THE LIFE AND CULTURE OF KODIAK

ILUANI

FEATURING

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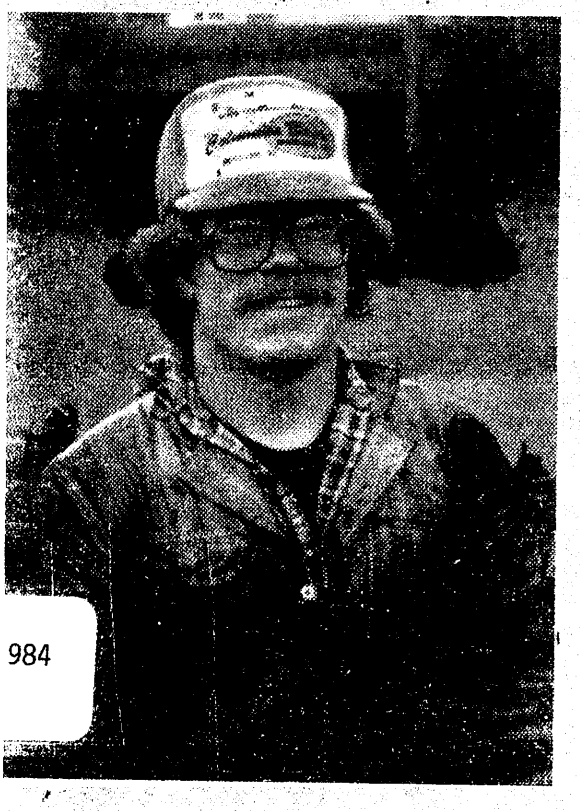


NEIL AND JUNE SARGENT

"Footloose and Fancy Free"

(TINA MONIGOLD)

The sweet face of my gram.

This is an article about my grandmother. She's a great lady. She's lived in Kodiak since after the war. And when she was a young child living in Afognak she used to visit Kodiak. One of her statements during our interview was, "My grandmother used to bring us in every Fourth of July, when we were little kids, and boy, that was the biggest thing to come to a big town like Kodiak." Gram isn't yet old enough to be classified as a senior citizen but she has led a life full of adventure. In this article she tells about a life in boarding schools, some things about Kodiak and living on Afognak. Now Gram resides in Kodiak with her husband, Ray Monigold, her two sons, R.J. and Kenny, and her youngest grandchild, Janese.

Christmas was a favorite subject for Gram and she shared a couple of her experiences she had with it in her old village, Afognak. We were talking about their flammable tree.

"Yeah, we had real candles! They were in little candle holders, you know, and you're always running around with a bucket, because you never knew when the needles would catch on fire. But they were so pretty. The candles must have been six inches, maybe four inches tall and they fitted into these little candle holders and you lit them all over your tree. Just like you have electric lights now. And you had to watch real close so the place didn't catch on fire."

I asked her when they lit the candles.

"Well at evening time, everything was kind of symbolic with the evening star. When the evening star came, you knew then everything started working towards evening. It was really neat."

After I got her started on one subject she kept up a pretty steady pace.

"Every church holiday was a big affair, Russian Christmas was really an exciting time. It's on January seventh. Whenever there was a big holiday everyone in the village participated in it. We scrubbed our house clean, we cooked a lot of good foods, and you all went to church together. For Russian Christmas you had what they call starring, we went from house to house. It's just like caroling, but you go inside the house with this star and its beautiful, made with tinsel and different colors. You sang Russian Christmas songs, you had your treats everywhere. Of course, being kids we really went for the treats, you know!" We had a laugh over this. Then I questioned her further on the treats of the holiday seasons. "How did you get presents on the holidays?"

"I don't know how they did it. But I think they used to plan so far ahead that they'd have things for us. For when holidays came, because we had two stores the village or three stores in the village and they carried all kinds of things like a regular country store. They carried hardware, dry goods, groceries and for holidays they had things come in and then you had the catalog so you could order. We didn't worry about things like that, 'cause kids don't worry about things like that.

"We had a very strict grandmother who made us fast and do all the things the traditionally Russian church did. Like, there's certain holidays you didn't eat till the star came out, everything had to be done by the star.

"My grandmother used to bring us in every Fourth of July, when we were little kids, and boy, that was the biggest thing to come to a big town like Kodiak. And I remember, they'd be preparing all this good food, you know, and we'd be sitting on that little stump looking for the first star in the sky, and the first star you saw, boy, you were at home and you (laugh) started eating (laugh some more). At least we did, I don't know about the other people but we did. Then you're always dressed up to go to church, too. My poor mother (Katherine Chichenoff) she'd have so many of us she really had to scrounge around to make us look good. So she'd sew all our clothes and she really did a good job. We always looked pretty good and they fit us all. Yeah my mother was really talented in making do with little. She could take a piece of cloth and run it up into a dress, and things like that."

"Did she always make your clothes?"

"Umm hmmm!"

"Did she teach you how to sew and things like that?"

"Nahh, we were to busy to learn how to do anything. I guess a little bit she showed us. Oh she must have, otherwise I wouldn't know anything (laugh). We had gardens, also. Great big potato gardens and everybody had to work for the harvest. Then we had to help with the everyday chores like carrying water and wood and we had animals. We had cows and chickens. Everybody in the village had a cow or chickens and you took care of them winter and summer. My grandmother had geese. We even had a pig. We didn't have a farm we just lived like that. It was a neat way to live. Nowadays they call it survival. Um, we called it real good living. We had a three room house and my father, "Papa" Chichenoff, used to trap. He used to fish and he used to cut wood. He'd deliver wood to different people that couldn't do it themselves. They'd pay him about six or seven dollars by the cord. We'd go help him, us girls. He showed us how to trap weasels. Of course, I forgot how to do all that."

Weasel trapping was a way back then for Gram and other kids to earn some money. It was probably entertainment and other games that their friends and them did together. So we talked about friends.

I was confused, because I thought Afognak was a little village with hardly any people inhabiting it, and I didn't think there was many kids to play with then. So I asked her, "Did you have lots of friends or did you just play with your sisters and brothers?"

"No," she replied with a thoughtful look, "its just like you guys, same things. A few friends and neighbors. I had real, real, good friends! I also had loads of sisters. I'm not sure, but I think there was ten of us. Yeah, there was ten of us. My one sister died, she was really sick as a baby and she died. And then my brother was killed in Korea. The rest of us are still living."

In Afognak they had school up to the eigth grade, so when Gram graduated she whizzed off to Sheldon Jackson, a boarding school in Sitka.

"I stayed away from home for four years." She told me. And then this, "I really think boarding schools are great. We've talked about it a lot in the native organization. And most of the people that are leaders in the native organization are products of boarding schools. We were talking about how did they preserve law and order in the villages in those days. But there really wasn't a drinking problem then. For holidays people made their own home brew and it was only during the holidays that people drank. I guess they didn't have time to drink. Everything was, you know, like, oh well I was talking about survival. You had to make your own heat, you carried your own water, there just wasn't time for drinking."

These are some excerpts she told me from her life at high school.

"Firstly I tried to play basketball. Basketball was the big thing down there. Basketball and stuff like that. I can't imagine myself playing basketball, but I must have because I was on the class team. I couldn't see, they wouldn't let me wear my glasses. But we sure did a lot of yelling. Team, you know. I guess that was the big sport event in the whole area. We got to go to a lot of functions, basketball functions."

Well we got into more interesting subjects. I pondered the question, "Did you date when you were in school?"

She answered me with some interest 'cause she knew I was waiting to hear some juicy story about this boy she met in school, but she shattered my hopes of hearing a hot tale and said, "Very

little, you know, you really had cute customs to follow. Like I said it was a church school and they were very strict. You were allowed to have company on Saturday afternoon for two hours."

I was curious as to what kind of company so I asked her, "Was it boy company?" And she gave me a kind of look as if she were saying, "Boy you sure are nosey."

But she only said, "Ummhmm, once a week and you're allowed to have the boys walk you home after prayer on Wednesday night and then after church on Sunday." Doesn't she remember the time well? "It wasn't encouraged too much," she continued, "but it was fun!"

"Were you interested in the boys at school?"

"Oh yeah, like all normal girls. There's always somebody. You know?"

"Do you remember who it was?" I thought I had something now.

"I can't,(laugh) oh just an insignificant person that I was involved with!"

For Gram and all her generation, WWII was an important time in her life. "I was in Seward, by the way, (laugh), that's strange. I was in Seward when the war was declared. Just galavanting around the contry, foot loose and fancy free. I came back to Kodiak later on."

"On the ferry?"

"No, they didn't even have a ferry. I had a hard time getting back to Kodiak. I had to wait till fall of the year to come back. it was hard to get back because of the war. I think probabaly 'cause they were bringing in military all the time and there just wasn't room. Kodiak has changed a whole bunch in my lifetime. It's a small little town, but it was bigger than Afognak. (Laugh) I even learned how to drive a car."

"Who taught you?"

"Your grampa. (Ray Monigold) That's the only thing he can ever think of is cars. He loves cars. He taught me how to drive a big truck. A big truck."

"Were you married to him?"

"I feel ridiculous!"

"Not then." She answered thoughtfully.

"But you knew you were going to marry him?"

"Probably did. Yeah."

"Were you in love with him?"

"I suppose so." Gram's getting embarrassed now.

"Are you still now?"

"Probably so.(Laugh) Yeah, yeah I guess so!"

"When did you meet Grampa?"

"Oh that was after the war. '47, I think. He was in the navy and I was working in a cleaning service. He's been here ever since."

"Just 'cause of you, huh?"

"I guess. (Laugh) I don't know I s'pose so! Yeah!"

The last thing Gram and I talked about was her former job and her memories of the old Orthodox priest in Afognak.

The last job I had was, gosh I don't even know what the name of it was. I drove people around. Picked up... Patient Advocate!" She exclaimed triumphantly. "That was my position. That was my last position. I sit on the KANA Board, almost continually. And I like to work with the Native projects and things like that. That concern Native people. I went to the AFN (Alaska Federation of Natives) Convention, in Anchorage. This is the 13th time I went to the convention. I enjoyed it. Its, uh, I don't know, it just makes me feel good."

I asked her, "Do you go to church?"

"No I don't, I'm not involved in the church here. But in the old days that was the focal point of the village. I used to be so afraid of the Russian priest! My goodness he was such a loud man, and he scared us so badly. He really kept us in line, I guess. I look back on those years. I don't know why. I don't think I could do it again. You know, myself living like that, and it was the way of life. And thats all I could say. It was a good life, for growing up as youngsters. Thats it, turn it off. (The tape recorder.)

So I turned the recorder off and Gram heaved a sigh of relief before offering me something to eat.

Story and Photos: Paula Skog

"There's Always Going To Be A Need For Fishermen"

...Bob Krueger

The future of commercial fishing is a little uncertain in Kodiak this year. The king crab fishery was booming in the 70's, with many boats making big money every season, strengthening the economy of Kodiak. This year, the numbers of king crab are so low that there may not be another open season on king crab for almost a decade. The shrimp fishery, which also was booming in the 70's, was seriously damaged when the numbers of pink shrimp plummeted in 1978-1979. Even the salmon fishery has suffered from disappointingly low harvests in the last two seasons.

Why is this happening? Well, no one really seems to know, but the fishermen, who get their livelihood from these different species, are the ones who really feel the effects of the declining numbers of fish.

I talked with Bob Krueger, a local fisherman who has had experience in nearly every fishery in the Kodiak area, about commercial fishing and where it is headed in the future.

Bob Krueger was born in Euphrata, Washington on May 1st, 1949. After attending Central Washington State College, in Ellensburg, Washington, he came to Kodiak on August 9th of 1973. Bob explained how he first got involved in the fishing industry.

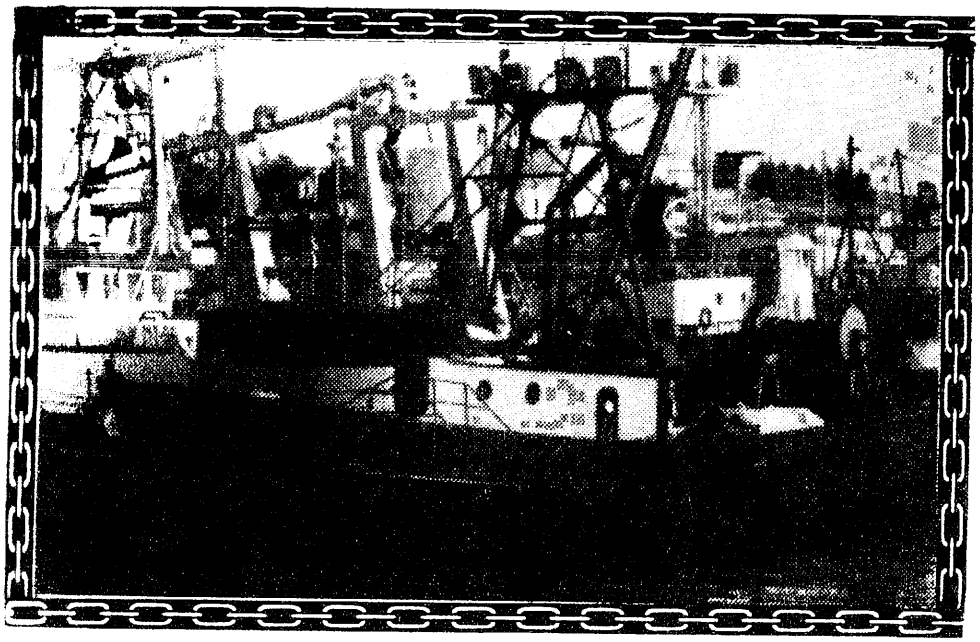
"My dad has a machine shop in Moses Lake and I was raised in a machine shop around machinery. A friend of my father's had bought a boat and he was looking for an engineer, and he asked me if I wanted to come to Alaska, and go fishing on his boat as the engineer. I said 'sure' and about a month later I was in Kodiak."

As it turned out, "I was the engineer and relief skipper for a fleet of six boats. I was in charge of the maintenance programs on all the boats. If a boat needed to be moved or anything like that, it was my responsibility to take care of it.

"I worked for this individual for about two years, and then I ended up buying one of the boats that was a part of this fleet, the *Mar del Norte*.

Krueger's boat, the *Mar del Norte*, is a trawler-type vessel with the wheelhouse forward, built in 1969 in Mobile, Alabama by Bender Boatbuilding Company.

"It is 86 feet long, 24 feet wide, and the registered draft of how deep it is in the water, is 11 feet 8 inches, its net weight is 104 tons and it has a 565 horsepower engine.



the
Mar del Norte

"We got the boat in March of 1976, and at that time we concentrated on fishing shrimp. But then as the shrimp started decreasing, we concentrated more on king crab and tanner crab, and started tendering herring in the off-season when there's no shell fishery, and just within the past couple of years we went ahead and diversified our boat so we could fish halibut, and we tender salmon, too, so we are involved in just about all the different seafoods that you get here in Kodiak," Krueger observed. Since I talked to him, he has also been participating in a joint venture on pollock, and fishing bait for tanner crab season.

"I started fishing in 1973, and it seemed at that time that there was tremendous volumes of shrimp everywhere. Just everywhere.

"Then, through 1976, 1977, and 1978, new areas were being explored and discovered that were just untapped gold mines. For instance, the bays up and down the Alaska Peninsula and out toward the Aleutian Chain"

But soon after, "You would fish for a shorter period of time every year, and you could just see that the volume of shrimp that you were catching was declining. It wasn't because of a lack of effort, it was more because there just wasn't that much shrimp around. You could actually, physically, see that there just wasn't that much shrimp there.

Krueger's own theory is that the increase in predation, caused by the decrease of the foreign effort on cod, pollock, and other predators and the heavy domestic commercial effort on shrimp, is what made the numbers of shrimp decline.

"I think it was interesting to note that in areas that were not open to commercial fishing the volumes of shrimp in those areas that never had a shrimp net in them decreased as much as the bays that were fished real heavily."

"When we fished here in 1975 there was tremendous volumes of pure, straight, shrimp. The year after that we started getting small pollock. They weren't much bigger than the shrimp. These year-classes of shrimp just kept getting

bigger and bigger, and a codfish, or a pollock, when it gets to be 10 or 12 inches long, well, then it starts using shrimp as a part of its diet.

"What I really think happened was the 200 mile limit decreased the amount of foreign effort. The foreign fishermen were fishing the predators, keeping those predators at bay, and there was this big surplus of animals in the lower part of the food chain, the shrimp, specifically, and the foreign effort on predators dropped off, then the predators just got stronger and stronger, and that, in conjunction with the American commercial fishing effort, which became very intense, was just too much for the fishery."

The king crab decline happened, "about the same way. Crab molt, and they're real soft for awhile before their new shell starts to harden up. Now, these codfish are large enough to eat, really quite a large crab, and juvenille crab very easily.

"I think the predators, to start with, were the primary cause of the decrease in the volume of shellfish that's available. It's going to take awhile, but I really believe that if we do concentrate on the predators we'll get the fisheries back into balance, so that the basic predator-prey relationships remain in balance."

Krueger also illustrated how cod and pollock, the two major predators, and other whitefish differ from other fish that are harvested in the Kodiak area:

"Fishing shrimp and crab--we just hauled them right straight to town, but whitefish doesn't have the storage capabilities of shrimp, or crab. Crab, of course, you're keeping alive all the time. They have to be alive when you sell them. Shrimp, you can ice down and keep them on the boat for five days. Well, codfish and pollock, flatfish that we're talking about fishing with the joint ventures, and hopefully with domestic processors in the very near future, the quality of whitefish doesn't warrant keeping them that long. You can't do it. Three days maximum, and then, if you're going to put them below on the boat, you have to gut the fish, and ice them down."

There's no way you can get around it. "That's the reason that the joint venture is a workable solution today. From the time that you catch the fish until it's cleaned and filleted and frozen, or salted, it's only a matter of hours.

"A joint venture is a venture where the foreign processor and the American fisherman work together.

"For example, take the Portugese joint venture. They're gonna bring one ship over here. That's a salt cod operation, so you'd go out with a fleet of about seven boats. They'll be bringing the fish right on board the drag boats. Then there'll be Portugese guys right on the fishing boats to clean the fish. Every night you go and you deliver to this processor which is laying there, taking these fish. They pay you so much a ton for the fish.

"The Russian joint venture is a little bit different. They're gonna send two ships over here, and there's gonna be about four or five boats fishing for them. That's the type of fisherey where you don't put the fish on the drag boat. You catch the fish, and all the fish go back into the tail end of the net, called the cod end--has nothing to do with cod, it's a cod end no matter what you're fishing for. You wind the net up on the boat until you get to this detachable cod end. Then you get the cod end up and get a strap tied onto it,

and you pull up behind the big Russian factory ship, which trails a line off its stern. You grab that line and connect it to your cod end, then you release it. The factory ship will pull the whole bag right up on the stern of the ship. The fishermen themselves don't have to handle the fish."

Krueger said that joint venture fishing differs from most commercial fishing in that, "It's not as tough, competitve-wise, but if it's blowing, the factory ship, he's 500 or 600 feet long, and with 15 foot seas running, he just keeps on chugging around, but the fishing boats gotta keep fishing. Maybe there's a hundred guys on the factory ship. If they're down for one day, they lose a tremendous amount of production. The whole idea is to just keep that fish flowing into that plant just as fast as they can process it.

"Even another aspect of a joint venture is that it's a joint venture between fishermen. The fishermen will actually help each other find the fish. Whereas, with the shrimp fishery and the crab fishery, if you were on hot fishing, you kind of tried to keep it a secret so that you could reserve that little body of fish for yourself."

Even though he believes that by fishing the predators, the numbers of shrimp and crab will increase, Krueger thinks that pollock and cod fisheries and markets may become just as important as the shrimp, crab, and salmon.

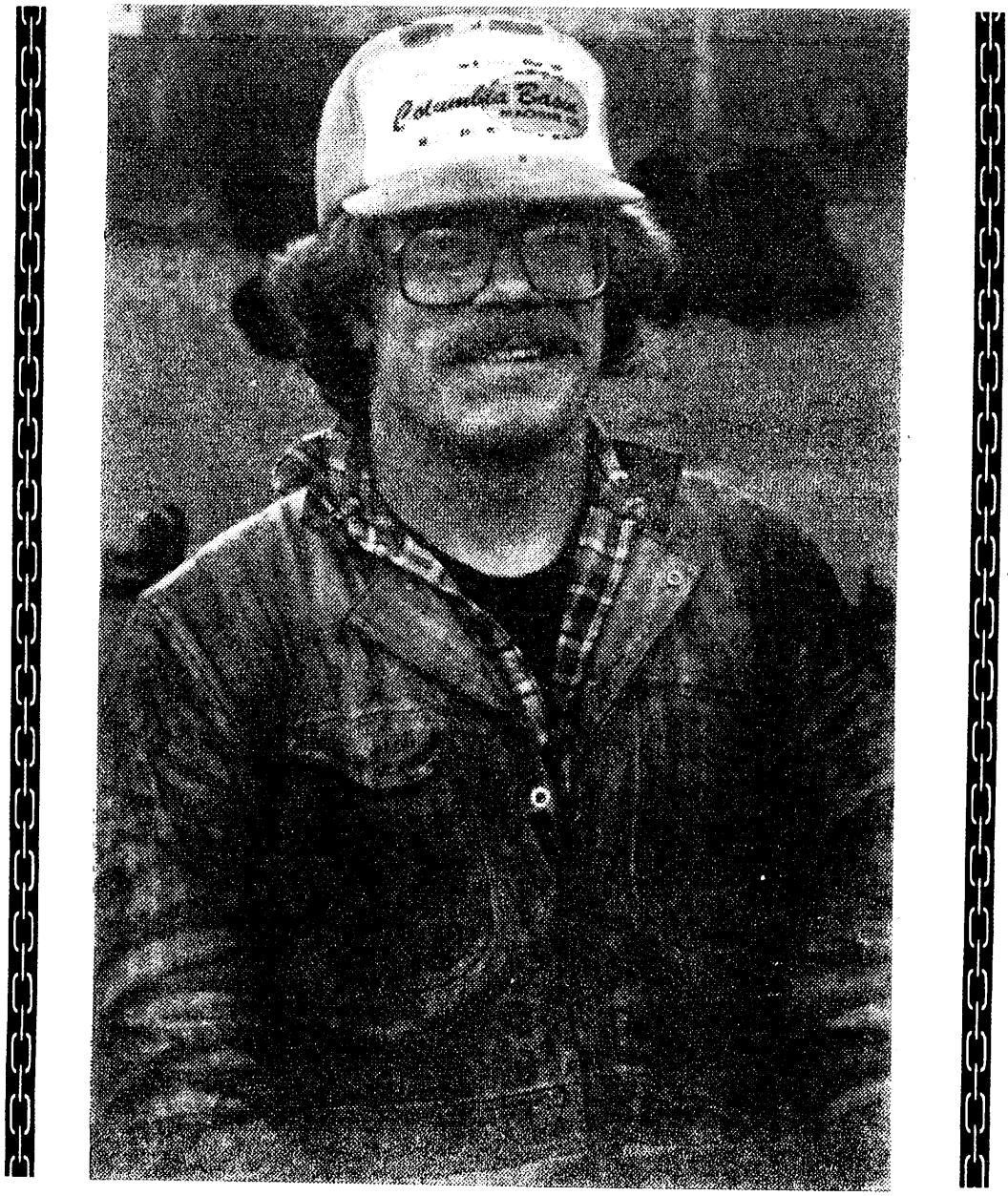
"I think that the people that are involved in the bottomfish industry and the whitefish industry right now aren't really too concerned with the fact that a codfish or a pollock is a predator. It's a source of income, and it's a tremendous resource. It's like shrimp or crab was years ago. There's lots of it, and, if a guy can get geared up for it he can make money fishing for them, and that's the whole idea. When we can develop the domestic markets, get the shore-based processors in town geared up and processing this food, it's it's going to be a real boost to the economy. This town, your whole economy really is based on the fishing industry. I think that bottomfish is going to be the primary industry in Alaska. It's going to be money for the fishermen, money for the local merchants, fuel dealers, parts houses, grocery stores... It's the key, and I think everybody knows it.

When Bob told me this, I wondered if the 80's would become just another decade of boom times, until the cod and pollock are wiped out. Bob doesn't think it will be that way. He said, "It used to be a situation where people would come into Kodiak expecting a job on a boat, where they could make tremendous amounts of money over a very short period of time.

"But nowadays, we're looking at getting involved in lower levels of income on a longer, stretched out basis, rather than short bursts of high income fishing. There's still good money to be made in the fishing industry, and a guy can make good money, but it's not going to be fast money, and it's not going to be big money, it's going to be a good living.

And when I asked Bob if he liked fishing, he said, "I like fishing. It's a good way of making a living, and I enjoy it. It's changing drastically. It used to be easier to be a fisherman because now a guy has to deal much more in politics and marketing of the products, so you can't spend as much time just out actually fishing. You're spending a lot of time talking to people and negotiating prices or openings or something like that. So it's really changed, but I enjoy the change. I don't think I'd like to have everything stay the same continuously. I like the change. It's a good, exciting, healthy way to make a living.

"Fishing is--it's a food industry. I think people need to remember that. There's always going to be a demand for food. We're just like the farmers, except we don't drive John Deer's, we drive trawlers, or crab boats or whatever, and so there's always going to be a need for fishermen. The ocean is a great resource. We have tremendous volumes of protein, and the world needs protein. I think that fishing's going to be a good way to make a living for many years to come.



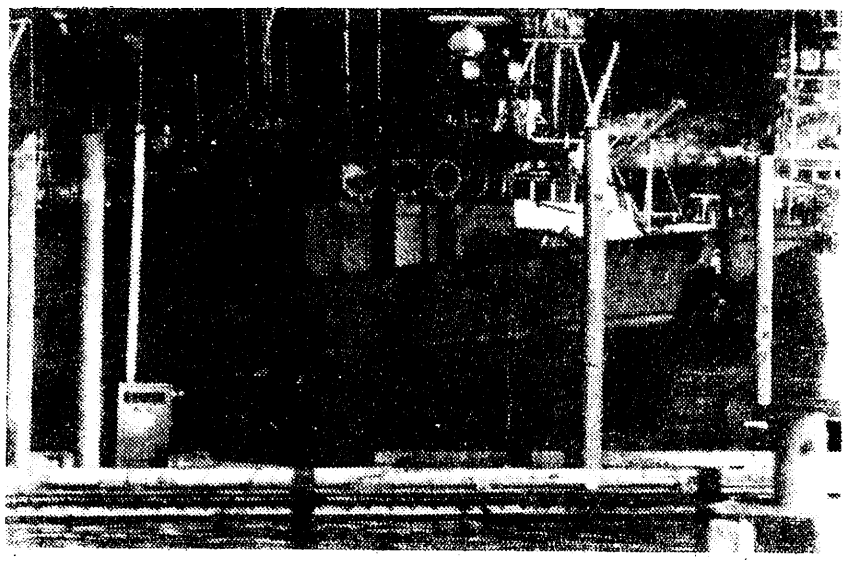
Bob Krueger

Story and Photos: Matthew Weeks

"The Boat was in the Rocks, Banging Around"

--Bob Krueger

"On my boat, the *Mar del Norte*, I was fishing tanner crab off the south end of the island, and the weather forecast was for northeast winds to 30 or 35 knots. We had a full load of crab gear on the boat. We were just moving into the area, and I heard a boat up north of us talking to another boat saying that it had really started blowing where he was. I knew this weather was coming so we started dumping this crab gear, and by the time we got all 50 pots off the boat, it was blowing at least 80 knots and the sea was tremendous--it was a 25 or 30 foot sea. Fortunately we got all the gear off the boat, and it was able to handle the rough weather conditions. It was definitely not comfortable. It was pretty much a situation where everybody was up and in the wheelhouse because it was too rough to stay in bunks or anything. So, that was a little bit scary.



the Mar del Sud

"But, I think the very worst storm I was in was during the winter of 1975, on the *Mar del Sud*. We were fishing king crab out in Unimak Bight and it started blowing real hard. We were about 35 miles offshore and it

the Mar del Norte

came up real fast. We turned and started running downwind, before it got too bad. It was about 30 to 35 foot seas, so it was tremendously rough. Fortunately, we were able to go in the direction that we wanted to go, so it didn't really create any big problems."

As you may have read in the previous article, Bob Krueger is a local fisherman who came to Kodiak in August of 1973. His diverse fishing experience includes shrimp, king and tanner crab, herring, halibut, salmon and pollock. He began working in Kodiak as the engineer and relief skipper for a fleet of boats.

Krueger reflects, "There were six boats in the fleet to start with. Three of the boats are still floating: my boat, the *Mar del Norte*; the *Mar del Sud*; and the *Arsco II*. Three of the boats have been lost through the last 10 years.

"One of these boats was the *Mar del Plata*. It was lost in Kujulik Bay, just north of Chignik. It was bad weather conditions and an unfortunate accident. There's a big reef in Kujulik Bay and it sank on the rocks, but somebody picked the survivors up right away and everybody was fine.

"The *Mar del Oro* sank in Shelikof Strait a few years ago. I never knew specifically what happened to that boat, but everybody got off on that one, too. Nobody got hurt.

"Then, in 1982, during the 7½ inch king crab season, pretty close to Christmas, maybe the 17th or 18th of December, we were out fishing in Chiniak Gully. As we were driving along, just setting a string of gear, we passed our other sister ship, the *Eastern Sea*. Everything was fine, the boat was sitting there and it was upright and high in the water. I was still setting this same string of crab gear, it was a real long string, when I overheard a conversation from the *Eastern Sea*, that they were in trouble and were sinking. So we turned around and ran right down my string, knowing that the *Eastern Sea* was right in that vicinity, just a few pots behind me. It was pretty tense there for a while, and when we got to the location where the boat had been, there was nothing there except the bait box, crab buoys,

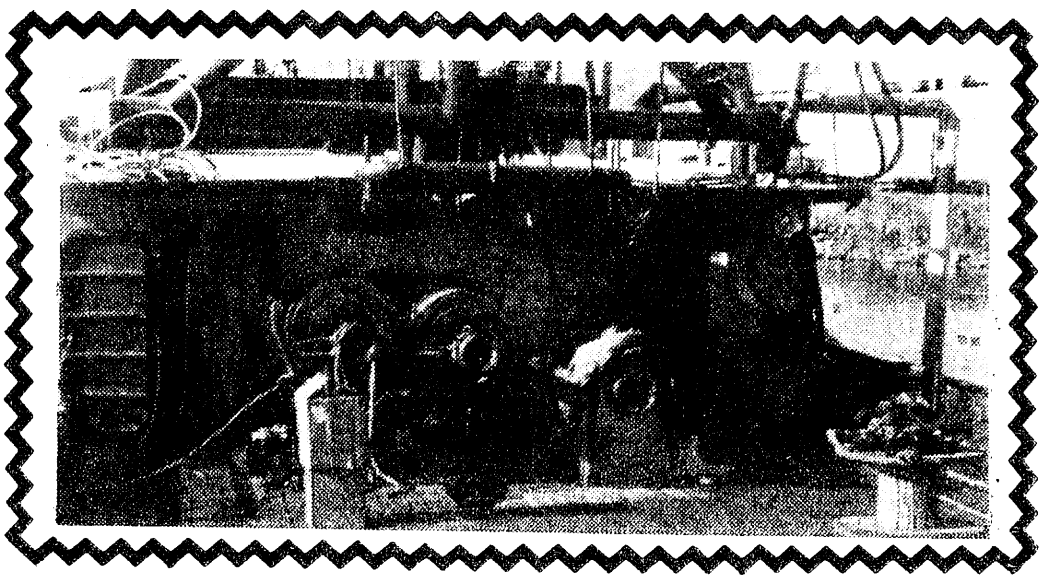
kicker cans and stuff floating around, and the four survivors off the boat, who were all paddling around in their survival suits. We picked them all up, and got them on board. It was pretty exciting.

"Our boat had a grounding, too. I was fishing down in Chignik in 1977. We were anchored up in Hook Bay and the anchor let go. It was terrible weather conditions that night, it was blowing 60 and 70 knots and snowing real hard. We went up on the rocks. I put out a MAYDAY, and we never did go completely dry, but the boat, boy, it was really banging back and forth in the rocks and we couldn't talk to the Coast Guard on our radio. If we'd have punctured the hull with a rock, well, we would have lost it right there, the boat was sitting right in the rocks, banging around. But as it turned out, we got ahold of the *Emerald Island*, who was in Prince William Sound. He could hear us even though that's 350-400 miles north of Chignik. We could hear him and the Coast Guard could hear him, so we relayed through him to the Coast Guard here in town. They sent the *Storis* down there. Before the *Storis* got there, a boat called the *Pacific Fury* arrived at the scene and he was able to get us out of the rocks. The tide was right, and the weather had come down. That was a situation where it would have potentially been a really bad loss. The Coast Guard cutter towed us back to Kodiak.

"It did tremendous damage to the keel of the boat, but it never touched the hull, so we took the boat to Seattle and got it fixed up, just like new.

"The whole incident was real frightening. When I put out the MAYDAY, I thought that it was a true emergency. We needed a helicopter, we needed immediate assistance from somebody, but it turned out just being lost fishing time and the repair cost. That's the closest I think we've ever come to losing the boat.

"You never really know if you're going to lose the vessel until it's actually gone. You never want to lose hope. If the boat is out of sight under the water, then you know that you have a loss.



the deck of the Mar del Norte

"And, there's lots of other interesting things that happen when you fish. The one thing about fishing is that it's always different. It's always changing. For example, you never travel to a particular place by the same exact route every time, and the weather conditions are always a little bit different.

"Of course, as far as being exciting, every once in a while, hopefully not too often, you get into a heavy weather situation with tremendous winds and tremendous seas. Those are always exciting, not necessarily good exciting, but exciting nevertheless.

"We used to fish tanner crab in Shelikof Strait and the season started in early January. It was really an exciting experience to fish over there with the ice floes coming down out of Cook Inlet. You're trying to get your crab gear out of the way, and tremendous icing storms and things of that nature.

"To see the different terrains and the different climates has been very interesting. There are a lot of villages up and down the coast, and you get to know the people in these towns and they all have their unique ways of life. I think basically the villages' fishery is salmon, so it's always interesting to talk with those people, and to get to know them. And we also do a lot of hunting off of the boat in the fall and winter.

"This summer we were tendering red salmon from Chignik Lagoon back into town. We were coming up through Shelikof Strait and we were between Uyak and Uganik bays. We started seeing these whales. My wife Marla was on board, and my son Kalen and my niece Rachel were also on board.

"It's always exciting to see whales, but we just kept looking and there were just more whales. There were whales to the port side of the boat, and there were whales to the starboard side of the boat, and there were whales ahead of the boat, and there were whales behind the boat. We travelled for a solid hour, and there were just whales everywhere. I think they were grey whales. I've never seen anything like that in all the years that I've been fishing.

"It was one or two trips later, and we were over off of Katmai Bay, and all of a sudden, off in the distance, to the starboard side of the boat I saw what I recognized to be the dorsal fins of killer whales. I wanted to get closer to them so that Rachel could see them. When we got over there it was a tremendous pod of killer whales. There must have been 40 killer whales in this one pod, ranging in size all the way from the really big bulls, to smaller young ones, judging from the heighth of their dorsal fins. I guess they travel that way, in big family groups.

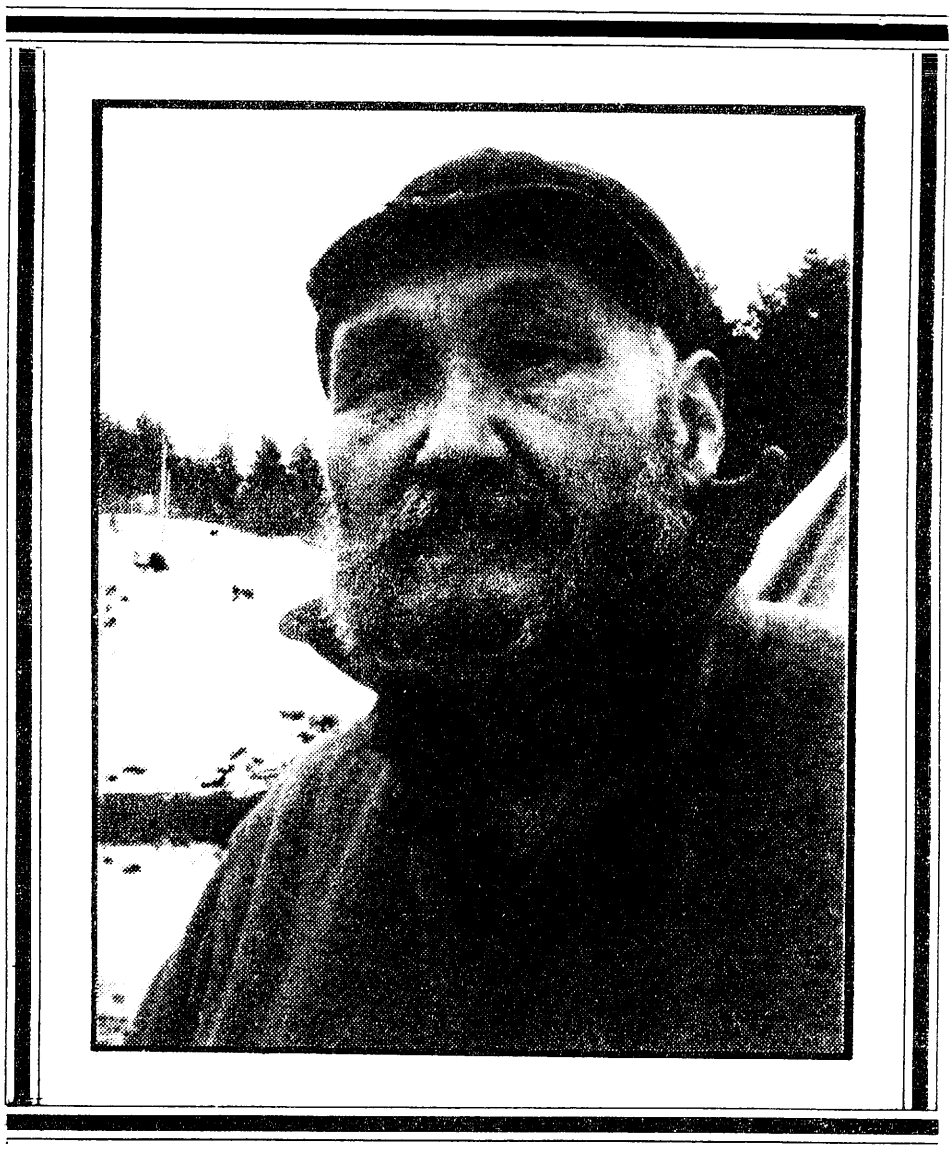
"That was real exciting, but it was a little bit gruesome in that there was a bunch of porpoises there, and it appeared that the killer whales were chasing the porpoises. We never did see a porpoise being killed or attacked by a killer whale, but it seemed that's what was happening, because you'd see these porpoises darting off and you'd see these big killer whales swimming around. We got right up close to them, too.

Krueger summed up the interview by saying, "Fishing is travelling, and it's changing all the time. I think that part of it is the most exciting for me."

Story and Photos: Matthew Weeks

"It Saved Your Bacon.."

Steven Kristensen



I had been in Kodiak only a week, and Mr. Kubiak suggested I interview Steven Kristensen for my article. When I was told he lived in skiff in Dog Bay Harbor, I thought to myself what a good way to meet people and have new experiences. Well, I was right. What an experience it was! As I got

off the shuttle that took me to the harbor, the man running the shuttle said, "There's where Steve lives." I found my way down to the skiff, knocked on his blue tarp, and said, "Hi, my name is Clark. I'm from 'Iluani' magazine and I'd like to do an article on you." I heard, "Come on in," so I climbed aboard. "Now, what is it you want?" he said as he studied me with his eyes. I explained to him once again why I was there, and then he was more than happy to talk.

After I entered the skiff, I was amazed at how somebody could manage to live in it for more than a year. His personal belongings were divided up beteen the two sides of the skiff, with a cleared out area in the middle. I guess that was where he slept. While I was sitting there, I noticed that there was a Coleman propane stove burning away. The purpose, I suppose, was for heating and cooking. My eyes began to wander even more as curiousity took over and I noticed that the Coleman stove was about two feet from the gas tanks. All through the interview I could picture myself as a victim of spontaneous human combustion. I have to admit, we were nice and warm throughout the entire interview.

Before I go any further, I would like to explain why Steven lives on a skiff. Steven lives on a skiff because that's all he can afford. Also, from my point of view, I would say that anyone who can live on a skiff for more than a year in the kind of weather Kodiak has to offer, is as tough as nails.

Steven Kristensen was born in a small Eskimo village called Topkok, on July,16, 1918. Topkok is located at the mouth of the Topkok river on the north shore of Norton Sound. In an 1880 census, Topkok reportedly had a population of 15.

The first time Steven saw Kodiak was in April of 1930. Since then he has been coming and going to Kodiak. This time he arrived in May of 1982.

When I asked him about Kodiak's future, this is what he had to say. "Everytime I go away for a couple of years and I come back, the place looks better. It's constantly building up, but it's not going to build up too fast, and hasn't for a while. Most of the land is controlled by individuals, and their holding onto it. They want to get rich quick and get out of here. That's what's holding everything back."

Next I said, "Steven, what nationality are you?" "I'm an American national, but you mean, 'What race?'" he said as he capitilized my mistake. I agreed with him and said, "You're right, I mean what race?" "My mother was a mongoloid and my father was a caucasoid, as far as race goes. My dad was a Norwegian and my mother was an Eskimo," he said.

Even though I don't like discussing religion with someone, especially someone I don't really know, I forced myself to ask him his opinion on the subject. Without hesitation Steven replied, "I think it's a big snowjob. My mother died when I was real young, she was a Baptist, and had me baptised a Baptist. Well, the Methodists got ahold of us. I had a younger brother, an infant sister and an older sister. When the Methodists got ahold of us, they baptised us Methodist. So I had two baptismals. They say there's a heaven when you die, if you're a good Christian, you're going to go up to heaven. No man has the power to know where you're going to go. The world isn't made that way. Like they say when Jesus was crucified. The world isn't made that way. No living man can die and come back to life. Once you're dead, you're dead, that's the end of the line. It's like these planets and

stars traveling through space, when they go by a certain point, they can't go back. There is no backtracking. They go in one direction and maintain that direction, otherwise everything would go all to hell, fall apart. There may be a supreme being, but to name it and pray to that name is a bunch of nonsense!"

After hearing Steven's theory on religion, which I have to admit left me thinking, I figured why not get right into the subject of nuclear weapons. I found out Steven was pro-nuclear from his first statement which started like this: "Nuclear arms is a darn good thing, It saved your bacon. If it wasn't for nuclear arms you'd probably be drafted and fighting in some God forsaken place right now."

"But they could destroy the world," I said.

"No, no, no. Who's going to destroy the world. That's a bunch of crap. People don't want nuclear war. You know why? When they have the bomb, it puts everybody on the front line. Reagan in Washington, he's on the front line if he starts a nuclear war. We have enough to knock out Russia, but they still have enough to knock us out. So they won't start a war because both of us would be dead. If they didn't have it (nuclear weapons) why, they'd start a war and sit there and smoke cigars, like they did in the last war. I spent four years in the army. I came out a P.F.C. with an honorable discharge. Old Eleanor Roosevelt used to be a reasonable person, but she got mad at the soldiers when she overheard what they were saying." Imitating the soldiers and in a Franklin Roosevelt accent, Steven Said, "I don't want war, Eleanor doesn't want war. Show them your teeth Eleanor!"

Story and Photo By Clark Senf
Layout and Typing By DeLynn Dooley, Denise Sallee

"Just Keep Your Net Wet!"

--Mary Jacobs

"I never feel like riding rollercoasters or anything very exciting. When I go out fishing, I get my fill. I get all my thrills when I'm out fishing."

Interviewing Mary Jacobs was a very exciting and learning experience for me. She is one fantastic lady!!

She's an open and honest person, and just meeting her, you can see that she's very outgoing. When she smiles, you know it's real.

Our interview was set for a Thursday, and when it rolled around, I went down to the boat yard to meet her. When I got there, she was down in the hold of her boat, checking on the fiberglass job she was working on at the tiime. I said, "Hey Mary, I'm here," and climbed up the ladder onto her boat. A big frame covered with visqueen was over the open hold of the boat to keep out the seasonal rain Kodiak gets. She offered me a hot cup of mint tea, and our interview started.

Mary Jacobs has been fishing on her own in Kodiak since 1979. She took over her ex-husband's boat the Invader, and ran it for three years. Then, she bought the Renaissance. Before that, she'd been crewing for her husband for seven or eight years.

I asked Mary why she chose fishing as her profession. She said,

"I think I just kind of slipped into it. I just started doing it for the fun and excitement of it, and the good money. I guess I still feel a little bit, I have yet to choose my real profession. I guess I could never imagine myself as an old lady running a boat. I truely love it, and it's something I can't imagine living without. Everytime I think of doing a different job, I just don't think that I could stand being cooped up.

"I think part of living in Kodiak and having this lifestyle, you get hooked on the excitement of it. I guess the fact that you never know what's going to come next, you're always out there making quick, spur-of-the-moment decisions, and that seems to be something I thrive on. I enjoy doing it. You know,... not making definite plans, thought out plans for the future, and thinking that you're going to stick with it, then being fustrated if they don't work out. You can make plans, and then five minutes later, those plans are kaput. Then, you just make some other plans. You are always planning, but it doesn't mean you have to stick with it. You've gotta see when something gets in your way, it's time to make a right-hand turn, or a left-hand turn. That's part of being good at fishing, and that's part of being at the wheel."

Mary says she definitly finds fishing more exciting than she'd find an office job.

Being a woman skipper in charge of her own boat, her own crew, Mary faces different problems than a man does, but not necessarily in the same areas.

"Of course I face different problems! I don't have the crew to tap on, or the young energetic boys, that just want to go out and work real hard. Well, I mean they're there, and maybe they'd work for me, but I think it would be more difficult for them to work for a woman, whether they'd want to or not. There aren't that many women that want to go fishing. Except of course, when the money is real good, but then, as far as people-- as women that are making it as careers, like a guy might, it might be something that they want to do for the rest of their lives. So that's one of the special problems I have. I don't have the mechanical background that a lot of guys who get into fishing have, but then, there are other men who don't have it, too."

If something does break down, what does Mary do? Well, she's not too proud to ask for help.

"When somebody is around that knows more than me, I don't like to ask for help if I don't have to, I usually try to fix it myself. I have friends who usually give me a little advice over the radio, and tell me where to look. I'm learning more all the time. I usually try to get in there and fix it and learn about it. I'll ask somebody if I have to. I get experience with whatever breaks down. The next time something happens, I'll know a little bit more about it, rather than getting an all around mechanical engineering background. I guess my attitude toward it, is, just learn the idiosyncrasies of this boat, and know what I have to do to keep this boat running. If I can get that down, that's all I have to know, I can squeeze by with what I've got. I've been real lucky as far as things breaking down and being able to get help, keep the thing running, just doing whatever is necessary."

Mary is a well known seine skipper around Kodiak Island, and people consider her successful. I asked her what, or who she felt she owed that success to. Thoughtfully, she replied,

"Mostly a lot of drive to work, a lot of drive to be successful. And,... I guess I just have a lot of determination. It doesn't matter if there's not a lot of fish out there, I keep working; I work late at night, and don't miss openings, and a lot of it,... people just do that. If you don't know that much about catching fish, then that's about the only way you can catch fish, is just get out there, and spend as much time learning and catching fish, trying as many different places as possible. I did start out not knowing very much, so... that's one of the lessons my ex-husband taught me, just keep it in the water. Even though it seems like everyday you might get discouraged because you aren't making very much money, but at the end of the season, if you fished everyday, it adds up. You've had a satisfying season. Other people, they might have a day where they gross five or ten thousand dollars, and then after that, they go and anchor up for a couple of days because they don't want to scratch fish."

"Scratch fish means that when the fishing isn't good, you're getting just a little bit at a time, and you're just making a little more money than it takes to run the boat. You know,... maybe the crew makes fifty dollars a day, but then, you could just be out there doing that for three quarters of a day, and then a shot of fish comes along at two o'clock in the afternoon, and you've quadrupled your day by being there. When other people have gotten discouraged and anchored up... so it's just important to be in those places."

Mary has gotten some pretty good fishing lessons from her past experience, she says. How to handle nets, and she knows the gear. She was able to design herself a net that works pretty well.

Mary Jacobs working on the fiberglass job in the hold of her boat.
(Photo by Chris Swanson)

Being good at fishing takes teamwork as well as having a good boat, and a good crew. Mary's team is her crew.

"The kinds of qualities that I look for in my crew are... independance,... hard work,... having been on a boat before so they know how to live with boat life. A lot of just knowing about the dirty work involved with fishing. I don't want somebody who just thinks they can go out on a boat and catch fish, that it's all fun and games. Usually, when I end up hiring someone I **don't know**, it isn't already prearranged,

because I've lost someone that's a crew person, it's somebody who just gets down on the boat and starts working, sees things that need to be done. Judy, who I took on at the last minute last year, she came down and she said, 'Whether you hire me or not, I'll come down and work for you a couple of days.' She came down in the rain, wearing her raingear, and she started polishing the rails, and doing things like that. Anybody else that came around looking for a job, I couldn't turn down Judy and hire them, because she had showed me that she really wanted to work. She's also a diver, and a good cook, so if you try to get a couple of different qualities in each person, so you have a well rounded crew, I don't have to do anything!" Laughing, Mary went on to say, "Karen Lee is a good engineer and carpenter, and Judy Blodget can dive and cook, Vicky Vesey ran the skiff, and all four of us can mend nets!"

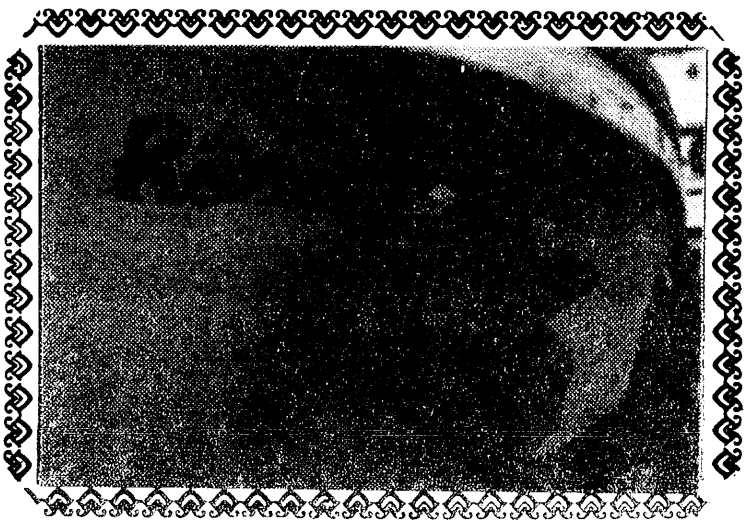
I asked her how the diving skills come in handy.

Mary replied, "Oh, sometimes you back over a net or a line,...or something stupid..." she smiled, "And it gets wrapped in the wheel, and somebody has to go down and cut the net out. It hasn't happened to me very often. It didn't happen at all last year!"

Mary's crew is all female, each with their own special qualities. There's four of them. If the line does get wrapped in the wheel or something, Mary told me that they've all gone down, even without diving equipment, and chopped it out, in the murky, cold water.

"It's miserable, and scary, and nobody likes doing it.

"When the four of us women went out fishing for the first time, we all just had this obsession. We really wanted to have a good season, and we just couldn't be stopped. And we were lucky. That's right! There's luck in it, too. We got into it at a time when there was a lot of fish around. And I've got a fantastic crew!"



Judy Blodget is busy sanding down the hull of the Renaissance in preparation for a new paint job.

The Renaissance was out of the water for several months being renovated. Now back on the ocean, she sports a new hold, a new paint job, an excellent overhauled running engine, and other various new fixations.

"I've had women work for me that have worked for boats with men, and have had problems, such as only getting paid a half-share, or not gotten paid at all. Or they've even lost their jobs because of the skipper's wife, or the skipper's new girlfriend. My crew has been real appreciative of not having those kinds of problems. And that's good for the moral, I think. The crew keeps together as a good working team, and sometimes playing together on the weekends.

"Everyone with different abilities--it was a learning experience for all of us. We had the shaft bent, the bearings go out on us, all kinds of things. We always got things back together somehow or other."

I asked Mary if she felt she worked harder than a man doing the same thing. She said,

"Not doing the same thing, no. We usually have to figure out a way... when it comes to doing something with brute strength, we usually have to figure out a way to get it done with the power that's on the boat. Rather than wear ourselves out, there usually is a way. It might take a few minutes longer, and it might make us a little bit slower, just because we can't wrestle 500 pounds onto the boat, and deal with it as fast as the guys. We're pretty much doing the same thing that everyone else is doing. I wouldn't say that I work harder than anybody. People that have done it their whole lives, they can take it easy fishing. They know when the fish are going to be there, they don't have to have their nets out all day long, waiting for two o'clock like I do. They can just toole out there at two o'clock and put their net in, because they know when the fish go by. They know the school-up areas and things like that. The old-timers can take it easy, and still catch twice as many fish as I do. I'll never catch up with these people that were born and raised in this fishing industry. A lot of them were fishing from the time they were little kids; they're going to have twenty years experience on me, no matter what. And that's something I can't get.

"It's one of the factors, you know, I've philosophized about what makes a good skipper... a lot, you know, and that experience is limited. There are quite a few things... the ability to work, the experience, the crew. If you have the best fishermen, that have the same equipment, the same crew, that have done it their whole lives, they don't lose their momentum, and they have a lot of inate intelligence, too. You can't begrudge them their fair share of fish all the time, because they know what they're doing."

Knowing how to be able to live with boat life is a big part of being a successful fisherman.

What is boat life? Said Mary,

"Oh, I think it's just,... it's getting along together... for months, in a tight area, and just having the little things that start bugging you about each other, and you can't escape them. There's no place to go. I'm

hiring independant women-- that's the women who want to go fishing. They usually have their own lives and businesses, just whatever they happen to have going. They may not be used to working for someone else, so it's really hard for them to put themselves in the position of taking orders from me for four months, and giving up their personal lives. We all... especially women, tend to prioritize their personal lives, such as, 'it's more important for me to be with my kid or my boyfriend than to go to work today.' It puts some real pressure on them, which comes out in arguments and bad tempers."

Mary beleives certain traits seperate the skipper from the crew, and some of the traits she thought of came out in this,

"Well hopefully, I know more about fishing! I know the places to go, when the fish are running, and what the tides are doing. I know the operation and the boat, and how to handle it, how to handle whatever situations might arise, I've seen more sets made, and more of the possible problems and how to get out of them, characteristically I'm somewhat of a business womar, which makes me want to put all of this together. That's not all of the differences there are, but that's about it."

I asked Mary what kinds of things make her life more exciting, the kinds of things that really make her day. With a very big smile, she said enthusiastically,

"Oh! A load of fish, of course! To see that thing full!" (she gestured toward the hold.) "That makes me very happy! It's just really exciting to get... to have a good fishing day! It's exhillirating. When you just put the net out and get a couple hundred reds, or a couple of thousand humpies, and the fish hold just starts filling up, everything's clicking and going just right, you just work hard. If you don't have a lot of boats around you, and you end up with a real good payday at the end of the day, and you end up catching more fish than anyone else, you feel great! It's just a wonderful feeling. It's something that there is no different pay scale for being a woman in this occupation. You get what's coming to you for the hard work that you have done.

"I'm dealing with the elements, I like dealing with the elements. I like it when it's a little bit rough, I have something to keep me on my toes. When everything goes really well, you're just really proud. I'm always getting those feelings. I'm proud of my net, you know,... everytime I set that thing, I think, 'Boy! I've built a good net, boy that works good.' It catches fish, and I know the fish are there, and I know we've caught the set."

When Mary said she'd 'built her own net,' I didn't know exactly what she meant, so I asked her.

"Well," she said, "You have a line of corks on it. We have a line that's leaded, a weighted line at the bottom, and you have a big pile of web put in-- you can hang in so much web-- you can hang in a lot so that it hangs real loose, or you can hang it tight, but what vou want to have is a nice, smooth, gentle

hanging net, so that the fish swim around happily in it, and they don't come up against a wall and turn fast, or turn the other way and get out. If it's hung wrong, the lead line could roll up in the net, and then you'd have a very big mess to deal with. Mainly it's just a matter of hanging good knots so they don't slip, and hanging in the right amount of web so that you don't have so much web that you're burying it, and it ends up completely blocked."

I wondered how well Mary was accepted by the men when she first started fishing with an all woman crew. She said,

"Well, I'm sure they just laughed at us quite a bit at first. We had one of the littlest boats in the fleet, a little funky boat, all painted up, no five gallons of water, and no toilet facility, and it was real slow. The men knew I'd never run a boat before, and I'm sure people didn't take us very seriously. I know for a fact that some people... well, I'd come into a place where I'd never fished before, and never fished around other people, and I'm sure they were thinking, 'Oh, well, let her go and take her turn, we'll just set behind her and catch the fish she misses.' But we didn't lose them all!"

But once people got used to an all woman crew and a woman skipper, they took on respect for this tough, determined, red-headed lady.

"Yeah, I think whether I deserve it or not, I've gotten the respect of most people. It's been real nice to have earned that. Sure, some people don't like me, some people can't handle me being out there, and never will be able to handle it, but they aren't people I know very well, either. My friends treat me as an equal when we're all out there vying for fish."

Last year when Mary and her crew were going across the Shelikof, they had a pretty scary little accident.

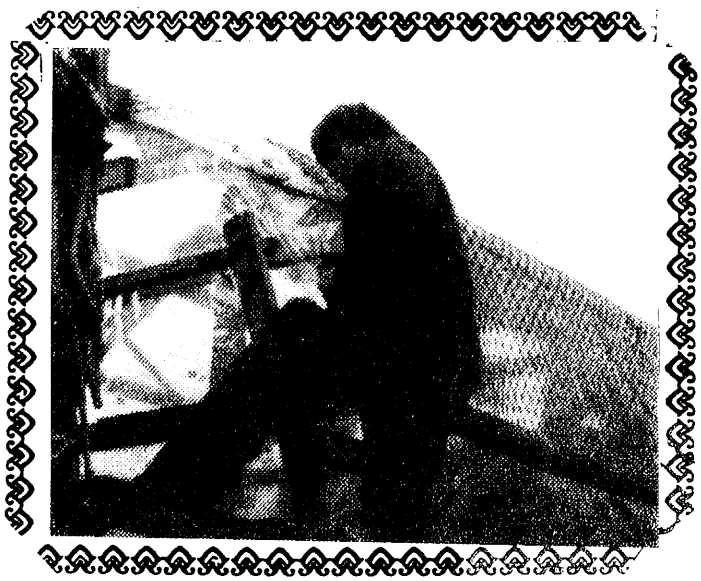
"We were working in a combine with three other boats, going to a herring opening. As we were leaving the south end of the island and going across the Shelikoff, the plane had spotted some herring, and our opening was from noon to noon. We had left that evening, and in the morning we were coming into this bay, where there were two other boats about three miles off shore. About the same time they were passing us, I hit a log. It was daylight,... I shouldn't have hit it. It wasn't a very big log... I didn't even look down in the fish hole or the bilge to see if we were leaking or anything. So I just kept going, and the airplane pilot, (spotter pilot) was saying, 'how long is it going to be before you guys get here?' He had one boat in ahead that was fishing already. We weren't going very fast, and the other boats were passing us up, and when we got in the bay, the pilot said, 'how long is it going to take you guys to get the skiff off and ready?' So I said I'd do it while I was running then I'd drop the skiff in. So, I did that. and after I got the skiff in the water, I had to winch it up tight against the boat-- a real tight line-- <u>really</u> tight against the boat, so it doesn't bang around back there. I went to turn the hydraulics on to winch the skiff up, and there weren't any hydraulics. It would only barely pull it up, so naturally I thought, 'Something's wrong!'

But then, I was used to there being something wrong with the hydraulics. Earlier I had gone ahead and put my seine out, gotten around the fish and pursed up, so then I had the fish. I had gone ahead and let them set me-- we set around the fish and put the two ends of the net together. Well, there were still no hydraulics. It wouldn't even turn the winch. Then just about that time the wind blew up on shore. It was about a forty-mile an hour wind, well, we were right in close to the shore, and it was shallow and reefy. I realized I wasn't going to be able to get those fish in.

"I looked down to see what was wrong with the hydraulics, and they were then under water. The whole end of the engine was down in the water, which was just up to the top of the battery.

"There was eighteen inches of water in the boat, and the hydraulics ran my bilge pump, so there wasn't any way that I could really get the water out. I was real worried about the electrical system, because the water was splashing on the battery,... I just wanted to shut everything off. So rather than trying to use the radio to tell people what was going on or anything, I did just shut everything down. I got my electric pump and hooked it up, and pumped enough water out to run the batteries. We hung a hose out the window and pumped the rest of the water out. I let go of the net completely, and anchored, so we wouldn't drag onto the beach.

"At that point you're just down there thinking, 'there must be a better way to make a living! Maybe I could get a job as a housewife!' But we got the water out, tightened up the hydraulics, and went back and picked up our net. It wasn't so bad, really. Everyone else had let go of their nets, too, because it was blowing so bad. I finally guessed it must have been the log, because it was the only thing I had hit on that trip. It was a bit of a scrape to get into, you can bet I check everything out, now! It was awfully exciting!"



Karen Lee, one of Mary's crew members, climbs up the ladder to work on the Renaissance while it's dry-docked.

Story by: Cinthia M. Gibbens
Photos by: Cinthia M. Gibbens and Chris Swanson

Neil and June Sargent

"If You Want to Raise Your Children Someplace, I Think it's More Like Home"

June Sargent

Where the Baranof Museum city park now spreads its green lawns for summer picnickers, the Sargent family home once sat. The Sargent family goes back to Russian times here on Kodiak when Fredrick Sargent first came to Kodiak as a trader. I talked to Neil and June last September upon the recommendation of Eunice Neseth.

ANCESTRY

"My father's mother was Mary Larionoff from Kaguyak (which was wiped out in 1964 during the tidal wave), and my father's father was from New Bedford, Massachusetts.

"He was, you might say, an itinerant trader. He came across the continent twice." The first time "he went as far as Nevada. He was in a gold-mining venture there with a partner. Then he got a message that his first wife was sick or she had died and he went back to Massachusetts.

"He had the urge to go out and get some adventure I guess and he came across the continent a second time. He was a trader between Vancouver and Sitka. He was at Sitka at the time of the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States and he took part in the ceremony of the changing of the flags in 1897."

He came to Kodiak and married Mary. "He became the first customs agent, the first postmaster, and Kodiak's meteorologist--he recorded the weather and tides.

"My mother told me how it was during the eruption of 1912 (Katmai). The ashes fell for about three days. She said that they rang the church bells continually and it helped people to know where they were. Everything was dark." June: "and the wells were filled up so I guess they didn't have any water."

Neil: "She also told me about the flu of 1918 with all the people that were dying. Whole families would die. She said that she and others would go around and tend the sick. There were old remedies that they had handed down to them using roots of different plants. They didn't have anything for the flu, though. She didn't say anything about her getting sick. She had her hands full because she had six kids and she was trying to help other people" as a sort of community health aid.

NEIL'S CHILDHOOD

The house Neil grew up in was built by his father, Fred, sometime before 1895. (The house was torn down during the rehabilitation of Kodiak after the tidal wave.)

"I was born in the house right across from the K.A.N.A. (Kodiak Area Native Association) building, my old family home, May 25, 1920

"There were eleven of us. I'm one of six brothers and five sisters.

"Since we lived close to Erskine's dock, I was down there quite a bit. I liked to play on the piling that they had around there. I guess my dad didn't like me around the dock or he didn't want me falling overboard and floating down the channel, which I usually did. I fell off a lot. But, I knew he didn't like it because Mr. Griffin, the bookkeeper for Erskine, would always come out of his office and chase me away from the dock."

Neil also played some Russian games with his friends: lapta and garatky. "Lapta is a sort of baseball game. It has two bases and we play it with a rubber ball. In order to get the opponent out, you hit him with the ball. So, me being a little bit mean, I'd try to throw it

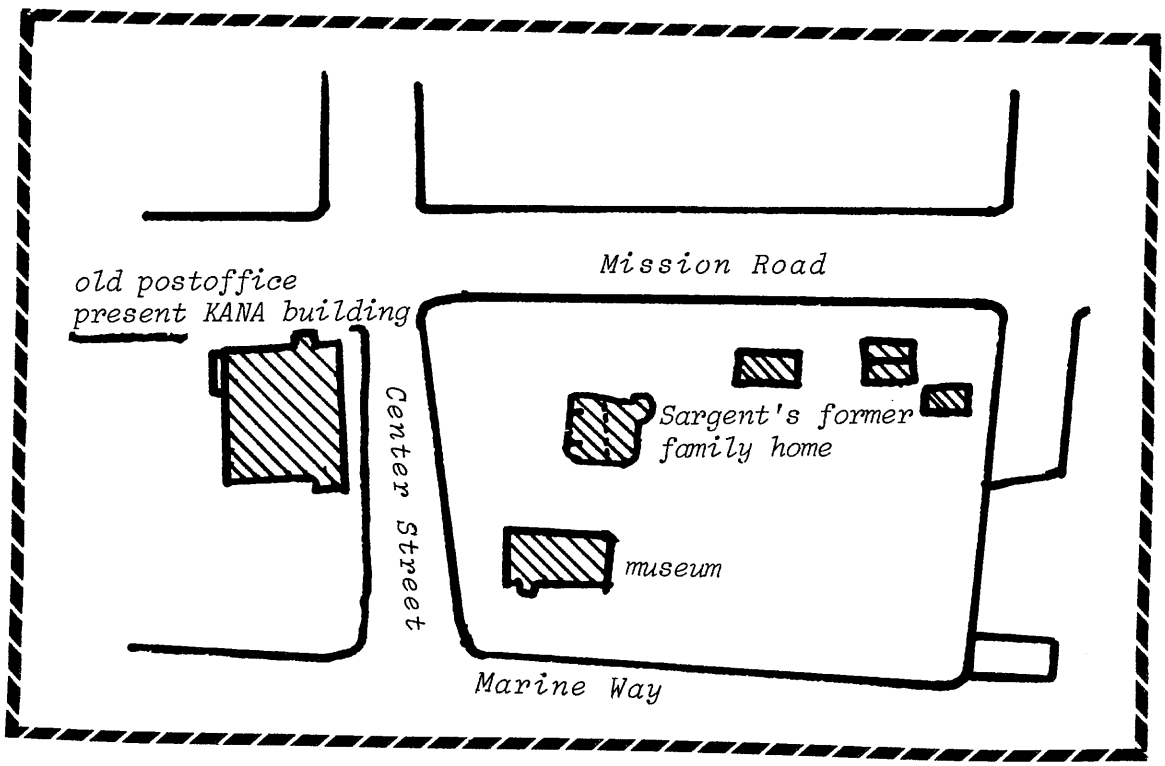
as hard as I could. For garatky, two bases, six feet by two feet were marked out in the ground about 40 feet apart. Then we would set tin cans, usually mild cans, along one of the lines. Then you're supposed to knock them out of the base line with a stick by throwing it from 40 feet away."

Neil's family owned some cattle which they kept in town. These cows seemed to love to follow people on their way to church so the city made the Sargents moved them out of town. "We kept them in the barn in bad weather but otherwise we let them roam. They just bothered the people out there."

Neil and his younger brother would bike out to the point near Shahafka Cove, where they kept the cows, and milk them "in the morning and feed them. In nice weather we let them out to roam, then gathered them up after school and milked them at night.

"Before we got an oil stove in 1935, we burned nothing but wood. So, we also had to gather wood. We beachcombed along the beaches and in the winter, we cut alders and brought them home.

Besides tending to the cows, "we had to feed the chickens, clean the chicken coop--I hated that the worst--clean the barn, get hay in the summer and help plant and weed the gardens. On the point we grew nothing but potatoes. Then where the old home used to be, we grew potatoes, rutabagas, cabbage, turnips, cauliflower, and carrots.



This shows the location of the former Sargent family home.

EARLY WORK TO ARMY

"In the summers, I would go fishing and in 1940, after the fishing season, I went on a trip down to Seattle. When I came back I started working at the Navy base. I wanted to get on as a carpenter's apprentice but they didn't have any openings.

"So, I got a job as a flunky (a waiter), working out at the Navy base mess hall, which seated 1300 in one meal and there were two sittings for lunch and supper. I worked on most of the big buildings, Hanger #3, the powerhouse, cold storage, supply warehouse and I also worked at Fort Greeley where the Nemitz Park housing is.

"At that time there was a lot of soldiers stationed in Kodiak and I worked for a month building nothing but tent frames for the Army and a lot of them were set up in the airport area where the Wien and Alaska air terminals are. That was all kind of a wasteland then. In fact, that one runway wasn't there.

"All the army buildings are torn down now except the one cold storage building that's by the Buskin. I worked on that one, too.

"I also worked on the Transmitter building and the 600, 400, and 300 foot towers and later the 450 foot tower. I worked on about every school building in town, too."

During World War II, "there were blackouts and all the men who worked on the base were assigned a certain area to evacuate to and were given rifles in case of an invasion. We weren't to show any light. If you opened a door to go out, there were MP's all around and you'd often be bawled out for showing light.

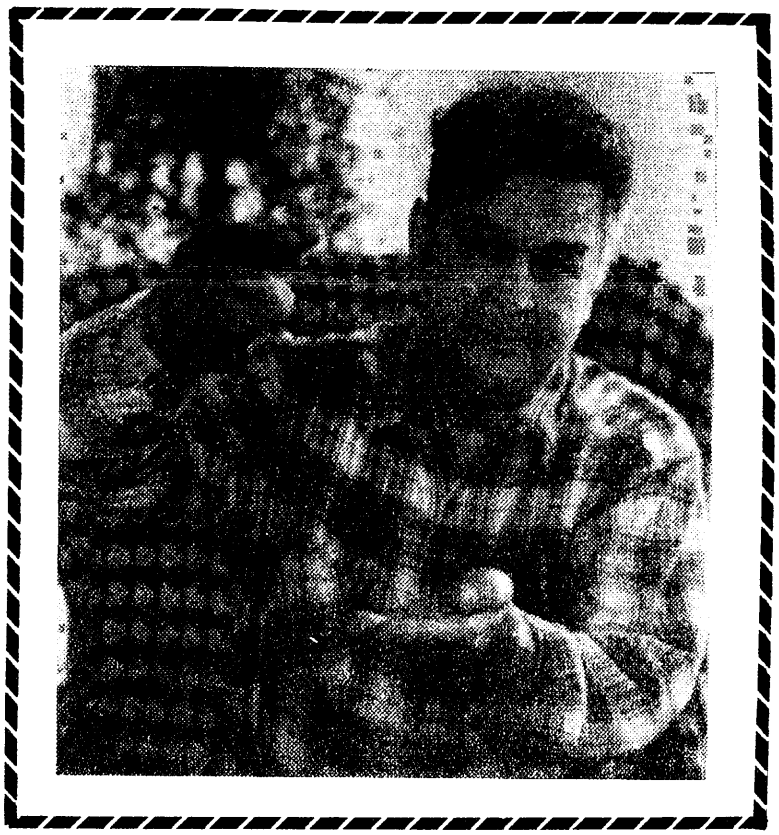
This one time, I was going to a movie and the name of the movie was 'The Invaders'. Right during the movie, there was an air raid alert, so naturally, everybody had to get out of the theater and go to their respective places to meet. We were supposed to get our rifles and go into the hills but, I never did get connected with my outfit so I never did make it. It was the time that the Japanese attacked Dutch Harbor. The Japanese Navy ships were bound for Kodiak but they were attacked by fighters from Cold Bay which is between here and Dutch Harbor. Luckily for us, they turned back. That was the closest they got to Kodiak.

"They were constantly having alerts during those days, and blackouts in the whole town and Navy base were common.

"I worked at the base until the summer of 1942 and then I was drafted in the army and took training in Anchorage. Then we shipped out to Amchitka. I spent two years there in the Army in an engineer outfit.

"When our outfit got there," we found that "the Japanese had already been there. They had staked out the airfield so the Americans just laid out the airfield on the Japanese survey stakes and made an airport there."

There was a problem though. "There was no surface. The only surface there was, was sand. So when the bombers and the fighters took off, it'd



"It'd make great, big furrows about

Y E A

deep."

make great, big furrows about yea deep (gestures with hands). The graders were just constantly going back and forth, smoothing the runway until they got a ship in with some steel matting and put the matting down.

"Amchitka is about 60 miles from Kiska, which is the next island out. The Japanese had that island and had a few thousand troops on it.

"After the United States had the airfield at Amchitka, they made it pretty, uh, unsafe for the Japanese, bombing them constantly.

"Finally during very thick weather, the Japanese loaded their troops up and left.

"I was working in the message center of the batallion so I got all the reports of what was going on. This one report said that two transports were seen outside Kiska. There were two bomb hits made, direct hits, neither bomb went off and the Japanese escaped. During all this time, the U.S. Bombers were bombing the airstrip and everything. They even fixed a 75mm cannon in one of the B26 bombers to fire at the steel doors that the Japanese had built in front of a cave that they dug into the mountain. They'd shoot directly at that steel door but they never could do any damage, I guess. Anyway, towards the last, it was real quiet. The planes going over didn't draw any fire. So they went down close to the runway to test them out, and they saw that the Japanese, instead of filling the bomb craters in the runway, had stretched canvas over them so that if the planes landed, they would wreck.

"They finally did land and our outfit was one that was supposed to be in the second wave if we were needed. All this time I'm getting the G-2 reports and one of the first casualties was this major and a group of men that went up to this headquarters building. The major went inside and the other men stayed outside. The major turned on this radio and killed himself" because the Japanese "had booby-trapped it. But there were no Japanese on the island, they had left.

"Our outfit was one that was building a 10,000 foot runway on Amchitka which was completed and then a gasoline tank farm system (a bunch of gas tanks connected together that pump gas to the runway), and that was all completed. But by the time it was completed, the U.S. had Guam or Iwo Jima, or one of them, that was closer to Japan so it wasn't necessary to use the airfield at Amchitka."

After Neil was discharged from the Army on June 14,1945, he continued his carpentry work by helping to build the Aleutian homes and "almost every school on the Island." As you remember, Neil had started out as a carpenter's apprentice on the Kodiak Naval base prior to his being drafted into the Army.

JUNE'S CHILDHOOD

I've covered Neil's life to about 1946, and what an interesting life he's lead, from falling off the piling and floating down the channel to building an airfield on Amchitka for the War.

It's time to back up to 1925 and find out how June Elf of Washington became June Sargent and landed in Kodiak.

"I was born on Whidbey Island, that's out of Seattle. I lived in Clinton or Columbia Beach, they called it.

"We had a little farm there, just for our own use. We had chickens, cows, and pigs. We had to pick strawberries in the summertime.

"We had a real fun life; real easy-going.

"We raised and picked our own vegetables. My mother canned everything so we were self-sufficient. It was a really nice life.

"When I was about nine, I went to Vancouver, Washington to the blind school there to take a sight-saving class. I'd be home in the summertime but be there in the wintertime to go to school. It was really nice, nothing unusual, just a really nice life. I stayed there until I was about 16 and then my father passed away, so I went home.

"We went swimming every day in the summertime. When they'd cut the hay for the cattle, we'd always have these mounds of haystacks. We had more fun playing in those--Hide-and-Seek. And when they'd pile the hay in the barn, Oh! we'd just have oodles of fun there. We'd hide our apples in there to ripen them and see who could find the most apples.

"Of course, we'd take care of the pigs, the cows, and the chickens. It was a lot of fun.

We'd do "things that didn't cost money, really, because we didn't have much money and we didn't have all the entertainment that kids have today like expensive toys. We just made our own fun. We really had a good time."

I asked June if she thought that spending money for entertainment had an affect on the way children today grow up.

"Kids are more demanding today. They don't have the imagination, but I think it's not their faults, just the difference in society today. Everything is so progressive. It's a different lifestyle altogether. I really think that it does make a change and have an affect on the children growing up."

NEIL AND JUNE TOGETHER IN KODIAK

On December 7, 1952, a newcomer to Kodiak stepped off the plane with her husband, to be welcomed by the drizzly weather that characterizes all Kodiak winters.

After leaving the airport, she recalls: "We came in on that little base road, and then, we had to stop the car because there were rocks falling down the mountain. I thought, 'Oh my goodness! What am I getting into?'"

Thus began the wedded life of Neil and June Sargent.

Neil had met two of June's brothers when they came up for work during the building of the Navy base.

"He was taking his mother (who was visiting in California), up to Seattle to get on the steamer to come back to Alaska.

"After he had her settled, he came with my brother and that's when I met Neil. That was 1946. I'd seen him several times off and on until 1952 and then we were married (in Edmonds, Washington), and came to Alaska, to this beautiful place of ice and snow.

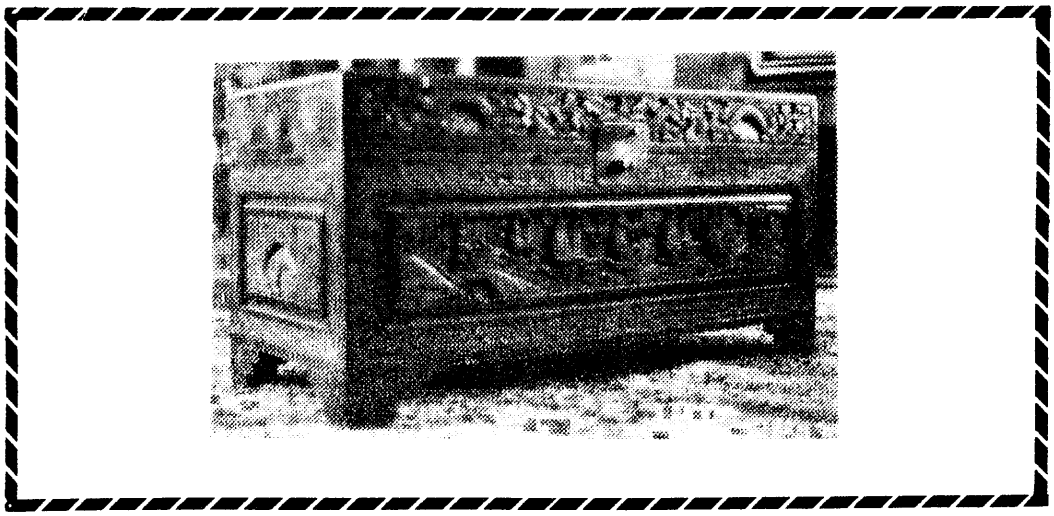
TIDAL WAVE

Kodiak is 'home' to Neil and June and what an adventuresome home it turned out to be. The earthquake and tidal wave of 1964 played an exciting part in this.

June relates her story: "We went down there (to Neil's old family home) and then they had the alert that we should evacuate that area because another wave was expected. So we went up to the school and spent that night there. The following day, they were expecting the second big wave that never materialized. It never did come but we had to get back out of that area, again, we went up to the school. After that we stayed at the 'Big' house. We used to call it the 'Big' house, it was Neil's former family home. We stayed there for a couple months."

Neil: "That evening after we got settled, I went with one of our boys out to where our house was. It was still there but it had floated up and was turned around a quarter turn and there was sand all over the floors. When we got there, the water was receded and so Wayne picked up his guns and I forget what else. We had borrowed my brother's T.V., so I thought I'd better take that along and I had a couple time books because I had a couple carpentry jobs going. I took those and my brother's T.V. and then I looked out and the water had receded <u>way</u> out and it looked like it was trying to come in. I told Wayne we'd <u>better</u> get out of there, so we took off. That was about nine o'clock. I came back two hours later and the house was gone.

"My brother and I went out that Monday after the tidal wave in the boat he was fishing on. We went out and finally found the house. It was about five miles north of Long Island, just the roof was showing. I could see one of the dressers throught this window and I was reaching after that. I got one drawer and while I was doing that, this chest came floating into view. It had floated clean through a hallway that curved around in an 'S' curve, and came to that window. I don't know how it did it but we got a hold of that and saved it. That was all that was saved.



This chest was all that was saved from the Sargent's house.

"The first thing we needed was toothbrushes and there were six kids at home. I just had a few cents left from a ten dollar bill for the toothbrushes and toothpaste. That was the first thing we needed.

"Afterwards, people were really generous. There were van-loads of clothes that came in and were distributed to all the victims."

June: "There was the Rhoades Foundation someplace out of Seattle and they sent us a lot of clothes and some household items. Of course, a lot of things we couldn't use, but we spread it around to friends that we knew could use them. People were really helpful and the Salvation Army was here at that time and they helped a lot of people. I don't know who had those clothes and some food at the Armory. We went up there and got some bedding and things."

Neil: "The Red Cross brought us a few items, a refrigerator and a couch.

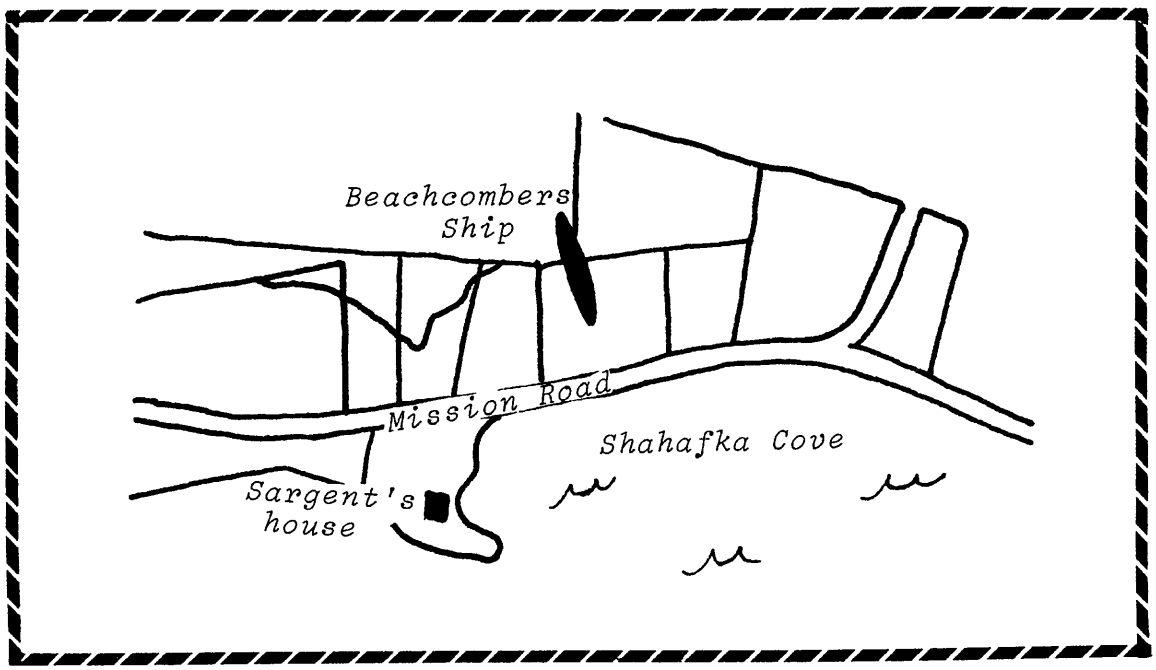
June: "We had just bought a brand-new washing machine from Sears and Roebuck just about a day before the tidal wave. I'd never even put any water in it. We lost that of course, so when I went and told them about it, they gave us another washing machine. That was really nice.

"It is an experience to go through, all right. I hope I never go through another one!

"We had six children and we had to start without any clothes or any household belongings or anything else. It's really something to gather up all those things just from scratch.

"The Small Business Administration gave us a loan to buy this lot and build this house. They called them disaster loans. They declared Kodiak a disaster area, and lent out low interest loans to disaster victims. They were mainly for businesses but since we lost the home we had, we were qualified to get that loan. That was a really big help."

Kodiak "was really booming after the tidal wave. There were a lot of crabs to be caught and all the construction work. Urban Renewal came in and they did a lot of property buying, that's what happened to Neil's family home and a lot of other places in the downtown area. Then they did a lot of business building and rearranged the downtown practically."



This shows the location of the Sargent's home on the Point

NEIL AND JUNE--THE BEGINNING YEARS

Kodiak changed a lot after the tidal wave because of the disruption it caused to the land and people. For most, this was a very frightening experience, comparible to June's first attempts at adjusting to Kodiak life.

"That was a really traumatic thing when we came out of that airport. I didn't know there was these terrible winds and ice and blizzards.

"It was different, all right, then what I was used to. I'd never lived anyplace where they had this much snow and in those days there used to be a lot of snow, ice, and winds. I never thought I'd get, well I still haven't got used to that wind.

"We came to Neil's mother's home and she had that big pot of pea soup on and fresh bread and smoked salmon and, oh! that was so good. It was so cozy and warm after being in that blizzard.

"All the meat you bought in the store was frozen and they didn't have any fresh meat. The milk was frozen and the prices compared to what I was used to in Seattle were really extravagant. The first time Neil took me to the store, he dropped me off and said 'You do the shopping and I'll be back to pick you up.' I went in there and everything cost so much, I didn't buy anything.

"I'd never seen dried apples in my life before because I was raised where we had a big farm and all kinds of apple and fruit trees. So, one time, I bought these dried apples, and I didn't know you had to put them in water or do something with them. I just put them in the pie--dry. That pie just swelled up like a mountain and these little shriveled up things were inside."

Since June had never cooked on an oil stove before, she had to get used to that also.

"You really had to get used to cooking differently.

"I liked it here except I was homesick for the first couple years because all my family was down there. But after that, it seemed like this is where I belonged and Seattle didn't mean that much to me anymore except to visit my family. I'd never care to live there again. There's too much hassle. Everybody's in too big of a rush. I like this easy going pace up here and I have a lot of friends here. If you want to raise your children someplace, I think it's more like home."

Story and Photos:
DeLynn Dooley
Maps:
Patrick Dooley

"She Took a Gun and Shot Him"

Helen and Bill Lee

"Everything in the world happened in that cafeteria," at the newly-opened civil service club, Helen remembered.

"There was one night where one of the fellows, who worked with Marion Pulver, my first husband, must have gone completely nuts, and went in there with a gun."

Bill said, "Everyone in the room was paralyzed. That guy was pointing that great big gun around, and here comes this little gal from the office. She came up to him and said, 'Give me that gun', and he handed her the gun. Nobody got killed on that one."

"It was a wild place when we first came up here." Helen said.

"I came to Kodiak in July 1949 with my husband Marion Pulver. We had a little house in town, I think we paid $75 a month for the rent on the house We lived in town about a year, and then we moved to the base and lived in Bell's Flats. We lived in quonset huts and paid $33 a month, for rent, oil, electricity--$33 a month!

"Marion worked as a rigger. He went out with Hank Finley and set the crab pots, and on their way back something happened. They found their boat down here, but they didn't find their bodies until 6 months later, in October.

Meanwhile, "Bernice (Hank's wife) and I couldn't collect the insurance,"

Because the bodies hadn't been found, they couldn't declare them dead for seven years, and during that time, they couldn't take money out of their bank accounts, or sell anything in their husbands' names.

"People all over the base took up a collection. One day they gave us $2000 apiece. You just hated to take it. That's the day that you never can return.

"So that was our 'put away' because we went to work by the time that we'd gotten it. All I'd ever done before was teach school, but the public works commander said, 'We'll get you a job', and I said, 'I don't type--I haven't done any office work!' 'Well, we'll teach you to type. You just learn to type and we'll give you a job.' I didn't even know how to put a sheet of paper in the typewriter, but that's the way it was in those days."

"Everybody helped everybody." Bill added.

"And people are that way yet today," Helen said. "But not as much, because you're not as close, people today, as they used to be."

"That's when Helen and I first really met, and after another year we got married." Bill said.

Bill characterized himself as a cross between a mechanic, a prize fighter, and a musician.

He explained, "If the job didn't quite suit me, I'd always fall back on music. Actually I made more money in music than I ever did on a job."

"He started playing in a band when he was 15," Helen mentioned.

"Them were the days!" Bill exclaimed. "Dens of iniquities, whore houses, you name it. Anyway, that all changed after I came up here and got married."

"I settled him down." Helen said.

"Sure did!" Bill laughed.

"I first came up here to work as a marine diesel mechanic, and I had to wait awhile for that job, but in the meantime, they'd just opened the new civil service club."

"What was funny was Bill came up here to get away from music, and the day he got up here was the opening of the new civil service club, and they had to have a band on this special occasion." Helen reviewed.

Bill continued, "That night I borrowed a tenor saxophone from the Navy band, and I ended up on the bandstand."

"Playing the night of the opening," Helen added.

When I asked Bill what were some interesting things that happened to him while playing in bands he said, "Oh brother, I don't know. I could write a book, there were so many interesting things.

"For instance, the one thing we were always short of was a good piano player. Now these were small bands, in larger bands they don't have that problem. When you've got 3 or 4 guys on the bandstand, you have to produce. If you get a lazy musician up there or somebody who doesn't know his job--with me playing the horn--it worked the hell outta me. So, I always tried to have a good piano man. If worst comes to worst me and that piano man could carry the job, you know. Drummers--we had a lot of them.

"I remember once over at the Chief's Club. All I had was a bass player and myself. And the place was packed--there were several hundred people there--it was just packed. I took a look at that crowd and I said to myself, 'Oh, brother, how am I gonna do this?' I made a frantic announcement over the microphone--I said, 'Is there a piano player in the house?', and that's when I first met Chief Martin.

"A bunch of his buddies came pushing him up to the bandstand and he said, 'Aww, no...'--He was a real bashful guy--'I'm just chording the key of C' 'That's good enough for me--get up here!' And we went through that whole program that night. He played for me a couple of years. He's a real nice guy.

"We'd alternate: we'd play the Officer's Club, the Civil Service Club, the Chief's Club, the Marine's Club--we played them all. We had the best band on base--naturally!"

Bill had a full schedule with working and playing in bands. He said, "I could never do it now. It was a grind at that time."

Helen remarked, "He played till 10 o'clock when they closed on base, and then came into town and played at the Beachcomber's. Through the week he'd play at the Mecca, and the Casino, "

"Yes, there's a lot of really happy memories there, and a lot of scary ones, too." Bill concluded.

Helen resumed telling me about the shootings in Kodiak. She said, "I remember a fellow that worked at fish and wildlife, whose wife had somehow decided that he was being unfaithful or untrue to her or something. She looked in a window and saw him with some woman, but although he was just working with her, she took a gun and shot him."

"Oh, we had a lot of fun in those days!" Bill exclaimed.

"They had a big party at the old Elk's club and two fellas got into an argument. One went home and got a gun and came back." Helen said.

"They were good friends, too--real good friends." Bill said.

"And the other man got the gun away from him, but was shot in the process, but he didn't get killed." Bill finished.

Helen said, "And there was another shooting when two guys got in a big argument at the old Tony's. The guy went home and got a gun, and by this time the other fella had gone to the Breakers. He came down to the Breakers and just shot him dead. They sent him to prison for two years."

Bill puzzled, "It was a lot easier on you if you killed somebody than it was if you robbed somebody. Oh, that's true. They'd get a longer sentence for robbing than they would for killing. It was weird."

Helen reflected, "You had a lot of murderers, but you didn't have robberies. You never thought of locking your doors, because everybody knew everybody."

Bill said, "It used to be, quite often as you'd be driving out towards Chiniak or Pasagshak and then you'd just stop--for whatever reason. Every car that came by would stop to see if they could help you. But that all changed. There was a taxi driver who was almost murdered and then people just didn't stop anymore. It wasn't real bad until the ferry came in.

Helen and Bill explained that the Kodiak road system was nothing like it is today. In fact, the base-town road was further up on the side of Pillar Mountain than it is today. Bill commented, "Every spring when it would start to thaw, every once in awhile you'd be driving into town and boy, a boulder weighing a ton or better would land right on the road. Every car up here was dented because of falling rocks. I'll never forget the first time I brought a friend of mine, Marty Carlson, into town. These rocks started falling, and he was sitting on the passenger's side and there was a dropoff--right, straight down several hundred feet. Meanwhile, these rocks were tumbling across the road, and poor old Marty was paralyzed--he said he'd get out and walk and I said, 'hell no, let's get out of here!!'"

Helen and Bill were in Kodiak during the 1964 earthquake and tidal wave. Bill said, "We had just gotten a shipment from the states--at that time two or three families would go in together and get a whole crib of stuff from the states. We could get it cheaper that way.

"We had all kinds of canned food and soup, you name it, we had it, and also quite a bit of booze.

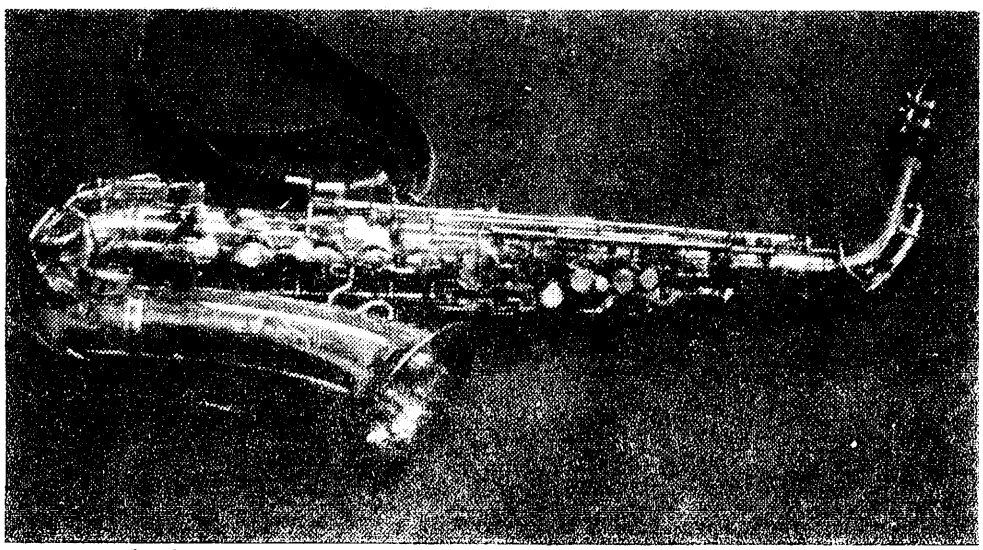
"The morning after the earthquake was cold. These people came, and this was a good vantage point to look out and see what they had lost, out in Potatopatch Lake. Some of them just had the clothes on their back, some of them were in bathrobes, and we all had soup and booze. Everybody was cheerful. There were no sad faces. That was the wonderful part about it. It must have hurt, though.

Helen told about a friend of hers who was trying to find her husband. "At 11 o'clock, which was not a safe time, she decided everything was over, and she drove back home to the base. She got out there and they stopped her. They said nobody's on the base, everybody's up at the Chief's Club. She said, 'I've got to go check him.' When she got home he was in the house doing his leather tanning, and he had no idea anything had happened!"

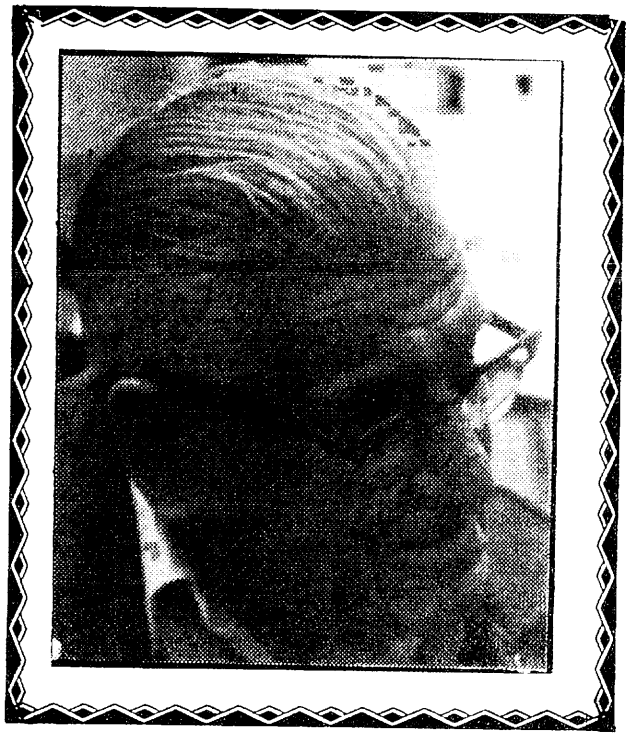
Bill remarked, "One of the humorous things that happened was the mayor's brother was sort of the local drinking man. And he was asleep on the boat, during the tidal wave. That boat washed out to sea and eventually it washed back in again."

Helen finished, "The next morning at 9 o'clock he came in saying, 'What happened!??' !"

Bill worked until 1969 as a heavy equipment mechanic, then worked in town for 8 years, and retired from his music career at about the same time. After leaving her jobs on base, Helen worked for 10 years at the Kodiak welding works, and just recently retired from 8 years of service for the Borough. They are now enjoying their retirement in Kodiak. They have two sons, Charlie and George, and one daughter, Candy.



Story and Photos: Matthew Weeks



JACK OF ALL TRADES

Tuck Wheeldon

At the beginning of the school year, 1983-84, I interviewed Tuck Wheeldon. My first recording of him was a total failure. I dutifully went back and told him of my flop, facing my embarassment head on. I didn't realize that he would understand completely. So he agreed for another round of tape and camera.

This time around I made sure the tape was clear and the recorder worked. I wanted to get all the good facts on tape.

But the tape recorder deceived me and couldn't be heard, although there was a faint sound from the audio.

Frustrated with myself (and the recorder), I went to work on my other article. Luckily that one worked out.

As I tried to keep myself busy, I couldn't help remembering my mistakes with Tuck's several interviews. He's such a nice man and I'd hate to let him down. I didn't want him thinking I was some vicious teenager with no responsibilities. So without the tapes and cameras I took notes on my memories of everything he'd told me.

Tuck was born in Waynesberg, Kentucky. He got the nickname "Tuck" from his home state, Ken"tuck"y.

He worked hard for his family.

Growing up on a farm, he worked for a railroad crew by hauling water for them. He earned approximately a quarter a day from his job.

Breaking away from home at eighteen he travelled across the country by means of 'side door pullman'. Just like in the movies, he'd hop into a boxcar and hope they wouldn't kick him off.

He had remarkable experiences working on the Grand Couley Dam.

It was dangerous work. He described an incident while the crew was pouring concrete.

There was a father's son pouring in the concrete, while the father was working the crane. Somehow the son got in the way of the crane and was knocked in the concrete and he died. I was horrified. It was a terrible accident. And Tuck worked many jobs on dams, mostly in the Washington area.

Tuck is a man who would be called a jack-of-all-trades. He got into welding, among his other professions, and became excellent in this field. He was a fast learner. Because of his wit, quick thinking, and common sense, he was good at what he did. Men he worked for, in the past, would admire these qualities about him.

He moved to Kodiak. During WWII he worked out on base. Every night Tuck would call lights out, in case of an air raid. Then, remembering when he went to his house, his wife had all the lights on.

He owned half a partnership with another man at Kodiak Welding, after the war. Though, it was wiped out after the tidal wave, Tuck kept up his business and moved to another location. Welding was important for Kodiak. Especially for fishing vessels. They needed an excellent quality of welding to ensure their safety at sea. And Tuck was the man to ensure them of that.

So Tuck, though I didn't mention everything you told me at our interviews, I hope I hit all the highlights.

Story by: Paula Skog

"We Sewed Something Like 10,000 Slippers In One Year"

"When I lived in Anchorage, I worked for Jonas Brothers Taxidermy Shop. After three years, my wife and I started our own fur sewing business. we did slippers, Eskimo yo-yo's, fur hats, fur coats, etc. We did that for about two years."

Sound interesting? Well that is just what Pat Sullivan is. While I was on Raspberry Island this summer, I had a chance to meet Pat. Then when I joined the Elwani class, at Kodiak High School, and they told me to do an interview, I immediatly thought of him. I had a good time talking to him, I found out alot about bush life. I hope that you have as much fun reading about him as I did writing about him.

Pat was born, "in North Dakota in 1932." But, "after living on all that flat land, and suffering through all that cold and all that heat," he, "had to get away from there and come to some place that had decent weather and trees and mountains and oceans."

Pat and his wife first came to Kodiak when they, "took a vacation," from Anchorage, "and came to Onion Bay on Raspberry Island.

"We liked the country, and we liked the ocean, and we decided that we were gonna try to move to Raspberry Island. Then we found out that Wakefield Fisheries had a crab processing plant in Raspberry Straits. I called them and got a job working for Wakefield Fisheries.

"About two months later my wife came down and we moved to where we now live, Port Vita. I worked," at Port Vita, "as a watchman while I still worked for Wakefield Fisheries.

"It was interesting work. I worked on a construction crew, we were at the time building.

"Port Wakefield had planned to build a new cannery," in Raspberry Straits. Because, "after the earthquake and the tidal wave, that part of the island had sunk four feet. So their processing plant was flooded at high-tide. They had to move their operation onto two factory ships. They would load one with crab, send it to Seattle, then send the other one up. They kept working king crab at that time on the two factory ships. After that, they had planned to build their new cannery, but someplace along the line they got involved in moving to Port Lions and building it there, which they did. And when they did, I moved into Kodiak and no longer worked at Port Wakefield.

But while I was there, I rebuilt bridges, power lines, a floating dock, and things in preparation for the cannery that they had planned to build. When they changed their minds, my job was over, so I moved into Kodiak."

Four of Pat's children went to school at Port Wakefield, and they would walk a mile and a quarter to school and back. "So my children can actually say, when their children are growing up, that they walked a mile to school everyday and back again. It was quite a joy and a trip everyday. We would sing along the trail and have alot of fun.

"When we moved after we left Port Wakefield, I came to town and worked for Kodiak Electric Association for nine years. During that time I got a chance to buy Port Vita and then we moved back out there. Two of my children were still in grade school and high school, and they took correspondence courses at that time. The courses were nice, everything they needed they got from the school district. It is kind of hard to keep your nose to the grind stone when you are out there, but they did quite well, and my youngest daughter, Kathy, finished her last two years of school at Kodiak High School."

As Pat explains, bush life isn't really roughing it.

"We try to produce as much of our own things as we can. We can our own food; we do alot of hunting, fishing, and preserving our game, fish, and our vegetables. And we have some goats. We can make cheese if we want cheese. We have alot of things out there that you can buy in the supermarket, but ours are all fresh and we like it. What we don't have, we do without. I miss television once in a while, the sport things etc. But we get to town once or twice a year, when our basic supplies get low. We stay in for two or three days and we get tired of it. I don't really miss anything in town, especially the traffic. I miss friends of ours, people that we have known most of our lives, but, they come and visit us once and a while so we do get to see them. When we do need to get to town, or call into town, we can call on our different radios. We don't have on automobile cause there are no roads on Raspberry. If we want to get someplace, we walk or go by boat or airplane. We don't have an airplane but sometimes we charter one to fly us around."

Pat has an interesting comparison of bush and city life. But I'll let him explain it to you.

"Kodiak is a city with all its city conveniences. We have some of its conveniences. We have our own little power system, (a windmill). We have our own water and sewer systems. We have things that are in the city. But in the city, if you have these things, you call somebody up when something goes wrong and they come and fix it. On Raspberry, though, when something goes wrong, I fix it. We do have a few radios, a V.H.F., a C.B., and an A.M. radio. We get our news and weather from those things. We can talk into town on them too."

Pat Sullivan

Pat told me about one of the exciting things on Raspberry, and a good reason why some people just can't handle bush life.

"Well, the things we call exciting, other people probably don't. We have bears visit us once in a while and that gets pretty exciting. You would think that they would bother us but they have never eaten any of our animals or bothered us, but they are pretty exciting when they come around.

"Alot of people think they can live out in the bush like that, but after spending a month or two out there they find out that it is a very slow life style, not enough activity or action for them. They get pretty antsy and miss their television and movies and things like that. My wife and I, we, don't miss those things anymore.

"I don't have any bad things I could say about it. The worst thing would probably be the weather in the winter time, when the wind will blow 100 m.p.h. And the house starts to shake. That gets a little bit hairy but, other than that, we don't have anything that really bothers us. We enjoy the lifestyle, the gardening, hunting and fishing. And we enjoy the remoteness of the place."

article by; Denise Sallee

"You Could Go Out Hunting"

(Martha Kahutak)

At the sight of Martha Kahutak (Ka-who-tok) I was instantly relaxed. Her face projects a warmth that seems to be illuminated through her brown eyes. Martha's voice is both soft and friendly as she carefully chooses her words with a sensitivity that I found to be one of her strongest characteristics. She is an elderly woman and is very proud of her Native heritage. I was interested in the village life because I enjoyed learning about the simplicity and freedom of Old Harbor. Martha obviously loved the village life and wanted to share the beauty of it with me. She seemed delighted to tell me of life in the village. First of all, I asked her where she was born.

"I was born in St. Michael's. When I was in my teens I was there. When I was five I had tuberculosis and they sent me to Seward Sanitarium. From there, they moved me to Anchorage and I went home when I was around my teens, back to St. Michael's. I went to school there. They were short of nurses and a whole bunch of us went to Tacoma, Washington, for nurses training. I didn't pass. I failed the part for heart surgery, but then I passed for nurses aide, so I worked in Anchorage and Bethel, all over. That's where I met my husband at the hospital. That's how I went to Old Harbor.

"I got married there by the judge and then we married again in the church.

"When I was growing up, I had to carry water from the well. That's when we had no running water. And I had to go get wood, with my father, for cooking. Things like that.

"Then when we were older, like six or five, my mother and grandmother teach me how to sew with skins and make baskets."

"What about your schooling?"

"I had hard time going to school 'cause I had to help with the house. Like sewing, so we could buy our clothes. I grew up without a lot of things I wanted. I didn't mind 'cause I knew my parents really loved me, so that's all I really needed."

I thought her parents must have been wonderful people to have such a kind and sensitive daughter. I asked her to tell me more about what they were like. She smiles gladly as she tells me.

"They were real good. I think they're the most wonderful persons. They were very good Christians. I never see them drink or smoke or fight. They're both gone now and I miss them very much. Both of them loved us all and they told us what's right and wrong. We were very close. Even my step sisters and step brothers.

"I'm next to the oldest. There's sixteen of us, with my step brothers and sisters. My father was married before.

"My father use to travel a lot and never come home for a long time. He use to be on one of those big ships, you know. He was a cook.

"My mother was kind of strict, you know. She didn't want me to talk to strangers or stay out. Things like that. But she teaches me how to sew and basket weaving, so I never have time to go out.

"We had to do a lot of skin sewing, like basket weaving, to get groceries and materials to make clothes."

"What kind of things did you and your friends do together when you were a young girl?" I wondered.

"My friends would come over and learn to sew skins and weave baskets. That was the past time.

"My grandmother use to make a football out of a skin, like reindeer skin, or skates or skis. My brothers would make me a skis with those barrels. You know, those big wooden barrels and you just put a skin across and just nail them down.

"I use to like baseball, but when I'm weaving I want to work on it 'till I'm done with it. I like to sew, too, but mostly hunting. I like to go hunting."

She laughs as she says, "My sisters call me a tomboy 'cause I like to hunt. I go hunting with my father or grandpa. We hunt rabbits, foxes, minks, and seals."

"I use to go hunting in Old Harbor. Or go for long hikes and go out for rabbit hunting or ptarmigan hunting. Go up in the hill. That's where the ptarmigans are."

"What did you like about the village life?"

"Oh, you could go out hunting or you could go out and spear fish. I go deer hunting and rabbit and duck hunting. Things like that. And you could go out for clams. You know, you can't do that here in the city.

"I was raised mostly on native foods like wild greens from the grounds. Like in springtime we go pick pussy willows when they first have leaves. We ate that and soak it in vinegar oil, just like salad. We eat fish, like seal meant, sea lion, or deer. Sometimes we eat bear. Mostly men eat that. I guess they were kind of superstitious before. The women couldn't eat no bear or they'll be mean or something like that."

Now she talks about the village in general.

"Yes, it's peaceful and you could go out clam digging, you know. You could go out hunting for native foods like sea life. Or you could spear fish, smoke salmon, dry fish, or salt salmon. I like berries, too. We get seal and tan them ourselves and we make good jacket out of this. A lot of htings you could make. Even slippers.

"They had some log houses. There's a lot of rain by our house before the tidal wave. We use to have, you know, just lumpy roads.

"There was a landing field, but it wasn't fixed or anything. We use to go, (before the tidal wave), we use to pick blackberries and cranberries and now they fixed it so you have to go kind of far to go berrypicking.

"There's about three hundred people, and three hundred houses. But they're bringing more in. It's growing pretty big. Before, they only had one store. Now they have two stores and a lot of different things. They put a satellite in T.V. and telephones.

"It's really peaceful. Nobody bothers you. If someone gets something, they share it. But here, nothing's like that. It's kind of hard. You gotta have a lot of money to live in the city."

I asked her to describe what Old Harbor looks like.

"The village is right by the ocean. There's a hill and then there's a flat place there. That's where we live. There's some mountains across and little islands in the back. It's beautiful.

"Sometimes I get homesick for my cousins or wondering if they're still with us on this earth."

I detected a note of sadness in her voice as she said,

"People were more kinder then. They were sharing things together. It's like the kids are smarter, too, than before. When we went to school, we never use to travel to villages.

"Seems like they don't do that no more. Life is changing. They don't share much anymore in St. Michael's and Old Harbor."

Story and photos: Maryrose Castillo

Tom Frost: Recollection of his Past Years in Kodiak

Tom Frost

"I was born on Afognak, Alaska, in 1920. My earliest memory was the hard times in the south '48, the depression. It didn't effect our area here because we were living off the land, so to speak. Everyone had cows of their own that they could use for beef. We had salmon, our own gardens, and berries. All that we had to purchase were the staple foods such as flour, sugar, and things of that nature."

Before I went to do my interview of Mr. Frost, I knew nothing about him. But when I knocked on his door, He greeted me with a smiling face. He took my jacket as I set up for the interview. We talked for about an hour, and I found him to be pleasant and a very interesting person.

"We fished during the summer months and trapped furs during the winter. Families grew their own potatoes, rutabagas, And carrots for winter use. I worked in the canneries, doing seasonal work, and during the winter I helped my dad on his trap line. We went hunting for ducks for our table and we salted salmon for eating purposes. Everyone used wood stoves during those days and we had to have lots of wood for cooking and heating. We had to help in the house, cleaning and washing dishes, cooking, baking bread and cookies, carrying water, chopping wood, etc...."

Besides those chores, Tom had to babysit his brothers and sisters. Large families were common in the 1920's and '30's and Tom had 9 brothers and sisters in his household.

"We helped take care of one another. We had our arguments and battles, but most of the time we got along fine and enjoyed one another.

Tom Frost and his wife, Johanna

"There was a high school in the city of Kodiak, but not too many people that lived on Afognak took advantage of the school there. We moved to Kodiak in 1937, so my brothers and sisters were able to take advantage of the high school here. We fished commercially and worked in the canneries during the summer to earn a living. During the winter, I worked in town delivering groceries for the grocery store."

Every Saturday, Sunday and holiday, their family went to church.

He told me, "When we were growing up, all of us had to go to the Russian Orthodox Church on Afognak. Church was a must for our family and I think it was a very good idea because it helps a person become a better citizen.

"I was able to live with my parents, after I married, if I paid my fair share of expenses, as we couldn't sponge off my folks. My dad was real strict, so as long as we paid our room and board, we were able to stay with them, which I think it's the way it should be."

Tom told me earlier that he wanted to talk about the war, so I asked him what it was like here during the war.

"After World War II erupted, the Alaska Territorial Guard was formed. They were very active during the War. We participated in air raids and alerts. Everything had to be blacked out. We had infantry personnel from Fort Greely give us instructions on how to handle rifles and do close order drill and they issued us gas masks and ammo in case any emergencies should come up.

"I remember, on December 7th, it was my sister's birthday and we were having a nice dinner at home. We were listening to the radio, and out comes the word that Japan had just bombed Pearl Harbor. I can't remember what time of day it was, but we got the news immediately. The Kodiak Daily Mirror put out a little one page 'War Declared'. It surprised everyone."

The next incident that Tom mentioned, I was the most curious about. I had never talked to anyone who had been in Kodiak during the earthquake and tidal wave of March 27, 1964.

"The earthquake hit on Good Friday about 5:30 in the evening and I was in the supermarket, working. Customers were shopping. Everything on the shelves wound up on the floor. The navy announced that the residents of Kodiak Island should head for high ground, that a tidal wave was expected in a couple of hours. This announcement saved many, many lives. It gave the city of Kodiak and the villages time to get to high ground. I remember leaving the downtown area about 6:30 and the water was coming up the main street then. We tried to drive up to Pillar Mountain, but there were cars parked all along the way. We parked in the area of the Aleutian Homes, and walked a little ways up the mountain. You could see the tidal waves coming. There were three waves, one after the other, and after being up on the mountain half an hour, about 7:00, we headed back down. Our home was on Rezanof, near the high school, so we had a good view of the channel. We saw boats, buildings, and all the floats from the boat harbor drifting down the channel. The buildings that were along the waterfront were all washed out to sea."

Tom recently retired from O.Kraft & Son and told me, "I went to work at Kraft's in 1952, on the 5th of November, and worked as manager of the supermarket for 25 years, and was operations manager for 5 1/2 years. I retired last April 20th, 1983."

I saved the next question for last to wrap things up. I asked, "Do you think the quality of life today, is better or worse, than when you were growing up?"

He replied, "I think that life from when I was growing up is the same as now. During my youth, I had a lot of spare time and I always found things to do, the same as the youth of today."

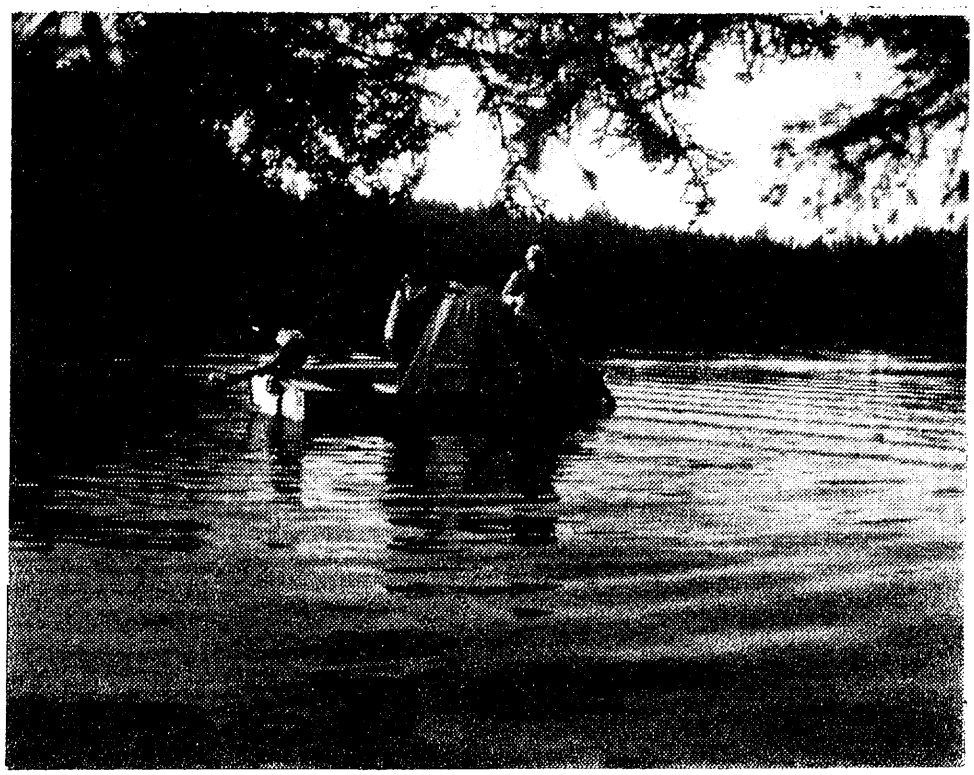
Tom Frost, at home.

Story and Photos:
Lani Hentges
Layout;
Lani Hentges
and Denise Sallee

ABERCROMBIE LAKE FISH SURVEY

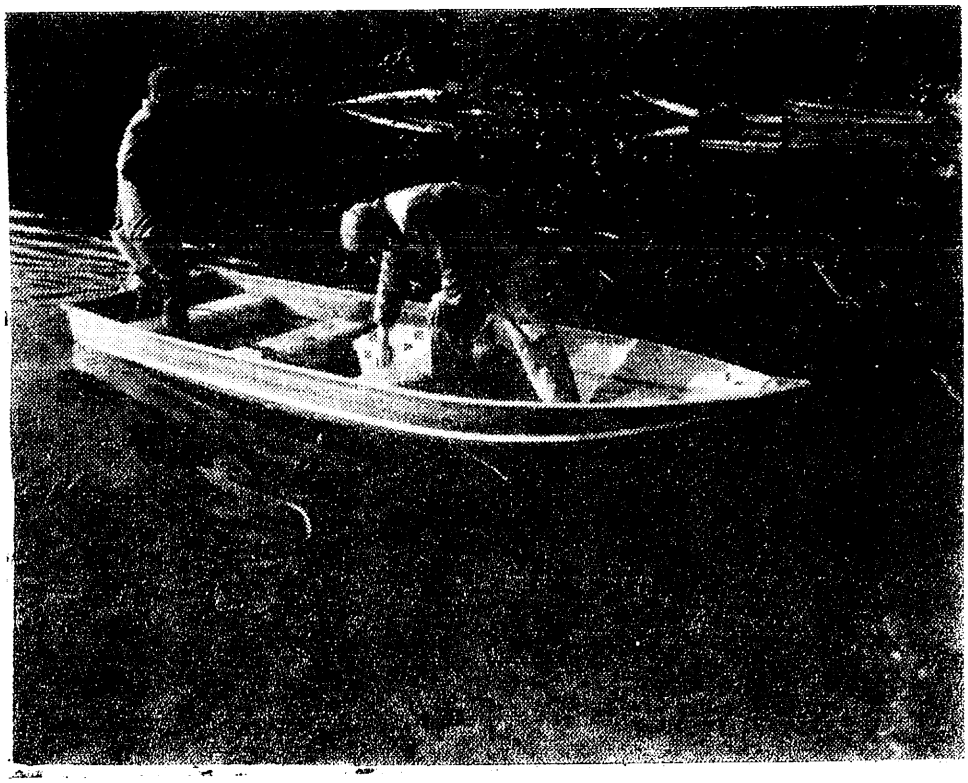
The purpose of the Lake Abercrombie fish survey is to determine the survival rate of the rainbow trout which have been stocked annually, as well as, the arctic grayling that have been periodically stocked since its chemical rehabilitation in 1972.

The reason for chemically rehabilitatig the lake was to get rid of the stickleback to make it suitable for a sport game fishery. Now that the sport fishery has been established, the stickleback have been washed back into the lake by a storm from the ocean. Pete Murray said in approximately two more years Fish+Game pland to chemically rehabilitate the lake again to once again kill off the stickleback that are now eating the food of the rainbow an grayling fry that were recenty stocked in the lake.

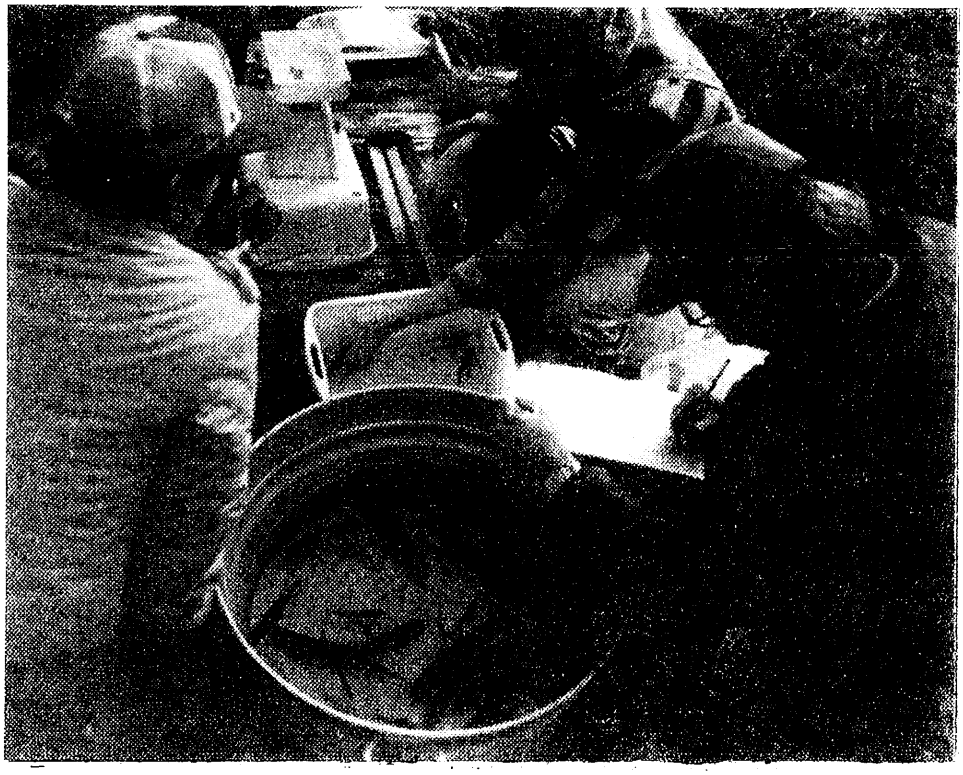


Phil Fogle and Pete Murray pull a fyke net at Abercrombie Lake while doing trout survey.

Pete and Phil landing the skiff with fyke net samples.



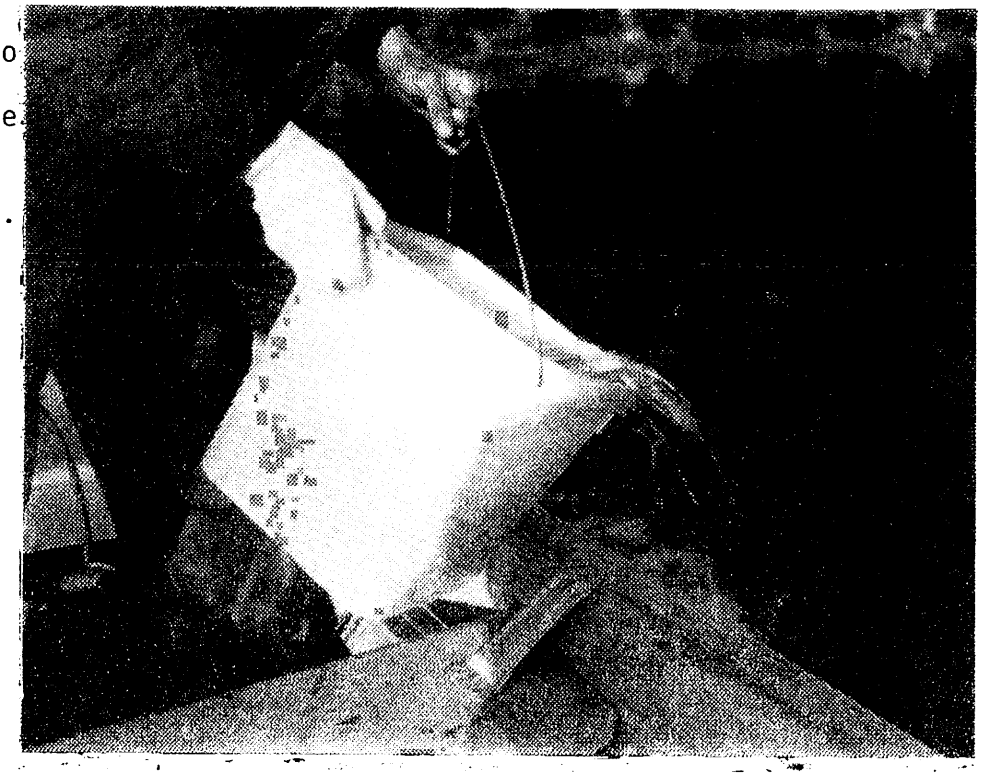
Fish are removed from tub and placed in knock out pan where they are tranquilized to prevent damaging fish when handling.

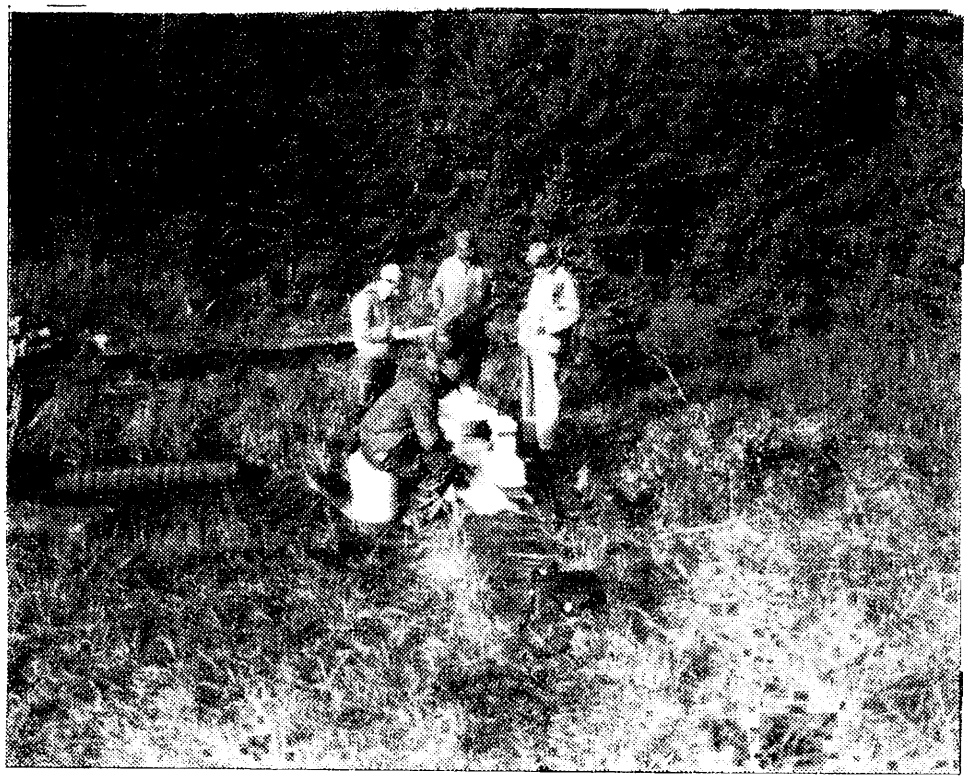


Phil Fogle removes age zero (under a year old) trout from knock out pan for marking and recording.

Fin cutting is the marking method used. Pete Murray cuts.

Fish are returned to the middle of the lake so they will be evenly dispursed, after the measure and marking process.





Photos and Captions by Chris Swanson

The measuring and and marking go on.

"It's Probably The Prettiest Ranch On The Island"

Bill Burton

Bill Burton

"I was born in Miami, Florida, in 1938, and have three brothers and no sisters. I came to Kodiak in 1966. We were up at Fairbanks, I worked in construction. I heard of some ranchers down here. I wrote Joe Beaty, Joe Zentner and Ron Hurst. They all answered me, and I came down and looked at the ranches. I fell in love with this ranch. It's probably the prettiest ranch on the island."

It is a long drive out to Narrow Cape and it gave me time to think. I sat there trying to think positively but my every thought was negative. My mother kept telling me that everything would be all right.

As we pulled onto the long road that led back to Bill Burton's house, I became very worried. The area that surrounds the road was covered with tall brownish-tan grass. The road was long and winding. The ruts in the road not only made it bumpy but it also made it clear that the road hasn't been taken care of in a long time. As we neared the top of a hill, we came upon a valley outlined with mountains, covered with the same brownish-tan, but with a hint of green grass. There weren't many trees, but the few that were there were around the mountain's base. The house wasn't really what I had expected. I expected a log cabin with a real down-to-earth interior but to my surprise, the house was a kind of A-frame painted red with white trim. It had grass doors and a very up-to-date kitchen. I liked the house very much and I felt very welcome.

At first, I wasn't sure if Bill was there, it's kind of hard to get in touch with him, when he lives at Narrow Cape. I walked up to the house and knocked on the glass door and his wife, Kathy answered. I asked if Bill was there, and just then he walked out to the back rooms. After visiting for a while, I ran out to the truck and got my tape. Bill went to turn on the generator and when he got back, I was still nervous but I started asking him questions.

Starting a ranch isn't easy, but Bill and his brother, Jim had help from their wives, Kathy and Toni.

"Jim and I, Toni and Kathy. We got what money we had and bought Joe Beaty out. Joe made us a good offer. So we pooled all the money we could come up with and bought the ranch in 1967.

"Jim and I looked at ranches in Montana, after I got out of the navy. He wrote for me and we went and looked all over Montana. We just couldn't afford a place. So when we came back to Fairbanks, we both worked in construction. When I came back to Kodiak and saw these ranches, I wrote Jim. When Jim came down, he looked at the ranches and we wound up buying this one."

Bill told me that he bought Jim out three years ago. I asked him why he decided to start a ranch here, and his reply made sense.

"Well, our folks had a ranch in Florida but they sold that when I was in the tenth grade. After going to the University of Florida, I came to Alaska to make some money. And I just liked Alaska."

Bill has owned the ranch for 17 years. He really enjoys owning a ranch. He has lived on the ranch most of the 17 years but not all of it.

"I haven't lived on the ranch all that time. Jim lived on the ranch for the first three years. I worked off the ranch and then we swapped and he worked off the ranch for a while, until eventually, I bought him out.

"I worked in town, on the slope and I worked in construction. You don't make enough money off cattle to maintain a ranch."

Then, I asked Bill about his cattle. He told me stuff about cattle prices, the slaughter for market and some of the stuff they give cattle in the lower 48. Bill also told me about the kid program he wants to start.

"The main source of income is cattle right now, but it's not enough. Cattle prices have been low and we've taken bear losses and you have to feed a lot more and it costs quite a bit. We are still paying for the ranch. If the ranch was paid for , it would be enough. When you're buying a ranch and you've got big payments to make out cattle just don't do it themselves, you have to have some other source of income. Kathy works in town at Mark-It foods. I've worked at times in town in construction but I would like to make all the income from the ranch that's why we're trying to start some kind of kid program and then in the fall take in hunters and fisherman.

"We are hoping to have a working ranch with kids. The kids would come out and stay for two weeks, a month, or a whole summer. They'd learn to ride, take care of tack. I think that maybe next year Hugh McPeck will come over and teach the kids to ride and train horses. They'd ride in the valleys and have a round. Our plans will be a lot of fun for the kids and it will be a little help for us. We need to make some other income besides the cattle.

"We started slaughtering this year in August and we slaughter until December. We sell them here locally. What we try to sell is yearlings and two-year olds and about nine- or ten-month old calves. The younger beef is a lot more tender."

"These are grass fat beef and they're organic beef. We don't give them any hormones, additives or any kind of antibiotics. When you get this beef, you know you are getting healthy beef. When you get beef that's been fed from a feedbox from the States, you don't know what you are getting. They give them all kinds of antibiotics and hormones to make them fat. The also give them tranquilizers to keep them calm so they will eat all the time and get fat. It's not their natural state, so when you have any kind of animal that is crowded in a certain area you have a lot of disease problems. That's why they use all those antibiotics.

"All those things are cancerous, and the residue is left in the meat. That tends to promote cancer in people and that's why the U.S. has such a high cancer rate. So, a person is a lot better off eating organic beef, and of course, grass fat beef is organic beef. When you buy U.S. choice, your waste is about 30 percent and grass-fat beef your waste is about 18 percent."

When I asked Bill about his buffalo, he told me some very interesting stories. I didn't see the buffalo but I saw pictures on his walls.

"We lost one on the way up. They were in trailers for four days. It's a long time being where they can't move around or anything.

I was curious about how to raise buffalo and why he brought them here. I learned some very interesting facts.

"One of the reasons we brought buffalo here is because we weren't making enough money or income on cattle. I thought if I went into buffalo, I could sell buffalo hunts and the meat. Buffalo is worth quite a bit more than beef. They are also an exotic animal, and are a lot hardier than cattle. You don't have to feed them as much and I think they are a better buy for market. We lost a lot of cattle to bear and the buffalo are so much faster and they are so much more of a wild animal, a herd animal and I don't believe that bear would bother them as much as they do the cattle.

"We have 48 buffalo right now, we had 14 calves born this spring and four last year. A buffalo cow have the same cycles as a beef cow except buffalo don't start breeding until they are two or three. The cow will breed as a yearling. But when buffalo start breeding they should breed every year and they live for 35 years, where cattle only live 12-15 years. They will calf until they are 30 years old. They normally only have one calf at a time. They do have twins but not very often. Buffalo have very small calves and cattle are dwarfed by the buffalo. When born, buffalo calves weigh about 40 lbs. and by fall they are huge. The cow doesn't produce much milk but it is very rich, it's almost pure cream.

"I haven't fed them the last two years. I wormed them with feed last year. I wormed them twice. The weather doesn't seem to bother them. They do take in some internal parasites, once in a while. You couldn't really doctor them because they are so wild.

"Once you get them and if you can get your fences up, they are a lot less cost and a lot less maintenance. The biggest expense is the fences, once you've got that down, the buffalo are a lot cheaper than cattle, so the cost is less. You can have more buffalo in a limited area that cattle.

"I will always have some cattle. I would like to have more buffalo. I would like to have three or four hundred head of buffalo and maybe a couple hundred cattle or more. I think there is more money eventually in buffalo than there will be in cattle. You can have buffalo hunts, and the hide is worth a lot more and the buffalo head is worth a lot itself. All the parts of the buffalo are worth much more than cattle parts. So you do make more money on buffalo."

I asked him about other livestock and if he was going to raise any other livestock. He told me that he would like to have some llamas and that he already has a dog family and some chickens.

"We have the famous Ramus family (his border collies). We have some chickens, I would like to have some geese. I also wouldn't mind having some llamas. I would raise them and sell them to people. Also I could use them for packing. They are kind of a neat animal. They are real friendly and real expensive."

As Bill, my mother and I loaded my horse, Chablis, I was glad I had a chance to talk to Bill. I not only had learned about buffalo and ranch life but I got to know Bill a lot better.

Article by: Wendy Robichaud

"It Hurts Me To Know That People Are Being Killed Down There."

Josefina Villatoro posing in her home in Kodiak

To Josefina Villatoro, she never dreamed that there would be a war in her country and that her family would have to leave and make a new life in the United States. To her, living in Nicaragua was a happy life that she misses a lot.

"What happened in Nicaragua is the people there were invaded by communism. The teachers have taught communism to the children and they have put it across as if the wealthy should not be in power and that it should be the poor people because they do not have as much. So people got into a turmoil and they started getting radical. The people in colleges and universities say 'Let's take that wealthy man out of that position and we will put this poor man in there.' It is the biggest turmoil and that is what communism promotes in the quest for power. They take advantage of disturbances that they create and then they take over the government."

She told me that the people in Nicaragua right now who are the Sandinistas are imposters because there used to be a group of people who followed a general, Sandino, and the people loved him. He did not want communism in Nicaragua, but what he also did not want was an American intervention and now the communists have come in saying that they are the Sandinistas using Sandino's name hoping that they can get the affection of the Nicaraguan people.

Josefina says that it hurts her to see and know what is going on down there and that the people are suffering. She feels that if it isn't stopped now, because it is spreading and if the Russians set up base there, in Nicaragua, then she feels it will just move further north and it will come on up to into the other countries and possibly into the United States.

Josefina says the reason why she had to leave is because her brother and her nephew were active members in the Nicaraguan Air Force. If Josefina and her sister would have stayed they would have been put in prison. They were related to someone who served in the over-thrown government.

Josefina said she has two sisters, Esther and Olympia; she also has two brothers, Irael and Jose. She was born in El Salvador, Central America. When she was seven years old, her father died and her mother remarried a Nicaraguan. They then moved to Nicaragua. She said she has always lived in big cities such as Masaya, Chontales and Diriamba.

Also, I asked Josefina what advice or training did her mother give her that has helped her to lead a better, fuller life and she said that she feels that children learn from what their parents do and how they act. Her mother was the type of woman that didn't hug or kiss her a lot, but was always giving her advice and she would always tell her "Josefina, you should never lie, Josefina, you should never ask what doesn't concern you and Josefina, you should never go with someone who you do not know." Her mother would tell her to never repeat what other people tell you. Josefina would watch her mother and feels that she followed and was influenced the most by her mother. She told me of one incident of when her

Mother told her never to laugh at anyone that had some kind of a defect because it isn't nice and one time a child laughed at another child that had a defect and God punished him by giving a worse defect than the child he laughed at.

In Nicaragua, they ate a lot of beans, rice, tortillas, cheese and meat. She says almost like here, but a lot more fruits.

Religion plays a large part in Josefina's life. It was about when she was eleven or twelve that she really realized how big a part God played in her life. This was when her father died and people would say, "Well, God took him away." She kept thinking to herself, "Well, why did He do that; if He loved me, why did He take my father away?" She thought about it a lot and she knew that God came to this earth, but He was not loved by everbody and then He died on the cross and He died for us because He loved us all. She felt that after she thought about it that for some reason He took her father, but He didn't take him because He wanted to hurt her, but because He loved her.

Her most valuable possession is her faith in God because if it would not have been for God her family would not have been able to escape from Nicaragua. There was shooting going on and bullets flying and none of her family members were injured, they were able to escape safely.

Josefina's only occupation has been that of a teacher. She told me a story about when she was a little girl. She said she did not play a lot with other children, she usually played by herself and a lot of times she would go out and play with little sticks in the ground and then she would put a little piece of paper in front of them and pretend they were students. So right from the time she was a little girl she knew she wanted to be a teacher. Even though she was a teacher, she wishes that she could have also been a doctor, but back then she did not have the money that it cost to go to school and study medicine. She has always liked anything having to do with medicine. When she was a teacher, she taught at a Baptist school, but afterwards she worked for a government owned school.

Josefina also told me a story about when she was a little girl. She took piano lessons from this man and during the first lession he gave her four assignments. She learned the first two assignments really well and the third and fourth ones she could not play as well. The teacher came back and he was pointing out the notes, but she did not know them and what she soon realized was that she was playing all these tunes by ear. Well, the teacher thought she was lying to him so he told her he was not going to teach her anymore. It was very sad because she never took anymore music lessons and she really did like music.

Well, now Josefina is living in Kodiak, Alaska and she thinks it is a pretty place. She has lived here for four months now and the most noticeable difference between here and Nicaragua is that the people visit each other more in Nicaragua than here. "Here people work and by the time they go home they are too tired to go visiting." Before living in Kodiak, Josefina was living in Carrolton, Texas with the daughter of her sister, Olympia.