

HABS No. AK-105-A

Sheldon Jackson College,  
Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall  
Lincoln Street  
Sitka  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Alaska

HABS  
AK  
17-SITKA,  
4A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
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Washington, D. C. 20013

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

ADDENDUM TO:  
SHELDON JACKSON COLLEGE, RICHARD H. ALLEN MEMORIAL HALL  
Lincoln Street  
Sitka  
Sitka District  
Alaska

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

### SHELDON JACKSON COLLEGE, RICHARD H. ALLEN MEMORIAL HALL (Allen Auditorium)

HABS No. AK-105-A

Location: 801 Lincoln Street, Sitka, Alaska 99835

Present Owner/Occupant: Sheldon Jackson College

Present Use: Storage

Significance: The Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall is the main building in the campus design of the Sheldon Jackson College. The building is one of six original campus structures designed by the New York firm of Ludlow and Peabody and constructed in 1910-11. The Hall served as both gymnasium and classroom, reflecting the religious, cultural, and social interests of both the school and the City of Sitka. The Hall stands as the central building in a quadrangle site plan that composes the only formal campus design in Alaska.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

##### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1910-11. The drawings of the "Main Building" or Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall of the Sheldon Jackson School (SJS) campus by architects William Orr Ludlow and Charles Samuel Peabody of the New York architectural firm of Ludlow and Peabody are dated 25 June 1910. The map showing the location of the new buildings and heating mains was dated 20 July 1910. The campus was completed on 7 June 1911.<sup>1</sup> The Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall is locally referred to as Allen Auditorium.
2. Architects: William Orr Ludlow and Charles Samuel Peabody. Ludlow, the

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<sup>1</sup>Genevieve Mayberry, *Sheldon Jackson Junior College: An Intimate History*, (Sitka: Sheldon Jackson Junior College Press, 1953), 25.

2. Architects: William Orr Ludlow and Charles Samuel Peabody. Ludlow, the senior partner, was born in New York on 24 May 1870. He graduated with an engineering degree in 1888 and a degree in architecture from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey in 1892. Ludlow worked as an architectural draftsman for the Boston firm of Carrere and Hastings from 1892 to 1895, until he formed a partnership with Charles Valentine. Ludlow was the senior partner of Ludlow and Valentine until 1909 when he began to work with Charles S. Peabody. Ludlow and Peabody were partners until Peabody's retired in 1930. Several years later, William Ludlow joined his son David H. Ludlow in Summit, New Jersey to form Ludlow and Ludlow. Throughout his career, William Ludlow assisted with the design of forty college buildings, thirty churches, and a large number of banks and hospitals. He died in 1954.<sup>2</sup>

Peabody was born in 1880 and raised in Brooklyn. He began his study of architecture at Harvard University, where he graduated in the early 1900s. Peabody received his architecture degree from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he graduated at the top of his class in 1908. In the following year, he entered into partnership with William Ludlow, a collaboration that would constitute much of his career.<sup>3</sup>

Ludlow and Peabody designed the SJS campus for the Presbyterian Board of Missions early in their career. Ludlow was an elder in the Presbyterian Church, and his religious affiliation may explain their association with the project. The SJS campus was one several commissions the firm completed for the Board of Missions; the firm also designed four churches in New York.<sup>4</sup>

The two architects designed a large portfolio of buildings, including the George Peabody School for Teachers, now part of the Vanderbilt University campus; the 14th Street Annex of the New York Times Building; the Johns-Manville Building in New York; the Chase Tower; and the First Baptist Church in Westfield, New

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<sup>2</sup>"William Ludlow, Architect, Was 83," *New York Times*, 22 January 1954.

<sup>3</sup>Henry F. Withey, A.I.A. and Elsie Rothburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company), 462. "Charles Peabody, Architect, 55, Dead," *New York Times*, 12 September 1935.

<sup>4</sup>"Charles Peabody," *New York Times*, 12 September 1935.

Jersey.<sup>5</sup>

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: Allen Auditorium was built for the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions originally to be used as classrooms and a gymnasium. Upon its completion, the school changed its name to the Sheldon Jackson School (SJS), in honor of the Presbyterian missionary devoted to the education of Alaska Native children. In 1917 the high school was established, and in 1944 the junior college was founded. In 1972 the name was changed to Sheldon Jackson College (SJC). The Presbyterian Board of Home Missions owned the school until 1972, when SJC incorporated under a Board of Trustees.<sup>6</sup> The college closed the building in 1990 and currently uses the space for storage.
4. Builder, suppliers: Most of the contractors for the construction came from Seattle: M. Arvensen, General Contractor; Thomas F. McGraw, worked directly for Arvensen or as a sub-contractor; G.E. McGraw, his son, also worked on site; Mr. McClaren, Construction Superintendent; J.A. Hassle, Electrician; M.A. Krows, Plumbing and Steam Fittings; and Oscar Sather, a foreman for the contractor.<sup>7</sup>

A group of students and faculty of Sheldon Jackson School assisted with the construction. The Home Mission Monthly volunteers provided funding and groups in the United States known as "Sitka builders," worked on site.

The Mills Corporation, Sitka were the suppliers.

5. Original plans and construction: The original drawings of the elevations and floor plans for "The Main Building" executed by Ludlow and Peabody of New York are dated 25 June 1910. The drawings are located in the Sheldon Jackson Collection at Stratton Library, Sheldon Jackson College.
6. Alterations and additions: The following is a list of changes from the original drawings evident in the current floor plans and elevations; most of the dates are

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<sup>5</sup>Withey and Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, 462.

<sup>6</sup>Dr. Evelyn Bonner, "A History of Sheldon Jackson College: March 1980; Changing to Meet Changing Needs," (Sitka: Sheldon Jackson College), 1980.

<sup>7</sup>R.N. DeArmond, *Comments*. Mr. DeArmond graciously read and commented on an earlier draft. He provided the names of contractors from various issues of *The Thlingit*.

approximate. A more detailed explanation can be found in the Architectural Information section. Many of these changes occurred during the renovation work of 1953.

In 1953, Mrs. Harriet Hurd Scheide, of Titusville, Pennsylvania, funded the renovation of Allen Auditorium, and it was rededicated temporarily as the Scheide Auditorium in memory of her husband, John H. Scheide. Use of the name Scheide Memorial Chapel Auditorium continued until 1958, when an organ dedication was held at the Scheide Auditorium in March. The sign on the front of the building was never changed, and the school reverted back to the use of the original name of Richard H. Allen Memorial or Allen Auditorium later in 1958. Student work crews under Mr. Chester Latta, Mr. Laurence Doig, and Mr. William Bullick renovated the building.<sup>8</sup>

After tearing out the floor and driving piles for a solid foundation, the sub-floor has been laid and is ready for the laying of the linoleum tile. The stage has been rebuilt and greatly enlarged. All rewiring is complete and awaiting the lighting fixtures. The ceiling, walls and entrances need yet to be completed.<sup>9</sup>

The arcade in the front of the Allen Auditorium was enclosed between 1950 and 1972.<sup>10</sup> The walkways on the east and west sides of the building were possibly enclosed at the same time the front arcade was enclosed. The eight-light windows in the side hallways were probably installed at that time. The hallways are concrete covered with carpet. Also, it is likely that the open arcade on the south, east and west facades was enclosed as early as 1953 to 1958, but the enclosure was definitely completed by 1967, when Dr. Evelyn Bonner came to SJS.<sup>11</sup> Prior to the enclosure of the walkway, three double-hung twelve-over-twelve sash windows were on each side of the double doors and three vertical six-light casement windows were above the doors. After the enclosure, the entrance changed from a single central position to the multiple entries on the east and west

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<sup>8</sup>*The Verstovian*, February 1953.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>Reverend Ralph Weeks and Louise Weeks, interview with author, Anchorage, AK, 17 July 1996; Reverend Taylor Potter, telephone conversation with author, 22 July 1996.

<sup>11</sup>Dr. Evelyn Bonner, telephone conversation with author, 23 July 1996.

corners of the south facade, and the window pattern changed. One double-hung twelve-over-twelve-pane window was placed on each side of the three six-light casement windows in the center bay. The use of the same types of windows in the enclosure of the walkway retained the integrity of the building.

The six Ludlow and Peabody buildings were originally painted brown; in 1972 the top third of the exterior was painted white, reminiscent of the Swiss chalet style.<sup>12</sup> The sign on the front of the building, which reads "Richard H. Allen Memorial," was painted white at one time: now it is brown. Volunteer professional painters from California brought equipment and painted the six buildings. The white paint was added because it made the buildings appear lighter and less cumbersome, and the white tied the campus together. Of the six buildings, the volunteers painted the Allen Auditorium last because it was the highest and most difficult to paint.<sup>13</sup> The bell located in front of the building was once mounted in a bell tower that stood between the original girls and boys dormitory. The Troy, New York Company of Meneely Bell cast the bell in 1882.<sup>14</sup>

In 1978, architect Taylor Potter designed the mezzanine for the southeast classroom of the second floor. Potter tried to be faithful to the building's integrity.<sup>15</sup> It was added to the Allen Auditorium because the Administration building had limited storage space.

In 1990 Harry Chartier studied the Auditorium and determined that settlement had occurred in the independent truss and hanger system that supported the second floor. A series of new wood columns and cement footings were installed in the auditorium. The columns were a temporary measure until the completion of the renovation project.

The stair and balustrade on the east and west sides of the north end of the building were originally open with newel posts, but they have been covered with solid

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<sup>12</sup>Edwin Crittenden, "The Architecture of the Sheldon Jackson College Campus," (Sitka: Sheldon Jackson College Press, 1991); Taylor Potter, telephone conversation with author, 22 July 1996.

<sup>13</sup>Pat Roppel, "The Buildings of Sheldon Jackson College Campus," SJC Archives, Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka, AK, 1988, 4; Taylor Potter, 22, 23 July 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Crittenden, "The Architecture of the Sheldon Jackson College Campus," 22.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

panels. At some point, possibly at the time of the enclosure of the front loggia, a mezzanine providing technical space for sound and lighting controls for theatrical productions was added above the original entry.

The other main changes on the second floor concern the doors. The doors to the vestibule into the office and the northwest classroom were replaced with hollow-core flush-panel doors. Also, the original floor plans indicate double door entries to the north classrooms at the head of each stairwell. No physical evidence remains to suggest any other doors in these locations.

Several other notable changes have been made to the building. Four single-hung eight-pane windows on the north elevation were enclosed at the back of the stage. Five windows on the east elevation were removed and infilled with plywood, while two others were replaced with storm windows. Finally, on the original building, balconies on the east and west elevations were intended to be fire escapes. Ladders were fixed to the building on the north side of each balcony. They were removed, probably at the time the walkways were enclosed, but definitely before the top third of the building was painted white in 1972. The doors that opened onto the balconies are sealed.

## B. Historical Context:

### 1. Culture

Sheldon Jackson College is located at the southeastern end of the City of Sitka, on Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska. It is situated at the base of Mount Verstovia, in Tongass National Forest. This location provided important resources for the Tlingit, Russian, and American inhabitants who consecutively occupied and settled the site between the late 1700s to the late 1800s also benefited from the area's location and resources.

The Russians established a fort at Sitka in 1799 that resident Tlingit attacked and destroyed in 1802. Two years later Russian-American Company manager Alexander Baranov retaliated against the Tlingit and established a new fort. The fort became New Archangel (Sitka), the Russian headquarters for the territory until the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867.

The Tlingit lived at one end of town and formed what became known as the Native Village or Ranch. The establishment of the Sheldon Jackson Institute,

which later became the Sheldon Jackson School (SJS), provided an opportunity for Native children in the village to attend school.

The goal of the SJS curriculum was to assimilate Native children into American and Christian cultures. Many students who came from other villages in Southeast Alaska eventually settled in Sitka after completing school and actively participated in the Presbyterian Church. The school remained predominantly Native, until 1945, when the first non-Native students enrolled at the program.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. The Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church and missionaries played a vital role in Alaska policy, particularly in education and religion: two points important in the establishment of SJS. According to one author, “for many years after 1880, the Presbyterian mission interests were second only to the great corporations in directing the destinies of Alaska.”<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Sheldon Jackson was a prominent Presbyterian missionary in the southwestern United States who visited Alaska in 1877 after receiving a letter from a Fort Wrangell soldier pleading for a Christian missionary to come to the area. During that first trip, Jackson established a Presbyterian Mission Church and School in Wrangell. Jackson persuaded the Presbyterian Board of National Missions to establish schools in Alaska because he saw the need for the education of the Native children. In 1878 the Reverend John G. Brady and Miss Fannie Kellogg temporarily opened a school in Sitka, but it soon closed. Brady briefly visited New York and returned to Sitka in 1879 with Alonzo E. Austin, a former New York merchant. Ultimately it was the school that Austin, his wife Isabelle Camp and daughter Olinda, who had a commission from the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions to teach Native children, established what became the Sheldon Jackson School.<sup>18</sup>

In 1880 Austin expanded the school to include space at the two-story Russian Hospital. Two years later the log building burned, leaving the school with no

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<sup>16</sup>CCC Architects Alaska, *Sheldon Jackson College Campus Inventory*, SJC Archives, Sitka, AK, Appendix C.

<sup>17</sup>Clarence C. Hulley, *Alaska Past and Present*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 219.

<sup>18</sup>DeArmond, *Comments*.

facilities. Brady offered his homestead property as a new site for the school. His property sat at the edge of town and the school has continued to occupy this site. Jackson and Austin salvaged much of the lumber needed to reconstruct the school. The men obtained some lumber from an abandoned cannery. Austin Hall became the first new building on site. The Hall served as a dormitory for Native boys attending the mission school, also known as the Sitka Industrial Home for Boys.<sup>19</sup>

In 1884, the Presbyterian girls' school in Wrangell moved to Sitka and joined the Sheldon Jackson Institute, which became known as the Sitka Industrial Training School. Construction of school buildings continued through the 1890s, until the school occupied fifteen buildings in various capacities. The buildings used by the Industrial Training School included the Tlingit Presbyterian Church, the boys' dormitory (Austin Hall), the girls' dormitory, housekeeping and service facilities, the Sheldon Jackson museum, cow barns, wood sheds, and miscellaneous outbuildings.<sup>20</sup> Prior to construction of the 1910-11 campus, the school lacked a gymnasium.<sup>21</sup>

The Organic Act of 1884 was particularly important for education in Alaska and for the Sheldon Jackson Institute. The act made Alaska a civil and judicial district, with Sitka as the seat of government. It allowed for the appointment of government leaders of Alaska, including a governor, attorney, judge, commissioners, etc. More specifically, it provided for the education of all Alaskan children of any race or color. As a result of the Organic Act, Dr. Jackson gained power over the education of Natives as the General Agent of Education in Alaska.<sup>22</sup>

As General Agent of Education, Jackson established schools throughout Alaska, which had a scattered population of approximately 30,000. He used church

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<sup>19</sup>Hulley, *Alaska Past and Present*, 219 - 243.

<sup>20</sup>Crittenden, "The Architecture of the Sheldon Jackson College Campus", 9 and *Home Mission Monthly*, (New York: vol. 25, 8 June 1911), 186.

<sup>21</sup> See the plans of the Sitka Industrial Training School dating from 1894 to 1910, and according to a letter from Mr. W.G. Beattie published in the June 1911 edition of *Home Mission Monthly*.

<sup>22</sup>Dorothea J. Theodoratus, *Sitka Tribe of Alaska Historic Preservation Plan*, (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1995), 24. *Alaska History 1741 - 1910: Theme XXI Political and Military Affairs, 1865 - 1910*, (National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, National Park Service, 1961), 55.

agencies to supervise and subsidize the mission schools. Hulley argues that Jackson was more interested in converting Natives than educating non-Native children.<sup>23</sup>

In the early 1900s the SJS began to plan for a new campus. The new campus was built because the old facilities were insufficient for the needs of the school. By the early 1900s the wooden buildings were in poor condition, such that it was more efficient for the school to construct new buildings than to remain in the old ones.

Our buildings are so rotten and old that we are compelled to burn two cords of wood where one should do the work. The window sash are all so slimy [sic] they can hardly be opened without some of the glass being broken, our roofs all leak, the floors everywhere are so worn and full of holes that it is impossible to keep them clean and are therefore in a very unsanitary condition.<sup>24</sup>

The architects for the new campus, Ludlow and Peabody visited Sitka before construction began. According to the January 1910 issue of the campus newspaper, *The Thlinget*,

The architect who is to plan the new plant will be here on the next boat and it is hoped that enough arrangements can be made at once, so that by the opening of the summer the Old Mission shall have in part ceased to be, and that the Training School will be assuming definite form.<sup>25</sup>

The “new plant” the paper refers to is the new campus, as is evidenced by the following quote from an article in *Home Mission Monthly*. “With great pleasure we show the Sheldon Jackson School. The picture is made from the architect’s drawing and shows at a glance how very satisfactory the plant promises to be.”<sup>26</sup> No other buildings aside from the six designed by Ludlow and Peabody were constructed on the campus from 1910 to 1911. Also, the laundry and boiler room provided the steam heat and hot water for all of the new buildings.

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<sup>23</sup>Hulley, *Alaska Past and Present*, 234.

<sup>24</sup>*The Thlinget*, May 1909.

<sup>25</sup>*The Thlinget*, January 1910.

<sup>26</sup>*Home Mission Monthly*, (8 June 1911, vol. 25), 186.

Ms. Mabel Gordon Parker, a visitor to Sitka in the summer of 1912, described the Ludlow and Peabody buildings as follows:

The new buildings, six in number, are harmonious in design, beautiful in simplicity of outline, satisfying in color and finish. All have steam heat and electric light from central plants. There are four dormitories, two for boys, two for girls. The "Richard Allen Memorial," the school building proper, occupies the most prominent position on the campus. On the first floor is the boys' gymnasium, with its complete modern equipment. Above are four recitation rooms, one of which is set apart for the domestic science department.... The shop, or industrial building, old and shabby,... is the only one of the former group of buildings still standing.<sup>27</sup>

Much of the funding for the new construction came from contributions from Presbyterian women. Mrs. Richard H. Allen, a member of the Women's Board of Home Missions, funded the construction of the main school building in memory of her husband. Richard Allen was an avid supporter of work at the Sitka Industrial Training School.<sup>28</sup>

Another reason given for the construction of new buildings at Sitka was that missionaries needed them in order to continue their work with the Natives.<sup>29</sup>

The SJS was an industrial training school, yet emphasized academic coursework in English and mathematics. Faculty also taught home economics classes in the laboratory equipped with oil heaters and a range. Faculty used a small office that divides two of the classrooms on the north side of the second story.

Students at SJS attended academic classes for a half day and then moved to vocational training. Girls worked in the kitchen and laundry, while the boys did carpentry, cut wood, fished, tended garden, and worked in the boiler room.

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<sup>27</sup>Mabel Parker, "A Tourist's Visit to the Sheldon Jackson School," *Home Mission Monthly*, (October 1912 quoted in Neal Armstrong, "Documentary History of SJC 1967"), 42 - 43; National Register Nomination Inventory Form prepared by Alfred Mongin, 16 September 1977.

<sup>28</sup>Pat Roppel, "The Buildings of Sheldon Jackson College Campus," 14.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

Vocational training continued on site until the school became the Sheldon Jackson Junior College.<sup>30</sup>

Although the new buildings and their landscape became the focal point on campus, the school retained some of the older, important school structures, including the 1895 concrete Sheldon Jackson Museum, the Presbyterian Church, the Pittsburgh House (residence of the superintendent), North Cottage, and the Simpson Building (the old mill and shop). In February 1911, the local paper stated that "The new buildings can scarcely be seen from the road because they are in the rear of the old ones."<sup>31</sup>

The Sheldon Jackson campus buildings were dedicated in 1915, after four years of use. It was postponed so that a representative from the Board of Home Missions could be present at the dedication.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. Architectural Influences

Ludlow and Peabody's design of the SJS campus is attributed in part to Thomas Jefferson's design of the University of Virginia. The campus of the University of Virginia, built between 1817 and 1826, follows a central formal quadrangle, with an anchor building at one end and five buildings flanking each side with covered walkways and a central mall. The design reflected Jefferson's intellectual interests and the idea that the university was "an 'academical village'."<sup>33</sup>

In 1810 he already saw it in the form of "lodges" for the professors, with classrooms on the ground floor, joined by "barracks" for students, "opening into a covered way to give dry communication between all the schools," the whole "arranged around an open square of grass or trees."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>DeArmond, *Comments*.

<sup>31</sup>*The Thlinget*, February 1911.

<sup>32</sup>Mayberry, *Sheldon Jackson Junior College: An Intimate History*, 25.

<sup>33</sup>Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture 1607 - 1976*, (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1981), 106.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 106, 108.

Although it was first suggested to Jefferson that the rotunda should be used as an auditorium, he preferred to design the building at the end of the mall to be a library. This designation further reflects the high importance Jefferson placed on learning. Just as his design for the Virginia Capitol was considered the forerunner of temple-form buildings constructed throughout the United States, his quadrangle design for the University of Virginia was the precursor of quadrangle plans for American academic institutions. The site plan of the SJS campus plan reflects the influence of Thomas Jefferson's quadrangle plan. Ludlow and Peabody architectural plans clearly mark it "The Main Building."

The design of the Allen Auditorium incorporates a number of different architectural styles, a common practice in American building after the Civil War. The compromise of architectural styles includes elements of both the Craftsman and Stick influences: two traditions that evolved and flourished on the West Coast after the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial. Ludlow in particular, appeared through his writings on architecture, to adhere to the philosophy that form and function greatly influenced a building's use. Very versatile in his application of style, Ludlow sought to match design with the use and the occupant. At Sitka, Ludlow and Peabody also adapted their design to the technology at hand, the use of local carpenters and applied decoration corresponded to availability of local materials.

The Craftsman building tradition evolved in the U.S. between 1900 and 1920 and was contemporary with the Colonial Revival and Prairie School. Often referred to as Arts and Crafts, the style developed its own vernacular in the U.S.-- its English counterpart was more akin to the Tudor Revival. Found predominantly on the West Coast, the Craftsman tradition gained appeal through the *Craftsman* magazine published in New York from 1901 to 1917 under the management of furniture master Gustav Stickley. The approach provided for an informal, hand crafted appearance through the use of natural materials in an attempt to regain contact with the pre-industrial past.<sup>35</sup> In Sitka, nature dominates the campus setting. Boxy forms with low-pitched gable roofs, not unlike a chalet style, usually with exposed roof rafters that are often false, and false projections of structural members, characterized the style. In California, the Craftsman aesthetic was applied mostly to houses and the development of the single-family bungalow. The style was viewed as functional, organic, and democratic<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 219.

The Stick building tradition flourished in the late 19th century, first on the East Coast and later in a West Coast application from 1890 to 1920.<sup>37</sup> Stick style is characterized by the exposure of a structural framing system and in particular of diagonal bracing element members. This was done to emphasize structural "truthfulness" but also to portray the greatest possible interplay of intersecting triangular forms. Earth colored stains were used as an exterior finish. The California architects Greene and Greene applied Stick elements especially in the roofs and long porches of bungalow style houses. The original porch on the Allen Auditorium was very reminiscent of the Stick style bracing on Richard Morris Hunt's 1863 Griswold House in Newport, Rhode Island.

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<sup>37</sup>John Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 55-57.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Allen Auditorium is a compromise of primarily two architectural styles, Craftsman and Stick. The remote setting and the use of simple wood detailing, particularly the window-trim, mudsills and roof bracketing, reflect the influences of these two styles. These styles were popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
2. Condition of fabric: Although the building has had little use in recent years, the structure is stable. Interior finishes are generally in poor condition. In 1998 the exterior was painted. However, there is little evidence of rotten wood or water penetration, which suggests that the structure is in stable condition. The relatively recent addition of a new roof has been a significant factor in preventing further deterioration of the structure.

The school stopped using the building in 1991 until renovation work could be completed. The structural modifications completed in 1991 were intended to stabilize the building until further renovation.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Allen Auditorium is two stories with a full attic, over a crawlspace. The building has a T-shaped plan, encompassed in a 75'-0" square. The overall height of the building is 47'-6" to the top of the ridge and 58'-0" to the top of the cupola.
2. Foundations: The structure rests on a concrete stem wall over a continuous concrete footing, extending around the perimeter of the building. Six enlarged concrete footings in the stem wall mark column locations supporting the major structural elements of the south gable. There are several access points to the crawlspace, including an exterior entry accessed by a stair on the north elevation and two metal grates at the south end of the auditorium. Evidence of the original concrete flooring system, which proved inadequate, is apparent in the crawlspace.
3. Walls: Brown wood shingle siding covers the exterior wall from the ground to the windowsills of the second floor windows. From the second floor windowsills to

the roofline is vertical, white board-and-batten siding, with brown trim around the windows and brown wood vents and roof brackets.

The exterior wall is made up of 2" x 6" wood framing with wood sheathing on the exterior. The wall is approximately 8" thick and the exterior wall cavity is not insulated.

4. Structural system, framing: Allen Auditorium is a wood structure of balloon frame construction. All exterior walls and interior walls of the main stairs and auditorium space bear on continuous concrete stem walls. The roof is stick frame construction with five heavy timber frame trusses, primarily supporting the south gable and the second floor span over the auditorium space.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticoes, bulkheads: Wood balconies originally existed on the east and west elevations but later were torn down, probably because they were not structurally sound. Since they were constructed as fire escapes, a ladder was connected to the side of the building to the north side of each balcony. The doors are sealed and brackets of the ladders are all that remain, although a ghost of the balcony is visible on the east facade.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Three types of doors are on the exterior of the building. The south elevation doors have six lights on top with two panels underneath. French doors, which opened onto the balconies, are nailed shut. A fixed transom window with sixteen lights is above each of the balcony doors. The north elevation door is the entrance into the crawlspace and has a Z frame.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The white double-hung twelve-over-twelve-pane windows are important to the integrity of the campus. The symmetrical window arrangement along the exterior walkway on the south elevation consisted of three double-hung twelve-over-twelve-pane windows on each side of the door, and three vertical six-light windows above the door. When the walkway was enclosed, the central entrance was moved and entrances were placed on the east and west ends of the south elevation. The three vertical six-light casement windows, originally above the central entrance, were placed in the center bay, with one double-hung twelve-over-twelve-pane window on each side. The use of the six-light windows

and the double-hung twelve-over-twelve windows in the enclosure of the walkway retained some of the integrity of the building facade.

On the east and west elevations, four clerestory windows above the porch provide natural light to the auditorium space. These windows are twelve-light single-sash windows pivoting on a horizontal center hinge. Similar eight-light windows are found on the side-enclosed hallways.

Five windows on the east elevation, including three in the southeast classroom and two in the stairwell, have been removed and replaced with plywood. Also, two windows have been removed and replaced with storm windows. Most of the remaining double hung windows are original, operating with a rope and pulley system. However, most of the ropes have been broken over time.

Windows on the north elevation are double-hung twelve-over-twelve sash windows. A row of four, single hung, eight-pane windows have been removed and infilled at the rear of the stage. A number of windows have broken panes and several have been nailed shut on the first floor.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is a steep pitched jerkin head gable covered with composite shingles, with the original wood shingles underneath. The building is t-shaped with a cupola at the intersection.
- b. Cornice, eaves: At the gables, brackets support a wide fascia board. The corner brackets are simple, triangular shaped brackets made up of two 4" x 4" members. The brackets at the jerkin heads are more ornate, sculpted to appear as exposed rafter tails of a heavy timber frame. The brackets are not structural, and many show significant rot. Roof rafters stop at the eave and are paired with a dummy rafter that is exposed on the exterior. Gutters, which were a later addition, extend along all horizontal roof edges, though most downspouts are in obvious disrepair. A thin fascia board with exposed sculpted rafter tails runs along the east and west elevations.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The cupola is located at the intersection of the gable roofs. The composite shingle roof of the cupola has concave hips,

the four sides have louvered wood vents on the upper half and wood shingles on the lower half. Each of the four sides is identical.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Allen Auditorium focuses around one major, multi-use space on the first floor, the auditorium. The auditorium is a large open room facing a stage on the north end. Eight clerestory windows provide natural light from the east and west sides of the room. The original main entry was from the south and is currently covered with plywood. A mezzanine, providing technical space for spotlights and audio-visual equipment during theater productions, opens into the main space through windows above the main entry. There is a single door entry on each side of the auditorium. Eight temporary columns have been erected in the space to support beams spanning the width of the auditorium. The columns rest on concrete footings, cut through the existing tile floor and wood floor framing.

The auditorium is surrounded on the south, east and west sides by hallways, which were originally open to the exterior and were later enclosed. Concrete sloping floors in the hallways provide adequate handicap access to most spaces of the first floor. Additional accessibility measures, upon renovation, would prove difficult, with at least four separate floor levels on the first floor, aside from the hallways. The side halls provide access to the stairways on the east and west sides of the building. A single bathroom has been added under each stair. The stage is raised several feet above the auditorium floor and extends into the auditorium space, forming a rectangular proscenium. Support spaces including the dressing rooms, audio-visual room, and storage areas flank the stage on each side. Evidence found in the crawlspace below the stage reveals the corner rooms were originally bathrooms, showers and dressing areas.

- b. Second floor: The second floor shows little evidence of alteration from the original floor plans. An l-shaped mezzanine, added in 1978, is in the southeast classroom. According to the 1910 floor plan, four classrooms in each corner and an office between the smaller two on the northern side made up the second floor. Two wood partitions originally in the main

corridor have been removed. A movable chalkboard divides the classrooms on the southern side of the building. Originally, the chalkboards could be raised into the attic via a pulley system, located in the attic and counter weighted by sand-filled oaken barrels. This system is no longer operational.

Original plans indicated double door entries to the north classrooms from the head of each stairwell. No physical evidence remains to suggest any prior existence of doors in these locations. Several other classroom doors have been replaced with hollow-core flush-panel doors, originally they were six-light opaque glass doors with a solid lower panel. A solid-core flush-panel door provides access to an ante-chamber of a single office between the two northern classrooms. This door is infilled into the original arched opening, which once had a door and an arched transom window, evident by a continuous crack in the wallboard.

2. Stairways:

Two stairways flank the building on the east and west. Newel posts mark the corner of each stair landing. The original open rail has since been enclosed with solid panels.

3. Flooring:

Diagonal decking covered with 12" x 12" linoleum tile makes up the auditorium floor. The floors of the east, west and south hallways are made of concrete, while the stairs are constructed of wood covered with linoleum. The floor of the stage and rooms at the north end of the building are of wood. The flooring on the second floor is made up of similar linoleum tile.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

Years of use and attempts to meet fire and building code requirements resulted in a variety of wall and ceiling materials.

On the first floor, the interior siding has been damaged or removed in numerous locations. Gypsum wallboard lines the hallways. Blue particleboard siding covers all of the walls of the auditorium. The stage walls are covered mostly with lath and plaster, although some dark-stained beaded wood siding, which was the

original finish in the auditorium and the stage, is visible. The walls of the back rooms on the first floor are sided with a mixture of lath and plaster and gypsum board. The hallway ceiling is made up of gypsum board, while the ceiling throughout the rest of the building is composed of multiple types of acoustic tile hung ceiling, which is lower than the original ceiling.

The walls of the second floor are gypsum board or lath and plaster in the upstairs hallway and the stairwells. Chair rails and picture rails extend throughout the hallway and stairwell.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: On the first floor the doors to the west dressing room and the east stage area are five panel. The single bathroom doors are one panel and the east and west side doors into the auditorium have two lights at the top with four panels below. In the south hall, the two doors have three vertical panels with one horizontal panel above and one horizontal panel below. Those two doors are thought to be from the original central south entrance.

All of the doors on the second floor have six lights with one panel, except the closet doors, which have five horizontal panels. The doors to the vestibule into the office and the northwest classroom are hollow-core flush-panel doors.

- b. Windows: Second floor interior windows are similar to the auditorium clerestory windows. They consist of twenty or twenty-four lights and pivot with hinges in the center.

6. Decorative features and trim:

Exposed brackets along the south elevation and the timber-like exposed framing of the enclosed arcade decorate the front. Similarly exposed brackets decorate the east and west elevations. Decorative moldings and dentils under a continuous sill at the second floor level and under the windows around the building provide extra architectural character. The exposed roof framing above the east and west entrances on the south elevation adds to the overall visual interest of the Allen Auditorium.

The building, as originally drawn in 1910-11, had the name Sheldon Jackson School across the front. However, when it was built, Richard H. Allen Memorial was put on the signboard across the front instead. Originally, it was brown but the letters were painted white at one time. The signboard is layered with vertical boards in the background, with decorative nameplates and circles attached. The decorative circles of the nameplate have vertical wooden siding inside them and are also painted brown.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, ventilation: Steam heat from the laundry and boiler building and a heating system in the crawlspace originally heated the Allen Auditorium (see basement floor plan). However, the school eventually installed radiators, which are the most recent form of heating in the building. Also, a vent runs from the attic to the stage.
- b. Electricity: Proof of additions and changes is evident, with connections ranging from the oldest wiring to the fairly modern lighting panels for the stage.
- c. Plumbing: Existing bathrooms have independent plumbing. Original plumbing lines and drains for bathrooms partially remain in the crawlspace but are no longer in use.

D. Site

Historic landscape design:

The original campus design by Ludlow and Peabody focused on the development of the quadrangle landscape. The building site was the original homestead of the Reverend John Brady. Many of the earlier buildings were left standing at the time of the 1910-11 construction and later salvaged. The plantings and landscaping around the campus were minimal at first construction, but since the completion of the campus, trees, shrubs, and flowers have been planted. The central quadrangle remains grass with paved walkways. According to Peter Corey, curator of Sheldon Jackson Museum, a road ran in front of Allen Auditorium and Home Mission Monthly Hall (the large boys' dormitory, later renamed Whitmore Hall) and North Pacific Hall (the large girls' dormitory). That road no longer exists, however, a paved sidewalk is in approximately the same location. Also, four mountain ash trees lined the front walk to Allen Auditorium -- two trees were on

each side. In the late-1970s one of the two trees near the auditorium building fell, so the school cut down the other tree to regain the symmetry.<sup>38</sup>

The 1910 Ludlow and Peabody site plan “was the first and remains today the only plan fully carried out for a complex of buildings in Alaska.”<sup>39</sup> In relation to the school, the Allen Auditorium occupied the central position on campus, reflecting its importance as the center of campus life and its importance to the city of Sitka, as many of the city’s events were held there.

The design of these buildings with their unusual shortened ridgeroll give these buildings a softness of design repeating the softness of the hills behind the campus, and one can even wax poetic when observing that the white second floor color is reminiscent of the snows at the top of the mountains behind the campus.<sup>40</sup>

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#### B. Early Views:

Photograph of Allen Auditorium Building (Richard H. Allen Memorial) at Sheldon Jackson School. Sheldon Jackson Collection, Stratton Library, Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka, AK, 27 July 1934.

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<sup>38</sup>Peter Corey, telephone conversation with author, 5 August 1996.

<sup>39</sup>Crittenden, “The Architecture of Sheldon Jackson College Campus,” 38.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 36.

Photograph of Richard H. Allen Memorial by Normand Dupre. Sheldon Jackson Collection, Stratton Library, Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka, AK, date unknown.

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#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the Richard H. Allen Memorial was undertaken by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a division of the National Park Service. The project was executed under the general direction of Blaine Cliver, chief of HABS/HAER, and Robert D. Barbee, Alaska Regional Director, National Park Service. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1996 by Steven M. Peterson, project director; Steven Blashfield and Anne Seaton, architectural technicians; and Elizabeth L. Ewing and Linda Cook, historians.