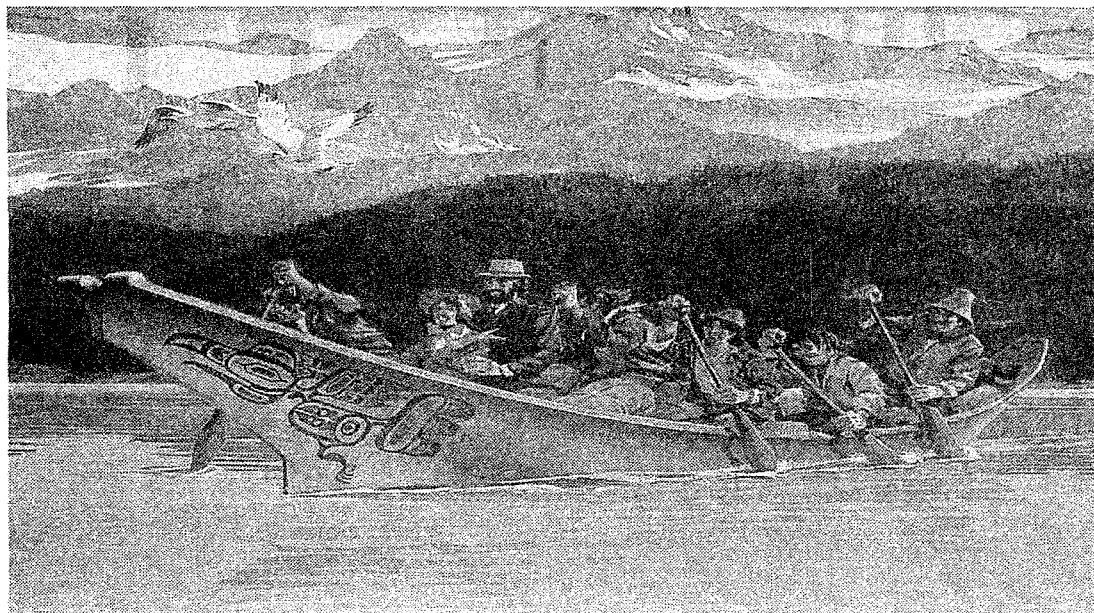


# Voyage of the *Nauti-Buoy* to Alaska and Return

An Epilogue to the Book *Challenge the Wilderness*  
130 Years Later

by George D. Tomlinson



*Boat Travel Northwest: A Different Mode and a Different Time*  
*Robert and Alice Tomlinson return up the coast on Honeymoon, 1868*  
*Artist's Rendition by Bob Wickstrom, formerly of Ketchikan, Alaska*

I always wanted to run a small boat by myself from Seattle, Washington to Ketchikan, Alaska. My desire and purpose for making this trip became more defined after writing the book *Challenge the Wilderness*, which is an historical account of my grandparents' and father's lives in northern B.C. and Southeast Alaska beginning in 1867. The Robert Tomlinsons are recognized as the first non-Indian family (other than Russian) to reside on the north Pacific coast of northern British Columbia and Southeastern Alaska. My trip up the coast, using a 19-foot power boat, navigational charts and instruments, and a copy of *Northwest Boat Travel*, would commemorate my grandparents' primitive journey to Kincolith, B.C. 130 years earlier. It would allow me to share their story with others along my way, even though for me no paddling would be required, and there would be planned ports of call where I would sleep between sheets each night.

In 1867 my grandfather, Robert Tomlinson, came over from England as a young 25-year-old medical missionary and stopped over in Victoria, B.C. on his way to Metlakatla, a new mission on the north coast of British Columbia. While in Victoria he met and fell in love with 16-year-old Alice Woods. Unable to obtain her parents' permission to marry Alice and take her north with him, Robert compromised and agreed that he would leave by himself to learn about the country and the Indian people,

and after a year, Alice's parents might possibly agree to the marriage.

Robert went north on a small trading ship to Metlakatla, B.C., which had been founded by William Duncan, an Anglican missionary. Duncan assigned Robert to establish a new mission on the mouth of the Nass River at a place named Kincolith, approximately 40 miles north of Metlakatla and 10 miles from the Alaska border. One year later, during the spring of 1868, Robert returned to Victoria and married Alice. The cover artwork on the book *Challenge the Wilderness* illustrates my grandparents, Robert and Alice Tomlinson, returning up the coast on their honeymoon voyage, along with their Indian companions, in a dugout canoe paddling the 650 miles back up the coast over the same waters I planned to travel in the summer of 1998.

My love of boating, fishing, and being on the water began in 1932 in Metlakatla, Alaska when I was eight years old. I had a 14-foot double-ended rowboat and later graduated to a 16-foot rowboat with a 4-1/2 horsepower outboard. Between 1943 and 1953 I worked on a commercial purse seiner and served in the Aleutian Islands on an Army Air Corps 85-foot crash boat. After moving to Seattle in 1951 I owned several small power boats, the largest being the *Nauti-Buoy*, purchased new in 1973.

I began preparing for my trip to Ketchikan early in the

spring of 1998 and originally planned (with strong objections from my family) to take my 14-foot Duraboat and leave around mid-May. My family and friends were also concerned about my traveling solo. One of my closest friends and fishing partners since 1938, Earl Stuart, even suggested that he join me, but I declined his offer, based on space and weight limitations, and the fact that this was a trip I wanted to take alone. To reassure everyone, I decided to make a trial run around Whidbey Island. On a beautiful April 17, 1998, I set out in my 14-foot boat, loaded somewhat as required, to circumnavigate Whidbey Island.

Seven hours later I had successfully completed my goal, but decided that this boat would not be safe for a trip to Ketchikan. I also realized that my 74-year-old body was no longer conditioned for any mode of travel requiring camping out on the beach and/or attempting to sleep aboard a 14-foot boat.

Therefore, the boat of choice became my big boat, the *Nauti-Buoy*, a 19-foot Glas-Ply runabout with a vinyl top, powered with a 130 h.p. Merc-Cruiser inboard/outboard, and a small outboard motor for trolling and emergency backup. Navigational instruments include a compass and a combination Loran/depth sounder. My family was very relieved with this change because they knew *Nauti-Buoy* had served me well for 25 years on numerous ocean fishing trips off the Washington coast and the west coast of Vancouver Island, as well as the more inland waters of Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the San Juan Islands.

The weather in mid-May turned cold and windy, and four days before I planned to depart, I decided that I should wait until July when the weather would be warmer.

Final preparations included obtaining additional charts,

On this trip there would be no detours off the planned route except possibly to fish for king salmon at Rivers Inlet on the return trip, and as required to seek shelter because of weather conditions. My planned schedule going north was as follows:

- Day 1:** Cultus Bay to Schooner Cove on Vancouver Island, with stop at Bedwell Harbour, South Pender Island to clear Canadian customs.
- Day 2:** Schooner Cove to Port Hardy with short stop at Campbell River.
- Day 3:** Port Hardy to Shearwater Resort near Bella Bella.
- Day 4:** Shearwater Resort to Prince Rupert, with stop at Klemtu for fuel.
- Day 5:** Prince Rupert to Ketchikan, Alaska, where I would clear U.S. customs. I planned to stay in the Ketchikan and Metlakatla area for at least a week before returning home.

The plans were made, the boat was ready and I was anxious to embark on a journey that would fulfill a long-time dream.

## Trip Log

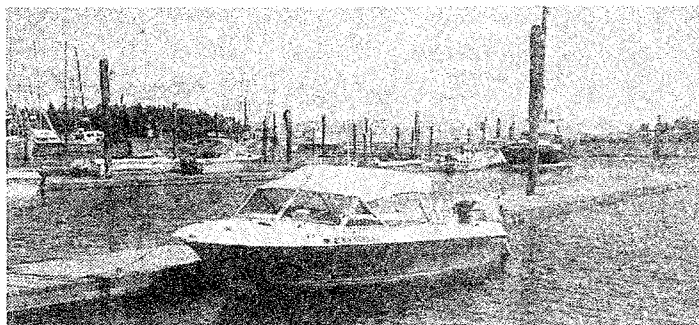
**July 15th** — Drove from Seattle to my summer place at Sandy Hook at Cultus Bay on Whidbey Island. Pulled *Nauti-Buoy* (on trailer) out of garage and checked equipment, including running both motors with water hose connection. Loaded up the boat with supplies: two large ice boxes for storage, one large duffel bag for clothing, one small duffel bag which I would take ashore at each overnight stopover. Charts were numbered in order of use, folded, and stored in a large water-tight zippered plastic enclosure. Fresh food and drinks were stored in a collapsible ice box. Portable gas tanks were placed where I thought they would provide the best balance.



Author in his 14-foot boat

establishing waypoints and courses, purchasing a new 9.9 Horsepower 4-cycle Honda outboard so the main and emergency motors would use the same fuel, and purchasing additional portable gas tanks to provide sufficient total fuel capacity as required for the longest run between fueling stops. In addition, I checked out miscellaneous equipment such as tools, spare props, anchor and chain, and lines.

Because water conditions are normally calmer and boat traffic is at a minimum in the early morning, I planned to typically arise at 4:00 AM, have a minimum breakfast of dry cereal on the boat, and be underway by 5:30 AM. This would provide a contingency for any delays caused by adverse weather and allow me to arrive at my ports-of-call during daylight hours so I could fuel up, find moorage and lodging, and check over various boat conditions. In the evening I could update my log, have a good dinner, get some exercise, and go to bed. It would be very important to get rest so that I could remain alert and have a sharp lookout for boat traffic, logs and other debris, as well as perform the required boat handling and navigation.



19-foot *Nauti-Buoy*

Fueled at local service station, launched boat, ran both motors, and secured the boat for the night. While launching, I talked to a gentleman who had just returned from Princess Louisa Inlet. He indicated that he had had severe problems with fog and that the trip had taken much longer than he had anticipated. I told him that I would be leaving early the next morning for Ketchikan,

Alaska. He acted very surprised, cautioned me about the fog and wished me luck. I went to bed early but had difficulty sleeping. Kept wondering if I had forgotten anything.

**July 16th** — Arose at 4:30 AM to a beautiful calm day, had breakfast and walked down to boat. Left mooring at 6:00 AM and ran slow out Cultus Bay Channel to entrance buoys. I was on my way to Alaska! The course was to run along the west side of Whidbey Island to Point Wilson near Port Townsend, to west side of San Juan Island, to Kellett Bluff at Southwest corner of Henry Island, to Turn Point at Northwest corner of Stuart Island and then into Bedwell Harbour, South Pender Island for Customs clearance. Ran by Loran and compass using waypoints starting at Schatchet Head buoy. Dense fog at Bush Point required reducing speed and being alert for drift and boat traffic. Entered Bedwell Harbour with fog starting to clear at approximately noon. Docked and went up to Customs Office. The officer was surprised and wondered how I had navigated in the fog. I was the first boat to arrive from the south. She also noted that the number on my boat did not match my boat registration boat number, which unknown to me, had apparently been changed. I got off the hook by showing her my U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Number Card, which indicated the same number that was on the boat.

Left Bedwell Harbour at 12:45 PM with fog fast clearing. Planned afternoon course was up the west side of North Pender Island (Swanson Channel), and Portlock Point on Prevost Island, up Trincomali Channel on west side Galiano and Valdes Islands; running between Danger Rocks and Tree Island, and then into Dodd Narrows. Tide flow in Dodd Narrows was reasonably strong but did not present a problem, other than to maintain clearance from other boat traffic. After Dodd Narrows, ran up Northumberland Channel past Nanaimo, into Horswell Channel past Lagoon Head and then up the Strait of Georgia past Nanoose Harbour, and Maude Island, to arrive at Schooner Cove Resort, my first port of call, at approximately 3:30 PM. Weather was clear and the Strait of Georgia was relatively calm.

At the resort I obtained moorage, lodging, and fuel. I had limited the first day's length of run so I could check out necessary equipment prior to the second day's run. This proved wise because I'd had very little sleep the previous night and after the tension of running in the morning fog, I welcomed dinner and a good rest. Schooner Cove Resort had very good facilities and service. During that afternoon, in clear weather, I had continued to navigate using Loran waypoints, plotted courses, and checked Loran headings against the magnetic compass. After checking in by telephone with family, I went to bed early.

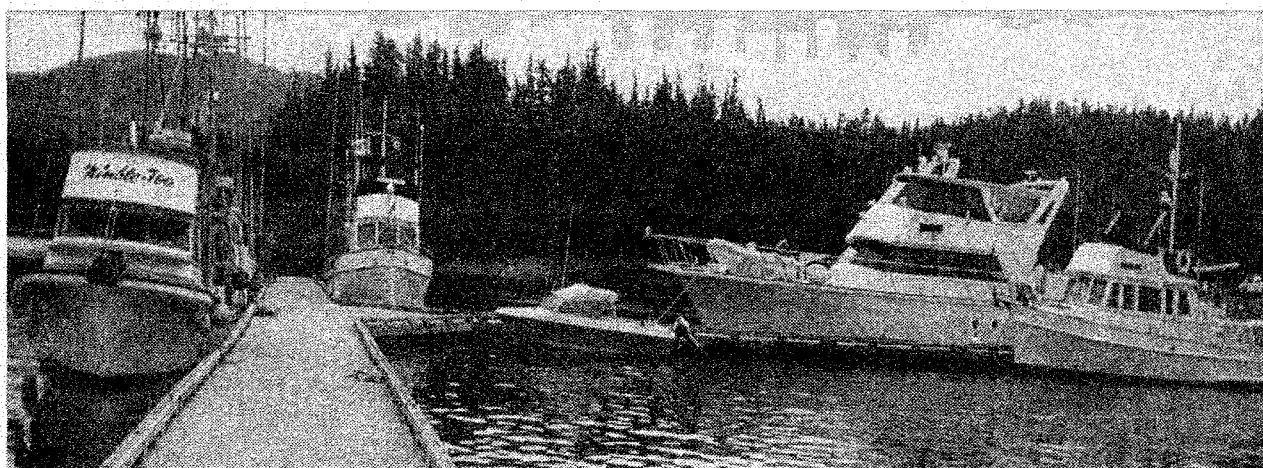
**July 17th** — Arose at 4:30 AM to another beautiful day. Had difficult time getting to the *Nauti-Buoy* because the moorage at that early hour was secured by a fence with key required to unlock gate. I was about to make an unlawful entry either under, over, or around the fence, when a kind early-bird aboard a nearby boat came up and unlocked the gate. My luck was still holding.

Had dry cereal breakfast aboard *Nauti-Buoy* and left Schooner Cove at approximately 5:30 AM. Nice day with reasonably calm seas, so I decided to run the shortest route up the Strait of Georgia to Campbell River. Northwest winds picked up, however, so changed course to run closer to Vancouver Island in calmer water. Ran between Hornby and Denman Islands; a good choice. Winds and seas flattened down, and continued into Campbell River without difficulty. Took on a small amount of fuel in Campbell River and I continued north. Tide was running fairly strong in Seymour Narrows but presented no problem. (Seymour Narrows had a special memory for me. During the fall of 1945, after World War II was over, we were bringing the 85-foot Army Air Corps crash boats south from the Aleutian Islands when one boat hit a large log in Seymour Narrows and started to sink. We were able to create a sling so that the damaged boat was cradled between the other two boats and the pumps of all three boats worked to keep the boat from sinking. We got the boat into Campbell River, where we temporarily patched the hole.)

Seas were reasonably good through Discovery Passage and the east end of Johnstone Strait, but once into Johnstone Strait, ran into westerly headwinds, which continued to increase to 15-20 MPH. The combination of the wind and tide made seas rough for a 19-foot boat. Continued west at reduced speed and crossed the strait several times looking for protection and calmer water, without success. I had reason to believe I would not reach Port Hardy in daylight and at best would make Port McNeill by dark.

In the afternoon, winds and tide died down and I was able to return to cruising speed. Decided to pass Port McNeill and try for Port Hardy. Water became calm and arrived at Port Hardy around 6:00 PM. Fueled and got last mooring spot. Had difficulty getting lodging, finally ending up at Port Hardy Inn. Had originally planned to stay at Glen Lyon Inn, which is handy to moorage, but it was full. Had a very minimum dinner, checked in by telephone at home, and went to bed.

**July 18th** — While plotting courses in this area, I noticed a location named Tomlinson Point (N 50°54.2' - W 127°15.0') on the north side of Queen Charlotte Strait and wondered if it was a location my grandfather, Robert Tomlinson, might have visited in 1868.



*'Nauti-Buoy' at Shearwater Resort*

Arose at 4:10 AM, walked down to boat (approximately one mile). Had my typical breakfast on board. Weather was calm, but foggy. Underway at approximately 5:30 AM. Loran did not give proper latitude and longitude. Attempted to reset for new location but could not get unit to operate properly. Decided to navigate using dead reckoning method across Queen Charlotte Sound. Ran compass courses in fog out of Port Hardy past Duval Point and then west to Duncan Island and into Christie Passage between Hurst Island and Balaklava Island. In Christie Passage a number of boats were anchored, waiting for the fog to clear. I decided to continue. The sea was calm. Set a course for Pine Island, a distance of 8.4 NM. Hit it on the nose. I then headed in the fog for Egg Island, a distance of 17 NM. Missed Egg Island on the east side, and had to retreat to south and then west to pass west of island before continuing north. At this point, fog was starting to clear with visibility approximately one mile. From Egg Island, ran north up Fitzhugh Sound in good water conditions, past Rivers Inlet on starboard, then Hakai Pass on port, and on to Lama Passage, which leads into the town of Bella Bella and Shearwater Resort. I had expected to see killer whales on this run, but none showed.

Arrived Shearwater Resort at approximately 12:30 PM, obtained moorage and lodging. Several large pleasure boats were moored near me. Their crews observed that I was a Washington boat and wanted to know my departure point. I told them that I had run from Seattle and was on my way to Ketchikan, Alaska. I think they were surprised. I also told them the reason for making the trip and that my grandfather and grandmother had come through these same waters in 1868, 130 years earlier. I met some nice people. After getting situated, ran to Bella Bella and fueled. Took some video and panoramic pictures of Shearwater Resort and Bella Bella. Shearwater Resort is a great place with good moorage, motel, restaurant, store, and facilities for hauling out boats. I had an excellent dinner, checked in with the family by telephone, and went to bed.

**July 19th** — Arose at 4:10 AM. Walked down to boat and had typical breakfast. It had rained during the night but weather looked as if it might be improving. This would be my longest run between overnight stopovers. Left Shearwater Resort at 5:30 AM. Ran out past Bella Bella into Seaforth Channel and west to Milbanke Sound, an area which is open to the ocean from the southwest. At the west end of Seaforth Channel you can continue out into Milbanke Sound or take a more protected but longer route through Reid Channel, then north into Mathieson Channel, then entering Jackson Passage, and then intercepting Finlayson Channel just south and east of the town of Klemtu. After observing the water out in Milbanke Sound, which appeared to be lumpy but not life-threatening, I decided to take the shorter Milbanke Sound route.

After clearing Vancouver Rock, I turned north and entered Finlayson Channel with a following sea. Originally planning to top off fuel at Klemtu, I passed by Klemtu because it was 7:30 AM on Sunday morning at the time I slowed down in the Channel.

There was no activity to indicate that I could obtain fuel at that time in the morning. I therefore re-evaluated my fuel and figured if weather and water conditions remained somewhat favorable, I would have adequate, and some spare, fuel to reach Prince Rupert. I would be traveling for the most part through narrow channels and heavily wooded areas with trees down to the water line.

Continued north through Tolmie Channel and Graham Reach, and into Butedale Passage. On this run there was a lot of logs and debris in the water, requiring that I be alert. Stopped briefly at Butedale, an old salmon cannery, which like many other locations in British Columbia and Southeastern Alaska, had fallen on bad times and been abandoned. On-shore facilities appeared to be in a state of complete disrepair. Would like to return to this location and try fly fishing in Butedale Lake and other lakes and streams in area.

Continued northwest into Fraser Reach, then west to McKay Reach and Wright Sound. There were numerous purse seiners and gillnet boats which required a sharp lookout in order to detour around nets if required. Entered Grenville Channel, a long, narrow waterway approximately 46 miles in length. After leaving Grenville Channel, proceeded north past Gibson Island, Kennedy Island, mouth of the Skeena River and into Prince Rupert Harbour, arriving at 3:15 PM. Fueled at Chevron. Noticed that the engine was idling very rough, which I thought might have been caused by bad fuel. I moored at the Prince Rupert Yacht Club. Worked on engine, including changing the fuel tanks and spark plugs, and adding a fuel treatment to eliminate water in gas. At Yacht Club moorage I was treated very well, especially when it was established that I had traveled alone from Seattle.

Checked into the Crest Motor Inn, an upscale facility, showered, cleaned up and had an excellent dinner. I was very thankful for the US/Canadian monetary exchange rate. Spent the evening walking around Prince Rupert, a very nice city that I had visited many times.

**July 20th** — Because the run from Prince Rupert to Ketchikan was only 85 miles, I slept in later (7:00 AM) than my past mornings, had a good breakfast in the Crest Coffee Shop. Arrived at the boat a little after 8:30 AM and purchased some additive for gas treatment. Left dock around 9:00 AM. Switched engine over to a portable fuel tank with the hope that it may help the idling problem. Weather and visibility were good, and water calm.

My planned route was a short-cut through Venn Passage by old Metlakatla. This town had a significant importance in the lives of my grandparents, Robert and Alice Tomlinson, as well as my father, Robert Tomlinson, Jr. I would be running a route which my grandfather took when in charge of transferring 800 Tsimshian Indians from Old Metlakatla to a location at Port Chester on Annette Island in 1887, which would become Metlakatla, Alaska. When passing Metlakatla, I stopped and took video and camera pictures of the town. At this time, it appears to consist of basically residential buildings.



*Old Metlakatla, British Columbia*



After leaving Metlakatla, continued through Venn Channel, Metlakatla Bay, and into Chatam Sound. Visibility was good and I was in a familiar area. Navigated using Marine Atlas courses. Compass headings were accurate and the engine performed well at cruising speed.

My course took me on the east side of Dundas Island, then to Tree Point. Along the coast between Tree Point and Foggy Bay, numerous gillnet boats were fishing, requiring detours around nets. Continued north past Mary Island, Hog Rocks, Bold Island to Mountain Point, and then up Tongass Narrows to Ketchikan. It was in this area that I hit a piece of driftwood. Fortunately, no damage. It was the only driftwood I hit during the entire trip. Having spent 20 years of my life in the Ketchikan/Metlakatla area, I was now in familiar surroundings. When entering Ketchikan Harbor, I took video pictures of town with two large cruise ships at dock.

Arrived at public moorage around 2:30 PM. Upon entering the moorage location, main engine idled roughly. Talked to several people including Harbor Master, who were surprised that I just arrived from Seattle aboard the *Nauti-Buoy*. Harbor Master was very accommodating and arranged for a week's moorage with the understanding that I would be in and out during the week. With reservations at the Super 8 Motel, they sent a van to pick me up. I had checked in until July 29th.

**July 21st** — Arranged for rental car and went downtown. Spent the morning doing promotional work on my book *Challenge the Wilderness*, including stopping at Parnassius Book Store, *Ketchikan Daily News*, and KTKN-AM radio station. Results of this effort were: Parnassius Book Store scheduled a book signing on July 28, *Ketchikan Daily News* indicated that they may do a feature story on my book and trip, AM radio station scheduled program on July 22nd, in which I would be interviewed live, followed by a question-and-answer period.

Telephoned Danny and Roxana Leask, who would be my hosts at Metlakatla, Alaska. Arranged to run to Metlakatla after AM radio interview. Spent the remainder of the day walking around Ketchikan. There had been many significant changes along the waterfront and in the business area, most of which related to the tourist trade.

**July 22nd** — After breakfast, went to the *Nauti-Buoy* and

loaded two boxes (40 books). Previously, they had been mailed to Ketchikan. Went downtown and had a short interview with Tim Barry at KRBD-FM. It would be broadcast at a later date. Went to KTKN-AM radio station for a live interview between 11:00 AM and Noon. Interview went well. Several people called in.

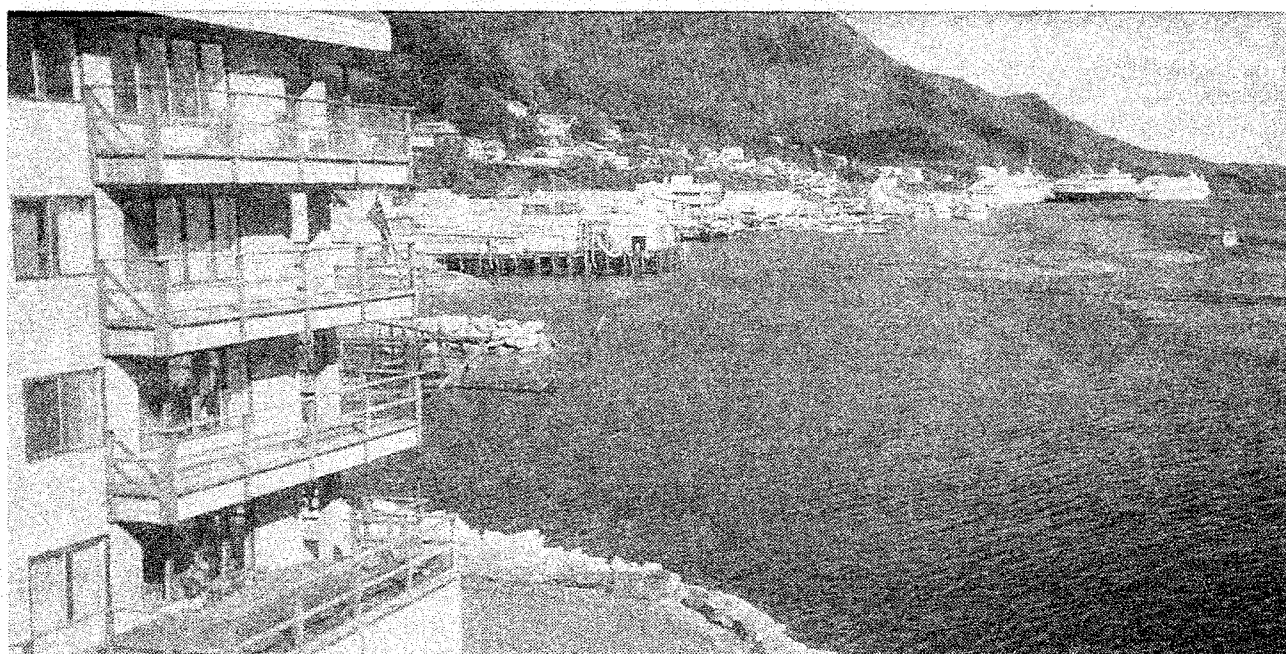
Left station and went to *Nauti-Buoy*. Started engine, which still idled roughly. Ran to Metlakatla (approximately 15 NM) with limited visibility by compass courses and sight. On the way over, sighted two humpback whales. Of course, they didn't show after camera came out. Danny and Roxana Leask met me at dock, directed me to moorage, and indicated that I would be staying at Ed Leask's residence, adjacent to moorage and a very nice place.

Toured the town with Danny and Roxana. There had been many changes since I had lived there between 1932 and 1938. Streets had replaced board sidewalks, the cannery had shut down and been replaced by cold storage, the town had new schools and a municipal building. The William Duncan Church where my father had been the minister had burned down and been replaced by a smaller, less impressive structure. A new boat harbor and breakwater had been built; many other impressive changes. It was good to be back in the town.

Arranged for a book signing in the new municipal offices at noon on the 23rd, and was advertised on Channel 3 of the local TV program. Came back to Ed Leask's residence for dinner. Ed had also invited Larry West, whom Ed indicated was an excellent mechanic. After dinner, I informed Larry about the idling problem, and asked if he would take a look at the engine to verify the source of the problem. Larry quickly established that the problem was not bad fuel, but a cracked exhaust manifold, which needed to be replaced. Larry explained that under idling conditions water would enter two cylinders, but at cruising speeds the water would be blown out the exhaust, allowing the engine to run properly. It would have been next to impossible to obtain the necessary repairs in Ketchikan, because the commercial fishing season was about to start and machine shops were very busy. My luck was still holding.

**July 23rd** — After breakfast, Ed offered me the use of his pickup for the day. I ran up to the Mini-Market Machine Shop that Larry West operated. Larry called Seattle and ordered a replacement manifold, then told me he would call me in Ketchikan when the manifold had been installed and the engine was operating

*Continued on Page 29*



*Ketchikan waterfront with three cruise ships*

Nauti-Buoy *Continued from Page 13*

properly. Drove to *Nauti-Buoy* and picked up the two boxes of books and then to the Municipal offices to set up for book signing at noon. During the signing I met numerous old friends and made new ones. Sold all the books and received orders for additional copies. At lunch in the Long House I met Wayne Hewson, an Indian carving craftsman. (I knew his father, Wesley Hewson, quite well when I was a kid.) He showed me some of his work, which was quite impressive, and I invited him to visit me when he was next in Seattle. Danny Leask had set up a TV interview in the Presbyterian Church to be broadcast at a later date. I was interviewed by Tim Marsden of Fast Forward Video. He thought the interview went well and gave me a videotape prior to leaving Metlakatla.

**July 24th** — Returned to Ketchikan by plane. Weather was wet and foggy but was predicted to improve.

**July 25th** — I celebrated my 74th birthday by walking around Ketchikan and driving out the highway both north and south.

**July 26th** — A beautiful day in paradise. Had dinner at Clover Pass Report with very good friends Jim Hodgman and his wife, Barbara. Jim and I had graduated from Ketchikan High School in 1941. After graduation Jim went immediately into the Coast Guard Academy. He rose to a very high command level position and served in various capacities all around the world. After retiring from the Coast Guard, for the next 17 years he piloted large cruise ships through Alaska waters. I discussed my trip up the coast on the *Nauti-Buoy*. Jim cautioned that I should run slower in the fog. We had a great time reminiscing over high school days and camping trips that we had taken in my 16-foot rowboat.

When I got back to the Super 8 I had a message from Larry West that the manifold was installed and the engine was operating properly. Therefore, I flew to Metlakatla the next morning.

**July 27th** — Another beautiful day. Flew to Metlakatla, thanked Larry for his wonderful service, said goodbye to my friends including Ed, Danny and Roxana Leask, as well as many others. Went down to the *Nauti-Buoy* and started the engine. Ran fine. Cruised by sight back to Ketchikan.

**July 28th** — Another beautiful day. Took two boxes of books down to the Parnassius Bookstore and set up for noon book signing. Went well. I spent the remainder of the day walking around Ketchikan, a town that I had called home from 1938 to 1951. Because of the cruise ships, downtown Ketchikan has been significantly changed. Some very nice facilities serve the tourist trade.

Telephoned my daughter, Susan Durbin, and set a schedule for the return trip: July 29th: Ketchikan to Prince Rupert; July 30th: Prince Rupert to Shearwater/Bella Bella; July 31st and August 1st: Shearwater Resort to Rivers Inlet with a 1-1/2 day stop-over at Rivers Inlet to fish for king salmon, then continuing on to Port Hardy or Sullivan Bay or Echo Bay; August 2nd: Rendezvous with Durbins at Big Bay on Stuart Island, and stay in the area for two or three days.

**July 29th** — Another beautiful day. Arose at 5:30 AM, checked out of the Super 8 Motel, had breakfast at the Landing

Restaurant. Went to fuel at gas dock, returned to moorage and loaded boat with baggage and food. Departed Ketchikan for Prince Rupert at 8:35 AM with a slight N.W. wind blowing and a following sea. Weather conditions were good until about 20 miles from Prince Rupert. Sea became pretty lumpy with quartering waves off my starboard bow and visibility reduced to about a mile. Tide and wind pushed me off course to port, and I had to adjust course to clear Tugwell Island. Picked up the entrance buoy to Venn Passage, ran by Old Metlakatla and arrived at Prince Rupert at 1:30 PM. Saw one humpback whale on this run. Also noted that compass deviation on southerly courses needed five to seven degrees correction to starboard to remain on course. Fueled up at Chevron and obtained moorage at Prince Rupert Yacht Club. Cleared Canadian customs by telephone. Checked into Crest Hotel and went for a long walk around Prince Rupert.

**July 30th** — Nice day. Arose at 4:10 AM. Checked out of Crest and had cereal breakfast on board. Left mooring at 5:30 AM. The run to Bella Bella was uneventful except for sighting a gray whale, which again did not show for pictures. For the most part, had northerly wind and a following sea. Arrived at Bella Bella at 3:30 PM, fueled up and then cruised to Shearwater Resort. Moored boat and checked in for lodging.

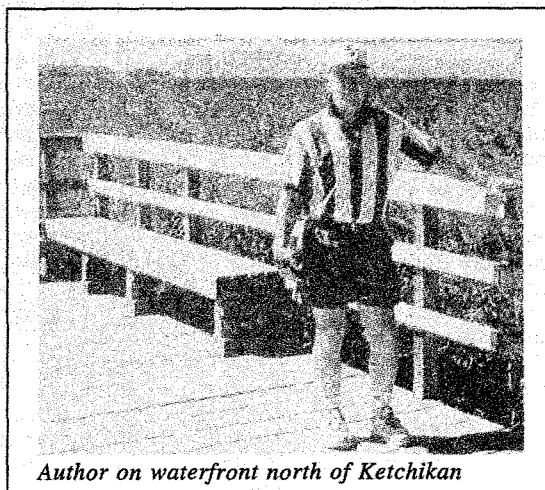
At the moorage float were four small boats around 24-26 feet in length, each with a family, including small children. These families were from Prince George. They had trailered their boats to Kitimat, where they launched. The four boats had traveled together as far south as Hakai Pass, where they had fished for king salmon. They were now on their way home. Everyone was having a great time cooking and eating on the float. I thought, "What a wonderful way to have a vacation!" They were very interested in my family history as well as my trip.

**July 31st** — Arose at 4:20 AM, had breakfast on boat and left moorage at 5:30 AM. Water was reasonably calm on inside channels. Decided to bypass Rivers Inlet without fishing for king salmon. The fuel tanks in the boat cockpit would make fishing difficult, and I had not purchased a fishing license. Queen Charlotte Sound was lumpy with six-to eight-foot swells on my starboard stern, topped by a two-foot chop. Decided on a route on the north side of Queen Charlotte Strait, through Richards Channel, Labouchere Passage, past Numas Islands, and Lewis Rocks, into Wells Passage to Sullivan Bay Resort on North Brighton Island.

Arrived at Sullivan Bay at around 12:30 PM. Fueled and decided to head for Big Bay Resort in what appeared to be good seas. Left Sullivan

Bay around 1:30 PM and headed east through Sutlej Channel, through Penphrase Passage, through Tribune Channel around the east side of Gilford Island, through Clapp Passage, into Chatham Channel, past Hull Island, through Havannah Channel, and entering Johnstone Strait at the Broken Islands. During the run from Sullivan Bay to Johnstone Strait, most of the route was in protected channels. On Johnstone Strait the westerly winds were quite stiff. Headed east on Johnstone Strait through Current Passage on the north side of Helmcken Island, through Chancellor Channel, through Cordero Channel, arriving at Big Bay Resort on Stuart Island at 7:30 PM. On the run down Johnstone, westerly winds were estimated to be 35 to 40 mph with strong tide action and wave action at over six feet. *Nauti-Buoy* performed well in this following sea.

At Big Bay, I went to the office to inquire about the Durbins, including my daughter Susan, son-in-law Steve, and



*Author on waterfront north of Ketchikan*

grandsons Brett and Scott, and their boat the *Sea Dancer*. People were not aware of the Durbins or their boat. I had arrived two days early, having omitted the stop at Rivers Inlet. After attempting to contact them by radio and cell phone, I later learned that they were at a resort in Cordero Channel having dinner when I passed by within a few hundred yards.

Decided to run into Campbell River for moorage and lodging. Traveled by way of Cordero Channel, Nodales Channel and Discovery Passage, arriving at Campbell River in the dark around 10:30 PM. In the channel in front of Campbell River, the engine stopped. I found that I had failed to open the vent on the portable plastic tank. Opened vent, started engine, got into moorage, and later lodging. It had been a very long day. From the motel I continued to attempt to contact the Durbins and finally contacted my son Scott, in Everett, and told him where I was located.

**August 1st** — Got up around 6:30 AM. Made more unsuccessful telephone calls in an attempt to contact Durbins. Decided to leave Campbell River and run to Schooner Cove. Gave motel managers, Jerry and Marge Morrison, a copy of my book. Walked down to moorage and started engine. It started and then stopped — no fuel. Decided that diaphragm in fuel pump was ruptured because of the previous day's problem of not opening vent on tank. Spent a major portion of the day in an unsuccessful attempt to find a replacement fuel pump. Jerry Morrison drove me all around Campbell River and helped me remove fuel pump. Finally, with existing fuel pump with part number in hand, we were able to order a new unit at Kirk Auto Parts. Cliff Riddock, Assistant Manager, was very helpful. Because it was Saturday, the start of a three-day Canadian holiday, the part would not arrive until Wednesday.

Finally, made contact with Durbins. They were on their way to Campbell River, but were waiting for the tide to subside. They arrived around 8:30 PM and we had dinner together. We decided that I would go with them to Big Bay Resort, with me staying on shore.

**Sunday, August 2nd** — After breakfast, decided to call Wilson Marine in Seattle and order another fuel pump in case there was a problem with delivery of the ordered unit. Wilson Marine had fuel pump in stock and would ship unit c/o Kenmore Air to Big Bay Resort.

Got aboard the Durbin's boat, *Sea Dancer*, and ran to Big Bay Resort. Met Bob and Ruth Monroe, original owners of Kenmore Air. Bob called Kenmore Air to ensure that the fuel pump from Wilson Marine would be on Monday's flight. Bob and I had a long discussion about Ketchikan and people whom we had known there. Bob and Ruth are a super couple with a very special interest and history in Washington and Alaska. Walked around Big Bay and surrounding area with the Durbins. Nice place with many large yachts. Had a nice dinner. Made plans to go fishing next morning.

**Monday, August 3rd** — Went fishing on *Sea Dancer* — no luck. Took pictures of scenery and eagles. Fuel pump arrived c/o Kenmore Air. Relaxed and enjoyed the comforts of the resort.

**Tuesday, August 4th** — Returned to Campbell River with Durbins on *Sea Dancer*. Installed fuel pump and ran engine. Engine ran okay. Durbins on *Sea Dancer* took off on their vacation. I checked back into the motel.

**Wednesday, August 5th** — Slept in and had a good breakfast. Jerry Morrison drove me up to Kirk Auto Parts to pick up what would now be a spare fuel pump. Went to *Nauti-Buoy* and left Campbell River at 1:30 PM with intent to run to Schooner Cove that afternoon. Weather was clear and seas reasonable, so decided to run down Strait of Georgia, the most direct route. Out about 40 miles, the wind picked up and seas became rough. Changed course to Vancouver Island side. Winds continued to increase and water became very rough. Decided not to press my luck and to return approximately 25 miles north to Comox. Entered Comox Harbour under stiff winds, fueled, and found

moorage. Everyone was very helpful. The Harbour Master telephoned a motel and reserved a room as well as arranging for a cab to pick me up. Checked into the motel and had a good dinner. After eating, walked down to boat moorage (approximately 1-1/2 miles) and checked out boat. Wind continued to be very strong from south. Called home to let family know I was secure for the night.

**Thursday, August 6th** — Got up around 4:00 AM, walked down to *Nauti-Buoy* and was underway around 5:30 AM. The wind had changed to the northwest and the following seas in the Strait of Georgia were reasonably good. Decided to continue as far as possible. Ran courses that were reverse of those going north, passing Schooner Cove, Nanaimo, and arriving at Roche Harbor around 1:00 PM. Cleared U.S. Customs and fueled. Decided to run around the south side of San Juan Island, Lopez Island, through Deception Pass, and down the east side of Whidbey Island. For the most part, seas were reasonably good except for some tidal action. Boat ran well and arrived home at Sandy Hook - Cultus Bay on Whidbey Island around 5:15 PM. I had been gone three weeks and covered 1300-plus nautical miles. After securing the *Nauti-Buoy* for the night, I called family members and informed them that the "old man of the sea" was safely home.

In reviewing this trip, I considered that my preparations and planning were such that I would change very little. Should I have chosen to use my 14-foot Duraboat, the overall trip would have taken at least two weeks longer because of slower cruising speeds, waiting for favorable weather conditions, and problems associated with stop-over locations and camping on beach. The 19-footer was therefore the correct mode of travel, and I considered that my boat handling and navigational capabilities were quite adequate.

What made this trip unique and memorable? There are several things that I considered:

How lucky can you get? I had a major engine problems when moored at locations where knowledgeable people were available to order new parts and to go out of their way to help, and at such times that the delay did not impact my overall schedule. It definitely was not unique that I found people who were kind and helpful. This is very common, and to me it's what makes boating such an enjoyable experience.

As I traveled along the inland passage, particularly going north, I could not help but think back to that time in 1868, 130 years earlier. There were no charts of the area, just rough, sketchy maps; no navigational aids, no overnight stop-overs at lodging facilities. Into this primitive, hostile environment came a small party comprised of five Indian men, one Indian woman, and my grandfather and grandmother. The natives belonged to the Nishga tribe of the Nass River, and had moved to my grandfather's fledgling mission village of Kincolith, where they felt a peace and security they had never known before. They had then agreed to leave their homes to help my grandfather go down the coast to Victoria and bring back his new bride. They felt such trust, loyalty and love for my grandfather, whom they had known for less than an year, that they were willing to journey into unknown territory, despite the great risk of dangerous weather, water conditions, and hostile, warring tribes they might encounter along the way.

Then there was my grandfather, a young medical missionary who had been in the area for only one year and had little experience with canoeing and navigation. He knew he faced a big risk. He could only hope that the parents of his choice for a wife would agree to let her marry and come with him. On the way back, he faced a different but equally daunting risk: he was completely responsible for bringing his new bride and the rest of the party safely back home to Kincolith.

But most of all, my mind kept returning to my grandmother, a 17-year-old bride who had given up a comfortable life in Victoria to marry this young medical missionary and place her life in his hands. She would be the first white woman in this primitive land, and would live the rest of her life in the small, isolated area of Northern British Columbia and Southeast Alaska that she would

call home. She would live through numerous hardships, and of nine children she bore, only six would survive. She surely must have had an appreciation for the risks, and a determination that matched her husband's.

Traveling this route so many years later, I felt an enlarged,

intensified appreciation for what they experienced, accomplished and overcame in their partnership, for their devotion to the life they had chosen, and for the legacy they left to their family, their people, and their land.

I thank *Northwest Boat Travel* for the opportunity to share this adventure with you.

## Visiting The East Coast Of Vancouver Island

by Terrance Berscheid

The following is an update report from our Vancouver Island distributor of *Northwest Boat Travel*. In mid-June, Terrance traveled from his Saanich home north to Campbell River.

"Visiting boaters are gradually showing up in **Campbell River** and **Nanaimo**, but overall, the count is still low; Beware to anyone who harasses whales anywhere around the Campbell River area; or collects shellfish illegally. Fisheries and Oceans Enforcement Officers have been quite active and won some hefty fines and confiscations (including vehicles).

The economy is gradually regaining a positive foothold, and marina operators are dressing up facilities in eager anticipation of a (hopefully) heavy influx of American visiting vessels this summer.

**April Point** (NBT p. 181) is in high gear, preparing for the first large arrivals expected in the next couple of weeks. While I was there, the biggest spring of the day came in at 18 lbs. Fishing has been quiet, but is expected to blossom forth within the next two weeks. The eagles remain active.

**Campbell River** (NBT p. 178) will look quite different to many who have not visited the waterfront in the last couple of years; there's a large new shopping mall just north of the ferry terminal (adjacent to **Discovery Harbour Marina**) and that's where the liquor store also relocated (along with a new **Starbucks**.) There's also a new large 'discount' grocery store in the mall.

**Ocean Pacific Marine Supply** (NBT p. 179) has an outlet in the mall.

**Seaway Marine Services**, which is proud to deliver the largest volume of fuel product on the BC central/south coast, has their well-equipped fuel barge in **Discovery Harbour Marina** (NBT p. 178).

**Comox** is expanding as well, with several new condo/subdivision developments; the harbour remains quiet, as few non-resident vessels are in the vicinity and the fishboats remain secured to their moorings.

**Esso marine's Black Fin Marina** fuel barge (NBT p. 175), while still on off-season hours (closing at 4 p. m.) is open for business.

Has anyone walked around the point at **Schooner Cove** (NBT p. 173) recently? I can't believe the huge increase in condo-

miniums, and expensive housing. The golf course was packed at 20:00 the evening I was there, and the pub was just a-humming, eh?

**Nanaimo** is just-a-hopping these days along the promenade (below the old Bastion) where **Harbour Chandler's Gift Shop** stocks *Northwest Boat Travel Guide*. There are also small 'on-the-waterfront' bistros overlooking the fishing fleet floats. Nanaimo also has a new Live Arts Theatre/Public Library across the street from the Old Bastion. **Anchorage Marina** and **Nanaimo Marine Centre** (both just off the waterfront) both stock *Northwest Boat Travel*.

**Townsite Marina** and **Nanaimo Harbour City Marina** (both on p. 137 NBT) are gearing up for their visitors.

**Manana Lodge and Marina**, (NBT p. 126) in Ladysmith is ready for summer traffic.

Construction of the new marina in **Chemainus Harbour** may start this year, with completion anticipated to be next year.

**Bonnie and Frank's Gift House** (NBT p. 127) — just two short blocks uphill from the Chemainus Ferry Terminal — stocks *Northwest Boat Travel Guide* in their gift shop — check out the weaving bobbin candlestick holders. I thought those were unique.

**Maple Bay Marina** (NBT p. 131) has felt the impact of their first influx of boaters. They also stock *Northwest Boat Travel Guide*, and the pub is open!

**Canoe Cove** (NBT p. 103) is bustling and has fuel.

One of the hidden secrets of **Tsehum Harbour** (NBT p. 101) is **Jensen's Marine** at **Thunderbird's Westport Marina**. Elaine has a good selection of bits and pieces, touch-up supplies, and *Northwest Boat Travel Guide*.

In downtown **Sidney**, explore **Compass Rose Nautical Books** — what a selection!

Drop by the **Oak Bay Marina** (NBT p. 97). The Marina Restaurant has a great Sunday Brunch."