

Marathon on Mt. Marathon & July 4th Parade

The Fourth of July was THE highlight of the social calendar -haha- of Seward and one of the highlights of the Highlight for kids was the sawdust pile south of the Alaska Shop. It was probably 12 feet square and filled with a foot of sawdust. Someone threw piles of silver and pennies into the sawdust and stirred it around. On a signal to 'go', kids were allowed to climb into the box and hunt for coins. Anything they found they could keep.

I found 23 photos of this event, though I can't tell if they are from the same year or not. The highlights really were the race up the mountain and the parade. We went to the top to watch the runners circle the rock at least two years and one year we descended on the back side, the north side, going down a long, steep, snow field.

The Marathon Race had not yet gained the notoriety it has today, though its fame today probably has more to do with the growth of the yuppie culture with its 'extreme' sport fixation than on advertising. I say that because even back then the race was famous enough to attract Sven Johanssen from Sweden, an Olympic competitor, as well as a runner from Japan. In this image the pair of them are reaching the crest together. But Sven went on to beat the Japanese man.

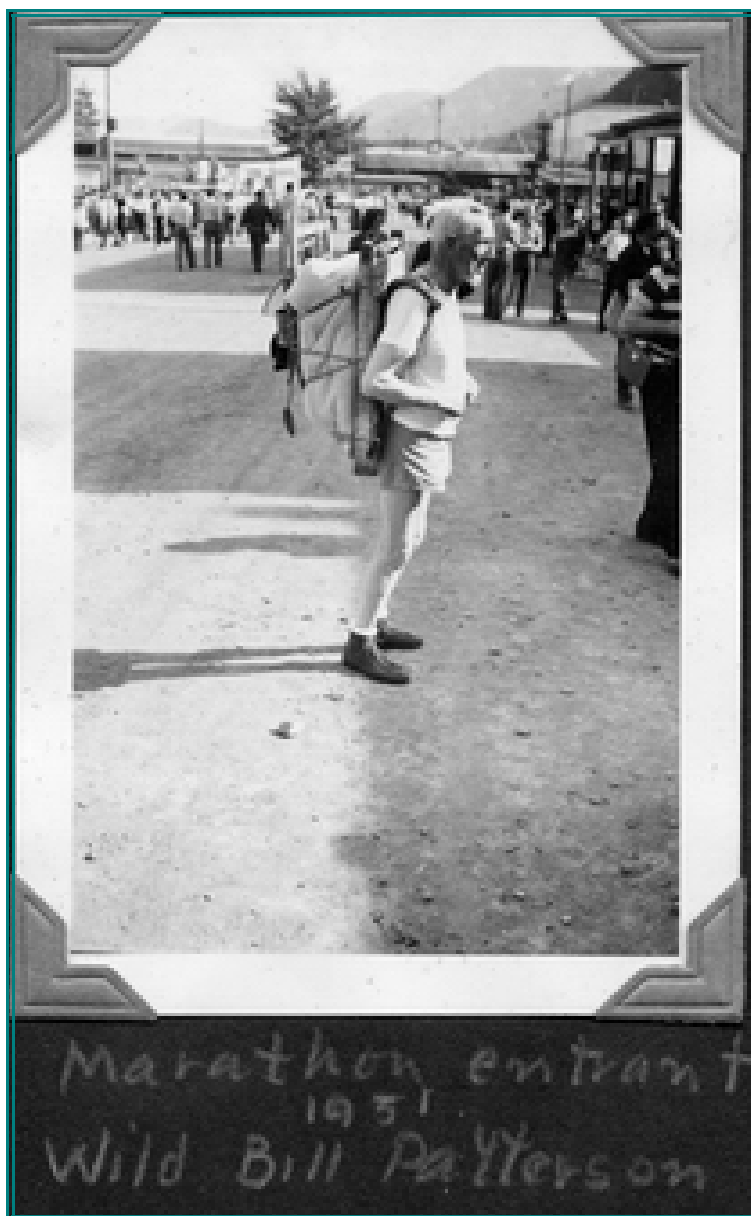


It was a strange feeling to be up there on the top of the cold mountain, knowing that runners were on their way up but not be able to see them. The race official on the top had a military walkie talkie so he let us know when the race started but we didn't see any runners until they emerged from the cloud cover as in this photo. You can tell from the snow over on Big Bear Mountain to the right just

how cold it was.

The race had been run from about 1915 almost every year so it had a historical quality even when I was there. One of the fixtures of the race was an old man -truly old man- named "Wild Bill Patterson." Bill would show up with an old pack board outfitted with a frying pan, bed roll, snow shoes, spoon, and miscellaneous gear one would use to set up a camp. He did start the race but only as an honorary gesture

because at this age he didn't even go to the foot of the mountain. It was a gesture to history that he repeated and townspeople loved it. Dad labeled this photo 1951 but I think it was a few years later simply because the other photos are later, i.e. Sven didn't run until something like 1953. This image was taken from about half way down the main block, looking toward the bay. Notice that this main street was not paved. Not paved and notice all the small rocks lying every where. The crowd seen here was enormous for Seward though I hear that today 10,000 visitors appear which is appalling and is why I didn't schedule our visit until July 6th which was a good idea. The sawdust box was to the left of the cluster of people on the left of the photo.



Once more, the presence of the military was manifested, this time in the parade. In the top photo, you see our small band standing to the side of the road as the large contingent of troops marches proudly by.



In the middle photo the troops are the large body far down the street, with a small group of boy scouts in the middle and a troop of cub scouts behind them. This is main street and is taken at about the fire station which is still located at that point in town.



The church behind the troops is the Methodist church which has been moved or something. These troops came down for the occasion from Anchorage, an honor to the town that otherwise had no military installation of any kind, even though it has been a central military location during WW II.



To get more mileage out of the parade which covered about 4 blocks, the participants followed a route that had them return back up 4th Avenue to the school where they had started. The Brownie Scouts are right in front of Durant's Hardware store and on the right edge of the photo is Warner's Market where we bought most of the groceries that we bought.



In addition to Wild Bill Patterson, there were sourdoughs -old time Alaskans- from the Seward Pioneers & Auxiliary, Igloo No. 6 who showed up with a clever dog sled, i.e. a small sled set on wheels, pulled by a single dog. The old man leading the dog had a long white bear, fitting the role.



Parades have apparently always attracted all kinds of entries. A bunch of kids are outfitted variously here.

Daniel Boone shows up as the little kid with the coon skin cap and Pa Kettle is in the sweater, with a painted on moustache, pulling the wagon. Note how the adults tend to be dressed up in fancy clothes to watch the parade, even in Seward. Times have changed. The lineman here was beloved by all. Monkeys have that effect on kids all of whom want one, all of whom would hate it if they did by all accounts. We did in fact have a party line in Seward so this

was no joke. The bus in the background was from the Jesse Lee home, bringing kids in for the festivities.



The band obviously had no choice but to march, particularly since this community had just forked out a lot of voluntary dough for those uniforms. I'm the little kid in the middle just at the edge of the church building, pretending to blow a silver clarinet.



Here I'm looking at the music trying to figure out what I was supposed to do. I really couldn't play a single song and I am sure the director knew it, but he was apparently desperate enough to have bodies that he included me because at least I wasn't squeaking to make his other performers sound bad. So bizarre. Notice how much snow there is on Marathon. That's where the runners were headed in a short time.

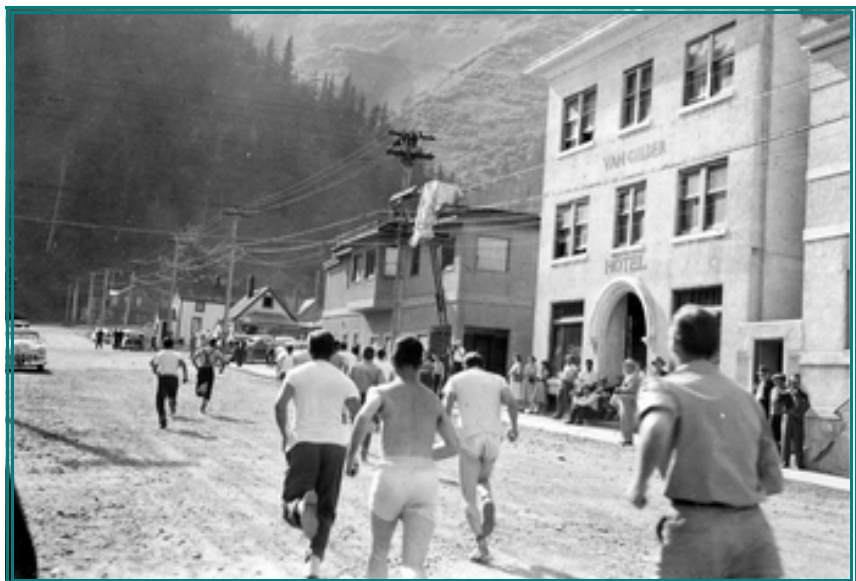


The highlight of the parade this particular year was Lady Godiva. Hmmm, based on the shadows, there was sunshine this day so dad did take these July 4th photos over a number of years. This girl was the hit of the show, attracting a lot of unbelieving curious people who had a full range of thoughts I expect. She's in front of the Seward Steam Laundry. The tree is in the vacant lot on the corner of 4th and Adams



so my house was behind these buildings several blocks. The Van Guilder Hotel shows to the right of the tree.

Here the runners on Adams street, being lead by a few show offs who did not actually make the race, have just turned in front of the Van Guilder. The Van Guilder is on the right, behind which is the movie theater. This year you see that Marathon had no snow on it.



Runners were allowed to take any route they wanted to the mountain and some of them went right through our yard on their way which didn't bother us because we understood the rules of the race. It was sort of an honor, actually, to be picked that way. See the car on the left? That's right in front of Joe Guthrie's bakery where we learned about commercial baking.

Dad took this photo of me, Jack Parrot and Dick, up there in the cold clouds while we waited for the runners. The race official has the two way radio in hand, talking to the men at the start-finish line. I don't know his name but I know him.



This is a good shot showing how runners rounded the rock where the official sat. At that

point he announced for the official below who had just passed. A pretty lonely event in those days when there were only a few dozen competitors. The kid in the front has his trusty dog with him.



Here's Sven rounding the top in a different year than the first photo above with the Japanese man. The same official presides here. Note the snow.



Obviously no time is spent on the top so Sven is headed back down into the clouds on the snow pack above the shale slide that all runners use. When they get into the shale the jump 15-20 feet at a time and are able to descend the 3,000+ feet in 15 minutes.



After all the runners had rounded the top, we decided to descend on the back side. You can make out the Jesse Lee Home just behind Dick's head. That's about where we came out. Dad's wearing the U.S. front and back pack that we took up on top of Big Bear that day.



I don't have any idea how long the snow field was but it was a glorious slide because the slope was so steep that we didn't even need a sled to slide. The only problem was that my bum was so wet and cold by the time the slide finished I could hardly stand. But it was glorious. In these two photos you can see most of the run.



In the top one you see where we started the slide. In the bottom, with the X that dad marked, you can see where we ended. The black ball down there is Dick and Jack on their way. The distance traveled gives you an idea of how fast we were moving because dad had to manually wide his film in that interval.



Dad got a great shot of me on another slide that shows just how steep it was. Jack is the guy following me who is spinning out of control.



Ptarmigan Hunt on Mt. Alice

Dad decided that he wanted to hunt for ptarmigan on Mt. Alice, or for grouse. I don't remember which. We loaded up and headed over the head of the bay on the Old Nash Road. Dad took his 30.06 Enfield, I took mom's 30.30 and Dick took the single shot .22. We were armed and dangerous. Well, we were armed.

Judging from our size, I'd guess this was around 1953-2 when I was 10-11 years old. The weather was typically gray, but obviously not raining, at least not hard enough for us to worry about it. One got used to grayness and rain and just lived with it. We didn't worry about it, except that we didn't like to get wet but as far as it affecting what we did, it didn't. We just carried on.

Based on the following photos, I judge that we climbed about a third of the way up Alice. These photos were probably taken at about the level of my



right ear in the photo on the left here. It was exciting to be out hunting with dad, but we didn't have any luck. I don't remember even seeing any birds but that was OK with us. We were out there hunting with him and that was what it was all about.

This photo was taken at about the same place, but from a different location. I have a memory that Art went with us but he doesn't show in the photos. He was probably the one who took the photo, but I'm not sure because if he went, Billy would have gone too, so I don't know how dad got these photos.



May Titus, Red Card & rancid seal oil

May Titus was an Eskimo woman that mom and dad met out at the TB San. They developed an affectionate relationship with her that persisted through our stay in Seward. Indeed, she became sort of a member of our family, sort of like a distant relative that mom and dad looked after.

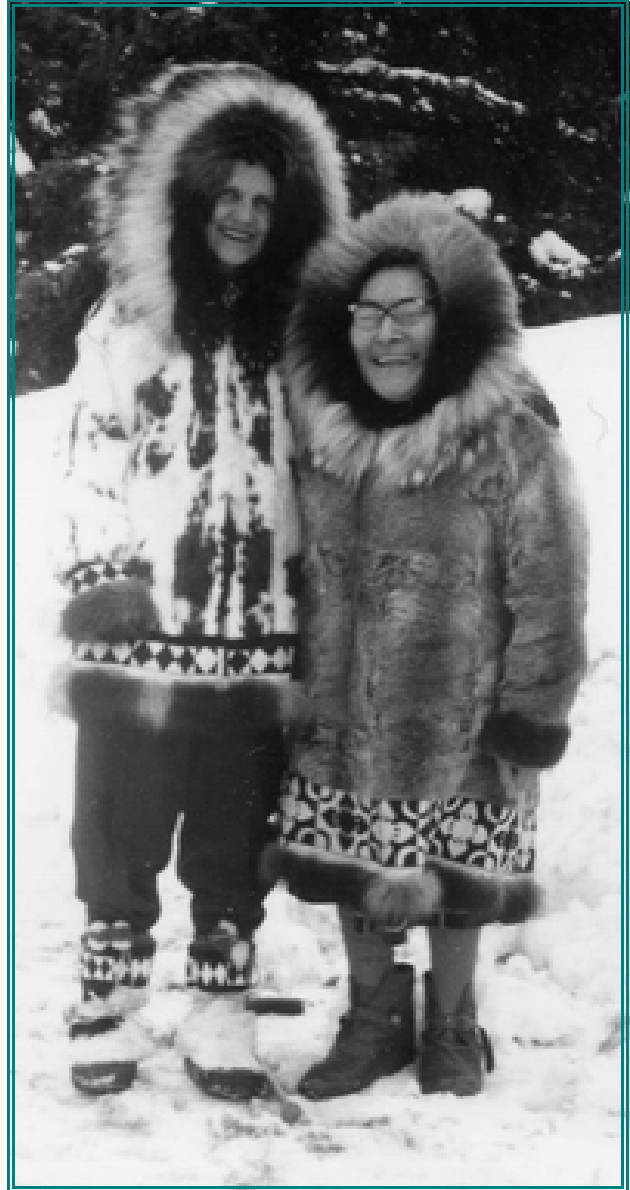
May did her therapy and treatment out at the San but later she moved into town into a small apartment that was on Third Avenue. From our the front of our house, we could look across the vacant lot across the street and see the two story

apartment building she lived in, and could even see the back window of her rooms. Given her disability, she was limited in how far she could walk, so mom made an arrangement with her. She told May that whenever she needed any assistance from us, she was to put a large green square in the window we could see. Then when we saw it, mom or one of us boys would walk over to see what she needed and then we would take care of it.

In this photo May and mom pose in their parkas so mom can show off the lovely parka that dad asked May to make for mom for her birthday. May also made the mukluks.

Some days May needed to go down to Warner's market and was afraid to go alone on account of the pack of wild dogs that prowled the streets. They actually didn't pose much of a threat although we were prudent around them, but her experience as a child with the meanness of Eskimo sled dogs remained with her and gave her an enormous anxiety. We would walk her to the store, carrying her big stick just in case, and then walk her back home.

One of the things she asked us to do was sort of unpleasant, not because there was anything wrong with it, just that we were not culturally prepared for it. She asked us to go over to one of the Quonset huts near the Army dock and pick up a quart jar of seal oil that someone had given her. That was fine, except that it somehow spilled a bit in the car. The smell was pretty pungent because the method of making seal oil from the white blubber is to sew it into a sealskin and let it sit for a year. During that time the fat is reduced to a yellow oil that has a potent sort of unpleasant smell.



The other thing I wasn't culturally prepared for was eating raw frozen caribou. She had received some from one of her friends so she offered it to all of us. She handed us a strip of frozen meat that was marbled with fat and ice crystals along with an Ulu. We put the stick in our mouth and gingerly cut a piece off with the knife. Once more, this meat had been let sit around for a long time so it had started to turn and did not taste at all good. We ate it, however, as a courtesy to May and politely refused more when she offered it. She understood and was teasing us.

Parties, Penuche, Taffy & Table Games

As Dick and I grew up, mom and Mary made sure to have activities to keep us busy, as much out of fear of us getting into trouble, as out of a desire to be nice to us. In Seward the latter was pretty easy and they didn't want anything to do with it. Ablanalps lived up the street from us on 2nd Avenue about 5 houses so they participated in these events with Gen Schaefermeyer who live next door. These four families constituted the bulk of the Seward Branch and our lives were inextricably bound up with the faith.

In those days people played board games and card games as their entertainment at home. There was no television at all in Alaska at the time so people had to find other things to do. Parcheesi, Sorry, Monopoly, Touring, Flinch, Chinese Checkers, Assembly Line, etc. Mom made sure to check out new games just before Christmas to see if there were any new ones that she liked. That's how we got the game Cootie in about 1954. It was the first of the plastic games like that and was a source of excitement to play.

When a party was organized by the mothers, several card tables were set up in the front room for kids to sit at to play games. Sometimes competitions were set up between teams or tables that required scores to be kept of who won what and prizes were given to the winners.

Food and candy always figured in these parties. Cup cakes were standard although regular iced cakes showed up. Ice cream was served with the cake, and cookies might be served with a kool aid punch. We drank soda pop at home but it wasn't usually served at parties because it cost too much for one family. When the mothers were really brave they would have a taffy pull which was always fun. The major problem with taffy was that people could burn their hands easily. Even when

you succeeded in not burning your hands, you still finished with a great sensitivity in your fingers and palms from the heat. It was satisfying to pull taffy and convert it from the clear syrupy form into a glistening white, fluffy form that was braided on wax paper dusted with powdered sugar to dry. We'd mix a food color into the taffy, green, red, yellow and blue, the colors that came in the Schilling food color box.

Mom would make penuche sometimes, an odd tasting sort of fudge. She loved it and I would eat it because it was sweet, but I preferred chocolate fudge or peanut butter fudge. The best candy she made, however, was divinity with walnuts and on special occasions with maraschino cherries.

Model Airplanes

The long dark winter days forced us to retreat to the house to play. Other kids weren't coming out either so we were left to our own devices. Mom and dad suggested that we learn to make model airplanes, an idea we loved. The planes we built were all old ones, reflecting the era.

We bought Tester kits because they were complete, except for the dope to paint the model. These models were constructed of think sheets of balsa wood that had blue patterns stamped on them. Some of the pieces were die-cut so could be pressed out of the sheet while other pieces had to be cut out with a razor blade. Exacto knives hadn't reached our world so we relied on razor blades, the safety razor kind because they were safe - there was only one cutting edge.

In that era jet airplanes were novel things. They had apparently been flown first by the Germans near the end of WW II, but the US did not have a credible response at the time although it, too, had a wooden-bodied jet in the works. This meant that all of the airplanes that I loved were propellor driven planes, in particular, the military airplanes. I built Piper Cubs and other civilian planes but it was the military planes that excited me the most. Remember, I lived in a little town that was supported by the military, we were in the Korean War and people had patriotism and had respect for the military.



Figure 26

<http://www.williamsbrosinc.com/planes.html>

One of my all-time favorites was the P-51 Mustang, a single-seater with an enormous engine that made it an agile dog-fighter. It had something like three machine guns in the leading edge of each wing and served as an escort for the big bombers that were flying over Europe and the Pacific Ocean, and in Korea. They were real-time, on-line things for me, active in the air. The shape of the plane is what appealed the most. The long nose, which housed a powerful piston engine, gave it a sleek appearance as did the enormous air scoop on the bottom. I made several of these.



Figure 27 www.web-birds.com/8th/20/20-00.jpg

Another favorite was the F-4 Corsair. It was also a single-seater over-powered machine, running a huge Rolls-Royce engine. It was one of the stars of WW II for the Allies. The wing was fun to build because it was V-shaped and required extra skill.



Another was the British Spitfire. It was the plane that finally defeated the German Luftwaffe over England.



Another was the P-47 Thunderbolt. Notice how similar all of these planes are, which is not surprising I suppose because they were designed to do the same thing.

Some of the models we made came in kits with thin sheets of balsa wood die-cut while others had to be constructed with thin stringers. Later we started to buy plastic models which were intriguing because the pieces were stamped in sets that had to be dissembled. The hardest part about the plastic models was trying to not mar the shiny finish with too much airplane dope but using enough to glue things together.

Painting them was equally difficult because there was no latitude for error. If you painted over a section two times, there was twice as much dope and it showed where no the balsa models this problem didn't exist. The dope we used was this exact set. We discovered the concept of buying things is lots. It cost less to pay 98cents for a set of 10 bottles of dope than it did to buy 10 individual bottles. You had to also buy a bottle of solvent to

clean your brushes because they would harden into plastic and would be useless.

After we finished a model, we'd ask dad to hang it up in our bedroom over the closet made out of the coffin case transported to Seward. They hung there, turning in any air currents, looking like they were flying. For some reason one day Dickie lost it and started destroying them. At that point I think I had one of the really complicated large, tissue-covered airplanes so he got in serious trouble. I suspect today that he was probably justified in being angry because life in that little house was anything but loving and peaceful. Perhaps he could have found another outlet but I don't really blame him. He reports that what changed for him was that he learned that he should only destroy his own models.



Figure 30

freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~johnjay/graphics/p%2047.gif



Junior Gateway Swingers

As we entered puberty and began to be aware of girls, mom and dad realized that something needed to be done to provide social contacts in order that we would have what ever it was they wanted us to have.

So mom and dad bought an advanced portable record player in order to stage square dances and regular dances for us and other kids who wanted to attend. They ordered via mail order 78 RPM records and LP's that had the music they wanted and dad became a proficient square dance caller. Their collection of records is still in the tan and brown metal box in the closet on mom's side of the studio at 2821 North.

In addition to the square dancing mom and dad taught a lot of folk dances, schottisches, polkas, and other dances like the bunny hop. These dances were a highlight of the week because I got to spend time with girls I liked, holding their hands, dancing with them. There was no pairing up of kids, it was just a gathering of kids of the same age for a social.

This dancing was very strenuous and by the end of the night, which was 10pm, you were sweating from the exertion. Cookies and punch were served so we could spend time talking and telling jokes and enjoying each others company.

To honor this dedicated group of young people, dad designed a logo that included the name of the group, "Gateway Swingers".



Tiny cave on Little Bear

There was a small cave half way up Little Bear a bit further north of the Whitmore house. I would go up and look into it. It was actually a tunnel affair that as perhaps 20 feet long and wide enough for me to crawl through. Except that I didn't have the courage to do that. I don't know why that was. I could see through it from one side to the other and I knew it wasn't going to collapse on me but the idea of crawling through haunted me because (1) I was afraid to do it, but (2) I really wanted to do it. I'd go there several times in the summer and wonder.

Mike the Big Bomb

The Hydrogen Bomb was the "Big Bomb" but I bet none of you kids have much memory of it, don't have as much understanding about it as you do about the atomic bomb. How could you. The media didn't belabor this one because



Figure 33 <http://mt.sopris.net/mpc/military/mike.html>

it doesn't have the political glamor of the atom bomb used to kill thousands of Japanese. But in terms of sheer power, this bomb was just incredible. Here are the words of Thomas Power [former Commander in Chief of the Strategic Air Command] that give you a sense of what's I'm talking about:

"No hydrogen bomb has ever been dropped in wartime, but this much we have learned from testing it--the bomb is so unbelievably powerful that, in comparison, the atom bombs loosed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki seem like mere firecrackers..."

"It would have taken millions of B-17 Flying Fortresses of World War II fame to carry a load of conventional bombs that would match the explosive power of a single multi-megaton nuclear weapon."

(Design for Survival_1965, at 34.)

Pretty astonishing comparison. "Millions" of airplane to match the explosion of one hydrogen bomb.

Here's an image of the bomb which was actually large to begin with:



Figure 34 <http://mt.sopris.net/mpc/military/mike.html>

The first test, code-named "Mike", in November, 1951 just astonished the observers. Carey Sublette reported some of its features:

"Mike created a fireball 3 miles wide; the 'mushroom' cloud rose to 57,000 ft in 90 seconds, and topped out in 5 minutes at 135,000 ft - the top of the stratosphere- with a stem eight miles across."

The cloud eventually spread to 1000 miles wide, with a stem 30 miles across. 80 million tons of soil were lifted into the air by the blast."



Figure 35 <http://nuketesting.enviroweb.org/hew/Wallpaper.html>

Carey Sublette <http://www.milnet.com/milnet/nukeweap/Nfaq8.html>

Those numbers are incredible but predictable since the mechanism is the same as that of the sun itself.

Other hydrogen bomb tests followed Mike. The largest one was "Castle Bravo" in March 1954. I imagine this is the one I remember being shown in a large image on the front page of the newspaper because it exceeded the predicted power by 250%. That yield stirred everyone up because it was so enormous.

These bomb blasts are amazing and formed part of my childhood in Seward. It is an

odd thing to look back and see how filled my universe was with military things and to note that I do not harbor anxiety about it. I did not grow up fearful of the nuclear atom bomb. Indeed, I viewed it as a wonderful thing. I did. Radiation is nasty I know but the Atom bomb was an invention of my country that saved thousands of lives and shortened the war. Oh, I know the media claim that's not true and they are as entitled to their opinion as I am to mine. And the hydrogen bomb was simply a vastly more powerful bomb than the atom bomb so was something I admired and respected. When it was announced in the media I hear and understood with the understanding of a child and remember that understanding. I have always loved and respected military things.

Winter Picnics on Little Bear

If you use your imagination, you might see a largish pine tree on the mountain right behind the peak of the roof of the front porch. That tree is the tree that Dick and I sort of appropriated as our own. Our 1951 Chevy is sitting in front of the house, Schaefermeyer's house is on the left and Whitmore's is in the right background. The snow-covered boat in the back yard is the "Jimmarie".



Anyway, in the early spring when the ground was still covered with snow and ice, the days started to lengthen. Occasionally the sun would shine and when that happened, it was too much for us little kids who had been cooped up for the winter. We'd go to mom and ask her if she'd make us a lunch so that we

could go up to our tree for a picnic.

She would agree. She took out our Easter baskets which were a heavy wicker and would make us sandwiches. She'd put a pint fruit jar of milk into each basket with a couple of cookies. When it was ready, we'd take off. We'd didn't cut across Whitmore's yard even though that was the fastest route because it wasn't polite to cross other people's yards. We'd walk down the alley to Adams street and turn right a hundred yards to the foot of the mountain. There was a trail we knew that led directly to the tree. A log lay on the ground that we'd sit on so we weren't in the snow. We'd sit down side by side, open our sandwiches and look down at our house and the Episcopal Church and as much of the town as we could see. When we got thirsty, we'd open our pint jar of milk and take a swallow, particularly when we ate our cookies. That was a great picnic. It may not sound like much but after a long dark winter it was a lovely thing to finally be able to go on picnics on the mountain, even in the snow.

Fur Rendezvous

The Fur Rendezvous was a regular part of the background of my life in Seward. I heard about it the first year of course and we attended it two times in 1953 and 1956. I loved it. The Fur Rendezvous took place in Anchorage each spring and was almost an anachronism, a historical left-over. The number of trappers who spent the winter running "trap lines" in the interior had diminished by 1950, but they were still out there with active trap lines so the rendezvous continued to serve its original function. The Fur Rendezvous was originally a business function and its name reflects the influence of the French Trappers who were so dominant in North America.

Trappers took a winter's worth of grub and traps and gear and went out into the wilderness in the late fall. Remember that winter in Alaska is mostly darkness and the further north you go, the more the darkness. Even in Seward on the south edge of Alaska we only had 4-6 hours of light in the middle of the day - just the opposite of the summers when the two are reversed. So when trappers headed out alone, in a wilderness that had no roads, no electricity, nothing of civilization, they really were undertaking something heroic. I don't think I could do it even in my prime. It is too lonely and isolated which you probably think is precisely what I'd like but too much of a good thing is too much.

After they had selected the area they wanted to trap which was determined by the animals they sought, they set up camp, sometimes using a previously-built log cabin or creating a new structure and then set a series of traps. There were the nasty "leg traps" that I think are barbaric because they don't kill the animal. They just immobilize the animal, keeping it alive so that its pelt isn't damaged. The trapper then kills the critter when he finds it, a pretty nasty business. I'm not against using furs for coats but I do find this barbaric.

This string of traps was called a "trap line" and it was the exclusive possession of the man who set it up and ran it. No one raided another's trap lines without penalty since the man's livelihood was at stake. A trap line demanded tremendous amounts of work. In the dark and alone or with a companion. The trapper had to make the rounds on the trap line on show shoes on a regular basis. If he didn't get to the a trapped animal soon enough, another animal would, and would ruin the pelt during the meal. The weather obviously affected his ability to travel so he had to work hard when he could.

The trappers would flense the hides on the spot so they didn't have to haul the carcass back to the cabin. They'd leave the carcass there for animals to eat, and would haul the hide back to the cabin where they would refine the quality of the hide by removing the rest of the fat and flesh, and then stretching the pelts on frames to dry. This was necessary to give the pelt a uniform shape without wrinkles and to make it easier to transport. The shape of the frames was dictated by the shape of the particular animal. A beaver pelt has a different shape than a fox so each kind had to have its own kind of stretcher. These frames were hung under lean-to's where they would be protected from snow so they could dry, which they really did. Here's a drawing from <http://www.mntrappers.com/skinning.html> of a racoon skin on a stretcher.

It was a tough lonely life that lasted until spring. The

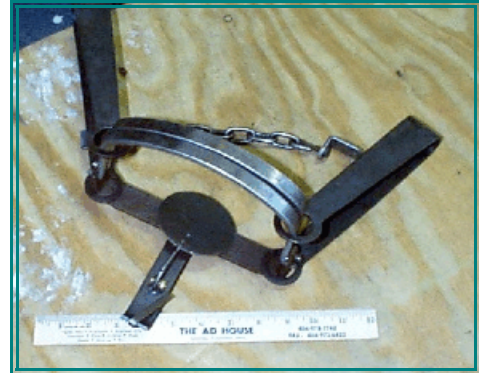


Figure 37

<http://www.bugspray.com/catalog/products/page748.html>

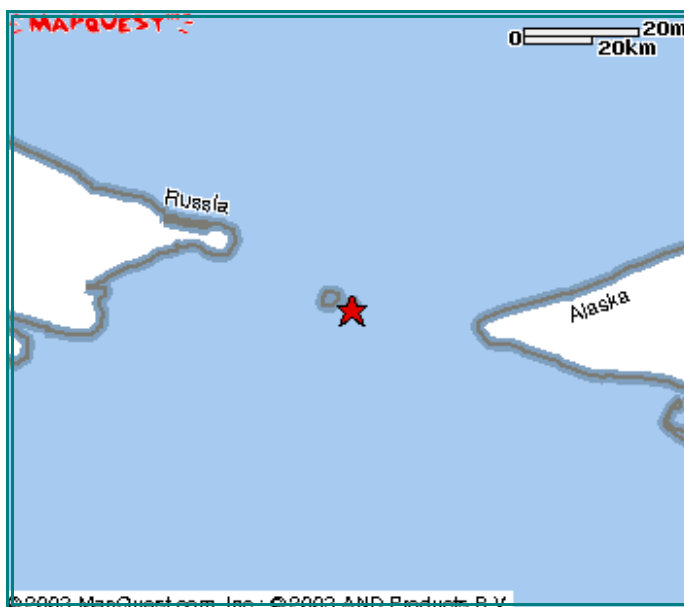


trappers knew when the fur buyers were going to congregate in Anchorage so they timed their return to coincide. They removed their hides from the stretches and made up packets of hides, tied them securely to be transported by dog sled. At the rendezvous, buyers and trappers go together and checked each other out, each one trying to get the best of the other. The hides were graded depending on the quality of the pelt itself, the age of the animals, the quality of the flensing and stretching and so on.

After the sales were consummated, the trappers were flush with dough and were ready to celebrate. Anchorage being a wild frontier town provided outlets for these trappers, collecting along the way a share of the proceeds from the winter's work. So the fur rendezvous was part business and part celebration which spanned the spectrum from bawdy houses and whisky to more genteel activities. The latter included plays, shows and art exhibits.

King Islanders & Eskimos from Little Diomede

In 1953 we first went to Anchorage for the rendezvous and then again in 1956. We saw marvelous sights that live in my memory today. We saw the masses of people, the Eskimos and Indians, sled dogs and attended a memorable exhibition put on by Eskimos King Island and Little Diomede. Little Diomede was one of two islands in the Bearing Straits that separates Russia from Alaska a mere 50 miles across. They obviously wore their parkas and mukluks [fur boots with heavy soles of walrus skin that the women literally chewed to get the shape needed - which wore their teeth down to the gums over time].



I remember being intrigued at the technical thing that happened just before the exhibition started. A photographer in an old flannel plan shirt stood up and

discussed the camera settings that people should use to get clear photos - he talked about flash bulbs [these were the old-fashioned kind made out of glass and filled with a mass of magnesium fibers that ignited when touched with an electrical spark. The bulbs were coated with clear plastic for black and white work and with a pale blue plastic for color work. The plastic wasn't just to determine the color of the flash - it was also a protective jacket that held the fragments when the glass bulb fractured from the intense heat. The heat was so intense that serious burns would result if one held the freshly fired bulbs. Magnesium fires are dreaded in industrial and manufacturing settings because they will burn through thick sheets of steel. That's why it is nearly impossible to quench the fire of a burning helicopter air frame after a crash.], F-stops and shutter speeds, a foreign language to me at the time.] After he finished his presentation and answered a few questions, the show started.


Mom saved the program from 1956. Notice who the sponsors are. What a kick. "Business and Professional" anyone sounds really funny when referring who lived there then. I am sure there were such, at least in Anchorage, but don't get carried away with visions of what you grew up with in this category.

They were doing a wonderful thing in fact and I benefitted from it so am glad they did it. The name just sounds so funny.

FUR RENDEZVOUS
ESKIMO SHOWS

Sponsored By
ANCHORAGE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB

Underwritten By
GREATER ANCHORAGE, INC.



MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM
February 23 to 25, 1956
4:00 P. M. 8:00 P. M.

The following page is the inside of the program which was really extensive. I was little so had a hard time seeing over the adults sitting in front of me but I did manage to get a good look of lots of the things that went on.

SAMMY MOGG

AND HIS

Eskimo Dancers

FROM KING ISLAND AND LITTLE DIOMEDE

+

1. ISSOUCK Invitational Dance by Mary Mogg and Walter Kiminock
2. POILUK Invitational Dance by Group
3. SEAL HUNT
4. FAMILY SCENE Cutting Up Of Seal
5. KOMONASEAK Song and Story by King Islanders about one of the best dancers from Cape Prince of Wales — done by Oolahuk and Towowkiak, King Island
6. QWIASUK Making a song and dance by Kaputuk, Diomedes
7. ELLANA Egg hunting dance by Ellana of King Islands
8. SAYUNE A family dance by Supkuck and Gloria Jeanne Mogg
9. TALLIKTOIT Bench dance by the Women

INTERMISSION

10. ESKIMO SPORTS High Kicking, Rope Tricks
11. TINGAREE A dance made by a young fellow that was very unpopular in village
12. NOOTICTUG A dance using song from Wolf dance
13. MITT DANCE Two parts of Wolf Dance
14. COMEDY DANCE by Carl Katuk
15. NAYANGUK Message to Pt. Hope from Diomedede to come to big celebration by Maasuk and Oolakiak, Diomedede.
16. CONTEST DANCES: King Islanders Diomedes

Cast

KING ISLANDERS.....Sammy Mogg
Mary Mogg
Gloria Jean Mogg
Clara Sirloak
Mary Pushruk
Leo Koonook
John Kokuhuk
Tony Pushruk
Carl Kutuk
Frank Ellana

DIOMEDE ISLANDERS.....John Kiminok
Walter Kiminock
Vince Ahelik
Patrick Omiak
William Kaputuk
James Kiminock

+

COMMITTEE.....Miss Eleanor L. Sullivan, Chairman
Miss Sue Booch
Mrs. Bea Culver
Mrs. Boyd Crume
Miss Harriett Whittington

STAGE MANAGER.....Miss Kay Anderson
assisted by Donna Engel
M. M. McCrary
Maynard Dahlstrom

These people were mostly King Islanders. They had umiaks -large skin-covered boats for going out on the ocean- which were tipped up on their side as if they were wind-breaks, just as they would do at home for a village celebration.

The dancing was hypnotic but simple. A small group sat in front of the upturned umiak holding single-sided drums in one hand and a stick in the other. They were fairly wide so were low-pitched. The patterns were not complicated, most of the drums being struck simultaneously, nor was it fast. While they beat their drums, the drummers and other participants chanted their Songs in time to the drum beats. There were changes in pitch but no harmonies that I noticed.

The dancers moved slowly and in time with the drum beat, moving their feet in short steps, forward and backward. They clapped their hands and moved them in stylized patterns that apparently conveyed meanings like the dance patterns of many cultures.

Eskimos

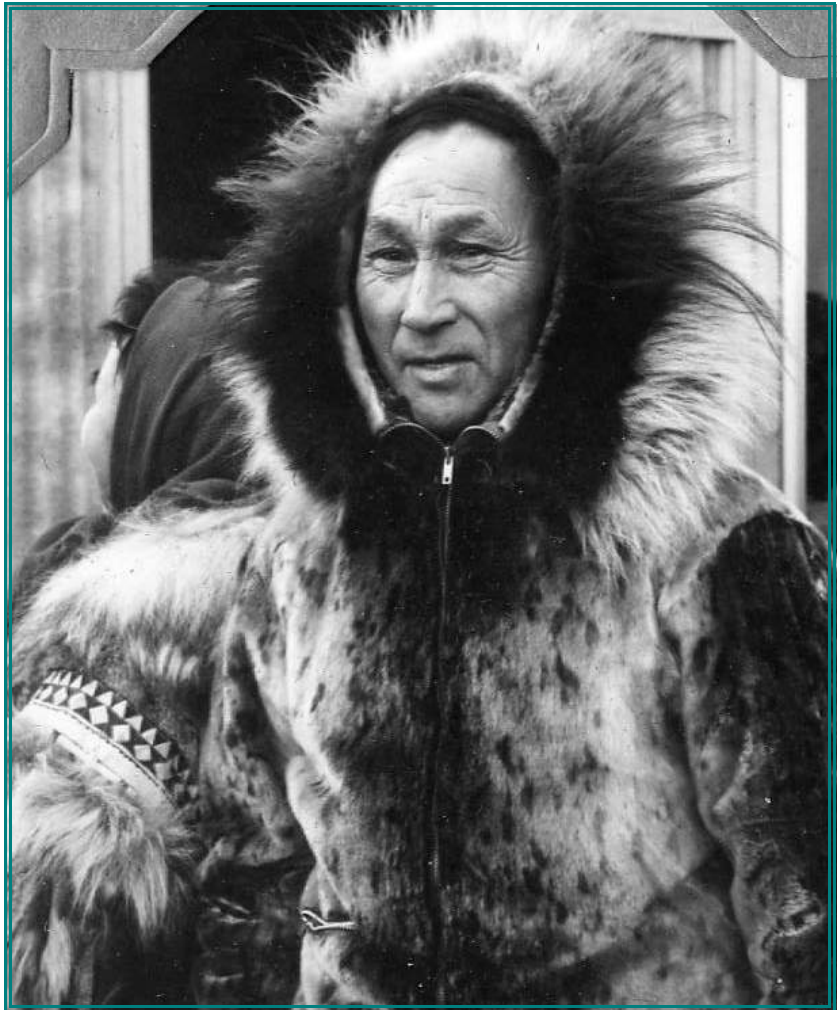
One of the highlights of the events was seeing more Eskimos. Mom and dad loved them as proved by their regular volunteer work at the TB



Sanatorium in Seward. Few people did that but they did and it rubbed off on me. I got dragged along now and then and met them. Some of their kids attended school with me and I was a member of the Eskimo troop so was familiar with them. Dad stirred up a deep interest in pre-technological cultures that resulted in a doctoral minor in 1973. Seeing more Eskimos was a great thing.

Dad took several dozen photos of these new people and they were beautiful. I'll just show you a few of the photos because I can't use that much space. They were beautiful and striking, men and women. Here's a shot of one of the pages of his photo album with his white pencil notes. I'll put two of these photos on the next page for you. Simply gorgeous people.

This man is wearing a parka made of harbor seal skins. Those seals were in Resurrection Bay so were familiar. Mom got pelts from some Eskimos in Seward to make her own parka that I'll show you about later. Note his ruff. It is not the complex "aurora" ruffs that the women have on their parkas below. But it looks like he has wolverine fur next to his face, an important thing because wolverine fur is different than other furs. When the moisture from one's breath passes over the sub-zero hairs, it does not freeze like it does on a beard and other kinds of fur. That makes it the preferred fur to surround the face.



The aurora ruff is made beautiful by layers of different kinds of skins behind the wolverine. The most ornamental cut of wolverine is a continuous strip cut to include the two front legs with the section of long hair over the shoulders. That way the claws are hanging down each side of the ruff.



Blanket Toss

The blanket toss done by a circle of 10 or 12 people who held the edge of a 'blanket' which was an animal hide in this case. This jumper is obviously outdoors doing the stunt. The person climbs into the center of the blanket after which the people pull outward forcibly and at the same time. This obviously tightened the hide and pushed the dancer upward. Then they relax the tension on the hide allowing the dancer to sag. Then they repeated their pull and relaxation cycle with increasing strength, bouncing the dancer higher and higher. The challenge to the dancer was to stay on his feet which was difficult since the tension from the circle was irregular, thereby making an uneven "surface". They offered Caucasians the chance to try it but few accepted the offer.



Sled Dogs

There were a dozen or so teams of dogs for show during the rendezvous. I don't remember that they were raced though they may have been. I think these teams were working teams for the most part. This shot appealed to dad and he painted it several times. Kobuk looked like the snarling dog though he didn't do that much.



Art Show

Dad entered some of his work in two of the three divisions for amateurs. He took first place in both amateur divisions as shown by the two ribbons on the next page. This was in the spring of 1956 at the same time we were starting to get up a head of steam for the Yukon Trip. The air was filled with emotional currents and it's sort of sad for dad that he didn't get to spend much time in Seward enjoying the notoriety that must have been associated with this double achievement, something that I

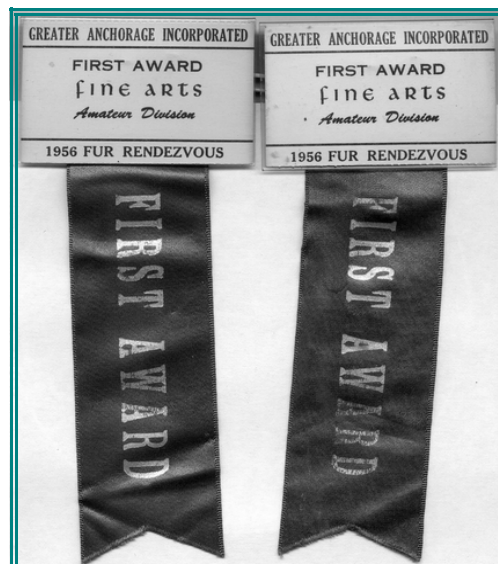


Figure 47

doubt few people ever do. He was a brilliant artist and I'll talk more about his art in Alaska elsewhere.

Fort Elmendorf & JATO bottles

The Korean Conflict, a euphemism for the Korean War (KW) that we lost, just like we lost the Viet Nam War¹, was in high gear when I was in Alaska. Indeed, a considerable amount of the shipping that dad dealt with on the docks was related in some manner with the KW and the military. So I was taken care because of it. This awareness that a war was being fought, and that it wasn't really that far from the end of the Aleutian Chain, part of my territory, created in me a real interest in the military. Someone had to protect and defend me and it seemed to me that this bunch was the most likely bunch to take care of that job.

I suspect that perhaps 30+% of the "gross state product", as opposed to the GNP, stemmed from the military and from this little bizarre war that seems to me

¹In the years following the painful nasty Viet Nam war my views clarified. I understand what was wrong about that war and can now state succinctly the metric that should be applied to any 'war' waged by the USA:

If the Federal Government cannot allow our men and women at arms the unlimited use of their armaments, then we should not be engaged in that 'war'.

It's that simple. If it is necessary to establish 'Rules of Engagement' that prevent our military from pursuing the enemy across certain political boundaries, then we sure as hell should not be there. There is no reason under the sun to sacrifice young people on the altar of self-serving political agendas, which are the ONLY reasons that the Viet Nam Conflict was even pursued. The devastating defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 made it abundantly clear that the Viet Nam were an implacable enemy, justifiably intent on defending their homelands from interlopers, and only men and women who had no moral compass would have done what they did to the youth of this country. It started with Kennedy, went through Johnson and finally Nixon finished this travesty.

But I hasten to add that I do not fault the military in any regard, even in those rare understandable instances where they engaged in impolitic exercises that I do understand and condone, I do not fault them. Sending a man into a boxing ring with one hand tied behind his back is the most cynical thing a promoter could do. And that is precisely what our politicians did to our youth. I look forward to seeing McNamara's punishment and suspect that it cannot be long enough to earn expiation for what he cynically did. I base that on what he has recently revealed wherein he says he didn't believe in the war!! Pour a bit of gas on him, but only a bit, and light it. Then repeat this until he is dead. Bastard.

today as a civilian to foreshadow the sad confusing Viet Nam war that was waged by our men at arms and directed by the incompetent politicians, may they rot in hell. But at the time I was in Alaska, the military deserved the greatest respect, perhaps in part because they basically supported our livelihood, but I think such a conclusion is too cynical. Perhaps it is true that they did, but there was still an over-weening love of the flag and a powerful sense of patriotism.

In those simple days, people at sporting events would actually stand, uncover their heads, turn obediently and respectfully to face the flag, put their right hands over their left heart and actually sing, out loud, so that god and the world could hear them and their cracked voice, the Star Spangled Banner. With a fervence that you really need to experience to understand how powerful the singing and the pledging was. It was like a tribe of people were reaffirming their commitment to a central leader and the value for which it stands in a visceral heart-felt way that actually mimics the state of mind and fervor of people devoted to a belief system that they reaffirm regularly with such communal expressions. Most impressive. I am still impressed and struck by the power of a group of people who publicly affirm their belief in their country and commitment to it. It is unfortunate that as a people today we have become embarrassed to show our love of our country, worse, that we don't even have a sense of love of country, and that we tolerantly sit and listen to the crappiest renditions of the Star Spangled Banners that merit a firing squad. We all politely smile and say 'Isn't that wonderful' when we should be puking on the arrogant singer who drug the meaning of our country in the mud. Enough of that. You get my drift and can see where I come from. The old saying, My country, right or wrong actually is a believable thing to me, which means more in the end that all of the "liberal", "enlightened" philosophies in the world..

As a by-product of this emphasis on the military, there were a variety of things done by the military to show their interest in and commitment to the common people, sort of an acknowledgment that they understood that it was through the sufferance of the common man that they received monies to continue the pursuit of their objectives, which were handed to them by the elected leaders.

Oh, I know that today the elected leaders have failed this country again and again, and that they are increasingly dishonest and cynical in their lives, William Clinton being the worst we have ever seen but unfortunately only the first of a series of increasingly dishonest men who should be castrated and put in front of firing squads because of their influence in the desecration of our national symbols and things, but in spite of these reasons to be cynical, I nonetheless maintain a

simple honest faith and hope -I know it is as much hope as belief, and that it is even MORE hope than belief- in the American system.

This system is the longest-lived democracy in the world. Even the extraordinary Greeks with their stunning Catholicism and creativity had been dead many many years before the 200th anniversary of their precious "city-states". After more than 200 years we arrogant childish immature unsophisticated Americans are STILL going forward, still the predominant world power, the power that could selfishly determine the direction the entire world will take over the next 100 years should we be so arrogant as to take the power in hand and simply "do it". But we know better, we are too simple, too unaffected by the nasty arrogant godless amoral media who, like Clinton, should be castrated and actually SLOWLY killed, or perhaps, the politicians are now too weak and spineless to engage in such presumptuous behavior. That must be the reason because it is not an honest commitment to bedrock values that guides their behaviors today. Most depressing.

Anyway, in those simple days in an economy that relied heavily on commerce with the military, when the populace had not become jaded and cynical, the military engaged in community activities that enriched the lives of us commoners, and forged stronger bonds with us and our government. Remember, please, that the first experimental hydrogen bomb had just been detonated by our government, a cause of pride and celebration. Because of this affection that existed between the military and the commoners, mom and dad decided to drive us kids from Seward one snowy day from Seward to Anchorage. So that we could go to Elmendorf Air Force Base, the destination of many of the munitions and cargo that dad personally off-loaded as a dockside longshoreman. The drive was not a simply drive in the park.

You must understand that. To drive from Seward to Anchorage in the winter was not like driving from Boise to SLC, or even across the continental US. This drive was an amazing exploration, even expedition even though it was only 128 miles, because one did not know what was going to happen in some of the wildest, most unprotected terrain in the US of A. For example, we did not know whether the road was even open. How do you feel today about undertaking a trip when you don't even know whether the road is open to wherever you are going? A dirt road, covered in snow and ice. Make the a trip of 128 miles. Throw in a few snow avalanches, territory where you see no one, there are not even villages, let alone motels or gas stations, and just make the road pure ice for the whole stretch. Start with those conditions. Would you even undertake the trip? My mom and dad did. Bless their souls. They were true pioneers. True, they didn't ride in the

Conestoga but look. A Conestoga wasn't even capable of doing what had to be done in Seward in those day. Its cattle would have died from the cold as would the men and women without proper clothing, without access to plants and forage for the animals, exposed to some of the nastiest and most unpredictable weather in the world. So why did Jim and Marie make those trips? First, selfishly. They could no longer stand to be isolated in the minuscule town of Seward. Second, and perhaps more importantly, they wanted to expose their sons, their off spring that they were responsible for, whom they loved, to the realities of government and the military and the purpose of dad's livelihood.

To make such a trip, the driver and passengers must be of a mind, i.e. they must agree that they are willing to undertake this risky expedition. Kids actually had no choice, obviously. Then the vehicle must be outfitted with the things required in the event of a serious emergency. Food and water for several days needed to be put on board, chains and shovel and sand had to be stowed, blankets had to be put on board, things to make a fire had to be included, a complete first aid kit had to be included, flashlights, boots, extra clothing, dry socks, towels, and so on had to be stowed in the car. Because one could not predict what was going to happen on the way. Food had to be included, enough for several days in case something happened to stop the trip at some point that required some time to repair.

Mom was experienced at making these preparation so it didn't take her long each time to get things on board. Dad relied on her to do these things, and she did them well. We got underway and I believe it was on this trip where we kept track of the number of moose that we saw from the road. The trip was made in the early spring which means that there was maximal snow packs everywhere, it was cold and day light was short. My recollection is that we counted over 400 moose from the road as we drove the round trip to Anchorage. We saw most of them in the flats of Turnagain Arm, but they were all along the trip because the snow had forced them down from the mountains to find whatever forage was still accessible to them.

Bull Moose Threat

It was on this trip on the way back to Seward that we had a frightening encounter with a large bull moose. We had made the trip around Cook's Inlet and Turnagain Arm and had actually made the turn south through Johnson Pass. The snow in the pass was heavy so the rotary plows had created a channel two-lanes wide. The walls were perfectly vertical, about 6-7 feet high and extended for many miles. This particular photo was taken at Mile 12 outside of Seward but it gives you an



idea of what these show tunnels are like. The interruption in the wall on the left is caused by the Alaska Railroad rails that also used rotary snow plows.

We were driving the 1953 cream and brown Chevy on this trip. It was a tall car by modern standards as you can see in this photo. It is almost as high as 5 foot 2 inch mom is tall in this photo taken at Mile 17. Things were going well as we started up the pass and entered this channel, and the sun was setting. As we entered a curve we could see light flashing on and off on the right wall, coming from somewhere in front of us. This was totally uninhabited



territory so there was no explanation for flashing lights in the crepuscular light but in territorial Alaska everything one experienced had meaning even if you didn't know what it was, so we stopped where we were. We knew something had happened and dad was going to get out of the car and walk around the curve to find out what was going on.

Before he could get out, a huge bull moose walked slowly around the curve toward us. This photo

gives you an idea of just how enormous these moose were. Dad is kneeling with a moose he shot and you can see that the muzzle of the moose is almost as high as his own shoulder. This is how big the moose was that approached the car, stopping perhaps 50 feet away. Dad did not get out of the car. We could see from his breath and the



movement of his chest that the moose was panting, like he had been running. He just stood there looking at us, gathering his strength. Darkness was coming and we had a long way to go to Seward so dad was impatient. We all were impatient. Nothing was happening after 5 or 10 minutes had passed so dad decided he'd start the motor, turn on the lights and drive slowly forward to force the moose to move and allow us to pass.

At that point, this moose with his enormous rack lowered his head until his muzzle almost touched the ground. The hackles over his shoulder stood up and he pawed the snow with his hoof. This was a threat and it was not a bluff. That was all it took. Dad turned off the lights and motor and we settled down to wait things out. We knew that people were killed every winter from hitting these giants in their cars and we didn't want to be casualties.

We must have waited half an hour when the bull finally decided to wander past us. As he started walking toward us, we didn't know what to expect. We sat still and held our breath as it approached, concerned that he might jump on the car. He didn't. Instead, he slowly continued past us, headed down the pass. As he was

directly across from us, practically filling that lane between our car and the other wall of snow, he looked directly at us. To do this, he had to actually drop his head down as he turned it to look in at us. He was gigantic.

After he was passed, we started breathing again, dad started the car and drove slowly forward. We found another car that had rammed into one of the snow walls. Everybody got out of the cars and started talking. The driver of that car said the what happened to them was that they also unexpectedly came upon the moose in the channel but didn't have enough time to stop before hitting it, so he turned into the wall, hoping it would do less damage to his car than ramming the giant moose. Dad helped him back his car out of the wall and it turned out that the damage was to the fender only. The wheel was healthy so the family continued on its way to Anchorage while we headed on down to Seward.

The adults decided that what must happened was this. The moose probably jumped down into the channel at some point, expecting to be able to get across and up the other wall. But for some reason he didn't manage to do that. Instead, he was apparently chased by a car one direction, and then back the other direction by another car and so on until it was exhausted. Its size was so great that it could not make a fast enough run in the narrow road to manage to breast the snow wall, so all it could do was run back and forth as it was chased. It was likely that he continued walking down the channel until he came out on Turnagain Flats.

Rubber Airplanes @ a Bar

One winter evening after I had been to Warner's Market to buy

something and was headed home, I saw three black model airplanes. They sat on the doorstep into one of the bars next to Warners. I naturally coveted them on sight. They were gorgeous black models made of a hard rubber, imprinted with details of the doors, canopy and so on. One of them was a



"Black Widow" , the P-61, which I loved. I think I loved the name for a plane as much as I loved the plane. A stark, threatening name. I knew that black widows were black and that the female killed and ate the male. This was a unique plane for another reason: it was one of the first airplanes to be outfitted with the new technology called "radar". That's what really made it dangerous.

I stood there in a stupor wondering who owned them. Why would someone leave them there? They certainly weren't owned by a man were they? Why would a man go into a bar and lay these wonderful models on the sidewalk? Where "someone" might take them. "Someone" sounded like a good role to play in this act I thought. I looked around surreptitiously to make sure no one was watching me. They weren't. No one on the sidewalk nearby. I looked at the models and considered their weight, decided I needed to pick one up to find out. I picked the Black Widow up. What a beautiful plane with its double vertical stabilizers, and long sleek elements.

The other two planes were about the same weight and I discovered accidentally that they fit into my hands at the same time. I could carry the three easily. Meantime, I was working out the self-deceptions that we all do to ourselves. Like why it was OK for me to sort of borrow them for a while, like why it was stupid to leave them lying there that way, like their stupidity meant it was their own fault if "someone" took them and so on. Maybe someone even laid them there just so that a little kid could have them, one just like me for example. In the end I persuaded myself that I actually had a right to take these three black models home with me, because they obviously had been either abandoned and lost which was the same thing and the person who lost them knew he'd never find them. Besides, if I didn't take them, someone else would and didn't I need them more? Didn't I deserve them more?

When I took them home and tried my best to sell mom on the idea that "they were just laying there, no one wanted them, so I can have them - can't I? Please please?" And her implacable reply was "Take them back and put them where you found them." I argued with her for a bit because I could tell by her face that she wasn't really into this fight - yet. You could tell that. It meant she was worrying about something else so was distracted and not really interested in matching swords with you. At rare times like that, I got braver than usual and dared argue more than usual - while I carefully watched her face to see if she was returning to the room. It happened. She came back in a flash. "Get them out of here and put them back or I'll punish you." I got it. So I put my coat back on in the dark and walked

back to the bar. It was completely dark by now but everything was lighted so I found the bar without difficulty. I went up to the entry way and laid the three models down. Carefully, in a row, and turned and walked back home.

Weekly Radio Shows

In Vernal we were allowed to listen to certain shows on the radio, like the Lone Ranger. Since there was no T.V. we didn't think there was anything better. Radio was a medium that actually engaged your imagination so it was as much fun I think as watching TV that spells everything out. In Alaska we continued to listen to radio shows with mom's approval. That was always required. She had to say we could, and if she was in a foul mood, we didn't get to. This had a tendency, when we remembered, of making us a bit more careful of what we did on the evenings when there were shows we wanted to listen to.

Several of the shows were about detectives and police, like "Johnny Dollar". Radio shows, like TV shows, were sponsored by companies who put their lure out before the show started and somewhere in the middle. They ran half an hour or a full hour. Johnny dollar was exciting because it had the flavor of a Humphry Bogart movie except there was no picture. Johnny talked tough and risked his life to help beautiful women and always succeeded in catching the bad guys, narrowly escaping being killed. It came on during the week so we had to be extra careful to listen on a school night.



Figure 52 Johnny Dollar
http://www.thrillingdetective.com/dollar_johnny.html

"Our Miss Brooks" was another favorite. It was on Sunday evening, which was basically another school night, so we had to be careful that evening. She was a school teacher who got into all sorts of jams with her students, the principal, a boy friend and other students. She had a great voice and sounded like she would be a fun teacher. I suppose I missed much of her humor that was probably aimed at adults but I got enough to think it was a funny show. I never saw what she looked like until I found this photo.



Figure 53 Our Miss Brooks
<http://www.mbcnet.org/archives/etv/O/htmlO/ourmissbroo/ourmissbroo.htm>

"Amos and Andy" came on right after "our Miss Brooks" and was as funny. In this case there were two black men who talked in an odd way but they were understandable. They were always getting into fixes where one had to get help to bail the other out with humorous incidents along the way. I think there was a character called "Kingfisher" who added flavor

"Jack Benny" was also on Sunday night and was a show I loved. His staff included an Irish Tenor named Dennis, a black butler named Chester and a lovely woman whose name I don't



Figure 54 Amos and Andy
<http://www.tvparty.com/myskingf.html>

remember. Jack was a violin player, a terrible one and had a dry sense of humor. His hallmark

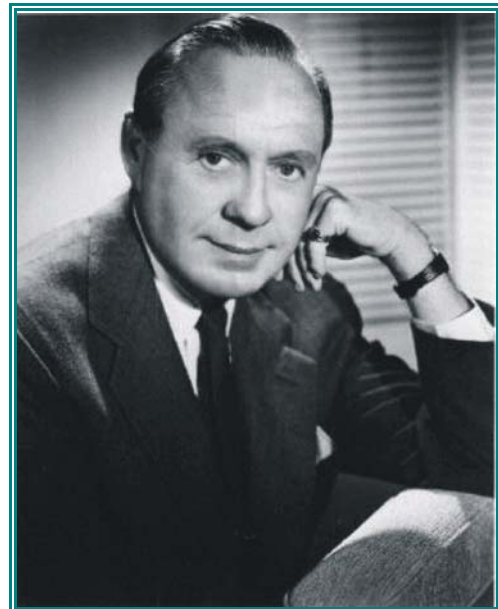


Figure 55 Jack Benny
<http://www.jackbenny.org/>

was being cheap. So cheap that he wouldn't tip waiters, wouldn't pay to have his shoes shined and so on. Chester had good horse sense so tried to save Jack from himself and sometime succeeded. Dennis was a foil to make the story go as was the woman. Jack's other trait that is perhaps more famous than his cheapness was the fact that he wouldn't ever admit his age. His joke was that he was 39 years old - again. This is where that particular joke became famous.

"The Shadow" was another mystery show that captured our imaginations and gave us chills. It started off with the memorable words, spoken slowly and carefully:

"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?... The Shadow knows!"

Then things developed but that phrase set the tone for murders, robberies, and general mayhem that the Shadow sorted out without the police understanding his contribution. The website for this photos summarized it thusly:

One of radio's most memorable dramas, The Shadow chronicled the adventures of Lamont Cranston and his companion Margo Lane. As The Shadow, Cranston used a "hypnotic power to cloud men's minds so that they cannot see him." This power was routinely used to battle crime lords, mad scientists, psychopaths and even werewolves, all of whom learned from The Shadow that "the weed of crime bears bitter fruit...crime does not pay!"

Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy were a pair, a human who was a ventriloquist with a back-talking dummy. Comedy was the staple of the show that was enormously popular. Mortimer Snerd was one of the foils that allowed Bergen and McCarthy to play off each other. The website says, "The Edgar Bergen/Charlie McCarthy Show



Figure 56

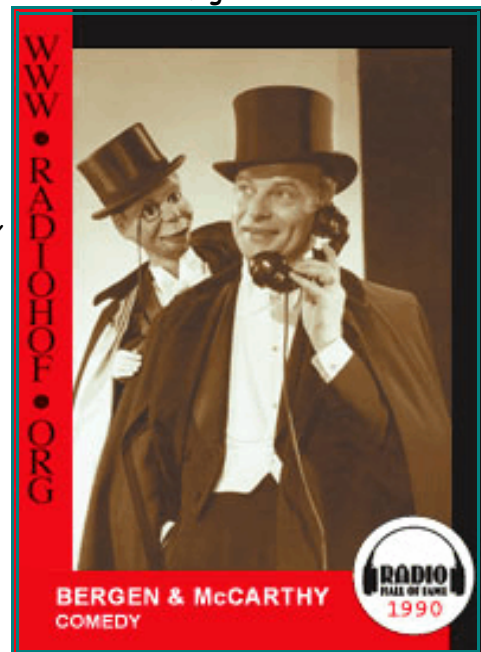


Figure 57

<http://www.radiohof.org/comedy/edgarbergen.html>

became one of radio's highest-rated programs, a distinction it enjoyed until it left the air in 1956."

I think it was the concept of ventriloquism that really attracted me. One person speaking in such a way that it appeared another was talking seemed like black magic, even when I knew that was happening.

"Gangbusters" was obviously one of the cop and robbers shows. It featured the same set of officers in a big city like New York. Gangsters and small crooks participated to keep the show going. Detectives, cop cars with sirens, loud bangs, a few shrieks constituted the background for the tough talk that the characters all used. This comic book, Issue No. 14 was created to capitalize on the radio show appeal and success.

When we were allowed to listen to these shows, we were usually in bed and it was only if we were good. Mom would leave the bedroom door open so that we could listen, tucked in tight, lying on our backs. That was a treat, to lie in bed after dinner, warm and comfortable, eyes closed listening to the stories, sound effects and the canned laughter. It was as exciting as watching TV in my mind. Because we could think whatever we wanted to think, to think whatever came to mind when we heard the voices and the sounds.

The sound effects were as amazing as the stories. I didn't understand how it was possible to make sounds that were so realistic while standing inside of a studio. In those days sound-samplers weren't even dreamed of and tape recorders were primitive and mixing equipment didn't exist. So if you wanted the right sound, the right loudness at the right time in the story, it had to be manufactured in the studio. Some things, like breaking glass, were easy because all you had to do was break an appropriate size of glass during the dialogue. Other sounds were more difficult. How can you reproduce the sound of walking on dry hard snow? Easy, it turns out. Take an unopened box of corn starch and squeeze it in time to steps.

Some of the shows were specials, one-time one-hour shows on an interesting topic. The one that I remember clearest was the most frightening of them all. It

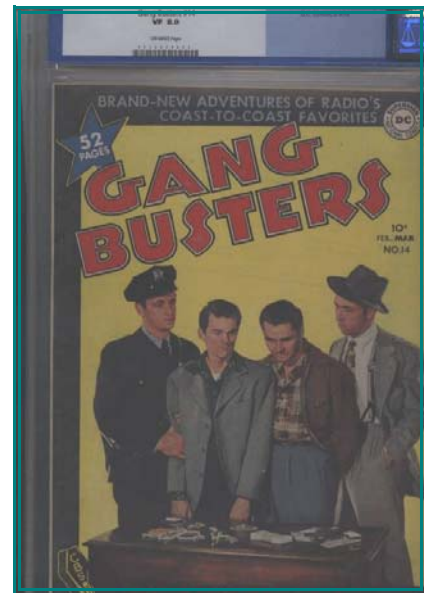


Figure 58

<http://www.socalcomics.com/gangbusters14.jpg>

was a show about an expedition in the Himalayas searching for "The Abominable Snowman." We lived in abominable snow, abominable snow and cold, with whistling mean winds and darkness. This creature was too believable. We were frightened by it after listening, whenever we were out alone at night in the snow. The sounds of whistling wind, the cries of lost frozen men, the shrieks of terror as the creature found and devoured them were too much for us because the sounds had a verisimilitude that harmonized with the world we lived each day. We had nightmares from that show for months and when they were particularly bad, we would get out of bed and go get in bed with mom if dad was working night shift. Oddly enough, if he actually was home, we were safe, even if we had bad dreams and didn't need to get in their bed.

Seward PD & Wrestling Team

Seward had few activities for young people which meant that kids had great opportunities to experiment and find ways to get in trouble. That seems to be the natural propensity of us when we are kids, find the limits by testing them. There were so few people in Seward that local businesses were limited to basic services and goods. The bowling alley and the theatre were about the extent of the commercial entertainment that kids could take advantage of, except that the bowling alley served beer so that limited who could go there. There was no skating rink, no museum, no stage groups, no dance groups, no parks, no gyms, nothing for kids.

The police department was the group that understood best that there was a real need for some kind of entertainment. They started a wrestling program for kids from about 8 to the late teen years. At the time it didn't occur to me that the police were doing this because they saw the trouble that kids got into when they didn't have something to do, but looking back it's obvious that they did this because juvenile delinquency was probably higher than they liked it to be. This was a way to reduce the statistics.

The program was held in the USO building which sat just north of the fire hall. It was left over from the war and was a recreation hall for soldiers. It was set up like a basket ball court with bleachers along the walls. There were various smaller rooms that were used for wrestling practice. Mom and dad signed us up for the program -worried about us turning into juvenile delinquents apparently- and sent us over at the appropriate time. I don't think we were given any say in the deal. Or, if we were given as "say", it was simply an opportunity for us to endorse a previously made decision with a 'yeah' like in communist countries. We were destined to go so go we did.



We went over and stood in line with other kids, most of whom were familiar to us waiting to get 'signed up'. That was a slow process but the policemen were polite and moved things along. After we had finished signing up, we were told to sit down and to listen while they told us the rules. I don't remember what the rules were but I expect they were standard for any collection of rambunctious kids and included the requirement that we wear some kind of gym clothes. After that night was finished, we were sent home which was usually late for us kids who normally had to be in bed at 8pm. Mom couldn't stand us longer.

The next week at the same time we were sent over to the USO after dinner and this time I was more nervous because "practice" was going to start. I had never been involved in any kind of organized sport and had never wrestled. Indeed, I had never even heard that there were 'rules' for wrestling, that there were "holds", that there were matches. I understood wrestling to be the fun that kids got involved in when they were rough-housing, which usually led to a bloody nose, some yelling and crying. Here we were told a whole bunch of stuff I had never heard about, which I didn't understand, and therefore promptly forgot.

After the coach -that's what the guy was called, "coach"- we stood around the ring where the hands-on training was done. Kids were eyeballed by the coach and lined up by size. Then the coach matched us up into teams and put in line for our chance to practice. We watched other kids and I dreaded having to do the

thing. It was an unpleasant thought that I had to get onto the mat with this other kid who I didn't really know and didn't like and wrestle him. What a stupid thing to do, but I knew that this was "for my good", that my parents "loved me" and so on. That meant if I tried to skip the practice and went home, I would be in real trouble. That's how much they loved me.

When it came my turn, I had a dry mouth and stepped into the ring with this kid. Neither one of us understood what we were to do even though we had watched what was being done. We understood the idea that one guy knelt on his hands and knees and the other guy knelt by him, put one arm on the bottom man's left arm and put his right hand on his shoulder or something. After the coach-referee was satisfied that we were properly position, he said "Go!" at which time we each were supposed to try to push the other kid down on the mat. That's what wrestling was to me. As we pushed and pulled and grunted, the coach was yelling to do this and do that, try this hold, don't do that, be careful and so on. As if I had a clue what he was saying, but I wasn't going to admit I didn't understand. I just proved it.

After the coach declared the other kid a winner, we had to start over but this time we changed positions. We wrestled wildly for a while with the same result. I didn't have a clue what I was doing and never did understand about the holds. In principle I could sort of grasp that a half nelson was such and such a configuration of arms and bodies, but when I was actually wrestling, an order to put a half nelson on the kid might as well have been an order in Chinese to launch a missile. I had no idea how to translate such an order into action.

It was so foreign to me to be physically fighting -that's what it felt like to me- that I was simultaneously afraid at a deep level that I was doing something wrong, and I was just plain afraid. I imagine my parents actually intended good for me out of this exercise but I disliked it and only went because I was told I had to do it. Nothing was learned. Besides, I wasn't a kid that was going to get into trouble. Are you kidding? The punishment from my folks would have been 10 times worse than anything the police and a judge would have done to me!

Fizz Pops, Canned Pop & Pop Tops

We drank soda pop from as far back as I can remember, considering it a treat because it was rare. Grandma would give us some when she had the little store, and mom would buy a bottle now and then in Vernal but it was the exception.



Figure 60

In the late 1940- and early 1950's there was a sensation amongst kids. I don't know what adults thought about the stuff. These things, Fizzies, were basically alka-seltzer with flavoring added. No kidding. They came in a flat package with a foil insert that contained 6 tablets the size of alka-seltzer. You peeled one out and dropped it into a glass of water and watched. It fizzed and bubbled just like alka-seltzer but was different because they were colored and had flavors. I liked them and didn't mind the fact that they did taste like alka-seltzer. Indeed, the fact that I like alka-seltzer today may well have something to do with this product.

They were great things to take on hiking trips because we carried canteens anyway so with these tablets we had pop without the added bulk and weight of a heavy bottle. The craze didn't last too long which was probably merciful. Most people probably hated them, as did most kids, but they were cool for a while.

Pop itself underwent a profound transformation at about the same time. It was taken out of glass bottles, the only container up to that point, and marketed in

tin cans. Literally, tin cans, not the fancy 'new' aluminum cans you kids grew up with. These tin cans were considerably heavier and some of them were poorly lined in which case the acid in the pop interacted with the metal and created a peculiar flavor. But the durability of the tin compared to the glass made these cans appealing.

Cone Top Pop

A long toward the end of our time in Seward, we went over to Anchor River to fish for king salmon. We were in the brown and cream 1953 Chevy and stopped for gas along the way at a little store that sold everything a person might want - which actually wasn't too much in those days in that place because people knew not to expect too much. We got out of the car and wandered inside the store to see what we just had to have.

We found it right away: cone top pop cans. I found this particular image on the internet with the following quote:

"Nesbitt's Fruit Products Company with headquarters in Los Angeles, CA made their canning debut with an orange drink in a 12 ounce cone top can. It appears that they hedged their bets on the acceptance of the new container by introducing it in the Alaska market area, as the only known examples have been found there."

This can is identified as a 1951 can and was advertized at \$285.00. It cost a dime. It was the shape of the cans that made them appealing and naturally, us kids hassled our folks to get one. You never knew when you'd wear them down and this time we did, and we even persuaded them to buy each of us one with the admonition that we "better finish it." We didn't. We couldn't. It was too big and I suspect now, looking back, that mom and dad probably knew we wouldn't. Thank you. It was a neat thing to have these cans, partly because they were safer to drink out of in a moving car that bounced over the rough roads. Perhaps that's why they bought



Figure 61

<http://gono.com/v-tours/sodacone/scone30nesbitts.htm>

it for us.

Pop tops didn't come along while were in Seward I don't think. They doubtless existed in the lower 40 but I don't remember them in Seward. They were so novel that I think I would have remembered them.

Dances

"Junior Swingers" was a marvelous creation of mom and dad for us pubescent teens. I've talked about it elsewhere but wanted to throw in a list of some of the dances that they taught us because it amazes me today, based on the experience you kids had with your own teenagehood. I have to say in retrospect, without any criticism of you because you were "victims" of your community, that your experience with dance was pretty tepid. Not a big deal in the final analysis but take a look here at the variety of dances that I was taught. Pretty astonishing. And this was by my own personal mom and dad. That's perhaps even more astonishing. I complain and moan about how they were harsh on me and they were, but _____ (insert a few choice expletives here) they were astonishingly wonderful. Your own mom and dad did nothing of the kind, did they, didn't teach you a single dance - other than the polka that I danced around the front room with the girls, Nancy intentionally missing the beat just to get yelled at. Anyway, this list is an incomplete listing of the dances they taught us.

The Bunny hop was a very popular dance that most kids could dance. It was a line dance where you stood in a row, holding the waist of the person in front of you, kicking your feet alternately -usually- out to one side and ending the pattern by putting your legs together jumping forward and backward, at which point someone jumped in the wrong direction creating havoc and laughs. The leader got to pick the direction the line went and always snaked it around in loops that ran back along the end of the line.

"Put you Little Foot" was a pair dance that required a particular 'hold'. The boy and girl stood side by side and held arms and hands sideways. The steps were a sort of brush with your right foot, a step and brush and so on in time with the music, "Put your little foot, put your little foot, put your little foot right there..." The excitement was both physical and emotional, standing together dancing, enjoying each other's company.

The "polka" was the most physical dance of all. You stood face to face, the

girl's hands on the boy's shoulders and his hands on her waist. The steps are simple, one-two-three-hop, jumping back and forth from foot to foot. That is the dance. However, the music is frantic and you try to keep time while your bouncing up and down vigorously, usually moving the girl backwards in swirls and loops, the faster the better. Collisions with other couples happened with enormous amount of laughing, mock-accusing, and yelling. By the end of the dance, you were breathing hard, later in the night actually sweating. It was an athletic dance that you would have been hard-pressed to continue for long.

The "Schottische" -of which there are many flavors- was from Scandinavia I believe. The version we learned was another vigorous folk dance that wasn't quite as strenuous as a polka, but demanding nonetheless. These dances lasted the length of a 78 RPM record, the source of our music - the records are still at 2821 N and I need to snag them for posterity I suppose. By the end, we were breathing hard from the exertion.

"Waltzes" were a staple and totally different from the preceding dances that are so physical. Waltzes in 3/4 time are stately slow dances with a one-two-three pattern, the couple standing in a classic ballroom position, the boy's left hand and girl's right hand joined and extended upward to the side, the girl's left hand on the boy's shoulder and his right hand holding the small of her back. The steps started with the boy moving forward with his left foot -the standard ballroom start- and the girl stepping backward with her right. These were sort of intimate dances even though bear hugs and body-clutching wasn't tolerated and you had a few minutes to talk quietly while you moved slowly in swirls around the floor. Collisions were not part of this dance. It was a dance you wanted to share with someone special.

The "Foxtrot" was a faster dance an 2/2, 2/4 time. The dance position was the classic ballroom position but the music was faster than a waltz, though nothing as physical as a polka.

We experimented with the "Rhumba" but it was too difficult for us. I think actually that mom didn't really know it well enough to teach so it got scrapped. Us kids appreciated that because it was a lot of fancy foot work without much activity overall and we were into big time bouncing and jumping and moving fast.

Same with the "Tango". I actually disliked the tango and was glad it was only a passing experiment. Too slow, too complex. Just let me dance!

Individual song titles stick out in memory, like "Dark Town Strutters Ball" and the "Tennessee Waltz". The atmosphere created by the words and music were haunting experiences. Young teens are not used to that sort of thing, just becoming

aware of themselves and their own emotions. That's how it was for me. I was startled I suppose at what was happening inside of my mind and in terms of the awareness I had of social things, of girls, of the fact that I had a mind and that I began to see things that had always been there but which had passed me by. It's interesting to see that the decision by mom and dad to create this dance group to keep us off the streets and out of trouble had an impact that went far beyond those practical concerns. They gave me gifts without intending to.

Library & Mythology

I hung out at the public library many evenings, particularly in the winter when it was dark all the time after 2:00 p.m.. Today I see that this tiny library which probably possessed no more books than I have today, was a center for some of the most formative experiences in my entire life. It was a small quiet place, located down a flight of stairs right at the center -don't put too much meaning on that word- of Seward. And the librarian, my neighbor Elsie Whitmore, was nice to me. That's it. So I felt a sense of liberty, of being granted the freedom to browse all books and a freedom to talk to her, to ask quiet questions that she quietly answered. I see that she offered me a fertile environment in which my burgeoning interest in intellectual things could flower safely. Not a trivial matter in a frontier town like Seward where a block away a man was arrested one night for running from a bar in his red underwear shooting his pistol in the air, harming no one but nonetheless violating several public statutes about various things.

Her kindness extended to the astonishing gift of a copy of the monthly news magazine sent to her by the Strategic Air Command. She received perhaps a dozen copies and she started giving me a copy of the new issue. That was like being given the key to the Library of Congress, to be admitted to her sphere of importance and intelligence. The gift, which to her was probably trivial, was an incredibly important thing. I was certified as a person, as a person worthy of such consideration, and my mind was permanently bent.

What happened is that she discovered that I loved

I'd take out several books a week and read them quickly and then return them the next week for more.

The Bobsey Twins were too tame for me so I read the Nancy Drew mystery

series and the Hardy Boys mystery series, plus a sprinkling of some odd books about scouts being involved in mysterious activities in WW II.

During these years I devoured the kids' books and moved on. I don't know how it came about but Mrs. Whitmore would suggest books now and then in between pasting envelopes in books, checking out the few patrons. One that she recommended that I read was "Up From Slavery" but Washington. It was a heavy book for a 12 year old to read I suppose yet it wasn't. It told the story of a remarkable man who was an inventor, struggling with and for his. It affected me for various reasons. I had never lived with black people so they were exotic creatures to me.

Cheechakos, Snow Worms & Snow Caves

I really did see snow worms. Real worms. I know it today with a certitude that I find impossible to believe. In the snow. In February of March. Over by Little Bear Mountain just past Whitmore's house across the road across from the street light under the big pine we played under. In the snow, while I was building another snow cave in the densely packed snow put there by the wind all winter.

As I grew up, I learned more about the odd words that were bandied about by "old timers". And about the stories they told. And the things they did to confuse and upset and make fun of "new comers". But that did not change my perceptions, as stated in the previous paragraph. I really did see worms. In near the top layer of snow in about that time of the year when winter had become really old and we were really tired of the snow. And I was just trying to do something that was interesting. There they were. These little white worms, in clusters, not moving, but not appearing to be dead either. The bodies were robust, firm, and yellowish-white.

A cheechako is a new person to Alaska, therefore someone who (1) didn't understand about the Alaskan frontier and (2) was a ripe target for being ridiculed. One of the things they were told was that there were "snow worms" in the territory, with the expectation that the newcomer would buy the joke without understanding that they were being made fun of and then ask about these 'worms' in another setting where they would be laughed at. Everyone would know the telegraphic message "Laugh at this fool!" and would do it. There was something of

an elitist mentality in the old timers, called "sour doughs" that gave them license, apparently, to make fools of the newcomers.

I didn't understand that. Why should the old timers make fun of the newcomers? They were new, so if they didn't understand something, that was no reason to make fun of them, to ridicule them. Just explain the reality and go on. They'd appreciate knowing the facts and would incorporate them quickly into their reality. No doubt about that. But the sourdoughs took perverse pleasure in doing things to belittle the newcomers. Perhaps I was so close to being one that I was hypersensitive. Odd that a child would harbor such sensitivity isn't it. But I did and I was of two minds. There was in fact something funny about an adult doing something that revealed his or her gullibility. Probably made me feel not quite so stupid about things in general that adults all seemed, or pretend, to understand. Misery loves company.

One of the things the sourdoughs talked about to the cheechako was the 'snow worm'. Now it may be that there was some story about enormous worms that sort of breathed fire, ate dogs, and Eskimos. If that was the story, then my experience was totally different. But I did know what a "worm" was, and I do know that I saw small white coiled worms in clusters when I dug snow caves in that snow pack that year at the foot of Little Bear across the road from Whitmore's. Really. There is no doubt. I know today that I actually did see them. The problem today of course is that it seems impossible that any creature would be able to live in that icy hostile environment, at a level that had been chilled below freezing for 3 or 4 months. But I am crystal clear. I saw them and will die without being able to change that understanding. I was not hallucinating, I was not using drugs, it was day light, there was sun and these creatures were there. I know they were.

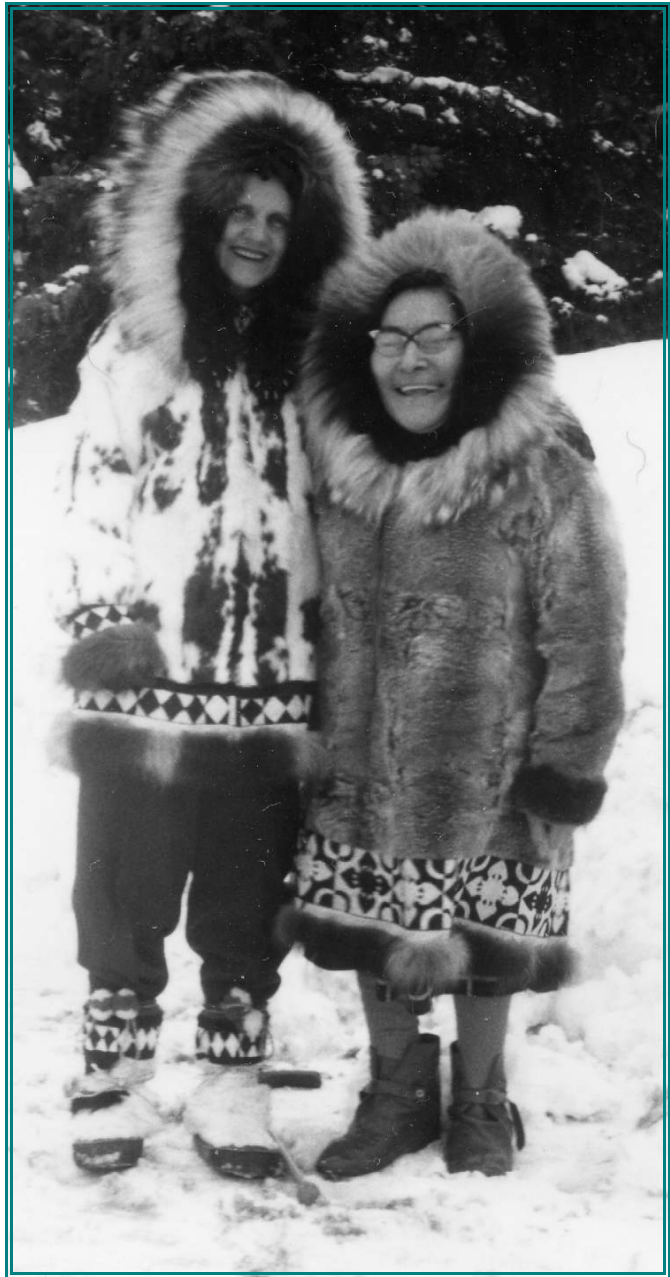
So perhaps I had relapsed into cheechakohood and was seeing what wasn't there. I doubt it however, in spite of the fact that the cold hard facts mitigate against my seeing what I saw. Perhaps it was a dream.

Mom Made a Harbor Seal Parka

May Titus was an Eskimo who TB of the spine and so spent time at the TB San. That's where mom and dad met her when they were volunteering. May was skilled at handling skins and made beautiful parkas. As a gift, dad arranged for May to make a rabbit skin parka for mom with a full aurora ruff. May is standing by mom, much shortened by her TB but she was generally in good spirits. She has laid her cane on the ground between them for this photo. She also made the mukluks that mom is wearing but not the soles. Those were provided to her by someone in a village where such work was still done. Then May sewed on the top.

The aurora ruff is beautiful. The first layer around mom's face is from a wolverine skin, the section across the shoulders that included the feet and claws that you can see. Next to the wolverine is a similar cut from a wolf hide so that the long guard hairs stand out, long with dark tips that form a band around the outside.

Being a seamstress, mom was interested in the method used by May to handle skins because it is different than fabric. One of the basic reasons is the thickness and toughness of the skins. Another basic reason is the fact that a skin must be cut from the inside with a sharp blade rather than scissors because scissors would cut hairs off. When May was getting ready to make mom's parka, she had mom sit down by her. She took a piece of butcher paper and looked at mom first. Then she took her scissors and cut



a pattern for the hood. Then she held the pattern up to mom's head and folded it into a parka. It fit perfectly. Mom paid attention to May as she worked and learned how to handle skins. As a result, she decided that she wanted to make her own parka out of harbor seal skins.

We started with harbor seal skins that had just been removed from the owners. I don't remember how it was but dad managed to buy two complete pelts from some Eskimos who had killed the seals out by Fox Island. The price was right but it was conditioned on one thing. We had to flense the blubber from the hides and return the blubber to the Eskimos along with the agreed-upon dollars. The skins came to the kitchen in a wash tub, smelling oily and bloody. Dad did the job of course.

The blubber was surprisingly thick, about 3 inches thick everywhere. After it was removed, dad hauled it over to the Eskimos who then did what they loved to do. They put the blubber in a poke -a tight bag made out of a seal skins where it would remain for 6 months or until it had liquified. During this time, the blubber ages and takes on a flavor that is used to flavor their food, and turns into a liquid that looks like but does not taste like cooking oil. We were given a quart bottle of the stuff by some Eskimos to take to May and on the way it leaked in the car, creating a pretty powerful odor that lasted a while.

Dad knew taxidermy so he knew how to prepare the hides to ship to a tannery stateside. As I remember the process, he turned them inside out and carefully scraped them to remove all bits of fat. Then he salted them heavily so that they would cure and be stable during the time they were transported. After he had them dry enough, he folded each into a bundle and tied it with ropes. Then he put these tied bundles into a canvas bag that he wrapped in paper and nailed into a wooden box for shipping to Seattle where they were tanned. When they returned, they were totally different of course and were ready so that mom could proceed to make her parka.

The first step was to make her own pattern. She did this with butcher paper like May did. She also procured the skin needles that are shaped differently that needles for sewing cloth and waxed threads of different colors. She also hunted down a tanned wolf hide that she would be able to use for her parka.

After she had prepared the parka it was gorgeous. She cut a wide swath of wolf for the parka and made a diamond pattern to decorate the bottom of the parka. She also installed cuffs of wolf fur. All of this was done under the direction or supervision of May who made sure that mom used the right skin needles and made the proper stitches in the hides. This is now in a trunk at 2821 N.



Flounder or Dungeness

Sometimes when I went to the small boat harbor to fish, I decided that I wanted to catch a flounder so I'd bait my hook, release the bail on my reel, and let the sinker pull the hook to the bottom of the ocean. Then I'd reset the bail and lift up on the line to find just where the bottom was because I didn't want my hook to be picked at without me knowing. I'd reel in a bit of line so that when the pole was about horizontal, the hook was just resting on the bottom. That way when something took hold of the bait, I'd be able to feel it, at which point I'd make a vicious swipe upward with the pole to "set" the hook. Today I'm not sure I was doing that right, but no matter. I was persuaded that I had to yank the hook

to make sure the hook set and I did it with enthusiasm.

After one such maneuver I rewound the line to see if the bait was still on. The reeling in was sort of slow because the bottom was probably about 30 feet down. That wasn't not really deep, but it seemed like a long distance when I reeled in a line using a reel that had a spool with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter reel. Of course, the distance to the bottom from the floats depended greatly on the stage of the tide. The difference between high tide and low tide there on the small boat harbor mooring was probably 10-12 feet. I could see the difference myself. The access to the floating segments was a long ramp attached permanently to the dock that was moored in place to secure the small boat dock. The other end rested on two steel wheels about 8 or so inches in diameter that rolled along steel plates fastened on to the deck. When the tide was out, the floats were so far down that the ramp was steep but when the tide was high, the ramp flattened out. The difference was amazing.

When I had to rebait the hook, I was sure a fish had eaten the previous specimen. That encouraged me in the insanity called 'fishing'. I'd anxiously rebait the hook, and quickly drop it down to the bottom again in hopes I could land it on the fish that had taken the bait last time. It never occurred to me that the vicious yanks on the pole might have been the cause of the disappearance of the bait but that is obviously half the reason for the loss of baits.

While I stood there waiting, pole in hand, I looked at the breakwater that the military had installed during WW II. The rocks were enormous. The breakwater stood 8 feet or so above the water, depending, of course, on the stage of the tide. Adult men would go out to the end of the breakwater with their large salt water poles to fish. I never dared even climb out there, fearing that a rogue wave would come along and flush me off. I couldn't swim and was terrified of getting my head in the water so did nothing that exposed me to that risk. All the time I saw the men fishing over there, I never saw them catch anything. Patience was required for fishing like this where you couldn't see the bottom, where you couldn't see the fish, where your line was simply hung between small boats moored on the docks.

I felt tugs now and then and hoped I had a flounder because dad liked them. I didn't. In the 5 years of fishing there, I don't think I caught half a dozen flounder but fishermen are eternal optimists and I convinced myself that (1) there really were flounders down there because I saw a few specimens and (2) I wanted badly to catch one. So I kept at it.

A bit of natural history here: see how both of the eyes are on the same side of the flounder head? That isn't how they hatch. As hatchlings, they swim around in the water like other fish, one eye on each side of their head but as they mature, they undergo several changes. As they adapt to living on the bottom as adults, the colors of their two sides change. The side on the bottom turns white while the top side darkens into a camouflage. At the same time, one of the eyes literally migrates from one side of the head to the other by moving over the top of the skull. But the mouth stays oriented for free swimming.



Figure 64
<http://www.oceanicresearch.org/booksample.html>

Sometimes I felt a tug on my line and instead of reefing on the pole like I usually did, I tentatively lifted the tip of the pole to get a feel for whatever was there. I don't know why I was gentle sometimes. Sometimes as I lifted the pole the line went taut and I could feel a heavy weight. If it wasn't a fish, this weight wasn't moving about. It was just there and I feared that I had snagged my line again on the debris on the bottom and dreaded pulling too hard. It didn't take long, however, to differentiate between a piece of garbage, a snag and a crab. The piece of garbage would pull heavily but would slowly come to the surface where I'd see a rubber boot or large can. If it was a snag, there was no movement so I whipped the pole one way and then the other, popping the pole up and down in hopes of dislodging the hook. Rarely did that work but I wasn't doing anything else so took the time to work the hook. Usually I lost the hook and the sinker.



Figure 65
<http://www.theworldwidegourmet.com/fish/crab/dungeness.gif>

If the thing was a crab, the process started out like reeling in the piece of garbage but the ending was different. There was no movement with either the garbage or the crab which was holding onto the bait with its pincer. Whatever was on the line fascinated me as I slowly reeled it in, leaning over the edge of the dock

straining to see what it was. Garbage was disgusting and wasteful, but sometimes the reward was a dungeness crab.

The crab would hold onto the bait tenaciously as long as it was in the water. Strangely enough, it didn't matter to the crab that it was moving upward, that he was moving in the water. I could pull him back and forth as long as he was in the water. I supposed that was because he was used to being pushed around by waves. But if I lifted him to the point that he broke the surface, he'd immediately let go and drift tumbling back to the bottom. If I was brave and wanted to impress mom and please dad who liked crab, I'd gingerly reach down into the water to take hold of him. I had been taught how to take them by pinching them from the back. I misunderstood however because I thought that it was necessary to squeeze the heck out of the tail to hurt them and make them stop trying to pinch. Handling from the back was simply a way to keep my hand out of the range of those nasty sharp pinchers. I could tell males from females and knew I had to throw females back which I did.

When I caught a crab, I immediately had to go home because I knew that you shouldn't let a crab die before it is boiled because it gets poison. Somehow I thought the things would die in the next half hour so had to gather up my stuff and get it onto my bicycle and head home. It was a challenge to carry my fishing pole in on hand while I pedaled when I had a crab suspended on the other handle bar by a piece of fishing line. I didn't want it to fall and didn't want it to pinch me.

Charlie McCarthy & Edgar Bergen

A ventriloquist did things that weren't possible. Fascinating. I even saw one in school on a program, a man from out of town. He had a dummy sitting on his lap. It talked to him just like a real person but it wasn't. It was in Vernal and I was younger and I was astounded. The dummy really did appear to talk. Oh, I knew that the man was making it talk but when I watched the man's face, it didn't look like it was really moving, at least no where enough to make all of those words, so I was able to suspend dis-belief and almost believe that a dummy was doing it himself.



Figure 66 Charlie McCarthy & Edgar Bergen
<http://www.asv.co.uk/sleeve/5312.jpg>

Edgar Bergen earned a national reputation. He was eventually given his own radio show which was sponsored by Chase and Sandborn coffee and Coke. He appeared with two dummies, "Charlie McCarthy" and "Mortimer Snerd." Charlie dressed like a dandy with a top hat and a tuxedo, while Edgar wore a regular suit. Charlie's monocle was an affectation that didn't seem out of place, just different, because we saw them in movies.

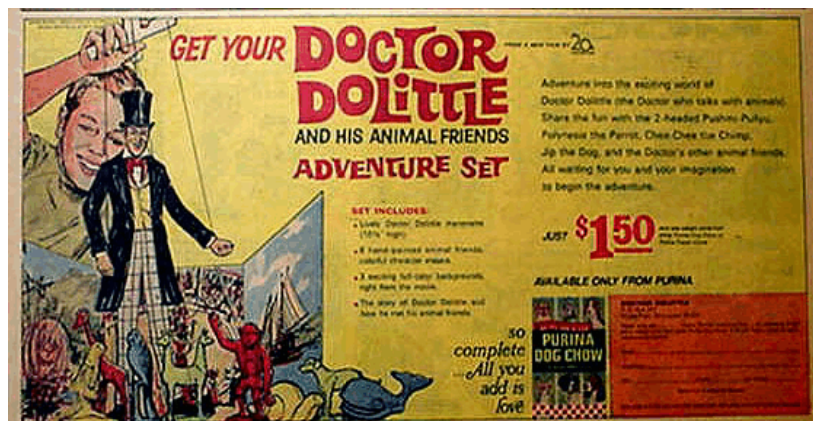


Mortimer Snerd was a country bumpkin who wasn't too bright, who was the straight man for the other two. He dressed in totally different style of clothing, a straw floated, bow tie and plaid sport coat and had freckles. Of course, we couldn't see these features when we listened to the radio, but the pictures in magazines revealed it all. Mortimer's favorite friend was his cow 'Bessie", and he lived on a farm with relatives. He was sort of slow but I liked him anyway. I had a couple of relatives like that and liked them. His name became a national synonym for a slow person.

We were allowed to listen to this show sometimes. We obviously couldn't see the dummy but we heard the different voice so it worked fine in our imagination. He was funny, sometimes saying things that made big people laugh that we didn't really understand. But we laughed anyway.

Dog Food

Dog food was an important commodity in our little world because we had a dog. He ate a lot and we had to buy the stuff with our own money. We bought it in 25 pound paper bags and took it home in a wagon. Mom never drove to the store. That was outrageous. She usually sent us to get what she needed, or walked with us and we pulled the wagon. We'd put an orange crate in the wagon to have 'side boards" so we could haul more groceries.



Figure

68 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/newsad26.jpg>

This food was powdery and looked like a mixture of corn flour, wheaties and other odds and ends. To make it we measured out 2 cups of the dry mix into a large bowl. Then we measured two cups of almost hot water and poured it into the dog food mix, and stirred it. This created a characteristic smell that I still don't know if I liked it or not. It wasn't really a bad smell but it was strong, probably revealing something about the original sources.

Then we set the bowl out by Kobuk's dog house and left him to eat. He was always hungry and devoured it all immediately. The warmth was especially important in the winter, not because Kobuk deserved warm food, rather because the food wouldn't freeze before Kobuk could finish.

There were different brands of dog food and different prices. Dick and I decided that Kobuk liked this particular brand the best. Because it also happened to be the cheapest. Nice coincidence.

McCarthyism

I think this was an evil man. His name was Joseph McCarthy and he was one of the most despicable politicians of the 20th century. Indeed, now that I think about it, I can see that he actually foreshadowed what the media do today, and doubtless taught them how to do it. For reasons that I sure don't know, this McCarthy who was one of the equivocal beings named 'politician' took it upon himself to launch a crusade that obviously attracted the media. Had the media ignored him, he would have not become the prominent thing he was.

His crusade was to root out the communists that had infiltrated our government and compromised our security. His most notorious attach was on Robert Oppenheimer and because of his disgraceful disregard for truth and propriety,

McCarthy was able, with the help of Teller and a few others, to permanently destroy Oppenheimer's reputation. In the end, Oppenheimer was determined through trials to be a significant security risk because of his dalliance with a few professed communists in the late 1930's and as a result, he fell into disgrace. That was the disgrace.

Here's a quote from

<<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/database/mccarthyism.html>>:

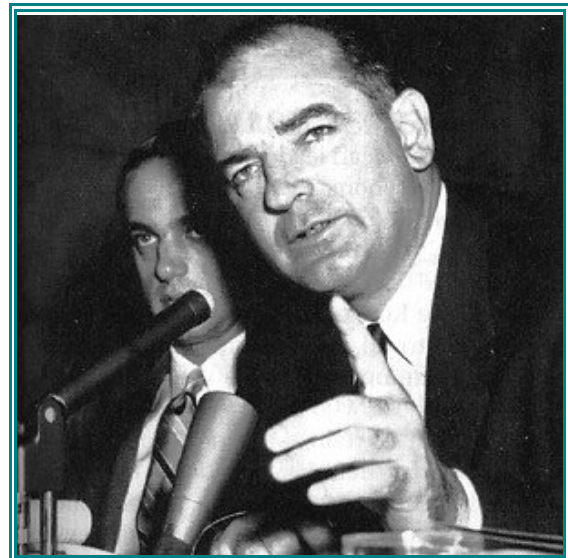


Figure 69

<http://www.vw.cc.va.us/vwhansd/HIS122/JoeMcCarthy.jpg>

"Throughout the 1940s and 1950s America was overwhelmed with concerns about the threat of communism growing in Eastern Europe and China. Capitalizing on those concerns, a young Senator named Joseph McCarthy made a public accusation that more than two hundred "card-carrying" communists had infiltrated the United States government. Though eventually his accusations were proven to be untrue, and he was censured by the Senate for unbecoming conduct, his zealous campaigning ushered in one of the most repressive times in 20th-century American politics.

While the House Un-American Activities Committee had been formed in 1938 as an anti-Communist organ, McCarthy's accusations heightened the political tensions of the times. Known as McCarthyism, the paranoid hunt for infiltrators was notoriously difficult on writers and entertainers, many of whom were labeled communist sympathizers and were unable to continue working. Some had their passports taken away, while others were jailed for refusing to give the names of other communists. The trials, which were well publicized, could often destroy a career with a single unsubstantiated accusation. Among those well-known artists accused of communist sympathies or called before the committee were Dashiell Hammett, Waldo Salt, Lillian Hellman, Lena Horne, Paul Robeson, Arthur Miller, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Charlie Chaplin and Group Theatre members Clifford Odets, Elia Kazan, and Stella Adler. In all, three hundred and twenty artists were blacklisted, and for many of them this meant the end of exceptional and promising careers.

During this time there were few in the press willing to stand up against McCarthy and the anti-Communist machine. Among those few were comedian Mort Sahl, and journalist Edward R. Murrow, whose strong criticisms of McCarthy are often cited as playing an important role in his eventual removal from power. By 1954, the fervor had died down and many actors and writers were able to return to work. Though relatively short, these proceedings remain one of the most shameful moments in modern U.S. history."

Unfortunately the media today engage in identical activities but they are able to get away with it - because they are the media. They single out individuals and groups and causes that they don't like and then mercilessly attack and criticize them, ridiculing them until they are diminished or destroyed, all in the name of "truth" that is an unknown quantity to journalists.

In truth, a few old journalists like Edward R. Murrow did object against McCarthy but as a group, the media was only too glad to report the sensational things McCarthy said and did.

Recording at Home

Today we make digital recordings of various kinds, DVD, CD, visual, aural, with an ease that is impossible to appreciate. In 1947 a far-sighted company offered a console model radio that included the ability to actually make your own 78 rpms. The same heart tugs were made then that are made today, though the visual styles are different. Family, memories, children, Christmas.

I never saw one of these at work, probably because the circle I moved in was too poor to afford such a thing in Vernal, and Seward simply was not a place that new technology found a place. It was too expensive to ship things to Alaska, and houses were small.

The ad contains no photographs. It is colored drawings, not too accurate, and text with a few "graphics", "cuts" as they were called in the printing industry. Notice also the class of people being teased with this ad. Dad is wearing a white shirt and a tie - apparently on Christmas Morning at home- and everyone was smiling, fully attired, hair combed and happy, without the presents being opened. Most of us wear pajamas or grubbies. I think that was true back then as well but this ad like many represented the "better class" of people. Perhaps they were the only ones with the money to buy stuff like this.



Figure 70 Recordio

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu:80/adaccess/R/R07/R0708-72dpi.jpeg>

Halloween

Dick remembered this. One Halloween we left out jackolanterns on the window sill when we went out to trick or treat. Mom must have gone with us because this wouldn't have happened otherwise. When we got home, we discovered that one of the candles had set a curtain on fire which obviously threatened the whole structure. We didn't make many points that night and were doubtless relieved that nothing worse happened.

Mom became concerned about the safety of things we were given so wouldn't allow us to eat apples, donuts or unwrapped candy. I don't know why she had this anxiety but imagine it was based on rumors in the town the some people had done things to harm kids. I don't know a single instance where a kid was hurt so perhaps she was overly protective, but there was also a positive effect of her attitude. We'd come home from going door to door and she'd have us pour our bags of candy into a dish pan. They we picked out the items that we were allowed to keep and then she'd pass out what was left to the other kids who came to the door. Today I look at this act and begin to suspect ulterior motives in her ruling, i.e. a financially motivated one. And I wonder why she would hand out things to other kids that she thought might be harmful. Ah well, parents are impossible to comprehend. Right?

School had Halloween parties that consisted of some kind of punch and cookies and cupcakes. Moms were allowed to bring anything they made without any concern for the kind of rules that apply today about home-prepared foods. Costumes were allowed if a kid wanted to wear them but we reserved that for the trick-or-treating time in the evening.

Sleigh Riding

As noted above, Seward sloped down to the ocean everywhere. The point I didn't make, though, was that the slope was severe in many places. That made it hard to ride bicycles home since our house was about as high as it could be, but the upside was being able to use gravity and the steep slope to go down hill. I took this photo from the front porch. It shows Mr. Leonard's Crosley pickup, the Episcopal Church and the bay. Notice just how steep the decline is down to the beach, one long straight shot.



Sleigh riding was naturally a lot of fun on that street. It was one of the best because (A) it was so long, (B) so steep, and (C) so little traveled. Even third avenue one block over had more traffic than Second avenue. So we had a grand time on our sleds in the afternoons and evenings.

As a kid I didn't pay a great deal of attention to the reasons for some of the things in my environment. I noticed them when they impinged on my world but otherwise I didn't think about them. So I don't know why it was that several times in the winter barriers were erected across Second avenue right there in front of the Episcopal Church. The barriers were basically long saw horses painted white which wasn't a good idea in the snow. Small kerosene lamps shaped like bowling balls with a wick on the top were set at the ends of the barrier to warn people and vehicles. The net effect of these barriers was to improve the safety of sledding down Second Avenue because cars didn't go down it. The only cars would be those that came up from down below so we could see them in front of us in plenty of time to stop.

The sleds we used were all American Flyers. Here's one of them in the summer standing against the back wall of the house. Notice all of the debris and garbage hanging about. That was just how it was. Stuff was left lying around just in case it was needed, and no one expected otherwise. Fancy lawns and flowers and shrubs were basically non-existent so we didn't worry about how things looked, just about safety. This particular sled was the longer of the two. We had a neat one that I liked better which was about two thirds the length of this one.

The shorter sled was perfect for doing belly flops to get going fast. When we sat on the top of that hill to go down, we could stand, lean over the sled and run while we pushed it and then after we got going as fast as we could, then jump onto the sled, crushing our bellies. It worked, but if we held the sled in our arms at chest level and ran while in an upright position, we could get going much faster. The downside was that when we finally decided it was time to get the sled down on the ground and mount it, things got tricky. The force of this maneuver on the chest and belly was even more severe so we didn't do it too often, only when there was a girl or parent that we wanted to impress. In that case we'd sort of pray we could pull the maneuver off and just plan on suffering silently from the blow.

Either method was treacherous on the street, however. This was because the roads weren't paved. In the first picture above of the snow you'd think this wouldn't make any difference, but it did. I never wondered why because wondering about the problem was about like wondering why the sun came up. The problem was that small rocks managed somehow to work their way up through the snow. They lay embedded in the snowy/icy surface which was great for traction for car tires, but they were like small concrete blocks to sled runners. You'd hit some of them and stop like you had hit a wall.

Jay Clapp demonstrated that really well. It was during lunch hour while I was attending Mrs. Moore's class in the undercroft of the Episcopal church. Jay, Brent and I all ran home to eat and reappeared with our sleds to take advantage of the remainder of the lunch hour by sledding on the icy road. I had actually stopped sledding and gone inside when it happened. I became aware of Jay's accident when Mrs. Moore called me outside and asked me to tell her and Father Clapp what had



happened. I felt like I was being accused of hurting Jay.

What happened was that Jay, who was a scrawny weak kid who was less athletic than I had been doing one of those acceleration moves. I don't know whether he was doing one of the running belly flops or was simply squatting over his sled while he ran and pushed it. Whichever it was, his runners apparently came to a screeching halt in an instant of high exertion. Jay's body continued, however, and because his hands were still holding the sled, his head arced down to the ground. His face hit some of the gravel and the ice which produced an enormous bloody nose, cut lip, chipped teeth and an equally enormous amount of blubbing.

Jay apparently told Mrs. Moore and his dad that I had been with him, or something to that effect which is why they called me out of the undercroft to interrogate me. But I got the distinct sense that Jay had reported that I was responsible for his nasty fall that took him next door to the Hospital where Dr. Deischer took care of him. I didn't like it that I was falsely accused of having hurt Jay, particularly since I wasn't even outside with him when he did the deed to himself. But everyone knew that I hung out with him so apparently I was guilty by association in this case. In the end, I was let off the hook with some suspicious looks from the adults who could tell I believed I was telling the truth, who did not believe I was. Jay was bandaged and swollen up for a few days and developed nasty purple bruises. But I wasn't the cause. It was his own doing on top of those nasty rocks embedded in the ice.

Spring Run-off

Winter was long and dark which made springtime particularly welcome. Sunshiny days were like jewels. When we could go outside without coats in the relatively warm air it was like heaven. The roads were all covered with ice about 6 inches thick, built up over the winter from car tires compressing the new snow. Snowplows were used sometimes but never got down to the dirt so the icy layer accumulated over the winter. Springtime was fascinating when the ice started to melt.

The neatest part of the thaw was how ice melted into water and started running in thin sheets at first after which the sheets turned into tiny rivulets. These rivulets began to etch narrow troughs in the ice and as time passed, the troughs deepened until they reached the dirt road. By this time, there was basically a small river during the daytime running in this channel, which was an

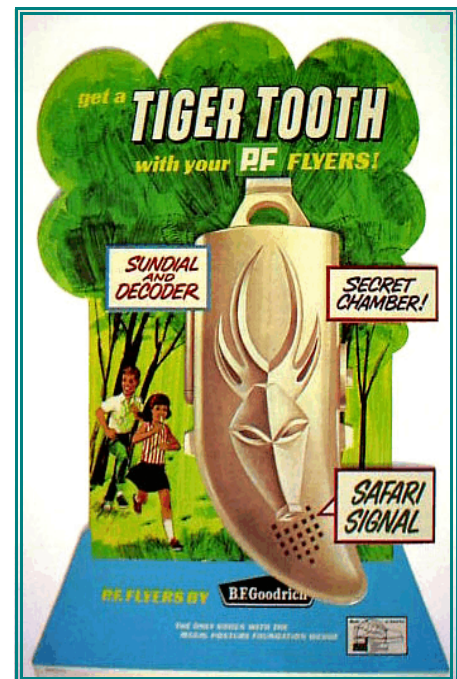
invitation to little boys to become civil engineers.

We'd find pieces of wood and rocks and cans, anything we thought could be used to create dam and haul it all out to the icy road. Calling it a road misrepresents what it was because it was anything but a road. It was simply a sheet of glare ice that lay over the road. We'd plop our stuff down on the ground and then proceed to build little dams to prevent the water from flowing. I don't know why that was so interesting but it was. The water always washed the dams away creating enormous excitement. We'd yell to each other to do this or that to stop the water, as if it were a matter of life or death. It was simply two little boys out in shirt sleeves kneeling on the wet ice in the warm sunshine having a great time.

Sneakers

Sneakers were as big a deal then as they are now, comfortable lightweight foot covers. So companies competed as vigorously with each other then as they do now for this market. The style of shoes, however, was so simple that you can scarcely find it today. These were basically canvas shoes with simple rubber soled and most of them laced up to the ankle. Girls wore a low tennis shoe -that's what all of them were called, "tennis shoes" even though a tennis player wouldn't be caught dead wearing a black lace-up ankle high sneaker- but boys didn't.

One of the most famous brands was "P.F. Flyers." These were made by B.F. Goodrich, naturally, because they specialized in rubber things. These two ads show the kids of gimmicks used then to sell shoes which strikes me as curious because I don't remember that any of you kids bought sneakers in order to get some sort of a



Figure

73<http://theimaginaryworld.com/disp1.jpg>



Figure 74 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/disp14.jpg>

time. Send in a quarter etc. and you'd get the prize.

prize. These prizes were sort of like what was advertized on breakfast cereal boxes at the

Red Ball Jets were another famous brand, but mom never bought these. Must have been too expensive. We got Flyers.



Figure 75 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/disp35.jpg>

Benzedrine

These things were common when I was a kid. In high school I was aware that kids abused these things to get high. However, I never saw one and had no comprehension about what they did.

The odd historical fact about them is that they are great weight reducers. I don't know what the mechanism through which weight is lost but they were marketed specifically for that purpose. Until the FDA finally banned them in the 1960;s or '70's.

One of the interesting historical facts about benzedrine is that airlines used to offer them free to passengers who had trouble with the pain caused by altitude changes.



Figure 76 Benzedrine Inhalers
wings.buffalo.edu/aru/

Smith Brothers, Dentyne, Chiclets

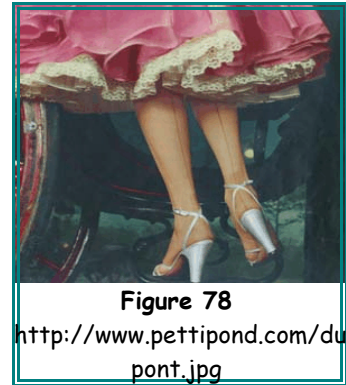


Figure 77 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/foodmain.html>

The following composite shows a variety of items that us kids coveted. Each one cost a nickel which doesn't sound like much but it was. Dentyne and Chiclets were part of your childhood, in about this form I expect but the Fizzies and the Smith Brother's cough drops are gone. The black Smith Brothers was probably my favorite out of this bunch, a licorice flavored cough drop. These drops were sealed inside in a waxed paper package to keep them from absorbing humidity and sticking together. The small boxes of two Chiclets would have been my favorite.

Heels and Hose

Things were much more discreet in that era, and panty hose didn't exist but lingerie was as widely advertised as it is today. Instead of panty hose, there were garter belts, nylons with seams, with fluffy petticoats, full skirts, and fancy heels. This image is interesting because it taken of the legs only, amongst a bunch of chair legs. Within the context of today's show-it-all world, this is dowdy and puritanical and would not be used to advertise hose, or heels though it might possibly be used to advertise chairs.



No seam nylons

This was the next step in the development of "nylons" as they were always called, seamless hose. Hanes was one of the leaders even then. This ad is more risqué than the preceding one with its suggestive quality, but it is mild by today's standards. I keep mentioning that because I am still amazed at how profoundly values have shifted during my life.



Mum deodorant

Deodorant is actually a fairly new development. I don't really know when this product was first developed marketed widely but based on my own experience with deodorants in my own life on farms in Utah, with longshoremen in Seward and urbanites in Boston. Natural personal odors were pretty common even in Boston. I remember a dance in Belmont where I danced with a girl who wore a strapless dress -in ballroom position- which meant that her arms were up on my shoulder and hand. So the emanations from her underarms suffused the air. I gagged. She was a field hockey player who needed a shower badly but rather than do that, she just rubbed on a thick layer of a deodorant. The combination was worse than the smell of a pig pen because it was so personal. I didn't ask her a second time. Yes, I was well aware of body odors and the benefit of deodorants and showers and soap.



Figure 80 <http://www.pettipond.com/mum.jpg>

I think that men and women probably used colognes and after shave lotion to some degree to mask odors, but it was pretty difficult when the clothes smelled stale and the body hadn't been bathed for a week. In my own life in Vernal, I know that my folks only bathed once a week and that dad didn't use a deodorant at all. Mom did.

She used this "Mum" stuff. It came in a small milk glass jar with a wide mouth, closed with a metal lid. I don't imagine it could have held more than a quarter cup of product as you can see in this image of two teenage girls. It was a white paste that one applied with fingers and had an astringent quality if you tasted it - as I did. I tasted lots of things because I learned from dad that tasting new substances revealed interesting things about them. As long as you only taste it on the tip of your tongue, you can even taste harmful stuff for the most part though I don't recommend it if you don't have any clue about it because tasting a sulphuric acid solution will cause a pretty nasty burn.

The next step in the development in deodorant products was the stick version. This was initially a hardened whitish paste but later was supplemented with a clear gel, a most amazing development. I started to be aware of deodorants in Seward before we left and wondered whether I needed to start using it. The next version was the spray. The first one I encountered was Right Guard in 1960 when I went to BYU. Some Californian had the fancy little red and black can of deodorant that all of us wanted to borrow because it smelled so good, and was such a clever idea. He didn't lend it, however.

Niagara Starch

Up to the time we moved to Boston, mom cooked up her own starch solution to use when she did the laundry. She used plain old starch in a pan of water and after it had thickened, she poured it gradually into a tub of water, stirring vigorously to mix it in. Then she would dip the wet clothes in the solution, wring them out and hang them to dry. Then when she dampened them and ironed them, they were starched.

It was pretty neat for mom to be able to buy a powder that she could just mix with water. Later she could even buy premade liquid starch. The development of spray cans was in the future, however.

"Petticoats with Poise"

NEED INSTANT NIAGARA LAUNDRY STARCH?"

Spring! Fashion shows! My, how good grooming shows up! But popular girls know they are always on a fashion runway...at school, home, church, everywhere. And they always use Instant Niagara Laundry Starch to keep starchable petticoats crisp and smooth! Wear one petticoat or six—you'll have more fun—feel more confident!—if you use Niagara starch.

Instant Niagara Laundry starch

- keeps cotton petticoats like new—crisp and smooth to touch
- makes all starchable petticoats stay clean longer—wash with greater ease
- never causes white streaks or spots—color stays fresh and clear
- makes petticoat lining stay—prevents the "round look"
- stiffens nylon petticoats—machine or line dried

Produced by Corn Products Refining Company, New York

JANE AHELY, Home Service Dept. 4
Box 1610, Church Street P.O.
New York 46, N.Y.

Dear Jane Ashley: Please send me, free, a copy of TIMELY STARCHING TIPS FOR TEEN-AGHS.

NAME _____
STREET OR ROUTE _____
CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

Figure 81

http://www.pettipond.com/latereimages/images_m/niagara.jpg

Coke

ZING!

Figure 82
<http://www.pettipond.com/coke.jpg>

William H.

Seward School

12 grades. In one building. Mr. Frampton was the principal, father of my good friend Clayton. I cannot find a single photo of the school in dad's collection which is obviously a reflection of his lack of interest in it. I mean that literally. He had no interest at all in my school or schooling at any time in my life. Even college was of little interest to him. The only image I could find that showed even part of the school was this one that I took of a WW II Quonset hut, probably in its original location on the "east side of town" -sort of a fancy way to refer to a town that was 8 blocks wide! That's the school there in the

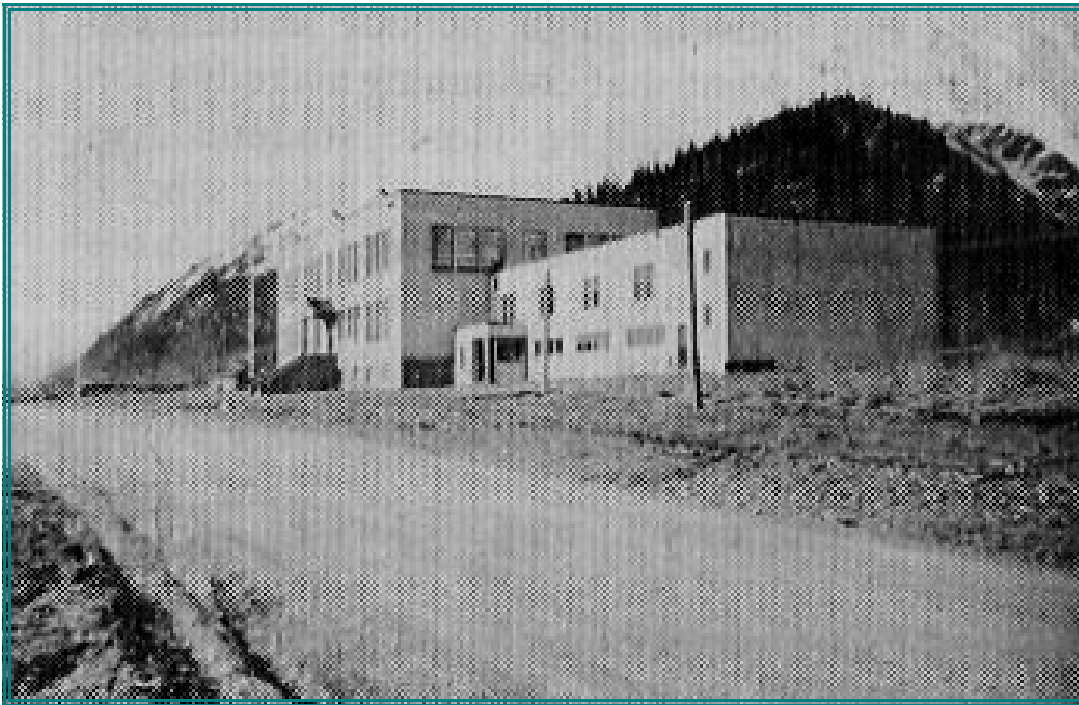


background on the right side of the photo, the second story and roof line showing. The belt of evergreens is the bench that runs along the bottom of Mt. Marathon. I can't tell if clouds had obscured Marathon down to that level or whether it was simply the flat light that created that effect.

This photo is wonderful for the way it shows what the scruffy town was like and what the weather was like most of time, gray and dark and wet. That is how I remember Seward. Indoors we were dry and warm enough but outside was a different story. But it's important to point out that I did not find the weather oppressive or unusual. It was simply my reality, just like dry summers were my reality in Vernal. Kids don't think about what the weather is like, what it means, how it affects their attitude and emotions. The total effect of weather on me was its effect on my outdoor life but even 'bad' weather didn't bottle me up completely, just required that I dress warmly, or dress to keep from getting wet. When I went out in bad conditions, I just counted on getting wet or cold, knowing that I'd dry out

or warm up later.

This is Mary Barry's image of the school. Too bad that the image I have to



work with is a low grade offset image. The pattern of dots in the original is magnified in this scan.

This photo is looking south along unpaved 4th Avenue which has no sidewalks at all, which is the main street that runs on down through the center of town to the bay in the distance. You can see from the slope of the road that the peak of the alluvial fan is right there almost directly in front of the school. The dark mountain on the right side is Little Bear and the whitish mountain above Little Bear is Big Bear Mountain. The school was a large building of two stories with a "basement" that was half out of the ground on this side. On the other side of the school, due to the steep slope up to the right of this photo, the basement really was a basement. The main entrance of the school is the covered porch affair there. There was a back entrance but it didn't have the canopy. The one-story building on this end is the gymnasium that served as a multipurpose space for basketball games, plays, parties, and celebrations of any kind in the community that required a large amount of space.

The school building had a wide hallway running lengthwise, creating two rows on rooms on the outside. As you walked inside this entrance, the main door, "The

Office" was on the left side. That's where you'd find Mr. Frampton - if you were so foolish as to want to see him. The top floor was for the upperclassmen while the first floor was for the rest of us. If my memory is accurate, there was actually a one story addition on the far side of the school which was also devoted to the lower grades. The basement was divided into the restrooms, one for each gender, the woodworking shop, and the cafeteria.

Note that there is no grass, no shrubs, no trees. That's how it was. There were no concrete sidewalks, no concrete play slabs outside, just a few teeter-totters on the south side, a jungle gym, and a merry-go-round affair that kids always got hurt on.

Mr. Watts Fights with a Student

It must have been around the 6th grade that Mr. Watts was my teacher. He was a shortish man, sort of on the heavy side with a pleasant demeanor. My impression of him was generally favorable though he was still a teacher and taskmaster who gave bad grades when they were appropriate so he wasn't exactly a friend. He had black hair cut short with a bit of gray on the side, and he wore a shirt and tie and sport jacket every day. He was a new teacher the year I had him and based on Mary Barry's list of teachers these years, Mr. Watts didn't stay long. Whether that was on account of Mr. Frampton the principal, the students, the town or something else, no one can guess.

The interesting thing about him was that he had been a successful wrestler in his previous life and I think he also taught wrestling. That was a novel thing for us because the Seward school of 12 grades had little athletics. It is likely, however, that Mr. Watts did not figure he would have to defend his reputation like he did that year.

There was a large Eskimo kid I think it was who was well into puberty, growing large with an equally large attitude and ego, unusual for that era. Things in the classroom were difficult for Mr. Watts as he tried to control the rowdiness that broke out, particularly at the start of the day and after lunch, times when all kids are wound-up anyway. I have no memories of particular events that precipitated this event but one fine gray wet day, Mr. Watts was late coming back to the classroom. No one talked much about it. We just sat and waited. He appeared after 5 or 10 minutes and his hair was messed up. He brushed it with his

hand to re-arrange it, he was puffing a bit like he had been running and his tie and shirt was in disarray, which was not typical of him.

I don't think we thought too much about it at the time. Class was a time to be quiet and he looked pretty severe so we went on with our lessons. Later, however, after we got out of school, the rumor circulated quickly that Mr. Watts had wrestled Rodney(?) down in the basement because Rodney was challenging him. Mr. Watts never mentioned it nor did any other teacher, so I'm not sure that's what happened. I do know that the rumor was credible because Rodney wasn't in class either.

Trojan Balloons

Growing up to be an adult is a treacherous undertaking that none of us can either control or opt out of. Of all the aspects of human life we each deal with as we are trained and grow, gender issues are the most difficult to comprehend, particularly since the kids' antennae register powerful upsetting confusing fearful emotional signals from the adults who are demonstrating their own anxiety and discomfort with whatever embarrassing gender issue has unexpectedly surfaced.

I was in the Fifth grade when I saw, though I didn't understand, a vivid public display of adult anxiety about a sexually-related matter. Though I doubt that most of us kids had a clue about what was going on. Actually most of us were envious of the kids who were having innocent fun. Until it happened.

We were having lunch in the classroom because it was too cold and snowy to go outside. The teacher didn't anticipate what was going to happen. Two boys went into the supply closet like they were going to get construction paper or glue to make something, a usual sort of occurrence during these indoor lunches. No one paid much attention, including the teacher. Until a small balloon bounced out of the closet to rest on the floor by the door. 'What a nice little balloon! I want one!', was our reaction. We were all envious. Then another came out and a kid picked it up and started to play with it, so some of us went to the closet to see where those kids were getting balloons because we didn't think the supply closet had that sort of celebratory toy.

What we saw were the most bizarre balloons we had ever seen. They came in little individual envelopes and looked like rubber donuts that you had to sort of

twist open and then blow up with difficulty because there was no mouth piece to hold onto like most balloons have. And the tying was just as difficult because the balloon was so soft and floppy. Such strange, clear, little balloons.

It must have been about the time these balloons were being thrown around in the room that the teacher made her move. She must have been simultaneously mortified and horrified and paralyzed. This was around 1953. She disappeared, but us kids didn't have a clue that she was going where she went. If we thought about it at all, we were glad she left, or we thought she was just going to the bathroom, like we did during lunchtime. Instead, she went to "The Office." If we'd known that, every kid would have had their coat on and been outside in 60 seconds.

In a few minutes she returned, walking behind a red-faced, angry, Mr. Frampton who was striding heavily, quickly, and angrily toward the supply closet. In his suit, white shirt and tie, which he always wore, such an odd thing in Seward where us kids wore Levi's and hip boots to school. Mr. Frampton had a bad temper so all of us kids tended to shy away from him even when he tried to be nice. You avoid the wolf even if it smiles. Without any introduction, he started in on the two little kids who were cornered and couldn't get away while he stood in the door. I don't think they even knew what they had. He was oblivious to the rest of us, and a string of angry questions and invective flowed without any time for the poor kids to answer, "Where did you get these? What are you doing? Why are you doing this? Give me those! I'm going to report you to your parents!"

At this point, what seemed like an innocent game started by these little kids became something very nasty. How did we know it was nasty? It's hard to really say because no words were spoken that would specifically convey that meaning. But the sheer magnitude of Mr. Frampton's anger about something as innocent as balloons signaled that a abnormally bright line had been crossed somehow by those boys. Even fist fights and bloody noses didn't provoke this terrible invective. We all knew those kids had not done anything on purpose to call down the wrath of god, but there it was, so we were all now in a minefield where we didn't even understand what the mines were. We knew each one of us that not a single one of us was going to ask a question or make a comment. We studiously looked away, or read our books or stared out the window while the slaughter concluded. Wondering what in the heck just happened? What did we just witness, knowing that it was profound, but clueless about what it was, fascinated and horrified at the same time.

Mr. Frampton tried to maintain his dignity while he angrily gathered the balloons that bounced away from him each time he grabbed at them. He finally

collected them all and put them into a paper sack with the wrappings and the box they came in. The name on the box was "Trojan".

Miss Wilkinson and Spelling Bees

I'd never heard of "spelling bees". I was just a dumb kid from Vernal who didn't know they could. (I'm not sorry.) Turned out I was about the best-est spelled in the mob. Know how I knew? We had spelling bees! Plus we had weekly spelling tests. 25 new words each and every week and as sure as god made little green apricots, there was a spelling test on Friday. Barring Easter and Christmas breaks.

On Monday Miss Wilkinson would announce after lunch, "OK, children, take out your note books. I'm going to give your spelling words for the week." That was our cue to get dry mouths, shaky hands that had resolved over the weekend. Then she would give us the 25 new words for the week. Always 25. We wrote them in our pads of wide-lined foolscap. The words were presented in a rigid, inflexible formula. She would say the word once, exaggerating its pronunciation to be sure we heard all of the syllables. Then she would spell the word carefully, sometimes pointing out something important, like "e before i or i before e". After she had spelled it clearly, she would use the word in a sentence that she would repeat one time, then she would say the word again and spell it again:

"Wagon. W-a-g-o-n. 'The farmer put hay in a wagon'" Wagon. W-a-g-o-n."

After she had given us our 25 new words she would always ask if anyone had a question. I don't recall that many kids had questions, perhaps because she intimidated us, perhaps because she did such a good job of spelling the word and using it in a sentence to show its meaning, that there was no reason for anyone to have questions. After she had given us our new words on Monday, she didn't talk much about spelling during the week except to remind us that the spelling test would be Friday after lunch. Not unless one of us wanted to ask her a question about a word. She was always polite and careful when she answered questions so you knew you could ask her if you could work up the courage because even though you knew she was a good person, she had a sober countenance. I don't remember any laughter in her class, but in fairness, I have to point out that I don't recall it being actually frightening either. Just a middle of the road experience with a good teacher who brooked no nonsense and one who actually loved kids and cared that

they learn.

The book end for the week was the Friday-after-lunch test. Miss Wilkinson would announce, "OK students. Time for your spelling test. Take out your spelling notebooks." There was a spiral-bound notebook manufactured specifically for spelling ordeals. It was about half the width of an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide page and 11 inches long, with a heavy cardboard cover, front and back, with perhaps 50 sheets of paper, wide-lined for the weekly trials. We had to have this kind of notebook to take the tests. If we didn't, we had to explain to Miss Wilkinson why we didn't have one and it better not be that we lost it or that we forgot it or that the dog ate it. Nope, only poverty would excuse us in which case she would make sure after class that the needy kid got his spelling notebook. She was an odd mixture of the severe school marm with her long salt and pepper hair wound up around the back of her head in a Scandinavian braid, and a softy who took care of kids who really needed it.

After we all had pencils at the ready, she would systematically and methodically as a metronome (one of the spelling words) administer the test. No kidding. It was sort of like an induction physical, except it was every week. She followed a rigid formula again. She would say the word, then use it in a sentence, and then say the word again.

"Super.

I have a super headache.

Super."

She would then pause for perhaps 10 seconds so the class dummies -of which there were several varieties, scratched their heads, looked out the windows, touched the tip of their tongues with the tip of their pencils, frowned or scowled whichever suited their feeling at the moment, glanced surreptitiously (another of them words) at their neighbor but looked back with alacrity (another of them words) before Miss Wilkinson caught him doing it because sure as shooting she would shoot any kid who she caught cheating.

Man alive, it was like Moses coming down off the mountain when she caught a kid cheating. She stormed up out of her chair behind her desk and nearly ran to the malcreant (another of them words) at which point she said "Mr. Thompson. You are cheating. I have warned you. Give me your notebook." At which time the red-faced Mr. Thompson -this was in the days when kids still could be embarrassed at being caught- meekly handed up his notebook and Miss Wilkinson angrily ripped this

week's test out of the book and told him, "You will get a zero for this test. And don't ever let me catch you cheating again. I will send you to the principal next time."

That, too, was something us kids in those days could be frightened with, being sent to the principal, particularly this one, Mr. Frampton. He made Miss Wilkinson seem Sweet and Mild even in her anger. When he was angry, he was like Vulcan when he smote a smoking molten iron rod on an anvil with his Hammer, flakes of flashing burning metal flying every which way. Don't get sent to the principal. He didn't usually strike kids but he did, in fact, have a heavy wooden paddle that he would use on certain occasions, so there was real reason to fear him. Looking back, I don't have a problem with corporal punishment. Guess that's because I don't have a problem with capital punishment. It's a powerful deterrent and we could use a little bit of it today, wouldn't you say?

Miss Wilkinson wasn't a tall woman, perhaps 5 foot 4, a bit taller than mom, though the difference may have been the piled-up hair, and she seemed ancient not just because she was older but because she seemed to have a lot of wrinkles on her face and neck which our moms didn't. The most distinctive, and bothersome aspect of her person, was her breath. Either from coffee or cigarettes, or both, her breath would curl your hair. That tended to keep me at a distance.

Miss Wilkinson lived alone in an apartment on the second floor of the apartment across the street from the post office. I would think of her over there sometimes when I went down to get the mail, but I never would have dared go visit her.

There was an occasion when I did visit her in that apartment so I got to see in it. For some reason mom had to go there and she took me with her, probably to drop off a present for Christmas or something like that. Mom appreciated good teachers and did offer gifts to them up there, though in Boston that never happened because it was a different ball game for many reasons.

I wondered about her living alone, how it must be to live there without family. But I knew that she had friends that she visited with and did things with like go out



Figure 85 Miss Wilkinson's apartment building in 2003

in the country side sightseeing. I don't know if she was ever married and haven't a clue about where she went. I noted with a bit of sadness that in Mary Barry's book about this era in Seward that when she listed the school teachers, she left out Miss Wilkinson, Mr. Watts and the two Mrs. Connelys.

The building to the right of Miss Wilkinson's building is the Oddfellow's hall where Andy's Army-Navy Surplus store was located. It's all wrong in this image because it's got shingles and is now missing the large display windows.

Auxiliary Classrooms

The population of the town was only 2,000 so there really weren't a lot of kids but there were more than the school could hold. The school had been built in the 1920's to hold all twelve grades. But the 1950's saw the first bulge of post-war babies and the school could no longer hold all of us. New teachers had to be found, and new locations had to be arranged.

The baby boom was a new and unexpected phenomenon so no one had taken steps to deal with the additional number of students that seemed to suddenly appear. But they were there and Seward was legally bound to provide them an education - though a large number of us would have been more than willing to sit it out.

(Did you know that I am not a baby boomer? I was born before the US even entered the war and the boomers are the kids born after the war after their daddies came home. The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor was 12-07-1941, and I was born in March 1942.)

Over the next few years the town fathers, territorial government and the feds cobbled together enough dough to spring for a new high school which really was needed and which decompressed the original building. Meantime, however, something had to be done to get the kids into classrooms. The obvious -and only- solution in this tiny community was to find a sufficient number of sufficiently large rooms in the community that could be used during the week to stable a gaggle of kids and a teacher.

I remember three off-site locations because Dick attended one of them and I attended the other two:

- 1 - The Episcopal Church Undercroft
- 2 - The Methodist Church basement, and
- 3 - The Oddfellow's Hall, a second story location.

There may have been other locations but these are the only ones I remember.

Methodist Church

I had the good fortune of attending one grade in the basement of the Methodist Church. It was a large open room that had room for 25 or so desks and students. I don't actually remember desks so we may have sat at small tables, but whatever the furniture was, we sat there every day for a school year.

The Methodist Church which has since burned down and been replaced faced the main street as seen in this photo of soldiers in a Fourth of July parade. These



guys were really impressive. I admired them and looked up to them. The Methodist Church stands there behind them. The entrance was from the back side. The church was 2 blocks away from my house so it didn't take long to walk to school, or go home for lunch.

6th Grade & Episcopal Undercroft

The Episcopal church was just a few houses down the street from our



home on the same side of the street. I attended school there for my 5th grade. It was sufficiently large to hold 25 kids who you can see in the adjoining class picture. This is a 2003 image that is accurate except for the addition of an enclosed porch. There were originally steps leading directly in to the church as in the following photo of the entire class with the teacher, Mrs. Moore.

Mrs. Moore was the teacher, a somewhat overweight, clinically depressed looking person who carried the burden of teaching like an anvil on her shoulders.



For good reason, no doubt. There are two significant memories of that year, one involved Dien Bien Phu, the other her method for retrieving stolen money. I thank her deeply for the former because it enriched my understanding of the damnable goings-on in South East Asia in the next 15 years.

As noted variously, ALL of us kids were well aware of WW II and of the Bombs (plural now since the Big One had also been experimentally detonated in 1951, making the atom bombs puny by comparison) and of the Korean "War" -as we called it in our unsophisticated (but accurate) way of viewing the world. It's worth noting that the movies of the time were often war-related. And one of the characteristics of movies in those days was the 5-10 minute "Newsreel" that frequently had clips of war-related items. So war was very much in our minds.

But we had never heard of Dien Bien Phu or French Indo-China. But for reasons I don't know today, but wish I did, the French who had occupied that region of South-East Asia were decisively beaten in 1954, and here's the point: Mrs.. Moore read the newspaper story to us. That is my first memory of Viet Nam, and an ominous one it turned out to be.

The corrupt family -3 brothers in particular- who had joined with the French

in subjugating the populace were overthrown. It was less the fact of the reason for the war and overthrow of a corrupt government, than for the manner of the overthrow, and the agent who accomplished. An insurgent guerilla army led by a man named Ho Chi Minh used tactics effectively to defeat the more professional, well-equipped French.

That was the man and the method of warfare that defeated the mighty US 18 years later.

I do remember Mrs. Moore reading other newspaper articles to us as a way to (A) kill time and (B) acquaint us with "Current Events". She succeeded in that, more perhaps than she could have imagined. It amazes me that this seemingly insignificant event in a land I had never heard of while the larger closer-to-home Korean War was winding down would stick in my memory simply because this teacher read an article and tried to explain why the event was important. Even after I started hearing of the Vietnamese problem in the mid-1960's it did not click in my memory that this was the same country and war and general until I heard the connection on a newscast one day. Then the pieces clicked into place. Thank you, Mrs. Moore.



There was a problem, however, that she dealt with poorly. Her method makes me wonder if she had children of her own because it was so inappropriate. First you have to understand the layout of the undercroft. It was a large empty room that was decorated by school desks in rows. Around the walls were blackboards, charts, maps and pictures. On each end was a short set of stairs that led out of the basement, and on the north side was a single bathroom inside of a large cloak room.

What happened this particular day was that someone had brought a large sum of money to school and during the morning discovered that it was missing. His or her conclusion was that one of us kids had gone into the cloak room and ransacked the pocket of the outercoat where the dough was housed. This person reported the theft to Mrs. Moore who was aghast at such behavior from us kids. So she swore to find the miscreant and punish him/her. But her method was bizarre.

She decided that the best way to recover the money was to have us

individually do something that she apparently thought would give the robber enough cover that s/he would cough up the moola. She said that we would all sit in our places and that we would each go into the bathroom, shut the door, and then come back to our chair. We would follow each other until all of us had done this. At that time, she would go into the bathroom and find the money and return it to its owner.

Well, we sat there listening politely but we all saw the flaw in this process. In the end, in spite of wasting 5 minutes, the money didn't show up. She criticized us a bit and told us she was ashamed of us and so on and we all listened patiently. But us kids weren't really sure that the original sin was the only sin. We speculated -privately to be sure- that the robber just may have deposited his/her swag in the designated spot and returned to his/her chair and that one of the next kids checked the designated spot, found the loot, and liberated it again, and since that kid didn't have to go back to the bathroom again, s/he didn't have to return the money. I still don't know who stole it but I know her method was ineffective.

Mr. Berg, Music Man

This man was an original who seemed out of place somehow. He came to town to replace a lady music teacher who I liked a great deal, so perhaps in my book he already had a strike against him. Teachers one can like are so rare that they are treasures, aren't they. She was, although I can't remember her name but I'll tell you about her next.

Of course, Lady Music Teacher had a leg up on any other kind of teacher because of the subject. I suppose one might argue that it was my own personal dad who did the deed, who set me up to be susceptible to someone who would teach me about music. That would persuade me. Truly.

But having admitted that aspect of the music classes, I will still point out that Mr. Berg didn't make the grade. He was more irritating than inspiring. But once more I have to offer another thing in his defense. When he came to the Episcopal Church Undercroft, he had no source of music. Lady Music Teacher (LTM) had a real piano. So how did he make a melody to teach us the melody of new songs he wanted to teach us? A violin. A plain old violin in a case, which had just been outside in the cold so needed tuning and didn't stay tuned. Further, he came in freezing from the outside while LMT was warm and toasty inside already. LMT had a record player and records that she could play to (A) entertain us and (B) teach us.

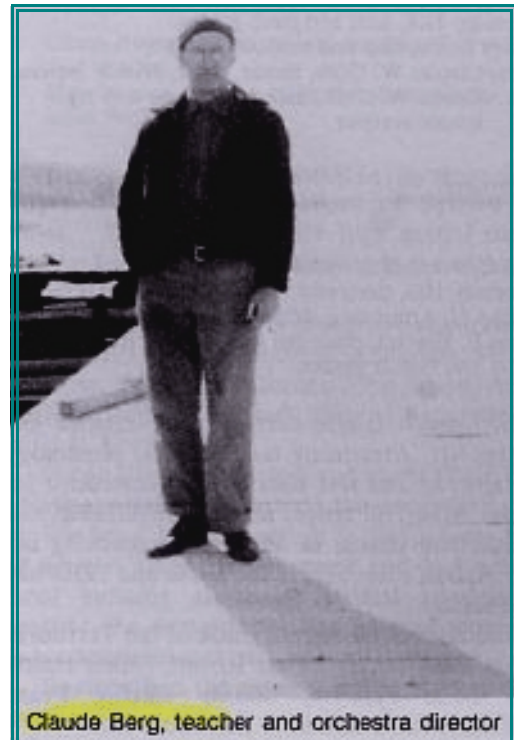
He had nothing like that. Finally, LMT had her own classroom set up with pictures - that she had acquired over some years- on the walls about music, composers and so on while the Undercroft had no such resources. There was a huge number of differences that are coming into focus as I go through this exercise. See, an old man can figure some things out.

But still.....poor Mr. Berg had two intertwined personal habits that dis-endearred him to us kids. First, he got angry at us, really angry. LMT did too, but somehow she had a way about her that controlled us when we got rowdy and noisy. She was probably someone's mom so had learned the ropes at home and knew what to say and do to handle us but Mr. Berg had none of those skills. He would speak kindly to us and ask us to please be quiet and listen, and he'd maintain his cool during several attempts to settle us down. In the end, he blew up. He got very angry at us, got red in the face and was so angry that he couldn't think straight. Even us kids could see that and unfortunately more than one kid figured out how to push his buttons on purpose to get him in that state. And second, when he got into that state, dressed in his suit, white shirt and tie, holding his violin in one hand and bow in the other, he'd wave that bow at us and yell. While flecks of white foam sat in the corners of his mouth, breaking loose occasionally.

Mr. Berg did run the music program well I think after all, particularly within to limitations he was saddled with. There is a program for the 1954 Christmas Program below that shows you what he did which was an accomplishment, particularly considering these resources. He apparently dropped the suit and tie and adapted to the environment later as shown by this photo from Mary Barry's book.

Lady Music Teacher

I don't remember her name, I can scarcely recall her face but she had as



much impact on me as a teacher as any individual teacher did during my 12 years of hard labor cracking rocks in the yard. I'll show you what I mean:

- A. Grofe, "On the Trail"
- B> Grieg, "Hall of the Mountain King" and someone's "Dance"
- C. Thunderstorm in 4th movement of Beethoven's 6th (Pastoral Symphony)
- D. Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" (4th movement of 9th)
- E. "The Glendy Burke"
- F. Etc.

Those are specific things I can remember about her class today, Sept. 14, 2003 at least 50 years later. Don't ask me if I can remember that many specific things that I learned from any other teachers there - even Miss Wilkinson whom I really did like didn't make such an impression.

LMT had a way of making things understandable and interesting. You have to admit that it is a difficult task to help a 4th grade kid who's 10 years old understand that concept that a piece of classical -gag- music is expressing a visual image or any kind of image. For example, if you play a Debussy piece for kids that age and tell them that it portrays sunlight through trees or on the surface of a lake, the kids will just get a blank stare. But she didn't go to such difficult places for her purposes.

Her first example of music telling a story was Grofe's Grand Canyon Suite. I had no concept of a 'suite' and I don't think she bothered explaining the term but she did use the proper name of the composition. I was familiar with the Grand Canyon so had that benefit when starting. Then she said that Grofe was telling stories with the different parts of the composition and the one she used was "On the trail". She explained how people made the trip up and down the canyon on donkeys or burros and explained that they had to start early to get down and back in one day. And on the way, early in the morning, they would be up before the sun, so as they descended they would be able to see the sun rise. Then she played "On the Trail" and as the situation progressed, she'd call it out over the music to help us understand what the music was expressing. I understood it.

Grieg was equally vivid. I was in love with folklore and myths and was reading anything I could find about Norse Mythology so I was prepared in that sense for Grieg. When LMT described the "Hall of the Mountain King" I had an already-

formed image to fall back on and when she played the music, the two fit together.

Her classes were generally divided into two parts. One part it that just described where she explained things about music and illustrated them with music from records. Of course, these were the old 78 RPM records so they only lasted 2 minutes. The other part of the class was singing. Her class room had 3 rows of chair that didn't have arms, that faced the black board in the front where her piano sat. She'd pass out song books to us kids, knowing that if we had them in hand while she needed our attention that she'd not get it.

Then she'd tell us to turn to page such and such and if it was a familiar song she'd just start us together with her piano and sing all of the verses. If it was a new song, she'd sing the song herself while she played the melody by itself. She'd do this several times emphasizing whatever points she felt we needed. Then she'd play the melody while we all tried it with her. After we had learned it she'd add the other parts.

Amongst the song in that book were American folk songs, Stephen Foster, and Burl Ives kind of songs. I loved them. Some of them always created humor and some kids got carried away, exaggerating the words with their faces and mouths, as in the "Camptown Ladies". One song I liked in particular was the "Glendy Burke". This song was about a tugboat with that name on the Mississippi River, moving barges up and down. I still remember some of it:

"Oh, the Glendy Burke is a might fine boat
With a might fine captain, too.
He sits up there on the hurricane roof
For to keep an eye on the crew.

Chorus:

Ho for Louisiana, I'm bound to leave this town,
I'll take my duds and I'll tote'em on my back
When the Glendy Burke comes down."

There were 4 or 5 verses. I'd sit by Brent and Clayton and we'd ornament the performance with "toot toot" syncopated at the right places. LMT didn't mind, oddly enough. I suppose that's because she could tell we were enjoying the music and as long as we weren't disruptive, she let it go, perhaps even enjoyed it herself though she'd never let on.

Mrs. Connolly, Jr. and the Methodist Church

The Methodist pastor, Reverend Malin, was a rosy cheeked do-gooder from the "lower 48", from "the outside", who always grinned an ivory-toothed grin and seemed always in the winter to wear this ridiculous fluffy red fake fur hat -that the sourdoughs wouldn't be caught dead in- I guess to show his solidarity with the folk or to dramatize his realization that he was roughing it in the wild with his little band of believers. Anyway, he was nice and allowed the town to use the basement of his little white church -a real basement, not an "undercroft" as it was over at Father Clapp's Episcopal church. It -the church with the basement- was located about 2 blocks from my house so it was a quick commute each morning. It was close enough to home that I could skip over and get a bite before I had to be back in class which was better than a sack lunch.

For the record, in those days lunch boxes that kids took to school were just like our dads' lunch boxes, the largish domed black metal boxes with a handle along the top, inside of which was a real thermos bottle that carried whatever moms could find to put in them that morning. Pretty funny looking to see a second grader lugging one of these to school - needed a wagon - or a pack mule. Paper bags were used a lot for this reason - and were re-used, too. Sometimes the bags were small grocery sacks, not the neat little lunch sacks made for the purpose.

In the bottom of the lunch pail or sack was a sandwich, a boiled eggs, or some carrots, perhaps a plastic container of something like pie or a few cookies, and apple or on really special days a candy bar. We'd go to the cafeteria or lunchroom and sit on benches along the tables, put our huge lunch boxes on the tables, tip the lid back and then practically fall inside while we peered in to see what was there. Eating was serious business so kids ate and then went outside to finish the recess. It was much later that the pretty silk-screened boxes with designs of cartoon characters and flowers made their appearance. Perhaps there were already in place in the "lower 48" but we didn't see them in Seward.

The teacher when we did our tour of duty in the Methodist Church Basement was a young Mrs. Connolly. The original Mrs. Connolly was a middle-aged art teacher, the mother-in-law of Junior. I sort of liked Senior basically but she made me feel very bad and I'll tell you about that later. Her son married a woman who was named Mrs. Connolly, at least after the marriage, and I call her "junior". This younger woman was pressed into service as a teacher in Seward I think when I look back

from the vantage point of my adulthood who also did a heck of a lot of teaching.

Mrs. C. Jr. was young, not that disqualifies her from teaching. But there was a greenness, and unpreparedness, and inability to cope with the normal stresses of classes that suggest that she really wasn't qualified or trained for the job. In those days I am sure that there was no requirement for even a teaching certificate of even college education. What would you do in a berg like Seward if you had those rules? You wouldn't find teachers, and with the baby boomer bulge someone had to be thrown into the breach. And this poor young woman was thrown in. And it showed.

She tried mightily to teach and she tried to control behavior in the classroom but basically could not. She'd get angry and out of control and just didn't have a great sense of appropriate handling of kids. On one occasion in the classroom, not out on the playground, something was going on with kids moving around the classroom. She had been trying to get us to do something, like maybe go sit down, and finally reached her limit. In a burst of ill-advised bravado, this 5 foot 4 inch 100 pound lady swarmed over a little kid, grabbed him and threw him up over her shoulder in a fireman's carry. The kid was so shocked that he didn't resist, else he would have knocked her down. She paraded him across the front of the room to show that she could in fact control kids.

But she couldn't. The year was a waste as far as learning went. Teachers like Miss Wilkinson and Mr. Watts could control the kids, who were basically good kids who just got the bit between their teeth if they could, and even managed to pour some information into them. My year doing time with Junior was a waste overall. I did feel sorry for her but not enough that it really made a difference in my sense of her. An insecure kid is not likely to focus on the trials and travails of an incompetent adult who is harshly managing him.

Mrs. Connolly, Puffins, and 2nd Place

Mrs. Connolly came to Seward full of herself and her artiness. She did end up teaching art at the school and probably got her fill of us kids. She was one of these teachers who had pets. And goats I guess you'd call the opposite. Her pets could do no wrong and were allowed many privileges that the rest of us were not allowed to have, although she made it appear that we didn't get the privilege simply because the timing was wrong. In fact, any time was wrong for certain kids.

I think I'll just scan in the actual picture because I have carted it around all these years. See, there it is. That is the topic of this story.

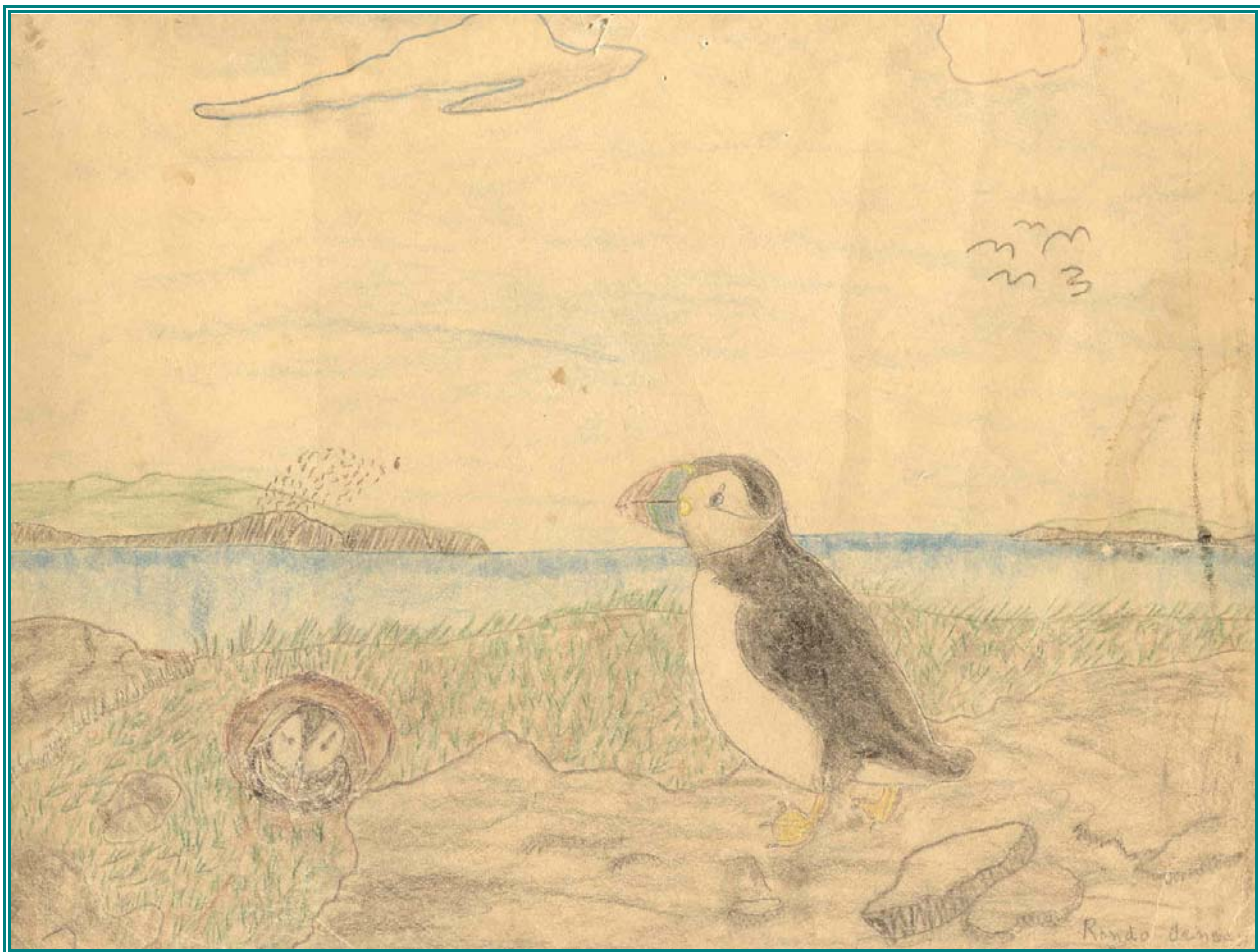


Figure 91 Puffins a la Audobon

The pet that I resented the most was an Indian kid, some sort of racial mixture of which there many varieties what with the native people and the wide variety of sailors from all over the world who passed through these little towns. As a kid this kid was actually OK. I liked him and got along with him, sort of low-slung Hispanic-looking kid with wavy black hair and pupil-less eyes, who was probably pretty badly damaged I guess today looking back at him - he rarely spoke, rarely smiled, was a loner, slouched against the wall, smoked and was tough in an authentic silent James Dean sort of way.

For some reason Mrs. Connolly decided to adopt him as her cause I guess, though it may have been just because he had a certain chutzpah that affected you and made you like him, made you want to root for him in whatever contest he was internally engaged. During art class she would frequently stop by his desk to observe his drawing. He had natural talent. I could see it because I hung around a lot of it on the ol' homestead. I could see it. He was good, nice drafting skills, nice sense of composition and choice of topics. Mrs. Connolly would spend far more time with him than with any of us other kids, carefully explaining to him about perspective and how to blend colors to get another color and so on. I resented that. His paintings did excel compared to most of ours, but guess why. It was in part because of the extra attention and instruction that he received.

Well, the time when I parted ways with her in my mind was at the end of an art show that was sponsored by a women's group, and staged in the Odd Fellow's Hall. Their "hall" consisted of 2 large rooms with a kitchen in between, two bathrooms and two large closetish back rooms. I'll tell you about the mysterious contents of one of those rooms down below in the section about class in these rooms. The large rooms lent themselves to public displays like art shows. I look back and sort of grin to myself. "Art show" in Seward. Chuckle. But it was good that such things were held and that artists were encouraged and that kids saw and heard and were exposed to it. Whatever pretentiousness was involved in these shows, they fulfilled an important purpose for a tiny frontier community perched on the edge of the ocean with no commerce with any city. Either the town provided for itself or it was not provided for at all. So this lady's club put on an art show each year and it had a section for kids.

For my last birthday in Vernal which means after dad had gone to Seward, mom and dad gave me a book that I have loved through the years. Even today I see it with great affection and recall the wonderment of it all, when I turned the pages slowly, savoring and pondering the pictures. It was a hardback book of Audubon's

prints, one picture to each side of a page. Absolutely grand gift for an 8 year old. [Isn't it an interesting gift for an 8 year old? What caused them to give that to me? I don't know but it is not your normal 8-year old's present is it.] Whenever I was trying to pick a topic to draw which I did on my own at home, I was more likely to turn to this book than any other for inspiration.

This year I had decided that I wanted to draw a picture of puffins. Their whimsical striped beaks on roly-poly bodies and orange feet appealed to me. I'd looked at them for years and decided I would reproduce the print in my own sketch pad, a spiral bound one with dense lovely heavy paper that made me feel competent. I laid the picture out freehand, looking back and forth between the book and the sketchpad. It had a nice composition. The birds stood on the beach low in the picture, with the horizon being high in the picture. Thirds, always pleasing. Then I colored them with a small set of colored pencils that mom and dad had given me. Only 8 short pencils in the set in a cardboard box with a little window but they were wonderful. Colors came out of these pencils, and they could be blended together to create new colors. It was many years later that I saw tin boxes filled with even hundreds of pencils and I about decompensated. I wanted one of those enormous sets so badly. Oh my, what a treasure. Hard to conceive of the richness of such a resource.

What finally ruptured my friendship toward Mrs. Connolly was her judging of the kids' artwork. When I learned that kids could enter pictures in the art show to be judged, with three prizes for the three "best" pictures, I, with the confidence of an innocent kid, decided I'd enter my puffin picture. I knew it was good for a kid my age. I really knew it. So I entered it and anxiously awaited the announcement that I got first place. It felt that clear to me that my picture deserved that honor, that it excelled. I looked at the other pictures and still felt that way.

But when the prizes were awarded, I did not get first prize. First prize went to the Indian kid. Remember who the art teacher was and who her pet was and who the judge was. His picture was good, what could I say, but so was mine. I don't remember the topic of his picture but his work was generally simpler than the puffins which required a great deal of work, not that the amount of work should determine 'quality'. I was awarded second prize and received some sort of art thing, but I was not happy with that. But what's a kid going to do about it.

Parents can, however, do something. One of them did. Mom and dad had obviously seen the kids' art and knew that my piece was excellent. I don't know the details of what happened nor do I know what motivated them to do what they did,

but it pleased me then as it does now that they took it upon themselves to inquire about the judging of my piece. I wonder if they knew, probably through me, that Mrs. Connolly favored that kid anyway. Since he was her pet whom she lavished attention on, she probably should have disqualified herself as a judge. But that didn't happen in Seward. The women's club asked her to be the judge. Who else could they ask but the lone art teacher in the town. She looked, she evaluated and she pronounced.

As I recall it, my parent's conversation with Mrs. Connolly was basically one question and one answer.

Question: "Why did Ron's picture only get second place?"

Answer: "Because he obviously traced it and that's not art work."

Ha. There it was. Mrs. Connolly, without investigating how I did the piece at all, decided that the picture could only be that good because it was traced. Besides she knew that she didn't spend any time with me in class so how could I be doing that well on my own? [She forgot my secret weapon, i.e. "my dad" who was generous in his critiques...] My parents felt that she had done that just so that she could justify giving first place to her pet. The proof was the print in the book.

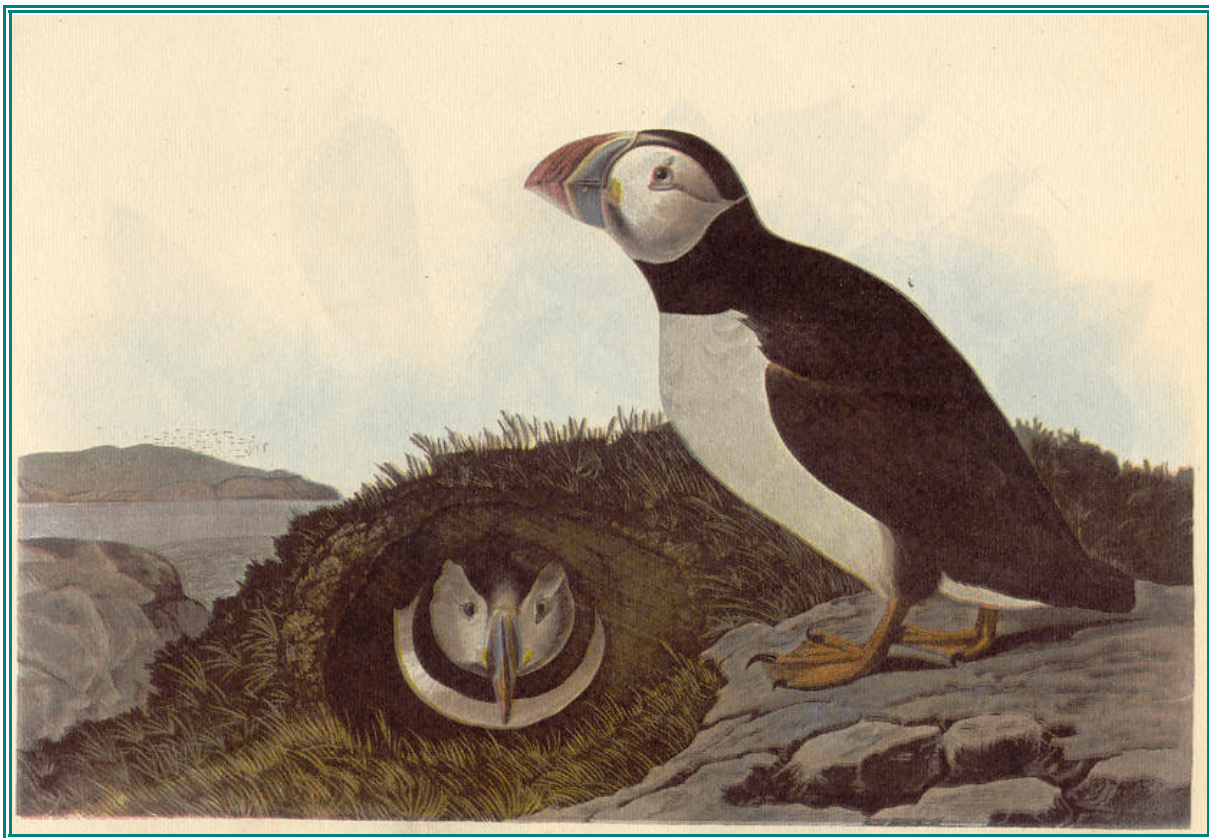
The sad thing about this episode is that it stalled my development as an artist. Childish? Absolutely. But I was a child. It stopped me. To this day. An impediment that is simply insurmountable in spite of (1) the fact that I understand how it came to be and (2) I know I am a damn good draftsman -at least. And that's how we all grow or don't grow. Her rejection of my work as tracing was depressing, like what's the use.

Mrs. Connolly obviously either did not like me, or liked the half-breed more - or something equally unfair. I obviously did not "trace" the darn thing. The other fact you are missing in these two images is the difference in size. The original was perhaps 6 x 8 inches while my "traced" version was 8 x 12. Not



likely was it that I had 'traced' it. My dad would have tanned my hide if I had traced. Connolly didn't know that. He would tolerate any amount of poor drafting, but if you were caught 'tracing', you would be on a ration of water and bread for a year. He did not tolerate that cheap technique.





Here's the actual image I looked at to create my drawing. On the one hand, it bears a strong resemblance to my drawing above, but on the other, it is so



sophisticated and so on that it is embarrassing that I show you my drawing. The fact that I was only 12 when I did it palliates the embarrassment.

Nine Girls

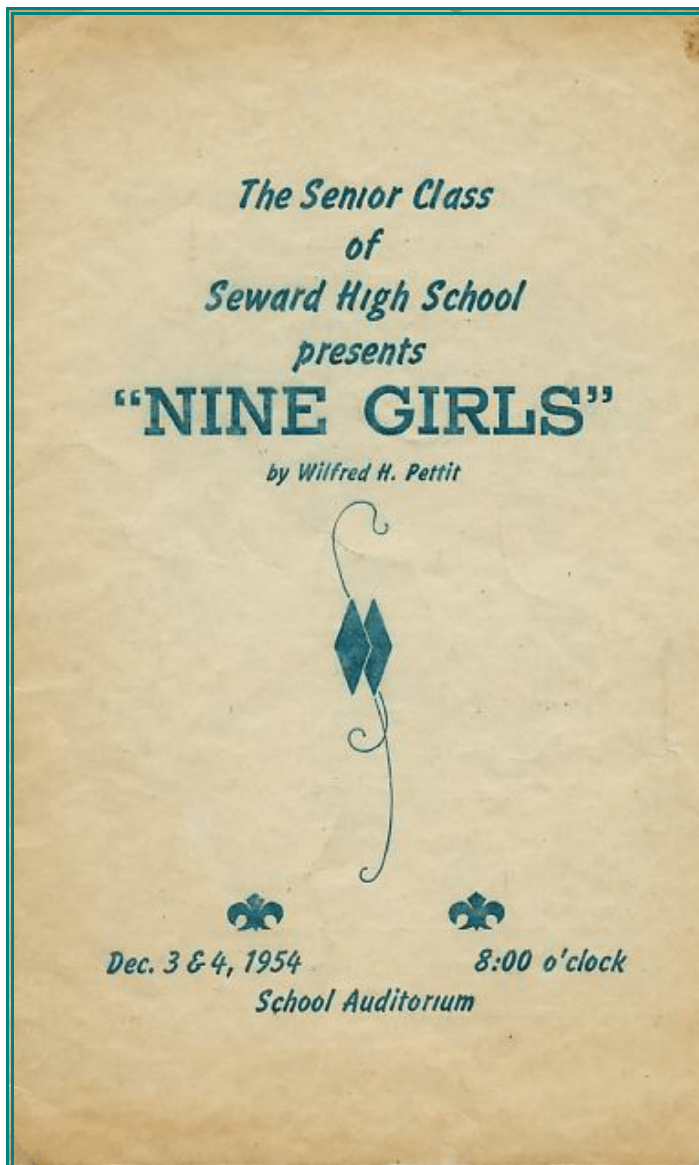
The high school students put on a play in 1954. I attended because it was a major production, the major one of the year. It was held in the gymnasium on the stage that was on the north end of the building. I sat on one of the front rows so I could get the full effect. It was an interesting experience. Somehow I think I expected more than there was, probably because I was sort of equating this production with what I saw on the silver screen. But the nice thing about this production was that I knew most of the kids who were participating, either by name or by face. The school wasn't large, nor was the town so people got to know of each other even if they never spoke. That was the case with these high school kids who

THE SCENES	"NINE GIRLS"
Place: Sorority clubhouse in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains.	CAST
Time: Three years ago.	JaneAVA DOYLE
Prologue: A spring evening, in the present.	Mary MURLENE TREVETHAN
Act I, Scene I—A Saturday evening three years earlier.	Freida HAZEL BROSSOW
Scene II—11:00 the same evening.	Alice AMY RUTLEDGE
Act II, Scene I—Sunday morning.	Eve JANICE FRAMPTON
Scene II—Sunday night.	Sharon (Glamor puss) CINDY COLEMAN
	Shirley AUDNEY HORTON
	Betty (Tennessee) PATSY WILLIAMS
STAGE MANAGER Pete Wagner, Jeff Potter	Stella (Shotput) JANIS JEFFREY
STAGE PROPERTIES Audney Horton, Murlene Trevethan	Phyllis (appears in Prologue) SARA PECK
SOUND EFFECTS Pete Wagner, Jeanene Schaefermeyer	
ADVERTISING Murlene Trevethan, Tucker Jones, Janis Jeffrey	
TICKETS AND PROGRAMS Ava Doyle, Hazel Brossow	
MUSIC Mr. Berg	
PROMPTERS Helen Carpenter, Jeanene Schaefermeyer	
DIRECTORS Mrs. Campen, Miss McGrath	

seemed to me to be basically adults. I didn't have the perspective of an adult so didn't realize that to an adult a high school kid is still a kid. They were giants to me.

This was particularly true with those kids who were snotty to us younger kids. One of the lead girls was of that type. This is an excerpt from one of dad's photos that I like because it shows just how snotty she was. She was obviously incensed that he was taking a photo that she was going to be in and was trying hurriedly to get out of the way. Couldn't beat the trigger finger, however. I am not positive but I think this was Murlene Trevethan.

The start time was surprising. 8:00 p.m.



That was about the time we were required to go to bed even at that age so it was a luxury to be allowed to stay up.

The cast and supporting staff are familiar in general. Janice Frampton was Clayton's older sister but she was so old that she didn't pay any attention to me. Jeanine Schaefermeyer was Jim's daughter who lived next door on 2nd Avenue.

Peter Wagner, Janis Jeffrey and Ava Doyle are other names of particular meaning to me, although I can't remember any specifics about them.

The play was figuratively dark. I don't remember anything about the plot but I remember

one of the scenes in particular. There was darkness on the stage like the lights went out in the room where the actors were. Shortly after the lights went out there was lightening through a side window followed by a bolt of thunder. The part that fascinated me was the need to know how it was the sound men made that thunder because it sounded real. I guess I could have asked Jeanie but she, too, was so old that she didn't pay any attention to me. I played in her house a lot with Vonnie and Darrell but she was either not there or if she was there, she ignored me like I was something slightly offensive. Like high school students do to younger kids. You experienced it yourselves.

The program is on a heavy stock, not quite like card stock but much heavier than regular paper. The printing is of such a fine quality that I surmised that it was printed commercially.

2 cent bottles of milk

Man alive, this was one of the finest things about school. 8 ounce bottles of milk, real, whole milk fresh from the cow for 2 pennies. Two pennies!! I didn't understand at the time that this meant that the price was being subsidized, especially since this milk was actually produced in Alaska hence was enormously expensive. To give you a frame of reference, consider this: a dozen eggs prepared by Alaskan chickens and delivered to Werner's market cost \$1.10 a dozen at the time. I don't know what a gallon of whole milk cost but it must have been enormously expensive at least for our table. We drank powdered milk, reconstituted condensed milk, or canned whole milk. We also ate powdered eggs in Seward. I suppose that we had cold storage eggs on rare occasions, eggs shipped in refers from Seattle but they were expensive and didn't really taste much better than powdered eggs anyway. In fact, I like the flavor of powdered eggs.

Anyway, the school board and the local dairy man must have worked out a deal where he would provide these 8 ounce bottles of whole milk -complete with the cardboard bottle top- such that us kids could buy a bottle to drink with our lunch for a mere two pennies. That was about the best part of the day,



Figure 97

<http://www.theseoldthings.com/images/ad5042bg.jpg>

to go to the cafeteria with our lunch pail, stand in line anxiously rubbing two pennies until it was our turn to offer them in return for an ice cold bottle of milk.

We'd find a place at one of the tables in the cafeteria to sit and place our lunch pail and bottle of milk in front of the chair and sit down. Then we'd open our pail, take out the sandwich, carrots wrapped in waxed paper or whatever was there and pry the lid off the milk. Then eat a feast, just because of the milk that we never had at home. It was something we drank limitlessly in Vernal

Clapping Erasers in the Boiler Room

The boiler room was down in the bowels of the school, the proper place for any self-respecting heating device that fills the whole building with smells and heat. It wasn't forced air, but it was central heating. Do you know how that was possible? Steam radiators. The old-fashioned steam radiators that were set in each room and plumbed into the boiler device in the basement. Each radiator had a knob that you'd turn to make the room hotter or colder, at least in theory. Truth was that the valves didn't seem to really make much different, but they kept you busy for a while until you got distracted with something else. The other end of the radiator had another valve that was activated by pressure. When the steam pressure inside the radiator got to a dangerous level, that valve would open and bleed off hot hissing steam.

The most annoying thing about radiators were "water hammers" or "steam hammers". I don't understand the physics behind this phenomenon but I can tell you it's irritating to hear it in the middle of the night when you thought you'd sleep. For some reason, on some occasions when steam is actively flowing through the heating system, a loud banging or pounding noise is produced by the steam inside of something. This loud is transmitted throughout the house or building through the pipes, almost as loud in each room as in the original location. This hammering will persist for 10 minutes or so until things equilibrate or the ghost gives up.

The school had radiators in all of the rooms heated from the boiler room. In the winter when it was too cold to go outside, the teacher would grab one of us kids, usually a boy, handed the erasers and ordered to go to the boiler room to "clap the erasers". The term 'clap' came from the usual method of dealing with the excess chalk dust that accumulates in these heavy felt erasers over a week or so. You'd hold two erasers in your hands, bottom surfaces facing each other, and then

'clap' them together like you were clapping your hands though you didn't make as much noise. The smacking together of the erasers stirred up a cloud of chalk dust that made you sneeze but the erasers were cleaned enough to last another week. If they weren't cleaned regularly, the black board -yep, real old fashioned slate blackboards- would be white like a cloud and when the teachers erased something, all she did was smear the cloud over it. It made pretty patterns and streaks on the board, but reading of the hieroglyphics was difficult.

In the boiler room, we didn't usually clap the erasers. There was a little electric motor device that looked like a grinding wheel in a machine shop, except that instead of carborundum wheels to sharpen steel, there were soft brushes. When these brushes whirred, you'd hold the under surface of the eraser against it and watch the dust fly off. You'd move the eraser slowly back and forth across the brush to cleanse the entire surface and this was actually more effective than old-fashioned clapping.

The other housekeeping chore that was associated with these slate blackboards was washing. Even when the teacher used fleshly clapped erasers, the time would come that it was impossible to really erase the chalk enough. At that point, over a weekend usually, the janitor would be summoned and he'd do his duty. He'd bring a bucket of water and a chamois-covered pad about a foot long. He'd dip this thing in the water and then slowly and systematically wash the board, starting at one end. When he could see that he was smearing and not washing, he'd wash the chamois thing in the water and continue. The result was a shiny black board with faint even streaks that showed the strokes made by the janitor, which disappeared on the first morning when the teacher started to use them. But they were a nice sign on Monday morning that things were well in the universe.

Obscene Ruler Figures

You know the wooden foot-long rulers that have the silver metal edge that had holes in them for a 3-ring binder? Well, there were a pair of kids who sat behind me in the 6th grade I think it was who got real creative with those rulers. The teacher was Mr. Watts who was so far away that he couldn't really see what they were doing. I could but I didn't understand it. One of the kids was a large Indian who broke a ruler into smaller pieces on a recess to avoid the noise. Then, instead of paying attention to his studies, he took a ball point pen -yes, we

had some of those- and on the flat surface of the ruler he drew the figure of a female on one piece and a male on the other. Then he broke a small fragment and stuck it into the 3-ring holes of each piece. I didn't understand what it was about but I could tell from the snide looks and behaviors of the other kids that it was something dirty.

Opera Singer vs. Students

In tiny frontier towns there were often a few hardy individuals who harbored love and affection for culture. Seward was not exempt. Out of the population of 2,000 men, women, dogs and children there was a band of women devoted to the cause of culture and refinement. They inflicted it upon us every chance they got, which, thank god, wasn't too often, what with the cost of freighting it into town from Seattle, a long way down the coast.

These sincere women -only women teachers and preachers indulged in culture- needed an occasional fix of culture. Life, otherwise was a pretty parched thing. They formed a women's club and met regularly. The members dressed in finery to attend and -be seen and- be enlightened by a speaker or a display. Dad did some presentation one time about his art. This is the same bunch that sponsored art shows including the one where I showed my puffin picture. They were held in a church or the Oddfellow's Hall. Tables with white table cloths and a few flowers were a bit more toney than the rest of our lives.

Every so often they were overcome by a fit of grandiosity. And they would make arrangements to bring stunning exemplars of culture into town, stuff from "The Lower 48". When that happened, we were in for it. The Opera Singer was such an experience.

Dear Pink-Cheeked, grinning Reverend Malin, the Methodist preacher, opened his sanctuary to a variety of non-religious activities, e.g. he allowed the school to use his basement as a classroom. The Women's Club of Seward availed itself of his courtesy. Plus it was probably free - though it is not entirely unlikely that the Sunday offering might have swelled just a bit. The good Reverend always showed his solidarity with the quaint frontier mob that met him on his arrival. One manner of demonstrating that he understood how difficult things were for us poor benighted folks who really did need The Light was his hat. He always wore a preposterous, pompous, laughable, huge, fluffy, fire engine red clipped mouton hat

with enormous ear flaps. That he bravely tied up over the top.

In any event the contract was signed and the visit was planned. For a soprano. Now if that wasn't about the most grating bit of culture to foist on the community, I can't imagine what it would be. The tone of the town is shown by the fact that it was a draw between the forces of good and evil: there was one bar for every church. Even-steven. Introducing a soprano, in a church, wasn't enough to permanently change the balance. But it sure raised hell for a while.

In spite of the fact that us kids felt pretty resistant to culture in general and sopranos in particular we were each determined to scrounge up the price of admission. We'd seen them shrieking in movies so had a sense of what they represented. In addition, candy bars were a nickel, so a two-bit piece was difficult to part with. We naturally laid it on pretty thick at home, pleading and pouting, whatever it took to get the quarter. Had to be a quarter, not a combination of smaller silver. More respectable some how. The motivation for this urge to get the money was not a burning interest in seeing the soprano. Indeed, more than one kid already was mimicking her to sniggering audiences. Caterwauling is what they did. The reasons for the urgency to get the price of admission were simple:

- 1) Skipping classes, and
- 2) Peer pressure.

Most of us collected the requisite quarter and were allowed to go. The teachers made checkmarks by our names in The Roll Book, granting us the privilege of skipping out. That's just how some of them regarded it, though some teachers probably welcomed the respite. Perhaps some foresaw what was about to happen.

This concert took place in the spring so the roads -not paved streets- were muddy. Like they were in the summer. And the fall. We walked in classes, more or less, to Reverend Malin's Place. Along the way a couple of kids that I was walking with told dirty stories. I could tell they were dirty by the way they sniggered. One of them was about a couple of insects that explored a body and got together to compare discoveries. The punch line was about a couple of mountains with berries on the top, but I didn't get it. I just remember the punch line because it was so weird.

When we arrived at the church, the anxious teachers herded us into rows assigned by grade. We sat down, curious but skeptical. We were cautioned to pay attention and to not make any noise because this was something special that we

hadn't seen before. No kidding.

The soloist and her accompanist appeared from the side of the church. She was attired in a silky full-length dress, which struck us as out of place. We were wearing levis or cords, and loggers or hip boots. But we kept our opinions to ourselves. This cartoon conveys the image we had in mind, however, not very flattering but this is about how kids viewed opera. In reality, she was much smaller than this woman.

She then did the worst thing she could have done. She patronized us. She condescended to us. Her words and her attitude showed that she understood that she was bestowing her enormous talents on us by sacrificing to come all the way to rustic Seward. We were privileged. She began by explaining what she was going to sing and what the words meant.

After the learned discourse, she stepped back, took a deep breath, concentrated and with great dignity nodded her head. The accompanist started on the tinny piano. We had actually never seen this kind of performance before so actually were captured by the drama. Hushed, we sat observing, not entirely entrapped but sufficiently interested to be respectful. Then she let loose with an unexpected banshee shriek that scared the beejesus out of us. Kids quickly recovered. Some of them showed that they had not been surprised by snickering.

The noise in the audience irritated the poor woman, but she just frowned at us and continued. What else was a cultured lady going to do in the face of adversity. But the kibitzing became a bit louder in spite of the teachers' attempts to quiet us. Now the singer began to show irritation as she lost her concentration. After she finished that piece, she commented on our rudeness, another fatal error.

That encouraged the "wise acres", as they were called in those days, to become louder. Her reprimand simply emboldened them. Her response was to sing louder, to sing over the noise as the horrified teachers wished they had agreed to stay in their class rooms with the kids who didn't scrounge up two-bits.



Figure 98

<http://www.cottagesoft.com/~songbird/artists/singer09.gif>

William H. Seward School had a large Christmas tree every Christmas. This large tree was set up and decorated in the Gym each year for the Christmas program and taken down after New Year. This particular year, my 6th grade, the used tree only made it outside the back door where it lay on its side until spring. The janitor was too busy to haul it down the road half a mile to the city dump by the lagoon.

Clayton Frampton was one of my two best friends. He was a skinny kinetic sort of kid with buck teeth and he grinned a lot. He wore thick-rimmed Buddy Holly style eye glasses. In the summer wore a brown felt beanie shaped like a sailor's hat like the one I'm wearing here except that I think he really did have a little propellor standing straight up on the top. It even turned when he ran. Being the son of the school principal made him an unknown quantity to most kids. They didn't know whether to fear, respect, ignore or ridicule him. It didn't occur to them to just be friendly. I liked him so he and Brent Whitmore and I were a threesome of nerdy little kids who played together a lot.



Clayton and that defunct Christmas tree provided an enormous amount of hilarity for the rest of that particular school year. Because it mysteriously started wearing a white bra one weekend. On Monday morning, there it was. That intimate apparel triggered something hysterical in us. Each time we saw it, one of us would whack the other on the arm and start giggling, looking sideways at the other. Then the giggling turned to laughter, sort of sniggers in the back of the throat and would finally escalate into whole-body belly laughs. By this time we had to hold on to each other because our knees had turned to jelly and we were in danger of falling. Giddy, hysterical, laughing uncontrollably every time we passed it. We would not have been able to rationally explain our reaction if someone had insisted we do. Indeed, we would have rather died.

It got so if one of us, sitting in our desks in class, even pointed surreptitiously at the window on that side of the building with a mock leer, we were both in danger of being expelled from school for our riotous disruptive behavior. It was such an extraordinarily powerful emotional topic for pre-very-close-to-pubescent boys. The odd thing about it is that I don't recall that we ever actually

discussed it. We probably did but the ownership really wasn't the issue. It simply was a fixture in the landscape possessed of this extraordinary meaning. The symbol was there and a naked girl herself could not have provoked any more hilarity than her bra did. Indeed, the girl would have shocked and embarrassed us. We never wondered whose it was or what sporting event led to its being hung on the tree.

Raffling Dad's Painting

The Seward High School Band, perhaps 35 players, needed new uniforms about the time I ventured with great anxiety into the band and public performances. The band teacher contacted vendors by surface mail to get quotes for a set of different-sized uniforms and then presented the information to Mr. Frampton, the principal. There was no question that the purchase of uniforms was not possible with the small school budget. This budget came primarily from the town of 2,000 people, so obviously could not be very large especially since it had to fund 12 grades of teachers and administrators. There was some federal money but certainly not enough to pay for a large out-of-budget request of the size necessary to purchase 40 full uniforms.

So the school board, recognizing that the old uniforms really did need to be replaced, cast about for alternate ways to generate the money. They fell back on the old stand-bys of the era, bake sales at the school and in businesses. The proceeds from these sales were all profit since the goods themselves were donated to the cause, but the amount of money needed was so great that bake sales just wouldn't do the job.

When Dad had lived in Seward before WW II, he had done various artistic things for the Alaska Shop. I remember seeing in racks in the Alaska Shop black and white post cards he had done in charcoal of huskies. So he was already a familiar quantity when he returned 8 years later. This was a small town where everyone knows everyone, and many of his previous friends were still alive and kicking, as they'd say.

He continued to draw and paint during this second stay, and his work sold easily. This was partly because his topics were basically Alaskan, Eskimos, snow scenes, caches, and mountains. Alaskans were proud of Alaska. It was also because he was familiar to people, sort of a "favorite son". People liked to be able to say, "I have that painting Jim did of that little Eskimo baby and bear cub." It was a sign of good taste and affluence I suppose.

So as the school board, in its hip boots and suit coats, hunted for a sure-fire way to raise the rest of the money, someone quietly allowed as how you can raffle off just about anything, especially for a good cause and make a lot of money easily. And another surmised as how they bet that Jim just might be persuaded to throw in a thing he done, seeing as how he had a kid in the band, wasn't that right?

So the decision was made and a delegation was deputized to formally visit Jim, hats in had, to play upon his civic sensibility in the hope, which is all it could be where Jim was concerned, that he might see a way to help the cause. I have no idea where this pow wow took place, but in the end Jim agreed. But I am as sure as I know my name that Jim didn't go gracefully. Good ol' Marie was behind his "agreement" to "donate" one of his paintings, and if the truth were known, I wouldn't be at all surprised to hear that it was Marie who put forth the idea in the first place - whether or not she was at that committee meeting. She had a way of leading Jim by the nose his entire life without realizing it.

So after a sigh of relief, the enterprise took on an urgent sense of mission. Band uniforms would be purchased for sure. Some one made the raffle tickets out of colored construction paper, someone undertook arranging the campaign to sell them to businesses and private citizens, someone was assigned to create the "thermometer" to reflect each week's take and so on.

The canvassing process not unexpectedly drafted the members of the band, who after all, were going to get to wear these gorgeous gold and green uniforms, so don't you think they should participate? I found my sweaty palm filled with a wad of tickets that I had to personally sell.

I had mixed feelings here. One, as a band member I did have a sense of obligation to help, but I was only a 6th grader for heck sake. Second, I was Jim's son and it embarrassed me to be pedaling his art work. Even if it was for a good cause, it still embarrassed me.

Clarinet in the Band

Somewhere along the line mom and dad decided that each of us kids should "learn to play an instrument" and further, that we had a duty, nay a 'civic duty' whateverintheheck that meant to a 12year old- to play the damn thing in the school band. I would rather have been boiled in oil. But somehow the whims of our parents become our mandates, or decrees, or dictates, and we find that we somehow agreed exactly with them , that "yes, we REALLY did want to look like an Easter parrot in that stupid uniform marching down the muddy street getting our shoes full of water squeaking badly off key", just so that they would stay off our back. That's the reality. Sounds harsh and is exaggerated but not by much.

Now, don't misunderstand me after I said what sounds so venomous. Kids are histrionic, no perspective, no balance of reality, so they react as they are inclined to react. Down in their hearts, from their guts, with pure emotion, which represents their reality in a way that 'reality' is never 'real' for adults who have learned to sublimate their real feelings and emotions and responses to the crap foisted on them by the world. And this business of putting on a brightly colored costume with this stupid hat, marching in formation down a street when I was positive that the entire world was jeering was painful for me. But I understood well that if I wanted to be able to live in that house, if I wanted to be fed, if I wanted to be 'loved' -which I doubted the entire time- wanted to be clothed, to be bathed, etc. then I darn well better discover that I "Really wanted to play in the band.". I did.



Here's a photo of that results of that experiment. Here we are on the Fourth of July one soggy July in Seward wearing gold and green -I think it was- uniforms. This was often the hottest day of the year, so you probably can extrapolate from this photo and figure out what the weather and climate was like in Seward. See the low clouds hanging on Mt. Marathon in the background? And the wet ground? This is




"Main Street" remember. I'm the kid there with the silver clarinet. The kid to my right was a red-headed nerd. I felt sophisticated compared to him. The kid standing right behind me with the French Horn was as good a horn player as we had but he was meaner than sin. I was afraid of him.

I suspect that the choice of Dick to play trumpet and me to play clarinet had little to do with what we in our heart of hearts really wanted to do. Somehow, mysteriously, nay miraculously, the Jones family just happened to have for sale at that mysterious point in time the cheap silver clarinet of their precious, precocious, 200 pound daughter felicitously named "Poodie"- that they would sell at a great sacrifice to Jim Jensen so that little Ronnie -sigh, hand across the breast, head turned to heaven to receive all of the blessings that were forthcoming for such Spartan and remarkable self-denial- could have . For twice what it was worth. If I remember correctly Dick fared better. He held out for a trumpet and since there didn't just happen to be a cheap trumpet in town, mom and dad had to buy him a new one. I think it was mail order, though it could have been specially ordered through a local store which was still mail order.

So I became the owner of this instrument, perhaps not as proud as I might have been under different circumstances. Jimmarie explained their 'good fortune' to their colleagues in crime, i.e. the Schafermeyers and Ablanalps, the senate within which they all tested and argued their child-raising decisions, particularly those that they knew in their heart were perhaps not really what their sweet children wanted. Was I even a sweet child? As a matter of fact, I was.

Christmas Program, 1954

Mr. Berg, the same that I've talked about elsewhere, was the "director" of



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
From the
MUSIC DEPARTMENT
of
William M. Seward High School
Under the Direction of
Mr. Claude Berg

The HIGH SCHOOL BAND Presents:

Magnus Overture	Messing
Blue Moon	Kibbe
Song of the Sea	Waber
Spirit of the Sioux	Guthrie
Village Chapel	Kibbe

SEVENTH and EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS' CHOIR Presents:


Angels We Have Heard on High . . .	Old Freede Melody
The First Noel	Traditional
Christmas Voices	Kohlman

The HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR Presents:

Today There is Singing	Christianson
O Holy Night	Adams
(Solo by Jim Woods)	
Birthday of a King	Waidlinger
Cherub's Song	Bortolanaki
Silent Night	Waber

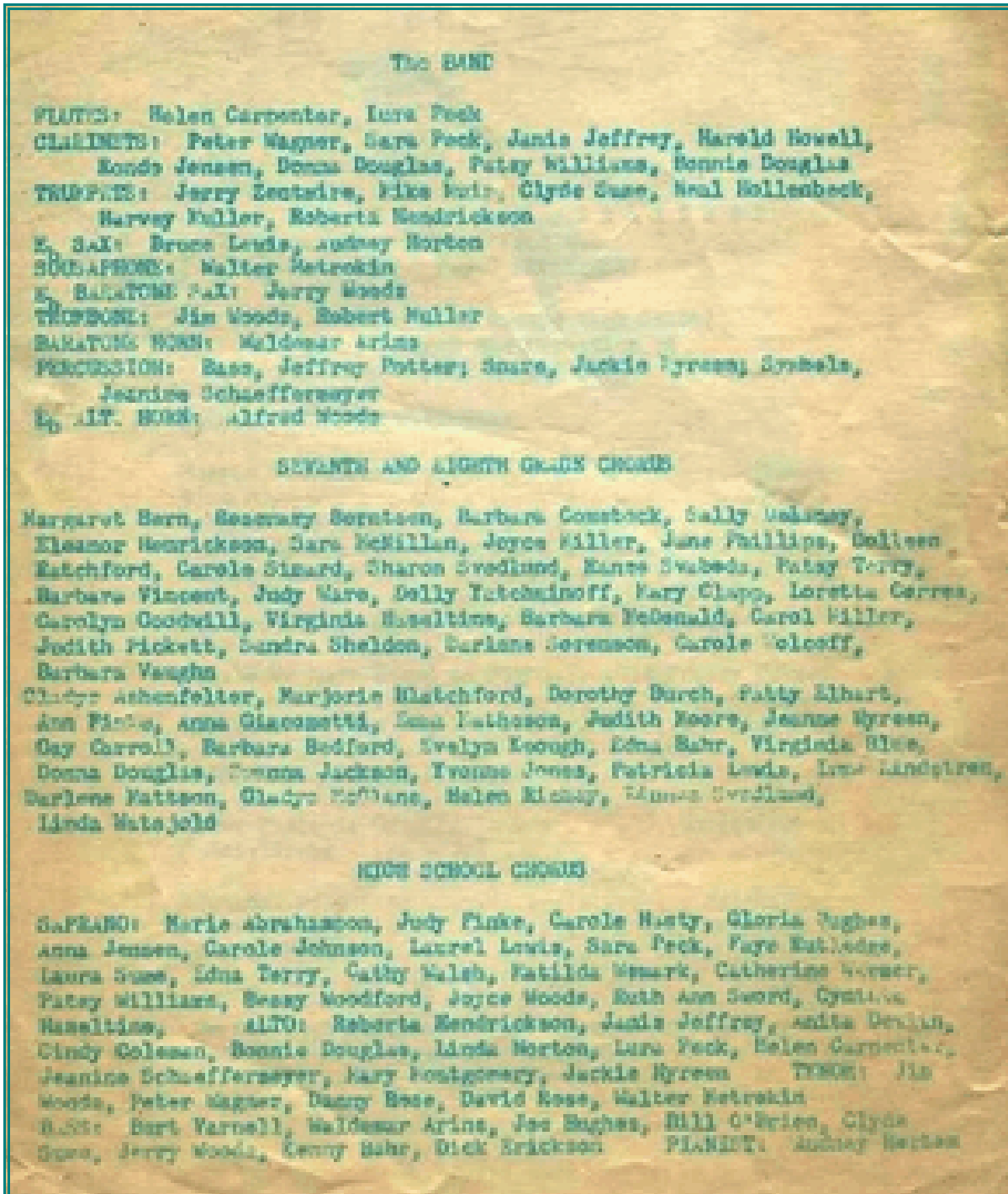
On the next page, we have listed the members of
each group of Soloists.

December, 1954



the Music Department at William H. Seward School. Pretty high falutin' title isn't it for what it really was.

The kids who participated were listed in detail inside. "The Band" was at the



top of the page followed by the "Seventh and Eighth Grade Chorus" and the "High School Chorus." My name shows up under Clarinets in the Band, and honor I didn't deserve. I never did learn to play well enough to truly contribute to the band and I think Mr. Berg knew it. But since I was a quiet kid and didn't make and BAD noises, it was safe to keep me there to fill a space, to "swell a crowd". I always felt dishonest and never did know whether or not my folks knew I rarely made actually noises when "playing" in the band.

The most interesting thing about this program is how it was prepared. It appears to have been made by using two ancient techniques: a mimeograph that you've probably seen, and a hectograph which is such an ancient process that I suspect none of your school teachers had ever heard of it. I knew it well because mom herself learned how to make one and then used it to make programs and so on for the little branch.

A mimeograph you probably know. A fibrous sheet is "typed" on with a manual typewriter - can't do this with modern word processors and ink jet printers. Of course, if you have one of these, you certainly don't need one of those. The keys would actually cut holes in the fibrous layer the shape of the letters. Then this fibrous layer is placed a circular drum set up to spread a thin thin layer of ink through those little holes at the same time a sheet of paper is pressed against that fibrous layer. This is the method used to "print" the names on the program.

A hectograph is a totally different animal, and much older. It is simply a layer of gelatin. That's all. A layer of dryish gelatin that has to be kept covered when not in use to keep it from drying out entirely. When ready to be used, a dense layer of dye is embedded into the gelatin. The gelatin absorbs the dye. Then a sheet of paper is laid on top of the gelatin and pressed lightly. When the sheet of paper is removed, it has a thin layer of the dye. So whatever shape the dye is in is the shape that will appear on the paper. Simple. That's how the fancy shapes and two colors were made in the corners of the program.

Mom found a recipe to make one of these things when she needed to make copies of something for us Blazers. She followed the recipe carefully and cooked up the gelatin on the gas stove. When it was finished, she poured it out slowly and carefully in a thin cookie sheet to make sure there were no bubbles. Bubbles would make it impossible to have perfect images. After it had set and cooled, she took something that looked like a "ditto master" something you may know. It was a sheet of paper with a thick layer of dye on the back behind which there was a white sheet of paper. With a stylus, sort of like a ball point pen without ink, you drew the

letters or images on the top sheet which pressed a layer of dye off the back of the sheet onto the white page behind it.

Then you took that sheet with the layer of dye shaped like a star or tree or whatever you made and laid it face-down on the gelatin layer. It was left in place for something like 5 minutes, long enough for the gelatin to absorb most of the dye off of the sheet of paper. After it had been left in place long enough, you pulled the dye sheet off and were ready to start making copies which was as just described. Clean sheets of paper were laid down on the gelatin and pressed lightly and then pulled off carefully to keep from tearing the sheet that stuck to the gelatin.

Then what. The gelatin now has a dye pattern in it, so do you have to make another layer of gelatin? That's the big question I had but mom said not to worry. She said to "Watch and see what happens." Like she knew. Perhaps she did, perhaps she just read the directions and trusted them. I don't know. But I do know that magic happened. After a week or so, the dye disappeared from the gelatin. When as a sheet of clean paper was pressed into the gelatin and pulled up, no image was created. I asked mom, "What happened to the ink?" That's what I called it. She said, "Oh, it sank to the bottom so I can put another picture of ink on it and make copies again." She was right. I still don't know what really happened to the dye. It had no weight so I don't see how it could "sink" to the bottom but I know that the dye wasn't volatile so it couldn't evaporate. It must have sunk to the bottom. I wish the thing had been made in a Pyrex dish so that I could see if the dyes accumulated on the bottom. Whatever, it was a slick method to make multiple copies.

"Coach" and the Metropolitan

The Coach was a little man, even to me, a little man. He was skinny, balding, wore glasses, had thin lips that protruded, eye glasses, disheveled grayish hair, wore a thigh-length trench coat with the collar up like Bogart, had a perpetual scowl and harried look and didn't like kids who weren't athletes. That about says all I need to say about him. Except you know I'm going to say more or I wouldn't have brought him up.

He was the "gym teacher" the class I feared and disliked. The only class I felt that way about. In his defense, I have to admit that the first problem with

gym was that it was gym. I had grown up like a wild kid without any discipline or exposure to organized sports. I don't think I ever saw a football game in Vernal. Indeed, I'm not sure I'd even heard of the sport though I must have, but it certainly didn't make any impression. Baseball was familiar but only as a concept. I never saw a baseball game, but I did see softball.

Basket ball was something mom liked to watch, yelling and screaming like a wild woman that I didn't know so I understood that there were groups of men who got together to "play" other groups of men who were willing to engage in this sort of thing. I didn't understand why it was called "play" when they were each actually trying to beat the other team up. That wasn't play, that was war. Whatever, I went to Seward from Vernal without any real exposure to, let alone experience in, organized sports. Then in Seward I maintained that pristine view of the world. Until I got in 8th grade. At that point, things changed dramatically and most painfully. I had to go into gym classes.

That was an exercise in terror and humiliation. Nothing less. If you didn't feel that way when you had to go out onto the basket ball floor as a member of a "team" of kids you didn't really like, who certainly didn't like you, then you were lucky. If you enjoyed going out on the floor under the supervision of a "coach" who yelled and screamed at you, while kids sneered at your clumsiness, then you're bigger people than I am. I couldn't stand it. I didn't know the rules for basket ball. I didn't care to know the rules of basket ball and I hated it not understanding anything about the game. And I was outraged at the way kids would intentionally foul each other, hurt each other, in order "to win". That was so wrong. I had been taught from early on that while it was understood that I would do things wrong, adults would never accept it. It was apparent in gym class that the coach knew that kids were committing fouls, so I was shocked. The injustice of it all.

The final humiliation was having to go into locker rooms where kids took off their clothes and stunk and yelled and made fun of each other. I hated it. One of the requirements for gym was to have a "uniform". What a god-awful thing to have to do. It was a basketball player's uniform and I felt like a moron and clown wearing the damn thing. It was gold and another color and I was cold when I wore it and looked like a dummy, particularly when I was stumbling around the floor in it. We were also required to start wearing "supporters" that I had not used before and I didn't think I needed to start them. Why should I be forced to wear one of those silly things if I didn't want to? It didn't offer any protection if I fell on my gonads or someone kicked me there, it didn't make me play better, it was of no use. Except

that the coach "ordered" it so there is was.

I personally had no use for organized sports like that. I would have preferred to have been sent out to hike or climb Marathon or something that had some redeeming value but this business of running around in a room or on a field obeying a set of stupid arbitrary rules made me crazy. I'm still not over it and you kids all experienced my ambivalence to sports, didn't you. I find them to be primitive, sort of like stylized warfare. Pre-technological groups of people engaged in stylized warfare, and I think sports are basically the replacement of that. It's as if people do have needs for symbolic war fare and sports is the substitute. I have no need for it.

The funniest thing about this "Coach", as all the athletes ("jock" was an unknown term, even a dirty term to me) called him, the macho man, was the car he drove. A puny, silly looking little boy's car. I wasn't into cars at that age but I was still aware of them and in his case, he drove a silly little car that didn't fit with the image of the big man that he tried to portray. To do that he should have been driving a late model Ford or Chevrolet. I don't know what his football or basketball students thought about this silly little car.



Figure 104

<http://www.classiccarbug.com/featuredcars/oct02-1.jp>

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Chik-a-lak-a-chow-chow-chow

What sort of embarrassing nonsense was that? Us 7th graders were apparently being initiated into the mysteries of organized sports. One day shortly after school had started in September, we were summoned with the 8th graders to the gym for something important. Being basically sheep and being glad to get out of class, we dutifully walked double-file to the gym where we were directed to sit in the bleachers.

After a few moment of nothing happening except a few of us talked quietly, a cheerleader walked into the gym from the basement where she would have changed into the outrageous uniform in the girls' bathroom. She was followed by several

more girls dressed in the same outlandish outfits more suited for Halloween than for everyday life. I expect I'd seen them before but from a safe distance, not trapped in the same room with them, not being addressed by them. They had what's called 'attitude' today, haughty, superior, patronizing, condescending, irritated, impatient, superior, aristocratic, arrogant, world-weary and so on. Just the kind of nice girls anyone would like to spend some time with.

The only photo I have that shows several of these specimens is this one, taken in 1956 in

Anchorage when we went up for a Music Festival, and this parade - on a street that was paved!

You can see 2 and a half of these critters wearing dark dresses with a gore in the side for sassiness, and batons which were apparently the talisman of the tribe.



The lead majorette, Miss Trevathan I think, was elevated above the other two who wore lowly saddle shoes, by wearing white, high-topped boots that had white tassels flopping around on the front. My, she was grand. If you doubted it, you needed to just ask her.

Well, she and several others appeared in the gym in front of us naive, innocent, country yokels, sitting there with our mouths open. Some of us were wondering why they weren't embarrassed being out in public that way. They might as well have been wearing pajamas or night gowns as far as I was concerned. They launched into some arcane discussion about "cheering our team on". "Our team"? "Our team"? Who or what was "our team"?

Believe it or not, that was one of the fundamental things they should have explained to us, that "our school" had teams of basket ball players and teams of foot ball players played games with similar teams -usually- from other high schools in the region. And that it was a local custom for us, on those august occasions when the games were played in our space, for students to actually go watch what was

going on, who was hurting who, who was getting away with foul play, and by the way, who was scoring points, and -here's the point of the educational conference- it was important for us to wave our hands and yell a lot. Somehow that made "our teams" hurt the other team more, get away with more foul play and even make some points so they would win. I didn't understand any of this when Murlene almost immediately launched into what is called, in mixed company, a "cheer".

She and her compatriots began to yell a song, without accompaniment, while they waved their arms in unison, jumping up and down like they were doing calisthenics. Our mouths dropped in amazement. What were they doing? Right there in front of us. Were we supposed to clap? It was mildly embarrassing. But what happened next was even more embarrassing.

We got a tongue lashing from Miss High and Mighty. Apparently we were supposed to engage in the same yelling and hollering and when we didn't, she was mad. Actually, I think she was embarrassed. Cheerleading is apparently one of those things that you can do "with" other people but not "for" or "in front of" other people. That is, people have to be as stupid as you. We didn't know that so she laid it on thick. Of course the other item that was missing was a song sheet. We didn't know these loud poems so how could we yell them. Teachers would get pretty upset at us in class if we yelled our poems.

Well, things moved forward a bit at a time. One of the other girls who wasn't so snooty could see that we genuinely didn't know what to do so she took the floor and explained something about cheerleading and cheers. She then said that she wanted us to yell the next 'cheer' with her and that she would teach it to us first. Then she said a line at a time and asked us to then repeat each line with her which we did intermittently because we were still dumbfounded at the silliness of the whole thing, acting like this was normal to sit in rows in a big room and yell together. We weren't Japanese you know, Nate.

I think the cheer she taught us was easy to learn because it was (A) so simple and (B) so stupid and (C) so embarrassing. Here's the whole deal, without the hand waves - I forgot to tell you that these girls compounded their foolishness and own embarrassment by holding wads of strips of thin paper and shaking them while they were waving their hands and doing calisthenics- or screaming:

First Verse (Quietly, face averted):

"A chik-a-lak-a-chik-a-lak

A-chow-chow-chow" (Got it? This is tough stuff.)

A boom-a-lak-a-boom-a-lak
A bow-wow-wow. (*My face is glowing again.*)

Second Verse (with gusto):

A chik-a-lak-a-boom-a-lak
A-Who are we? (*You don't have to answer that question.)(Fools?)*
Seventh and Eighth grade
Yes-sire-ee!!

My face was fairly burning with embarrassment to be sitting there with those shenanigans going on. And we were supposed to enjoy making fools of ourselves that way. Well, I didn't.

Of course, I have to admit that walking around streets in outrageous uniforms squeaking and tooting together isn't a whole lot smarter and I did that so who was I to make fun of these girls and their own favorite sport.

Crossing Guard for Police Department

This was a highlight of my last year at William H. Seward school. I was a crossing guard for the whole school year. I don't remember how it came to pass that I was selected from the 8th grade class to be a crossing guard but I was. It sounded like something I'd like doing, being responsible for helping people and protecting little school kids who had to cross the busy streets.

T. H. MILLER
PRESIDENT
STANLEY ZAVERL
VICE-PRES.
CARTER SEYMOUR
SECY-TREAS.



ALASKA ASSOCIATION
OF
CHIEFS OF POLICE

FRIENDSHIP - EFFICIENCY - SECURITY

MAY 14, 1956

THE CITY OF SEWARD COMMENDS

RONDO JENSEN

FOR HIS DEVOTION TO DUTY WHILE HOLDING THE RANK OF

PATROLMAN

WITH THE SCHOOL PATROL, A UNIT OF THE JUNIOR POLICE.

HIS CONDUCT AND SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF

THE CITY OF SEWARD DURING THE SCHOOL

YEAR OF 1955-1956 WAS OUTSTANDING.

Derry Stockton
MAYOR
CITY OF SEWARD

Carter Seymour
CHIEF OF POLICE
SEWARD, ALASKA

A. Harding
CITY MANAGER
CITY OF SEWARD

All Alaska Music Festival 1956

This was the first music festival I attended in Anchorage. I don't know whether they were done every three years or some such things but whatever the case, we were invited along with every other school in the territory to go to Anchorage to participate in a "All Alaska Music Festival", in full dress. So we did just that, mom and dad and teachers and kids. It was a major event in my young life.

Part of the excitement of the festival was the location. A new high school had just been finished in Anchorage and this was the first major event to be staged there. We were honored to be part of the group. This 2003 image shows you the auditorium in the front with the high school behind it.

Mr. Berg had been drilling us all winter for this performance because he naturally felt he would be judged by his students' performance. I didn't



accomplish much as I've noted elsewhere. I felt like a cheat doing this thing but I was simply not given an option to stop being in the band. I knew that if I asked mom and dad for permission to quit that I would get interminable lectures with two salient features. First, they would play on my sense of guilt for letting the tiny band down by dropping out, but second, they would also tell me that I could do what I wanted. Sure I could. So I kept up the charade.

The event lasted several days so we stayed overnight but I don't know where. It seems like we stayed in a private home but I don't even know that for sure. We practised during the daytime one day and the performance was the next day. Things were going well but a very funny thing happened in the middle of the program. This new high school appeared to be top drawer stuff so it as totally unexpected when the electricity went off. Everything in the building was dark and since the school was out in the country, there weren't even streetlights to provide

any light. Janitors had to find flashlights and go to the master panel I suppose to figure out and fix the problem. The audience wasn't bothered by this event because we all lost power in our own towns on a regular basis. But the Anchorage High School band was obviously the most skilled of us all. Without any light, simply on the basis of voice commands, the band launched into a song that was currently popular, a song that everyone knew. The audience laughed and then joined in, singing "Glow little glow worm, glimmer glimmer."

Girl who got Pregnant

Around my 7th grade year, a girl in my class or in the 8th grade became pregnant. It was like she had one of those fearsome loathsome "social diseases" although the only thing we understood about such diseases was that they were especially nasty. Her disease was such a reprehensible disease that she was even sent away for some reason. We imagined that she was subjected to some painful thing that would remedy her problem.

The confusion about her condition arose from the fact that we didn't know how it actually happened, but had a vague uncomfortable sense about the process. This confusion was compounded by the fact that our mothers had also been pregnant to get us and they didn't seem to have been derided for it. They were even proud to have been able to make babies - though I think there were some days when they repented of it. So why was it so nasty if this 14 year old was in the same condition?

If we turned the corner in a hallway and saw and heard teachers talking about her, their voices dropped as soon as they saw us. That told us that something was really wrong about this deal because they didn't bother to whisper when they talked about discipline problems with some kids.

Some of those kids with discipline problems were friends of this girl, a guy named Tracy McCracken and his brother Jeff and their friends. The teachers would audibly talk about their bad behavior - but not whatever this girl was guilty of. As it turned out, it is likely that the McCrackens were the cause of her problem. There was a small group of pretty hardened kids who hung out together, cussed dirty words, told dirty jokes, disobeyed the teachers, made fun of everything and picked on other kids. In some way we "got it" that this girl's sin was severe by the company she kept. "Nice" girls like Virginia Blue wouldn't even

talk to Tracy. Even we avoided them and were actually afraid of them and their switchblade knives - which were illegal, but that only makes them show them off more.

We still did not know the "facts of life", although our dads probably swore to their concerned wives that they had explained them all to us. Mothers recognized the signs of incipient puberty and thought it was high time for us to have a talk about the birds and bees -though why it was suddenly necessary, or what difference it would make, isn't clear to me even now. When the hormones surge, so does the urge and it all becomes shockingly clear anyway. No talks will subvert that. We did know generally about the 'facts of life' and that we needed to learn what they were, even wanted to know them, but the emotional baggage hung on the phrase "the birds and the bees" -most confusing since they are pretty innocuous creatures who really have nothing to do with the hormone rage that was about to strike us down- convinced us with a visceral certainty that the keys to the meaning of life were contained therein. In fact they were, but we were clueless.

Actually, I specifically remember the first time someone explained explicitly the act of intercourse. It was in the alley behind my house on Second Avenue. I was going to Joe Deischer's house, the new one, to spend the evening and he, being the son of a doctor had a good understanding of the mechanics. He asked me if I knew the facts of life, and when I admitted that I didn't really, he launched into a detailed description as we walked. I looked at the grassy alley listening to this explanation. It was the most disgusting thing I'd ever heard.

Anyway, this girl's condition was tied up somehow with that topic so we were alternately horrified and fascinated by her, as she sat on the school steps in a jacket worn by that little gang, toughly and defiantly smoking a cigarette, while the McCrackens and their ilk hung around, sneering and leering, challenging us all with the eyes to "make something of it" - though what "it" might be or why we would even care about "it" was a mystery to us 7th graders. After she left things quieted down and we stopped think about it any more. But that experience was disturbing because of the confusion and insinuations that made no sense to us kids who just didn't know enough facts about sex or about human relations or the law.

Betty Boop

You have all heard of Betty Boop. She probably came across as a sort of kewpie doll type character, innocent and not the sharpest knife in the drawer. But I suspect that you might not know how sexy she really was. This image gives you a sense of that quality, sort of risque. She was a sweet thing, but not really. A hot little number with the brains of a modern blonde I suppose. Not really the sweet young innocent confused thing you know her to be. She was those things to be sure, but there was also the deeper meaning I think. At least that is how I perceived her. When you all began to think she was cool, part of me was shocked. I knew what she was really about.

The original cartoons were done in black and white, not the color that you probably saw. She was modeled on the Rita and Lana type I imagine.



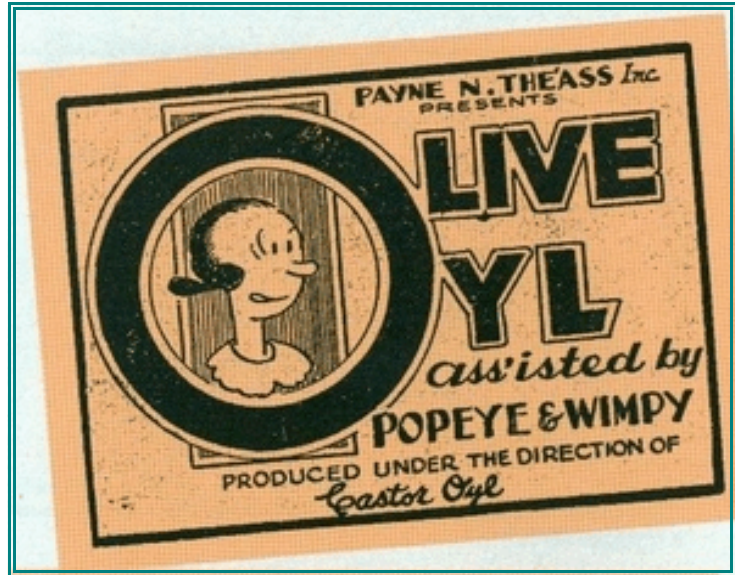
Figure 108 Betty Boop

<http://www.tiac.net/users/mharney/boop.html>

Tijuana Bibles

I'm not going to embarrass you by showing you the complete contents of one of these things but they were another feature of teenagehood. I never owned one and I never even actually held one in my hand to read it completely through. But this was another of the pornographic things that teenage boys circulated amongst themselves. I have no idea whether teenage girls indulged in the same things

These little booklets were about 4 inches long and 2 inches wide. They were crudely drawn by hand and consisted of about 16 pages of pictures, basically a dirty cartoon. The drawings and language were explicit, far beyond what was available in the public. I don't know how kids got them, but expect that someone's dad bought them from some salesman on the dock or in Seattle or in Anchorage and brought them home. Kids would giggle nervously and pass the thing to the next kid, all the while on the lookout for an adult who would confiscate the thing if s/he saw it. They were so explicit that



they were actually a course in sex education if you read them, but I didn't ever have that opportunity. Once more, I was aware of the things because I saw them and I recognized the dirty laughs and sniggers which meant the things were prurient, though that term wasn't one I knew either.

Waldemar and John Ahrins

DP's. They were DP's, a pejorative term though I didn't understand what there was to be pejorative about. These people deserved sympathy for what had happened to them. "Displaced Persons" from Latvia. The most obvious characteristic of these guys was their accent. We didn't have much contact with Europeans whose native languages were not English so these two stood out. I understood somehow that they were disadvantaged though I didn't understand the mechanism. I understood it had to do with World War II in Europe but I didn't know how these people were displaced, just that this family came to Seward to live.

It was difficult for them, I believe, based on my experience with John who was my age. I have one photo of John, this segment taken from one of dad's photos of one of our treks to the top of Marathon on the Fourth of July. He was several inches taller than I was and ended up hanging around with me to some degree, probably because I was nice to him. I was nice to everyone. Most kids didn't pay a great deal of attention to him after they had looked him over. He was just a feature of the landscape for most of us, including even the mean McCracken kids. It was like we all knew that there was something different about John and that he should not be harassed.



The only time I remember him being bothered was on the days when he would go to the store over lunch time and spend a quarter on a small paper bag of candy. A quarter would do that since you could get two pieces for one penny. When he'd come back to the school yard where we were all playing, he'd stand around eating with one hand while he held the neck of the sack tightly closed with the other. The problem was that some times some kids would go after John begging him to give them a piece of candy. It was an absolute thing for John. He absolutely would not share his candy, even the little pieces that cost only half a cent. It was HIS candy, and HE was going to eat it all. No one actually hurt him, but they would pretty aggressively go after him verbally, "Come on John! Give us a piece! Come on John. Be a sport!" and so on. He would get tense and angry and if someone actually tried to grab his sack he would jerk it up in the air over our heads because he was taller than most of us, and would tell us to leave him alone. His accent made understanding him difficult when he got upset.

We didn't understand that in asking for food, we were asking for his life. His family came to town with nothing after suffering in Latvia so what they had was theirs and they were not inclined to share. To share would be to hurt themselves.

The other memorable thing about John was his hamstrings. During one of the years that I attended school in the school building, the health doctor came and did some sort of physical exam of all kids. I don't know what this was all about. I just know that we were advised ahead of time that on a particular day we were all going to be examined by the doctor and that we had to take a permission slip home for our parents to sign to authorize him to do this. I don't remember whether any parents refused to sign and I do know that basically everyone was herded through

this line.

The cafeteria was divided into half with tall screens so that there was a boy's side -south- and a girl's side. Teachers were there to oversee the process. We were brought down a class at a time and ushered into out side of the cafeteria. We were told to take off our shirt, pants, socks and shoes. Then we had to stand in a line to wait for the doctor. He would call the next in line each time he was ready. We were nervous and self-conscious as we stood there in our underwear, hoping that the girls didn't peek - which is probably what they were doing.

One of the things we did for the doctor was put our fingers on our toes, a simple enough exercise. Few of us could really reach our toes but we could all get pretty close to them so the doctor was happy. But when John was asked to touch his toes, he could hardly bend over. He was self-conscious in the first place, more than the rest of us, and was mortified at this public display of his inability. We all heard the doctor report dryly something about John's "hamstrings". We didn't really understand what this meant, nor did we really even understand what they were. But we knew that something was wrong with John, something serious.

Today I think about that event and entertain the possibility that John was a victim of some hideous treatment by the Germans. They are the ones who overran Latvia first and it is not inconceivable that John's family was beat or tortured. His inability to do much more than bend forward was so abnormal that it stood out. As I said, none of us could really touch our toes, but we all got far enough down that the doctor could see that we were basically OK. But John was totally different. This is the first time I have considered this possibility for John.

I liked him but it was difficult to talk to him because he was self-conscious in general. When he spoke and saw that we couldn't understand him, that made him even more nervous and self-conscious at which point his speech became even more difficult to understand. He'd stutter and hunt for words, making these strange sounding sentences that probably reflected the word order of sentences in his native language. Poor John.

Troop 620

This was a trip. It was astonishing. I look back and am astounded at my good fortune. Being a boy scout in Seward in the early 1950's when

Alaska was still a territory, when it was still a frontier, undiscovered, rough, no paved roads and fewer people, trees everywhere, trap lines, miners, fishermen, log cabins. The magnitude of the good luck is compounded by the fact that most of the kids in my troop were Eskimos, Indians or admixtures with European genes.

I have to explain why I feel that way. Basically, I see the scout organization as one that is suited primarily to agrarian, rural settings, almost pre-industrial settings which is precisely what Seward was. Taking kids as we did in Boston a few years later out to a "scout camp" that was 150 acres on someone's wood lot outside of Boston was a joke. That was not scouting. Oh, we engaged in tent erection, fire building, axe sharpening and so on, but the effect was phony. How can one be a scout when you can practically hear the traffic over there on the freeway, when you can just walk down the road a mile and find a Dairy Queen, A & W, gas stations and stores. Silly really.

In this comment I obviously hearken back to Lord Baden Powell, the instigator of the international scouting movement and reveal my strong personal opinion about how the program fits into a 21st century world. I don't think it fits at all. That's not to say that I am opposed to organizations for young people because I actually am much in favor of them. But not Baden-Powell's type. The foundational elements of the program were acquired in a different era and different setting where there was merit to being able to learn to fend for oneself in the outdoors, to become self reliant, capable of tracking, starting fires, creating emergency lean-tos, cooking, swimming and so on. Merit badges covered a much wider range of topics but the fundamental purpose of the scouting movement as created by Lord Baden Powell was those elemental things, not libraries or stamp collecting. Those were added to enrich the experience but they were merely ancillaries to the basic objective of the scouting movement to enrich the boys, not to supplant those features. To take a program designed for a different era and force boys to participate it in today is a little like taking an engineer from the shinkansen (bullet train) and making him work in a narrow-gauge, coal-powered, steam locomotive in Rainbow, Utah. It just doesn't fit and no amount of finagling and adjusting can change the fact that the program is fundamentally agrarian, rural, non-urban, low-tech. Nothing will change that.

My first realization of this fact -in my universe it is a fact- occurred in Boston in 1956. I think that I and those like me from that era in that type of seeing are the only experts on the matter because we experienced the authenticity of the program, the setting and the era. That's pretty rash to say, but it is,

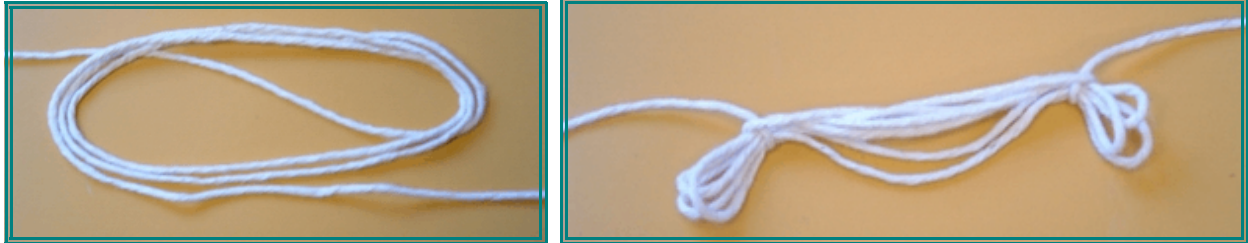
whether you like it or not, the truth. We have the requisite experience to evaluate the various versions of boy scouting. Specifically, we actually lived as BOYS, not as intellectual, oh-we-can-make-it-fit adults, inside of a full-blown program in precisely the environment it was designed for.

When we moved to Boston I found myself in a metropolis of a bewildering sort. It was bewildering specifically because it lacked the fundamental features of a wilderness, frontier, rough-hewed life. Our little band of boy scouts in Boston consisted of city kids like Adam Pereira and Eddie Valleau, two truly entertaining authentic characters even at the ripe old age of 14. Who in their right mind would go camping with a heavy military webbed belt slung around their waist with a lantern hanging from it, a pack of army bandages designed for massive head injuries, etc., except an urban nut who didn't have a clue about what real scouting was about. We went on several camp outs around Boston and they were enormously disappointing to me because they were, literally in one instance, a camp on someone's property out by Farmington. It was like a bunch of little kids playing "Let's pretend." In Alaska we didn't have to pretend. We had to be serious and careful because nature did not forgive stupidity, there was no hospital nearby, no store nearby, no highway. It was deadly earnest up there.

Many years later when I was a scout master in Boise, I learned even more about the program which was the confirmation of my belief. The other feature, in addition to a legitimate outdoors, that was essential to having real scouting was to have enough boys to make a troop. A band of 8 boys was a joke if one really intended scouting as Lord Baden-Powell intended it to be. But in Seward? We did it right because we had enough boys to reach a critical mass for the spirit of scouting to manifest itself. This is only possible with a certain minimum number of boys.

To attempt to have a scout troop with less than absolute minimum of a dozen and a half boys is to engage in "let's pretend". Only men who have done real scouting can grasp the truth of that statement. With less boys it is just a game, particularly in an urban setting, particularly with a bunch of boys who want to play video games, who don't like to get dirty, who don't like sleeping on the ground, who don't like cooking over a messy fire where they either half-cook or burn their food, who are accustomed to who hand-held GPS devices so think compasses are stupid, and who couldn't care less how one tied a 'sheep-shank'. I don't blame them in the least. I'd be the same today.

For the record, let me give you an example of the kinds of skills I'm talking



about. Here's what the 'sheep-shank' looks like in 2 steps. A sheep shank is a knot that is used to shorten ropes when you're lashing a load or doing anything where your rope is too long and you don't want to cut it. You simply make uniformly-sized loops in the rope, and then twist the loose ends backwards and fit those twists down over the school of loops. Then, when you pull on the two ends of the rope there in the image on the right, the knot tightens up and the rope is as much shorter as you want it to be, determined by the number of times you looped the rope. You can treat that thing on the right as if it were simply a length of rope, even though there is that tumor on it. Then, when you're finished doing whatever it was you were doing, you release tension on the rope and simply shake out the loops and the rope returns to its usual shape. Neat nifty knot.

That's what scouting was about, doing stuff like that in settings where you had real reasons to do it. But why would kids today care about this? Worse, when would they ever have a chance to use it in a setting where it actually fitted into their attempt to deal with their universe? Sitting in a church room pretending you care to do this, just waiting till you can go home and play video games or watch TV, pretending that you understand when to do it, not really knowing it could be important to your survival - perhaps to even save your own life- is a travesty. I think Lord Baden Powell is turning in his grave. BSA has lost its position of prominence in the young male minds because it is so badly out of date and no amount of tinkering and adjusting will change that. I hate Bill Gates but think that his enormous monies could be used to build a data, computer-oriented, entertainment based program for urban kids.

Lord Baden-Powell

This is the man who created this outfit in about 1910. He was an officer in the English Army in South Africa, in the Boer Wars. He observed young English men who were sent to the front to fight who didn't have a clue about how to survive in the hostile environment except with careful instruction and supervision. On the basis of these observations he -obviously assuming that these kinds of wars would be fought in those kinds of primitive settings- decided to create an organization for young boys to prepare them for the day that they, too, put on uniforms and went to some wilderness when they had to fend for themselves.

He patterned the organization on the military organization he was involved in, hence the uniforms and troops and insignias and ranks. The program he created was presented to organizations and officials in England when he returned. It was an immediate hit for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the fact that England, while industrialized, nonetheless had a distinct rural flavor in most areas, and people also understood his reports that young soldiers were unprepared to take care of themselves on bivouacs in inhospitable territory.

His program was introduced in the US in about 1912 and was also well-received. Remember, again, the state of the nation in 1912. The United States were still basically agricultural, rural settings in spite of the few large cities like Boston, New York, DC, Chicago, and San Francisco. The interest in the US probably had less to do with anticipation of young men being at war than it did with the basic appeal of camping and fishing and swimming in the outdoors that was abundant. There was a match between the fundamental philosophy of Lord Baden Powell's program and England and the US in the early 1900's.

However, the urbanization of the US has fundamentally altered the balance between young men and their interest in and need for outdoor skills. To young people today, an overnight with a jet ski, or a snazzy bicycle, twinkies and pizza are more interesting. Don't try to teach them to understand the purpose of a sheep shank or how to tie one. What a waste of their time.



Figure 113
http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Baden-Powell

It is. Scouting today is an anachronism that people certainly should be allowed to engage in but it has moved now into the category of "fanatics" like those who engage in re-enactments of the Battles of Appomattox, Gettysburg and so on. Exciting but off the main path. But when I was there, I was in the perfect milieu to engage in scouting as Lord Baden Powell intended it to be.

Scout Troop 630

Troop 630 was one of two scout troops in town. I don't remember the number of the other one but it was affiliated with one of the religious organizations in the town. This is the patch we wore on the left shoulder of our shirts. We had to sew all of our patches and merit badges on our shirts by ourselves. I suppose mom would have done it except that it was a scout requirement that boys do their own sewing so mom probably would have said 'no' if asked. The "630" shows by its shabbiness how poorly it had been sewn on. Repeated washings of the shirt frayed all of the patches I sewed though that's partially the result of the construction of the patches I suppose.



There was always a sense of competition between our troop and the town troop, as there always is between any troops. However, I detected a subtle difference in the sense of competition in this instance. Perhaps I am wrong but I don't think so because I was a little kid and little kids have the most extraordinary radar for detecting emotional signals in their environment. I'm pushing my glasses back here with three of my Indian friends from the scout troop.



In this instance the subtle signal I detected on various occasions, which was

probably plausibly deniable by whoever sent the signal, had to do with two things:

- 1) race, and
- 2) genealogy.

The two are intertwined in fact and in this instance the issue I detected, though subtly to be sure, had to do with fact that the town troop was pretty much of lily white European extraction while Troop 620 was pretty much a collection of native American orphans, of whom most were 'bastards', which was not a nice thing in those days.

Diversity training -a damnable charade parading as something good- hadn't risen its ugly head and Sewardites were of a mixed mind about "mixed breed" kids, - not a nice term- indeed, about native Americans. I was only a kid but my sense was that natives were looked down on, regarded as primitive, as less educated, as inferior and I suppose that by those European standards they were. But just meet them out on the ice in a parka and then see who's inferior. Having said that, I have to say that I also imagine that Sewardites were more tolerant than the average - whoever that might be- American where interracial issues came up. They lived in the Alaskan natives' home territory.

I know personally diversity training is something different than it pretends in some instances to be because I went through one of these silly sessions. The leader was, predictably, a minority person, in this case a black man. That was fine with me. I'd lived two years with black people and don't see their color as much as I see their attitude. He struck me as a sort of tongue-on-cheek operator who said things as if he had an internal smirk but there was nothing to call him on. It became apparent, however, as things progressed that this was basically his opportunity to play the poor benighted martyr, beset by the prejudices and injustices of the whites who oppressed even him personally. Oh, he was careful to dress up his complaints in nice-sounding language so you couldn't take him to task without sounding like YOU were the bigot -when in fact, HE was the bigot.

Anyway, I detected signals coming from other kids, from the other troop, that I was in a sort of inferior group when I hung out with these Jesse Lee orphans. This trait was observable in general where these kids were concerned. They had their own school for some of them, they had no money, had to wear cast off clothing that was donated, had to live under the rigid rule of a religious group who ruled with an iron fist, and so on. They had to ride the Jesse Lee bus into town or

had to walk, didn't have parents to buy them things, to take them around. They were treated as equal-but-separate I suppose.

It interests me that I did not take that stuff personally. That sound funny perhaps but it isn't. Kids easily take onto themselves disparagement of a group they hang out with and as a result turn on that group. I did not feel embarrassed to be part of that troop, did not feel embarrassed to be part of the group, did not look down on these kids. They were kids like I was a kid and they happened to have the background they did, and happened to live where they did but there was nothing bad about them, other than the interpersonal differences that spring up between human beings in any event. My folks had trained me to not care about the differences between myself and other groups, i.e. Indians and Eskimos. Indeed, dad always showed a fascination with these people, their culture and their belongings. Those things made a difference in me and I learned to share his interest and curiosity. Being in this troop was as natural as being with the white troop in town.

Having said they "trained me to not care", I need to clarify again what I mean. That phrase may suggest that mom and dad sat me down and said, "Now, Rondo. We want you to understand that you are no better than those kids. Etc." They didn't do that, ever. I don't remember a single time in my life where either of my parents made a point of lecturing us about difference between me and native Americans. Never. So don't misunderstand and think that I got Sunday school lectures about 'doing good' and "turning cheeks" and so on because I emphatically did not. The 'training' I refer to was entirely subconscious on their part as far as I could see. They simply demonstrated their relationships to native Americans and I assimilated them without even thinking about them. It was as natural being with them as with Billy Schaefermeyer or Brent Whitmore.

I don't specifically know why mom and dad chose to put us in that troop out there. However, it isn't difficult to guess that there were at least two reasons. The first would be the fact that the town troop was less disciplined than the Jesse Lee troop by its basic nature. The city kids didn't have a rigid religious system within which they lived so they were considerably rowdier than the Jesse Lee kids. Second, mom and dad had a soft spot for working with native Americans as demonstrated by their lengthy service to the patients at the TB San and the fact that mom took us out to the Jesse Lee home early on. It seems to me that the reason behind the latter was two fold, first to give us exposure to more kinds of people and second, to provide to those kids friends from town. The fact that the home was run by a different religious group didn't bother mom and dad. Indeed,

the fact that there was a religious group involved at all counted positively.

I find it interesting today to look back at mom's determination to make us kids become friends with those kids at the orphanage, because I don't remember that she specifically explained to us what she intended to accomplish. However, I do know that mom never did anything in her life without a calculated, clear reason behind it. If my guess is right that her intention here was to introduce us to these kids while she gave those kids some friends, then it is interesting that I have no recall of a lecture of "doing good" or some such cant. But that would be consistent for both mom and dad. While the lectured us about our own moral behavior and castigated us severely for our failures, they were private about their own 'good deeds' in the community. Their volunteer work at the San was done freely, frequently and fervently. There was something dedicated about them yet they didn't talk about it to people, didn't carry on to get praise or even thanks. They felt the urge to do it, understood there was a need, that there would be some benefit, so they did it. I think that taking us boys out to the Jesse Lee home was one of those kinds of things for which reason she really wouldn't discuss it much with us. We just did it.

It was sad in 2003 to return to the Jesse Lee home and discover that two of the three buildings are missing. They burned down. The one that remains is forlorn and sad, fenced in, windows broken out, and the subject of a lot of debate between those who want tear it down and replace it with something modern and those who want to keep it as a historical building. This was the boys' dorm, the only left. It's surrounded by trees and houses today. I spent a lot of time there.



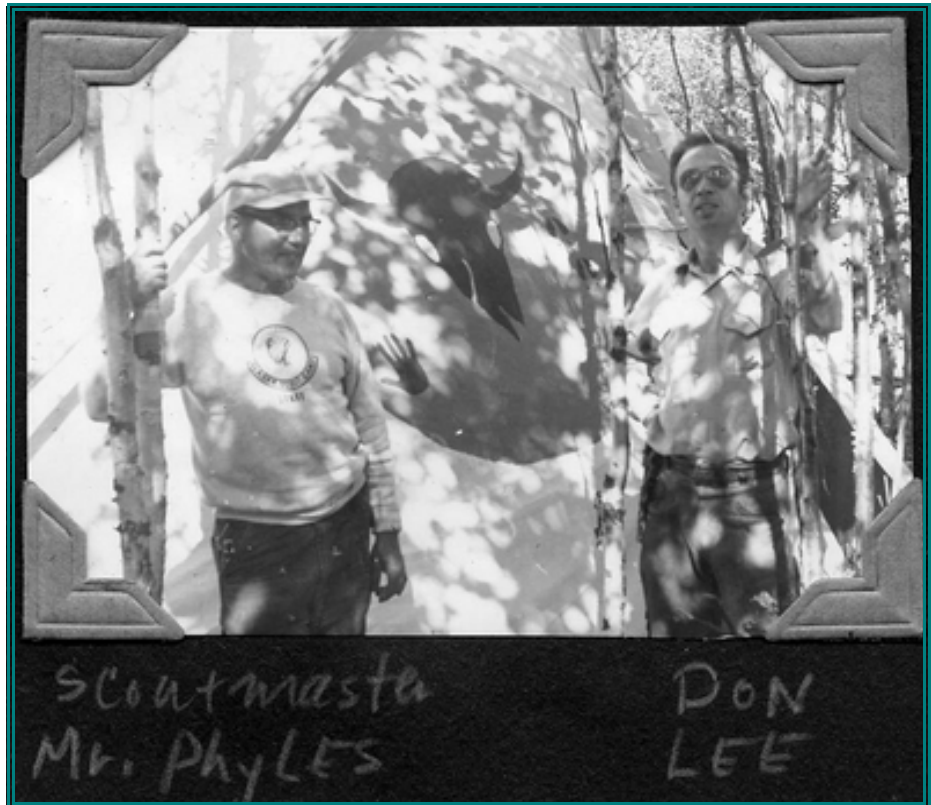
Mr. Phyles, Scoutmaster

This man has probably been enthroned on Olympus as far as my little kid is concerned. He was an enormous man in my eyes, and not because he was physically tall. He wasn't. He was probably about my height, 5 feet 9 inches, but he stood like a giant to me, a 12-14 year old. He had a daughter my age so I knew her in school but I had nothing to do with here. That was an age where girls

were still sort of nasty things that we avoided doing anything with, even though we were becoming acutely aware of them and their femininity.

As I recall, Mr. Phyles moved to Seward from outside sometime after we did. I don't know where he came from, nor does it matter. He was more suited to the task than any scoutmaster I have even known. Here's a great photo of both men who dominated my scout troop, Mr. Phyles on the left and Mr. Don Lee, the director of the Jesse Lee Home, standing in front of one of our teepees at Camp Gorsuch.

The kindness you see here in Mr. Phyles smile was genuine and constant. Just ask any little kid who spends 10 minutes with an adult about whether the adult likes little kids or not. The kid will tell you god's truth in an instant, because only a kid isn't deceived.



Mr. Phyles had a kind, direct manner that appealed to us kids. He was actually a quiet man, almost reserved, yet when an occasion required him to stand up and take charge, he would, unhesitatingly. But he knew how to stand back and let others perform and take charge.

A telling example of the latter was the courtesy and trust he showed us all toward his senior patrol leader and assistant patrol leader. I don't remember his name but he was Robert Muller's older brother. Each week we gathered at the Rec Hall for Troop Meeting which was a momentous event for us. Recall that life in Seward was interminable mist and rain and clouds with a movie theater and a tiny library for entertainment, and little else, other than a few school events. But it was a tiny isolated town. So anything different from the run of the mill stuff

assumed a large size in our minds. That was Troop Meeting.

Us white kids trickled in a few at a time, Billy Schaefermeyer, the Aylen boy, the Muller boys, Marshall Mahurrin and then the Jesse lee boys would arrive more or less en masse. About this time the senior patrol leader would stand in the front

of the room in front of the huge fireplace that you see behind these women at a function during WW II. This gives you a sense of the perspective of that room. It was large though the sheep head was no longer there. Mr. Muller would raise his hand in the call to attention and would command us to "fall in." All of us milling-around kids actually obeyed his order. Really. I'm not kidding you. Try that with a bunch of kids today and see what happens.



We had 40+ boys so had 6 (S I X!!!) Patrols that lined up at attention in full dress uniforms every week. Full uniforms were required. If a kid didn't have the money to buy his shirt or hat or belt or neckerchief or slide or whatever, all he had to do was tell Mr. Phyles. It was embarrassing to appear at Troop Meeting without a complete uniform because inspections were sometimes held and we were advised in public that our shirt was missing, that it was dirty, that our neckerchief knot was wrong, that we needed a different slide and so on. The necessary items that were needed would appear shortly, no strings attached and no identity of the giver. Each of our patrols had a patrol leader and assistant patrol leader who had power and control and responsibility for us. The seriousness of the senior patrol leader who stood in front of us, alone, facing us, rubbed of on us. When we 'fell in" we had to "face off", extending our right arm straight ahead to touch the shoulder of the man in front of us, and extending our left straight out to touch the man to our left. When every man did this, straight files were created on the patrol leaders who stood at attention before the senior patrol leader.

Here's the point of that description: My Phyles didn't say a thing during this process. Mr. Muller was entirely in charge. He was allowed to stand alone in charge of us all and it was an impressive thing, both for Mr. Muller as well as for Mr. Phyles. Instead of somehow diminishing the senior patrol leader by "helping" him,

Mr. Phyles enlarged him by letting him manage the whole opening exercise. He did nothing until we were at attention in neat ranks. After Mr. Muller had finished his task, he ordered us "At ease", which we did as uniformly as we could. Only at that point did Mr. Phyles stand forward and take charge. That's an example of how Mr. Phyles inspired trust and obedience in us.

Time Trials

We had never heard of such things. I just use the name to catch your attention. A big part of troop meetings was devoted to competitions of all kinds, based on skills taught in the Boy Scout Handbook, which was our Bible. One competition, however, had nothing to do with tying knots, or sharpening knives or orienteering, nothing to do at all with camping or the outdoors. It was something we loved to do and something that none of us did well. The secret to keeping us interested in it was not doing it often. That kept interest and a sense of challenge.

When Mr. Phyles thought the time was about right to do a time trial, he'd order us to fall out and sit anywhere we wanted on the floor in front of the counter. Some kids had difficulty finding the 'right' spot to sit down, others just sat down where they stood, interesting differences. After everyone was seated, Mr. Phyles would announce that he would give a new neckerchief slide to the kid who was able to guess how long a minute was. We understood the drill.

When he was ready, he held a large stop watch up dramatically, like he was going to start a race, and called out, "Ready, set, GO!" at which point he'd click the watch while its string dangled. At that point all of us did whatever we did to try to count 60 seconds. We'd all heard the instruction to count "One-and, two-and", others of us just counted slowly, "one, two, three". Whatever we did, we did silently so we didn't let any of the other kids know what we were doing. After an enormously long time had passed, one of the kids would pop up like a jack-in-the-box, red faced, eager to be the one who guessed right. Mr. Phyles would just smile and look at his watch, not saying a thing. The kid knew he was wrong.

But now that one kid had stood up, the rest of us began to feel some pressure because we weren't really sure about what we were doing. We began to fear that we were going beyond 60 seconds. It had already seemed so long. So another kid would pop up, looking eagerly at Mr. Phyles who would just smile again, looking at his stop watch. Then in a few seconds another kid would pop up. This continued, more kids popping up at shorter intervals, until the last kids sitting felt

like they were way over the 60 seconds. At last, all of them stood up and Mr. Phyles would then announce who the winner was, hand him the slide, and move immediately into another activity. I never won and had no sense of time but always liked the thrill of trying to guess time that way.

Parade Drill

Other troop meetings Mr. Phyles would tell us that the major event for the night was a parade drill and told us that the last person to be doing the proper moves would win a new pocket knife that he held up for all of us to see. We each wanted it, partly because it was a new knife, and partly because it was from Mr. Phyles. After explaining this to us, he told Mr. Muller, the senior patrol leader to take charge.

Mr. Muller ordered us all to fall in on the guidon bearer who was positioned facing the fire place. After we had all fallen and stood at attention in our patrols, Mr. Muller would perform an inspection of each and every scout. Patrols were ordered to march out in front of the troop where we were each examined from head to toe. Mr. Muller commented on an improper knot in our neckerchief, soiled shirts, missing neckerchief slide, sloppy hat, dirty web belt, poorly sewn on badges, missing badges, etc. Each gig was like a slap in the face in front of the rest of the troop but we all knew our turn was coming so no one took it too personally. Any boy who was missing a part of his uniform felt particularly bad that night. You just did not go to troop meeting with anything less than a complete clean uniform and that included a hat, neckerchief with slide, shirt, belt, and pants.

After the inspection was completed, Mr. Muller would take us through a parade drill. He'd put us at 'attention' and then call out orders that we had to follow as he called them, "Right Face", "Left face", "About Face", "Parade Rest", "At ease", "Attention," forward March, "Halt", "About Face," "Right face." The first couple of commands all of us kids followed properly but as soon as we started marching and trying to execute the turns, we started to fall apart. One kid would realize that he was on his right foot instead of his left, so while he was trying to get back in step, he'd miss the next turn command. That would throw another kid off who was standing behind him, and so on. In the end when only one kid was still following Mr. Muller's orders, the rest of us were standing to the side just watching. It never took very long because while we understood the commands and how to execute them, we were inexperienced. It was fun, however, and made us feel a bit like

soldiers, which, of course, we were.

Singing

Singing was an integral part of troop meetings. I expect that we sang in most of them. Some of us sang better than others but it was immaterial. The best times we had when we sang were those when the troop was gathered closely together around a roaring fire in the large fireplace when the overhead lights were doused. In that setting, we'd sing fun songs and we'd sing silly songs. The interesting feature of these song fests was the fact that certain of the songs allowed kids to improvise the words. If a kid wanted to do that, he'd just raise his hand during the chorus and then he'd get to lead the next verse, singing the words he had made up.

The most popular song for this kind of improvisation was, "Oh ya' cant' get to heaven." The verses were rowdy but that was the tenor of life in Seward anyway. Here are a couple of verses with one refrain of the chorus. The style of the song was antiphonal. One person would sing a line to be followed by the whole group singing the same song, sort of an antiphonal arrangement though the boys would have recoiled at such a fancy-sounding word to describe what they were doing, the person would solo the next line which was repeated by the group. There were four lines to each verse that went this way:

"Oh ya can't get to heaven (solo voice)
(Oh ya can't get to heaven) (Group response)
On pork and beans
(On pork and beans)
Cuz the Lord don't have
(Cuz the Lord don't have)
That many latrines?

Chorus:
(The four lines were sung together as the chorus.)

"Oh ya can't get to heaven
(Oh ya can't get to heaven)

In Mr. Phyles' car
(In Mr. Phyle's car)
Cuz the gosh darned thing
(Cuz the gosh darned thing)
Won't go that far.
(Won't go that far."

CHORUS.

Kids improvised fairly often and the results were pretty rough. The point of their improvisations were usually to tease Mr. Phyle. Rhymes tended to be absent and the length of the lines didn't match the melody but no one cared. We all knew what was going on and even admired the brave kids who dared try it. Another song we loved to sing was "I wear my pink pajamas":

I wear my pink pajamas in the summer when it's hot
I wear my purple undies in the winter when it's not
And some times in the spring time
And sometimes in the fall,
I jump right into bed with nothing on all.

That's the way we do in Seward
That's the way we do in Seward
That's the way we do in Seward
With nothing on at all.

These were innocent songs sung for the joy of singing together. "The ants go marching" was another fun one that grew a line at a time. We'd also sing the military songs, "The caissons go rolling along" (Over hill, over dale as we hit the dusty trail, and the caissons go marching along, in and out, round about, counter-march and ...) "The Marine Hymn (From the halls of Montezuma, to the shores of Tripoli, we will fight our nation's battles, in the air on land or sea. We will fight for right and honor and to keep our country free. You can always ...the United States Marines"), then "America", "Home on the Range", "The Star Spangled Banner." and so on. Singing was a central part of the program that we loved, partly because Mr. Phyle loved it and participated as fully as we did. We also sang on campouts.

A song I learned at scout camp -NOT from Mr. Phyle- that was very naughty sticks in my memory. Marshal and Robert taught it to use younger kids. The odd thing about it is that I learned it so quickly, once or twice through and it stuck:

*Three Irishmen, three Irishmen were digging in a ditch
One called the other a dirty son of a
Peter was a doggy a very fine dog was he
He went to see his lady friend to keep her company
She fed him she fed him she fed him some jump
He jumped right up her petticoat and bit her on the
Cocktail gingerale 5 cents a glass
If you don't like my story you can kiss my rusty
Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies
But if you get hit with a bucket of spit
Be sure to close your eyes.*

There were other bawdy songs that kids sang but not me. I was too afraid of being punished. Some of them I didn't understand.

First Aid drills

After we had all been taught how to do certain first aid cares, Mr. Phyle would announce that there was going to be a competition between patrols to see who did them the best and who did them the fastest. Both elements were evaluated, speed and accuracy. He'd then identify which pair of patrols was to go first. After three pairs had competed, he had the three winners finish the competition by simultaneously doing the assigned skills.

These events created a lot of yelling from the observers. We all had friends we liked, and we had patrols we wanted to win, so we cheered for those kids. I'm not sure the yelling helped at all, particularly if someone was trying to yell instructions. Us kids were not used to competition so would get rattled easily. Since the patrols had 6 - 8 boys, the prize was usually something to eat, a sure fire winner for scouts.

Vespers

This was often the most inspirational part of the troop meeting, one that was familiar to me because it was prayer, one that I anticipated. I loved the name 'vespers'. When our activities were completed for the night, Mr. Phyle would summon us with the standard scouting signal into a single circle in the middle of the rec hall by holding his right arm up straight and rotating it in a circle. We all fell quickly into the circle and at that point a candle was lighted on a bottle in the center and the lights were doused. Mr. Phyle might say a few words sort of like a gentle sermon and would end by telling us to join hands. This was done in a particular way. We crossed our hands in front of ourselves and took the left hand of the kid to our left in our right hand and so on. After we were all joined together this way, Mr. Phyle would lead us in a verse or two of Scout Vespers:

Scout Vespers

Softly falls the light of day,
As our campfire fades away.
Silently each Scout should ask,
Have I done my daily task?
Have I kept my honor bright?
Can I guiltless sleep tonight?
Have I done and have I dared,
Everything to be prepared?

Quietly we join as one,
Thanking God for Scouting fun,
May we now go on our way.
Thankful for another day.
May we always love and share,
Living in peace beyond compare,
As Scouts may we find,

Friendships true with all mankind.
Quietly we now will part,

Pledging ever in our heart,
To strive to do our best each day,
As we travel down life's way.
Happiness we'll try to give,
Trying a better life to live,
Till all the world
Be joined in love,
Living in peace under skies above.

That is a beautiful, non-denominational prayer that all faiths could say, one that touched each of us with its simplicity and honesty. On some occasions we would sing a song that I don't remember the name of, just the first line, "Softly now the light of day,..." It was another fitting way to end a troop meeting where we had enjoyed learning and playing together. After the group song or prayer was ended, we would break loudly as the lights were turned on and tear out of the Rec Hall.

Charred skin

That large fireplace was used in most troop meetings in the winter. Wood was provided by Mr. Lee I believe. It was stacked up outside and brought in as needed. The fire pit was probably 5 feet tall and about as wide. On one occasion I was assigned to start the fire and build it up so that it was large. I took the assignment seriously and got a fine fire going so I let it burn a while. Meantime I wandered away to do something else with Dick probably. After some time had passed I looked at the fire and decided that I needed to put more wood on it. I went over and without thinking about what I was doing, I reached through the chicken wire that served as the screen to keep embers in the fireplace. I stuck three fingers through the loops and as soon as I lifted, I felt a terrible pain and then smelled burning flesh.

I didn't understand what had happened but I dropped the fire screen instantly. My fingers hurt badly so I looked at them as I was smelling the charred flesh. Across my index



and middle finger there was a narrow crust of burned skin, sort of brown and sort of tan, but crisp. It hurt badly but since I was given an assignment, I fulfilled it rather than complaining about it at the time. I knew there was nothing to do to stop burns from hurting. The eschar -that's the fancy medical word for charred flesh- eventually came off in peculiar strips, leaving behind a shiny scar where the finger print is missing. You can see the remnants of the scar in this image as a straight line above the joint of my middle finger. It is the missing fingerprint that shows where the burn was. About straight across from that scar you can see a smaller one at about the same level on my index finger. The burn scar is the lower one on the middle finger. I was accident prone so have scars covering my hands and arms. Mom said I was just too eager to try things out. Sounds like I'm ADHD.

Weekly Patrol Meeting

Marshall was our patrol leader. In the summer when the snow was gone we had weekly meetings, usually at his house. He lived out past the TB San a short enough distance to walk. We would take the San bus out and get out at the San and then go to Marshall's house. The other members of our patrol were from the Jesse Lee home so took the San bus from their place to the same place we got off and walked over.

These meetings were sort of lazy times to get together out of uniform and talk about merit badges, an upcoming campout or plan our own activities. There was a scribe -i.e. secretary- who had a little book that he wrote in, and who collected weekly dues. Dues were a dime and we had to pay our own money into the kitty. No handout from mom and dad. Either we earned it or we saved it out of our irregular weekly allowance of 25 cents. The dimes were put into a metal bank and saved to buy merit badges or whatever sundries we could afford to buy.

Mr. Phyle gave assignments to the patrols so if there was something we needed to practice, the weekly meeting was the time to do it. This usually involved activities from the requirements for ranks, like fire building or first aid. We'd get supplies and practice the skills for a while, and then break for some kind of Pool-aid and cookies, the standard refreshment that Mrs. -in those days married women were addressed differently than unmarried women so we said "Mrs." or "Miss", as the case demanded- Mahurrin always prepared in the kitchen.

Day Hikes & Snipe Nests

One of the activities we planned for our patrol was a day hike around the head of the bay. The day we went was sunny and as warm as it got which isn't really warm, but nonetheless nice for us. We had small back packs and canteens. In the packs we had things like compasses, ropes and first aid supplies, things we really didn't use but we carried just in case, a wise thing to do.

We followed the Old Nash Road that went clear around the head of the bay but not much further. The road was not paved but was fairly smooth because it was graded in the spring by a big yellow road grader. Rain made pot holes but there was so little traffic that they were generally not large. We had to cross three rivers.

We stopped at each river and explored upstream and down stream from the bridges, just poking at things and looking for interesting items left behind by fishermen. At one of the bridges, Marshall called us over to point something out. He and Robert had found some snipe nests that had been built by the birds up underneath the bridge. He pointed out to us exactly where the nests were and we made the association in our minds with the snipes we saw in the Hunter's Encyclopedia. We finished our hike which meant going twice along the Nash Road before we were finished, the second half being considerably longer than the first.

Furnace in the Rec Hall

The last winter I was in Seward I was given the assignment in the winter of starting the furnace in the Rec Hall before each meeting so that it would be warmed up enough for troop meeting. I was 13-14 that winter. I don't remember how it was decided by the adults that I was the one to do it but it made sense to me because I did something three days a week that took me out that way anyway.

The little yellow bus that shuttled between downtown and the TB San made a side trip over to the Jesse Lee home. That allowed the older kids to get around a bit. The route the bus took was a "U" shape, so that it passed on both sides of the Rec Hall. On the way out to the Jesse Lee Home,, the little bus ran past the south side of the Rec Hall and when the bus left the Jesse Lee home to go on out to the TB San, it ran past the north side of the Rec Hall. So I was assigned to get off

the bus on its way out on Wednesdays -or whatever day of the week it was.

Then I would run up to the Rec Hall, and open the furnace room from the outside door. The furnace was idle so I had to turn on the fan that blew warm air out into the Rec Hall, and had to turn on another switch, one that allowed oil to be fed into the burner. Then I had to open the fire box, light a match and ignite the oil spray coming out the nozzle. This was a safe enough process because it wasn't like gasoline.

After I had the furnace started, I'd shut the firebox door, go out the back door of the furnace room, and run across the other side of the Rec Hall lot for the road on that side. I'd stand there and wait until the little bus came by, flag it down, get on and continue on my way out to the TB San where I'd administer the ultrasound treatment to my right calf.

Lost Lake Hike

Actually, I am not sure this hike was to Lost Lake but I'll call it that to have a name. The reason I am doubtful of that memory is the fact that I have photos with dad's notations saying they were taken at Lost Lake. Since they show mom and us kids fishing, I know we didn't hike anywhere. We drove up close to the lake, and walked a ways, but we didn't hike. Whatever lake it was, we had to hike in and a long ways.

Like all of our troop events, this one was planned carefully because getting out in the wilderness is, like, well, getting out in the wilderness. Where there ain't no one to telephone, no telephone, no hospitals, no fast food stores, no roads, no plumbing, no electricity, nothing. Just bears and creatures and wildness. It was so different than what I experienced in Boston a few years later. Anyway, we got our gear and food together on the appointed day and had our packs inspected and loaded and stored in someone's pickup.

Us kids were loaded into the Jesse Lee bus and followed the pickup(s) out to the jumping off place. Kids piled out of the bus and emptied the pickup(s) quickly in their haste to be on the trail. It was exciting to be doing this, to feel like adults, carrying our loaded backpacks, to hike into the mountains four or five miles to spend a few days. I'm sure there was the usual chatting that boys engage in but discipline in the Jesse Lee Home was strict as it was in my house, in Billy's house, in the Muller house, in the Mahurrin house, in the Nelson house, and so on, so it didn't ever get out of hand. It would be too fancy to say that kids had "respect" for each

other because that's a sort of conscious decision one makes and us kids weren't conscious in that way. We just existed peacefully, perhaps as much out of fear of punishment and out of 'respect'. Whatever it was, it was fine because it allowed us to go about our tasks.

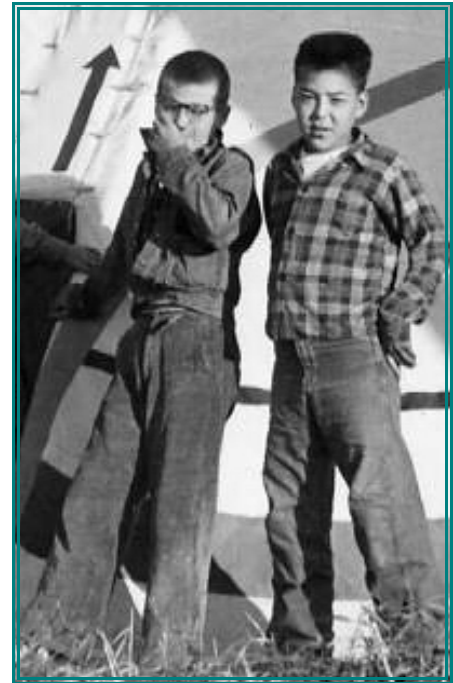
We got on the way and lined up sort of randomly, meaning that patrols weren't formed and ordered. We just fell in behind whoever we wanted and started up the trail. The day was sunny and as warm as it was most of the time, which isn't warm at all, but by comparison to winter, it was warm. There was an adult leading the troop and another adult in the rear keeping track of what was going on. Other adults were along as guides and supervisors. They were tolerant of reasonable activities that didn't threaten injury, otherwise, they called us on our behaviors. It didn't seem unreasonable because we knew when we were doing something that was unreasonable.

The trek into and back from the lake was long with a heavy pack and had one scary segment. The trail was narrow and rough since there was no forest service hanging around and because it was rarely used. The challenge was at a place where the trail became extremely steep, so steep that it was difficult to traverse. We held up at the bottom -or top on the way back- in single file. Then the adults guided us one at a time over the trail to be sure that we made it safely. Then we continued our way.

There was an old log cabin a few hundred yards from the lake that we used as headquarters. It was naturally unheated, no electricity, no water, nothing, just an empty building that kept the wind and rain off. The cooking was done inside the cabin. The most memorable of this camp out involved the water. The leaders told us that we could drink the water in a small clear stream that flowed swiftly past the cabin. It was icy cold and tasted good. However, on the second or third day I was exploring the stream to where it came from, just walking upstream, along poking with a stick. The kid I was with, probably Andy, saw a sort of wooden frame in the stream.

This box-like affair extended from one side of the little stream to the other and was about 2 feet long. We wondered what it was for so stopped to examine it. The bottom of the stream and box was dark so we had to lean close to the box to get a good view. What we saw made me nearly puke on the spot. Two large dead rats lay in the box, the water flowing across them.

The other memory of the campout involves an Indian kid named Alex. Here he is, standing by me in the doorway of a tee pee set up in the field in front of the Jesse Lee orphanage. He was toughened to the cold and decided one cold morning that he was going to go swim in the lake. That was a serious undertaking. It was icy cold and had a skin of ice around the shore. But he was tough. He put his swimming trunks on in the cabin, took a pair of swim fins and walked all the way to the lake, climbed in swam, and walked back. I was freezing just watching him.



Momma's Teepees

There is something very important that you need to understand about these teepees. First, there were five of them as you see in this photo



They were gorgeous things to pitch and sleep in, partly because they were envied by all other scouts who saw us. They envied us. They were fun to pitch, though. You took three of the longest poles and lined the butts up. Then you lashed the top end loosely to keep them together, and flipped the center pole 180 degrees so it was lying in the other direction and tied the top of the teepee to it. Then we lifted this set to form a tall tripod, letting the teepee just hang. We'd lay another 8-10 poles more or less evenly around this tripod after which we'd stretch the teepee around the cone and secure it in the front.

The important this is this:

Mom sewed every one of them, by herself, in the front room, on her Singer.

That was a small room anyway. When you think about the quantity of canvas that went into a teepee you get the idea. She was drowned in canvas, yet she managed without complaints to sew five of these things, there in the front room. It was amazing. It was a major project to set up the sewing machine to set a shirt, so doing these things demanded determination and creativity. Which she had.

After they were assembled, us kids painted them during some troop meetings, but that was only possible because mom was able to create them in the first place.