

As | remember . . .

Alaska

by

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FIRST EDITION

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Preface

In the early 1970's I had left the government civil service, and purchased a job printing shop. I quite quickly realized that I was barely making wages — the competition of the larger printing businesses was near insurmountable. The purchase of supplies in larger quantities cost only a fraction of what they cost a small printing shop. Realizing that my desire to eat exceeded my enjoyment for printing, I started searching for another avenue to enhance my welfare. Several had commented that I showed some talent for layout, and noticing the prices charged for this work, I decided to sell my printing equipment and evolve into the typesetting and layout business. Hopefully this would allow the habit my family and I had attained of enjoying eating most every day to continue, and we could live happily ever after.

Not knowing where to find this type of work, other than with the existing printing businesses, I contacted each of these in the Huntsville, Alabama vicinity, and picked up an occasional job here and there. Not nearly enough to sustain a business, but still offering just enough hope to keep trying.

One day in 1974, I received a telephone call from Mr. James R. Travis, Managing Editor of the University of Alabama Press in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. It seems that one of the local printers in Huntsville had been in contact with the University Press, and in the course of the

conversation had passed my name on to them. Mr. Travis called to ask if he and his wife could drive up to our home to talk with my wife and I about typesetting. He wanted to see the quality of our typesetting and generally ascertain to his own mind that we would be able to produce. We agreed and that afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Travis came to our home north of Huntsville to visit with us.

After talking with each other for several hours, Mr. Travis decided to let us produce a book he was publishing by his own firm, Portals Press. Later, after completion of this book, we did typesetting and layout for the University of Alabama Press and over the next nineteen years, did approximately one hundred books for Portals Press. Mr. Travis also sent other publishers our way.

During the ensuing years my wife and I became very good friends with Mr. Travis, who passed away in 1994. (I had the honor of preaching his memorial service in Tuscaloosa.)

We learned much of each other's histories and discovered we had lived quite close to each other in Tulsa, Oklahoma several years ago, and again in Huntsville, Alabama later — just two blocks apart — but had never heard of each other until that day he and Mrs. Travis came to see us.

As we became better acquainted, we became very good friends, and over the years spent considerable time just visiting each other. As our friendship progressed, I began relating some of the experiences I had in Alaska to him. The more he heard, the more he tried to encourage me to consolidate them in a book. I explained to him that I had made no notes, and though I had many personal photos I had taken while there, I had some confusion as to

when certain experiences took place.

Mr. Travis finally prevailed on me to write my memoirs of these periods of my life (there were three separate trips to Alaska, over a four year period), relying upon my memory as best I could, to sort out each incident. Together we finally agreed that the story would still be true, and as accurate as could be recalled. Retracing the routes of the separate accounts would be impossible at any rate.

With this in mind, I began writing some two years ago, and to my amazement, many details returned as I wrote. Each incident did happen. Wherever I have indicated I was, and whatever event happened there, actually happened as I have recorded it. I cannot relate to you with all certainty it happened just when I had it recorded on a particular trip — nor can I say for sure that I always have the proper person mentioned as being with me at that event. The events happened during the period of 1964 through 1968.

To the best of my knowledge and belief I have written an accurate account. I hope you enjoy my chronicle.

I believe a short explanation concerning pictures of my chronicle is in order.

First, all the pictures I have included in this book were either taken by me, or of me by some friend. None are professional photographs, as I'm sure you will recognize. Much to my sorrow now, I did not capture everything on camera as I made my journeys.

Next, let me apologize for not having pictures of the events recorded in Part I — the earthquake scenes, Portage Glacier, the native cemetery, Floyd Akins' garden, Matanuska

Valley — all of these are apparently lost, forever. It's true, I have a photographic record of all of this — on the old 8 m.m. movie film.

Since beginning this book, I have been searching for a way to extract still frames of this film, but to this point, I have not been able to. These movies have been transferred to videocassette, but lost so much detail and color, they're not usable to capture still frames. The movies themselves, are too dark and include the drive tracks within the picture frame.

So I must apologize, and just say that I'm sorry I must omit these pictures.

N.A.S.