

Through the Storm Towards the Sun



Carol Feller Brady

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Through the Storm Towards the Sun



Carol Feller Brady
the daughter of
Elizabeth Kadashan James

a personal account
of life in transition
in Southeast Alaska

Written during the
International Year of
the Child

Finding and nurturing the
lost child within



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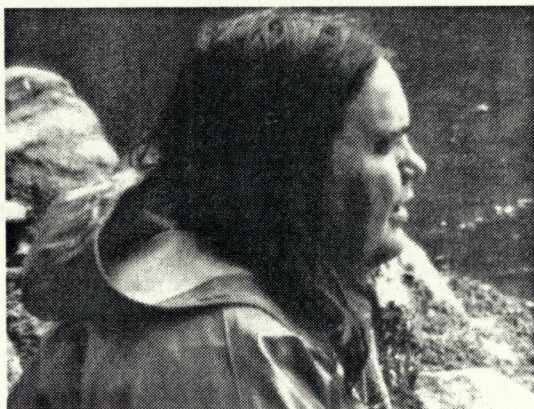
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Through the Storm Toward the Light

By

Grandson Gary Stevens

Tlinget Name Goosh-Tlein (Big Dorsal Fin)

*My body is a vessel, sailing through the night
Below me is the darkness above me is the light*

*Sailing through this ocean with a little spark of light
Given by a power that helps me through the night*

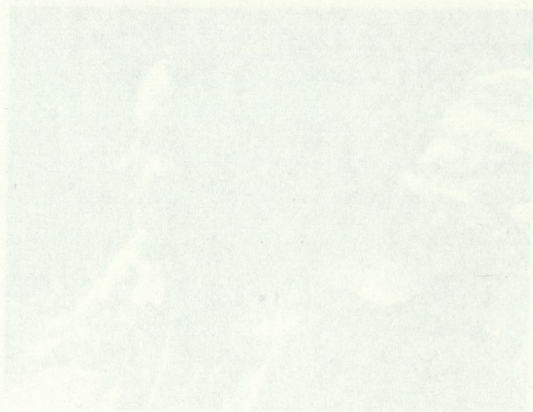
*This light that I feel always seems to grow – it
Comes from a feeling deep inside my soul*

It was given by the spirit for direction through the night

*Through the waves of looming darkness
Through Storm and Toward the Light*

*Gary Stevens is a Traditional Alaska Native Artist and Writer
working from his gallery in Washington State.*

This is Gary's first poem written at age 19.



Through the Storm Toward the Light

By

Gregory C. Stewart

First Name (Last Name) (First Name)

My body is a vessel sailing through the night
Below me is the darkness above me is the light

Sailing through the ocean with a little spark of light
Given by a power that leads me through the night

This light that I feel always seems to grow - it
Comes from a feeling deep inside my soul

It was given by the light for direction through the night

Through the waves of boisterous darkness
Through storm and toward the light

Gregory Stewart is a traditional blues singer from New Orleans
working from his guitar in Washington State.
This is Gregory's first poem written in 1973.

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Dedicated to my father, Major John

In loving memory of my husband,
Brother (Scott)
Parents - Major and Colonel West Bond

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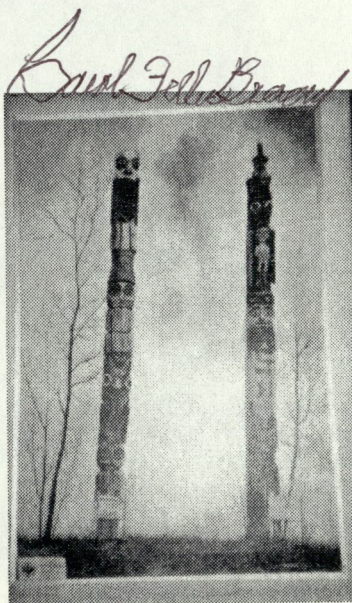
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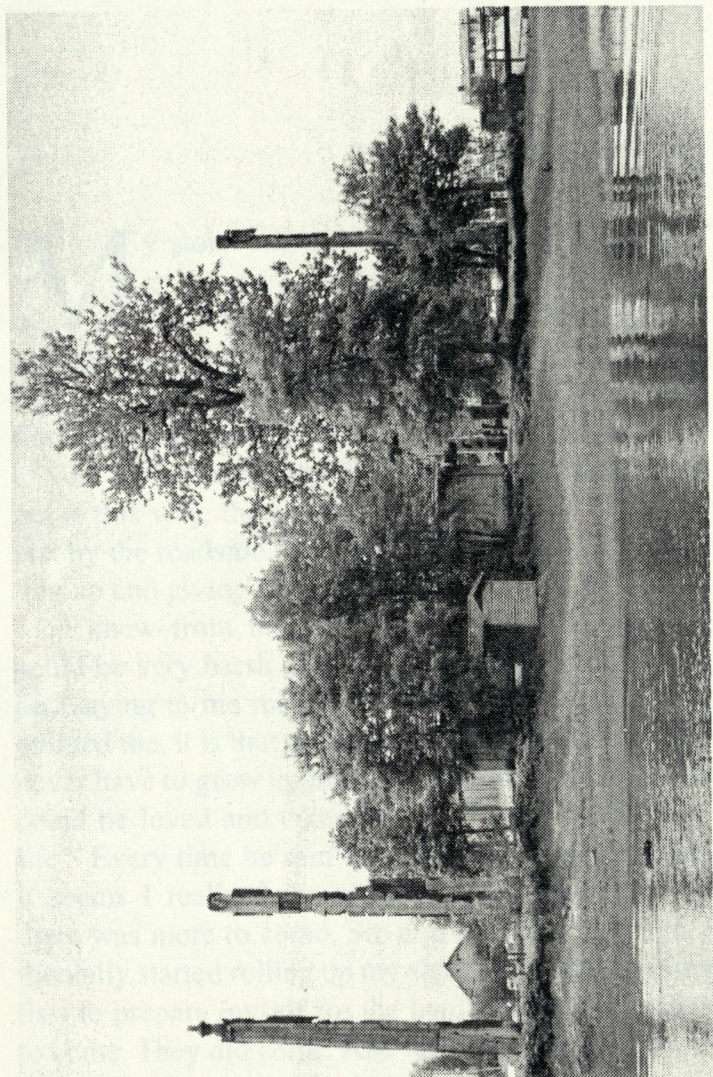
Carol Feller Brady



The Kadashans, painting of
Shakes Island totems by
Wilford S. Fykerude of
Wrangell



My Grandfather, Clan Elder John Kadashan Tlingit/Haida
originating from the Chilkat area 1850-1914.
Great orator and storyteller.
Guide for John Muir.



The Kadashan totems of Shakes Island, Wrangell Alaska

To My Five Children

My story was not written for the purpose of getting you or anyone else to feel sorry for me. All I want you to know is that a person can benefit by both good and bad experiences in life. I've always been strong in will, mind and determination. There were many times those traits were invisible to you. Those times must have scared you badly. Let's put it this way, those were the times I needed a little rest by the roadside. But not without intentions of getting up and giving her my best shot.

I knew from the time I was very little that life could be very harsh and cruel. I barely remember my dad saying to me more than once, "If I had one wish granted me, it is that you would remain a little girl and never have to grow up in this cruel world, and that you could be loved and taken care of for the rest of your life." Every time he said that to me from his sick bed, it seems I realized the situation was desperate, and there was more to come. So, at that very young age, I mentally started rolling up my sleeves, doubling up my fists to prepare myself for the hard knocks and bumps to come. They did come. And when they did they were like powerful gusts of wind that knocked me every which way and finally dropped me with a big thud. But as we all know

we are not ships that can be moored in a nice quiet harbor until the storm blows over. We have to learn to roll with the punches that life has to offer. Life is the biggest challenge of all. It's like the toughest teacher you've ever had. But goes on demanding of each and everyone constantly. It gets equally as tiring for everyone. That's why it's always nice for families to stick together. Do not let your purpose in life be defeated by what others may, or may not have done. A whole lot of what you have to do is still ahead. And while you are still young, you have the opportunity to examine your lives as individuals, even if it happens to be what you are doing now. Just make the best of it.

I wrote about the first ten years of my life as well as I could because those years had to be fulfilling, and so good that the memories of them just had to be enough to keep me going thru hell, and high water. There were so many cute and comical things that happened during those years. I used to love telling you those stories when you were little, remember? And also on looking back, I have to admire my family and the beauty of their faith, love, loyalty and togetherness thru thick, and thin. I must have gathered some of their strength too. Otherwise I would never have been able to live thru all their deaths. One by one. Until I was alone in the world. That is, until I had you, My Children.

The Storm

No, this is not about the weather. It's the story of my life. I was born January 1st, 1927 in Sitka, Alaska. I wonder if it was a stormy day. It seems to me as I look back, that there has always been a storm raging inside of me. Though the first ten years of my life were quite wonderful. We lived up in the Cottages. The people that lived there all had been students of S.J.S. founded by Sheldon Jackson, the first Presbyterian Minister to visit Alaska in the interest of Missions. Both Mom and Dad attended school at Sheldon Jackson.

When they got married they were allotted land on which to build a home.¹ My dad, Ray James, was a carpenter. He built our home. I have my Mother's Bible with me and in her own handwriting is written, Ray James and Lizzie Kadashan were married the 27th day of February in the year of 1902. My Dad after a long terrible illness that had him bedridden for eight years died when I was ten. I didn't know at the time that this illness was the result of overwork. It was the Depression. He held down two jobs. He had a job at Jennings Boat Shop during the day and after five 'till midnight he worked at the Pyramid Cannery doing carpentry work there. He was paying tuition for my two brothers Ray and John, and my sister Flora to live in and attend Sheldon Jackson School. He was well

rewarded. They all came out with flying colors.

My sister told me later about my beloved brother Raymond and how he graduated from high school in two years. All three won scholarships upon graduating which I understand were not easy to come by. While working at the boat shop my Dad bought an old boat from Scotty Jennings which he fixed up in good running order. It served as a nice, but small seineboat. This boat had a lot to do with the course of good, and bad events that were to take place in our family after it was put to float. It played a big role in providing a comfortable living for our family. The name of the boat was the "Eagle" in honor of the Tlinget Eagle Tribe.

My Dad was of the Raven Tribe, my Mother was Eagle. A marriage was blessed only if an Eagle marries a Raven or vice versa. All the children are born to the mother's tribe.

I've always had a good strong memory. Which is sometimes good, but for the most part, bad. When I think back – I barely remember the feeling of loss and tragedy that always seemed to be present in our home, and of this handsome man with black wavy hair that was my Dad, who was a very sick man. He looked so tall lying in bed. Always with a stern, proud expression on his face. I have a flash of memory of him before he became bedridden. He was pretending to march for me and was singing, "It's A Long Way to Tipperary". I barely remember laughing with glee and calling him "Daddy Long Legs". I found out later why he became such a sick broken man. Our family lost three beautiful little girls. They came down with a lung disease. They died one month apart. My Mother had borne eleven

000004

1 PLACE OF BIRTH

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

Precinct Sitka
Township _____
or
Village _____
Town Sitka (No. Mission Cottage Settlement St. _____)
(If in remote section, give distance and direction from town)

Territory of Alaska
OFFICE OF
REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS

2 FULL NAME OF CHILD Alice James
(If child is not yet named, make supplemental report as directed)

3 Sex of Child Female 4 Twin, triplet or other _____ 5 Number in order of birth _____ 6 Sex of mate? yes 7 Date of Birth Jan. 1 1927
(Answer only in event of plural births) (Month) (Day) (Year)

FATHER

MOTHER

8 Full Name Ray James

13 Full Maiden Name Elizabeth Rodak

9 Residence Sitka, Alaska

14 Residence Sitka, Alaska

10 Color or Race Indian Age at last birthday 44 (Years)

15 Color or Race Indian Age at last birthday 43 (Years)

11 Birthplace Alaska

16 Birthplace Alaska

12 Occupation Boatbuilder

17 Occupation Housewife

18 Number of children born to this mother, including present birth 11

19 Number of children of this mother now living 7

18 CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE (a)

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was born alive
(Born alive or stillborn)
at full term at 4:30 P. M., on the date above stated.
(State if born at full term)

(a) When there is no attending physician or midwife, then the father, householder, superintendent of institution, captain of vessel or other competent person should make this report. A stillborn child is one that neither breathes nor shows other evidence of life after birth.

(Signature) Ray James
Father
(Address) Sitka, Alaska

Given name added from a supplemental report _____ 1927
410

(Below this line is reserved for official purposes)

The above original CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH was filed for record in my office on the 22 day of January 1927 and has been duly recorded by me in Book No. 4 Record of Certificates of Birth, page 40
Sitka Precinct, Sitka (Town) Div'n No. one Alaska
Robert Armstrong
U. S. Commissioner.

TERRITORIAL REGISTRAR'S OFFICE
JUNEAU, ALASKA

This CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH received FEB 5 1927 Entered in Record of Births.

WELL McLOSKEY
Clerk to Registrar.

children. After the three little girls died, (their names were Ann, Helen and Ruth), there were my two handsome brothers, Ray and John and my sister Flora...who was always glaring at me. I have to laugh now when I think back. I wonder if she thought if she glared at me enough I'd shrivel up and disappear. Or if she didn't look at me, I wouldn't exist at all. That was probably when I started developing a deep feeling of defiance which said, well I'm here - what are you going to do about it? What can you do? I was a funny looking kid. When my brother Ray thought I wasn't around he would land into Flora and ask her why she hated me so much. He even predicted that someday everyone else in the family would be gone and Flora would be left to care for me. When that did happen she was not prepared for it. She could not seem to get her bearings after losing the family thru tragic deaths, especially our brothers. All her life she had had them to turn to for comfort and companionship. Without them she must have been lost and frightened. It would have been so much better if she had sent me off to some school when I was 12 right after our mother died. As it was, we got off to a bad start because we were almost complete strangers. The close family ties that existed when everyone was alive never did draw us close as sisters. I had become indifferent toward her early in life and it was not easy to change overnight. All she had even noticed about me was that I was mischievous, and a great opportunist, a common trait in all children, but those traits were soon labeled as my being underhanded and deceitful. This was frequently suggested to Flora by someone that visited with her a lot after I moved

in with her. I think she really started to believe those things about me and started treating me as if I were an enemy all the years that I lived with her. It dawned on her shortly before I was to leave that she might have grown to trust in me and even love me. But I had to leave. There had been too many sad events that took place during my stay with her. I can't truly say that the years I lived with my sister had everything to do with my illness, or, how my life turned out.

As it was, I was sickly as a small child. I had started school at the age of six, but had to be taken out of school for two years because of a spot on my lung. I had to start first grade again when I was eight. After I returned to school, my family really watched out for my health. I really don't know how my mother managed. But she did a good job of taking care of both Dad and me. She did this all so lovingly. Never complained. She was sick herself. I barely remember when she was sent to the Government Hospital over in Juneau. I only remember that the times she was away seemed to drag on, and, on. And how unbearably lonely I was for her. This must have been when I turned to Ray for the comfort of his love and guidance. It got so I depended so much on his being present that all my little friends thought he was my dad. I idolized him. I have to remind myself that all men are not like him. (Except for my husband Brookner (Scotty) Brady, who is just as loving and kind).

And my brother John was equal to Ray, but in different ways. Although he seemed aloof, and was always coming and going, he always had time to be a good big brother. And unlike Ray – he had no time

for a bothersome (little) sister. Especially if she tried to demand unnecessary attention. He was always firm, but very nice. A hero. (This was to cause his death). He was an all around athlete. He and Ray were really something else. No wonder Flora adored them. She loved to have them escort her around. Especially because they were all three very close in age. I can only imagine with envy how proud Flora must have felt to walk into any social gathering with a handsome brother on each side. Each of them was outstanding. Her life must have been empty after they died only seven months after Dad.

Now I want to write about some of the things that used to go on at home. When Flora, John and Ray were all there together. Ray was a big tease. He used to love to get a rise out of us. He usually would start with me. He used to poke me on the shoulder. I'd usually be sitting in the corner playing with my paper dolls. He would pick me up, stand me on the table, then he would tell me to "Holler shit for all your might"! My mother would say, "Ray, don't make her do that, she might do that at Sunday School". And when he found out that I was afraid of a man that I saw dancing the Fox Trot down at the A.N.B. Hall during a basket social – the man was a nice man – I'm ashamed of myself for being afraid of him. His Indian name was "Shuna Ghate". I was so small. I started crying while I was watching him dance the Fox Trot really expertly once. I once have been just tired. I feel bad about it. I must have embarrassed him badly. I remember he was always dressed to a T. So, after that, Ray used to get my attention away from my dolls by singing "Sweet

Ginny Lee” and dancing the Fox Trot real fancy. While grinning real big. At the end of the song he would put in his own words which went “E-Sunny Shuna Ghate... da da da da da dum.” He would make the last of the tune sound like an instrument. He would stamp his foot and then stand there like he didn’t do a thing. I’d start crying real loud. Then my brother John would tell me “Oh, shut up”. I’d do so. And turn my attention back to my toys. Which I had plenty of.

Then he’d start in on John. He would take John’s arm and say, “Hey Brudda (brother), what do you say we go to the restaurant for dinner tonight. I’ll have steak, you can have hamburger. Huh, what do you say? I’ll buy yours and you buy mine?” He would say this real loud. Just like it was a good idea that just dawned on him. As a response, John would pretend to pull his arm away real ruff, and he would reply, “Oh, go to hell.” But in spite of himself he would have to laugh and shake his head.

Then it was Flora’s turn. Ray knew she loved to keep up with the popular tunes. (The real standards now.) I used to love to listen to her sing them. She had a beautiful, well-trained voice. So, Ray would sing, and do his dance for her while she glared at him. He would pick the song that was most popular at the time and just crucify it. I remember the one that was liked by people of all ages. The name of it was “It’s Delightful, It’s Delicious, It’s De-lovely”. I remember when he sang that one real goofy while dancing his dance the Fox Trot. (One would think he invented that dance himself, the way he used to go at it). He never cut up that way at public places. He would always act so sophisticated,



Flora said she would always get a little humor when she thought how comical he would be at home and how as soon as he was out the door, he would be all business. If he wasn't heading down to the boat to work on it, he always had something to do up at Sheldon Jackson School

I didn't know that he taught a religious class with the Freshman boys at Sheldon Jackson School on Sundays. This was after he graduated. I only found out when he had Flora help him give them a party at the end of the school year. The only two of the young boys I remember were Ned Johnson, and, George Hamilton.

I know my family was all involved with Sheldon Jackson School. As students and later as alumni. Everyone who lived in the Cottages attended Church services on Sunday mornings. The little ones would all attend Sunday School after Church. There was a Sunday evening service. And if you missed going, you'd get asked why. As was the case with Uncle Peter Simpson, who never drank liquor, smoked, or, said a bad word against anyone. But, sometimes he would break down,

Opposite page.

The families who lived in the cottages, Totem Park, Sitka, about 1912

Bottom row from left: Dorothy James Truitt, Jennie Simpson Sing, my brother Ray James Jr.

Middle row: Tillie Howard Hope, Ellen's 'Mom', Mr. and Mrs. Sloan, parents of Mary Simpson Sing, my Mother, Elizabeth Kadashan James, with baby Flora. Dad, Ray James, and far right, David Howard, Tillie's brother.

Back row: Dad's sister, Olinda Bailey, Peter Simpson Jr., Mary Simpson, Peter Simpson Sr., with Baby, Jennie Willard, John Willard, far right, Dad's brother, Albert James



and go to the movie in town. (The best movies were always on Sunday). And since he was always such a devout Christian, the Reverend's wife, Mrs. Webster, would always confront him the following Sunday and ask him, "Where were you last Sunday evening? WE missed you". And since he was a man of a few words he would only say "I went to the show". Then he would be on his way. He had always been a good and loyal companion of Dad's. When Dad was well, Back in their younger days they worked together as carpenters and on the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood Hall.

They were both very good trombone players. They were with the group that formed a band back in 1928. A real heavy duty marching band. They titled the band "The A.N.B. Band".

I am so grateful to my relative Gil Truitt, the editor of the paper titled "The Voice of the Brotherhood", which is published in Sitka, Alaska, for sending me one edition in particular that I have saved over the years because of a write up in that paper explaining how the people of Sitka and alumni of S.J.S. formed the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood back in the early 19 hundreds. This is a very powerful organization that is still being supported by many dedicated, and smart

Opposite page:

On facing page: 50th anniversary party for Aunty Jenny and Uncle John Willard. In attendance were Sheldon Jackson School staff, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Superintendent, and natives from all over Sitka. A big thanks to Margaret Hope McVey for donating the picture, and to Harold Jacobs for printing the names on the picture.

people right up to this day. Now each community has a camp of their own. This includes all of Southeastern Alaska. And I understand there are some camps in Interior Alaska also and all the people involved are doing a great job. I was very proud to find out that my Mother, Elizabeth Kadashan James was one of the first Grand Presidents of the Alaska Native Sisterhood. This was included in a report which was brought back by Dick Stokes from the convention that had taken place in Sitka, in the early seventies. And a part of it read that a cash contribution was made by a kindly gentleman who could have been none other than my Mother's great, and dear friend, William Paul, the attorney. Dick read in the report that the cash contribution was towards the Sitka Convention in the name of Elizabeth Kadashan James.

My Mother was born in Wrangell and if I am not wrong, William and Louis Paul had been friends of hers all her life. Especially where politics were concerned. Those two men admired her highly - as she did them. She thought of them as true brothers. They were both among the founders of the A.N.B., and the A.N.S. I think she would have been better off if she had communicated thru the mail with William, or, Louis after losing my brothers, Mom might have gained some moral strength thru them. But she probably never gave it a thought. Maybe she still had hope the day following would be a little brighter. People were concerned about her during that time. So, once when she had a little too much to drink downtown, she was taken up to the jail in the Federal Building. Just until my sister could

come and get her. My sister would not go, but sent Al, my brother-in-law down to get her. Judge Knight told my brother-in-law that my mother had just gotten in an argument with two fresh young attorneys. And he said she really stood her ground on her part of the argument. The young attorneys went to look up the subjects and found out she was right. The Judge told Al that she was very smart, and knew her law also.

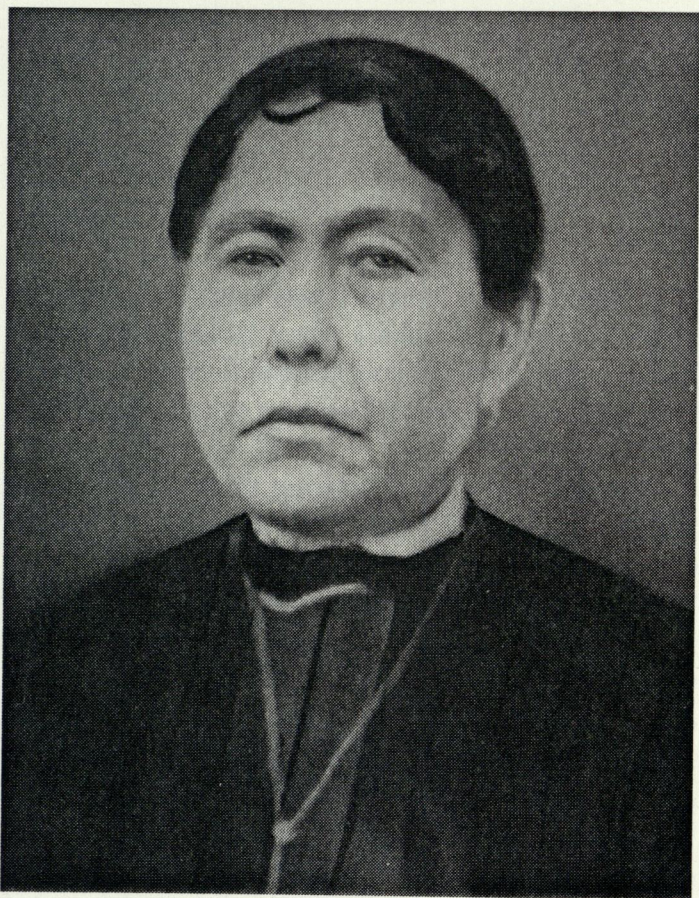
This was just a little of what my family was like. The next is on how the family worked to make a living during the Depression.

When I first started writing things, I remembered my father because I did not have a sister or brother closer to my age to play with. I guess that's why Aunt Fannie and Uncle Andrew were used to being Ed's Ellen up all the way from Iowa to play with me while they visit with my parents who were still filled with grief over the deaths of my three little sisters who had passed away only six months apart when I was only two years old. I remember the beautiful answers my mother gave me when I asked her why my sisters had to die. She said that they were God's special little children, that he had loaned to us for a short while, and that he needed them back in Heaven. She said that as little as they were, they were very religious and tried so very hard to assure all their loved ones that they were not afraid to die. They did this in their own sweet little ways. How hard it must have been for the family. When Ruthie was sick to death, she begged to go to see our grandma Carter, so she was bundled up and carried to Grandma's house that was at the entrance of Totem Park.

The Cottages

The Cottages where I was born is surrounded by three of Sitka's many beautiful historical sights. The Sheldon Jackson School, the Totem Park, and Indian River. Those were our unofficial playgrounds.

When I first started noticing things, I remember feeling bad because I did not have a sister or brother closer to my age to play with. I guess that's why Aunt Tillie and Uncle Andrew Hope used to bring little Ellen up all the way from town to play with me while they visited with my parents who were still filled with grief over the deaths of my three little sisters who had passed away only one month apart when I was only two years old. I remember the beautiful answer my mother gave me when I asked her why my sisters had to die. She said that they were God's special little children, that he had loaned to us for a short while, and that he needed them back in Heaven. She told me that as little as they were, they were very religious and tried so very hard to assure all their loved ones that they were not afraid to die. They did this in their own sweet little ways. How hard it must have been for the family. When Ruthie was close to death, she begged to go to see our grandma Cameron. So she was bundled up and carried to Grandma's house that was at the entrance of Totem Park.



Amelia Sloan Cameron, Matriarch of the Kiksadi Point House People of Sitka. Tlinget name "Yaandusgei." Carol Feller Brady's, Dorothy James Truitt's and Ronald Search's grandmother known as Grandma Cameron lived at the entrance of the Totem Park in a light painted house facing the ocean. A picture of it opposite page 96 in "Early Views" book put out by Sitka Historical Park, author: Kristen Griffin

When my brother John tenderly put her in Grandma's arms, she quietly passed away. Back in 1975 John Hope told Ellen and me that he was at Grandma's when the little girl died. Although he was very young at the time, he remembers how very sad it was. On looking back, I think the unusually strong ties that developed between Ellen, Tootsie (Lucille Sing) and myself were encouraged by our parents. Because the three of us were inseparable. I remember both Ellen and Tootsie were smart little girls. Although Ellen was the youngest of the three, she was always exceptionally bright.²

We three used to spend all our time together. Especially the wonderful weekends with Tootsie at her grandpa's big home just two doors from my house. She and her family lived with her grandparents, Peter and Mary Simpson. Mary always reminded me of a saint. She was so gentle and always so neat. I can still picture her in her big front room sitting at her piano playing hymns. Ellen's grandparents, John and Jenny Willard, lived one door down from Tootsie's. We loved their big old fashioned home. Three of us used to love to go and visit Jenny when she was home alone. We used to try to outdo one another telling her stories. I think we talked too much. Sometimes while we were there at Jenny Willard's my Grandma Cameron (Her Indian name was "Yaandusgei") would come to visit. It was always fun then. Although they only spoke Tlinget it was interesting to watch their actions as they sat visiting. We could always tell when the stories were nice and juicy because while listening to Grandma talk, Jenny would have a gleam in her eyes, while shaking her head back and forth. All of a sudden she

would suck in her breath and then say “Weh”! meaning “well”. And when it was Jenny’s turn to talk, Grandma would sit there looking very stern, all the while trying to pretend that she wasn’t really enjoying what she was hearing. Every once in awhile she would take a quick glance around, then say “Muh”! meaning “My”! with all the indignation she could muster up. Their visits must have been real breaks for both of them just to get away from the daily routine of housework, picking, and putting up berries, and sewing moccasins to sell when the tourist boats came in. They both looked just like beautiful old-fashioned grandmas should look. With long dresses, their hair done up neatly. I always loved the way grandma’s hair curled softly around her face. She had beautiful natural curls. At 89 she was taking care of three of my cousins. And of the three, the one I remember most was Bobby because he was so full of mischief, and full of adventure all the time. He was half breed and was fair. I always thought of him as a “Tom Sawyer” type with his faded, patched bib overalls, and light reddish hair. From the time he learned to talk, he spoke Tlinget, as well as English. His mother Martha died when he was around three, and his brother Donald was a little baby. (Martha was Dad’s youngest sister. I barely remember her but my oldest daughter Sue reminds me of her in looks.) I used to love to go play with little Bobby when I wasn’t with Tootsie and Ellen. He was so cute! Even if he was so little, he’d be talking right along with Grandma in Tlinget. She never would learn to speak English, but Bobby would act as the interpreter for her when

she would bawl me out because I didn't speak, or understand my own language, that I was ashamed of it and that I would be very sorry someday. I was already sorry then, as I am now. Bobby would get up very early every morning with grandma and grandpa Don, (He was Dad's step-dad. I never did know him very well.) Everybody always tot up very early at Grandma's. After feeding Bobby breakfast, she would dress him for the weather, whatever it was at the time, and send him out to play. I secretly felt like he was my very own little brother. Maybe he sensed this, because the first place he would head at 7 o'clock in the morning would be up to my house. One of my brothers would say "Oh, oh, here comes Bobby". He had a strong voice. Once morning he started singing "Jesus Loves Me" real loud. All the way from his house to ours. Maybe he thought if he sang that song loud enough he would be forgiven for what he did in Sunday School. He had told Miss Spoorhill the Sunday School teacher, that he had a verse for her and all the kids in the Sunday School. She seemed very pleased with him and told him to go ahead and recite his verse. So he stood up and said it like this. "The Church is on fire! The Church is on fire! Save the organ. The hell with the choir"! Well, needless to say, Bobby wasn't too welcome in Sunday School after that. My other parents, Mr. & Mrs. John James gave me a beautiful white fluffy kitten once and I loved it so much. One day we thought it got lost, or, hurt because we just couldn't find it anywhere. I carried on so that my mother finally broke down and said she was gong to check with Bobby to see if he

happened to know anything about my lost kitten. When she went looking he wasn't hard to find. She could hear him under his house talking away to someone. So she called his name. There was a short silence before he answered. And when he finally answered he tried to pretend that he was really happy, and surprised that it was Mom calling to him. He said "Oh, Aunty Lizzie, is that you out there? Mom said "Yes, it's me. Have you seen our kitten"? When she came in sight of him he was sitting on a water bucket that was turned upside down and he went into the act that he always did when he was not telling the truth by shrugging one shoulder so that it touched the side of his chin. And he would start to blink his eyes real hard while trying to look his accuser in the eye. This always gave him time to think of a good answer. When he answered Mom's question he said, "No, Aunty Lizzie, I didn't see the kitten, but I was just getting ready to go down to the park to see the pony. That is where I'm going right now, but don't look under the bucket while I'm gone". And off he went to see the pony. That was the pony that all the kids in town had their pictures taken on while riding it, or pretending to ride it. So, after Bobby was gone Mom picked up the bucket and sure enough, there was the kitten sleeping peacefully. I was so happy to have my cat back that I never did have it out with Bobby for taking it. I never could complain of being lonely when he was around. Sometimes I used to be afraid for him, he was such a little dare devil!

Like he used to ask this big manly looking woman with steel rimmed glasses for a nickel. When she was

going home from town she used to walk part way through Totem Park, and then cross the Indian River bridge to the road that led to Jamestown Bay where she lived. She never did strike me as a friendly person. I would not have asked her for the time of day - but not Bobby. It would have been a lot better for him if he was a little careful of people. One day he ran over to the lady with the steel-rimmed glasses and asked her for a nickel. This time she got angry and pinched him on the cheek and told him not to ask her for money again! He started bawling. I'll never forget how embarrassed I got. And the time I got scared because he got one of the S.J.S. boys real mad because he was calling him names in Tlinget. The boy said "I know what you're saying", and started toward us. Probably just to scare us, and he did. I couldn't keep Bobby out of trouble all the time because he just moved too fast for me. So, much as I loved him, I just couldn't handle playing with him every day. There was Tootsie and Ellen with all the exciting places to play, and fun things to do.

But our favorite was spending Fridays, or Saturday nights at Tootsie's. You would have thought that we three had initiated slumber parties. It was always delightful to wake up in the morning to the nice smells of breakfast drifting up from the kitchen. We would scramble out of bed, get dressed and go down where we'd find Uncle Pete (Tootsie's Dad) standing by the big stove with a smile on his face, and a cheery "Good morning this afternoon. We thought you young ladies were going to sleep all day". Then he would serve us his famous sourdough hotcakes smothered in butter

and homemade Maple Syrup. He was a very good cook, and used to be in charge of the dinners that the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood put on for big occasions at the A.N.B. Hall, and he would be chief cook for big banquets at Sheldon Jackson School. There was a song made up for him at S.J.S. that everybody would sing after the dinner was over that was very cute. I don't remember all of the words but it went - "Oh, Mister Sing will sing-a-ling-a-ling a little song for you. If there is anything, a-ling a-ling that we can do for you". I don't remember the rest, but while they sang to him they would keep time by tapping their coffee cups with their spoons. It was always funny when one or two people would get carried away and break their cups, especially if it happened to be a couple of the sophisticated teachers like Mr. Stewart and Mr. Ludie. The person, or persons would get all the attention focused on them, would be embarrassed, but this was all in fun and brought a lot of laughs. And a good way of thanking Uncle Pete for a very good dinner.

Everyone called S.J.S. "The Mission". WE Cottage kids always played around up there, so we pretty much knew what was going on there. We loved to go to the Operettas that the teachers and students put on. The whole town would turn out for those and the basketball games too. Sheldon Jackson had a good team called "The Tigers". My brother John was the center. Ann Gunderson gave me a picture of that team a few years ago that was taken about the time they won the Southeastern Alaska Championship. I remember most of the guys on the team. Besides my brother John, there

was Bert Leask (later my brother John named his son after him. He was a pilot during World War II and he was from Metlakatla). Harold Donnelly who still lives in Sitka, and was one of John's closest friends. There was Jumbo James, who looked so much like my brother John, Embert Demmert, who later became my 4th grade teacher. There were Gil, and Harry Hamilton, and Paul Edwards from Sitka. I remember one time in particular when the ball team came to the house with my brother John. Because I was such a very bashful little girl, I went and hid under the table where I could still see all the boys standing at Dad's bedroom door while he gave them a pep talk. He kept saying "It's up to you" and when he kept repeating himself, I thought of the Italian movie I had seen just a few nights before where they kept singing the same song all through the movie, "It's up to you to do the Hot cha cha" 'till I got tired of it, and when Dad said "It's up to you" once again, I don't know what got into me but I sang out "It's up to you to do the Hot cha cha". Everybody turned and when they spotted me sitting under the table the all laughed. Dad would have made a good preacher because everybody always listened real good when he talked. From what I heard later, he talked only when he had good advice for others and he always made a holt lot of sense. I'm afraid I and the dog Punco weren't much help to him at all during those times. Before he was bedridden, I barely remember him sitting at the head of the dinner table. There was a clothesline hanging in the kitchen just above dad's chair. Once just before dinner my brother John was pretending to box with the clothes

on the line and knocked some of the clothes loose. After dinner my dad was preaching to the boys again, but everything he was saying was going over my head because all the while he was talking the dog Punco was busy untying dad's shoelaces. When he was done talking he sat and looked at everyone for a long while, then he shook a finger at the boys and said "Don't you ever do that again!" Just then my sister Flora's panties fell off the line and landed on his head with the lace drooping over one eye. When he didn't make a move to take it off his head my sister giggled, and reached out and snatched it off. I started laughing but Mom said "Hush dear, your dad doesn't like anyone to laugh at him". Shucks, I couldn't see why I couldn't have a good laugh at something funny once in a while.

Then there was the time Punco went to Church. He was a German Shepherd. He was a fat little puppy when Punco (Loftus) Erickson gave him to the S.J.S. Tigers for a mascot. He stayed at our house and everyone grew to love him very much. He was such a beautiful dog! And he was welcome everywhere but Church, and Sunday School. But no one told him that. He didn't know. One Sunday morning when everyone was getting ready for Church my dad cautioned the boys to make sure "Punco" was securely tied in the back of the house so he wouldn't show up at Church. This would have been a disaster because Punco knew everyone that attended our Church and the family was afraid he would run up to a few people and knock them down. So, the boys tied him up and took off for services. My sister Flora said later in Church she took

a bench in the back so she could admire Ray and John. They looked so handsome sitting together because they looked so much alike. The services went along real fine until after collection was taken. Then the organist started playing the introduction for the next hymn. The preacher stood up and put a hand up for the congregation to rise. Flora said she looked at Ray and John again as they rose together from their bench and thought how proud of them she was. Then everybody started to sing. "Praise God from whom all Blessings flow" when all of a sudden there came a big ugly howl from under my brother's bench that made everybody jump and look around to see where the noise was coming from. There stood John all embarrassed as Ray, smiling apologetically tugged the big howling dog out from under the bench, and had to carry him out of Church, and all the way home. Just about then, Dad missed Punco and told Mom (who for some reason stayed home from service that day) to look out in back because he couldn't hear the dog whining anymore and figured he got loose. Sure enough! When Mom looked out the back door there lay the empty dog collar at the end of the limp rope that had been tied to a big block of wood. Mom was just getting set to go looking for Punco when she looked out the window and saw Ray packing the great big dog up the street.

He was full grown, but was still a pup. I don't think anyone trained him to protect the people he loved, but he did. Punco's sidekick was a big yellow Lab named "Casey" that belonged to Willie Wells who lived across the street. One fall when we went to Tyee Cannery and

the families took both of the dogs along, the cannery Superintendent, Mr. Steffens, also had a big beautiful German Shepherd named "King" who used to park outside the cannery store but never bothered the people, but did not tolerate other dogs coming around his territory. One day Casey and King got in to it in front of the store and Casey got hurt quite bad. Just leave it to the little boys. They just had to take Punco over to see if he could hold his own against King. When he did tangle with King, he won. Maybe it was because he was younger. I don't know. All I know is that I was not happy about the boys taking our dog over to fight. But they made me feel better by telling me that Punco wanted to even the score for his buddy, Casey, Well, it wasn't too bad when they put it that way. A long time after we got back to Sitka, Casey still had a bad wound on his ear that just wouldn't heal. I forgot once and petted him on the head and it hurt him so much he couldn't help himself, He snapped me on my wrist but not real hard. Just enough to surprise me, so that I yelled out his name and before I knew what was happening, there was Punco heading down the beach towards us like a streak of lightning! And when he jumped over the log it was like nothing I had ever seen before! He was about 20 feet above Casey and I when he was clearing the log. It was scary. And beautiful! I can still picture it in my mind. It would have been real nice if he hadn't been heading down to fight Casey because he thought I got hurt. I felt bad about that, and I still do. We really enjoyed Punco while we had him. Someone poisoned him. When that happened he was really suffering and crawled way under our house.

Henry Sing, Tootsie's big brother pulled him out and dumped raw eggs into him. He was fine for a while, but later went blind and had to be put away. Everyone felt real bad about that. I found out later that Mr. Yaw, the Superintendent of Sheldon Jackson School, and one of the teachers gave him burial at sea.

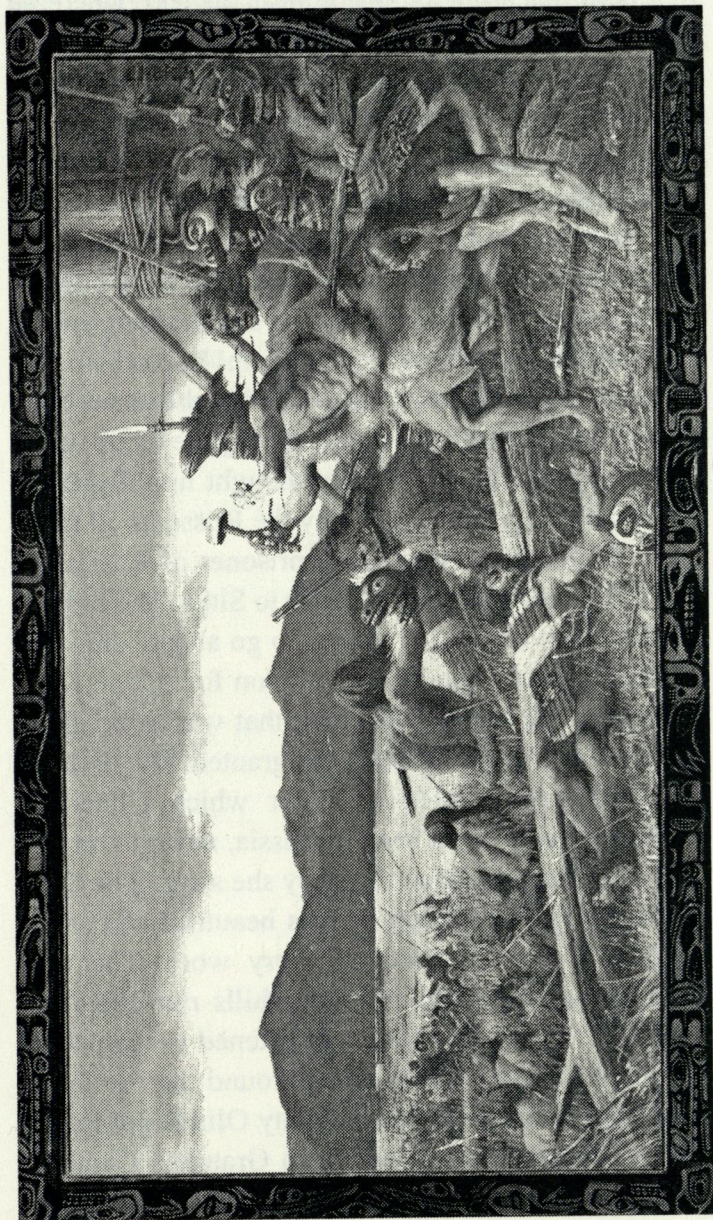
The Totem Park, and the Indian River were the other places all the kids loved to play. Sometimes all the kids would get together and play games all day. Or we little girls would pack our doll buggies with our playhouse toys and go down to the Park to play house all day. This was when the Navy ships or tourist ships were not in. When the tour ships were in we all used to get dressed up real nice, so we could meet tourists and walk through the park with them. We thought we were the greatest Indian guides. The park was also called "Lovers' Lane" and when the Navy ships were in, we used to love to tease the couples. That was not very nice.

There are two ways to get to the Indian River, either thru The Cottages, or down through Totem Park. On Saturday mornings in the summers there would be lots of little boys heading up to the river with fishing poles to fish for salmon which if they caught they took home for dinner, or sold for enough money to go to the Saturday movie. No one told us at the time that this was the location where a big battle took place between the Sitkas led by a young handsome Chief named "Katlean" against the Russians. "The Battle of Sitka". I had never been lucky enough to hear any stories concerning that battle until 1975 on one of my last visits to Sitka when I went over there to be with

Ellen when her mother, Aunty Tillie had a fatal heart attack. I made my usual special visit to Aunty Olinda Bailey. She gave me a Tlinget pendant with "Sitka" on it in white beads. I really love the pendant. I guess giving me the pendant prompted Aunty to go on and tell me the beautiful story that she called "The Legend of Ohne-Kha" one of Katlean's young warriors who had been taken captive by what was left of the Russian party as they retreated from the Battle of Sitka by the Indian River. She said that way beforehand the Sitkas found out through scouts that the Russians were on their way down to attack them. So they prepared great dugouts for the mothers, children and old people to stay safely during the oncoming battle which they had no intention of losing. The young single women were trained to fight. So that they could go into battle side by side with their brothers - either blood brothers or tribal, which meant Eagle stood beside Eagle Tribe and Raven Tribe beside Raven. The Sitka port was silent when the Russian war party approached the beach. They got right up to the fort when all of a sudden the war drums started to rumble, the gates flew open and Katlean and his warriors lunged out and attacked till there were piles of dead enemy outside the fort. When "Ohne-Kha" saw what was left of the Russian war party retreating down the beach to their landing crafts, without any warning he headed down the beach after them.

Opposite page

Painting of the Battle of Sitka at the mouth of the Indian River in 1804. Painting by Louis S. Glanzman.



There was a big explosion near the spot where he had been. When he did not return, he was presumed dead. Years and years later when we were no longer at war with Russia, a big Russian trading ship came to Sitka where it was to lay at anchor for three days. The Indians got very curious about the tall gray haired man, wearing a coat made of fur who just stood on deck and looked at them. Everyone grew very curious by the end of the second day. On the morning of the third day the man on deck finally spoke to them. He told them that he was "Ohne-Kha" and he had been one of Chief Katlean's warriors during the battle of the "Indian River". He knew they thought him dead, but that he had been held captive by the Russians all those years. Although he was still a prisoner of Russia, he was able to make this one last trip to Sitka. The Indians on shore then organized a party to go aboard ship and ask the Russian Captain's permission for "Ohne-Kha" to attend a big farewell potlatch that was to be given in his honor. The permission was granted. The potlatch was both joyous and sad, after which Ohne-Kha boarded the ship to go back to Russia, never to return.

After Aunty finished the story she sang "The Song of Ohne-Kha" in Tlinget. It was beautiful and sad. I felt like I could understand every word. The tune just matched the story. It made chills run down my spine like when I was little and listened to the people swapping stories while they sat around the fire in the smoke house out in D'khate. Aunty Olinda got lots of stories handed down to her from Grandma Cameron who was a young girl during the Russian occupation. I

told Isabelle (Sing) Brady about the story and the song that Auntie had sung for me. Isabelle said she could arrange to have it tape recorded if Olinda would agree to tell the story, and sing the song for us. At first she agreed, but when we got there with the tape recorder she told us that she was sorry but her doctor advised her against any undue excitement. The time she did the whole bit for me I noticed that she got so emotionally carried away that it must have been hard on her heart. She died in 1977. I really feel back that I couldn't have been there. I really loved her.

Did you include our treasuring and helping ourselves to Lillian Liberty's make-up scene, and our Indian School tap dancing? I remember playing in the park with the Twins and Tootie, that glorious 4th of July excitement, the Christmas caroling. Many, many scenes.

When I was very little I admired Lillian Liberty and how pretty she was with make-up on. One day Ellen and I got dressed up like big ladies. I think it was my idea to march into Lillian's house where we put on lots of powder, eye make-up, and lipstick. Then we decided to go down to the fish cannery to show our mothers how pretty we were. But when we came clumping into view of the cannery workers, the result was not what we expected, because everyone burst out laughing till tears came in their eyes. We wore a slight two-day little girls' standing skirt, with lots of make-up on, with big high-heeled shoes on backwards. We looked more like two little Charlie Chaplins than pretty big ladies. I felt like a big stooge when Ellen

Ellen & I

In a Christmas greeting, dated December 20, 1979, Ellen Lang Hays wrote the following: "Hi Carol: How nice to hear from you and to learn of your autobiography project. It is good that you were encouraged to document your life.

Did you include our trespassing and helping ourselves to Lillian Liberty's makeup scene, and our Indian School tap dancing? I remember playing in the park with the Truitts and Toots; fatal illnesses; 4th of July excitement; the Christmas caroling... Many, many scenes."

When I was very little I admired Lillian Liberty and how pretty she was with make-up on. One day Ellen and I got dressed up like big ladies. I think it was my idea to trespass into Lillian's house where we put on lots of powder, eye make-up, and lipstick. Then we decided to go down to the fish cannery to show our mothers how pretty we were. But when we came clumping into view of the cannery workers, the result was not what we expected, because everyone busted out laughing till tears came to their eyes. We were a sight! Two tiny little girls standing there with lots of make-up on, with big high-heeled shoes on backwards. We looked more like two little Charlie Chaplins than pretty big ladies. I felt like a big stooge when Ellen

started crying because I was older than her and should have known better. A few years ago we had a similar scene. Ellen was the instigator this time. She invited me to Sitka so we could celebrate our birthdays together. December 29th and January 1st. That was the first time we got together for our birthdays since we were little girls. We had a wonderful time. Especially on New Year's Day. In the evening we went to the Airport Lounge on Japonski Island for our birthday dinner. We wore long gowns, high-heeled shoes and not too much make-up. This time no one busted out laughing when we walked in.

Fish Camp at D'Chate

It was way out in the middle of nowhere. I could never find it if I tried. I remember we would leave Sitka and go out past Halibut Point. Then after that there was, or seemed to be, a long stretch where the ocean swells pounded the boat "Eagle" so badly, I used to think the boat was going to break apart. There was also the dreaded whirlpools to go over. Which was just as scary as the ocean.

D'Chate was owned by the Kiks'adi Clan. Mr. and Mrs. John James were the caretakers, who I always called my other parents, at their request because I was named after one of their daughters. I will always be honored because they were beautiful people. On our rough trip to D'Chate, my two brothers would be in complete charge. One at the wheel while the other took charge downstairs. Keeping check on the engine, and seeing to our comforts and discomforts. Especially where I was concerned. When John was down with us, he would put up with no "baby stuff". He was always firm, but nice.

There was Dad to be considered. But he never complained. He was very strong. Even though he was crippled. The boys loved having him along. If they ever had a doubt about anything at all, including fishing or

the boat, he was always able to set their minds at ease. But always waited for them to ask for his advice.

D'Chate was the name of the fish camp located way out in the wilderness. This camp had a small cabin for the living quarters with bunks, wood stove and shelves along the wall. And a large smokehouse for drying fish.

On arriving at D'Chate the work would start by unloading all the supplies that were needed for a two-week stay. Then my Dad would be taken ashore and made comfortable in the cabin where my Mom, Flora and I were to bed down. My brothers stayed aboard the boat and later stayed in the smokehouse to keep the fire going to smoke and dry the fish. There was plenty of hard work to be done. The special kind of wood had to be found. The trees cut down, chopped down and stacked for both heating the cabin and drying fish. There was a small river running just below the cabin and the smokehouse where the boys made fish hauls with a small seine that had been allotted to them for the purpose of putting up food for the winter. I forgot to mention that "fish camp" took place between the big summer commercial seine fishing and fall commercial fishing season, and when I became of school age, my family would have to arrange to take me out of school to go out to fish camp and then for commercial fall fishing season over in Tyee Cannery which is located in Peril Straits. And I must add that there is rough country! My old stomping grounds.

But, back to the fish camp. After enough fish had been hauled in for the day, the job of cutting, cleaning

out the fish would begin. The fish was sliced down the belly, laid flat like an open book. Then the center of the fish was cut out leaving a little less than 1/4 of an inch next to the fish skin to be dried. The center part of the fish was cut away from the bone, put in small air tight barrel kegs in salt brine and was called salt salmon bellies. Very good to eat with spuds on cold winter evenings.

And a few choice fish heads were made into "gink" a real delicacy to my mother and her friends. There's a trick to putting up this type of food. I remember fish heads would be put in a covered barrel, and buried by the river until it was time to leave camp. It was always meant for an outdoor Indian food potlatch. My mom and her friends had this once a year. It smelled to high heaven, but tasted good! To my mom and me that is. And when my brothers were not helping prepare the fish for drying they would go deer hunting. No one had freezers, so deer was put up in mason jars or cans, cooked and cased away. Of course we ate fresh meat as long as it lasted. I don't know where people got the time. But I remember we always had plenty of wild berry preserves, including an assortment of jams and jellies that were put up in the summer, during time off from cannery work. We used to take some of this out to D'Chate where we really enjoyed it. The process of drying the fish went on day and night. My brothers took turns during the nights to keep the smokehouse fires burning. So, it was great pleasure to have the only other people out there come to visit us in the evenings. They lived a short way up the river. I remember the elderly

couple, and a very old lady who used to eat onions like one would eat apples. I always loved the sight of their lighted lantern as they walked up the paths to visit us in the evening. It always gave me chills up my spine to see the lantern out there. It was always pitch black out and this was the only light for miles and miles around. I always loved their visits. Our visitors spoke only Tlinget. My mother loved that. She was an expert at both the English language and Tlinget. They used to swap Tlinget stories. I couldn't speak Tlinget except for a few words and small phrases. But their Tlinget was so fluent and their expressions so vivid, I felt like I could just about understand them. Although I couldn't have repeated them. I still treasure the memories of those evenings. I get a nice feeling yet, remembering sitting around the campfire on those dark nights, feeling cozy because all those friendly and loving people surrounded me. Way out in the middle of nowhere. This was at least a two-week stay before the dreaded and rough trip back to Sitka and home, where the 2 kegs of salt salmon bellies, and 2 large barrels of dried fish (which was very good for evening snacks which the family loved sharing together) were added to our berry preserves, jam and jellies and cases of venison (Deer Meat). My family also stocked up on dry goods such as beans, rice, coffee, teas, flour, sugar, lard, oatmeal, cornmeal. All bought with summer wages. Mr. Tilson, the owner of the Mercantile Store, trusted the family and gave them credit for things they needed during the winter. He was the Mayor of Sitka. (He was later to carry a huge wreath down to the A.N.B. Hall and place

it over both my brothers' caskets).

What made it nice to have all the food (which took up one fourth of our kitchen) was my family loved sharing with relatives and friends. Especially my brother John's basketball team. The Sheldon Jackson "Tigers". Because we burned wood, John took on the responsibility of cutting up the wood after ball practice on Saturday afternoons. His teammates would come along to help saw and chop up the wood. After they were done they would mug up on dried fish with hooligan grease. Then my mom and sister Flora would put out their delicious fresh homemade bread, wild berry jam and coffee, with blueberry and salmon berries for dessert.

It's interesting about the time it took to make a batch of bread for the week. Instead of yeast the women used boiled potatoes with liquids that had been made to ferment. The dough was made on Friday evenings and was set beside the woodburner to rise overnight. This meant someone had to keep the fire going all night. (Which was not unusual in those days because everyone we knew burned wood). We all loved the smell of freshly baked homemade bread on Saturday morning. Life was wonderful in those days.

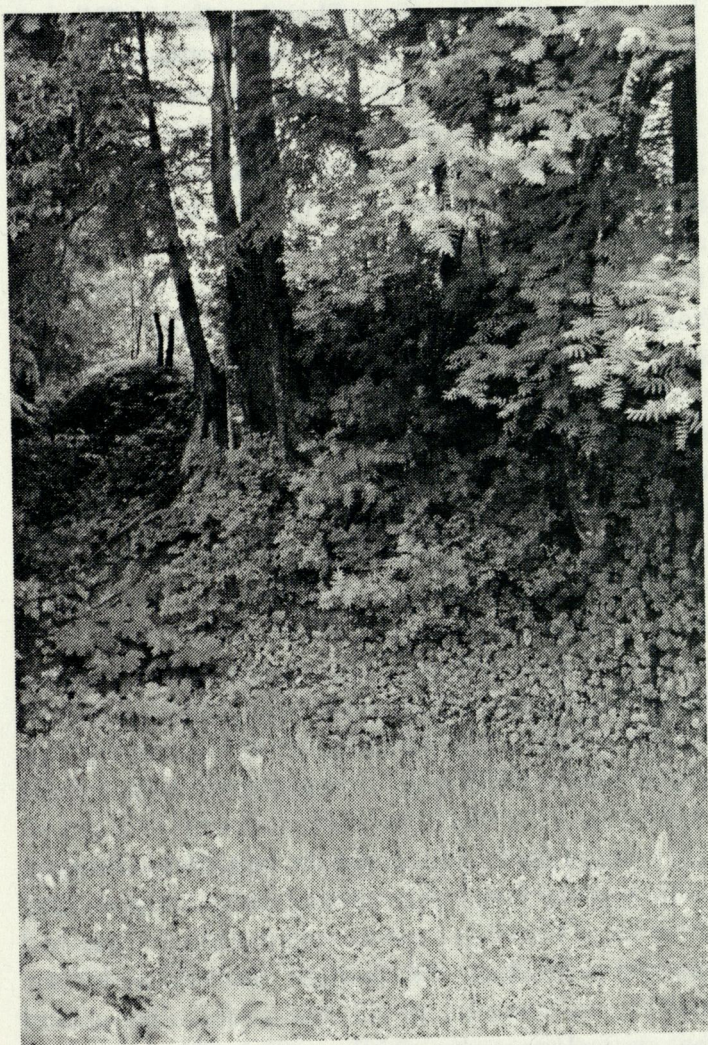
Memories, Fond and Sad

After fish camp my family would almost immediately start getting prepared to go to Tyee Cannery which was located in Peril Straits. As always the boat was fixed up in good running order. Peril Straits is no baby. She's fierce! Andrew Hope, Joe Truitt, and my brothers would scrub the hold very clean, because if they ran at night the women and children slept down there. This did not present much of a problem because it was only a ten-hour run. And we were just like one big happy family, on shore, or, off. While at Tyee families each had a company house.

Now that I remember, my family's loving attention focused around my Dad's bed. One night in particular in Tyee remains in my memory. After my Dad and I were comfortably bedded down, the lamps were turned off. Then my family started singing hymns. My sister with her soprano, my Mother's alto, my brothers' tenors and Daddy's bass. Just before I fell asleep they sang "Abide With Me". I've always loved that one in particular.

Getting off the subject a little bit - concerning the "Eagle" crew over the years that she ran "in all her glory" were Andrew Hope who taught my brothers all they knew about fishing. Joe Truitt, a good loyal man to have aboard, and during the summers on his vacation

from the University of Ministry, Walter Sobeloff, they were high boat in fish and money. After all the hustling for food and money was over, things went back to normal. The holidays seemed to come real fast! Thanksgiving, and then Christmas. My favorite Holiday! All the excitement, presents being snuck under the tree. The program at A.N.B. Hall given by the U.S. Public School, grades 1 thru 8. (This was a Bureau of Indian Affairs School). Then the beautiful Christmas program at the Presbyterian Church. Each Sunday School class gave a short Biblical Christmas play. The carols sung by the Sheldon Jackson School Choir were done to perfection! Then again, there's a night during the Christmas Season that will always remain in my memory. The night my Dad and I were home alone. Dad lying there so clean and comfortable. And I still remember I had a red sweater on with a red plaid pleated skirt. There was a table fixed up in the front room with all kinds of goodies. The snow outside was just sparkly and beautiful! I remember I was sitting on the floor near the tree gazing at the beauty of it, and looking at one of the packages that looked extra pretty that had my name on it. Then out of the night the most beautiful voices began to sing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing". It was the Carolers made up of S.J.S. teachers and alumni. My mother, my sister and brothers were with them of course. They all came into the house shouting "Merry Christmas". They had hot coffee and the Christmas goodies. They went back out caroling. The memory of those years were to be a great comfort for me when things got almost too hard to bear. It all seemed to start with the passing of my dear Dad in



Our backyard where my children and friends played.

April, 1937. I was ten. Things seemed to go from bad to worse after that. My brothers missed him terribly. Especially my darling Ray. The summer of 1937 went by without much incident. The family tried very hard to stay close. Incidentally during the course of events my brother John got married to a very pretty girl from Yakutat whose name was Stella Johnson. They had a son whom they named Burt. He was born when the song "Pennies From Heaven" was number 1 on the Hit Parade. They lovingly nicknamed him "Penny". He sure was cute! His precious presence helped to ease the pain of missing Dad. In early fall season we didn't go out to fish camp at D'Chate. When fall fishing came my brothers left the "Eagle" tied up, and went out fishing aboard boats owned by their buddies. It sure seemed strange. The fall fishing season was uneventful. On returning to Sitka, my brothers took jobs with C.C.C. Of course they had weekends off. So they made plans for a hunting trip to Neva Point. Our relations, Henry Sing and Joe Truitt were going along. (Joe was married to my 1st cousin, Dorothy).

They made plans to reach Neva Point at low tide which was at 4:30 a.m. November 4th. The couple staying up in the Boy Scout cabin heard the boat arrive. They could hear real clearly the sounds of someone cooking breakfast. Some talking, someone whistling. Then the skiff being lowered into the water. They had planned to clam dig 'til daylight. So they loaded the buckets and shovels and the three of them got aboard the skiff. Henry, Joe & Ray. With the agreement probably for one of them to come back for John who stayed on deck. With the tide so low, there didn't seem

to be any problem. But - there was. It had turned cold all of a sudden and there was a very deep drop-off near shore. The skiff caulking started coming loose.

The couple on shore heard one of the guys say - "There's water coming into the skiff"! Another voice. "I'll use this can to bail". The first voice. "Hey! John! We're sinking". It sounded like there was water in his windpipe. The people on shore were getting dressed as fast as they could, looking out the window at the same time. They saw someone with a large flashlight on deck. My brother John must have seen the lamp at the cabin. He made a signal to shore by making three big circles with his light. Then they saw the light go into the water as he dove in. Being the athlete that he was he must have gone a long way in spite of his hip boots being fastened to his belt. The guys that found him later said it looked like he had tried to unfasten them, but his hands must have been numb from the cold. They found his body near Henry's³ Old Sitka Charlie was trapping out there. He helped the two people pull their skiff down to the water edge. When they got down there and reached the spot in the water, all there was floating were three watch caps and one tin hat. I believe this was the type always worn by Joe. Cigarettes, matches and a can of Copenhagen. The next day lots of seine boats went out to drag for the bodies. They found three of them quite easily. But Ray had floated far out. It was almost dark when his best buddy, Bill Walton, found him. I loved Ray. (He was my world.) When they couldn't find him, my mother threw herself on the deck and cried, "Just like in life, he is the same in death. He always put everyone before

him". I truly lost my Mother then. Her heart went with her boys. I often wished she had gone right then. She was truly pathetic. She didn't take much stock in her life in the two years she had to serve on this earth. I loved her so much but she didn't seem to know me, much less need me. I was so lonely! It didn't seem to matter to her if she stayed sober or not. She sent me to be with my sister part of the time.

In the fall of 1939 we went out to Todd Cannery with Uncle Andrew Hope and his family aboard the S.J.S. II so Mom, and my sister could work. Nothing much to tell about that except my Mother was a very sick woman. Upon returning to Sitka, Mom and a friend borrowed a skiff to move our belongings from the boat. But on the way between the cottages and town, the skiff capsized. They didn't know whether Mom drowned or not. It was a cold, gray October day. They thought that her heart stopped when she hit the icy water.

In any event I really lost my Mother that day. The beautiful Elizabeth Kadashan James finally went to a well-deserved rest. She was truly a wonderful, loving, understanding and forgiving lady right up to the time she lost her boys. I will always remember the good things she stood for.

The End of Childhood And "Little Alice"

Where did that little girl go? Everyone used to call her "Little Alice". That was her baby name - she was one of the silly little girls who used to tap dance for the girl students up at Sheldon Jackson in the girls social hall. She was no different from the other girls because of missing baby teeth. She looked like a little Jack-O-Lantern when she grinned, with a gob of hair growing straight up as a result of cutting out a wad of gum that had stuck in her hair while she slept. Even though she was funny, she was cute too.

In the fall of the year when she and her family went out to Tynee Cannery in Peril Straits where her mother and sister worked, and her brothers fished all week, she and her bedridden dad were left at home to watch over each other, and when she went out to play she had strict orders to go home and check with him often, which she usually did. And when she was just learning to read she would sit beside his bed and read him the funny papers. Even though she was very little, she learned to build a wood fire in the old wood stove (with instructions from her dad) so her mom would be able to fix something hot to eat when she got home from work. She and her dad sure made a good team.

In those days it wasn't fashionable to wear bib-overalls. But it was practical. Especially for her. She was quite skinny. In the mornings she would get dressed in her bib overalls, her warm homemade wool jacket, the maroon knitted tam her mom made, and last, but not least, her little hip boots. She really loved those! She would go down to the beach below her house to play boats with Gil Truitt, and Buddy Daniels. One of them always had an extra hand carved wooden boat for her to play with. Where did that little girl go? Why, that was me! Carol Alice James as I grew steadily towards the tragic years when I was to lose Dad after his long illness, and seven months later Ray and John drowned. After that everything went down hill. The old house was spooky and chilly. It needed a man's presence and attention. I was ten, and that's the first time in my life I was to feel desperately lonely, and deserted. I was really lost because I knew my mother and sister felt that way too. And knowing the grown-ups felt that way made the situation seem even more desperate.

There was no welfare help in those days. Joe Truitt, and my cousin Dorothy had six children with one on the way when he drowned with my brothers. I can't imagine how they managed. Auntie Jenny and Uncle Peter Sing lost Henry, who was always ready to lend a helping hand to anyone who needed it. With all four of them gone from the cottages, there was no one to turn to. John left his beautiful wife, Stella and his Little 9-month-old son "Penny". Stella stayed unhappily in Sitka for a short time then she took "Penny" and went back home to Yakutat and out of our lives.

It was not too long after my brothers left that my sister Flora married Al Hamre. I never did think she really knew him that well. Although he loved her very much, it never seemed that she felt the same about him. But he really tried. He rented a house near the National Cemetery, and had my Mom and I move in with him and Flora. He was a very good provider, but there was something missing. I had just turned 11 then, but I noticed that Flora, who always had had a bad disposition, (especially where I was concerned) seemed to be getting more unhappy as time went on. But no one ever noticed that I missed my brother Ray desperately. I remember one time in particular when I didn't think that I could bear the loneliness that was so heavy in my heart for him. I didn't think that I could go on living any longer without his love and guidance. That was the day I went up to the house in the "Cottages" and stayed there for a long time, trying to recapture the feeling of Ray's presence. After awhile I went outside and looked up at the big mountains and realized that if I were to climb all the mountains or cross the biggest oceans looking for him - I would never find him. That's when I came face to face with the hard fact that Ray was gone from me forever, and I was never going to see him again!

"Little Alice" left that day, and in her place stood a very thin, lost and bewildered eleven-year-old girl who didn't know where she belonged, or who to turn to. Many years later when the very beautiful song "Un-Chained Melody" became popular I fell in love with it. It reminded me of the day I realized I had lost my brother forever. I love all the verses of the song, but the

one that grabbed me the most was “Lonely mountains gaze at the sky, at the sky, waiting for the dawn of day, all alone I gaze at the sky, at the sky, dreaming of my love far away”. I will always love that song. Just as I will always treasure the love I had for my brother Ray. Just remembering that love has gotten me through many hard times. But I did change that day, alone in the house that held so many memories. My heart grew numb, and I then accepted the fact, too, that Mom was going to die soon. She was in such pain and despair. I thought I was prepared for her death, but nobody was prepared for the way she died.

The Heavy Years

I was twelve when I moved in with Flora and Al. I was like a shadow. One that displeased them. They felt very put upon because they were stuck with me. They talked about me as if I wasn't there. I would hear them planning on how I would earn my keep. I was to be gotten up at 5:30 a.m. when Al left for work on the base. I was to have everything done at home before I left for school at 9:00 a.m. After school I was to come straight home to put the tub of water on the stove for the laundry, before heading out for groceries. There was no quitting because of being tired. I went to bed when every last chore was done. I always heard Al telling Flo, "If she give you any damn lip, let me know - I'll fix her". I was never taught how to do any of the work - I learned by my own mistakes, the hard way. The mean, ugly names I was called went on, on. Then when Al got home he would start in on me too. They accused me of doing things wrong on purpose. I began to believe them. There was no letting up for them where I was concerned. When people scare you, and make you nervous, you naturally start to dislike them, and wish you didn't have to be around them. But I was trapped - there was nowhere to turn. I got so I worked real hard so maybe I could get out of those spur of the moment errands that came up, I was at an awkward age

and all I had to wear was grown up hand me downs, and the ugliest brown oxfords, that were too big at first, but I wore them until they came apart. I hated them! I sure wasn't blooming into a beauty either. I would rather die than go downtown - but I had to.

The Sitka town was booming. Japonski Island Naval Air Station was being built, so there were cocky young Navy and Marines everywhere. I got so I knew every out of the way trail to take on back streets, but when I'd get where I was supposed to pick up whatever it was I was sent for, there always would be a long line up. Just when I didn't need. I always was late getting back home and would get accused of standing around flirting with servicemen. I was so nervous all the time. I hated to leave home because it took every bit of courage I had to go back, but I had no choice. I lived in a world of self-centered people. I was getting more and more tired. I could not concentrate on school, because when I was in school all I would think about was what was going on at home. My grades started falling terribly and it hurt when the teachers would complain about why I was not smart like my sister and brothers had been. I was nervous when Al was in town, but the last year and a half I had more reason to be nervous - especially when he would go on halibut fishing trips that started in early spring and lasted into early fall. Flora started to do some heavy drinking. I could never concentrate while in school. As time went by I missed an unbelievable amount of school sometimes for long periods because of serious situations at home. It was not good for all concerned (except for Flora's kids) that I was handy to be called out of class to go home

a lot because I was needed there by "the little ones". I was always relieved to be called home because I was always frightened half to death that something was going to happen at home. I developed a mental block where schoolwork was concerned - I knew it would be hopeless to make up for all of the school I had missed. I only wished I was old enough to drop out of school because I loved my sister and her kids so much, even if I was always too nervous and tired to show it much. All my childhood friends drifted away one by one - it was just as well - I didn't have time for them. The hard work at home became a blessing because I could lose myself in it and forget about what went on outside. I didn't want much then. All I longed for was to lead a carefree life, the same as the kids my age, and to wear nice clothes like they did. But by the time I was 14 I became very good at keeping up with the work at home so that I had some time to take care of my appearance. It was then that Flora sold the house up in the Cottages for \$150.⁴ I was given \$75.00 of my own which I used partly to order myself some nice clothes, which I did with a lot of loving care because they would be the last new clothes I would have for a long time! Happy, I couldn't remember when the last time was that I had been happy! It had been such a long time. My heart could hardly take it. Besides I had a new friend. Her name was Virginia Jones - she had a lot of class, and poise for her age besides being pretty. My sister had always liked and respected her family too. That helped a lot!⁵

My times for going out were very limited but when I would get time off, Virginia and I would go roller

skating down at the rink. It was always real exciting! Sitka seemed to be growing overnight. We did not have to go anywhere besides the rink for excitement and entertainment - it was all there. All our school chums, the Navy and Marines, lots of pretty girls, and there was good music to skate to. But that always came to an end. And there was always a different kind of music to go home to. Things were still bad at home. I tried to hide it from Virginia. I wanted to give her the impression that my home life was like hers. It never bothered me so much about the drinking. It was the verbal abuse that went on constantly, a lot of times in front of company. After awhile Virginia quit coming around, although she was still friendly. That was fine because Al was getting more rowdy - he was bad to begin with! Sitka was really lively then. There was one great big constant party all the time. Sometimes things got pretty bad. Al never touched me one way or the other except for once when he and Flora said that they heard I had been complaining about them and how hard I had to work all the time. They said if I were ever to do that again, they could both testify to the authorities that I was no good and would be sent to Reform School. Al hit me on the face a few times but when I didn't cry, or move - I froze - he grabbed me and gave me a bear hug and said "Poor kid! You can't even cry". I was doing a good job of burying my feelings deep inside of me. But every day of those 3 years I stayed in Sitka, the only feelings that stayed near the surface were tension and frustration, like one must feel when a room is uncomfortably hot and the door won't open, and the windows are stuck - you don't dare start to scream -

you may never be able to stop. (Those feelings stayed with me for 38 years). Bitterness that I didn't know I felt was there. I'm realizing a lot of this as I write - this is the reason for my writing. I turned hard over the years, subconsciously I became afraid to love - love was too painful. Inwardly I shied away from any signs of love and affection from others. Way underneath I always felt guilty and embarrassed as if I was accepting something I really didn't deserve. When "Little Alice" left, I let her take the love and affection with her. She had known all about them. My first husband and my children really must have suffered because of that.

Well getting back to the last few months with Al and Flora, just before I became 15 years old I made two new friends of Sue Kitka and Esther Andrews. They were both so neat and lively - they were 17 years old and I really admired them. They tried to soften Flora up to me and they were quite successful because I was permitted to go out with them a few times. I really enjoyed going to the dances at the Moose Hall. (Note: My husband doesn't mind if I write the following, I've told him. He only wishes I could write more). The band was good and played a lot of Glen Miller hits. There was wall-to-wall Army, Navy and Marines. The boom brought families in from all over the United States so there were plenty of girls and women to go around. Back when I was 11 years old my mother got me tap dancing lessons - but before I learned to dance I had to do the acrobatic course first which was very hard, but helped later on when I was learning to jitterbug up at the Moose Hall. I just lived for those dances which came few and far between and only added to my frustration

- we only lived about 100 yards from the hall, so when I had to stay home it just about did me out! Especially when I was made to believe that if I did all the work at home I would be permitted to go to the dance. I always did the work anyway - but on days of the dance I would go through all the chores with such happiness! I would somehow let my friends know I would be going so they would stop for me. But, at the last minute Al and Flo would decide that they wanted to go out instead, so I would stay home to baby sit. When my friends showed up for me there was a scene! If I couldn't count on anything, I could count on those! I was accused of being an underhanded sneak, getting my friends to come for me to insure my going out. When my friends looked shocked and embarrassed - this riled Flora up even worse. I knew it would be a long time before I could go anywhere. I quit asking to go. I went when I was told to. The frustration was building inside me. It got so I ran as fast as I could everywhere I went. It felt good to run off the frustration.

One April evening in 1942, five months before I was to leave, I was told I could go out for a short while and to be home before curfew. I didn't get very excited about it because it was sort of late, but I headed to the Post Office - just below the Pioneers Home I ran into some of my school chums. They were standing around talking to a small group of Marines that had been on their way down to catch the shore boat. This is when I met Thomas Rosinsteine. He had been aboard the U.S.S. Lexington and had just been transferred to Japonski Island Naval Air Station for a rest period. We never did get romantically involved. I was very

young, besides, "Rosi", his buddies called him that for short, told me that there was a girl in Texas his parents expected him to marry someday. He also told me that he and his buddies talked about wanting girlfriends. They were all going into battle soon and wanted to take some good memories with them. That was ok by me. But we did form a real nice group with two of my friends and two of his buddies. It sure was nice, but the same thing happened as before with my other friends - even worse because Flora was about to have a third child, and I was needed at home more than ever. Every time there was anything nice planned or our group there would be the same old scene at home that was so embarrassing that my friends would have to go without me. After three months of trying "Rosi" gave up on me and got a new girlfriend. I was hurt, but then again, I was relieved. Mentally - I threw in my towel too. I didn't let myself care about anything or anyone, It was all too hopeless. It's not that I don't have good memories of the warm friendly times with my girlfriends and our Marine buddies. The very few times we got together - but it was all too strained.⁶ I turned dead inside. I gave up caring if I went anywhere and I was glad that I signed the application to go to school in Wrangell. Sheldon Jackson School was out of the question, it was too close to home - I didn't know it then but the Bureau of Indian Affairs had decided that already. I had been missing far too much school - I suspect they knew the reason for it. So, I began preparations to go to Wrangell Institute. The boat "Eagle" was still afloat so that summer before I was to leave, Al took it out seining. I was given \$500.00 boat share. I should have

been happy but I wasn't even though I was able to buy myself a lot of pretty new clothes. One night before I was to leave, Flora and I stayed up very late together - this was the first and last real visit we were even going to have - she was making an attempt to warm up towards me by recalling many stories of my childhood that I have written about. She explained how hard it was to have someone my age to be responsible for. I thought to myself - why did she have to be so hard on me when I really didn't give her a reason to be. She also pleaded with me to change my mind about going to Wrangell Institute. She said that she would treat me better than she did before. But I felt that I had to say no. My mind was made up. She promised all this once before, but did not carry through. I knew I was never going to come to stay with Flora again - but I did not know how final that was. Because when I left her that October when I was 15, I was never going to see her or her kids alive again.

Wrangell Institute

They died in a fire that following March 15th, 1943. I didn't know until later that 2 weeks before she died she had written and asked for me to come home but was refused because Doctor Clements had given orders to the people at the school never to let me go back home. I became a very sick girl shortly after I got to Wrangell - I was in the hospital more than in school. My heart was very bad. But I was still worried a great deal about my sister and kids right up until they died. One night I woke up by my locker. I had my suitcase out and was starting to pack. I woke up saying, "I've got to go home!" I was drenched in sweat. After I heard the news about her death with the kids, I went into shock for a while, but came out of it. After that I turned very mean! I never intended to hurt anyone physically. And I had my close friends that I care for - but they would all become shadows to me and when I would let loose with feelings I didn't understand myself, because when I'd open my mouth all the words would flow freely - every mean word I'd ever heard over the past few years. It felt delicious to be the one that was mean. I was not mean to my close friends; they stuck with me. I had become very sloppy! I didn't care about all the nice clothes I had bought with the "Eagle's" boat share. I gave most of them away. I took



On the steps of Wrangell Institute where I went to school and worked for fourteen years.

showers, but other than that I didn't care about the clothes I wore. I continued being terrible! I liked seeing people being very angry at me - and they had every reason to be. We got out of school one week out of every month. This was called occupation week. The 8th grade had occupation week with the Freshmen; then the Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors had their week. The first 2 years I was put on light duty because of my heart, besides no one cared to bother with me if they could help it. I was too bitter! Not very pleasant at all. I remember telling myself that I never did have anybody, that I walked on this earth by myself, and I liked it that way. Only on Christmas I would feel lonely, especially when I'd see all the packages the other kids got from

home. It brought back memories. It was very painful and embarrassing for me to go to the Christmas program where the gifts were given out, where I would be lost in the crowd with my little package from "Santa". But the dorms would be locked up so everyone had to go. I felt real bad, but I was too proud to cry - besides I had forgotten how. It was about then that the boat "Eagle" was sold. I knew nothing at all about how the sale of the boat was handled, but I did receive a check for a few hundred dollars, I don't remember what the sum was. The summer I was to become a sophomore I came out of my shell! I started to really join in the fun, and that was largely because I loved to dance. That summer the group of students that stayed at the school got to go to Todd Cannery to work. It turned out that going there was a lot like summer camp, very well planned and guided by the owner of the cannery, Nick Bezz, and the superintendent of our school, Mr. George T. Barrett. We were given a dormitory especially built for us with showers and running water. We got our good meals from the same mess hall as Nick Bezz. The rules were as strict as at school - if not more so. We did not mind. Each student was given a detail such as food service, keeping the fire going when needed and regular dorm details. Everyone was given an allowance every week to be taken out of summer earnings. I made a lot of friends, and really felt happy! I didn't mind the strict rules and the details we had to do, because we all worked together. Then again there were times when the feeling of deep pain and frustration would come over me for no reason - these times were hard to bear. I would usually go off by myself and brood

or I would just feel angry - at no one in particular. My friends would be so bewildered. But they were ready when I was feeling better. We would go out rowing boats and sing in rounds. We really enjoyed ourselves. No one could help but be happy.

There was a nice group of boys that came down from Pius Mission in Skagway that shared the dorm with our boys. Something I will always remember warmly were those summers in Todd Cannery. That same year we got a new Superintendent at the school, Mr. Earl C. Entollebe. Maybe this could be my very own opinion, but I'm willing to put it out that he might have helped lay the plans and guidelines for the Child Guidance Department. If I am wrong, I couldn't be far off. The year he got there I was made the staff cook out of the Sophomore class - it was a challenge I would never have taken up by myself. There were real neat girls picked from the Freshmen, Junior and Senior classes - each of us had his assignment during our occupation week. The staff that ate in our dining hall was very particular. I couldn't believe it when Millie Johnson, the head of Food Department told me that I was the best staff cook that year. In my Junior and Senior years, I was picked to work up at the Health Center (Our little hospital). You wouldn't believe how well we were taught up there. The hospital staff was real pleased with my performance. That surprised me a lot! I never stopped to think about why I was being given responsible jobs all of sudden. The 3 school weeks when we were not on occupation we had regular details to do in the dorms. In my last year and a half I was supervising dorm details for 2 weeks, and when

we would change, I would be detailed supervisor in the dining hall, some of the girls I supervised were my best friends, and classmates. I became best friends with Wilma Churchill (Stokes) she was then the President of the Girls Dorm, Once when we went to the bulletin board that was outside the girls advisor's apartment to see what the newly assigned details were, I started loudly voicing my complaints about being assigned as detail supervisor down in the dining hall, when I had just been supervising upstairs. Wilma said "Shh, they really have confidence in you, and like the way you do the job", She told me in confidence that when Mr. Entollebe first came to the school, one of the first things he did was study the students' files that had been sent from the previous schools that they had attended. He became interested in my files which told a great deal about my past. He called a meeting with the girls dorm advisor, Mrs. Barrow, and the girls dorm president, Wilma Churchill, and asked about my performance as a student and what my social status was like. They were a little surprised at his questions until he told them a little bit about what was in my files - particularly all the tragic events that took place from the time I was little. When he was told that I was just like any of the other students, he was quite surprised. When I was given all those responsible details, I didn't know that I was being put through a test. If I had suspected, I wonder how I would have performed - as it was, I pulled it all off well. My self confidence was still there - I didn't know I ever had it before that. I have never gotten over the mental block that developed when I was in grade school and I really hated the bad situations that had

caused that to happen, because I suspected the teachers at the Institute expected better work than I was doing. They thought that I was putting them on. I could tell by the way they acted. It would have helped if I could have talked about it, but I was too tied up inside to talk about things in my past. Even when I thought about it, I felt like I was going to come apart at the seams. So I kept quiet. I had a good gang of loyal friends. On Wednesday afternoons we would all get together to see if everybody had money for town leave on Saturday. If someone was broke we would all pitch in enough for them. We never felt right if we left a member of our gang back on campus. The highlight of Saturday afternoon town leave was to go to the Den-O-Sweets (Wrangell Drug) and have an undeclared dance contest with the Wrangell High School kids. Then we would do what we all loved best. Next to dancing that is - we would all go and have a banana split. There were about ten of us - No one liked making that many banana splits. When we were Junior and Seniors Wrangell High sent us an invitation to attend their Junior Prom, but the invite was turned down with the understanding that we would accept to go to their Senior Prom. We were so disappointed and tried to sneak off and go - but we got caught and almost blew it as far as the Senior Prom went. Everyone was so mad at us that we were called "The Wicked Seven" after that. I did the best I could in school and graduated with the last senior high school class from Wrangell Institute before it became a grade school for younger kids from 1947-75. I had been given a loan to go on to school but decided to work out at the Institute Bakery for a year after graduation.

CLASS ROLL

Elizabeth Antonson	Tina Larianoff
Lottie Audlaksrook	Grace Lincoln
Wilma Churchill	Marsha Malutin
Mary Gooday	Alfrida Peratrovich
Dorothy Edenso	Lorraine Phillips
Carolyn James	Virginia Sawa
Pauline Karo	Alice Thomas
	Winifred Woods
Percy Baines	Charles Natkong
Pedro Barril	Gabriel Ruff
Matthew Garcia	Eugene Samuelson
William Gregorloff	Alfred Steplin
Conrad Lee	Joseph Upickson
Chester Miyasato	Thomas Williams

The Class of

Nineteen Hundred and Forty-Seven

Waungell Institute

announces its

Commencement Exercises

Monday, May Twenty-Sixth

School Auditorium

I am very happy to enter this old graduation program in my book. It has the last high school class to graduate from there. All of the buildings are all gone now, when I go by the empty grounds, I imagine that I can hear the lingering echoes of the school song.

To the tune of "On Wisconsin":

Chorus: Oh Wrangell Institute, Glory to thy name,
Loyalty and virtue ever shall maintain thy fame. Work
together, play together steadfast and true. Do we all
pledge allegiance? Yes We Do!

Come forward boys and girls and let us sing this
song, to echo through the nation with a tribute clear
and strong. And praise give to the land where pioneers
have trod, through fairest hills, through land and seas
our precious gifts from God. Where oh where are
flowers so dear, as where the blue forget-me-not loves
to bloom. So with our might, we'll sing this song of
cheer for our dear Institute.

I went to school there for five years and later worked
there for fifteen years, until it closed in 1975. There
are future plans for the property now. The concept is
for a senior housing development to be built there and
a lifelong learning center. Besides the actual housing
-- dormitories, apartments, and cottages, there would
be the added educational component, which seems
appropriate.

My Marriage and the Fire

But plans for going on to school fell through when I married John Feller. I met him in 1946 right after he returned from Germany where he had served with the U.S. Army during the war. After we got married we lived with his Dad, Otto. (He was born in Danzig, Germany), his sister Christine, Otto, Jr. and the prettiest, sweetest girl named Erma Axberg. She was 17 years old and was John's niece. I got along real good with everyone there - especially Christine and Erma. All the men were gone fishing on the Christine II a great deal of the time. I was going to have my first baby, we were all excited over that - but things did not seem too cheery when the fall of 1948 approached. Christine left to spend the winter in Seattle and Erma went back to school at Wrangell High. It was lonely in the big house. The men first went on a trip to Prince Rupert, to buy food supplies for the winter. They were going out fall fishing. It was then that I started to develop a bad bout of insomnia caused by restlessness at night. I would finally fall off to sleep I would be awakened from nightmares. One night in particular I had a bad one! It did not help that it was a very dark, rainy and stormy night and Erma and I were the only ones home.

The nightmare began. The storm outside died down completely. In the nearly dark standing at the foot of the bed I was lying in was my husband John, and Ethel Churchill. They both seemed to be in a terrible frenzy, and neither of them seem to notice I was in the room. She was busy handing him clothing to try on and he was quickly slipping them on, and off, and tossing them aside. Just about then I realized there was a little boy lying in the crook of my left arm sound asleep. It was "Penny", my brother John's son. He looked to be a bout 4 years old. The same age as when I'd seen him seven years before. I knew that there was something very strange going on but did not have time to figure out what it was because somewhere in the house there was a baby crying and sounds of a man half moaning, and crying at the same time. Then I heard Erma's voice calling my name. I thought maybe she needed me to help take care of the baby. I slowly came awake as I sat up and called Erma's name. The only answer I got was the echo of the voices I heard in my dream slowly dying away 'till all I could hear was the storm going on outside. The next evening I told Amy and Howard Churchill about my nightmare. I had been babysitting for them for two years and they had become as close as family. They said that I could stay with them until John came back from fishing, but I told them that I thought Erma and I would be perfectly fine and safe together. She was such an adorable girl. I didn't think anything bad could happen while she was around. I had thought that more than once before the fire.

On the day of the fire Grandpa Otto and young Otto had come home early from fishing, but my husband

John and the rest of the boys were still out fishing near Ketchikan. I was so happy to have them home that I feel off to sleep earlier than usual which was about 2:00 A.M. As I dropped off to much welcome sleep I remember how cozy and safe I felt as I listened to the storm going on outside, but about a half hour later all hell broke loose! I heard Erma knock on my door telling me to get up, that there was a fire. When I got out the door of my room it was very hot, the smoke was real thick, but through a flash of fire I saw someone leap out the window. This was on the second floor and I thought it was Erma, but I never did see her. When we said goodnite the night before, it would be forever. I found out later it was Otto, Sr. who had come to help us but got blown out the window by combustion.

I was 7 months along - I thought I was going to die when I jumped out of tile upstairs window. I gave up my life completely and was disappointed that I didn't die. Especially when I found out Erma didn't make it. That hurt and still does.

After escaping the inferno on my way down - my clothes were on fire - my father-in-law stopped my fall with his shoulder. Then when I hit the ground I went out like a light. He thought I was dead and was surprised when I got up! My right hand and leg were badly burned but the wool coat I had thrown over me saved me, so did the rain. I was taken over to the Barlow's home where Ethel Churchill and her mom, Jesse Barlow got busy and found a robe for me to wear because my coat was so badly burned - it's a wonder it held together. When they tried to help I did not want them to touch me. I was too filled with pain and fright. I was in so much pain

when I looked at the clock on the wall, the time hands seemed to be twirling around like if they had gone out of control. When I could focus my eyes I could barely make out the time. It was twenty minutes to three a.m. October 28, 1948. When my father-in-law was taken up to the hospital he was having a near heart attack and he was half moaning and half crying out just the same as I heard in my nightmare - that was weird! All the while I was suffering. My unborn baby suffered with me because I could always tell by the movements when I was in severe pain with my burns. Doctor Bangman was disturbed about giving me morphine shots, but he had no choice. I had to be taken off while there was still a lot of pain.⁷ John Junior was born 2 months after the fire on the 29th of December. Everyone called him "The little paratrooper". Sue was born February 26th, 1950, Helen on October 29th, 1951. Luella, September 9th, 1954, and Christopher Ray was born March 5th, 1957. Usually a newborn baby doesn't look like anybody - but Chris looked just like his daddy, John. Grandpa "Gassy" kept saying, with his German accent "Does he not have a face just like his daddy"? Kids, I sure did appreciate your grandpa's and Christine's help while you were very little. When I think back, I think that you must have been all terribly lonely growing up. Even if you didn't know what you were lonely for. Before I started to work out at the Wrangell Institute and before John Sr. died, I didn't know how to show my love. I'd busy myself giving you material things that I thought would make you happy.

When John Sr. Died

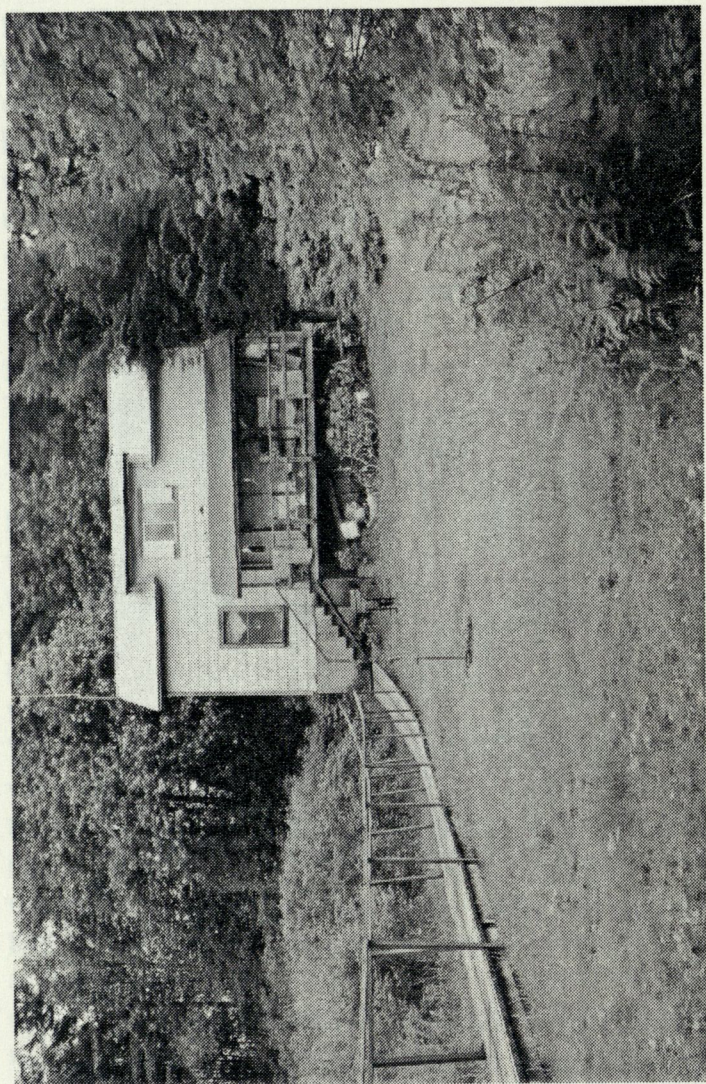
On that foggy night around the 1st of August in 1964 when he had apparently fallen off his gillnet boat while it was running, the thought of his lonely death has always haunted me. And the way he died out in the cold black waters with no one near by. All the men in the gillnet fleet were his dear and good friends. They all felt very bad about the death - they all pitched in and gave us a large amount of money before his funeral. Arnold Bakke felt very bad because he had been John's running partner, close fishing associate, and friend, But on the day before John was missing Arnold had to leave him to go in to town on business. The days that John was missing were very traumatic for all concerned and were the longest days of my life because I half expected him to walk in any time. There were many speculations that he could have gone deer hunting and he might have gotten hurt or lost in the woods and could still be alive somewhere. When his boat was found by a Petersburg fisherman, the running lights were still on and the boat lay resting against some rocks as if it had been moored there. So the man left John a note saying that he had turned off the running lights. Several of the other gillnetters set out their nets hoping to recover his body. But on the 6th of August, John's body was found laying face down on the beach by two of Wrangell's boys, Emil Churchill and

Frank Young, Jr., who had just started out on a hunting trip. The big search had been given up by then. Everyone figured it was very unlikely that John would ever be found. You needed a shoulder to cry on. I wasn't much help after I got over the shock of John's death. I realized that it was the first time in my life that I was completely on my own. IT was scary, but yet again it gave me a heady feeling. I'm afraid I became pretty "cocky". I was enjoying my feeling of independence. I got on a merry-go-round and didn't want to get off. Then in 1970 I started to feel depressed and empty. I felt like I had lost something and did not know what. That's when I started doing some serious drinking. Some people thought my drinking became suicidal. I thought the trial and tribulations I'd gone thru during the course of my life had left me unscarred but I was wrong. I never realized how badly I felt inside. Those horrible suppressed feelings that I had expertly hid from the time I was 11 would have to come some time. When they did they were so powerful, just like huge waves washing over me. It showed. I would clench my teeth together from nervousness and fear. Ellen Lang and I were talking together a few years back about my life on the whole. She had seen some of the things that I had gone through. I told her that if I hadn't done something rebellious I would have just slipped out and could have ended up in a straight jacket. When I was really young, I had always wanted to run! But, there present a very good picture. I told my Mother-in-law, Marjorie Brady, about two months ago that I didn't even know myself. Being the smart woman that she is she knew what I meant. I was just passing through as far as life went – afraid to face

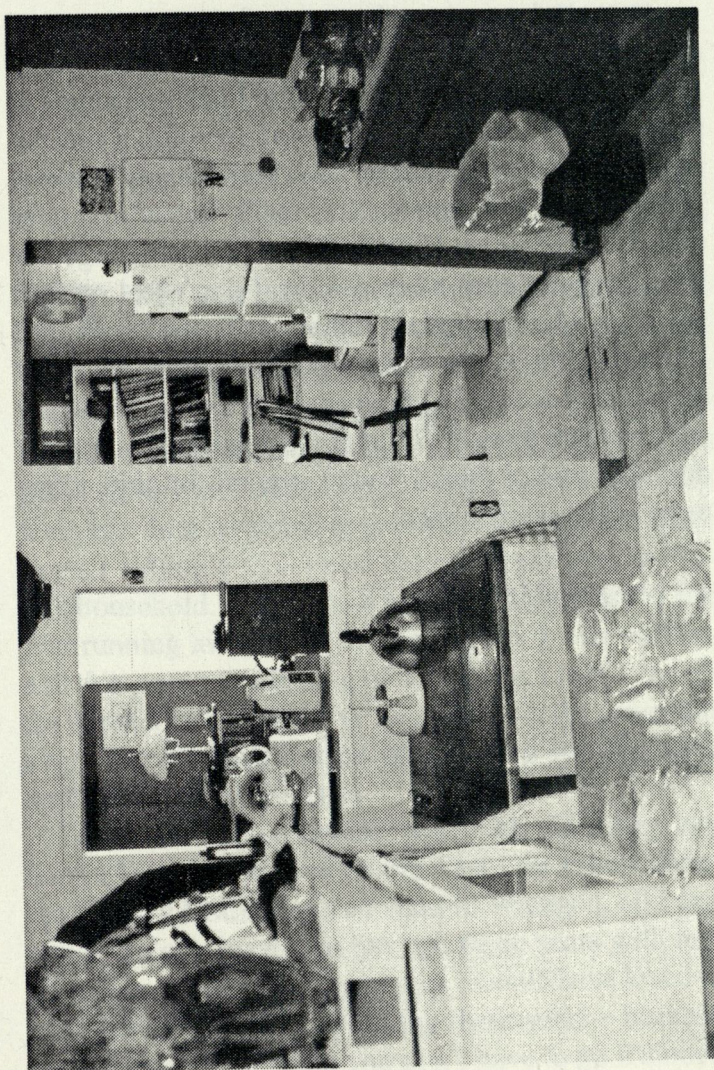


John Paul Feller, 1924-1964. Father of my children.
Fought in Europe during WWII.

myself. I never thought about that theory of mine, that applies to many things in life. That if you are afraid of the dark, go out into it. You may find there is nothing out there to be afraid of. I've been able to sort out all the pent up feeling that have been bottled up in me for years. Bitterness and resentment, they have been given a tranquilizer.



Our home in Wrangell where the children grew up.



The kitchen and oil range where we cooked many holiday dinners.

Hatred? I was very happy to find there is none. Ahh, love? There is lots of love. Enough to go around. Little Alice took very god care of it. I don't need booze to feel like I can open up my true feelings. I did the right thing when I married Brookner "Scotty" Brady. His kindness and patience has really helped me over the past three years. If we were content to be together before, we are even more so now. I don't feel restless anymore, like if I lost something and won't rest until I find it. I still have a ready made cocktail about twice a week just as I'm finishing cooking dinner for Scotty and me aboard our R.V. I really enjoy that. But no big deal. Say, kids, I think I'll stick around for quite a few more years. It's real nice.

Love Ya, Mom

Conclusion

Why is it that when I wrote about the first ten years of my life I felt like that was really me I was writing about? The rest of my story seemed to me as if I was writing about someone else? My life with Flora taught me a great deal. There were many times that I stepped out of my role as a burdened teen-ager to a responsible grownup. There were many times I willingly took on all the responsibilities of Flora's household. I know now as I look back, I never felt like running away. I began feeling like I was needed, and this gave me a feeling of belonging. I now keep all the Mothers Day cards I've received over the years that say, "You are always there when I need you Mother", and I really hope this is so.

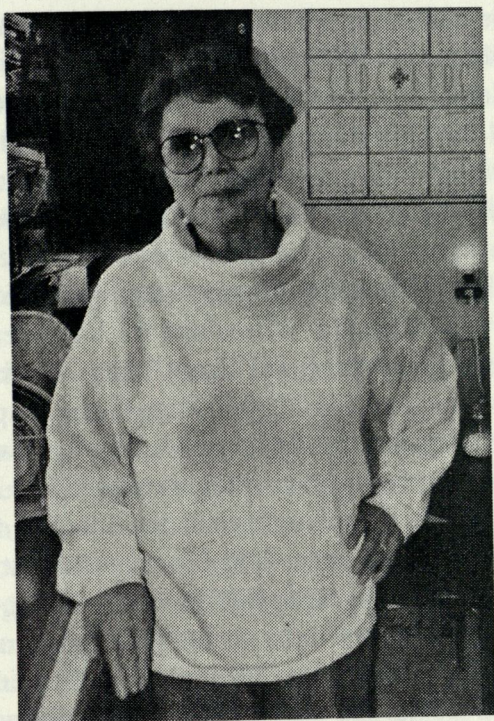
And if there is anyone who feels like they can contradict anything concerning what I've written about the "Heavy Years" before I went to Wrangell, all I can say is, no one lived thru through those years with me, minute by minute and day by day. I would have loved to have had some company during those years – because nothing is so hard when you don't have to go it alone.

The reason I titled part of my story "The Storm" was because like I said, there was always that feeling inside me. I struggled to bury it – but looking back, I always had great outbursts about twice a year that just

about blew out my doors (1964-1976). Those outbursts just about shook the building I was in, and the people around me. Those feelings must have been a result of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Sometimes when I'd glance in a mirror and catch the expression on my face – the anguish and strain written all over it – that looked like I was filled with hatred and cruelty, I never realized why I would feel so relaxed after one of my outbursts. I never really solved the problems that were bothering me, why would I feel so at peace with the world for a long while? Because after I let loose emotionally – I loosened all those tight knots that were inside me. I never held a real grudge. I was having quite a bout with life when I'd get knocked down I would go back and sit in my corner for the next few rounds, I was able to roll with the punches and even laugh about it. I was tough wasn't I – Didn't I have some pretty good teachers once). So much thoughtlessness on my part – after all I was real young I was taught to do things, but I was never taught to think. I wish I had been different, but every time there was a tragic death in my family my way of living changed drastically and I'd have to take on a whole new role – still trying to get over the shock which ended the last role and trying to adjust to a confusing new one which was always so different. I can understand why I lost myself.

Endnotes

- 1 Land on which S.J.S. alumni built their homes was allotted thru the Board of National Missions.
- 2 Up until a little over a year ago, Ellen was Regional Superintendent of Parks under the Forest Service with an office in the Visitors Center Building at the entrance of "Totem Park."
- 3 The couple that were out at Neva Point at the time of the drownings had to move into Sitka later because the woman kept having bad dreams beginning with the "Eagle" coming into the Bay, dropping anchor, and the whole living nightmare. She could not go on staying there so her husband took a job as gardener on the Pioneer's Home Grounds.
- 4 Grandpa John Kadashan's big picture was left in the house. There is one just like it in our Indian Folklore book up at the Wrangell Library.
- 5 In later years Virginia named a daughter after me. I was very proud to find that out.
- 6 Most of this outfit that had been stationed in Sitka were wiped out on Saipan.
- 7 After the fire my mental state was bad because of being so frightened. It really helped that Amy and Howard Churchill brought up a radio. They knew that I loved soft music. I always fell off to sleep listening to it. I loved them.



About the Author

I am grateful that Author House requested this autobiography on the author, but it took me a long time to come up with anymore about myself, so this is hard in more ways than one. Something in me needed release from the memories that were buried deep within me for so many long hard years. I never wanted to remember the terrorizing, heartbreaking years when I lived with my sister and her husband who were both alcoholics. Things took place, because of the heavy drinking which turned them into mindless and sightless zombies, which was enough to scare me half to death!

It was demoralizing for my poor sis and her babies.

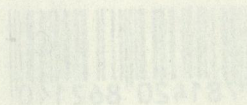
While my mother and I still lived in the house up in the Cottages, one night I had been to the movies. It was still daylight when I got out, so I decided to stop up to see how Flora and her family were doing. I do not know why I entered the house when it was all-dark, but as my eyes focused, there were two people passed out on the bed and the bassinet was tipped over. On the floor lay little baby Wilma and for a few terrifying moments I thought she was dead! Then I realized she was hiccuping from crying herself to sleep. It appeared someone staggered by, knocked the bassinet over, and kicked her in the head as they stumbled by. Violent things like this happened when the alcohol flowed. Al broke my sister's arm and Flora had a cast all the way down one arm, half way down the other, and all the way down to her hips. At the time, she was three months pregnant; I believe all three of her babies were conceived while she was intoxicated. This was just after WWII broke out. Doctor Sharpenberg warned that if her arm were broken again she would be crippled for life. Al worked over at the Navy base. When he did not come home after work, we knew he was out drinking. I was sick with worry about what would happen when he came home, due to my sister telling him, while she was very drunk, that she did not love him anymore. When he did arrive, he was in an ugly mood and tried to re-break her arm. She motioned for me to call the police, then turned and entered the kitchen, so I picked up the phone. I was thankful the operator was not busy, but could barely get the words out while telling her where to send the police. When they arrived, Al told

them he would settle down so they left. Afterwards he started in again. While I was trying to protect my sis, he had me by the hair and was jerking so hard I felt my neck would break. The police plain-clothes' man left outside, burst in and was going to hit Al with a Billy club but my sister stopped him. Al went to bed and fell into a sound sleep. When they were not carrying on like that, they kept me busy doing all the household chores.

I had to stay home from school until her arm healed. I missed so much school and because of being so traumatized I could not concentrate while there. I sat on the edge of my seat, expecting Superintendent Wolf to open the door and motion me out to the hallway. His face would be as white as a sheet while he told me to get on home as fast as I could. I would be so frightened, I do not know why my heart did not stop right then! Flora's three little ones needed me. When their parents picked on me, they put their arms around my legs and little Wilma would scream, "Don't hurt my Aunty Daa Daa, I love my Aunty Daa Daa!" I do not know why, but that coming fall I signed up to attend Wrangell Institute. I was torn because I did not want to leave behind my little angels who I loved so much! I was so exhausted, I often fell asleep in school. My heart was beginning to give out, but neither myself nor anyone else knew. When I arrived in Wrangell, where my mother was born, Doctor Clements told the Institute staff that I was never to return to live with my sister. The superintendent relayed what the doctor told him; I was almost worked to death and if I stayed there for two more months, I would have dropped

dead. That meant I would have been dead before my sis and her children. I spent much of my first year in the health center on the campus. I felt so bad when I knew I would not be able to go back to see my little angels. My sister wrote me that she had a tablecloth with a map of Southeast Alaska on it. She showed little Wilma and Harvey where Wrangell was and when they missed me desperately, they put their little fingers on Wrangell and hollered as loud as they could "Aunty Daa Daa come home!" We were never going to see each other again! After all these years, my message for my three "little angels" is, "Aunty Daa Daa loves you very much and God willing I will see you soon."

It was very difficult to deal with so much sadness and lost love. I have traveled a long hard road and often wonder how I made it all this way! I am writing because there are many who may be experiencing the same grief as I did and they can relate. Opening old wounds is painful, but healing. Thank you Author House, from the Author, Carol Feller Brady.



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Kadishan's House

Kadishan (or Kadashan), a leader in Wrangell, built this house in 1887. Winter and Pond reported that his ancestors were high-ranking Haidas who intermarried with the Tlingits and moved to the Stikine River region. The poles are considerably older than the large house. Although he adopted new architecture, Kadishan still faced his house toward the beach and preserved his poles by supporting them with a prop. His neighbor's house is in the traditional longhouse style, although it has a fence, windows, a door, and a flagpole in front.

The house on the front cover is the home of the author's Grandfather, John Kadashan.

