilities, scarcity of materials, uncertain transportation, spiraling prices and a feeling of uncertainty about the future have been contributing factors in creating these problems... With the countless disturbances in all human affairs, the maintenance of properly conducted schools has been an accomplishment truly worthy of note.⁸

Becoming the most distinguished alumnus of the Nome Public Schools, General James H. Doolittle, who had spent his first six school years in Nome, led his Army Air Corps bombers in an aerial assault on Tokyo, April 18, 1942, from an aircraft carrier. Three of his schoolmates, among those still living in Nome, who recalled memories of young Jimmy Doolittle, were Guy Boyd, Cappy McDougal, and Bud Lehmann.⁹

Good schools are a compound of several tangible and many intangible ingredients, but the most important of these has always been effective teachers. While teacher replacement has been characteristically high in the Nome schools, two great teachers, Emma Stubjaer Cameron and Olaf Halverson, are among those whose long

contributions to the community life have been immeasurable in human values. At a farewell dinner in honor of Mrs. Cameron and her husband, Bill, in 1966, Carrie McLain made the following remarks:

It was in the 1936-37 school year when the Nome school board, consisting of Slim Rydeen, Mrs. Effie Baldwin, and myself, in going over a number of teachers' applications submitted by the Huff Agency in Montana, decided on Emma Stubjaer's application for the Nome high school. We never affectionately called, for over a period of twenty-five years, to become a beloved and respected teacher and a valuable asset to the community.

It was not long before she sized up the needs of the school and that first winter had the courage to try out a Nome high school band, giving those raw recruits their first appreciation of band music.

Later, she developed the high school glee club amongst the girls, and for years parents and Nome audiences were delighted with the music from these young voices.

Outside of school hours Stuby gave of her time in teaching commercial subjects to adults who were interested in learning.

We all know her application to civic and church activities and what they have meant to our community down through the years.

It was really an expression of sincere appreciation when Slim Rydeen wrote me a little over a year ago, "We were a very lucky school board when we secured Stuby's services." I agreed, for Stuby was and is a dedicated teacher with a pride and interest in her pupils and a devotion to her work.

To her colleagues, Mrs. Cameron's talents and energy seemed boundless. She taught French and Latin, sponsoring a Junior Classical League whose annual banquets were resplendent affairs in the style of Roman antiquity, and the official language was Latin, often spoken with a distinguishable Eskimo accent. "Stubby" ran the library, where she actively assisted students in selecting books, advised on the preparation of reports, and trained her own student librarians. After school she directed student casts in the many plays she produced. Stubby was a professional teacher in the collective sense, as well; a continuous supporter of the broad aims of education through active membership in the National Education Association and its state and local affiliates, the Alaska Education Association and the Nome Education Association. Emma Cameron's standards of scholarship were directed toward the pursuit of excellence, in which she was indefatigable in her efforts to encourage the individual student to strive toward his potential. Her fire of dedication burned unwaveringly, and she touched its kindling power to the lamp of knowledge that each growing child holds invisibly for an able teacher to fill and light.

Elementary and junior high teachers with tenures exceeding ten years, in the nineteen forties and fifties, were Helen Bockman, Omie McCarthy, Lennie May Nerland, Helen Dunbar, Ann Gillis, and Mary Ellen Walsh. High school teachers of this distinguished group included William Henry Ullrich, who received his early education in the Nome schools, Emma Cameron, Olaf Halverson, and Superintendent William L. Angell.¹⁰ The long service of these able teachers provided a center of stability beneficial to the hundreds of children to whom they became identified with the life of the school and were known familiarly by whole families of students.

As the school enrollments increased, teachers were called upon to do yeoman service in clerical assistance to the administrator.¹¹ Superintendent A. A. Ryan, whose complaints were couched in direct reportive terms, mentioned in his 1940 Report to the Commissioner of Education that the superintendent did all his own clerical work. The total enrollment that year was 161. Eighteen years later, in the 1958 school year, when the school board had been increased to five members and the student enrollment had burgeoned to 700, Superintendent William Angell was given the assistance of the first office clerk to be employed in the schools.¹² The absence

of office help undoubtedly was a source of inefficiency not only to the superintendent, but to the elementary and high school principals, all of whom doubled as teachers of at least one class daily in a tightly structured school economy.¹³

Soon after the formation of the Territorial Department of Education, Commissioner L. D. Henderson devised an examination for the certification of teachers, and toured the schools of northwestern Alaska to make a personal inspection and to examine applicants. He gave two examinations for teacher certification at Nome, in August 1917.¹⁴

He reported on salaries of teachers:

The salaries now being paid to Alaska school teachers compare favorably with those in the majority of the States. If consideration is given to the expense of reaching Alaska, the salaries are inferior. It is not to be expected that any reduction in present salary schedules can be made.¹⁵

Teachers' salaries, other than those of the superintendents and principals, between 1918-19 and 1938-39, for the Nome schools elementary staff ranged from a minimum average of \$1440 to a maximum average of \$1698.75; and for high school teachers the figures ranged between \$1665 and \$1800, representing a drop, rather than an increase, of \$101.25 between 1921 and 1939. In the same overall period, administrators were paid from \$2025 to \$2900.¹⁶ These salary scales had evolved from the beginning of the local school system, with adjustments to conform to approved budget amounts over the years, and had become stabilized to an essential degree, although the superintendent's salary was negotiated.

In the early years of his administration, Commissioner Henderson had proposed a plan of minimum salaries for teachers by geographic areas, taking into account the widely varying costs of living, travel expense, and remoteness. In his 1920 report, the Commissioner offered a minimum salary schedule and expressed hope that local school boards would adopt it.¹⁷ The seed bore fruit in the 1939 session of the Legislature, when an important basic school support act was passed to provide equalized minimum salaries, by judicial divisions, for all classroom teachers. Commissioner of Education, Anthony E. Karnes commented on the law:

This Act provides for the minimum salaries of qualified teachers of \$1800 per year in the First Division, \$1980 in the Third Division, and \$2100 in the Second and Fourth Divisions. While nearly all Territorial teachers benefitted by the passage of this Act, its weakness lies in the fact that new and inexperienced teachers, with only three years' preparation, receive as much as many teachers who hold the A. B. degree or even the M. A. degree, and have had several years of experience.¹⁸

However, the act was a foundation for a pragmatic and equitable system of salary adjustments that proved to be fruitful in elevating professional standards of education in years to come. The minimum salary scale of \$2100 per annum for both high school and grade school teachers of the Second Judicial Division increased the salaries of the Nome school faculty by approximately \$400 and \$500 in the high school and grade school, respectively.¹⁹

A series of education bills in successive legislatures were supported by able commissioners of education, James C. Ryan and Don M. Dafoe, in the two decades before statehood, under a strong territorial board of education whose members, under a reorganization act of 1933, were appointed by the Governor of the Territory for overlapping terms of five years. Besides the efficient territorial department, a vigorous revival of the Alaska Education Association in the war years added the strength of an increasingly powerful teacher organization to the forces working for higher educational standards in Alaska.²⁰

Improvements in the salary schedules provided minimum and maximum salaries, supported chiefly by the Territory, for teachers and administrators, with annual increments according to qualification. These schedules,

together with annual sick leave provisions, and an actuarially sound retirement system, were developed and lobbied by the Alaska Education Association with a high degree of success. By 1958, the average annual salaries of Nome teachers had risen to \$7077.22. For many years the Nome teachers enrolled with 100% membership in their local and territorial associations, as well as the parent National Education Association, taking an active part in the activities of these organizations, as they have continued to do with constructive effect following statehood.

Commissioner Karnes pointed out, in 1944, that "graduation from an approved university or college is the minimum requirement of training for high school teachers in Alaska, and at least three years of work in an accredited college or normal school is required for elementary teachers."²¹ In Nome, from 1919 to 1930, the ratio of college graduates on the faculty to normal school graduates was two to three, or 40% college graduates to 60% normal school graduates. By 1937, 87.5% of a faculty of 16 teachers held a college degree, and 12.5% were normal school graduates or did not hold a college degree,²² compared with a territorial average for other incorporated districts, in 1958, at the close of the territorial period, of slightly over 87% of degree holders.²³ Although supporting statistics are not at hand, it is probable that the Nome schools surpassed the territorial percentage in this respect in 1958, as the trend had continued upward. The fact remains that the Nome teaching staff antedated the highest average degree of qualification attained by the sum total of territorial teachers by a period of five years. The difficulty has not been in employing well qualified teachers, but in keeping them through a stabilizing length of tenure. Associated with budgetary inadequacy, the erratic and excessive turnover of teachers is undoubtedly a cause of lowered achievement standards by the students.

With the amalgamation of the city schools and the Bureau of Indian Affairs school in 1946-47, and the following year, the student population rose from its 1944-45 figure of 163 total enrollment to 337 in 1948-49, more than doubling in a space of five years. By 1957-58, the school enrollment had again more than doubled to a figure of 700. The new school budgets spiraled from the \$36,981.82 sum of 1945-46, (city share, \$8,855.82) to an astronomical amount of \$256,635 (city share, \$80,763.74) in 1957-58. To a board and council accustomed to thinking conservatively in educational costs and reacting with shock to the 1945-46 city share of under \$9000,²⁴ the developing situation was almost enough to induce a trauma. However, the firm guiding hand of Superintendent William L. Angell, from 1945 to statehood in 1959,²⁵ eased the local financing through federal assistance programs, and provided the administrative strength that times of change require.

As the enrollment skyrocketed, more space for classes became a pressing necessity. Commissioner Karnes had stated in his 1940 report that "ordinarily, cities are supposed to construct their own school buildings, but the last three legislatures have set a precedent in assisting cities in the construction of their school buildings..." In 1953, with a grant from the Legislature, a new elementary addition to the main school was built. The home economics and shop classes were moved into renovated army surplus yak-huts on adjoining grounds.²⁶

Sanitary conditions in the Nome schools had never been standard. The city existed in sewage and garbage disposal conditions that had prevailed in the gold-rush era. Water purchased from a tank trucking firm was pumped into water storage tanks in the residences and public and business buildings, and reordered periodically. Water drains from sinks and tubs emptied onto the ground to run off and evaporate, a system that would have caused endemic disease in a warmer climate. Toilets were indoor "honey buckets," usually vented, with an outside "port" for the scavenger's contracted collections.²⁷ Shortly before statehood, the territorial health officer warned the city that if more than 500 children were housed in the city school building, sewer and water facilities meeting standard health requirements would have to be installed.²⁸ Although the standards were never met by the school in the territorial era ending in 1958, the health department cancelled any further additions to the main building after 1962, pending the correction of sanitary conditions.²⁹

In spite of the negative aspects of the school facilities, a faithful corps of teachers remained to perform cadre duty with those newly coming in. One who came to stay, in 1946, Mr. Olaf Halverson, made his mark as a great teacher of the Nome youth. Mr. Halverson, a graduate of St. Olaf's College, in Northfield, Minnesota, came to

Alaska in 1935, as a surveyor with the Matanuska Valley colony project. He had formerly been a teacher and was proud of his record of having taught twenty years without a day's absence or tardiness. Of Norwegian stock, Olaf was a master skier. He once astonished his students by chartering a ski plane to take him into the coastal range north of Nome, where he mounted his skis and made a swift return down the valley slopes to town. Of a pleasant disposition, and radiating good will in his classroom, he made his mathematics, science, mechanical drawing, and shop classes popular. On Sundays, Mr. Halverson taught church school to a roomful of small children at the Swedish Evangelical Church. Among his teaching colleagues, Olaf collected the education association dues, which were customarily one hundred percent, and he wrote articles for *The Alaska Teacher*, as well, making him well known among the teachers of the Territory. He acted as high school principal in various years, and spent numerous hours assisting the clerkless superintendent with fiscal reports.³⁰

As school budget money was in short supply, Mr. Halverson underwrote a school yearbook, *Polaris*, which he served as advisor for the four years from 1947 to 1950. The *Polaris* is an excellent book of quality pictures, sound territorial and school history, and a valuable resource of information concerning the school years of publication. One of Mr. Halverson's students, Loretta Snyder, a girl of native blood and valedictorian of the Class of 1948, concluded her graduation address, which was printed in the *Polaris*, with these words of pragmatic philosophy that characterized the attitudes of her teacher:

The problems of tomorrow are for us to face. Perhaps none of us will become famous statesmen, but by taking advantage of the training provided by our educational system and the further training some of us hope to acquire as we go on to school, we can practice our teachings and become effective citizens of our democracy so that it might live.

Loretta became a medical doctor.

When Mr. Halverson died in 1962, he left a bequest of \$100 a year to be awarded as a scholarship to a worthy Nome High School graduate at the annual graduation exercises.³¹ Although Olaf was a bachelor, his affection and concern for the welfare of children was boundless. His popularity with them, which led to their naming a favorite skating pond "Halverson Lake," made a deep impression on the community memory. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), the pupil of Plato, wrote a suitable epitaph for all great teachers:

Those who educate children well are more to be honored than even their parents, for these only give them life, those the art of living well.

Olaf Halverson was one of those who deserved that tribute.

CHAPTER VIII

The School Board, City Council, and Fiscal Independence

Much has been related about the Nome Public School board of education earlier in this history. In every incorporated school district the local school board is the core operational body responsible for maintaining public education, under the state laws, within its jurisdiction. In Alaska, no other local political body has this direct function delegated to it by the State. In his last report as territorial Commissioner of Education, in 1958, Dr. Don M. Dafoe, an able chief school officer, made these selected remarks concerning the local school boards:

One hundred forty men and women make up the school boards in the 28 school districts currently operating. Each of the school districts has a 5 member board which is elected by the people as provided by Territorial law.

The powers and duties of local school boards are set forth by statute and by the Rules and Regulations of the Territorial Board. There is no position in the community which is more important than membership on a local board of education.

The local school board carries out the Territorial program of education within the school district. The powers of local boards are actually only those powers which are delegated specifically by law or by the Territorial Board of Education. However, the local school boards have considerable discretionary authority in matters of local concern so long as such actions do not contravene Territorial law or the Rules and Regulations of the Territorial Board.

City and independent school district boards are fiscally dependent and are required to submit budgets to the city council. The city councils have authority to reduce the total budget amount, but do not have authority to specifically reduce budget items...

The local school board should act as a policy forming body and in a judicial capacity rather than in an executive capacity, formulating and adopting policies and then delegating the execution of such policies to its chief administrator. It should be remembered that the board can only delegate administrative powers and cannot delegate its legislative or judicial powers. The administrator possesses only such authority as is delegated to him by the board.¹

Such was the framework under which the local school board functioned in the final year of territorial government, and basically functions today. In the first 58 years of its history, the Nome school board had enrolled a succession of 65 members, 54 men (83%) and 11 women (17%), who had served a cumulative total of 195 years of individual membership. The men gave 140 years of service (71.65%), and women gave a total of 55 years (28.35%), with an average tenure of three years.²

Prior to 1922, Scotty Allan (1906-12) held the longest board membership of six years. However, in 1921, with the election of the Rev. W. F. Baldwin, a Methodist missionary, a remarkable record of school board service by one family began, which terminated in 1956, and encompassed 32 years. Mr. Baldwin was a board member for eight years, when he was succeeded by his wife, who remained in office from 1929 to 1945, sixteen years – the longest membership in the board's history. In 1948, the Baldwins' daughter, Helen B. Olsen, was elected for a three year term, followed in 1951, by her brother Robert Baldwin, who served until 1956, when he was appointed by the Governor to the Territorial Board of Education.³

Before 1922, the average length of service for a board member was only two years, reflecting the early changes in school administration from the Bureau of Education to the city, and to the early quarrels with the city council involving fiscal independence. When the fiscal dominance of the council was no longer a legal issue, the average board tenure doubled to four years in the 1922-58 period. In the first 21 years only one woman, Mrs. Sara E. Schofield, was elected to the board (1911). Since 1922, one or more women have sat on the school board, with the exception of the two year period from 1945-47. In 1946, Mr. Charles E. Fagerstrom became the first member from the native community. After four years in office, Mr. Fagerstrom was succeeded by his wife, Helen, who served through the eight years preceding statehood. All successive boards since 1946 have been represented by one or more members of native background.

Other board members whose service has exceeded the average are: Richard L. Morris (1916-21), five years; Mrs. C. C. Crooks, (1922-31), nine years; W. H. Koch (1923-32), nine years; Mrs. Carrie M McLain (1934-40), six years; Almer Rydeen (1935-41), six years; W. J. Dowd (1941-47), six years; and M. B. Young (1952-57), five years.

School boards, like other elected bodies, are intrinsically conservative. Under the supervision of their executive officer, the superintendent, an annual budget is prepared early in the year to be sent to the Commissioner of Education, whose Department of Education budget must anticipate all necessary State commitments for support of the local districts. If the local budget is low, or cut by city council action, State support is automatically reduced on a mathematical formulation. School boards and superintendents are characteristically honest as well as conservative in using the taxpayer's dollar. When budgets are made, they are carefully pared to represent the actual needs of predicted enrollments, professional staff, plant operation and maintenance, and a margin of growth in educational standards. To neglect any of these areas means systematic degeneration and serious contingent trouble involving the entire community. Yet this process has taken place in cyclic pattern throughout the history of the Nome Public Schools, and elsewhere in Alaska. What is the cause? Let us examine it.

In the early contention over the percentage of license monies that should be shared by the city and the school board, the city was eventually successful in gaining veto power over the annual budget presented by the board, placing the board in a dependent position in fiscal planning. Schools are a public business, and as any competent business management does, the school board becomes thoroughly informed on its business affairs and costs of its educational product. But with an eye on the city council, the board keeps costs to a minimum, avoiding the appearance of budget "padding." Their integrity oddly tends to hurt the schools, as the council rarely trusts the judgment of the board in predicting enrollments, increasing professional staff sufficiently, the costs of estimated maintenance needs, or the necessity of certain experimental innovations aimed at higher standards of education. Although the school and the community lose up to 90% in matching State support funds on budget reductions, the budget is cut by the council to save the comparatively minor percent of local tax dollars, and the board must retard its objectives to conform to the reduction. This phenomenon is styled "fiscal dependence of school boards."

Is the veto function of an intermediary agency necessary on the local school district level? Actually, the State Department of Education also has that prerogative, but historically it is much more liberal in its fund allocations, when properly justified, than local governments. An unsound dual structure creates gratuitous problems. The city council-school board relationship cannot be compared with bicameral governments, where two houses are knowledgeably processing the same legislation. To the contrary, the city council, or in other cases, the borough, acts as a board of review with certain veto powers, for the purpose of limiting their tax support of the educational program to the legal minimum. The predictable result is curtailment of the board's responsibility for providing maximum efficiency in its purposed duties. Where the board is normally oriented toward the highest standards it can attain for educational development of the school children, the council is self-directed toward a minimum cost maintenance operation. So long as the school institution is existing and not disturbing the city treasury with increased demands, the council will not trouble itself to question the quality of the school system or the quality of its product. But this the school board in good conscience must do.

Unfortunately, when the standards of the schools degenerate to the explosion point, the school board, like a pregnant girl, suffers the blame.

In the early years of the Nome Public Schools, as we have seen, all the city needed for its own support was a small ad valorem millage rate on taxable property. The license fees from the district court were more than ample to sustain an independent school system under a regulating board of directors. But the lure of free money for the city induced the struggle for control of the school budget, to the point where council interference in school matters was denounced by editor John F. A. Strong as a usurpation of school board powers.

Any group given power over another is impelled to use it critically, and at least to treat it in such a manner as to nullify any threat to its own security. The holding of discretionary power also places a real or an implied responsibility on those who hold it. The city council normally knows very little about the specific factors in the needs of their school system, but once a year it is their duty to approve or demand modification, largely on trust, of a budget presented by a school board that is closely associated with these factors of school operation and directly responsible for the futurity of the system. The loss of accreditation by Nome High School in 1969, is a direct result of the inadequate community support arising from the dynamics of the system of fiscal dependence on the city council.⁴

Elsewhere in Alaska the problem has moved into the higher level of borough government, where the annual school budget controversy has become especially bitter. In 1969, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Superintendent of Schools issued a quasi budget figure to the press covering the total needs of the school system based on a survey by the individual school principals of requirements they considered necessary for excellence in their particular schools. The total amounted to a sum in excess of two million dollars of the expected official school board request, causing the community establishment and the Daily News-Miner to react in anger. This was indeed "truth in packaging," and they didn't like it.⁵ Yet the Borough Assembly proceeded to reduce the trimmed budget in its customary ritual. In a discussion of fiscal dependence of boards in city school districts, a borough school system superintendent remarked, "In the borough it's even worse."⁶ If education in Alaska is to be developed for the requirements of the latter twentieth century, clearly an adjustment in the school support system must be made.

Commissioner of Education William K. Keller, in his report for the 1930-1932 biennium, made the following statement and recommendation:

The city schools are now fiscally dependent upon the city councils. This is contrary to sound educational policies. The schools should be fiscally independent of all governing bodies except the Territorial Legislature. Steps should be taken to separate city and school government by making the school boards in city districts independent of the city council in matters of school finance.⁷

Dr. Keller commented further that, "It is interesting to note that every expansion of the school system since its inception has resulted in a 100% charge of the cost of such expansion to the Territory, instead of a reasonable proportion being charged to the community affected."⁸

Since 1932, the tendency of able communities to relinquish their basic responsibility for a large share of the support of local education has grown to the point where they no longer expect to bear it. The past hope of local school board fiscal independence based on the board as a local taxing unit was made generally impossible by the provision of the State Constitution, Article X, Sec. 2., that "the State may delegate taxing powers to organized boroughs and cities only."⁹ However, the preeminence of the State over public education is to be inferred from Article VII, Sec. 1., providing that "the legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions..."¹⁰

Therefore, every public school in Alaska is the direct responsibility of the State as a unit in the State school system. Why should not the Legislature by an Act assume the complete fiscal responsibility for the schools, operating under the Department of Education with the locally elected school boards as the single local controlling agency of educational policy at the city or borough level. Under such a proposal all school property should also be the property of the State. Working directly with the State Department of Education, the local school board would be reasonably assured of a budget large enough to preclude the accumulation of large deficiencies in maintenance of plant and educational programming. The school board would be able to work within a framework of freedom never known before, with the assurance that the State of Alaska would not let the local schools fall below the level of acceptance for annual accreditation. Relieved of all official connections by the board for policies, planning, administration, and funding, the city or borough governments might be of benefit to education by exercising pressure on the State Department of Education and the Legislature for better schools and larger budgets in their areas. It would indeed be a new shoe on a new foot.¹¹

CHAPTER IX

An Ending and a Beginning – 1958

In 1958, in midsummer, Alaska was admitted to the Union. It was an auspicious event long yearned for by a majority of the citizens of the Territory, who saw in their new status an opportunity to exercise freedoms of American citizenship never before available to them; such simple rights as to cast a vote in a presidential election and to share as equal partners in the determination of the laws and conditions under which we might more freely live. Statehood in 1958 marked the end of a long era that was characterized by hard struggle under adversity, but yielded the happiness that rewards those who care and endure. The opening era offered a challenge that was accepted with the same alacrity that had spurred the stampede to answer the call of the early gold strikes. A constitution had been prepared by a constitutional convention at the University of Alaska, in 1956, and the people were ready for new responsibilities of self-government. It would take time, but as in the past the tilling would bear the harvest.

While great events were in the making, the Nome Public Schools adjusted slowly to the pressures of a school population growing at the rate of fifty to sixty more pupils a year. The new elementary wing eased the crowding measurably, and a full time music teacher for all grades gave a new dimension to student life. The library contained 1239 volumes in the year 1952-53, an average of three books for every pupil. Three years later, Mrs. Cameron was assigned as part time librarian, for which work she had become qualified through summer sessions and a correspondence course. A part time nurse was employed in 1953, for the first time on the school records. Athletics, especially basketball, had become an aspect of fervent devotion by the schoolboys, who understood "body english," regardless of what the English teacher in the classroom might credit them for. Basketball playing kept many of the native boys in school, and the physical education department should be given full recognition of the part it has played in the successes of the students in completing their high school course. In 1955-56, a federal school lunch program served 105 children a day, of the 595 total enrollment. Superintendent Angell still had two more years to wait for an office clerk, but he could be thankful for Stuby Cameron, and Olaf Halverson when he faced emergencies with the child accounting and the budget preparation.

The Class of 1956 numbered nine graduates. As this year was the golden anniversary of the first graduation class, Ralph Lomen was invited to attend the commencement ceremonies. Mr. Lomen sent a congratulatory telegram from his home in Seattle, but at 70 years of age, he declined the invitation. James Walsh, '35, was the speaker. Lutie Boardman, Ralph Lomen's classmate of the class of 1906, had faded into history.

By the terminal year of the old Territory, 1958, 220 students had been graduated from Nome High School. Of this number, 106 were members of 36 families, representing in three families two generations of graduates, the Longleys, the McLains, and the Lyles. The largest family of children to receive high school diplomas before statehood, were the sons and daughters of Michael J. and Louise Forsythe Walsh. Eight young Walshes finished school between 1930 and 1942. Other large families to have multiple graduations were the Bells, six, with others in school; the Fagerstroms, six, with others enrolled; and the Snyders, also six. All these families are among the distinguished citizenship of the Nome community, being outstanding in their occupational and civic life.

The public schools of Nome are even more important today than in the past, when demands on the individual for a full education and training were far less critical than those made upon him by the modern world. In the most essential meaning, there is no longer a "local" school; rather there is a "public" school that owes its loyalties to the larger society that includes with the community, the State and the Nation. We must examine our meaning of "local control" in terms of "local control for what ends?"

We must strive to build our Nome Public Schools as a healthy component of the educational organization of the State, and of the Nation that becomes closer to us in our daily activities. We cannot be satisfied to send out a

few well prepared graduates into the world. We must send out all our youth well equipped by educational insight to be contributors in a productive society.

The future is always ours. The trials and errors of history are ours for examination and study. If we learn our lessons well, we will not be doomed to repeat the failures of the past when we face the golden prospects that beckon toward the challenging future.

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Appendix A: Years of Service of Nome School Board Members - USBE1 and City Schools - 1900 to 1958.

1	Walter Church	1900-1901	1	34	Nels Swanberg	1919-1922	3
2	S.A. Keller	1900-1901	1	35	W.F. Baldwin	1921-1929	8
3	E.S. Ingraham	1900-1901	1	36	A.M. Sitton	1921-1923	2
4	D.W. McKay	1900-1901	1	37	Mrs. C.C. Crooks	1922-1931	9
5	D.J. Elliott	1900-1901	1	38	W.H. Koch	1923-1932	9
6	J.W. Brynteson	1900-1901	1	39	Mrs. WF Baldwin	1929-1945	16
7	S.J. Call	1900-1903	2	40	Mrs. Tolbert Scott	1931-1934	3
8	J.W. Logan	1900-1901	1	41	Lars Rynning	1932-1935	3
9	J.J. Chambers	1901-1902	1	42	Carrie M Mclain	1934-1940	6
10	Miner Bruce	1901-1902	1	43	Almer Rydeen	1935-1941	6
11	Colin Beaton	1901-1902	1	44	K.D. Rude	1940-1943	3
12	B.F. Miller	1901-1902	1	45	W.J. Dowd	1941-1927	6
13	L.L. Sawyer	1902-1905	3	46	Nels Strand	1943-1944	1
14	H.O. Butler	1902-1903	1	47	A.C. Steinwandel	1944-1946	2
15	J.B. Harris	1903-1904	1	48	F.E. Love	1945-1948	3
16	Harry Storey	1903-1905	2	49	C.E. Fagerstrom	1946-1950	4
17	A.H. Moore	1903-1905	2	50	Mildred M Webb	1947-1948	1
18	S.T. Jeffreys	1905-1906	1	51	Helen B. Olsen	1948-1951	3
19	E.T. Baldwin	1905-1908	3	52	J.D. Hudert	1948-1950	2
20	J.W. Wright	1905-1908	3	53	R.H. Tveter	1950-1953	3
21	A.A. Allan	1906-1912	6	54	C.G. Boucher	1950-1952	2
22	John T. Reed	1908-1911	3	55	Robert F Baldwin	1951-1956	5
23	John H. Dunn	1908-1910	2	56	Jane Galvin	1951-1955	4
24	J.H. Guffey	1910-1911	1	57	Helen Fagerstrom	1951-19	8
25	Sara E. Schofield	1911-1914	3	58	M.B. Young	1952-1957	5
26	J.Y. McCune	1911-1912	1	59	W.J. Barber	1953-1957	4
27	S.N. Carman	1912-1916	4	60	Lorena L. Gray	1955-1956	1
28	Ward Estey	1912-1915	3	61	G.A. Bayer	1956-19	2
29	Fred Ayer	1914-1917	3	62	James M. Walsh	1956-1957	1
30	E.E. Grimm	1915-1918	3	63	Dorothy A Grant	1957-19	1
31	R.L. Morris	1916-1921	5	64	Roy W. Snyder	1957-19	1
32	Antonio Polet	1917-1920	3	65	Neal W. Foster	1957-19	1
33	W.E. Carlton	1918-1919	1				

1900 - Voluntary School	1900 - 1901 - U.S. Bureau of Educational School	City of Nome incorporated, April 26, 1901. First elected school board: 1901-1902 - Nome Public Schools
Judge Walter Church	Judge Walter Church	Dr. J.J. Chambers
D.W. McKay	S.A. Keller	Miner Bruce
Major E.S. Ingraham	E.S. Ingraham	B.F. Miller ¹ Colin Beaton
S.A. Keller	D.W. McKay	1902-1903
J.V. Logan	D.J. Elliott	Dr. S.J. Call
	J.W. Brynteson	Col. L.L. Sawyer
	Dr. Samuel J. Call	H.O. Butler
	J.V. Logan	1903-1904
		J.B. Harris
		Col. L.L. Sawyer
		Captain Harry Storey
		A.H. Moore ²
		1904-1905
		Captain Harry Storey
		Col. L.L. Sawyer
		A.H. Moore
		1905-1906
		Judge S.T. Jeffreys
		Major E.T. Baldwin
		J.W. Wright
		1906-1907
		A.A. Allan
		Major E.T. Baldwin
		J.W. Wright
		1907-1908
		A.A. Allan
		Major E.T. Baldwin
		J.W. Wright
		1908-1909
		A.A. Allan
		John T. Reed
		John H. Dunn
		1909-1910
		A.A. Allan
		John T. Reed
		John H. Dunn
		1910-1911
		A.A. Allan
		John T. Reed
		John H. Guffey
		1927-1928
		Rev. W.F. Baldwin
		Mrs. C.C. Crooks
		W.H. Koch
		1928-1929
		Rev. W.F. Baldwin
		Mrs. C.C. Crooks
1911-1912	1919-1920	
A.A. Allan	Richard L. Morris	
Mrs. Sara E. Schofield	Antonio Polet	
J.Y. McCune	Nels Swanberg	
1912-1913	1920-1921	
S.N. Carman	Richard L. Morris	
Mrs. Sara E. Schofield	Nels Swanberg	

Ward Estey 1913-1914	Rev. W.F. Baldwin 1921-1922	W.H. Koch 1929-1930
S.N. Carman	Nels Swanberg	Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin
Mrs. Sara E. Schofield	Rev. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs. C.C. Crooks
Ward Estey 1914-1915	A.M. Sitton 1922-1923	W.H. Koch 1930-1931
S.N. Carman	Rev. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin
Ward Estey	A.M. Sitton	Mrs. C.C. Crooks
Fred Ayer	Mrs. C.C. Crooks	W.H. Koch
1915-1916	1923-1924	1931-1932
S.N. Carman	Rev. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs. W.F. Baldwin
Fred Ayer	Mrs. C.C. Crooks	Mrs. Tolbert Scott
Edgar E. Grimm	W.H. Koch	W.H. Koch
1916-1917	1924-1925	1932-1933
Fred Ayer	Rev. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs. W.F. Baldwin
Edgar E. Grimm	Mrs. C.C. Crooks	Mrs. Tolbert Scott
Richard L. Morris	W.H. Koch	Lars Rynning
1917-1918	1925-1926	1933-1934
Edgar E. Grimm	Rev. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs. W.F. Baldwin
Richard L. Morris	Mrs. C.C. Crooks	Mrs. Tolbert Scott
Antonio Polet	W.H. Koch	Lars Rynning
1918-1919	1926-1927	1934-1935
Richard L. Morris	Rev. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs. W.F. Baldwin
Antonio Polet	Mrs. C.C. Crooks	Lars Rynning
W.E. Carleton	W.H. Koch	Mrs. Carrie M. McLain
1935-1936	1944-1945	1952-1953
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	R.H. Tveter
Mrs. Carrie M. McLain	W.J. Dowd	Robert F. Baldwin
Almer Rydeen	A.C. Steinwandel	Mrs. Helen Fagerstrom
1936-1937	1945-1946	Mrs. Jane Galvin
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	W.J. Dowd	Morris Bennett Young
Mrs. Carrie M. McLain	A.C. Steinwandel	1953-1954
Almer Rydeen	Frank E. Love	Robert F. Baldwin
1937-1938	1946-1947	Mrs. Helen Fagerstrom
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	W.J. Dowd	Mrs. Jane Galvin
Mrs. Carrie M. McLain	Frank E. Love	M.B. Young
Almer Rydeen	C.E. Fagerstrom	William J. Barber
1938-1939	1947-1948	1954-1955
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	Frank E. Love	Robert F. Baldwin
Mrs. Carrie M. McLain	C.E. Fagerstrom	Mrs. Helen Fagerstrom
Almer Rydeen	Mrs. Mildred M Webb	Mrs. Jane Galvin
1939-1940	1948-1949	M.B. Young
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	C.E. Fagerstrom	William J. Barber
Mrs. Carrie M. McLain	Mrs. Helen B Olsen	1955-1956
Almer Rydeen	John D. Dudert	Robert F. Baldwin
1940-1941	1949-1950	Mrs. Helen Fagerstrom
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	C.E. Fagerstrom	M.B. Young
Almer Rydeen	Mrs. Helen B Olsen	William J. Barber
K.D. Rude	John D. Dudert	Mrs. Lorena L. Gray
1941-1942	1950-1951	1934-1935
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin	Mrs. Helen B Olsen	Mrs. Helen Fagerstrom

K.D. Rude
W.J. Dowd
1942-1943
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin
K.D. Rude
W.J. Dowd
1943-1944
Mrs.. W.F. Baldwin
W.J. Dowd
Nels Strand

Raymond H. Tveter
Clement G. Boucher
1951-1952
R.H. Tveter
C.G. Boucher
Robert F. Baldwin
Mrs. Jane Galvin
Mrs. Helen Fagerstrom

M.B. Young
William J. Barber
George A. Bayer
James M. Walsh
1957-1958
Mrs. Helen Fagerstrom
George A. Bayer
Mrs. Dorothy A. Grant
Roy W. Snyder
Neal W. Foster

Appendix B: Superintendent of the Nome Public Schools, 1901 - 1958

1901-1902	1922-1925
James A. Riley	Lars E. Rynning
1902-1903	1925-1926
Will Henry	D.W. Davis
1903-1905	1926-1928
Professor D.H. Traphagen	Leo W. Breuer ¹
1905-1907	1928-1930
D.W. Jarvis	Luther Dunbar
1907-1911	1930-1934
Professor Edgar E. Grimm	E.J. Beck
1911-1914	1934-1936
Frank Xavier Karrer	William H. Bloom
1914-1916	1936-1939
C.W. Baird	Calvin E. Pool
1916-1918	1939-19
Charles W. Thompson	A.A. Ryan
1918-1920	19 -1944
Emma Lee Orr	Frank Allen Smola
1920-1921	1944-1951/1952-1959
Mrs. Frederick Bockman	William L. Angell
1921-1922	1951-1952
T. Collins	Oliver G. Boe

¹Territorial Commissioner of Education, 1929-1931

Appendix C: Nome Graduates, Nome High School, 1906 -1958.

1906 - 2	1914 - 3	1925- 2
Lucius J. Boardman	James Bogan	Ada Arthurs
Ralph Lomen	Eugene Kell	Emerson Fromm
1907 - 1	Jerome Simson	1926 - 11
Irving McKenny Reed	1915 - 3	unidentified
1908 - 3	Helen Allan	1927 - 4
Irene Hannagan	Elizabeth Neuman	Charles Becker
Vesta Storey	Sam Wittenberg	Robert Lyle
Crittenden C. Tolman	1916 - 4	Alvin Polet
1909 - 1	Catherine Bongard	Eunice Sears
Charles Deyette	Fred Haering	1928 - 3
1910 - 7	Amandas Johanson	Edward Becker
Claude Kell	George Wanger	Russell C. Maynard
Helen Kreps	1917 - 0	Frances Ross
Nora Kreps	1918 - 11	1929 - 0
Harrison Loerpabel	unidentified	1930 - 4
Barbara Stipek	1919 - 0	Helen H. Baldwin
Branson Telley	1920 - 0	John S. Carlson
Jess White	1921 - 0	Frances C. Nicholas
1911 -	1922 - 0	Joseph E. Walsh
1912 - 5	1923 - 1	1931 - 5
Linda Davison	Una Sitton	Wilfred Neily
Mildred Lehmann	1924 - 5	Margaret Rowe
Mae Mayer	Alvin Bahlke	Robert Sears
Lillian Simson	Jack Hamlyn	Margaret Ullrich
Anna Wittenberg	Donald Lyle	Mary Walsh
1913 - 6	Emily Polet	1932 - 4
Euphemia Allan	Kristie Sather	Madeline Calkins
Rose Cameron		Aaron Johnson
Hilda Johnson		Grace Swanberg
Harold Lyle		Eileen Walsh
William Sellers		
Carrie M. Stipek		

1938 - 5
Hert Baldwin
Thomas Christianson
Leroy Martin
Thomas O'Leary
Snyder
1939 - 21
Identified
1940 - 3
Hest Boulanger
Virginia Harper
Thomas Walsh
1941 - 6
Rude Johansen
Dorothy Nelson
John O'Farrell
Herbert Slack
Lynn Wallace
Alice Walsh
1942 - 8
Amarok
John W. Lewis, Jr.
Mann
O'Leary
Ludine Rude
Henry Ulricksen
J. Waid
1943 - 7
Hood Chapman
Frederic Dunham
Charles Faxon Lewis
Anna E. M. Polson
E. F. Shedley
L. Walsh
1944 - 4
John D. Bell
John L. Bronson
John N. Gray
John M. Hay
1945 - 4
Robert Ahkolik
John W. Bell
Johnita J. Fagerstrom
Beverly Swanberg
1946 - 5
John Bjornstad
Boucher
John Larsen

1939 - 4
Ernest Bergh
Lois Ost
Lincoln Ost
Martin Willoya
1940 - 9
Frederick M. Bockman
Virginia M. Hoop
Edith M. Hoop
Oscar Eugene Margraf
Richard L. Margraf
Alyce Viola Martin
George G. Martin
Robert F. Scott
Darrold R. Wagner
1941 - 2
Yvonne Mozee
Kermit Rock
1942 - 8
Roger Bockman
Marjorie McLain
Marianna Mish
Jane Nelson
Grace O'Connor
Frank O'Farrell
Kathleen Walsh
Kevin Walsh
Kristie Sather
1943 - 3
Walter Dowd
Blanche O'Connor
Judith Bockman
1944 - 4
Theodore Amarok
Erik Hay
Elizabeth McLain
Frances Waldhelm
1954 - 5
Gerry Fagerstrom
Elmer Greene
Ruth Nershak
Leroy Reader
Gordon Swanberg
1955 - 11
David J. Bell
Carolyn Glavinovich
Robert F. Herman
Donna Clarissa Lyle
Dean W. Martin
Sam A. Mogg
Jack F. Muller

1945 - 2
Bernadette Amarok
Paul B. McCarthy
1946 - 3
Caroline McLain
David S. Mazen
Grace Putkuk
1947 - 10
Mary Ann Amarok
Elinor F. Dowd
James W. Edwards
Walter B. McCarthy
Elliot Mozee
Phyllis I. Roell
Charlotte Jane Scott
Julia Silverman
Robert H. Snyder
Thomas L. Tucker
1948 - 9
Florence Bell
Bertha H. Bjornstad
George Bourdon
Mae H. Castel
Robert K. Lewis
Arthur W. McLain
Corinne M. Snyder
Loretta A. Snyder
Ellen E. Waldhelm
1949 - 8
Margaret A. Bjornstad
Aarnout A. Castel
Gary T. Longley
Edward B. O'Connor
Lois K. Overbough
Robert V. Rose
Jennie L. Sayers
Clara M. Seiffert
1957 - 5
Charles W. Fagerstrom
Paul S. Glavinovich
Madeline K. Mogg
Stanley W. Senungetuk
Barbara D. Trigg
1958 - 12
Sadie J. Bell
Edward N. Carter
Harriet D. Coleman
Virginia E. Doyle
Suzanne K. Fagerstrom
Ruth Glavinovich
John C. Johnson

rence Okpealuk
ence Willoya
- 7
ge Bell
Fagerstrom
Larsen, Jr.
Longley
on Olson
ed Sahlin
Sahlin

Madeline Piscoya
Roy Weley Snyder
Robert A. Summers
Milton J. Willoya
1956 - 9
Ann M. Ailak
Dianne M. Boucher
Robert Dunbar
Ronald Engstrom
Lucy Ann Fagerstrom
Helen Marie Glavinovich
Loretta A. Johnson
Sigrid L. Olsen
Nancy Teayoumeak

Gloria Jean Mogg
Arlene J. Muller
Charles H. Snyder
Berda J. Tate
Gladyce M. Walker

Appendix D:
Essay written by Lucien P. Riegert, an eighth grade graduate,
and published in the Nome Daily Nugget, Sat., May 30, 1908, p.3.

The school we now occupy, heated with steam, lighted by electricity marked contrast to the first school in Nome, started in 1900 by the government.

Now books and every convenience for school work are provided by the school board. At first we used what books we brought with us from the "outside" school, and coming from different places, we had as many different kinds of text books and classes as we had as many different kinds of text books and classes as we had pupils, making it very difficult for the two teachers. Now, we have a principal, a special teacher, and six class teachers, and the classes are graded.

The first Nome school was held in the old Congregational church on Second Avenue West. We had no modern school furniture in those days. We sat on benches, chairs, and the tardy ones, finding even the sills occupied, had to go to the shed for boxes. It was a case of first come first served in those days and our comfort was not considered.

We had no steam heat in those days. We took our turns or fought for places near the stove to get warm or dry as the season called for.

Think of it! Twenty children crowded in one small room. I was a beginner in those days. I remember I was greatly interested in everyone's books and lessons but my own. I could listen all day to the teachers hearing the other scholars. I could see so many amusing things that the teachers couldn't see. I tell you I enjoyed myself in those days, but when it came my turn to recite, that was different.

Then we had to move and had a hilarious, exciting time moving to Brown's hall. The room was much larger, but, Oh! so cold.

Then came the incorporation of the city of Nome. And the joy of it to us boys!

Why, they even made "sandwich" men of the Eskimos, and we packed banners and distributed cards and hung them on the teams decorated with the names of our favorites; and the hot arguments on the streets and the fights we watched, think we were referees. There will never be an election in my memory to come up to the one in the spring of 1901. I can't remember all I did, but I was very busy.

After the city was incorporated, we had a school board, and our present building was planned and built. While waiting for the completion of our building, the grammar grades went back to their old stand, the Congregational building, now used as a library since the building of their new church. The primary grades were taken to the Bridge school on the Spit. From there we moved to a room over the old Lobby saloon, and it was not until October 1901, we got into our own school house on Third Avenue, which far surpasses anything which people expect when they come here.

It seems a long time since I wore short pants and attended the first American school north of "53".

**Appendix E: Course of Study,
Nome Public Schools,
1912-1913**

HIGH SCHOOL COURSES -- The High School shall have two courses: a Regular Course which has for its aim the preparation for college or university and a General Course in which the aim is to allow students not planning on attending a college or university certain options in the planning of their course from options allowed in any one year and from those allowed or offered in the year for which they are enrolled in the High School. Neither the Board nor the Superintendent assumes any responsibility for any student choosing to follow the General Course not being able at the end of his four years' high school work to enter any particular college or university.---ARTICLE I, SECTION 5, Rules and Regulations for the School Year 1912-13.

Third Year
Algebra V (5)
English V (5)
Commercial Geo.V (5)
Latin V or Ger. I (5)

Solid Geometry VI (5)
English VI (5)
Economics.VI (5)
Latin VI or Ger. II (5)

Third Year
Algebra V (5)
English V (5)
Commercial Geo.V (5)
English Hist. V (5)

Solid Geometry VI (5)
English VI (5)
Economics.VI (5)
English Hist. VI (5)

Explanations

Arabic numerals signify the number of recitations per week. Roman numerals signify the semester in which the subject is given.

Students of the Regular Course may be granted the privilege of choosing subjects from the General Course to satisfy certain or particular college or university requirements.

Eight credits are a year's work. Thirty-two credits are required for graduation. A credit is given for the satisfactory completion of a five-hour subject for one semester. (Amendments to Rules and Regulations, Article VI, Section 2. School year 1913-14).

In the Regular High School Course of Study third and fourth year students may elect Latin or German to fulfill college or university requirements.

Ancient History and Medieval and Modern History will be offered in alternate years. Medieval and Modern History will be offered during 1913-14. For further rules and regulations in regard to the High School Courses of Study, see Article VI of the Rules and Regulations for 1911-1912, also Article VI as amended for the years 1912-1913 and 1913-1914.

