

Memorable days in ouzinkie

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Forward

“Ukalaha” is the result of a year-long project in collecting local oral history. We call it cultural journalism because the final results are an appreciation for and a greater understanding of one’s unique cultural history.

The high school students in Ouzinkie have begun to recognize and prize the valuable and meaningful resources available to them in the oral history of their community. They see their relatives and the people of Ouzinkie as personal storehouses of history and knowledge to be treated with care and respect.

The oral history they have collected appears in this first issue of their magazine and we hope that the care and respect with which it was prepared will be obvious to all.

A project of this type takes many hours of personal time, a great deal of dedication and hard work on the part of everyone. It also calls for the cooperation, patience and good will of those people being interviewed.

I wish to thank all the students, staff members, school district personnel, parents and community members who contributed to this magazine. Teamwork was the means. Hard work was the method. “UKALAHA” is the product. And we are proud of it!

Diane Borgman



OUZINKIE, OUR HOME TOWN

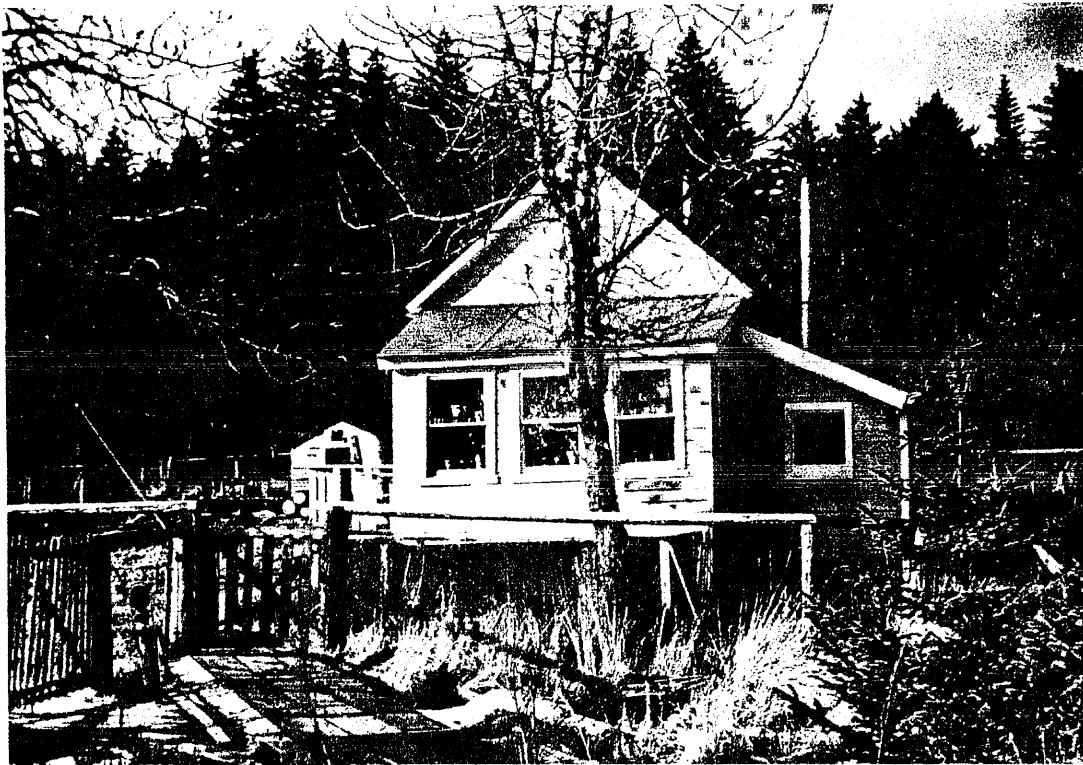
*Crab-buoy swings and snowball fights
The Russian Church Bell rings on Easter nights
Three-wheel Hondas cruising up and down
That's the city of Ouzinkie, our home town.*

*Kodiak Western brings us home
Or a whaler fast — where there is no phone
But my dog is waiting all alone
In Ouzinkie, our home town.*

*In 1980 we got a new school
In which to learn the golden rule
It's quiet and peaceful all day long
And that is why we wrote this song
About Ouzinkie, our home town.*

*Summertime at home is happy and gay
We fish and eat and swim and play
And the sun stays out almost all of the day
In Ouzinkie, our home town.*

*At Christmas time we celebrate twice
With masking and starring it's very nice
In winter time with ice and snow
Our hearts are full and all aglow
In Ouzinkie, our home town.*



JENNY CHERNIKOFF

by carl & kevin smith

Jenny Chernikoff has lived most of her life in Ouzinkie. She has a lot of stories to tell. We were fortunate enough to get some stories from her for our magazine.

“The first cattle that got here were from my grandparents. They brought them from Woody Island, and from there they increased. My grandparents lived over there in Monk’s Lagoon. They lived in Sitka first, and then moved to Woody Island for a little while. Then from Woody Island they moved to Monk’s Lagoon. They lived in Monk’s Lagoon for quite a few years. When Monk’s Lagoon got too crowded they moved to Pestrikoff Beach. That’s how that’s named Pestrikoff Beach, see. Oh, there were a few houses there, a few buildings for barns, you know. But they are all decayed now. They were the first settlers in the Ouzinkie area. Nobody else lived here then.”

We had a lot of cattle them days. Lots of them. Pretty near everybody had cattle here. Just about every family had cows. Oh, there were a lot of them. Great big bulls came down here in the swamp in the summertime. And then they fought! Free for all! So, some people finished theirs, and the bears took most of what was left.”

“There was a big bear that got here one year. I forgot what year it was, though. Anyway, Pariscovia Muller’s mom and I met up with it! It was a monstrous one! Ha! I’ll never forget it. We were going to go to Sourdough’s. My cousin’s little boy had a Shetland pony, and we were going to watch the kids ride it. There was a man working in the cannery here who used to be a cowboy, so he taught the young boys how to ride. My son Fred was small then. They used to go to Sourdough’s to ride the Shetland pony.”

“So this old lady, Paris’ mother, came to me and said, ‘Let’s go and watch them ride the pony.’ I said, ‘I have to get the fresh vegetables from the garden.’ We had a garden over there on the other side. Great big one, but the tidal wave took that and washed that away. We had a cellar right there, too. It’s still there, that cellar. It never went down, nobody wrecked it.”

“Well, anyway, we went, and it was a beautiful day. It was in September.

“What’s that smell?” I said.

‘Pony.’

‘What’s that growling?’

‘Pony.’

‘No, ponies don’t growl.’

“So we walked up and stood on the edge. There was a little boardwalk there. There was a little creek and you cross that little boardwalk. What would I see, oh my gosh! I think that he was about twelve feet tall! Oh! He was a big one! And he’d stand up. You see, the wind was coming from him, and not from us. He had the most huge nostrils, but his eyes were small. Oh! He was a great big thing! To this day I do not know what happened to the bucket of vegetables I had. I was carrying them. I guess they’re over there some place.”

“That’s the time he killed lots of cattle. He took 28 of them. We tried to say that there was a bear over there. Some people here tried to hunt for it, but they never did find it. They saw the carcasses of the dead cows which he chewed. He’d leave the heads, but he’d eat the bodies. After that, the people didn’t care much for cows anymore. There was only a few of us who had cows. Well, the cows were nice, but the people used to shoot at them. I enjoyed taking care of cows; I still miss them. I wouldn’t mind having more.”

“Well, we did have foxes. We had a lot of them. We had interesting kinds. We had white ones. We also had blue foxes, but after that, we had mixed kinds. We didn’t have very many female foxes, but we had quite a few boy foxes. Most of the white ones were males. And then, some of the foxes ran away in the woods here, and they turned wild. Some people used to see them in the woods. They were mixed: red foxes and blue foxes. They were the ugliest things you ever saw. There were quite a few, but I don’t know what became of them.”

“Every spring they got young ones. Little tiny ones, oh, about so big (5-6 inches). There would be eight or nine apiece. We used to sell the furs. I don’t know how much we used to get for them though. I did the work and Mike (my husband) did the pelting and selling. We used to sell them at Anchorage. There was a big demand for that. They wanted mostly white ones. But of course, I had to take care of them, see. I had to cook. There could be no bones in the food at all. There had to be a special kind of food for the foxes. It had to be cooked just so, and we had to put some kind of minerals in the food for the foxes. I don’t know what kind they were. So we didn’t like it anymore, it was too stinky. Too odorful, so we had to finish them off. The price went down, there was no market for them any more. Not that kind. And besides that, they were close to the houses. That wasn’t very good. We had them for ten years.”

“That time when there was a terrible earthquake, we had five little calves at Garden Point. The last one we saw the day before, and I was going to go and see how it was. When they’re real tiny, they’re real weak. My old man came into eat supper and said,

‘Did you see that new calf?’

‘Not yet, I just got done washing clothes.’

‘Well, you better go and see it.’

‘What’s that noise?’

‘Nothing!’

I knew right away that something was wrong. I had one boot on and one was barefoot. I said,

‘Oh, my gosh, something is happening!’

You could hear the roaring! Oh! Then the house started to shake. Good thing that I didn’t go and see the calf. I don’t know what I would have done if it started to earthquake at Garden Point.”

‘Boy, oh boy, dishes were falling, washing machine was out of place, and the freezer was in the middle of the room! And the water came quite a ways up this way. We had to go to a higher place. And then we watched how it took the cannery, that big cannery across here, you know. The tide came, and our little boat “22” was tied up there. I said,

‘Good-bye “22.”’

‘22’ just dove like that! A big wave came. It didn’t come full force though. Then there was a strong suction, and that poor cannery went down! We were watching it. Oh! That was terrible.’

‘Two days after that, we were still up at Ellanak’s place. Kodiak Airway’s plane came and someone said he saw a Ouzinkie boat and a great big building going through the Narrows over there by Whale Pass. And that boat was the “22.” No one else would go except Alfred Torsen. He volunteered to go on his white boat. It was hard to go; you had to watch. Big logs would come full force and could wreck the boat. We were watching when it went. After a while, somebody hollered at me, ‘There comes the Joanice T!’ Somebody else hollered, ‘There comes the “22” with its own power!’ That poor boat didn’t have a cabin or mast.’

‘It shook for quite awhile after that. The old people said it happened 65 years ago! They had a terrible one before here, too. Someone else that lived long ago remembered it in Seattle and made a story about it in the Seattle Times.’;

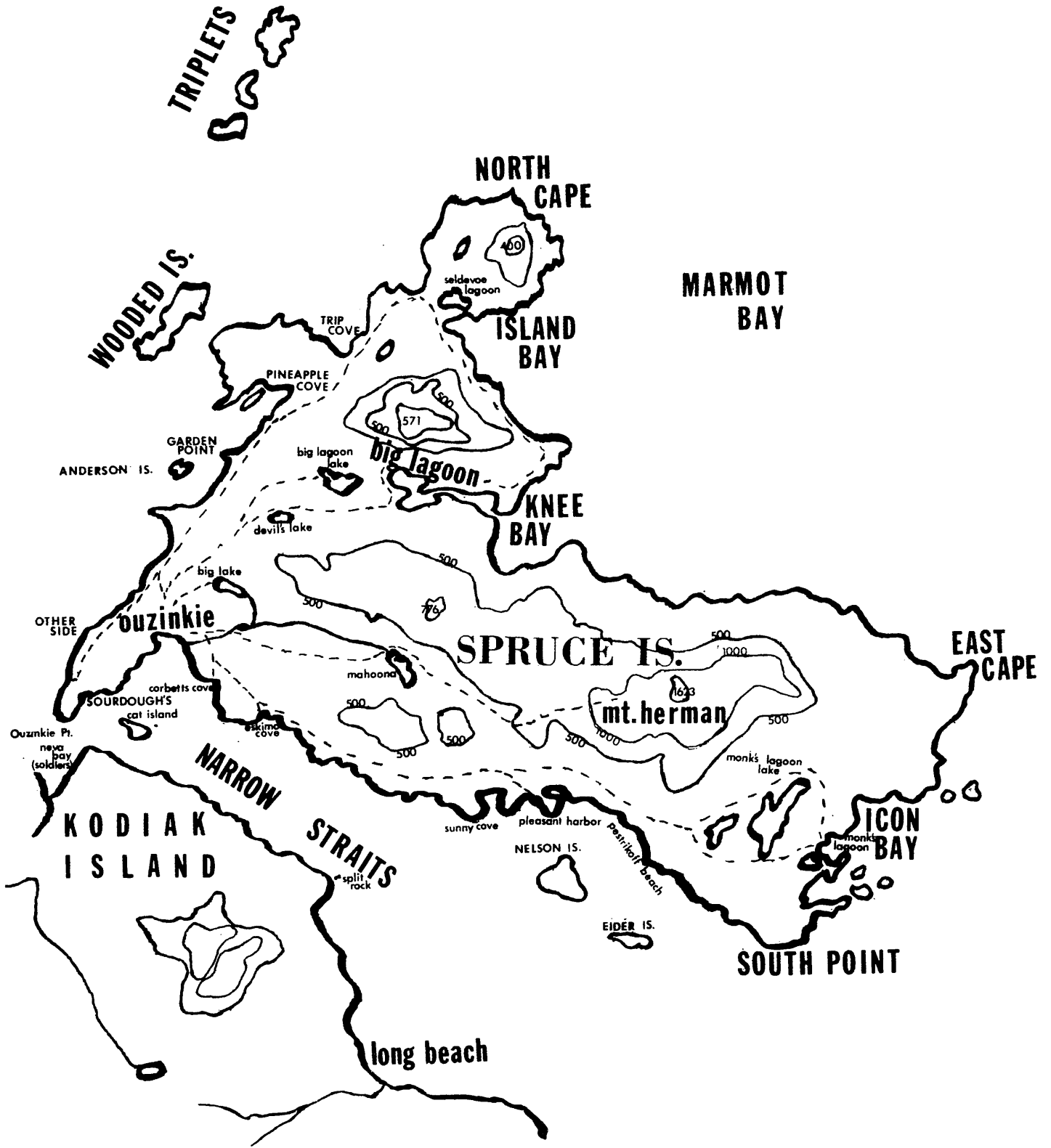
‘I never worked with salmon. I worked with clams. I worked two years in the clam cannery. Oh, I used to work down here a little bit at the cannery. I used to be a packer. I used to “case up.” For a little while though. I used to go in the morning at 9:00 and come back at 11:00. Then go back in the afternoon about 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. I didn’t have to work steady; more or less pass time. I never did work steady in a cannery, except two years in a clam cannery. That’s way over there in Kukak Bay.’

‘I went to school here, the first four years in the old school here. A big school building used to be where the store is now. There were no other commercial buildings except a small store with one room. The school teacher, his name was Grimes, had a small saltery. I remember that. I was small then, a kid. They salted codfish. My mother worked too. Then Grimes expanded a bit more, and finally he got himself a small cannery. Then after that he got a big cannery. And so he got old and retired. He sold the cannery to Erick Balmer, and afterwards, Columbia Wards bought it. After that the tidal wave took it. Then Columbia Wards took over the store.’

‘I know we used to have more severe winters than we do now. I know that much. We had lots of snow them days. It would get cold early. But then, of course, spring would come early.’

When we interviewed Jenny, we felt that we had learned a lot about the past. She enjoyed talking to us, and we hope that more people will give us as much as Jenny did.

‘All of the things down in the little chapel — the cushions and covers — he made by hand. The cross stitch pillow covers, cushions, hand purses and all the other things Father Gerasim made himself. He was very good at cross stitch on Monk’s cloth.’





ALICE PANAMARIOFF'S

MEMORIES OF GROWING UP

It was a partly cloudy day when we, the Ouzinkie High School students, went to the city office of Ouzinkie to interview Alice Panamarioff about her memories of the late Afognak village. When we arrived, she was waiting patiently, while we were a bit nervous because this was to be our first interview. Out of all of us in the high school, we could tell by the look on her face she had quite a story to tell

“I lived in Afognak for sixteen years. We, my family, moved to Ouzinkie to work in a cannery. Nobody else moved when we did.

“Afognak was pretty big, we had two villages in that one place. Some people lived in one part of the village and others lived in the other. Afognak was big, one side they called Aleut Town. Where we lived they called Russian Town. It must have been maybe about seven hundred people.

“We had a really nice school. It went to the eighth grade. The old school was really big, it was on the Russian side of the village. Later on they built another school in Aleut Town.

“My mom and dad worked real hard to bring us up. Mom used to do sewing and Dad did little odds and ends. My sister and me used to go up to the woods and watch him split wood. After school we'd go up and help him, but when he was pulling the sled down we'd be riding in the back. He knew we were doing that, he used to tell us. He would never get after us, Mom used to, but not him. I'm glad I still have her though.

“We used to have masquerade parties. My mom used to sew costumes and the other girls' moms would sew them costumes for Russian New Years.

“We usually had a lot of snow in those days. We used to go out on what you would call a Yukon sled. A bunch of us would go to the other side of the village and slide down the hill. We would go up again and slide right back down. Sometimes we would use a piece of cardboard or toboggan and just slide down the hill.

“To earn money, people did different things. Some people worked in a post office in the village, but most of the time there was really no work for everybody. Even in the old stores there was just a family doing their best. So usually you go to canneries, like over to Kodiak. We used to go to Kodiak Fisheries, which was where King Crab is now. We’d go there and they’d let us case up because we weren’t old enough to work with machinery.

“I’ve worked in casing up, and I’ve worked repacking herring. That was a horrible job and really smelly. But you know I learned how to do that and I was about 14 years old when I first went to work. My sister had worked before, my older sister. I went with her. We stayed for the summer and we made a few dollars. It wasn’t much, but we could get some new winter clothes and some things for the kids. Now you can’t do that, you need about a thousand dollars. There’s not much you can get for less than that. Ten dollars was just like one hundred dollars now. Everything’s so high, but I guess you have to live with it. Those days they did salmon only, then in later years king crab started and then shrimp.

“We used to work with clams, I used to go from here and work with clams in Kodiak and go right to salmon. We used to have salmon and crab canneries here in Ouzinkie. The tidal wave took everything away from here though.

“The older people used to go trapping for furs. Foxes, land otters, and other things. They used to sell the furs. The furs cost quite a bit. In the summer they’d go fishing and in winter, trapping. That’s how we were brought up. They’d buy things with that, and about Christmas time they’d come home. They got a good price for furs, but fish was very low. But the things in the store were really low priced.

“Sometimes our dad used to make cordwood and sell it. I think they were just about eight dollars a cord. With eight dollars you could get a lot of food, and of course we’d put up our own food, like salmon. We had cows and chickens. We’d grow our own vegetables. We had great big potato gardens, I remember weeding and hoeing them. For me, I think we ate real good. Not much, but they knew how to fix things.

“We grew some turnips, rutabagas, carrots, beets and all those vegetables and have them for winter. We had cellars that they’d put all the vegetables in for the winter. It was always warm when we went down to get potatoes from the cellar in the winter. It had a top part and that was where they kept the jellies and jams. I remember, when we used to have eggs in a keg. I don’t know whether mom put them in brine or what. They were always in the keg.

“Gram had geese and a bunch of chickens and I didn’t like the geese because they always used to come after us all the time. They’re just like dogs, watch dogs. They were always really terrible, they would hiss and snap at you. She loved her geese of course. We used to call her Mother Goose.

“We all lived together. We were born and raised in our house. It was our grandmother’s house. It was a big house and she had all her sons there. My dad was the oldest so he got married first, then after that their other brother got married. He, my father, had a family, and the other brother had a family, so we were all living in our grandmother’s house. Until I was eleven years old and we got our own place. We moved, and it was the happiest day of my life. There were so many people in that one house, and we



were the oldest ones too. All of us moved except my oldest sister, she stayed with our grandmother. It was so good to be alone, just the family in your own home. I liked that. I was really happy when we moved.

“We used to have some transportation. A few people used to have outboards and others had row boats, of course. Most of the time they rowed with oars. They would row across to Kodiak and back over to Karluk and those places. I remember people used to row even if it took them days and days, but they still made it.

“I really liked my childhood. We had real nice friends. We lived close together and were always together. I don’t think we were ever mad at each other. We all, boys and girls together, used to go on moonlight walks. We had a real good time. We got along real good with the kids from the other villages. We used to go there, or they would come over for dances. Nobody drank or anything like that, just good clean fun. I’ll never forget that.

“We didn’t have much, but we really enjoyed ourselves. We used to have to carry wood and water, but we did it. When our parents said no, that was it, we didn’t ask any more. Our grandmother was a strict woman and we listened to her.

“Many times I meet people I used to know in Afognak and I don’t recognize some of them, but they recognize me. We sit down and talk about our days over there, and they say they’ll never forget that either.”

Our interview with Alice Panamarioff was very interesting. It seemed to take us back in time. Alice enjoyed talking to us about her past childhood in Afognak. She seemed to enjoy the interview and telling us about the past.

When it was over, we thanked Alice for spending time with us.



ED OPHEIM

by
James Anderson
&
Mike deVillers

Ed Opheim is a well-known dory builder and many articles have been written about him. He lives at Pleasant Harbor which is about a five mile hike from Ouzinkie. Our walk through the moss covered, spruce forest went quickly. As the trail opened up to Pleasant Harbor, we saw Ed's white house perched on a hill looking out toward the ocean.

Anna Opheim, Ed's wife, was working in the garden and hurried to greet us. She made us welcome in their house that they have lived in for seventeen years. She introduced us to Ed. We went into the living room and made ourselves comfortable while Ed began to tell us about his exciting life.

"The very first skiff that I built was when I was 10 years old at an orphanage in Manet, Washington. My brother Roy and I had some lumber and old rusty tools that we thought could be used to build a skiff. We began by pulling nails out of some old lumber and with a lot of determination, I guess, we fashioned a skiff the way that we thought it should be. We had been brought up around people who'd been building things like that.

"We didn't have a hand plane; but we cut our side pieces, made a transom and a bow stem and got it all set up on the floor. We started putting things together. We had the sides, transom, and all the bow stem nailed together and a couple of cross pieces to hold it apart. We decided on putting the bottom on crossways which I know is not proper. We didn't have enough wood for framing.

“We didn’t have any caulking, but I found some old long Johns in a closet that we made strips out of and caulked the boat. Of course we didn’t have any putty or oil to put in the seams but we managed with what we had and made a pair of oars out of some old ship lap.

“Then came the launch! We had to get it out of the building and down to the beach where there was a channel right across from Bremerton. It was quite a ways to go; we made some rollers and skis and dragged it down to the water. The thing sunk on us! Of course, we didn’t realize that the wool in the long Johns wasn’t like cotton, so our caulking job wasn’t too good. We got in and bailed and tried rowing around anyway.

“We got wet and then a man came down to the beach and asked us how much we wanted for it — if we wanted to sell it! We had just built it and didn’t have any thought of selling it. He offered us fifty cents! Of course fifty cents to us then was an awful lot and more than we had ever seen. We figured, by gosh, we’d better sell it! But I think that the man bought it with the idea of using it for kindling wood. I think that he didn’t want to see us go out and drown ourselves. That was our first attempt, but after we came back up here, amongst people that built dories and skiffs in Outzinkie.

“There was old Nick Pestrikoff, Billy Squartsoff and Abram Gregorioff. Of course, Nick was the one that turned out most of the dories and skiffs. I’d sit around the shop and watch them. I got to thinking, well, if I could get some lumber, I was going to build me one. I would build me a dory or something.

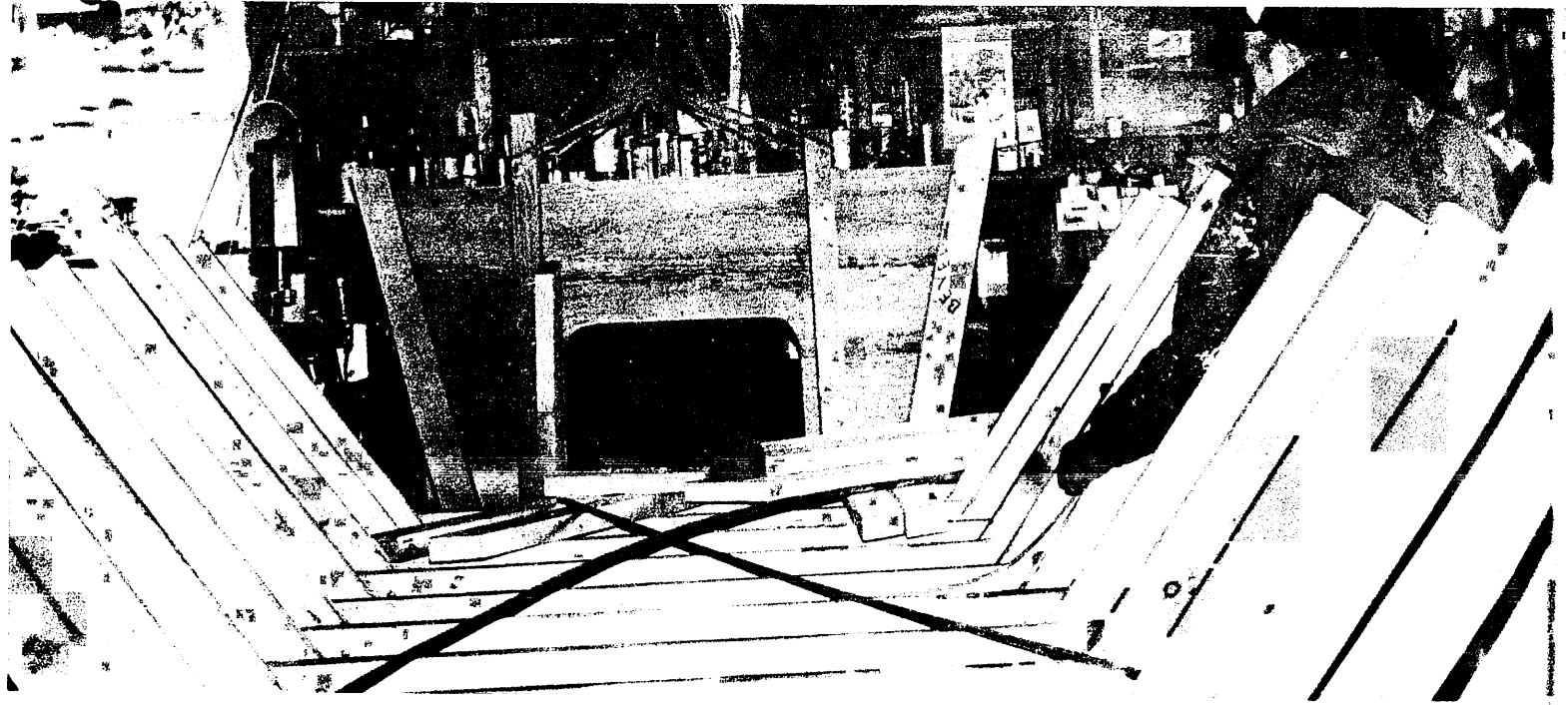
“It was a number of years before I even got around to building that. My father, of course, had built a few small skiffs for our use and finally I started to build my own skiffs as I needed them. Lumber was cheap: back in those days you could buy Sitka spruce for 10 cents a foot. Up here it’s beautiful lumber. And nails and paint were cheap.

“As I got older, I would need a skiff in the summer and I would just build one. If it didn’t suit me, I would sell it in the fall and build another one. That went on through the years and after I started to sell them, why I had so much spare lumber that I could never sell on account of there was no demand for it.

“Nothing to do in the winter, so I’d turn around and build a few skiffs with the idea that someone might need a snag or rowing skiff of some kind. I didn’t really make any money doing it. I had never been in the selling business before except to build skiffs and sell them for cost.

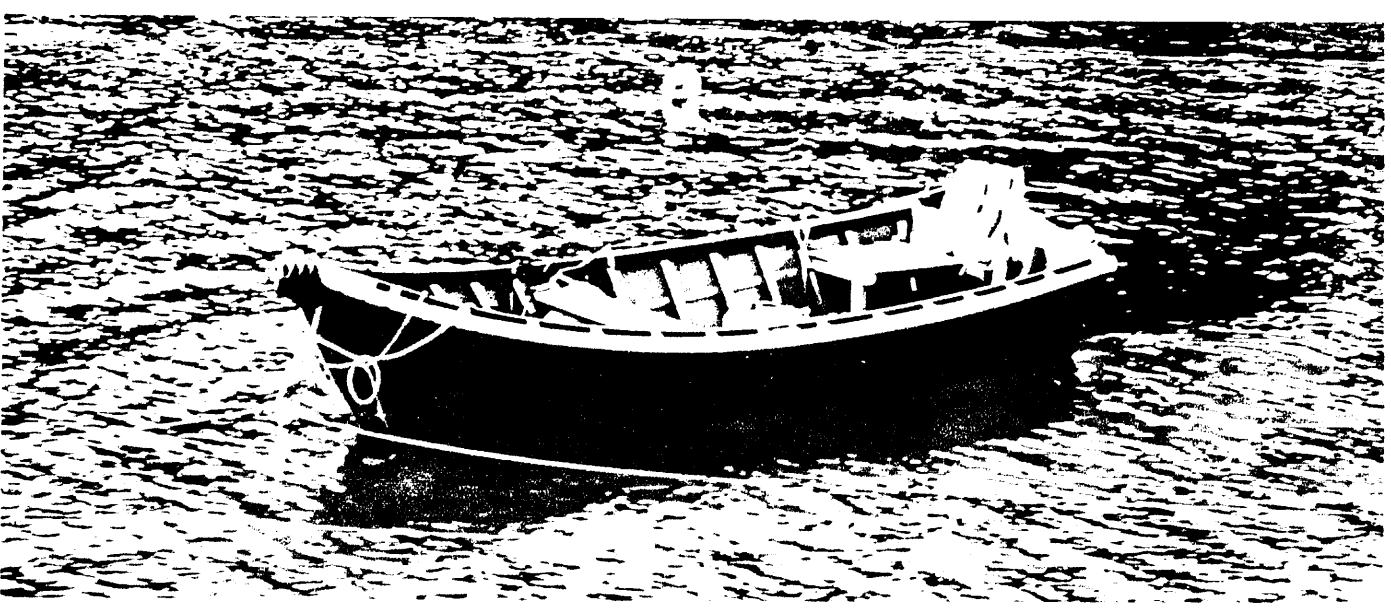
“But I was really building them for money and finally I sat down and figured what I had to add on my lumber and other costs besides wood, and I doubled my prices. I was only paying myself 50 cents for my labor an hour, which isn’t very much.

“Years ago nobody had any kind of work going on around here. Why most of the cannery work was over 50 cents an hour. So that’s what I used as a gauge for my labor charges. I figured why work for nothing even if I was just building skiffs for a pastime.



“After '64 I lost the sawmill in the tidal wave. I got some power tools and decided to see if I could work up a trade. I modified my design and started putting some real effort into making nice boats and skiffs, although I did do some nice ones before. I would order mahogany and yellow cedar from outside on account of not being able to get lumber after the mill went down.

“It's worked out so that over the years I've been able to make a living at it. Of course it's something that I like to do, but it isn't just to see how much I can make at it. It was a kind of a pleasure to go into the shop and do something the best I could. Now it's a question of building one on speculation and selling it. There are so many aluminum and fiberglass boats built . . . of course I still like to build boats. I suppose that is what I'll be doing as long as I can.”





THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

by Nick Pestrikoff, Jr.

I wanted to know a little bit of the history of the Russian Orthodox Church here on Spruce Island. I picked Jenny Chernikoff to talk with because I had heard that she lived here all her life. I thought that she would probably know something about the church since she was born the same year that the church was built. When she was asked what happened to the old church, she said:

“It got old and they abandoned it; and it got too small anyway. But, I remember it, though. I remember when it was still up, but they quit using it. It was too old to be used. It was way smaller than the church we have now.

“This church was built in 1906, the same year I was born. It was completed just before Christmas. Father Katellin from Afognak blessed the church. He used to come every time they put something up. You know, when it was completed, he would come and bless whatever it was we put up.



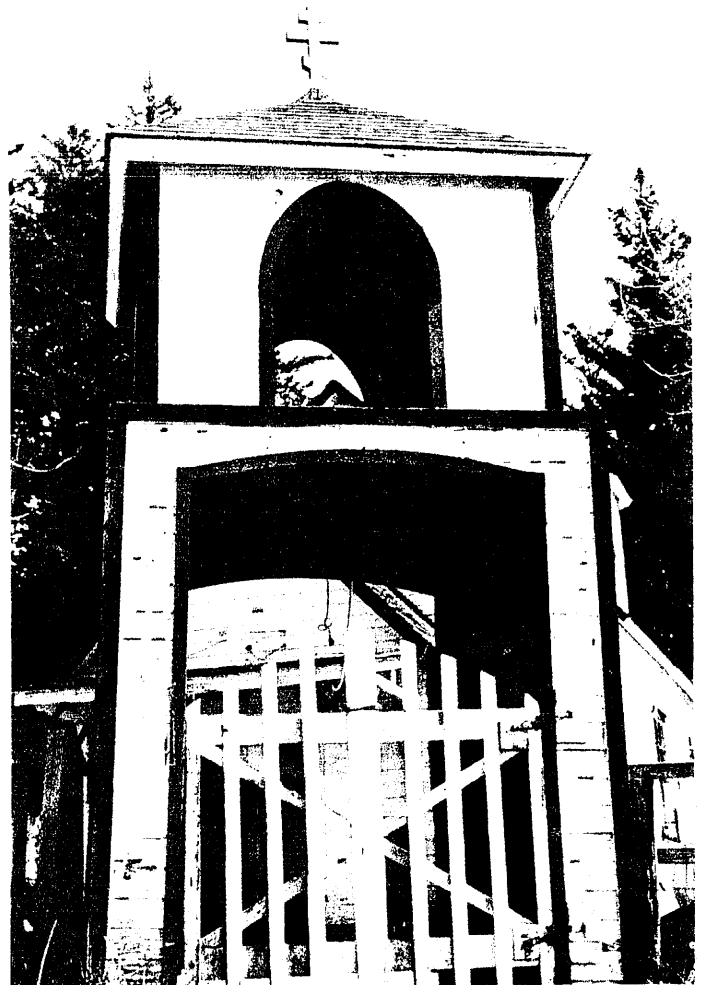
come in his place. His name was Father Martish or Father Shalomo. That's the priests that used to come. You see, they would come by turns. The last priest we had was Father Gerasim. The first priest ordained here was, I think it was, Father Yakov. He had to go to New Jersey.

“Your grandfather came when Fr. Gerasim nominated your grandpa (Larry Ellanak). He wanted him here from Karluk. Our reader, Tichon Sheratine, passed away. After that, Fr. Gerasim wanted your grandpa to come here from Karluk. I couldn't tell you which year. I don't remember. I think your grandpa or grandma would know about that. Your momma was a little girl, and your uncle Dan was a little boy, about so high. I really don't know when they came.”

“Okay, I will tell you who helped build the new church. My grandpa, your grandpa, your daddy's dad, and my three uncles who were your grandpa's brothers, Abram Gregerioff, Nick Katelnikoff, and Paul Katelnikoff. You see they built this church. They used whip saws to cut the lumber.

“Each person would donate whatever was needed. Like one person would donate nails, another would donate paint and another would donate windows. These were all made in donations from whomever could afford it. That's the way this church was built.

We didn't have a priest here then. Father Katellin used to come from Afognak; but if he didn't come, a priest from Kodiak would





the crow and the goose

TOLD BY

PHILIP KATELNIKOFF

TO

JO ANN TORSEN & FRED SHANAGIN

I will tell you a story about the goose and the crow.

Well, you know like everybody else, that every spring the geese fly by shaped like a V. There is a captain who leads and the crew. Geese always fly in a V, you see them passing by in the fall.

Well listen: now one time they were flying towards the chain, the Alaska Chain there. They'd stop once in awhile when the wind would get too rough. Captain said, "Let's get something to eat, drink of water." They'd stop anywhere, then they'd come to stop here at Camel's Rock at the reef because there are a lot of clams there.

Well, they hit the Nushagak, someplace around there. There were crows, too. Crows in here, in Ouzinkie. Small crows and big crows. Sometimes there was a crow and a family: wives, kids, daughters and sons. Oh, they stayed there in Nushagak for the summer.

Well, the captain's daughter got a boyfriend; he was a crow! Well, they stayed there and got married. All the geese and crows came from miles around to see this unusual marriage.

It was getting colder, especially for the new husband crow: time to go back south.

Well, come fine weather, they took off from there. Crow was with them, their son-in-law.

Well, the geese can land in water but crows can't. That's where the trouble starts. Crow could land in trees but geese can't because they have different feet.

At the beginning of the trip, crow was pretty happy. They would stop once in awhile to eat a little bit. Wind was getting a little rough. They always were flyng in a V. When they got close to Ouzinkie, they landed at Camel's Rock, to dig clams and stuff like that, you know. Crow was still with them.

Come fine weather they took off for Resurrection Bay at Seward. The captain said that they were going to show crow the Gulf of Alaska. "Oh, crow, can you make it?" the captain asked. "Okay!" said the crow, wanting to impress his new bride the beautiful goose. Crow did a fancy turn like they do here in a big blow. They can sure turn, oh!

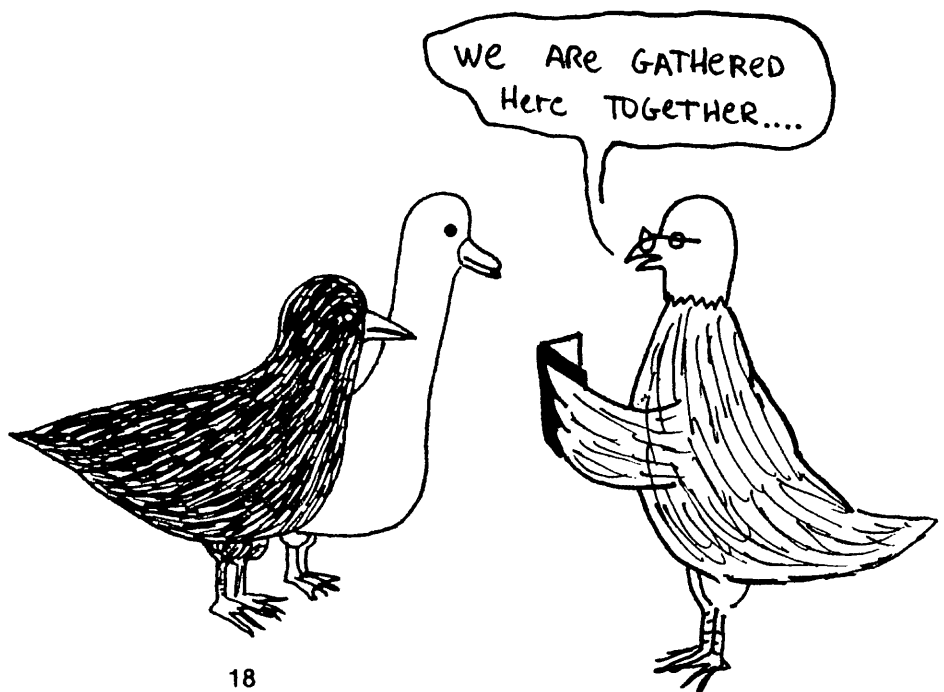
From Resurrection Bay they took off again for another very long flight over the ocean, no trees for crow to land on if he got tired. Only the cold, deep ocean below. One afternoon of fine weather they left. "Let's go. We've got a long flight to Spencer!" the captain honked to his formation.

Crow started out fine enjoying the new sights: whales below and things like that. But he begins to lag a little and they ask him, "Crow can you make it?" Still wanting to impress his dear wife and his new friends he does another fancy roll over and says, "I'm okay!"

Now they are half way to their next land fall where poor, tired crow can land on a tall tree, but crow is getting behind a lot. "How you making out crow?" they all asked. "Okay," he says slowly but can barely make one of his fancy turns and his poor wife is wondering if maybe she should have married a goose instead!

Finally he's getting really far behind with only the cold ocean below and no trees in sight! Again his concerned friends holler back, "How you making out crow?" "Okay," he softly says but in trying once more to do his fancy turn to impress his new, dear wife he drops straight down into the Gulf of Alaska. He's still there drifting some place.

And to this day no captain goose will let his daughter marry a crow, only a good goose with good feet for landing in water!



MIKE CHERNIKOFF

by Michael de Villers
James Anderson
Anna Rae Bent

“Some of the old people in Afognak knew a place where they got rocks for making spears. They’d go out and kayak where the whales were in the summer. The whales were feeding out there and they would go for the little ones. They harpooned them and the rock on the end of the spear would break off in the body of the whale. The whale would get sick and the mother would come and try to help the little one. Finally he died, and the hunters stood by to wait and tow him to shore. Then they cut him up.”

“I was fifteen when I started school. There was no school in Afognak when I was born. Back then they didn’t have any schools. We moved over here to Ouzinkie in 1917 where the school was. I went as far as 4th grade because I was big enough to work and in them days it was hard pickings, not like now, you know. People now don’t work for a dollar or five dollars a day. In them days 10 cents was money you could get something for it. When I sold one salmon for ten cents, I was very lucky to sell it. I got married and settled down and built this house. I started working in Grimes’ cannery in 1928 and worked until the tidal wave in 1964. I had a couple of fishing boats; I used to fish once in awhile when they gave me time off.

“When winter came I would go out trapping. I trapped fifteen years over there in Afognak Island in Ishuit Bay with my father. There used to be a bear here who would tear up the cattle. What he didn’t eat he’d bury. That’s what happened over there in Afognak during the 1912 eruption of Katmai when we had about 2½ feet of ash. I was over there in Paranosa Bay where they are logging now. Seal Bay I think they call it. The reason they call it Paranosa, it means in Russian where you can walk. From here to there — otherside like you see. I walked there a long time ago, that’s where I was, there was a bunch of us over there. I was a kid then, 12 years old. All of a sudden it got dark and a thunderstorm started — all the lightning started coming around, going over the tent! Nobody knew what was happening. In them days there was no radio or anything. We just stood there and night came and the next morning it didn’t get too bright. It was dark all day, I think it was two days. The people used to go out and take their dinner plates and catch ash, they didn’t know what it was. Finally after two days my grandfather and one of the other fishermen started to walk to Little Afognak. From there you can see Paranosa. They ran into a bunch of bear in the mountains and



they were scared from the thunder. Finally the tender came to see us during fishing. The bay was full of reds that died. Their gills were filled up with ash. We made a small haul and caught quite a few reds and put them where the little creek runs. Put the rocks on the front and filled it up with salmon, you see. From there they took us back, there wasn't any motor; they rowed everywhere. Each gang, four in a gang, had two skiffs. That year we didn't do any fishing because of the ash fall."

"All the furs were no good. The belly part of the otter was all shot from the ash. You see, they like to slide all the time. We went back to Little Afognak and from there the government boats came and they were going to take us over to Wrangell. They took us to Afognak Village, the village was still there then and the school hall was full of people. We were all there and people from the mainland, too. My grandparents wouldn't leave. Most of us left. My father, mother, sister and brother stayed there for about three weeks. Then the old man decided to go back to see the old folks. 'If the time comes to go, we'll go right here.' So they didn't move.

"We had cattle over on Afognak. And after the eruption some bears got at the cattle. Some came back with their guts hanging. Some had the horns torn off. It had never happened before; but everything was hungry because there were no fish in the creeks. A good sized boat brought some food for the cattle. They took quite a few people from the mainland to Wrangell and I guess some of them stayed. Some came back and we all settled back again the way we started. Finally we moved over here to Ouzinkie in 1917.

"In Afognak they called one end of the village Aleut town and the other end Russian town. They had a pretty good sized village over there. They had about four stores over there. We had boats for transportation. We had gas boats, not diesel. There were no diesel boats in those days. It was way colder when I was a young man. The snow used to be up to the top of my pants. It was about four feet one year. The ocean was frozen clear across the bay to the river. The boys would skate there. Everybody used to burn wood. We would drag the wood from the trees to keep the stoves going. Of course, everyone had log houses. They used moss for insulation and no drafts got through there.

"Money was really scarce. The old man used to get a few groceries for Christmas. He would bring apples and hide them and cut them in half. Then we would be wondering how they got over here and he would say, 'Well, maybe the crow brought them over here!' It was really hard for everybody, but the people were healthy. I guess now there is so much canned stuff and cold storage. You know everything you eat fresh is good for you. Well in those days, they didn't have doctors, they had Aleut doctors. They would cut you open and take out the bad blood instead of it going through your system. Everything is brought by God; still he helps people. So many things He has done. Long time ago God gave the mind to do something and the people made things out of nothing.

"You take those skin boats. They catch a seal; they skin it, dry the skin, soak it and cure it. They get the fur off the skin and make a kayak. They get the limbs from the wood and twine off whale muscles. My grandfather used to make those kayaks and make jackets for the hole. Some kayaks even had three holes. they go out to sea and water would wash right over them and they wouldn't get wet. They even tipped over the kayak and came up again without getting wet. I know they used to try themselves out in the surf in Little Afognak. You know, it is pretty rough, southeast wind, big swells. They used to ride the surf and do their best.

"The fish were plentiful and people didn't destroy them like they do now. There was not so many tools when I first began to fish. I made everything that I used. When the Russians came they left the tools that everybody used. I guess that is where they came from to begin with. There were very few tools in those days. We used to go out in the woods to get lumber. They knocked the tree down and used whatever they wanted. They fixed a place to stand where they sawed: one guy on the top and one guy on the bottom. My old man used to tell me he sawed 1000 feet one day. You know, that's a lot of lumber for whip sawing for two men."

Memories With Dora Llanos

by Carl Smith
Kevin Smith
Jo Ann Torsen



We were fortunate to obtain an interview with Dora Llanos. She had time to come to Ouzinkie, her home town, for a visit. Here is how the interview went:

“I was born in Ouzinkie. My maiden name is Smith; my name now is Llanos. My father’s name was William Smith. What I liked most about growing up here was the freedom we had. It was really fun growing up here. We would skate in the winter time, and in the summer time we would make play houses. We’d play on the beach, go for walks and pick berries, and all that kind of thing. It was fun. We made playhouses: we’d go scrounge up broken dishes, make mud pies, and pick flowers. For games we used to play marbles and lapture.

“There were also chores in those days. We didn’t just come home and turn the faucet on when we wanted to wash our hands. We had to carry water from the well, and fill the wood box because we had a wood burning stove. So we had quite a lot of chores to do, but we always had a lot of time to play too.

“For discipline the teachers would take a ruler and whack us on the hand. I remember that very distinctly, because one time we locked the teacher out and we wouldn’t let him in.

When he came in, Man Alive! We got a whacking! I guess the school was built in the early 30's. The teachers were always husband and wife combinations. Oh, we had some that were good and some that were not so good. But essentially they were very nice people really. The teachers were never missionaries. They were BIA teachers. I taught school here for one year: I was an assistant teacher. It was in the 40's and I taught grades 2nd and 3rd.

“After I finished the eighth grade my sister Nellie and I went to Eklutna Boarding School, to start high school. I didn't come home at all for the summer when I went down there because in those days you had to pay your own transportation. Your transportation was not paid by BIA or whatever. So in the summers, I would go to work in the hospital in Ketchikan, and I would also board there, too, in order to make spending money for the winter. I just stayed down in Wrangell all the years I was going to school down there. The boarding school that I went to was not so much academic training as it was vocational training. There was not near as much subjects as children have now. I think that they have a much broader program than we had when we were going to school.

“I worked in a cannery; canning salmon when I was 13 years old. I used to case up and then later on I worked putting the tops of the cans on. I guess that they call it the 'clinchier.' We used to work long hours, sometimes late in the night and we went back early in the morning. We started in June and then we worked till the middle of August or so. Most of the ladies used to work in the cannery: most of the men would be fishing. The cannery I worked in was the Grimes Packing Company. It was operating ever since I remember and I was born here, so as far as I remember it was here a long time before that. There were canneries in Kodiak and other canneries around the Island, but Grimes' was the only cannery in Ouzinkie. Most of the local people fished for the cannery here. It kept people very busy in the summer time.

“The cannery had its own fleet of boats and they had their own packers, you know, that would pack the salmon. I don't think that there were too many outside boats in those days. They were mostly local fishermen.

“When the boats came in, they would pew it out; and it would go into the cannery — up the elevator and to where the heads were sliced off. Next, the fish was opened up and then there was a bench type of thing where ladies would slime the fish. That's taking the inside blood and that kind of stuff out. From there it would go to fill the cans. The fish would be cut and filled into the cans. Then it would go to another table where ladies would weigh the can to see if it weighed one pound. If it didn't they would put more in or take some out to make it exact. From there it went to have the tops put on to seal the cans. After that, it would go to the cooker and it would stay n there for awhile. After it was cooked, it would come out and go to the case up crew. It was quite a long process. It was fun to work in the cannery. I think that most people enjoyed it because everyone got together then. It was hard, tedious work, but everyone kind of enjoyed working.

“In those days I don't think there was an age requirement, because I was working when I was 13. Certainly you don't go out and work anymore when you're 13 years old.

The cannery was the only industry in town, and if you wanted to make money, that's where you worked. I don't remember exactly what I was making when I finally stopped working, but when I first started, we were doing case up for \$.25 an hour. The canned fish went down to the states and from there I don't know. It probably went to markets that they had. The freighters would come in the fall to pick up the pack and take it out. The cannery had its own generator which they used for processing. It was located above the cannery on the hill. They also had reservoirs of water. Of course, there was running water in the cannery which was used for processing. They used to import people to work; they had a bunkhouse for them to live in.

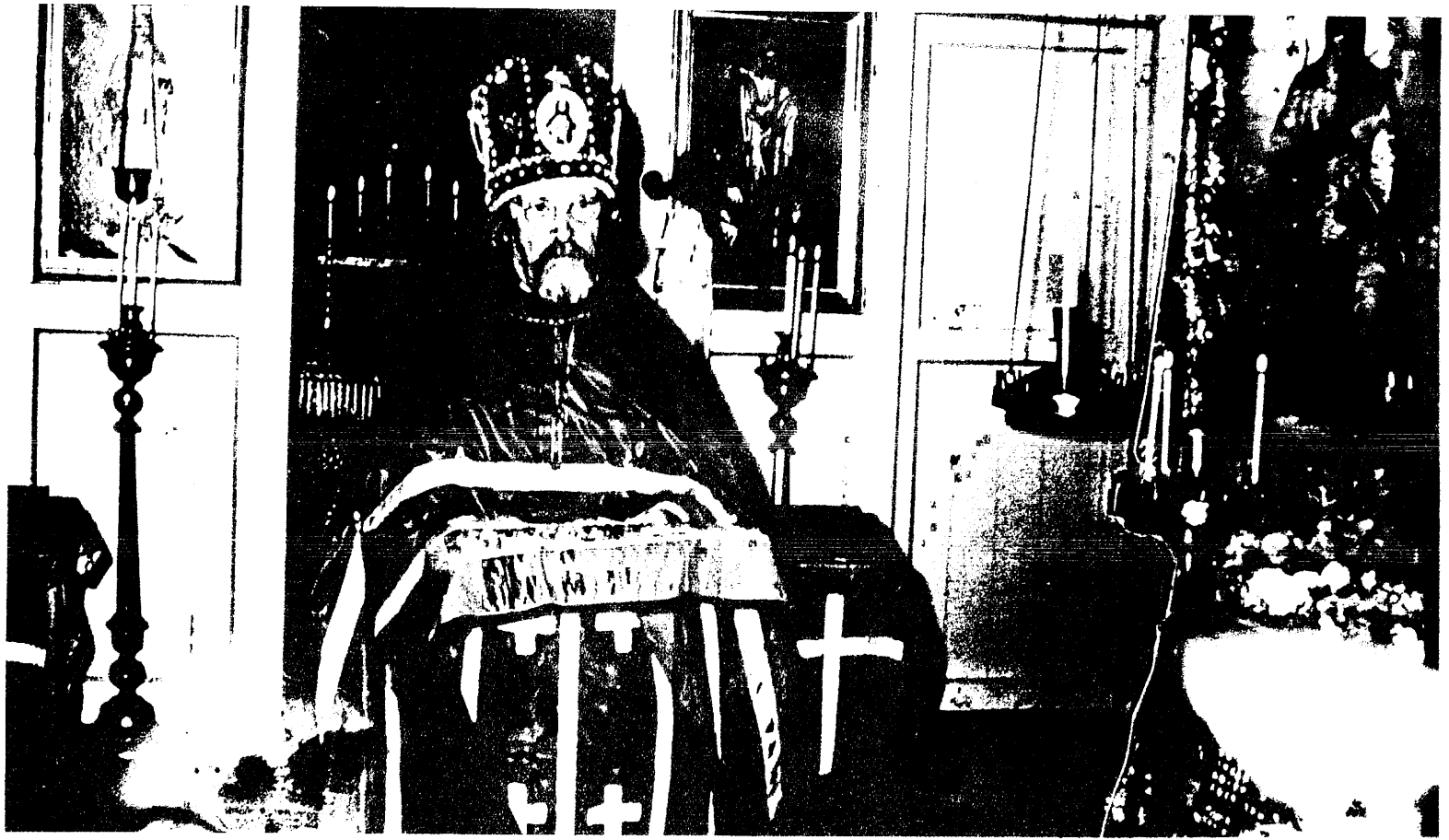
"When the mission was built in 1938 or '39, there were two lady missionaries that came over with the children. They were here a long time. I wasn't here when the Norman Smiths came, though. That was after I had gone away. The kids from the mission went to school where the other kids did. I imagine that most of the kids were orphans. I don't remember their parents ever coming over, so I think they were orphans. They weren't necessarily from Kodiak, because there were some from the Chain also."

"We did not have a health aide here then. You would have to be taken to Kodiak . . . or just get well by yourself, I guess. There were mid-wives in town, but no one used to take herbs or anything like that. When you wanted to go somewhere or work anywhere, you had to go on the boats that would come in and they wouldn't come in very often. It was the Alaska Steamship Co. that used to come in those days, you know. If you needed to go away, you'd have to get a boat to come in, and maybe it would come in once a month or once every two months. In those days it wasn't easy to just jump on an airplane and go to another part of the state or down to the states and find another job, because there weren't any airplanes in those days . . .

"I really can't remember too much about the war. I do remember the year my sister and I were in Eklutna. It was in the spring time and we were coming home in the boat. It was really scary for us because it was when the Japanese were bombing Dutch Harbor on the Chain. In the spring the school was closed because the military came up there and took it over. After that, if we wanted to go to school, we had to go to Wrangell Institute. That's where I went to high school the rest of the years. When we got to Kodiak, everyone was saying, 'The Japanese are going to be here soon!' They were digging trenches in the hills and everything else. You couldn't have light shining through the windows. You had to have shades over them. In Kodiak you couldn't keep the headlights lit on your car. The Japanese came quite close and it was really scary for people in those days. After that in the fall, I went to Wrangell Institute.

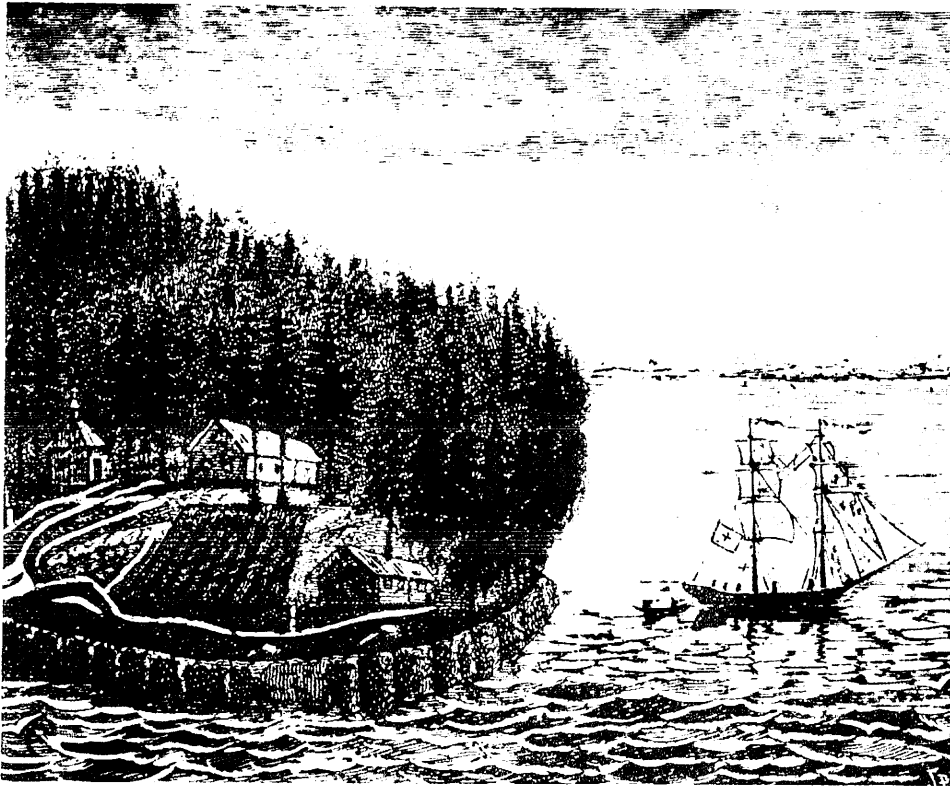
"Actually I wasn't around here very much for the war years. A lot of boats were taken over and used by the military. It wasn't easy to go anywhere, either, because everything was taken over by the military. You know, they told you when you could and couldn't go anywhere. And of course, they had the submarine nets across by Kodiak over there, and you had to get permission to go through that area."

When our interview was over, we all felt grateful that Dora had shared her experiences with us. We felt that she had helped us to learn about our past.



Father Gerasim **by Anna Rae Bent**
as told by
Dorothy Morrison

“Father Gerasim Schmaltz came to the United States in his early twenties. He was already a priest when he came from a little town called Aleksin near Moscow. He couldn’t speak English when he arrived in New York in 1915. He spent his first year in New York where he was a Bishop’s helper and priest. In 1916 he came to Alaska with Bishop Philip to Sitka. In 1917 he came to Afognak Island and in 1933 Father Gerasim moved to Monk’s Lagoon where he built a small chapel. He spent many of his summers in Monk’s Lagoon. He built a little house that is still standing. It’s right by the little chapel and you can see it before you go to Father Herman’s chapel. His house was fixed up like a little doll house and everything was handmade.”



Early 1800's rendition of Monk's Lagoon

“The common knowledge of respecting your elders started to fade, probably when education came into the picture or maybe it was during the war when all the military moved in. The people around the island saw a different kind of life style, and maybe then it was phased out. It's not all that bad but I don't think that it is as strict as it used to be. In those days I think that it was passed down from generation to generation to always respect your elders and even more so to respect the priest.

“Father Gerasim had a fairly good sized family. After he got to the United States a revolution broke out in Russia and many times he would go for months without hearing from his family. After the revolution he had only one surviving sister. The only reason that she survived was that she married a communist in order to survive. Her name was Vera. When his family did write, and if the letter got to him, they couldn't mention any religious feelings. Father Gerasim could not be addressed as a priest because of the anti-religious sentiments in Russia at the time. If you had a priest in your family you would be mistreated. Father Gerasim tried to send over packages and I guess that some of the packages of flour and things made it back over to Russia. Then again he was never sure and when they wrote to him they could never come out and say what was happening. Everything was in a turmoil and he just hoped that everything was all right.

“In the months when it really got cold, people would go over and bring him back to Ouzinkie. He could no longer catch his own fish and it was really hard for him as he got older. He just stayed in Monk’s Lagoon during the summer months, living off what he had there. People would stop in and bring him a few supplies. He became a monk; he was to never marry or have anything of real value. He became an Archimandrite which is an important position in the church. His whole life was dedicated to teaching. Father Gerasim was offered the position of Bishop several times but he turned it down, because he didn’t want to leave Monk’s Lagoon. If he had accepted the position, he would have had to leave and go to Sitka. He wasn’t after that; he just wanted to live all his life in Monk’s Lagoon.

“Whatever Father Gerasim’s income was, he sent it out as fast as it came in. He received a small pension from the state or church. There were many orphanages that he contributed to yearly. Father Gerasim adored children. He had a way of talking to you and you got the message. It seemed to me that if you were guilty of something, he really didn’t have to say it; it was inside of yourself, you just felt the guilt just by having him talk to you. All he had to do was look at you during the service and you felt the guilt if you had done something wrong. If you were talking or playing in Church, he would come and tap you on the shoulder and tell you to be quiet. That was the biggest punishment; to be picked out of a church service for anything, that was the biggest embarrassment. He didn’t have any other punishment. It was degrading just to have someone look at you during a service. Many times he didn’t get after the child that was misbehaving. It was the parent who did because the parent is supposed to correct the child. If they didn’t it was as if the parent had committed the sin. In early years it seemed like we had a larger crowd, a more steady crowd and services were more regular.

Father Herman’s prophecy that “Many years will come after my death, but I will not be forgotten, and the spot where I live will not be empty. A monk like me who will leave behind him the emptiness and vanities of this world, will come to live on Spruce Island and this place will not be unpopulated.” Father Gerasim Schmatz fulfilled that prophecy. He died in his sleep in his seventies.

Fr. Gerasim as a young man





MOSES MALUTIN

by
Gene Delgado

I wanted to interview Moses because of the many stories he has told me in the past. Moses appeared to enjoy talking and sharing these events in his life.

“I was born on July 13, 1917 on Afognak. I moved to Kodiak when I was about five years old. The Russian priest sent for my dad to come over to Kodiak to be a choir leader.”

“Ever since I was a kid, I made boats. My sisters used to play paper dolls and they used to put them on boats. I’d make the boat tip over (he said with a laugh), but anyways I had lots of boats.

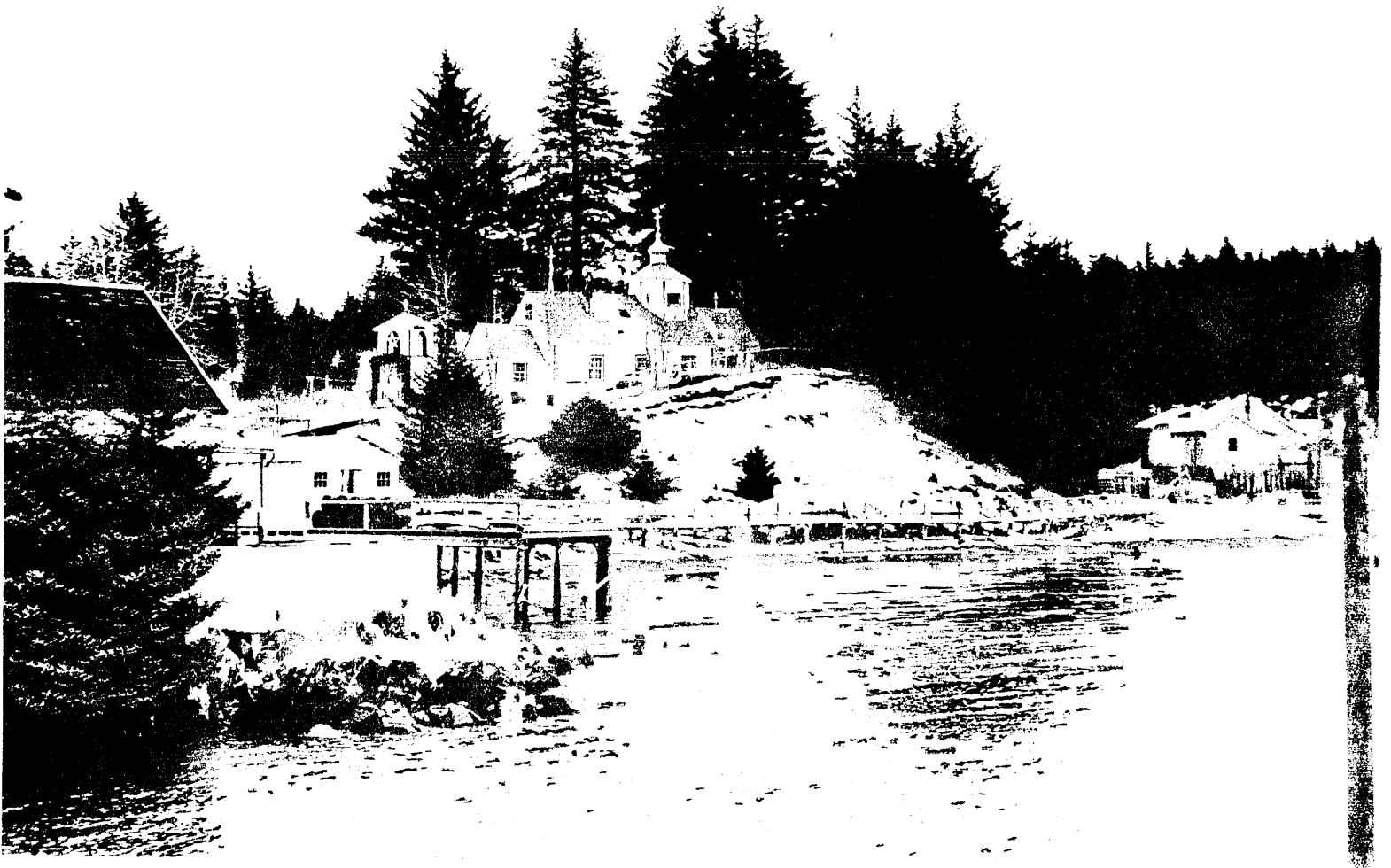
“The first boat I had was the *Sea Bay*. We built it ourselves behind the post office in Kodiak, Bobby King and I. I was a delivery boy for Urskins at that time. After that I had so many boats: UF2, Rose Ann, SJ9 and 10. Oh gee, there were so many more. Then I lost my last one on the tidal wave. I fished all my life. The first year I went fishing with my grandfather. I was just a young kid then, and we fished for Katmai Packing Company and seined at Sheratine Bay. I was about 5-6 years old. Once I went over the stern of the skiff! Good thing that my shoe packs caught in the cork line or I’d probably have gone down!

After the fishing season, Boy, I had a pay day! My grandfather gave me a whole nickel! To go and buy myself some candy (laughter)! Fish was worth one cent a humpy and \$10.00 for a thousand. But now, Holy Smokers! And there isn’t enough of them. I wish that there were more fish, then we’d get richer! Red salmon was only getting about 25-30 cents a fish. I started fishing in the little creek behind my grandmother’s place; I’d catch little trouts. After that I got big enough to fish in the Pacific Ocean. I always had fish no matter where. I always liked fish anyhow. They are the best food and if I ever run out I always caught fish, even if I had to use a can opener.

“As I grew up, every year it changed. Prices and groceries, everything went up and naturally the fishermen asked for more for the fish, so it’s way up there now. Prices are still going up. And I don’t know, it’s hard telling, this coming summer I don’t know, but it seems like there is not going to be much fish.

“When I first came to Ouzinkie, I was six years old. I stayed with my grandmother. My grandfather was a choir leader and they used to live in the location where Ada and them lived. We were brought up in that place, right there. Gee, we used to have a shed, banya, chickens and all kinds of things. When we moved back to Kodiak, my grandmother passed away on Easter night at the Russian Orthodox Church during midnight services.”

“When I went to school, a lot of girls asked me to marry them. But I never wanted to change my last name, so I didn’t; I said no! But as I grew older a lot of women asked me why I didn’t get married. I always tell them I had a lot of chances to get married, but I always sobered up in time!”



TANNER CRABBING

BY
LISA BENT
AND
JO ANN TORSEN



Theodore Squartsoff is a fisherman of Ouzinkie. He fishes to support his family. He fishes all year long.

Theodore's nickname is Smitty. He is a Los Angeles Lakers fan who hates the Seattle Supersonics.

We went out on his boat while he was tanner crabbing. He fishes on the Sharmon Mae.

As we climbed down the ladder for our trip, we were wondering if we would see anything exciting.

We watched as they pulled up the pots, but they only caught three crab big enough to sell.

Theodore has been tanner crabbing for three years. He fished on the Ironside for one year and leased the Sharmon Mae for the last two years. He fishes with two crew members.

One year he fished in Uganik Bay and the last two years he fished in Marmot Bay. He owns 75 crab pots.

This season they were paid \$.65 a pound for crab at the beginning of the season and were getting \$.75 toward the end. He sells his crab to Swiftsure.

This year the season opened on February 1 but there was a strike that lasted until February 24. The season ended on April 10.

Theodore says it was a pretty good season, better than last year. They averaged about a thousand crab a day; they only can keep the crab that are 5½ inches in length or bigger.



Theodore goes out when the weather is nice. He tries to leave the dock by daybreak, if possible. They try to get back before dark after moving and picking the gear. This year he had a problem with someone picking his gear!

For bait they use herring and fresh cod. The crab has to be kept in water. They should be kept in a live tank with good circulation or else in a live sack that is placed in the sea.

He fishes in water from as shallow as 30 fathoms to a depth of 140 fathoms. His pots are all 5x5s. The most crab that he ever had on his boat was 5,000 crab or 15,000 pounds.

He puts the bait in a quart container or in a bait sack. He catches a few cod,



sometimes king crab and halibut if the crew doesn't put the tanner boards on right.

A hydraulic pot puller pulls the pots out of the water: it takes about 5-6 minutes to pull an empty pot up and rebait it. They average about ten pots an hour.

Theodore plans to lease a boat for one more year and then hopefully buy his own. He usually pays his two crewmen 15 percent each, the boat lease gets 30 percent and he gets 40 percent. He pays for the fuel out of his percentage and the crew and he pay for food and bait together.



WASKA

by kevin smith and
anna rae bent

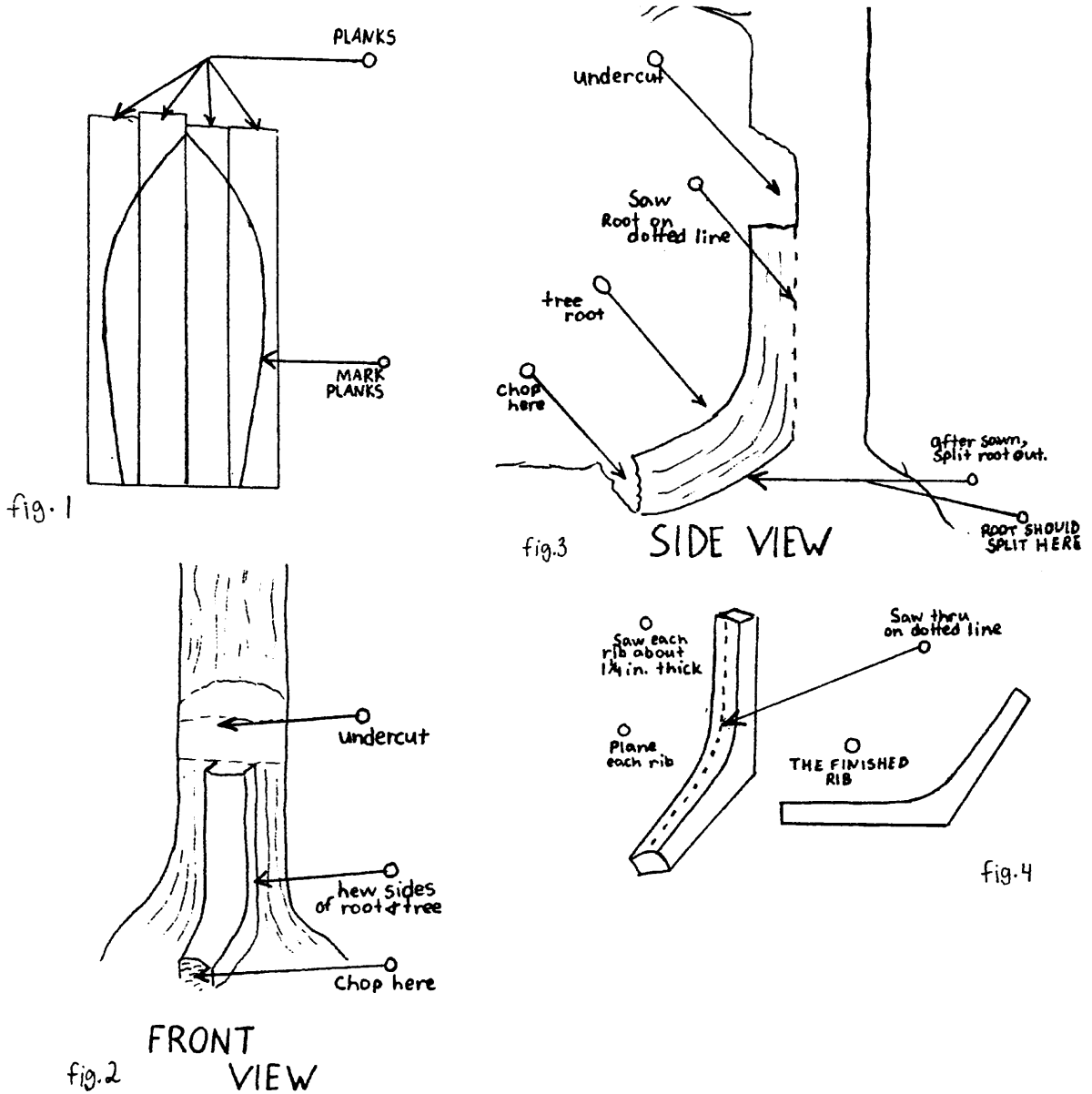
It was a cloudy October day when we went to interview Waska. His name is Bill Boskofsky, but we all call him Waska. When we first saw him, he was hauling blocks of wood with his old fashioned wheel barrow. We began talking to him on his experiences with boat building.

“I built my first dory when I was thirteen years old. Nobody taught me how to build boats. I did it all by myself. I had my own tools; all the clamps and things for building a skiff.

“I’ll tell you how to build a skiff. You’ve got to have some wooden saw horses. You lay the lumber on top of the horses and get the clamps on. Put the board on one side, with the clamps holding it up. Put the clamps about three feet apart. Then mark the strips one by one. Mark the strips to the right size, then after you mark it, you take the clamps off. Next you rip them. [Fig. 1] After you’re done with that, you put them together again and start putting the ribs in.

“The ribs are wooden, for the dories, you know, where you put the boards, where you nail them on. You gotta cut a big block off from the tree and then trim it off. And rip them all the way, for as wide as you want them. [Fig. 2-4]. Then after you get done you plane them. Lots of work. Then after everything is done, it will take you only a couple of days to put it together.

“We used to get lumber from Grimes. He used to have lumber here, before. The last time I got lumber from Port Bailey. And before, we used to use hand saws, you know. One on top and one on the bottom. Two guys sawing. We used to use Spruce trees for lumber. We made lumber that had no knots. We picked the good logs. You could just look at them



with your eyes. If they had knots, they weren't any good. If they didn't they're good. And just knock that tree down.

"Zack Chickenoff's dad in Afognak told me, 'I don't have any lumber for my skiff.' So he asked me to build him a dory. I told him that it's not that hard to make lumber. So the next morning we went across the swamp, and across the lake.

"So we knocked two trees down and hewed them there. We made a high horse. That's where we were gonna saw the lumber. I marked it with real dark lines, so he could see, you know. He told me that it was hard for him. I said, 'You'll learn.' The first board wasn't bad. The second one better yet. The third we went all the way. The thing he wanted was a 12 foot skiff.

"Two days it used to take me to build a skiff. I used to work fast. I built lots of boats all over. I don't know how many!"

We really enjoyed our interview with Waska. We found out that he was a very nice person. During the interview he really made us feel comfortable. He was very generous with his information. We felt happy to have gotten to know Waska better and we learned so much about boat building.



THIRTY YEARS AROUND THE ISLAND

THE STORY OF
JOYCE SMITH

BY
NICK PESTRIKOFF
AND
LISA BENT

Mrs. Smith has lived in Ouzinkie for over twenty years now and she is our health aide and our preschool teacher. I don't know what we would all do without her. Here is her story:

"It all started over on Woody Island in 1936. The first mission was over there so they started a children's home because there were so many homeless children. In 1937 there was a big fire on Woody Island which burned down the main dormitory. At that time they decided that they would move over to Kodiak because it was bigger than Woody Island was. They built the three mission houses in Kodiak. They wanted to have a family type of home instead of an orphan home where all the boys stayed in one dorm and the girls in another.

I came here, you see, in the summer of 1951. I came in May to take the place of one of the house mothers. She was away on furlough and I came to take her place so that I could be closer to Norman, really! He was coming up to operate the Evangel. And I was here from May until the middle of July. Then the children and I spent about six weeks with Norman on the Evangel. We went to various villages all around Kodiak and we saw where we were going to live in Larsen Bay. That was the first time that we saw our tarpaper shack

where we were going to live. But we had to go back because Norman had one more year of seminary before he graduated as a minister.

“We came back in May of 1952 to stay for good. Well, I really started in Larsen Bay. In those days the public health nurse came twice a year and that was all the medical service we had. There wasn't plane service then. There might have been a charter once in awhile. The mail came by boat twice a month. The public health nurse would start giving D.P.T. shots. She'd give the first one but she couldn't come back and give the other shot, so the next time she'd have to start all over again. The first thing I was taught to do was give shots so that I could give the kids the second and third shots. The nurse asked me to do that.

“Mary Setzekorn. They called her Setze, she was the house mother here. She was a nurse and she kind of took care of Ouzinkie. When the children's home closed she was sent somewhere else. She went to Montana to work so that left Ouzinkie without a health person. The public health nurse then had me as a health aide in Ouzinkie. In those days we didn't have any clinic place, equipment, blood pressure cuff or anything like that. I used a lot of home remedies that my mother had taught me. We had to. We didn't have any penicillin or a lot of those drugs in those days. We had immunizations that we could give. We used to give a lot more than we do now. Everybody had to have a typhoid shot and everybody had to have a smallpox vaccination. When I first came here a lot of people had tuberculosis. There was at least one child that died in the village of tuberculosis and even after I was living here a little girl that was in my kindergarten was found to have active tuberculosis. She had to spend a couple of years in A.N.S. before she was well.

There were a lot more health problems then, than we have now. One of my first memories about health problems was that first summer I was here in 1951. A little boy got sick. A little two-year-old. Very sick. It was a very stormy day and they chartered the cannery tender to take him to the hospital. Setze, who was the house mother, went along with him. I remember the mother carrying the little boy along the trail and Setze going down to meet him. The rain was just pouring and the wind was howling. It took quite awhile to get to town and the little boy really needed Setze's attention along the way. I think he probably had pneumonia.

“I really began to be a health aide before I took training. We had special courses from the public health nurse. I took a training course and every doctor that came around would train me. I also took Red Cross first aid courses. I learned everything I could from everyone that I could so that when I took my first courses in Anchorage, I got 100 percent on my first test that they gave me. That was the first time anyone ever got 100 percent on the test. I already knew the use of various medicines and other things. Apart from the training I had a lot of serious emergencies. One of the major ones was the time that there were three stretcher cases at once. We called the Coast Guard most of the time for evacuations. One time there was a man, I don't know how he did it, but he cut his head and it was just bleeding and bleeding all over. I had to try and stop the bleeding. The Coast Guard didn't come until 8:30 in the morning, that was as soon as they could come. I was grateful for the relative that came and tried to help. He was so bothered by the amount of blood that he'd go into the bathroom and get sick. But he'd come back out and help me anyway. Surprisingly, when I'd have a situation that was really serious, I just seemed to know what to do. When it was all over, I wondered how I could have done that. It comes naturally I guess. Well, everything that I learned I somehow remember when I need to. I've taken care of a lot of serious illnesses and emergencies and mostly everything has come out all right.”



FRED MULLER REMEMBERS

by Carl Smith
and Sheila Anderson

This is the story of Fred Muller and his life sailing in the Merchant Marines, working on a tender, and his life in Ouzinkie. Fred was born in Afognak in 1901 and started sailing when he was 17 years old.

“I was born in Afognak on August 27, 1901. When Katmai blew up (in 1912), we moved to Kodiak. This was before I started sailing down in the states. I worked at different canneries around here. I moved to Ouzinkie in 1926 where I married Julia Torsen. We stayed together for 11 years and then got a divorce. When I was in Ouzinkie I built a log house; while I was in Seattle it burned down. Julia picked that spot out when we got married.”

“You had to go in the woods those days. Things were kind of tough. You couldn’t buy lumber when you felt like it. You know money was scarce. So, while I was in Seattle, I was going back and forth on a tender. I didn’t stay here for several winters; I stayed in Seattle when I worked for the cannery. A couple of canneries and a herring saltery used to be here in Ouzinkie. I worked on a tender since I was a little fellow with my dad. When we lived in Afognak, my dad was a watchman on Alaska’s Packer Spit at Uganik Bay. During the

summers we'd go to Uganik Bay — Winds Island on Packer Spit. Packer Spit has a dock with a big warehouse. There are two bunk houses on each side of the bay. In those days they used steam for power like on the boat that I had. It had a steam engine in it, no bigger than the one I had to tow skiffs around.

“I later went to San Juan Fishing Company in Seward. That's what I did before joining the Merchant Marines. San Juan had a cannery and cold storage then. I'm glad that I joined the Merchant Marines. I was just eighteen when I started sailing outside. I sailed around half of the world. At the end of World War I when I was 18 was when I joined the Merchant Marines. I was on the Merchant Marine training ship Iroquois for my first sailing. I liked boats; that's why I joined the Merchant Marines. I couldn't sit inside the school, that's for sure. I was always looking out to see how I could get out of there. I had other things on my mind like seeing the world. I learned a lot from sailing on different ships. A lot of ships had their own nationalities; they talked their own language.

“After months on the training ships, you are sent out to deep water ships. I remember my first trip: I went to Portland, Oregon. then we went to Vancouver Island and loaded up with coal to take to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. From Hawaii we headed for San Francisco with a load of sugar for the refinery. In San Francisco we loaded up with cargo and headed for New York, through the Panama Canal. We got paid in New York, so I took a train back to Seattle.

“I was an ordinary seaman when I first started. Then you are on your own. Before you get a ship, you return to the Merchant Marine's union hall. They keep you there until they find another job for you. Once I got shipped on a freighter heading for Cartagena, Columbia. From Cartagena we stopped at Cuaco Island and then back to New York. That was my last trip on that boat. Then I headed back to Seattle. It used to take a train five days. There were no planes in those days. On one trip to Rotterdam, Holland, we were in the middle of the Atlantic. The ship was loaded down with coal and the ship hit a pretty bad storm. The waves smashed all the portholes in the bow, and they had us out of our quarters to other spaces. It lasted about three days. That was the worst trip in the Atlantic. It was sometime in 1918-1919.

“When I was in Seattle, the first World War ended. I got on the tail end of the war in 1919, but ships were still sinking because of lost mines. I know that we had to be up in the crow's nest to keep a look out during the day for the mines, (but during the night) they couldn't see, so forget it. Well after being in Seattle for awhile I was shipped out for a couple of weeks on another ship with a load of railroad ties heading to Philadelphia on the east coast. When we got to Philadelphia, we unloaded the ties and got paid. I didn't come back to Seattle the second trip. After that I was shipped out on an oil tanker from Philadelphia to Tampeko, Mexico. From there we headed back to Philadelphia.

“Most ships only made one trip. When you got off of the boat you'd be changing boats all of the time. In the Merchant Marines you ship out, going through the union hall, and you get paid in wages. Finally, I went to Seward and got the bookkeeper to write down to the Merchant Marines for my discharge.”

BANYAS

BY
SHEILA ANDERSON



A banya is a steambath. Banyas were around before the Russian occupation of Alaska. The Koniag people had underground homes and steambaths. The Aleuts began building banyas above the ground when they began to build their homes above ground also.

There are about five banyas in Ouzinkie. A banya is a small structure with a stove which is covered with rocks. People put rocks on the stove so that when water is splashed on the rocks, steam will be given off. Banyas were used to get clean as we use bathtubs today. We still use banyas here.

In the past they would get the rocks red hot. They would sprinkle water over them for steam and stay in there until they could no longer stand it. They would run to the ocean to cool off. When they got out of the water, someone would hit them with branches to get their blood circulating and their bodies warm again.

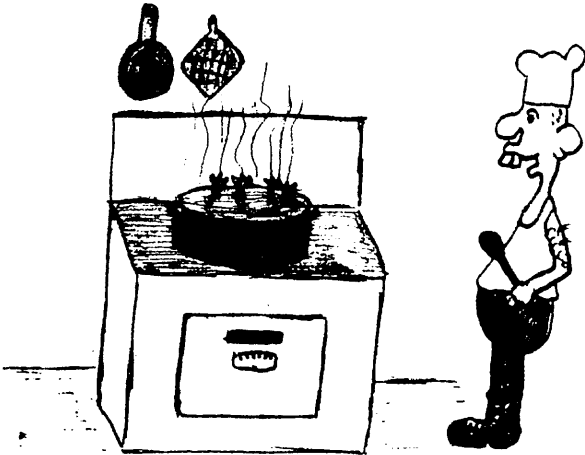
The stove for the banya is usually made from an old oil drum which has been drained and the oil burned off. The drums are cut to make a door and a hole for the stove pipe. Rocks are piled over and around the stove, and a big basin or wash tub is put on top to heat water. Cold water is brought in by hand or through a hose hooked up to a house faucet.

A banya usually consists of two rooms: the outer room for undressing which has benches, chairs and some hooks to hang clothes on; the inner room which has the stone covered stove, benches along the walls and nails on the walls to hang the washing basins. There are usually small holes on the floor to drain the water. Usually a banya can hold from one to four people.

Some of the things that are used in banyas today are “waniks” (alder branches with leaves) to hit the floor after splashing the rocks with water to make more heat and steam; a scrubber to wash yourself with, and soap and shampoo.

Taking a banya is a good way to get clean and can be an enjoyable experience as well.

LOCAL RECIPES



Smoked Salmon

First you have to make a brine to soak your fish. To do this, you fill a bucket with water and keep adding salt until the mixture is salty enough so that a potato will float in it. Then put in the cleaned fish and soak it for 2 hours. The next step is to smoke the fish. Hang the fish on poles in the smokehouse. Then light a smoldering fire under it. After two weeks are up you remove the fish and put them in cans to store for the winter.

Aladiks

Aladiks or fried bread is made with regular bread dough. Let your dough raise about an hour and a half. Then take a ball of dough about as big as an egg and flatten it until it is about a half of an inch thick. Heat grease in a pot until it is very hot. Drop the aladiks in and fry them on both sides until they are golden brown. Serve with butter, syrup and jam.

Duck Soup

2 ducks, medium size
2 large potatoes, cut up
1 large onion, chopped
4 carrots, sliced
2-3 stalks celery, sliced
½ cup rice, raw
Salt

Cut ducks into small pieces. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Season with salt.

Just before boiling point, skim off foam which collects on top. Boil 2 hours. Add vegetables and cook ½ hour longer. Add rice and cook another ½ hour more.

Bliny

A bliny is like a pancake but it is much thinner and richer. It can be eaten at any meal or at any time of the day. In Ouzinkie, bliny is prepared only during the week before Lent begins. The eggs and butter give it a very rich taste and make it a favorite prenatal food. Specific recipes vary but the following ingredients are used: flour, dash of salt, 6 eggs, ¾ cup or more sugar, and 6 cups of water. Batter will be very thin. Put flour, salt and sugar together, add water and eggs. Beat with an electric mixer 2 to 4 minutes until batter is thin and smooth. Lightly grease large frying pan, heat, pour batter in and cook about 3 minutes on each side. Spread with butter, jam or syrup and roll it up like a crepe. Serve it on a plate and eat it with a knife and a fork.

LOCAL WILD AND EDIBLE PLANTS



BLUEBERRY

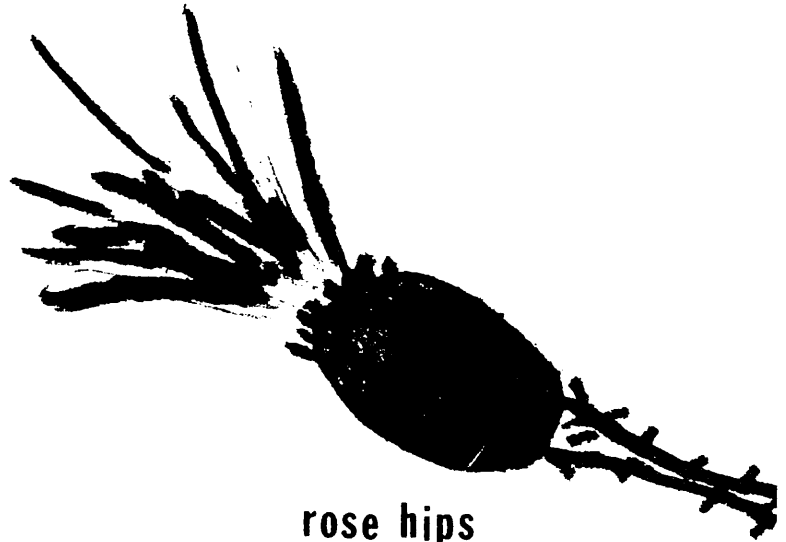
BY FRAN KELSO

Plant Name	Habitat	Edible Parts	Nutritional Value
FIREWEED	Burned-over areas, recent clearings, open hillsides	All parts (young plants)	Good source of Vitamins C and A
NETTLES	(Gather with care!) Fertile ground, forested areas	Leaves	Vitamins A and C Some minerals
WILD RHUBARB (Knotweed)	Moist open soil, as river-banks. Following landslides or forest fires	Young stems and leaves	Vitamins A and C. Serves as vegetable, fruit and nut
SOURDOCK	Moist ground	Leaves, seeds	Richer in vitamin C than oranges; more vit. A than carrots. Calcium, iron, potassium, phosphorous, thiamine, niacin, riboflavin.
LAMB'S QUARTER (Leaves smooth and white-powdered)	Disturbed ground, such as old gardens. (Can be cultivated in garden.)	Leaves, stems and seeds	More nutritional value than spinach. High in calcium, Vitamin A, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin
AMARANTH (Leaves softly hairy)	Likes rich, manured soil; along beach.	Leaves, stems and seeds	Vitamins A, B and C, calcium, phosphorous, iron and potassium.
GIANT HORSETAIL	Damp woods, gravelly hillsides	Top and stalk (inner core) New shoots on rootstock	Minerals

Plant Name	Habitat	Edible Parts	Nutritional Value
WILD CUCUMBER	Woods	Shoots, young leaves, berries	Vitamins A & C
DANDELION	Fields, roadside, or your lawn	Young leaves, roots	Vitamins A & C, minerals, thiamine, riboflavin, calcium, sodium, potassium
WILLOW (All willow trees have edible parts)	Along streams and rivers Young leaves.	Strip outer bark; eat inner portion.	Vitamin C. Seven to ten times richer than same quantity of orange
ROSE HIPS	Thickets and rocky slopes	Leaves, rose petals. Hips (fall & winter).	Vitamin C. 3 rose hips = 1 orange. Vitamin E (seeds) Grind, boil, and use juice.
INDIAN RICE (Chocolate Lily)	Open coastal meadows	Bulbs (dig in fall)	Carbohydrates
ALASKA SPRING BEAUTY (Purslane)	Wet places near running rivulets	Roots, leaves	Carbohydrates. Leaves, Vitamins A and C
ROSEROOT (King's Crown)	Rocky places and alpine meadows	Stems and leaves (Root also edible)	Vitamin C
LABRADOR TEA (Shrub 1-3½ ft. tall) Heath family	Woods, bogs & swamps.	Leaves	Vitamin C
SILVERWEED (strawberry-like runners. Silver underside of leaves)	Seashores, lakesides and streams	Roots. Leaves for medicinal tea.	Carbohydrate
GOOSE TONGUE (Seaside Plantain)	Along the coast	Young leaves.	Vitamins A & C. Minerals
WILD CELERY GROUP: (Parsley Family)			
COW PARSNIP (Pushke) Big leaves, flat flowers on top	Rich, low ground, thickets and seashore	Young leaf stalks, before flowers appear	Vitamins A & C
SCOTCH LOVAGE (Petroushke) Three leaflets, shiny leaves.	Sandy and gravelly seashores	Leaves and stalks	Vitamins A & C
WILD CELERY (Angelica) Flowers in umbrella-like clusters.	Moist fields or seashore	Young stems and stalks, and leaves	Vitamins A & C

PREPARING EDIBLE PLANTS

BY FRAN KELSO



rose hips

Plant Name	How to Prepare
ROSE HIPS	Boil leaves and petals of rose for tea. HIPS: Wash, remove the "tails," partly cover with water. Bring quickly to a boil and cook gently about 15 minutes. Use this juice for jellies and syrups or mix with other juice. Pulp can be saved and used for jams and marmalades. Good combined with low-bush cranberries. Wine can also be made with rose hips.
WILD CUCUMBER:	Add shoots and young leaves to salad for cucumber-like flavor. Berries may be combined with others for jelly.
DANDELION (When boiled, drain first water to avoid bitterness.)	Scrape, slice and boil roots and crowns in salted water. Roast and grate roots and use as coffee stretcher. (<i>E. INSLEY'S RECIPE</i>): Wash well, drip, but do not dry. Put in pan of butter. Add small pieces of bacon, crisp first. Turn often. Salt and pepper to taste. Cook until wilted. Beat an egg, add about ½ cup vinegar, mix, add to greens. Slice hard-boiled egg over top. Dandelion wine recipe available on request. Hang larger plants by roots, dry, crumble, use like parsley.
WILLOW	Peel outer bark; scrape inner bark and eat with sugar and seal oil. Called Keeleeyuk (to scrape) by Eskimos. Eat young leaves raw with oil. Inner bark may be cooked in strips like spaghetti or dried and pounded into flour.
INDIAN RICE (Chocolate Lily)	Dry bulbs; use in fish and meat stew or pound into flour.
ALASKA SPRING BEAUTY (Purslane)	Young leaves can be cooked as greens. Dig up root; clean and boil with jackets on. Peel and serve with butter and salt.
ROSEROOT (King's Crown)	Gather before flowers appear. Use raw in mixed salad. Cook as vegetable.



fireweed

Plant Name

How to Prepare

FIREWEED

Boil the young shoots, alone or with other greens, for a few minutes. Dried leaves are used for tea. Stems of young plants are peeled and eaten raw.

WILD RHUBARB

Young stems may be peeled and used like rhubarb. Leaves may be mixed with other greens and boiled.

SOURDOCK

Summer Salad: Young dock leaves are mixed with cress, dandelions, or mustard greens; season with oil, salt, pepper. Boil, steam or wilt in frying pan with water and butter. A green that keeps its bulk. (Older plants: drain away the first boiling to rid of bitterness.) Seeds may be used for flour or meal.

AMARANTH

Steam or boil leaves; serve with butter, or mix with other greens. Grind seeds for meal; good for making hotcakes.

GIANT HORSETAIL

Peel; add pieces to salads or stews.

NETTLES

(A SMITH'S RECIPE): Gather nettles when they are 2-4' high. Wash nettles in several waters. Have a saucepan ready. Pick nettles from rinse water; place directly in saucepan. The water clinging to the leaves will furnish sufficient cooking liquid. Cover and cook 20 minutes. Remove from heat; season with salt and pepper. Variations: Cook 2 tbsp. chopped onion in 1 tbsp. oil; add washed nettles and cook.

LABORADOR TEA:

Gather and dry leaves. Use about 1 tablespoon for cup of tea. Drop into bubbling water; remove from heat and steep 5 minutes. Sweeten to taste.

SILVERWEED

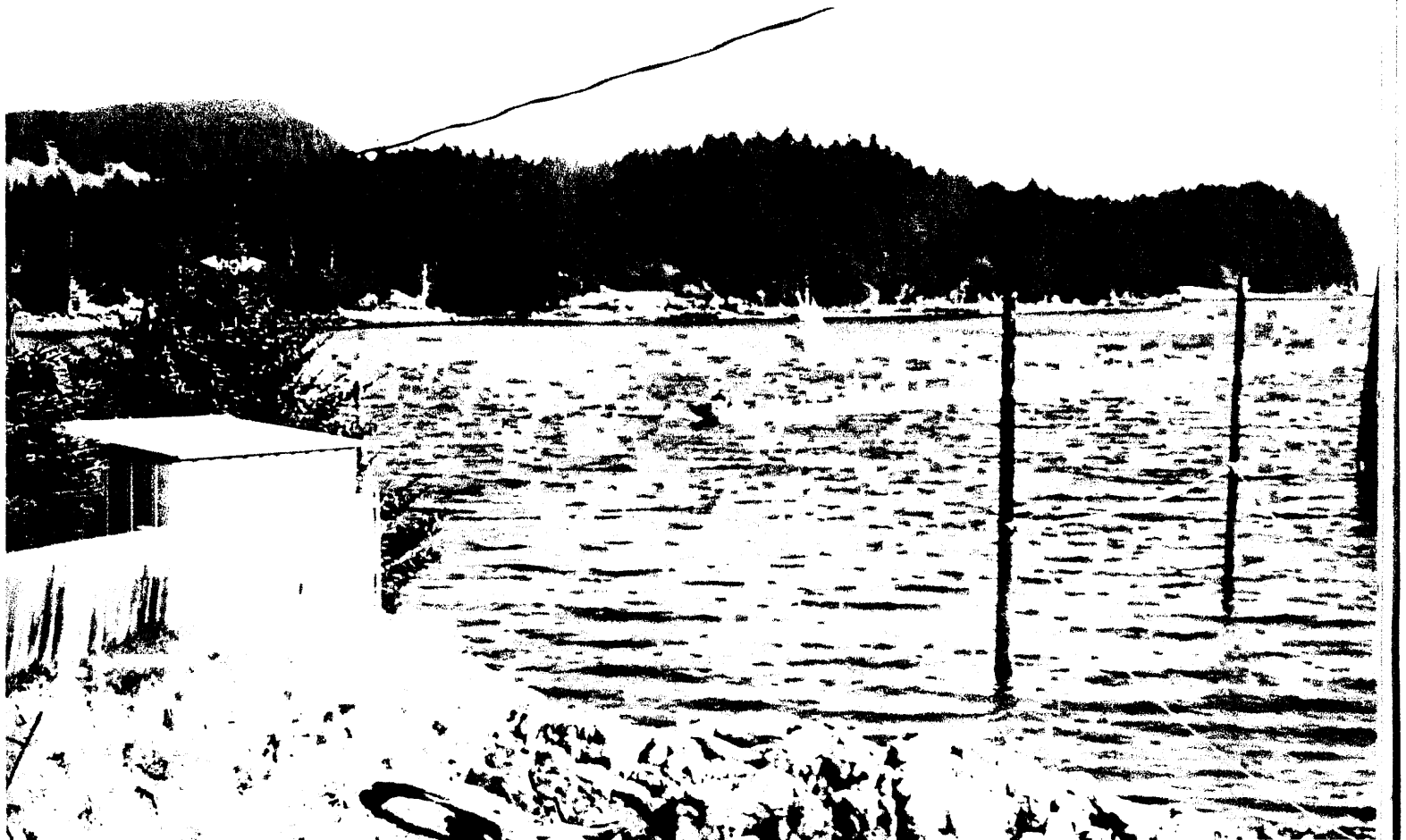
Dig up roots; boil, roast or steam. Taste a little like sweet potatoes. A tea from the leaves, drunk cold, helps relieve diarrhea.

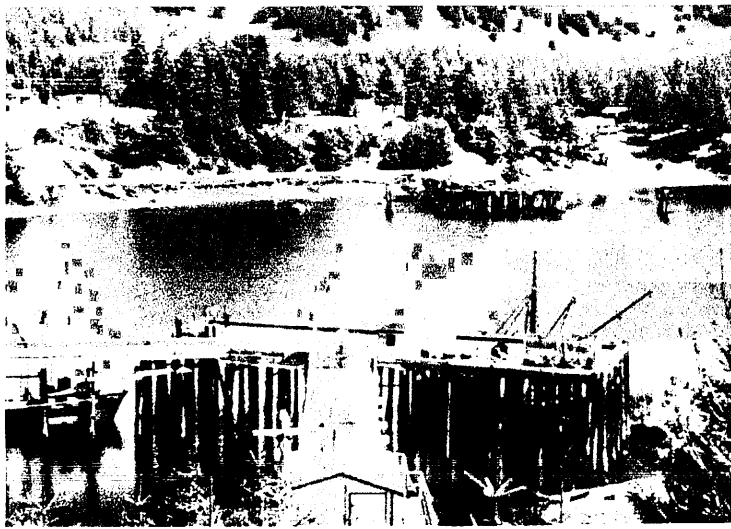
GOOSETONGUE
(Seaside Plantain)

Young leaves may be used raw in salads, or cooked like spinach. Older plants can be pureed and pressed through a sieve and served with cream sauce. Put ½ handful per cup of boiling water and steep ½ hour for tea.

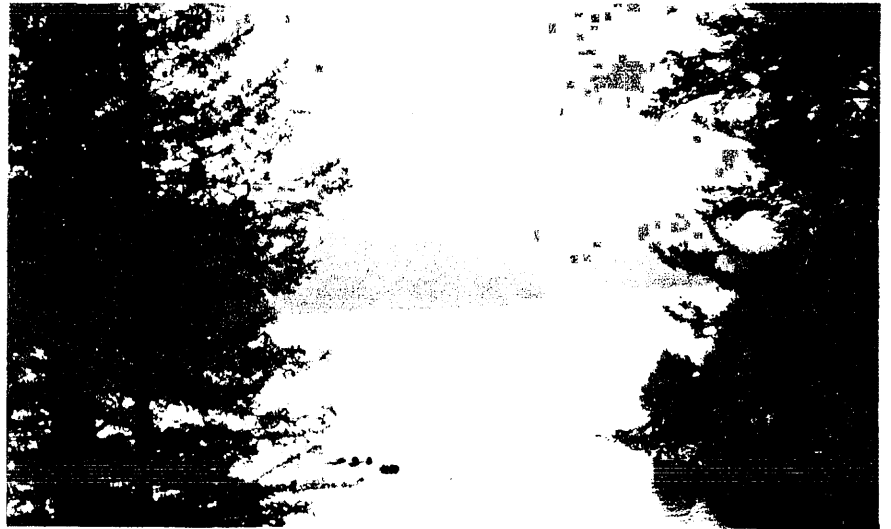


*A trip
through
Ouzinkie . . .*





*... Our
home
town!*



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