EVOLUTION
OF THE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
IN ALASKA

A BRIEF HISTORY
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The Cooperative Extension Service was formally organized as a department of the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, later the University of Alaska, on July 1, 1930. Extension work in agriculture did not, however, actually begin on that date.

Pre-Extension Period

A proper perspective of extension work in Alaska can best be obtained by reviewing briefly the history of United States Department of Agriculture work in the former territory. The earliest reference to this work is found in a report by Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson:

The first appropriation "to enable the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate and report to Congress upon the agricultural resources of Alaska, with special reference to the desirability and feasibility of the establishment of agricultural experiment stations in said Territory," became available July 1, 1897. The general supervision of the work under the appropriation was assigned to the Director of the Office of Experiment Stations.

Special commissioners were sent to the coastal area and islands of Alaska to make the investigations. The Secretary of Interior also made available the services of the superintendent of Government Schools in Alaska for collecting information on the agricultural possibilities of the Yukon Valley. Reports submitted were so favorable that Congress continued the appropriation for another year, and Professor C. C. Georgeson was sent to Alaska to establish a headquarters for agricultural investigations. The headquarters was located at Sitka in 1898, then the Territorial capital. Congress, as a result of Georgeson's reports, authorized the Secretary of Agriculture "to establish and maintain agricultural experiment stations in Alaska, as well as to investigate the agricultural resources and capabilities of the Territory. . . ." Land was acquired at Sitka and a permanent headquarters established during the summer of 1900.

Secretary Wilson commented on the work in Alaska at that time as follows:

The problem which the Department has undertaken to work out is to determine whether sufficient agriculture and horticulture can be developed in Alaska to form an important subsidiary industry to aid in the permanent development of mining, fisheries and lumbering, which will undoubtedly be the leading industries of this region. If all the food supplies of the population engaged in these industries must be transported from the United States and Canada, it is evident that the development of Alaska will be much slower and uncertain than if a considerable portion of these supplies can be produced in the Territory. . . . If our investigations should do nothing more than
establish on a sound basis the growing of vegetables in little gar­dens about the cottages of miners and fishermen in Alaska, they will make an adequate return for the funds expended on them. 3

The investigations resulted in sites being selected that seemed to have agricultural possibilities and where future settlement appeared likely. Experiment station farms were established in these areas and farming was attempted. Seven stations were established between 1900 and 1915. Only two of the original farms remain today, namely at Matanuska, in the Matanuska Valley, and Fairbanks in the Tanana Valley.

The United States Department of Agriculture defined these establish­ments as experiment stations, although they would more properly be termed as demonstration farms. Their major purpose was to determine what types of agriculture could be carried out in the various parts of Alaska. Seed was supplied to cooperating farmers and gardeners in return for reports of their success or failure. Annual reports published from 1898 to 1931 make reference to farm demonstrations conducted, requests for information replied to and bulletins and circulars published, in addition to reporting the research projects.

The first publication appeared in 1902 under Georgeson authorship. Entitled "Suggestions to Pioneer Farmers in Alaska," it was revised in 1917 as Circular No. 1 with the title "Information for Prospective Settlers in Alaska." Additional education bulletins issued during this period were "Vegetable Growing in Alaska," 1905; "Cereal Growing in Alaska," 1926; "Vegetable Gardening in Alaska," 1928; and "The Potato in Alaska," 1929.

All Federally conducted agricultural work in Alaska between the years 1900 and 1930 was under the direction of the States Relations Service, Office of Experiment Station, United States Department of Agriculture.

These pioneer agriculturists determined areas of potential agricul­tural production and proved that farming and gardening were possible in Alaska. They made available to early residents the types of services later carried on by the Experiment Station and the Extension Service through the land-grant college.

Alaska's land-grant college dates from 1915. The cornerstone was laid on July four of that year on land set aside by Congress for the support of a Territorial College and School of Mines.

The Territorial Legislature by its Acts of May 3, 1917, accepted the land grant and created a corporation, "The Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines," defining its duties and providing for a Board of Trustees consisting of eight members.

The college opened for instruction on September 18, 1922... 4
concerted effort was made to have the terms of the Hatch or Smith-Lever Acts extended to Alaska until the late 1920's when Federal support had diminished to the point where only two of the original seven experiment station farms remained active.

Congress, on February 23, 1929, passed legislation extending the benefits of the Hatch Act establishing Experiment Stations and the Smith-Lever Act providing for Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics to Alaska. The Act of February 23, 1929, was restrictive in that it did not provide for financing of extension and research on the same basis as in the States. Ernest Gruening, a former governor of Alaska, has pointed out that:

Congress had through the years enacted other acts further endowing agricultural research and agricultural extension work in connection with land-grant colleges. Despite the earnest efforts of Dr. Bunnell and Alaska's delegates, these acts would not be made available to Alaska for some years and then appropriations would be reduced from the amounts authorized by law and enjoyed by the states.

Specifically, the Act limited funds for extension work to "Such amount as the Secretary of Agriculture might determine." Not until 1949 were the full benefits of legislation authorizing Federal appropriations for Cooperative Extension work extended to Alaska.

Extension Service Established

The Territorial legislature accepted the terms of the Smith-Lever Act on May 2, 1929, and designated the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines as the college to administer Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics in Alaska, but they did not appropriate any funds for the work. The Secretary of Agriculture made available ten thousand dollars to enable the College to organize the new department on July 1, 1930.

The founding of the Extension Service was reported in the October, 1930, Extension Service Review. Excerpts from this account follow:

At the request of Dr. Charles E. Bunnell, President of the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, W. A. Lloyd, in charge of extension work of the Western States, United States Department of Agriculture, was sent to Alaska for two months to assist in organizing and starting the new service. Mr. Lloyd arrived at the College June 25. President Bunnell was appointed director of extension without compensation; George W. Gasser, assistant director for agriculture; and Mrs. Lydia O. Fohn-Hansen, assistant director for home economics. On the day the work was started at the College three boys' and girls' 4-H extension clubs were organized, one in gardening and two in sewing.
Early in July Mr. Gasser and Mrs. Fohn-Hansen accompanied by Mr. Lloyd, left the college for their first field trip. Eklutna, Matanuska, Anchorage, Seward, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, and Wrangell were visited and extension work organized. Nine 4-H extension clubs were started, with 110 members and 12 women's home economics clubs. Owing to the work being started in mid-season, only preliminary work could be done in agriculture. Plans were laid for another year. The clubs included in addition to the white children a number of Eskimos, Aleuts, and Indians. Cooperative club work was established at the industrial school at Eklutna and the Jessie Lee Home at Seward. The club demonstrations are clothing, nutrition, and gardening. The work with women consists of sewing, home management and young-mothers clubs.

A few homesteaders are coming in each year and the foundations of organized rural society are being laid. The extension field, both in home economics and boys' and girls' clubs, is attractive, with possibilities for considerable development.

In agriculture the work for a while necessarily will be largely to give individual assistance to farmers or homesteaders and particularly to help market crops through organization.

The Extension staff was enlarged in 1932 by addition of a veterinarian. A full-time director was appointed in 1935. The assistant directors and the veterinarian travelled throughout the Territory helping the settlers in any way they could. Transportation was difficult and trips were long. Communications were poor. Four-H and Homemaker clubs were established but often disbanded for lack of extension personnel in the immediate area to provide continued leadership, yet the program reached more and more people each year and was well accepted.

Agricultural settlement in Alaska was greatly expanded in 1935 by action of the Federal Government establishing the Matanuska Colony. Of the formation of the colony, historian Hulley has written:

In 1934 Harry Hopkins, Federal Relief Administrator in Washington, D. C., and other federal authorities, took up the idea of sponsoring a government-assisted colony in Alaska. They felt that such a settlement would aid the territory, supply foodstuffs for Alaska, serve as a step toward the possible defense of the region, and above all give a new start to scores of families from among the millions of farmers who were finding it almost impossible to make a living in the United States.

The Matanuska Valley in south-central Alaska, some 45 miles northeast of Anchorage, was finally selected by the federal administrators as the most suitable area for the New Deal experiment.

In June 1934, federal agents made a hasty survey of the Matanuska Valley. When their report was received in January 1935, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Department of Interior agreed jointly to sponsor the settlement.
Colonists were selected from the states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, in the belief that persons from these Northern latitudes could more easily adjust to the climate of Alaska. The first of 200 selected families arrived in the Matanuska Valley in May of 1935 with the remainder following in the early summer.

Establishment of the Matanuska Colony gave the Extension Service an opportunity to concentrate its effort and to prove its adaptability to local situations. The home demonstration leader went immediately to the colony where she remained all summer and fall working with the women who were pioneering on a frontier wilderness. The Extension Service director went on leave to work for the colony and later resigned from Extension. The Extension Service director continued to work closely with the colonists.

The Territorial and Federal governments took a greater interest in supporting extension in Alaska as a result of the successful efforts of the small extension staff in working with the colonists. Funds from both Territorial and Federal sources were increased in the following biennium by approximately 35 percent.

The first Extension Service field office was opened in Palmer, in the Matanuska Valley, in April of 1936. The office was staffed with an agricultural agent, a home demonstration agent and a secretary. These agents worked closely with the 200 colony families and the approximately 100 families who had homesteaded in the valley previous to the establishment of the colony, in helping them develop their farms and improve their living conditions, and to develop youth programs through the medium of 4-H clubs. This fact prompted the directors to write, in 1956, that, "In a sense, agricultural extension work in Alaska has, since its first beginnings in the Territory, concerned itself with what has recently become known as the 'farm unit approach.'"

Action taken by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1936 had a direct influence on the role of the Extension Service in the eyes of the people. Production and Marketing Administration funds were made available to Alaskan farmers for the Agricultural Conservation Program and the Extension director was named administrator of the program in Alaska. The Extension director was thus placed in charge of an action program concerned with direct payments to farmers for carrying out certain conservation practices on their farms. Not until 1952 was the Commodity Stabilization Service, a successor to the Production and Marketing Administration, put on a committee basis in Alaska with a separate "state" chairman.

Establishment of the county and state Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees, with a Federally appointed chairman, did not separate this action program from the Extension Service as far as the farmers were concerned. Confusion continues because Extension is still required to furnish the committees with office space and clerical assistance on a reimbursable basis. Persons seeking information concerning the program come to the Extension office, which is also the Committee office, and talk to extension personnel. The confusion in the minds of the people is vividly illustrated in a book written by an Alaskan homesteader. He said, "The Extension Service, a government agency which functioned to help farmers, had paid me $40.00 for clearing the acre and it expected me to use it for farming."
The Hatch Act establishing the Agricultural Experiment Stations was extended to Alaska in 1929. The Territory accepted the terms of the Hatch Act in 1933, and ownership of the two remaining Federal Experiment Station farms were transferred to the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. Research programs at these farms, located at Matanuska and at College, were directed by superintendents appointed by the President of the College.

The Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines was changed, by action of the Territorial legislature, to the University of Alaska in 1935. Two years later the University President moved to coordinate the program of the two experiment station farms with each other and with that of the Extension Service by appointment of a joint director with headquarters on the campus.

Territorial appropriations for the Extension Service during the next ten years increased and the organization gradually expanded. Permanent field offices were opened in Juneau, Anchorage and Fairbanks and staffed with home demonstration agents. A part-time 4-H State Leader was employed. Emphasis was placed on the direct personal contact of agents with the people to the extent that when the veterinarian resigned in 1938 no full-time specialists were again employed until 1957.

The Post War Period

The Federal government took a real interest in Alaska from the standpoint of military defense both during and following World War II. The only landings of enemy troops on American soil were made at Kiska and Attu in the Aleutian Islands. Following the war, as relations with Russia became unfavorable, Alaska's location was considered the logical site for military defense installations.

Military personnel agreed that Alaska would make a logical first line of defense against Russia but suggested that if supply lines were cut off by the enemy, troops stationed there might be rendered incapable of action by a food shortage. Military leaders indicated a real concern for increasing food production in the Territory. This concern led to another study of Alaska's agricultural potential.

The Agriculture Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations initiated a provision in the 1947 Department of Agriculture Appropriation Act providing for a "nonrecurring, immediately available appropriation of $20,000 to the Administrator, Agricultural Research Administration, for special exploratory investigations of Alaska, to determine the basic problems underlying potential agricultural development in appropriate areas of Alaska, as a guide to the development of future agricultural research in the region." The investigations were carried out in the summer of 1946.

The following statement indicates that the concept of people in the United States Department of Agriculture toward the role of agriculture in the Territory had changed little from 1900. This same concept is held by most informed residents of the State today. "Farming in Alaska was considered in the exploratory investigation as an auxiliary to military, transportation, mining
fisheries, forestry, and industrial development."

The exploratory investigations and subsequent hearings resulted in Federal legislation providing for an expanded agricultural research program in Alaska. The legislation also moved control of the agricultural research program from the University of Alaska back to the U.S.D.A.

The United States Department of Agriculture developed a five year plan based on direct federal appropriations in addition to land-grant and Territorial funds. The direct appropriation by Congress to the Agricultural Research Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture for work in Alaska provided the wedge for assuming direction of the program. A well equipped physical plant including offices, laboratories and staff houses was established at Palmer. These physical facilities are still federally owned.

This action of the federal government dealt a severe blow to the Extension Service for a number of reasons. The joint directorship of the Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service was terminated. A new director was named to head the Experiment Station and the former joint director was retained by the University as Director of the Extension Service. Headquarters of the Experiment Station was moved to Palmer, some 400 miles from the University campus and the University lost effective control of the program. Professional persons employed by the Experiment Station in the new program had federal civil service status without University appointment. This action was interpreted by the people of Alaska as indicating a lack of faith on the part of the federal government in the leadership of the University of Alaska. This attitude was further enhanced by the significant fact that, although a substantial increase in funds was made available for research, no additional funds were made available to the Extension Service for disseminating the results of the research to farmers.

The 4-H and home economics programs of the Extension Service appear to have survived this period without loss of prestige, largely because of the personal respect which the people of the territory had for Mrs. Lydia Fohn-Hansen who was Home Demonstration Leader and acting 4-H Leader at the time.

From 1949 to Present

The outlook for extension improved somewhat in 1949 when, on October 27, Congress extended to Alaska the full benefits of legislation authorizing federal appropriations for Cooperative Extension work. Thus, for the first time federal funds were made available to Alaska on the same basis that they were allocated to the states.

The Veteran's on the Farm Training Program was developed after the war to allow veterans to be paid a certain sum while learning to farm on their own farms. The veteran had to attend regular classes and follow acceptable farming practices. If the veteran met the requirements, he was eligible for monthly payments while enrolled in the program. The University of Alaska held the contract with the Veteran's Administration for administering the program in Alaska and assigned responsibility to the director of the Extension Service.

Acceptance of the program appeared to have many advantages, but it
also had its disadvantages. Two new district agricultural agents' positions were established with the funds for this program and the increased appropriations which had become available in 1949. These agents were to spend half of their time as veteran-on-the-farm training instructors and the other half of their time as agricultural agents. The Alaska Extension Service had again become involved in a program including payments to farmers.

The Veteran's on the Farm Training Program came to an abrupt halt in Alaska in the spring of 1952 with Veteran Administration charges of abuse of the use of funds through payments to veterans not meeting all the requirements. Charges and counter-charges were made, with the result that as late as 1958 the Veteran's Administration was forcing many veterans to repay the money they had accepted in good faith through Extension Service connected personnel. The program was terminated in 1952.

The University administration became concerned, in 1951, about the lack of leadership the University was exerting in the field of agriculture. The research staff was successfully gathering facts needed by the rural people but had little means of getting the information to them. A number of conferences were held by University and Experiment Station personnel in the winter and spring of 1951 and 1952. A representative of the United States Department of Agriculture joined in the final meetings. A plan for developing the traditional land-grant college functions of resident teaching, extension and research in agriculture was developed and approved by the University of Alaska Board of Regents and the divisions concerned in the United States Department of Agriculture.

The approved plan called for associate director of the Experiment Station to add to his responsibilities those of Director of the Extension Service and Dean of Agriculture. Equally important was the provision for joint research-extension specialist and research-teaching appointments.

Changes in organization have resulted in a joint Extension Service-Experiment Station director with no provision for a Dean of Agriculture. Five research scientists continue to devote approximately 25% of their time to extension-specialist activities. The Extension Service has also employed a full-time specialist in the field of horticulture. A feeling of interdependence and a desire for cooperation on the part of staff members have resulted in continued good relations between the Experiment Station and the Extension Service. The third side of the normal land-grant college triangle in the field of agriculture, that of resident instruction, has been de-emphasized since 1955 and the University of Alaska does not now offer a four year undergraduate program in any area of agriculture. The University's department of agriculture does offer a two year curriculum in the basic sciences and the following advice to potential agricultural students: "Students preparing themselves for an agricultural career are advised to enroll for the first two years, recognizing the reservation that their second two years of training will have to acquired at some other institution."

Very little work was carried on by the Cooperative Extension Service in the isolated villages of northern and western Alaska until early in 1956. At that time funds were made available to the Extension Service by the Alaska Rural Development Board, a territorial board established by the legislature.
to evaluate the conditions in isolated villages and seek solutions to village problems. An agricultural extension agent was employed to develop a program of better living and community development in these villages. From the beginning this agent and other staff members working with him have fostered the development of 4-H Clubs, home gardening and better nutrition. Federal "Special Needs" funds have been available since 1956 to expand this program in the isolated villages. The first state legislature meeting in 1959 abolished the Alaska Rural Development Board but granted funds for isolated village work directly to the Cooperative Extension Service.

Additional emphasis was placed on the youth program in 1957 by employment of a full-time State 4-H Leader. This work is currently supported entirely by federal "Special Needs" funds. 113 4-H Clubs had an enrollment of 1,102 boys and girls throughout Alaska in 1957. The enrollment rose in 1958 to 1,546 young people in 141 clubs. State programs include a round-up on the University of Alaska campus in June. Four-H Club members also compete for trips to Chicago to attend the National 4-H Club Congress in the fall.

Headquarters of the Cooperative Extension Service is at the University of Alaska, College, Alaska, which is near Fairbanks. The Director devotes approximately 30% of his time to Extension. The remainder of his time is occupied with duties as Director of the University's Agricultural Experiment Station.

Direct responsibility for program and operation is delegated to an Associate Director, who also is assigned duties in the academic program of the University. The Associate Director is assisted by the State staff which includes a Home Demonstration Leader, a 4-H Leader, an Administrative Assistant, a Horticulturist and the Director of Information.

District Agricultural Agents are located in field offices at Fairbanks, Palmer, and Homer. District Home Demonstration Agents are located in field offices at Fairbanks, Palmer, Anchorage, Homer and Juneau. Headquarters for the isolated village district is on the University of Alaska campus. A Home Demonstration Agent is employed during the summer months to work in isolated villages in the area of Nome. A part-time assistant to the Home Demonstration Agent in Juneau has an office in Ketchikan through the cooperation of the Fisheries Product Research Laboratories. In most cases the districts served by the offices are the areas adjacent to the cities or towns in which the offices are located.

The Director and five research persons serving Extension as specialists are located at the Experiment Station headquarters in Palmer.

The total operating budget for fiscal 1960 amounts to $242,853, with $122,703 from federal sources and $120,150 from state sources. This dollar for dollar ratio in Alaska compares to the average for all land-grant colleges of nearly $2.00 of state money for every dollar of federal money.

The United States Department of Agriculture's field committee for Alaska was established to evaluate agricultural needs in the Territory and to advise the Secretary of Agriculture. Committee membership is limited to heads of the United States Department of Agriculture branches operative in Alaska.
The Extension Service Director participates actively in the semi-annual meetings. This committee has been effective in fostering cooperation among federal agricultural agencies in Alaska at the state level.

The close association with the agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees, through their use of Extension facilities, has been noted. In addition the Extension Director serves on the state committee, and the agricultural agents serve on the local committees.

Cooperative working arrangements have been maintained with the Soil Conservation Service in the field through district agricultural agents having ex officio membership on local soil conservation district boards. Cooperation at the state level is assured through the Extension Director who is a member of the Alaska Soil Conservation District Advisory Committee.

Relations with other federal and state agencies are good. These relations are generally informal and based on professional and personal relationships of the individuals involved, and the strong desire of most of the people to use their resources in accomplishing the greatest overall gains for Alaska.

Continued development of Alaska as a state will bring many more people who will have to learn to adjust to the north country. These people will also have to be fed, clothed and housed. The Cooperative Extension Service has been developing for 29 years in Alaska. The Service reached a degree of maturity that will enable it to help both the old and new residents achieve the goals of orderly development of the State and a good life for themselves and their families.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


3. Ibid., p. 61


8. Ibid.


13. Ibid., p. 2

It is a moving experience for me to have a part in this Baccalaureate program some 36 years after I joined the University of Alaska faculty and 16 years after I left the University of Alaska. It is a moving experience for each of us to take part in this first interfaith Gathering to be held on this campus and still a novel idea nation wide. Why has it taken us so long to get together?

The important thing is that we are here. We are here in a service of thanks and praise, honoring the 1987 graduates of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. It is a pleasure to congratulate you who are graduating on your scholastic accomplishments and to wish you well, whatever road you take from here.

I also salute you, the families of the graduates, for your support is essential to the student. Your encouragement and your patience need to be recognized at this time of culmination and commencement. And let us not forget the faculty whom you have challenged and whom I hope have challenged you. We are fortunate in Alaska to have been able to recruit and retain a top-notch faculty. As a University administrator for almost 30 years I must also salute all those persons with whom the student seldom has direct contact but who are essential to the institution. I refer to administrative and support staff. I have always maintained that a fairly competent administrator could be an outstanding executive, with the right secretary.

Let us take a moment to recognize that this is Mothers' Day. It is entirely fitting that the University Commencement be held on Mothers' Day. What better way to honor one's mother than by the successful attainment of an academic milestone, an important milestone along life's way.

You who are graduating today leave a fine campus. You take with you many memories most of which I hope are pleasant. I have many memories of this campus and I want to share a few of them with you. I will share with you the lives of two people who have been special to me and to this institution. Then I shall take a moment to analyze the characteristic that I think made them the special people that they were.

I remember well our arrival in Fairbanks on September 9, 1951. It was a rainy Sunday afternoon. Frances, our 19 month old daughter Marjorie, and I had driven from Connecticut to Seattle, back to Idaho and north to Fairbanks. A fine way to get acquainted with the vastness and beauty of our great nation and part of our neighbor, Canada.

We filled the tank with gas at a station on Cushman Street where the National Bank of Alaska now stands, crossed the old steel Cushman street bridge and drove out the newly paved College road for our first sight of the University of Alaska campus. We found it alright. A cluster of mostly gray wooden buildings on a hill at the end of the pavement. The campus streets were made of tailings from the gold fields of Ester. The lawn was a brome grass hay field. Street lights and sidewalks were non-existent. A sharp contrast to the New England halls of ivy from which we had come.
But we also found a cluster of warm and caring people! We found challenges and opportunities unlimited. We found a small but solid institution of higher learning, and we found a supportive community in Fairbanks.

The warmth of our reception helped us to meet any feelings of loneliness from having left our families so far behind. Living and work adjustments kept us busy and the time went fast. I don't know when we came to the realization that we had forgotten our original intention - that of spending only two years in Alaska. After all, we had come for the adventure, not for the rest of our lives!

Adventure. Yes. Well, we found it. Of course there was the adventure of the trip over the Alcan highway. The adventure of meeting new people; of learning to cope in a basement room we called home the first six months; of building the first greenhouse on campus in the summer of 1953 as a teaching tool for my courses in horticulture; and on and on.

Over the years new adventures presented themselves through new programs and expanded administrative roles. The positive challenge of administration led me to reorient my goals and to better prepare myself. I took a leave of absence to pursue graduate work in administration. I completed the Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin and returned to the campus in 1959.

I have been so fortunate. To have the varied experiences that I had in my twenty years with the University of Alaska most people would have had to move to other institutions at least three times. Neither life nor work were ever dull in the last days of the Territory of Alaska nor in the fledgling days of the new State of Alaska. New programs, more areas of the state to serve, more people wanting and needing services. We each wore many hats and that in itself was part of the interesting challenge of those years.

My first office on this campus was in a gray wooden building named Unit 5. It was adequate but deserved no better designation. The building also served as the headquarters of the Cooperative Extension Service. In the office next to mine was one of the finest persons I have ever met or worked with. Lydia Fohn Hansen.

Lydia came to Alaska in 1925 as Lydia Jacobsen with a Masters Degree in Home Economics from Iowa State College. She came at the invitation of President Charles Bunnell to serve as Head of the Home Economics Department of the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. Being young, attractive and talented it is not surprising that two years later she married Hans Fohn Hansen, a gold miner. She left the College for the gold fields but returned in 1930 when President Bunnell appointed her Assistant Director for Home Economics in the newly formed Cooperative Extension Service. Except for four years following the death of her husband Lydia was in charge of home economics programs, and often 4H programs as well, until her retirement in 1959. In her last two years she served as Associate Director of Extension. The University of Alaska recognized her work by bestowing on her an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.

On July 1, 1930, the day Extension work officially began, Lydia already had two 4H Sewing Clubs underway and early that month, with George Gasser as Assistant Director for Agriculture, and Mr. Lloyd from the USDA, she left on her first field trip. They travelled to Eklutna, Matanuska, Anchorage, Seward, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan and Wrangell. Nine 4H Clubs and 12 Home
Economics Clubs were formed on that trip. Club work was started at the industrial school at Eklutna and the Jessie Lee Home at Seward.

Extension work was not easy in the early 30's. On one trip Lydia was snow bound for four days in Broad Pass when the train was stuck in a snow drift. In 1935 she had to go to Homer by boat from Seward. On her first trip the boat had to anchor out in the channel so the crew took her in a dory. But the dory could not get all the way to shore either so the first mate carried her ashore. Then he carried her luggage which included a loom, yarn, pressure canner with cans and sealers, duffle bag and personal baggage for a three week's stay.

When the colonists came to the Matanuska Valley in the 1930's Lydia was there to help them preserve food and adjust to a whole new life. The Heartland of November 23, 1986, said of Lydia, "She traveled throughout the territory by dogsled, plane, boat and train, organizing 4H clubs and homemaker clubs and teaching a myriad of homemaking skills." Lydia also wrote hundreds of extension publications and 4H handbooks - many of which are still prized and used today. We remember also how she organized berry picking safaris in the Fairbanks area. Quoting again from the Heartland, "Lydia Fohn Hansen's entire life was characterized by her interest in helping and teaching people." She died last year at the age of 95.

If was my good fortune to work with the Cooperative Extension from 1954 to 1971, first as Associate Director and then as Director. My appointment as Director coincided with my appointment as Dean of Statewide Services for the University. In this position my responsibilities extended to all areas of University outreach including community college and academic credit programs and courses at the associate, baccalaureate and masters degree levels. Working with John Hilpert we established the Engineering Management Masters degree program in Anchorage, an evening program for practicing engineers who could then complete the degree in three years while continuing their employment. Later the position of Dean was changed to Vice President for Public Service.

It was as Dean and Vice President with academic responsibilities, including the on campus summer session, that I met and worked with Laura Jones.

Laura Jones served this institution as Registrar and Director of Admissions for fifteen years, retiring in 1971.

Laura Buchan was born in Benton, Wisconsin. She attended Platteville Teachers' College in Wisconsin and earned her bachelor of arts degree at the University of Denver. Laura began her professional career as a teacher in the Denver area but when World War II broke out she felt a need to join in "the Battle of Production." She moved to Seattle and went to work in an airplane factory. When asked how they met he said, "I met her in Nuts and Bolts, proposed to her in Rivet and she accepted me in Final Assembly."

At the close of the war they selected a trip to Alaska for a belated honeymoon. They came for a brief adventure but the Great Land took hold of them and Alaska was their home forever after. It was during a three day visit in Juneau that they decided to look for work in Alaska. They found it at the Alaska Native Service office in Juneau. Their assignment was to the day-school for Alaska native children in Bristol Village, a small village somewhat north of the Aleutian Chain. Laura was the teacher and Eliot the maintenance man
and radio operator. They stayed in Bristol Village for six years. Their
daughter and only child was born there. Laura wrote of their experiences
in a wonderful book, "Hearth In The Snow." It was published in 1952.
It is a heartwarming book full of the love of people, an excellent picture
of village life with its beauty and tragedy, and a rare insight into the
role of the only non-native family in a small, remote, community in the
late 40's and early 50's.

From Bristol Village, Laura, Eliot and Jeanie moved to Mt. Edgecomb,
the boarding school at Sitka, but not for long. Soon Laura was selected
by the BIA to be an Education Supervisor. From Juneau she travelled to the
native village schools along the coast and to the islands all the way to
Barrow. Travel was on the North Star through some of the roughest of ocean
waters. She supervised the young teachers such as Charles and Doris Ray,
who were in Savoonga at that time. It was in 1956 that Laura Jones came to
the University of Alaska. Laura was the Registrar and Director of Admissions
but she was so much more. She quickly became that person on campus that
anyone could go to with a problem or concern. Always ready with a smile she
was referred to in the December 18, 1970, Nanook News as "the University's
twinkling and determined registrar."

She was available to all and she seemed to know their special problems.
Foreign students found in her a friend who would go an extra mile if the
student were making a sincere effort. From her work in the villages she had
a special affinity for the native students. She was their parent away from
home. Laura Jones and Charles Ray started THEATA, the first native student
club on this campus. Native parents had confidence in the University because
Laura Jones was here.

There was another group of students who had special needs. They were
the men in the armed forces. We had an extensive outreach program to the
military and civilian personnel as far away as Adak, Kodiak and Kenai. Our
largest number of enrollees working for degrees were stationed at Fort Wain-
wright, Eielson Air Force Base, Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base.
These people had taken courses at foreign bases from the University of Mary-
land and from numerous other institutions of higher education. How to judge
these in relation to our courses and our degree requirements? How to help
the student to get in the required courses in order to obtain their bachelors
degree while still on duty in Alaska? I assure you Laura quickly became an
expert on institutions offering courses to those in our armed services and
she worked diligently with the academic departments and the students to smooth
the way to the degree. The University of Alaska and its degrees were too dear
to her to want to water them down in anyway. Hers was always a positive
approach which the student and faculty appreciated. In 1970 she had this to
say, "We have always had a remarkably good faculty, and the staff has been
absolutely tremendous to work with. I have never had a cross word or an un-
pleasant experience with any staff member in 15 years."

Those post World War II servicemen were eager for their degrees. They
worked all day and went to school at night or adjusted their work schedule to
attend a day class on the campus or in Anchorage. Many had families and it was
not easy for them. When they completed their degree requirements in the early
and mid 1960's they had to come to this campus to get the degree, or have it
mailed to them. There were no University of Alaska Commencements at other
locations in the state until very late in the 1960's.
The military graduates were so enthusiastic, and I think appreciative, that very seldom did any miss commencement. They bought class rings and did the whole bit. Families came from Elmendorf and Fort Richardson for the weekend. Laura of course was here to greet them and more. She threw a party for them. Some others here may remember how she took over the Malemute Saloon and some of us were pressed into being can can girls or playing other parts in The Shooting of Dan McGrew. Of course she was always Lou. One year the party was on the river boat Discovery. As a part of that evening Laura, appropriately robed as Queen Neptune, gave each of the degree candidates their final, final examination. Howard Cutler and I sat with her at this time of judgment, he as a Rear Admiral, I as a Fore Admiral. Laura always had a way of making people and events special.

On May 9, 1971, the University of Alaska, Anchorage and Anchorage Community College, held their first joint Commencement. Laura Jones was honored at the Commencement for giving unstintingly of her time and energies during a period of rapid expansion, both at College and at other campuses throughout the state. It was said of her, "Her enthusiasm, charm, and good judgment have gained for her the love and respect both of students and the professional staff." Laura lived out her last years at the Pioneer Home in Anchorage.

We are inadequate to measure the achievements of these two women, Lydia Fohn Hansen and Laura Jones, whose influence has been such a vital part of this institution, but we do know that their accomplishments record a valuable chapter in the history of the University of Alaska. They made a difference.

Lydia and Laura were very different people and they went about their tasks in different ways. What then has caused me to speak of them together here today? It is because they exhibited certain characteristics that made them successful in their work and which I believe you graduates should take a close look at as you move on from the University.

Both were well qualified professionals. Both were people oriented. They cared deeply about people. They worked to fill a need, not to put in so many hours a day. They were approachable and understanding. They did not judge their fellow humans. I never heard either of them criticize anyone. They were completely unselfish. Lydia stayed on as Associate Director an extra year before retirement so I could be on leave to complete my doctorate. They each had a sense of humor and were delightful people to know and work with. They were beautiful people.

So I set them before you as examples of successful people for you to emulate. If you do, at the time of your retirement you, and those dear to you, will know that regardless of your field of endeavor, or the size of the house you live in, you have been a success, for you will have made this world a better place for having been here. You too will have made a difference.

Congratulations.

Arthur S. Buswell