



EAST BAY

A Personal History of East Bay Sand Island, Wisconsin

By Bob Dahl

Compliments of Bayfield Heritage Association Bayfield, WI
BHA File 2016.14.119

Chapter One

First Trip

(Dateline: December 22, 1942, Ashland, Wisconsin) On December 19, a son was born to Alma and Carl Dahl of Sand Island, Wisconsin. Both mother and son are doing well and expect to return to the island when the lake freezes over in January.

When the time for my birth grew near in early December, Mother, Dad and the three of the four kids left the island for the mainland. Sister Sharon, 18 months old, stayed with the Noring's on the island. Ice making in the channel, unpredictable at best had begun, and Mother and Dad felt they had to leave before any big freeze so as to not be stranded on the island for the birthing. The channel could remain open into late January, but could just as probably be impassable by boat for weeks in late December.

They all stayed in Bayfield until labor started on the eighteenth and Mother moved to the Ashland Hospital twenty-two miles south, at the head of Chequamegon Bay. Dad and Fred stayed in Bayfield while Connie and Carl were moved to the Herman Johnson's in Sand Bay. Herman and Agnes Johnson had moved from Sand Island and established a residence and fishing business alongside the Hokenson's in Little Sand Bay, three miles southeast of Sand Island, on the mainland. Sister Connie would have been five, Carl three and Sharon eighteen months. Connie recalls the Johnson's being nice, but she and I suppose the younger ones missed their Mother and Dad. Herman and Ag had no children so would have enjoyed having the children to care for, if only for a short while.

With the birth of the new baby, the family waited until the ice formed thick enough to walk back to the island. Staying with relatives in town, the large family would add a burden to any of our many relatives: the Wollans, the Edwards, the Humphreys the Garragins and to other friends. Fred, then twelve, boarded in town for his schooling so had a room separate from the rest of the family for some of the time.

Mother and the baby returned from the hospital the day before Christmas, but neither was in adequate shape for the long cold trip, even if the lake had been frozen over between the mainland and the island. The Christmas gifts and

other goodies remained on the island, so Christmas for the Dahl's awaited their arrival.

Toward the middle of January, Dad, and on occasion Fred, would drive to Sand Bay with Uncle Marvin to check the ice for firmness. Dad, always a bit foolhardy, announced that the ice held firm under his weight out five hundred yards so we were to get ready to move to the island in the morning, the third week in January. (In my later years, observing the ice making in this area, I never knew the ice to be safe in this area at this time of year) Dad's word was good enough for Mother so the next morning she bundled us up and Marvin drove us the twelve miles to the Johnson's at Little Sand Bay.

Although ice covered the southern-most section between Sand Island and the mainland to Big Sand Bay and westward as far as Eagle Island, open water could be seen reaching southward between Sand Island and York Island, almost as far as the southern most points of the two islands.

Mother questioned if it was safe, but Dad assured her that if they followed the shore west toward Big Sand Bay, they could cross directly to Hill's Point and either follow the eastern shore on the island, or take the woods road to East Bay.

The baby, Bobby, the only baby in the family to be named by Dad, and named for no one in particular, rode bundled up against the cold morning air in a sled pushed by Fred. Sharon and Carl rode together on a sled pulled by Dad while Mom and Connie walked together holding hands. Moving slowly and more or less in single file, Dad led us westward, inching ever so slightly northerly, toward Big Sand Bay on the mainland and Hill's Point on the island.

By the time they reached the western-most point where they had to turn north or over-shoot the island, they stood about midway between the mainland and the island. The little caravan turned due north and to one from the far shore we must have looked like a rook of penguins waddling north across the ice.

Freddy felt a sagging sensation in the ice as he walked along, but knew better than to say anything. Dad was heavier by thirty pounds and led the way and he hadn't broken through. As long as the ice froze solid from shore to shore, the ice could support an adult, over the underlying water, with little more than two inches of ice due to the outward force against the shore, not unlike an arch holding a much heavier structure above it. However, any weak points in the ice, or an unusually heavy step could have plunged us all to our death in the freezing

water below. Shuffling along rather than walking heel to toe kept one's weight evenly distributed over as large a surface as was available to an upright standing person. Still Freddy worried that he might not see his thirteenth birthday.

Each of those who knew enough to be worried breathed a sigh of relief when they could make out the short squat figure of Burt Hill standing on his dock willing them forward. Those of us who slid along on sleds thought this to be a fun adventure or simply slept to the rhythmic schussing of the sled runners over the ice and the gentle rocking of the winter cradle.

Fortified with coffee and hot chocolate from Anna Hill, Burt's wife, and in one case, a bottle of milk, the weary travelers trudged through the snow along the East Bay road rather than risking any more travel over the thin, dangerous ice. The baby's life could have ended before reaching his sixth week.

Dad and Fred cut a spruce tree the next day and finally the family celebrated Christmas a few days later. Fred, of course knew that Christmas had come and gone, but Connie, Carl and Sharon knew no better.

The tree stood snugly in the corner, across the room from the fireplace. A potbellied stove, standing on a square metal base, radiated heat along the same wall, a safe distance from the tree. Little displayed the religious nature of the holiday, but several traditional knickknacks sat around denoting the secular shift the holiday had begun to take. A small squat Santa, or in the Norwegian tradition, Saint Nick- a bowl of fruit, mostly oranges, apples and walnuts, with a cracker and miniature pike for working the meat caught in nooks and crannies of the shells and a Currier and Ives print of a sleigh being pulled by a horse along a country road toward a white farm with a red barn in the background.

The tree, covered with lead ice cycles shimmered in the lamp and firelight. Few presents sat under the tree, wrapped in plain white tissue paper. Nested in the tree limbs Christmas gifts from previous years sat, waiting to be rediscovered by the children. A new rattle sat in a notch in a limb, awaiting the baby sleeping in the basket on a chair. The white star, the Star of Hope and Love, although unilluminated, shown over all on the apex of the evergreen. Christmas tree lights would have been useless without electricity and besides would have distracted from the beauty and simplicity of the scene and Martin Luther's tree candles would have been dangerous at best.

The house, occupied for only a few days, already smelled of foods cooking, a ham, bread and spices. Mom, Dad, and much to his chagrin, Fred, did all the work as the younger four were only in the way. Wood needed to be gathered and paths shoveled to the back of the house -as Dad made fishnets in the attic- as well as to the outhouse and to the lake where water could be dipped through the ice.

The two older -younger- children would be bundled up in snowsuits and scarves and be allowed to play in the snow for short periods during the day. As they stood so short and the snow along the paths heaped high in comparison, about all they could do was waddle along the paths, eating snow as they moved along. Sharon and Bobby stayed in; unaware of the fun they missed.

“Christmas Day” came on January 25th that year. Fred received a hunting knife, with case, that strapped to his belt. Connie opened up a coloring book. Carl played with a toy boat. Sharon enjoyed a new rag doll. Bobby cried loudly as the older children shook his rattle in his face. Mother got a new sweater from Dad and Mother gave him a new pair of boots and a work shirt.

The four older children had small packets of ribbon candy and nuts that sat by plates at dinner. A feast befitting the occasion, welcomed them all; roast turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, yams and for dessert, two kinds of pie; mincemeat and deep-dish apple. The wind blew and the snow fell on the family, snug and warm in their home in East Bay, Sand Island, Wisconsin. Although a month late, this Christmas remains as one of the most pleasant to remember for the older children as it happened to be the last time the family spent the winter on Sand Island. After this year it became necessary for the family to move into Bayfield for the fall and winter as the older children were beginning their schooling.

Chapter Two

The Apostle Islands

Splitting the difference between Point Detour and York Island, the steamer *Apostle Island* chugged slowly through the cold, dark Lake Superior waters, it's prow pointed west, directly into the heart of East Bay, Sand Island, three miles dead ahead. The mid-morning mist hung low over the lake, slowly burning off by the late May sun peeking through the clouds in our wake. This was the third of the weekly early season trips through the archipelago, known for a hundred years as the Apostle Islands. The steamer would stop at fisherman camps on Manitou, South Twin, Rocky Island and Sand Island, gathering the catch of lake trout and whitefish for processing at the Booth Fisheries in Bayfield.

Captain Eli Hendrickson, a stout friendly man with reddish curly hair, ran the route with only one deckhand to assist him in docking, loading and unloading the boat. Not a large boat in reality, but to a five year old in 1948 this seventy foot all metal ship was the biggest thing I could imagine. White with red trim, this behemoth appeared to be two stories high at the rounded stern. Maybe as much as twenty feet wide at the beam, the "second story" rounded to a front, ten feet from the prow, leaving a small triangular open deck.

Since this was a working ship, the interior consisted of a front wheelhouse, all glassed in for 240 degree viewing, a large open bay and a small after cabin for the few passengers who might be riding along, usually relatives of the fisherman or employees of the fisheries. In the middle of the after cabin stood a small table, four straight back kitchen chairs, a small upright coal burning stove in the corner and two wall mounted kerosene lamps. A single electric bulb hung from the ceiling. Everything smelled of fish, which for the small Bayfield community was the smell of money. To a kid it stank.

A cool day with little wind, the boat undulated through rolling seas, the remnant of a recent Nor'easter. Because of the cold the hatches remained shut with the only light in the cargo bay coming from a string of bare light bulbs strung along the ceiling, ten feet apart. We hadn't stopped at any of the camps yet so the cargo consisted of several fish boxes of crushed ice, a stack of empty fish boxes to be exchanged for full ones, varying sized boxes of food for each fish camp, a large scale for weighing the fish and our mountain of provisions for the summer, located close to the hatch in the center of the starboard side, as Sand Island would be the first port of call on this run.

The *Apostle Island* made trips to the other camps more frequently than every other week, but because the only active fisherman working out of Sand Island was our dad, more frequent visits were unnecessary. The period of time fish would keep under ice (as well as how long ice would last without refrigeration) dictated the frequency of the trips as much as the size of the catch. In the cool season of May, the trips were made less often than weekly and up to twice weekly in June, July and August.

Other than the Captain and deckhand, both of whom stayed forward in the heated pilothouse, the only other passengers were my mother, two sisters, Connie and Sharon, and my brother Carl. Our dad had been living on the island with his deckhand, our oldest brother Freddie, for close to two weeks. The spread of ages among the four of us was less than five years, with Connie being the oldest at close to ten, next Carl, then Sharon and I being the youngest, who had turned five in December. Mother had taken the older children out of school early, as she was anxious to join dad and Fred on the island to help with the endless chores that arise from living on an island with no electricity or running water.

We had boarded the boat at the Booth Fishery dock before nine that morning. We all had to walk the three blocks from our home on Catholic Hill - unofficially named so because the Catholic Church had been built there, not because only Catholics lived on the hill- to the dock. Even if we had had a car, there would have been no place to park it for the summer since it would be early September before we returned to town. Our groceries for the summer had been delivered to the *Apostle Island* by Melde's Grocery earlier that morning so we each had only a small package of things to carry the short distance to the dock. Our parents would make quick trips to town over the summer, but unless there arose some compelling reason for any of us children to leave, we stayed on the island for approximately four months every summer for the first thirteen years of my life.

This summer started out differently from the others. It turned out that this was to be the only trip that any of the four of us would ever make on the *Apostle Island*, even though the ship continued to make the island run for several years after 1948.

Leaving the dock shortly after nine, we chugged north, the Bayfield Peninsula to our left and Bass Island to our right. The five of us sat in the back cabin, warmed by the stove. Mother had packed a lunch for the nearly two

hours, twenty mile trip, which we wanted to eat even before leaving the dock. Mom, in her patient way, suggested that maybe we should wait until Frog Bay, about half way to Sand Island. We, of course, didn't know any of these landmarks. We relied on the grownups to keep us informed as to where we were and what we were to do, and when.

Within minutes the cabin became too hot and cramped for four healthy, inquisitive children to stand so after listening to our whining for a few minutes, Mother opened the cabin door that led into the cargo bay. Any mother of four young children might do the same to achieve some semblance of peace and quiet, if only for a few moments. She sat back down at the table, sipping a cup of coffee poured from the pot simmering on the stove.

The four of us entered the large cargo bay, a blank palette ready for our young, but creative minds; at least Connie's and Carl's. Sharon and I were too young even to read, let alone be creative, so we became the puppets to their marionettes. We played their games and for the most part followed their directions, within reason. We knew better than to bother our mother's things so that left whatever the rest of the boat had to offer.

Avoiding the grilled hatch that covered the shiny engine in the bowels of the ship, a four cylinder Kahlenberg diesel, the girls played hopscotch on an imaginary playing surface while Carl placed me into a net box and dragged me onto the scale. After fiddling with the counter-weight and slide he declared with authority, "Forty pounds...whitefish!"

There are two kinds of boxes commonly called "fish" boxes. One was actually designed to hold fish, while the other designed to hold nets. The net box stood about eight inches high with the open end slightly larger than the bottom. The open top measured roughly three feet by two feet while the bottom might measure two and one-half by one and one-half feet. Handles were cut into the narrow ends, basically an elongated oval the width and depth of a man's hand. Because of the slanted sides, this box made a better dry-land boat than the true fish box that had roughly the same top dimension, but stood deeper, maybe two feet, and had the same size bottom as the top. Basically an open topped rectangle, the box had four handles on the short sides made by the middle sideboard protruding four inches beyond the side. Not the best pretend boat, but an excellent fort or shack or castle building block, not unlike life-sized Lego's without the interlocking.

Connie and Sharon joined us with a second net box and Sharon became a second "catch" to be weighed. She and I took turns being weighed. "Forty pounds...trout!" She became. The two older children would slide her off the scale and lift me on. The game played like a primitive carnival ride for Sharon and me, but considerable work for the two of them. At the time it didn't register with me that they declared the same weight for "trout" and "whitefish so Carl must have been repeating what he had heard Captain Hendrickson or his helper say rather than actually weighing us.

Soon tiring of this game, we built a fort/castle from a few fish boxes stacked in a corner. This structure could be a fort for the boys and at the same time, a castle for the girls. Imaginary guns might flash at the same time as grand ballroom dancers swirled around. Movies, mostly westerns with their obligatory serials, became the fabric of our young imaginations. Buck Rogers, Tom Mix, Jungle Jim, and of course Roy Rogers, Dale Evens and Gene Autry populated our imaginary world. There weren't a great number of female heroines in the movies so book figures were fleshed out, Pocahontas, Cleopatra, Little Women and Mary, Queen of Scots.

The boxes filled with crushed ice occupied us next. Carl pulled back the tarp revealing heaps of chipped ice that sparkled like diamonds in the artificial light. But we weren't interested in diamonds. We sucked on the clear ice like it was candy, picking away the bits and pieces of sawdust that clung to the surface like bugs on a windshield. The ice had been harvested the previous winter from a patch of lake ice a few yards off the Booth Fisheries dock in Bayfield. A fifty to 100 foot square or rectangle of surface ice, shoveled clear of snow, was then cut with a crosscut saw into two foot by six foot by whatever the depth of the ice, 18 inches to two feet chunks of clear ice. In later years the ice was cut using a gas-powered circular saw.

The ice would be cut from the inside of the rectangle out. The ice chunks would float and would be controlled by men with pike poles and ice spuds. The men would guide the ice to a ramp constructed on the outside of the storage shed. This ice would be stored in a large warehouse, by a method they had developed over the years where the ice would keep in a solid state through the following summer and into the fall when the whole process would start anew. A layer of ice, a layer of insulating sawdust, a layer of ice, a layer of sawdust until the space filled to the rafters. Tons upon tons of ice were stored in this fashion by Booth. A ramp that could be raised or lowered on the outside of the warehouse facilitated the filling and the emptying of the building. A two-foot

wide metal channel ran up the middle of the ramp on which the men would push the ice up or slide the ice down, depending on the season of the year. Winter ice up, summer ice down.

We, along with many of the town residents, would purchase chunks of ice for our iceboxes, carrying it up the hill in our little red wagon. A few large cubes of ice sat off to the side to be used by the fish camps for preserving food, but the bulk was crushed for preserving fish.

It wasn't until our hunger told us to stop playing and go for lunch that the fish smells mingled with fuel oil made me a little queasy, but being hungry I ate the liverwurst sandwich Mother offered me. I suppose there were children accustomed to eating far fancier fare; caviar and pheasant, shrimp and steak, but to us, a bologna or peanut butter and homemade jam sandwich on homemade bread was about as good as it got. We didn't know any better, nor did any of our contemporaries in Bayfield. Everyone, with a few exceptions, was poor, using monetary wealth as a standard of measurement. Connie and Carl had begun reading more complex stories so they may have suspected that there was a more affluent life somewhere out there. Mother was a voracious reader so she certainly knew better, but Sharon and I, ignorant of the outside world, took pleasure in what little we knew and life was pretty good for us.

With the warming day, Mother had slid the rear hatch open so we could see Frog Bay and then Raspberry Bay to the south of us and soon Raspberry Island to the north. Behind we saw Oak Island, the highest of the twenty-two islands. Even the youngest of us knew to not horseplay near the edge of a dock or by an open hatch. Inbred from birth, all of us had a healthy fear of the water without being immobilized in its presence.

With York Island in our wake, we all rushed forward to be the first to see Sand Island. Sharon and I, being too short to see through the pilothouse had to settle for the competition between Connie and Carl. Connie shouted that she could see the island first so she won. Mother finally slid the starboard hatch open, allowing Sharon and me to at least see the northern end of the island looming close at hand. The caves of Swallow Point were the first recognizable land mark to the two of us and we knew we were at the island.

I don't know if it was the smells, the food or the excitement of reaching the island, but 500 yards from the dock I clutched the rail with my little hands

and threw-up out the hatch into the clear green water below. This ended my most vivid early memory of Sand Island.

Chapter Three

The Bay

Dad, with Fred's help, had moved the fishing boat, *Egersund*, up the dock toward the shore in order to allow room at the end of the dock for the *Apostle Island* to moor. This early in the year, with only Fred and Dad on the island, the arrival of the company boat elicited little fanfare. However, when the other residents were on the island, the sighting of the boat would draw all the inhabitants to Johnson's dock in the middle of the bay, like ants to honey, to receive their mail, news, groceries or any other materials ordered from town.

In the summer of 1948, if all the houses in the bay held all their potential occupants, there would be Grandma Hansen, her daughter Dorothea, son Jake and his girlfriend Fluorine and her son Eddie Shrinner in the Hansen's homestead on the north edge of the bay. None of the Moes would be there as they had move off the island a few years before. Their property stood just south of the Hansen's and had the safest dock to leave a boat in the bay. About a thousand yards south of Moe's was Johnson's and close behind them Noring's. Mr. And Mrs. Noring were regular summer visitors to their home near the shore, but the Johnsons had moved to Sand Bay on the mainland. Johnson's dock had deep water, but stood exposed to a strong northeast wind so large boats were never left there overnight.

The Aabels had a small cabin between Johnson's and us, but were never seen during the many years I lived on the island. The roof of their shed was the hull of the Herring King that had burned to the waterline a few years before while anchored in the bay. It sat back in the woods a ways and we children would quicken our step when walking by, as we knew what spirits dwelled there in the shadows.

The next three hundred feet belonged to my parents, a wedding gift from Uncle Mel Dahl who had the adjoining property. There were seven in our family and during this summer five in his. He and Adel had two more children born after '47. They came up from Minneapolis for a week over the Fourth and for the month of August. Palms owned the next stretch, but hadn't a house, literally, placed on the property until much later. Loftfield's had a picturesque home set two hundred yards back from the water. Their home had been built so far enough back from the lake so that it couldn't be seen from the shore. Frequent visitors to the island, someone would be staying there many weekends, usually

not more than four or five at any one time. At the south end of East Bay stood Gert Wellish's, a single schoolteacher who had a female companion who also taught school in St Paul.

From one end to the other, the bay stretched for three quarters of a mile and probably not more than a quarter mile deep. A high bank of twenty feet at the south end dipped to a few feet at Johnson's dock and rising to ten feet at the Hansen's with a few places in between being higher or lower. Our home sat, more or less, in the middle. Rocky at both points, the only sandy beach lay on both sides of Johnson's dock and in later years around our dock.

During 1948 and 1949 the water in Lake Superior rose higher than it had in some time. The only way one could walk between the houses on the shore without getting wet was to walk up on top the bank in many places. Between Hansen's and Moe's the trail led through the tall grass a few feet from the edge. It would then veer down to the dock and back up the bank in front of the Moe buildings, past their small apple orchard and blackberry patch to in front of Bjorn's (another home never occupied during our time on the island, but was originally owned by our great-grandfather, Jacob Johnsen) to veer down off the bank in front of Johnson's dock where one of their twine sheds still stand. The small beach could be walked in calm weather from that point to just beyond the M. D. Dahl's. An ancient trail through the woods connected the Hansen's and the Johnson's, but was never used by the children, at least not without an adult along.

If one wanted to walk to Lofffield's or to Gert's, you would take the "County Road," a narrow trail until after Bayfield County widened the "road" in the late fifties. This trail connected the lighthouse, a little over two miles to the north and Hill's Point, a little over a mile to the south. This trail entered East Bay on the north between Hansen's and Harold Dahl's-Mel and my dad's father's place) where one could either walk due east to the water's edge, or turn south ninety degrees to connect with what became commonly known as the East Bay Road down by Johnson's and Noring's. The East Bay Road ran behind most of the homes in East Bay. At Noring's the trails formed a crossroads. You could walk east to the lake, one hundred yards away, west about a half mile to Noring's old place, a farm back in the woods, or south to Hill's Point or later known as Andersen's or even more recently, Hulings.

The land between Hansen's and Gert's was our universe until into our teens, with only a few forays to the west of the East Bay road, without an adult

along. This area encompassed maybe a mile long by five hundred yards deep of shoreline and woods, swamps and meadows, homes and outbuildings; occupied and abandoned.

Dad, Fred, Mom and to a lesser degree Connie and Carl, carried our supplies to the house. A creaky old wheelbarrow that stayed on the dock aided considerably in carrying the heavier boxes the short three hundred yard distance.

Our summer home, covered in cedar shingles, stained green on the upper part of the house and dark brown on the lower, the newest in the bay at that time, had been built in the early forties, sat back two hundred feet from the water's edge. Cleared of trees in the front, a beautiful view of much of the bay could be enjoyed from the screened-in porch built along the front of the house.

Five plank steps led up to the forty by ten foot porch, built at the level of the raised foundation that held the main building three to four feet above the yard. Four short concrete pillars held the front of the porch at level.

The social center of the house on warm days, the porch held a large round dining table with chairs, a small rectangular table for playing cards or more particularly for holding "stuff" and a padded bench swing which hung from the rafters that could hold two adults and a child. A variety of chairs, few matching, sat here and there depending on the activity of the moment.

Two doors led into the main living quarters. Off center to the right the painted white door led into the small kitchen. Cozy and warm on stormy days, a large wood stove dominated the room with its left side facing the door. The cast iron stove, dark metallic in color, was the type that stood waist high to an adult had a back that held a warming shelf with two compartments with doors, at eyelevel to the cook. The exhaust chimney ran up the middle of the back of the stove, behind the shelving.

The cooking surface consisted of a two-hole firebox on the left, a flat cast iron cooking surface in the middle (perfect for cooking Pancakes) and a water-heating reservoir on the right that held about two gallons of water. Between the firebox and the water reservoir was a fairly large oven with a built in temperature gage. A lever could be lifted or lowered, directing the heat from the fire to the different compartments. Rather ingenious, this stove replaced a smaller one around this time in my life.

An icebox, later to be replaced with a gas refrigerator stood to the right of the kitchen door, on the porch. A short hallway led to my parents bedroom with a door to the quarter basement and a door to the side stoop which led to the outhouse and a path to the back of the house where the outside steps rose to the attic quarters.

The north wall of the kitchen had bright white cabinets above and below broken by a window and sink in the middle of the wall. A black tile work surface separated the cabinets. The sink was used only for drainage, as the home had no running water. A rectangular table, with fold down "wings" pushed up against two double hung windows on the porch side. The twelve-gallon water crock sat between the table and the door. Later a gas stove sat here and the water crock was moved to between the wood stove and the refrigerator.

To the left of the porch door and behind it when open, a double rack of hooks held adult jackets and caps above with children's below. The wood box tucked in between the opening to the living room and the stove. For whatever reason, most of the movable furniture had been painted green. This included the table, wood box, water crock cover and stand as well as many of the chairs.

The living room, twice as wide and maybe half again deeper than the kitchen, centered around a fireplace on the south wall, a couch with stand under the porch side windows, a potbellied stove in the cooler months which utilized the same chimney as the kitchen stove, and a large, closed front, writing desk. Two rockers, painted green, sat in different positions in the room. A card table for games and such tucked in along the wall by the desk. An indoor opening wood box had been built into the wall to the right of the fireplace. Wood could be placed into the wood box from the outside and removed from inside the living room.

Virtually every flat surface held anywhere from one to three single flat-wick, glass canister, kerosene lamps. As all the walls had been painted white, the lamps reflected a bright warm glow on an evening. The side table to the couch held our *Philco* radio powered by a red telephone battery, which sat on the floor under the table. The radio provided our only means of outside entertainment.

The back of the living room had two doors; one leading to Connie's bedroom and the other to Sharon's and mine. A common closet connected our room to Mother and Dad's bedroom.

Connie's room held two single beds, a dresser and a chair. Sacrosanct from the beginning, one didn't enter this room without an invitation or before making sure she was far enough away where you wouldn't get caught rummaging through her things. Obviously, if one were to keep her door closed and forbid any one to enter, there must be some secret treasures to be found. If there were any treasures, I never discovered them nor understood what the big deal was in the many times I snuck in to explore.

Our shared room held two small beds and a dresser, but no chairs. We had a double window overlooking the back yard while Connie had a side window and a back window and our parents the same. Our parent's room had a double bed, two dressers and a chair.

As we entered the house my mother informed us that Carl would not be moving to the attic (a right of passage for each of the boys) but that I would be moving in with Sharon. I had been sleeping in Mom and Dad's bedroom and Carl had been in the same room with Connie. He would have to stay downstairs another year.

Fred had moved upstairs when Carl was born and didn't like the intrusion on his sanctuary so was happy with this arrangement. The attic, the size of the main house, could only be entered by the outside stairway. Fred's bed, just inside the door, had belonged to Burt Hill from the south side of the island who had built it himself out of small birch logs. Only a twenty-foot wide floor covered the first story rafters with open storage under the eaves with no flooring. The chimney from the kitchen stove separated the open room into one-third on the lakeside and two-thirds on Fred's side. Probably the main criteria for moving upstairs had to do with your ability or maturity to handle lamps and the ensuing danger of starting a fire. With no way to put out a large fire, each household, all of which utilized lamp light, relied on everyone to use caution when dealing with these potential fire hazards. I guess that the necessity for more room downstairs prompted Carl's potential move as a few years earlier he had nearly burned our Bayfield house down when he started a fire in a cardboard box in the upstairs of that house when he was five. He carries a large scar on his right leg today as a reminder of his near fatal folly.

By the time we had adjusted to our new living arrangements, Fred and Dad had finished their work for the day and sat in the living room waiting on supper. They smelled faintly of fish and wet socks as they sat talking to 'Al,' as Dad called Mom who's name was Alma. She called Dad, Dad or Carl. We all

called them Mom and Dad. We had no cutesy mispronounced names from someone's childhood; just Mom and Dad. When exasperated these one syllable names may stretch into two, three or even four syllables, but for the most part they remained Mom and Dad their whole lives.

The meal that night consisted of fried whitefish caught that day in the cold deep waters of Lake Superior, boiled potatoes and canned peas. Rarely fancy, our meals varied little over the years. We ate a lot of fish, either fried or boiled, potatoes and whatever vegetable that was in season in the far north. At this time of year and during the long winter, most were canned, either by Mom or store bought. Having no freezing capacity, meat had to be eaten within a few days of purchase. Our milk was Carnation condensed milk, supplemented by fresh milk delivered by the *Apostle Island* and stored as long as possible on ice in the fish house on the dock.. The icebox could keep things, like eggs and cheese, fresh as long as in an electric refrigerator so long as the ice remained. Mom baked her own bread, pies, cakes and cookies and these goodies wouldn't last long so didn't need refrigeration.

Darkness fell early this time of year so all of us were soon in bed, starting with Sharon and me, then Carl and Connie and soon after Fred and then Mom and Dad. By ten o'clock the house would be dark and silent, as different visions of the coming summer would play through each of our heads.

Chapter Four

Watery Grave

In early June, Carl and I started out for Grandma's place at the north end of the bay. We wore our normal uniform for the summer, long sleeved tee shirt, blue jeans-patched at the knees and tennis shoes which we called sneakers. It seemed that several pairs of sneakers leaned drying by the stove on most days as between the dew on the grass, the wet boggy land around and the lake and streams, at least one of us would have wet feet, if not all. Socks, being more flammable, draped over the wood box drying. Carl's and my footwear consisted 100 percent of white high-top PF Flyers either left from the year before or in rare occasions new for the summer. Mine were usually hand-me-downs.

The girls, on the other hand, wore similar shoes, but also had low-top rubber bottomed shoes, which might be blue or red. On warm days none of us would wear shoes unless we were going for a walk in the woods or off the trails.

A cool gray day, maybe fifty degrees in the lee of the soft northerly breeze, we started along the bank above the narrow beach eight feet below. The nearly wave less lake lapped gently at the base of the clay embankment. Quickening our steps as we passed Aabel's, Carl slowed so I could catch-up by the time we reached Johnson's property where we could walk the beach for a short stretch, almost clearing the small creek with a single bound, we reach the dock. Dad must have been out fishing as the dock held no boats and the Egersund could not be seen moored at Moe's in the distance either.

Always exploring, we walked out onto Johnson's dock, Carl in the lead. The walk to Grandma's, no more than a half mile, should take no more than twenty minutes, even for youngsters with short legs like the two of us, but with all the abandoned homes and out buildings between our home and just about anywhere in the bay, a short walk could take hours. It is interesting to note that with all the potentially dangerous situations we could get into, we still had the run of the bay with little or no direct adult supervision. There were three docks with deep water to fall off from, banks as high as twenty feet to tumble down, buildings with basements, rotting boards and sharp objects to fall on, or toss at, each other or stick into tender feet and fingers and etc.

Not a dock surface in the bay had two matching boards, either in width or thickness. There existed plenty of opportunities to trip or stumble. Virtually

none of the boards on any of the docks came from the same lumberyard. Ninety-nine percent had washed up on the beaches of Sand or York Island some time in the distant to recent past or rescued from some torn down building on the island. In this somewhat primitive society, everything recyclable was recycled, from a tin can flattened to patch a hole in a wall or floor to an old engine used for an anchor. Everything was either used for its intended purpose, some other purpose or saved in the off chance that it could be used for whatever, sometime, somewhere in the near to never future. Moe's blacksmith shop held the mother lode of such treasures.

In those days the path passed in front of Bjorn's, a mysterious two story small home that at one time held a thin coating of red paint, barely noticeable in its weathered condition. Once the home of our Great Grandfather Johnsen, (Grandma Hansen's dad,) we always knew it as Bjorn's, people we children never saw until teenagers in the 1960s.

The path curved down to Moe's dock and back up the bank for a short two block walk to Hansen's. Tall grass grew on either side of the path so that someone observing from a boat in the bay could only see the tops of the bobbing heads of the children as they moved along the bank. For most of the summer it would be the heads of one, if not all, of the four of us.

Visiting this week in June was Eddie Shrinner, a little older than I, but younger than Carl, staying with Grandma Hansen, along with his mother.

Carl and I made our way to Grandma's and after visiting for a short while, the three of us, Carl, Eddie and I snuck our way down onto the dock. The dock, jutting precariously into the cold blue-gray waters at the northern most point of East Bay stood sentinel on a rock strewn shore protecting a ten-foot high clay bank. Three cribs filled with blue-black granite boulders supported the three spans, tripling the length of the dock. The first span covered the distance from the bank to the first crib, a distance of thirty feet, a twenty foot crib, and another span of twenty feet to the third, bigger, crib of forty feet lay parallel to the shore forming a small protected L at the end of the dock.

Like all the docks in the bay, this one held a shed, roughly twenty feet by twelve feet with a narrow walkway on the southern side, the mooring side, of the dock. The fishermen used these sheds for storage of fish boxes, nets and other work related paraphernalia. Virtually all of them had small stoves for comfort in stormy weather and working long into the cold fall.

There stood about rope and buoys, bits and pieces of wood, both milled and drift as well as boxes of different sizes; anything that might have been used in the everyday activity of a fishing family or discarded by same.

The outermost crib had shifted during a previous storm or when the ice flowed one spring, forming a narrow shelf a few feet wide, one log above the water's edge. As we sat on the edge of the dock, our feet dangling four feet over the ten-foot deep water, one of us noticed a tiny piece of driftwood slowly moving under the span, pushed on by some inexorable force unknown by any of us. Carl, our eight year old leader, picked up a piece of wood and dropped it into the water on the north side of the span and we lay on our bellies, heads dangling over the edge to watch the floating object drift along beneath us.

We each dropped objects in and watched them drift past. In time it was noticed that each drifting piece of flotsam was wet on the top, unlike a real boat so Carl and I climbed down to the shelf on the waters edge to gently lay a board in the water, being careful to keep the top dry and scramble back up onto the dock surface to watch this more realistic "boat" drift through.

I had found a real beauty to set sail. A one foot 2 by 4 with an angled prow was to be my next ship. I climbed down to the wet log on the waters edge and while crouching down to place the board into the water, fell in with a sickening splash, the most feared sound you could hear on an island as a kid.

All of us had fallen in the drink at some time or another, but adults had always been nearby to fish us out. Fred told tales of each of his younger brothers and sisters being pulled out of the water by the hair or clothing or whatever could be quickly grabbed. One time Connie had fallen off the fantail of the Egersund while docking at Moe's dock. She had been sitting on the stern line and was flipped off the back of the boat when Uncle Mel jumped off with the rope to tie-up the boat. Dad didn't even get wet as he stood on the rudder, which stuck out a short distance behind the boat and grabbed Connie with his free hand and pulled her out.

Carl instinctively knew what had happened and sprang into action. Barely knowing how to swim himself, he leaped from the dock, hitting the water like a crab, all akimbo. I had drifted under the dock between the cribs like one of the many "boats" we had launched. I distinctly remember watching the rocks drift by as I struggled to stay afloat, if not swim. The cold clear water magnified the rocks, making them appear bigger than they actually were.

Carl reached me, fighting to control my flailing, windmill motions. He grabbed me around the neck and pulled me the few feet to the logs forming the outside crib. Once holding onto the security of the dock, he guided us along the logs and out from under the span and around the corner so that Eddie could see us clinging to the logs, mostly in the water, but our heads safely in the life sustaining air. Eddie tossed sticks and boards into the water around us, not knowing what else to do, thinking, I suppose, that we could float on them if need be. Having exhausted the floatable material he tossed lengths of twine toward us in the hope that we could pull ourselves out. Even if we had the strength, he neglected to tie the upper end to anything so the twine simply slid into the water and drifted off.

Finely, Carl convinced Eddie to run up to the house and get Grandma who could pull us out of the lake, as we were too small to climb over the logs to the dock surface. Grandma, Aunt Dor and Mrs. Shrinner hurried down to the dock and soon had us pulled out of the water and onto the dry dock. Once free of peril, I began to cry uncontrollable, not from relief from being rescued, but from having to face Mother who warned us as we left the house each day to not get wet.

Grandma urged us to come up to the house for cookies and Kool-Aid, but in my fear of Mother's ire, I walked home along the bank, shoes squishing the whole way, crying. Carl and Eddie joined the adults for a hero's party.

Arriving home still wet, Mom, without explanation made me strip naked, and with a swift swat to my bare bottom, made me go straight to bed, although only mid-afternoon.

A half hour later Carl, expecting a hero's welcome, came home, also wet, so was given the same consideration I had been given and was also stripped, swatted and sent to bed. It wasn't until Grandma came over a short time later that Mother realized what a heroic deed Carl had performed so that he was given the proper recognition he deserved and in her relief also allowed me to get out of bed and join in.

Chapter Five

Let There Be Light

Night fell in East Bay sooner in the bay because to its eastward view, with its back to the setting sun, it fell fast and hard. This primordial blackness enveloped everything like a Black Forest fog of living shadows creeping over the island, first covering the house and soon slithering along the dock leaving only York Island, two miles off to the east bathed in an all too brief sunlight before it too blackened to merely a dark smudge on the eastern horizon. Foolish was the young child who lingered too long along the shore, chancing being caught too far from home to be possibly kidnapped by whatever trolls, goblins or gnomes that lurked in the primeval forest that hugged the clay bank along the shore.

Everyone knew that unlike Norway where trolls lived under bridges waiting to snatch a child to eat for dinner, the island trolls lived in the forest a few feet from water's edge. Many were the times that a child would be running home in the near darkness to be scratched by the bony hand of a troll whose arms were not unlike a tree branch reaching out of the woods. For some reason unknown to us then, the older kids made the younger ones walk or run on the forest side of the beach. It wasn't until we were older that we younger ones realized that we were bait for the trolls and other things that go bump in the night.

The forest, scary at high noon, took on an even more morbid appearance as the sun set. Creatures of unknown parentage scurried or walked only in the blackness of the forest, dormant by day coming out at night like Prince's of Darkness. We had read the stories. We knew not exactly what was out there, but we knew it wasn't pretty. You can imagine the relief and comfort we felt when reaching the clearing where our home stood and could see the soft light emanating through the windows lighting a small area around the outside of the house. It was the comfort we felt from this patch of light in the otherwise dismal world of blackness that gave us a common feeling with our ancient ancestors who must have felt a similar relief when approaching their campfire in front of their caves a few hundred thousand years ago.

Civilization could have developed along a certain course during the daylight hours, but what extended and expanded the march toward progress, and the day from twelve hours in the summer months and eight hours in the winter, was the invention of artificial lighting. The cave dweller had his fire, the

igloo dweller his seal blubber lamp, the city dweller (before electricity) his whale oil lamps and the Sand Island dweller her kerosene lamps. Although it was long after the taming of electricity on the mainland, the bay dwellers lit their homes with lamps up through the present day for the purest.

A portable lighting must have taken thousands of years to develop from the lightning struck tree or volcanic lit fire to the hand held torch. One can easily imagine the first time a primitive picked up a branch from the fire to ward off an attacker, realizing in an ah-ha moment that not only did the branch make a club, but it also lit a small portion of the darkness and was portable. Soon the prehistoric might be using the burning torch to move about at night or to light the back of the cave they lived in, expanding their environment slowly but surely into that mysterious darkness that enveloped their world around the same time each night.

What could have happened to move mankind from the unreliable burning branch to a more portable, reliable source of light? Imagine liquid animal fat pooling in a depression near the fire. A twig or a slice of animal hide partially submerged in the fat. Some how the "wick" is lit and over time it is noticed that the "lamp" burns far longer than a similar bit of flammable material in the campfire. A quantum leap took place for one to realize that if fat were placed into a "bowl" of, say, soapstone or a seashell, and a wick laid into this lamp and lit, one would have the first portable, somewhat controllable, light source and thus expanding the day into the night for an even longer period.

Many centuries would pass by, up to about 3000 B. C., when candles came into existence, made from tallow, a form of animal fat. Many centuries later came sperm whale oil, followed by paraffin, a petroleum derivative. The lack of an inexpensive fuel source held back the widespread usage of a liquid fuel lamp. It wasn't until oil was discovered, first in Ontario, Canada and then in Pennsylvania in 1859 that a readily, easily obtainable source of liquid fuel for lighting became available to the masses. In 1858, sperm whale oil cost, at today's equivalent of \$200.00 a gallon, only affordable by the very well off. Kerosene, also a derivative of petroleum, dropped from \$1.00 a gallon to \$1.00 a barrel overnight. The Drake Well in Pennsylvania gushed 1,000 barrels of oil a day. That is enough fuel to fill 336,000 lamps a day with one pint of kerosene for less than a penny per lamp.

Several other developments influenced what was to become lighting on Sand Island. A Frenchman named Argand invented the "Argand burner,"

(1783-4) a method utilizing a round wick whereby air flowed up the middle, increasing luminescence. This burner, coupled with Welsbach's (an Austrian chemist) incandescent mantle (1885) produced the brightest light ever produced from kerosene. The Aladdin Lamp Company uses an improvement on these inventions today. Over the years there have been more than 4,000 patents issued by the United States Patent Office for improvements to fuel burning lamps. A rather expensive lamp, East Bay had only three Aladdin Lamps in the early '50s; one at Gert Wellish's, one at Grandma Hansen's and the Loffields had the third. Everyone else in East Bay used the more common flat wick lamp that gave off less light, but was less expensive to buy and less expensive to operate. At Hill's Point, the Aladdin Lamp became the lighting source of choice. The Hills had one or two that the Hulings inherited when they bought their place. The Andersens had some left over from the Camp Stella days and the Jenschs used Aladdin's early on. Because of their superior lighting ability, this early supply of lamps was supplemented with later purchases.

Most all lamps used in our home were of the flat wick variety. Virtually all flat wick lamps had the similar elements. A wide base on the bottom for stability, held the lamp on any flat surface, like a table or fireplace mantle. A stem for height as well as a cool place to grip and carry the lamp from place to place connected to an oil font or reservoir for holding the fuel. Some lamps, called chamber lamps, had a handle on the reservoir portion, and no stem, for carrying to your chamber or bedroom. A filler cap for refueling covered the small hole, usually made of brass. A pronged burner screwed into the top of the reservoir through which the flat cotton wick could be lowered or raised by turning a small screw on the side of the burner. The prongs held the chimney (called a slip chimney) by slipping the chimney onto the burner, inside the prongs. Some lamps, but none in East Bay, had a shade holder and shade, which would concentrate the light over a smaller area and in theory anyway, is brighter.

For the most part, all parts of our lamps were made of glass, except for the burner, filler cap and wick. We had one brass chamber lamp. All our chimneys had a straight base for being held into the burner brackets, a bubble or flair that tapered to the top, leaving a two inch in diameter opening for venting the heat and any smoke. Several chimneys had a pearl edge on the top, but most were straight edged. Considerable heat came out the top. Many times, especially on rainy days, we would roast marshmallows over the heat from a lamp, not always being careful to not allow drippings to stick to the glass chimney. The heat off the top of any kerosene lamp is extremely hot. It could blister the skin in

moments and a healthy respect was learned early on that you didn't mess with lamps unless they had been off for an hour or more.

Mother would clean the lamps every week, filling the reservoirs and trimming the wicks, a job we would sometimes help with. The maintenance of the chimneys fell exclusively to her as one could easily break from handling and especially from placing a warm chimney into too cold water for rinsing. Her technique had our chimneys spotless and sparkling. In total we maintained about a dozen lamps in our household, moving them to wherever the activity took place; in the kitchen, on the porch or most often, in the living room. Several lamps resided semi permanently on the fireplace mantle with at least one on top a high desk in the corner. These provided ambient lighting, cheering the room. Another lamp hanged on the wall over the water jar between the stove and the icebox.

Toward dusk homes on the island varied in brightness and warmth, depending on the number, clarity and style of its lamps. On the south side of the island an Aladdin Lamps cast a very bright white light that could be seen for miles on a clear dark night. An Aladdin Lamp placed in the eastern Beach House window at the Point could be seen and identified miles across the water at Little Sand Bay. This was but a pinpoint of luminescence on an otherwise dark shore, but a beacon nevertheless for a weary late arriving traveler. A light in this window gave even the late night East Bay boater a reference point as fifteen degrees farther north from the light would place a boater in the middle of the bay where other references would assist the experienced boater to the desired dock.

Standing on the dock at Hill's/Hulings' one would see various lights from windows, depending on the time at night. At dinner time, always late into the night in those days, a bright light shown in the Kitchen on the hill while the other buildings stood dark and somewhat foreboding. As various people went to bed, lamps would be lit in the four or five separate bedroom buildings along the shore, dulled by curtains and shades. Unless someone would be reading, all buildings would be dark by midnight.

Following the dark ominous path toward Andersens, all would be pitch black. A lantern would help light the way, but to an imaginative young person the dancing shadows made the few hundred yards walk a quickstep. Three troll-infested bridges had to be traversed so few, if any, of the Point kids dared walk alone after dark. However in the teen years the trail served a similar purpose as

taking a young lady to a scary movie, she didn't stray too far from your embrace and the Lookout, strategically placed between the second and third bridges, made for a perfect, natural stopover before braving the final leg of your trip.

The Lodge at Andersen's, with its surround of chest high windows sparkled with a combination of Aladdin's and flat wick lamps strategically placed to maximize the ambiance for their many guests. Because of its open floor plan and many curtain less windows, the Lodge appeared to the casual traveler as being almost like a pavilion with simply a roof and a floor. Those enjoying the festivities inside would be very visible to the sojourner outside.

The final building would be the Jensch Cottage. On a Saturday night virtually all the lamps in the building would be lit giving the broad grounds an almost festive air. The many windowed cottages would shine like a Currier and Ives Christmas painting with the many lights causing eerie shadows to form and disappear only to reform, depending on movements inside the cottage. Muffled noises added to the festive atmosphere, occasionally accented with a whoop or a shout from the many Jenschs and guest who occupied the structure at any given time. Kids could be seen running in and out amongst the huge pines and spruce that dotted the lawn in the dim light, playing hide and seek or simply running and shrieking having been sent outside by the adults to unwind before going to bed.

The East Bay homes were less festive and party oriented. The lighting would be utilitarian and functional. If expecting a boat late at night a lantern would be placed on the outermost post on the dock where the boat was expected, be it Hansen's, Moe's, Johnson's or Dahl's. A lamp wouldn't be practical as a breeze could blow the flame out so only lanterns were used as signaling devices.

A boat approaching from Little Sand Bay would scarcely see any lights in the bay, even with all homes occupied, but would rather "Head to the Hollow." The hollow was the low spot on the silhouette of Sand Island when traveling from the east. Even on the darkest of nights this "hollow" could be discerned. Experience taught us that this low area almost perfectly matched up with Johnson's dock, which had deep water and a sandy bottom. One wouldn't see the beckoning lights until within a half mile of the bay. Gert's, high on a bluff would establish the southern boundary and if in residence, the first lights to be seen. Closer to shore one would miss her lights, as the line of sight angle would be too great.

The Lofffield's (as well as the Hansen's) sat too far back in the woods to be seen either in daylight or in dark so the next welcoming beacon would be from the MB's and then the CO Dahl place. Depending on who was in residence it became a process of elimination to find where you were. With rudimentary mental triangulation an experienced East Bayer could calculate to within feet where they were and how far they had to go and at what speed.

I would imagine that those before our time had different lights they followed, as the occupied homes were different and the tree line a bit different, but probably used the same process that dad did and his dad did and as we do, long after the pioneers are gone. Those seafarers who lived by their wits and their innate skills passed from father to son the knowledge needed to survive and to be comfortable in these hostile, though beautiful surroundings.

In a very real sense as we travel either to the Point or to East Bay in the dark of night or in the fog, we are as our forefathers were, sensing the sights and sounds as they must have; looking for visual clues to guide us safely across. Feeling what they felt. Different aspirations and expectations, but little has changed in the essence of being on Sand Island, one with nature; one with one's past.

Some buildings that still stand as they did, a few for over a hundred years, cast the same welcome warm lantern glow that must have said, "Welcome! You are with friends!" to Frank and Josephine Shaw, Charles and Daisy Jensch; Fred and Agnetta Hansen: Carl and Alma Dahl: Bill and Betty Hulings; Burt and Anna Mae Hill; Fred and Kitty Andersen, the Phipps and also to many of us from this living generation, beckoning us to approach. Beckoning all to be enveloped by the light with a, "Welcome home, friend!"

Chapter Six

Eagle Island Open

“Bobby, get up! Come on now! Wake up! If you are going out with Dad and Fred you have to get out of bed. Sharon, you too!”

Mom shook me awake. It was 5:00 A.M. and pitch black outside. I didn't want to get up, but I did. Sharon, in the next bed, rolled over and went back to sleep. Shuffling in bare feet through the cool house, I entered the kitchen where the wood stove crackled and popped with new life as a fresh pot of coffee began its life saving boil over the pine scented flame. Dad and Fred sat silently on either end of the green table, smelling of fish in their calf-high Wellingtons and work clothes holding their coffee cups in anticipation.

Fred, only 17, had been doing a man's job since he was nine as Dad's assistant in the fishing trade. Somewhat cynical of us younger children, Fred seemed to resent our carefree life of swimming and playing all day when he had to work. Other than when the Loftfield boys -Roger and Jimmy- were on the island, Fred had no one his age to hangout with so he was raised on the island, associating with adults and therefore had an adults view of work and play. He smoked, but never in front of Ma.

A story often told about him was when he was three or four years old, Mom and Dad had gotten a tricycle for Fred for Christmas. Thinking that he would really like it, they waited in anticipation for him to see it under the tree. Fred came down the stairs, seeing the tricycle he looked at it for a short time and said, “Well, I might as well ride the asshole.”

Gillnet fishing consisted of a series of events, repeated every few days for as long as the season lasted, from early May through late October. When the fish ran light in numbers, Dad would set one day and maybe wait two or three days and then lift. When the fish ran heavy he might set one day and lift the next. The schedule of *The Apostle Island* might dictate your lift, as you wanted the fish to be as fresh as could be when the boat made its visits. The fish would be dressed and iced down for those catches made between visits.

After a breakfast of cold cereal and condensed milk (we had no refrigeration other than ice), with toast browned over the stove on a coat hanger bent to form a double V shaped apparatus that held the bread a few inches above

the hot stove surface. Fresh strawberry jam made the bread taste like dessert. Mom packed us each a lunch in a brown paper bag, as we would be on the water until after noon.

As we walked the short path to the shoreline from our house, the arc of the sun popped up behind York Island, bathing the lake in a soft glow, portending a warm sunny day to come. We walked up on the bank to Johnson's dock as the swells from the recent storm lapped against the bank making it impossible to walk the narrow beach without getting wet. Dad and Fred could have walked in the water with their high boots, but in deference to me, we all walked through the woods the four hundred yards.

Dad, ever the romantic, stopped at Johnson's dock to enjoy the unusually colorful sunrise as Fred walked ahead to Moe's where the fishing boat was moored for the night. He held my little hand in his big, work gnarled, fist and said, "Bobby, you will never see a sight more beautiful than a sunrise over Lake Superior. I have been to Hawaii and San Francisco and here is about as pretty a place as you will ever see."

I didn't know where either of those places were, let alone what they looked like, and had never been awake to see the sunrise on Sand Island or anywhere else for that matter, but even my young mind appreciated the golden globe, now half raised behind York.

The sun's rising appeared to progress in jerks. While low on the horizon you could look longer, but as the sun rose you had to look away more often so with each look the sun appeared to rise faster. We stood there for about ten minutes and Dad mumbled what sounded like a poem. I understood only the words "orb" and "sword." The rising sun was beautiful and warmed the body as well as the soul as its life-giving rays bathed us in its brightness.

The light fog on the water had burned off by the time we reached Bjorn's. Passing in front of the building that once my great-grandfather had owned, Dad picked me up onto his shoulders, as my short legs couldn't keep up with his long stride. His head smelled of Vitalis Hair Cream with a slight hint of cigarette smoke. His boots made a twap, twap, twapping sound against his legs as he carried me the rest of the way to Moe's.

As we neared the blacksmith's shop we heard the engine of the *Egersund* sputter into life with a pop and a bang. Dad set me down when we reached the planking that led out to the dock.

Moe's dock, the Disney Land of East Bay, had everything a young kid could want to explore. To the north of the walkway stood two net reels where fishnets were wound to dry. Resembling a sternwheeler on a riverboat and about the same size, these net reels were freestanding; about ten feet high by twelve feet wide with a pole through the middle which rested on an upright pole stuck into the ground, with a metal or leather strap to keep the pole from slipping off, on either end. The four "paddles" were made of one by sixes jutting perpendicular from the pole with a cross piece attached on which the fishnets would be spread and dried.

Linen nets were the norm up to about 1950 when nylon began to dominate the market. Linen would rot if not soaked in a substance called Blue Vitriol (copper sulfite) and dried, or during the season, simply dried ever so often. Every dock had net drying reels before nylon came into vogue. Moe's had a third reel just off the inner dock shed.

When not watched closely, one of us would climb into the cocoon formed by the net having been wound around the reel and the other kids would spin the reel slowly, tossing us into the soft net like a big fish, too big to be caught. Our little feet would do more damage than the worst storms, but Dad never raised his voice when discovered, even though this affected his livelihood.

A cork-soaking bin stood off to the side. Cork hadn't been used for many, many years as floats to keep the tops of nets floating upright, but the name stayed even in the aluminum and plastic era. At this time, the corks were made of wood and therefore subject to absorbing water and losing their buoyancy. To help reduce this problem, the corks were soaked in hot linseed oil. The heat kept the oil liquid so it would soak more readily into the wooden corks, sealing them from the water.

Moe's bin must have been the only one left in East Bay as I don't recall seeing or hearing of any others. Hills must have had one as The Point was about a mile and a half away.

This bin consisted of four posts holding a four-foot by eight-foot box, four feet off the ground. The box had sides twelve inches high made of wood. The

bottom was made from a single sheet of tin, nailed and caulked to form a waterproof bin. When oiling corks, linseed oil would be pored into a barrel and heated by a fire set under the barrel. When hot, corks would be dumped into the heated oil to “cook.” Dad or Fred would stir this “stew,” making sure the corks were well covered and penetrated with oil. After a half-day or so of this, the corks would be laid out to dry in the cork bin with a drain hole to catch the oil runoff. A separate wooden bin was used to store the corks until needed.

The dock had two fish’s sheds, the one closest to the shore stood perpendicular to the dock, parallel to the shore, approximately twelve feet wide by twenty feet deep. The second, half again longer, ran parallel to the dock to within twenty feet of the outer end. A fourth net reel sat on the end of the dock. Each shed, opens from wall to wall, and had a stove for late season work and a crawl space in the rafters. Fish cleaning tables, also called dressing tables, stood in each shed with a covered hole in the floor for the dumping of fish guts. A small structure connected these two buildings, forming a fifty-foot wall from the shore to near the end of the dock. A five-foot wide walkway located between the buildings, at the edge of the dock, lead to the boat where Fred waited impatiently.

Within minutes we were in the *Egersund* and on our way. Fred ran the boat as expertly as Dad, while Dad prepared for the days work. Spare buoys and anchors, as well as nets, were in their place, leaving the starboard side free to lift the nets and the stern open to set those same nets.

We passed Hansen’s to our port and the small bay, part of East Bay, but separate, where the first homesteaders settled to fish and farm and raise their families in this new country. All from northern Norway, some knowing each other in the Old Country; there were Hansens, Dahls, Johnsens and Johnsons who settled here in the late 1800s. The caves of Swallow Point, then Justus Bay came next as we chugged along. At this time the land from Moe’s through Justus Bay, including the caves, was owned by Grandma Hansen. Not that ownership made much of a difference.

Dad relieved Fred from steering and Fred came back and sat with me on the inside edge of the open fantail stern deck.

Dad had acquired the *Egersund*, built in the 1920s in Cornucopia, Wisconsin by Thomas H. Jones, Sr. for Carl Ludwigson, of Bayfield, who named the boat for his hometown in south Norway, in the early 1940s. Only 34 feet long

by 8 feet wide the boat seemed tremendous to a small boy. Although originally built with an open bow, the boat now had a cabin from the open stern to the straight stem. Painted white on the outside, below and above the gunwale, the gunwale rails were painted black. A pilothouse stuck out of the roof in the back third of the cabin, just over the engine, a Chrysler Crown Marine.

The engine connected to a straight shaft to the propeller with a three-foot lever shifter for forward, natural and reverse between. The speed could be controlled from up in the pilothouse and of course the steering, but to shift one had to either bend down and shift by hand, or more commonly reach with your right foot and either pull the lever forward or push it backward while maintaining some line of sight as to where you were going.

Four large hatches in the cabin, two on each side, allowed you to work nets from either side of the boat, but as the lifter sat in the starboard, forward hatch, this side stayed clear of equipment and spare parts.

The lifter had been around in some form or fashion for a hundred years. Designed as an aid in lifting heavy, fish laden gill nets, the lifter evolved from a simple roller system to a powered wheel that could grip and pull the nets out of the water at the same time. Powered by a small gas engine, Dad's lifter consisted of metal drum about two feet in diameter and 18 inches high. About two-thirds up this drum a movable cog and wheel system was designed to grip and release the nets with smooth cogs so as not to harm the delicate net as the wheel turned in a counter clock wise direction, pulling the nets into the boat.

Set on a frame waist high, a smooth metal shoot hung over the side of the boat to guide the net into the clogged wheel system, which fed the net into a longer metal shoot where, were they available, several men could work removing the fish from the nets.

The inside of the boat had been painted with some kind of dark preservative up to the gunwales and white washed above, including the ceiling. This was a working vessel so the only seat was in the pilothouse where the pilot sat a foot below roof level with his upper body in the pilothouse and his lower body dangling over the engine box. A railing made from half inch galvanized pipe, raised four inches, ran along the roof on both the starboard and port sides, giving one a hand grip while walking the gunwale, which protruded four inches on the outside of the boat.

Looking to the side opposite the island, all I could see in the morning haze was water so I asked Fred, "How can you find your nets? It all looks the same to me."

Fred smiled benevolently as though he had been asked this question many times before, but decided, this time, to give me a full explanation, not knowing if one day I might want to be a fisherman.

"Each fisherman from Sand Island had their own places to set. The first person here picked his place to set where he felt he had the best chance of catching fish. Over time he would move farther out or closer in and would learn where good places were. When others moved to the island they would have to find their own places to set because they couldn't use the areas that had been established. In order to differentiate from one range to the other a series of landmarks aided in finding where it is that you should be. For example, we use two; 'Eagle Island Open' and 'Fire In The Branches.'"

"What does that mean?" I asked. "While 'Eagle Island Open' means that spot out in the water where if you travel due north you will eventually reach a place out in the lake where a gap appears between the west side of Sand Island and the east side of Eagle Island, to the south-west of Sand." "I know where Eagle Island is!" I said somewhat smugly. "I thought you did. Anyway, keeping 'Eagle Island open' you could draw an imaginary line from the edge of Eagle to the North Shore. We set along this line."

"How do you know where to start and where to stop?" "That's where '*fyrårn i grenene*', which is Norwegian for 'Lighthouse in the Branches' comes in. Following the line of 'Eagle Island Open' there is a spot where the light from the lighthouse shines through two branches in an old pine tree. When lined up properly, this is where you start your set, heading toward the northeast. The Johnsons used 'Swallow Point in the Hollow' to start their set, which placed them to the northeast of us."

"No one else fishes out here, except Uncle Jake once in a while, does Dad still set in the same spot?" "We set approximately in the same place, but aren't prohibited by convention from setting wherever we want." (This imaginary line, two miles north of Sand Island, follows roughly the underwater ridge that becomes Sand Island Shoals. Fish like to congregate along these underwater barriers.)

Sand Island Light, the most picturesque of all on Lake Superior, maybe on all the Great Lakes, appeared majestically through the trees on our left. Gulls appeared from out of nowhere; circling the boat before either landing on the water thirty yards away or on the roof of the boat. Normally squawking and loud, they settled in quietly for their ride to the fishing grounds. They knew their meal wouldn't be served for some time, but came to the table early so as to get a front row seat.

"How do you know what nets are yours?" I asked. "Out here now, the only nets are ours, but if there were others setting around us, the buoys would have markings or flags to tell the difference."

"Did you ever lift someone else's nets by mistake?" I said innocently. Fred said, standing up, "I have to get ready to lift so stay out of the way!"

About three miles north from Lighthouse Point, Dad slowed the *Egersund* to an idle while Fred leaned out the front hatch, a box hook in his hand. A box hook is a metal rod approximately three feet long and as big around as a man's index finger, with an oval on one end for gripping and a dull hook on the other to be used primarily for moving fish and net boxes without having to bend down. In this incidence, Fred used it to hook the buoy, which Dad had expertly maneuvered the boat alongside.

Dad kicked the engine into natural so that he and Fred could work together to lift and set their nets. Working together at the front starboard hatch, they pulled the buoy, which attached to the anchor line. Bringing both on board, Dad walked the two to the stern and dropped the anchor and the buoy off the back. Fred started the small lifter motor and after clearing the bridle - a wooden rod, about three feet wide that helped to keep the net spread under water. He fed the net into the teeth of the lifter, bringing up enough net so that Dad could set this same net off the stern.

Dad would steer the boat from the back as Fred worked the lifter from the front. Being a calm day, with only rollers remaining from some distant storm along the 350 miles of lake to our northeast, the lifter would pull us slowly along allowing the two men to do their work in concert.

I stood behind Fred as he reengaged the lifter, slowly pulling the harvest from the deep, clear, clean waters of Lake Superior. Within moments fish began to appear, their gills caught in the mesh of the net. Whitefish in one box, trout in

another, scrap fish -like suckers or those too small to keep or other trash like sticks or clinkers from the ore boat furnaces- were tossed back into the lake for a later catch. Occasionally too many fish were captured in a short piece of net so that Fred had to disengage the lifter while he worked the many fish free from the nets grip. They worked silently, each knowing the other would do his job. After a while, I walked to the stern to see what Dad was doing. He pulled the net that Fred had cleared of fish, spreading it, corks on top and leads on bottom and feed it back into the water off the stern. When a snag occurred he would shout to Fred to "Hold!" and Fred would disengage the lifter, giving Dad time to catch up. A cigarette dangled from his mouth, the ash about to fall.

I was hungry so I asked Dad hopefully, "When do we eat?" "We will eat between sets. We have two gangs of nets. Should be about in half an hour." He said the cigarette bobbing up and down in his mouth. The dangling ash fell onto his shirt.

They soon reached the end of the net and Fred walked the buoy and anchor back to dad. He then went to the engine and pushed forward on the shift lever. Dad held the anchor until the net felt the right tightness and dropped the anchor into the deep.

We sat on the stern to eat, letting the boat drift aimlessly in the soft swell. Mom had packed a hardy lunch of two ham sandwiches for the men and one for me. I had my own lunch bag with my sandwich, a small jar of cool aide and a generous piece of pineapple upside-down cake. The men drank coffee from a thermos and discussed the day's catch so far.

"What do you think, Dad?" Fred asked, sipping his coffee. "Looks like about seventy-five pounds of trout and maybe fifty of whitefish." "I hope the other net gets more." "We set where there used to be lots of fish in the old days this time of year, deep and farther out so we should do alright. Well, lets get going. The fish aren't going to jump into the boat."

We moved about a mile beyond where we had been. The lighthouse could barely be discerned from my low vantage point. As I must have looked restless, Dad boosted me onto the roof and gave me his piece of pineapple cake. The green roof speckled with gull droppings was warm in the August sun. I walked to the front of the boat and lay down just over the hatch where Dad now lifted while Fred set off the stern. The warm roof, the undulating boat and the hypnotic hum of the small motor made it hard to stay awake. I lay on my

stomach with my head leaning over the side so I could see the net being lifted from the water. A shimmering in the deep blue water foreshadowed a fish being brought up. Sometimes multiple shimmering and sometimes only one told me that this lift would be better than the other.

The gulls began to move in as the anchor splashed at the end of the lift/set. They had avoided the prow of the boat as I had been lying there, but several had braved the pilothouse and the midsection of the roof. Many more swam nearby in anticipation.

Fred helped me off the roof as dad setup a waist-high table by the rear hatchway for dressing (cleaning) the fish on the way back to East Bay. Using a short, stubby fishing knife, Dad began cleaning the fish before Fred had the gear stowed away. The knife, about eight inches long, including the handle, had an inch and a half wide blade, rounded at the end.

Dad would start at the gills, cutting through the lower portion of the fish, leaving the head attached by the backbone. Turning the head of the fish away from him he would draw the knife along the belly of the fish in one quick cut to the anus and with the rounded end of the knife, scrap the guts out in what seemed like one motion, over the side where the gulls would fight and squawk over the delicacy offered to them. He could dress a trout in less than fifteen seconds.

The boxes of undressed fish shrank as the box of dressed fish filled. Pick-up from the left, dressed, and plopped into the box on the right. Trout landed in one box, whitefish in the other. The whitefish took longer as they needed to be scaled, but Dad could do a whitefish in about a minute. With the whitefish, he would separate out the livers -a sand Island delicacy- with a flick of his knife, building a small pyramid to his left on the tabletop.

This lift, a good one, consisted of 150 pounds of dressed trout and 78 pounds of dressed whitefish. Worth about \$100.00 to the fisherman, these fish will increase in value to where they will fetch up to ten times that on the dining tables of fine restaurants in Chicago, Milwaukee and the Twin Cities.

We pulled into Johnson's dock at 1:30 in the afternoon where the fish would be iced down and stored in the dock house to await the next trip from the *Apostle Islands*. Fred and Dad stayed with the *Egersund* to complete their chores and to prepare for another day on the lake. The sun showed bright and cheerful

as I ran home along the bank to tell Mom and the kids of my day of fishing with dad and Fred.

Chapter Seven

Dry Dock

Living on an island revolved around the lake and its whims and whimsies. Storms were a part of the big lake's majesty and awe, but those many calm warm days which dominated the summer months, made a person long to be on the lake, not just on the shore. Although the bay held many intrigues for young active minds and a raft satisfied some of that wanderlust, a boat -a skiff- would open the bay's north and south exploration.

Carl, 12 at the time and I, 3 years younger, longed for the freedom a boat of our own would give us, one more suitable for our needs. Dad would let us use the big work skiff if we stayed close to the dock, but the pond boat was way too big for our small arms and bodies to row efficiently. Carl could barely reach across the seat to row as the depth of the skiff left the paddles of the oars above the water unless he raised the handles over his head and pulled. The boat was also too wide at the beam, nearly five feet. Two kids sitting abreast could row somewhat efficiently, but the difference in strength between Carl and I or Carl and Sharon would propel the craft into an endless circle unless a third steered from the stern with a third oar. All in all, this was not an ideal situation for a curious, adventuresome family of young children.

We wanted to visit those places mentioned in Jungle Jim movies, Tarzan movies and those exotic places mentioned in the shorts: The South Seas, the Amazon, the Congo, Casablanca, Tangier, Cairo, Zanzibar; deepest, darkest, Africa and the most exotic of all, the Kasbah where beautiful women invited you to go with them for what we didn't know, but it sure sounded like fun. We had little idea where these places were, but could pretend they existed on the island, just beyond Uncle Mel's or between Moe's and Grandma's or most holy of holies, in the caves of Swallow Point, viewed from a distance, but never explored by us kids.

Valuable jewels awaited the picking off the shores of Sand Island. Beach Glass, sometimes called Lake Glass, (bottles that had been cast overboard along the 300 mile stretch of Lake Superior, broken and grounded into translucent forms of white, blue, green, yellow and the rarest of all red, were found on most of the beaches of the Apostle Islands) could best be found, not on the sandy shore, but on the rockier stretches north and south of where we lived. The logic being was if you wanted to find small beach glass, look where the pebbles are

small. If you wanted to find large beach glass, go where the stones are bigger." Probably these bottles drifted to the island in tact and were broken when they reached the shore and either buried in the rocks or bits and pieces washed along the shoreline to be found by islanders. Agate Beach, about three-quarters of a mile south of us had the perfect conditions for treasure hunting – 100 feet of thumb-sized stones with a tangle of driftwood along the cliff side. Sharon could walk along this stretch of land and in a single pass find something of value to us island waifs. Each storm would turn up new opportunities.

Not only glass and agates caught our fancy, but also wooden corks (pretty much phased out by the fishermen by this summer) were in abundance and just beginning to show up, aluminum and plastic 'corks.' Of particular interest, the large -foot long- pond net, aluminum corks. Interesting shapes of driftwood didn't interest us except as firewood.

It might take ten years of gathering beach glass to fill a quart jar. Every house on the island had a windowsill display of a few pieces of found glass, from Hill's Point to the lighthouse. As we stayed on the island longer than the others, we were the only ones to gather enough to fill a jar with multicolored beach glass. The most 'valuable' piece ever found was the "Kincaid Diamond," a frosted white chunk of glass that we assumed had once been a glass stopper in a wine decanter.

Carl came up with the idea to build a boat scaled for our size. The examples we had available to us were limited. The work skiffs, although easy to copy in theory, tapered to a point at the prow so might as well have been an airplane given our inability to bend boards to fit this shape. The other boats on the island were even bigger or more stylish so less likely to be copied by a couple of preteen children.

The design, of necessity, was more of a small scow type boat, which Carl could easily draw. Designed to be eight feet long by roughly three feet wide the prow would be flat and only slightly narrower than the stern with the slight taper running the length of the boat. The prow could be slanted at a 45-degree angle giving the illusion of style if not function.

Once the idea germinated for a day or two, what remained was the purloining of material. Drift boards wouldn't do, as the edges would be rounded with wear. Only good, sharp edged boards would do on the outside of a boat as anything less wouldn't give you a tight fit to keep the water out and

allow the boat to float. The other problem facing us was to find the proper tools for a job of this scope and magnitude.

The tools were what the tools were. We were in no position to purchase the needed tools so we made due with what we had. A small crosscut saw, hand auger and tin snips that had once belonged to Burt Hill, a wood plane from Moe's, a hammer, a worn rounded edge screwdriver, a tin snip and a pipe wrench. Nails could be found in abundance -if not in consistency- in Moe's old workshop.

We began the search for lumber. Wood lay everywhere. The rocky shoreline stretches had wood piled Tinker Toy fashion along the tree line. Mostly logs, but on occasion we would see a board or two. Of a hundred of such boards, 95 would be short remnants of what might have once been a usable piece of lumber, but the wear and tear of a long sea voyage rendered them useless but for firewood. Four might be long enough for our use, four to twelve feet long, but usually were two inch thick boards that went directly to patching a hole on the surface of a dock or replaced a dock board that was in even worse shape. The one in a hundred, one-inch thick board suitable for boat building that had not been in the water long enough to round the edges -probably had to have been dropped in the water that summer- seldom was found. The plank wouldn't have been saved for us kids. The flat timber would have been used within days for their own purpose. If found by us, we would have used it in a fort or tree house, not saving it for some future use. Salvage wouldn't build the boat. Reclamation might.

Virtually every house, barn, shop, shed, schoolhouse and outhouse in East Bay that hadn't been lived in or used in the last year presented an opportunity for creative young minds to purloin materials to build this boat. Unfortunately most of the construction in the bay was either clapboard style, using four inch by one inch by eight-foot lumber, milled to interlock, or logs. Grandpa Hansen's barn had some appropriate sized lumber in it, but had been so weathered and dried over its 60-year life to be useless in a boat.

No, we had to find our material from a more recent source. One sunny day, while playing at Moe's, Carl, Sharon and I stood leaning against the cork oiling bin, having finished a game of hide and seek or tag, smelling the not unpleasant linseed oil residue in the "just as good as new" boards of the bin. Carl stood eyeing the boards, sighting along the straight, square edged lumber. He ran his hand along the top surface of the boards, a gleam in his eye. Lumber

that was wide enough, long enough and had the added advantage to be well oiled, thus less permeable than any lumber on the island.

Never being one to do his own dirty work, he said, "Bobby, go ask Dad if we can have this corking bin to build something." He put his arm over my shoulders and instructed, "Now don't just go and ask him to give us the thing. What you say is 'Dad, you don't oil corks anymore, do you?' When he says no, you say 'While can we use the boards in the bin to build something?' He made me repeat his instructions three times before he let me go to see Dad.

Dad worked on the engine in the *Egersund*, too busy to turn around when I said, poking my head into the starboard side hatch, "Can we have the boards in the cork bin to build something?" Without looking up from his work or even thinking about what I had asked for, he said, "Sure, but be careful," which was pretty much what he always said when he was busy. We had the materials, we had the tools –as limited as they were- and we had the desire, but did we have the skill?

By ten the following morning we had gathered the tools, collected the nails and walked over to Moe's to begin our building project. Dad and Fred were on the lake that day so we would have much of the day to work unimpeded by adults.

What took the longest was the separation of the tin bottom from the upper structure. Calked, nailed and tarred every two inches, the tin ran three inches up the outside of the boards, forming a watertight reservoir for the hot oil during the soaking process. Difficult to accomplish, it did provide us with an inspiration that would be utilized in the construction of our boat. What kept the oil in could also possibly keep the water out.

The disassembly of the cork bin moved along quickly once the tin had been removed. The hammer and pipe wrench served as battering tools to separate the good boards from the posts that held the platform off the ground. Careful to save the nails, we carried the four long boards down to the shoreline where we had decided to construct our craft, close to the water's edge. In the lea of the dock, the warm summer sun beat down on our backs as we labored. A soft east wind rustled the leaves on the small birches that grew in a clump near where we laid out the tools and the materials.

Carl had his drawings that had been made before we even knew what materials we would have available to us so modifications had to be made to accommodate reality. We had no idea in what order to do this construction. In looking at a completed boat, one can't tell what was assembled first. Do you start from the top and work down to the bottom, or vice-a-versa? Does one work from the inside out or from the outside in? Carl's decision was to build the two sides independently from the stern and the prow and attach the four sides, saving the bottom for last.

Two boards high, the critical dimensions would be the sides, as that is where the majority of the lumber would be used. We had four twelve foot boards so the ideal boat would have to be eight feet long by four feet wide, with no room for error. So we started on the sides.

We could have measured, sawed and nailed the two sides together with the 2 x 4's we had gathered and then cut the prow angle, or we could measure and cut each angle on the board at the proper distance and then nail the boards together. We chose the latter. Carl did one board for the port side and asked me to do the top board. I measured carefully. Marking my cut with a board laid on my board to be cut and a nail. I sawed my board with Burt Hill's saw. I proudly carried it to Carl who discovered that I had cut it at the reverse angle. Fortunately we could use the board on the other side by flipping it over. The old saying of measure twice and cut once made some sense now.

Finishing the two sides, we rested in what remained of the afternoon sun. Along the eastern shore of the island, afternoon shadows came early, even in the height of summer. Around four in the afternoon the sun appeared to be over the backside of the island -although it would be light for several more hours- along the beach where there were high banks or along the shore where the forest grew to the edge, shadows crept out over the cold Lake Superior water.

We picked wild sweet peas, popping them open and eating the small pea inside, being careful to not eat the ants that vied with us for this delicacy. Some wild raspberries could still be found here and there, having escaped Sharon's expert picker's eye, which we picked and ate.

We lay on our backs just off the rocky beach, on the edge of the grass that grew ten feet back from the water. Lush and green from too much rain, the tufts of grass enveloped our small bodies cocoon like.

“Do you think it will float?” I asked Carl who lay with his eyes closed, in his own dream world, a world he entered often.

A bee buzzed by; on its way back to the hive after absorbing what nectar it could from the blossoms on the sweet pea and raspberry plants. It flew up the incline toward Louie Moe’s house in the field, soon out of sight and sound.

“I suppose it should.” He said, not too confidently. “If we can keep the water out of the cracks between the boards and it doesn’t tip over.”

Every wooden boat had to soak up at the beginning of the season as the boards would have dried out over the winter and left cracks between the boards. We had seen Dad do this by literally weighting a skiff down so that the boat rested on bottom with water washing over the sides. He would leave it like this for several days. The skiff would be bailed out and those places that still leaked would be caulked with cotton or even old rags cut into strips. The cracks above the water line needed to be caulked, as they wouldn’t get the consent soaking of the bottom of the boat. Although we didn’t know to at the time, you should leave a small gap between abutting boards to allow for expansion, especially along the bottom. Being eight and twelve, it was amazing that we knew what we knew; let alone how to do it correctly.

We heard the *Egersund* start over at Johnson’s dock so knowing the men would soon be here; we hurriedly put away our things for another day. We weren’t trying too hard to keep this project from the adults, but at this point only Carl, Sharon and I knew that we were building a boat. Why leave yourself open to criticism if you didn’t have to? Besides, by tomorrow night everyone would know anyway. If it didn’t work it would be Carl’s folly. If it did, it would be our triumph.

It rained the next day and the next so we stayed inside for the most part. We talked secretively of our boat and where we would go and what we could do with this newfound freedom that a boat of our own would bring. We weren’t foolish enough to think that we could take this boat to another island, but once we proved to the adults that the skiff wouldn’t sink and that we could be responsible children, maybe we could go as far as the caves on Swallow Point or to Agate Beach or even as far south as Hill’s Point.

We all had a healthy respect for the water and weren’t interested in going too far away from land, but an awful lot of fun could be had within swimming

distanced of the shore. I don't recall ever seeing but one life preserver in East Bay and that was an old gray navy cork filled life preserver that Dad had in the *Egersund*, so bobbing around in the water with a life preserver on wasn't an option. You either swam or you didn't. Carl and Sharon were fair swimmers, but I still hadn't mastered the skill. Grandpa Dahl would say that the water was so cold that if his boat sank, hand him the anchor. I wonder if that is what he held on to when his boat sank in 1938 and he disappeared forever.

Rafts, by there propulsion, were limited to no more than three-fourths the length of the pole, depth of water. Plus rafts have the advantage of not being able to sink so although you could drift into deeper water, the rule we all learned very young was to stay with our craft until rescued. There is a story about a Dr. Diesen, the previous owner of Uncle Mel's house, who in the early 1900's liked to sunbath in the nude while floating on a raft he had made. He fell asleep one time and drifted a mile or so from the shore and had to be rescued by the crusty old fishermen who got quite a kick out of this strange man and his antics.

We would play cards or read or listen to the radio on these rainy days. Fun for a while, but we were anxious to get out and complete our boat building. Mom would try and keep us busy and dry, but was ready for the sunshine by the third day and after our chores we would burst from the house like bees from a disturbed hive.

By noon we had the back and the front nailed to the sides, giving the general appearance that the boat would take. It was Carl's plan to cut the tin from the bottom of the cork-cooking bin to make the bottom of the boat. Straining mightily, we tipped the boat onto its gunwales and rough-cut boards were nailed to the bottom to give support. We measured the bottom, making sure there was a six-inch overlap on all four sides. Carl cut the tin with the tin snips and laid it onto the overturned boat folding the tin snugly over the edges. Tapping the edges of the tin to make for a tight fit, we used roofing nails every two inches with caulking material between the tin and the sides of the boat to seal the bottom. Basically we had rebuilt the corking bin into a boat.

An inside rail was nailed along the length of the boat, six inches below the gunwale where two seats could rest, one in the stern and one near the middle where an oarsman would sit. Another rail was added at the inside top of the boat with a one foot 2 x 4 inserted between the inside and outside rail for an oarlock hole to be drilled. The boat was finished!

We carefully eased the boat toward the water on rollers. It was a very heavy boat for kids our size, but with pries and working together we made it into the water. The boat road gently in the shallow water as we stood alongside, waiting for disaster to strike. The tin kept the water out, at least with no one in the boat to weight it down over the tin line. We pushed it over to the dock.

Carl stood on the dock, raft pole in hand as we had no oars. He gingerly stepped into the boat as Sharon and I steadied it and he said, "Well, I might as well ride the asshole!"

And he did.

Chapter Eight

Broadway on the Beach

Saturday and Sunday movies at the Harbor Theater in Bayfield were the biggest part of the entertainment available to the town kids. When school was in session there were those activities, but between September and May the island children, along with the town children would attend every movie run on Saturday afternoons and if a different movie, Sunday afternoon. In the early days the cost of the early shows was seven cents and the evening movie twice that. In a few years the price jumped to fifteen cents, but by then we weren't as enamored with the silver screen or were older so went to movies at night with the rest of the adults.

It was a real entertainment value. A Fudgecycle sold for a nickel (in later years they had Dreamcycles, orange or lime over a vanilla center, but by then they cost a dime and frozen fruit juice on a stick) and a small bag of popcorn also for a nickel. If you could talk your parents into twenty cents one could have an entertaining afternoon with a little money to spare. Jaw Breakers sold for a penny and would last for a long time so seldom was there change brought home. I later realized that to have us out of the house for three hours was well worth the sixty cents to have the three younger children out of the way, realizing that sixty cents in the early 1950s was a lot of money. Many people worked for fifty cents an hour or even less. Babysitting paid ten cents an hour, for example. Herring picking, the number one cottage industry in Bayfield, paid thirty-five cents an hour.

The theater, located a half block off the main intersection in downtown Bayfield, only three blocks from our house on Catholic Hill, could seat about three hundred patrons. Twenty rows of curved wooden backed seats with a tip up padded bottom provided supreme comfort. Two isles directly behind the two sets of double doors separated the theater into three sections. We would rush to the front row, provided that some kids weren't there before us. We were particularly leery of the older Indian kids who would either be in the front row before us or they would tell us to get out so they could sit there. Until we were old enough (big enough) to fight back, we had an unreasonable fear of the Indian teenagers, I suppose bred from prejudice.

The moves were quite eclectic, ranging from adventures; Tarzan was a favorite as well as Jungle Jim, to romances; merely tolerated, to light comedy;

anything with Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland packed the house, to sea stories; C.S. Forester's, Horatio Hornblower series (most adults were familiar with these works as they ran as consolidated stories in *Post Magazine*.) and Mutiny on the Bounty were favorites as they had to do with the sea, which we all thought we understood having lived with the Big Lake our whole lives. One time I had to sit on the lap of Mrs. Iversen as we watched together the movie through a crack in the door during a particularly rough sea scene in one of the movies of that time. Once the rough sea scene was over I was able to return to my seat in the theater.

The Iversens were wonderful people. Two brothers lived in Bayfield and in my young mind I couldn't differentiate between the two families. To my knowledge they had no children. Whoever ran the theater treated the children of the town with respect and we respected them. It was the Mrs. Iversens who ran the theater or at least they were the ones who were always there.

As magnificent and magical as the movies were to us, what kept us coming back week after week were the serials and shorts. Serials were usually in twelve parts, each episode ended with some sure death incident that you had to wait a week to see how the hero escaped. Tarzan is being chomped by a crocodile, Jungle Jim being swept over a mammoth waterfall, Captain Gordon being hit by a meteor, or some cowboy or another being run of a cliff in a buckboard. The following episode would show the hero escaping by leaping from the buckboard or clinging to a limb or whatever the writers could make us believe, which at that age was just about anything, the more farfetched the better.

Once in a while a Tom and Jerry cartoon would be shown and most special of all, a Little Rascal short. Spanky, Alfalfa, Darla and the gang would be doing all the kinds of things we would be doing, or like to be doing, on the outside of the theater. We built racecars and tree houses and baited adults into doing foolish things. Our Gang inspired us to try adventures or other forms of foolishness that we rural kids wouldn't have thought of were it not for the movies.

Bayfield was a good two to three years behind the rest of the country in the movies that were available to us. First run movies were even later; *Gone with the Wind* wasn't shown until maybe ten years after it was made in 1939. As we didn't know any better, all the movies we saw were first run, no matter how long after they were originally released.

Connie's inspiration that summer of 1952 to put on a show for the East Bay crowd must have been influenced by having seen the Little Rascals and Mickey and Judy putting on shows for adults to raise money for some charity or another; in this case the charity was we children.

Connie, as though parroting Judy Garland, one warm August day said, "Let's put on a show!" She, being the oldest as well as the most creative of the four of us, often dictated what she wanted us to follow her in doing and without question we usually did, especially in the early years. Although skeptical, we went along with her as, for the most part, we didn't know any better. Carl would have agreed readily as he had some writing talent as well as an appreciation of art of stagecraft. Sharon and I were too young to ever question what the older kids said. The MBs, especially Harold and David, were happy to be included in this venture.

Living in the bay could be quite boring at times, considering that most of the summer (some of May, all of June and three weeks in July) there would be only the four of us to entertain each other. Fred, being a teenager and working hard with dad, pretty much stayed out of our way and we stayed out of his. Connie approached an age where she too would want her freedom from the rest of us, but she and Sharon had their "girl things" that they did as well as Carl and I our "boy things." Putting on a show was something we could all do together. Once the MBs came out in August the dynamics changed a little, but more so for Carl and I as Harold and David doubled the males in our age group, diminishing by half the relative female population. On occasion, Ruthann Humphrey or Joann Wollan, our cousins, would visit, but also Melvin and Jimmy Wollan would just as likely be there so there would still be a predominantly male population. For the most part though the kid population consisted of five; the MB Dahl boys, the two CO Dahl girls and the two CO Dahl boys.

This was the population available as actors and extras for Connie's show. The creative team consisted of Connie and Carl and to a lesser degree Harold, with the rest of us there to fill in as their alter egos and as stagehands. There would be skits where the younger children could shine, but the acts were pretty much selected by the three of them to showcase their talents.

The first order of business was to find a place to put on this show. There were several buildings large enough for such an undertaking. The fish houses on the docks, both Moe's and Johnson's would do, but being used for active

enterprises and smelling of varying degrees of decomposing fish, they should not be used.

Just a few feet to the north of Johnson's dock stood two twine sheds, one in front of the other; the front one being about twenty feet from the shoreline and the back of the second one about 60 feet back from the shore. As the one was directly behind the other, from the beach it looked like one shed stood there. The first twine shed had been painted red at some point in the distant past and the other, although looking weathered had in fact been painted gray at roughly the same time. Each building was approximately 12 feet by 15 feet deep. I believe the front one had been used by Herman Johnson, Jr. and the back one by the Norings. At one time the Johnsons may have used them both as they stood on what was their property.

The gray shed had double swinging doors, like a garage, but a strong padlock secured the insides from prying eyes. There were no windows. As we weren't ones to "break" and enter, we never saw the contents of this building during these years.

A door on the front that wasn't locked, would allow one to enter the red shed, which may be the reason why there was nothing of value left in the near empty interior. What had once been a window had been boarded over so unless lamps were lit or the door left open it was dark and gloomy inside, but dry. We would play in here in the rain sometimes as other than being on our porch or if cold in our living room, this was one of the few places we could get in out of the rain and wind. The tarpapered roof appeared to still be in good shape so this building, by default, became our theater.

Cleaning the near empty room soon was accomplished as many hands, albeit small hands, made light work. First the cobwebs that could be reached with a broom were swept down, then the walls and lastly the floor. As cracks between the floorboards had developed with the drying of the wood, the dust and grime fell loosely through the openings to the ground below. The sunshine in the doorway filtered through the lightly dancing dust particles stirred up by our efforts.

As Connie, Carl and Harold worked out the program we younger kids assembled the seating for the gallery. Not many were expected to attend so the three rows for sitting consisted of fish boxes either laid on their sides or on the

front row, fish boxes with a two by twelve spanning the gap between them leaving a walk way to the “stage” on the right side.

A wire suspended between the walls with two sheets pinned over it, which could be parted, separated the back third of the small shed from the sitting area, which became the stage. All props would be kept on stage, to one side or the other, as there wasn't enough room to hide them.

The whole show idea was based on some of the things Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney did in many of their movies as well as Little Rascal's skits from the many shorts we had seen in the Harbor Theater in Bayfield. There would be readings and poetry a song or two and a few renditions of the Rascal's antics. Showtime was to be Saturday night and we were ready, or as ready as a bunch of pre-teens could be.

That Saturday began as gloomy and rainy, but the show must go on. Two lamps were placed in the audience section along the walls and three on stage, one on a three-foot pedestal for readers to see by and the other two to light the stage area. Five in the afternoon the curtain would go “up.”

Uncle Mel and Aunt Adel, (with Norman, just a baby and Steve, a toddler) mom and dad, Gert Wellish as well as Herman and Agnes Johnson, who were nice enough to ride over in the *Sand Bay* for the show, were in the audience. The balance watching the show would be the “actors” who weren't performing in any particular skit.

The show began roughly on time. We children couldn't have been more excited and nervous were we on Broadway performing before royalty, instead of in a cool dingy shed on the beach on Sand Island with rain dripping off the eaves and a drip or two wetting the floor from holes in the roof. The audience adjusted to the drips and settled in for a night's entertainment.

The older kids stumbled through a few skits, but as far as the audience was concerned it couldn't have been any better were it Lionel Barrymore and Ethel Merman up on stage. Poetry was read or recited; some original, but more from familiar authors that were known to the patrons. The skits were short with two or three participants and a single punch line.

The skit I remember the most (because I was in it) was rip-off of a Little Rascal's short where Spanky had hidden in a well and Alfalfa scammed the other

kids into thinking that it was a wishing well. We used a wooded barrel that had been used for soaking nets in blue vitriol as our well. The curtain opened with Alfalfa (Harold) talking into the well to Spanky, played by me, already in the well. Alfalfa explained the scam as part of the skit. Darla (Sharon) and Butch (David) stroll up and Alfalfa convinces them that this is a real wishing well by tossing in a coin and asking, "Wishing well, wishing well what my future will be?" The well answers, "You will be rich and famous."

Butch likes what he hears so he tosses in a coin and asks, "Wishing well, wishing well will I be a famous racecar driver?" The well answers, "You will be a famous and rich racecar driver."

Darla tosses in a coin and asks, "Wishing well, wishing well am I beautiful?" The voice in the well answers, "You are the most beautiful girl in the world and you will be rich and famous and marry a prince and live happily ever after."

Alfalfa, beginning to believe in this wishing well wants to try it again so he tosses in a coin and asks, "Wishing well, wishing well am I the most handsome man in the world?" His answer came back as, "You will be rich and famous, but you are still ugly!" The curtain closes to thunderous applause or at least as thunderous as ten or twelve people can make.

A few more skits brought us to the last performance, which were Connie and Sharon singing a duet of "Fairest Lord Jesus" in two-part harmony, a cappella. The two girls had honed their skills while whiling away the time doing dishes, which they both hated doing. One would wash and one wipe, neither liking either job, but was made more tolerable by singing familiar songs, mostly religious ones. As I recall they sounded good. Apparently Sharon had a good voice as it was around this time in her life that she sang on the radio in Ashland. WATW, 1400 on your AM radio dial. I don't remember what she sang, but we were glued to the radio in Bayfield that winter day when she was to perform. It must have been John Chappell or John Shaw who arranged the performance, as they were both summer Sand Island and year around Ashland people. They owned and published the Ashland Pioneer Press and more than likely had an interest in the radio station. They always took an active interest in what the children on Sand Island were doing and encouraged them to further their education.

“Fairest Lord Jesus” is a song that cries out for harmony. Fairly easy to sing and the soft melody almost forces those singing to at least try harmonizing. The words seemed written to be sung on Sand Island, accompanied only by the soft rain falling on the roof and the dripping off the eaves:

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God and man the Son,
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul’s glory, joy and crown.
Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.
Fair is the sunshine,
Fairer still the moonlight,
And all the twinkling starry host;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels heaven can boast.

The small crowd loved it and sang along for the last two verses. The whole show lasted only an hour and fifteen minutes, but everyone; the actors and the audience left with a feeling of warmth and satisfaction.

We raised almost a dollar for our efforts, which considering the times and the place was pretty good. We must have realized that we could never top this performance, as we never attempted such an enterprise again.

Chapter Nine

“No Girls Allowed”

On any given day during the summer there were only two girls in residence in the bay. In a teenage society the advantages would have been with the fairer sex, but in a society dominated by preteen boys the girls were relegated to doing either what the boys were doing or create their own fun, either with the boys or on their own. Also given the fact that virtually everyone in the bay was closely related to each other, even being older wouldn't have help. At eight or nine or ten the girls could keep up with the boys, or even beat them at certain games, if they had the interest, but once Connie reached twelve or thirteen, her interests changed. Gaul begat guile; guile begat beguiling.

Each of the girls learned early on how to manipulate dad, but had a more difficult time with the boys. The boys didn't care if they pouted or stormed to their room or started crying. Connie generally had better things to do than to worry about what the boys were doing anyway. Sharon, eighteen months older than I and fifteen months younger than Carl and a couple years younger than Connie, fell into the middle of both these camps interested in what her older sister was doing, but for the most part, more interested in being with the boys on their adventures around the bay.

Females in the late forties and early fifties were relegated to learning to maintain a household rather than being encouraged to branch out into the more traditional “male” roles. It made little difference if you were born into wealth or poverty; Indian or white, the girls in a family were expected to learn over the formative years how to cook, sew, clean and otherwise take care of her husband to be and children to be. There hasn't been a single incidence where a daughter took over her father's fishing business in the 150-year history of Bayfield. The primary reason was that it wasn't even considered a possibility for a daughter to inherit her father's fishing tug back then, besides the fishing business was so physically intensive it was considered too tough for a female, no matter how strong.

As the girls grew they were expected to become more and more involved in the household chores and less and less involved in the more masculine defined chores of carrying water, cutting, splitting and hauling wood and running the various machinery –boats, lawnmowers, washing machine engines, etc.- replacing screens and any other repairs to the physical structure of the

home. On an island all jobs had equal importance, but as a general trend the girls were shepherded into indoor activities while the boys into outdoor chores. I am sure there wasn't a conscious effort to separate these duties; it was simply done that way. In families where there were only girls or only boys there would be a blending of these roles, but in our family the divisions were considered natural as well as proper. No one ever questioned his or her role. If either of the girls had thoughts of having it different, they never expressed it.

In later years Sharon came the closest to assuming some of the more masculine roles by handling the smaller boats –especially the Green Skiff with its ten horse, 1948 vintage, Johnson outboard- as good as any of the boys, as well as mowing the lawn as often as I did. She carried water split wood and many other chores, but of course by that time Fred, Connie and Carl were off the island and I worked full time at the Point so she had to assume duties she might not otherwise assume.

The girl's day started at the same time as the other kids, soon after first light. Early on dad and Fred would be out lifting nets so we would wake to mother and the four of us younger kids. We pretty much made our own breakfast of cold cereal and as the fire would be going in the big kitchen stove, no matter how warm it was as mom had to make coffee for the men to drink for their breakfast as well as for a thermos to take with them on the lake. If a cooler morning, we would cook toast on the stove by using a bent over double, metal cloths hanger. Laying the bread on the hanger, which suspended the bread inches over the hot stove, it would toast on one side and then flipping the bread over, on the other side.

The girls would be left in the house to do the dishes and to clean the rooms. Mother maintained a very clean home, which required a constant effort by all three of the females. The tables needing wiping, the bedrooms needed cleaning and especially the floors needed sweeping. Sand and grass had been tracked in, critters had left either their waste and/ or their carcasses here and about and other household dust built up quickly on all surfaces. Without electricity all cleaning had to be done by hand so was very labor intensive. Dirt (mostly sand) built up in every crack and crevice, between boards as well as on and under surfaces so a daily –if not more- vigil of cleaning and wiping had to be maintained to keep ahead of the buildup. This ritual occupied several hours a day, seven days a week.

By the time these chores were finished the men would be coming in off the lake, their knee boots thwoping, thwoping against their legs as they walked up the path from the lake, expecting lunch. Usually by one in the afternoon the woman folk would be free to do whatever they wanted until dinner. Mother did all the cooking except when assisting the girls to bake a cake or a pie. Mother would read and the girls would rush outside, especially on those nice warm summer days.

On this August day they wore shorts and short-sleeved t-shirts as the flies weren't too bad and the sun shown hot in a cloudless, deep blue sky. A slight breeze from the west stirred the tops of the trees, but little cooling effect reached the front lawn where the girls ran toward the beach, their bony legs and arms all akimbo as they rushed to find what the boys were doing, Connie short, but slender, Sharon a half-head shorter. The breeze rippled the lake far out, like wheat stocks in a farmer's field, promising a cool reprieve just out of reach from the young girls. They were well tanned, not from sunbathing, but from spending so much time outdoors, much of it in bathing suits or shorts. Although the island could be cool much of the time, the children of the island had adjusted to finding warm patches out of the wind and in the sun. It was far easier to find warm places to play when it was cool than it was to find cool places to play in the heat. A breezy day at least gave the impression of being cooler

The boys were nowhere to be seen or heard. The two of them ran along the bank and out onto Johnson's dock, as the outside end of the dock would afford them a better view of the broad, but narrow concave bay that encompassed the whole world of these young girls. Dad and Fred worked cleaning and icing down their considerable catch of whitefish and trout from that morning, partially ignoring the girls as they ran along the uneven surface of the dock. Openly ignoring their progress, but aware that at any moment one or the other of them could trip and fall into the lake as had happened many times over the years. Rather than telling them to walk it was easier to fish them out of the drink the few times one or the other of us fall in, than it was to continually discipline them for their recklessness. Plus I think it never entered into the heads of dad or Fred to interfere in the girl's excitement.

Connie asked breathlessly. "Where are Carl and Bob and Harold and David?"

"The last time I noticed them they were walking by Bjorn's toward Moe's, but that was an hour ago." Fred answered. Adding, "It's not up to me to keep

up with them." Fred resented the fact that his younger siblings played much of the day away while he had to do a man's job and work hard from early morning to early afternoon. Nine years older than Connie, he grew up in a different generation from the rest of us.

On their dejected walk back toward the house Sharon wondered, "What do you want to do now, Connie?"

They had decided to not take the high-risk chance on finding the boys with so few clues as to where they might be. Having scanned the bay on the end of the dock from Gert's to grandma's, with no boys in sight, they had to create their own fun for this afternoon.

"Let's play Indian Princess!" Connie said excitedly. "How do we do that?"

"I'll show you. We will get our dolls and put them on our backs like papooses. It will be fun. We can go exploring in the woods like real Indians."

They went to their rooms and each picked out a doll for their game. Sharon picked the doll with "real" hair and eyes that closed when you laid it down. Connie's was bigger, but the "hair" was molded into the rubber head and couldn't be combed like Sharon's, but the eyes opened and closed depending on the horizontal or vertical position of the doll.

Using dishtowels purloined from mom, they swaddled their babies and tied them to their backs with net twine. Their woods adventure was limited to "exploring" either between the MBs and our house, bordered by the East Bay Road, the lake and our property and Uncle Mel's or heading north into the woods with the same landmarks except that the northern boundary would be Johnson's. Neither sections more than a few acres of unusually deep woods considering they were so close to the lake.

With their babies strapped to their backs they wandered off into the woods almost instantly a tangle of fallen trees and brush. Within a few feet the house faded out of existence in the darkening forest.

"Your papoose will be called Running Bear and mine will be Fawn." Connie said with authority.

"I don't like that! I want my baby to be Fawn." Sharon said, stopping at the edge of the woods. "You always get the good name," even though they had never played this game before.

"Okay then, your baby can be Fawn and mine will be Shooting Star." Sharon didn't dare say she liked that name better than Fawn so they moved on into the woods.

"What name do you want to call yourself?" Connie said having learned how to manipulate Sharon into committing first so that she could have the name she had already picked for herself.

"I want to be Rita." More of a Mexican name than Indian, but Sharon had made her choice. "You can call me Shinning Antelope." Connie said haughtily.

Within hearing distance of the lake, but still in the darker, cooler woods, they came across a rotting stump from a fairly big tree that had been sawed down in the not too distant past, leaving a flattish surface with a hollow, bowl shaped, indent in the center. The encroaching woods seemed a little less intrusive in this tiny glade. Moss and ferns covered the ground like a fairy circle.

"This will be our camp. Let's gather leaves and pine boughs for our bed and food for our babies and us. This stump can be our cooking pot." Shinning Antelope instructed with her usual authority. "Don't you mean papooses?" Rita said, happy to have the chance to correct her older sister, an opportunity that seldom presented itself.

They gathered material for their papooses to lie on and berries and nuts for food, some of which was eatable and some of which would make you sick if actually eaten, but the papooses didn't seem to mind. The girls "cooked" a meal in the hollow of the stump and in their young minds created what they thought was a pretty good Indian campground.

When left to their own devices they would return to this glade, as it was their secret, magical place, away from the prying, unsympathetic eyes of the boys. This was the place where they could be just plain girls and not competitors in some masculine game, or another, where they would be at a disadvantage.

At night, especially when the MBs weren't on the island, the boys and girls would play as equals. After dinner, which would generally be eaten early

by five or six o'clock, the boys would gather the evening wood and water while the girls did the dishes. Sharon never liked doing dishes (a lifelong pattern) so Connie would manipulate her into enjoying drying -or at least making the job seem shorter- by beginning to sing familiar songs to which Sharon would join in by singing the alto parts as Connie sang the melody. Sometimes Sharon sang the melody and Connie would add either a higher voice or a lower voice to create a two-part harmony. The rest of the family would enjoy this concert while sitting in the living room either reading or playing cards or doing nothing waiting on them to finish their chores.

After evening chores the four of us would play in the front yard as mom and dad sat on the porch swinging and talking lowly about whatever it was adults talked about in the early fifties and Fred would go up into the attic bedroom to read. Many nights the older MBs would come down to play and talk about the day's activities and plan the next day's adventures. Mel and Adel would join the folks on the porch. If it were rainy we would gather on our porch or if cold, in our living room, with a cozy fire in the fireplace. Usually around the time the lamps were lit we would begin winding down ourselves. Probably the number one activity for the girls was to find out what the boys were doing. For the most part we did things together like swimming and rafting and meeting the *Apostle Island* or going across with dad, etc., but there were other things that went on where the boys didn't want the girls along. Our job was to hide these activities; their job was to find out what we were doing.

This summer the boys were determined to keep their new fort secret from the girls. In past summers a hideout might be built in an old crib washed up on the beach or nestled into the rocks under one of the docks or in the attic of an abandoned building, but as these structures were either already on the beach or the materials were near the shore, the girls could easily hide and see where the boys went and follow them to their fort. It was part of the gender games we played. However, in the summer of '52 the boys vowed to keep their hide-a-way secret for as long as they could. There really wasn't any compelling reason to keep it secret other than in some movie or serial it was done to the furtherance of the plot line.

The most ambitious construction project was is in the top of the balsam alongside the schoolhouse, only because it was fifty or more feet off the ground, but there was no effort to keep it's location from the girls. The simple fact of location, in the treetops, kept any prying eyes away. Only Harold, David, Carl and I braved the top of this fort in the sky. The only other tree house that as built

was alongside the East Bay road near Lofffield's so Harold and I would have a vantage point to watch the reconstruction of the road.

In any case, we kept the girls in the dark that we were even building anything, let alone where or what or how.

"Where have the boys gone to this time?" asked Sharon of Connie. "I don't know, but they sure have been secretive the last couple of days. I bet they are building something and they don't want us to know what they are doing or where they are doing it."

"We'll find it. Remember the time they hid the 'Kincaid Diamond' and dared us to find it. They thought they were so smart hiding it in the rocks, in plain sight, but we sure showed them."

"Ya, when we told them we found it and they went right to the spot where they had hid it and we watched them from the bushes and went back and picked it up." Connie added. "Girls are smarter than boys." "That's for sure."

The girls kept a low profile for a few days trying to see a pattern in what the boys were doing. Every summer the boys tried to keep something or another from the girls, which wasn't really being mean, it was just part of the ritual, part of the game. Like hide and seek, only more complicated. It was a game that having greater numbers didn't give an advantage. Being stronger not an asset. Not gender specific, although the boys never seemed to try and find out what the girls were doing.

Connie and Sharon tried everything from listening quietly when the boys had disappeared to spying from afar when they had walked off into the woods. Nothing seemed to work. Every day the boys took a different approach to their hideout. All the girls could determine was that it was somewhere between Johnson's and Moe's, either to the east or to the west of the path that continued from the end of the East Bay Road to the lighthouse. In those days the somewhat grown over field behind Bjorn's, stretched from Johnson's dock to the blacksmith's shop and maybe a hundred feet from the shore to the woods wide. The grass was waist high on the children, but the small trees –willows, poplars and birch- had not taken over the field, merging with the forest beyond. The space was somewhat limited, but still the girls couldn't find the fort.

They began to wonder if a fort even existed. It would have been quite a joke on the girls if the boys convinced them that they had built something while

all they actually had done was to go sit in the woods a few times, making the girls think something was going on. Maybe bang a hammer on tree once in a while; even carry some boards with them. Saw a board or two for effect. It would have been poetic justice for the Kincaid Diamond fiasco. The boys even took a lunch with them a time or two. Were they that conniving? Could they sustain a joke for this long?

One week ran into two and still no discovery, but the boys still meandered off into the woods, not every day, but often. Sometimes two, sometimes all four, left from different directions walking into the woods. Something had to be going on, as the girls knew in their heart of hearts that these boys would not, could not, keep a joke or a secret this long. Or at least the boys never had in the past. One day, three weeks after the mystery began, Connie said, "We are going to find out what is going on if it takes us all day. We will weave in and out of the forest between the field and the lighthouse trail and if anything is there, we will find it."

The boys had gone somewhere for several hours so Connie and Sharon had a free reign to explore the area for a full afternoon if need be. They had a rough idea where to look and had covered this ground before, but were going to be more methodical this time. It was a matter of pride, not necessity that motivated them. They didn't particularly care if the boys had built anything or not. They simply wanted to find it or definitively say that it didn't exist. The area to examine ran about 1,500 feet north and south and 900 feet east and west of heavily wooded new growth forest. There weren't many big trees, but a lot of smaller trees, close together. Walking through wouldn't be an easy task for the two young girls, but they were determined.

Sharon noticed something different in the foliage to her left. It appeared to be thicker and the coloration darker and less green than the surrounding area. They had been walking within talking distance of each other so she simply had to say, "Doesn't that grove of trees over there look different to you?" She pointed to her left and began walking that way.

"Yes it does. I think the brush there is dying." Commie said following her younger sister toward the strange growth.

Parting the bushes, they found the fort, the hideout, that summer's Holy Grail. "Those S-O-Bs!" (Connie didn't swear, but certainly had heard enough over the years to express her surprise.)

The boys had cut young saplings to camouflage their handiwork, standing them up around the circumference and it was these dead leaves, turning brown, that gave it away. When green and new, the saplings blended in with the surrounding forest, effecting hiding the fort, but after the second week without renewing the camouflage, it was a forgone conclusion that the secret would be compromised, but by then the boys had moved on to something new. The structure, merely a platform four feet off the ground, secured to four birch trees roughly growing in a six-foot square. A few doodads sat on the platform, a can of bent nails, a few rocks, birch bark with "NO GIRLS ALLOWED" written on it and a half bottle of water.

Connie scratched "HA!" into the birch bark with a nail and left it tacked to one of the support trees, satisfied that another mystery had been solved. They didn't tell the boys they had found their hideout, but a few nights later while gathered around a small pile of beach wood, the birch bark was used to start a fire with the comment from Carl that, "We had stopped using the place anyway."

Although our life on an island in the late Forties, early Fifties may seem simple and even trite to mainlanders, to us it was adventuresome and in a way mysterious. We had to create our own fun from nothing but our imaginations. We had little in a store-bought material sense. Bikes would have been useless, TVs a waste, balls and bats of little value, but we were rich in mental material and daily something new presented itself for investigation; inspection or adaptation into the fabric of what was our lives. A glass bottle became a liquor bottle for a café in Casablanca, a wooden wire cable holder the table, a glass stopper a diamond to be discovered in the Congo, a fishnet cork a hand grenade to be used during the Battle of the Bulge, a rifle shaped board a rifle, an odd shaped rock an ancient artifact to be traded at the market in Marrakech and the buildings a castle in Spain, a fort in Indian Territory, a cave in South America or a bombed out building on the Rhine. Each child saw things differently, the girls different from the boys; the older children different from the younger children. One girl's castle was another boy's fort. One boy's rough-cut diamond was a girl's crown jewel. An empty bottle contained whisky or perfume; milk or nitro glycerin.

During these formative years I don't recall ever wondering, 'What am I going to do today?' or 'I'm bored.' Rainy days presented a little more challenge and there were plenty of them. If the boys dominated the outdoor activities, the

girls dictated more of the indoor variety. You could only read so many hours or play Chinese checkers or plain checkers so many times. Cribbage was a favorite, but after five games, this too became repetitive.

Most storms lasted three days. Rook cards presented a variety of games, but it too became irritating after a while. The adults played Pinnacle, but we weren't ready for that game yet. Connie and Carl might secrete themselves in their room for a while and would soon emerge with some scheme or another to pass the time.

One time Connie came up with, "let's play post office." Not the teenage parlor game, but actual post office. She had us build from chairs, cardboard boxes and sheets a "post office" in the corner of the living room. There were slots for each member in the family to receive mail from other members. Connie, of course, was the postmistress. The older kids as well as mom and dad (I was exempted as I couldn't write very well and Fred was going to college and working at Andersen's that summer) wrote letters to each other and took them to the post office for stamping (Connie and Sharon drew little faces on the upper right hand corner) and distribution to the individual slots for pickup.

I received mail that I took to mom to read with great pomp and solemnity: "Dear Bobby, How are you? I am fine. What are you doing today? Love, Sharon." I had never gotten a letter before, even though it was only from a sister, it was special. This game, between the building of the post office and the writing and reading of letters and the dismantling, took two days of indoor time so we were more than ready for the sun to shine again and to get out of the house. Mom was more than ready for us to get out also.

Chapter 10

Carl and Al

The three children leaned against the gray weathered shed wall somewhat numb to what they observed. Mabel, the oldest at eleven, cried softly, Carl, almost nine, shuffling his feet, trying as best he could not to cry while Melvin, four years younger, too young to comprehend, watched as their mother's coffin was loaded gently onto their dad's boat, *Star*. The four men; Fred Hansen, Louie Moe, Burt Noring and the father of the three children, Harold Dahl, worked silently to secure the casket to the bow, laying it across the gunnels in front of the small engine. The date was October 1, 1915.

Constance Ingibritsen Nelson Dahl had died a day or so earlier and had been laid to rest in the coffin Fred Hansen had picked up from town from the Herman Sense Funeral Home the day before. He made the forty-mile round trip from Sand Island to Bayfield by boat, for his friend and next farm neighbor Harold Dahl. It was a sad time in East Bay. No adult had died on Sand Island since the sinking of the steamship *Sevona* ten years earlier and those who had died weren't island people.

Bessie Nelson Dahl, Constance's teenage daughter from a former marriage, sat stoically in front of the coffin, her left hand resting lovingly on the polished wood. She alone of the children would be attending the funeral in Washburn, as that is where her mother's family was from. Fred and Louie's wives would ride in with the body and attend the funeral. Mrs. Noring would take care of the children left behind on the island.

As the boat pulled away from Moe's dock, Mabel and Carl waved goodbye as Melvin asked, "Where are mom and dad going?" Mrs. Noring, who stood behind them, patted Melvin on the head and said; "Your *pater* is taking your *mater* to heaven."

"When will they be back?" He asked looking back at the nice lady, a tear welling up in his eye. "Your *pater* in a few days, but your *mater* won't be coming back as she will be staying with Jesus and God in heaven."

Melvin turned back to the departing boat and looking up at his sister Mabel and then at brother Carl for guidance sobbed, getting an inkling as to what was transpiring. Carl took Mel's hand and waved it listlessly with his as

the boat turned to head east toward the gap between York Island and the main shore on its sad journey to town.

Carl thought of a Viking funeral ship he had heard about from one of the older men and pictured in his young mind that his mother was going to Valhalla perched atop an ancient Viking ship and somehow the thought made him feel a little better.

Carl had fond memories of his mother. A pretty woman, she had married his dad in 1904 after her first husband, Peter Nelsen of Washburn, had died. She brought to the marriage her young daughter Bessie and a capacity for hard work in this harsh land as well as some musical talent that she exhibited on the piano, the Dahls only frivolous piece of furniture, in their small East Bay home. Having first married at quite a young age, she was only in her late twenties when she married Harold and barely forty when she reportedly died from complications of pneumonia, but more than likely was ovarian cancer as she had some sort of distention on the left side of her stomach.

Carl's earliest memory of his mother was of her sitting on a blanket having a picnic with Mabel, Bessie, and baby with Melvin swaddled in a basket. She had packed a lunch "just like the grownups" and they walked a few hundred yards away from their home and spreading a blanket, had a picnic. The hot sun warmed them in the protective cocoon of the tall grass as they relaxed; smelling those fresh smells that emanate from a field of wild grasses and flowers. Yellow and black bumblebees flitted from clover to buttercup to fireweed in their constant pursuit of sweet nectar for their hive. Carl giggled while being chased by Mabel and Bessie through the tall grass, his head barely clearing the tips as he bounced along. His mother smiling face greeted them as they made their forays radiating from the hub of the blanket out into the field and back again like satellites, never too far from their magnetic home.

Carl Odin Dahl lived an idyllic life for a young boy, if not as an adult. The realities of living an isolated existence, far away from the civilized world were lost on these young children. They didn't know any better and might not have chosen any other life had they the choice. Their universe consisted of five or six families perched precariously on the shores of a lake that might as well have been an ocean, in a climate that ranged from too hot to too cold. The children, not unlike the generation before and after, made due with what they had. They coped while not knowing they were coping.

Several children had been born on the island of Carl's generation. In fact, every family in East Bay had youngsters ranging from seven years older to seven years younger than Carl. The Norings, Moes, Johnsons and Hansens all had boys and girls around Carl's age. There was never a generation on Sand Island with so many young people to hang out with as the generation Carl Dahl was born into. So many children roamed East Bay in those days to the point where a school had to be built to accommodate them all as transporting them to Bayfield would be too cumbersome and costly. One picture of the old schoolhouse showed sixteen sitting or standing children in front.

A highlight of their meager existence in their small home occurred when Harold came back from his monthly trips to Bayfield for supplies. Although he seldom drank on the island, he would drink heavily while in town. After he sold his fish and/or vegetables –depending on the time of year- but before he began drinking, he would buy the supplies needed as well as some candy for the children and whatever sheet music he could afford and pack the boat for his return trip. After spending his allotted amount on liquor he would stumble to his boat and start the twenty mile, four hour trip, back to Sand Island.

Although the candy was appreciated, the sheet music had a longer lasting value. Constance would practice the new music during those few moments of freedom she had during the day and approximately a week later would entertain her small family with an after dinner concert of the new music as well as favorites she had already learned. Carl was the only one of the four children who had an interest in music so Constance would help him to pick melodies on the piano, but he remained too shy to play in front of anyone but his mother. She was very proud of his interest, but never pushed him to perform.

Something happen in September of 1913 that would change his life possibly even greater than the death of his mother, but at the time barely registered in his seven year old mind. Alma Josephine Hansen was born as the fourth child of Agnetta and Fred Hansen.

With his mother's death the dynamics of the Dahl house changed. Bessie was old enough to handle the cooking and cleaning with the help of Mabel, and Carl could do much of the lighter outdoor work like splitting wood and carrying water. The well water from behind the house was good enough for cleaning, supplemented by rainwater collected in the wooden rain barrel at the side of the house, but any drinking water had to come from the lake a good five hundred yards away.

Harold had carved for Carl, from a single board, a wooden harness or yoke that would fit around the back his neck, resting on his small shoulders, with protruding ends from which a rope was secured from each end, with hooks on the loose end for carrying two buckets of water. At least once a day Carl had to walk to Moe's dock and scoop the water out of the lake and carry the buckets back to his home. If moving too fast the water would spill over the top so Carl had to walk slowly and methodically or he would be left with less water than when he started. He moved from the simple maze of one cow path to another, avoiding cow pies, until he was home. During these walks he would have the time to think of what he wanted to become in life.

As he walked along day after day, no airplanes flew overhead as they hadn't been well developed yet, so being a pilot wasn't a consideration. Doctors seldom came to the island and he had never seen a lawyer so those professions were not even a possibility. He had heard of, but never had seen, a policeman or fireman so they too weren't for consideration. A schoolteacher was on the island, but as far as he knew schoolteachers were only women so being a teacher hadn't entered his young mind. Besides, he didn't like school very much anyway. The only avenue that he could see open to him on Sand Island or anywhere else for that matter was to become a fisherman like his father. As he grew older Carl gravitated toward becoming what he knew best, a Sand Island fisherman.

Alma Josephine Hansen was born into a different situation from Carl; not necessarily better, just different. Her birth date was in early September of 1913. The event went pretty much unnoticed by the six-year-old Carl, but would have far reaching ramifications to the adult Carl.

The fifth of what was to become six children. The oldest at the time was Paul, then Dorothea, Gert, Connie and a couple years after Alma, Jake. A large family, they lived in a modest comfortable home on the waterfront a few hundred feet to the East of the Dahl's. Fred Hansen, her father, a wilderness Renaissance man, read prolifically about science, literature and nature. He experimented with different crops and growing techniques as well as did his own photography and developing, and like many in East Bay, brewed ("cooked") his own version of moonshine. He tried new things while most in the bay stuck to the old school methods from Norway.

Fred and Agnetta's two youngest children fell closest to the tree. Both grew to be curious, experimental, well read, although not well schooled, individuals; curious almost to a fault.

The Hansen home bustled with activity with all their children in a fairly cramped space. Paul did a man's job working with his father fishing and farming while the girls helped maintain the household from the time they were old enough to walk. The older girls learned how to maintain a wilderness household that included cooking, cleaning, canning, splitting wood for cooking and when no men were around, carrying water. The girls maintained the household garden. They planted, watered and weeded. They spread fertilizer from the cows and chickens and pigs when available, which served a twofold purpose of keeping the barns and sties clean while providing nutrients to their garden. Each had specific chores once they were old enough to be responsible. Virtually every day a cake was baked and eaten, utilizing what was available for flavoring; apples, strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and currants in season, as well as canned fruit in the off-season. Every other day bread was baked to be flavored by spreading jams and jellies and apple butter on top from their ample larder. Everyone worked from the oldest to the youngest.

Once old enough, an early job of Alma's was to clean the Hansen's small, but efficient, homemade cabinet for holding dishes and which incorporated a baking flower bin. To clean properly everything, except the flower, had to be removed, wiped down and then everything replaced. She thought this an imposition, but like most children of the era, did her assigned job.

Agnetta maintained a spotless household. Like most Scandinavians, she had a fetish against dirt of any kind. The floors were swept many times a day and scrubbed once a week. Windows washed at least once a week. Lamps cleaned when the kerosene became low in the reservoir. Unused surfaces wiped off once a week, while used surfaces were wiped or scrubbed after each use like tabletops and countertops, which with constant baking had been scrubbed to a smooth shine.

As Alma grew older she learned the fine art of baking bread, which she master early on and later became one of the best bread bakers on the island; a skill she fortunately never lost.

The girl's life wasn't all work and no play. The Moe's, Noring's and Johnson's had daughters around the Hansen girl's ages so after chores, usually in the mid afternoon and after dinner, they would meet at one home or another and talk and play cards. They expressed aspirations, but like the boys saw their lives as somewhat limited to what was available in Northern Wisconsin and more particularly, East Bay. As they grew older the young men in the bay would

gravitate toward where the girls were and several romances ensued among the older teens as would be true in any society.

Little work, other than maintenance work, would be done on Sundays. Dishes washed and cows milked, animals fed and boats maintained was the extent of any physical exertion. The families in the bay didn't have a church to attend, but in some homes the Bible might be read or even more formal services for some of the families. Not a religious lot, they did practice a sort of religion that incorporated not cheating anyone or doing anyone physical harm. As in all closed societies there were things done that hurt others psychologically, but for the most part not too much harm was done, at least to the perpetrator.

"Let's go on a picnic today." Agnetta announced one morning after chores. She would spring this surprise on the children using picnics as a reward for acceptable behavior. She had a sliding scale as to what behavior constituted acceptable behavior, as she liked getting out of the house on a sunny day also. Her announcements always came as a surprise to the children unless it was the Fourth of July when they always went on a picnic to Little Sand Bay to celebrate the birthday of their adopted country to some and birth country to others. "Oh goodie, goodie!" The girls would squeal delightedly. The boys, more stoically, only smiled. One got the wicker basket, one the napkins, a third the knives and forks and spoons. "Where will we go? One asked. "Papa will have to decide that." Not telling them that Fred and she had already talked about it that morning after breakfast once they saw that it would be a nice day. Little Jacob ran down to the dock to ask his father where he wanted to go.

Many Sundays a picnic lunch would be packed and either the whole family or several families would climb into a boat and go to a place where they normally wouldn't go in their day-to-day lives. The backside of York Island had a beautiful beach, not unlike Lighthouse Bay on Sand Island, but different. Big Sand Bay with a peaceful trout stream flowing through a large broad beach was another favorite picnic area. Many a brook and brown trout fought for their lives in that slow moving stream. Big Sand Bay was also a favorite spot where deer could be harvested whenever the mood struck an islander. Few, if any, laws prohibited the men folk from the island boating over on a late summer or fall afternoon, shooting a few deer and catching a few fish and being back on the island by supper time. Everything harvested was eaten. It wasn't as much as sport, but a supplemental necessity.

Although the lighthouse served as a favorite site for summer residences to picnic, it was too close and accessible to the East Bayers so seldom served as a destination picnic location when only East Bayers would be going. Once during a summer sojourn to Bear Island to visit a family with five children who summered there in their cabin on the south point, as well as a reciprocal visit to East Bay by them, was a highlight. Another longer journey for a picnic would be to Devil's Island, a good ten miles by boat to the northeast.

The Hansen family went on many, many picnics. In calm sunny weather they might go once a week. The lunches weren't appreciably different than what they had at home, but seemed more festive to the girls as they didn't have to clean after and they could run wild on the warm sandy beaches. The men and boys would sit and smoke and often drink homebrew while lying on the simmering sunny sand, their heads resting on a large log. Seldom could any of them be so lazy in this harsh dawn to dusk work filled existence. The contrast between labor and leisure made their leisure so much more appreciated by all of them from the oldest to the youngest.

"Papa! Papa!" Jacob shouted as he ran out onto the dock, "Mama wants to go on a picnic and you get to pick the place!"

"How about Big Sand Bay?" "Yes, yes! That's my favorite!" Jacob said turning to run back to the house on his short little legs to tell the others.

Back at the house the basket had been packed and the five children ready to go. They had their swimsuits on and wide brim hats to protect them from the hot July sun. "Can we ask the Dahls to go?" Connie asked.

Because of the Dahl children's situation without their mother, they might be invited to picnic with the Hansens or the Moes or the Norings on occasion. Carl many times would go hunting and trout angling with the older men, especially when Alma's younger brother Jake became of age.

"Sure you can." Agnetta answered, having already talked to Harold to make sure it was okay.

They put putted away from the dock. The open boat, having been cleaned a little by sloshing water along the inside gunnels to wash off the fish scales and bits and pieces of entrails that had stuck and dried on the wooden sides moved slowly through the calm clear water. This was a workboat being used for

pleasure so the assembled group didn't even notice the pungent smell of fish that permeated the small boat.

Going on a picnic to these people would have been similar in feeling to what a city kid would have felt going to the county fair.

"It is so nice to get away." Agnetta said leaning against the port gunnels in the stern of the double-ender boat. A small seat spanned the space between the gunnels in the rear where Fred sat steering and Agnetta sat beside him, her left hand dangling over the side making a small ripple in the water.

All the kids crowded into the front third of the boat with Jacob having claimed the coveted bowsprit where he dangled precariously over the front, mesmerized by the water being parted by the slow moving boat as it plowed forward.

Having been bread to respect the water, but not to fear it, his mother barely noticed Jacob's precarious position. Keeping track of him out of the corner of her eye, but saying nothing, she heard Fred say, "What a beautiful day. It makes one happy to be alive in such a beautiful place."

She wisely didn't remind him of a few days earlier when he complained of the rain and storm that had torn up a gang of nets and he swore that he wanted to chuck it all and move to town.

The chugged along waving at the Moes down on their dock and followed the contour of the bay, roughly 100 feet from shore. They passed Pete Johnson's place, now abandoned and approached the new Herman Johnson's home that had been built in front of where the Norings planned to build their new place closer to the shore. The clearing was there, but as of now no construction had begun. The Norings found that living the quarter mile into the interior of the island was too inconvenient and wanted to be closer to the water.

The Johnson's dock had to be skirted and the kids on the boat shouted to the Johnson girls sitting on the end of their dock that they were going to Big Sand Bay for a picnic.

Besides the Hansen children, two of the Dahls had elected to go with, Bessie and Mabel, as Carl and Melvin had been off somewhere when the invitation came. The boys were dressed in one-piece bathing suits that covered most of their bodies from shoulder strap to a short leg covering while the girls

bathing suits resembled short dresses that puffed out at the hips and covered the body from along the arms just above the elbows to just above the knees.

As they passed the middle of the bay, young Alma thought to herself, her chin resting on the starboard gunnel, "This is where I would want to live some day."

They passed Deison's place and Lofffield's, which couldn't be seen from the water, but everyone on the boat knew where it was by the big boulder sticking out of the water a few feet from shore. A couple kids were swimming off the boulder, but the boat people merely waved as they passed.

"I wonder what the Hills are doing today." Agnetta asked of no one in particular.

"I think some Jenschs are here so they are probable doing something with them." Fred answered. "They may even be coming over to Sand Bay where we are going."

They putted along and in time cleared the south side of the island, entering the open channel between the island and the mainland. A soft breeze from the southeast met them and they felt a little refreshed in the stifling heat. A soft crunching sound emanated from the boat meeting the sandy beach at Big Sand Bay. Paul pulled the boat a few feet unto the beach securing the bowline to a log half buried in the sand as Fred dropped a small anchor off the stern to keep their craft perpendicular to the shore. The girl soon had the food out and blankets spread as the younger kids ran along the shoreline shouting and squealing with delight. The men made a small fire from driftwood and coffee soon boiled adding its flavor to the already familiar beach smells.

The middle girls, Bessie, Mabel, Gert and Connie, gravitated to a spot near the river while Alma and Jake played at the water's edge. The parents and the older two children, Dor and Paul, sat near the fire, on blankets, leaning their backs on a log, soaking up the hot sun as though storing energy for the cold winter just around the corner.

"I wonder how the other half is living." Paul repeated a statement he had heard his mother use when times were particularly good, like at Christmas and Thanksgiving with the table piled high with delicious smelling food. He leaned his head on the log and took a long drag on a hand rolled cigarette.

At some level they each realized that even the wealthiest strove for the same type experience that they were experiencing at this moment, but seldom achieved. They indeed were lucky to be here, on this day, in this place, in this time. They ate their lunch and sat around a while longer while the kids played and talked and with the sun kissing the horizon behind Eagle Island, they motored back to their East Bay home, each having their own thoughts as to the success of this rare day in the far north. It was dusk in the bay, in the lea of the sunset, as they slowly walked to their respective homes, tired from all the relaxation.

The Hansen's interacted with the Point people, especially Burt and Brigit Hill. Playing cards –whist primarily- and dinning and drinking together more than any of the other East Bay settlers of that generation. Fred Hansen and Burt Hill served on the telephone company board together and for a time Mr. Hill had a post office in the lean-to alongside their small log cabin on the beach. The Sand Island Telephone Company had less than ten subscribers and after the second time the ice broke the line to the mainland, disbanded.

Some of the East Bay men would provide labor for the summer residences at the Point when labor beyond what Burt and Anna Mae Hill could provide was needed. Certainly for Camp Stella as well as for the Jensches, a tradition that lasted into the late Twentieth Century with each new generation helping out. Beginning with the pioneer families, each succeeding generation supplemented their income by doing odd jobs for the Point people. Many friendships developed from these Bayer's, Pointer's interactions. One day when Carl was around sixteen he worked at Shaw's Point re-roofing the shed on the dock, he met a young man who lived at the Point during the summer. The young man appeared to be around Carl's age and he climbed up to the roof from the dock surface, uninvited, to scout the job Carl was doing. Carl saw this as being nosey more than curious so challenged the interloper with, "What do you want!" Carl said sharply, more sharply than he intended.

"I'm just curious as to what you were doing up here. I saw you as I walked down the trail and wanted to see what was going on. This sure is high above the water. Could you jump off from here into the lake?" The teen said hugging the peak of the roof.

"I suppose you could if you wanted to." Carl answered, ignoring the other statements. "I don't know why you would want to though."

"Can I help you?" The newcomer said still fearful of falling off the roof. Carl hadn't many friends his age so he welcomed the young man to his perch high above the waters of Lake Superior.

"I'm Clyde Jensch, but they call me Bud." Bud said sticking out his right hand to be shaken. "I'm Carl Dahl from East Bay." Carl said shaking Bud's hand briskly, too briskly for their precarious perch and they almost fell off.

It was a hot August day and the boys grew sweaty and dirty from the hard work on the roof. Around four in the afternoon other kids from the Point strolled down to Hill's to enjoy the sandy beach around the dock. Of the Jensches there was Wanda, Sam, Herman and little Phoebe, along with some friends of theirs.

"Bud! What are you doing up there?" Wanda demanded. Four years older than Bud, she felt it her duty to keep him straight. "I'm helping Carl fix this roof." He shouted proudly down to his bossy sister. "Get down here right now or I'm telling Mother." She stomped her foot down for emphasis.

"You're not my boss. Anyway, Carl asked me to help." Bud lied. Wanda knew who Carl was and wasn't sure her authority included him so acquiesced with, "If it's okay with him, I suppose it is alright." With that sign of weakness the two other Jensch boys shot up the ladder to join their brother on the roof.

"What do we do now?" Young Herman asked. "Carl says he isn't afraid to dive off from up here!" Bud said excitedly.

Carl realized that "could" became "will" and that "jump" morphed into "dive." "I'd like to see that!" Sam said encouragingly. "Me too!" piped in Herman as he inched toward the edge of the lakeside of the roof.

"If you dive, I will jump from way up here." Bud said hoping a little that Carl would back down. "Me too!" "Me too!"

Carl, not one to back off from a challenge nor to let these "city kids" get the better of him, especially with cute girls watching, strolled along the peak and without thinking, dove gracefully the twenty feet into the cool clear water. East Bay kids seldom swam recreationally, but he could tread water and waited a few

moments and saw Bud jump, followed by Herman and with a little encouragement Sam soon joined the three of them in the water.

As the boys sunned themselves on the surface of the dock, a couple of the girls climbed to the roof and one of them actually jumped off, but the others backed down the ladder, fearful of the height.

Carl didn't dive off again that day as he thought to himself, "How can I top this feeling. All eyes were on me and I didn't back down. I came across." It was one of the first times he felt totally in control of his destiny.

A week later, Burt Hill observed the Point kids jumping off his shed. That evening he removed the ladder, as he didn't want for them to get hurt or to ruin his patched roof. He and Bud went on many adventures over the years and developed a friendship that lasted for more than sixty years.

In April 1925, when he was near nineteen, Carl enlisted the Navy. His younger brother Melvin was old enough to help their father with the farming and fishing and Carl wanted to see what was beyond Sand Island. Having only been to Duluth once, on the steamer *America*, the fifty miles was the farthest he had been from the friendly confines of Sand Island. By now his sister Mabel had married Magnus Loftfield and lived in Minneapolis and Bessie had married Ludwig Palm and their letters were filled with the wonders of the outside world so he developed a wanderlust that the Navy seemed ideal to quench. World War I was over, but magazines of the time were filled with stories of exotic places, which the military had liberated and he wanted to see as much of the world as he could at the expense of Uncle Sam.

With his father's blessing, he traveled to Ashland and joined the Navy. A few weeks later he caught the train out of Ashland heading for The Great Lakes Training Facility just outside Chicago. Alma was just twelve at the time he left the island.

His four years were to be up in early 1929. While on a cruise from San Francisco to Honolulu on the *USS Maryland* in mid April of that year he awakened with a start from a dream he was having where he heard his father calling to him in a muffled tone, from what appeared to be underwater. His dad said in the dream, in Norwegian, which Carl understood, "Carl, take care of your brother and sisters." Carl tried to ask his dad why he was to take care of his brother and sisters and what was wrong, but his dad only repeated this single

phrase. He didn't have the dream again so had almost forgotten it by the time he arrived in Honolulu a week later where he received the telegram dated April 22, 1928 that stated; "FATHER LOST AT SEA STOP PURSUMED DROWNED STOP COME HOME ASAP STOP B HILL".

He stared at the telegram and read it over and over. His friends asked what had happened and he said softly, "My Papa has drowned in Lake Superior." At twenty-one years of age he had lost both his mother and his father and was now, for the most part alone. He realized that his dream of a few nights before might have been a premonition or a plea for help and not just a random dream. The rest of Carl's life he believed that his Papa had been calling to him on that night and somehow he felt better about the tragedy, especially having been halfway around the world and unable to help.

The Navy let him muster out a few months early and by summer he was back on the island and had noticed that the young Alma Hansen had blossomed into an attractive young lady. They married in 1930 and moved off the island until 1933. During that three-year period Carl and Al lived in Minneapolis and worked for a while with Magnus Loftfield who was a bridge building engineer. Fredrick Harold Dahl was born during this period.

They missed the island life; the fishing, the camaraderie, the picnics, the card parties, being near her parents and yes, even the hard work. They wanted to raise their family where they were raised. Material things didn't interest them that much so they knew that they could make the kind of life they wanted on the shores of Sand Island. In 1933 they moved into the abandoned Dahl house and Carl began to do what he knew best, gillnet fishing in the deep cold waters of Lake Superior. Everyone in East Bay pitched in to help them get started with their home and their fishing rig. Furniture appeared as well as nets and a small open boat that they named the *Freddy D*.

In the early thirties the sons of the pioneer families had taken over the fishing operations of their parents. Elvis Moe fished his father's rig. The Noring boys fished the *Bobby* and Jake Hansen fished the *Dorthea*, Fred Hansen's boat.

Chapter Eleven

Alma & Carl

In the summer 1934 the new Dahl family had settled into their life in East Bay. Little Freddy was the only child in the bay so everyone spoiled him and enjoyed his presence. It had been so long since a child lived on a full time bases on the island the child soon picked up some of the bad habits the adult men had developed over the years. Habits like swearing and talking out of turn and as his only example for behavior was the grown men, he acted like a man.

As she could visit them regularly having her family close was a big help to Alma. She soon fell into the routine, the ebb and flow of the seasons, the pulse of the rural life as it had been lived for fifty years in this small, tight-knit community. Carl too fell into the seasonal fluctuations that made life possible on this harsh landscape. The few years they had lived in "civilization" hadn't spoiled them for the hard work that made eking a living from the cold water's of Lake Superior and the rocky soil of the island, possible.

They fell into the pattern of playing cards and celebrating holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries with the other island people. As the older original settlers died off or left the island, they, over time would become the bedrock family of East Bay.

In 1936 her parents built a new, basically hand-hued log home within a stones throw of their old home (and is the house that still stands just south of Swallow Point on the north side of East Bay). Her father lived there for only a short time, but had installed running water and electricity from a gas generator and had many of the comforts of city living. Their fieldstone fireplace, reported to us to have been constructed from rocks from all the islands, was probably wishful thinking on their survivor's part. He died of cancer in 1938. Having kept a diary for twenty-five years, many of his short entries are all that we have to give us an insight into what life was like way back then.

Constance Agnetta Dahl was born in 1939, with Carl, Sharon and Bob to follow in short order. Carl and Alma built their new home in the middle of East Bay on 300 feet of land given to them as a present by his brother Melvin. It was that same spot Alma had wished for a home as a little girl. She had planned and designed the home that was built to her specification and until burned by the

Park Service to make way for their Ranger Station, was the only insulated, winterized structure on the island.

Fishing techniques, but mostly equipment improved over the years and soon the open boat became a thing of the past. In the early 1940s the Dahls bought the *Egersund* and fished this boat until Carl left fishing in 1954. Nylon nets and aluminum and plastic corks eliminated the need to soak nets or “cook” corks. Longer and more gangs of wider nets could be set by fewer and fewer people, catching more and more fish. As each of the Sand Island fishermen had a range they would set, as the older fisherman ceased to fish and the younger generation left the island for more lucrative employment, Carl was left as the only fisherman fishing off Sand Island, but still fished the range his father fished right up to the end.

With the exodus of people from the island the number of boats diminished also, leaving only the *Egersund* to ferry people across from the mainland as well as becoming the workhorse of the island. To many people the *Egersund* was Sand Island. Even when bigger and faster boats were available, most preferred a ride on this old tug to any other. In 1948 Fred Andersen purchased the *Admiral*, which made the Point people less dependent on the *Egersund* for their stormy day crossings.

One of the early island families to leave was the son of Herman Johnson, Sr., Herman Johnson, Jr. He and his wife Agnes moved to Little Sand Bay where he fished and opened a small beer bar and light grocery store at the terminus of Bayfield County Road K onto the Sand Bay Road, the launching spot on the mainland for going to Sand Island, Bear Island, York Island, Raspberry Island and maybe Devil’s Island, but this last island was so far out that mostly only Coast Guardsmen went there and they left from Bayfield.

Herman and Ag’s Bar, although it had no formal name, was the hot spot for Town of Russell, Town of Bayfield and Sand Island residents. On a hot summer day and evening, the locals would migrate to the beach in the hopes of catching a cool breeze off the lake or at least cooler than being back in the interior where it seemed to always be still.

On this sunny summer Saturday, Alma and Carl walked along the bank with his sister Mabel and husband Magnus and met Jake, Connie and Gert Hansen at Moe’s dock to take the *Egersund* to Little Sand Bay to party at Johnson’s. They had heard that “Tiny’s” band would be playing in the bar that

evening and as they all enjoyed dancing, not to mention drinking, they left earlier than normal to make the crossing. They preferred arriving in daylight so boarded the boat at 7:00 for the three quarter hour trip. A calm, still night, the boat barely undulated as it plowed slowly through the steel gray waters in the gathering dusk. The sky was a clear azure blue with a hope for full moon to rise to guide them back home. Carl stood on the engine box as Alma, a good foot shorter, sat in the pilot's chair; their heads almost equal sticking up into the pilothouse. Even though the four port doors had been slid open, the five passengers stood on the fantail enjoying the slight breeze caused by the forward motion of the boat.

As they pulled into Herman's dock at Little Sand Bay they could see the *Admiral* leaving the Point and coming their way. In those days there weren't that many boats around so even though they couldn't see the boat clearly as it left the dock at the Point, they all knew it was the *Admiral* as no other boats were on the island at this time other than the *Dorthea* and her Captain was standing with Carl tying up the *Egersund*.

Several families milled around on the beach and at the two picnic tables savoring the cooling afternoon, in the waning light. The sun setting a bright orange between Sand and the mainland, shining its light on the now shimmering surface of Lake Superior. A small fire on the beach had been lit and a few kids sat around in their bathing suits, roasting wieners and one, marshmallows. Music from the jukebox poured out of the open windows and doors of the bar, wafting over the septet as they walked up the dock, accented with laughter from the largely male crowd. "*I'm lonesome, I've got the lovesick blues.*" The Hank Williams's song ended as they entered the bar from the roadside.

The bar could be entered from two different doors, one if coming from the dock on the lakeside of the building that entered directly into the dance floor, or one that might more commonly be known as the main door situated facing the street by the gas pumps, across the road from the Town of Russell baseball diamond. This door entered directly into the bar.

Always recognized as a popular crowd, especially with four women in tow, the East Bayers were greeted hardily. Carl and Jake shook hands with the men there, two of the three Hokenson brothers (Esko and Leo), Dick Gorman, Lee Meierotto, Franklin Basina, Ludwig Lohman and his brother's son Myron; introducing Magnus to those he didn't know. Bob Hokenson was sitting with his

uncles, the men lined up along the bar like birds on a wire. Herman Johnson stood at the curved end of the bar, holding court, while Aggie did most of the work.

Bob's sister Elaine sat at a table with his wife, Claris, which is where the women from the island gravitated. A mixed group stood around the jukebox picking out songs being shouted out by the patrons. "Play B-17!" Someone shouted above the din. "Give me a nickel you cheap SOB!" came back.

Entering the barroom from the street you faced an archway leading into the dance floor. A round table sat to your immediate right with four vinyl backed kitchen chairs, under a window. Across from the table, in the narrow room, a jukebox played tunes from the Forty's and Fifty's. Hank Williams, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Doris Day, Duke Ellington, The Modernaires, and Dizzy Gillespie and several big bands were favorite artists of the time. A bar that left maybe four feet for bar stools and just enough room to enter the dance floor through the archway dominated the room, maybe twelve by twenty-four feet. A short curve to the bar connected it to the back wall with a hinged section that could be lifted to allow access to and from behind the bar by the bar personnel, i.e., Aggie. Herman seldom served the only alcohol in the bar, beer. You could buy pop and snacks, but the main fair was beer. In these more lax times, pop might be used as a mixer or chaser, but one had to bring his or her own hard liquor. Pop was used mostly as a pacifier for the children who had accompanied their parents.

The island girls moved into the dance floor room just as the Point crowd entered from the side door. The dance floor, a room maybe three times the size of the bar, had booths on either side of the lakeside door. All wood, they could seat six adults comfortably. A table and shuffleboard stood under the windows on the far wall and a round table with four chairs completed the furnishings. The bathrooms were located to the left, opposite the lakeside door.

Herman Jensch led the charge onto the dance floor with a hardy, "The party can start now, *WE* are here!" He grabbed Alma and twirling her around a time or two on the dance floor, obviously having already had a drink or more before he got there.

His wife Betty, slightly embarrassed, ignored him and went to talk to the Hansen women who had commandeered the booth to the left of the door.

From the Point entered Clyde (Bud) Jensch, Herman's older brother and his wife Dorothy, Betty and Bill Hulings, their friends Marj and Mel Johnson and Wanda (Jensch) and her husband, Jack Harris. More reserved than Herman they too moved to the booth where the East Bay women sat. Two chairs were brought from the sidewall and set by the booth so all of the women could sit. The men moved to the barroom to buy beer for the booth.

On special occasions, or maybe when the musicians were simply in the bar, a dance band would play in the far corner. They would play without amplification, but unless an unusually loud crowd was in attendance, they could be heard in the fairly small room. The only sign that the band would be playing was a small cordoned off area in the corner near the woman's bathroom. On this seamy Saturday night in July of 1949 or maybe it was in the summer of 1950 the stars were aligned for a special night of partying at the bar at Little Sand Bay. A live band would be playing, "Tiny's Toe Ticklers," a floating band who's anchor was Tiny (Bob) Hokenson, with varying other musicians in attendance. Tiny played the accordion; his sister Elaine also played the accordion, Ludwig Lohman played banjo, while Lee Meierotto played guitar. Franklin Basina usually was the percussionist, playing spoons or washboard and on occasionally the violin. Dick Gorman would call square dances, as would Franklin. Their playing style included polkas, two-step waltzes, schottisches and square dances. If you wanted to hear anything else, "Go to Chicago!"

The band was to begin playing at 9:00 so plenty of time for drinking and other carousing remained. Herman Jensch got into an argument with Esko Hokenson about the relative merits of Roosevelt's New Deal and the ineptitude of the Democratic Party verses the progressive nature of Republican policies, knowing full well that most of these rural folk favored the DFL line or at least voted that way.

"Now, you take that idiot Roosevelt, all he does is take wealthy people's money and gives it to the undeserving lazy parasites of society." Herman said, raising his deep voice so that others around could hear. He smoked, as did virtually everyone else in the bar, using his cigarette as a pointer. They stood at the bar, not too safe a spot to shout anti-Roosevelt arguments, but Herman was so jovial it was hard to take him too seriously.

"All I know is that he help us hard working fisherman and farmers to get out of the depression." Esko argued, poking Herman in the chest, maybe too hard, with his index finger.

Bud sensing that Herman was once again crossing that fine line between discussion and bar argument placed himself between the two men and said. "Let me buy you both a beer?" He placed a dollar on the bar and asked Aggie for three Grain Belt beers.

You could drink anything you wanted at the bar as long as it was Fitger's or Grain Belt beer, in the longneck bottles, because that's all they served. Both Esko and Herman took a step back and downed the beer they were drinking and accepted the icy cold beer Bud offered.

Both Herman and Bud were used to spirited arguments in their home on the island and back in Hudson, Wisconsin, with many arguments almost ending in blows, but they knew when to back off before fights might breakout with these country folk. None of the Point people knew quite how far to push these mainlanders, but being friends of the East Bay crowd, most locals would allow some slack to these strange people with their strange ideas from the cities.

The Hydes, Kellys and Harold Holt entered the bar just before 9:00. Harold had spent many nights on the island with the Hansens and the others were Town of Russell people.

At this moment Herman Johnson unplugged the jukebox, as the band was about to begin playing. Playing as loudly as they could without amplification, they began with a rousing polka to let the patrons know that the dance had begun. Settling into a string of waltzes, the dance floor soon filled with couples exhibiting varying skills in the fine art of dance. Starting with the one who "brung" you, the switching of couples soon morphed into a hodgepodge of dancing couples: Carl with Claris, Betty Hulings with Myron, Alma with Bill, Connie with Dick, Mel with Gert, Marj with Harold, Dorothy with Herman, Bud with some town woman, etc. Dances in those days weren't as much dates, but excuses for holding someone else's husband or wife or boyfriend or girlfriend with impunity. It was expected that you would be dancing with whoever asked you. It took a while for the city folk to get into the swing of things, but before ten o'clock everyone had danced with at least one person they didn't know. Wallflowers were unheard of as wives made sure their husband danced with someone who might have gone a while without being asked to dance. Dancing in the late forties, early fifties were truly mixers.

When Tiny's Toe Teasers played their first schottische, the Point people wanted to sit out as they were confused by what appeared to be random steps

and spins, but Alma grabbed Mel Johnson's hand and told Carl to get Betty and as other couples bumped into them they explained the rather simple steps. Other East Bayers paired up with Pointers to teach them the popular dance. Bill Hulings snuck away and stood at the bar, his ever present pipe in his mouth and began engaging Herman Johnson in a discussion of the relative merits of Linen nets verses nylon nets. Although not a bad dancer, he didn't want to dance at this time.

"Every dance grouping is made up of two couples, one in front holding hands and one behind holding hands." Alma begins to explain to Betty and Mel. "The front couple and the back couple also hold hands with their outside free hands."

"Like this?" Betty said reaching for Mel's hand that he had thrust back for her. Carl took Alma's hand the same way. "Perfect! Now listen to the music as well as watch the other groups. Everyone in the room needs to move in unison or we will really have chaos. The dance is basically three movements of four steps each. The count is..." Alma waited until the sequence of steps began again. "One, two, three, hop! "One, two, three, hop! One, hop, two hop, three hop, four. With the one hop, two hops, three hops, four, the front couple splits apart and moves to the back behind what was the back couple, who is now in front." "Then it begins all over again?" Betty volunteered. "I'm confused." Mel interjected. To his relief, the music ended. "Stay here!" Carl commanded and went up to Elaine who was relieving her brother on the accordion. By the time he made his way back to the milling group of Sand Islanders, another schottische had begun.

Carl and Alma dragged Betty and Mel into the stream of dancers like a semi entering a busy freeway. Alma, partnered with Mel, counted loudly for the novices and within minutes the four of them were schottisching like old pros as well as the other Bayer, Pointer groups, packing the dance floor with revelers. Dick and Franklin called some square dances and more polkas and waltzes followed. The constant milling of people, dancing and drinking and smoking made some feel as if they were drifting along in a dream.

It was getting hot and smoky in the room so many people wondered outside during the band's next break. A group of men meandered down to the Admiral where a bottle of whisky appeared and the men shared a tog directly from the bottle. The full moon peaked through a layer of thin clouds bathing the dock and campground in a surreal simmering half-light. Jake dug some

moonshine he had hidden in the Egersund and passed around to the already drunk men, saying, "How poetic, moonshine in the moonshine." Even though some were reluctant to drink more, especially this potent homebrew, none refused, swallowing varying degrees of the stinging sixty percent alcohol, proving their manhood.

At three in the morning the island group left the bar in mass, signaling the end of a glorious evening. Starting as a conga line snaking out the front door of the bar, the group soon formed a two chorus lines stopping every ten feet or so to sing a song. Betty Hulings, her clear soprano would begin and Carl and the others would join in. An eclectic group, they sang spirituals, bawdy sea chanteys, show tunes and popular tunes of the times.

Staggering to the boats, most of the women wanted to ride back in the *Egersund*, trusting a drunken experienced sailor over a drunken inexperienced one. Carl looked for Jake as his experienced deckhand, but couldn't find him on either of the boats. He had disappeared. This wasn't the first time Jake had wondered off to follow his own agenda so Carl asked Magnus to ride with him to assist in docking at the Point.

Bill Hulings ran the *Admiral* with the rest of the men singing their own version of various songs. A far faster boat, the *Admiral* soon left the *Egersund* in her wake. Clouds had obscured the moon so the crossing was made in virtual darkness. The *Egersund* women soon fell into silence with only the engine pounding in their ears. A shorter run than to East Bay, Carl checked down the engine fifteen minutes after they left Little Sand Bay. He couldn't see much, but knew that the island was out there somewhere. The potential problem never is missing the island, but hitting it. Through the fog in his head he saw the dock at Hill's, a safer landing than at the shallower water at the Andersen dock. Idling forward he eased toward what he hoped was the dock fifty feet ahead.

WHAM! He ran the bow of the *Egersund* smack perpendicular into the dock that hadn't been fifty feet away, but ten. The women went flying about with the shock. Recovering quickly, Carl and Magnus soon had the boat secured as Bill and Mel sauntered down the dock saying as they helped the Point women out of the boat, "You should have ridden with us. It would have been safer."

The Point and East Bay adults gathered together many times on the island in the late forties, early fifties, usually to play cards, not unlike the generation

before them. They might gather at the Point, probably in the Jensch cottage, one time, maybe at Little Sand Bay another, but the time I remember was the time they played on our porch in East Bay in 1952. I was ten years old at the time. The usual suspects were there. Herman and Martin (Mitts) Johnson, Bud and Herman Jensch, Magnus Loftfield, Bill Hulings, Mel (Pussy) Johnson, Harold Holt, Jake Hansen and Carl, along with their wives, some of whom played poker, but for the most part the wives simply talked and made sure things didn't get out of hand. They played on the big round table on our porch.

Everyone arrived by 7:00 that balmy Saturday evening in August, The Point people walked the East Bay Road and Herman Johnson brought the mainlanders along with several cases of beer cooling in crushed ice in two fish boxes, left on the wheelbarrow just outside the porch screen door. Everyone brought desserts; cookies, cakes and other snack food.

The men settled in around the table and began playing cards. Mostly five card draw and seven card stud, but the dealer could call the game they were to play so once in a while you might play with one eyed jacks wild or low hold card wild, etc. Nickel and dime with two-raise maximum, one couldn't win or loose too much. They played with money and not chips so you couldn't loose more than you had brought with you. The purpose of the game was more social than monetary so hands were interrupted for jokes and stories of interest to the men and women there. Nothing off color unless the men were sure the wives were in the other room and out of earshot, which wasn't often.

We kids could stay up until ten or so, so were listening to the banter of the guests with one ear as we listen to the radio in the living room with the other. We listened to Gangbusters and The Shadow as well as the FBI In Peace and War. More real to us than reality, the four of us listened raptly as the mysteries unfolded in locals we had never been to by people unlike any we knew. Fred lived with us only part time, as he was a senior in college that year.

My bed lay above the porch so I fell asleep listening to the clinking of glasses, cards slamming on the table, laughter and all around good camaraderie from people who had a common bond of island living during more innocent times that will never happen again, at least not on Sand Island.

Carl fished during all these years, from the early thirties through the fall of 1953 when an event occurred that would change our lives as islanders forever. Quite successful as a commercial fisherman, the only thing that affected his

ability to make a decent living as a fisherman was the introduction of the sea lamprey to the Great Lakes by the opening of the St Lawrence Seaway some years earlier. It took several years for this insidious sea snake to make its way to Lake Superior, but once there thrived on the soft underbelly of the lake trout, sucking the blood from these delicacies to the point of near extinction. More and more trout as well as some whitefish were being caught with lamprey scars, not affecting the taste, but making the marketability less attractive. Fred, biology major, dedicated his working life to the eradication of this menace, finally partially succeeding after twenty plus years of dedicated effort. However, it wasn't the sea lamprey that knocked Carl off the lake after all these years.

The summer of '53 wasn't any different than any of those that passed before. There were storms and hot still days, flies and misquotes, beautiful moonrises and dark sultry nights. We swam and explored, built rafts and forts. We hid from the girls and were found by the girls. The *Apostle Island* made its weekly trips, breaking the monotony of being isolated from the outside world. Connie participated less and less with the three of us and the MBs as she worked a little at the Point and had entered high school the previous fall so had matured—at least in her mind—beyond where the rest of us had matured. We left as late in the fall as we dared, mom not wanting us to miss too much school as we progressed through the grades. Our lives were becoming more and more town related and less and less, island related.

Dad fished herring that fall as he always did, one of the few to set on Sand Island Shoals along with some Corny fisherman. In late November an unusually hard south wind blew along with freezing temperatures and snow. Moe's was a safe harbor in all weather except a south or southeast wind so he secured the *Egersund* at Andersen's dock and walked back to East Bay to wait out the storm with his deckhand. The wind and snow increased during the night and the temperature dropped into the low twenties. Waking on the morning of November Twentieth, he walked down to his dock to see the waves higher than he had ever seen rolling in from the south, over the outside of the dock, leaving a sheet of ice a few inches thick on the logs and rocks.

Concern filled his thoughts as he hurried through the snow to the Point. Clearing the trees at Hulings', he hurried to the end of the trail where he would have a view of the small harbor below. His heart sank as he spied Andersen's dock, ice coated with waves continuing to break over the south sending spray that whipped northward by the near gale force winds.

The *Egersund* dangled from only one stern line, as the others had snapped in the raging wind, off the end of the L on Andersen's dock. As Carl watched a huge wave broke over the edge of the dock sending surges of freezing water toward the precariously tethered boat, snapping the last life line like a twig sending the now loose boat toward the rocky shore only a few feet away. He was helpless to do anything. His only hope was that somehow the heaving boat would miss the many boulders strung along the shore and settle between them until he could get on board and start the engine and reverse the *Egersund* from what could easily be its destruction.

Within minutes, as Carl stood motionless on the bank, the surging waves laid the bow of the *Egersund* heavily upon the boulders found just below the surface of the lake. The sturdy boat withstood the first two impacts, but the third wave stove a small hole in the bottom, enlarging with each wave as other rocks joined in the destruction of this once proud boat. Ten minutes later the *Egersund* laid listing on its starboard side, a ten foot by five-foot hole in her bottom.

His heart ached as he inched his way to the edge of the embankment. There sat the *Egersund*, washed up on the shore, its bottom stove in by the rocks on the beach, the waves continuing to dash his way of life away. He was helpless to do anything but watch as his beloved boat, his livelihood, for years a symbol for Sand Island, slowly rising and falling like a dying white whale, the life of the fisherman, so closely aligned with his fishing boat, ebbing out like the water from the gapping hole. He sat on the bank and cried, as much for the loss of his boat as for the loss of his way of life.

That was the last year Carl Dahl fished off Sand Island or anywhere. The double whammy of the lamprey and the prohibitive cost of rebuilding the *Egersund* forced him to seek employment elsewhere, first in Sault St. Marie, Michigan and then in Chicago.

The family continued to go to Sand Island in the summers that followed, but until he retired, without dad, and of course, without the *Egersund*. We all grew up a lot that year as our anchor, our essence, our Sand Island, took a secondary role in all our lives and we, like everyone else, became mainlanders, merely visitors to what was our home for so many years.