

WALDEN;
OR,
LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,
AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE MERRIMACK AND MIDDLESEX RIVERS."



I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to lay as lightly as possible on the
workings, shewing on the way, if only to wake my neighbours up. — Page 93.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LIX.



**DEEP BAY; OR ENCOUNTERS IN
THE WOODS BY JAMPA DORJE**

DEEP BAY;
OR
ENCOUNTERS IN THE WOODS.

BY JAMPA DORJE,
AUTHOR OF "A BOOK FROM LUMINOUS PEAK"



KAPALA PRESS
ELLENSBURG
MMXVII

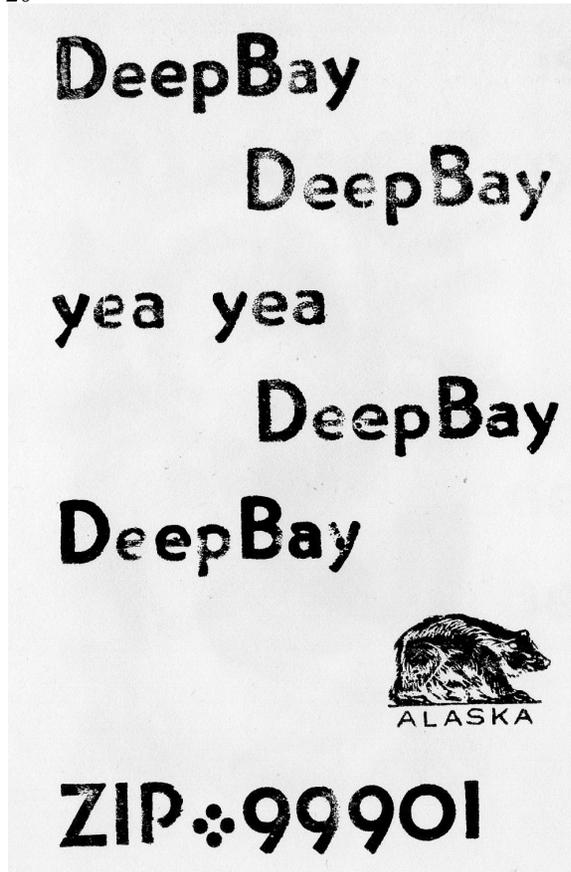
For Cheri & Theo

Photo of Cheri and Rychard (soon after arrival at Rollog Cabin, in 1969) probably shot by Al or Mimi Kotlorov.

Deep Bay; or Encounters in the Woods is a part of
Deep Bay: Works & Days, dPress, Sebastopol, 2003.



www.kapala.press.net
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



Before we moved out to Deep Bay, I asked at the Fish and Game Department whether I needed a permit to hunt all year. The official told me there was no such permit,—that in Alaska, if you lived in the woods, there was no law preventing you from keeping food on the table. A kind of law of the wilderness. The same with fishing,—but to show my good faith, I bought a fishing license as a gesture to the law of survival.

The move to the cabin came quite suddenly. I had been working at the Ketchikan Daily News doing layout, shooting plates, and assisting on the web press. On Thursdays, I got off early to write Waterfront News, my own column. I was glad to work indoors through the winter in Alaska, but I also enjoyed getting out to see what was happening beyond the back shop.

Walking past Wini's Beachcomber, I spied a book in the window by Bradford Angiers, entitled *How to Live in the Woods on \$10 a Week*. Angiers lived in British Columbia, a part of the same eco-zone as Ketchikan. Ketchikan is a small city at the tip of the Alaskan panhandle, on the island of Revillagigedo. The island is long and narrow. "Ketchikan" is a Tlingit word, meaning "spread of the eagle's wings," which is a fitting emblem for my craving to be carried beyond civilized life.

In his book, Angiers discusses the land and the supplies necessary for survival. The basic idea is to find a place where it doesn't cost anything to live and to survive from nature. I inquired around town about abandoned cabins. The cabins I looked at were in need of major repairs, but my grocer, Mr. Rollog,



didn't get many visitors or have much in the way of entertainment,—and watching them scurrying about seemed like fun. I told them I was sorry that my enjoyment nearly got them stranded. They laughed and thanked me for my help and Cheri for her donuts, but they were curious about why we were living so far from the nearest road.

I told them that we had deliberately come to the woods, and that perhaps the idea of getting in touch with Nature to find oneself is a fruitcake idea, but in desperation one attempts such things. I mentioned Thoreau, who had pointed out, in *Walden Pond*, that there are only three essential requirements,—food, clothing, and shelter. We were discovering that our material needs could be simply met, and we hoped to reveal this to an expanding circle (friends, town, city, state, country, world) that it could be done, giving them inspiration to do the same. We parted friends, no harm done, their mission accomplished. I had only repelled the Demon Establishment in my domain for half an hour.

While they were looking in the undergrowth, the tide changed. A fourteen foot tide exposes a lot of beach when it goes out, and the spot where the surveyors had anchored their boat was above an outcrop of rock that was underwater at high tide. I pulled on my rain parka and boots and went into the muskeg to tell them their boat was going to be high-centered if they didn't come back and get it away from the rocks. By the time we returned, the boat was listing to starboard on a large, flat rock, so we got in my dinghy and rowed over to it. After we tied their boat up to my dock, I showed them the survey marker surrounded by ferns near an enormous cedar tree. Given the technology at the time the first stake was placed, during the Depression Era, it wasn't far from the location of the new marker.

I invited them in for coffee and some of Cheri's fresh baked donuts, and we talked awhile. I was asked why I didn't tell them where the marker was, and I told them we

said he had one in Deep Bay, a cove off Moser Bay, about twenty miles by boat from town, that was in good shape. He said he would be happy for us to live there if we maintained it and protected it from vandals. I arranged to have a bush pilot fly me out to take a look.

The place was damp and smelled musty. The stovepipe was rusted, and there was a lot of snow on the roof. The two oil drums that were jerrybuilt to the Yukon stove were half full. There were utensils in a drawer. There were mattresses and blankets, pots and pans, a pressure cooker, tools. The cabin was on pilings along the edge of shore. 20 feet by 40 feet with 10 feet at the end that had been turned into a workshop. The previous occupant had been a pack rat. Whenever I needed some wire or nails, a bolt or a hinge, I could find it in one of his caches.

Friends helped us move the middle of February, during a hiatus in the snowfalls. The sky was clear and the air, cold and crisp. With a 17 foot high tide it was easy to unload

at the front door of the cabin on the deck. Amazing how quickly the elements became the main factor determining what we could and couldn't do.

Everyone pitched in settling things indoors. I cleared a patch of snow off the roof and set up a new stovepipe. The children whimpered, but Al quickly built a fire, and soon an area around the stove was warmed. We stood there and drank coffee from a thermos and had a picnic of Mimi's sandwiches before our friends headed back to town. There were fond farewells, but once their boat was around the bend in the bay, the silence was ominous.

The trickle of water. The hoot of a bird. Mauve shadows from the sunset. The tide laps the rocks. Huge stars



This drawing of lines through the forest, mapping the territory, gave me the chills. A year earlier, I had been in Berkeley working for the Berkeley Barb, reporting on students trying to stop the first troop trains that were taking recruits to basic training in preparation for their eventual deployment in Vietnam. I looked at the railroad tracks and realized the weird feng shui of towns that had been built off those lines;—here were the extensions of the same Euclidian lines, forming a grid from the North Pole to the South Pole, from Deep Bay to the Moon.

A rain forest, and the undergrowth was almost impenetrable. Average rainfall, 154 inches, leaving maybe thirty clear days,—and this was one of those days, a blue-sky day, and I could see to infinity. The two government surveyors separated. One went one way, right past the stake, and the other circled around and nearly stepped on it. Cheri asked me, “Aren't you going to tell them where it is?” I said, “I'll tell them if they ask, but until then, I'm going to let them look.”

tide, enough to float a forty-footer off an abandoned logging rig. Tied on and rowed it to the cabin. Took a break for coffee. Read a few chapters of Thomas à Kempis.

Dedicated to a spiritual life, the teachings and disciplines are obvious and traditional. The problem was in the implementation. Wood and water, water and wood, would you believe wood and water? The meaning is subtle. I felt I had only scratched the surface.

An abundance of bugs and migrating fowl signaled spring. Two U.S. Geodetic surveyors came in their speedboat to chart the wilderness with a laser on a tripod. They moored their boat just off the deck of our cabin, and I remembered that Thoreau had a job as a surveyor. I knew they were looking for a brass stake, but I played dumb, wondering how far off the mark they would be. Theo and I stood on our deck and watched them hack their way into the deep entanglement of Tongass National Forest.

emerge from the darkness. The glow of embers from the fire. Eerie shadows dance on the ceiling from the flickering lamp. Primeval recollections. Aloneness, not loneliness,—the feeling of being out of the loop, off the grid. Solitude and a realization that I had left the city to get the Man off my back, and ironically, by using the system to free myself, I was the Man.

Cheri and I cuddled together with our sourdough starter in a crock tucked in next to our feet at the end of the bed. There was ice on the inside of the wall. The fire was stoked and crackled, and we were just dozing off when there was a fast-moving, scraping sound above us. Cheri grabbed me with both arms. “Is it an avalanche?” Silence. Then,—a enormous splash along the side of the cabin and the heavy thump of a wave hitting the wall. A pool of water was fast forming on the floor. “No,” I said in my best calming voice, “I think it’s a tidal wave.”

The heat from the stove had melted the snow pack on the

roof, and a section had slid into the water along side of the cabin. We lay there and trembled from the adrenaline. I don't know any secrets about life. I try to look at life accurately and soberly. The fact that we were there, alone, changed nothing. A New World was before us,—and I knew that, even when we hold each other knowing we are alone, we share this aloneness together.

I got the oil stove to function by taking the line off the Yukon stove and attaching it to the other carburetor. I cut up some beached timbers into blocks and strung them together so I could row them to the woodshed at high tide. The dinghy I found on the dock needed repairs, but I found a sheet of marine plywood to make a new bottom, and with some tar and a few dabs of paint I soon had it ship shape.

Our first mishap came when the weather warmed and we decided to air things out. Opening the doors of the cabin, front and back, to create circulation, I stoked up the fire,

men of strong will. We might have understood each other but failed, and the moment to be friends had passed. I thought,—neighbor, my nemesis, you follow me everywhere, and I can see the War, eternally inside of me.

The weekend was over. The traffic on the bay slowed to a halt. Things were quiet. I consoled myself that being alone is one of the few things I could have totally to myself.



Whitecaps in the cove, cedar bending in the gale, gulls motionless. February,—a windy month. We made a mixture of vinegar, cloves, onion, garlic, salt, sugar, and mustard to make sauerbraten. Put it and a venison roast in a stoneware crock to marinate. Awoke to a fourteen-foot

Well, not everyone. One morning, a boat pulled up, and a guy asked me if he could use my dock to fix his engine. “Sure, no problem.” I went inside to make some fresh coffee, when I heard a shot,—and when I looked out the window I saw a widening pool of blood on the water.

I shouted, “What do you think you’re doing?”

“Shot a seal,” he replied.

“Why don’t you have numbers on your boat?”

“Wouldn’t you like to know?”

“I guess I do.”

He told me he was a seal hunter. I asked him how he would like it if, the next time I was in town, I shot his dog in his front yard. He became apologetic and asked if I wanted some of the meat. I had my handgun tucked in my belt against my back,—but I went back inside the cabin, sensing an escalating situation.

I looked out the window and viewed the chasm between

but I underestimated how hot the stovepipe could get, and soon smoke was pouring from the attic. Smoke in her eyes, Cheri grabbed the fire extinguisher and managed to spray foam into the kitchen. I pulled off the metal around the stovepipe that revealed smoldering mattresses and newspaper insulation. No flames, only smoke, but, to be on the safe side, I grabbed two buckets of salt water used to flush the toilet, put my bandana over my nose, and walked along the rafters to douse the fire from above. I nearly asphyxiated myself in the process. After the smoke cleared, I looked at the objects in the room, the sink, the table, the chairs, now that everything had been saved from fire, and everything seem unique and precious.

Birds and beasts, great and small. Sea otter and seal, beaver, bear, and Sitka black-tailed deer. Woodpecker, thrush, starling, cormorant, raven, and owl. Seagulls and more seagulls. Once, I saw an Emperor Swan. And eagles,—what an awesome presence. Theo had learned to pee between the boards on the fenced part of the deck in

front of the cabin. I encouraged this because it cut down on the number of diapers I had to wash. He was relieving himself, and I looked up and counted fifteen eagles circling overhead. I quickly shooed him indoors before one plucked his little white buns up to its aerie.

Sort of unreal, this tug of life and death. I had eaten my lunch by the beaver pond. I had encountered the black bear that frequented the berry bushes behind our cabin. I had kept a low profile, but he caught my scent and moved into the shadows. I smoked a joint and listened to two ravens discuss the weather. I had come as far as the hemlock snag by the river, maybe three miles inland. Beyond, for me, was unexplored territory.

Coming up the incline of a hill, the sun broke through the drizzle. A buck appeared in silhouette. I got off a shot with the gun half way to my shoulder, and the deer spun around the crest of the hill. I heard his hooves clatter on a bit of rock, and then there was silence. I moved quickly

could catch a boatload. Fortunately, the area was off limits to commercial fishing, so the sport fishermen had it to themselves.

I built a smoker out of a couple of oil drums, one with racks and the other for the fire, hooked together with a length of stovepipe. Some fish I hard-smoked and wrapped in waxed paper and stored. Some fish I light-smoked, so we could feast right away. Like all good things, too much is much too much. Salmon is rich meat, and after awhile, we again needed a change.

A boat in the bay, fishing for herring,—I rowed over, and the fishermen gave me a cardboard box full of fish as a friendly gesture. Another day, I was sitting on the deck smoking a Gauloises and drinking an espresso, when Ron Arnce and some of his band dressed in bearskins with bear claw necklaces, bearded and looking like Vikings, pulled up in their riverboat and handed me a huge slab of bear meat. Everybody was looking out for each other.

ning, a pressure cooker, jars and lids. We set the cooker on the Coleman stove and brought it to pressure. We cut the venison into chunks and filled all the jars we had. The rest we cut into strips for jerky. We feasted on the ribs, and put the jars away for a time when venison might be scarce. I was thinking, it's happening;—we are living off the land.

If, on any given day, the fishing was poor or the deer were more clever than me, I would return to the clam bed. We ate clams steamed, fried, and stewed. I think it was clam burgers that finally threw me off clams.

My favorite spot to fish was down a long inlet near a fresh water lake, a place known as “the rat hole.” During a short interval at high tide, the water coming down from the lake would reverse, and a boat could get into the lake. At the end of the inlet leading to the stream was an area thirty feet in diameter, which became a whirlpool during this augmentation of the lake. Fish would be trapped there, and if you kept your speed up and stayed in a gyre, you

around the edge of a cliff in pursuit. Stopping to listen, I saw a blur. I turned and was knocked off my feet. The buck scrambled a few yards and fell. There was a gaping shoulder wound. I was at his throat with my knife in a flash. Then, it was over, except for the handling of the meat. I removed the entrails, careful not to break the bladder. I left the head on a log. I cut the skin between the tendons on the back legs above the joints and dislocated the forelegs and poked them through the tendons, making a kind of knapsack out of the carcass.

Now, which way was home? I had gotten myself turned around in all the excitement. Just fog and tall trees whichever way I turned, none of it seemed familiar. I tried to sort it out...Let's see...I came over this hill and around to here, and I turned and went over there, and then I knelt and backed up and turned and sat down and adjusted my gear and got up, reflecting that, in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the Universe says, “I am the Eater of the eater of food.”

Beyond the forest, perhaps, the world had stopped. Here there was an excess of noisy quiet. I looked into the stony face that might annihilate me. I figured if I could find the river, I would be all right, otherwise I could wander in the forest until I became exhausted. I climbed the hill and looked for a mark. In the distance,—some rock and a fallen tree, which seemed familiar, and an enormous cedar. I walked toward the cedar to see if I could get my bearings. From there I could hear the sound of the river,—but now it was getting dark, and since I was covered in blood and carrying a freshly killed deer, I worried about wolves.



Finding the river was one thing and following it, another. I felt small in the vastness of the forest, smallness I knew I

would feel forever if I survived. Panic tingled at the threshold of every step. I knew I must keep moving;—courage would follow. Battling my way through a field of devil's club, I stepped into a soggy muskeg up to my knees. I was about to hang the deer on a tree limb, when I spied the snag I used as a jumping off place.

I climbed a mossy slope to the trailhead just as darkness arrived. I was resting under the snag, catching my breath, when I heard a shout and saw the beam of a flashlight. Then, Dale was embracing me;—a friend had come to visit. Cheri was worried and had sent him with a bag of munchies. I gobbled them up as fast as I could. He told me he had put some candle ends in the bag in case we needed to start a fire, but by then they were gone, consumed in my hunger,—all one taste.

The weather suddenly warming from a Chinook wind made it necessary to process the venison I had hung in the woodshed. We had all the equipment necessary for can-

