

2nd Avenue Place

After living at Homebrew Alley for a year and a half, mom and dad rented this little house up on Second Avenue. The motivation to move is probably evident from the things I've told you already. Homebrew Alley was not the nicest place in town to raise a pair of boys. It was interesting and eventful, but there were other places more suitable for raising families so we moved. The geographical distance between the two houses wasn't great, perhaps a quarter mile at the most, but socially it was a different dimension. Homebrew and prostitution versus living 3 houses away from the Episcopal Church. The move was an event of great interest and I remember the excitement of going to live in a house that had a basement, the first one I personally lived in. As noted above, I don't know why dad didn't rent this kind of place straight off when moving to Seward but I suspect it had to do with money, which was in real short supply, and probably the supply of single-family dwellings. I couldn't remember the address of this house until I visited it again in 2003. But the problem is that the address has been changed. It's now 309 instead of 307 Second Avenue. Dick and I both agree that it was 307 even though the number on the house today is 309. I don't know what happened.

The amazing thing about this house was the discovery I made in 2003. I



found this photo in mom's and dad's stuff and I was stunned. That's the house and that's mom and that was in 1941 just after they were married. It was shock to be

sifting through photos of SLC, Naples, Hawaii and Seward and to see this come to the top. I had no idea that they had lived in that house back then. (Of course, they probably told me the story when we lived there but it was completely gone from my memory.)

As I got the story from mom in 2003, this house was owned by Luella James who owned the Alaska Shop, McMullins, and a variety of residential -that's about all there were- properties in the town. Luella lived up the road from this house. I remember Luella's house because I did some yard work for her there. Next to Luella's place there was a large 2-story house that had been converted into a boarding house where single men lived. In those days there were no such things as co-ed facilities. Any woman who might have dared live in an all-male boarding house would have been advertising that she was wanton and loose and fair game. The counterbalancing part of this equation is that any men who remained in such a facility would also damage their reputation. Any self-respecting man wouldn't be caught in the same sleeping facility as a jezebel. Things have changed but I'm not sure for the better but I'm just an old man.

2nd Avenue Boarding House

I couldn't find any photos of the boarding house back then and when I saw it in 2003, it had gone the way of the world. There was an American Flag that suggested someone lived there and the roof was new but otherwise it was pretty run down. There used to be a porch on the front that men sat on in the evening. Luella's house was to the right of this house and the post master's house was to the left where we played with his daughters. That's Mr. Marathon in the background. There is now a huge trail worn into the mountain from the climbers.

Anyway, dad lived in this boarding house in 1941 and about the time mom was headed up to get married, he arranged with Luella across the yard to rent the little house at 307 from her so that when mom arrived he'd have a house for her to live in. That's how they came to live there. So our living on 2nd Avenue in 1953 was just a continuation of their prior life there. It isn't unlikely that mom told us that fact but if she did, it didn't stick. What meaning would that information have to a little kid.

When we returned to visit in 2003, I obviously was anxious to see this house, see if it was still there and so on. It was there and I was able to go inside thanks to the owner, who lived in Schaefermeyer's house next door.

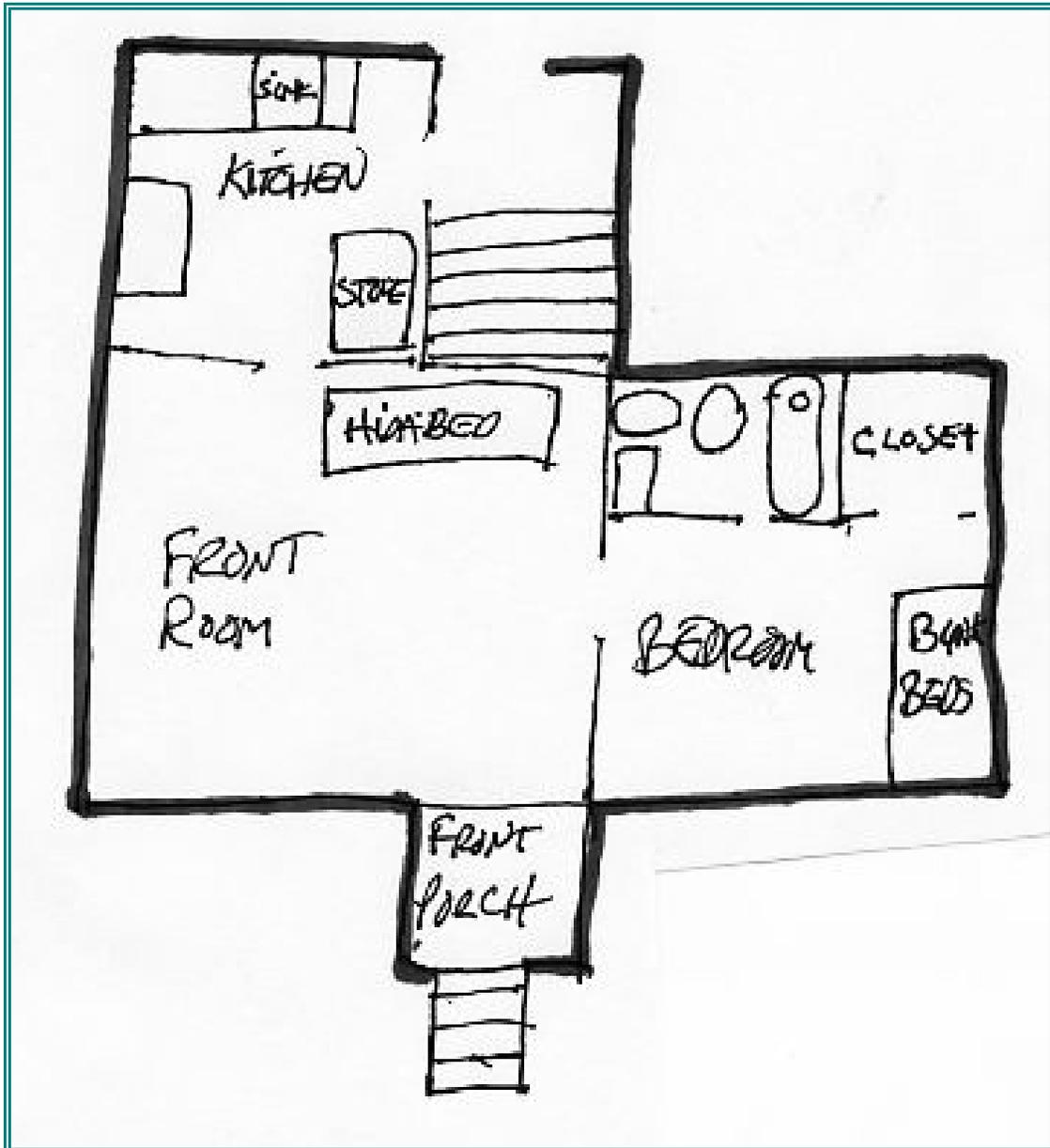




This photo is also slanted so I am guessing that the steep slope of 2nd Avenue is what causes photographers to tilt their photos. Anyway, this is the same house but with modern siding. Dave Fleming's house also has siding as well as a dish. The house across the alley from Dave's place had been missing for a long time.

The house was not really any bigger than the one on Homebrew Alley but instead of an attic, it had a full-size basement, a musty damp smelling place that only had two tiny windows.

Here's a crude drawing of the main floor of the house. I haven't included measurements but look at the photo of me above and imagine how much of the



front of the house would be covered by my 6-foot reach if I had stretched out my arms - perhaps 25 feet wide, the large dimension.

The first floor consisted of an enclosed porch entry way, a living room, a bedroom, a narrow closet, a bathroom and a kitchen. The house was probably no more than 500 square feet. I look back and see that my folks actually did a little

self sacrifice for Dick and me, which I didn't recognize at the time. They put us boys in the only bedroom and chose instead to sleep in the front on a hid-a-bed. My experience with hid-a-beds is that they are equivalent to mild torture and sleeping on one for 3 years must have been pretty awful. Let's go through the rooms in no particular order.

Front Porch

That entry way was sort of a large walk-through closet where coats and boots were kept and it served the function of keeping the main part of the house closed when the outside door was opened. That way the cold wind didn't blow into the house. It was sort of like an intermediate lock to come in or to go out in the winter. Most houses had that sort of entry way. On one side there was a bar from wall to wall to hang things on, basically our coats. Boots lay on the floor underneath, a shelf over the top of them held hats and miscellaneous things. There was a small table with a box on the top for gloves, most of which seemed to be missing a pair. This porch thing has now been given a yuppie name now. When I was there in 2003, people referred to an "arctic entrance." How cute. The damn thing is an unheated porch and is used other places than the arctic. <Growl>

The challenge of that porch was its steps, in the winter. The snow obviously collected during the night so it needed to be shoveled off in the morning. Simple enough thing to do but somehow the snow didn't always get scraped off sufficiently and then ice built up. And the ice was slippery so we could fall and so on. There was a sack of rock salt in the porch the we could sprinkle on the ice to melt it which worked pretty well. The best solution was to take the spud an chip the ice off so the wooden steps were exposed and we'd do that - when ordered by mom or dad. Otherwise we'd use the salt.

Dressing for a winter night's work

Sit close my children and let me tell you an extraordinary tale of what my dad did for me. He worked all night on the dock to put food on the table for me. If you think that's trivial, then you don't really understand what this entailed in those days. I understood it because when I walked from Homebrew alley up the hill to school, the wind blew so hard it would knock me down some times, the cold was so bad that I couldn't move my lips when I got to school and in

spite of my warm coat I was frozen to the bone. I knew what it was like in that weather for 20 minutes and knew it was horrible to spend 10 hours outside in it. My dad worked it when assigned and I never heard him complain once. He was stoical and carefully prepared for it. The things that made dockside longshoring so tough in the winter included:

First, the work was outside. Second, all motor-operated equipment that longshoremen used was open and unheated. Third, the weather was cold, really cold. Fourth, the weather was wet, even if it didn't rain or snow. Fifth, the wind blew hard and sixth, the night shift ran from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. so there were long long stretches of darkness in that bitter wet cold with winds that would push you over.

Dad went out there at night and worked. It was not a fool's errand.

Dad's work clothing hung out in the closet because it was so bulky. There was only the one small closet in the whole house and it was filled with mom's nice dresses and dad's suit. In the winter if dad was working night shift, one of us kids would be sent out to the closet half an hour or so before dad had to go to work. That kid was assigned to bring in whatever things dad was going to wear to work that night because he wanted them pre-warmed. It was bitterly cold in the daytime and more so at night.

When he was assigned to drive spotter or jitney, he had to sit. Just sit. All night, for hours on end. Just sit. No chance for exercise to warm him up, so he bought heavy, fleece-filled pants to keep his legs warm. He wore two pairs of real, knee-high, wool socks inside of large rubber boots that had a thick woolen felt insole to keep them as warm as possible. He wore at least one pair of long-handled underwear under heavy pants and a long-sleeved flannel shirt. Over the top of it all he wore a heavy, quilted coat.

Vat skin

One of dad's quilted coats was wearing out the fall of 1953. He needed a new one with winter coming, but liked this one because it was an old friend and so warm. To buy a new one as good would cost a large sum of money which he didn't really want to do, so the ever-resourceful Marie looked the old one over. She considered how it was constructed, and being a highly skilled seamstress, she decided that she could take this thing apart and rescue the

important parts, the quilted body and arms. The frequently-patched lining and outer cover were shredded beyond repair this time, so she would just discard those as she disassembled the garment.

She took her seam ripper and ripped the seams. The whole thing came apart, dusty and greasy on the outside, but the quilted portions were intact. She cleaned up the edges and prepared them to be rebuilt. Meantime she had taken James A. in hand and persuaded him to pick the cover she wanted. She wanted him to have what he wanted, her only reservations being (1) cost and (2) durability. He passed both tests by picking out an unusually heavy corduroy piece that was patterned like an animal pelt. I doubt that the pattern mattered to him. Sitting out there in the night, appearances were of no interest. Just keep me warm. I have to wonder today whether his choice was as free as it was represented. Marie had a way of funneling you to making a choice that you thought was your choice which was the choice she wanted you to make.

So she took this heavy piece of brownish-orangish pelt-patterned corduroy and laid it on the table where she decided how to get the greatest economy out of it as she cuts the pieces for the arms, yoke, back and fronts. He had also picked out a heavy satinish fabric of a nondescript color for her to use as the liner. She finally cut all of the pieces out and carefully began the process of reconstructing this heavy quilted coat. Not surprisingly, she succeeded. There was never any surprise about her finishing a job and doing it well. The only surprises were what projects she picked.

Dad started wearing the coat that fall and loved it. He got the same warmth from it as before so had a real affection for this old coat that was given a new lease on life, saving a bundle to boot. It was given a name by one of the rugged old Scandinavians who infested the docks. This man whose name I've forgotten approached dad one night about this "new" coat. In the darkness he could see the pattern that resembled that of some sort of animal but couldn't tell whether it really was from an animal. In those days people proudly wore animal skins. He squinted at the coat, took his glove off, and fingered the fabric, and asked, "Vat skin is dis?" Dad loved it. As a result that coat was christened his "vatskin" and he repeated that story with gusto. When he instructed us to get his things for the night, he'd tell us which quilted pants and so on, and say to get his 'vatskin'. It hung in that closet until we left.

Front Room

The front room was the multi-purpose room. Everything happened in that room, primarily because there was no where else for anything to happen. This was a really tiny house. There isn't a really good photo that shows the room, primarily because it was so small. This shot gives you about as good a view as any of the tiny room. The door on the left is to the kitchen, the pictures on wall are above the hid-a-bed that doubled as the living room couch during the day and mom's and dad's bed each night. The lamp is sitting on the north wall with the doorway into the small bedroom just out of sight of the right edge of this photo. A tiny tiny room. The lamp is sitting on mom's sewing machine.



I later found another photo that actually showed the hid-a-bed and gives a different perspective on this room. These are four missionaries who visited us as often as they dared. The only name I remember is "Wood" who is the supercilious second from the left.

More of Dad's pictures hang on the wall and sit on the back of the hid-a-bed. He had a never-ending stream of pictures. And his electric guitar case is on the right side of the couch, next to the sewing machine.



The doorway shows the west wall of the kitchen. The window with sun shining through the curtains sits above the sink where I washed a lot of dishes. A cupboard is to the left of the curtains on the wall which was where the dishes were stored. The man on the right could reach his left arm out and touch the wall to the bedroom.

The hid-a-bed sits on one side of the kitchen door and on the other side of the door was an easy chair. Mom's sitting in it with "Andy", the Eskimo baby that we took care of for 6 months while his unwed mom was finishing treatment at the TB San. There's a steam radiator here that illustrates how our house was heated. These radiators experienced "Steam hammers", blew off steam and made the floors wet but they heated the house. Just don't sit on one.



Bedroom

The single bed room in the house was a narrow room with two doors on the west end. The first door was to the bathroom and the second was to the closet. On the north wall there was a pair of bunk beds that dad built out of 2 x 4's that he scrounged from the docks. We bought straw tick mattresses from Andy's Army Surplus store and slept on them. I don't know whether they were comfortable or not because in those days or conditions comfort was not a consideration. Just having a place to sleep was the issue. Dad build a ladder to get to the top bunk. It was notched so that it would hang on the edge of the top bunk. He also build a railing about 10 inches tall about a bout a yard long along the top end of the top bunk to keep the sleeper from falling out. It worked, most of the time. I usually slept in the top bunk but when I had surgery on my leg I slept in the bottom bunk. One night I was awakened by a loud crash. Dick had fallen out

of the top bunk onto the orange crates, destroying one of them. The next day he couldn't remember anything unusual.

Next to the beds were two wooden orange crates sitting end that held our toys and books and play things. They were excellent cases to use for storage because they were about a yard high, about 18 inches deep and 18 inches wide. They had a sturdy shelf across the middle, so when these cases were turned on end, there were three shelves to put our stuff on.

When I practised clarinet, I sat on the lower bunk and read from a music stand we bought from Sears & Roebucks.

Closet

The only closet in the house was a narrow one at the foot of the bunk beds. It was where mom and dad hung their clothes, us boys not having any particular things that required hanging. The arrangement didn't strike me as inconvenient probably because the house was so small that there was no distance to go for mom to hang things. We kept our shoes on the floor of the closet if we didn't push them under the bottom bunk.

Kitchen

The kitchen was wide enough for a narrow table, a narrow stove and a narrow path between them. And long enough to add cupboards at each end. You see one bit of the kitchen in the photo above and this photo shows mom standing at the propane stove we cooked on. It's hard to make out the details in this poor photo but to mom's left is the refrigerator. The wall she is facing has a door in it across from the refrigerator. You can see the crotch of the wall and ceiling over her head which gives you an idea of how short this room was.

The stove is on long skinny legs so we could lay on



the floor under it. That's where I was laying one day reading the local paper. I must have been about 12 or 13 and I ran across a word I'd never heard. I couldn't see mom's face because I was lying on the floor under the stove looking down at the paper. I was a completely innocent kid and read an article about two men who had been arrested by the police for an activity out by Gabe's Place. I didn't understand all the words so I asked her, "What does 'rape' mean?" Whoa.

Her response was one of those that kids get when asking about sex, sort of a guillotine. The conversation is whacked off right then and there. I knew that whatever it was I wasn't going to hear the answer nor did I care to hear it. It wasn't the words themselves that conveyed the message because the essence was, "Oh, you'll have to wait till you're older to understand what that is." It was the emotional baggage that came with those words that were sort of a slap in the face, a message that I was pretty damn presumptuous to talk that way, to ask questions like that, so shut your mouth please and don't embarrass me like that again.

The oven is the higher part of the stove to her left, and the drawers underneath were for pots and pans. The stove was new at the time, a modern appliance compared to the coal stoves we used in Vernal and the old stove we used in Homebrew Alley. It was "down town" - or "uptown" as the case may be. She prepared good meals for us

Basement

The stairs to the full-size -which isn't saying much- basement were steep. The walls were the concrete foundation for the house. The concrete hadn't been sufficiently jiggled so the surface of the wall was basically a curtain of rock indentations. They were constantly moist from all the rain so the basement smelled wet and moldy all the time. Since it was the first basement I'd lived with, I thought it was pretty nice. The idea of walking down wooden steps into the ground where things we needed were stored pleased me.

The original heat source for the house was a coal-burning furnace. It must have been in place when mom and dad lived in the house in 1941. It had been replaced by the time I moved in with an oil-burning furnace that was supplied from a 150 gallon tank that sat above ground on stilts. The line down into the basement is visible here in the middle left side, an inch thick line going into the wall. The storage tank set to the left of this photo and was filled several times during the

winter by a truck that made the rounds, driving up the alleys to more easily reach the backyard storage tanks. This furnace made a fair amount of noise when it was operating. There was a constant smell of fuel oil in the basement in particular from spills over time, a smell that was faintly present upstairs as well. The old coal storage room was too dirty to be used for anything so it sat empty, covered with a layer of fine coal dust. We played a bit in it but it was too much of a hassle upstairs to hear about it.

This image shows both the back door and the entrance to the basement. This is the backdoor. The steps down into the basement are to mom's right and the door into the kitchen is to her left. Notice the things standing against the wall, a board, a sled, and on the ground are other pieces of wood, and an old tire. The back step wasn't there. You can see under the door jamb where there is missing siding. That's because the steps were removed before we moved in, so dad just put a heavy board on the ground on top of a pair of 2 x 4's to hold it up. Long step down.

There were three long narrow windows in the basement. Two were on the east end and one on the south side. Dad built a work bench along the east wall where Dick and I learned to do some woodworking. The remainder of the basement was basically used for storage of things since the house was so small.

We had a cat who enjoyed those stairs. In the dark the cat -the one who freaked out regularly and tore up the drapes to the top of the windows- would take a marble and push it off the top step. It would roll bumping down to the bottom. The cat followed it down and if it stopped, would push it again to make it roll.



Then, the surprise was that the cat would take the marble in her mouth and carry it back to the top of the stairs and repeat the performance. While we were trying to sleep.

Backyard Yard

The backyard was just a piece of ground that had lots of junk lying around, a barrel, pieces of logs and so on. It looks OK here because it's covered with snow. Dick is holding onto Kobuk's chain for this photo. The chain was connected to the clothes lines over his head to allow him free run end to end. In the summer we could hardly reach the lines.



When the men who ran the Marathon started preparing for the run on July 4th, some of them would come through this back yard, looking at the junk lying around. They would rearrange it so that they had a clear course if they chose to run that way on the race day, otherwise it would have been an obstacle course.

The black structure on the left of the photo is the tar paper covered porch on the back side of Schaefermeyer's house and the shed on the other end of the yard with torn tar paper was also theirs. The little house in the middle is that of Mr. Leonard, the plumber who lived alone. The spire of the Episcopal church is sticking up above his roof.

Front Yard

Summer in Seward was characterized by three things: lots of rain, lots of daytime (though not lots of sunshine) and cool temperatures.

These conditions encouraged the plants in our yards, front and back, to grow. 20 hours a day. This front yard had a bumper crop of dandelions. Some of them reached a yard in height and had blossoms that were



as large as the end of a Carnation Condensed milk can. On more than one occasion people came through our yard as they were picking dandelion blossoms to make dandelion wine.

The back yard in this photo had a great crop of a grass that grew enthusiastically in those conditions. The only time these weeds were "mowed" was when us kids decided that we needed to make secret pathways, or needed something to build forts. Lawn care was not on anybody's list of things that absolutely had to be done. There were some homes like the Lilly James and the Blues where lawns were mowed and I even mowed Lilly's yard up the road. But I think more homes dispensed with such niceties. Spending money on gas to cut grass? Spending money on chemicals to make grass grow? Plain Nuts.



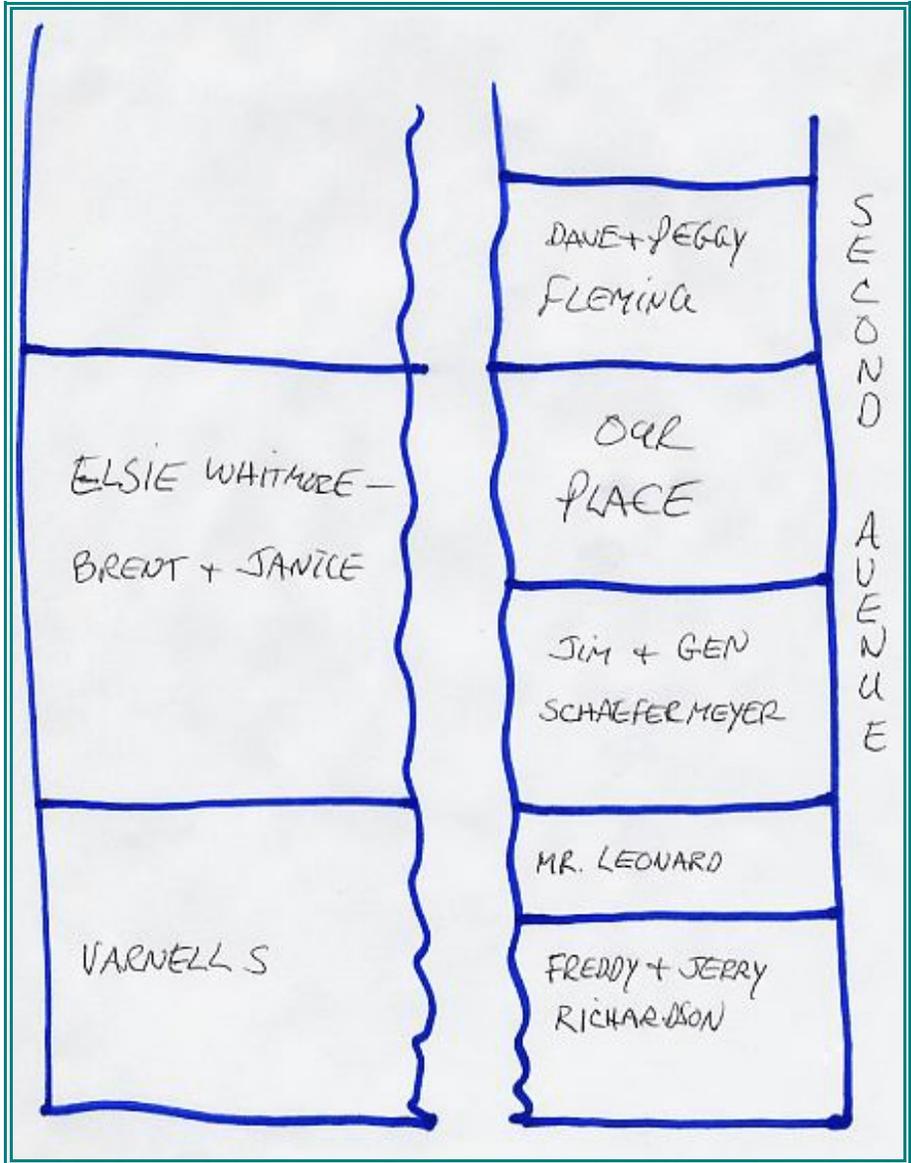
Neighbors

Let me introduce closely to the neighbors who filled the points of my compass on 2nd Avenue. Our neighbors were:

- 1) Dave and Peggy Fleming to the north,
- 2) Jim and Gen Schaefermeyer to the south,
- 3) Whitmore behind us to the west over the alley,
- 4) Mr. Leonard by Jim and Gen,
- 5) Freddy and Jerry Richardson next to Mr. Leonard,
- 6) across the road was an empty lot with a house on the north filled with people that my mother distrusted,
- 7) the Episcopal Church, and
- 8) A partially built log cabin across the road.

The map on the next page shows the locations and approximate sizes of most of these lots. North is toward the top. The alley running through the lot is the extension of Homebrew Alley.

I'll talk about each of these places, the people and include some photos when I can find them. They constituted my universe for several formative years.



The house of ill-repute sat about here.

The log cabin sat about here.

A more or less empty field was here.

A house set here with a vacant lot in front of it.

1. Dave & Peggy Fleming

Dave and Peggy had no children at home. Whether they never had any or they were grown and moved away I don't know. My sense was that Peggy was childless. She kept a Budgie Bird that entertained us, and treated us like nephews. Dave was a longshoreman with dad so they knew each other on the docks and at home. In this 2003 photo you see our



house by Fleming's house. And here are clips of the back and front of that house from that era. The basement wasn't occupied. It was a work shop and garage.



2. Gen and Jim Schaefermeyer

Our house is in the middle of this photo, Schaefermeyer's is on the left and Whitmore's is behind us. For the record I should point out that the Schaefermeyer family that lived in this house is Jim and Genevieve, not Art and Mary. They came up a year after we moved there. Their house was two stories and they had five children, oldest to youngest: Gloria who married Jack Parrett, Jeanie, Vonnie (my age), Darrel and Susan. Jim was a mechanic who didn't much hunt or fish and Gen was into everything. Little Bear is there behind everything.



It looked like this in 2003. The old outbuildings were torn down, the house was cleaned up with new siding. You can see Mr. Leonard's small house peeking around the left end. It is funny to see lawn and concrete stairs.



This is Darrell Schaefermeyer who was a little kid when I left in 1956. He served most successfully as city manager for various years and helped develop the Exit Glacier and the shipbuilding yard at 4th of July Creek. It turned out that the house we spent the week in during July 2003 was 3 houses away from his house so I spent 15 minutes chatting with him. He got a funny look on his face when I referred to my beloved ammunition collection that I gave to him -under duress- when I left in '56.



This 2003 photo shows greatly cleaned up Schaefermeyers, our old house and Flemings. Ours was the only single story house. When we lived there, the yard were rough as I pointed out and the houses wore old asbestos shingles with shabby paint jobs.



3. Whitmores

I actually don't have a single good photo of Whitmore's house, either from 1950's or 2003. I am amazed to sit here right now and realize that since I was standing there a few months ago, I walked through my house, entered Whitmore's house and spent an evening talking to Brent and Elsie. But I didn't. Too much excitement in re-meeting my history.



In the left clip, dad's salvage boat sits under a snow covered tarp, awaiting his work on it in the spring. He finally sold it. In the right photo, Dick and I are digging out the old canoe that was inverted under the snow for the winter. Janice Whitmore is in the red coat and she's looking at the backdoor of the Whitmore home.

I just noticed that the Whitmore back porch is different in the two photos. On the left the door was positioned between two windows and on the right the door is on the right side of the porch. I don't remember the construction that obviously took place as shown by the black tar paper on the right which was in 1956 just before we left. They must have extended the porch. Now I do have a memory of construction but only of the idea of construction.

4. Mr. Leonard



Mr. Leonard was a plumber and seemed to live alone. In the depression in the left photo, there was a long narrow building about 6 feet tall that he stored his pipe stock in. Us kids would crawl through the place for the heck of it, sort of an adventure because we imagined we weren't supposed to do that. He didn't seem to be an angry man but he was an adult so was one of "them" to be feared and respected. Taking advantage of his stuff to play seemed a reasonable thing to do, particularly since there was a dearth of things to do in that unadorned little town.

He drove a Crosley truck around town with his tools and supplies sticking out the back-end.

The Richardson's house stood in the lot to the left of Mr. Leonard's place. It was separated at the time by a picket fence.



Figure 25

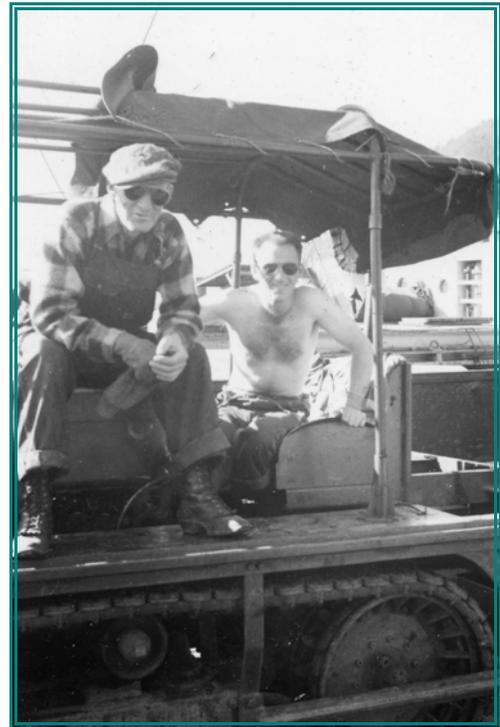
http://www.lovemontana.com/collectible_cars/crosley_truck.html

5. Freddy & Jerry Richardson

Jerry and Freddy Richardson were good friends of my parents. I don't have any idea how they met but since Freddy worked on the docks, I expect they struck up a friendship there. One of the problems I had if I bothered to think about it was to figure out which friends were left over from 9 years earlier and which were new ones ginned up on this visit.



I think that one of the things that dad liked about Freddie was Freddy's love of tools and equipment as shown by these photos:



In the right photo, Freddy is on a spotter and in the left one he is working out at the airport on a dual-engine plane. It probably belonged to the Bear Paw Airline or another of the pilots who housed their planes at the tiny airport. In this image you see Marathon on the left side. Dad was either helping Freddy work on the engines or was working another one, perhaps painting logos like he did on occasion.



Freddy and Jerry shared an interest in hunting as shown by this image of Frances Aylen (Left) with Jerry and Freddy at Ptarmigan Lake on a moose hunt. She was a pretty woman.

Frances Aylen was married to Jim Aylen who was one of the committee men for my scout troop so I'll talk about them later.



6. Suspicious Neighbors

Across the street, and up a short distance was this house. I didn't pay a great deal of attention to what went on there because the kids were older than me and mean. I knew better than to stick my nose where it would get bloodied so I ignored those kids and the adults they were with.

But mom was more bothered about what went on in this house than about anything else in the neighborhood. To this

day I don't really know what her concern was because she didn't voice it. But I know that her hot button was sex above all else. Since there were "old" men and "young" girls coming and going, I opine that mom thought there was some sort of prostitution or something going on. I knew who lived there so I knew that some of the teenagers who went there to see the older men weren't residents.

Mom's concern for the place was severe enough that not only did she forbid us from having anything to do with the bunch, she started to do her own detective work. By that, I mean that she made a point of watching to see who was coming and going at that house. She took a note pad and started to keep track of dates and time and names of people who were at the house. She stored this pad underneath a decorative dish that set on top of our large radio by the front window in the living room. Nothing ever came of her anxieties but there were abundant and manifest.



7. The Episcopal Church



Imagine that the Richardson house is just off the right edge of this photo. That's where it stood in real life, across Adams Street that traveled east-west here. This church is the Episcopal Church -it had a real name of one of the early apostles but such a name didn't mean as much as "Episcopal" so none of us kids referred to it as anything but Episcopal.

The rectory is the low building. It has a full basement which was populated by several kids of the pastor -or whatever you called the religious leader of this brand of Christianity. His name was "Clapp" and was referred to as "Father" which always struck me as a funny thing to call him. I knew two 'fathers' and he wasn't either one. Coming from a primitive religion, his brand of liberalism was shocking. After he had dismissed his flock at the front door, he'd go over to the rectory, get a cold beer out of the fridge, get a cigarette and stand there on the front porch of the rectory, smoking and drinking.

Father Clapp had a son my age named "Jay". He became one of my three best friends in Seward along with Brent Whitmore who lived behind us, and Clayton Frampton whose father was the principal, poor man, of the 12 grades in one building. I'm on the left, Jay is in the middle and Brent is on the right. Brent told me in 2003 that he didn't know where Clayton was the day this photo was taken.



Jay was an unhealthy specimen who struggled in that rough environment with the climate and rough kids. His family tended to be what you might call "genteel" so his attitude didn't exactly win him friends from the bullies he patronized. I saw the effect of such attitudes and didn't repeat the mistake. I was basically a chicken - but a smart one.

8. Incomplete log cabin

Straight across the street from our house was this log cabin. It was in this condition when we moved there and it was in that condition when we moved away. The owner had no rush or no money.

The house of ill repute is there on the left.

Just inside the right edge of the picture you can see a two story building.



Figure 34

That's where May Titus lived who we helped on occasion. She was an Eskimo who spoke good English who was less than 4 feet tall because she got TB of the spine. Mom and May had a great friendship so us "boys" were marshaled in the direction of 'charity' which was usually OK, though some of the demands on us went beyond what I liked. I'll tell you about her and those stories later.

Of course, that's Mt. Alice towering up in the background. She was everywhere. Just an amazingly tall overpowering thing.

Sunbeam MixMaster

Around the time we went to Alaska, dad bought mom a Mixmaster so she didn't have to mix everything by hand or with an eggbeater. That's how it always was. If she needed an appliance or something for the kitchen, he'd buy it as a 'present' for her, Christmas or Birthday. Seemed sort of unfair that she didn't get to have frivolous gifts but she was satisfied, probably because it saved money. I don't think she would have been any happier with a frivolous gift anyway.

The model was this exact one, a black and white Sunbeam MixMaster with milk glass mixing bowls. It weighed a ton. There was also an attachment to make juice out of oranges or whatever but we didn't use it. Fruit was too expensive. The long black handle arcing over the top also served as a lever for releasing the beaters. It was fastened to the narrow white segment of the body of the mixer on the left side. When you pushed the handle sideways, it rotated the mechanism that clamped the beaters in place or released them. The black knob on the other end was the control that turned the motor on and adjusted the speed. On the right end of the base is a small



Figure 35

<http://www.fiestajim.com/kitchen/10-1-mixmaster.jpg>

black lever. You pushed that to adjust the base depending on the size of bowl you

used because the beaters had to be working along the outside, instead of the center of the bowl.

This thing weighed a ton because most of the parts were made of metal. Plastic still hadn't taken over. The motor frame was steel as was the base and the arm that held the motor so the whole thing was heavy. I imagine it was possible to release the motor and hold the thing by its lever and mix like modern mixers but it was so heavy that you had to be a weight lifter to do that for any length of time. It used as you see it.

These things were made to be repaired, however, also a contrast with modern stuff. For example, you see that black button on the side of the motor? There's one just like it directly opposite it. You could easily unscrew this button and as you did, a spring-loaded 'brush' was released. These brushes rest on the armature of the motor which obviously spins and in so doing gradually wears down the end of the brush, so with this system the user could easily check the state of the brushes and replace them. Try that on your mixer today.

Jap-A-Lac

About this time I became aware of finishes on wood as something of interest. It was a good thing, apparently, for wood to be smooth and protected. Various products competed for your money and one of them captured my interest because of its name that made an obvious connection with Japan, "Jap-a-Lac." Whether the product actually was related to Japan is not an issue. The name said it, so it was obviously the case. The product is still made today and it is interesting that it has not been censured by various rights groups.



Figure 36 Glidden Jap-a-La Varnish

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu:80/ea/printlit/Q0039/Q0039-17-7>
2dpi.jpeg

Tree Houses and Forts

Little kids have an atavistic love of cave-like places. This love manifests itself in their fascination with tents, tree-houses and forts. The Alaskan frontier afforded the optimal environment for expression of this fascination. We had a clear sense of it being the last American frontier, particularly in a tiny town that was perched between the ocean and mountains, 130 miles from Anchorage, with terrible weather, lots of rain, lots of grey weather with low clouds scudding just over our heads, coldness that chilled you to the bone, particularly when a fierce wind blew. A fort was what was needed since there were no trees in our yard. The few trees that had managed to grow on the sterile alluvium deposited by the Lowell River had been logged off years before and few had been planted in their place. So forts it was.

The north edge of our yard was lined with Elder berries, and in the back of the lot we scraped out a flat space under them bushes. You can see the elder berry bushes behind me in this photo. The place we made the fort is where the boat is sitting here. The dirt was rocky but soft so we managed to make a level area about 8 feet square. It was important that the bushes hung over it. That made the difference. To have scraped a flat place in the middle of the yard would have been pointless because there was no natural barrier on one side and nothing hanging over it. The overhanging bushes stopped the rain and gave a sense of being protected, a sense of being in a cave, secure. Just sitting on this cleared space in the grayness while the rain fell was comforting. I felt like I was safe and protected from the elements. It was a powerful sense that I sought all



the time we lived there, a sense of being able to take care of myself in the elements. That was a frontier and I knew it and I wanted to learn to be safe on my own. These forts were one of the exercises I went through to achieve that end. I am not exaggerating.

After we had cleaned the rubbish out of this space, throwing it in little piles just anywhere around us because it didn't matter what the rest of the yard looked like, we were ready to construct the fort. This was a serious undertaking because we knew that our lives depended on the security it would provide from things like the bad weather, and marauders like our neighbors.

We discussed the plans for the walls, where to put the corner posts and how to construct the wall between them. A certain amount of squabbling was inevitable in these exchanges where we lay on the ground on a fluffy pile of branches, resting on an elbow, or sitting on the ground leaning back against the narrow elderberry trunks.. We'd talk about the deal while we picked up bits of wood or rocks which we'd toss away, listening quietly most of the time. But when we had a real difference of opinion about what should be done, we'd get louder and sit up to argue a point. Most of the time we really didn't care too much about our position. Sitting up was because we were tired of laying down.

One summer we managed to scrounge enough pieces of lumber to built a low wall a foot and a half high around three sides of the square. The fourth side was protected by the elderberry bushes so didn't need a wall. We struggled with getting this wall to stand alone and stand straight. We tried sharpening pieces of wood and driving them into the ground in the corners but didn't really succeed. In the end the rudimentary wall tipped over and we stopped worrying about it. But during the time we were focused on it, it was thrilling to have a project of that magnitude to work on.

Tree houses were rare in Seward but there was one up the alley in a tree behind the house of the post master. He had two daughters about our age who played with us. The tree house was about as rudimentary as the wall of our fort but imaginations made up for whatever deficiencies there were.

Five and Dime stores

They are defunct now. I understand why. No one today would dare trust the public to paw through shelves of tiny, fit-in-your-pocket toys. The cost in shop lifting would bankrupt the store in 6 months. But back then when a nice moral ethic really did prevail in the US of A, although it, too, was fractured in locations, these stores were a garden of Eden for little kids with a few cents, a nickel or a dime to spend. Hours could be devoted to poring over the various things that could be purchased for these small amounts of cash. Of course, to put it in perspective, a gallon of gas cost 12 cents, so 5 cents was not an inconsequential amount. For a dime you could go to the soda fountain and buy a large frosted mug of Hires Rootbeer and a candy bar! Or go to a movie. But whatever, it was a wonderful way to kill part of an afternoon wandering through the store examining all of the small things there beckoning for your cash.

Seward had two. One was in a private residence and the other was either a Franklin or a Woolworth 5 & 10 Cent Store like this one. It set on the west side of Main street, about 6 stores north of Warner's Market and south of the laundry.

There are probably a lot of reasons that this kind of store doesn't exist today, and hasn't for many years. One of them, I personally believe, is a degeneration in the public values of this country. Once you

understand what these stores sold and how they were displayed you will agree. Your first reaction will likely be that I'm over-stating my case but you see the evidence her and can form your own opinion after reading more.

These stores catered to kids and to families with little money. There actually were hundreds of small items that cost a nickel or a dime, things like key rings, sets of jacks and a ball, yo-yos, all sorts of small toys, caps for cap guns, small plastic guns, sets of small playing cards, and so on. The way the items were

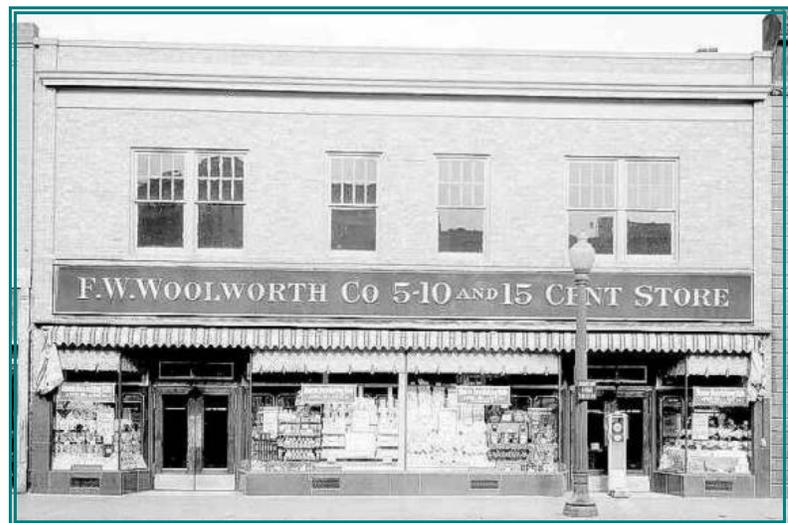


Figure 38 <http://www.laramiemuseum.org/Images/Woolworths.jpg>

displayed was astonishing. The things were laid in bulk out in the open in small compartments on the top of a counter. The compartments were an inch or two deep, made of glass, and were perhaps 4 by 6 inches in size. Stuffed with whatever item was assigned to that small bin. Things just lying loose there for you to pick up and feel and inspect and consider. Small signs with the name of the item and the price were affixed to each bin, so you could tell how much you would be spending if you bought any item.

When we had change that we could spend, we would get permission from mom to go "shoppin'", i.e. spend 15 cents or whatever we had. When we lived in Homebrew Alley we went to the private residence because it was closer. When we opened the front door, the store keeper who was in the back of the house or upstairs would come into the store area, wiping her hands on a towel. She would greet us and ask if she could help us and we'd politely reply that we "were just looking." But she knew that whenever we came in, we were going to spend some money because we never went in for any other reason.

We would paw through the piles of things, wanting everything but knowing we could only spend a dime or 15 cents, so we chose, and put back, re-chose and put back until we had finally chosen the one thing we had to have that day. We gave her our purchase, paid her the money and she put it in a small sack for us and thanked us for coming. She waited for us to exit and then went back into the house I suppose.

It is the size of the items and their unprotected display that persuades me that no storekeeper in his right mind would consider doing such a thing today. Too many people, kids included, would just pocket these things and pay for a nickel candy bar on their way out the door. But they were wonderful places to see a wide range of things to spend your money on. Very different that the bubble cards, and shrink wrapped toys that are secured to cards to make it more difficult to shop lift. There was something satisfying about being able to actually handle and play with the things.

For example, there was a pair of plastic Scotty dogs, inch long, secured to the top of equally long bar magnets. This pair was always sold in a wonderful matchbox type box that you had to slide open to get to the dogs. Then you would sit them on the counter and push them back and forth to see what happened. The same



Figure 39

<http://www.magicbilly.com/magic/spunkydogs.htm>

dogs may be available today but they will be secured in some manner, probably on a large card so you don't have the tactile experience of feeling them push or pull on each other. They also offered infinite enjoyment because the magnetic field could be used to collect filings, pick up small steel or iron objects and so on. The concept of "north pole" and "south pole" was easily understood, as well as the concept of "opposites attract". Pretty persuasive evidence as far as I was concerned. Of course, having a dad -and a mom, the truth be known- who believed in the 'scientific method' and were both naturalists, Dick and I were naturally susceptible to anything 'experimental', anything 'scientific'.

Post Office Box

There were no postmen in Seward who walked from house to house delivering mail, at least none that I knew. They may have been someone who delivered to the businesses down town and there was rural postal delivery out the highway and along the Old Nash Road, but private homes in town didn't get that service. We were assigned a post office box in the post office in the federal building and had to go there to get out mail.

The post office was located in the building I knew as the Federal Building. It had a different name I know but can't remember what it was. To me it was the federal building because that's where the post office was which was a federal thing. I wasn't too clear on this business about federal and government but somehow I knew the postoffice was the thing that Benjamin Franklin started back in the east and it got to be part of the national government.

There were two routes that we could take to the post office which were naturally parallel and they were about 50 feet apart. One of them was a sort of mini-alley that ran east-west behind the row of buildings on the north side of Adams Street, also an east-west street, the one that ran across 2nd Avenue by the Episcopal Church. The other route was Adams Street itself. The advantage to the alley was that it was rougher and unpaved with some small drop that you jumped down over or had to climb up on going back. Remember that there was no flat ground. Everything sloped two ways so you had the benefit of the slope going in one direction. In the winter this back alley route was fun after a new snow because new snow is always fun to play in, to be the first to make a trail in.

The Adams Street route was clearer when we got near the center of town

because there were a couple of sidewalks if we were on the right side of the street. For example, there was a sidewalk in front of the Van Gilder Hotel and the bank, but directly across the street there was an empty lot shaded by a large tree, and there was no sidewalk there, just a dirt path.

This is the modern version of Adams street, a far cry from what I lived with. For example, this street has sidewalks on both sides and they extend clear up to the Episcopal Church. In addition, the street here is paved.

Imagine that, paved.

There was only one short strip of pavement on the main street, Fourth Avenue. None on any of the cross streets like this. There in the background is Little Bear wearing dark green and on the right is

Mt. Marathon. Adams runs straight up -up hill- to the Episcopal Church which sits on the corner of Second Avenue. We'd walk up that street and when we got to the Episcopal Church, we'd turn right and go four houses to our own.

The building here in the foreground on the right is a new building that was built after the old federal building was torn down. I don't know whether the 1964 Tsunami destroyed the federal building or whether "urban renewal" got it. In any event the "city" of Seward built its City Hall on the same corner.



The old building we went to is this, the one I showed you in Volume 5 - Seward 1941. That's where mom and dad went for their wedding photos. The street running in front of this old Federal Building is Fifth Avenue and the one running along the far side of the building is Adams. The little alley I talked about using sometimes to get to the postoffice runs along the near side of the building. We used Adams most of the time but sometimes used the rough unimproved alley. The two routes were close but to me as a little kid it seemed like a long distance.

Whichever way we came to the federal building to go in to the postoffice, we'd have to go in through the main doors on the front of the building between the cars. We'd go up a few steps and enter a high lobby. Directly across from the entry way was a counter that had two windows that were opened to serve postal customers. The place had the smell of old wood since the floors were wood, and old polish. Cigarette smoke mixed with these wood smells to create a unique odor unlike any other in the town.

All of the mailboxes were to the right of the rightmost window. The lobby was shaped like an 'ell' with the short limb on the side where the windows were and the long limb running back along the room that the windows were in. These small mailboxes lined the wall it seemed from top to bottom, though they couldn't have been too high obviously. Dick remembers the number of our mailbox and he remembers the combination. The door had a small glass window so you could see if there was any mail inside, thereby avoiding having to unnecessarily open the door. The small knob that was knurled had to be turned a certain number of turns to the left, a couple to the right and then back to the left.

If you managed to line all three pins up correctly you were lucky, and got to twist a little fin-like affair that released the pin that constituted the lock. At that point the little door swung open and you could reach inside and grab the mail. If there was one of those special slips that said there was a "Parcel Post" you took it back to one of the windows and stood in line until it was your turn. Then you stepped up to the counter and handed the slip to the man who was there. It was always men in those days, no women anywhere in the postoffice itself although there were women secretaries in the offices. You waited anxiously while the man went back into the bowels of the place and muttered to himself while he rummaged around in boxes and sacks to find the package. Finally, he'd return with it and hand it across with a cheerful comment about "Been waitin' for this long?" or something like that. They were always nice.

Any other kind of post office slip we had to take home. If there was

postage due, we had to take it home to get the money necessary to pay the amount due. If it twas a COD, 'Collect on Delivery", something that went away a long long time ago since no one trusts anyone these days and for good reason, you'd have to get the right amount of money and go back to pay the amount due. In both cases, the man would do the same routine hunting up the package or the envelope to hand over.

Sometimes mom would give us money to buy stamps for her. That was an important task. I felt grown up when I took a dollar bill and went to the counter and told the man that I wanted a sheet of one cent stamps, which cost something like 50 cents, or ten nickel stamps that also cost fifty cents. That was a lot of money in those days. We obviously had to be particularly careful when we were carrying stamps home. If we got them wet, they'd stick together and we'd get another lecture about paying attention and how much work we made by being lazy and so on. I could have repeated the lecture actually but learned early on that it wasn't wise to mimic mom when she was 'het up'. That only earned ANOTHER lecture that was pepperier still. No, just let her run down and go back outside to play. That as the best way to deal with the irritation that was always on the surface.

Allowances, Washing Dishes & Cleaning the Kitchen

Any idea how hard it is to stand in the kitchen trying to wash the dishes at 8:00 pm in Seward in the summer when the sun is still high in the sky after a long dark winter? And school is out. And the neighbor kids are loudly playing "kick the can", or "Find the candy bar"? And you need to go pee, and the dish water is running down your elbows into you shirt sleeve? And your mosquito bites need to be scratched. And there are a bunch of pots and pans to scrub with a worn out scrubber. And the water is dirty and needs to be changed. And you are so frustrated you want to cry. And your brother won't wipe the dishes like he should. But I knew. If I didn't do precisely what I was ordered to do, if I complained, the consequences would be even more uncomfortable than this list of irritations I just enumerated. Mom had her way to make sure you agreed that her instruction was reasonable.

Then when you finally think you're finished, ready to tear out the back door to partake of the shouts and sunshine your mom comes into the kitchen and asks,

"Why isn't the counter clean? I told you to clean the counter." So. You have to come back, take out the dishrag from under the sink, and clean the counter. But worse now, it's under her direct supervision. So any thing you would be sort of inclined to overlook, any crumbs you might have surreptitiously brushed on the floor go carefully into the trash. Things she might be inclined to ignore in different circumstances now receives the white-glove test. Oh boy. And the sink better not have any grease around it, or even soap foam. Gotta get it absolutely sparkling and dry. But the dish cloth is now soaked so won't really polish the sink. Oh my, agony, the sun's going down and I can hear those kids and they are having a lot of fun judging by the squeals and yells. Get me out of here!

This was the kind of work performed around our house to "earn" an allowance. Let me tell you, that allowance was fully earned. And you were held hostage by it. With a word mom could cut it off for a week, and there you were without any money at all. When the neighbors always had money to buy a nickel candy bar for "Find the candy bar."

Storage of this allowance was a weighty matter, but not because one of us would steal from the other. At least not at that point. I am sure that we each experimented with the principle of "Permanent loans" of each others cash money at some previous time. And I am just as sure as the sun will come up tomorrow, that mom visited a punishment on us so severe that we would have preferred to be put in the granary alone for a week. She left nothing to chance in her punishments. She was diabolical. The thing I know she did even though I don't have a specific memory of it, is that when we each stole some of the other kid's money, she made the robber do two things. The first was reasonable. Just hand back the 1 dime, and 1 nickel and 3 pennies to the other kid. Who by the way, was standing there with a big grin looking you right in the face, and heaven help you if you snarled at him for "Laughing at me". That would earn you a whack on the behind that would jar you molars loose. Nope, you walked over to the other kid who stood expectantly with his hand out to receive his money back. That was the easy part.

The next part was the nasty part: while she stood there looking over the whole proceeding like the Lord High Executioner, the offender had to go get his own piggy bank. And while everyone waited silently -including any neighbor kids who just happened to be hanging around for the hanging- the offender had to remove the same number of dimes, nickels and pennies from his own piggy bank, and hand them to the other kid. That's why the other kid was grinning. He knew. He knew because HE had done the same thing and more than once. Mom was merciless

when she was in the punishment mode and woe be to the wrongdoer, for his is pure pain, sometimes purely physical, sometimes purely psychological, but when she was in high dudgeon, it was inevitably an admixture of both. Don't make mom mad. That was my cardinal rule. If only I had been able to observe it, my life would have been a lot less painful.

Soap, Washing & Beans

Fluffy sweet smelling soap powders or liquid detergents fill supermarket shelves today, but grandma made her own and we used it in Vernal. Lye soap which was harsh and generally not sweet smelling. The recipe is simple. Take fat, mix it with lye and water and chemistry will do its job, producing soap. The trick, of course, is in getting the right proportions.

Grandma would put a large kettle on the stove, or over an open fire outside, and would throw in all of the fats she had collected specifically for this purpose. The fat could be congealed ham fat, grease from frying bacon, fat from a venison roast, lard or tallow, the globular accumulations of fat from the stomach cavity of a cow. The kinds of fats determined the nature of the soap, tallow producing the lightest finest soap but any fat worked.

The basic process starts with mixing lye with water in the right proportions. Gramma always poured the lye slowly into the water to keep it from splashing out on us. This mixture produced an enormous amount of heat as well as irritating fumes. The fats were then heated to melt them all and then the lye water was slowly mixed into the fat. To evaluate her mixture, Grandma would get a small amount of it on her finger and then touch it to her tongue.[Or she would just rub it between her index finger and thumb to see whether it needed more lye water. She kept adding lye water and stirring the mixture until it had the right 'feel' at which point she would pour it out into wide shallow dishes or enameled pans.

Then magic happened. The mixture was let sit overnight during which time it turned into soap. Grandma would then take a large butcher knife and score the surface of the fat to divide it into equal sized bars and then would cut it out. These bars of soap were her laundry soap so she made them about 2 and a half inches square and three or four inches long. They were set out in a dry place to cure for several weeks after which she would put them away in storage.

The laundry was done by heating water on the coal stove in large copper

kettles made to fit over the two burners after the lids were removed. The hot water was poured into a large galvanized tub with one bar of soap that was cut into pieces so that it would dissolve rapidly. This was the washing tub. After clothes were stirred around in this hot soapy water and rubbed on a corrugated scrub board, they were wrung out and put in the first of two rinse tubs. After rinsing and wringing out the clothes in the first rinse they were put through the same process in the second rinse tub that had bluing added to the water to make white clothes appear whiter than they otherwise would be. The bluing came as a liquid in a bottle or as blue marbles that she dissolved in a pan of water on the stove before pouring it into the rinse water. After putting the clothes through that process, they were hung outside, even in the winter, to dry which produced a wonderful smell in the clothes.

This is how the process looked before the advent of electricity, an entirely manual process. A washboard is lying on the tub, resting on the woman's thighs. She would scrub the piece on the washboard, rinse it in the water, run it through the manual wringer, and then drop it in the white enameled pan. The pan-ful of clothing was then hung on the lines to dry.

Later the process was mechanized. The first washing machines on the farm were powered by small gasoline engines since there was no electricity. These motors that were fastened to the frame underneath the tub and agitator smoked and clattered but were interesting to a kid. Later after rural electrification reached the farms, electrical washing machines appeared. The gasoline motor was replaced by an electric one.

My mom's first washing machine was electrical and looked like the one in the preceding photo. There were two selling



Figure 42 Manual washing machine with wringer



Figure 43 Wringer Washing Machine being filled with water

<http://newdeal.feri.org/images/s36.gif>

points to mechanical washing machines. First, the agitator relieved the women of having to do the strenuous work of rubbing the clothes against a washboard. Second, there was a mechanized wringer that also relieved the women of the work of wringing out the clothes. Plus the agitation and wringing was probably superior to manual work, at least by the end of the long wash day.

I had to help do laundry I got old enough. Saturday was "wash day", a special day of the week during which the house was filled with steam and the smell of wet clothes. In the winter windows dripped with dew flowing down on the casements. Lifting dripping clothes out of a tub of water and holding them up to the wringer always wet my shirt front, a miserable feeling that was cold and prickly but as much a part of wash day as the wash itself.

The wringer presented a special risk to any user. It earned your respect quickly. The dripping shirt or pants had to be held up to the slowly turning wringers in such a way that an edge of the cloth caught between the rollers after which the entire piece of clothing was slowly but inexorably pulled through the wringers, squeezing the water out. Simple enough process but various problems could develop so the manufacturers had built a safety release on the top of the wringer.

The safety release was a long narrow handle on top of the wringer head that you could slap to relieve the pressure on the rollers. The top one would just pop upward because it was sitting on a powerful spring built for the purpose. The pressure ceased immediately when you hit the release. I used this release if a large lump of clothing was trapped between the rollers and couldn't pass through. The other time it was of vital interest when putting clothes into the wringer was when any part of my anatomy threatened to get trapped between the wringers. Mom made us use a long narrow stick to lift the clothes up to the wringer to prevent us from getting our fingers trapped because the wringer would bruise them badly or even break them, but sometimes we would be impatient with the stick so would hold clothes up by hand. More than once I whacked that lever when I felt my fingers being pulled into the wringer. A very famous saying also refers to this problem, alluding to a particular part of one's anatomy in the wringer. Painful thought.

Some washing machines had the wringer head rigidly fixed so that it could not be turned. We had one of the machines that were built with a wringer head that could be rotated 360 degrees around the column it set on. So when you set your rinse tubs next to the washer, you would wring clothes out of the wringer

into the first rinse tub, agitate them by hand there, then rotate the wringer head 90 degrees, and wring them into the second wash tub, agitate them some more and then rotate the wringer head 90 degrees again and wring the clothes out into the dish pan.

The house was so small that mom didn't like to use the wooden drying rack she stored in the basement. She preferred to hang the wet clothes outside on the clothes lines. She

would set the wooden rack up in the front room if it rained all day but a week's worth of washing took more than one day to dry. Our clothes lines were in the back yard by Schaefermeyer's wash lines. (You can see the top of the Episcopal Church



steeple over Mr. Leonard's house) Dick as a pup is holding Kobuk as a pup as he squats below the clothes lines. Kobuk's chain was secured to one of the lines so he could run back and forth. This image shows the problem we had when we hung the wash out in the winter. In the summer we had to reach over our heads to reach the lines but 2 feet of snow created a different problem. Instead of hanging a shirt by its tail, we'd drape it half way over the line to keep it from touching the snow. The temperature was so cold that it froze the wet clothes into sheets. You could take a dish towel off the line and hold it flat so it looked like a crusty piece of poster board. That probably makes you wonder why we bothered hanging the clothes outside at all.

Ice is funny stuff. It shares a characteristic with solid iodine because both of them will "sublimate". I suppose other substances do this but I don't know which ones they are. To sublimate means that the solid stuff does not need to turn into a liquid before it can boil off. You know that water has three "phases": it can be (1) molecular vapor in the air like humidity and steam, (2) it can be liquid,

and (3) it can be solid ice. So does iodine. Most substances have to pass through those three phases, if they change at all, but these two substances are bizarre. For reasons that I don't know, they can skip the liquid phase and simply go from the solid phase into the gas phase. This was very convenient for our laundry. What happens is simple. Molecules of the water -or iodine- simply 'evaporate' out of the solid mass and if this process is allowed to go on long enough, the constant departure of those individuals molecules will eventually reduce the solid mass to nothing. In the end, we had soft, sweet-smelling clothing that smelled no different that they did when they hung outside to dry in the sun.

Wash day beans. The day was focused on doing the washing, and took all of mom's attention and energy. That meant that she didn't want to spend a great deal of time or attention on dinner. On Friday night, she would pull out a bag of beans and open it on the counter. She'd set a pan by the bag and she'd lift out a left handful of beans at a time and let them pour slowly out of her palm into the pan, watching carefully for bits of stems, pod, dirt and rocks. After she had "enough" beans in the pan, she would put it under the tap and fill it 3/4 full, reach into the pot and swirl the beans around to wash them. This caused the remaining bad beans and debris she had missed to float to the top so she could skim them off with her hand and throw them in the trash. After this process was completed, she'd pour off the water, refill the pot, cover it and set it on the back of the stove to soak over night.

The next morning as the washer was being set up in the kitchen with two rinse tubs, a major undertaking, she would prepare the pot of beans. She'd take a ham hock she saved in the fridge and put it into the bean pot. She'd light the burner with a match -automatic lighting of propane burners was the stuff of science fiction- and then set the pot on low heat to cook all day. During the day she would stir the beans to keep them from scorching and would replenish the water as needed. As a result of the steam generated by the boiling beans and the washing, the windows were constantly covered in steam that would drip down onto the window sill. The smoky smell of the ham bone or joint mixed with the smell of the cooking beans to produce a distinctive smell that made my mouth water.

After we had finished washing we had to drain the tubs and washer and put them away. It was a major production to assemble the washer and tubs in that small kitchen and do the work.

Ambulatory Toilet Seat

My brother Dick has a special talent. He can sleep walk and I envied him doing that. And he has the added feature of not remembering a thing about what he did. So it works out really nice in some instances for him. This story is true but I still don't really know the truth about what happened in the first place.

It all started one morning when mom got up and went to the bathroom. She was shocked first at the fact that the toilet seat was entirely missing. There was nothing but the enameled porcelain toilet bowl to sit one which was a cold proposition. Then she started to get angry. I guess I understand that anger but I'm not able yet to comprehend why what happened did. She confronted us to kids immediately. She opened the bathroom door that was one of the walls of our small bathroom and asked with her usual sharpness, "OK, which of you kids took the toilet set."

In our sleepy state of mind we had no answer. No one took the toilet seat. It was there last night and no one came into the house so it should still be there this morning. We each said we didn't take it, believing that we hadn't. That of course didn't sit well with her. She was standing there by the toilet and she could tell that the seat was missing so we didn't win any points for our answers. Then we were ordered out of bed to come and look. We looked and sure enough, mom was right after all. The toilet seat was missing.

The problem was the neither of us kids said he took it. Why, I wonder, did someone take the toilet seat? It was risking one's live to play tricks on mom in the first place, and somehow a toilet seat trick seemed about the least likely thing I'd consider. As I got dressed and ate breakfast and got out the door for school, I continued to believe I didn't take it. And Dick said he didn't take it and he seemed to believe it. The unfortunate thing for us was that mom believed that we were just lying to her and that we both probably were involved in this prank and she was going to have her revenge. She did one of those horrible imprecations that I hated. She said, as we got our coats on and started out the door, "Just you wait till your father comes home."

Oh man. What a way to start a day. We had to go to school and sweat the whole day about having our own personal inquisition. We never quite knew what form the attack on us would take because these two were really creative. I guess they believed the punishment should match the crime so they devised alternate

methods of torture for us. We had a hard time concentrating on school, and when we got home we were sick to our stomachs as 6:00 p.m. approached because dad would be home about 6:15 p.m.

As soon as he walked in the front door and got his coat off, mom announced to him in her best queen voice, "The toilet seat is missing and neither one of the boys will admit he took it. I need you to take care of them". Oh boy. But true to form, dad surprised us again. He said we should eat dinner first after which we would look into the matter of the missing seat. Fine torture that was. I would have preferred to just get it over with and be sent to bed without dinner which was one of the versions of torture they practised.

After dinner was over and we did the dishes, we were ordered to get our pajamas on and to come into the kitchen for a family council. Those were pretty ominous words after this particular edition. We got undressed around the corner in our bedroom, got our summer pajamas on and marched to the kitchen, feeling like the executioner was waiting there with axe to behead us. Mom sat at one end of the narrow kitchen table, dad sat at the other end, and we stood with our backs to the stove.

The inquisition began with the usual sort of quiet observations and comments and a request for an admission. The thing to have done would have been to immediately confess and take the spanking or punishment because the longer we waited to get to that point, the madder they got and the harsher they were. But I knew I had not stolen the toilet seat. Did they think I was a moron?! And Dickie maintained steadfastly that he hadn't stolen the toilet seat. I didn't know what to think because someone obviously took it because mom sure didn't.

Mom's and dad's logic was infallible and irresistible. They knew that no one had come into the house last night, that only the four of us were there, that the toilet seat was taken during the night, and that neither of them took it, so that meant that either the seat walked off by itself which they were skeptical about though I wanted to believe it, or that one of us was the miscreant. So confess! Which one of you took the toilet seat!

We were standing so that we could see out the kitchen window to the Schaefermeyer's house. This was summer evening so those kids were playing in their back yard which meant they could see us standing at attention there in our pajamas in front of the stove. They knew something was up and watched surreptitiously to see which one of us was beheaded. I don't know how long we really stood there but it seemed like far longer than we had ever had to do this

thing. I was sleepy, I was embarrassed to have the kids watching us in this unpleasant position, so I did the only thing that I could do under the circumstances to bring this meeting to a close.

I finally told them that I had been lying, that I had taken the toilet seat. I hadn't but I was through with this silly inquisition so really did lie this time - a bizarre way to end an inquisition about lying. I don't remember what punishment was meted out for this transgression but I am sure it was terrible and that's why I can't remember it. They had such a way of abusing their kids all in the name of honesty and truth. Love was always absent in these transactions that had the quality of the sad scenes from a Charles Dickens' book.

To this day I don't know what happened. I didn't even know where the toilet seat was. I entertain the possibility that Dick had been sleep walking and that he removed it. But that seems so far fetched because removing a toilet seat requires that two nuts be removed in order to lift the thing up. It seems doubtful that he would be able to remain asleep through such a process that required him to lean down and under the toilet with a wrench of some sort to do the job. I just do not know what happened. But I didn't take it.

4th of July Creek and Hermit

When the salmon were running, dad took another trip across the bay to Fourth of July creek to see how they were doing there. He took Art, Dick and me. No other kids went which is surprising. After we moored the canoe at the mouth of the creek, Dick and I started chasing salmon. They were all over the place and the river was only a couple of feet deep in most places, shallower in some, so we were convinced that we would be able to catch one. But they are amazingly fast and managed to find routes we couldn't anticipate, even if their bodies were half out of the water. They just flailed away with their tails and propelled themselves out of reach again and again. In the process of accosting a bunch of salmon this way we both got really wet, through to the skin which made for a cold time.

Seward was never warm even when we were dry but when we were wet, we were really cold. To remedy this problem, dad and Art built a fire for us to get warm. Art got wet too so he took his socks off and held them up to the fire to dry while Dick took his levis off and held them over the fire. Which looks sort of funny since we are all wearing coats and hats.



While we were there, we

visited an old man who lived permanently on the north bank of the mouth of the river, above high-tide line in the willows. He had an old log cabin that was well chinked in the part he lived in but it was not a really well-maintained log cabin. No reason I suppose because he went over to get away from people, didn't care what people thought, and probably did what he wanted just to spite them. We approached the place together and dad or Art called out to alert the old man that we were coming. His whereabouts was known to the town so it wasn't a surprise to find him over there.

He was probably used to having a nose-poke now and then because he was civil to us. He invited into his cabin to sit a spell. We followed but as we entered the place, we encountered a cloud of smoke from his stove that made it impossible for the adults to stand up so they stooped over and found a rough chair to sit on. The old man had manners still and was apologetic about all the smoke that was so obviously uncomfortable for his guests. He explained that he had a problem with the draft and that one of these days when he wasn't too busy he was going to go up on the roof and take a look to see what was wrong and repair it. That killed dad and Art. The man lived alone, did nothing except fish, cut wood and cook but he was too busy to take care of the draft that made him as uncomfortable as us.

Janitoring

Dad was the Presiding Elder for the small branch of the LDS church in Seward, it being too small a congregation to qualify as a true "branch", let alone "ward". It was his -hence my- duty to set up the meeting place each Sunday. The group of 4-5 families that constituted this branch paid some amount of tithing that dad sent to the HQ in Anchorage at which point Anchorage returned money to dad so he could rent the Oddfellows' hall for meetings. It seemed to odd that he collected money that he could not use to pay the bills, but that he was sent money to do the job.

Renting the Oddfellows hall sounds fine enough until you realize that this group had a penchant for Saturday night parties with lots of booze and cigarettes which was practically anathema. The natural result was that dad had to go down to the hall at 6 am on Sunday morning to pour the booze out, clean up the cigarettes and spills, open the windows to air the place out and set up the chairs. Dick and I were fortunate enough to be allowed to help. Every Sunday. In the summer this wasn't too bad, though I didn't ever like getting up early. But in the cold dark snowy winter it was horrible. We didn't drive the half mile to the place. No, we walked. And I think it was intentional on dad's part, almost punishment. (Although, looking back from today clear through my childhood to his, I am open to the possibility that it didn't really occur to him to drive that short distance. In his youth, I don't get the idea that he was given any of the advantages of this kind. He had to just tough it out so that became his view of the universe. That's what he expected of us because that's the only thing he knew.) In the dark and the snow, without any words of encouragement or pleasantness. Indeed, he always was critical of us and threatened us always to work hard and not be lazy. He actually gloried in being rough and loud about waking us up, clapping his hands, stamping his feet, loudly singing some song, for the sole purpose of irritating us. It did. It was not a fun time. Did we learn anything? I don't know, but I learned not to talk back to him, not to say I didn't like doing what I was assigned to do, not to have an opinion. Sound familiar? I bet it is.

Shoveling Snow

Even harsher than this assignment, for which we were promised "blessings" -that never came and which I would have willingly dispensed with- and "learning to work" that never seemed happened, was the "opportunity" we had to shovel walks for Lillie James who owned a dress shop that Rachel Puckett worked in - McMullins was the name of the shop.

In terms of snow, remember now that Seward has an average precipitation of 62 inches a year and 40 inches of snow. My brother and I were to be paid the princely sum of 50 cents a piece to go down to the shop and shovel the new snow off. However, the problem was the snow often fell during the night, even week nights. And guess what - we had to have the snow shoveled off the next morning before the shop opened. And before we had to go to school. So you can imagine that we were unceremoniously roused out of bed at 5:30-6 am and sent on our way down to the shop, groggy and cold with our shovels to be responsible.

Some mornings it was still snowing when we arrived there in the dim light from a small street light on the sidewalk, no one about except for an occasional man going to work. And we had to shovel and get the sidewalk clean. That is tough, particularly since people walk on the sidewalk all day, packing down the snow with their feet as it fell. So many morning we were frustrated as we could be, hating the work, feeling tension about getting done and getting home in time to go to school, because we would catch heck from mom if we were late, etc. It was a grim job and half the time I was so depressed I felt like crying. I could just feel tension well up in my shoulders with anger at being forced to do that job that was so hard to do. BTW, I NEVER saw another kid on those bitter cold mornings out there shoveling snow. Never. Go figure.

Most of the time we didn't actually clear the snow down to concrete. We just cleared the loose new snow down to the layer of ice. A few times in the spring on a sunny Saturday we used a spud that dad kindly bought specifically so we could do this difficult job, to get down to the concrete, but that was such a tough job that we rarely did it. When we got home from shoveling, all we heard was to hurry and eat breakfast so we could then walk half a mile through the unshoveled streets and paths to school. In the snow. Uphill both ways. Never a thought of a ride. I would probably have fainted if mom had offered to drive us. And if dad had offered? I would have passed out for sure. Dad. Impossible.

Ice Rink

For all of its water and coldness, Seward had no ice skating rink. We had ice skates from Andy's Army Navy store but had to go out to rivers to skate. The town was just too small to support any entertainment businesses. We had 13 bars, 13 churches, one movie theatre and one bowling alley. That was the extent of our entertainment. That didn't keep creative little kids from improvising. So we tried to make ice rinks two years.

Before the snow was too deep, we took the garden hose and spread water on the yard between our house and Schaefermeyer's house with the hope that it would freeze into a smooth ice rink that we could skate on. The water would sort of melt the snow and formed a large puddle of slush. Our idea was that we'd apply water to this patch over several days with the expectation that it would eventually develop a smooth surface. We never really succeeded.

Over the few days we pursued this project, the surface did smooth out a bit but since we didn't know how to do what we were trying to do. It seems in retrospect that the major problem was that we didn't put enough water on. We'd run water on the ice for a period of time but not enough to create a complete new layer that covered the entire surface. As a result, we ended up with a sort of cascade of bumpy ice layers with a surface blotched with chunks of slush. When we put our skates on, the experience wasn't much fun. But it was fun, nonetheless.



Manikins

While Dick and I were working for Lilly James, who owned McMullins, and for Rachel Puckett who was the manager of the place, Rachel would have us do all sorts of odds and ends just to keep us busy so she could hand us a quarter. She was really like a favorite aunt who doted on us kids, probably because she never had any children. She'd send us across the street to get something for her, or would send us down to the basement to get a package. But that basement was a revelation. Absolutely shocking. I can remember what it was like. One time when down the stairs I happened to look beneath them into a closet sort of place that I hadn't looked in before. And I was shocked at what I saw under the stairs. Undressed store manikins.

We were used to seeing the Manikins in the store windows modeling dresses and coats but we hadn't thought about what was implied by the fact that the clothing was changed periodically, that the pose of the models varied and so on. Never. So when we went down there innocently one day to fetch something, we returned wiser. It was indeed a shock for a 12 year old to be exposed to nudity. Given the puritanical upbringing I had, I was protected from the female form. The only time I had a glimpse of it was in National Geographic magazines or the Sears or Montgomery Wards catalogs. But here they were, life-size, life-shape, just standing there.

The basement of McMullins was basically a dimly lighted warehouse affair with one large room down the center and a few smaller rooms like closets. The place had a distinctive odor that I couldn't identify because it was compounded of unfamiliar odors. One of the scents was that of unwashed fabric that has sizing in it, I knew that from mom's sewing, but there were faint perfume odors, the odor of leather shoes, and the smell of cardboard boxes blended together with whatever wood smell was still present. It was a lovely scent that was apparent when walking into the front door of the store. The basement was lined with



Figure 47

http://www.goldsmith-inc.com/g_torsos/ft1004.html

shelves and filled piles of boxes and the general clutter that must accumulate in any business over time. The place was clean and dry so satisfied the two principal criteria for my approval. I had no idea that it housed these shocking creatures.

Some of them were a sort of flesh color like the one in this image but the ones that were really troubling were clear like glass. These were made out of a Lucite type material. Most of them didn't have head, arms or legs which was bizarre and the weirdness of the situation was compounded by the fact that there was a pile of arms and legs sitting in the corner, as if the bodies had been dismembered. While I had been exposed to butchering of livestock and deer and moose and game birds, I had never seen a dead body of a human. And I certainly had not seen anything like this, torsos in a pile or on stands, with a disconnected set of random arms and legs lying on the floor. Obviously the limbs could be affixed to the torsos but that didn't make the deal any simpler to grasp. It was too much.

But the quality of the experience that was transcendent was the sexual dimension of the whole thing. Do you remember when you were entering puberty and were in puberty how shocking sexual things were to you? It's that way for all of us. There's no way around it, particularly since sexuality seems, for most parents and children, to be a forbidden thing that cannot be talked about which of course makes it even more powerful in a vicious circle. So when we finally face it face to face, or body to body or however it is, the event is just mind-boggling. I thought of those darn bodies a lot both from a mechanical point of view as well as from a sexual point of view. In fact, I was confused by it all.

I had not been prepared for sexuality in any manner, so exposure to my own burgeoning sexuality was a shock. I did not understand where those feelings and senses and sensations came from. I hadn't changed - so I thought. I was still me, but here are feelings that cannot be denied that are astonishingly powerful. I was confused and upset by the whole thing. And of course, I didn't say a peep to anyone about it, not even Dick. I had to go down into the basement other times and would always sneak a peek at this collection of body parts and be troubled by them.

Whales and Seals

The deep bay was attractive to a wide range of sea life, the largest of which were seals and whales. I don't remember what kind of whales entered the bay other than the killer whales. Dad or mom would point out the dorsal fins of a small pod of killers as they cruised around across from the docks. They didn't go up over the mud flats but were directly across from the city dock so were easy to see. This is what we would see, several at a time, though we were never this close. It was an exciting time to be called to watch the killer whales because they were unusual and because they were so dramatic with their fins sticking out of the water and with their beautiful dives and they arched their backs up and disappeared.



Figure 48

http://landsendlodges.com/homer_photos/orca.jpg

Larger whales occasionally entered the bay and caused as big a stir as the killers. People would be pointing and explaining as we all watched for the spout. These whales did not have dorsal fins that stuck out of the water so about the only way to identify them on the gray days in the waves was by their spout when they surfaced. Dad doubtless told me what kind of whale they were but I don't know, probably Right or Bow.

Seals were common in the bay which was an indication of the suitability of the habitat to them in terms of temperature, food and scarcity of predators - except for the killers. The only one that I ever saw was the common harbor seal that seemed to hang around where they thought they could get food. They were afraid of humans and didn't come close enough for me to ever see them well. But I had experience with them closeup when dad bought several pelts from harbor seals from Eskimos who had killed them for the meat and blubber.



Andy's Army Surplus Store

You all know what "army surplus" stuff is, don't you. It's some cheap, khaki colored stuff made in Pakistan that you get in cut-rate stores. But that's not what real army surplus stuff was. The real stuff was the real stuff. Literally. Army surplus in those years was stuff that had been manufactured under contracts with the federal government for the various military services, which was not consumed. The federal government in its infinite wisdom decided to sell the stuff off so it didn't need to store and care for it. It went to enterprising civilians for pennies on the dollar who then took it off the army's hands. It was a good deal because items made for the military truly are first rate. They are designed and manufactured to survive tough conditions and wear well and do their jobs.

I have a mosquito net in my closet that was made in 1945, the one I used on the Yukon River. It will last longer than I will and it's only a few years younger. It was real army surplus that we bought from Andy's Army Surplus Store.

Now it is really important that you remember when I lived in Alaska in relationship to World War II. I went there in 1951 which was only 6 years after WW II had formally ended, after the Armistice was declared which signaled the end to hostilities. But the whole thing was not over in an instant. It gradually wound down. In the era when army surplus stores really did traffic in army surplus gear. None of this khaki-colored "Made in Taiwan" or "Pakistan" sort of stuff, just genuine war materiel that was left over.

Seward was luck enough, though it is not surprising, to have a man who trafficked in army-navy surplus gear. I have no idea where he bought it, but he had a store filled with it, stuff I recognized and stuff I would never understand. These stores always bought by large lots and there was little control of what was included in a lot. The guy would see that a particular lot had a bunch of mummy bags that he wanted so he'd bid and buy it. But in the same lot there might be canteens, life jackets, dummy ammunition, boot liners, toilet paper, parts for a diesel engine, gas tanks, shoe laces, Vaseline, candy, K-rations, and so on. Since he bought the stuff, he displayed it which meant that the place was like a museum and could consume hours and hours of time.

The store was called "Andy's Army-Navy Surplus Store." The store was located in the first floor of the Oddfellows Hall. This image shows the stairway to the second floor where the Oddfellows met, which is also where the Seward Branch held its meetings. The end of Andy's window shows here, with a gaff, a flag, lantern and I can't tell what else. That wall was covered with old rifles, including a bunch of musket loaders. That's where dad bought the one that he carted across the country and back to Utah.

Andy was the owner and he struck me as an old man when I met him. He was probably 30, but to a 10 year old, that's about as old as Methuselah. The two things in his favor were first, the wide range of fascinating stuff he offered, and second, his kindness. We could go in there and prowl around to our heart's content and not be sent packing in the early years. However, in later years kids began to pilfer stuff which understandably upset him.

Whenever you asked him about a particular item, if he had it, he knew he did, and then he'd pantomime where to find it. He'd turn to the quadrant of his long narrow store where the item was located, waving with a hand in the general direction, giving explicit instructions, "It's on the right side of the aisle about this high." He'd indicate with his horizontal palm the height of the item, chest-high, knee-high, and sure enough, the thing was right where he said it would.

The stuff ran the gamut. Weapons, clothing, tents, uniforms, medals, service bars, K-Rations in cases and K-Rations broken down, canteens, blankets, tents, boots, puttees, ammunition, books, flares, cooking ware, pots, pans, maps, rope, tools, netting, socks, underwear, etc. Anything that was used in a military service was likely to be there. If it wasn't he had an explanation.



We managed to get into some C-rations several times and they are a really mixed bag as far as palatability goes. They came in cardboard tubes that were sealed that were packed with different contents that were printed on the outside.

Some of the containers held wet foods that us kids didn't really want. We were looking for the candy and the crackers like the ones shown here. They were like small pilot breads, hard and dry. The candy was individually wrapped.

During the war a variety of 'rations' were prepared for the military and I didn't pay much attention to the differences. The malted milk found in the K-rations was sought after as were the chocolate bar from the emergency D-Rations. These kits all included one of the small

ingenious can openers that I used for years. It's the odd flat object in the bottom row. It was durable and effective on any cans, and had a small hole so it could be put on the chains that held dog tags.

The medals were the most prized things from Andy's store. We all coveted having them. This collection from the Ninth Armored Division. There is a cloth patch on the top left, collar insignia on the top right, marksman badge with one bar hanging from it and at the bottom were the campaign ribbons. Each ribbon was earned in a particular way and could only be worn by the soldiers who earned them. After the war



Figure 51



Figure 52 <http://www.ww2rationtechnologies.com/kratlate.jpg>



Figure 53

<http://www.mindspring.com/~sgasque/army/army.htm>

there was a surplus that found its way into these stores and we loved to handle them and dream about what they meant.

Oddfellows' Hall

The time that Andy started getting cranky was probably when the school started warehousing kids over his store in the Oddfellows' space on the second floor. He became cranky about browsing and wanted to know just what it was we wanted to see. He practically asked to see our money then. So by then kids really weren't welcome to drop in to kill an hour handling the goods.

Dad didn't have a photo of the building so here's a 2003 image in B & W. Too bad there's a trailer in front but you get the idea. You can see the stairway on the front, the same one in the photo above. This long building has two stories and it was named for the group that occupied to top floor which is probably the bunch who built it in the first place, the Oddfellows. They did their deeds on the top floor and Andy rented the bottom floor. In 2003 the bottom floor had reverted to some sort of private residence. The plate glass windows had been removed and a wall installed so the first floor here doesn't really give you the sense of what it looked like when Andy was holding forth. But the building is the same other than the doorway on the second floor that you can see and all but one the windows in this image. That wall was just smooth stucco.



The fascinating thing about the building that I learned from snooping around when waiting for dad to finish his janitoring was that on the back of the building - the right end of this photo, there was a secret staircase that went down to the back of Andy's Army Surplus store. I know it was secret because first, it was difficult to tell when you looked at the wall in the little backroom that there was actually a door there, and second, the staircase was narrow, steep and unlighted.

There was even some rubbish on the stair treads so obviously was not publicly used or known. I wondered over the years what it was for and I believe today without any evidence that it was probably used by the Oddfellows when they had secret rituals that required people to appear and disappear magically in the main hall.

If you doubt that, you haven't seen the astonishing costumes that were stored in the other locked room on the other side of the building. The room with the door was on the far side of the building as you look at this photo and the one with the costumes would have been on the near side. They were incredible. I sneaked in there, too, using dad's key that let him into any room. He was more trustworthy than I so while I waited for him I really did wander around and test everything that was testable. In this costume room were incredibly bright, colorful, scary costumes, beards and accessories.

I remember a white costume that was either a god, a wiseman or a conjurer. There were several that looked sort of like pirates, made out of bright satiny fabrics, hanging there on hangers. There were also masks made out of paper mache that were large enough to cover a person's head, also scary or sobering. But the most sobering things in this secret closet were the swords. There was perhaps 6 of them. I don't really remember how many, just know it was more than two and that they looked real enough to do some damage which gave me cause to the extent that I didn't even mess with them, which is out of character for me. I wasn't against trying anything once - as long as mom didn't know. She was so dang harsh, bless her wrinkled hide.

I talked to her today and when I told her good-by I started crying again. It is such a sad thing for this extravagant woman who took the whole dang world on by herself, 17 years old, to be in this condition where she can't remember what she had for breakfast half an hour ago. I will take care of her to the best of my ability for as long as she survives. She is completely unable to take care of anything now. She can't even address an envelope properly anymore so I will care for her. I will repay the debt I owe her for being my mom, the best damn one there were was. Thank you very much and don't you forget it. I love her and would take her confusion on as my own if I could to spare her the ignominy of her end.

Back to the Oddfellows hall: in the front of the main meeting room, the north half of the top floor, there was a three-step podium constructed against the wall. That's where the big shots sat. But the really



fascinating aspect of that wall above this podium was a frame set squarely in the middle. It was about 2 feet square and did not open from this side which meant that it opened from the other side, i.e. the costume room which would be to the left side of this image. This door and the secret stairway suggest something about the activities that the oddfellows engaged in.

It never occurred to me that the Oddfellows had anything to do with Freemasonry but I just found that out. These guys were masons after all. I don't know anything about the masons other than the fact that the LDS rites are claimed by certain parties to have been borrowed from the masons, in which case the costumes and secrecy ring a familiar note. When I looked on the internet in Goggle at the images for masonic regalia I was astounded to see white shoes, white ties, white belts, white robes, aprons, white hats and so on. The similarities between the two groups is actually amazingly strong. What that means I don't know but it lends credence to the claim that Joseph Smith "borrowed" some of his "inspiration" from the Masons with to he did have a formal tie.

WW II Military trails & Quonset Huts

Fort Raymond had been disbanded -or whatever the word is- around 1946, only 5 years earlier than the year I arrived so it is not surprising that

there were many evidences of that occupation. For example, Fort Raymond itself remained basically intact, its barracks



and buildings converted into the TB San north of the bay, the Army Dock was still standing, and a large field across the Army Dock still had Quonset huts. Most of the Quonset huts had been taken down by the time I moved there but the evidence showed that there had been structures in place.

Some of the quonsets were probably taken out of Seward but others were purchased by locals and moved to different locations in town to be used as storage sheds or homes as was the case with this one over by the school.

In addition to these signs of the military occupation of the town, there were more interesting things running along the bay. There was a rough road that looked more like a trail than a road that apparently ran out to Caines' Head where there was the remnant of a gun emplacement erected to guard the entrance to the bay during the war. In addition to the road, there were also foot trails along the bay that were used by soldiers assigned reconnaissance



duties that required them to leave the fort and reconnoiter down the bay. Where the trail ran along the cliffs that constituted the walls of the bay, these foot trails were actually wooden staircases that had been constructed on anchors drilled into the cliffs. They had rotted so much that mom and dad wouldn't let us climb on them but I looked at them and wondered what things must have happened on them during the war. There appeared to be the remains of electrical conduit secured to the staircases that must have been the source of land communication between the Caines' Head outpost and headquarters. I expect that the wooden trails are gone now but Caines' Head remains. These elements combined with others like the camouflage of the Jesse Lee Home to create a powerful awareness of the role of the military in our lives.

Art Schaefermeyer and his family even set up residence in one of them as shown in this photo of Christmas that year. It is not unlikely that dad and mom saw the start of this encampment of Quonset huts. Here the modest Christmas tree is shorter than dad, lighted by a string of lights plugged into the wall on the left. This must have been the first Christmas judging from my age. I'm wearing corduroys that are worn at the knees and a coat identical to Dickie's. The little kid in the front was Mikey. He was the baby of the family at the time and was spoiled so got to do things that the other kids didn't. This was across from the Army Dock and had been occupied by military families 5 years earlier. Dick appears to be eating a popcorn ball and I'm holding bootie.



Wreck of the Quackenbush

During the 1940's, a ship named the Quackenbush served as a transport vessel to ferry soldiers between Seward and the Aleutian outposts. In 1945 the ship scraped on rocks that ruptured the hull to the extent that it could not be repaired. No lives were lost but the ship was towed back in to Seward. According to Mary Barry, it was surrounded by empty, sealed oil barrels and placed in the breakwater until 1950 when attempts were made to burn the hull. The attempt was partially successful. The remainder of the hull was towed away from

the breakwater and deposited on the mud flats where it sat for most of the time was there. In 1954 1,100 pounds of dynamite were placed and detonated, exploding the hulk into pieces that floated away as drift wood.

When we went onto the flats at low tide, we could have walked clear out to the Quackenbush but I was afraid. The distance from the beach to the wreck was so great that I feared that if I went out there and the tide turned, I might be trapped in the hulk, or I would be drowned by the advancing tide. I don't remember whether or not mom or dad talked to me about how fast the tide could come in on the flats but for some reason I understood that the tide in that location moved extremely quickly. Looking back today, I have to admit that it probably did move usually fast for a tide in most locales, but even a kid probably could have outrun it if it became necessary. But I survived by not being too foolish so I didn't take the chance of going out to explore.

Searchlights, Dead Climber & Mt. Marathon

Dave Fleming rented the back half of his lot to a family of Nazarenes from Nampa, Idaho who moved a trailer in and set it up on blocks. You can see the end of the trailer in this photo to Dick's left. Dave's house is there on the right and there was a wire fence between the yards. This family was active proselyting and being devout, attracting other families from the lower 48. As I remember, this particular strain of Nazarene was fairly strict in that the woman had to do special things with their hair which Paul described as the crowning glory of woman. They were as rigid in their morality as the LDS but the teenagers



sowed their wild oats. I remember hearing stories about them going to the dock, like many people young or otherwise as a form of entertainment in a pretty dull town, to meet ships but ending up doing things they shouldn't. The saying was, "Nazarene girls don't smoke and don't drink, but that's all they don't do." I've heard that said about LDS as well. Whatever the case, the leader of the little congregation lived in this trailer next to us so we knew them well.

But tragedy struck the group. In the fall of ~1954, the old man decided that he was going to go up on Mt. Marathon for some reason. I never did understand if he was hunting, which would have been unusual because people didn't hunt on Marathon, or whether he was just on an outing for the day. Whatever the case, he was inexperienced in rigors of the climate. It was rainy and wet, as it usually was, on the day he went up. He apparently went alone, which was his first mistake, and his second was to wear shoe-paks for climbing in rocks, a serious mistake. The rubber soles were not suited to climb rocks because they were too slippery but he didn't know that so took of on his errand.



In the evening, his failure to return alarmed the family. Night was falling and it continued to rain. The family consulted with those in town who would mount a rescue attempt for the man because at least they knew he had gone up on Marathon and was going along the bench, perhaps to the falls. Since night was falling, artificial light was necessary if rescuers were going to be able to get out before daylight. Contact was made with the ships tied up at the docks. The skippers understood the gravity of the situation and agreed to fire up their enormous search lights.

The lights on the ships were the carbon arc lights used during WW II to light up the night sky searching for aircraft and they did the job here. I remember vividly the image of these wide, enormously bright beams of light that were shined up on the side of Marathon during the night, moving slowly as the rescue team made its way along the path they anticipated that he had taken. This is the shape and strength of those beams.



(From <http://www.absolutehollywoodworld.com/outdoors_advertising_searchlights_xenon_sky_trackers.htm>.)

I believe it must have been dad's success in the solo discovery of the Mahurrin boy that dad got involved in this rescue as well, which is part of the reason that I was allowed to go outside late at night and watch the extraordinary spectacle of wartime technology at work. He later reported that the man had obviously lost his footing on some rocks and fallen over a cliff to his death. And was undone by the ordeal again.

Hooligan Fishing

This was one of the strangest things we did that I loved. Fishing for fish with dip nets. What an amazing concept. Put a net of a pole, dip it into water and pull out a bunch of skinny 8 inch long fish, dump them into a wash tub. And do it again. The fish was called "hooligan" locally. The scientific name was eulachon, more dignified but less interesting. The term hooligan was an anglicized version of an Indian name for these fish that started "oo-" so it's easy to see how an "h" could be put at the beginning to create a word that came out "hooligan".



The fish is also known as "candle fish" because, it was claimed, you could light one and use it like a candle due to the amount of oil in its flesh. They were used by panhandle Indians

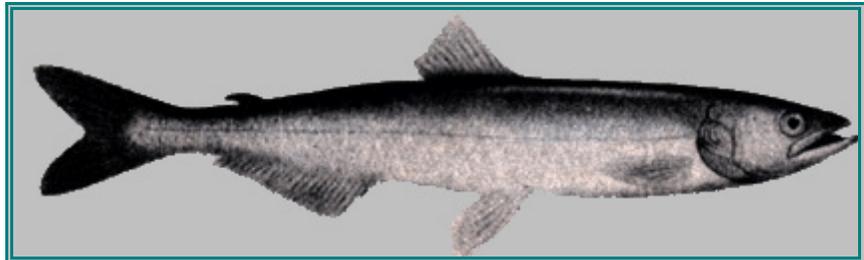


Figure 63 <http://fishhotline.com/jpeg/eulachon.jpg>

for food and hooligan oil was extracted from the fish by fermenting them first, which must have been a pretty odoriferous process. They ran in the spring for several weeks because they needed to spawn in fresh water. It seemed their numbers were endless. People would catch wash tubs and buckets of these little fish.

We fished for them every spring over on the Resurrection River. Here a man is fishing in water that is fairly clear. The water in the Resurrection was clouded with silt so you couldn't see anything. You just dipped into the water with the net, made an arc as you pulled it through the water, twisted it so the opening was parallel with the surface of the water and lifted it up. The technique required that you sweep downstream with the net, not upstream. That was because the fish were swimming upstream.



Figure 64 <http://www.keetgooshi.com/images/eulachon1.jpg>

This photo of Chilkoot Indians shows just how many hooligan could be caught this way. It wasn't unusual to bring up two dozen or more in one scoop. The surprise was to catch a salmon. On rare occasions, someone would net a salmon which of course caused a lot of excitement and made everyone else hope that they would have the same luck.

We used all the fish we caught, in contrast to some other families who just did it for sport. The intestines of the fish were negligible as in herring so we

didn't have to clean them before preparing them for smoking. We'd just wash them off, and lay them out one layer at a time on the trays that we put into the smoke house and then fired up the alder fire in the fire pot.

After the fish were smoked, mom put about a dozen into a plastic freezer



Figure 65

http://www.yukonweb.com/business/lost_moose/big_gifs/chilkoot/20_eulichon_fishing.gif

bag and sealed the bags with an iron. Then these packages were taken down to Warner's freezer where we had rented a locker for our meat. These bags then sat there to be retrieved one at a time when mom sent us down. We'd thaw the bag out, open it up and pull out a hooligan and then eat it. I'd bite the head and tail off and throw them away and then eat the rest of the fish. They were good, though very oily compared to salmon.

Cold Storage Locker

Jack Warner had a really scary place across the street from the Federal Building. It was a cold storage locker where we rented a medium sized locker. We stored our moose, fish and clams there until we needed them. The moose meat was cut and wrapped for a small charge by the butcher but mom wrapped the smoked fish and clams using plastic bags with paper covers that had little round windows to help you identify what was inside. Frozen packages are as hard as rocks and even seeing the contents didn't really help you know what was inside. It was the handwriting with a black wax pen that helped you find what you were after. The smoked fish was hooligan and salmon and the clams were primarily huge razors from Clam Gulch on Cook Inlet by Ninilchik.

Mom would decide when she needed something from the locker and would summon one of us and give us the order. It was easy for her in her warm kitchen to just say, "Ron. Here's the key. I want you to go to the locker and get a package of razor clams, a package of hooligan, two packages of mooseburger, a package of steaks and any kind of roast." after which I knew better than to talk back, but it was not an easy thing in reality to go there.

I trudged down along Adams past the Joe Guthrie's Bakery, Liberty Theater, the Flamingo Bar, the Van Guilder Hotel, the empty lot by the cleaners, and across



Figure 66 Lost URL

4th Avenue to 5th where Jack had his cold storage unit, a single level nondescript building with an entrance on 5th. I would go in the door and say something to the adult standing guard about having to get some meat. Then I opened the heavy door into the locker section. It must have been a foot thick and had a peculiar handle that you pushed to unlock. When it shut, it made a quiet chunk like a boulder had fallen onto the concrete floor.

I had nightmares of being locked in it and forgotten over night, freezing to death. No kidding. It was frightening to be sent into the locker alone with the key to our locker with those orders. I wasn't tall enough to reach the door so I had to drag a set of steps over to the locker first, then climb the steps, stick the key in the lock, turn and open it. The meat was thrown helter-skelter inside. There were no shelves so things were randomly placed. That meant that I had to lift packages out one at a time and sort through them to find what was ordered. After while I would have a pile of them sitting on the edge as I reached deeper into the pile which made it harder to get the next packages. It was hard to interpret the handwriting on the white butcher paper, and while I was searching, I could hear someone open the heavy thick freezer door and shut it with a ka-chunk. I was petrified that someone was going to turn the light out on me and could hardly breathe when someone opened the door.

When I had the meat I was ordered to get, I threw the meat packages I didn't need back into the locker, quickly locked it and literally ran for the door. As I reached it, I slowed down because I knew I had made it and then walked slowly out as if nothing had bothered me. But it did. The thing was like a tomb and kids told scary stories to each other about how they knew someone who got locked in overnight and froze. Probably a lot of nonsense but I believed it fervently and hated to have to go down there.

Smoking Salmon

The hardest part about smoking salmon is getting them lighted.

[I am not sorry.]

Once upon a time, Dad built a smoke house That's the beginning of a story about the fire chief's salmon but we need to dispose of the description of the thing first.

This is what the thing looked like, an outhouse with a stove pipe sticking into the side near the bottom. On the other end of the stove pipe was part of a wood stove that dad appropriated from the dump and installed here to be his smoker. He had to cut a piece of sheet metal to make a seal over the top of the stove so that the stove pipe could be connected to it. You can see the silver surrounding the stove pipe. It was sealed in place with a substance that resembled concrete and it did prevent smoke from escaping. The wooden piece on the right side of the stove pipe was to keep people from knocking the stove pipe loose. That's Whitmore's house in the background, obviously under construction. In the very top left corner you see a whitish tree trunk. That is the place that Dick and I would go for picnics in the early spring when it was still snowy. Mom would make sandwiches and put them in our nice Easter baskets, put in a pint jar of milk and a cookie and off we went. We'd sit up there on a log, feet in the snow, looking down at the world. To the left and behind the smoke house you see the garbage cans on a stand. The garbage truck came through regularly to pick up the trash and haul it out to the city dump just beyond the small boat harbor and across from the lagoon. Notice again the kind of vegetation in the yard. No grass.



Here's a great photo of Dick and a silver that's headed for the smokehouse. His bamboo deep sea pole is leaning on the smoke house and he's wearing a rain slicker and shoepacs. The smokehouse has smoke oozing around the top as it was intended to do when in operation.

Dick's holding the salmon with the home-made gaff prepared by dad, of course. Dad took a cedar 2 x 4 - which in those days was actually 2 x 4- and carved a long narrow handle. Then he drilled a hole for the spike end of the heavy metal hook, and after inserting the hook, he wrapped the shaft with a heavy cord, as neatly as possible and tied it off in such a way that the ends of the cord disappeared underneath the wrapping, a slick trick.

Here's how you do it in case you want to know: take a length of string, cord or rope. Lay one end along a dowel to have something to work on. Leave about 8 inches of cord and carefully loop the cord back along itself, holding it carefully in place. Then when the cord is about an inch and a half from the loose end, carefully start wrapping the cord around the

dowel and first segment of string. Wrap all the way back to the loop, being sure to make the loops tight and keep them pressed against the preceding one. When your cord wrapping reaches the end of the loop, just insert the end of the cord through the loop. Now grab the loose tail of that loop which is sticking out of the other end of the wrapping, and pull hard enough to make the loop shorten underneath the wrapping. This will pull the end you had been wrapping with down under the wrapping. Pull hard enough to center the two ends in the middle of the wrapping and then cut the two ends of cord loose. You'll have a tidy neat wrapping with the



ends out of sight so they won't come loose or unravel.

We smoked a lot of salmon in our days, and preferred silver. I doubt we smoked any other kind because no specie was as good to our mind as the silver. Mom would gut the fish, behead and fillet it skillfully. She became adept at filleting. Then she'd cut the fillets into 3-4 inch lengths and put them into a pan of brine overnight. I'm not sure what the brine really did but it was part of the process. The next day, the brined pieces were laid on trays that were constructed like picture frames with chicken wire fastened tightly over the opening. These were naturally designed to fit precisely in the smoke house about 8 inches apart, which means you could smoke a lot of salmon at once as you can tell by the size of the thing. After the salmon was carefully placed inside the smokehouse, the door was shut and secured. There were openings around the roof such that smoke could rise from the chimney, passing over the salmon and then exit. The opening under the roof was basically the draft so it was the heat that caused this flow to happen.

A fire was started in the fire box, using alder that had been dried. It never burned with a bright flame because there wasn't enough draft to do that. I think that he did have a damper in the stove pipe to further regulate the fire so that he could keep enough air flowing to make the alder smoulder and would leave it overnight that way. If the fire went out there was no harm, the fire was just restarted. Since the salmon was on chicken wire, it was smoked simultaneously on both sides so it didn't need to be turned over. When it was ready, the fire was allowed to go out and the door was opened.

The racks were taken into the kitchen where the salmon was pulled off and packaged for freezing, eating and giving away. We preferred a dry smoke which took longer than otherwise. Part of the reason was that salmon that was dry would not spoil, something my parents always paid attention to. The other reason was that it was chewier than the moist smoke. At some point in the season, dad would make some "squaw candy", which was strips instead of pieces of salmon that were smoked so long that they were hard. You could carry this in your pocket and it wouldn't crumble. Today I think it would be called 'salmon jerky.'

Cramming and Clabbing

Clamming and Crabbing. Billy Schaefermeyer and Dick and I thought we were so funny. We had been nagging our parents to let us go dig clams on the mud flats. We just knew that there were a lot of them out there because no one went



out to dig them. That meant they were still there. The perfect logic of a kid that sort of missed another interpretation of the fact that people didn't go out there to dig clams.

One day they relented, probably to shut us up so Billy came into town from his place out at 5 Mile and mom hauled us and our gear over to dig clams. She naturally drove along the Old Nash Road that skirted the bay and dropped us off anywhere. We all wore what we called hip boots. The bottom foot part was a rigid boot that extended up to the knee. Then there was a soft part made out of rubberized fabric sort of like canvas. This could be pulled up another foot and a half to provide additional protection when needed. In this photo I have that segment just turned straight down, and Dick has his folded down and then folded back up on itself. Dick's carrying a 'clam gun' designed specifically for digging fast digging clams.

We walked out from the beach on the flats, looking at the sea lettuce, 'things', and detritus that always covered the bottom. You had to walk quietly as you were searching because the clams could "hear" loud noises and might dig down

deeper into the sand. We knew what to look for, inch-wide depressions in the sand that had small holes in the center for the clam's siphon. The siphon has an intake tube and an exhaust tube so there were two holes. When you saw one of these unique holes, you were pretty sure you had a clam so you did the deal then and there.

Ah ha, we found one. Success right away. I don't remember who it was but he found the thing and dug the clam. Except that it wasn't a clam. It was a dungeness crab. That was a strange thing. We'd never dug crabs before when we found these little depressions but there it was. So we kept searching for more depressions and found some. Sure enough, it was another crab. We spent an hour and a half out there digging up the clam depressions but always getting dungeness crabs. We each brought home a bucket of crabs and not a single clam.

Cat Marbles

Cat marbles are different than marble cats. I have always loved cats as shown by the evidence. This particular cat was one of the weirdest I'd ever lived with. We got her as a kitten so she grew up knowing the 2nd Avenue house well. Winter being as cold as it was, cats didn't do well outside so she was basically an indoor cat which was a novelty for us because mom and dad did not generally tolerate pets inside the house, probably from personal experiences of a certain kind. This cat went outdoors to do her duty, however. In those days, at least in my life, there was no such thing as a "litter box". What a strange name when I heard it. "Litter box" that you put inside of your house for a cat to crap in. Smelliest crap in the world, who would let a cat do that? So she went outdoors several times a day, even in the snow, and took care of business.

She had several peculiar habits that manifested themselves early in her life. When she was you, something would come over her. Upon being allowed in the house she would streak across the floor into the front room which was ok. But at that point, she'd head for the drapes and climb them, floor to the top, in a second. Then she would look around to get her bearings, walk across the curtain rod to the other side, and then descend down the other drape. That did not earn points with mom but she was so fast that it was hard to catch and stop her. Fortunately, she got over this habit before mom got rid of her.

The oddest thing she did was carry marbles in her mouth and then play

games with them. Cats in my experience don't normally pick up inanimate objects in their mouths like dogs do so willingly. They are above that sort of pedestrian behavior and only take food or creatures in. This one had a fetish for little round marbles and would bite and hold them. That was unusual enough, but then she taught herself a game that didn't win any points either. She discovered that if she stood at the top of the stairs, set the marble on the floor, and pushed it with her paw, the marble would roll down the stairs, one at a time, clicking and bouncing slowly until it reached the floor. This was done, of course, in the pitch blackness of night when we were all sleeping. Then she would repeat the process, picking the marble up in her mouth, carrying it back up to the top of the stairs, setting it down, pushing it with her paw, sitting and listening, click, click, click.

The other pet in the neighborhood was Peggy Flemming "budgie bird", or parakeet. We fell in love with it first because it was a beautiful bird, but more because it learned to talk. So mom and dad bought us one, which was a challenge in a cold climate like Alaska.

Pepper the Parakeet

A salt and pepper green parakeet took up residence in our front room one year in response to the pleas of Dickie and me. Peggy Flemming had one of these little birds that fascinated me. Hers was a blue and white bird that chattered in a wire cage into a mirror, pecking at a cuttle bone, popping small round seeds. The bird was exotic, a bit of bright color that she would take out of the cage and had to me on a finger to hold. It was tame and tolerated handling well. It became a friend and would climb up my arm and perch on my shoulder, fluffing out the chin feathers and muttering to itself quietly. It would reach up to my ear lobe and softly bite it as if testing its flavor but it didn't bite. It loved to chew on the frames of my glasses as if they were a toy. Eventually, it would reach up to the bow of my glasses and quickly hoist itself up and perch. At this point, it would chew strands of hair, testing and



Figure 70

<http://www.crystal-parrot.com/about.html>

tasting, walking back and forth from my ear to the hinge. It would sometimes look down into the lense and peck at it as if it were a mirror, and walk across to the other side. During these 5 minute interludes its GI tract inevitably overloaded so a little gray-white deposit appeared on one of my shoulders. Peggy taught me a fancy new word, that sounded like an antique, when she said, "You mesmerize him!". I asked what that meant, not sure whether I had done something wrong. She explained that the word meant 'hypnotize'. That was OK and I was relieved.

We pleaded with mom and dad for a parakeet, a foreign jungle creature and they relented. I think I was as surprised as I was pleased. I believe Peggy was instrumental in getting this young green and yellow bird and cage with all the furnishings, cuttle bone, trapeze, mirror, hanging balls, water cup, seed cup and treats. The most novel thing about the bird that we named "Pepper" was its sleeping habits. When the end of the day came, we would put him back into the cage because he had the run of the house most of the time. Then we would slip a cloth cover over the cage. He magically quieted down even though he had been protesting a moment before, clinging to the wires, chattering to get out. He returned to his perch and muttered quietly to himself, and finally was silent. That amazed me because the lights were still on so his cage was still light but the enclosure transformed him.

Our main objective with Pepper was to teach him to talk. I'm not sure why that was so important but I had always been fascinated with birds that talked. I think they were like bits of cartoons that were alive. So we earnestly undertook teaching him through repetition like Peggy explained, short words, again and again. The first words we taught him were "Pretty Pepper". Again and again and the day came when he repeated them. Amazement! Our bird could talk! That inspired us and energized us. "Happy Birthday", then "Pretty bird" and "Pretty Boy" and a wolf whistle, a total of 14 words were acquired by Pepper.

The biggest surprise was "Merry Christmas". We had been trying to teach him to say "Merry Christmas" for weeks, immediately prior to Christmas but he refused to say it. He would say his other words, even mixing them up on occasion which was amazing. We got up Christmas Morning intent on opening our presents under the tree. A some point one of us became aware that the bird was talking quietly to himself under his cover, saying "Merry Christmas".

He had a sad ending that was unnecessary and preventable that winter. Dick and I were squabbling like we often did. It was a tiny house and being cooped up all winter was tough on everyone's nerves. On this particular morning, he and I were

getting ready for school. We must have been feeding Kobuk because we were in the kitchen and had the door open to the landing of the stairs. While we quarreled, each focusing on winning the argument, one of us opened the outside door. At that instant, Pepper who was sitting on one of our shoulders, took off. He saw the door open and the whiteness of the outdoors and flew away so quickly that neither of us even moved. By the time we realized what had happened, it was too late. We naturally became instantly quiet and stepped outdoors quickly to see where he was, in hopes he would perch in a bush so we could catch him. But he didn't. He was not used to the vertical freedom so he flew in a widening spiral ever upward until we lost sight of him.

Paperboy

In addition to these jobs, we were forced to pedal newspapers down town for which we made 2 pennies apiece and to deliver some up our street. This is an area you have some experience with, isn't it. Pretty rotten deal isn't it. And pedaling papers down town directly to the public was just plain humiliating. But that was less painful than the alternatives. We saved our pennies, literally, in a metal Curad bandage can.

We didn't use bags to carry our papers. We'd go pick them up at a location I can't remember and then start pedaling them down town or delivering them. I hated the pedaling part because I was embarrassed to approach people, asking them to buy one of my papers. I don't have any memories of hostility to me, rather it was the inborn hesitation I had about approaching people, fearing rejection and humiliation. Each time I did approach a man with a question, "Wanna buy a paper?" and received "No" for an answer I did feel rejected. It made it harder the next time to try. But mom was implacable. She decreed that "Thou shalt pedal papers on main street for 30 minutes!" and I understood that was about like Moses coming down the mount with his arms full. So I would wander up and down the main block and Adams hoping that someone would notice my papers and ask for one, occasionally daring to approach a kindly looking man. But those offers were sparsely distributed over that 30 minutes. I probably spent more time trying to figure out the time than I did trying to sell. When the time came that I could go home, I did with trepidation, dreading the inquisition that would follow, "How many papers did you sell?", "How many people did you talk to?", "Where did you try to

sell papers?" and so on, in a critical weary voice, like I was a failure. Which I was. I hated doing that.

The other version of paperboying was the home delivery kind. I was ordered to go door to door on 2nd Avenue to ask people if they wanted to subscribe to the paper that I would deliver. It was a dreadful experience at 10 to walk up to a door, knock, and stand there dreading that someone would answer. When no one came, I felt a wave of relief and the reprieve and walked away. But as soon as I approached the next door, the relief evaporated and the dread set in again. When someone opened the door and looked at me, I said my piece as best I could, which wasn't very graceful I know. I didn't want to be doing this job plus I was just a kid, inexperienced in sales so I was clumsy and awkward at approaching people.

A few people actually did like the idea of home delivery of the paper so signed up. It was a good feeling to go back and tell mom that "Juanita said she wants to take the paper," "The postmaster said he will take it." A list was prepared of the customers and a tally was made so I knew how many papers to ask for when I went to get them. As I remember the drill, we would ask for a certain number of papers which were handed to us without payment, but we had to return with payment later that day or the next day. At that point we had to account for each paper we had taken out by returning it, which earned a deep sign from the distributor, or by payment of 3 cents per paper. That meant that we had to collect the money from the customers, figure out how many papers we sold, how much we owed the distributor and then had to make that payment. 3 cents doesn't sound like much but for a 10 year old who was expected to handle all of this alone, who had no preparation for doing it, the job was tough and discouraging. Even the delivery to homes was unpleasant, but that is normal for most paperboys I'd guess so wasn't different than what you kids experienced when you had to deliver papers. I kept my profit in a white, metal Band-Aid box with a lid that you pulled off, not the hinged variety, and I kept it in the cupboard on the east end of the kitchen on the first shelf. The other opprobrious dimension of this working for money business was the 10% rule. Mom was absolutely rigid about it. I had to count my money out for to actually see at which time she offered about the only help she offered: how to figure 10%. Then it had to be set aside to be given to the presiding elder, my dad, in the proper envelope. I did it but I didn't really want to give away part of my hard-earned money.

One of the most puzzling events of my time is Seward involved pedaling newspapers downtown. It had to do with this hotel, the Van Guilder.

This 2003 photo shows the hotel, although it is painted, there is pavement and so on. But it is the same hotel that did hotel business I suppose but it was also used as a sort of boarding house



as best I understand. There were several old -to me, then- men who sat in chairs on the front entry way. They seemed to be there often so I assumed they lived there.

One day I sold one of these men a newspaper. That was a fine thing to happen. As the man paid me, he tipped me, something that always surprised and puzzled me. His tip was two shiny new quarters. As I walked away, I was stunned. 50 cents! Man alive, this was like getting a brick of gold bouillon. I practically ran home to show mom my good fortune, planning over and over again how I would spend it -after I put the 5 pennies for the 10% aside. But I was stunned at her reaction. Instead of happiness, or congratulation for my salesmanship abilities, she got angry. She said, "Where did you get that money?" implying, I thought, that I had stolen it. I assured her that I had not stolen it, that it was given to me by this nice man. "Where did you find this man?" I told her he lived at the Van Guilder Hotel. That was it. That was enough. She said, "You are not to take money from those men. You go back right now and find that man and give him his quarters back."

I thought she had come unhinged. The best luck I'd ever had! It was like

having sold 25 papers and she wants me to take this money back to that nice man. Now what will that man think about me, I wondered as I wandered back along the dirt road to the Hotel. I dreaded finding him but I dreaded more going home without having done the job. The odd thing today is to realize that the thought never crossed my mind to just hide the money for later and lie to her and tell her that I had given the money to the man. That would have solved several problems in my favor. It's like I was positive that she would discover my dishonest and abuse me more. It was simpler and easier to just do what she said, so I found the old man, gave him his money back saying, "My mom told me to give you your money back." I don't have a memory of his response because I was turning and headed back out the door. I did not know what was going on, I knew I had stepped into one of those nasty spaces that I did not understand and I never returned to the Van Guilder Hotel for any reason.

Today I see that she was concerned that the man was a pedophile, something that was absolutely outside my scope of understanding. Since she was an adult in that tiny town, it is not unlikely that she knew things about goings on of various unsavory characters thin which case she was correct in what she did. And the fact that she was so harsh would not have been harshness at me, rather irritation and concern about what that nice man was doing. If only she had somehow managed to convey her message to me in a way that didn't make me feel like I was the one who had done something wrong. It's true I wouldn't have understood what she was concerned about but I would have understood fine that there was a problem for adults that she knew about that I wouldn't have understood, and she was happy for me, but that I needed to give this money back to the nice man and not go into the Van Guilder again.

There weren't a lot of other forced labor projects pushed on us in Seward. Probably because there were few to push on kids our age. It was a town of around 2,000 on a narrow beach on a wonderful bay. What are you going to find for kids to do? No farming, no crops, nothing like that. So we were more or less safe other than the snow business and the church business.

Halibut Lines

Dad wanted to try his luck at catching halibut out in the bay. He came by a roll of several hundred feet of old halibut line and a box of large halibut hooks. I was surprised at the size of the hooks and at the way they were secured to the line. These hooks didn't have an eye for line to be inserted through. In place of the eye was a wide flat shape like the eye had been smashed flat with a hammer. This wide flat end was laid on the line and secured in place by being wrapped by a stout fishing line. I remember noting that this line was aged and wondered quietly to myself about its suitability for fishing for big fish like halibut.



After he had prepared two lines with hooks, he coiled them carefully and tied them so that they wouldn't get messed up while being handled. He loaded them with a bucket of herring into the freight canoe on a sunny morning and headed out into the bay. We went further down the bay than we ever had, perhaps half way to Fox Island. When he was satisfied with his location, he shut off the Elgin motor and started to bait the hooks with the herring as he unrolled the line and hooks over board. When he had let one line out completely, he secured it to a float to keep the end on the surface and serve as a marker for the location. Then he repeated the process with the other line. After both lines were lowered and suspended from floats, dad carefully examined the distant shores to find prominent landmarks that he could use to triangulate this location again. After marking the spot this way, he restarted the engine and we headed back to Seward.

I don't remember how long he left his lines out before returning to check them, but I remember returning with him after a day or two. The floats were either not there any more or dad couldn't find the spot where he set them. In any event, we returned to Seward empty handed and he never tried his hand at halibut fishing again. And I didn't say a word.

I found out from one of Deanna's clients this summer who fishes halibut commercially on Kodiak Island that he never leaves his hooks out more than 4 -6 hours. He said that out there a small bottom creatures called "sand shrimp" cover

the halibut and devour it. He said that they actually will strip all the meat off if given enough time. So I wonder if dad would have had any halibut anyway.

Elsie, Slugs and Nails

The Home Brew Alley house sat on an alley that was actually the north end of Homebrew Alley. Like all the roads in town, except for a few blocks of the main street, alleys were not paved. And this alley for some reason was filled with rusty nails, probably the result of construction though that never occurred to me. They obviously made drivers nervous. Elsie and her husband both worked and were willing to hire us kids to help deal with the risk. She paid her son Brent, his sister Janice, me and Dick a nickel for 10 nails that we picked up out of the driveway. I remember that there was some sort of requirement about where we discarded them so we didn't show her the same ones, but it was sort of a fun thing to do. Not unlike beach combing that is actually fun.

In addition to getting compensation for picking up nails, we could also earn money by going after snails in Elsie's flowers. The climate encourages slugs, something I had never seen in Utah. Dad said they were basically snails without shells which made sense if you looked closely at them. They all had tiny horns, slick skins and a large flat foot to walk on. The problem with them, which surprised me, was that these little slimy things ate green plants. I don't know what I expected them to eat but I did not think they would eat plants, or I was surprised that they could actually eat enough of a plant to damage it. Elsie wanted to grow flowers so had several flowerbeds that were magnets for slugs, so she paid us the same rate for collecting and killing snails.

As a sidelight to the collection process, I learned something about solutes and osmolality, though I didn't know it. Someone told us that if we sprinkled salt on a slug it would kill it so we did the experiment. Sure enough, the slug was really unhappy about the salt on its skin and shed masses of slime in an apparent attempt to sort of wash it off. But once the salt was on the creature, it was done for. It squirmed, made heavy slime trails and finally died but the interesting thing was that the slug shriveled. Why would that happen? I understood that poisons would kill animals and birds and I viewed salt as a poison, yet it induced shriveling which other poisons didn't. Dad explained that the salt absorbed water from the slug. What a novel idea. Salt absorbing water. The correlation was the realization that

the Morton's Salt girl on the circular salt box was advertising that HER salt continued to pour when there was rain, which wasn't always the case for salt. I learned in Ann Arbor that if you want to prevent salt from absorbing water across a semi-permeable membrane, you have to erect a column of mercury 10 feet tall on top of it.

Breakfast food Ads

This was the time in our country when Madison Avenue kicked into high gear - from which it has never disengaged. Of course, advertising has been an American past-time since colonial days but it seems to me that it became more prominent and intrusive at the same time the print and electronic media matured in sophistication which started in the 1930's. One of the most prominent food categories to benefit from this media grown was breakfast foods - at least from the perspective of a little kid who was taken in by the ads. I say it that way because I do know that a lot of other kinds of products were aggressively pitched but they didn't relate to me, had no appear to me like breakfast food did.

Mom continued to make cooked cereal for us in Seward but prepared breakfast foods found their way to the breakfast table more and more frequently. All-Bran was one of those cereals which is interesting because it was also advertised as a cure for constipation. I don't know whether or not that's true but dad had a chronic problem with constipation which is probably why I was aware of this aspect of this cereal. I have wondered if his problem was evidence of the genetic traits that manifested in your generation in the gastrointestinal problems experienced by several of his grand-children.

I do know that if the stuff was left sitting in a bowl of milk too long, it turned into a homogenized mass of grey goo that was not



Figure 73

<http://theimaginaryworld.com/zow28.jpg>

appealing. We ate it if it was all that was available but preferred other kinds of foods. Our preferred method for eating any breakfast cereal was to pour a batch into a good size bowl first, then pour milk over it and finally to spoon several teaspoons of sugar over it. The latter was only possible when mom was out of the kitchen or turned her back, but she knew that we did it. I think the evidence was the slurry of dissolved sugar that remained in the bottom of the bowl after we had finished the cereal and milk.

Manners, always manners. We were constantly assailed with her corrections, "Don't do that," "Do this", etc. Even breakfast was infected with her manners. The object of her lecture was usually drinking out of the bowl. I didn't see why that was a problem. In fact, it struck me as silly to lift all that milk to my mouth a teaspoon at a time, particularly since I frequently managed to spill it on the table, my chin or the front of my shirt. Much more efficient to just lay the spoon on the table, lift the bowl to my mouth, and pour the milk in, but mom didn't approve and since she had a way of popping unexpected into the kitchen we actually observed her order to the point that it became a deep-seated prohibition such that if I were to lift a cereal bowl to my mouth today I would feel guilty. She was really good.

Some of the breakfast cereals earned mom's scorn and criticism, but that didn't prevent us from begging. One of our favorite worthless cereals was puffed wheat. The fluffy dry texture with the milk was an interesting combination that had a mild nutty flavor. But mom claimed that it didn't have any nutritional value for which reason she didn't want to waste her money on it. But we were relentless about the matter so she apparently caved in now and then. It came in boxes and in long narrow plastic bags. We preferred the latter but would take either. The notion was that rice was 'shot from a cannon' was fascinating. What a way to make cereal but it didn't cut any ice with mom. This was a great cereal to make sugar syrup in the bottom of the bowl, a great combination of tastes and textures because, as



Figure 74 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/ikk201.jpg>

you know, the puffed rice kernels quickly dissolve into nothing. Gabby Hayes in this ad was a famous movie star cowboy who played comical roles in general, so he was appealing to kids, hence a good carney to put on the boxes to get us to buy the things being pedaled. But don't be fooled. Even in those days one didn't buy anything but small plastic replicas for 20 cents although the drawing made them appear to be full size. The wonders of advertising. One box top and a quarter. That's where the saying originated.

Perhaps our favorite breakfast was this one, which was never purchased except for holidays. The reason thrown out was that it was too expensive which is probably true. The cost of pouring a tiny amount of cereal into a waxed envelope that was enclosed in a cardboard box was doubtless high. The customer always pays for luxuries. But a variety pack was the ultimate in breakfast food.

The idea that we could choose a package from a set of 10 was attractive for some reason, but what was most appealing was the fact that the cardboard box could be converted into a bowl. That naturally required some skill but when it succeeded, it was great to be able to pour milk into a paper box. Naturally, one box was not enough. We had to have another one so we pestered mom for a second one. Generally, we were denied that pleasure but it happened enough times that we persisted.

The ad on this box was obviously directed at the mothers instead of the kids. Kids don't want to buy chrysanthemums.

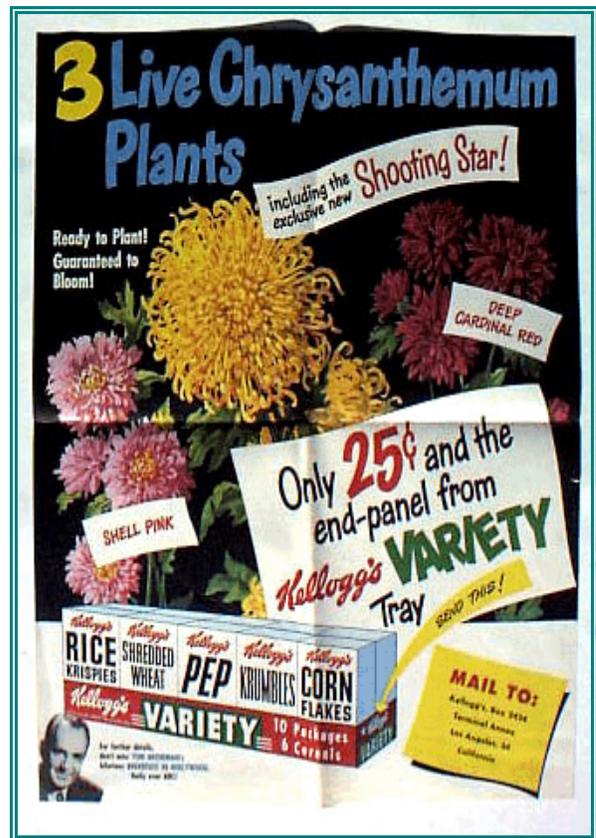


Figure 75 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/disp82.jpg>

Stamp Collecting and Postmaster

Aren't these gorgeous? Just startlingly lovely.



I fell in love with stamps first because they were so beautiful. These Austrian stamps exemplified the style that I loved the most, an ornate picture frame of a solid color inside of which was a simple image in another color that complemented or contrasted with the frame.

Some Algerian stamps were similarly designed. This stamp is slightly different because the frame creates a triptych with a panorama. This also shows an empty block reserved for a stamp of a different value and different colors. I loved the names for the colors, "Carmine", "Lake", "Ultramarine." Gorgeous words and suggestive.



I associate the name "Miss Peacock" with stamps and have specific memories about her, but I doubt that all of my memories about her are accurate. Part of me says that she was the postmistress, an impressive position to a little kid, but I know she couldn't have been the postmistress because the postmaster lived 5 houses above ours on 2nd Avenue and I played "Hide the Candy bar" in the alley with his two daughters. So perhaps she had another position at the post office and I mis-remember it because I met her when I was younger, still living on Homebrew Alley.

The way I remember meeting her is remarkable for a little kid of 9-10 years. The manager of the railroad gang liked me and Dickie so talked to us when he saw us, asking how we were. I see today that he was perhaps actually checking us out, and that it was with his blessing that we were allowed to climb around the cars and fraternize with the men of the crew. Anyway, one late afternoon, I was hanging around the dining car talking with cook who wore a chef's hat, white tee shirt and white slacks. The dining car was always sweaty in the winter but warm otherwise and I hung out in hopes I'd get a handout. He offered cookies sometimes. This particular evening, the manager showed up, not unusual, but he had a with him.

She was a pretty woman with a pearly gray suit, Baum martens, and gloves. The manager was duded up with a sport coat, dress slacks and a fancy fedora. This was an event, obviously. He had come over the grab a cup of java for the two of them and there I was. It was an accident that I was there but he took the opportunity to introduce me to her. I also (mis-) remember that her name was "Miss Peacock". I have no idea where that came from but it has stuck for 50 years. I was tongue-tied as usual meeting someone new, particularly a pretty woman, particularly people who had obviously been out on the town. But he was kind as was she. He told her that was interested in stamps, as was she. On that basis I was able to have a brief conversation with her. She promised that she would provide me some duplicates that she had, and sure enough, she did.

Another framed image is from Greece. I loved Greek stamps for this reason, as well as for the fact that they had funny looking letters that I couldn't read. That exotic feature fascinated me because I was old enough to understand the concept of a different alphabet and had never seen one. The classical image of a bull with a man either being thrown or doing a stunt over the animal fascinated me. I'd gone to rodeos where there were bulls so this resonated. The style was simple lines in one color.



My first Greek stamps were given to me by, of all things, a Greek. His name was "Pete the Greek". No kidding. And he had a large fishing boat on blocks near the deck above the small boat harbor where he worked on it, replacing individual timbers that had rotted. I don't know whether he actually intended to launch it

again, or whether it was just a fantasy that he enjoyed like Henri in "Sweet Thursday" who kept a boat in the woods, because it set up there for years and was still there when I left.

In any event, Pete the Greek found out I was interested in stamps so he gave me several. The really memorable part of the transaction, however, was not the stamps themselves. He was a swarthy heavy-set man who wore the standard plaid shirts and had a salt and pepper beard and heavy work boots. He talked with an accent and when he interrupted his work on a plank and called me over to give me the stamps I listened carefully. He had half a dozen stamps from letters he had received from his family in Greece. He held a stamp in one hand and with his other index finger he pointed to the "ΕΛΛΑΣ" and asked if I could read the letters. Naturally, I couldn't, which he knew but it was a way to start a teaching session. He pointed to the letters and said their names, "epsilon, lambda, lambda, alpha, sigma" and then he said the word out loud. [I don't think he told me about the 'smooth breathing' mark, but perhaps he did. It was something I wouldn't have understood if he had.]

For me, words are magical. They are powerful. They are symbols that capture the essence of things and ideas. The precise word to express a specific notion or emotion is lovely and powerful, like a proper name or spell. The exact word required by meaning and context sounds, when spoken, like a sledge hammer driving a huge nail squarely home in a single blow, "blammo". Saying "eye-less" did that to me although I didn't know the word. But I heard and I remembered - up to this day. "Eye-less", he said, "That's what that word means. It's the name of my country, Greece, you see." I saw and I still see. "Eye-less."

I used this information during a presentation in Miss Wilkinson's class. I don't remember what the assignment was or why I chose this topic. But I remember clearly standing up in front of the class with my prepared talk. I showed the kids my Greek stamps and one of the things I proudly explained to them was the Greek name. I pointed to "ΕΛΛΑΣ" and told them that Pete the Greek had said that the way to pronounce the word was "eye-less." That's right. Exactly right.

Another set of wonderful classical images was this group,



with narrow frames and classical images. The Minoan -now I know- lady on the left with the uncovered breasts, the naked Zeus throwing a thunderbolt and the graceful, armless Venus captured my imagination.

You need to understand something else right here. There was a powerful parallel current flowing in my poor juvenile brain at the time. Mythology. Perhaps because of the Indian stories that grandpa Merrell told, or stories that dad told, I became absolutely fascinated by mythology. Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Norse. I devoured all the books in the library. Edith Hamilton's "Mythology" captured my soul. So stamps from these countries were incorporated into the fascination as if it had been planned that I would see them.

I wasn't quite sure what this stamp was about and couldn't read the word "olympikos" at the bottom. But it was clear that this was some sort of celebration where two men were carrying another man. Others stood on the sidelines, and waved palm fronds, while pillars hung out in the background. The odd part was the men and kid running around without clothing. But the classical image inside of a frame appealed as a piece of art.



Close to Greece in my photo album was Guadeloupe with stamps like these, picture frames with lozenge shaped images in bicolor again. I am not really sure why that format and style appealed to me then and don't

understand it now. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is a true statement.



I had never lived around black people, though I'd seen a few in Vernal. There were none at all in Seward, a fact that is interesting but which I cannot interpret without risking being called prejudiced or biased. There was manual labor that required no education which paid well. Where were they? Anyway, they were in the same style so this set of bi-color Madagascar stamps captured my imagination again. Mom bought this set for me from the Charleston or Jamestown



Stamp Company. I was familiar with cattle so found these long horns of great interest. I'd never seen long horns but had heard about them from Texas and these images reminded me of the stories I heard. The particular combinations of colors were appealing, brown in lavender, red in green, blue in brown, violet in brown, brown in red, all were appealing.

Ethiopia had the same stamp design with images of animals. Another unreadable script -Amharic it turns out- graces the frames. But I had a particular interest in Ethiopia because I had a friend whose dad took a job and moved to an exotic, far-off place called Addis Abbaba. That is actually in Saudi Arabia but in my mind it was close to Ethiopia.



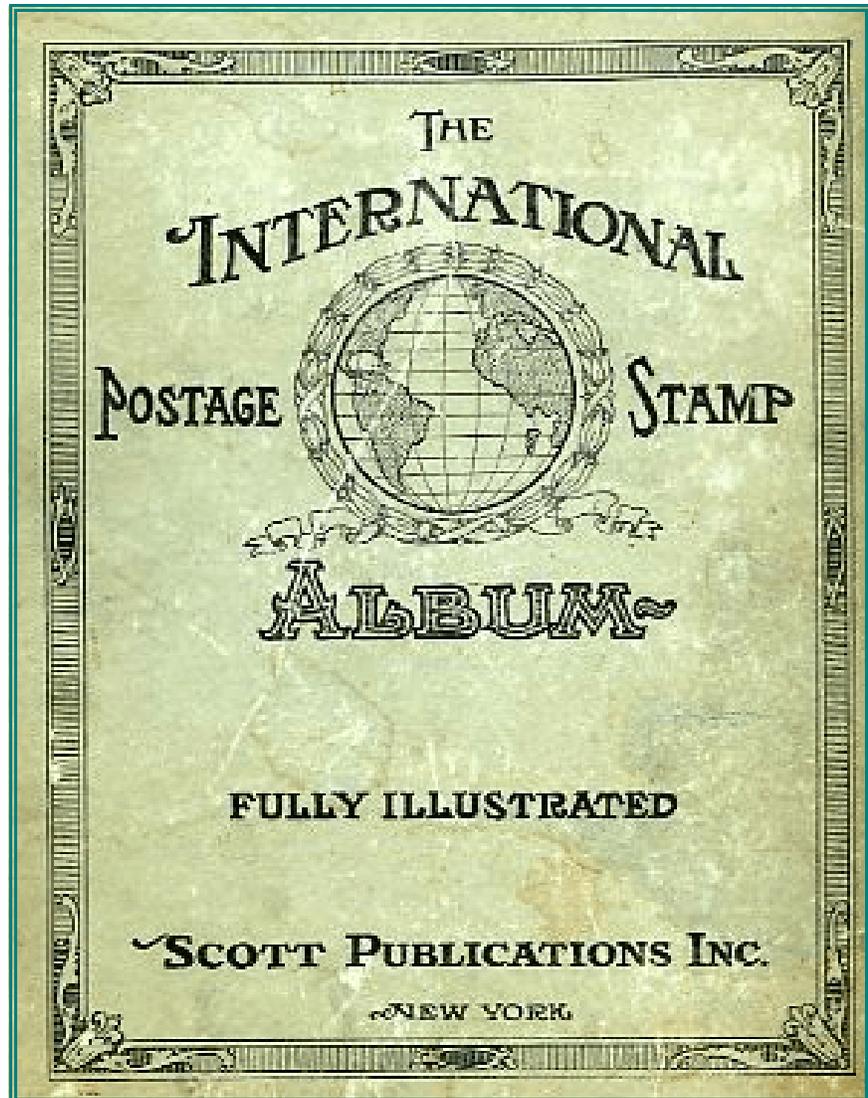
Armenian stamps were sold with a tantalizing question, "Are these real stamps or are they wallpaper?" They came in small glassine envelopes with that question printed on the cover, for a few cents so we bought them, again, because they were so unusual.

French Sudan stamps were some of my favorite because the frames were bolder, darker. Sets of identical images varying only in color made lovely patterns on an album page.



For my 10th birthday, 1952, while we were living on Homebrew Alley, mom and dad bought me a stamp album. My interest had matured to the extent that they thought it a worthwhile gift, which it was. Six whole dollars which was a heck of a lot of money in those days, from the Alaska shop, printed in 1947, hanging around for 5 years until some one 'needed' it.

Scott stamp albums are still the predominant brand of stamp album. This old timer is word but still has a good spine and the sprinkling of stamps that I would look at again and again, wondering about the countries they came from, wondering about the images, what they portrayed, what they meant. Philately is actually an excellent way to painlessly learn history, geography, cultures, etc. I recommend it to your children.



Selling fish

I think that the only free enterprise project I ever voluntarily attempted was catching and trying to sell "sea trout" in Seward. It failed. Fell flat. Not a single sale. What I think happened is this. Dick and I sometimes

fished off the creaky old cannery pier. We were threatened with our lives if we entered into the actual cannery building so we never did even get close enough to see through the doorway. But we liked to stand on the more or less stable docks outside and to use hand lines to fish. We usually caught the small cod that infested the waters there. And used them as bait for their brethren.

This one time instead of cod there was apparently a run of "sea trout" and today I don't know what they really were. But they took anything we threw in. We ended up with large catches of pretty substantial fish, some of them a foot and a half long. We talked about what to do with all these fish and decided that we'd gut them and

string them on a pole. Then we'd go door to door in the town to sell the fish. I don't remember how much we asked for them probably a nickel or something like that. But no one bought any. A lady did examine



them closely and pronounced them unclean because she could see some sort of parasite in the abdominal cavity. We were embarrassed and stopped pedaling the fish then because we knew it was wrong to sell damaged goods. We never ate anything we caught in the waters near the docks so felt funny about trying to get other people to buy these to eat. Because the raw sewage of the town was dumped into the headwaters of the bay.

Primary

This is a historic photo, the full body of the first LDS Primary in Seward



in 1951. Mom is on the left and Sister Carrol is the other adult. We're standing at the bottom of the stairway to the Oddfellow's Hall. Andy's Army Navy Store window is on the left. I don't remember most of the kids by name but remember these: On the back row Billy Schaefermeyer is second from the right, Dick is to his right, and Ross Carroll is to his right. The front row has Mike Schaefermeyer on the right and I'm kneeling just behind him in a shirt and suspenders that matched Dick's, obviously angry about something. I remember the faces of other kids but not their names. Note how few girls there were. I think about 6-7 families are represented by these kids, not all of whom were active in the Sunday functions but in the summer primary was a good place for kids to spend some time.

I don't remember the names of the classes we attended before we were 10 years old, but the Primary was rigidly structured so there must have been names for each class which was determined by age.

Trail Builders

The Trail Builders program was for boys from ages 10 to 12 and was designed by the general primary board in SLC. The structure was changed long ago but in those days reflected the agricultural antecedents of the faith. It also demonstrated the faith's commitment to the Boy Scout's of America.

Each of the three years was given a specific name, workbook and emblems.

The first year was named "Blazer", the second was named "Trekker" and the third was named "Guide." The Guide year in particular was aimed toward preparing the boy for integration into a Boy Scout troop. I still have the items that represented all of the Trail Builder activities I was involved in. Here's the cover of the Blazer Log, which was the same size as the other two. Each one was 48 pages long.

The Logs were filled with instructions, stories, diagrams, requirements and songs, graduated for each year.

For example,

O U R S A L U T E

THE SIGN: The four fingers held up palm front, the thumb resting in palm of hand, reminds the Trail Builder of the four trails.



The Sign



Put hand in sign position and place over the heart to indicate devotion. (Figure 1)



Raise the hand to the head to indicate the cooperation of the mind with hand and heart. (Figure 2)



Bring arm to square position, repeat code, and drop hand to the side. (Figure 3)

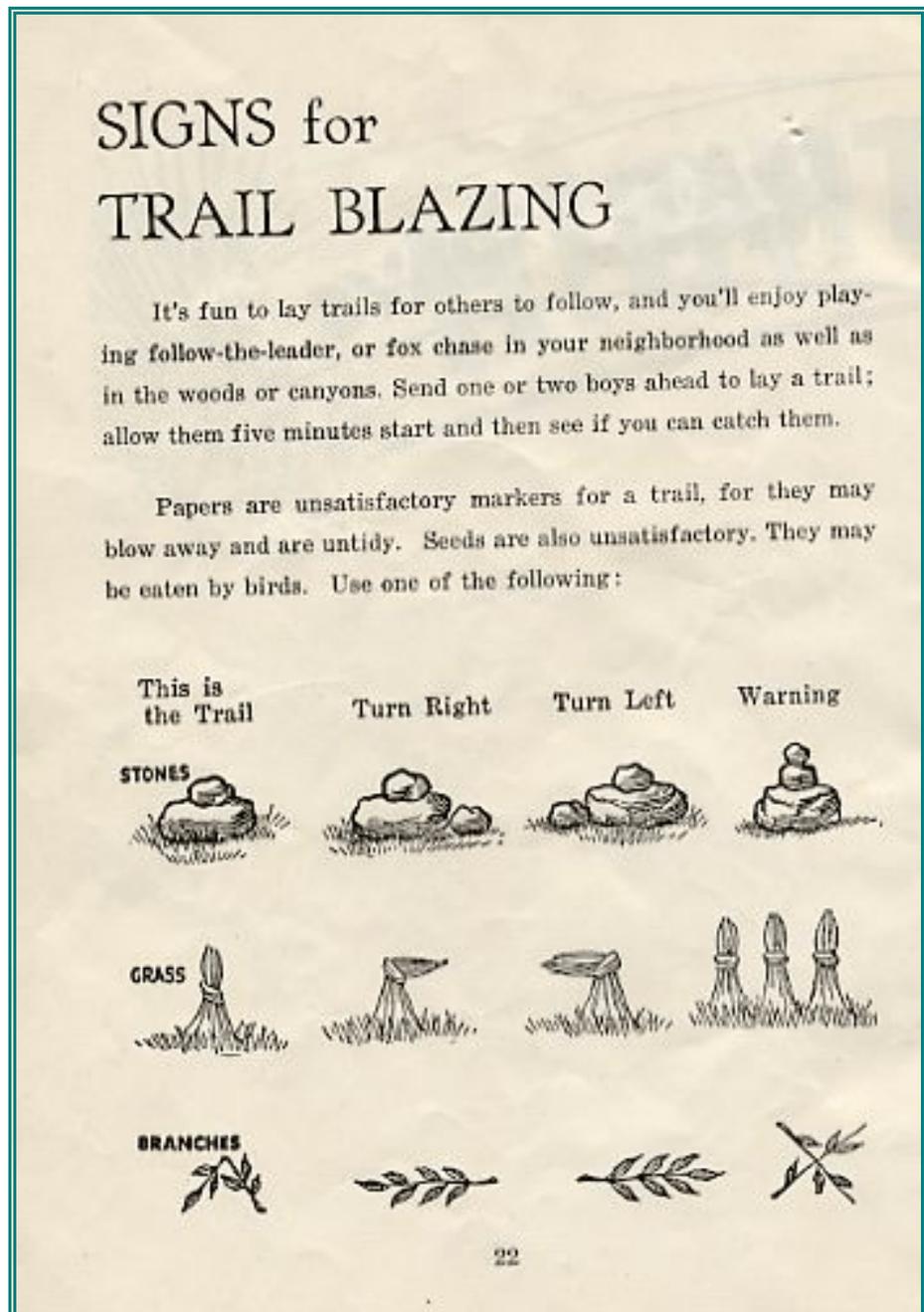
When giving the salute without the code, use positions one and two. Complete the salute by dropping the hand to the side.

8

the Blazer Log had instructions about the Trail Builder Salute and Motto. This obviously prepares boys for the scouting program. We were earnest in learning how to execute the sign and argued with each other about how to hold our fingers and hands as little kids will. Having to associate meaning with the salute was another matter. Then the sequence of actions to complete the salute had to be memorized and practiced until we could all do it together without any mistakes.

Mom was our Trail Builder leader who took her job seriously and taught us well.

One of the activities that we did as Blazers was to learn trail blazing. Three types of signs were demonstrated in the Log. We studied these diagrams while mom explained them carefully, trying to understand what the differences were. I compare the simplicity of this task to the complexity of tasks done by children of the same age today and am amazed at their sophistication. These tasks really did require us to work. We weren't stupid but somehow



the expectations of us then and the amount of related information we received was such that this was a task. Today this would be handled by any kid in a few minutes.

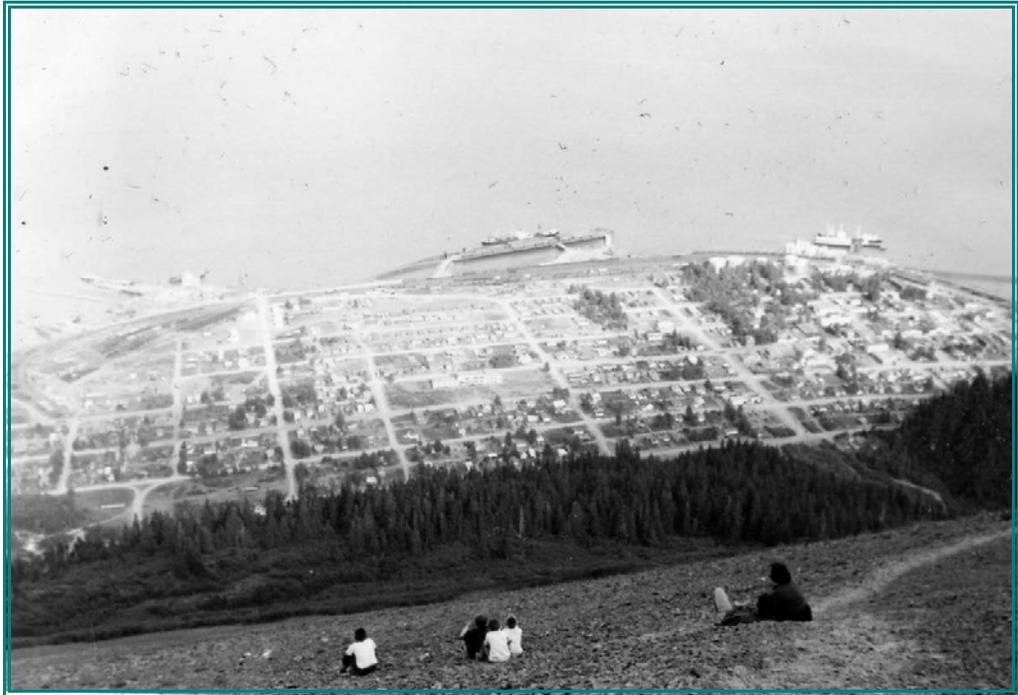
The exciting thing about learning these three forms of signaling was finally being taken on a hike. Mom told us that after we all learned these signs that she would take us on a hike up Marathon so we could practice and she did it. Don't you love the last paragraph.

On the day we were to go, we had brilliant sun, a treat even in the summer. We gathered at the foot of Marathon for a photo before we started. Billy is on mom's right, Frank Alblanalp is on her left with Ross on his left. The irritating Whitaker kid is kneeling on the left, I'm in the middle wearing a beanie, with Dick on the right, also in coveralls, but with a denim jacket.



Mom took divided us into two groups and sent one group ahead with a 5 minute head start and the instructions to blaze a trail that would the other group would follow.

It was an exciting thing to be in either group and we switched jobs after we caught up. This photo was taken at the point where the trail breaks out above timberline, the Army



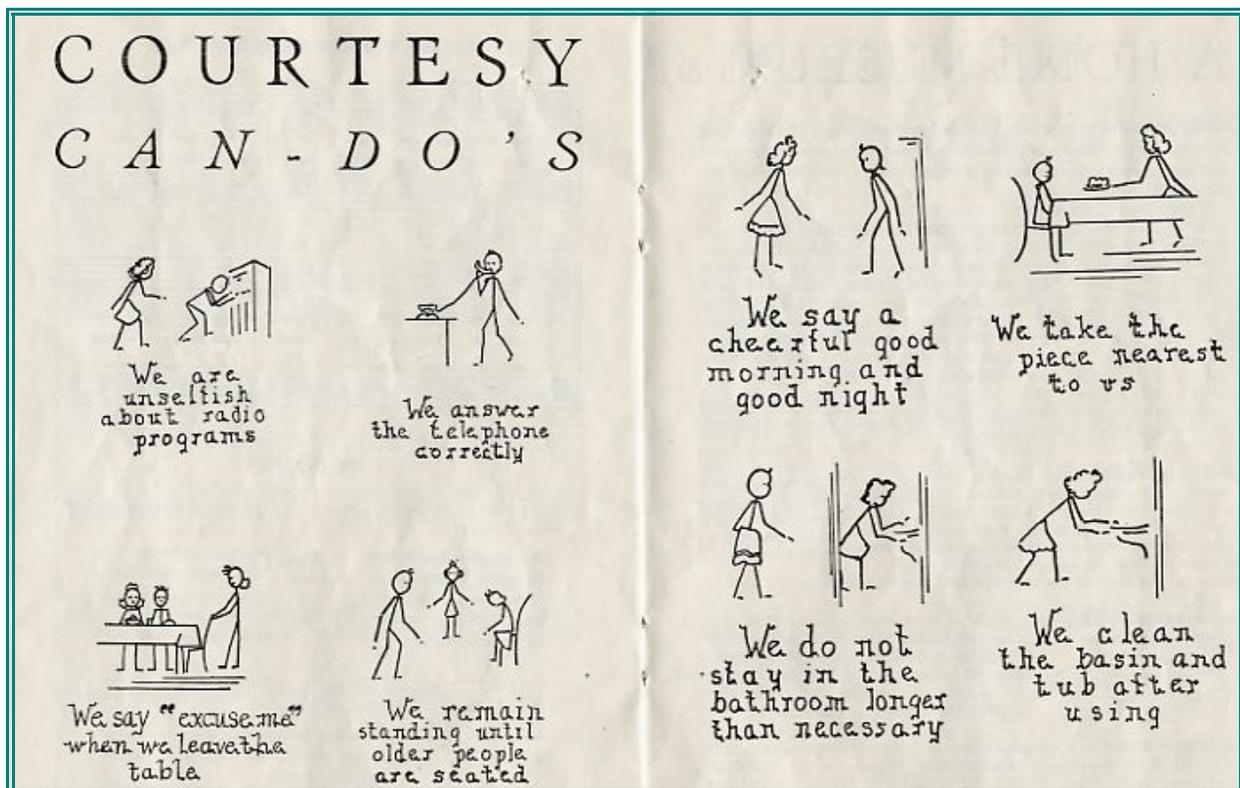
dock in the center. Mom was a good sport and also fit so we climbed almost to the top of the mountain, no mean feat. We're resting here in the shale looking at the town and the all-important docks from which we all derived our livelihoods. See the faint small boat harbor on the left side of the photo? The San Juan Dock is to its right, about as pale. Then the Army Dock, followed by the Standard Oil Dock and finally the railroad access to the City Dock that is just off the right edge of the photo.

The activities in the log continued in this direction as indicated by this page that shows how to tie certain

knots. We loved doing this because our dads worked on the docks and had to know how to secure cargo using knots. It was natural to do these things. Learning to whip the ends of a rope is something I've used throughout my life whenever I have used manilla or hemp ropes.



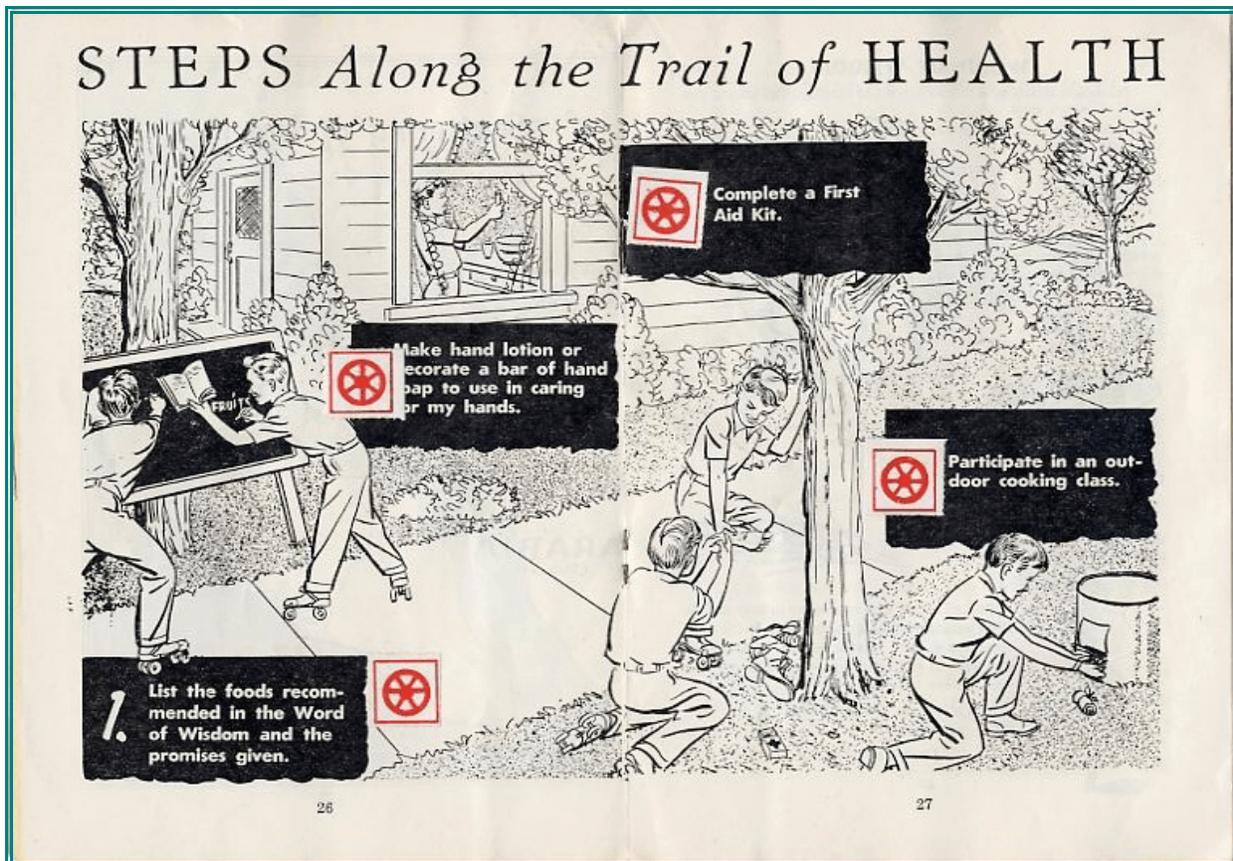
I put this page in because I think it is so different from things that kids are taught today. These 'can do's' seem silly in today's world perhaps but they are



actually elements that contribute to a smooth-functioning family and society. Manners are not popular today but we had them drilled into us and I think it was better.

Notice the smallness of the actions described, being unselfish about the radio, answering the phone correctly, saying excuse me when leaving the table, waiting for older people to sit (amazing isn't it), taking the piece nearest to us. Ever heard of the latter? It was a big deal in a world where "pieces" were cut by mothers instead of impersonal perfect machines, in which case they were of different sizes so when a plate of pieces of brownies was presented to you, a larger one might be on the other side of the plate but you were to take the one on your side.

The three logs had sets of four activities that we had to complete. When we completed one of the four, a small stamp was placed by that activity. When the four were completed, we were given a plastic emblem to place on our bandelos which was a complicated process because it required cutting holes and gluing round



fasteners on the back of the plastic posts with acetone. This page shows a full set of four. I can still describe three of them.

We made hand lotion in our kitchen, cooking things that we bought at the drug store. The oddest item was a package of gum tragacanth which looked like flat dried scales that dissolved and made the lotion thick. Rose water was used to give scent to the lotion.

The first aid kit was built to fit inside of a large metal band-aid can and consisted of band-Aids, Mercurochrome, tweezers, matches, needle, gauze, halazone tablets and other small things.

The cooking project was done past Billy's place close to the bridge over Bear River. We used number 10 cans, cut out a hole near the bottom on one side, and

cut an opening on the opposite side at the top. We inverted these cans, built a fire inside of them, and the arrangement of the two holes created a draft through the can that made the fire hot. Then we cooked pancakes, bacon and eggs in pans on top of the stove, a real accomplishment for 11 year old kids.

We finally graduated from Primary and we are wearing our bandelos. I don't remember whether Dick graduated the same year I did but given mom's propensity to make us into twins, she may well have advanced Dick a year to make it so. I have that bandelos as well as the oil cloth envelope that holds the three Logs that I displayed above for you. One of the first projects we had to do in Trail Builders was stitch those oil cloth envelopes with large needles and blue yard. The oil cloth is badly deteriorated over 50 years and some of the stitching is tearing loose but the envelope still holds the logs.



The Primary was small but was constantly engaged in preparing programs for the adults, which remains true today. One of the programs involved learning several songs in Spanish. Sister Carroll taught us how to speak the words which we had to memorize. "El yono rancho grande, alala...." We wore some sort of sombreros and vests and learned a Mexican dance which we had to perform up there in the Oddfellows Hall.

The biggest program we ever did was Christmas. This photo shows the entire population of kids in the Seward Branch that included Gloria Schaefermeyer on the left who sang a solo and her sister Jeanie on the right holding an Easter



Lily. At Christmas. Joseph in the middle is Frank A., Dick to Frank's right is one of the shepherds, I'm a wiseman to Dick's right with an unidentified wiseman to my right. Billy is the wiseman on the right. Vonnie Schaefermeyer is Mary and Mike S. stands to her right. I don't remember the other kids but they are obviously costumed to represent nations of the world. This was quite a production with a satiny backdrop, Mary Schaefermeyer playing a funky electronic keyboard device that Art had to repair periodically for her, and us kids singing all the wonderful Christmas carols.

That was Primary in Seward.

Hit by Car

I was hit by a teen driver in a 1953 Ford, a mixed-breed kid who was known to be wild. His name was "Teddy" and he was probably a high school senior. I don't remember much about the accident except that I was walking home for lunch with a neighbor named Varnell -which we crudely changed to "Barnsmell". There was a great deal of snow on the ground and the roads were naturally nothing but icy, packed snow. We were headed west on the north side of the road that goes up Lowell Canyon when Teddy with a car full of kids appeared unexpectedly. I don't know why it was unexpected because the roads were wide and there was no other traffic so he should have been easily visible or audible.

I have a clear recollection of the instant of impact. As I was walking alongside the road, I became aware that Teddy's car was probably going to hit me. But instead of running off the road which is probably what Varnell did, I remember that I stood still. Then I turned to face the car and as it slid toward me, I crouched down a bit and had a vision of myself gracefully leaping up into the air at precisely the right moment so that I would land on top of the hood and not be hurt. That was a stupid thing to do because I had never tried anything remotely resembling that kind of sophisticated acrobatic move yet there I was. The car approached but I had a change of heart and decided that I needed to run after all. I turned to run and was struck at that instant by the front bumper. I was just a country kid after all.

The bumper struck my right leg half way down the calf. That is a shorter distance from the ground that the bumper was so I apparently was in full flight. The impact threw me through the air, an event I don't specifically remember. My next memory is lying on my back compressed down into the deep snow. Varnell was talking to me and Teddy was out of the car with his friends worried as he could be.

Then my memory is blank except for one highlight: an ambulance and several men came to collect and take me the few blocks to the hospital. I have a vivid memory of the instant of being picked up off the snow. The noonday siren was sounding, and my dad was kneeling over me, looking scared, talking to me. I was surprised to see him because he was on the City Dock that day. He helped put me into the ambulance and came to the hospital with us. I don't remember his words but was comforted by his large powerful presence. I hurt badly and passed out before we got to the hospital.

I was wearing my winter coat that had a hood made of brown clipped

sheepskin. The hood zipped along the middle and could be folded backward and snapped into a tall, double-thick layer of sheepskin, which was fortunate. I had bad bruises on the left side of my face and head but nothing was broken and I believe that was because the sheepskin cushioned me from the impact. I was bruised all over as one would expect but the other part that was badly hurt was my left elbow. I must have landed on the elbow and forearm because there was a hard knot over the elbow and my inner forearm was black. It was fascinating to watch the transformation of large bruises. They go from purple black to purple to green to yellow, in that order so you look like a rainbow. That elbow bothered me for a long time and a calcium nodule developed

This is the little hospital that served the town. It burned down years ago.

It was located on the south side of the Episcopal Church, or half a block from our 2nd Avenue House. I don't know what door they took me through



Figure 102 From Mary Barry's Volume 3

because I was unconscious. But I was put in a room about where the blind is up to the right of the flag pole. There were two beds in the room but I was alone in a bed that looked like army surplus.

I stayed unconscious for a few hours and woke up when I needed to pee. I think that's really what woke me up. I was 12 and as self-conscious as a kid could be about things to do with body functions, so peeing was a big deal. I imagine there was a urinal nearby but I'd never used one and would have been shocked at the idea. Lying in bed and peeing into this metal tube, possibly while someone stood there and watched. Toilet training is so severe and creates such deep-seated aversions that even if I knew I was peeing into a container while I lay in bed, I would have felt like I was wetting the bed. I knew that there was a

bathroom at the end of the hall -the left end of the first floor in the photo from Mary Barry's book.

So I slowly crawled out of bed, sliding painfully over the side of the mattress and down onto the floor. It hurt like heck to stand on my right leg but the pain from my bladder, and the need to get the job done before anyone got some funny ideas, made me ignore the pain in my calf. I hobbled down the hall, leaning against the wall, hoping that no nurse would see me and order me back to bed, hopping on my left foot with enormous pain on my right leg. I made it. I went in, shut the door, peed and then had to repeat the effort. This time the bladder pain was gone and I had now been standing on my damaged calf for several minutes. This time it hurt like hell to go the distance from the bathroom back to my bed. It hurt soooo bad, but I was determined to get it done because I knew I would get a big lecture if I was caught. I made it, crawled painfully into bed, and lay there hurting so badly that I cried again. I never told anyone I did that because I knew I would have gotten into trouble.

I spent a couple of days in the hospital and different people came to visit, more to see how bad I was than to make me feel better. Kids in a hospital don't really benefit from the attention of adults. After Dr. Deischer decided I was stable to go home, he discharged me. Dad carried me out to the car and drove me home. At the house, he took me out and while Dick or mom held the front door open, he carried me inside, into the bedroom, and laid me on the bottom bunk which was actually Dick's bunk. I was privileged I thought because it was more convenient than climbing up a ladder each time I wanted to get into bed.

But one nasty event took place during the time I slept on the bottom bunk. During the night, Dick must have been trying to sleep walk. I was awakened by a loud crash right by my head. Dick had fallen out of bed and onto the orange crates we used as shelves. He destroyed the crate, went to the bathroom and got back into bed, but didn't remember the event in the morning.

Polio Epidemic

I think it was 1954 when the movie Peter Pan was released. At least that's when it hit Seward which may have been a year after the initial release. In any event, it came to Seward and was one of the most waited for movies of the year. It was a highlight to look forward to which all of us kids did. There was nothing otherwise happening most of the time so this sort of Disney release was a thrill to look forward to.

Something terrible happened, however, that affected the 300+ people for the rest of their lives. An epidemic of polio and/or Iceland Disease happened. The symptoms were comparable and showed up all over town. The showing of Peter Pan was scheduled to take place well in advance of the outbreak of disease and went forward as planned.

It was frustrating or depressing or both to Dick and me that mom refused to allow us to go to the theater to watch this movie, along with most of the kids our age, but when she spoke, it was like holy writ. So when said you don't get to go, guess what. You didn't. But we resented that limitation for a long time.

In retrospect, it's hard to tell whether her judgment was accurate or not. She said that she didn't want us to go into the theater for an hour and a half with all those other kids because we might be exposed to the sickness was affecting so many people. I don't think that the diagnosis was even know at that point in time, just that there was a bizarre illness affecting a large number of people. 300 out of 2,000 people is an enormously high incidence of a disease, hence the designation of epidemic.

The reason I don't know if her judgment was correct is that I got the Iceland version of the disease anyway. I caught it while I was recuperating from the car accident and apparently due to the trauma to my right calf, the focus of the muscle wasting was that calf. I note in the article written by Joe Deischer, MD, in 1957, entitled "Benign Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (Iceland Disease in Alaska)" in NORTHWEST MEDICINE, reports that the muscle group most affected in the victims was the legs so my experience was consistent.

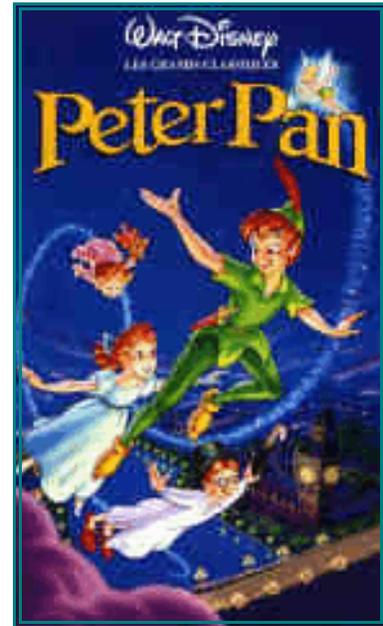


Figure 103

<http://www.sciencefiction.com/movies/images/pan.jpg>

It was years later that I tracked Dr. Deischer down through Deanna's mother's friends on Lopez Island. A Ted Phillips, M.D. was retired there and it turned out that he had lived in Seward after I left, so he knew Dr. Deischer and had kept track of him over the years. Ted talked to Dr. Deischer about my disease and he replied by sending a copy of this article to Ted who copied it to me. Deischer included a funny anecdote that sort of reflects the quality of life in Seward in the frontier days. Deischer wrote a note to Ted as follows, referring to lab tests he had wanted run on disease victims:

"The mental giant from Alaska's Dept of Public Health took some blood samples then lost them on the way back to Juneau. BRAINS! We need Brains!"

Poor Dr. Deischer. It have been frustrating trying to practice medicine this way.

The source of the epidemic was never determined, though there was speculation that it had been brought to town by some parakeets. Whether that's possible or probably I don't know but whatever it was, the disease was alarming. Mom got it in her spine, Susan Schaefermeyer got it and had to go into an iron lung and two people died from it.

Achilles Tendon Surgery

In 1955 an orthopedic surgeon from California had arranged for a six week hunting and fishing trip on the Kenai Peninsula. He was a godsend. Probably as a result of the severe damage to my right calf, the disease caused enormous damage to it, perhaps more severe than other wise would have happened. As I was coming off the crutches from the car accident I noticed that the stiffness in my calf remained. As a kid I didn't even think about it. I just knew I had been hit by a car and that my leg had never recovered. However, it became evident over the next 6-8 months that something bad had happened that was not related to the car accident. Dr. Deischer doubtless related the symptoms I was experiencing to what he was seeing in other victims of Iceland Disease and concluded that I had developed the disease which had created severe atrophy of my right calf and tendon.

The severity of the atrophy progressed for some time. When I would wake

up in the morning, my calf ached which was bad enough but the serious effect was apparent when I climbed down the ladder from my bunk to go to the bathroom. My calf hurt so badly that I had to lean on the wall as I walked, hopping along on my left foot. When I tried to put my right heel on the floor, I could not. Not just because of pain but because it simply would not go, it would not stretch that far. However, as I walked around for the next hour, I could stand on the tendon and gradually bring my heel to the floor. It hurt badly but I dreaded going to school with this kind of disability. Kids were -are- malicious and I feared being labeled "crippled". So I was motivated to get my tendon stretched out enough that I would appear to be walking normally, even though it hurt badly. I did get a release from PE which made me happy for many reasons.

That next summer, 1955, this good orthopedist came to Seward for 6 weeks, but instead of hunting and fishing, he spent most of his time operating on those of us who needed it. In my case his surgery was to open the Achilles tendon, cut half way through it, split it down about 5 inches and cut the rest of the way through. At this point, after he had cut the tendon completely through, he pulled on the toe to move the bottom half of the tendon down far enough that the foot would be able to reach the floor "normally". When he judged that he had it far enough down, he stitched the two strips of tendon back together, closed the skin, dressed the wound and applied a heavy plaster cast that ran from just below my knee past my toes. The purpose the case was to completely immobilize the tendon for 6 weeks to allow it to grow back together with scar tissue and allow it to heal.

After six more weeks of hobbling around on crutches, having them stolen by mean kids at school, falling on the ice and snow in spite of the sharp calks put into the rubber foot, mom took me to the hospital to have the cast removed. I'd had a cast in Vernal so I understood that the nasty sounding saw was not going to hurt me, but I was nervous about what was going to happen after the cast was off, how my foot would work, how much it would hurt. It was a nurse who used the saw to cut the cast open along the shin on the front. The cast was so thick that she had great difficulty. She had to make two cuts and pried the halves open with a flat bar, being careful to not hurt me in the process.

When she managed to get the cast open enough to slip it off my leg, she called Dr. Deischer to come in. What was found was a dressing from knee to toe that was soaked with old blood, and which stunk worse than most bad things I'd even smelled. The leg wasn't hurting but the smell made me worry that something was wrong. The smell was caused by bacteria and aging blood and nothing was

wrong with the incision but I didn't know that. I thought my leg had rotted.

Dr. Deischer carefully cut the cotton layer and strips of gauze and gently removed them, working his way down to my skin. After all the stinking gauze had been removed, he had me turn over so that he could examine the incision. There were 8 big stitches visible. I don't know whether or not the orthopedist used other absorbable gut sutures inside the skin which would have dissolved by this time, but the 8 stitches were heavy and secure. The startling thing about them to me was that they had actually been placed through the center of the tendon. So when Dr. Deischer pulled them out, they hurt like hell. He did it without any pain medication, just an apology that it was going to hurt. Man, did it hurt. 8 times.

I was taken home still on my crutches because Dr. Deischer ordered that I not try to walk on it yet. He gave orders to continue with the crutches and to gradually start putting weight on my leg, just a bit at a time, to allow it to get used to the weight. I followed his instructions carefully because my ankle started to ache now that it was moving. The mending took place over 4-5 weeks and I eventually put my crutches aside, relieved that I didn't need to use them, and relieved that kids no longer had anything to bother me about.

But I still had one more painful episode related to the surgery. I was out at Billy's place at 5 mile playing one Saturday. We had walked down the old road to Bear River to explore. That road was 3-4 feet below the new road bed that had been built up with gravel. As we were walking back to Billy's house, we all started running which was just fine. My ankle was not hurting. Billy, Dickie and Mikie decided they run up the steep slope onto the new road and I naturally followed, not thinking a bit about my ankle.

As I turned, running, and headed up the slope, the first step I took on my right ankle produced a loud pop in my mind and instantly hurt so badly that I fell to the ground yelling. It hurt badly enough that I couldn't even stand up so the kids went to the house and got Art to come over. He talked to me, always a gentle man, and finally picked me up and carried me back to his house where I waited until mom came out to pick us up. She took me to see Deischer and it turned out that no damage was done but to this day I am chary of using my right leg to lead. I am, indeed, left-footed as you can tell when you compare the wear patterns on the heels and soles of my shoes.

The one benefit, perhaps, of this polio and surgery was that I was not drafted during the Vietnam war. I received my notice to appear for an induction physical, but after it was over, I was classified IV-F which meant I would never be

called up for anything.

Bicycles

We didn't have horses in Seward. Too cold, no where to put them and too much rain. Actually, there were horses in Alaska, but they were rare because the weather was what it was and because hay wasn't produced much in that rain, the winters were terrible, etc.. Can you imagine how quickly hay would mildew before it could dry and be bailed? At least in Seward.

Instead of horses, we had a pair of legs and bicycles. Those were our transportation. If we wanted to go somewhere, we used these devices to get us there. I must point out something again: my apologies but it is an important difference to point out. Our parents -like virtually every mom and dad in Seward- had no interest in "driving" us to School, driving us to the store, driving us to the Small Boat Harbor to fish, drive us out on the Old Nash road to fish. None of them.

Here's the part that may actually be the surprise to you: None of us kids would have accepted rides to the small boat harbor if they had been offered. Because we would have been afraid that our friends would see us and you know what would have happened? They would have made fun of us, and they would have called us "sissies" or "momma's boys." Those were pretty awful things to be called. I know they are pretty tame by the standards you grew up and live with but that is simply because the scale has shifted. You know what the terms would be for yourselves that would embarrass you.

When I look back and try to understand why mom didn't offer to give us a ride to the Cannery or the Small Boat Harbor I have to admit that I actually don't know why she didn't. However, I can make a good guess, actually two good guesses. First, the community standard was different than that as just pointed out. No parents drove their kids anywhere - except perhaps Virginia Blue but she was a special case. She was a pampered girl, an only child, whose parents BOTH worked - one of the big differences back then though not that rare- so they had the funds and time and energy to indulge her. I viewed her as spoiled and didn't see her as a standard model in Seward of how kids lived. Parents just didn't drive their kids around.

The other reason that mom wouldn't drive us around was money. Pure and simple. Money. In contrast to the community of Boise where parents seemed to be

oblivious to this fact, car motors actually consume a product called gasoline and that stuff actually costs money, real hard cash. Every single time the thing is taken for a ride, it eats gas, and at the same time, it eats money. It was viewed as a waste to spend money on gas when we legs and could walk ourselves wherever we had to go. I think that to mom, driving us kids to the small boat harbor -a frequent destination I use as an example- would have been about the same thing as handing us a pocket full of pennies that we threw away, one at a time, every one fifty feet.

To you kids that doesn't seem like much so let's convert the "value" to something you understand. A regular size Babe Ruth candy bar cost 5 pennies. Today you pay 40 pennies for that sum. So that's 5/40 for the value of one "penny". So let's use the homely example again but use today's value. Imagine how YOU would feel if you were told to throw a dime away every 50 feet you walked - assuming you would even walk that far!- and try to think how you would feel about the idea. I think that as long as you didn't view it as YOUR money, it wouldn't bother you but if you understood the dimes to be your personal dimes, you just might take a dim view of throwing them away one at a time, particularly if you had something you wanted to buy. I think that's how it was for mom and most parents. Driving a kid in a car somewhere when they could walk was about like throwing money away.

Anyway, the times were totally different and I had to get myself wherever I was going. The only exception was when I could beg mom to giving me a ride out to Mile 5 to see Billy Schaefermeyer. In that deal, there was a long distance for a kid to walk, plus mom could sit and chat with Mary so there was something in it for her. Otherwise, I rode my bicycle.

By the time I left Seward, I had three bicycles. I paid for them myself with money I earned from selling papers or saved from my allowance, or saved from shoveling snow. Those were my primary sources of cold hard cash. I never paid more than 10 dollars for one and paid 5 dollars for one of them.

They were all balloon tired bicycles, not because that was the stylish, faddish kind of tires to use, rather, it was the only kind of tires that were available. There were a few English Raleigh bicycles that has narrower tires but they were rare. Most of us rode balloon tires and didn't think a thing about it.

This photo makes me happy. This is actually one of the bicycles I owned, a Schwinn "Roadmaster". Mine was a blue and looked exactly like this with a large flat leather saddle. The two silver shafts running from the front axle upward were attached on the silver thing on the other end were a shock absorber. Pretty cool to have a shock absorber. It really did make a difference in how the front tire negotiated bumps. The wide section hanging on the cross bar had a button



Figure 104 <http://www.deco-echoes.com/futures/to131.htm>

hear the front that you can barely make out close to the handle bars. That button activated a small horn that was powered by a pair of D-cell batteries that were contained inside of that fat section.

This machine was stopped by stepping backward on either pedal. That applied tension on the innards of a Monarch Bendix-style brake just like this one. The toothed gear obviously held the chain and the long flange on the other side was secured to the frame by a small nut and bolt through a yoke-affair. When the toothed gear was turned clockwise in this image, the bicycle would move forward. When turned the other direction, the inner workings were activated and pinched together and compressing two surfaces together. That friction slowed and stopped the bicycle. The tough part of handling this unit was keeping that center shaft centered in the works. If you got it too far to one side, the other end would open up and bearings would spill out, creating a nightmare. I did that more than once because I would forget to pay attention to the centering business while I was



Figure 105 <http://nostalgic.net/arc/parts/>

concentrating on getting a nut off the shaft. If the nut was frozen in place, I would be turning the entire shaft, not realizing it, in which case it ended up being wound out of the cap on the other end and then I'd be frustrated having to rebuilt the whole dang thing.

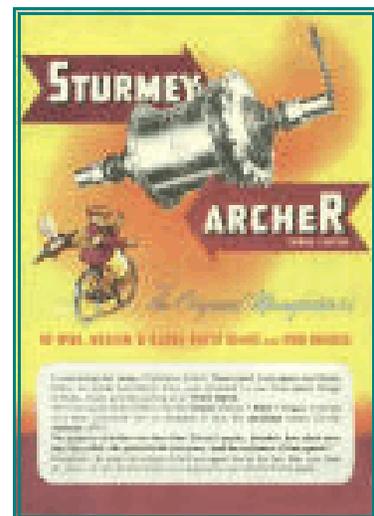
Sturmey-Archer made a three-speed rear hub that was operated by a lever on the handlebar. While the rider was pedaling, he advanced the lever a click at a time from low to second to high gear. As the lever moved, the cable it was attached to moved into or out of the inside of the gear mechanism, thereby altering which gear ring was being pushed by the pedal. Here's an image (the site identified by



Figure 106 <http://nostalgic.net/arc/parts/>

Google was no longer operational so I don't have a URL but this is a genuine Sturmey Archer ad from that era.) that shows the small flexible chain that the braided wire cable attached to. It's hard to see but on the top end of the chain is a threaded shaft.

That male element was threaded into the corresponding fat female element on the cable in the next photo. To adjust the length of the cable as the lever in the middle here is advanced or release, the female sleeve was loosened, and then secured in place by a "lock ring" on the male element that basically used friction to keep the elements locked in place. The way you could tell that the cable was too tight or too loose was that it would or it would not go through all of the gears. If that happened, you just got off the thing and experimented as many times as you needed to get the three gears operating again.



When we got flat tires, which we did often on those unpaved, nail-ridden streets, we had to fix them. Period. I suppose that we could have pushed the bicycle to a service station where we could have paid a man to fix it for us. But the problem was the cost. We had to pay that, too. Not our parents. Us. So we learned how to repair inner tubes. It is a lost art one I suppose we're better off not having to deal with. Remember when your tires went flat how much work it was to get them fixed? We tried to deal with the possibility by buying the so-called thorn-proof tubes and then fill them with the puncture repair liquid, one tube per tube. There were no such things as thorn proof tubes and the liquid repair stuff, so I had to do the repairs often and from scratch. The



Figure 108

http://www.antiquemystique.com/images/2507_08_jpg
jpg

worst part of these repair ordeals was how often I punctured the tube myself when I was putting it back inside the tire. I used two or three screw drivers to lift one side of the tire and to put it back inside the hub. It was during those manipulations that I'd accidentally pinch the inner tube between a screw driver and the hub. And of course, I wasn't aware of having done this until AFTER I had everything reassembled and inflated the tire. I was so stupid that I'd even reassemble the entire bicycle in the beginning, only to have to undo it all and start over. Eventually, I learned that the best thing is to assemble the tire and then inflate the tube. That way I didn't have to remove the chain guard again, remove the chain again and so on.

Turns out that my dad didn't help me repair my tubes any more than your dad helped you. Do you suppose there was any connection?

I bought three bicycles so I'd have access to spare parts since things wore out and had to be replaced. I kept them leaning against the south side of the house under a tarp I cadged off dad.

The point of the bicycles was the freedom they gave me. I had a large, huge is the right word, basket hanging on the handle bars so I could haul all kinds of things around. At one point, I even managed to scrounge up enough moolah to buy a

set of used saddle-style baskets that fitted over the rear tire. Together, I could haul more things that I had the strength to pedal. Because I always had to pedal uphill when I came home. That was the major drawback living up that high on the alluvial fan. It would have been much less strenuous to have lived in Homebrew Alley. But whatever the slope was, bicycles gave us a great range to explore and play.

Schwinn Bicycles

I suppose that kids loved bicycles so much because there was no other rolling stock to use to get around outside of the little pedal cars that small kids used and scooters that were fun but didn't get you far very fast. So kids were acutely aware of anything to do with these glorious things. This kind of sign hung in hardware store winds. They had incandescent bulbs inside so glowed in the dark.



Figure 109 <http://nostalgic.net/arc/parts/>

Jesse Lee Orphanage

There was a religious group from the Lower 48 who took it upon themselves to build an orphanage up there in the frozen north to help take care of the little kids who were left behind when their parents died from white man's diseases and so on. I don't know which group it was, other than that it was a protestant group, as opposed to Catholic or Jewish group. You can see it in this photo between Dick and



me just above the tree line as we're preparing to descend Mt. Marathon on one Fourth of July. The white spot to the right of Dick's head was the residence of the director of the place, a man named "Don Lee" when I lived there.

When mom and dad were in Seward in 1941, the Jesse Lee Home was in existence so it must have been built in the early "part of the century." There I go again, using that phrase that suddenly refers the 21st Century. Doesn't seem like anything to you I suppose but it sort of jars my chronometer to have to recalibrate it that way.

There were four structures that comprised this outfit when I went to Seward in 1941, and all four of them were painted in camouflage. This camouflage was another piece of the omni-present military and war efforts. I can't find any photos to show you what the camouflage was like but it's simple to describe. The buildings were almost three stories tall so had large walls that could be seen from the bay. These walls were painted a gray color and then full-length gray-green spruce trees were painted over the underlying gray. It didn't do anything to conceal the structure from us who stood in the town looking northwest to the Home, but the story I was told was that this camouflage was designed such that if

a submariner raised his periscope to scout the shore along here, he would not be able to see the orphanage. That was the key, "orphanage", a place filled with kids that needed to be protected. After a few years, the pine trees were painted over and I missed them. I liked the way the buildings looked before but I had nothing to say about the deal, did I.

The three main buildings of the home were these:



The building on the left was the boys' dormitory, the building on the right was the girls' dormitory and the one in the center was the school for these kids, called "Bayview School." As a kid I never learned precisely why this outfit had to provide it's own educational system. But since universal education was provided in those days, I assume that the orphans -sounds like such a pejorative term today doesn't it- would have been provided their education on the nickel of the local citizenry. So it's my guess -and that's all it is- is that the religious group who paid for this outpost of their religion decided that they probably and shrewdly decided that they kinda' otta' also provide "education" in addition to a bed and grub. So this was probably a parochial school in the beginning, just to keep these kids away from the nefarious influence of the town folks. But let me clarify things for you: When I

lived there, this approach was still the norm, and I can tell you unequivocally that those kids were no slouches when it came to getting into trouble. Indeed, I spent a great deal of time with them and came to understand that there was a kind of undercurrent of barely repressed violence ready to burst. And no wonder. How would you feel if you had lost your parents to something you didn't understand, at a young age, to then be shunted from place to place to live with people who weren't your family, who really didn't love or understand you, didn't really care for you like your mom and dad did, to finally end up in this place, a sort of barely concealed penitentiary.

That is precisely how the place felt to me: a jail, a penitentiary and I felt sorry for those poor kids trapped and locked up that way. Oh, if you visited the place with Mr. Lee or one of his minions who would describe the place in glowing terms, pointing out with pride the various features of the structures and the organization, you might not develop that same sense. But I went there dozens of times and I was sent out in the "cell blocks" without adults around. THAT is how you develop a sense of what it's REALLY like and believe me, it wasn't a bed of roses.

The most graphic example I cite of the repressed violence I saw how the boys played when we went into a small exercise room designed to be just that. It was one of the prettiest rooms in the place, not very large, with white walls, and a fair number of windows, situated on the second floor. When we were taken there the first time, I was surprised to be ordered -ordered, not asked- to remove my shoes because there was a rule -lots of rules- and no one could wear shoes in this room. So a pile of shoes developed by the door way as 7 or 8 of us boys went in to "play". There was actually little exercise equipment in the room so exercise was sort of roughhousing and scuffling and wrestling with each other. There was no adult in the room. That's the key to what happened. I had no idea what was about to happen to me.

The one piece of play equipment that was always in the room was a largish "medicine ball". It was made of a light tan leather and had many seams and was smooth, an innocuous looking ball that I immediately assumed would be rolled. I was wrong. This ball was about a foot and a half in diameter and probably weighed 10 -15 pounds. The kids started playing with it by throwing it back and forth. It looked like a game of catch but when the ball was thrown to me, I was amazed at how heavy it was. But I was more amazed at the near violence of the throw. It was not a throw "to me". It was a throw "at me", and there was nothing reserved

or gentle about it, regardless of the fact that I'd never been in that room before with those kids.

I was hit in the stomach so hard that it knocked the wind out of me and I could scarcely breathe and got tears in my eyes. I didn't cry because boys don't cry but it hurt bad. That was bad enough, but I was out there to play with these kids, probably at mom's instigation so I couldn't very well back out after the first time I had the ball thrown to me. The kids could see I was hurt but no one said anything about it. They just kept pitching the ball around but not with the same intensity or ferocity. When I got my breath back I tried to be a good sport and started to engage in the play again. At some point, one of the kids yelled for me to catch the ball. He ran toward me with it. As he came near, he got this big evil grin on his face, wound up and threw the ball at me as hard as he could, hitting me in the stomach the same way. This time I cried and I left the room. I never played medicine ball with them again. It was too dangerous. The latent violence was given rein and it boiled in there.

The point of the story is the look on the kid's face and the expectancy of the other boys. It was as if they finally had a chance to punish someone in a room that was even set aside for mayhem. They did the deed with such undisguised satisfaction and were so malicious about it that I knew they really did want to hurt me. It wasn't until I was an adult that I began to get an understanding that there truly was a latent violence in these kids that was unleashed in certain circumstances. The etiology of that violence is (A) their antecedents and if I had the same ones, I, too, would doubtless have been violent, and (B) the regimentation they were forced to endure and were powerless to resist. I saw comparable expressions and actions at other points. It was like a penitentiary where there were guards with superior strength who rode the kids hard and were merciless in meting out "justice", i.e. punishment, for disobedience. The kids learned well.

Anyway, the place ran like a well-oiled machine as the saying goes but more out of fear than out of appreciation of the rules. Later in Boston I attended a junior high school across an anchor fence from a parochial school and there I saw the kind of violence that religious types inflicted on kids. In that case, they were nuns in the old-style habit who carried rulers and when kids broke a ruler they had to hold out their palms so the teachers could smack them with the ruler. Once more, there was latent violence in the acts of the nuns, as if they wanted to unload an murder the kids -who may have deserved it! In any event, these were the boys who comprised the bulk of Scout Troop 620 so I had a lot of experience with their

attitudes and behaviors when adults weren't around.

This is a ground-level view of the three buildings to give you a better sense of their size and layout.

At this time, there was nothing around these buildings -as you can see from the first photo above of the Jesse Lee Home but in 2003 the entire field is overgrown with tall



evergreens standing along paved streets between a subdivision!

Benny Benson

The claim to fame for the Jesse Lee Home -which is now defunct which makes me very sad- is this little kid, Benny Benson. He was one of the orphans stranded at this place where he was being 'taken care of'. While he was there, the territory decided it was about time to have its own flag, even though statehood was still nothing but a far off dream -32 more years. The competition was advertised everywhere in the territory in the hope that someone would come up with a design that the "committee in charge of choosing" would like.

This was in 1927 and Benny was something like 12 or 13 years old, just a little kid to be entering a contest that was basically for adults. No one expected that kids would be able to come up with a design that might be good enough to win, so there were no rules that prohibited him from entering. No one guessed this might happen.

He was an Indian child and he loved his world. He decided that his flag would have a background like the blue sky. Then for a design he used the KISS principle and chose two things to include: the north star, and the big dipper. His simple, elegant design won and it's the classiest flag of the 50.

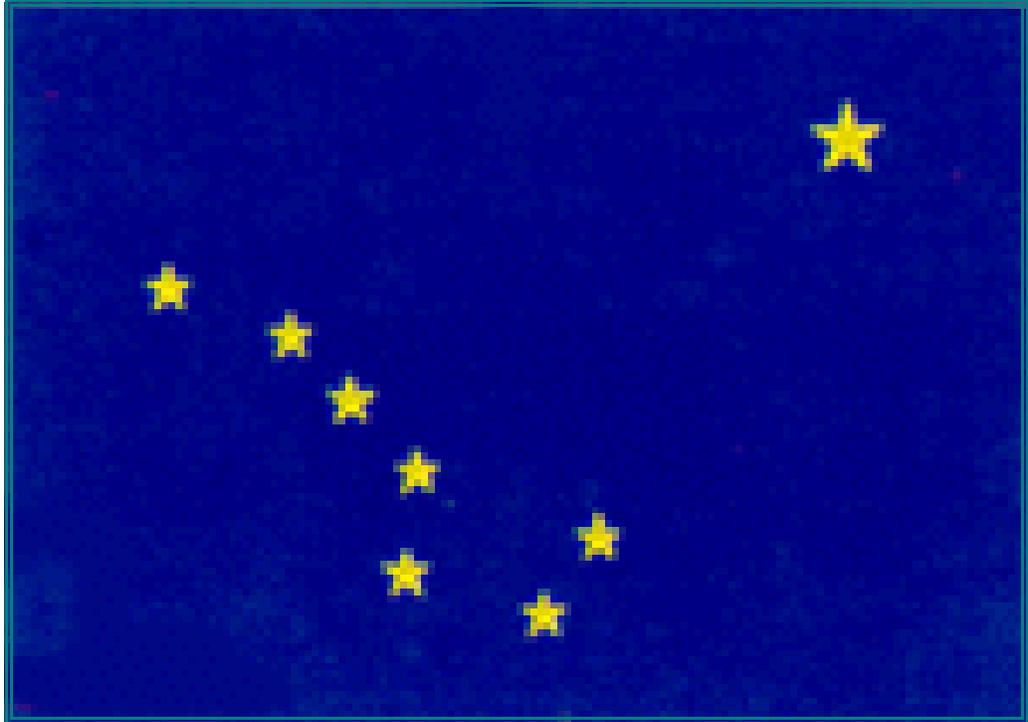


Figure 113 http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/misc/ourflag/stateflag1.htm

Guinea Pigs

This is the first place I ever saw guinea pigs. I was astounded at these creatures. I was with the boys in their dormitories which were large halls with probably two dozen cots lining the outside walls. I could hear this bizarre shrieking or crying that sounded like nothing I'd ever heard. It was sort of a whistle but not. I asked the kids what that sound was and they took me over to a



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Figure 114

<http://www.sPCA.com/francais/pages/adoptions/other.html>

wire cage that had 3 or 4 piles of fluffy hair that seemed to be squirming, from which arose these weird sounds. The kids reached in to the cages and pushed the piles of fluff which made them whistle even more. AT the time I didn't relate the odd odor to these animals.

I asked what they were and the kids said they were guinea pigs. They were happy that they could tell me about an animal I'd never seen. I could see that they ate something like rabbit pellets and made pellets sort of like rabbit pellets and drank out of a bottle with a metal straw hanging out of it. I'd never seen this before and was just amazed. The name "pig" confused the heck out of me. I knew what a pig was like. THAT was a 'pig', so why in the heck were these kids calling these piles of fuzz 'pig'. The reason they did was because the adults called them 'pigs' too but I never and still don't understand that.

There were their pets, no cats or dogs, which must have been a let down. But the Order Knew Best Once More.



Figure 115 <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/images/pigs.jpg>

Brent, Janice & Pogo Sticks

Brent Whitmore, the kid who lived behind us across the alley, had a little sister. She was a wiry tough little kid who was a real tomboy. She'd spit with you or throw rocks at tin cans and do as good as you. She didn't like to wear dresses and didn't like to play girl things. But I discovered that she did know she was a girl. One summer afternoon, she and I were doing something in the alley between our houses. We kids spent a lot of time in that dirt alley with two tire tracks. For some reason, as we were playing, I ended up hitting her hard in the chest. It was not a malicious act, but she took exception to that particular accident and scared the crap out of me.

She screamed and started to cry which wasn't too bad because she had been hurt so it was appropriate to cry if it hurt that much. But she said something

that scared me. While she held the spot on her chest where I had hit her, she screamed that I had hit her "in my her breast bud". Sobbing, she said that now she was "going to be deformed" and yelled that it was all my fault and she was going to tell her mom on me. At which point she ran screaming and sobbing for her back door which was right there.

My natural impulse was to scam so Mrs. Whitmore couldn't find me to punish me for my crime. Brent and I ran down the alley toward the Episcopal Church to get away, though technically he wasn't running away - he was just keeping me company. I wasn't seeking solace in religion, I was unrepentantly seeking a hideout - in Father Clapp's house where Brent and I played with Jay Clapp. Every so often over the next few hours when I was "on the lam" I'd suddenly remember what had happened and would break out in a cold sweat. Mrs. Whitmore could get pretty worked up and I imagined she'd take a dim view of my deforming her only daughter.

I had never heard of "breast buds" and certainly was horrified to think she had any. That was sort of treacherous of her. To play with us boys while she concealed them seemed sneaky and dishonest of her. Real girls like Virginia Blue probably had these things but Virginia wore dresses and played dolls inside her house and made fun of us boys. We knew that she was a girl, that she was different. I did know what breasts were and was of an age where they were entering my consciousness but I never had associated them with this scrawny genderless kid. I felt confused and betrayed when she sort of switched sides on me that way. Our relationship shifted permanently at that point. She definitely became a girl so was "discriminated against", sometimes not so subtly, when she wanted to play with us boys.

One year for Christmas Brent and Janice were each given a pogo stick. Now a pogo stick was a funny thing to give a kid who lived in Seward where the streets weren't paved and there were no concrete sidewalks or driveways to bounce on. But that didn't matter. When summer came and the ground hardened up, Brent and his sister started experimenting with their pogo sticks. And so did I.

It is a tricky enterprise when you start. You have to develop a technique of jumping up and down just like you might do on the floor but in this case you do it on a pair of foot pedals. These pedals are fastened to a long tube that sticks up far enough for you to hold it in your two hands. Inside this tube is a strong spring that is compressed when you come down on the pedals. When you hit the bottom and jump upward again, the compressed spring expands and propels you and the stick

into the air. At that point you have to aim your self in a direction away from where you were, otherwise you just bounce up and down in one place, looking sort of dumb.

Coordinating all of these movements is tough to do but once it's accomplished, jumping is pure joy. When I could talk Brent's sister into loaning me her stick, Brent and I would take off bouncing for several blocks sometimes. Sometimes on our lunch break during the year our class met in the "undercroft" -not the basement we were told by Father Clapp- we'd get Mrs. Moore's permission and run the half block to Brent's house to get the pogo sticks. Then we came bouncing down the alley and to the church, to the envy of all the boys the point of the exercise.

After you perfect your technique you can vary the length of the "step" you take which also changes how fast you go. This is done two ways: first, you can vary how hard you jump on the pedals because the tighter the spring was compressed, the harder you shot back into the air; second, you could vary the tilt of the stick - held vertically, you just bounced in place but tilted forward a great deal meant you would take a really long step. If you tilted the stick sideways or backwards, the latter requiring more practice, you jumped in the same direction.

As long as the dirt was hard and smooth, jumping was nearly effortless and riskless. That wasn't the usual situation, however. Only the streets which were compacted by cars and trucks were reliably hard. But the problem in the street when you were getting up a good head of steam was the unexpected rocks. You had to keep an eagle eye out for them because if you landed with the foot of the stick on a small rock, it would roll, your footing was lost and you ended up on the ground wound around the stick.

If you tried to bounce in a yard, none of which had grass, you might avoid the rocks. But in this situation you would be doing just fine until you rammed into a secret spot of soft dirt at which time you mired straight down so you were standing on the pedals now flat on the ground. That stopped you real fast but there was a prohibition against doing this stunt. Dirt would stick in the grease and was then carried up into the spring the next time you jumped. Done enough times the dirt would gum up the spring.

[Grandpa Jensen's Correspondence](#)

When we moved to Alaska, we wrote occasionally to Grandpa Jensen far away in Leamington. He always answered, and his addresses were old-fashioned: "Master James Rondo Jensen". His sly humor showed through, though it was too dry for me to appreciate at the time. For example, in his letter dated October 27th, 1952, he says: "...yesterday I received your letters - yours and Dickie's - dated Jan. 26. It sure took them a long time to get here."

In his Feb. 3, 1953, letter, he ends with this:

"Figure this out:

Elizabeth, Lizzie, Bessie and Beth,

Went across the river to rob a bird's nest.

They found a nest with five eggs in.

They each took one and left four."

He was a lonely man. He ended one letter, "I am feeling fine, but get pretty lonely at times. will try and write your daddy tomorrow." He died before we got to see him again. He died in 1953 while we were still there so I never got to see him again after the trip dad and I took together to southern Utah.

Grandpa Jensen's Letters

I received three letters from grandpa while I lived in Seward and I saved them all in my photo album which later disintegrated. At that time I transferred them into glassine sleeves and kept them with the set of photos that mom sent me for Xmas around 1984. The three are scanned in below for your enjoyment.

very lovely and Wilford and Ruth looked very happy. I am sending you Newspaper clippings of the first announcement and the final one when they were married. It was an impressive ceremony at the Temple, Thur. morning. We had all gone through the temple together Wednesday evening. Bonad and I acted as witnesses at the ceremony.

Wanda has changed doctors. She went to Dr Worley in Nephi and he told her to stay in bed for the next 2 months. The same doctor cured Viola Nielson of a condition similar to Wanda's. As soon as Viola and Bonad heard about it they phoned to her and told her to get ready and they would come and get her, which they did. Joey's and Kenji's father and his new wife kindly consented to take the two boys and send them to

Figure 116 Page 2

Heamington, Utah Feb. 2, 1953
Mr. James Rondo Jensen
Seward, Alaska.

Dear Grandson Ronnie:

Please excuse me for being so slow to answer your last letter. I guess I worried some about having to go through the ordeal of a big wedding reception in the city, but it wasn't quite as hard an experience after all.

In fact I enjoyed it very much although it was a little tiring to have to stand in the reception line for 2 1/2 hours at a stretch. There were so many people coming in a steady stream. Viola stood there with me, when the Brides mother is supposed to stand and then Mr. & Mrs. Wiseman and then the rest of them. It was all

Figure 117 Page 1

4
With their families.
Earl has 3 boys and two girls. The
oldest boy Eugene is on a mission to
South Africa but is expected home
any day. Wallace has 3 girls and 2
boys but they are all married but the
youngest girl 14 yrs old. Her name is
Wally Beth. One of Earle's girls, about
5 or six years old is named Althea Beth
and the oldest one is Lois. Their mother's
name is Lilac. She said she and all
her sisters had names of flowers.
I think Althea Beth is a pretty name
and she is such a pretty little girl,
looks so much like her grandmother, my
sister Eligabeth. We called her Riggie.
Trigme thought:
Eligabeth, Riggie, Bessie and Beth,
Went across the river to rob a birds nest
they found a nest with five eggs in.
They each took one and left four.
Hope you are all well and enjoying your
school and everything good
With love from Grandpa James.

Figure 118 Page 4 with the Riddle

3
school in Salt Lake City while
Wanda is resting. I really believe
this doctor will get results because
Wanda is still quite young.
Well, Ronnie I know I shouldn't
burden you with all these troubles
and it wouldn't have done so if I
hadn't felt that there was perhaps a
solution in sight.
I called to see Uncle George on
my way home and found he was
home from the hospital and seemed to be
doing better. Alta and Reak are
there helping to care for him.
Saturday I went to Delta to visit
two of my Nephews, Earl Holman and
Wallace Holman. I was glad to see
them again and to get better acquainted

Figure 119 Page 3

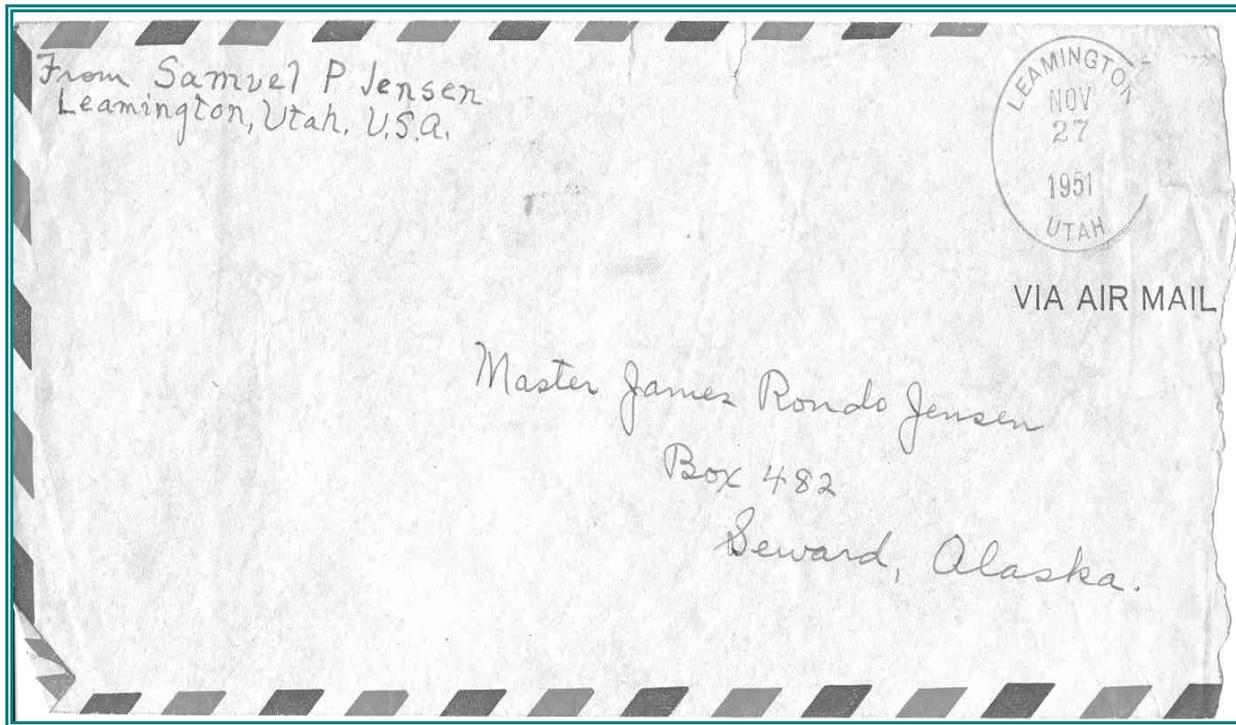


Figure 120 Grandpa Jensen's 11-27-1951 envelope to me in Seward.

The stamp was removed from the envelope by someone I know well.

2

all the way and was not very safe driving.

On Thursday morning we went to Mantli in Bonradi car. Ruth went with us and we got there before 8:00 a.m. We returned to Salt Lake City that evening.

It was snowing quite hard Saturday morning but I decided to drive home anyway. The roads were slick and it was snowing so much that I decided to stop overnight at Lake Shore and visit Uncle George & Aunt Jane.

I returned home Sunday morning in time to handle the mail.

I am feeling fine but get pretty lonely at times. Will try and write to your daddy tomorrow

With Love, Grandpa Jensen

Leamington Utah 11/27/51
James Rondo Jensen
Seward, Alaska.

Dear Grandson:

I was glad to receive a letter from you and to hear that you like attending school at Seward.

It must have been a wonderful time you have had this past summer. I guess your days are getting pretty short by now. You must get plenty of sleep if you sleep all night.

I believe I would have enjoyed being with you on some of your trips. That looks like a pretty fine boat you go riding in.

I went to Salt Lake City in my car last Wednesday morning to be with the rest of the family on Thanksgiving day. It snowed

Figure 121 Grandpa's 11-27-51 Letter

shot a deer last year too, with the same gun. Her husband works on the section, but he hurt his foot some time ago and still has a cast on it, so he couldn't help her drag the deer down to the car so after cleaning it she had to go and get another man to help her.

There were lots of deer killed in Utah this year. They were allowed either buck, doe, or fawn.

I didn't buy the gun I was thinking of buying, so I didn't go hunting.

It is still lovely weather here and most of the leaves are still green on the trees. I have a Paul's scarlet rose bush (climbing rose) that has sent out ^{strong} shoots from the root that have grown all the way up to the eaves, and

Figure 122 10-27-52 letter, Page 1

Heamington, Utah 10/27/52
James Ronda Jensen
Box 582 Seward, Alaska.

My Dear Grandson Ronnie:-
I was just thinking of writing to you asking you to please write and tell me how you spent the summer, and then yesterday I received your letters, - yours & Dikie's dated Jan 26. It sure took them a long time to get here, however I am glad to hear from you, and thanks for the pictures.

Just a little while ago a woman came here to the postoffice. She was talking about shooting a large buck deer yesterday with her 22 Hornet. The deer was nice and fat, 2 points on one antler and 4 on the other. She

Figure 123 10-27-52 Letter - Page 2

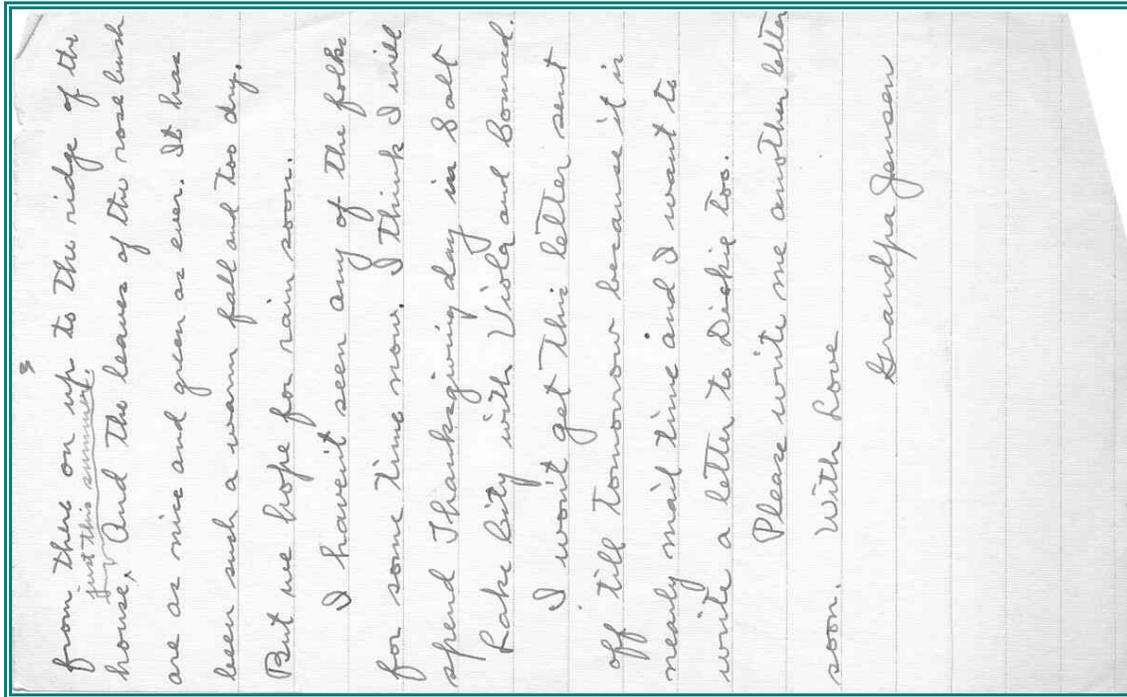


Figure 124 10-27-52 Letter - Page 2

I knew that grandpa was a naturalist and that things from Seward would probably interest him. So Dick and I collected shells and long stiff walrus whiskers to send to him. The box hung around for what seemed like a long time but it was finally mailed to him.

Frenchy LeBeau's tribe

Frenchy was one of dad's friends, or at least acquaintances. I assumed he worked on the docks with dad but I'm not sure. There are two memories of him and his outfit: 1) butter mints, and 2) mean kids.

Frenchy had some sort of experience as a chef or cook where he had learned some secrets about candy. He explained to dad how to make butter mints because dad apparently liked them, although the evidence of the rest of my life with him has essentially no buttermints in it. The basic idea I gleaned from watching dad was this: you had to make candy with real butter that was like taffy. You pulled it to fill it with air bubbles and then cut it into small pieces by cutting it with a pair

of scissors. These small pieces were then dumped into a 2 gallon glass jar that was filled with corn starch. This mixture was then set aside for many weeks during which time the hard candy crystalized and turned into soft mints. I liked the idea of the process better than I liked the candy. Buttermints were not at the top of my list.

Frenchy had a kid about my age I think it was, at least he was about my size and he was mean. He ran with other mean kids like Tracy McCracken and caused trouble. They were bullies who taunted and teased littler kids. Dick and I were walking home from school late in the afternoon when it was dark. We were on 2nd Avenue on the east side of the road, hurrying back in the cold when Frenchy's kid and another bully accosted us. We were peaceable kids who had been taught to never fight, which meant that we had been taught to not defend ourselves.

They started in on us. I don't remember what they were saying but it didn't matter. They were just wanting to fight. They pushed us and threatened us but we didn't reply and didn't do anything to defend ourselves. That didn't make them happy, however, and they finally shoved Dick hard, making him fall into some rocks along the road. He hurt himself at which point the kids took off because they were bullies and didn't dare get into trouble. We then continued on our way home.

When we got home, Dick was still crying because he had been hurt when he fell onto the rocks. Mom checked him out and asked what had happened. We had the other disadvantage of being trained to tell the truth, so we explained the whole thing to mom. But did we get any sympathy? No. We were criticized for not fighting back, in particular I was criticized for not protecting my "little" brother - who was about my size anyway. You would get into trouble for fighting, you would get into trouble for lying, and you would get into trouble for not defending yourself. You couldn't win with her.

As I sit here and riffle through my memory banks, I can't find a single instance of some thing I would have appreciated. I can not find a single instance where she showed genuine sympathy for me when I was injured. She always did take care of any injuries I had, which were frequent (perhaps that's why she was impatient?) but the band-aid was accompanied -always and without exception- with a complaint or lecture that I wouldn't have been hurt if I had been paying attention or hadn't been doing something I knew I shouldn't do. She just wasn't very nice to us.

Fishing

The small boat harbor was a marvelous place for kids to hang out. There were boats of every description ranging from large yachtish sorts of things moored by a few wealthy people who stopped in Seward just to fish, down to the small boats that were used to poke around in the headwaters of the bay when weather was good. And everything in between. Large fishing boats that trolled and so on. It is remarkable in retrospect to understand how much freedom Dick and I were given by mom and dad. The basic rules were simple:

- 1) **Tell us where you are going**
- 2) **We'll tell you how long you can be gone**
- 3) **Be safe and**
- 4) **Be home by the time we set.**
- 5) **Cuz if you're not, you don't get to do it again.**

The latter was very persuasive. We thought it was a great idea to get home when they said to be home. But in between, we could actually take our bikes or fishing poles and bikes or walk or whatever we wanted to do and go to the Small Boat Harbor, the defunct Cannery, any of the other docks or even visit Billy five miles outside of town.

One year the birthday present for each of us -often identical- was a rod and reel set mail-ordered from Sears. What a present. The reels were anti-backlash types so you didn't have to keep your thumb on the spool when you were casting like you had to do on the other kind of reel.

We went fishing often in the summer. Probably not daily but once or twice every week. Usually to the small boat harbor although we would ride our bicycles around the head of the bay and fish in a clear water stream along there, probably the Bear River. The Resurrection River emptied into the bay there as well but it was filled with silt so was milky and not much fun to fish.

The Small Boat Harbor was a sure bet, however, so if I needed to feel good about "catching fish", I went there. Throw a hook with a salmon egg out and you would catch a small cod fish fairly quickly. The wait could vary but they usually took it. The challenges were the perennial ones of the fisherman: when to jerk the line to set the hook and how hard to jerk it. We had variable success but to a true

fisherman, which we were, any contact with fish was exciting.

One day we decided to kill the small cod fish we caught and throw them out for seagulls to eat. That was great sport because it always attracted a cloud of screaming fluttering gulls that fought over the fish, each attacking the lucky one until he dropped the fish, and repeating the cycle until one of them was able to swallow the fish before being bullied enough to drop it. This particular day a kid that was with us decided that that he would try something different. When he caught another small cod instead of taking it off the hook and throwing it out as we had been, he left it on the hook, killed it then threw it out to see if a sea gull would take it.

Sure enough, the cloud of gulls descended and flapped around the surface until one of them picked the fish up and started to fly away. This was fascinating to watch. We stood there without any particular expectation. We watched the bird fly over toward the rock jetty, the fishing line whizzing off the kid's reel, the fishing pole pointed straight at the bird. Then it happened. The line on the spool ran out and since it had been securely tied to the reel to prevent a fish from getting away, something was going to happen. What happened was that the kid in his amazement at what was happening had relaxed his hold on the pole so when the bird hit the end of the line -seagulls are fairly big birds and this one obviously had some momentum going- it pulled the pole out of the kid's hand. Oddly enough, I don't remember the end of the story, just that the pole flew away and sank as the bird was flapping away. I was glad that we hadn't tried that experiment but I was tempted.

Kobuk, RIP & Porcupine

We had cats and dogs in Vernal and wanted them in Seward. The cat was not a problem because they are small, cheap to feed and they take care of their wastes. None of those are true about a dog, but we pleaded our case repeatedly and finally were granted a dispensation to get one. But there were strict rules attached to the boon: first, we had to swear an oath that we and we alone would take care of the dog so parents didn't have to; second, we had to swear that we would buy all of its dog food; and third we had to swear that we would clean up after it as necessary, which turned out to be a challenge in the ice

and snow. While we were less than perfect at any of the three, we were nonetheless constantly prodded and poked and pushed in those directions.

The dog that mom and dad got for us was a wonderful squirmy pup. I don't

remember whether they had to pay for it or simply picked it up from a litter that had been weaned and needed homes but knowing their style I imagine it was free. Their background didn't include resources to spend on pets. If they are seriously sick or hurt, put them to sleep. Always. Whatever, we got this wonderful pup that was half malemute husky and half German shepherd. His muzzle was long like a shepherd but he was generally shaped like a husky. He was black with the shepherd marks above the eyes in yellowish-brown. As we cast about for names, we wanted an Alaskan name. Somehow "Jellybean" was not appropriate for a husky. The name we ended up picking was "Kobuk", the name of a river in central Alaska. It just sounded like a good name.

So we had a husky named Kobuk to tend and play with and he was a source of great fun for several years. Seward was full of stray dogs but we kept him chained up all the time. We could unhook him and walk him, but only if we stayed with him at all times and then we had to chain him



up before we went back inside the house. We didn't have to train him to stay with us. It was natural for him, the loyalty of a dog I suppose.

The strays in the town weren't usually a problem around our place. One or two showed up here and there but their presence was advertized more often by tipped over garbage cans. But one winter forage must have been bad for them. There was more snow than usual and it was colder than usual. The strays began to run in small packs and became militant. They growled and bared their fangs at anyone and were scary. That was the time that our Eskimo friend May Titus refused to even go outside. Eskimo and Indian women had obvious fear of dogs because their relationship with them in the villages was a fearful one.

When we went down the Yukon in '56, we saw how the dogs were handled. It was pretty un-nerving. The dogs in the summer at least where we were looked shabby and starved. We could hear them growling and barking as we neared a village well before we could see it. Each man's team was separated from all others. The dogs were staked out on 15 foot chains or ropes fastened to a wooden stake securely stuck in the ground. Since even team mates will fight, all dogs were placed far enough apart that they couldn't reach each other, but that didn't keep them from howling and threatening each other. They were fed once a day in the summer, one half of a dried salmon which was gone in a startlingly short time out of either fear another dog would take it or to get ready to take someone else's fish. The fish was tossed from a distance. When we asked about going outside the village to look at the dogs we were told that wouldn't be advisable. Only the owner dared enter his team. Kids and women never went there out of fear of being torn up. So May's intense fear of the stray dog packs was well founded. She did venture out sometimes during the day but only with a club.

The feeding of Kobuk was not a lot of fun after he got big, especially in the winter. We bought 25 pound bags of powdered dog food that was reconstituted with water and let sit a while to thicken up. There always seemed to be spilled water and powdered dog food on the counter. We'd sit the food near his dog house. He'd attack it right away, making a mess in his hurry to eat. In the winter we had to use warm water because the sub-freezing cold quickly froze any standing water. He also ate fast for that reason, otherwise the food froze.

Sometimes we bought him some sort of treat, small nuggets that he loved. Actually, I am thinking today that he loved anything to eat and that it was us who loved those particular items. Madison Ave at work. We didn't do this too often however because mom and dad didn't really approve of that sort of frivolous use of hard-earned cash. Some times mom would give him a treat, as a piece of toast in this photo. Fleming's house is in the background and the infamous giant sling shot is on the right edge of the photo. Elsie Whitmore strongly disapproved of it as reported elsewhere. Behind mom is a telephone pole except that it wasn't a telephone pole. It was a basketball hoop that dad made for us.



When Kobuk was a pup we were allowed to take him in the house for a while. He was never allowed to stay long, and certainly not over night which suited him, too. He did like to be in the warm house as a puppy, but after mom chased him out with a broom, didn't like to be in the house any more than he had to. We tried to interest him in play with a toy of some sort that we hoped a dog would like, but as soon as the door was opened s he could get out, he ran. After he got large, we drug him into the house by his collar and he did the same thing he did as a puppy. He ran to crawl under the couch. But he was so large by this time that he actually raised the couch off the floor.

On occasion dad would pay attention to Kobuk which he normally was too busy to do. Kobuk didn't quite know what to do about this but was a good dog. Dad's wearing his fedora which he always wore when he dressed up and Dick has a cloth parka. The 1953 Brown and creme Chevy is waiting to go. Behind dad is a 2 story apartment building which is where May Titus lived as described elsewhere.



Kobuk's death was a sad one that I remember vividly, the only pet death I remember. I can describe the weather that day, what I was wearing, what time of day the decision was made to shoot him, who participated in the examination of him, what the exam showed, and the tears I shed for him. I feel them now.

It was noontime on a sunny winter weekday when we got home for lunch that we heard the bad news. Kobuk got off his chain somehow so went prowling. I seem to recall that we knew he was missing in the morning, but we had to go to school anyway. In his explorations, as a sort of "city dog" without any experience with wild life, he wasn't prepared for his encounter with a porcupine. He must have regarded it sort of like another kind of cat or small creature to chase. They move slowly and deliberately so are easily overtaken. Dick and I saw the result and were sick.

What we saw was a miserable dog with porcupine quills in his lips and on his front legs. He was huddled on the ground by his dog house, on the chain again. While we were there, dad and Mr. Whitmore, Brent's dad, figured out how they could examine him because it is possible to remove quills. If the end is cut off to allow the quill to decompress, it can be pulled out with pliers. That's painful because the small barbules on the quill tear at the tissue, but they can be removed and the tissue can heal. Dad and Mr. Whitmore had to find out if there were any inside his mouth as well, before they would even start removing the quills.

Kobuk didn't want to be handled but there was no choice. What dad did was

take a large empty tin can and cut the other end out so that it was a hollow tube. Then he took the roll of all-purpose gauze from the medicine chest and wove a webbing over one end and tied it in place with string. Then Mr. Whitmore sort of straddled Kobuk and managed to get a good enough hold on him so that he couldn't move. Dad shoved the tin can over Kobuk's muzzle and while he held the can in place he poured ether from the drug store on the gauze. Kobuk kicked and fought, just like I did each time I had ether, but finally he was rendered unconscious.

Dad took the can off. Now it was possible to thoroughly examine Kobuk. There were a large number of quills in his lips, nose, chin, and forelegs, but they could be removed. Then dad opened Kobuk's mouth and what we saw was terrible. Kobuk had obviously tried to take a big bite of the porcupine. His tongue, the insides of his lips, gums, and palate were covered like hair with quills. They appeared to be migrating down his throat. There was no choice now. There was no veterinarian in town, and mom and dad wouldn't have spent any money on him any way, so he had to be shot.

Rural life was rough and this was one of the roughest times. Dad made us both get a good look at the inside of Kobuk's mouth. He wanted us to see just how badly injured Kobuk was. The purpose of that forced examination was probably to help us by letting us see with our own eyes the extent of the quills. The theory at least was that we would find it easier to accept his death if we understood how badly injured he was and the impossibility of fixing him. I understood that part even then, but it felt like punishment to be forced to look at this dog that we loved, in such a condition, knowing that he was going to be killed.

Today I wonder if Kobuk could have been taken care of. Just prolong the anesthesia and methodically clip and pull the quills. But the men were busy and had to get back to the docks. And dogs had no value. Indeed, I remember well as a kid in Vernal how unwanted kittens were treated. They were put in a gunny sack with some rocks, the sack was tied shut and thrown into the creek or irrigation canal. My cousins thought that was great sport but I could never get used to the idea. So shooting Kobuk was just the natural thing to do n those days with an animal that was badly injured. But I hated it.

At least they didn't force us to watch the shooting.

Edible Plants

Another thought came to mind later about things we were forced to do in Alaska. The objective of this exercise was to prepare us for life and to care for ourselves, and this episode did have a connection to the physical reality of Alaska. They bought a book of the edible plants of Alaska and our assignment was to learn them so that on the chance we were ever stranded alone we could subsist for a while eating these plants - which Alaskan Indians and Eskimos did. This exercise seemed to last for part of a summer, though I can't remember which. The family often took rides out the dirt 'highway' so summer time was a perfect time to see the plants in their habitats and to get a real personal knowledge of them. The rides were fun.

One of the funnest plant, whose scientific name I don't remember, was tuft grass. It seemed to grow in marshy places and produced a white tuft of cotton on the end of its stems. The roots were edible apparently.



The only scientific plant name I remember was that for fireweed, *epilobium angustifolium*. An uglier name I don't know, but it stuck in my memory. The plant is beautiful and grows well here in Oregon. The explanation for the name was that the seeds would only germinate after being heated by a fire. Seeing them growing so well here I wonder if that is actually true.



In any event, this exercise which was well intended had the quality of punishment. It felt like we were being harangued and forced to do something we didn't like, and when we couldn't remember those ugly Latin names the response was at best a sort of disgusted silence, and at worst, a lecture about how we really should try harder for 'our own good'. Always for our own good.

The photos on the next page are ones I took in 2003 but they reflect what things looked like when I lived there.





Fourth of July, Home-Made Root Beer & Mooseburgers

Home-made root beer I grew up on. As far back as I can remember we made root beer with Hires Root Beer extract, a square ridged bottle that came in a box marked with the Hires Root Beer logos. The ingredients that determined the flavor the most were sassafras and sarsaparilla. Wonderful tastes. I was thrilled to discover in New England that sassafras was easily found in the woods, a low growing shrubby plant with oak-like leaves. We'd pull the plant up, strip the leaves off, peel the bark off the root and suck on it. Just about like Hires root beer. For me, A&W didn't compare. I like A&W but not as much as I like Hires. That was the ultimate. "Dad's Root Beer" appeared in the '50's, and it was pretty good, but not as good as Hires. Nothing was.

Making root beer is a simple process. It just requires time to ripen. In a well-scoured galvanized wash tub -yep, the one we washed clothes in each weekend- mom would mix the ingredients together so you get a sense of the volume we're talking about here. When she made root beer, she made root beer. The recipe is simple: water, sugar, extract and yeast. That's all. The extract takes care of all of the ingredients really. I loved it when mom put the sugar into the tub first and then poured the extract on it. The lumpy blackish brown sugar tasted excellent, but we were likely to get a rap across the wrist if she caught us taking any, which only made it more fun to take some when she wasn't watching. Then the water was poured in and stirred well until the sugar was completely dissolved.

The last step was perhaps the most delicate. A cake of yeast was dissolved in a cup of warm but not hot water. By the same token the water in the tub had to be warm but not hot either. After the yeast was dissolved, the cup of liquid was poured into the tub and thoroughly stirred again. It is the yeast that eats the sugar that creates the carbon dioxide bubbles. At this point the flat mixture was ready for bottling.

About the yeast. Fleischman's dry powdered yeast is probably the most common yeast in super markets today, but back then powdered yeast wasn't marketed. I don't know whether it didn't exist or whether there was market resistance from housewives to "dry" yeast. I know that when I first encountered it in Boston I thought it sort of bogus stuff. Yeast is yeast and it comes in little foil wrapped blocks that were stored in a cooler, not a freezer, in any store. When

you bit into one of these cakes, it sort of squeaked and crumbled. It tasted - like yeast. [Have you noticed how a basic flavor cannot be described? It's a basic building block. Compounds of different basic flavors can be described as compounds of different flavors, but basic tastes cannot. Try to really describe the taste of salt to someone who has never tasted it.]

Yeast comes in a wide variety of forms some of which are pathogenic. Yeasts are small organisms that are neither plant nor animal. It is 'yeast'. Its job in life is to take in sugars for the energy it gets from them, e.g. $C_6H_{12}O_6$ - sucrose. One of the by-products of that metabolic process is carbon dioxide - just like it is for you. When this metabolism happens in a closed space, i.e. a capped bottle, the carbon dioxide dissolves in the water. When the cap is removed, the bottle decompresses so the carbon dioxide effervesces, the whole point of putting yeast in the mixture.

The pressure created by the carbon dioxide could become great if the stuff is allowed to brew a long time, and since the whole process was sort of a hit or miss thing without any "quality control", you never knew when you were getting a lot of pressure. It could cause bottles to explode so was a real consideration. The simplest way to deal with this risk was to use bottles designed to hold pressure which meant you didn't use quart canning jars - at least not if you really wanted to carbonate the stuff. The other way to limit the pressure was to chill the root beer after a few days. The chilling would kill the yeast.

So we used any sort of pressure-resistant bottles we could find including -I loved this- beer bottles. We made fun of beer drinking but we use beer bottles to make our own brew. I loved it. Of course, I never ever dared say that out loud but kids aren't stupid. They see what's going on, what the score is and think things their parents don't dream they think. Mom would set up an assembly line operation to handle the bottling and capping process. She sterilized the bottles first to kill any yeasts or organisms adhering to the bottle which would alter the quality of the final product if they competed with our tamed yeast.

She set them in rows that we handed to her to fill out of the tub with a ladle and a funnel. She'd leave about an inch of head room and give the bottle to one of us to put the soda pop bottle cap on at which time the bottle and cap were set into a bottle capper made specifically for this project. If there wasn't headroom, the bottle would explode much sooner than otherwise. The operator of the capper turned a long handle that moved the shaft with the cup-like plate down

onto the cap to compress it around the neck of the bottle, sealing it so that pressure could build up. If the cap wasn't tight, even though the yeast did its work, the bottle wouldn't be pressurized which is why these caps were essential.

This is a photo of the actual capper that we used in Alaska. Mom selected it

as one of the things we'd take to Boston and it found its way to 2821 N. The black handle that's hanging down is rotated in full circles. This causes the silver shaft with the flange on the bottom end to



descend down onto the top of the bottle, compressing the cap onto the top of the bottle. The caps were plain unmarked, cork-lined metal discs that came in boxes of a gross (144). This box is left over don't think that mom ever made have no memory at all of home example of the profound shift we



when we moved to Boston, some good, some bad, but over all such a complicated mix that I can't say categorically whether it was good for us or bad for us.

from the 1950s because I root beer in Boston. I made root beer there, an experiences in our family

Then the capped bottles were set near the stove or in location where they would be kept warm for the next few days. Three or four days, depending on how warm the room was, allowed sufficient fermentation. At that point the bottles were moved to a cool location to kill or at least immobilize the yeast, lest it cause the bottles to explode. The way we knew the stuff had brewed enough was to open a bottle each day and taste it to see if there was enough bubbles. Now we are finally ready to talk about the Fourth of July.

The Fourth of July was a special day in my book for the simple reason that I was allowed to drink all of the root beer I could hold and eat as many mooseburgers as I could. Period. That is exactly why I looked forward to the Fourth. No other holiday was celebrated that way in our house, not even thanksgiving or Christmas. The Fourth of July in our house it was sort of a

low-budget bacchanalian debauchery - at least as close as we could get and still be inside the lines. But I suspect that the intensity of my feelings got me over the edge in spirit. I love it. Man, I could drink all day and eat all day and not feel guilty.

Ground moose made excellent hamburgers. There wasn't a lot of difference between moose and beef in my memory, much less difference than between venison and beef. On the Fourth, mom would thaw pounds of mooseburger from the locker for the celebration. She would take the waffle plates out of her large waffle iron and open it out flat like an electric grill and cook up a bunch of burgers which we could help ourselves to at will. Buns and condiments were set out, including onion slices and lettuce, and we could dig in.

A large batch of root beer had been brewed for the celebration, knowing the Schafermeyers would probably be over at some point. Usually happened. It was made so that it peaked on this day, a shaky thing to predict but mom and dad succeeded. They had mastered the technique through their own lives. If root beer brews too long its flavor deteriorates so timing is critical here. On the Fourth of July morning with great anticipation of what was to come, Dick and I undertook a ritual we did several years.

We put the same trusty wash tub in our wagon with the small shovels we had from Andy's Army and Navy store, the kind used by soldiers to dig fox holes, then headed up the road to the turn off that went up into Lowell Canyon and finally got to the remainder of a small avalanche that happened every winter on the south side of Mt. Marathon. You could always get densely packed snow there all summer, plus it was free. This is exactly what it looked like. We scooped the dirt off the top of the



snow to get to fresh and then filled the tub.

The distance was probably between a quarter and half a mile, not a trivial distance for a couple of little kids. But we loved it. We were out there on the frontier, killing bears to protect our homes, slogging through storms, saving lives and generally having a heck of a good swash-buckling time on our way up the canyon, swaggering and staggering as we twisted our ankles and jostled the wagon on the trail, not a road - quarreling a little bit about who was doing the most work just to liven up the expedition. The trip back was not quite so much fun because we then had a tub full of frozen water which was heavy. And the trail was just dirt so there were holes and rocks that wanted to turn the wagon over and ruin our precious snow. By the time we got home, we had stopped to rest a number of times, but it was a triumphant return. We staggered into the weedy rough back yard with our wagon and tub. We had the snow to chill the root beer, so the celebration would go on! Whee. We did. That's how it felt.

We grabbed root beer in long necked beer bottles and shoved them down into the snow to chill. Dozens, literally, of bottles were stuck into the tub so you'd think the whole neighborhood was coming over for mooseburgers. By the early afternoon when mom would fire up her fancy Sunbeam grill, the root beer was chilled and ready. She knew how to cook burgers and I can see her standing at the grill made by removing the waffle iron plates from her waffle iron and then lying both halves flat, using her spatula to scrape the fat to the corner spout to drain the burgers, pressing the burgers thin so that they cooked thoroughly, all of this accompanied by the wonderful smell of cooking salted peppered meat.

Then we'd open a bottle of root beer in anticipation and set it aside. We'd arm a commercial hamburger bun with everything imaginable on the table, catsup, sweet relish, mustard, hot dog relish, onions, chili sauce, tomatoes, lettuce. If there'd been chicken, we'd have probably put it on too. The first bite of burger and pull of root beer nearly undid me. I could hardly stand the gorgeous powerful flavors and smell and bubbles and textures. The liberty to indulge at will just overwhelmed my senses. My knees about buckled and I was in love with everything and everyone, all was well with the world, and it doesn't get any better than this.

Those were Fourth of July's to remember and I never had any better. Partly because we were such a small unit that we were dependent on each other for our sense of things and understood each other and loved sharing special times like that together because they were so unusual and rare. I have no idea why mom and

dad decided to handle the Fourth that way. It was so out of character for them to enjoy anything, to be so prodigal with food, but that of course is precisely why they were such memorable holidays. My memories are doubtless flawed here but you get the general sense of what I am trying to tell you. Perhaps they granted us the same boon they were granted by their own parents when they were kids on the Fourth of July.