

Helen Allen (Born??? Where???)

"We've always been a real close family," Helen says. She and her husband Wes came to Alaska by boat from Olympia in ???? along with their four children. Wes was a logger, a feller, and was employed at a logging camp in Hollis run by Pat Lemay. Wes built the family a two-story house there, a house that was later moved to Wrangell and bought to furnish another logging camp. Helen says of Hollis, "I like it real well. It was friendly, a good camp." Her boys went to work early there, learning how to raft logs by age ten to earn spending money. The camp was so small that there was no school so Helen home schooled her children. Helen's baking was popular. "I baked for the crew," she recalls.

The family moved to Wrangell WHEN??? 1950s??? when Wes got a logging job, again with Lemay, in Wrangell. After a few years he bought a troller, named the Helen Ann, and fished for the rest of his life. Anita Bay was one of his favorite spots, as was Point Baker and Port Protection. Helen remembers the fishing being very good then. "We made a good living fishing." Later they built a fishing houseboat, fishing together in comfort and style. "All the fishermen used to sneak in and eat with us. They came over at night and had pie or cake with us." She remembers Bob Rooney being one of the most frequent guests. She refused to touch a fish, though, and spent her fishing days behind the steering wheel.

While her children were younger, Helen cooked for several restaurants in town including Winnie's that was located in the present-day Angerman's building. She also cooked for Daisy Callbreath at the Diamond C and worked as a cashier at City Market for many years. Baking pies and cakes was always her specialty, no particular kind, "I just baked a lot."

The combination of her baking and her warm nature meant that many people gathered at the Allen home for food and companionship. Helen says that a lot of holiday get-togethers ended up at their house, both at camp and in Wrangell. "Everybody just showed up," she says and there were family dinners every Sunday as well. Her children may have inherited some of her baking skill. At least they practiced it the day she came home and found that they had baked her a birthday cake and, she smiles, "my kitchen was in shambles."

The family recalled fishing days at Wes' graveside service. At its end everyone released balloons and Helen remembers that as they rose, "They went down to where we always fished in Anita Bay. "Doc Davenport said, "They knew where to go."