

Growing Up Alaska



By Niki Breeser Tschirgi

During her first grade year, Niki and her family moved to Tok, Alaska. Her Dad worked with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the position in Alaska fulfilled a lifelong dream. Niki soon adapted to the uniqueness of life in a small remote town in Alaska. The cold long dark winters, the brilliant short summers, and the distances travelled to connect with others became normal. She and her family resided there until she was nearly ready to graduate from high school. Once again they followed her Dad as he moved on to another desired position, this one back in the *Lower Forty-Eight*.

This slender volume is Niki's recounting of the time spent in Alaska, starting with the trip north. Besides describing the realities of live in such a rugged and cold place, she vividly describes the people, the animals, and the bonds that made her experience unique and memorable. It allows the reader to sample a small portion of what life was (is) like in Alaska, and perhaps causes a desire to partake of it themselves.

Born and raised in Alaska until beginning the first grade, this reviewer has a special interest in this book. It points out what life may have been like during his school years, had he and his folks stayed. Much of what Niki describes brings back ancient, half-buried memories or provides a sense of familiarity and understanding. Reading this also reinforces the idea that once someone experiences Alaska, it will always be a part of them.