

## Tonsina & Trapper's Cabin

We went down the bay to Tonsina for a 4 day camp-out in the fall. It was cold and rainy but we were used to that so it didn't bother us. This photo shows us in that weather on Milo Martin's boat as we are returning to Seward which is far off in the mist. I think that's Lowell Point right in front of us. The second lighter gray mountain is Marathon so you can



see where Seward is. The little guy pulling a face was my shadow, Andy. I'm the kid kneeling up on the left in the bow, without a hat.

Tonsina was one of the few beaches along the west side of the bay. Most of the bay was lined with cliffs so the beaches were special places. Tonsina was situated near the mouth of a small river that drained glacier water down from the mountains, hence was icy cold. After we had walked in the river, it was a relief to walk in the comparatively warm bay. There was a train along the north side of the small stream that we decided we needed to explore when we were given some free time. North of the camp site there was a large flat marsh that communicated with the ocean, and which was situated between the beach and the foot of the mountain.

We located the places we wanted to pitch out tents and set about getting them up. Night fall was coming and we didn't want to be left out in the rain so we got tents or lean-tos ready. Some kids cut boughs to sleep on. Andy, my little Indian Shadow, made himself a particularly irritating pest on that trip by deciding he would steal my axe. It was a single-bit BSA axe that I was proud of which I had received for my birthday. I kept it in its leather scabbard to protect the edge that I carefully honed with dad's whetstone, so I was worried that Andy

would ruin the edge. I chased him all over the camp but he was faster and always got away from me. I finally got angry at him and called him some names, or told him what I thought about it. That finally got to him so he later brought the axe back, but instead of just handing it to me, he buried it inside of my sleeping bag. He was a constant pest. I don't know why he picked me out but every campout we went on, and troop meeting we had, he hung around me.

We set up cooking facilities along the stream where the bank was clear, using wood we chopped and dragged in. In those days there was plenty of deadfall or trees and we just took what we needed. I suppose that today there are all sorts of rules about this sort of thing. After camp was pitched and we had eaten, we were allowed to explore with the absolute requirement that we have a buddy with us. It was an unbendable rule that would earn a kid a severe punishment which was motivation to obey it. More importantly I think, we actually felt the need of having someone with us when we went out of camp alone, and for good reason.

The next afternoon when we were allowed to explore outside of camp we started walking up the trail along the stream. One of the adults saw it first, a brown bear track. We could tell that what it was because it was enormous. Here's a photo of a brown bear track that dad took over at Kasilof. His belt knife which was 8-9 inches long is lying in the middle of the track. That gives you a sense of the size of these creatures so we were nervous from that point forward. As you look at it, you might be suspicious because the print looks like a human hand with long 'fingers', so just remember that the knife is 8-9 inches long and is about the width of the print. These bears are just huge.



## Snipe Hunt

On the second night, something remarkable happened. My brother and I suffered from a severe case of naivete, plus we were inflicted with a sense of the scientific world that Bailey the Blacksmith reinforced. As a result of both, we were taken advantage of and have a marvelous story to tell about it though at the time it wasn't too exciting. As dad always said, an adventure is something that's painful at the time, or something to that effect.

The way Bailey the Blacksmith unwittingly prepared us to be taken care of was by giving dad this marvelous, huge book, the biggest book we ever had in our home, entitled "Hunter's Encyclopedia." I sat down and pored over that thing for hours on end. Seward winters are dark and darn cold so there was a lot of time to kill inside. Even if we wanted to go outside and play it got pretty boring when we were doing that alone, so we opted to stay inside a lot of the time. The Encyclopedia was filled with details about guns and ammunitions as well as nature lore.

It contained chapter after chapter about deer and wild cats and ducks and geese and upland game birds and lowland game birds and so on. It was filled with facts and information, the kind of thing that our dad loved, the kind of thing that captured his attention faster than anything else. So between dad's fixation of science and facts, and this dang book, Dick and I learned about the bird named "snipe." In keeping with our interest in seeing any unfamiliar creatures, we wanted to see any kind of bird. So it was easy to take advantage of us.

The snipe was a beautiful small bird that lived in marshes. Note: marshes. This bird was speckled like sage hens and Hungarian partridges and ptarmigan, a familiar pattern. The Encyclopedia described how they were hunted, and the zig-zagging flight pattern they had when flushed. It also explained where these birds made their nests and how many young they had. All in all, the snipe became an absolutely real bird to us, as real as Canadian geese, pheasants and mallard ducks. Whenever anyone referred to these birds we had a good understanding about the basic information about them. The fact that they were rarely talked about didn't mean a thing to us. People didn't talk about gorillas

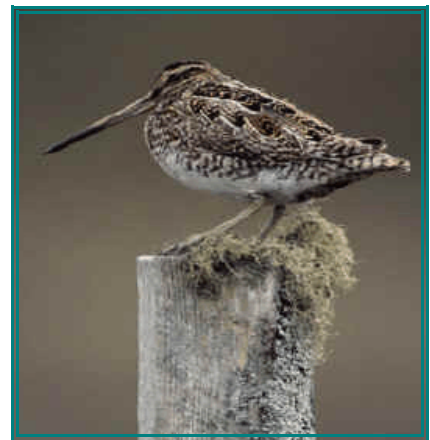


Figure 3

<http://www.habitats.freeserve.co.uk/aylesbea.htm>

in Alaska, either. As long as we read stories about creatures and saw photos of them, we knew they existed.

So there was nothing, absolutely nothing, to raise a sense of suspicion in us when our trustworthy patrol leader, Marshall and assistant patrol, Robert, told us about snipe the previous summer on our day hikes. We knew these birds from the Encyclopedia. We knew they lived in marshes so it was entirely believable that they were in the environs.

This night as it was getting dark, Marshall told Dick and me to go get a gunny sack. There were several by the cook tent. He then explained that he knew a place where there were snipe and that the snipe are easily spooked so we wanted to go along to try and catch them. He said not to tell anyone what we were going because other kids would want to go with us and would spoil it. We didn't say a thing and trustingly followed Marshall and Robert.

They took us out to the beach and we walked north several hundred yards before we cut back through the willows toward the mountains. When we got through the willows we entered a marshy area, open and flat, across from which we saw trunks of spruce trees standing over bare ground. Marshall led us across the marsh to the bare ground and then explained what we were going to do. He said that snipes are not terribly smart birds and that they preferred to run instead of fly. Snipes hunt for holes to hide in when they are chased so we were to sit quietly and hold our gunny sacks open while he and Robert would go back along the marsh and flush the snipes in our direction. They said that we were not to talk to each other because the snipe had good ears and would be spooked if they heard us talking, so if we really wanted to catch them we had to sit absolutely still and quiet.

What did we know. We knew there were snipe and had never encountered them before so when our patrol leader gave us these instructions, we believed him. It didn't bother us that none of the other boys knew what we were doing and in fact, we felt special. We saw or squatted underneath the spruce trees, looking across the marsh in the direction of the ocean. We couldn't tell where Marshall and Robert went after a while but we heard them walking away from us. We sat there quietly, waiting. While we sat there we had visions of catching a snipe and quickly closing the mouth of the sack to trap it inside, after which we'd show it to admiring envious kids.

As we sat there, we heard small creatures around us. That persuaded that we only had to wait, innocent souls that we were. These creatures must have been chipmunks or small squirrels though we couldn't see them. They didn't scare us.

We just waited and hoped. At one point I had to stand up and pee and then sat down again, hoping I hadn't broken the spell. We got a bit impatient and whispered something to each other but still trusted. We really wanted to catch a snipe. But after a long period of time we decided that Marshall and Robert had gotten lost so we figured we might as well head back to camp. It was probably a quarter mile away so we couldn't hear any noises or see light from the camp fires.

We stood up and stretched our aching legs and shook our gunny sacks. Empty. We brushed leaves and needles off our back sides and then started back to cross the marsh. We had to look hard because the light was minimal. Suddenly, straight ahead we saw a large black shape that was moving. We didn't know what to think at first because we knew we were alone out here in the marsh above Tonsina and that everyone was back at the camp. We stopped and looked hard, thinking that all of the people are over at the camp, on the other side of this black shape. We weren't spooked by it at first but as we thought about it, and saw that it really was moving up and down, that huge bear print began to bother us. That black shape was large and really was moving up and down. About now we were ready to scream and bolt but didn't.

Our training was sufficient to allow us to keep our wits. What we did was decide that instead of going south across the marsh in the direction of the camp on the river, we would head north through the marsh and find an opening to cut through the willows. We walked as quickly as we could but started getting wet feet. While we had been setting there, the tide had been coming in and filling the marsh, but we hadn't noticed that. When we realized that the tide was coming in, we did get real anxious. Neither of us could swim, both of us were afraid of the water, we were alone, there were no adults around, we didn't know where we were, and there was a big black shape coming for us.

We found an opening through the willows to the beach and quickly passed through. The problem, obviously, was that we had to walk south now to get back to camp so we headed south. We were nervous and alone but the idea of staying out there alone all night was worse than the anxiety about the bear through the willows that we had to pass. The willows were all that separated that bear from us as we passed it but there was no other way. We each whispered to be quiet at the point where we figured we were across from the bear. We finally got all the way down to the river and turned upstream to find the camp.

When we got back to camp, no one was up. Everyone had gone to bed. The big campfire was still burning a bit but was almost out. We couldn't figure out

what had happened but were relieved to have made it back safely past the bear, even though we didn't catch any snipe. The next day in the sun light we went back to the marsh to see if there were signs of a bear and we found it. It was an empty, rusty 55 gallon barrel. As the tide came it, the waves gently lifted the barrel up and down, creating the sense of a walking bear. Marshall didn't say much when we told him what had happened. I don't remember how we found out the truth about "snipe hunts". When we did, we were sort of embarrassed but we weren't the first ones to be fooled that way.

### Breaking & Entering

On the last full day we were at Tonsina some of us kids decided we were going to explore the little river. We started going upstream from the camp site, further than we'd gone before. The leaders trusted us so no adults were with us. We were on our own. No way to get into trouble they thought. Well, there was.

As we got up the stream a good distance we came across a trapper's cabin. We knew it was a trapper's cabin because only trappers -or hermits and there wasn't one of those- built cabins out there in isolated lonely places like that. It was a log cabin and set back about 50 feet from the river bank. We poked around the outside to see what was there. Things were OK until one kid, whose name I don't know, decided that he'd try and see if he could force the locked door open. There was only one door, the one in the front, and we found that it was locked. Most of us didn't think anything further about it. But this kid couldn't resist the challenge apparently so he worked on that door until he broke it open.

That as bad enough, but what happened next was worse. He and several other kids went into the cabin to see what was in there. That's trespassing but didn't cause damage, but for reasons I never understood those kids turned into hoodlums. They threw the bedding onto the floor, they opened flour sacks and spilled the flour on the floor, pulled metal dishes and cups out of the cupboard and generally made a real mess out of the place. Some kids took fishing gear. I looked inside but what I saw bothered me enough that I didn't even go in. Call me a chicken. I just carried such an enormous alarm bell about doing bad stuff, a bell that rang 'serious punishment'. When I saw the vandalism, I knew I wasn't going to go inside. I stayed outside playing until things settled down inside which wasn't

very long. We wandered around some more and then returned to the camp.

Nothing was said about what was done and none of the adults asked. I wouldn't say that anyone was actually trying to cover up the event, rather, it was just sort of forgotten. We struck camp the next day and boarded Milo's boat to return to Seward. The event at the trapper's cabin was forgotten. For the present time. But the trapper didn't forget.

### Inquisition

Later that fall the trapper went to provision and prepare his cabin for the winter when he would set out his line of traps. When he got there, he was shocked. He had no idea that anything had happened to the cabin because it never had before. The damage and destruction outraged the man and he returned to Seward and talked about what he found. I don't know whether he had any knowledge at that time about Troop 620 spending a few days at the mouth of the river at Tonsina, but if he didn't know, it didn't take long to find out. One thing led to another and people talked. Finally, the trapper approached Mr. Phyles about the vandalism and told him that he suspected that the scouts had done it.

At that time, Mr. Phyles did not know anything bad had happened. Nothing had been said about it while we were on Tonsina, but he could tell from the trapper that the timing of the event raised the suspicion that the scouts had been involved. That of course was a violation of the scout law and civil law, and boys can stray. So Mr. Phyles told the trapper that he would go to the Scout Committee to discuss the trapper's experience and decide how to proceed with an investigation.

The Troop Committee met together, consisting of Mr. Phyles, dad, Don Lee, Mr. Aylen, Mr. Muller, and I believe Art Schaefermeyer. These men listened to the meager evidence, compared the chronology and with sinking stomachs decided that they better do an official investigation to see if the trapper's suspicions were justified. They decided that the most efficient and effective way to do this was to summon all of the troop who had been on the Tonsina Camp Out to an 'interview'.

We were all summoned out to the Rec Hall on the next Saturday and we were not given a choice. Law enforcement officers weren't required to round us all up but that's about how it felt to us, summoned to appear in the Rec Hall to meet with the Scout Committee. The Rec Hall was eminently suited for this sort of formal proceeding. The large booths on the south side of the hall were large enough to hold the entire committee. Imagine that this booth is filled with 6 adult men, none of whom are smiling, none of whom are angry, but all of whom are asking you, a 13 year old kid, pointed questions. This may even be the exact booth where they sat.



All of us boys were held at the far end of the hall in front of the large fireplace. We sat on the floor. Mr. Phyles announced to us what was going to happen. He said that the trapper, by name, had reported that his cabin on the river at Tonsina had been vandalized and that the trapper believed that us scouts had done the deed when we were camping there. Mr. Phyles then explained that it was important that the Troop Committee do a complete investigation to find the truth so that the wrong doers could be punished and so that the trapper's cabin could be restored. That sounded like Zeus speaking from on high. His voice didn't thunder, but it resonated inside my skull. Man alive, I didn't do anything, yet I had been there.

Kids were called up one at a time, and instructed to stand at the end of the table. He faced the six adult men arrayed three to a side. The men then interviewed the boy carefully. These men were not trained lawyers or investigators or interrogators, but they were decent men and they were worried that the boys they were responsible for had violated the trust placed in them and had committed vandalism. They knew what they had to do and how to do it. It was a solemn occasion for all of us. One of the men was secretary and took down each boy's name, and his answers to the questions that were asked. When the committee was through with the boy, he was dismissed and another boy was called.

I was nervous as a cat again. Some boys spent only a few minutes before the



committee and others spent what seemed like a long time. When I was called I walked nervously and stiffly up to stand at attention. My dad was there at the table but he didn't smile at me. He didn't say anything to me. I was alone before the awful inquisition. By the time I went up, the committee had its basic format down so they went quickly to the heart of the matter. They knew I had been at the camp-out because I was there on that day so they didn't need to confirm that.

They went straight to the issue:

Did you explore with other scouts up the river on the last day?

Did you see the trapper's cabin?

Did you see that it was broken into?

Did you see any kid break the door in?

Did you see what was done inside the cabin?

Who did those things inside the cabin?

Why didn't you tell an adult this had happened?

Did you help break the door down?

Did you commit vandalism inside the cabin?

Did you take any fishing lures?

Did you enter the cabin?

What were you doing while you were there?

Is that all you did?

Are you sure?

These sound like simple enough questions but they weren't, particularly those that reminded me that I did know that something wrong had been done, and I knew that I really should have told someone about it. Since I didn't, I was now part of the problem. So when they asked me what I was doing if I was hanging around, I had to tell them my sin. While kids were rummaging around inside the cabin, I was outside by the river playing with an old clothes wringer. It looked exactly like this one. The barrel was deteriorating and the white rubber wringers were crumbling along the ends. What I did that was so evil, that I hated to admit, was this: there was a bunch of head-high fire weed



growing along the river and I got the clever idea of pulling the stalks and running them through the wringer. It was an interesting exercise and made a purplish tint on the rollers.

When I had to admit that I did know something bad had been done, that I had not told anyone about it, and that I had vandalized the wringer, I was mortified. The men just looked at me as I spoke, while I stared at the floor or out the window or at the ceiling, avoiding their eyes. No one lectured me, no one criticized me. They didn't need to. The experience itself of standing before them was punishment. All they were doing was collecting facts from all of the boys so that they could find who the problems were and then advise the trapper. But it was punishment of a sort. After they had finished their questions and I had finished my answers they dismissed me. That is the correct word, "dismissed". There was a simple earnest military bearing to the investigating body. I returned to sit down and await the end of the inquisition, thinking that I was going to be punished by being thrown out of the troop which made me feel bad.

The committee finished its interviews and the boys were then sent home. Today I don't remember precisely what was done. I do know that the ringleaders were identified along with those who participated with them, and I do know that they were punished in some fashion. I was not punished which is probably why I've forgotten that part of the event. It was a sobering thing to stand before that body that felt to a kid like a court martial and to be questioned directly and personally about me, the kid who stood on the river bank and let it happen and didn't report it.

Justice became more than an abstract concept. It existed in that room that day, in the eyes of Mr. Phyles, my dad and the other committee members and I cherish that experience. These men were deadly earnest in their desire to find out what had happened. They were fair but there was no letting anyone off the hook. Nor was there a wish to somehow pin anything on anyone. They were simply seeing to find the truth. They were simple men with minimal educations but they had the wisdom that comes from a life of simplicity and fairness in their dealings with others some of who were con artists. Out of this ground came the ability to tell when someone is dissembling, the ability to ask reasonable questions that follow the line of a person's responses, and to ultimately discern what had happened. I wish the justice system today could have those attributes. In that event, Bill Clintons wouldn't exist.



## Gorsuch Pioneers

The Western Alaska Council of which Seward was part had managed to pull together the funds and cooperation to create an official boy scout camp out east of Anchorage. We had the good fortune of being one of the troops who signed up to go there the first year, 1955. In commemoration of this, we were given cloth patches saying "Gorsuch Pioneers" that we sewed over our council patches, as you see here. It was an honor.



The camp was so new that it hadn't even been completed. I don't know the size of the camp area but it was large. A few weeks before we arrived a headquarters building had been erected along with a trading post. They sat on a knoll above the swimming area. There was a road, more like a trail, that vehicles could navigate to get around. It had been created by a D-6 Cat "walking" in a long loop that must have been a mile or more long in its entirety. I walked most of it so know it was long. It looped around a small lake before it turned back to the point of origin.

Well before we left Seward for Gorsuch we were hearing stories about what it was like. All of them made the place sound glamorous. The camp was rough and wild and offered real wilderness camping opportunities for us eager kids. The distance from Seward added to the glamour of the place. As we were getting our gear loaded to head up to Gorsuch, we continued to get tidbits of news calculated to whet our appetite. The most exciting involved black bears in camp. We were told on good authority that two bears had actually been killed that week right there in camp, by men using axes! Amazing. Today I have to chuckle. I doubt that any man would risk attacking a bear with an axe. That would be sheer stupidity. But the fact was that bears did get into the camp and did raid people's food supplies that weren't properly protected.

## Teepees

This shows the five teepees that mom and dad made, set up in the field in front of the Jesse Lee Home. Dad laid the designs out on the canvas and allowed us scouts to paint them with latex paint.



When we set these teepees up on our campsite at Gorsuch they looked totally different.

One shows here on the right, sitting in brown birch trees that had to be cleared out so that we had enough space to set them up. The white tent on the left is in fact the Jesse Lee tent that was used to store our cooking utensils and supplies. They were spaced about this far apart so we had a large camp. I'm the kid in the front with



had on sideways. Right in style today.

## Cooking Detail

The cook stoves were set up in front of the tent which meant that we all went there to get grub three times a day. We were allowed to take our food to eat anywhere we wanted. This was a great place to camp because there was plenty of birch trees that had to be taken down. That was fun. Chopping trees indiscriminately was frowned on so this



gave us freedom. The other benefit of the plenitude of trees was the amount of raw material we had to use for lashing everything we could think of. How do you like the size of his frying pan hanging there?

Don Lee is standing there over the griddle that has been leveled to compensate for the hill we're sitting and you see the fancy framework we lashed over his cook area. We had a great time lashing that frame, was just in case there was rain at which time we'd put a large tarp over the frame to keep it out. We hung around while he cooked like a pro. Nothing fazed him. Like the size of the basin of pancake batter? We had all we could eat.



Marshall and I are sitting on a mound looking at some critter on the ground while we are eating out of our trusty aluminum mess kits. The road made by the D-6 Cat is just behind us. Notice the tripod to my right? It's holding a large round object that happens to be a heavy-duty canvas bag that is filled with water. The water was treated with halazone tablets to purify it which made it



taste like diluted Clorox which is precisely what it was, but at least it was safe to drink. We'd fill our canteens out of the spigot at the bottom. Dick is there on the left digging in the dirt with a stick.

### KP Detail

Of course, after we ate, we had the privilege of washing dishes. This troop was set up, thanks to Mr. Lee, to do the whole cooking and washing thing right. Mr. Aylen is standing over one of the barrels made to wash dishes. See the stove pipe coming out the near side of the barrel?



That's because it was two barrel halves welded together to create two compartments, one on the top for water and the one on the bottom for a fire. That way we boiled, literally boiled, our water and thereby were able to basically sterilize our pans and dishes. Diarrhea from grease and bacteria was a problem with some troops that didn't have this sophisticated arrangement. That's Billy Schaefermeyer standing to my right. I don't know who's got the diving mask on but I don't imagine it really helped. The kid



standing behind the steam was Beaver Nelson. He was an Indian kid who had been adopted by a family who lived out north of the San. He claimed that he was descended from an important chief and referred to himself as 'royalty'. He was a nice kid and quiet.

### Swimming & Canoeing

Gorsuch was constructed on the edge of a fair-sized lake that didn't have any houses on it. Indeed, the ride out to Gorsuch from Anchorage seemed to take an hour or two which was an ordeal, given the fact that we did it in the Jesse Lee bus, the same one we traveled in from Seward





to Anchorage. This water was cold, real cold. The ice had all melted, about a month before but the water never warmed up. We froze when we got in the water and since it was mandatory we all did it.

This was my introduction to the "buddy system". I imagine that the boy scouts still use this safety system when kids are on the water because it is simple, easily monitored and effective. It keeps kids from drowning. A plywood sheet was painted and set up with a bunch of cup hooks screwed in neat tidy rows and columns set off with lines both ways to make a grid. We were each given a round disc with our names on it, that hung from a small metal loop. These discs were stored in our troops section of the board. Whenever anyone went to the water for any activity in or on it, he absolutely had to take a buddy. The two kids would take their discs and hang them together on a single hook on the activity side of the board. That way the troop could tell which kids had checked out and which kids were together and where they were. So in a glance the scout master could keep track of his boys on the water. I was too afraid of the water to spend much time there, only when ordered did I get in and then only in the shallows.

Looking at the raft the boys are standing on, I conclude that army surplus pontoons were used. The military was everywhere and provided all kinds of things to us for all aspects of our lives.

All of the water-related merit badges were offered which included the life saving, rowing,

canoeing and swimming. Dad is out in a canoe with one of our kids. The setting was beautiful at the foot of large mountains that are behind the person who took this photo.

There was little rain while we were there so it was about as good as it could get.



We had a great time here, particularly since dad was there.

## Black Bear Scare

You ever been chased by a black bear? I mean for real, not in a dream? It's pretty scary and makes you run really fast. We'd been there in camp for several days and for some reason one night my little Eskimo shadow, Andy, and I decided to sneak out alone. That was forbidden but we did it anyway. Other kids had done it and I guess we wanted to try it just for the heck of it. Taps was played at 10:00 p.m. so we had been in bed for an hour or so, waiting until we figured the adults would be asleep. When we judged it safe to get up, we crept out of our sleeping bags with our shoes and quietly snuck out of the tent. Our idea was to just explore the rest of the Gorsuch Camp site. We had not been taken around the loop road and didn't know what was out there. We had been told that there was nothing on the far end but we wanted to look at it anyway as any reasonable kids do.

At that time of year, night is never really dark. We got our shoes on and then started to follow the road to the right which took us out to the uninhabited portion of the camp. The D-6 road was rough but passable. Trees squeezed close to the track because no one had cleared out any of the brush. We were having a great time just walking around the area looking and wondering. There really wasn't much to see but the freedom was wonderful. At one point after we were on the far side of the loop we heard the bushes rustle next to us. Remember, I was 14 years old. We figured there was just another kid who was out disobeying curfew like we were, so we called to him. No answer, we called again. No answer. so I walked over to the place where the branches had moved. I stepped out of the trail into the bushes and pushed the tree branches back.

There was a small black bear. Looking at me. He wasn't an adult I don't think and he wasn't a baby but it was small enough that as soon as we saw it we figured that momma bear was probably nearby. That was frightening, so we took off running. We headed back the way we had come trying to get as much distance between us and the bear as we could. I imagine today that the bear also took off in the other direction but that wasn't what we were thinking back then. We were frightened, not out of our wits, but we were frightened because we did think there might be a big bear around who might look unkindly on us being in the environs.

We got stitches in our sides and slowed down, stumbling and tripping on the rough track. We knew we still had a long ways to go, so we decided that we would cut across the road loop. We stepped off into the trees and bushes and headed in

what we figured was the direction of our camp. The ground got real rough not and we tripped even more but we were in a hurry. Suddenly we noticed that we were in a marsh. The ground was mucky and sticky. Straight ahead was a small lake. We had run into a lake we didn't know was there so, frustrated now, we turned to our left and headed sort of back to the road and around that end of the lake.

We finally made it back to the track and followed it to our campsite which looked good at this point. We took off our muddy shoes and crawled back into our teepee and into our sleeping bags. The adults never knew we did this because we never told anyone, including the other boys.

### Scout Jamboree

This was a highlight of the scout year because it involved head to head competition between the town troop and the Jesse Lee troop, the only time there was competition of this sort. This was held in the USO hall by the fire department on the main street. Mary Barry's photo shows it just as it was when we went there. The jamboree was about as big a deal for the community as it was for the troops because there was so little entertainment otherwise. Those doors opened and hundreds of people poured in to fill the bleachers in anticipation of the competition.



Second USO building (later Seward Civic Center)

Each troop had been preparing for this day for months. Strategy was developed in each troop by the scoutmaster. Patrols or boys were assigned certain skills to refine so that they could do them faster and more accurately than the corresponding team from the other troop. Our patrol was assigned some first aid skills. I liked first aid and found it exciting to think I would be able to show my skill. We practised the skill earnestly at troop meeting or at Marshall's house. I learned how to stop bleeding with a tourniquet, how to make splints out of magazines or sticks and socks, how to treat shock, etc. Everything in the Scout

Manual I learned perfectly and could apply a splint as fast as anyone.

On the appointed night we all appeared in full uniform at the USO and took our assigned spots down in front of the bleachers. I had butterflies in my stomach and my mouth was dry because public performances always made me nervous, even if I thought I was prepared for the thing I had to do. The rules were simple. There was a master of ceremonies who introduced the troops and explained to the public what he was going to do. He had a set of 10 or so tests that both troops had to take. These tests were written on 3 x 5 cards and sealed in envelopes. They were identical. The MC announced that he was ready for the first test so each troop sent its representatives out to their place. The places were side by side with the MC between them, on the floor right in front of the bleachers where the public was sitting.

The rest of each troop sat in the stands and cheered loudly for their team. Kids are always full of advice and insight so the teams were subjected to an enormous amount of suggestions that probably confused them more than they helped them. The tests were graded on two elements: speed and accuracy. As the first team finished its task, it stood up and dusted its hands while the troop cheered loudly and the public clapped. A timekeeper kept track of the time of each team. After the second team finished, a pair of officials walked up to each product and evaluated them. They read the assignments out loud so the public would know what had been done, and then examined the work. They assigned some sort of score after which the MC would announce that the next test was to take place. The same sequence of sweat and anxiety and cheering took place, followed by scoring. Finally it was our turn. I was a nervous wreck.

We got up off the bleachers and walked down to the floor to our assigned location. There was a pile of first aid supplies, knives, axes, wood, sheets, etc., all of the things that the teams could use in whatever manner they thought they should to complete their assigned tasks. After our two teams stood there, sort of nervously checking out the other team, the MC handed our leaders the unopened envelopes. He reminded us to not do anything until he had yelled, "Ready, set, GO!" After he gave the command to go, we did.

Marshall tore the envelope open with shaking hands while the public was murmuring quietly. He read the assignment to us so we could all know what we were to do. At this point the troops started yelling encouragement which only unnerved us, making us more nervous. What we had was an accident victim with a multitude of injuries and our assignment was to discover and treat all of them. I don't

remember whether we had to provide our own victim or whether one was handed to us. In any event, we ended up with a body lying on the floor, dying.

The poor soul had suffered a blunt injury to his head that was bleeding badly. He was in shock. He had broken two fingers on his right hand. He had broken his left femur. And he had mosquito bites or some such little stuff. Marshall, being an in-charge kind of leader, gave us our orders. Dick and I were assigned to splint the fractured femur. That was great. We loved doing that and did it really well. We went to the pile of stuff and pulled out the long sticks that were there and dug out some pieces of rope. We knelt down across from each other and spread the kid's legs a bit so we could put a stick between his legs. We pulled off our neckerchiefs, a heroic thing to do, and oh so gently slid them under the fractured femur. We stretched the neckerchiefs out to give us room to maneuver. We set the other stick on the other side of the leg, slid a few pieces of rope under the leg and then wrapped the fracture part of leg in a small blanket. By now everyone in the place was yelling so loudly I don't think I could have heard Dick if he had tried to speak to me. I wasn't quite sure why they were yelling, whether it was encouragement or criticism. We gingerly moved the sticks closer to the leg, and began to pull the neckerchiefs and ropes tighter. We decided we could tie the ends so did that and finally had the leg immobilized at about the same time the head would, broken fingers and mosquito bites were treated.

The final task was to build a make-shift litter, load the boy and haul him to a particular place in the hall. We feverishly built the litter out of long poles with a sheet. This neat device was made by simply folding the sheet over on itself around the sticks, leaving enough room between them to hold the body. We then did a special lift and carry technique to safely raise the body and move it over onto the litter. As a group we hoisted the litter and headed as quickly as we could to the designated finish line. At that point, we laid the litter on the floor to loud cheering. We had finished first and stood proudly, sort of dusting off our knuckles, looking at them modestly for slivers, wanting to spit nonchalantly on the floor. The other team followed in more than a few seconds.

The cheering died down when the officials came over to grade our performance. Our patrol was confident that we would win because we knew our skills so well, and because we finished well ahead of the other team. The officials started at the head, checking to see that the right kind of bandage had been applied to stop the bleeding, and checking to be sure that no tourniquet had been used. They worked their way down the body to the fractured femur. I held my

breath but was proud because I could see that our job was neater and tighter than that of the city troop. The officials made me nervous, however, because after looking at our victim, they took out the assignment card again, and read, looking for something in particular.

We were heartbroken. The assignment card said that the fractured femur was on the left side. We had carefully splinted the right femur. Our patrol lost that contest, although our troop fortunately won the overall competition. But I will never forget the embarrassment I felt at letting my team down by failing to read the assignment carefully.

### Flint, Steel & Tinder

The idea really appealed to me to learn how to make fires using a piece of flint and a piece of steel. That's how the pioneers had made their fires in the settling of the west and there was romance associated with the idea. So when I was assigned to learn how to make fires that way as part of a merit badge or rank advancement, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I bought a kit from the boy scouts that had everything I needed. This was perhaps the first of the BSA "kits" I purchased and it seemed particularly special because it was BSA. The kit included a large chunk of flint, a flat metal bar about 6 inches long and an inch wide, some outing flannel to convert into tinder and a wad of excelsior. The flint had come from a chalk bed so it had bits of white chalk all over the outside. It was from a largish chunk that had been broken in half so there were sharp edges to work on with the steel bar. The fundamental issue was striking the sharp flint edge a glancing blow with the steel bar to create sparks.



To convert the flannel into tinder we put it in a tin can and placed it in the oven and heated it to a high temperature for some time. That changed the flannel from soft fabric into breakable layers of carbon that held together well enough to be handled.

The process is not a simple one in practice though the idea is. You prepare a bed of the excelsior, tear off a small piece of tinder and set it in the bed of excelsior, then you strike sparks off the flint with the steel so that the sparks land in the tinder. When the tinder starts to glow where a hot spark landed, you

grab the bed of excelsior keeping the tinder in the middle, hold it close to your mouth, blow as hard and fast as you can to heat up the tinder which will then start strands of excelsior to burn, then you roll the excelsior into a ball so that the tiny flame is in the center, then you lay it on the ground, and immediately begin laying tiny dry sticks across the excelsior and continuing adding larger and larger sticks until you have a real fire.

I loved doing this exercise and became proficient at it. We had competitions in troop meetings and I don't recall whether I won or not, but I know that I could get the excelsior ignited and start a tiny fire in less than 10 seconds. That was great fun and very satisfying. It was comforting when I was outdoors somewhere to know that I had the makings of a fire if I needed it. The key to success was to keep things dry. Once you had learned how to hold the flint and strike it with the steel to create large sparks that would effectively start the tinder to smolder, you were set IF you had dry tinder, excelsior and dry kindling. We carried our tinder and excelsior in Band-Aid cans. The flint and steel needed to be dry as well but it was less critical.

### Winter Camp Out Mile 5

**A**round the winter of 1955, our troop decided it would do a winter camp out along about February. Get it? "February"? That's the coldest month with the most snow and we were going to go outdoors and sleep. On purpose. Was there something wrong with us? Not really, but it was an intimidating thing to think about. We knew how cold it was and expected that the nights would be pretty miserable. We were right. It was horrible. Here's what happened.

We spent weeks planning for this event like we always did. But this was a more serious outing. Spending a couple of nights out in the deep snow and cold cold was actually dangerous so we were careful when we thought about what needed to be done, what we had to take and so on. We decided that we would take the teepees as out tents which solved that problem. Then we had to be sure we had sleeping bags that were warm enough for a long cold nights.

I had a GI surplus mummy bag exactly like this one made for the arctic. It was filled with down and had a



canvas cover so it was durable, light, and warm. It had a small opening at the top on the front that you looked out of, so when you turned during the night, you had to turn the bag with you or else your head was buried inside. But it was warm. That was the best thing about it.

Of course, a key to keeping warm out there was to keep dry. The worst thing we could do was to get wet. Cold conducts heat away from your body quickly, and in the cold weather your clothes wouldn't dry off like they will in warm weather. Keep dry. That was one of the primary considerations. When we played in the snow we kept snow out of our clothes and out of our boots.

The day finally came to make the trip so several dads appeared with pickups to load up the teepees, poles, and gear for us kids. We then drove over the ice and snow out to Mile 5. That's where Billy S. lived. We went past his place about 200 yards to a clearing on the west side of the road, next to the bridge over Bear River. The clearing was the remnant of the original road that had been built out there. The road we used was the "new" road.

We situated our five teepees around the space and set them up. We scraped and shoveled snow out of the inside and put down ground clothes which were tarps. Some kids took axes and went to cut down pine boughs to put under their sleeping bags instead of tarps. I tried that one night and discovered that while the idea sounds real good, the reality is not, unless you made sure to use only the smallest terminal branches that had no thick branches. I didn't do that, however. That's why I know about it.

We built a large campfire and found some logs to roll up and sit on to get warm. Mr. Lee had his cooking gear there which was a godsend because the food he prepared was superior to what we would have cooked for ourselves over camp fires. He made hot chocolate which was a treat out there in the cold. I think he also brought chili to warm up because that was one of the preferred foods to eat in the winter for some reason.

Bear River was frozen over with enough ice that we could walk on it safely. It was particularly fun because we found a side stream that wound through a bunch of trees that had protected the ice from the snow. There was skiff of snow lying on the ice but it hadn't congealed because it was too cold for it to melt, so we could push it aside and see ice like glass. It was a curious feeling to stand over a stream on what appeared to be a piece of glass because we were afraid it would crack and drop us into the water. At one point as we explored this ice, we heard a deep 'crack' that meant that the ice was changing shape at least and at worst was



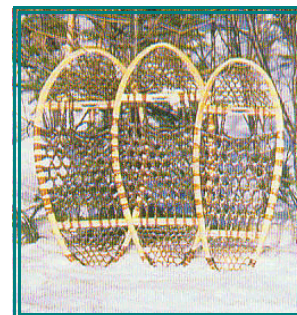
actually breaking. It didn't take us kids long to get off that part of the ice. We returned to the thicker ice where we hadn't heard those unnerving cracks.

We had been trained about walking on ice. If it started to break in earnest, the first thing we were to do was lie down on the ice, which sounds sort of funny, but the point is to distribute your weight over the length of your body on the ice instead on two points represented by your feet. We had also been trained in rescuing someone who had fallen through the ice. The idea again is to distribute your weight over the ice by lying down and to extend something long and strong to the victim who was to take hold of it and use it to pull himself out of the ice at which point he was to stay flat and work his way to the bank. The idea of falling through the ice was terrifying. I was deathly afraid of water and the fear was compounded by the idea of falling through the ice into the water and then being carried a distance so that when I came back up I would be under the ice and couldn't get out. The idea terrified me, so when I heard 'crack' I was off the weak ice about as fast as I could go.

We took snow shoes so spent some time exploring the area that way. There really was no alternative because the snow was too deep and soft to walk on. It was a novel idea to walk on top of the snow, particularly in a location where the snow was up to the top of bushes was walked between during the summer. This image shows several styles of snow shoes. The best kind for the deep fluffy snow was the one that has turned up tips. It was called a "Yukon" snowshoe and was used to break trail because the tips stayed above the snow, making it less strenuous to break trail, at least when compared to what happens when you break trail with a flat snowshoe.

The other fun kind of snowshoe was the Bear Paw. These have a totally different purpose. They are designed to be used in country where you are walking through brush that would catch the tips of the Yukon shoes. They were also easier to run in so we competed with each other to see who could run faster in both kinds of shoes.

One time while we were exploring the clear ice under the trees, we knelt down to look carefully at the bottom. The water was only a few feet deep there and the water was as clear as the ice so we could see everything. We saw the



vegetation but not much else until one kid hollered, "I found a salmon." We all hurried over, not sure whether he was pulling our leg or not. He wasn't. There was a dead salmon trapped between a couple of rocks. It was still bright red and hadn't decayed, due I suppose, to the coldness of the water. I don't know why other salmon bodies hadn't survived but I didn't wonder about it either at the time. It was like a jewel lying there in the darkness, almost shining with red.

The nights -two of them- were pretty awful. The first night I tried sleeping on pine boughs and discovered that was a dumb idea, at least with the boughs I had picked. The second night I slept on a tarp to keep my bag from getting wet in the snow. Even an insulated bag like my mummy bag would still generate heat on the bottom side and would melt snow which would be absorbed into the bag which would make me wet and miserable. So I kept something between me and the snow.

We got into our sleeping bags with all of our clothes, except for our boots which we took off first. We stood on our bags while we took them off and set them by our heads, and then we climbed into the bags. Some kids were stupid enough to climb in wearing their boots which was a mistake because they ripped the bags in some instances. We lay with our coats on for a while to allow our bags to warm up -as much as they would. We took off our socks, which were moist now from perspiration if not snow, and lay them close to our bodies so they would be more likely to dry during the night than they would on our feet at the bottom of the bag. They didn't actually dry, however, rather they just made cold spots by me. All of us took our coats and gloves off but most of us kept our clothing on, in the hope that it would help keep us warm. I expect it did, but by the morning, I was cold and miserable, with two damp socks that I had to put on after which I climbed into ice cold boots. Man alive, why did I ever want to do this?

No one was really warm except for the adults and I never understood what they did to keep warm. I think Art Schaefermeyer went back home? We stood around the cook stove while Mr. Lee made breakfast, wishing we could get warm, but we couldn't. We realized that this was just the first night and dreaded having to do it again. True enough, the second night was worse and by this time some kids really had wet clothing so the leaders had to do something to get them into dry clothes or they would have been frost bitten. Really. It was cold and I was so glad when we struck camp and loaded up to go back into town. I never wanted to do a winter camp out again.

## Cedar Totem Poles

We carved two totem poles out of good sized cedar logs. Dad was in charge of this project, of course, and in this instance worked to our advantage. We got to go out with him to the shop at the Jesse Lee Home where the logs were laid out to be worked on. The impetus to do these totem poles was to build something to mark the entry way to the scout camp out west of Anchorage named "Camp Gorsuch". Our troop decided that it would make two totem poles, a reasonable thing to do since most of the kids were native Alaskans.

Dad dug up the cedar logs from his friends in town who probably donated them for the project. These logs had aged so were not going to check after we had finished carving them. They were about 2 feet in diameter and about 8 feet long, long enough to be set into the ground and leave a nice head-high totem. Dad researched the patterns in Haida, Tlingket and Tsimshian art and chose several that he liked, including a frog on the base. After the logs had been prepared, he laid the designs out with a soft lead pencil and we set to work with mallets, chisels and files. As we worked, the totem began to take shape and looked like this, though not quite as large.

The best part of carving totems in my estimation was the scent. Cedar is one of the loveliest smells in this world and I'm not sure what its appeal is. It's probably because I grew up in Naples and Vernal where all my relatives oohed and ahehd over cedar and juniper woods' smell. It really is lovely. To stand at a cedar log with a file making aromatic saw dust was wonderful. Cedar wood is soft and easy to carve. With a sharp chisel it cuts easily. Minimal energy is required to carve so it isn't hard work.

Half a dozen of the older boys worked on the project for a few hours one a night other than troop meeting. It was winter so we kept the door to the workshop shut. One evening one of the older kids who I got along with well whispered to me, "How about a fresh apple?" Remember this is Seward where fresh fruit was a delicacy. I don't suppose I ate a dozen fresh apples in a year so his offer of a fresh apple was irresistible. He said to follow him and to not say anything. That was my clue that we were about to do something else wrong. Oh well, a fresh apple is worth a risk I guessed so we went outside like we were going



Figure 21

<http://georgestorry.com/artist.htm>

back to the dormitory.

Except that this kid took me out back along one of the buildings to a cooler where he opened the door. I think he had some sort of a key, like he was a privileged upper classmen who had authority that the little kids didn't. He took me inside and found the apples. They were packaged in large crates and smelled wonderful. This was a smell I didn't encounter anywhere except Warner's Market. He pried open one of the crates and the apples were individually wrapped in a heavy tissue paper. He took two out and handed one to me. We unwrapped them and they were golden delicious apples. We threw the paper aside and started eating. They were cold and crisp and juice ran down my chin. We finished the apples and returned to the workshop.

### Vernal Expedition Summer 1953

Mom and dad had a remarkable capacity to make big decisions on what appeared to us kids to be short notice. And to see them through. The expedition from Seward to Vernal and back again in 1953 was a memorable one. One day they said to each other, "I think it's time to take a trip to Utah. "Let's go, oh say day after tomorrow." We did. As I sit here today writing this I chuckle because you kids will hardly believe what it was like. How can you, kids who have scarcely driven on dirt roads, who have never had to deal with inner tubes or actually remove tires and repair holes in inner tubes, replace the inner tubes into the tires, and re-inflate them? That trip is actually the greatest pioneering-type trip we ever took as a family - next to the Yukon adventure we took in 3 more years. Traveling something like 3,500 miles each way, just the four of us in the car, hauling everything we would need for the 6-7 day trip, on "roads" that had no habitations for 60 miles in some locations. An extraordinary trip.

The "AlCan [Alaska-Canada] Highway" of 1953 was a rugged stretch of road that scarcely deserved the title. We drove "out" two times actually, the other being when we finally exited Alaska in 1956. This scarcely-graded road deserved the title "highway" because it did in fact connect Alaska to the "Lower 48" through Canada -but for no other reason. It wandered from the Alaskan border through the Canadian provinces of Yukon Territory, Alberta and British Columbia, enormous territories each.

The road bed had been graded by military corps of engineers in the 1940's for transporting heavy equipment should that ever be necessary. But the road had not been upgraded from that rugged condition. Some stretches of road were covered with baseball sized "gravel" which quickly damaged regular car tires. In addition to the lack of funding and lack of reason to upgrade the road, the terrain itself contributed to its terrible condition.

Tundra is a flat uninteresting type of terrain that is boring to drive through. But it presented some challenges for road builders because some of it was boggy. In the winter that was not problem but in the summer it was. Road building in bogs is nearly impossible and there was one stretch of road that was surfaced with a corduroy of small logs, such as was done in the frontier days of the continental US. The resulting ride about jarred your teeth out of your head. But this type of road wasn't what destroyed tires.

The road was known to be a tire-killer, and this meant that any sane person - who obviously wouldn't even undertake the enterprise in the first place- prepared for the worst because it always happened. One day in the early summer, dad sort of announced to Mom and she agreed that we were going 'stateside' in 2 days. He had "pulled his plug" on the union board thereby telling the dispatcher that he was not available to work - until he put his plug back. In anticipation of the horrendous road conditions, Dad put a new set of tires and tubes on the car, a brown and tan 1953 Chevrolet, put a rack on the top and filled it with another set of four tires, inner tubes and boots along with a tire pump and tools to repair inner tubes.

Flat tires happened regularly along the way which delayed the trip but afforded us kids a chance to stretch our legs and explore wherever we happened to be. After receiving the standard injunction, "Now don't you boys wander too far." Dad jacked the car up and removed the tire. Then the tough part was removing the inner tube. You've probably seen flats repaired in tire shops? With powerful machines that pop and hiss. Well, dad didn't have one of those so he had to use tire irons made for the job and brute strength to get at the tube and to replace it after it was repaired.

The neatest part of the process was putting the patch over the hole. In those days patches for car tires came attached to the flat outside surface of shallow metal cup-like devices that were filled with hard fibrous material. After one scuffed the area around the hole on the inner tube, one of these metal cup things was centered over the hole and a special clamp that was made for this specific job was applied to squeeze the patch together with the tube. Then the

interesting part. The fibrous material was scratched with a knife to raise a few fibers which were set on fire with a match. The whole thing was left on the ground as long it took for this smouldering smoky process to finish, the purpose of the heat being to seal the rubber patch and tube enough that they would bond together. Then the clamp was removed when dad allowed as how the thing had probably cooled off enough to check it. In that instant of truth time was suspended, you didn't dare breath, as you watched him gingerly pull the metal cup off the patch. To see if the patch had bonded to the tube. If it had, then joy of joys and jubilation. But if not, we would creep silently away to poke at something and become inconspicuous, knowing that the last thing we wanted to do at that instant was offer a target.

When dad noted that a tire had been badly bruised from hitting large rocks, he would install 'boots' during the flat-repairing process. These are sort of like insoles you put in shoes, except they are much larger and are made out of thick layers of rubber. Their purpose was to strengthen the tire and to protect the inner tube. By the time we had finished the trip dad had discarded several tires because they were beyond repair.

The trip took 5-6 days each way. That meant making camp that many times.

As long as there was no rain that meant nothing more than rolling sleeping bags out on the ground for three of us. Under the stars which in an unpolluted environment were just astonishing. Mom slept in the car. Mom cooked on a green Coleman stove that is still in her basement in Provo using aluminum cookware made for the job. I still have that set of nesting pans somewhere around here. She used the trunk to set up the Coleman



stove and the top of a suitcase as her table as in this photo. Dick's rolling up his sleeping bag. We'd just stop anywhere to camp. There were few vehicles so we weren't troubled by traffic. I don't think any vehicles went past during the night and few during the day outside of the small communities that were scattered along the road.

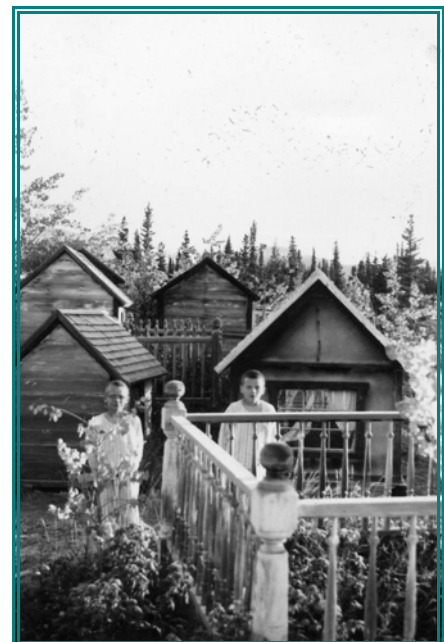
On the way out we stopped by the Matanuska Glacier and got several photos. See the road? Unpaved and we were not far from Anchorage. Identical shirts as usual. Dee and I saw the glacier in 2003 and it was still about this size which is interesting because the Portage Glacier had retreated an astonishing amount as had the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Glacier across the bay from Seward.



The way we traveled was to just drive and drive. There was nothing to see for a thousand miles and no places to stop at so getting as many miles behind us as we could each day was the primary objective. That meant us kids had to sit still for hours and hours. Dad would drive late in the evenings which were extended in the summer. For those parts of the ride, we laid sleeping bags and quilts on the floor of the car behind the front seat. That made a level bed so that both of us could lay down and sleep - or squabble half the time which always got us in trouble, but it was so boring on those long rides.

### Indian Burial Ground

Somewhere in the Yukon Territory dad saw a burial ground with curious houses built over the graves. He stopped the car, roused us out and had us stand amongst the little houses for a picture. In our pajamas. These were perfectly constructed houses with curtains, small tables and chairs, windows, all of the elements of a home. There was no settlement or habitation around so there was no way to get information about this place so we don't know what tribe this represented. It was obviously a burial custom that



was a combination of Christian and Indian beliefs. These houses were recently constructed as you can see in these photos. The wood was sound and carefully put together.

Notice the trees in the background of the top photo. Those are swamp spruce or scrub spruce. They are full grown and represent the kind of trees that survived the terrible cold and conditions of this region. Short, scruffy looking trees. They were replaced by 'real' pine trees as we moved south in Alberta.

### Raymond, Alberta

Mom's sister  
Bessie

lived in Raymond. Her husband, Melbie Libbert, was the supervisor/foreman for the Black Ranch that the LDS church owned in Raymond, an enormous ranch that was the second largest in North America behind the King Ranch in Texas. We spent several days at their home, and naturally went out to the ranch. It was huge. Melbie is the man on the left here.

His kids our age went out to the ranch to play and we all got to ride a horse named "Cannonball". I was familiar with horses so wasn't afraid though it had been a long time since I'd been on one. We spent





hours wandering around the place, into barns, stables and whatever other buildings were there. I don't remember the circumstances or details but have a clear memory of a remarkable ceremony that us kids engaged in out in one of the corrals. We apparently were swearing a commitment to each other and acknowledging our fealty to family. At least that's what I imagine we were going. We had decided to take a blood oath, so we each found a scab from a mosquito bite, picked the scab off, and then rubbed our blood into each others blood. That was a satisfactory thing to do with cousins who liked each other.

### Idaho Falls Temple

It's interesting that I have no memory of going to Idaho Falls except for the flat expanse of rapids in a river. But the photos prove that we passed through. It was only a side trip made on the way from Montana down to Utah. This little excursion fit into a long time plan that dad and mom had. From early on I remember that they talked about visiting all of the LDS temples after they retired. At the time there were something like 14. However, as the Swiss Temple appeared, the New Zealand Temple and then temples all over the place, that little plan sort of went the way of the world. I never heard them talk about it in their later years, but in 1953 it was still feasible.



### Conrad & Viola's Place

On our way to Naples, we stopped in Salt Lake City for most of a week. We stayed with Aunt Viola, dad's sister. She and Conrad had 3 kids and a place up on the bench near the University of Utah.

We slept on the floor in sleeping bags and I don't know nor did I care where mom and dad slept. I tended to me. Conrad was always a kick, making jokes and laughing. I don't really remember him being angry or sad though I expect he had his share of sadness. He had a fake leg. He worked for the railroad and one night while cars were being shunted around in the yard, he was at the back of the train. He signaled with his lantern to the engineer to start and at some jumped up onto the ladder affair to get into the car but for some reason he missed his step and fell under the train which rolled over and cut off his leg. He hobbled around but didn't pay any attention otherwise.

### Samuel's Family Reunion



While we were there grandpa Jensen and his other children came for a family reunion. These are the five surviving children. Ivan died in childhood but the other five are here in adulthood. Viola is on dad's right and Wanda is on his left. Ruth is kneeling on grandpa's right and Doris is on his left. Notice the sad look on grandpa's face. He is smiling but is sad inside. His wife Dorothy had been dead for about 16 years so he lived alone in Leamington and came up for the occasion. Neither Wanda or Viola had good health. Wanda died first and Viola lasted for another ~20 years. I saw her many times when I lived in SLC in the 1960's.

While this reunion was going on, family group photos were taken. Here's the entire clan at that point:



From the left in the back: Conrad, I don't know who, dad, mom, Ruth, John Mayfield (Doris' husband), Wanda. Second row from left: Viola, ??, grandpa, Dick, Joe Zezukla (Wanda's). On Viola's lap is Raymond and Connie sits in front of her. I'm kneeling between grandpa and Doris. I don't know the other grandkids' names or relationships. I remember the little kid sitting in grandpa's lap, a wild little kid

with hair standing on end.

Our family group looked like this. I like dad's expression. I can't tell if he's smiling, or what he's thinking. Mom has a bright smile, but dad is thoughtful. It's a good representation of how he looked when he was thinking about something and not quite in the present.

Notice the inevitable sameness in the boys. This shows you just how particular mom was down to the last details, the same jacket,

shirt, belt, and slacks. She was a parsimonious soul so usually bought our clothes a size or two too large to give us room to grow in. Her own dress is one she doubtless made. Even into her later years she made more of her own dresses than



she bought. The only things she always bought were her sweaters.

### Merrell Family Reunion

We spent weeks and weeks with grandpa and grandma Merrell in Naples and loved it. I didn't want the summer to end. There was so much sunshine and cousins and farms and things to do. We met at least one time with as many relatives as could come, which was a lot, not surprising since most of them actually lived on the



road there on the left of this photo. I'll give you a few landmarks in this photo: Ross is on the left back row with his wife Nelma in front of him and his two sons (Dale and Norman) to his left. Carl is next to Nelma and his wife Leah is to his right, barely visible in front of dad. Harold stands next to dad with his wife Marie in front of him. Another favorite uncle is Ted to dad's left, Mable's husband. Leo is to Ted's left and his wife Laree stands in front of him. Pearl stands to Laree's left and Ray is next to Pearl. Behind Ray is Delroy and Mable. You see mom on the

left half, Margarita is pregnant as usual and Boyd sits in the middle of kids with Grant on the right end holding Mable's Brent. I'm on the left end in a white shirt, Denny (Leo's kid) behind me with Tommy behind him and Dick to his left. Marion is kneeling behind me, the same one who lived with us a couple years earlier when we lived in Vernal. Grandpa and grandma are obviously seated in the center. I can't name any more of the adults and only a few of the kids.

Notice the little shabby house in the background. It was 3 rooms and didn't have a bathroom but Grant lived in the fine house while his parents lived out there. I didn't understand that since grandpa owned the whole thing. Seemed more reasonable for the kid to be out in the shack but it didn't happen that way.

That summer was filled with memories spawned of the relatives and all of the things we got to do. The lawn where the family photo was taken is the one we slept on in quilts and across the road was a wide canal where we'd go fish often after digging worms out behind the house.

### Eggs and Chickens

**H**ave you ever tried to get a hen to let you take the eggs she laid last night? Grandma sent us out to the henhouse in the morning to collect eggs for her. Which was OK if there was no chicken in the box. You'd just pick up the eggs out of the straw and go to the next box. But sometimes there was a chicken sitting in the box. That was pretty protective of her work product. It took a lot out of her. You would reach carefully under her to find any eggs she had and take them. But some of these chickens, what Grandma called "brood hens" bitterly resented it. They would strike at you so fast and so hard when you start to reach under them that you will have a painful bleeding hole in your hand before you even realizes what happened. You quickly learned which were brood hens. So we avoided those particular hens and told Grandma that we couldn't check all the boxes. Grandma would go out and forcibly shoo the birds out of their boxes so she could get their eggs. She had learned the technique years before and talked to the chickens as she moved them out of the nesting boxes. Chickens are stupid so this trick of sort of grabbing and shooing them at the same time always worked. Problem is that little kids apparently don't have the authority necessary to make it work.

Grandma sold some of the eggs and others she turned into custard. One of my favorite dishes. Made with a little nutmeg sprinkled on the top. We felt like

we had actually contributed to the enterprise by collecting the eggs that we ceremoniously carried in and handed to grandma. An important learning for a kid to have.

The banty roosters were the most irritating of the chickens. They strutted around as if they were 5 feet tall and challenged anyone they didn't know. Regardless of their size. When we stepped into the henhouse, if one of them was there, he would charge us and peck hard and fast at our legs. This persuaded us to clear our until grandma could take care of them. It seemed unfair to me that an adult could handle these little birds with such success.

### Slaughtering and Plucking Chickens

**A**mong the chores that farm kids have to deal with are those dealing with creatures on the farm that are intended for human consumption. Have you ever slaughtered a chicken? And gutted it? And plucked it's feathers? And then singed it with a burning newspaper to take off the fine fuzz they are covered with?

My uncle grant was my favorite uncle and he was a stinker. When we went from Alaska to Vernal for the 1953 summer, many cousins my age visited us at Grant's house where we stayed. One day he took all of us 10-12 year old kids out into the corral to slaughter a bunch of chickens. He and another uncle grabbed about 2 dozen of the smelly things and then. One uncle held the chicken's head and body over a cutting block and grant whacked it off with an axe at which time the first uncle just let go of the chicken. It flopped about far longer than you can imagine. Jumping and bleeding and flapping. Minute or more perhaps. Amazingly long. Well, these two uncles chopped all of the heads off the other chickens as fast as they could because the result was 2 dozen headless chickens running and flapping their wings in the corral where a bunch of little kids were also running - and you'd swear as a little kid that the chickens could see you! It didn't matter what direction you ran to get away from them, they followed you. Flapping and jumping and bleeding. While Grant and Ross roared at us dumb kids running from headless chickens that really did look like they were chasing us.

But us kids got "pay back." Turns out that Grant had no allegiance to anyone. So he told us kids what to do to gross out Ross. Pick up from the chicken guts a couple of the eggs that were formed but which didn't have the calcium carbonate shell yet. Soft shelled eggs. Take them and show Ross. At which time he would



start to retch. He did. Pretty gross sounding stuff, but that was life on a farm. Cutting off lamb tails and castrating pigs, etc. All part of being on a farm.

### Greenriver Ranch

The ranch was south of Naples what seemed like 15 or 20 miles. I was surprised to discover years ago how close it actually was as the crow flies. The Greenriver is a murky greenish, grayish color, not suited for trout. It has carved deep gorges and canyons over the eons. Uncle Grant worked for the Hatch Brothers running the Green River and Ladore for pay. The ranch was in a sort of bowl stretched along the river, at the bottom of sandstone cliffs and mountains, dry and barren except for the irrigation. The water was pumped out of the river through a powerful electric pump and distributed across the ranch through large pipes. Grant raised sheep now and again and alfalfa and lucerne.

### Peeling and cooking cottontail rabbits

We were allowed to use Grant's single shot .22 rifle to hunt rabbits. Cottontails abounded so it was fairly easy to get one. They're odd creatures because then don't understand the noise of a gun so if the bullet doesn't hit them, they just sit still hoping it will go away. That's not wise, however, so you have a second or third chance.

The process of skinning and gutting these rabbits was simple and crude. Take the rabbit in one hand by the hind legs and lay its head on the ground, step hard on the head and pull. The head pops off. Then you swing the rabbit in a complete circle once to warm up and on the second time you accelerate the swing and just as its coming down swing real hard and then stop as it comes back up. The guts shoot out the neck hole. Then you take the body in both hands, split the skin over the belly and peel it back like a banana. That easy.

We went to the ranch house to cook one we'd shot and cleaned this way. Grant was out somewhere on a tractor so we had the run of the old log cabin that was chinked with white clay. The coal stove was already hot so we just added some more coal and stirred the fire to make it really how. Then we butchered the rabbit into quarters to fit it into the cast iron skillet. We used shortening like we'd

seen mom do and dredged the rabbit pieces in flour, getting it all over the table, though we didn't really know why. That's just how it was done. We dropped the dusty pieces in the hot fat and watched it a bit. Nothing much happened so we went to play in the front room while cooking took place. The inevitable thing happened. We forgot. We eventually smelled the smoke from the burned rabbit and tried to rescue it but it was too late. However, we did our valiant best to eat at least the top part that wasn't burned too badly. We threw most of it away.

### Rattle snake on the Porch

A snake in the porch where you didn't expect to see it, gets your attention real fast. Particularly when it is a rattler. That is coiled and rattles as soon as it sees you. The only question is how to kill it without being bitten. Alone in the log cabin, Grant the adults gone until they returns at noon for lunch which is several hours away.

I think Dick is the one who found the snake. We were in the kitchen trying to cook rabbit on the wood stove and he opened the door to the back room which we thought was empty. He saw the snake and yelled so I went over to see what it was. A rattle snake. Which was scary. They weren't supposed to be in the house and we didn't know what to do with it. Obviously we could have closed the door and hoped it would stay there or go away but we would still have been afraid that it would get into the house where we were. So we decided to kill it. Which is pretty amazing for a couple of kids who were 10 and 11 and alone.

We hunted for something to hit it with that was long enough that we could reach it, but it couldn't reach us when it struck. Turns out that a house doesn't have too many things of that size and shape. What we did find was a long handled metal scraper designed to pull ashes and clinkers out of the ash box below the fire box of a stove. The long handle was a thin steel rod and a thin metal plate was welded across the end of the rod. We recognized it as a scraper that was used to pull ashes out of a stove so I don't know why it had such a long handle but it did the job. One of us fearfully stepped toward the snake, which elicited the threatening dry rattle and caused it to spread its jaws and reach toward us. Swinging the



Figure 33

[http://www.americansouthwest.net/slot\\_canyons/white\\_canyon/rattlesnake\\_1.html](http://www.americansouthwest.net/slot_canyons/white_canyon/rattlesnake_1.html)

scraper high in the air, he swung it as hard as he could and hit the snake. That angered it but also broke its back so it uncoiled and started uncertainly toward us across the floor. Now the hitting started in earnest. Whacks and yells filled the air. We each had something to deal with the fearsome beast. When it was over, the snake looked like a bag of mush. But it actually wasn't very big, probably 14 or 15 inches. The first time we saw it, it was about a yard long. In reality, I doubt it was a rattle snake. But it made a great story.

### Burning cottonwoods

Chasing mice into fires is probably not an activity that is encouraged by your local N.S.P.C.A. -or whatever it's called- but it was fun for us that summer. Grant actually paid us kids to help him clear part of his ranch. Really. The western-most part of his land right on the Greenriver was covered with old cottonwood trees and he wanted them burned down so that he could pull out the roots and prepare another field.

Cottonwood trees are messy, shedding bits and pieces of themselves all year so there were plenty of branches lying around to use for making fires. Tommy, Lyle, Brent, and Byron spent as much time on the ranch as we did so we'd hike down to this field together to spent a few hours. Doing something that city kids never got to do - set trees on fire. With the endorsement of our elders. Who knew where we were all the time and gave us an activity that kept us entertained so they didn't have to worry about us doing something stupid. Which left to our own devices we surely would have done.

The strenuous part was just pulling the branches over to the base of the tree we were working on. The small stuff wasn't a problem and just took time to get it moved. But some of the branches on the ground were fairly large and required the combined efforts of several of us. After we had put together a respectable pile of kindling and wood, we would bunch up some dried grass and light it with kitchen matches that one of us brought for that purpose. This burning torch was hurriedly shoved under the fire pile to get it going.

As the flames started we'd grab pieces of small branches and shove them into the flames to encourage them. When the fire failed to catch, we'd collect more piles of small stuff and shove it under the larger pieces and repeat the lighting process until the fire really got going. The amount of heat coming off the fires combined with the hot sun to make an enormously hot work area. But we

thought it was pretty exciting, and pictured ourselves as firemen heroically doing the opposite of what we actually were doing.

After a day or so of running around between burning trees in the bits and pieces of charred grass floating in the eddies of heated air, we convinced our mom to buy us hats to protect our heads. Why our mom's didn't freak out is a mystery. If we were in an environment with burning bits of grass blowing around, wouldn't you forbid kids from being there? Whatever, we got real straw hats and wore them proudly. And when burning wisps landed on the brim and scorched it, we displayed the charred spots with nonchalant but prideful grins. Proof of the danger we worked in.

The neatest time to be in this burning grove was nighttime. The remaining flames burned dramatically against the darkness and the smouldering trunks glowed in bright-red patterns. That glowed more brightly when a breeze blew on them. I don't think we actually managed to burn many trees down but we had a grand time in the effort.

### Tiny melons

Part of Grant's scheme for making money off the ranch was raising watermelons to sell. Only problem was that he planted the wrong kind of melon seeds. So he had 10 acres of small round watermelons, not much bigger than softballs, and not the kind the locals considered worth eating.

The melons ripened before we had to return to Alaska so us kids had a grand old time. With Grant's approval, and since he was just going to plow them back into the ground, we spent a fair amount of energy eating melons. In between sweating times in the fires. All we could eat. We would wander down the rows of plants thumping melons to find ripe ones. Probably couldn't tell and probably didn't matter. They were all ripe - but we fancied ourselves connoisseurs of melons. We'd fill our arms with four or five, however many we could hold, and head for a nearby hay stack of baled hay. After climbing to the top, we'd break open the melons and scoop out the sweet heart and sit there in the hot sun under a cloudless sky letting the cool juice drizzle down our faces and fronts as summer breezes flowed over us. Loving the moment of hot sun, the prickly texture of hot dry hay and the smells of it all. And repeat the process until we couldn't eat another one. Until tomorrow.

## Fishing on Green River

"Nigger fishing" with bamboo poles and cork floats, overnight, frogs for bait. That about sums up what fishing for catfish was like. We didn't stand there and hold a pole because it was such a slow process.

Catfish are bottom feeders and don't mind dirty water like the Greenriver. Same for carp, but you'd never catch a trout in such water.

We spent long hours prowling the banks of the river, drowsy, feeling the heat, watching for interesting rocks because there were many with fossilized snails and clams. No shirts, barefooted walking in the warm slimy mud that squished up between your toes like paste.



Figure 34

<http://www.stannardhouse.com/images/catfish.jpg>

## Mud puppies

Under ledges in shallow pools that undercut the bank the older kids found these odd creatures. They are salamanders but at the time I didn't know that. All I knew was the country name of 'mud puppy', such an odd usage of the term 'puppy'. The pools were all murky so I wasn't too excited about the idea of putting my hand back under a ledge to see what I could find on the bottom but Dale and Norman did it without fear. Of course, they were nearly adults so I excused myself with that idea.



Figure 35

<http://www.nsm.iup.edu/pha/monthlyherparcive/Nmaculosus.jpg>

## Pitchforks and giant carp

The Greenriver is cloudy murky grayish water, hence its name, so isn't inhabited by clear water fish like trout. But it is home to large catfish,

suckers and carp. Toward the end of summer the level of the river had dropped so low that sandbars began to appear in the river which was probably a quarter of a mile across at this point. These sandbars had odd shapes, reflecting the density of the bottom and the effect of water currents on them. In the middle of several sandbars right across from the burning cottonwood trees were small lakes, that eventually were cut off from the main flow as the river level dropped farther and farther.

The surprise to me was that we could watch these small lakes and see that there were large fish in them, splashing their tails as they tried to find a way back into the main current. We told our older cousins who knew what to do to take advantage of this bonanza. They came down with us the next day with pitchforks. I was afraid of the water so didn't go with them when they waded and swam out to the sand bars but it was exciting to even watch. They got out of the river and waded into the lakes and chased the carp around, stabbing frantically with the pitchforks. I'm not sure what they would have done if they had actually caught one but the yelling and excitement sufficed.

One of the kids got the great idea later to take a .22 and shoot the darn things. Grant or another uncle heard this plan and suddenly shut it down. He explained that shooting guns into the water is very dangerous because the bullets might ricochet off the surface instead of going into it. Besides, the fish isn't actually where it appears to be. And if the bullet ricocheted, it might hit someone or something you didn't want to hit, so no guns over there, boys. This wasn't a problem once we understood the physics. It was part of learning gun safety. We did not disregard our elders' instructions about gun safety. So we were allowed to use the guns to target shoot or to hunt rabbits without supervision of any adults. They were just making sure that we understood the dangers of using guns around the water.

### Tractors and Jeeps

Uncle Grant and Uncle Ross owned a ranch on the Green River outside of Vernal. We went there many mornings standing in the back of Grant's jeep, to kill the day goofing off however we wished. The ride seemed long, probably because we got up so early in the morning to drive out, leaving a large trail of dust. Which would catch up with and engulf the jeep if we stopped suddenly.

Ranches and farms are wonderful places for kids to learn skills that help

them as adults. Grant had us driving vehicles of various kinds, as long as we could reach the controls. One of the vehicles he put us in was an old army jeep. It had a compound gear which is ultra-low, so it didn't go very fast but it could practically climb vertically. On this particular day, Dick was the driver. Grant put the jeep into compound, engaged the clutch and jumped out, grabbing Dick and sitting him on his knees in the driver's seat. While I was on my hands and knees on the floor, leaning across the drive shaft tunnel, pushing the accelerator with my right hand. Otherwise we would have been all day getting across the ranch.

In the manner of children with one large synapse that is easily and completely engaged in an interesting activity, Dick became interested in some geese that he saw in the road after he turned a corner. I couldn't see a thing from my vantage point on the floor where I just kept pushing the accelerator to hear the jeep grind and go faster. Suddenly we took a huge sort of leap into the air and crashed to a stop. Dick's geese got tired of being followed, crossed the road and went into an irrigation ditch to escape. In his determination to catch them, he followed them into the ditch. Grant laughed and pulled the jeep out with a winch on a truck.

Another time he put me on the seat of an ancient tractor, so old that the steering wheel was attached to a shaft that ran horizontally the length of the tractor above the engine compartment joining a vertical shaft at the front attached through a series of gears that caused the front wheels to turn when the steering wheel was turned. My job on this day was to pull a thresher through fields of alfalfa. The thresher chopped the alfalfa into 6 inch lengths and blew it out of a narrow chute on the right side. The successful collection of this chopped alfalfa depended on the driver of a truck with a huge bed to keep exact pace with the tractor such that the chute blew the chopped hay into the truck bed.

Alfalfa fields are home to a wide variety of things, such a rabbits, dodder [a parasitic plant that will eventually kill the host] and snakes. On this day as I concentrated on the really tough job for an inexperienced 11 year old of turning the tractor at the right time to avoid running off the field but not turning so soon that I missed the last 25 feet of alfalfa, I lost track of the truck - and wandered a bit. As I made the big cut to my right with this throbbing tractor and noisy thrashing machine right behind me, the chute moved away from the bed of the truck which Grant was driving. Without a door. Because I had hit and removed the door in a similar situation a week or so earlier. At the instant the flow of chopped alfalfa blew into the cab and onto Grant, we picked up and chopped into

pieces a huge yellow blow snake. Grant thought that was pretty funny. Which meant he obviously was not a father.

### Bucking bales of hay

A month later Grant had us out behind a tractor and bailer. A bailer is a cleverly designed machine that collects a narrow row of dried alfalfa and chops and compacts it in square tube-like device. When the collection of packed hay is long enough, the machine automatically wrapped wire or baling twine, depending on the bailer, and the pushed the finished bale out onto the ground. Tractor didn't stop. Just kept dropping bales on the ground which weighed something like 75 pounds, depending on how dry that hay was.

Our job was to stand on a metal-covered skid about 6 by 10 feet that was pulled behind the tractor by a chain. Flat on the ground. When a bale was dropped by the bailer, we were to grab it as soon as it was by the skid, and pull it onto the skid. Then we had to stack them in such a way that they were sort of woven together. This task sounds easier than it is and you are covered in a minute with the dry wisps and chaff created when the bailer compacts and crushes the dry hay. So you itch all over, the bales are too heavy to lift easily, you get blisters, the bales come too fast to be accommodated and you want to die before admitting that you can't keep up. At night you hurt so bad that you would use some of the liniment that grandpa Merrell used on his sore muscles, though it didn't make any difference.



Figure 36 <http://www.hobbyhorseranch.com/used2.htm>

### Laurel & Wolves

The woman who married Uncle Grant that summer, Francis, was from Salt Lake City and her name was Francis. She was a really nice lady and ran the household while we were there. She made custard regularly which was one of



my favorite dishes. This was because Grandma's chickens produced more eggs than we could eat so they had to be converted into another kind of food to be sure they were eaten before they were spoiled. Warm custard with nutmeg sprinkled on the top was heaven.

Francis was not an only child. In fact, she had two sisters, not just one. The youngest was about 11 years old, and the other was between them, being my age and she played a role in my life in the summer of 1960 when I lived at Uncle Carl's place in Salt Lake. The little sister Laurel spent several weeks with Francis. She was a pretty girl and I fell in love right away in the clumsy way cousins do I suppose. She had a sparkly personality and warm smile and ready laugh, a bit of sunshine.

She slept in the house in one of the bedrooms and us boys slept outdoors. Some nights we slept on the front lawn. Those were glorious days. The moon was clear and bright and the nights were warm. There were no street lights so moonlight was what we played in. Laurel would come out and play with us. It was a heady experience to be becoming aware of girls, at age 11. She was a lovely girl and when we played tag or no bear's are out tonight, she laughed and squealed like she should. It was funnest when she was chasing me for some reason. Tommy came over sometimes and added another dimension to the experience. When Dick and I were bedded down in our underwear inside of a quilt on the lawn, he'd come up and try to take the quilt away. That always provoked a lot of yelling and running and threats, particularly if Laurel happened to be standing around.

One of the funnest things we did with Laurel was go into town to the public swimming pool. Admission was a quarter and you got a funny safety pin with a numbered metal disk that you pinned to your swim suit after you had stored your street clothing in a wire basket. Then we had to do a quick cold shower, walk through a funny little pool of water that was supposed to disinfect our feet and into the pool area we went. The sun shined hotly all the time and it was hot so the pool attracted lots of kids. The walkway was jammed by towels and kids and mom. We'd work our way around to the shallow end because I was deathly afraid of the water and then go in. Splashing and yelling was the major activity. There was a life guard who reprimanded kids who ran because they could fall and get hurt.

For some reason it was particularly delicious to go swimming with Laurel. We went other times but the experience was sort of flat. After we got out of the pool and dressed, we usually had a dime to go over to the Rexall drug store. We'd climb up on the stools at the fountain and wait till a waiter came. The smell of

these drugstores was particular to drugstores and while we waited, we'd imbibe the smell, a lovely mixture of perfumes, soaps, hamburgers and fries. We'd always order a large root beer which was drawn from a tap, Hire's Rootbeer which is still the best root beer in my estimation. The soda jerk, as the person was called, would take large heavy glass mugs out of the freezer where they were chilled specifically for this purpose, and fill them with creamy cold root beer. We'd sit there, twirling on the stools, sipping rootbeer from the frost-covered mugs, savoring the flavor and the experience. Eventually, we finished the root beer and went outside to wait for mom to come in our brown and creme Chevy to go back to Naples.

### Castrating Pigs and bobbing Lambs' Tails

Grant had a herd of sheep out at the ranch and grandpa had some pigs behind the house in Naples. The sheep tails were bobbed about the time we arrived which is a simple surgical procedure. While someone immobilized the lamb, Grant would find a joint between vertebrae in the lamb's tail close to the torso and cut the tail off with a large knife. He'd then douse the bleeding stub with a solution he had prepared of something that smelled like clorox or some other disinfectant, let the lamb go and do the next one. This was a pretty straight forward procedure.

Castrating pigs was not simple. The male piglets were identified and isolated for the surgery. One person had to hold the pig on its back with the legs spread so that the Grant could cut the perineal area to get at the testes that he then cut off with a knife. He doused these creatures with the same disinfectant solution and then release the howling creatures. All of them recovered but it was a pretty gruesome procedure in both case.

## Catalpa and Bee Colony

Out in the front yard hanging over the mailbox was a largish catalpa tree. I was fascinated with this kind of tree because of its seed pods, 14 inch long tubes that were filled with peculiar fluffy seeds. Most of them were still green like these so I'd pull one down and split the skin with my thumbnail so I could examine the contents, a whitish, poorly differentiated mass of wet tissue. The leaves were enormous so the whole tree was a curiosity. This specimen had two large trunks that divided about head level. In the crotch a rotten area had developed like they do in that sort of location. Then a colony of some kind of bees found the spot, excavated the dead wood and set up a colony.

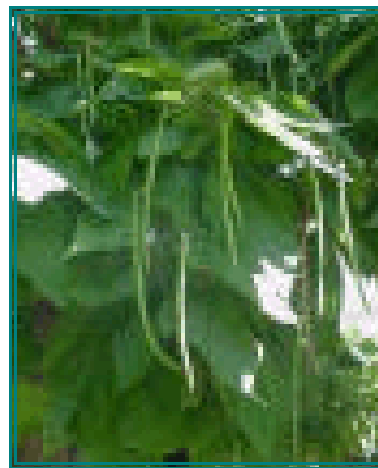


Figure 37 [www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/4DMG/Trees/catalpa.htm](http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/4DMG/Trees/catalpa.htm)

Whenever we went near the tree we heard the buzzing of bees lazily coming and going, getting ready for winter.

I was curious to see what this bunch of bees would do if they got wet. I always wanted to try out new ideas so I dragged Grant's pale green garden hose over to the tree, turned on the water and performed the experiment. I stuffed the tip of the hose down in the hole, avoiding the bees that were now upset. I went back to the hose bib and turned on the water, watching to see the effect. Bees accumulated around the location, flying quickly, buzzing anxiously I suppose, wanting to get back in. I showed some prudence here, fear actually, by not going near the scene of the experiment. After a suitable period of time, I turned the water off and just left the hose there until later in the evening when things had quieted down. I performed this experiment several times during the summer and never was stung. I don't know what the point was, except to just 'see' what happened. There was probably the delicious thrill that comes with tempting fate which a herd of angry bees can be.

## Devil's Playground and Fossil Turtles

Aunt Doris and husband John came out to Vernal for a few days so she could spend time with her brother I suppose, though I didn't really think about it at the

time. She was my favorite aunt and she liked me as much as I liked her. So I always looked forward to seeing her, regardless of the reason for the occasion. One of the things the adults decided they needed to do was to make an expedition to desert east of Naples. This would allow them to do a variety of things in a single day: visit mom's childhood town of Rainbow and hunt for fossil turtles in Devil's Playground.

In 1953, the federal government was searching frantically for more uranium. The arms race was on and atomic bombs were being built in large quantities either in the expectation that we would might have to use them, or, in the hope that by having so many the Russians would think twice about attacking us. I don't know which it was and suspect that the government really didn't know either. In any event, everyone in Utah who could afford one bought a fancy Geiger counter and took it everywhere they went "just in case". So John lugged his machine along, knitting his brow and muttering mysterious phrases while he adjusted a knob or two, waving the silver metal tube over rocks, us and the ground. I think the phrases were incantations of some sort, calling down the power of the almighty to help him find a vein - so that he could get rich. That is what it was all about, getting rich. Disease is what it was and an irritating one that John, and Grant and some of his brothers came down with. It ran a natural course like any disease and passed out of the system but only after a fever that consumed the patient. Turns out that fossils are highly radioactive. Fortunately they occurred in isolation from each other, else these guys would have turned them in for cash. The same thing happened in Utah when the big oil companies were hunting for more oil.

The drive with Doris was fun sitting in the back seat between her and Dick.

The road through Devil's Play ground was like a roller coaster. Dad drove to accentuate the stomach-churning effect so we had a great time getting to the beds where fossilized turtles were weathered out.



Figure 38 "Devil's Playground" between Bonanza and Jensen, Dragon-Vernal stagecoach road in Uintah County, Utah. <http://gowest.coalition.org/cgi-bin/imager?00138208+GB-8208>

The top of some of those mounds had turtle shells. Sometimes it was the plastron (the belly side), other times the carapace (the top side). We found lots of fragments down in the gullies between the mounds and tried to trace the track of fragments to the mounds they came from in the hope of finding the source. We did find a few shells that were complete so dad and John carefully collected the pieces in boxes or cloth sacks and then took them back to Vernal. I don't know what happened to them but remember seeing some of them years later. The excitement of running up each hill to see if there was a turtle shell wore me out. I was only 11 and the hills seemed much higher to me than they look in the above photo. Perhaps they grew between the time the photo was taken and the time I visited.

## Visit to Rainbow

We did a lot of visiting and exploring around Vernal in the summer of 1953 doing things like hunting for gastroliths out in the burning hot desert, visiting Split Mountain Gorge and yelling to hear the echoes, and going to Dinosaur National Monument. Dad's sister Doris and her husband John came out to Vernal from Bountiful which is just north of Salt Lake. They spent the large part of a week with us, the first time we had seen her for 3 years. Doris was my favorite aunt and I loved sitting by her. She liked me and teased me in a friendly way.

One bright sunny day the adults decided to go to what remained of Rainbow



Figure 39 Rainbow, Utah in 1922 (Bender 1971:97)

to see where mom lived for part of her childhood years.

Rainbow was not a pleasing place to me. The lovely name conjured up the expectation of something colorful and beautiful, but the reality didn't match. Having said that, I have to say that there was something starkly beautiful about the town in its isolated desert setting. It was a ghost town. The desolation of a collection of perhaps a dozen or so abandoned, silent houses casts a spell. The road into Rainbow ran through a narrow canyon with vertical walls that looked like banded reddish-orange sandstone. They were close enough to the road that it seemed like there right over us, ready to collapse. The dusty dry road churned up

into billowing clouds behind the car as if attempting to engulf the car to prevent it from entering the deserted town.

Suddenly we exited the narrow canyon and entered a large flat area. The remnant of the pioneer town set right there in the entrance of this canyon. The little community consisted of several "streets" laid out more or less regularly and were lined with deserted decaying houses. These buildings had been abandoned many years before by the miners and farmers who finally decided they couldn't make a go of it there. So they pulled up stakes and moved to Naples and Vernal in most cases.

The town was built on a small plain that was fairly flat and was bordered by steep hills of shale. On the far side of the town at the foot of that cliff, there was a wide dry wash. That indicated that a river flooded through the area in the spring. We were there at the height of summer and rain wasn't likely to fall in any quantity for months. But a kid raised in the region had heard plenty of stories of people out camping who were deluged and swept away by the huge flash floods that quickly develop when there is a heavy rain storm. The parched ground cannot absorb most of the water which can actually create sort of an impervious clay seal over the ground that prevents more rain from being absorbed. In this situation, the rain quickly accumulates into powerful floods that unexpectedly tear down dry washes and sweep away animals and vehicles, and campers, killing some of them. I was fearful that might happen to us in Rainbow in spite of the clear blue sky, and my greatest wish was to get out as soon as possible, just in case.

The desolation of the ghost town accentuated this anxiety. What if a flash flood had been the cause of the total departure of the inhabitants? If it happened then, it could happen again. Even Doris' presence didn't deflect this train of thought.

Mom wasn't with us, probably because there wasn't enough space for her to go. John, Dad, Doris, Dick and myself filled the car. Since she wasn't with us, we didn't know which houses she had lived in so we went into several of them to get a sense of what they were like. The single family homes were divided into four rooms. No plumbing or electricity and no interior doors. The outside doors and windows were missing. Either the last family to live there took them to a new house, or they were vandalized later. The roof had holes in it and the walls were unpainted. I wondered about what it must have been like for Marie to be a child out there in a tiny community, isolated from a town of any size. Kids will be kids and will find things to entertain themselves and perhaps living in this narrow canyon

was fun. How did the family get groceries, was there mail service, where did they keep their animals?

There were no people or livestock in the town, no crops, irrigation or vehicles. Just a collection of decrepit abandoned houses that had been left behind because that was all that could be done when each family left. The sky was clear, the sun was shining and nothing bad had happened to us, yet the visit was depressing. I didn't specifically think, "What a sad place for mom to have been a child!" but today that is the sense I have.

I don't know if she had expected that we would be happy to see the place or whether she even thought about it at all. Perhaps she was just curious or dad was interested and since we were in the area, it was a simple trip to get in to Rainbow. Whatever, I was struck by the sadness and desolation of the sad little town, isolated by many parched desert miles from any other community. After spending an hour or so, we got back in the car and returned to Vernal on Route 40.

### Hunting Gastroliths & Uranium

Uncle John was a fanatic about hunting for things in the desert, at least that's how it seemed to me. That was just fine. My dad was, too. And on this trip, the interests of the two blended such that I got to take trips out doing the same thing in their company. The area around Vernal in those days had ample supplies of gastroliths. These things were believed by dad and a bunch of other men to be rocks that had been ingested by dinosaurs to be used in a structure like the crop of a chicken. Chickens ingest small pebbles that are not passed through to the stomach. They catch in the crop so that when grains and seeds are swallowed they can be ground into a fine paste before they pass to the stomach. No teeth means they had to develop an alternative method of preparing their food to obtain the maximal nutritional value in the stomach. These gastroliths were found sometimes inside of the stomach cavity of some dinosaur skeletons, hence the belief. Dad said that a microscopic examination of the surface of these smooth rocks that obviously had been 'tumbled' revealed patterns of lines that could only be created by an action comparable to that experienced when a muscular crop is squeezing and rotating the rocks against each other. Whatever, I was happy to believe they did come from dinosaurs and still am happy to believe that.

Uncle John was a rock hound anyway, so he got dad to take him, and Doris



and me and Dick out in to the surrounding desert to hunt for gastroliths. They were not really hard to find at that time because there were few people interested in them. They were all over the place if you knew where to look, i.e. down in washes in members of the Morrison formation that abounded. So we went out, and we did find gastroliths. The only problem was the heat. Standing out there in the dry desert in the hot noon day sun was to stand in a dryer, but the discomfort was easily offset by the thrill of finding and scooping up these belly boulders as John called them.

The other thing that John did at the time -this was 1953, remember- was haul his trusty Geiger counter around everywhere. Today that sounds like a crackpot thing to do, but it wasn't at the time. Uncle Grant was doing the same thing as were thousands of other westerners because at the time, the federal government was still hunting eagerly for new uranium mines and paid premiums for new mines. This was only 8 years after the Nagasaki-Hiroshima bombing and early in the development of bombs. Intercontinental ballistic missiles didn't even exist so SAC B-52 bombers were the sole mechanism for delivery of the primitive atom bombs that were being built at the time. So people were all hoping to get rich quick by buying Geiger counters and combing the area for the motherlode that would allow them to sell their farms and settle in luxury. I don't know that anyone every did that, but us Americans are eternal optimists so will try any gimmick for a while.

Anyway, John who wore a handkerchief hanging down from his billed hat to keep the sun off his red neck, used his Geiger counter on everything he came in contact with, except for trees. These devices made neat sounding pops or clicks when they measured radiation. Rocks of any kind were of great interest to him as he held his wand up to them, watching the needle on the meter, listening to the audible pops. There is a low level of radiation in many places so we got to hear the clicks often but he never found a real vein of the stuff. It was neat, however, when we found fossil turtle shells because all fossilized organic items were radioactive and caused his Geiger counter to click like crazy. Too bad it was individual pieces of bone and not a vein of uranium.

### Dynamite & Milk Bucket

Uncle Grant was my favorite uncle because he was the funnest. He did things with us kids that 'adults' didn't which made him unpredictable,

and he laughed a lot. He was the one who persuaded Dickie to eat a little fish out of a bottle of fish pickled to use as fishing bait. This summer Grant had just bought a new Pontiac which had a hot engine that he loved to show off. One afternoon he was taking us somewhere and had both of us sit in the front seat with him. Cars were bigger in those days and we were smaller. We headed west on the road toward Naples and stopped at the stop sign on US 40. After looking both ways, Grant did the unexpected. He floored the gas, gave out a loud yell while he reached down and released the lever that held the seat in place. The combination of a sudden surge of speed made the seat which was now not anchored fly backwards, and the yell scared the crap out of me. I didn't know what had happened. He, of course, laughed his head off at us stunned little kids, so we finally did, too.

He had been using dynamite out on the Greenriver to blast out tree stumps so he had some of the stuff sitting around the place. TNT was not tightly controlled in those days although one had to have a permit and do some paperwork even then to get it, but as long as there was a legitimate reason for a farmer to have it, he could get it. It came in fairly small wood crates. Grant also bought some fuses that came in sturdy metal boxes with lids, for obvious reasons. These fuses were the kind that was set off with heat, not electricity.



Figure 40

[www.westbranch.ciu10.com/cacm/dupont\\_dynamite\\_fuse\\_cap.htm](http://www.westbranch.ciu10.com/cacm/dupont_dynamite_fuse_cap.htm)

A stick of dynamite looks like the red cardboard wrapped flares you see the police light and place on the highway near an accident, except that they aren't flares. They blow up. Grant took one stick this afternoon and told us kids he was going to show up something. That was always a sign he was up to no good. Tommy was there as was Byron so we were excited to see what this experiment was. Grant grabbed an old steel milk pail that had a hole in it which had been used to haul feed in the corral. He told us kids to climb up on top of the corral that had a flat, sloping roof. We all laid down and peered over the edge to see what he was doing.

He took a stick of dynamite and cut it in half with a pocket knife. Nothing happened which is what we expected but one never knows what will happen, at least to a kid, so we watched with a blend of fear and excitement. Grant put the halves of TNT on the ground and then opened the tin of fuses. He also had a 2 foot length of blasting cord that looked like a thick stiff rope that had a braided exterior and something inside. The something inside was sort of like gun powder I

guess. Grant closed the fuse tin and set it aside with one half of dynamite. He picked up the other half and with his knife he punched a hole through the cardboard layer half way between the ends. He put his pocket knife away and laid the TNT down. Then he inserted the blasting cord into the open end of the copper colored metal fuse that was about 2 inches long. He seemed to be doing this carefully. Then he inserted that fuse combination into the slit he had just made. He took the things that were not to be part of the experiment back into the corral.

We were fascinated. We had heard dynamite blasts from a distance but had never actually seen the set up. Grant looked for a good place to set up his experiment which was a hundred feet or so in front of the corral where we lay on the straw roof, sort of protected -we thought- by the roof. Then he set the old bucket upside down over the fused dynamite. He now became very careful. He took a kitchen match from his pocket and lighted it by rubbing it quickly along the underside of his thigh. Then he leaned over the bucket and looked sideways back into the corral to be sure his getaway path was clear. He picked up the end of the blasting cord and carefully lighted it. It instantly began to smoke and burn, a tiny flame visibly crawling up the cord.

Grant ran like hell to hide behind a tractor or something inside the corral below us. We unconsciously held our breath anticipating a loud bang like a fire cracker. Nothing happened but no one moved. Then the tiny flame disappeared under the edge of the bucket. We waited. Suddenly there was the loudest explosion I had ever heard and the bucket shot straight up in the air like a rocket on a trail of smoke, going out of sight. Grant yelled in excitement and we let out our shocked breaths, watching the bucket go up and then return to the ground. We climbed quickly down from the roof and ran around and into the pasture to catch Grant who was headed out to the bucket. When we found it, the thing was a ragged, flat piece of metal. The circular bottom had been blown completely off and we never found it.

This ad pulls together a combination of three forces of the time, Lana Turner, the gorgeous pinup movie star, Woodbury cosmetics and Metro Goldwyn Mayer, one of the dominant movie producers of the era. (Remember that this is a 13 year old boy talking at this moment.) This has little of the subtle sophistication of other ads I showed you in Volume 4. This one relies for impact on the name of the movie star, a famous movie and the famous movie producer. The text tells the reader that she, too, can be a movie star like Lana if she will only use these products. At the center of these cosmetics ads is the notion that beauty is the way to catch and keep "your man". Sex sold products then just as it does today, but these women were dressed. The plays on this type of image of Lana, calling women to be sultry vixens by using these products.

Pinups were a force that I was dimly aware of even from Vernal years. They were curvaceous movie stars who posed for carefully posed photos that portrayed them effectively. Lana Turner and Rita Hayworth were two of the names I remember from the era and these photos circulated in the large format magazines

at the time, images that I wasn't supposed to look at. But I did. They were images that became part of the life of the military, ending up being painted on bomber bodies, ships and whatever else they were inclined to decorate. They appear in full

LANA TURNER, starring in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Keep Your Powder Dry"

*A couple of gentle nudges... for that man in your heart!*

**1**

**Woodbury Complete Beauty Cream**  
for the newest Hollywood "finish"

Irresistible Lana! Irresistible you... if you give your skin beauty extras with Woodbury Complete Beauty Cream. One cream that does all old-fashioned cold and cleansing cream can do... and so much more!

Use it generously to cleanse, soften and smooth your skin (rewards will be just as generous). As a powder base... as a night cream to discourage dryness and old-looking dry-skin lines. Remember--only Woodbury has "Sterilin", purifying the cream in the jar, helping protect against blemish-causing germs.

To hear him whisper, "Irresistible you", try Woodbury Complete Beauty Cream today! 10¢ to \$1.25, plus tax.

WOODBURY CHAMPAGNE RACHEL is golden cream for a honey. \* toned medium skin like Lana's. Woodbury Complete Beauty Cream means beauty extras for "that irresistible complexion"!

**2**

**New Woodbury Film-Finish Powder**  
for that flawless Hollywood "finish"

Created for lovely stars like Lana! Made, in fact, to give you the fabulously flawless look stars have on the screen!

Woodbury Film-Finish Powder goes through an exclusive new, 5-stage blending process for STAY-FRESH SHADES, SMOOTHER TEXTURE. This powder clings longer, covers little lines and blemishes better. Never clogs, cakes... and never makes your skin look "porey".

Wear it tonight and look more like the girl he wants to marry! 8 star shades.

**3-IN-1 BEAUTY BUY \$1**... Now with your big \$1 box of Woodbury Powder, you also get your choice of including lipstick and vaginal Complete Matched Make-up! No change in the box--all Woodbury Powder is the new Film-Finish Powder.

Also boxes of Woodbury Powder, 25¢, 10¢, 5¢, 1¢

4/15/45

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Figure 41 Lana Turner for Woodbury 1945 NY Times  
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu:80/adaccess/BH/BH19/BH1948-72dpi.jpeg>

page size on the next two page. They were, indeed, beautiful women.

Putting these images in historical context is interesting. Today, women have become garish unreal characters. Nudity is the theme of the day and nothing is left to the imagination. These images portray the beauty of the women in a tasteful way. Their shape and hair and face are emphasized. The lighting is skillful as is the pose that emphasizes the womanly features.



Figure 43 Lana Turner

<http://www.tlac.net/users/mharney/Image/lana.jpg>

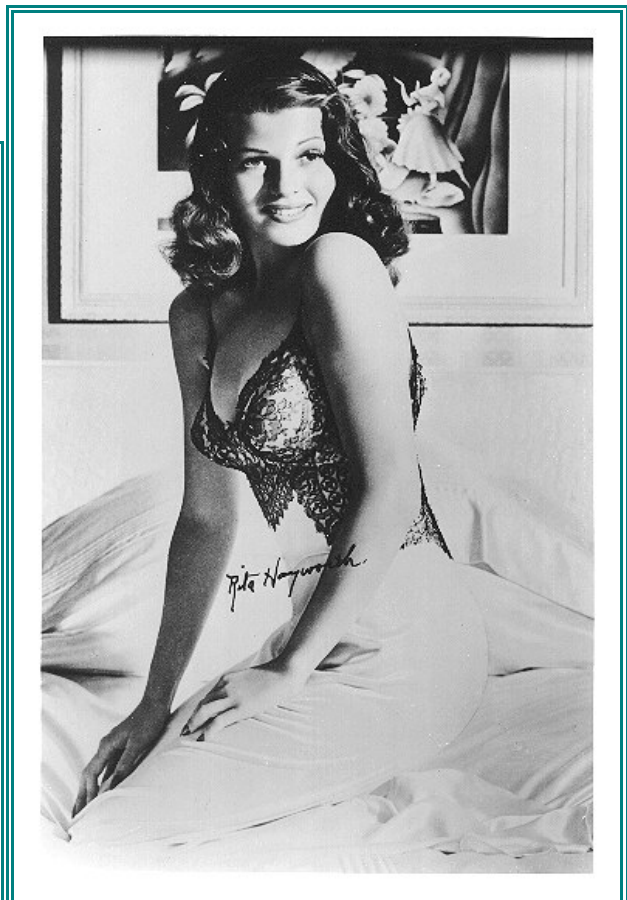


Figure 42 Rita Hayworth

<http://www.tlac.net/users/mharney/Image/hayworth/rita03.jpg>

## Ptarmagin skin

Taxidermy fascinated me. Dad had mounted two eagles for the Field House in Vernal - for Arnie Lewis, the man who got him the job in a few years at Harvard. I found while researching UBW that dad learned taxidermy when he was a young teen. It hadn't occurred previously to me to wonder just where he picked up this skill. He had so many. What happened was that he hounded his dad to enroll him in a correspondence taxidermy program that was advertised in magazines. Finally, Sam relented, dug up \$10.00 which was a lot of money, and sent it in. The two of them took the course together and mounted whatever they could get their hands on. In Volume 2 - Leamington, dad tells stories about trying to unwrap cats so he could taxidermy them, or catch a few of the local pigeons, etc.

I wanted to taxidermy too, but dad was too busy to help me. He was always so involved in his own art projects that he had little time for us kids and our interests. The closest we came to matching his interests was going boating, mountain climbing, clam digging, etc. - things out doors. Somewhere along the line I became the owner of a complete ptarmigan skin, minus the inhabitant thereof.

These birds are about the size of a skinny chicken. They come in two varieties, a "willow ptarmigan" and a "rock ptarmigan". The difference is in their coloration and habitats but sitting side by side, they look about the same. The thing I found most interesting about them was their feet. Not being carnivores, these birds spend a fair amount of time walking on top of the snow while they hunt for something to eat.

Good ol' natural selection worked and selected the versions of ptarmigan that wore tiny snowshoes. No kidding. These creatures have wiry tufts sticking out all along each toe, creating wide foot prints that distribute weight over a wider area. In addition, the feet are also covered with feathers as in this picture. Pretty clever birds.

The skin I inherited was pretty raw when I got it. It wasn't exactly fresh but it had not been properly prepared to be preserved over time. So, on the advice



Figure 44

<http://www.hominids.com/donsmaps/clickphotos/ptarmigan.jpg>

of dad as he looked up from his easel, I bootlegged a box of Morton's salt out of the food stores and laid the skin down on a pile of newspapers in the basement. The skin had been removed so that it was basically a tube without the head, body and legs. I opened this feather tube and poured salt down into the center. Then I shook the skin around to distribute the salt, looked inside to see how it was and poured some more salt in. After the inside was completely coated with a layer of salt, I set the skin on top of the oil furnace to allow it to dry. The furnace wasn't hot at that point, just warm, so it was a perfect place to let the skin cure.

I replenished the salt several more times to be sure that there was no chance that the skin would decay. It had a strong odor from the fat but not really offensive. I examined it many times down there in the basement during the winter. What else is a kid going to do when it's cold, dark, snowy and lonely outside. I had dreams of sending the skin to the outside to have it tanned, just as dad had done with the seal skins, but it never happened. When we had to reduce our belongings to zero, this wonderful preserved skin went into the trash. I felt bad but there was nothing to be done about it.

### Turkey neck

**A** long about now I got interested in structural features of skeletons. It was natural to collect natural things given the patriarch of the household. I decided about the age of 12 that at the next thanksgiving I wanted to prepare the neck of the turkey. Not the entire skeleton which was sort of overwhelming because of its size and complexity. The neck was complex enough for a first trial.

So after Thanksgiving was over, I talked mom out of the next. She didn't use it for anything which made it pretty easy to separate it from her. The next step was to dry it. The process didn't require salt like a skin, just a location away from water where warmth would remove the water. Over a couple of weeks, the skin hardened up as it dried out. The remaining tissue was greasy, and became crumbly. I took a pocket knife and pecked at the dried tissue in the hope that I could clean the vertebrae but that wasn't possible. I didn't really know how to do that so I gave up after a while. I stored it in a long, narrow, shallow chocolate box which created a peculiar odor.

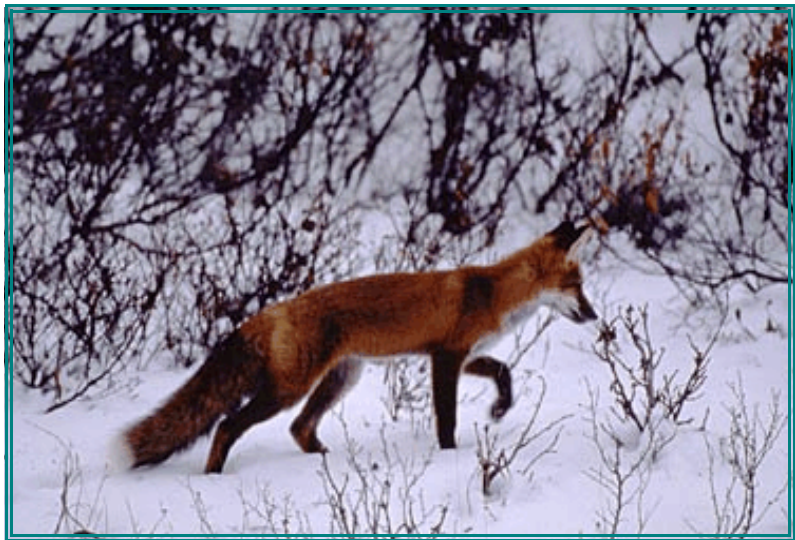
The way the vertebrae fit together fascinated me. I didn't understand

anything about the purpose of the various elements but was impressed at the complexity of things. This little exercise was the precursor to the work I did a few years later in the Gray Bird Collection at MCZ. I got to prepare the skeleton of the last passenger pigeon.

## Fox Tail

Somehow I came up with this lovely red fox tail. It came from a critter

that looked like this one, a pretty, cattish looking being. The tail was really gorgeous. It was fluffy and had no scent. It had been cut off cleanly from the carcass. The bone that was exposed had dried before it decayed so there was no odor.



It was interesting because the hair was so dense that when I squeezed it together and released it, it expanded like a sponge.

This was about 1954 so the legend of Davy Crocket was a big deal. I think there was a movie about him and I know that he showed up on cereal boxes. There was even a popular song about him.



Figure 46

<http://mamasmsfortune.safeshopper.com/images/bi0doi6g.jpg>



## Mahurrin Mountain Tragedy

Marshall was my patrol leader in Troop 620. He had kinky wiry red hair and a face smothered in freckles. When he got excited, he sort of foamed at the mouth, getting flecks of white in the corners of his lips. Here he and I are at Camp Gorsuch looking at something on the ground while we are eating. Marshall lived out by the TB San not too far from Robert Muller, who was his assistant patrol leader. Sometimes we had patrol meetings out at Marshall's home which was a big deal, both in terms of the meeting itself, as well as in getting out there. We'd take the little yellow San bus that shuttled between downtown and the San, apparently paid for by some tax because I never paid a fare to ride it.



Then we'd walk the rest of the way which was probably another half mile. His house was fairly new and was nestled in the spruces and evergreens and didn't have a lawn.

I got to know Marshall well and thought of him as one of my friends along with Brent, Clayton and Jay. We were in the same grade so saw each other every day. I was walking up the north staircase in school at lunch time with him when one of the awfulest things happened that I've experienced in my life. Remember, I was only about 12 years old. Let me tell you the background first and then I'll tell you what happened.

Marshall's only brother who was about 18 had gone hunting in mountains somewhere near Kenai Lake. It wasn't on the lake but was about that far out of town. This is a photo dad took of the mountain. The two kids took their rifles, hoping to get some game before the snows shut things down for the winter. Older kids were allowed to do this sort of thing so it wasn't something bad that he did, just ill-judged. After things were over, the story was clear: this boy, like our Nazarene neighbor, had made the fatal mistake of going up into wet rocks and cliffs wearing shoe paks. Fatal mistake. He slipped and fell to his death over

several cliffs, landing several hundred feet below the point he started.

This was probably early October so there was already snow in the higher elevations and the constant rain of the region kept everything wet. The two kids had been scouting in the gray day when the Mahurrin boy lost his footing and fell. The other kid couldn't see just where the body landed because of the snow, and there was nothing he could do about it any way so he descended the mountain and drove back into town. He had the terrible duty of telling Mr. and Mrs. Mahurrin what had happened and that he didn't know where the body was.

The weather was closing in with winter rushing forward so there was enormous urgency to get a search party together to go out and try to find the body. As the team was collected very early next morning from volunteers in the tiny town, dad was chosen to go. He had developed some skill in rope climbing and had a large coil of a stout rope that he would take in case it was necessary. Other men collected a rescue toboggan from the fire depart with rope, first aid supplies, dry clothing, hiking food and water for the trip.

The other kid took the team out so they could know precisely where they started their climb. The men sent the boy back to town so he wouldn't see what they expected to find. They carried rifles and agreed that if any of them found the body he would fire two shots in rapid succession as a signal. That would allow the other men to stop risking their own lives and to focus their energies on the location where the body was so they could hopefully get it off the mountain before the snow fell.

Men paired up for the ordeal but started their way up the mountain



together. Above timberline they split up and went different ways to search. The weather was close, clouds covering the peak, so visibility was bad. Day time was short anyway so they were all anxious, particularly since snow was possible that night in which case the body would be covered. Avalanches were common in the winter which meant that even if the body survived the winter, it would likely be moved from the point of impact and never found.

They labored up the rocky cliffs looking carefully, using binoculars, searching for any sign of the boy. Dad, carrying his heavy rope was the one who found the first sign of the boy. He found a red hunting camp in the approximate location that the other boy had pointed out from the road below. Dad judged this to be the likely point the kid had slipped so he stopped there and reconnoitered. He spent some time looking over the cliffs hunting for evidence of the boy. The day was passing and he was anxious for his own safety, and finally decided it was time to move on, thinking they were probably not going to find the body, part of his brain half hoping they wouldn't. He made one last sweep with his binoculars as he prepared to leave and there it was. He could see a spot of color against a snow covered rocky ledge about directly below where he was standing.

He figured that was the boy's body so he fired two shots with his Enfield and started examining the cliffs to find the best way to get to the body. Other men started in his direction and he hollered telling them where the body was. It turned out that the body was inaccessible by foot and since dad was the only one with any experience, and a rope, he was the one who had to go to the body and bring it out.

He gave someone his rifle and labored over cliffs and rocks to get to the body. The first thing he did when he got to it was to tie a large handkerchief over what was left of the head. He said that is the first thing a rescuer does when finding the body. Then he had to maneuver this stiff frozen body alone out of its landing place down to a location where the other rescuers waited. This required him to use his rope. He said that the worst part of the descent was a point where he had to tie the body on one end of the rope as a counter weight to allow him to descend a cliff first after which he had to catch the body when he released the rope.

In the end, he got the body close enough to the other men that they could take it from him. They put it in the metal toboggan and secured it in place and headed down the mountain as quickly as prudent and possible to get off before night fall. By the time they got to the road it was dark but they all made it safely.

So that's the background for what happened: A kid who I don't remember had just come into the school through the front entrance and had just heard the news while he was home for lunch. When he saw us coming up the stairs, he ran toward Marshall, screaming at the top of his voice, "Marshall! Marshall! Your brother was killed!" That kid is lucky he wasn't. I was almost as stunned as Marshall was because I knew my own personal dad was out there in the mountains searching for Marshall's brother.

Dad came home and was a wreck for days. He pulled his plug and didn't go to work for some time, sitting at home, struggling with what he had just done, not even painting much. Us kids said little and walked softly, playing in the basement to give him space to deal with it all and to protect from an outburst that would have been devastating.

It was many years later that he recited the entire story for me. I had a general understanding but only because I overheard him recounting bits of the story over the years. This was the first time he had revealed himself. I was on one my quarterly visits, alone, to Provo see mom and dad and he and I had gone to Wendy's to get a hamburger. He loved Wendys. As we sat there near the intersection of University and 12<sup>th</sup>, he felt compelled to tell me his feelings and the facts of the experience. His eyes got red and he teared up as he got into the story. His voice choked various times as emotions overwhelmed him so we just sat looking out the window until he could go on. The experience seemed to be about as vivid to him in 1990 as when it happened 35 years earlier in 1955.

### Adolph's Meat Tenderizer

I was ready for this stuff when it came out in the early '50's. No way I wasn't ready. Some of the protoplasm we ate for dinner was so tough I was sure it came from between the horns of the darn moose. This product promised to make my eating enjoyment greater, reduce my cotton-chewing episodes, etc. We used all of the meat that came from any animal we inherited for food which meant that we had cuts that were pretty stringy and tough. The standard method of making them edible was a wooden mallet that we used to pound the thinly sliced pieces of meat into submission. In the process, the tissues were broken down so that after they were fried, we could manage to chew them. One of the awfulest things I had to deal with at the dinner table was the wads of cotton

that developed in my mouth from certain pieces of meat. The flavor was gone, but the tissues were still so fibrous and stringy that I couldn't reduce them to small enough pieces to swallow, so there I was. Taking it out of my mouth and setting it on my plate was not a good idea if mom was around, so I had to struggle with the thing until I could sort of gag it down.

This stuff was my first exposure to good science that produced a product that actually did something novel. Adolph's succeeded. They even got a write up in Reader's Digest which raised their sales. And persuaded me that the extract of papaya did do the thing that the advertisers said it did. Papain actually did dissolve muscle fibers.

### Bear Paw Airlines

Dad was hired around 1954 to develop a logo for the Bear Paw airlines??. I am not positive of the last word but am about the first two. He drove out to the "airport" which was an airstrip off the Nash Road on the north end of the bay. He ended up painting the logo on several planes that flew out of the airport.

The most memorable bush pilot and airplane was Tiny Trichowski - spelling is probably wrong but the pronunciation is right. He was an enormous man for a pilot, and he flew a Widgeon, a single engined float plane.. The engine was fixed to the top of the cabin and faced backwards, so it "blew" the plane forward rather than "pulled" it forward.

## Tiny Trichowski & the Republic Seabee

**T**iny was not tiny. He weighed 250 pounds and was a pilot. A bush pilot. A big bush pilot. In his bizarre but talented airplane unlike anything I had ever seen, a Republic Seabee. A plane that had its engine mounted ON TOP of the cabin, not on the front or on a wing. It faced backward, blowing rather than pulling the plane along. With a wasp waist that looked like it would break. Bizarre airplane. A bulbous homely airplane. To compound the whole effect,



Figure 49

<http://www.1000aircraftphotos.com/GeneralAv/RepublicSeabee.htm>

it was constructed in such a way that its hull functioned as a stable pontoon if the pilot, i.e. tiny Tiny, decided to set the darn thing down on a body of water.

This thing was talented, however. Tiny Tiny could coax it into turns and landings and takeoffs that a conventionally designed airplane on outrigger pontoons couldn't do. So when dad and Tom Aldous decided that they wanted to hunt moose up on Crescent Lake that was inaccessible otherwise, they hired tiny Tiny. You should have seen him. I marveled that he could even climb up and into the plane but he was a daredevil of the highest water like all Alaskan bush pilots of the era and he obviously simultaneously gloried and excelled in his work. A craftsman in love with his tool, loving the opportunity to demonstrate its superb qualities and his skill. They had to wait 3 days on the lake after dad bagged his moose due to being socked in. Finally tiny Tiny managed to get in and hauled them out with the remainder of dad's bull moose- a mere 600 pounds because one fore quarter had spoiled due to the delay. Like most bush pilots, time kept track of his narrow escapes and finally he cashed in his chips on one of his extreme daredevil attempts.

Tiny was hired by dad and Tom Aldous to haul them in to Paradise Lake to hunt for moose along about 1955. Tiny is standing here by his plane, holding a moose rack in front of him. Notice the size of the man and the size of the plane. It was a match. The reason for hiring bush pilot to get into Paradise lake is



that there were no roads into the area. Flying in was the only way in.

After Tiny dropped the two off with their gear and rifles, he flew away, with an understanding that he would return to pick them up in three days. That seemed reasonable even with the frequent rain. In those days, there were no cell phones and there certainly were no telephones so we had no way of knowing what was going on with dad out there in the middle of no where.

The three days passed and Tiny left Seward to pick up dad and Tom . But when he got to the lake, the weather was so bad, the rain was so hard and the clouds so dense, that he decided that it would be foolish to try to land. That's a pretty amazing thing and shows just how awful the weather was because these busy pilots would fly in pea soup. So Tiny returned to Seward and let mom know what had happened. She told us kids what was going on and that we had to wait another day for dad to get back. I was nervous inside about the delay caused by bad weather. We hadn't heard anything of course and we knew that bad things could happen out there in the wild and that made me worry.

The next day Tiny tried again with the same result. That made me even more nervous but mom acted like things were OK, like she wasn't worried. I bet she was. On the third try, however, Tiny was able to get in. He found dad and Tom

safe in good health. They had shot a large moose on the second day near the lake but naturally couldn't get it out. By the time Tiny was able to fly it out one of the front quarters had spoiled so had to be left behind along with the head. After the remainder was skinned, cut and packaged by Warner's freezer folks, there was still something like 500 pounds of meat, an enormous quantity of mooseburger, steaks and roasts.

### Mountain goat & Buck Fever

**I**t turns out that I am not a hunter. Oh, it doesn't bother me that men shoot animals, at least if the purpose is to get meat. But I found out personally that I cannot shoot large animals. I hunted rabbits and bagged them. That didn't bother me. I'd skin them and fry them but somehow looking down the barrel of a gun at a mountain goat was too much. I stared at him, and couldn't pull the trigger. Dad took care of the job and we went about the job of getting it down off the mountain but I couldn't do it.



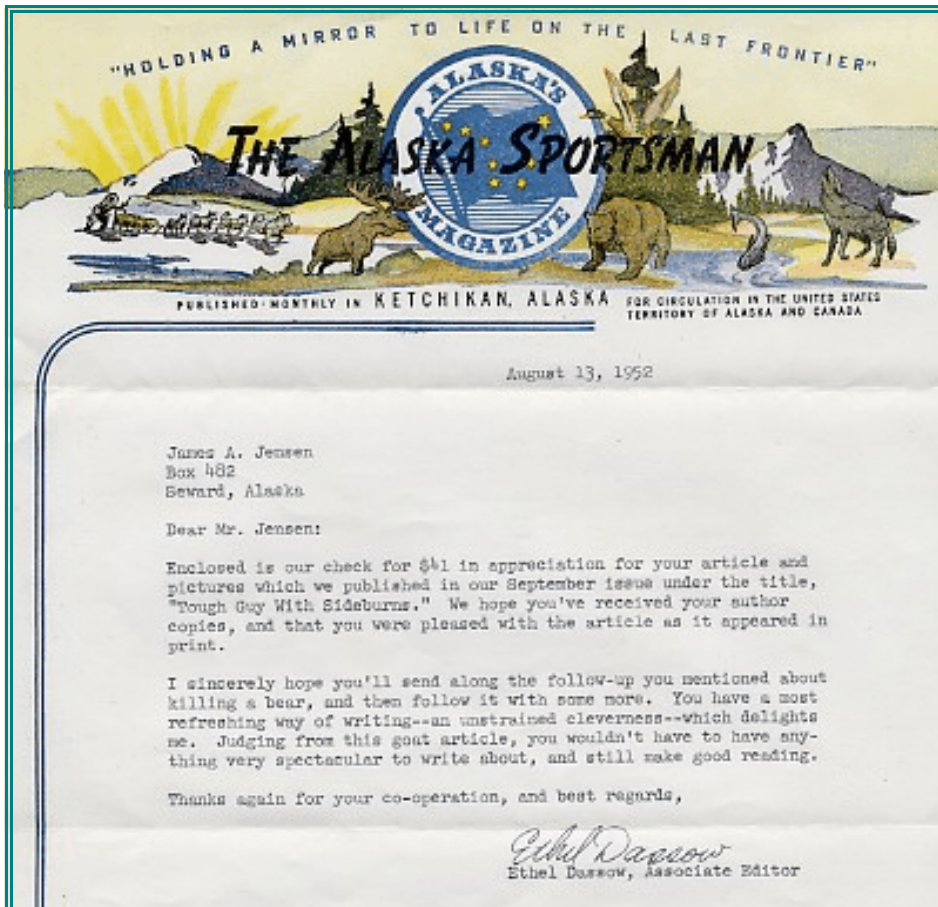
Figure 51

<http://seward-alaska.com/bearlakeair/Hunting/goats.htm>



## Blood in the Snow

Dad and Tom Aldous shot a mountain goat up somewhere in the snow and it hung at Tom's place for a few days. Dad got a few photos of all of us with the critter. Judging from the age of us in the photo, this event actually happened much earlier than I remembered it. He took this event and a few photos and made it into a story that he submitted to the "Alaska Sportsman magazine. It was accepted and published, his first published article. The letter that came with a \$42 dollar check follows.



### Portage Glacier

This was a remarkable sight. An enormous glacier that was accessible by a dirt road. A small lake in front of the lake was filled with small



icebergs that were calved off the glacier. This photo shows dad with us on the west shore of the lake in about 1955. This was in the spring time, and we're wearing identical shirts again. Dad's wearing his fancy fedora that is now in my closet.

Note how full the lake is with ice and how close the glacier is to this shore. On the right side you can see just how large the floes are.



Here are several other images from that visit:



Moose

These are huge animals.



Figure 60 <http://seward-alaska.com/bearlakeair/images/Moose3.jpg>

Foods



Figure 62 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/newsad63.jpg>



Figure 61  
<http://theimaginaryworld.com/newsad15.jpg>

## Betty Crocker Cake Mixes

In the late 1940's Betty Crocker managed to create cake mixes in a box that had a reasonable shelf life, and cooked reasonably well. They were a sensation. Just open a box, pour the powder into a bowl, add some water and an egg, mix and put in a pan and bake. What a switch from the laborious process of measuring out every ingredient and getting the batter just right.



Figure 63

[http://www.old-time.com/commercials/stunning\\_upset.html](http://www.old-time.com/commercials/stunning_upset.html)

## Mom's nightly Noxzema Rub

Every night after she carefully washed and rinsed her face in the sink in the minuscule bathroom, she'd do her toilet. She'd open the small jar of Pond's night cream, and look at it while she scooped out a small amount on her two fingers. Then she'd lean toward the mirror, turning her head slightly, looking out the corner of her eye. While she applied the miracle stuff to her neck and under her chin. Repeating the process for both sides until satisfied that she was protected from the rigors of night that would rob her of her youthfulness and beauty.

Then she'd put the lid on the Pond's jar and set it back into the top drawer of the chest of drawers that held her private things. The Noxzema bottle, the same dense blue color, was opened. She'd take a generous dollop of the stuff and put it in her left palm, carefully re-closing the jar with her right hand and restoring it to the top drawer. At this point with her face 'done', she'd slowly wander out to the living room, slowly rubbing the fragrant compelling noxzema into her hands. Smoothing it over the back and up over her wrists, sensuously, savoring the smell and the tactile experience of the slippery stuff. I watched, mesmerized, loving

the odor and her calmness, inner focused on being sure that Jim loved her, that she was lovable by him. Sacred ceremony each night, done religiously.



Figure 64 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/newsad61.jpg>

### Albert the Alligator Pitching Soaps

I always like Albert. Pogo was the first comic strip I liked that was cerebral. Dad liked it and that helped me like it.



Figure 65  
<http://theimaginaryworld.com/disp1.jpg>

## Billikin

This crude carving captures the basic nature of this thing that was carved out of ivory. I thought it was a thing out of Eskimo or Aleut or Indian culture but turns out that it was a creation of so and so in such and such an era. This person created the name 'billikin'. When I lived there, the billikin was produced out of walrus ivory by Eskimos and fascinated me.



**Figure 66**

[http://www.ulimaaq.com/Resources/JI\\_36tn.jpg](http://www.ulimaaq.com/Resources/JI_36tn.jpg)

## Kick-the-Can & Hide-the-Candy Bar

Summer nights when the sun was shining, as it did late into the evening some days which were glorious, we would finish washing the dishes and ask permission to go out and play with the other kids, Brent, Janice, Jay and a few other kids who lived close by. Those chores were like the Ten Commandments, had to be observed every day or be punished. Mom generally allowed us to go, as long as we hadn't "been bad" that day. We'd be the last of the group to arrive due to the chores but no one gave us a hard time. They, too, had unbendable rules they had to follow so understood the delay.

On the way out the door some nights, we'd ask mom if it was OK for us to take a nickel or dime - of OUR money. Again, if she was in a good mood, i.e. we hadn't been bad, she'd say it was up to us. Never a 'yes'. There was no choice as far as we were concerned. We'd reach up on the lower shelf of the cupboard on the east wall of the kitchen and take down the metal band-aid cans we put our money in. Then we'd head out the back door before she changed her mind.

We'd meet up with the other kids and then go down to the store to buy candy bars. Of course, we had to get permission, if we hadn't already asked for it



when asking permission to get a dime. The store we went to was the one on the corner of Adams and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue since it was closer than Warner's Market. We'd agonize over what candy bar to buy, finally get the purchase done, and head back to the alley to play before we got called in for the night.

Hide-the-Candy bar was really just an excuse to buy candy bars. But there was an elaborate, silent charade that went with it, to give it a sense of legitimacy, which we all fervently believed in. One of us was chosen to be "it" at which point he had to cover his eyes and count out loud by ones to 100. In that time period the rest of us hunted frantically to find the 'best' hiding place that was within the circumscribed area we designated, lest some guy thought he'd run out to the street or something like that. We'd change our minds during the countdown once or twice, nervous that ours would be found first, because the guy whose candy bar was found first was "it" for the next round.

"It" would open his eyes and start looking within in the boundaries. There was usually a tree included which meant that he had to look high and low, turning over rocks, behind boards, empty boxes, tin cans, anything lying on the ground. The area was not neat and tidy with all sorts of junk hanging about as you could see from the photo of the back door of our house that shows boards, old tires, sled, etc. on the ground with grass and weeds growing up around them. The first person who was not 'it' was anxious to get on with the job to get it done but had to wait till the present 'it' to finish. Once done, the process would start all over. After we tired of the game, we'd allow as how we were tired of playing and would look at our candy bar. The wrappers came off shortly and the candy bars disappeared.

Now it was time to play kick the can. This was a combination of regular hide and seek with an audible 100 count, with the twist that the person who was 'it' had to jump over a can for each person he spotted while he yelled their name. The area we had to hide in was much larger than in the previous game which meant that 'it' had to walk around the corner of the house, or go out in the road to be sure someone wasn't hiding behind a parked car. While he was away from his base, the can, those who hadn't already been caught were waiting for their chance. They'd carefully peek around to see where 'it' was and when they judged they were closer to the can than 'it' was, they'd make a mad dash directly to the can. If the person could kick the can before 'it' could jump over it, 'it' had to be 'it' again. When that happened, 'it' would yell, "Alley alley outs in, all in free" which meant that all kids still hiding could come in without fear of being caught and the game would start again.

## Mom's Best of Show

This was actually a continental divide for mom, an astonishing experience, one that revealed something to her that altered her for the rest of her life. The choice she made was consonant with her general commitment but its clarity and specificity are just mind-boggling. I know I could never do that. I have never been able to accommodate myself to what she did. Never. It is just too impossible that some one would be able to do it, or would ever actually do it. Here's what happened.

First, mom had started dabbling in charcoal that year. Dad doubtless gave her pointers and she was a quick study. I don't think he was at all resistant to the idea of her painting but wouldn't have given it any priority since he was so enmeshed in his own. On several occasions, at mom's insistence, he'd sit us kids down and give us "art lessons". They were helpful but he was bored and returned to his own work quickly. She worked away and went quickly from pretty crude work to surprisingly good things. Here's a photo posed in our front room by dad with borrowed spot lights, probably from Dr. Phillips. Her picture is on a small board, his is framed. He made his own frames, by the way, with the molding he bought in Seattle in 1953 on our way back to Seward from Naples.



Every year the Business Women of Seward -don't you love the name?! What a kick, "Business Women of Seward", a railroad-longshoring town of 2,000 men, women, children and dogs with half a dozen businesses -some of them not legitimate- owned by women. In any event, this outfit tried to bring a little culture and civilization to Seward, a parched desert in that arena otherwise. They'd scheme and plan all winter, picking out their hats, veils and gloves simultaneously with getting programs printed, and entries logged in.

On the appointed week, they'd rent out the Oddfellow's Hall, encroaching on

our territory a bit for one weekend, and do the show. Tables were set up and starched linen table cloths were laid out. Hothouse flowers were arranged and displayed with coffee and cookies. People dressed up like they were going to church to go to this gala event and climbed the stairs nervously, not having a lot of practice at holding the little pinkie in the air while a starched collar chaffed at the neck. No one fainted, no one died, but there was a near miss this particular year.

This year mom decided that she would also enter one of her paintings in the art show. Dad had been doing that but she'd practised a bit, though only a small amount, and managed to get a likeness she felt comfortable with giving an outing in this forum. It was a small town and she knew most of the people who she knew understood that dad was the dominant painter in town and that she was just indulging herself this way, perhaps even to keep him happy because she allowed him to patronize and instruct her at the same time. On the afternoon that the show had been judged with ribbons being hung as appropriate, dad started to agitate.

Mom was in the bathroom getting ready to go, in no particular hurry. Perhaps she even savored the preparation. This was a rare event, having a public event with culture. Men get ready faster than women so dad was sitting on the couch or pacing the floor, anxious to get on his way. He started to sort of push mom, asking her when she'd be ready. He explained his sense of urgency by telling her that the show was open and wanted to go see who got 'best of show'. He did the previous year, so he probably expected it again and wanted to get the maximum public exposure so people could ooh and aah over him and the winning picture - dollar signs spinning in his head.

She finally was ready and put on her coat as she went out the front door through the cold entry way. They got into the car and drove over to the Oddfellow's hall since that was more dignified than walking. Dad wore his trusty fedora like he always did -the same one you see in this photo- with a top coat and a fancy pair of dress, leather gloves, a real dandy. They parked as close to the building as they could and then walked up the stairs that were so familiar since we did that every Sunday. On this occasion, however, they went alone. Kids were not taken to these high-toned happenings.

After hanging their coats in the cloak room, as it was called, they then entered the north room of the Oddfellow's Hall



and then slowly sauntered around surreptitiously watching for the big blue ribbon that said, "Best of Show". Dad probably headed directly to his pictures, of which there were several, expecting to see this lovely ribbon on one of them. When he got to his pictures, however, he stopped and looked, stunned. There was no big blue ribbon on any of them. His reaction was to check to see if it had slipped to the side or back but it wasn't there. Now he was stricken. Not only would he not be able to bask in the public praise, he realized that someone else was going to get that honor and that people would specifically remember that while he got it last year, he didn't make it this year. He now wanted to know who his competitor was.

He and mom walked a bit more hunting for the blue ribbon. That was all dad could think about. He could hardly speak to people who said hello to him because he was focused on discovering who bested him this year. Then he found the blue ribbon, Best of Show, in the most astonishing place. It was hanging on a picture of an artist who had never exhibited a painting before, who had painted less than a year. "Best of Show" was hanging on mom's picture. Dad was staggered. I have no doubt that he was sick to his stomach over the loss of the prize of prizes, and in a state of shock that his own wife beat him.

Here's the stunning part of this little story: mom told me several times over the years that in the instant she stood with dad before her "Best of Show" and saw what it did to him, she realized two things.

First she realized that she could be a more accomplished painter than dad and I have no doubt. The picture is on the next page and when you compare it, the work of an artist who had been painting for less than a year, to the final pictures dad did after his long career as an artist, I think you can see that she could have at least equaled him, and probably exceeded him.

Second, she realized that if she did in fact start to pursue painting seriously, she would destroy dad as an artist. He would simply give up, collapse, shrink away from art. I think that is true also. He had such a bad case of inferiority -although most people didn't know it- that competition was always tough on him, and he had not regarded his wife as a serious competitor, so being beat by someone that he had no respect for would be so upsetting that he would throw in the towel and give it up. He would stop being an artist.

I like to tell you this story for many reasons. On one level, it is just a great story of pride with a humorous twist. On another level it tells about dad. And on another, the one I am emphasizing here, it reveals the absolute devotion Marie paid to Jim, and at the same time, the crystal-clear view, the squinty-eyed view of the reality that she had that she was better than he in this arena. Yet she made a conscious and irrevocable decision to stop painting at that instant. Astonishing isn't it. You see, her commitment to him was absolute. In my lifetime I have never seen any other people commit and dedicate themselves so totally, completely to another. I don't think you'll ever see it. It just doesn't happen.

I said above I could not do it, and I couldn't. My art comes out in my photography and writing and it would be like cutting off an arm or digging out one of my eyes to give them up. I couldn't do it because I am nourished by them, I need them, I cherish them. But that says more about my own selfishness than anything about her, doesn't it. She, too, understood what she gave up, and judging by this early, early picture, she enjoyed painting and doubtless found satisfaction in it. She is much bigger than I am, and much bigger than Jim when the whole spectrum of their lives is laid out on the table for analysis.

I read this story and feel tears when I allow my own heart to brush against the self-denial she exercised, and the devotion she had -still has- to him. I talk to her each day, and he comes up in some fashion several times a week. She still misses him and is so real to her that she dreams him present. She got up the other night, got a wool blanket out of the closet, and laid it on the bed so Jim would have it when he arrived during the night. It was the night before the day I arrived.



## Tuberculosis Sanatorium

This was the end of an era. TB was still treated by collecting patients into sanatorium where they were managed, to help them recover from TB. This San was created out of the barracks that were constructed as part of Fort Raymond during the 1940's for the military occupation during WW II. It was managed by Dr. Francis Phillips. This is a photo of him and his family in their new home in Anchorage, including Jane who was my age, the girl I liked the best in the dance club. It was mailed to us at 3 Auburn Terrace, Sept. 26, 1957, a year after we had moved.



Dr. Phillips -"Frank"- and dad were great friends. They had respect for each other and enjoyed Seward. There's a funny story about them and a huge cheddar cheese that involves a ship, the city dump, and the trunk of a car.

The city dump was a pile of garbage on the beach on the edge of town just north (left) of this tiny radio station -KIBH-that sat out alone on the flat by the lagoon. You passed the dump -and most of the time this radio station- every time you left town and returned. The San was about half a mile further north, so Dr. Phillips had many opportunities to comb that dump which he did regularly. He didn't need anything but loved the sense of adventure I guess. On one of his forays, he ran across a huge cheddar cheese. He could tell somehow from the packaging that it had been discarded by one of the ship's cooks and ended, alone, out there in the dump - waiting for Frank.

Well, Frank couldn't stand to see the waste. With a certain relish, he got out his



pocket knife, something every man and boy carried, literally, cut off a bit to taste and decided this thing was worth saving. He pulled his old car closer, un-wired the trunk, and raised the lid. He hoisted the huge yellow wheel and lay in on a piece of paper on the floor and shut the lid. Later he asked dad if he liked cheese. Dad allowed as how he did, Frank asked him if he'd be interested in tasting an interesting cheese, and he would be, so Frank took him mysteriously out to his old car. Dad didn't quite know what to make of this but Frank had a sense of humor so he played along with him. Frank ceremoniously un-wired the trunk because the lock was sprung, popped the lid up and said, "Behold!" Dad behelded, they cut bits off to taste, and dad went home with an enormous chunk of the stuff. Frank was as happy as dad. This block of cheese lasted a long time. It was aged, dry and crumbly, an excellent compliment to mom's spaghetti sauce.

Frank left Seward the year after we did, i.e. 1957, and he reported later that the San was closed around 1960. Treatment of TB had changed so much that patients didn't need to be herded together that way.

I am not clear why mom and took it on themselves to volunteer at the San like they did. It was a simple commitment, not an obligation. They weren't



proselyting - they never bothered people that way. Live and let live was their opinion about religious beliefs. Mom taught sewing to the women and dad just sat



around and talked to the men. Friendships were created this way and we stayed in touch for several years. We even received letters from them in Boston.

One of the immediate -though not expected- benefits of these friendships was their effect on our reception in the Indian villages along the Tanana and Yukon rivers in 1956. The patients knew we were taking that monumental trip so they gave us small gifts to personally deliver for them. As a result, when we approached the first man on the river bank after we landed and announced that we had a gift from Rhea Sam for Harry Bob, we were transformed in his eyes from a tourist to a friend. Word of who we were preceded us down the river so that people started turning out in their Sunday best to receive us, really an extraordinary thing.

Most of the patient were adults but there was also a scattering of kids which strikes me as odd because some of the kids of patients went to school with me. I expect that's where I got TB which resulted in coughing up blood in Ann Arbor many

years later, a week in the medical center to be pounded on and probed by residents who had never seen a live case of this old disease. Here's a page from dad's photo album of some of the kids. He painted the two little



boys in the center top but I think his favorite character was "Mosquito", the little girl second from the top on the right.

### David Kagak's Kayak

Out at the TB San, dad met a man, Stan, his name was not Dan, it was David. David was from up north, an Eskimo from Wainwright. His TB brought him to Seward for treatment and while he was there, he did 'arts and crafts' I guess you might call them, but it wasn't the trivial artificial kind that occupational therapists try to get patients to engage in today. This was authentic stuff, real seal rawhide, grass and bone. He made a kayak that is as lovely as any you will ever see. Because he knew what he was doing, and because he loved it. Look at him, standing here, holding this kayak, in love with it. His pride is evident.



His wife was also in the San, in this photo. David developed an affection for mom and dad and extended to them an interest that many patients did, proof of their authenticity when they served the patients. Mom and dad weren't "do-gooders" out there. No one sent them there. No one assigned them to do this. They got no credit. They simply chose to do it which startles me today because I didn't grasp what they did at the time. The proof that it was pure is this kind of response. David gave mom and dad a photo of his own family while they were hunting whales. Their large skin boats are called 'umiaks'. They haul them out on ice floes when they have walrus to gut, skin and section to haul back to the village.



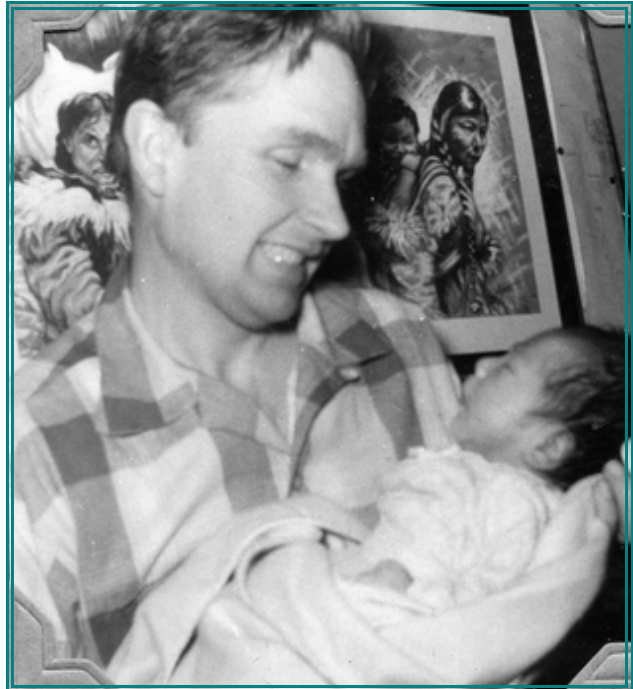
## Eva Black

Mom's and dad's work at the TB San made them familiar to the patients who saw them every week. Dad took a lot of photos of them because he was fascinated by the beauty and structure of their faces and because he was always hunting for models for his paintings. One of the Indians he liked best was Eva Black from Hooper Bay. She was skilled at making small baskets out of grass and we ended up buying 5 of them. This a shot of four of them here at 5324 SW. They are about 5 inches tall and have become valuable. I saw a small one last summer in Pike's Place in Seattle that was about the size of the one on the right selling for \$250. That wasn't why dad bought them, however. He bought them because he thought of preserving arts that were disappearing.

Here's a photo of Eva Herself holding one of those baskets. She's wearing a cloth parka with a fur ruff, an everyday sort of affair. Dad found her face appealing to paint so he painted her portrait several times, using this particular photograph to jog his memory. She is on the left of the following photo behind dad holding our Eskimo baby Andy.



How do you like the other picture in charcoal and chalk of an Eskimo Madonna? That was one of his favorite subjects which also sold well. Over the years I believe that he painted Indian and Eskimo Madonnas more than any other subject. He never talked about the appeal of this composition, or why he was attracted specifically to native Americans as subjects but they were central in the last half of his life. I never thought to ask about it. It was just how things were. Landscapes were his other favorite topic.



Here's a fragment of another of his Madonnas. The one above he did in charcoal and chalk on a greyish-tan paper. This one was done in oils, another of his three favored media, charcoal, pastels and oils. It wouldn't surprise me to discover that he sold half a dozen of this particular Madonna in Seward. I don't know who the model is but he captured her beauty and strength, with the sleeping infant that snared everyone's heart who saw the painting.



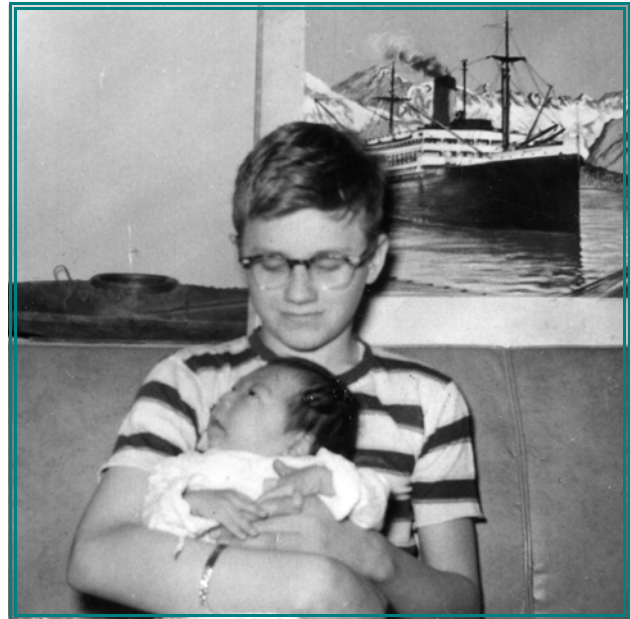
## Baby Eskimo Andy

Cecilia Andrews was a Eskimo at the TB San from Chuvak. She got involved with someone and one thing led to another and before you knew it, Little Andy needed somewhere to live because the San was not an appropriate place for infants. Again, I am surprised when I look back and remember the ruthless judgment of mom against any kind of sexual impropriety, promiscuity, or even allusions. Why would she take the spawn of illicit sex into her home? I don't know.



I wasn't offended because I understood the little kid needed to be someplace and I also understood that it was only a six month commitment. The fact that we had no room in the house for him wasn't an issue. We made room. That's always how it is. People who have little will do more than those who have much.

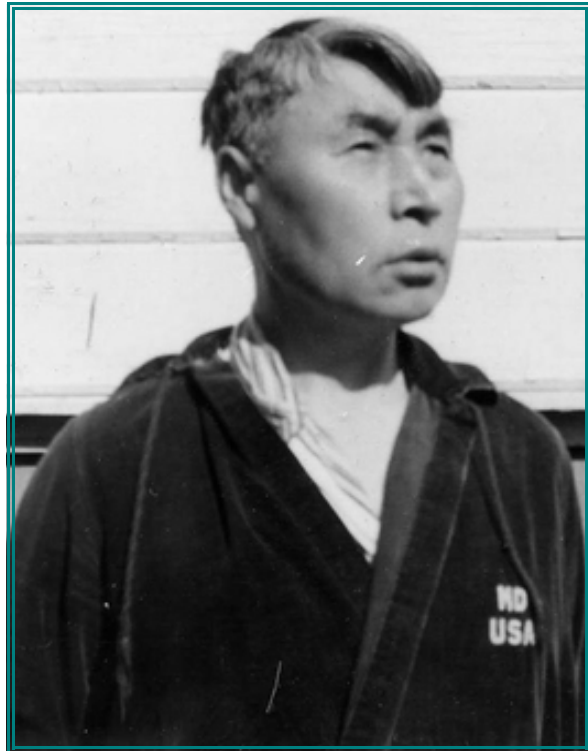
Anyway, Andy needed to be christened I think the word is by the Catholic priest I think it was. I didn't get to go. Mom reported later that Andy behaved himself well and that the only interruption was that he created when the priest sprinkled some salt on his lips. He began to smack his lips tasting the salt. Andy was a good-natured baby and we all took care of him for the time he lived with us. There was a photo years ago that's lost of mom wearing her parka with Andy in the hood, a model for dad's Madonnas.



## Harry Kigoruk

Harry was one of dad's favorite faces. That's sort of how he thought of them, friends who were subjects for painting. Harry was an Eskimo and had a high-cheeked, oriental-looking face. He was serious but approachable. Dad painted his face at least one time but the most important thing he did with Harry's countenance was to sculpt it.

Dad made two busts of Harry. One was about 3 inches tall and the other was about 10 inches tall. He worked in plasticine and then made latex molds so that he could make additional copies to sell. I was fascinated with the rubber mold business because I'd seen the plaster molds he made in Vernal for clay but never realized there was any other medium for molds. He painted the



completed plasticine model with tincture of green soap, just like he did when preparing a plaster mold, but then he painted on a light tan substance that had the consistency of runny pudding. He reinforced the mold by painting strips of cloth into it. Then he molded actual zippers in so he could easily open the mold to retrieve the cast. He'd fill the empty mold with plaster of Paris which set up quickly. After it was set, he'd remove it and make another, letting the fresh casts dry out. He'd pay me a nickel for sealing each model with shellac down stairs on a bench on the south end of the basement. When the casts were dry, he'd paint them with a bronze paint and then apply a watery black paint that he'd rub off, creating thereby shadows that gave drama to the model. He sold many casts around town and won first prize for sculpting in the Art Show at the 1956 Fur Rendezvous in Anchorage. Harry would have been glad.

## Leah Apayak

Leah was a lady who spent time at our house in town which she loved. Living all the time as a patient in the San was boring. She brought color into our lives, literally, by wearing a red shirt, orange slacks and pink socks. That killed dad. Impossible combination though she'd be right in style today I think.

Leah's cloth parka has a simple aurora ruff with the shoulder stripe from a wolverine, feet still attached. You can see that the creature is actually small for a wild animal, but they are the most disagreeable, fiercest of all. If a wolverine and a bear start to cross a gully on the same log, the bear will back down first.



Leah developed a deep affection for my parents. It struck me that they were substitutes for her own parents. Her speech was musical and accented because she apparently didn't grow up with English, but she spoke well. I think that part of the reason she liked to come to our place was the hope that she'd be allowed to go down town to meet other young people, but mom and dad didn't think that was a good idea.

Her Eskimo face was a pair to Harry's which meant that dad painted her and sculpted her. I went through the same drill with her casts as Harry's, earning a nickel for each one I shellacked for dad. He's holding one of the casts in this photo. Mom made our corduroy shirts.



She sent at least one letter to us in Boston.

## San Patient & Model Dogsled

I don't have the name of this man but he made the model he's holding here. He used blocks of balsa wood for the dogs and the driver, and birch wood for the sled. The dogs are wearing harnesses made out of string and a fine wire, and the sled had a foot brake with a toothed-metal strip from a tin can. Very nice model.

This was the sort of thing that worked with at the San, native crafts. He obviously didn't know the crafts but he helped men as they found satisfactory materials, taught them how to use tools to create certain effects. There was a shop at the San that sold items made by the patients, all of whom were Indians and Eskimos.





## 1955 Constitutional Convention

In 1955, 55 representatives from all parts of the territory met in Fairbanks at the University of Alaska to frame a constitution. It was anticipated that statehood would be coming and one of the prerequisites for that was to have a constitution. The representative from Seward was Irwin Metcalf, a well-known man. He's the man in the bottom left of this segment of the photo gallery of attendees.

This excerpt is from a special newspaper, dated Nov. 21, 1955, that "...was printed by the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, and is being distributed throughout the Territory of Alaska by the Alaska Statehood Committee... The Statehood Committee is taking this means to inform all citizens of Alaska exactly how the new constitution is written."

I have apparently been a pack-rat, archivist since the beginning because I saved my own copy of this newspaper. It struck me as a seminal event that Alaska now had a constitution in anticipation being granted statehood. I guess I was saving it for this point in time when I could tell you that



this momentous convention took place while I lived there and that I understood that it was of great importance.

According to the paper, the 55 delegates went to the University of Alaska and were given use of the entire student Union building which was named "Constitution Hall" in honor of the event. Over a period of 75 days -over two months- these men and 6 women hammered out a constitution that was acclaimed as a model. This constitutional convention had the advantage of hindsight, i.e. they could see mistakes made by other territories and take steps to minimize them. For example, this bunch decided that the people who would reapportion the legislative district would be people who were NOT elected legislators. Brilliant. Anyway, they did their work, got a congratulatory telegram from President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and went home. Four years later the territory was granted statehood and Alaska became the 49<sup>th</sup> state in the Union. I was in Boston at the time but was aware of the event.

### Ninilchik, Coal and Giant Razor Clams

Once a year in the spring there are ultra-low tides that expose beach that is never seen otherwise. That means that these tides are carefully watched. When they are scheduled to happen, people who want to take advantage of what they offer head to the beach. In our case, we wanted to go over to Ninilchik and on to a place called "Clam Gulch" for obvious reasons. We went over camped on the beach for several days so we could dig giant razor clams.

The beach was long and straight and some people used it as a landing strip. Here are Nels Hagen and Walter Johnston on the beach in front



of two piper

cubs. Behind the planes is the cliff that has veins of coal that we burned when we camped there.

We went over several years for this event and took Art and his family one time. On that trip, someone's grandmother was visiting from Utah so she came with us, a hardy soul who enjoyed camping out and cooking over a campfire in the wet cold.

Here she is stirring the smoking fire with a small shovel I'm the kid on the left eating from an aluminum plate, our '53 Chevy in the background. This beach was terribly crowded. You can see the other outfit camped out there in the background.

Our camp site was fairly flat. We came in two vehicles, Art's pickup and our Chevy. In front of the Chevy is the tent we made. We used poles to lash a framework and threw a large tarp over the frame to make an enormous tent for us all to sleep in. In the bottom picture you see Vonnie standing behind the pickup. She was my age but much taller. I'm the kid eating



there. Mary is wearing a scarf, pouring water out of a small milk can. Dick's on the left helping mom who's wearing a coat with a hood. In the distance on the left edge of the photo you can see a gray streak that is a little river that figured later in this adventure.

We liked to beach comb on any beach and if it was a new one, all the better. I spent hours wandering along, looking down at the flotsam and jetsam that collected, wondering about things. It wasn't raining so the sand was sort of dry and I was wandering back toward camp. I'd been out alone which was no problem since there was no storm and I knew how to be safe there. I caught up with an old woman, and I do mean she was old, perhaps in her '60's. Perhaps the weather had aged her face but she looked ancient. I did speak first but when she greeted me I replied. We fell into step and wandered leisurely along the beach not thinking about anything in particular, no urgency, just the slow passage of time to the periodic noise of the waves. She sounded like an educated person, perhaps a school teacher. She asked me where I was from so I told her. She asked me what grade I was in and I told her. She asked me if I had to memorize any poetry and I said I did. She asked me what I had memorized and I told her several titles. That launched her into "The Chambered Nautilus" by Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of the poems I had memorized:

"This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
Sails the unshadowed main, --  
The venturous bark that flings  
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,  
And coral reefs lie bare,  
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
And every chambered cell,  
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,  
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
Before thee lies revealed, --  
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
Child of the wandering sea,  
Cast from her lap, forlorn!  
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!  
While on mine ear it rings,  
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings: --

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

We got credit for memorizing a poem only if we stood in front of the class and recited it in its entirety but I was not used to people doing what she did. Without any stimulus other than the obvious pleasure it gave her, she recited the whole thing. We walked quietly while she almost chanted the poem, a thing she obviously loved. I was fascinated that an old person remembered the whole thing. After finishing that one, she launched into Longfellow's "Ship of State", another one I had memorized, a beautiful poem that was easier to appreciate than the Chambered Nautilus:

"Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!  
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!  
Humanity with all its fears,

With all the hopes of future years,  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!  
We know what Master laid thy keel,  
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,  
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,  
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,  
In what a forge and what a heat  
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!  
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;  
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,  
And not a rent made by the gale!  
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,  
In spite of false lights on the shore,  
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!  
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee.  
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
Are all with thee, -are all with thee!"

It sounded like a hymn. About this time we were next to my campsite so I told her good by and she wandered slowly on, looking down, leaning on a stick.

The low tides were about 10:00 a.m. so we had plenty of time to wake up, eat and get on our way. Clam Gulch was on the other side of the small river I pointed out above. We went in Art's pickup. When we got to the river, he stopped and he and dad went to the tires. I had never seen this before. They took off the valve stem caps and with a key they held in the valve to let out air. I never did anything like that on my bicycle but these were adults so had a trick up their sleeve. By the time they had finished, the tires were flatter and bulged widely. I didn't comment for fear I would sound like I was criticizing but I feared they were making a mistake.

They said to get in the back again so I did and we started again. Art drove slowly into the river which was perhaps a foot and a half deep, rushing quickly past us. It was probably 30-40 feet wide. We crossed it without any difficulty, thanks to the flattened tires that distributed the weight over a larger area. We went on to the clam beds which were a few hundred yards away and parked the truck. We

got out and started hunting for clams. They were all over the place. Art had two wash tubs to hold them and by the time we finished, we had in fact filled both. These clams were huge. They were so long that they wouldn't fit diagonally in a square 5-gallon can.

While we were there, something happened that was funny and sad. Another pickup came along the dirt road to join in the fun. They apparently were newcomers to the area. They saw where Art had parked and made an assumption that they, too, could just drive out there. What was the difference between the pickups? A pickup is a pickup, right? Well, not quite but they didn't know the difference yet. They drove up to the little river and bravely started across, assuming they were doing it the way we had, except they weren't. As they crossed they started to sink into the sound and about half way across they got high-centered. The driver probably wasn't too worried yet because he could see us over there so he probably figured he could make it across too, so he rocked the truck back and forth trying to free it. However, all he did was dig himself in deeper and deeper. All of his people were out of the truck pushing and cursing but to no avail.

When we returned across the river, we tried to help him but to no avail. His inflated tires had just cut grooves so deep that he was nearly up to his running boards in the sand. There was nothing that could be done to help him. Niniichik was several miles away and there was no heavy equipment there anyway that could help him get out. So in the end, he had to abandon his pickup when the tide came in. We didn't see the end of the story because we left the next morning.

### Gooseberries

What a weird name, "Gooseberries." No one knew where the name came from although the spelling suggests something to do with geese. Their taste is something to become acquainted with. We never grew them but dad seemed to like them. That meant that when Peggy Fleming offered some from her bushes, they were accepted after which they found their way into pies, about the only thing mom could do with them. The pie crust was great.



## Puffballs

I think I discovered that puff balls were edible from Joe Deischer's mom. She was a modern, up-to-date woman in the loveliest new house in town up in the mouth of Lowell Canyon. I'd go over the play with Joe sometimes and end up in the kitchen. I liked his mom. She was friendly and interested in kids and talked intelligently to us about things. She showed me how to wipe down the sugar crystals inside a pot of candy syrup as it is boiling, so that they didn't fall in later and cause the syrup to granulate or crystalize. She was into modern cooking and used local fungus, something that no one else that I knew would think of doing, probably because they didn't know which ones were safe.

After hearing that puffballs are edible, indeed a delicacy, I started to hunt for them. In the dark wet forest along the foot of Mt. Marathon, I'd hunt for clumps of these white balls. They practically glowed in my mind because they were so beautiful. I found two varieties, one that had a smooth skin and one that had a skin that was covered with small items that resembled tightly packed warts. I'd fill a container with these things and take them home where I'd wash them, and discard the ones that had started to turn. I'd slice them into thin slices watching for bugs, gray tissue, etc., the stuff that was no good.

The good slices I'd put on a cookie tray and set in the oven to dry. Mom never wanted to use them in her cooking which was OK with me because I had never seen her use them anyway. I was pleased for some reason, however, to be drying these puffballs and storing them in jars with lids. I set them down in the basement and threw them away when we moved.

## Playboy Calendar

Joe Deischer's family was enlightened about sexuality, particularly compared to my constipated, neurotic tribe. It was a shock to be shown around Joe's new bedroom that had its own bath. On the wall hung this calendar of scantily clad women. My goodness. The first Playboy calendar I'd ever seen, which he proudly showed, a month at a time.

Joe is the one who really told me the 'facts of life' one day. He and I were walking up the alley behind my house toward his new house. We were yakking about anything and out of the blue, he asked me if I knew the facts of life. I was too

embarrassed to even admit I did or that I didn't. The topic was scary with anyone. It turned out that Joe didn't really care whether I knew the facts of life or not because he was determined to recite them for me.

I said nothing and listened intently after he had launched into this dissertation about how men and women are constructed differently. That part I understood. Then he waxed eloquent about the manner in which the two structures fitted together. That made me start to feel a bit nervous and then he threw in the coup de grace. He described graphically what the deal was.

That was really the first time I was given a crystal clear explanation of the situation. I was horrified. That was the most disgusting thing I had heard in my entire life.

### Fasting & Stomachache

LDS have a custom of torturing themselves every month. On the first Sunday of the month, they indulge in a bit of self-flagellation. It's termed "Fasting", and you are supposed to go without food for two whole meals. Right? Two whole meals may not sound too bad. The way the rule was understood when I was a kid was this: you had to skip the Saturday evening meal and you had to skip the Sunday morning breakfast and only after you had attended church that morning could you go home, fix and eat a meal. Do you know how many hours that is? If you really do it that way you don't eat from Saturday at noon until Sunday after noon.

Well, my Old Testament, patriarchal parents insisted on the letter of the law like the good Jews they really were underneath. Scratch a stout LDS and you get Jewish blood. So when I was 10, 11 and so on, this regimen was enforced. With a vengeance. I vividly remember sitting in church with my stomach hurting badly, wanting to go home to eat. But I might as well have fallen on my sword as ask to do that. So I'd stick it out until things were over and then head home.

But when we got home, we were not allowed to have even a piece of bread. The rules was rules and we had to wait until mom had finished making dinner which usually meant waiting for her to at least make gravy, not the fasted thing in her armamentarium. I'd go change my clothes, stomach hurting like blazes and sometimes I'd lay on my bed and cry to myself it hurt so bad. But did that persuade my parents that perhaps their implementation of the law was excessively

harsh, that perhaps good ol' Jesus Christ himself might have snuck me a cracker? Nope. Not at all. All it did was convince them that I hadn't yet learned to understand the rule and what it meant.

In fact, I had learned to understand what it meant. It meant, "Go ahead, Abuse your children so that you can publicly say they are 'following the rule.'" Pretty damn cynical outcome.

## Vomiting

I don't know whose side of the family this trait came from but I'd like to give it back. From as far back as I can remember, I can remember throwing up, "vomiting" as mom called it, such a crude word. One of the four letter Anglo-Saxon words I'd guess, at least it sounds like one. My poor stomach has always been wary about what I put into it with the result that I found myself throwing up with distressing frequency. Dickie didn't. He'd be sleeping peacefully while I'm having a circus.

There are two things about this exercise that distress me. First, the fact that I feel nauseated to that extent is pretty awful, and second, I didn't know how to throw up, indeed I refused. \When I felt sick to my stomach, I'd tell mom about it. She'd usually fire up an alka-seltzer which is probably the reason that I actually enjoy them. I find it as enjoyable as a glass of tonic water which is almost what it is. She seemed to have a theory that I would not drink the stuff without special handling, probably based on experience with me or other kids. As soon as the tablet had risen to the surface of the water, bubbling and spraying tiny drops of water everywhere, she'd say with conviction, "You have to drink it while it's still bubbling!" What did I know. She was the adult, so I'd obediently -because I didn't really need the laying of hands here- drink the glass down. It didn't bother me at all. I would have drunk it without her urgent order. I don't know. Maybe it just made her feel like she was doing her job that otherwise was pretty dull - dropping two tablets into a glass of water isn't difficult. Perhaps the package urged cheerleading on the adults. In any event, the stuff usually did the job for me. I could tell in half an hour if I was past the worst.

If I wasn't past the worst, the worst was yet to come, and come it did. I would pop out of bed -these episodes usually happened during the night after I had been in bed a while. Even today, if I can get past 2:00 a.m. with nausea, I will make

it through the rest of the night. Midnight to 2 am is the danger zone. When I had to go throw up after rolling around in bed agonizing over the possibility, I'd holler something about I'm going to throw up and the ruckus I raised was sufficient to stir mom out of bed. She'd stagger in haggard and squinty eyed to participate. I didn't appreciate her participation though I understand her point of view. As I hunched over the slop bucket or outside over the ground, or over a toilet with the lid raised, my stomach would clench and hurt. I'd gasp a little bit and swallow hard, trying to keep from puking. This would go on for a few minutes, and I kid myself that the nausea that prompted me to jump out of bed had passed. It hadn't. It was just playing with me.

Eventually I'd get worked up enough that reverse peristalsis would start. At that point I'd usually be leaning but not bending, not a good position when you're going to broadcast a cup or two of vomit so mom would push my shoulders down and yell, "Lean over!" Between the urgency to puke, the desire to not, and mom's yelling, I was in a state. When the stuff finally got to the top, I wouldn't let it out. That made mom madder. I'd be obediently leaning way over, but I'd have my mouth shut tight. My poor nose. I expect you've felt the acid in your own noses. When mom saw me clenching my teeth with that crap coming out the nose, she slap me hard several times on the back of the head and yell, "Open your mouth! Open your mouth!"

She was obviously saying the right thing but somehow I didn't really get it that I could stop the stuff coming out my nose if I'd open my mouth first. She understood that I didn't understand but it frustrated the heck out of her.

### Blueberries & Baby Bears

About Mile 3 outside of Seward there was an abandoned logging road that ran off to the west. It was on a curve so was easy to pass if you didn't know what you were looking for. That was also the place that a dog ran into our car one winter. That's right. A dog ran into our car as we were driving out to Schaefermeyers. The snow was piled high along the road and apparently this dog has been running in it or something because I doubt he started out intending to ram us. Something went wrong for the dog just as we were driving past him in our 53 Chevy. At that instant, as the dog came loose from the snow bank it popped out into the roadway, striking the passenger side with a loud thump. We stopped, the

dog ran off, and there was no damage to the car.

I don't know how mom knew to take that particular logging trail to hunt blueberries though I'd guess someone told her it was a great place to get great big blueberries. In those days I thought blue berries were particularly wonderful, though today they are too watery to enjoy. Give me any other berry. I think they're way over-rated.

Anyway, this particular year while dad was on the docks, mom took us kids out with buckets to that trail to hike back in to find the famous blueberry bushes that reportedly had the largest berries in the area. The hike must have been a quarter to a half mile which was nothing in those days. Today no one walks anywhere but then we walked everywhere. It was a gray day, moist and cool, but not cold and not raining. We had no difficulty finding the berries, at least mom didn't, so we each took a container and started picking. Mom told us to not get too far away from her which was her standard warning. We usually observed the rule fairly closely even if we didn't think there was any risk out there because there was a substantial risk 'here'. Her words were prophetic that day.

We had been picking for a long time, working our way around bushes back along the trail with large evergreens hanging over us. I don't know which one of us made the discovery, but one of us came across a fresh pile of bear poop. It's not like deer or moose and too big to be anything but something big, which left bears. We talked about it a bit and mom gave us a sterner warning to stay around her. We actually didn't need it, but we pretended to agree with her.

We kept picking the berries which were, indeed, enormous. That was a great way to pick berries because it fills a container so fast. We lost ourselves in the mission to fill mom's bucket so we could go back home. Suddenly we heard a crackling in the distance. That alarmed all of us, mom included. There was no one out there. The trail hadn't been used for years. That noise, with the fresh spoor, the berries that bears love, the fact that we hadn't brought a gun, and the distance from the car made our minds up fast. As a group we grabbed up our container and berries and headed back out the trail. We heard one more crackling but never saw anything. That didn't matter, however. We were sure it was a bear and were sure that we were going to get between a sow and her cubs so we beat it. We got back to the car without incident other than being winded and got back to town with a great collection of blueberries.

## Boston Bound

I don't remember precisely when it was but somewhere in the winter of 1955-56 dad got a communication from Arnie Lewis who was a preparator in the Department of Vertebrate Paleontology in the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Peabody Museum at Harvard University. Arnie had hired dad in Vernal to mount several eagle and hawks so they had an acquaintance based on that encounter that blossomed into a long-lasting friendship. What happened was that Harvard came up with money to hire another preparator and told Arnie to find one, so Arnie knew dad and thought he might like the job. So he contacted dad up there on the other side of the continent and asked if he'd like the job. I was unaware of the details or even the number of letters and/or phone calls, just that something was going on.

In 1955-56 I was in the eighth grade and Seward education was severely limited. Why wouldn't it be. This was a tiny town of 2,000 people without any industry at all, no manufacturers, a minuscule bit of farming, and only a handful of businesses that eked out an existence on the citizens. All 12 grades were crowded into one building. There was simply no tax base to be able to fund fancy schools. So mom and dad were agonizing over the idea of quality education and were thinking already about moving stateside to find better schools for us. It didn't make much difference to me. I had no sense at all of 'quality' in education. I just knew which teachers I liked and which ones I didn't, and what subjects I liked and which ones I didn't.

Arnie's offer came at an opportune time. The fact that the job was in paleontology, dad's life-long love, in Boston which certainly had better schools than Seward made it nearly impossible for dad to turn down. However, he finally said that he would only accept it on one condition, and interesting thing for the job applicant to offer. He said he would take the job IF he was allowed enough time to take the trip we had been planning for several months. He was not going to take any job if he was denied this opportunity of a lifetime.

In the end, Harvard said it was OK if he was late arriving, that they would be in Nova Scotia on an expedition that they needed him on, and that as soon as he was back stateside, he was to fly out to Boston and then up to Nova Scotia. That's what happened. We took that amazing trip down the Yukon, just the four of us. I've talked elsewhere about the pain of discarding most of our belongings. It was difficult and it was really the prospect of this Yukon trip that made it palatable.

I've wondered how much worse it might have been if dad had accepted the job and we had to do this process without any prospect of an exciting three-week excursion.

The final amount of things we were going to be able to take was simply a matter of volume. How much stuff can you fit in the wooden box he had built on the back of his half-ton Chevrolet pickup. That was the limit. We pared things down to the bone and ended up not taking a single piece of furniture, not even beds. Toys were cast off, tools except for basic ones, books, drapes and curtains, everything but the bare minimum was left behind, either given away or discarded.

After everything was condensed, a large woman named Mary Something agreed to drive the pickup out to Great Falls Montana and leave it there for us. It was her way of getting stateside at minimal cost to her. I don't know who paid for the gas for that leg of the trip. I just remember that when we got to Great Falls a month later, the pickup was in the parking lot of an elaborate funeral home with red velour wall paper and heavy sconces, sort of like something out of an Adam's Family cartoon. She took off on that trip about the same day we drove to Anchorage. We made final arrangements in Anchorage for the trip, parked out 1953 Chevy and got on the Alaska Railroad up to Nenana.

Here's a photo of that truck with all of our worldly belongings, in front of our 1953 Chevy, somewhere in Montana. The story of that adventure follows in the next volume. Just remember that when that was over, we flew back to Anchorage with a few belonging we could carry, got into the car and then drove out over the Alcan Highway.

