

Part III

All Over

Chapter 18

Here We Go Again

Returning to Oklahoma and trying to pick up the pieces was not as easy as you might think. There wasn't any problem about my job especially, though some things were done differently while I was away in Alaska. These required my retraining two or three employees to think slightly different. A couple of confrontations got everything running smoothly again.

It is very hard to go through a project like the one I had just completed, then move into the different requirements of life back home. It was nice to get back to my church, and the permanent friends I had made in certain circles — but, there were also other elements that put a damper on life in other areas.

My solution was to keep transferring. Construction of Webber's Falls Lock and Dam was just getting underway. When the position of Administrative Assistant to head up the office was advertised, I applied for it and was chosen. I was beginning to believe my role with the Corps of Engineers was to "start up" new offices (I later started three additional offices from scratch).

This was nice and challenging, but I still was not at ease, so I resigned my position at Corps of Engineers — moved to Dallas, Texas, and found work with the Defense Contract Area Services Region (DCASR), administering contracts.

Still not content with everything in life, I applied for a job as Industrial Property Assistant in Saudi, Arabia. Overseas personnel actions do not happen with haste, so while waiting on

word if I would be accepted to this position or not, I decided I would check back with the Alaska District, Corps of Engineers to see if they had a place for me back in Alaska again.

When given my award at completion of Project Long Shot, Col. Farley, the District Engineer told me that if I ever wanted to come back to Alaska while he was there, he would make a place for me — or; if he was moved to another post, if I could find him, I would have a job with him anytime I wanted it.

As it was, I didn't call him but rather the Construction Division. They immediately said they wanted me, but they would have to establish a job for me as there were no openings at that time. They advised they would call back as soon as this could be accomplished and arrange travel orders for my transfer.

My family moved back to Muskogee, Oklahoma — the very place I was trying to get away from. I remained in Texas to await my orders. When I didn't hear within the next few days, I went to the Ft. Worth District Office of the Corps of Engineers to ask them if they would contact the Alaska District. They placed a telephone call and included me in the conversation. The Alaska District was not aware I was interested in transferring immediately, and hadn't expedited the creation of the position — Administrative Assistant for the Construction Division. They advised they would contact me within a few days.

While I was in the Ft. Worth District Office I looked up the employee I had shared the apartment with when on TDY after the earthquake. You remember him — the one who caught the baby salmon we all enjoyed. We had a cup of coffee and visited a while — it was nice to see him again.

In less than a week, I had my orders to transfer to the Alaska District — I still hadn't heard from the Saudi Arabia position. I had made my point of transfer as Muskogee, Oklahoma, so I returned home to pack and get ready to leave. This was now April, 1967.

Since I have become an old pro at flying, there is not much to tell of my trip to Anchorage — Tulsa, Denver, Salt Lake City, Portland, Seattle, and Anchorage. This being my first stop at Salt Lake City bears mentioning. The Great Salt Lake was low — It's banks had receded a

long way. I'm afraid to put a distance on just how far, as my memory is just not that good right now, but as I remember it, it seemed to be a mile or better.

The mountains to the east presented a backdrop highlighting the down town area and the Mormon Tabernacle. This was a very beautiful scene — though the mountains were mostly bare of foliage. The Tabernacle was very impressive. I would have enjoyed having time to see the city, but this was not a cruise trip — so on to Alaska I went.