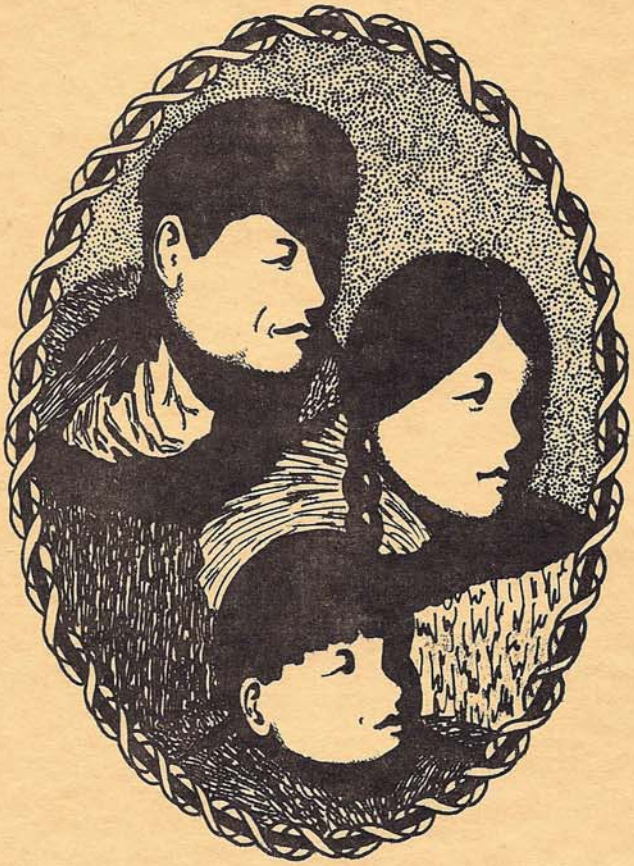

# Education in Northwest Alaska

by Warren P. Tiffany

BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS · BRANCH of EDUCATION · JUNEAU · ALASKA

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SCANNED VERSION

There are few histories on Alaska Native Education that contain as much information on actual school activities and experiences as Warren I. Tiffany includes in this historical document. The reader will also find many happenings not found in other histories which together paint an educational picture starting with a foreign institution, the school, being constructed in an Eskimo village without any explanations and/or instructions on why it was being constructed. Then, by 1958, when the document was printed and distributed, there are many Eskimo teachers and administrators as well as a course of study titled, "Minimum Essential Goals for Indian Schools." The road to 1958 reflects:

- 1784 First Russian school at Three Saints Bay
- 1784-1867 Russia exploitation of Alaska
- 1867 U.S. Buys Alaska from Russia
- 1867-1877 "Period of Neglect" by U.S.
- 1884, May 17, An Act providing Civil Government for Alaska"
- 1884 July 4, $15,000 appropriated for the education of Indian children in Alaska
- 1885 First General Agent for Education, Sheldon Jackson appointed to fill the position
- 1884 - 1894 Missions provided Alaska Native education
- 1887-March 16, 1931 Bureau of Education, Department of Interior, Alaska Native Service controlled Native Education
- 1892 Reindeer introduced as part of Education program
- 1895 Alaska Native Service established by the Bureau of Education, Department of Interior
- 1905 Nelson Act passed
- 1917 Territorial Uniform School Act passed
- 1917-1919 Influenza epidemic created orphans and boarding schools, Wrangell Institute established
- 1931 Bureau of Indian Affairs takes over the Alaska Native Service
- 1934 Indian school supervisors meet in Washington, D.C. to develop education program based on new policies
- 1947, February 22, Mt. Edgecumbe School opened
- 1958, 23 Eskimo teachers and administrators
- An outstanding 1958 Bibliography on Alaska Native Education

Warren passed away in the fall of 2009 but left behind several documents he had written. The documents have been made available to his daughter, Sarah, who did the initial scanning for this electronic version of *Education in Northwest Alaska.* This historical document will provide an increment to a general history of educating Alaska Natives.

Thomas R. Hopkins, Ed.D.
Sarah Tiffany

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James E. Hawkins, Area Director

BRANCH OF EDUCATION
Max W. Penrod, Area Director of Schools
Kenneth K. Crites, Assistant Area Director of Schools

Documentation by
Warren I. Tiffany, Educational Specialist (Elem.)



Illustrator
Alice C. Cook

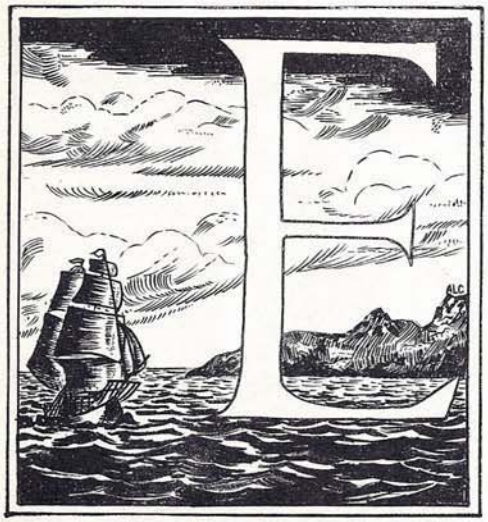
# Education in Northwest Alaska

by Warren P. Tiffany



Illustrated by Alice Cagwin Cook

# The Russians Begin (1784 - 1867)



ducation in the land mass termed Alaska was not a part of the cultural environment of this area for almost sixty years after the discovery of Alaska by Vitus Bering in 1728. The motivations of the early Russian explorers were centered around the expansion of the wealth-producing fur trade. The pattern of living in the early Russian settlements in the New World has been called by historians a "career of rapine." The efforts of the Russians were not directed at a colonization of a new territory, but rather a program of exploitation of the natural resources of this land.

The schools and the teachers during the Russian period may be grouped into three classes: the public schools under the control of the Russian-American Company with company employees as teachers, the religious schools under the control of the Russian-Greek Orthodox Church with missionaries as the teachers; and the Government schools which during the latter portion of the Russian period had regular professionally trained personnel. Of the three, only the missionary schools were ever established in Eskimo territory.

While the educational program of the Russian-American Company was aimed at satisfying the need for trained personnel, and that of the Government schools was concerned only with the education of the sons of company officials, that of the Russian-Greek Orthodox missions was directed at the Christianization of the natives. The curriculum was listed as religion and reading; the primary object of the latter being reading of the scriptures.

The first school in Alaska was the Russian-American Company school at Three Saints Bay established in 1784. Education did not begin to penetrate Eskimo Alaska until 1843 when a Mission school was opened at Nushagak, followed in 1860 by a school at Kwikhpak.

Historians generally report that neither the Russian-American Fur Company or the Russian Church ever made any real attempt to bring education to the native races of Alaska. In the light of history, it may be best to temper any criticism of these early adventurers in a wild, foreign country. Certainly the policies of the American Government in its newly acquired Territory, in 1867, were hardly as adequate as the Russians in providing such education.

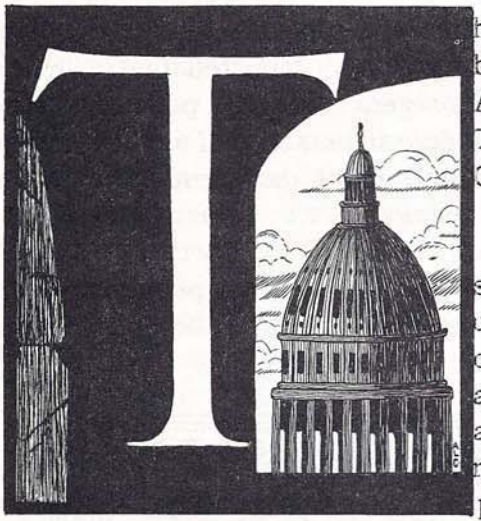
# The Missions Step In (1867 - 1884)

he transfer of Alaska to the United States in October, 1867 began the Mission era of education in the Territory, when only the missionaries were left to educate the native and white children. The Russian officers and company officials who had been teachers in the schools left the country with the cession, leaving only the Russian priests to carry on the religious and educational activities. The treaty of annexation had left the Church title to its property and granted it permission to carry on its activities.

The government and churches of the United States were not quick to step into the educational void created by the Russian withdrawal, and the period from 1867 to 1877 has been called the "Period of Neglect." Slowly the mission churches responded. The Russian-Greek Orthodox Missions were operating schools at Nushagak and St. Michael by this time. The Swedish Evangelical and Moravian churches led in the establishment of schools among the Eskimos. Schools at Golovin, Kangekosook (Kangusuk), Koyuk, Kotzebue, and Unalakleet were opened by the Swedish Evangelical or Covenant Church. The Moravians moved into Akiak, Bethel, Kalskag, Quiegaluk, and Tuluksak. Other schools were established by the Presbyterians at Gambell and Barrow, by the Episcopalians at Point Hope, by the Congregational Church at Cape Prince of Wales, and by the Roman Catholic Church at St. Joseph's on the Yukon Delta.

During this period, in 1869, Vincent Colyear, Secretary of the Board of Indian Commissioners, traveled in Alaska. He secured an appropriation of fifty thousand dollars from Congress for education in the Territory, but the funds were never put into use as no agency was found to administer the funds.

# The Government Lends a Hand (1884 - 1917)



The end of the Mission era arrived with the provision by the Federal Government as part of the "Organic Act" of funds for the establishment of schools in the Territory and the appointment of an officer of the Government to carry out the program:

" . . . That the Secretary of the Interior shall make needful and proper provision for the education of the 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. Approved May 17, 1884."

By the Act of July 4, 1884, a further appropriation was made in the amount of fifteen thousand dollars: "for the support and education of Indian children of both sexes at industrial schools in Alaska."

The Department of the Interior and the Federal Bureau of Education recommended that the money be distributed among the existing mission schools and that a general agent for education in Alaska be appointed. Dr. Sheldon Jackson, who had gained prominence through his activities on behalf of the Presbyterian mission in Alaska, received the appointment.

Faced with the problem of providing for schools over an area of five hundred thousand square miles with a school population of perhaps 6,000 children, Jackson followed a policy of subsidizing and supervising the mission schools.

Cooperation between the Government and the missions was essential, as well as the use of mission teachers, but Dr. Jackson stipulated that the teacher should "provide non-sectarian instruction in the public schools and leave all persons to the fullest expression of their religious liberty." The principle of dividing the Territory into unofficial missionary districts, however, invested the various mission bodies with unlimited powers for the proselytization of the natives, and religious liberty was not extended to the native people.

The Quakers or Society of Friends established a school at Kotzebue in 1887 and extended their activities to Deering, Kivalina, and Shungnak by 1902. The policy of subsidizing mission schools was discontinued in 1894. A few of the schools continued under denominational support, but most of them were taken over by the Bureau of Education.

In 1899 local communities were authorized to set up school boards to select teachers and establish schools. By 1902 a local board was in operation in Nome. The first report of racial conflict appeared in 1902. Incorporated city schools, which were principally all-white schools were in some cases not providing for the education of the native children. The Commissioner reported that: "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, seven thousand nine hundred sixty-two dollars of the same being turned back into the city treasury and used for other purposes."

In 1911, the Governor speaks of the "aloofness of the white people towards the natives of Alaska, the Native Service employees and missionaries being the only ones interested in them."

The Nelson Act of 1905 provided for the establishment of schools for white children outside of incorporated towns. These schools were to be under the control of locally elected school boards. This same act provided for the creation of the "Alaska Fund" derived from the sale of business licenses outside of incorporated towns. One-quarter of this fund was to be used to finance schools outside of incorporated towns not under the supervision of the Federal Bureau of Education.

Thus, by this Act, the management of schools for white children outside of incorporated towns was placed in the hands of the Governor of Alaska, as ex-officio superintendent of Public Instruction. Any such community having a population of twenty "white children and children of mixed-blood leading a civilized life" might petition for the establishment of a school district. The education of natives of Alaska remained under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. Since 1905, then, Alaska has had the two separate school systems.

The Native Service underwent a transition with its reorganization from 1900 to 1909 under the new Chief of the Alaskan division of the Bureau of Education, Harlan Updegraff. Alaska owes Sheldon Jackson a debt for his pioneering

efforts in gaining support for the schools and fashioning them into an organized system. Updegraff increased the number of supervisory personnel to increase teaching efficiency, and reoriented the curriculum so as to reflect the native culture. He further recommended that Alaska Native Service teachers be employed for twelve months of the year, so that the teachers could be with the native people even at their summer camps. Updegraff modified somewhat the close relationship that the Alaska Native Service maintained with the missionary societies in the Territory. With Updegraff also came a statistical presentation of attendance figures and school costs. Increasing emphasis was given to the employment of teachers with a university or normal school training.

The first teachers' conference in the Territory was held in Juneau from September 1 to September 10, 1908. An initial indoctrination was given teachers at the Seattle Office.

It was possible in 1909, because of the increase in supervisory personnel, for officials to visit every station except two for the first time in the history of the Service. In order to accomplish this it was necessary for the supervisors to travel thousands of miles by dogsled and reindeer sled to visit the teachers.


Lack of adequate funds was always a serious handicap to the early schools. Dr. Jackson had asked for $60,000, but Congress continued with appropriations of $30,000 for the operation of the Alaskan schools.

The pioneer nature of the educational work was given recognition in the employment of teachers. Sheldon Jackson requested that: "In a few places where they can have a home in a private family, it will be proper to employ unmarried ladies; but in the larger number of places the teacher should be a married man accompanied by his wife. Especially is this the case in the native village, where the school aims to lift the whole community out of their old methods into those of civilization. In such communities a well-ordered household is an object lesson of great power."

There apparently was a little difficulty in securing applicants for the positions in the early schools. The General Agent received twenty applications for positions in 1890, from which three teachers were selected. The following advertisement that attracted the applications was placed in a Washington, D.C. newspaper on March 13, 1890, and gives an insight into the nature of the professional and personal backgrounds required of teachers in Alaska during this period:

> Teachers Wanted for Contract Schools Among
> The Eskimos of Arctic Alaska
>
> The schools are to be taught in English, as the people never had school and know no English, the schools will for a long time to come, be in the primary grades.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> For the first year at Cape Prince of Wales it is advisable that a male teacher go without his family.
>
> At Point Barrow the teacher should be a married man without children, and can take his wife with him.
>
> The teacher should be of good sound health, and from twenty-eight to forty years of age.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The work being both educational and missionary, applicants will send not only certificates as to their aptness as teachers, but also testimonials from their pastor or others as to their Christian activity.

The reports of the teachers show some of the hardships encountered and the ingenuity with which they were attacked. Teachers were expected to beg, borrow, or build a schoolroom and quarters. L. M. Stevenson, first teacher at Point Barrow, reports that:

> The school was begun under adverse circumstances, but a beginning had to be made. Five men from a stranded schooner were quartered in the room used as a schoolroom, and the teacher held them subject to the rules of the school for conduct, and required them to set the example of order, thus using them as a means of assistance in the government of the school.

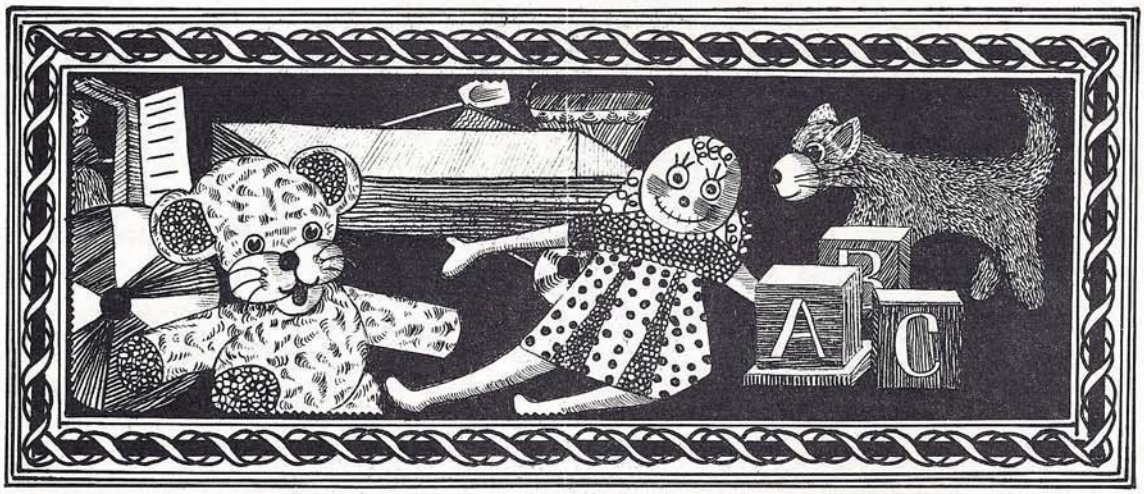
Beginning a school in a native village brought with it many interesting innovations. One method of obtaining attendance was described by the Point Hope teacher in 1890:

> The school was opened on the 1st of October. The day brought with it a blizzard and snow storm that lasted for nine

days. During the morning the teacher occupied the schoolroom alone, but as time wore on and no pupils came he put on his furs and started for the village to hunt up the children. Upon going outside the house he found a boy walking on the beach. Taking him into the schoolroom, he commenced school. At the close of the afternoon he presented his pupil with a couple of pancakes left from his own breakfast. The effect was equal to any reward of merit. . . . The next morning four presented themselves, and from that the school grew to sixty-eight.

There being no compulsory attendance law at this time in the Territory, inducing native children to attend school was generally facilitated with rewards of various kinds. A teacher in 1897 comments:

I was only sorry that I could not say to the parents that according to the laws of the United States they must send their children to learn English, or American, as they term it. . . . Immediately after Christmas I offered prizes to be given on Washington's birthday to those whose attendance was good until that time; seven were worthy of dolls or mouth organs, and one, whose record was excellent, I deemed worthy of a suit of clothes, and a very happy boy he was, for I believe it was his first whole new suit. My next effort to increase the attendance and punctuality was to buy a number of toys which I allowed the children to play with before each session.



The teacher at Cape Prince of Wales comments on the use of prizes:

Since 1894 no prizes have been given for attendance at school. One serious objection to the prize (biscuit) system was that it educated them to think we were under obligation to them for attending school.

At this same station later, the school enrollment exceeded all bounds of the school, a total of over three hundred pupils. As the school would only hold fifty pupils, the teacher had three school sessions daily, morning, afternoon, and evening:

> It was with great difficulty that the pupils were made to understand that it was not proper to talk and laugh and jump over the benches in the schoolroom during school as much as they pleased; nor could they understand why 30 or 40 visitors could not lounge about the room which was needed for those who desired to study.

The liquor traffic among the natives was a severe blow to educational efforts in these early years. The native unaccustomed to restraints, under the influence of liquor, became demoralized and community life would almost cease in certain areas. At Point Barrow, the teacher commented: . . . "a sufficiency of liquor gets into the country to demoralize a number of the natives, and drunkenness commences with the arrival of the whaling fleet and lasts until it leaves the country in the fall."

Even on isolated St. Lawrence Island, liquor became a problem:

> They have at last learned to manufacture whiskey. A whaler brought a woman from Point Hope who taught them. They use about 8 quarts of molasses and 3 of flour to a 5-gallon coal oil can of water. This is allowed to ferment for from four to seven days, when it is heated, the vapor passing through an old gun barrel which is kept cool, thus condensing it. This yields about a quart of whiskey. Several houses were making it all winter, and drunken men and women were not uncommon.

The teachers' lack of understanding of the native culture often strained community relations. The souvenir hunter and amateur archaeologist was not welcomed among the ancestral graves. In one case "the teacher was cautioned . . . not to ring it (the school bell), as the . . . noise of the bell would prevent the people from successfully hunting foxes and seals." In another "they expressed a great deal of surprise at the character of the teacher who neither traded nor hunted, and at the time was unmarried. He was a puzzle to them. They said: 'Too poor to trade, too stingy to marry, and too effeminate to hunt.'"

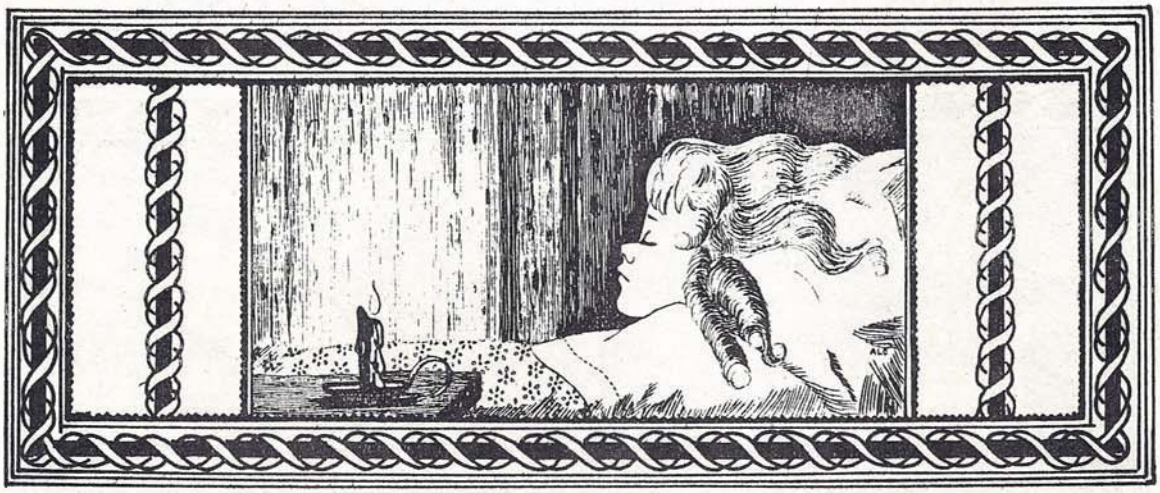
Oftentimes, the teacher would contribute out of personal funds for food and clothing as there was no central welfare agency at the time. During the winter of 1895 on St. Lawrence, the natives were starving:

> Some of the natives had eaten even their dogs, which are as valuable to them as horses are to us. Mr. Gambell gave as

freely as possible of his own stores, always, however, exacting something in return, so as not to foster begging among them.

Sickness and disease were constant problems for the teachers in the isolated schools far from medical assistance. At Little Diomede in 1910 the situation was serious:

> Although I quarantined the infected houses, it was impossible to keep the disease from spreading, owing to the close quarters in which the natives live. Our own baby was taken sick and died in four days. I was obliged to close school for three weeks and look after the sick.



Some gave their lives. The Gambells who had opened a school for the Eskimo on St. Lawrence Island were returning from the States to their station in 1897, when a storm struck their vessel, and in "ten minutes after the alarm was given the Jane Grey sank, taking with her Mr. and Mrs. Gambell and about thirty other passengers."

Getting down to the business of providing an education for an entire community, the teachers found it necessary to reappraise their philosophy of education. After a first year of teaching among the Eskimo at Wainwright in 1909, the teacher there summed up the results:

> Many of the finely spun idealisms with which I began my work here are sadly shattered idols now. The Arctic is a stern iconoclast. Our most cherished dreams as well as our most complicated theories, well enough fitted to live in the southland, shrivel and die in the Arctic solitude. I have become firmly convinced that civilization cannot be grafted upon these people, that it can only come by accepting the good that we find in Eskimo society, and while cherishing that, lead on to better things, and that we should be very slow in advising the natives to abandon the customs,

ethics, and inventions that the adaptations and adjustments of thousands of years have often made much more serviceable than are those which we would put in their places.

The teacher on Little Diomede mentions this development:

> I used the bathtub and an old range to fit up a washroom. With the Eskimos "cleanliness is surely next to Godliness, and soap a means of grace." They responded beautifully to my appeal and were nearly swamped every Saturday. In three months, or twelve washing days, we turned out 85 washings, 22 baths, and 40 batches of bread. Then the exhausted stove broke down, the water supply gave out, and we were forced to quit.


At Bethel, the pupils were furnished by the teacher with clothing and a simple diet:

> Each pupil is provided at the expense of the school with two suits of clothing, a fur "parka", a fur cap, a pair of seal-skin mittens lined with wool, and from two to three pair of fur boots, per year.
>
> The diet at the school table consists of dried salmon, frozen fish and game, bread, tea, sugar, beans and salted salmon.

In the schoolroom, the teachers were greeted with satisfying results. An interesting method of teaching English was described by Lopp and Thornton, teachers at Cape Prince of Wales:

> The teachers began their school work by learning the Eskimo names of the most important objects in daily use and training their pupils in the English equivalents, from words they proceeded to

phrases and from phrases to sentences, teaching them to translate from Eskimo into English and vice versa. They gradually added English letters and numbers, together with some elementary geography and arithmetic. Although they had a combined experience of thirteen years in the school-room in the States, the teachers declare they never had more quick-witted, intelligent pupils than those wild Eskimo children.

The interest of Eskimo parents in the Educational program of the school was reported by V.C. Gambell on St. Lawrence Island in 1894:

> The men visit the school frequently, and are very much pleased to hear the sentences read. They sit breathlessly attentive until a sentence is read, and laugh heartily when it is rubbed out. When a boy hesitates, and fails to recognize a word at once, the men grow excited, and say, "oo-hook, OO-hook," an exclamation that they use to their dogs when they want them to go faster.

In regard to reading, the teacher at Shishmaref believed that:

> One of the most urgent needs in the school work here is a text book easily understood by the Eskimo children. The text-books provided, although admirable from a white child's stand-point, treat of subjects utterly foreign to an Eskimo child's comprehension. What is needed is a book treating of Eskimo life and familiar objects, written for the Eskimos, not about them.

Regarding the ability of Eskimo children in arithmetic:

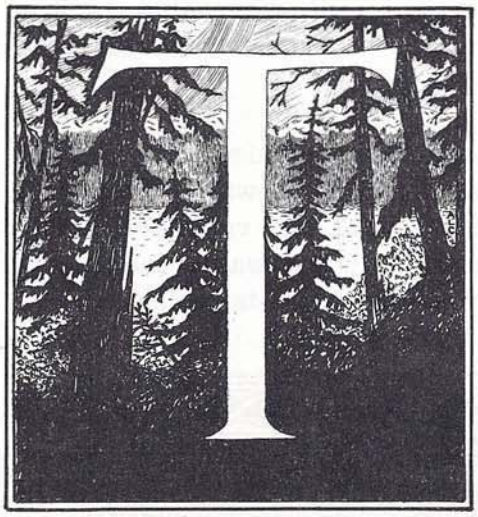
> Many people say the Eskimo has a receptive, but not analytical mind; that he can easily learn the abstract functions of arithmetic, but can not apply them to concrete problems. This was our first impression. We found later, however, that it was not so much the principle they failed to grasp as it was the English.

It was felt by some that the general welfare of the native people could be improved in some instances by relocating them in more favored locations. Noatak was founded around 1908 when Alaska school service representatives gathered the scattered families of Eskimos from the lower and upper river valleys to the present site. Noorvik was a planned community resulting from the transfer of the people from Deering as well as from the surrounding Kobuk River country. It was also suggested that the Diomede and King Island people be moved to St. Lawrence

Island. This was resisted by these people who preferred their traditional homes.

The depletion of the caribou herds and the whale and walrus threatened a grim economic picture for the Eskimo by 1890. To combat this Dr. Jackson began the introduction of reindeer. In 1892, and continuing for ten years, 1,280 reindeer were imported into Alaska from Siberia. Chuckchee herdsmen from Siberia were brought along but they did not wish to stay in Alaska. Lapp herders and reindeer from Norway were brought in. The Laplanders proved to be better instructors in reindeer husbandry and the experiment continued successfully.

# The Territory Assumes Its Responsibility (1917 to date)



he establishment of a Territorial Department of Education with a Territorial commissioner under the Uniform School Act of 1917, definitely crystallized the dual-school systems of the Territory. The areas of responsibility of the Alaska Native Service and the Territorial Department of Education were now more clearly defined.

To serve the native people more effectively, increasing emphasis was placed on the employment of native teachers. The Bureau's Superintendent of the Northwestern District reported in 1918 that the entire work at Kotzebue, Wales, and Solomon was under the direction of Eskimo teachers. At other places Eskimo assistants were employed, principally as craft instructors. Arthur Nagozruk at Wales and Charles Menadelook at Kotzebue were commended for their excellent services as was Garfield Sitarangok at Solomon:

> With such possibilities among the Eskimos there is every reason for us to look forward to the time when a great part of the work in this district will be in the hands of Eskimo teachers.

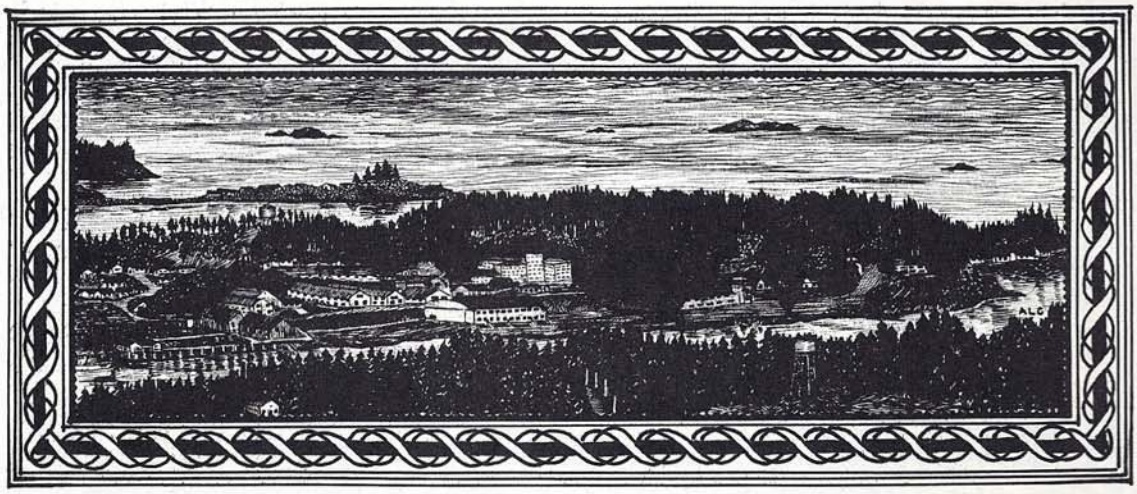
In 1958 there were 23 Eskimos teaching among their own people. Tony Joule, Gladys Jung, Mary McDougall, Arthur Nagozruk, Jr., and Bernadette Trantham were employed as Principal Teachers. The majority of the remainder were functioning as Instructional Aids in charge of newly-established schools.

The first boarding schools in Eskimo Alaska were mission operated. A Catholic orphanage was operated at Pilgrim Hot Springs on the Seward Peninsula and another at Akularuk on the southern mouth of the Yukon River. The Moravians opened an orphanage at Nunapitchuk near Bethel and the Lutherans began operating one at Teller Mission. The Superintendent of the Western District advocated in 1918 that a vocational school be located on the lower Yukon River.

The influenza epidemic of 1917-1919 created a great many orphans for whom the remaining adult population were hard pressed to give adequate care. The Federal government met its obligations for their care as well as recognizing the necessity for industrial and higher education by the establishment of orphanages and schools at White Mountain and Kanakanak. At the time the institutions in question were opened no plan was developed to make them over into industrial schools, but in 1926 they were renamed "industrial schools" and a policy and program of industrial training for boarding school pupils was initiated.

To provide additional high school facilities, Wrangell Institute was opened and made available to Eskimo youth. From their beginning and continuing until recent years the boarding schools were operated primarily to take care of orphans and other welfare cases. Beginning in the early 1950's increasing emphasis has been placed on the boarding school for providing education for children having no facilities available locally.

After World War II the U. S. Navy turned over its facilities on Japonski Island to the Alaska Native Service and the Mt. Edgecumbe School was opened on February 22, 1947. Mt. Edgecumbe took over the high school and vocational school function from Wrangell Institute. White Mountain boarding school was closed in 1953 as the last Federal boarding school in Northern Alaska with its need greatly reduced and part of its facilities destroyed by fire.



Plans for extending opportunities for secondary education include regional high schools at Barrow, Kotzebue, Unalakleet, and Hooper Bay as well as the boarding facilities in Fairbanks to enable the students to attend the Fairbanks Public School.

The reindeer continued to increase. In 1929, the Reindeer Service was officially removed from the administrative control of the Office of Education, Alaska Division and set up in its own headquarters in Nome. The Superintendent of the Northwestern District still had a major responsibility for reindeer as well as school work in his district and village teachers were still in charge of local reindeer activities. In the 1930's the reindeer industry had reached its peak. After that many factors contributed to its decline. At present there are herds near Buckland, Deering, Golovin, Kotzebue, Noatak, Nunivak, Selawik, Stebbins, Teller, and Unalakleet. The largest herd is on Nunivak Island and numbers five to six thousand head. Teachers have been relieved of responsibility for this activity.

The educational philosophy in the Federal schools has always been directed at a community program. Not only has there been an attempt to develop native resources and to improve the economic condition of the villages, but a concern for

the independence of the Eskimo people fostered many efforts in community government. Following the Indian Reorganization Act, fathered by John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Village Councils were set up in the late 1930's and given definite form. Teachers still retain an advisory capacity to these bodies when called upon.

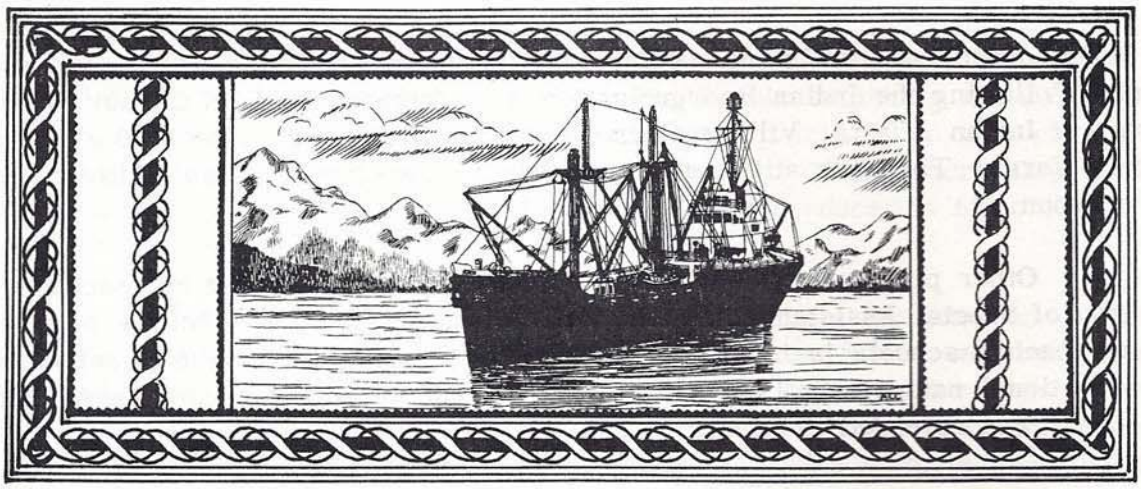
Other programs of adult education have been instigated by teachers. The position of Special Assistant, later General Assistant, held by spouses of teachers in one-teacher schools is intended to be partially given to community activities of an educational nature. In 1957 a program of adult education employing full-time personnel was extended to Alaska.

Another service which the teacher in Alaska native villages performed was medical care. There being a great need for medical attention of all kinds and little, if any, professional help available, teachers soon found themselves rendering far more than first aid. Until recently, the Alaska Native Service operated four principal programs: educational, medical, native resources, and welfare. As an employee of the Service, the teacher was ipso facto the local representative in every case. In July of 1955 the U.S. Public Health Service assumed control of the medical program in Alaska. Lack of personnel, however, still makes it necessary for most teachers to provide such assistance as maintaining radio contact with a doctor for advice on emergency and first aid cases, dispensing medicine and other related duties.

Construction and maintenance programs have given increasing help to the teacher over the years. Far from being expected to fend for themselves, the teacher can now expect to go to a village where reasonably adequate quarters, oil heated and electrically lighted, will be provided and maintained in good condition through the services of locally employed janitorial help and traveling carpenters and mechanics. As the airplane has replaced the dog team for most travel, so has the Jack-of-all-trades teacher with his kerosene and gasoline lamps, coal and wood stoves, waiting for month-old news, been replaced by the professional educator with most, if not all, of the conveniences found at schools anywhere.

The conduct of the educational work among the natives of Alaska was administratively under the direction of the Bureau of Education of the Department of the Interior from 1887 until March 16, 1931, when control was transferred to the Office of Indian Affairs of the same Department. In 1930 the field administrative headquarters was removed from Seattle, Washington to Juneau, Alaska. The purchasing and shipping office has remained in Seattle where it is now under the direction of the General Services Administration.

Early freight shipments and other maritime transportation to Alaska were handled by the cutters of the U.S. Revenue Service, "Bear" and "Thetis." The Bureau of Education, faced with growing freight requirements, then acquired



the "Boxer" for its use in the early 20's. This was replaced by the "North Star" in the 30's. During World War II this ship was taken out of the Alaska Service and used by the U.S. Coast Guard, to be returned to the Alaska Native Service after the war. During the war years, it was necessary to rely on such commercial transportation and other carriers as were available. The "North Star" was returned to service for only a short time, until about 1948, when it was replaced by the rebuilt "Coastal Rider", which was given the name of its immediate predecessor. The new "North Star" now makes two trips annually to supply the schools and native stores throughout much of northern and western Alaska.

The educational work of the Federal government has gone by many names in the course of its history. Beginning with the Alaska Division of the Bureau of Education and later of the Bureau of Indian Affairs it was later called the Alaska School Service. With the transfer of the administrative offices to Juneau it was known as the Alaska Indian Service until 1945 when the name became Alaska Native Service in recognition of its services to the different ethnic groups. In 1956 the organization was instructed to be known officially as the Juneau Area Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, although it remains the Alaska Native Service in popular usage.

As the requirements of education and the ability of the Territory to assume the responsibility for the education of all the children in the Territory has changed there have been transfers of schools from one system to another. The incorporated towns in centers of white population were first removed from Federal control. The extension of this policy to the rural schools was attempted after that and some schools were operated by the Territory for a time only to be returned to the control of the Native Service. In recent years, beginning about 1950, the Johnson-O'Malley Act has provided the machinery whereby many schools in southwestern Alaska were transferred to the administrative control of the Territory, although it has not yet assumed financial responsibility for these schools. This program has had little effect on Eskimo Alaska as yet. The Territorial Legislature, recognizing the need and the ability of the Alaska Native Service to provide for the educational needs of a large portion of the natives of Alaska, passed the following memorial March 21, 1957:

## HOUSE MEMORIAL NO. 12

Your Memorialist, the House of Representatives of the Territory of Alaska, in Twenty-third Session assembled, respectfully represents:

WHEREAS, the mutuality of interests between the United States Government and the Territorial Government of Alaska in providing education for Alaska children has been prevalent throughout the whole struggle for Alaska school facilities; and

WHEREAS, because of the vast area of the Territory and its diversified population, the Territorial Government has only been able to and has concentrated its efforts to establish school facilities in the more densely populated areas, while the United States Government shoulders the burden of providing school facilities in the more isolated areas where non-tax-paying Natives are located; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government through the Alaska Native Service presently operates 80 day schools located throughout the more remote areas and two boarding schools located at Sitka and Wrangell, thereby affording school facilities to larger numbers of Native children who otherwise would be denied even an elementary education because of the lack of such school facilities; and

WHEREAS, a determined and progressive attitude has been taken towards providing more elementary and secondary or high schools for the vast number of Native students in Alaska; and

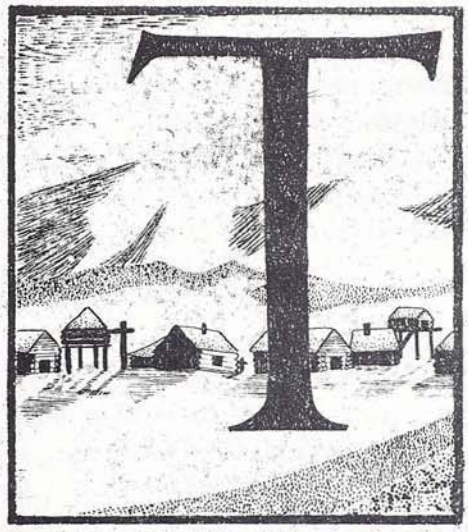
WHEREAS, the need for such a program is eminent and urgent and the Territorial Government is unable to provide all such facilities at this time; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Native Service personnel in charge of operating, conducting and teaching in such schools are of the highest caliber, devoted to their duties and expending their full energy in its behalf and many making their careers of supplying educational facilities and training in areas most seriously needing such facilities and teaching, thereby raising the educational standard and the general, social and economic status of the Native population of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, said Alaska Native Service has been and is continuing to work in close harmony and cooperation with the Territorial Board of Education and with school boards in all areas of Alaska in order to promote the general educational interest of the Native people and the improvements of the school system in Alaska;

NOW THEREFORE, your Memorialist, the House of Representatives of the Territory of Alaska, in Twenty-third Session assembled, respectfully requests that the Alaska Native Service be commended for its untiring efforts in behalf of the educational program of Alaska and that it be encouraged and afforded the opportunity to continue and to enlarge this beneficial program until such time as conditions will permit the responsibility for the education of all Natives in Alaska to be taken over by the Territorial Department of Education.

# Early Educational Developments



The provision for education in Alaska by the Congress of the United States in the year 1884 marked the beginning of an experiment by that government in the training of the native peoples with their varied and separate cultures, races, languages, and economic systems. Section 13 of "An Act Providing a Civil Government for Alaska" reads as follows:

> That the Secretary of the Interior shall make needful and proper provisions for the education of the 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. Approved May 17, 1884.

There were no traditions or principles of colonial administration or education to assist in the organization of native schools, when the first General Agent of Education in Alaska was assigned to this duty on the second day of March, 1885.

Public interest in native education was low and the Bureau was inexperienced in defining educational policies to be carried out amongst native peoples. It was necessary, therefore, that a philosophy of native education be derived from contemporary aims and objectives of educational theory as in use within the schools of this country. The principles of organization were improvised in like manner, being an extract of the public school systems in the United States.

Sheldon Jackson, the General Agent, in assaying the difficulties, outlined for the Commissioner of Education the objectives for a program of native education. These objectives, some of which might be applied to the present system of schools, emphasized a socialized, community-centered idea of education. After first noting the desirability of establishing English schools for native people, he wrote:

> It was to instruct a people, the greater portion of whom are uncivilized, who need to be taught sanitary regulations, the laws of health, improvement of dwellings, better methods of housekeeping, cooking, and dressing, more remunerative forms of labor, honesty, chastity, the sacredness of the marriage relation, and everything that elevates man. So that side by side with the usual school drill in reading, writing, and arithmetic,

there is need of instruction for the girls in housekeeping, cooking, and gardening; in cutting, sewing, and mending; for the boys in carpentering and other forms of woodworking, boot and shoe making, and the various trades of civilization.

In achieving the desired objectives, Dr. Jackson reported that there were many obstacles, a major one being the vast area of Alaska. Without public conveyances of any type, except a monthly steamer in the southeastern district, and without roads or a comfortable means of transportation except the log canoes or skin boats of the natives, the establishment of schools required a careful survey of the field.

The nature of the native people and of the administration of the program was such that they were unable to appreciate the educational advantages furnished them by the government. Finding properly qualified teachers for these people was trying because of the moderate salary and the school environment in which the teachers would be isolated from their society, hearing from the outside world once a year. The construction of a schoolhouse and a residence for the teacher necessitated great expenditures of money, time and effort for the materials had to be transported from 1,500 to 4,500 miles.

Formulating a curriculum for this environment and with the desired objectives in mind became a difficult undertaking, especially with the lack of experience in native education and the dependence on the philosophy and objectives of education in the United States. The emphasis of missionary philosophies in the education of the native child was evident in that the native school during these first years was usually the mission and the General Agent was affiliated with a missionary body in Alaska.

The curriculum became, then, centered on two broad fields, that of industrial education based on current educational thought in this country, and moral training as considered important by the particular missionary. The nature of the industrial program was indicated by Dr. Jackson:

> As the purpose of the school is to develop an intelligent and useful citizenship, they will need more and more to extend their industrial facilities. As the people make progress, catch the spirit of civilization and come under the influences which emanate from the schools, they gradually begin to give up their old methods of living and adopt the American. . . . But all this creates a necessity for a larger income and more remunerative employments. . . Therefore, to create the want without enabling them to supply it, is only to make them more miserable.
>
> In other words, the work of the Alaska School system is not only to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, but also how to live better, how to make more money in order to live better, and how to utilize the resources of the country in order to make more money.

The religious character of the moral training of the native children was implicit in the program, for the natives in their uncivilized state were considered immoral and degenerate and in need of salvation. Thus, the foundations of the native school curriculum were established in industrial and moral training of the native child. The program of industrial exercise indicated the limited scope of the planning and conceptions of the native environment. Woodworking, carpentering, etc., were an impossibility for the native peoples of the tundra area of Alaska. Many features were manifestly inappropriate to the native environment. The same may be said of the training outlined for young women, which did not consider the basic realities of the native home.

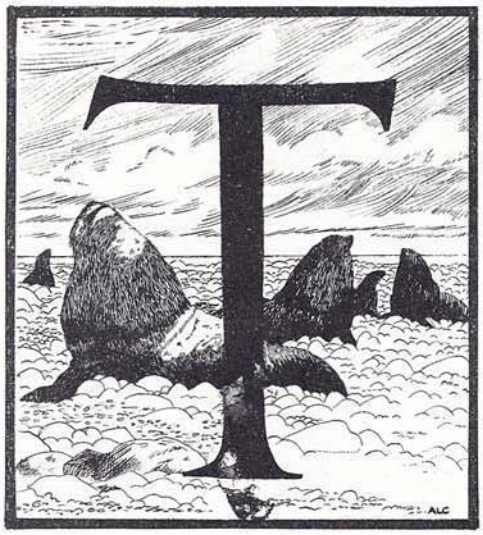
Moral education of the native child, a feature desirable in the curriculum of any school, was construed for the native schools to be religious training.

Cooperation between the government and the mission was advocated by Dr. Jackson in promoting the education of the natives. The advisability of teacher and missionary sharing the problems of isolation and working together in solving them was accepted without question.

Religious cooperation was further suggested. The principle of sectioning off portions of the Territory for the development of the particular missionary body invested the missions with religious control of the native peoples and elimination of the native religions. The religious boundaries thus created exist today to some extent.

# The Philosophy and Curriculum Develop

# Establishment of Native Education



he philosophy of education and the curriculum proposed by Sheldon Jackson, the first General Agent of Education in Alaska, were interwoven in the framework of the native school system during the period of his office from the year 1884 until 1907.

More important than the setting up of a school system was the creation of a course of study for the native school. In 1888, the United States Bureau of Education issued a regulation directing the Board of Education in Alaska to prescribe a course of study for all of the government schools, including the missions which were receiving government assistance.

Despite the regulation it was over twenty years before a tentative course of study was originated. A noteworthy report on education on the Seal Islands for 1891 indicated the lack of an organized program for native children. The report of the U. S. Bureau of Education for that year stated that although these schools had been in operation over twenty years, they had not yet succeeded in teaching a pupil to read or write a sentence in the English language.

Without a course of study, educational practices in the individual schools became those in which the particular teacher had been schooled. Despite the emphasis placed on indistrial training by the General Agent, few schools included it as an important part of their program. In 1900, the teacher at Douglas reported that he taught reading, writing, spelling, geography, arithmetic, physiology, morals, manners, drawing, history, language, grammar, gymnastics, and kindergarten. From St. Lawrence Island came the following report:

> The pupils were divided into four classes, A, B, C, and D, studying the following branches:
>
> Class A: English (reading-Second and Third readers and New Testament); grammar, composition; arithmetic (multiplication, short division, long division, traders' accounts); geography (physical, general, United States); drawing.
>
> Class B: English (reading-First reader, advanced); composition, writing picture lessons in conversation; arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication by several figures, short division); geography, Alaskan; drawing.

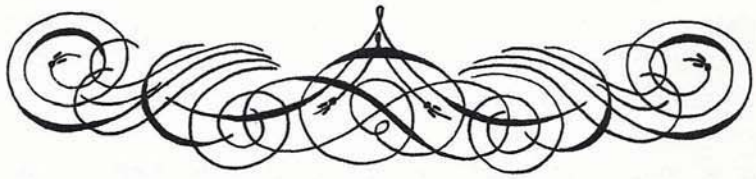
Class C: English (reading-First reader); writing, object lessons, conversation; arithmetic (numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication by one figure); drawing.

Class D: (primary) English (object lessons, reading simple words, alphabet, conversation); arithmetic, numbers.

All classes: Vocal music one-fourth to one-half hour; calisthenics.

During these early years of the Service, therefore, the teachers were faced with the problems of preparing a course of study the native children would assimilate.

The teachers' needs for extended social and professional contact after living in isolated areas were evident, and provisions were suggested for an institute at which they would be able to discuss methods and experiences.



# Reorganization of the System and Development of the Curriculum

The installation of Harlan Updegraff as Chief of the Alaska Division of the Bureau of Education in 1907 resulted in an important development in the philosophy of native education, and in the expansion of the native service. Appropriations, which retarded development under Sheldon Jackson, permitted the construction of new schools, the beginning of the medical division, and the increase of services to the natives. Most important as regards the curriculum, was the restatement of the objectives of native education based in part on the philosophy that Dr. Jackson had evolved for the Service. The aims were changed in the direction of the native environment to a slight degree in the belief that a portion of native culture might be acceptable in the over-all scheme of educational policies. Updegraff in his report to the Commissioner of Education states the objectives:

> Among the measures most necessary to prepare the natives for efficient participation in the future life of Alaska are:
>
> (a) Instruction in the English language, so that it can be spoken, read and written.
> (b) The development of native industries.
> (c) The introduction and development of new industries adapted to the region and to their abilities.
> (d) Instruction in the methods of marketing their products.
> (e) Instruction in arithmetic until ability is developed to perform mathematical computations incident to business transactions.
> (f) Instruction in sanitation and personal hygiene.
> (g) Instruction in cooking and domestic economy.
> (h) Compulsory education law so framed as to be applied at discretion.
> (i) Recognition of property rights by express law.
> (j) Instruction in morality.
> (k) Broadening and deepening of religious life as their development in above lines makes it possible.

Under this changed program, the natives were to accept the standards of American civilization and to make an adjustment in their culture to match these standards. The natives had to face the fact that their lives would be dominated by

that of the white man. Updegraff states, "He has accepted the Christian religion, he prefers the white mans' food and clothing, and he is adopting the white mans' house whenever he is financially able." A system of education for this development must view the community as the unit of effort and the individual native as the sub-unit, the advancement of the race being more important than the education of the individual. Native education, therefore, must prepare the individual to take a definite place in the life of the community and promote harmonious relations among all the elements of the native environment, the industrial and the physical being influenced by proper methods of sanitation.

Updegraff sounded a warning on the dangers of government assistance for natives:

> Government action should not contribute to the lessening of self-initiative and self-support, but should rather develop these capacities . . . The adoption of the reservation system for the natives of Alaska would by its paternal character and artificial barriers be apt to foster dependence and to weaken self-initiative. For these reasons it is to be avoided if possible.

Inculcation of the teachers with these changed principles and objectives of native education was next brought about by Updegraff. The first teachers' institute was held in Juneau, from September 1 to September 10, 1908. The purpose of the conference was to emphasize for the teachers that the Bureau of Education regarded them as "social workers and the schoolhouse in which they were to live and work as social centers."

In the year 1911, the Alaska School Service developed a tentative course of study for the schools of Alaska, built in part upon the socialization program of the new chief of the Service. The theme of the course of study was, "Each school is conducted as a community center for the education and general uplift of the whole population of the village." The subjects centered around practical hygiene, physical training, music, writing, drawing, emphasis on native art, sewing, manual training, cooking and gardening. For the first grade, the teacher was advised that, "busy work or seat work for primary children should have as important a place on the teacher's program as the active recitation. Little folks must be kept interested and employed."

A course of study for the Native Service of a more formal and permanent character was issued by Jonathan H. Wagner, Chief of the Alaska Division of the Bureau of Education, in the year 1926, for the first eight grades of the Alaska native schools. The course of study was formulated as a result of a survey of conditions among the natives of Alaska, which indicated the need for consideration of five fundamentals: (1) Health and Sanitation, (2) Agriculture and Industry, (3) The Decencies, Safety, and Comforts of the Home, (4) Healthful Recreation and Amusements, and (5) Education, Industrial Schools.

The most abrupt departure from the earlier philosophy was the encouragement of native games and dances. This represented a change in the orientation of the native school program away from the missionary viewpoint that native culture was unacceptable.

The need for higher education for the children of the community who will be the leaders of the native people was recommended.

Relating the general principles of education to the program of the native school in terms of the native child was not achieved in most instances. The course outline was subject-centered and unrealistic, less applicable to the native environment than the tentative study prepared in 1911 under the guidance of Harlan Updegraff. The material presented would have been applicable to a contemporary rural school in the States, but not for the learning situation as it existed in the native school of 1926.

Criticism was directed at the course of study by authorities for being subject-centered and failing to identify the proper objectives in native education. Anderson and Eells reported in 1933 that the prescribed course of study was not universally in force. Twenty-two different stations reported the use of guides in teaching subjects rather than the course of study.

During this same period the Office of Indian Affairs assumed jurisdiction over the activities of the Alaska Indian Service, in the year 1931. A change in the educational policy was proposed by John Collier, the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933:

> In the long run, the Indians must be their own savers and their own helpers. Every branch of the Indian Service should be controlled by this principle. It means individual self-help and group self-help. It means decreasing the paternalism of the government and extending civil rights and the facilities of modern business enterprises to the Indians. It means that those Indians whose culture, civic traditions and inherited institutions are still strong and virile, should be encouraged and helped to develop their life in their own patterns, not as segregated minorities but as noble elements in our common life.

Translating this new policy into the curriculum of the native schools was the purpose of a conference of Indian school supervisors held in Washington, D. C. in 1934:

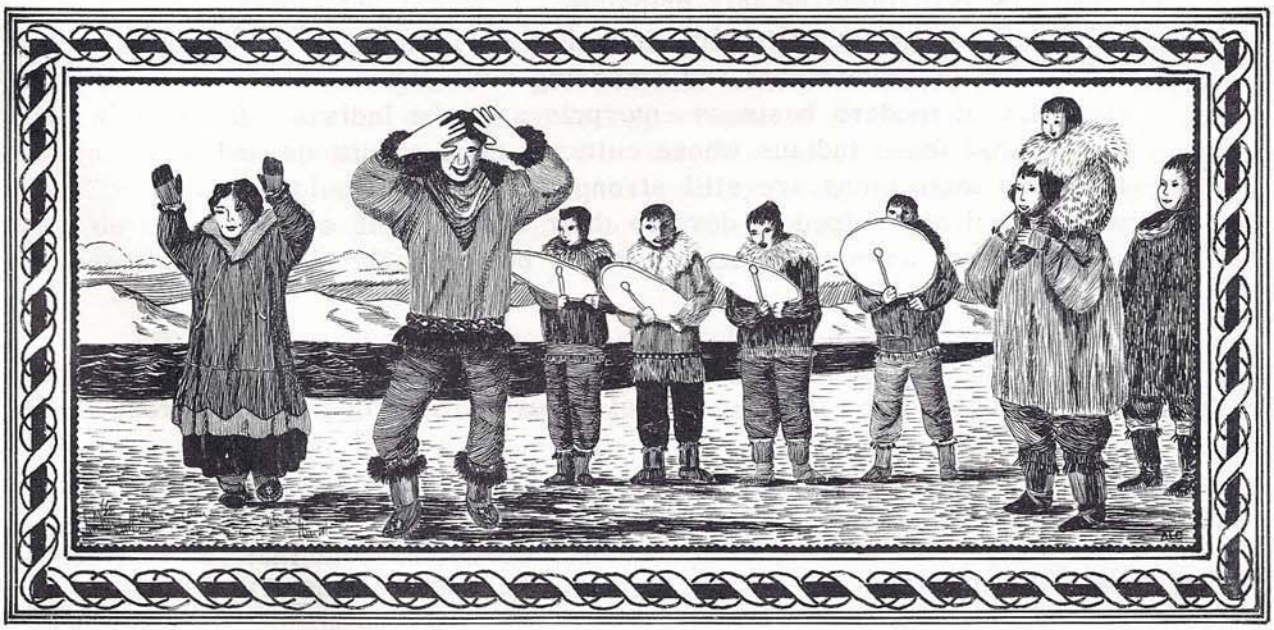
> The objectives of the educational program must be kept constantly in mind: to give the Indian children the best that education can provide, having in mind <u>their</u> needs, <u>their</u> abilities,

their futures. The work must be based on the best pedagogical principles, but it must be put into application mixed with a very liberal dose of "horse sense." Effective education is built upon the basis of what the child already knows. The school work can be effective only when the teacher has an intimate knowledge of the homes and home lives from which they come. This is especially true when we remember that the work of the school . . . is but a part of the total education of the child.

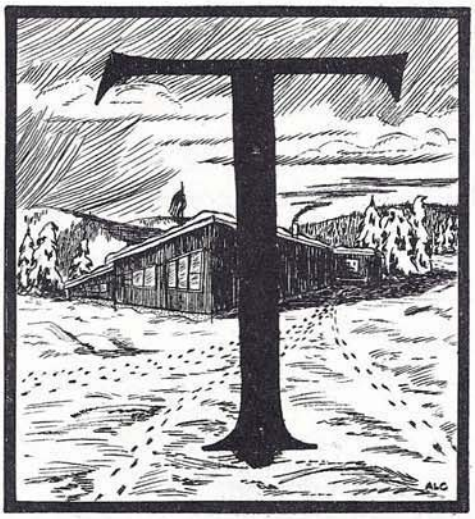
This policy represented a departure from that of the past in that the program was to be directed at the native environment and in terms of the needs of the native child. Further amplifying this policy, instructions were given to the field representatives of the Alaska Service in 1939 advising a practical approach to native education:

1. Bear in mind the philosophy and objectives of Indian Education. . .
2. Study very carefully the social and economic conditions in the community, giving particular attention to family life and methods of making a living.
3. Analyze the interests, purposes, needs, and problems of the natives, and determine which of these permit practical solution within the resources of the community, and the possibilities of the educational program.
4. Organize a program of activities adapted to the needs, interests, and maturity levels of the various groups.

The Service, thus, attempted to create a curriculum that was flexible and directed towards independence both economic and social for the natives.



# Recent Developments in the Curriculum of the Native School



he approach to the curriculum in recent years has centered around a series of Minimum Essential Goals for Indian Schools for the particular levels of the native school, throughout the United States Indian Service.

These goals are intended to present those learnings which are believed to be basic, and which the child must successively master before he can advance into the next unit of learning with some prospect of success. They are directed at the attainment of a basic core:

> . . . the ability to speak and understand the English language; ultimately to read with facility and understanding; to communicate through written language with directness and meaning; to bring certain physical and social activities of each individual into general conformity with community standards; to understand basic numerical concepts, and acquire automatic mastery of the number combinations; to understand and practice basic health skills; to understand and apply scientific methods of thinking.

Unfortunately, the content of the Minimum Essential Goals, because of the inclusive nature of the materials, lacks consideration of the native child as to both English requirements and suggested activities. The limitations of a minimum essentials program create a wide chasm between reality and prescription in the on-going practices of the native school and in the everyday program of the native teachers.

In addition to the Minimum Essential Goals for Indian Schools, the Alaska Native Service supplies the native teacher with the Course of Study for Elementary Schools which has been developed by the Territory of Alaska. This course of study provides the standards of education to be followed in the public elementary schools and mirrors similar studies developed in the United States. The materials presented in general are unrelated to the native environment. The use of the course of study in the native school for other than comparative purposes would hardly seem to be justified.

Teachers' workshops have been of more direct importance to the native school program through the correlation of basic policies and the problems of the native school teacher. In the Curriculum Workshop Report for 1951 educational outlines were developed for Adult Education, Native Resources, Health and Nutrition,

Language Arts, Mathematics, Natural Science, Recreation, and Social Studies. The program follows the philosophy of the United States Indian Service: "The objectives for the Alaska Native Service Educational Program are the objectives of the United States Indian Service adapted to the individual needs of each school and community in Alaska."

The 1956 In-Service Summer Workshop at Mt. Edgecumbe developed the following outline of a basic philosophy for the day schools:

1. Using the school as a center there are two directions or goals to look to: Working in and studying the needs of the community and the opportunities we can offer to help the students and people meet these needs for a better future.

2. Comparison of the communities of Alaska of twenty years ago and today reveals that we cannot justify the same type of school program.

Economic
a. New types of work offered
b. New desires for better things such as food, clothing and social activities
c. War has changed outlook

Social
d. Basic social changes of increased population, greater longevity, change in local government

Health
e. Increase in health standards by better opportunities for hospitalization, visits of health teams, dentists, and decrease of tuberculosis.

3. How and in what way should the school program be changed to meet this?

a. Special training to meet economic and social needs
b. Develop a desire to go to school
c. Strengthen tool subjects
d. Broaden subject material when children show a readiness
e. Strengthen use of English
f. Develop even better health habits so they are physically better prepared to go on to higher education
g. Develop better personal habits such as promptness to better fit them for jobs in the future.

4. Most important for a new program is integration to help a basically dissatisfied and economically poor people to prepare for a better way of life.

The report of the 1958 workshop emphasizes the role of the school in a changing world. Concerned with the development of a community school the

participants agreed that:

> " . . . we recognize the importance of the individual and his development . . . We are concerned with the participation of the school in the life of the community, and . . . we are aware of the role that the school can play in economic development."

The planning of the program today recognizes that in order to meet the ever-increasing demands upon the schools and to prepare children for the more complex requirements of society, an exchange of counsel and guidance from community leadership as well as from professional educators must be considered and used in formulating a school program. Students, community leaders, school principals and teachers, area supervisors and administrators, all have their contribution to make in organizing an effective community-school program.

Lack of adequate supervision has always been one of the weakest points in the Alaska school system which must deal with great distances and isolated communities. Progress had been made in this field through two developments. The first, a facilitating development, has been the improvement of transportation and communication throughout the Territory. The second, an organizational development, was the establishment in 1955 of the position of district educational consultants, or educational specialists. The personnel assigned to these positions are now performing first level supervisory work in the field for the Bethel, Nome and Anchorage districts of the Alaska Native Service. Through periodic visits to the day schools, they are able to evaluate programs and to counsel with teachers concerning the philosophy and curriculum of their school in particular and that of the Native Service in general. A great deal more will have to be done, however, before it can be said that effective professional supervision is a fact.

In summary, contemporary policies and adjustment of the content of native school programs have been a product of research in part by the teachers in native villages and through professional supervision of in-service training programs. The principles and objectives of education evidenced in native programs have failed in the past, however, in their application on the local school level and the curriculum has long remained a result of current educational practices as found throughout the public school systems of the United States.

Any innovations of educational planning have had to overcome distance, administrative problems in supervision, and traditional procedures before being utilized. While principles and objectives for the native schools which were of practical emphasis were stated, interpretation in the learning environment of the native school has been slow.

Only the future can tell whether the results of our present in-service training activities will be enough to guarantee that every native child becomes an educated and responsible citizen of his community.

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