

North to Alaska

By Fleataxi

Chapter 1 - Bad News

When Susan Williams came home from the doctor, her husband Roy Williams took one look at her and said, “You look like you’ve seen a ghost! Are you OK?”

Susan broke down and cried, “Roy - the doctor said I have terminal Ovarian Cancer, and I have 2-3 months left to live!”

Roy rushed over to Susan, caught her to keep her from falling to the floor, and tried to inject some levity to the situation, “It’s Not April, Dear!” She said, “Unfortunately it’s No Joke!” With that, they both broke down and cried.

A couple of days later, during a follow-up visit to the Oncologist, Dr. Jones gave them the “really bad news” that her type of ovarian cancer was very aggressive, and very far along - that there was nothing medical science could do for her. Susan asked Roy to leave the room for a minute, and Roy walked over to the Chapel to pray. She found him half an hour later, still on his knees. “Let’s go home dear; the doctors can’t do a thing for me now!”

Later that week, the Williams sold the house and bought a Class A motor home. Roy hitched his boat to the back, and they took off to spend what little time they had together.

First, they drove to California to say goodbye to her sons, but aside from a brief visit, they were too busy with their careers and families to really care what was happening to their mother, so the Williams packed up and hit the road. They spent a week at Yosemite, another at Yellowstone, then the Grand Tetons and Mt. Rushmore. Then they went fishing in the Great Lakes, and other popular fishing sites. They were having the times of their lives.

After a few months, Roy noticed that Sue’s pain was getting worse and worse. One night, they spent the whole night holding each other and talking. In the morning, when Roy noticed Sue wasn’t breathing, he panicked and checked her pulse. Finding none, he laid down crying.

He arranged for Sue to be buried in Nebraska next to her parents. After the funeral, he was really depressed, and the thought of just traveling around with nothing else to do didn’t help. Finally, he opened one of his hunting magazines, and saw an ad for fly-in hunting trips to Central Alaska to hunt Caribou. This sounded interesting, so he called up the guy and spoke to him for several hours. After talking with him, he realized three things: 1) He could easily afford it, 2) He wasn’t getting any younger, and 3) there was nothing holding him there anymore. He logged onto the Internet, and browsed several of his favorite sites. He downloaded and printed lists of recommended gear to take hunting in remote Alaska for that

season, as well as the guide's recommendations that he pack some winter gear just in case, and pack it all in waterproof duffle bags.

This also gave him the chance to do something he never got the chance to do before - order a set of custom knives from a knife maker he'd kept in touch with over the years. He called up his buddy, explained what he wanted, where he was going, and how much he could afford. His friend said he could have the knives he wanted ready in 90 days. Roy called the guide back, and booked a hunt for the next spring - 5 months away. Roy then took the time to get in shape, and walk more. He finally gave up cigarettes, and cut back on his drinking. By the time he was ready to go, he was in pretty good shape for a 50-yr old retired Machinist.

Roy inventoried all his gear, replacing what needed to be replaced, and repaired the rest. He then bought six waterproof duffle bags for his gear, and a Pelican case for his camera, rifle, and handgun. He bought a .44 magnum revolver since the guide said he might need it to shoot a grizzly that was horning in on his kill. He sent his 7mm Magnum rifle to a gunsmith to have it thoroughly checked out, and mount a Leupold scope on it. He got his knives back from the knife builder, and set them on the coffee table of his motor home to check them out. His friend had built what he called his Alaskan Combo, a 12" Frontier Bowie and an interesting variation on a combo hatchet and Ulu blade. Both were made from ATS-34 stainless steel that had been Titanium Nitride coated to a smoky black color that prevented rust and Rockwell Tested over 60, and had black canvas micarta scales. The guard on the Bowie had a regular and Phillips blade on the ends, and a hardened hammer pommel all done in black TiN. The Ulu/Hatchet that he designed was also made out of ATS-34 and Titanium Nitride coated, but it also had 2 finger holes behind the Ulu head to allow the user to choke way up, and use the blade as a Skinner. The back of the Ulu head had a hammer pommel like the old Frontier Hawks. These blades fit easily into a Kydex sheath made by Sharp Squirrel that carried a pouch with a Duafold diamond sharpening stone, a ferrochromium striker rod, 35mm fishing kit, 35mm film can full of PJ saturated cotton balls, and a small bottle of Polar Pure.

All through the winter, Roy planned for his trip, bought the necessary gear, and read as much as he could about the region. During this time, he constructed an emergency fanny pack sized kit that would never leave his side except to go to the outhouse, because he read somewhere that if you were more than 3 steps away from your gear in Alaska, it was good as gone. He even printed up a list of gear in his fanny pack to help him remember, and he practiced using the components on his daily hikes.

Fanny Pack Kit list:

Custom AK Knife Combo (12 inch Bowie w/ micarta scales, stainless guard, and hammer pommel. Made out of ATS-34 and TiN coated smoky black. Modified Ulu knife (Ulu Blade and hammer head on reverse with conventional handle and 2 finger holes w/ micarta scales.)

DMT Duafold Sharpener (Med/Fine)

Gerber Multi-tool Model 600 w/ replaceable saw, 3 extra blades

SAK/MFS/Hot Spark/Scripto Butane Lighter/P-38, Cotton Balls/PJ Tinder

Mini-FAK/Mini-Mag AA/LED Keychain light

35mm film can fishing kit, Snare Wire

Military Canteen/Cup/Stove/WP tablets/Hexamine Tabs

35mm cans of Salt & Pepper, 3 tea bags, 6 Lipton Chicken Noodle soup pouches

Watch Cap & Gloves, 3 Disposable Hand Warmers

Compass & waterproofed Map. Signaling Mirror, 3 Lightsticks, Fox-40 Whistle

100 ft Paracord

1 Survival Straw

2 pr Polypro Socks & 1pr Longjohns

3 High-protein energy bars, bag of hard candy

3 large contractor-grade trash bags

2 Mylar blankets.

Deck of Survival Cards

Favorite Bible verses on laminated 3x5 index cards.

Timex windup watch, flint & striker, ranger compass and neck knife in a pouch on beaded neck chain

He was going to wear:

Polypro longjohns and socks

heavy denim levis

wool hiking socks

over-the-ankle sneaker-boots

flannel shirt

wool sweater

3-season windbreaker with hood w/ lightweight ski gloves in pockets

As the day of his trip drew near, he called his sons, but didn't have a lot to say - told them about the trip, but forgot to tell them the details.

He parked his Motor home in Washington near SeaTac, paid for 1 year in advance, and boarded the flight to Alaska. When he got to the terminal in AK, his bags were waiting for him inside the door of the terminal with a skycap to help him load it on the bush plane that was going to take him to the interior of the state and his hunting site. He walked up to the skycap, who

greeted him warmly, and they walked out to the bush plane. As they were loading the plane, Roy had the skycap stop for a minute, opened one of his duffle bags, and got out his fanny pack with the canteen and custom knives. The skycap commented about how nice his knives looked as Roy clipped the fanny pack to his waist, then turned the bag around front so he could sit comfortably. He shook the hand of the pilot/guide and told him how he was looking forward to this trip, and it was nice to finally meet him. The pilot told Roy they were burning daylight, and the camp was almost 4 hours by air from the airport, which was almost the round-trip limits of the airplane. As he looked down through the window, he noticed the plane had some big floats, as well as wheels. The pilot told Roy they were going to land on a big lake, and beach the plane near their campsite.

With that, the pilot finished his pre-flight checks, and started the single engine, then got clearance to take off.

Chapter 2: The Plane Trip

Roy was a little uneasy during the flight, since this bush pilot seemed a little too carefree and sloppy for his tastes, he hoped he was a better guide than pilot. The pilot kept talking like a tour guide during the flight, and after a few hours, told Roy they were just passing Denali on their right. Roy looked out the window, and all he could see were clouds. Roy got worried, since most of the private pilots he knew avoided weather like the plague. This guy was flying right through some seriously dark clouds. All of a sudden, the pilot banked the plane away from the mountain - Roy figured it was the first smart thing he'd done all day. They kept flying north into Central Alaska, where his guide said the best caribou hunting was. After about another hour, the pilot started to get nervous, like something was wrong. Roy didn't say anything. He didn't want to make matters worse. By now, the pilot was looking around like mad out the windows at the ground. All of a sudden, the plane went into a hard left bank and dropped like a stone.

Roy woke up all of a sudden - it was cold, dark, and wet! WET? In an instant, Roy realized he was IN the plane, and it was underwater and sinking fast! He glanced over quickly at the pilot, but one look told Roy the pilot was dead. Meanwhile, the cabin was quickly filling with icy cold water, and plunging to the bottom of the lake. Roy fought like a madman with the door, and finally it opened. For some reason, his seatbelt wasn't hooked, and he fought clear of the sinking wreck. Roy saw bubbles headed to the surface, and decided to follow them before he passed out. He fought for the surface, and reached it just as he ran out of air.

As he gasped for air, Roy floated on the surface for a minute. He remembered he was COLD, and has to get warm and dry ASAP, or this would be the shortest trip he'd ever taken. For a few seconds, he thought of his dead wife and all the good times they had, and how much he missed her, and was tempted not to fight it. Somehow, he found the will to live, and started swimming for the shore. He found the going tough with all his clothes on, but knew he might need them later if he got out of the water. Finally, after what seemed an eternity, but was only a matter of minutes, Roy's feet touched the bottom, and he proceeded to crawl out of the water, and onto the shore. Once he was totally out of the water, he suddenly felt MUCH colder, and realized that a slight breeze was causing major wind chill since he was wet with ice water.

If he didn't start a fire in a few minutes, he'll be dead. That thought motivated him to move higher on the beach and grab some wood that was lying around. He opened his fanny pack, and found the contents were dry despite his swim in the icy lake since he remembered to pack all his stuff in Ziploc bags. He pulled out a butane lighter, and a film can full of petroleum jelly saturated cotton balls. Even with his fingers numb and his body shivering from cold, he managed to shred one of the balls into a pile of fluff, and put it at the base of his fire. After saying a quick prayer, he lit the lighter, and it lit the first time. Carefully, he lit the corner of the cotton ball tinder, and it caught. He watched the flames, and gradually added bigger and bigger sticks to the pile, until he has a nice sized fire. He put everything back in his fanny pack, and opened another compartment, took out a Mylar emergency blanket, and put on the gloves in his

jacket. After a while, he stopped shivering enough to make some tea. He took his canteen out of the case, and removed the canteen cup. He carefully set some rocks near the fire, poured some water into the canteen cup, and set it on the rocks to get hot. He checked it every few minutes, and when it was hot enough, put a tea bag into the water. After it had flavored the water, he put it back in a small Ziploc to use it again later. He sat there, and drank his tea, watching the sun go down on the horizon, but it never quite set. He remembered that he is far enough North that the sun never really sets during the summer.

Once he was warmed up, He laid down and went to sleep.

Chapter 3: LOST!

When Roy awoke, he looked at his watch, and realized that he'd been asleep almost 10 hours - not bad for lying on rocky dirt. He opened his kit, and took out a piece of peppermint, added some more water to his cup, and set it next to what was left of his fire. He added twigs to the coals, and coaxed the coals back to flames. While his beverage was getting hot, he took inventory of his surroundings and gear. Feeling all over, he didn't feel injured in any way, and he had all his clothes on. Next, he opened his fanny pack, pulled out the inventory list, and checked it against the contents. Everything was there, including the custom knife set with the Duafold sharpener attached to the web belt of his fanny pack. He was thankful he got the sheath made out of Kydex instead of leather like his buddy the knife maker wanted. If his sheath had been made of leather, the blades could have been dislodged during his fight to the surface of the lake.

Even though he had a compass and a map, none of the landmarks were familiar to him. Then he realized the reason the pilot kept looking around - he must have drifted off course and got lost in the clouds. He remembered what the guide/pilot told him a couple of weeks ago - "stay with the plane for 10 days. If you're not found in ten days, you're probably on your own." He got up, and took a better look around, but it was still overcast, and he couldn't see more than a few miles in each direction. He hoped to see Denali, because if he knew where Denali was, he would have a better idea where he was, since they passed it on the right on the way up from Anchorage, they had to be Northwest of Denali, but how far? He knew Fairbanks was to the Southeast, but there were some serious mountains in the way. Roy sat down again and went over his priorities.

He needed to make signals to help the aircraft see him

He needed to keep a fire burning 24 hours a day.

He needed to build a shelter

He needed to get some food

First things first. He took his Bowie and walked over to a green tree, and cut down several branches to make a smoky fire if a plane showed up. He stacked the wood next to the fire on the upwind side so it didn't go up prematurely. Then he walked further into the woods, looking for downed trees for firewood. After making several trips, he stacked up a large pile. While he brought in firewood, he found several long branches that would make a good frame for a shelter. He took them, and arranged them in a triangle, then stuck a forked branch in the ground to hold them up, then he laid an opened trash bag over the branches and lashed it to the branches using several short pieces of Paracord. Then he took some branches with leaves and stuck them in the ground so they lay over the plastic until he'd formed a thick layer of branches over the plastic. He figured this shelter would hold up for a while, and would be quite warm with a reflector fire in front of it. Next, he built a bigger fire ring with a reflector of green logs to push the heat back at the shelter.

When he had that task accomplished, Roy's rumbling stomach reminded him there was one more item on the list. He took the mini fishing kit out of his fanny pack, and started walking along the lake, looking for a spot that was likely to hold fish. He tied a 1/8oz lead headed jig with a plastic curly tail grub lure to his 10/50 Spyderwire line, spun the weight a couple of times, then let the line go. About 30-50 ft of line shot off and the line plopped into the water. No sooner had it hit bottom, then Roy felt a tug on his line. Wrapping his hand around the line, he tugged back, then the fight was on. About 5 minutes later, he landed a small trout. Throwing it on the bank, Roy tossed the line into the water again, and caught another fish. He kept this up until he caught 5 fish. He cleaned the fish at the water's edge using the blade of his SAK to cut the fish open. He saved all the entrails for bait, figuring he could catch a bigger fish with fish guts.

He took the cleaned fish back to his campsite, and placed 2 fish across a forked stick, with other little green sticks to hold it. He stuck the bottom of the stick into the ground in front of the fire, and turned it every 15 minutes. About 1 hour later, breakfast was served. While the other fish were cooking, he took the other 3 and butterflied them on sticks so that they would dry in the smoke of the fire. He figured the fish would be well smoked and dried by dinner.

After he ate, Roy cleaned up the mess, and policed his campsite - he didn't want any bears sniffing around since he didn't have a gun. He suddenly remembered he was lost, and kicked himself for not remembering to blow the whistle and flash his mirror - so he decided that NOW would be the best time to start. He took his signaling mirror and whistle out of his fanny pack, zipped it closed again, stuck the whistle in his mouth, his fingers in his ears, and blew as loudly as he could three times in a row, waited 30 seconds, and repeated 3 times. "Oh Well, guess I just scared every Caribou in the Neighborhood - they might stop running when they hit the Canadian border!" He picked up the signal mirror, and started flashing all around him with the mirror. After about 10 minutes, he realized "this is pointless - I could do this forever, but I need to do other stuff to still be alive if anyone shows up." So, he set a schedule - he looked down at his watch, and it was still running. He was amazed it was still running, and figured the Casio ads were right after all. He reached into his bag, removed the neck pouch from the bag. He set the Timex windup to the correct time, wound the spring, and set it back in his neck pouch. He then set his Casio watch for a 3-hour repeating reminder alarm, thinking the extra battery use should be ok since he just replaced the battery before he left, and bought the freshest battery in the store.

He continued fishing and exploring for 3 days. On the morning of the 4th day, when Roy woke up, he saw a bright yellow object on the lake. Quickly, he ran to the water's edge, and it looked like one of his bags - but Which One? Several of them were full of junk that wouldn't help him survive, but a couple of them had essential gear. Looking around, he spotted a large driftwood log that he could manhandle into the water - he couldn't risk hypothermia and the bag was too far out to swim there and back. He decided it was worth the risk, and manhandled the log into the water, lay on it like a surfboard, and paddled out to the bag. It was still floating when he got there, so he took the bag and snagged the handle over the front of his log. He carefully paddled

back to the shore - it took longer this time since he decided to hang onto the bag with one hand. Finally, he got the bag ashore, dragged it over to his campsite, and wrapped himself with the Mylar blanket to get warm in front of the fire. He threw a couple more pieces of wood on the fire, and poured some water into his cup. He dropped the used teabag and a peppermint into the water when it was hot enough. The fire and the hot beverage finally stopped him from shivering. Once he was fully warmed up, he opened up his bag, and found that the news could have been better, but the snowmobile suit, the arctic parka, pack boots, 3 pairs of longjohns and Polypro socks, heavy mittens and liner gloves, and long woolen socks would come in really handy if it got cold out in a couple of months.

Chapter 4: Stranded

He stayed by the lake for 10 days, and never heard or saw a plane. He realized that the pilot must have not either filed a flight plan, or been so far off course they were looking in the wrong area. He started searching the woods around the lake by taking a compass bearing and traveling for 1 hour on that bearing. He felt he could find his campsite easily enough by traveling on his back-bearing for 1 hour. He discovered some patches of edible plants and some old rotted trees that had a large supply of bugs he could use as bait. He started setting snares to trap small animals, and managed to capture some squirrels and rabbits. He skinned them, and cooked the meat for dinner with the edible plants he foraged. It wasn't the most appetizing meal he ever ate, but when you're hungry, you're not so picky about what you eat.

He'd completed 2/3 of his survey of this side of the lake when he walked into a clearing about half a mile from the lake and spotted an abandoned trapper's hut. Carefully he opened the door, and shined his flashlight around, not knowing what to expect. By the looks of the cabin, it had been abandoned for a long time. The chinking in the walls needed patching, and the roof needed repairs, but it had a fireplace with a cast iron Dutch oven and some furniture. He wondered what happened to the owner. Since the cabin was in better condition than his shelter, he decided to move in for now. He walked outside, and there was a small stack of wood around the back, and what was left of a small axe - looked like the wood handle had rotted from being left in the weather, and the blade was rusty. He took the wood and the axe blade indoors, walking carefully since he didn't have time to check the floorboards. He made a small fire in the fireplace to check the chimney, and it worked perfectly. He was amazed that the chimney wasn't blocked by bird nests. After he got a nice fire going, Roy started looking around the place more carefully. He almost jumped out of his skin when he saw the old flintlock rifle over the door. He stood on his toes and carefully set the rifle on the table. It was in good shape, but needed a good cleaning. The flintlock action worked fine, but he needed powder and balls. He started going over the cabin inch by inch, when he finally spotted a loose floorboard. He ignored it until he realized it was the only loose floorboard in the cabin. Carefully he lifted the floorboard, and there was a large metal box under the floor. It was heavy and took both hands to lift out. He set it on the table, and the lid was sealed with beeswax. He peeled the wax off the lid with his Gerber Multi-tool, and found a treasure trove including several sealed cans of black powder, a bunch of 1 oz blocks of lead, a bullet mold, cotton for patches, a large can full of lube, some spare flints, a melting pot and ladle, and some miscellaneous parts and tools. He realized with a working flintlock rifle, his chances for survival had almost tripled - he could now hunt big game for meat, fur and tallow. He carefully put all the stuff back in the can, and set it back under the floorboards. He walked outside again, and looked at the roof. The chimney appeared to have some sort of wire mesh over it - well, that explained the lack of nests in the chimney. Evidently, whoever set up this cabin knew what they were doing. He had several hours of daylight left, and decided to move all his stuff to the cabin. He quickly hiked to the lake, filled all his water containers, packed all his stuff, took down the shelter, and salvaged everything he could. He picked up the waterproof duffel, and set off to the cabin. He got back

with an hour to spare, and made rabbit stew for dinner. He slept on the floor that evening, since the bed was broken, and the next morning, started fixing the cabin. He walked out to the lake again, and dug some clay for chinking the walls. He mixed it with some dried leaves and grass, then pressed it into the gaps in the walls. It took him a week to patch the walls, and ate the food his snares were providing. Next, he tackled the roof, which meant he had to make a ladder first, which meant he had to fix the small axe so he could cut down some saplings. He grabbed a suitable piece of wood, sat on the porch, and started whittling. It took him a few days to whittle a suitable handle from the piece of wood. Thinking he might need to cut a lot of wood, he made the handle about 3 ft long. Then he cut the top of the piece of wood so the axe blade would fit, and made a wedge out of a piece of metal in the box that looked like a crude nail. He sharpened the axe with a flat rock outside until he got it close enough to use the Duafold sharpener. Another hour's work with the sharpener had it as sharp as it was going to get. He took the sharpened axe blade, and fitted the handle onto it, then hammered the wedge home with the butt of his Frontier Bowie.

He took it out to the woodpile and tried a few experimental swings at a big log. The new handle seemed to be holding up well. He walked out to a stand of tall straight saplings, and cut down a few, he dragged them back to the front yard. He then wrestled each one against the roof, and set the three of them about a foot apart, with the branches crossing each other. He tied the larger branches together to make steps using the thin branches from the top of the sapling so the main trunks were about a foot apart, and the heaviest parts of the branches formed the steps. He tried his improvised ladder out carefully, found a few weak spots, and reinforced them with more of the thin branches. Now he had a fairly sturdy ladder, so he decided to check the roof from a higher vantage point, and climbed up the ladder. The sod roof was in better shape than it looked, and only needed a couple of pieces of sod replaced. He removed the bad pieces carefully so he wouldn't fall through the roof. He crawled back down to the ground, and found some patches of sod, took his axe, and carefully constructed a small shovel blade out of a large piece of wood by cutting off both sides until the center 1" section remained, then he sharpened the edge of the center section - which left him a foot wide shovel to cut the sod with by hand. He cut the section of sod free, then dug under the sod to separate the root system, and remove the sod as one piece. Next, he carried the sod up the ladder and placed it on the roof. He cut the sod slightly larger than he needed, then dropped the piece into the hole, and took the rest and filled the other holes. Now he needed to water the sod so the roots would grow into each other, so he went back down the ladder, picked a couple of long poles, lashed a couple of crosspieces to it with some more thin branches, and grabbed one of his contractor trash bags. He dragged the whole mess to the lake, and filled the bag full of water, then picked up the poles, and dragged the improvised travois behind him with the contractor trash bag full of water. It wasn't very easy, and he needed to stop several times to catch his breath. He finally reached his cabin shortly before dark, and figured the water wasn't going anywhere, so he washed his hands from the water in the bag, then went inside to eat and sleep.

Next morning, some of the water was gone, but not enough to worry about. He took a couple of large gallon size Ziplocs full of water up to the roof to water the sod. After a couple of dozen

trips, the sod was well watered, good thing too, because he was flat-out tired. He filled his canteen from the trash bag, then washed his hands and face. He took the rest of the day off, and went fishing since he felt like a fish dinner. He took the bag of offal with him, and baited a hook, and tossed it into the lake. After a while, he noticed the line was running out of his hands - Dang, not a good time to take a nap. Quickly, he grabbed what was left of the fishing line, wrapped it around his hand several times, and started to pull the fish in. When he got the fish landed, it looked uglier than his mother-in-law, but figured it was probably a Salmon. It was easily 5 pounds. When he opened it, he realized it must be a pre-spawn female, since it was full of roe. He had another small Ziploc in his pocket, and scooped as much of the eggs into the bag as he could. He got some eggs on his hands, and instead of wasting them, tasted caviar for the first time in his life. It was actually not bad, a little salty, but not bad. He desperately needed salt in his diet, so instead of using it for bait, he decided to eat the rest of it then and there. He took a drink from his canteen when he was finished, and then finished cleaning the fish. He took the fish home, filleted it, browned it in the Dutch oven, and ate it with some greens. He threw what he couldn't finish back in the Dutch oven added some water, and the rest of his greens. It would also make a good dinner as a soup.

Chapter 5: Making Bullets

The next morning, Roy opened the box again, and noticed that one of the cans of black powder was smaller than the others. He guessed it was powder for the pan. He picked up the mold, melting pot and ladle, and went outside, set the stuff down on the porch. He spotted 3 large flat rocks in a circle, and guessed that's where the old trapper melted his lead to pour bullets. He dug a deep pit next to the fire circle, and lined it with mud left over from his chinking project. He left the mud to dry, then a couple of hours later, he took a burning stick from the fireplace, and a small pile of sticks to start a fire in the pit to harden the mud and make it waterproof. He let the fire burn until it was out several hours later, then scooped the ashes out of the pit, making sure that he didn't get the ashes wet. While he was waterproofing the pit, he got another fire going in the fire circle, and soon added his melting pot half full of lead cubes. Next, he poured water in the now cooled pit to cool the bullets after pouring lead. Finally, the lead melted, and he dipped the ladle into the lead, and filled the bullet mold. As soon as the mold was full, he used the butt of his knife to hit the sprue cutter. He opened the mold, and tapped on it with his knife, dropping the bullet hissing into the water. He reset the mold, and made about 7 more balls out of the remaining lead in the pot. He felt 8 balls were enough for now, since he needed to test fire and sight in the rifle. He opened the box again, and took a careful look at the miscellaneous stuff. He had a starter, some jags, a patch & ball puller, a tobacco can full of bear grease to lube the patches, a small tube of gun oil, some flannel patches, a powder measure, some thin leather to hold flints in the jaws, a hard file to sharpen flints, and a powder horn. He examined the ramrod, and it had a notch cut about 2 inches from the end - good thing since Roy didn't know how far to ram the patched ball into the barrel. He stuck the ramrod down the barrel, and it went 1-2 inches past the notch - the gun must be empty, he reasoned. There was still a flint in the flint jaws, so he decided to take it outside and make sure everything still worked. He cocked the hammer, closed the frizzen, pointed the gun in a safe direction, pulled the double trigger, and the hammer fell with a snap, and he could see sparks fly from the flint.

He set up a log end-on 50 yds. away from the cabin as a target, went inside and picked up 2 lead balls, then lubed 2 patches. At this point, he went back outside with the powder and powder horn - he didn't want to be anywhere near a flame or spark when he filled the powder horn with powder. He sat on the porch, opened the can of black powder, and filled the powder horn ½ full. He closed the powder can, poured powder into the powder measure until it was full to the line scribed inside the measure, tipped the barrel of the flintlock straight up, and poured the powder into the barrel. Next, he took a lubed patch and a ball, set it on top of the muzzle, grabbed the short starter to start the ball, then used the ramrod to ram the lubed and patched ball down the barrel until seated to the mark. He opened the frizzen and set the hammer to half-cock to expose the pan, and trickled the pan powder into the pan very carefully until it was half-full. He closed the frizzen, then shouldered the gun. When he was pointed at the target, and was ready to shoot, he reached up and brought the hammer back to full cock. He sighted in the target, squeezed the rear trigger, which set the front trigger. As the target steadied in his sights, he carefully touched the secondary trigger. The gun went off with a roar, the bullet struck the

center of the log, leaving a big hole in the log. He looked at the log, and the hit was dead center, but high. Next, he grabbed another log, and paced off about 100 yds. - about as far as he thought he could hit with a smokepole. He repeated the loading process, took a careful stance, and carefully squeezed the trigger. The gun went off with a roar again, and the log had a nice hole in it. He walked off to examine his hit, and it was dead center, and just a little low. So he figured that load would shoot dead on from 50-100 yds., and a little high from 50 yds. on in.

He took the gun back into the cabin, and cleaned the barrel thoroughly, then ran an oiled patch down the barrel, and cleaned off the lock mechanism. Then he put the gun back up over the door.

Later, he checked his traps, and decided that Squirrel Stew would be nice for dinner, since he'd found some more edible plants during the last couple of days, including cattails and some red berries. He took the carcass of the squirrel home, skinned it, and threw the meat into the Dutch oven with the cattail tubers and other greens. He started to save the skins of the animals he trapped, and carefully dried them to use later.

Chapter 6: Learning to make furniture

By now, Roy was getting tired of sleeping on the floor, and decided to try and make a bed. He walked outside to survey his raw materials, and chose about 6 tall aspens that were about 6 inches around. The axe made short work of felling them, then he started to limb the trees. When he finished later that afternoon, he had a pile of limbs and brush, and 6 long poles. As the sun set, he checked his snares to see what was for dinner, he found a rabbit, and told himself, "I guess this means we're having rabbit for dinner." He took the rabbit inside, skinned and cleaned it, then hung the skin next to the squirrel skin. He added the rabbit meat to the pot with some greens. While his diet was somewhat boring, he wasn't going to starve.

The next morning, he resumed his chopping chores, and chopped down a few more trees, then he cut some vines to tie everything together. He cut 8 6-ft long pieces, and a bunch of 4-ft pieces. He dragged the 6 ft pieces into the cabin, and laid them in a rectangular frame. He took the vines and lashed the corners together, then set some larger logs under the corners to make the bed frame. Once he made the frame, he laid longer poles over the frame, and wove shorter, more flexible branches across them to tie the frame supports together. Next he took some leafy branches, and spread them over the frame support, he took the trash bag that he'd cut open to use for a shelter, and laid it over the boughs. It wasn't the best bed he ever made, but it would do for now.

Chapter 7: Way out there!

The next morning, Roy hiked back to the lake to catch some fish. When he got there, he saw the mountains all around, and realized he COULDN'T see Denali, which should be no more than 30-50 miles South to ESE from his location. He could easily see mountains 30 miles to the east from him. Bad News - he was WAY more north than he thought he was - no wonder why he couldn't recognize anything on his map. He didn't bring any other maps in his fanny pack - the rest were in his duffle bags at the bottom of the lake.

He walked over to his fishing spot, and considered his position while he caught some fish. When he had a big enough stringer, he took the whole mess and a couple of gallons of water back to the cabin. He sat down on the porch to clean the fish and realized there was No Way he was walking out of here toward Denali before the snows closed in, so he figured that if he were going to survive, he would have to winter over. Good news was there was a huge stand of 5-yr old Aspens and other small trees that wouldn't be too hard to fell with the small axe. He thought the old trapper that once owned this cabin did the same thing, and the trees had grown back since he left.

He thought, "OK, I've got wood, water and food as long as the lake doesn't freeze over - I need to kill some Caribou or Moose for the hide to make a blanket, for tallow to make candles and bullet lube, and for meat to make jerky and pemmican. The rest of that week, he fished and trapped, drying and smoking the meat to take with him on the hunt - he didn't know where the Caribou were, but he hoped there should be a couple of good hunting grounds East of him before he got to the mountains that were about 5 miles away as the crow flies. Later that week, he made 20 more balls for his flintlock rifle, filled his powder horn with 22 measures of powder (always carry more powder than shot, he remembered) and took his "possibles bag" that contained everything he'd need to keep the gun working while he was hunting, along with his fanny pack, knives and canteen. When he was finally ready, he set off at sunrise, hiking due East for the whole day, only stopping to drink and chew a bite of jerky. Toward sunset, he found a suitable camping site in a clearing, and set some snares to see what he could catch to extend his larder. He made a quick lean-to out of a contractor's bag, and built a small fire to heat water, and keep warm. When the sun went down, he went to bed since he'd have to be up early and moving at first light.

He heard some noises during the night, but nothing he could recognize as a predator, so he slept peacefully all night. The next morning, he woke up, heated up some water and added a peppermint candy to the water. Then he checked his snares. Three were empty, but 3 had some really fat tree squirrels caught in them. He took the snares down, and skinned the squirrels. Keeping the skin to dry, he roasted the squirrels over his campfire. "Nothing like roasted squirrel for breakfast" Roy mused. Once he was finished with breakfast, he quickly broke camp, packed up his stuff, and headed East to try and find something big enough to help him make it through the winter.

Chapter 8: A Hunting we will go!

As Roy hiked into the rising sun, destiny awaited. If he did not find any moose or caribou within the next 5 miles, he was probably going to die of hypothermia and starvation. Roy's hunting experience paid off since he was walking into the wind, and making no noise. He followed game trails so as not to make noises breaking trail, and he kept attention to his compass to make sure he was still heading East, because if he swung just a little off line without knowing it, he'd never find the cabin, and that would seal his fate even if he found some moose or caribou. As he broke into a clearing, he saw some very large moose feeding in a small lake - more like a depression than a lake. Quietly, he laid all his gear down except his rifle and possibles bag, crouched down, poured a measure of powder from his powder horn into his powder measure, carefully capped his powder horn, poured the powder into his rifle, pulled a ball and a lubricated patch out of his possibles bag, set the patched ball on the muzzle, grabbed the ball starter, and started the ball down the barrel. When the ball was fully started, he took the ram rod, and rammed the ball home, making as little noise as possible. Once the ball was seated, he brought the hammer to half cock and opened the frizzen, exposing the pan. He filled the pan half full of pan powder, and then carefully closed the frizzen - all the while keeping an eye on the moose. Once he had the pan loaded, he took a careful cross-legged seated shooting position, brought the hammer back to full cock, steadied his aim at the bull moose, gently pulled the first trigger, then as his sight picture matched the sight picture when he shot the log, squeezed the second trigger. The rifle went off with a roar, and when the smoke settled, the Bull had charged toward him 5 steps, and died on the ground in the short grass. Quickly reloading his rifle in case he needed a second shot, or a bear showed up, he got up and walked over to the moose. It was obviously dead, and had bled out. It had a huge rack, and he estimated it weighed over 1000 pounds.

Once he was sure he wasn't going to be interrupted, he moved his gear closer to the kill, laid the moose on its side with its head running downhill, and took out his Ulu/hatchet and started skinning and gutting it. It took him the whole day to skin the moose, and once he had the entire skin free, washed it in the pond, and then laid it out to dry. As it was drying, he remembered something he had read about Brain Tanning, and cracked the moose's skull open with his Ulu/hatchet then scooped the brains onto the flesh side of the skin. He added some water to the mix, and spread the mixture evenly over the skin. He thought the smell was bad enough to gag a maggot, but somehow Roy managed not to get sick.

At that point it started to get dark, so he made camp about 20 yards away from the kill, so any predator would go to the kill, and not him. He rinsed off his hands in the pond, then started a fire, and settled in for the night, chewing on some squirrel jerky. The next morning, when the mixture had thoroughly dried, he rinsed the skin off and laid it out to dry. He then began boning out and sectioning the moose with the Ulu and the Bowie knife. When he was done, he had several piles of meat, a pile of entrails that he wasn't interested in, and the stomach and other parts that he could use. By this time, the skin had dried to a pliable consistency, and he

wrapped the meat and other parts he wanted to use in the skin, and tied the bundle closed with the animal's sinews. Looking around, he spotted some small straight trees, and he cut them down and made a travois to carry the meat home with him. Since it was just him, he thought it would take a lot longer to get home than it did to get there, but it was fairly flat land, and nothing in the way to prevent him from dragging his catch home in one piece.

With that, he broke camp, took a compass heading due west, and retraced his steps homeward. It ended up taking him 3 times as long getting home as it did getting there, but at long last he spotted his cabin through the trees. With that, Roy fell to his knees in Thanksgiving and exhaustion. When he finally regained his strength, he dragged his prize the rest of the way home, and set the load on the porch. He walked in the door carefully, because he didn't know if something had chosen to occupy his cabin while he was gone, but nothing had been disturbed. He walked back out to the porch, picked up the skin off the now much shorter travois, and carried it into the cabin and set it on the table. After he got the rest of the stuff into the cabin, he sat down and took a big drink of water. It was getting cool, so he built a fire in the fireplace, and then finished butchering the moose carcass, cutting the meat into strips to jerk, and separating the tallow. He was still butchering the carcass when the sun went down, so he wrapped the mess back in the hide, took another drink of water, ate a piece of squirrel jerky, and laid down to sleep.

Chapter 9: Moose jerky

He slept better than he had in years - probably due to total exhaustion! The next morning, he got up and continued to butcher the carcass. When he had enough meat to fill his jerky frame, he filled the frame with long slices of moose meat, and set it outside in the sun to dry. He started a smoky fire underneath it to keep the bugs off, and checked it every couple of hours. He continued cutting slices of moose into jerky, and slowly filled up the other frames with meat, and added them to the rack outside. Later, he took the stomachs and intestines out to the lake, and thoroughly cleaned the stomachs and intestines inside and out. When he was through, he washed his hands, and carried the clean stomachs back into the cabin. When he got back to the table, he took the tallow, and stuffed it in the clean intestine and tied off the sections with sinew. When he was done, he had about 6 feet of intestine stuffed full of tallow. He took the rest of the edible organs, and stuffed it into the stomach in case he would need them later. He took the stomach and intestines down to the lake, and using some more sinew, anchored it so it would float in the water, and cool off. He hoped the 40-degree water would act as a refrigerator, and keep the meat from spoiling. When he got back to the cabin, he rotated the racks and added wood to the fire under the racks. He'd learned from experience this was the best way to dry jerky in the wilderness. As a result, he lost very little of the meat to spoilage. He went back into the cabin to finish the rest of the jerky. When he was done, he cracked open the large leg bones, and removed the marrow, and packed that into another section of intestine. He added some fresh moose meat to the intestine, and set it to boiling in the Dutch oven. During his travels, he'd found some wild onions, and added them to the boiling water as well. When he was done, he cleaned the table and the cabin as best as he could, since he didn't want to attract any bears. At this point, he was pretty sure there were no resident bears in the neighborhood, but you never know. With about 3 hours of daylight left, he went down to the lake to get some water, and check on his packages. When he got to the lake, the stomach and intestines looked like they hadn't been touched, and were ice cold. He opened the stomach, took out a piece of liver, left the rest in the stomach, grabbed a couple of gallons of water, and hurried home since it was getting dark. He barely made it home before sunset, and he added the piece of liver to the pot. Next, he took the moose skin, which had dried again, took the plastic off his bed, and laid the skin on it instead. It was almost a perfect fit - just a little larger than the frame. He sniffed the skin, and was surprised it had almost no scent. He folded the plastic back up and put it back in his fanny pack. Meanwhile, dinner appeared to be done, and he sat down to eat out of his canteen cup. The liver was rich in vitamins, and the piece of marrow gave him needed minerals. He left the fireplace burning since it was a cool night, and lay on his new moose skin bed, and went to sleep.

Chapter 10: Making Pemmican

He woke up with the sun, he never remembered getting up so early, or sleeping so soundly when he lived in Civilization, then he realized that 1) he was doing a lot more physical work, and 2) he was going to bed around sunset. He ate a quick breakfast from the pot simmering next to the fireplace. While it wasn't the most appetizing food he ever ate, it was nourishing and filling. With that, Roy thought he might need some variety in his diet during the winter, and then remembered he read somewhere that Native Americans made pemmican with jerky, tallow and dried berries. He had 2 out of the 3 ingredients, and he knew where to get the third. He pulled the map out of his fanny pack, and turned it over to examine the hand-drawn map he drew showing the lake, some local landmarks and various points of interest such as good berry patches, good spots to snare squirrels and other critters, the approximate location of the moose he shot, and most important - the location of his cabin. Since all his meat was in the process of drying, and he didn't have anything else to do today, Roy decided to go berry picking so he could make pemmican. While he was out and about, he'd check out the local plants to see if he could recognize any more edible species. He'd seen tons of wild mushrooms, but since he wasn't an expert, he didn't chance it. When he finished breakfast, he packed up his fanny pack, slung his flintlock rifle over his shoulder, and headed to the lake. When he reached the lake, he turned North, walked a couple of hundred yards to a large rock, and then turned his back to the lake. Consulting his map, he set a compass bearing to the Northeast, and walked about a quarter mile until he came across a big berry patch. This time the berries were good and ripe, and he picked as much as he could carry. There were several varieties of red and blue berries mixed together that he'd recognized and eaten before. He ended up taking about 1/3 of the ripe berries back to his cabin with him. On his walk back to the lake, he picked a few plants that he thought he recognized, and removed the parts that he thought were OK to eat. Next, he stopped at the lake, refilled his canteen and his water containers, caught a couple of fish, cooked and ate lunch next to his old campsite. He picked up a large quantity of tallow, which was now well congealed and cold, and brought it home with him.

He got home shortly before dark and decided to make the pemmican the next day after his jerky had finished drying. The next morning, his jerky was totally dry, and he took it off the frame, laid the plastic on top of the frame, and spread the berries out to dry. While the berries dried, he scouted around for a large rock with a depression in the middle, and another rock with a smooth rounded side. After a few hours of searching, Roy found the ideal rocks, and carried them back to the cabin, and set them on the table. After thoroughly washing both rocks, and drying next to the fireplace, he took his jerky and pulverized it between the rocks. When he had enough pulverized jerky (about 1/3 of his total supply of jerky), he set it aside, and walked to the lake to catch more fish, gather more water, and pull up some cattails. When he got back to the cabin, he added some more green wood to the fire under the berries to keep the flies off, and stirred the berries to evenly dry both sides of the berries. He guessed it would take a couple of more days for the berries to finish drying, so he looked around for a project. He thought about his bed. While it was comfortable, it needed to be better if he was going to winter here. He went

through his fanny pack, looking for a needle to punch holes in the moose hide so he could stretch it over the bed frame when he remembered his SAK included an awl. He took several large pieces of sinew, and stretched them into a long heavy thread. When he was done, he thought it would work to lash the skin over the frame. He punched holes into the edge of the skin every couple of inches, then he took the sinew and started threading it through the holes in the skin, and wrapping it around the frame, pulling it tight. When he was finished, the skin was strongly lashed to the frame. Between the skin and the latticework of branches underneath, the bed behaved like it had a regular mattress. He lay on the newly re-designed bed to test it. The lacing job was plenty strong enough, with no hint that it might fail, so he laid down for a rare nap.

Later that afternoon, Roy got up, stirred the berries drying in the sun, and added some more green wood to the very small fire underneath the drying frame. Judging by how fast they were drying today, the berries would be done tomorrow. Now, Roy was really bored, so he took out the plants he'd gathered, and nibbled a small piece of each, some were OK, others while they were edible, tasted like Sh#t! He guessed he could live without those plants, but noted on his hand-drawn map where he found the good plants. He even found a few plants that should make a good substitute for tea, as long as he could find something to sweeten it up as he was rapidly exhausting his supply of candy. "Maybe I'd find a beehive full of honey?" He thought, and then he remembered he was seriously allergic to bee stings, and didn't have his epi pen. Roy turned the berries again, and when they were dry the next day, he mixed the powdered jerky and the moose fat into a paste, added the dried berries, then packed the whole mess into some moose intestines, and tied it into sections, then he added the pemmican to his drying rack to dry.

Chapter 11: Smokin'

He realized that if he was going to survive the winter, he was going to have to store food, especially meat, and he remembered the smoked venison sausage he ate at his friend Warren's summer barbecues - of course...he'd build a smokehouse - he had the wood and the time. With that, he picked up the small axe, and walked out to the stand of Aspens near his cabin, and selected about 12 6-inch trees that were each over 8ft tall. He thought he'd get 2 4ft poles out of each tree, and he'd need a 6 ft interior height for a hot smoke house, since he had no other way of preserving large quantities of meat, and hot smoking was safer than cold smoking without nitrates. By the end of the day, he'd felled all the trees, and started de-limbing the trees. He put the branches into a pile, so he could use the thicker ones to hang the meat from, and the smaller ones would help thatch the roof. He didn't need an airtight roof, since he wanted the smoke to escape slowly. He'd make the roof fairly weathertight so he wouldn't have to rebuild in every spring. The next morning, Roy resumed his task, which he soon figured out, resembled the Tasks of Hercules - Roy rightly guessed he may have bitten off more than he could chew. OH well - It's not as if he had anything better to do. He picked up his axe, and chopped the trees in half, then notched the trees so when he put them together they would interlock. Next, he gathered a bunch of dry grass and leaves then went down to the lake, to gather up a bunch of mud. Since he needed a bunch of mud, he used the travois that he dragged the moose back to cabin with, and laid the contractor's trash bag on it, and dragged the whole thing down to the lake. Using his wooden shovel, he dug up as much mud as he could carry on the travois, filled up his water containers, added them to the pile, drank his fill of the lake water, then headed back to his cabin. When he finally got back, it was near dark, so he set the travois full of mud down outside, grabbed the water, and went into the cabin to eat some dinner, and go to sleep.

The next morning, he dumped the sticks, leaves and grass on top of the mud, and started mixing with the shovel and his bare hands. Next, he took the thickest logs he'd cut, and laid out a 4ft x 4ft square on the ground about 6 inches high. He then laid a layer of mud onto the logs, making sure not to cover the notches, and only covering the wood in the center and only 1 inch deep. He then laid the cross pieces down, then remembering he needed a doorway, decided to leave the front basically open since the door needed to be almost 36 inches across, and the wall was only 4 feet wide. He just loved this engineering on the fly. This would also save at least 4 trees he'd have to cut down. He could split poles in half lengthwise and weave them together to form a doorway. He thought he could use some leather or something to make a hinge when he needed one, and a couple of pieces of wood and a loop of rope or something else to act as a crude lock. He continued piling logs on top of each other, adding mud chinking between the logs, then adding another course of logs. By the end of the day, he had 5 more courses done, and he was up over 4 feet, Now he took the branches he reserved to hang the meat on, and laid them crosswise inside the smokehouse, about 6 inches apart. He laid 4 branches down, and then stopped, because he needed to comfortably reach the meat in the back without disturbing the meat in the front. Higher up, he would lay sticks all the way across, since he could duck under them and get to the meat in the back. Once he'd finished laying the lower branches inside the

smokehouse, he called it a day - It was getting DARK! He went inside his cabin, washed his hands, sat down to eat dinner, and then fell immediately to bed. The next morning, he got up at sunrise, and looked outside his cabin, and noticed how beautiful his surroundings were. "Man, this is the Life!" Roy thought, "I could just about live here forever!" He thought of Sue, and spent the next hour remembering the good life they had together. He wished his Sons were closer to him, but didn't really feel any anger or bitterness, he thought he wasn't much of a father to them anyway - he was always gone when they were up, running his machine shop. He thought they would understand, but of course they didn't. They'd rather have him than the nice house in the nice neighborhood, and all the things that go along with being well-off.

Roy shook off his melancholy, and decided to get back to work. He started laying logs along the walls, chinking the gaps between them with mud, and laying more branches inside to hang meat on. Finally he got to the top layer of logs, about a foot beneath the roof, there he laid branches across the entire top of the smokehouse. With a final layer of chinking, he closed up the gaps in the logs, and then went outside to cut more trees. He thought he'd need another 6 to 8 trees to make the roof, and another 6 to make the door. "Man, was this going to be a long day...better get to it - times a wasting as my Dad used to say." Now that Roy had been alone so long, he often talked to himself, just to hear another human voice, and to make sure he didn't lose the ability to speak, just in case someone found him. That was looking less and less likely each day, and it was not something he liked to dwell on.

Roy walked out to his personal forest - as he thought of it, and selected a dozen trees, and an hour later, they were all on the ground, and he started chopping off the limbs of half of them, and leaving the other half's branches on - easier to make a roof with the branches to add support. He de-limbed 6 of them, then split them in half and cut them to fit the door opening. Once he had them cut lengthwise, he laid the remnants across them, then taking some vines and smaller branches, started weaving the logs together, until he had something resembling a 4x4 raft. Then he walked over to the cabin, carefully took down the ladder off the roof, and dragged it over to his new smokehouse. Luckily, it was only 20 ft away, because the ladder was really heavy!

When Roy finally muscled the ladder up to the roof, he said to himself, "That's it! I'm taking the rest of the day off!" He went into the cabin, grabbed his rifle, his possibles bag, and his fanny pack, and headed to the lake. By now he was pretty ripe, and figured a swim would cure two problems at once. First he built a big fire by the lake shore at his old campsite, then he took off his clothes, and went skinny dipping. It wasn't like anyone besides the fish was going to see him anyway. He scrubbed himself as best as he could with some clean aspen branches (he hoped the leaves and stuff might help break up the dirt clods.) After about 5 minutes, he was beginning to turn blue, and headed for the campfire. He heated some water, dropped some herbs and berries he'd found that didn't taste half bad into the steaming mug, and quickly drank it down. Then he wrapped himself in his Mylar blanket, and warmed up the rest of the way. He took his clothes to the water's edge, and cleaned them the best he could with some large round rocks. That done, he took some sticks from his old lean-to, and built a drying rack near

the fire, but upwind to keep any embers or smoke from ruining his clothes. He laid down next to the fire wrapped in his Mylar blanket, and took a nap while his clothes dried. He had a vivid dream of Susan.

“Roy, where are you?”

“I’m right here, Susan! - Where are you?”

I’m here, can’t you see me?”

“Not really - Susan I don’t mean to be rude, but you’re DEAD!”

“I know Roy. I’m in Heaven! It’s beautiful!! Roy, there’s something I’ve got to tell you!”

“What’s that, Susan?”

“Roy, God loves you, but you haven’t been talking to him lately, and you’ve been thinking of killing yourself! Roy, I want you to be with me forever, but you can’t kill yourself - God doesn’t want you to, and neither do I!”

“Susan, that was way in the past - I haven’t felt like that in a while!”

“Roy, just this morning you were thinking about ‘joining me’ weren’t you?”

“Yeah Susan, I never could lie to you. I guess that’s why I never fooled around on you.”

“That and I probably would have killed you!” <laughter>

“Susan, now I know it’s you, I’d remember that laugh anywhere.”

“Roy, we’re just about out of time, just remember I love you, and you need to get right with God if you want to see me again.”

“OK Susan, I promise!”

“Goodbye Roy, See you Later! I love you!!”

“I love you too, Susan”

Roy woke up crying - and remembered his dream. “Susan - I promise honey!!!”

Roy got up a little later, and checked his clothes - they were dry, so he got dressed again.

“God, I’m sorry - I’ve just had a lot on my mind, I promise I’ll talk to you every day from now on! Just one question if you may - Why did you take Susan and leave me? I don’t understand - why am I here? Why did you leave me in the middle of Alaska?” “I guess you just wanted to get my attention - well, you’ve got it!”

He sat there for a few minutes, and didn’t get an answer so he got up and walked down the lake to his fishing hole. He unwrapped his line and put a fresh piece of bait on the hook, then threw the line into the water, and sat down to relax. About 10 minutes later, he felt a nibble on the line. He waited until the fish was well hooked, then grabbed the line. It took him about ½ hour to land the fish, and he opened the fish’s mouth to remove the hook, and saw something glittering in the fish’s mouth, reached in and pulled out a wedding ring. Roy fell down stunned, it looked just like Susan’s wedding ring, but that was impossible, he’d buried Susan with her ring on. Once Roy had recovered from his shock, he took the hook out the salmon’s mouth, and baited the hook to catch another fish. When he had caught a total of 5 fish, he threaded a line through their jaws, and carried them home on a stringer.

Chapter 12: Finishing the smokehouse

Once Roy got home, he gutted and cleaned the salmon, then sliced them into 2 filets, leaving the tails on. Then he scored the fillets crosswise to expose more surface area to the heat to dry faster and then set them on the drying rack. By then, it was getting dark, and he decided to get indoors and sleep. The next morning, he ate breakfast, and started putting the roof together. He laid several split poles over the top of the smokehouse, then he put the other poles that had branches and leaves over that. When the roof was covered with branches, Roy gathered up all the branches he left in a pile and carried them onto the roof, where he wove them together to form an intricate mat of branches and leaves. Once he was finished, he climbed on down, and observed his work from underneath, looking for holes in the roof. Once he patched all the holes, he took the loose debris and scattered it on the roof to fill it in. When he had finished filling in the roof, he laid a small fire in the center of the smokehouse, lit the fire, and when it was burning well, lifted the door into the door frame and lashed it temporarily in place. Then he stepped back to check where the smoke was getting out, and it was leaking out throughout the roof just as he planned. He thought a slow smoldering fire would keep the smokehouse hot enough to smoke the meat without cooking it too fast. He left the door in place, and checked on it every couple of hours to make sure it was burning Ok, and still smoking. Roy went back in the cabin, selected a couple scraps of moose hide, and punched several holes in the edges with the awl on his SAK, then grabbed some sinews to anchor the leather hinges to the smokehouse. He fashioned a loop out of some more sinew, and sharpened a short stick to drive into the door to make a primitive lock to keep the door closed. Using another small sharpened stick, he poked holes in the wall of the smokehouse and threaded the sinew through the holes, and through the holes he punched in the moose leather. Once he had several pieces of leather tied to the wall, he poked matching holes in the door, threaded more sinew through the holes, and tied the leather hinges tightly to the wall and the door. Next he punched another hole on the opposite side of the door, treaded some more sinew through the hole, and tied a loop in it. He measured how far the loop would go over the door, and punched the sharpened stick into the door at an angle, so when the door was closed, the loop of sinew would just reach over the stick, and hold the door closed. Next, he swung the door fully open, and stuck a rock in front of the door to hold it open so the smoke could vent. After the smoke had fully cleared, he went into the smokehouse, and everything looked OK.

He walked into the cabin, picked up some scraps of moose meat and took it into the smokehouse and started hanging the moose meat from the rods that were criss-crossing the smokehouse. After several trips, he had all the moose meat in the smokehouse, and then he built another fire, added some green wood once the fire was burning steadily. The fire immediately started to get smoky, and Roy walked outside, and closed the door. He thought that he did a good job building the smokehouse, and it was too bad Susan wasn't there to see it, but thought she probably was anyway. When he was done, he went back inside, and cleaned up the cabin. When he was done, he went through the pile before he threw anything out just in case something could be re-used, then he thought "Now I'm a recycler." He found a couple of

pieces he thought might be useful, then took the rest of the junk about 100 yds. downwind away from the cabin, and dumped it in a pile. Then he walked to the lake, and washed up. When he was finished, it was starting to get dark, so he headed back to the cabin. He had a pot boiling on the hearth, and scooped some into his canteen cup, and called it dinner. With a start, he remembered he forgot to say grace. Then he tried to remember the last time he had - and realized it was the night Susan died. With a heavy heart, he bowed his head and gave thanks for God's abundance and Grace. When he finished, he was overwhelmed with a sense of peace and contentment, almost like Susan saw and approved.

When he finished dinner, he banked the fire, and went to sleep. He slept soundly and awoke the next morning refreshed.

Chapter 13: Roy vs. The Bear

Roy took inventory of his supplies, and realized if he were to survive the winter - he needed to gather some more berries, and hunt another moose or caribou.

He quickly put his kit together, checked his flintlock, grabbed his possibles bag, and headed out to locate a new berry patch, since the old one was picked over. Berry Season was short, so he thought he'd pick and dry as many berries as he could find, and hunt later after he was done berry picking. Roy walked out to the lake, filled his canteen and drank his fill of the clear cold water. In all this time, Roy had never gotten sick drinking out of the lake, and considered himself lucky - either that, or the lake was relatively free of parasites and bacteria. When he finished drinking, he turned north and walked past his usual turning point for the berry patch, and kept walking along the lake. By now he could recognize berry patches from far off, and spotted one about a quarter mile away from the lake, about 15 minutes walking time further north from his other berry patch. It looked to be full of berries, so Roy decided to investigate further. No sooner had he started picking berries, than a large male bear popped his head up to investigate the noises Roy was making. Roy spotted the bear at the same time the bear spotted him. He remembered what the outfitter had told him when he talked to him about bears. He said most bears bluff, and the first thing you don't want to do is run away - since that makes the bear think you are prey. One thing you do want to do is stand up, make yourself as large as possible, and make a bunch of noise.

Roy stood up tall, yelled at the bear, but this bear wasn't backing down! The bear rose to his full height, and roared his challenge. At this point, Roy knew this bear was serious, and wasn't going to leave him alone. The bear was only 40 yds. away, and there weren't any close tall trees, so he chose his only option to survive - He had to shoot the bear, and hope he died faster than he could cover the ground between them and take a couple of swipes at Roy. Roy shouldered his flintlock rifle, took careful aim, and fired - striking the bear square in the chest. The bear sat down with a woof, but then got back up and charged. Knowing he didn't have time to reload, Roy dropped his rifle, grabbed his frontier Bowie in his left hand, and his Ulu/hatchet in his right, making sure the lanyards of both weapons were around his wrists, just in case he lost his grip. By the time Roy finished, the bear was on him, snarling and swiping with its paws. The bear's first swipe barely missed Roy's face, and the second swipe almost disemboweled him. Feeling the wind from the near miss, Roy answered the second swipe with one of his own, catching the bear's paw on the blade of his Bowie. The bear's paw ripped open and gushed blood as he opened the paw to the bone, and the bear roared even louder in pain. The shock of the blow loosened Roy's grip on the knife, and luckily for Roy, the lanyard held, and he fought for a grip on his knife. Meanwhile, the enraged bear swatted with his good paw at Roy's face. Roy barely deflected the blow with his hatchet, but didn't have time to score a return shot. By now, Roy was wondering "when is this damn bear going to lie down and die? I know I hit him with a good shot - why isn't he dying?" The bear continued swatting and snapping at Roy, but Roy stood his ground, and slowly, the bear appeared to weaken. As the

bear weakened, Roy scored more hits on the bear's paws. Finally, sensing his chance, Roy reversed his grip on the Ulu/hatchet and struck the bear on the head with the hammer pawl, stunning the bear. As the bear fell to the ground, Roy finished it off by slashing through the bear's neck from front to back, severing both jugular veins, and ending the fight.

Roy fell down next to the bear, exhausted to the point of collapse. After a while, Roy got up, poked the bear to make sure it was dead, retrieved his rifle and possibles bag, checked and cleaned the dirt off the rifle, then reloaded it. When he finished reloading it, he sat back down and drank the rest of his canteen, then walked to the lake and drank some more and refilled his canteen. "I guess I can finish the berry picking another day - What a way to get my own bearskin rug!" Roy said to himself "I hope there aren't any more around here!"

Roy walked back to the bear carcass, and with a great effort, rolled it on its back. "Man, you really were a big bear! Well, it was you or me, Mr. Bear, and today I won - but you put up one heck of a fight." After he had rested, Roy started skinning and gutting the bear. When he was finished, he walked to the cabin, grabbed the travois, and walked back to the berry patch, sliding the gutted and skinned carcass onto the travois, and dragged the carcass back to the lake. Roy buried the parts of the bear he couldn't use, and washed the skin in the lake to wash off all the blood and gore. Next he brain tanned the hide. When he was done, he rinsed off his hands, and set to deboning the meat and tallow. Several hours later, he had a pile of bear meat, a pile of tallow, the stomach, intestines, heart, kidneys and liver on the travois resting on the garbage bag that he'd once used as a shelter so many weeks ago. He also kept the major bones for marrow, and the sinew for various projects. With his Gerber tool, he pulled the bear's claws, then he walked to the lake to refill his canteen and water containers and then picked up the travois and started dragging it back to the cabin.

Roy made it back to the cabin just before nightfall, sweating profusely, and thoroughly exhausted. He barely got the load set down, and walked into the cabin when he passed out onto the bed, and slept like he was dead until the sun came up the next morning. Roy woke up ravenously hungry and thirsty, so he decided to eat some pemmican - moose pemmican wasn't too bad - definitely better than those scrawny rabbits he caught. When he was finished, he drank the rest of the water in his canteen, then got up and walked outside his cabin. There on the grass was the bearskin and the bear meat just where he left it. He carried the bear meat into the cabin, laid it on the table, and started slicing it up into strips so he could smoke it. It took almost the whole day to slice up the bear, and as he finished each bunch of meat, he took it out to the smokehouse, and hung the meat up. When he had finished, he started a small fire in the smokehouse, laid some green wood on the fire, and closed the door. He took the stomach, intestines and the skin back to the lake on the travois, and cleaned out the stomach and intestines, then washed the skin. He took the cleaned and washed bear parts back to his cabin, and stretched the bearskin out to dry. He took the tallow, and packed it in the bear's stomach this time, since he wanted to use the intestines for sausage casings.

Chapter 14: Berry Picking - Once More

When Roy got up the next morning - he realized he needed to finish picking berries. Since the bear meat was smoking, and there was nothing pressing to do, he grabbed the contractor's bag and the rifle, his possibles bag and fanny pack, and set off to pick some berries.

This time he was much more careful approaching the berry patch, and made a bunch of noise, yelling and banging stuff to make sure he scared off any bears - he didn't want any more surprises. Once he was sure every animal within a mile knew he was there, he walked into the berry patch and started picking. When he was about 2/3 done, he was looking underneath the bushes to make sure he got all the berries when he spotted this dark shiny rock. "No, It couldn't." Roy said to himself... but he investigated anyway, and it was a large obsidian rock. It must have weighed 5 pounds when he finished digging up the rest of the rock. Roy thought, "This was a very good break - if I can figure out how to build spears and bow and arrows, I can make my powder and shot last a lot longer." He picked up the bag full of berries and slung it over his shoulder, slung his rifle over the opposite shoulder, and picked up the big obsidian rock then he hiked back to the lake. When he reached the lake, he drank his fill, and filled all his water containers. Now that he was heavily weighed down, he trudged back to the cabin with his load. Setting everything on the porch, he opened the door, and walked into the cabin. Everything was as he left it, but he noticed some curious dog-like prints out in front of his cabin. Thinking for a while, he figured it was probably a lone wolf, since a pack would leave more tracks, and would probably have managed to get into the smokehouse, where the bulk of the paw prints were. Roy grew up with dogs as a kid, and couldn't bring himself to think of trapping or killing the wolf, but he might be able to tame it enough that it would hang around the cabin and keep him company. It was a lone wolf, so there wasn't much danger of it trying to kill him. After he set everything inside the cabin, and locking the door, he walked to the lake, and removed the bear heart from his lake refrigerator, took it back to the cabin, and set it on the porch right as it was getting dark. The next morning, the heart was gone, and there was a bunch of wolf tracks around it, and a spot close by that looked like the wolf had laid down to eat the meat. Roy thought that this might work, and resolved to save all the scraps from his hunting for the wolf instead of burying it.

Roy wandered around the cabin, trying to spot the wolf, and thought he might have caught a glimpse once or twice through the trees. Evidently, this wolf wasn't dangerous, just wary since it made no overt move toward Roy while he was out and about. Roy bent over to pick up a rock to try knocking shards off the obsidian with, as he bent over, the wolf walked up to him, and stopped about 15 feet away. Roy slowly crouched down, and held out his hands palms down so the wolf could see he wasn't dangerous. As Roy crouched down, the wolf sat down and looked intently at Roy like "OK, it's your move Jack!" Roy talked softly to the wolf like he would a dog, and the wolf laid down where he was. Roy knew that any animal that felt safe enough to lie down near a human was either domesticated, or had previous experience with humans. This was odd, since Roy couldn't remember any references to other cabins nearby when he talked to

the outfitter, so he wondered how this wolf was so familiar with humans. Then he realized he was near Denali National Park, and they probably had wildlife biologists studying the wolves. But he thought Denali was over 100 miles away. This was a lone male, so he thought it had been raised in the park, and driven out by the other resident males. This wolf probably was habituated to humans when his mother was one of the wolves they tracked with the collars. He saw a story about it on the Discovery Channel years ago. Thinking about the TV show saddened Roy because he remembered who he used to watch them with, and missed Susan terribly. Meanwhile, this wolf was just laying there watching Roy, so Roy decided to take the next step. He reached slowly into his pocket, and removed a piece of moose jerky, and gently tossed it in front of the wolf. The wolf stood, sniffed the jerky, and bolted the food down whole. Then he looked at Roy, and almost seemed to smile. As Roy stood, the wolf got up, and quietly walked away into the woods, but looked back at Roy as he went into the woods. Roy noticed he didn't go too far, so he figured he might have made a friend. Every time Roy left the cabin after then, he fed the wolf a piece of jerky. Roy realized he needed to kill several more big game animals in the next couple of months to have any chance to survive the winter. Looking at his watch, he realized it was July 1st already - on second thought, he REALLY needed to bag some big game. He hoped about 6 big animals should see him through the winter, and he also needed to lay in a supply of dried fish and greens. He guessed he had about 3-4 months before the snow might start falling - like the end of October. He spent the rest of the day fishing at the lake, catching as many salmon as he could while they were around. At the end of the day, he had about 20 large salmon, and he worked past dark cleaning and filleting the fish to hang in the smokehouse. He risked going out after dark to set the fish up in the smokehouse, and saved the entrails for the wolf. He found another pre-spawn female, and collected the roe into a small Ziploc for later. Around 8 o'clock he was ready for bed. He went back into the cabin, ate whatever was in the Dutch oven, and fell fast asleep. Two hours later, he awoke to a loud wolf howl in the distance, and heard no responding call - then he KNEW the wolf was alone. "Know how you feel buddy - goodnight!"

Chapter 15: Roy makes a friend

The next morning, Roy carried a big pile of salmon entrails outside the cabin, and laid it on the ground about 15 ft from the cabin near the wood line. Within minutes, Roy spotted the wolf, which walked up to the cabin, sniffed the air, and calmly walked over to the pile of fish guts as though he owned the place. He ate all the pieces, then looked at Roy as though asking, "Please Sir...May I have some More?" Roy laughed at the look the wolf gave him, and he said, "That settles it, I'm calling you Oliver." Leaving the cabin door open, Roy went inside and grabbed another handful of fish guts, and laid it on the edge of the porch, forcing Oliver to make a decision. He looked at the fish for a minute, then walked right up to Roy, and ate the pile of food less than 3 feet away from him. While Oliver ate, Roy sat down next to him, but kept his knife handy just in case. When Oliver was done eating, he sat down licking his chops. Roy took a big risk at this point, and extended his hand to Oliver, palm down, wrist bent in the classic "sniff my hand and let's be friends" pose. Oliver looked up at Roy, and something primeval passed between them, like the first contract between dogs and men. Roy's eyes softened and Oliver grinned, then sniffed Roy's hand and experimentally licked Roy's hand, tasting the fish smell on Roy's hands. At that, Oliver proceeded to lick all the fish off Roy's hand, and Roy reached over and petted the Wolf. He figured, "what the heck, I could die tomorrow, might as well make a friend." When Roy started petting him, Oliver's tail started wagging just like Roy's dogs. "I don't think you fetch, but I could use a friend, and I can afford to feed you OK." Roy got up, Oliver sat down to wait for him as Roy went into the cabin, grabbed his rifle, possibles bag, and fanny pack to go catch some more fish. Oliver trotted right along with Roy, ranging ahead then exploring the wood lines around the path to the lake, occasionally stopping to mark his territory.

When they got to the lake, Roy stuck a hook through a piece of fish guts, and tossed the line into his favorite fishing hole. Soon, he hooked a large salmon, and landed it while Oliver watched intently. Roy strung the fish on his stringer, baited his hook, and soon landed a second fish. Oliver soon tired of watching Roy fish and lay down to take a doggy nap. After Roy caught 6 large salmon, he baited the hook again to catch one for Oliver. When he landed the last fish, he carried it over to where Oliver laid, and dropped the fish on the ground in front of him. Oliver was watching these goings on, drooling a mile a minute. As soon as Roy set the huge salmon down and backed away, Oliver took a huge bite out of the belly of the fish, and quickly consumed the whole fish. When he was finished, he sat down, and looked at Roy as if to say, "Where's dessert?" Then he walked into the lake, and lapped up a large quantity of water. When he was finished, Oliver laid back down where he was before.

Roy walked over, sat down next to Oliver, and ruffled Oliver's coat behind his ears. As he was petting Oliver, he realized why Oliver was so eager to eat his scraps - Oliver's ribs felt like he hadn't eaten in weeks. With that, Roy landed another large salmon and laid it at Oliver's feet. Oliver devoured the second salmon as rapidly as the first. Then he looked at Roy as if to say, "The cuisine's great here, but the service is a little slow!" and he laid down to take another

doggie nap. Roy laid a fire in his fire pit, and baited another hook to catch lunch. A couple of minutes later, Roy had another big salmon on the line. When he finally landed it, cleaned it, gutted it (giving the scraps to Oliver, whose eyes said, “well I guess I could eat some more.”) and laid it across some green stick to roast over the fire Roy was ready for a nap too. Roy lay down next to Oliver, and sacked out.

He awoke about an hour later, to the smell of really well cooked fish. Roy quickly took the fish off the fire, and sliced pieces off with his Bowie. He ate leisurely, knowing he was secure with Oliver around. When he was finished, he gave the scraps to Oliver, drank a canteen full of water, refilled all his water containers, picked up his stringer of fish, and headed off for the cabin. When Roy got to the cabin, Oliver stopped about 15 feet away from the cabin, and sat down. Roy opened the door, and called Oliver, but the wolf wouldn't budge. Roy walked inside and left the door open, figuring the smells of him gutting and cleaning fish would encourage Oliver to come into the cabin. Roy cleaned and gutted the fish, and carried each fillet out to the smokehouse, and added to the collection of smoking fish inside. When he was finished, Roy whistled for Oliver, and set some fish guts on the floor near the table. Smelling the food, Oliver went to the door to investigate, and slowly walked into the cabin, sat down and ate all the fish. When he was finished, Oliver looked at the door, but since it remained open, he wasn't too worried. Roy sat on the bed, and left the door open for the rest of the afternoon, and then Oliver got up and walked over to Roy and sat down next to the bed. Roy reached down and petted the wolf, and knew that he had made a new friend. Roy's eyes filled with tears, and kept petting Oliver.

Chapter 16 - Fish till you drop!

The next morning, Roy ate breakfast then went fishing to fill his smokehouse while the salmon were still around. As soon as he opened the cabin door, Oliver trotted over to greet him, and they set off for the lake. When they got to the lake, Roy baited a hook with fish guts, and threw it out into his “fishing hole” that had produced so many salmon before. Within minutes, he had another big fish on the line. Oliver was sitting on the bank, practically drooling all over himself with anticipation of a salmon breakfast. As soon as he landed it, he carried it over to where Oliver was waiting, and plopped the fish in front of Oliver. Oliver dove into the fresh-caught salmon like he hadn't eaten in a week. Meanwhile, Roy baited another hook, and shortly had another large salmon on the line. He landed the fish, and ran it through his stringer, and dropped it into the lake. Roy kept landing fish all morning until his stringer was full, then caught another one for Oliver. Roy waited until Oliver had eaten the fish and drank his fill, and then they set off for the cabin. When they got back to the cabin, Oliver laid out in front of the cabin and took a nap. While Oliver took a nap, he cleaned and skinned the salmon, and put it in the smokehouse. He rotated the smoked salmon from the top of the smokehouse to the bottom to control temperature and smokiness of the fish. He took several pieces that were done out, and put them in a Ziploc to store in the cabin.

It suddenly occurred to Roy that if Oliver was going to spend the winter with him, he'd need to be indoors, and that meant doggie-proofing his larder. “I guess I'll have to build a food box in the cabin. Just what I needed - more projects!” Roy walked outside and grabbed the axe, then found some likely candidates to make a small box and proceeded to drop them, then de-limb them. Roy thought a 2x2 box about 4 ft high should be big enough to hold his dried jerky supply for the winter. He chopped the logs about 2.5 ft long, and notched the ends. Since it was indoors, he thought he could skip the chinking, and connect it like a Lincoln log set. When he had enough logs cut, he started carrying them in the cabin, laid them in the corner next to the door, and started assembling his food box. He had to make minor adjustments as he assembled the logs to make them fit snugly, but the work went quickly, and he soon had the box built. He took some skinny branches and tied them around the corners to hold it together, then cut some other logs in half lengthwise to make the top of the box. As he assembled the box top, he lashed it together with more skinny branches. He took some leather scraps to make hinges with, and punched holes in them, and tied them to the box and the lid with sinew. Roy felt the box top was heavy enough to keep Oliver's nose out, so he didn't need to fashion a lock (matter of fact, it took HIM some effort to lift it.). When he was done, Roy started piling all the jerky he had into the box, filling it between ¼ and 1/3 full.

Later, Roy went outside to catch some more fish before it got dark, and Oliver tagged along. They walked to the lake, Roy baited his hook, and gave the first salmon he landed to Oliver, who looked up at Roy like “Thanks for the grub!” and Roy patted Oliver's head, then Oliver

devoured the salmon, bones and all. Roy caught several more salmon, and by the time it was getting dark, he filled his stringer again. Roy decided he wanted a Salmon Dinner, so he quickly baited his hook, and threw it in the water, and caught a nice salmon almost immediately. Roy started a fire in his fire ring, cleaned and gutted the fish - Oliver got his share, of course - and grilled it over the fire. Since Oliver was with him, there was no reason to rush back to the cabin, so he sat outside, and watched the sunset for the first time in weeks. When he finished dinner, Roy went over to the lake, picked up his stringer of salmon, opened his fanny pack and took out his Mini-mag flashlight, and followed its beam back to the cabin, arriving well after dark. When he got to the cabin, Roy extinguished the light, and looking up, got the surprise of his life - the Northern Lights! Roy walked into the cabin, set the fish on the table, and walked back out to enjoy the light show. Roy and Oliver sat outside for almost an hour, when Roy started getting cold, and decided to get back into the cabin. He quickly cleaned, gutted, and filleted the salmon to put them in the smokehouse. Roy walked out with the fillets, and opened the smokehouse door, to be greeted by a big cloud of woodsmoke. Waving the smoke away, he quickly hung the salmon fillets in the smokehouse, added some wood to the fire, and shut the door.

Oliver was still waiting outside the cabin as Roy walked in. he turned to Oliver and said, “What you waiting for, a gold-lettered engraved invitation - come on in!” Oliver trotted into the cabin, and sat down. Roy put the fish scraps on the floor, next to the table, and while Oliver was eating, quietly shut the door. As soon as Roy shut the door, Oliver turned to look at the noise, but the smell of food made him stay where he was, and Oliver went back to eating the fish scraps. Roy sat down on the bed, and when Oliver was done eating, he walked over next to the bed and sat down. He petted Oliver for a while, then rolled over and went to sleep. Oliver lay next to Roy on the floor, and soon both were fast asleep.

Chapter 17 - Oliver earns his Keep

The next morning, when Roy got up, Oliver was standing by the door with a look that said, "If you don't hurry up and let me out, I'm not going to be responsible for what happens!" Roy quickly opened the door and let Oliver out - he'd seen that look before with his other dogs. Roy left the door open so Oliver could come back in when he was done. Roy spooned out some of the week-old stew in the pot, and called it breakfast. It tasted bad enough that he decided to give the leftovers to Oliver as soon as they cooled down enough to move. Roy picked up his rifle, his possibles bag, and his fanny pack with his knives and canteen, buckled the belt on his fanny pack, and adjusted the belt just so. He went outside to call Oliver - He needed to get going fishing while there were still some fish to be found. When Roy whistled, Oliver came trotting up to him with a Doggie Attitude, like "Waadaya Want Already?" Roy ignored his doggy insolence, and said, "Let's go fishing!" and they set off for the lake. When they got within 100 yds. of the lake, Oliver's hair stood up and he growled loudly. Roy unslung his rifle, and looked into the woods where Oliver was growling - it was a big bear, almost as big as the last one. Roy kneeled down to brace his rifle, and took careful aim as the bear turned, stood up and growled. Roy fired and as the smoke cleared, he could see he killed the bear with his first shot. Roy patted Oliver after he shot saying "Thanks buddy! I owe you one - I guess it's a lot easier to kill a bear when you're ready to shoot."

Since the bear was already down and dead and they were so close to the cabin, Roy decided to go back and get the travois, and take Oliver with him. Oliver followed reluctantly, not knowing what Roy had in mind, when they got to the cabin, Roy went inside, and got a nice big piece of dried salmon for Oliver, then went outside and picked up the travois. By the time Roy was ready to go get the bear, Oliver had finished his salmon and was licking his chops. As Roy headed back to the bear, Oliver was tagging along - "OK, but I don't know why you keep walking back and forth." When Roy reached the bear, it had bled out. Roy manhandled the bear onto the travois, and Oliver cleaned up the spilled blood. Roy picked up the travois handles with a groan, and started back to the cabin with the bear and Oliver in tow. A couple of very hard hours later, Roy arrived at the cabin, and dropped his burden in front of the porch. Oliver sniffed the bear like "Yeah that's what I smelled - I'm glad it didn't decide to make bear chow out of me!" and sat down away from the bear. Roy first drank the contents of his canteen, then sat on a large log he used as a stool, and proceeded to skin/gut the bear, starting by slitting the throat to bleed the bear all the way out, then opened the bear from neck to butt with the skinning edge of his Ulu/hatchet. Meanwhile, Oliver tried to maintain the disinterested look, but was failing miserably as the familiar smells of a kill came back to him. Finally Oliver could stand it no longer and started to whimper. "Patience Oliver, you'll get some soon enough!"

Roy carefully broke the pelvic bone and removed the sex organs, rectum and anus of the bear, then carefully removed the bladder, the intestines, kidneys, liver, and stomach from the abdomen. Opening the chest cavity, he then removed the rest of the organs, separating the ones he needed from the pile Oliver was going to get as a reward for finding the bear and warning

Roy in time to get ready and make a clean kill. Once Roy had all the discards in a pile, he walked over toward Oliver, and dropped the entire pile in front of him, saying “Bon Appetit!” With that, Oliver chowed down. Roy then skinned the bear the rest of the way, and cut the meat into sections, and laid them on the table in the cabin. When he’d sectioned the meat and removed the skin and sinews and fat, he broke open the bear’s skull to brain tan the skin. Dumping the contents on the skin and adding about a quart of water, Roy mashed the brains into a thin mush and spread it evenly on the skin. Next he picked up the skin, and laid it over the roof and side of the smokehouse, making sure to keep the door clear so he could put the bear meat into the smokehouse later.

Roy called for Oliver, grabbed his stuff, and walked to the lake to wash off, fill his water containers, and catch some fish. A couple of hours later, he came back with a stringer full of fish. Roy took the stringer and hung it inside the smokehouse until he had the time to clean it later that afternoon. Roy went back inside the cabin, and started slicing the bear meat up to smoke it, and when he was done, he walked into the smokehouse, removed all the smoked fish and bear meat that was in there and done, and set it inside his food box in the cabin. He took the freshly cut bear meat, and laid it over the sticks in the smokehouse, then took the salmon, gutted and filleted it, finding a couple of pre-spawn females again, and collected the roe. Then he set the fillets in the smokehouse to smoke. Saving some of the fish guts for bait, Roy gave the rest of the fish guts to Oliver, who was thoroughly stuffed by now. Roy took what was left of the bear over to his burial pile, and buried it after he removed the claws from the bear paws. Roy thought, “I’ve definitely got enough claws for a bear claw necklace, but who’s going to see it.” Roy and Oliver were so pooped that they took the rest of the afternoon off, and went to bed early.

Chapter 18 - Fish, Again?

The next morning Roy let Oliver out, who didn't have the pained look on his face he did the previous morning, "Good", Roy thought, "Maybe he's getting cabin-broken." Roy walked outside, took the now dry bearskin off the smokehouse, rolled it up, grabbed his smokepole, his possibles bag, and his fanny pack, and took off for the lake. Oliver caught up with him as soon as he'd done his business. When they got to the lake, Roy unrolled the bear skin, and dunked it in the lake to wash off the junk that was stuck to it. Roy hung the bearskin over his old drying rack to sun dry while he fished. By now, Oliver expected a fish every time Roy went to the lake, so Roy hoped the fish were still running. Roy baited a hook, and tossed it into his favorite spot, and a few minutes later, hooked his first salmon of the day.

Roy was seriously happy that the Salmon were still there, and caught several more in the next hour. Roy tossed one of the fish to Oliver, who decided to play with his dinner instead of eating it, and swatted the still jumping fish with his paws. Roy saw Oliver playing with his food, and started to laugh. Finally, Oliver decided that it would be better to eat his food than play with it, and took a big bite out of the fish's belly. Roy went back to his fishing, and soon had a stringer full of large salmon. As soon as Oliver was done eating, he rolled up the skin and carried everything back to the cabin, where Roy gutted and filleted the salmon, then stuck it in the smokehouse, and added some wood to the fire, then set the skin on the smokehouse roof to finish drying. Roy fed the leftovers to Oliver, who was looking a lot better since he was eating regularly, and getting some fat in his diet.

They walked down to the lake again to catch some more fish while the fish were still running. This time, it took a couple of hours to catch 6 smaller salmon, and Roy was worried because he thought the salmon run might be over. Roy hurried back to his cabin to get these fish into the smokehouse, and back on the lake as soon as possible. Later that afternoon, Roy tried another spot further North along the Lake that looked promising, and caught his limit of fish within an hour, and they were big fat salmon. Evidently they had just moved to a different bank. Oliver even got another fish. When Roy cleaned the fish, he found that 4 out of the 6 were females, so he saved the roe. As usual, Oliver got the scraps that Roy didn't need for bait. After he rearranged the smokehouse and put some more wood on the fire, it was getting late, but Roy wanted to get one last stringer of salmon in the smokehouse, just to be safe.

Roy finally made it back to the lake with just about 2 hours of daylight left, and went to the spot he was in last time. It took him about an hour to catch all the fish he could carry, and one for Oliver, whose belly was so full, he looked like he was having puppies. Roy got home right before dark, quickly cleaned and filleted the fish, and hung them in the smokehouse. When he was done, Oliver ate the small pile of scraps, and then walked into the cabin with Roy. Roy chewed on a piece of Moose jerky, and petted Oliver. "Boy, you sure got it easy! 3 salmon in one day, plus all the scraps - we might need to put you on a diet!" Oliver licked Roy's hands when he was done eating, then stood on his hind legs, put his paws on Roy's shoulders, and

gave him a big doggie kiss. Roy gave Oliver a bear hug and said, “Good thing for you I like dogs, otherwise I might get offended.” They played and wrestled in the cabin for a few, and then Oliver just sat down and looked at Roy as if to say “Thanks Bud!” Roy got ready for bed, unrolled the bearskin and laid it next to the bed for Oliver. Oliver sniffed the skin tentatively, but since there wasn’t any bear in it, he figured it was safe, and lay down on the rug. Roy hoped he could still use part of the bearskin to make clothing and still leave Oliver with a rug to sleep on. Roy patted Oliver’s head, and rolled over and went to sleep.

Chapter 19 - Another Boring Day in Paradise

Roy got up, let Oliver out, picked up his gear and headed to the lake. He caught some fish, and fed Oliver, went home and cleaned them, then he caught some more. Then he went to bed.

Chapter 20 - "I'm a Lumberjack and I'm OK!"

Roy decided he needed some more wood for the fire. At daybreak, he sharpened his small axe, and started dropping trees until he was tired. At the end of the day, he'd felled almost 20 trees, and he needed a lot more if he were going to make it through the winter. Over the rest of the week, he dropped almost 100 trees, and then he started limbing them and dragging the logs over to the cabin by tying some Paracord around the tree in a timber hitch, and making a shoulder harness to drag the load. Taking a stout branch, he levered the logs on top of each other, forming a pyramid of logs. When he got too tired to drag logs, he tried his hand at fishing, but by now, the salmon were getting scarce. When he finally had all the logs stacked next to the cabin, he took a day off to recover and play with Oliver. Roy hoped that he had enough wood to last the winter without chopping more.

The next day, Roy decided that he needed to bag some more big game animals, but he wasn't too sure about bringing Oliver - he didn't want the wolf to spook the game. Roy thought that Oliver was a predator, just like he was, and would probably not blow any shots, and might actually help, like he did with the bear. Roy made sure his rifle was clean, that his flints were sharp, then he made some more balls and cut some patches and lubricated them with bear grease, adding them to the can of lubed patches he carried in his possibles bag. Next he sharpened his knife and hatchet, and checked all his emergency gear. By now, it was getting cold at night, but not cold enough to justify the winter gear - then he remembered his bearskin - it would make an excellent bedroll with the Mylar blanket as a liner. Roy checked his food box, and it was 2/3 full, and he still had fish and bear meat in the smokehouse. Roy walked down to the lake with Oliver in tow, and both of them took a bath. Oliver was none too happy when Roy dragged him into the water, but Roy quickly made a game of it, and Oliver didn't seem to mind as much. After they had both washed as much dirt off as they could stand (the water was still freezing cold.) they quickly ran up on shore and sat down by the fire that Roy started before they took their bath. Roy drank some homemade tea that tasted horrible, but was high in vitamin C that was made from dried berries. When he was finished, he and Oliver laid down for a nap while Roy's clothes and Oliver's fur dried. Oliver lay right next to Roy as Roy rolled up in his Mylar blanket, and soon both were fast asleep.

When they got up several hours later, Roy's clothes were dry, so he quickly changed - Roy hoped Oliver wasn't laughing at him. Once they were both dry and dressed, Roy walked up the lakeshore, and went exploring while Oliver tagged along. Roy spotted a snag of driftwood floating near the shore, and walked over to investigate. It looked like the stump of a long-dead tree that had found its way into the river, and eventually the lake. As he walked around the stump, he made a gruesome discovery - the pilot's body was caught on the stump. After Roy got over the shock, he thought he better drag the body out of the water, and bury it, since it might contaminate his water supply. As he dragged the body out of the water, he noticed the guys' pockets were full of stuff. Roy decided to investigate, thinking that it might provide some clues to the guy's ID in case he ever got out of there- at least the family would know.

Rummaging through the pilot's pockets, he found a wallet, a comb, some coins, a small Keychain SAK knife with a led light and a flint striker. When the body shifted, Roy noticed a neck chain with dog tags and other stuff hooked to it, and took it off the body. On the neck chain was two dogtags, a neck knife, and a micro-kit wrapped in a condom with a sewing kit, a couple of water purification tabs, some Advil and a button compass. Roy noticed the pilot's Rolex Chronometer was still running, and it was a wind-up. Roy felt guilty for taking them, but he thought the pilot wasn't going to need them anymore. Roy looked at the dogtags and read the pilot's name: Ron Fellows - Yeah that matched the name the outfitter gave him. Roy dragged the body as far as he could away from the water - at least 100 yards away, and spent a couple of hours digging as best as he could. When he finally got the body in the grave and the dirt replaced, he piled as many rocks over the site as he could. Then he knelt in prayer for the soul of the pilot, "God - I know I haven't talked to you in a while, but I need you to take care of Ron and his family for me. If for some reason I don't make it out of here, will you find a way to tell his family that Ron didn't die alone, and he died doing what he loved, and he didn't suffer. By the way, Thanks for sending Oliver here to keep me company, and thanks for saving my life. And if you could get me out of here, and back to civilization, great - if not, I'm perfectly content here."

Chapter 21 - Hunting with Oliver

Roy hiked back to the cabin after leaving one of the pilot's dogtags on the grave - hopefully someone could come and claim the body later. He stopped at the place he caught the fish last time, and tried for an hour, but only caught some small fish - Roy guessed the salmon run was officially over. Roy took the fish down to his fire ring, and had a fire going in minutes since all he had to do was stoke the still smoldering embers of his previous fire. He cleaned and gutted 2 of the 4 fish he caught, and started them broiling above the fire. Oliver got his 2 fish, and the guts out of Roy's. They sat down together in the sand, waiting for Roy's fish to cook. When Roy thought it had been cooked enough, he cut slices off the fish and ate it. When he was done, Oliver was looking at him like his namesake begging for another bowl of porridge. "OK, Oliver - Bon Appetit!" and Roy gave Oliver the rest of the fish. When he had finished, Oliver walked over to Roy and licked his face like he was saying, "Thanks Boss!" Roy ruffled Oliver's fur, and then they got up and walked back to the cabin. Roy laid everything out for his hunting trip tomorrow, then checked the smokehouse and took all the dried meat out and put it inside his food box. Roy took several pounds of jerky and dried fish out, packed it in a Ziploc bag, and stored it in his possibles bag. Then he went outside, and topped off his powder horn with 22 loads of powder, and counted 20 balls and patches. He checked his rifle, knife and hatchet, topped off his canteen, and set everything on the table so he could leave at first light. He'd roll his bedroll first thing in the morning, since he was going to need the bearskin tonight. Roy decided to let the fire die tonight because he didn't want to risk burning down the cabin while he was gone. Roy went to bed at sunset, looking forward to shooting some moose or a caribou.

Roy was up at first light, rolled up the bearskin and tied it with Paracord so there was a sling to carry it over his shoulder. Roy fed Oliver a piece of dried salmon, and he ate some, then he picked up his gear, grabbed his rifle, looked around the cabin to make sure he didn't forget anything, opened the door, and he and Oliver went out on their first hunting trip. Once Roy was outside, he took his compass out of his pocket, and turned the map over to note the bearing to the moose lake. He set his compass, took a bearing on a distant mountain, and headed off. Roy and Oliver walked steadily all day, and Roy was really enjoying himself. He wasn't afraid of getting jumped with Oliver around, and he was able to relax and enjoy the outdoors. This time, he noticed a bunch of stuff he didn't notice the last time. Within a few miles of his cabin, the forest changed from small aspens and willows to larger and larger trees. Finding a small clearing with a stream, he decided to make camp for the night. He gathered some fallen wood until he had enough to last the night, then made a small fire, and unrolled his bearskin blanket. There was enough room for both of them, so Oliver sat next to Roy, and Roy was petting and talking to Oliver, who grinned in return. Just before it got dark, Roy topped off his canteen, and gave Oliver a piece of dried fish while he chewed on a piece of moose jerky. When it got dark, Roy rolled the bearskin over until he was covered, and lay down and went to sleep with Oliver's nose no more than 6 inches away.

The next morning, Oliver trotted off to do his business, and Roy rolled up the bearskin rug, and

retied the Paracord so he could sling it over his shoulder. When Oliver returned, Roy dug a piece of dried fish out of his pack, and a piece of moose jerky for himself. Oliver quickly ate his share, and soon they were hiking through the woods to the spot where Roy last saw the moose. Later that day, Roy came across some different trees, he didn't know what kind they were, but he remembered something about Native Americans making bows out of certain woods that included ash and yew - he'd never seen yew trees, but these looked kind of like ash, they were tall and straight. Knowing he'd probably pass this way on the way back, he noted the location on his map, and pressed on. Since he had Oliver with him, Roy didn't have to be careful about wild animals, and could walk much faster, and covered ground it had taken him 4 days to cross last time in 2 days. He slowed as he remembered the clearing where the moose were, and dropped his gear except his possible bag just in case there were moose feeding. As he carefully walked the last couple of paces into the clearing, he could see the moose were gone. He sat down and scanned the surrounding area, but there was no sign of moose anywhere. Roy walked back to his pack, picked up his gear, and continued walking east. Oliver trotted right along side Roy as they pushed east into unknown territory. They hiked through the meadow, and back into the timber. When it started getting dark, Roy looked for a suitable campsite, and found a clearing about 20 yds. further ahead that looked like it would make a comfortable campsite. As they neared the clearing, Roy spotted trash on the ground that looked like someone had camped there before. He also found an old coffee can, but it was rusted out and useless. Roy picked up the junk anyway, he didn't like to leave a dirty campsite. As it got dark, Roy gathered enough downed wood for the night, and started a fire, and then he laid the bearskin on the ground, and sat down. He gave Oliver another piece of fish, but not as much as he used to, Oliver was looking like he could afford to skip a few meals. Roy boiled water for tea, and dropped some dried fruit and some other stuff into his canteen cup and let it steep while he chewed on a piece of jerky. When the tea was done, Roy drank it down - it didn't taste too good, but it was full of vitamin C. When it got full dark, Roy rolled up in his blankets, and went to sleep with Oliver right next to him.

Later that night, Roy woke to a loud noise and a bright flash, and all of a sudden they were getting wet. Roy looked around, and there wasn't a tree within 30 yards, and all the trees were over 20 feet tall. Roy broke out his garbage bag and grabbed his flintlock to keep the powder from getting wet, grabbed Oliver, and wrapped them both up. Oliver wasn't too happy, but stayed with Roy since Roy had a good grip on him. Seconds later, there was a bright flash and a deafening roar. A bolt of lightning had hit a nearby tree. Roy looked around, and a tree 50 yds. away was smoking, but no fire had started. Roy quieted Oliver, who was freaking out at this point. Roy was pretty nervous at this time anyway. Several more bolts struck the area, but none got closer. Eventually the storm let up, and Roy went back to sleep.

When Roy finally awoke, the sun had been up for hours, so Roy ate a quick breakfast of moose jerky while Oliver trotted off to attend to the call of Nature. When Oliver got back, Roy gave him a piece of dried salmon, and Oliver drank from the nearby stream. Roy walked upstream of Oliver, filled his canteen, then took his flintlock and dumped the pan powder since it looked damp, and refilled the pan. When he was finished, Roy rolled up the blanket, stuffed the

garbage bag back in his fanny pack, picked up his gear, and kept heading east. After a couple of hours, Roy climbed a small ridge, and as he crested the ridge, laid down to look at the other side of the mountain. Roy couldn't believe his eyes - there were Caribou as far as the eye could see! Oliver could smell the caribou as well, and was getting antsy. Roy grabbed Oliver by the ruff of the collar, and looked into his eyes, "Oliver, you've got to be quiet - or we don't eat." Somehow Oliver sensed his master's meaning and quieted down. Roy checked his concealment and the wind direction. So far he was OK, the wind was in his face, and he had brush down the whole slope to the bottom of the meadow, and less than 50 yds. to the herd. Roy wanted to shoot the largest bull he could, then he'd shoot a cow since this was before breeding season, and the cows with calves were still segregated from the main herd. Roy wanted to make sure he didn't shoot the Prime Bull, but any large bull would do for what he needed. Roy needed meat and a couple of skins. Roy stalked carefully down the hill, with Oliver following closely. Oliver was now making less noise than Roy was.

Roy followed a game trail down the hill until he got within 50 yds. of the edge of the meadow. Roy set his pack and the bearskin down, picked up his rifle and his possibles bag, and carefully moved to the edge of the clearing. Roy found a fallen log that he could use as a rifle rest, and got in a comfortable shooting position with his rifle resting on the log. Roy had a fairly good view of the meadow, and several animals were within 100 yards of his spot. Roy took out 4 balls and patches, the powder measure, the powder horn, the pan powder, and the starter and ramrod, and laid them out next to him so he could reload quickly before the herd got out of range. As he got set, a large bull walked within 50 yards, broadside on to him. Roy centered the sights right behind the bull's shoulder, where the heart and lungs should be. Roy pulled the first trigger, and as the second trigger broke, the gun roared, and a huge cloud of smoke obscured his target. Not looking up to check his target, Roy quickly reloaded and found a large cow that hadn't spooked yet. Roy set up quickly, put his sights on the cow, who was standing broadside about 75 yards away, and steadied the sights on the cow's heart/lung region, and quickly pulled the first trigger, then squeezed the second trigger when the sights were pointed exactly where he wanted the bullet to go. The gun went off with a roar, and a large cloud of smoke. Roy quickly reloaded, and was amazed that another bull was just standing there about 60 yards away, but about 60 degrees to the left of his two previous shots. This bull was smaller than the first, and standing quarter-on. Roy waited while the bull stood there, and finally the bull moved, giving him a broadside shot. Roy steadied his sights on the bull's heart/lung area, and pulled the first trigger, then he squeezed the second trigger as his exact aim point settled down in the sights. The gun roared and bucked a third time, and Roy quickly reloaded. He surveyed the meadow, and there were three caribou down within 50 yards of his location. The rest of the herd scattered when he stood up, and ran in a mad panic when Oliver showed his face.

Roy walked back to pick up his gear, then walked toward the first bull he shot. It had dropped where it stood with an amazingly perfect heart/lung hit. Next he checked on the cow and the other bull, and they were both deader than a doornail. Roy left the animals where they lay, dropped his gear and picked up his knives to begin gutting and skinning the animals. Since he

had shot so much, he was going to take only what he could use and carry back to the cabin, and what Oliver could eat in the next couple of days. First he bled and gutted all 3 animals so the meat would cool as fast as possible. Oliver was feasting on the guts that Roy wasn't going to need, so he left Roy alone to work in peace. Once he was finished gutting the animals, he started skinning the big bull first. When he finished skinning the big bull, it was getting dark, so Roy built a fire, and sat down and ate some jerky. Oliver wandered over later, and he was so bloated, he looked like his stomach was dragging. Oliver sat down with a look like, "I can't believe I ate all that!" and promptly rolled over and went to sleep. Roy chuckled, and finished his jerky, grabbed his bearskin, said goodnight to Oliver, and went to sleep. The next morning, Roy continued skinning the big bull, then brain tanned the skin.

Roy laid the skin out to dry, and walked over to the watering hole the caribou were using, and discovered it was a fairly large stream. After he washed his hands, Roy decided to not take a chance with so many caribou around, so he used his Survival Straw out of his fanny pack to take a large drink of water. Roy then skinned and brain tanned the other 2 caribou. As the caribou skins were drying, Roy started butchering the carcasses, and put all the usable meat into a garbage bag to keep the flies off. Roy took several days to butcher all the carcasses and store all the usable meat, tendons, sinews, tallow, stomachs and intestines. While Roy butchered, Oliver pigged out. All Oliver did while they were there was eat, drink and sleep. When Roy had finished butchering the carcasses, Oliver was seriously porky with a big belly and Roy couldn't feel Oliver's ribs anymore. When Roy finished butchering the meat, he looked around for some trees to make a travois out of. There were some bigger trees about 40 yards up the hill that Roy thought would work. Roy dropped them, cut them to length, and cut crosspieces to lash across the travois. When he had finished building the travois, he laid the skins across the frame, and carefully lifted the bag full of meat, etc. onto the frame. When he was finished, he sat down, ate a piece of jerky, and drank some more water from the creek using his Survival Straw. Roy waited until Oliver had eaten his fill, and left for his cabin the next morning. Before he set out, Roy verified his compass bearing back to the cabin, rigged the travois for hauling, and picked it up. Roy could barely lift the travois, but figured that unless he got really lucky, this was all the meat he was going to get for the winter. Roy trudged up the hill, slowly making progress. Finally he crested the hill, and sat down for a breather. Oliver was waddling up behind him, and was more than happy to sit for a while and let Roy pet him.

After Roy had regained his strength, he got up and picked up the load again. Roy made better time downhill than up, and cleared the bottom of the hill about an hour later. Just before sunset, Roy made it back to the clearing he'd spent the night during the lightning storm. He could tell it was the same clearing, because the tree was still smoking. Once Roy made camp, he used the smoking tree to start his fire by poking the smoldering tree with a couple of dried leaves and bark until they caught fire. Oliver was still stuffed to the gills, so Roy ate a piece of moose jerky, drank from his canteen, then refilled all his water containers from the stream. When he was finished, he spread the bearskin rug, and they both sacked out. The next morning, Roy packed his stuff up, ate another piece of jerky, drank his fill from the canteen and refilled it, then picked up his gear and then the travois and headed for the cabin. Hiking all day, they made

good time over the flat land, considering Roy was hauling several hundred pounds of meat and stuff, and Oliver's belly was so full it was almost dragging on the ground. Later that afternoon, Roy came across the trees he'd marked on his map, dropped his burden, selected several trees that would work for a longbow, and dropped two of them. Roy cut the wood into 8 foot sections, figuring on a 6-ft longbow. Next he dropped a small tree that looked like ash, since it was totally straight and chopped it into 4-ft sections for arrows. Roy bundled up the wood, and put them on the travois so he could make a bow and arrow later when he had time this winter. When he was finally finished, it was getting dark, and Roy decided to stop there, and made camp.

The next morning, Oliver was back to normal, and looked very sleek and beautiful. They broke camp and Oliver trotted off to take care of business while Roy ate breakfast. Roy picked up everything, then picked up the handles of the travois. After shooting a bearing to the cabin, they were off again. The land was flat and fairly easy to cross, so they made good time. The rest of the day passed uneventfully. The next day, Roy found their cabin, and he carefully inspected it, but it was just as he left it. Roy picked up the wood, meat, and skins off the travois, set the meat on the table, the wood on top of the food box, and the skins on top of the smokehouse. Roy quickly cut the meat into jerky, and got it in the smokehouse. Roy figured if he didn't get it smoked quickly, it would go rancid. Some of the tallow was starting to smell already, but he wasn't eating it. When he finished cutting up the meat and putting it in the smokehouse, he lit a fire in the smokehouse, then he put the skins, stomachs and intestines on the lighter travois he'd made earlier, and dragged them to the lake. Roy washed the skins, then cleaned the intestines and stomachs thoroughly. Roy stretched the skins out to dry, and decided to try some fishing. Roy took his fishing kit out of the fanny pack, baited the hook with some entrails he kept in a Ziploc, and threw the bait as far into the lake as he could. He sat down with the line in his hands, and Oliver sat down next to him to wait for his fish dinner.

About half an hour later, Roy felt a huge tug on the line, and he pulled back. As soon as he set the hook, the fight was on. Roy didn't know what he'd hooked, but it was huge. It took Roy almost half an hour to land the fish. It was a long skinny toothy fish - so Roy thought it had to be a Northern Pike, but he didn't know Pike lived in Alaska. It was easily 20-30 lbs of fish. Roy thumped it with the hammer of his Ulu/hatchet to make sure it was dead, then just to make sure, severed the head. Roy carried the now headless fish away from the water, then gutted the fish and cut it into fillets to smoke. Roy started it over his campfire smoker, then went back to fishing. Roy caught several other fish, but no more pikes. He tossed one of the smaller fish to Oliver, who looked at it like "I don't think I could eat another bite for a year" then decided he might try to fill his hollow leg. Roy took the other fish, cleaned and gutted them, then skewered them onto sticks, and roasted them over the fire. Since Oliver was obviously full, he saved the guts for his bait bag.

Chapter 22 - This Little Piggy Went to Market

When Roy finished cooking the fish, he cut strips from it and ate his fill. Oliver was lying on his side, out like a light and stuffed to the gills. As he ate his fish, he did some serious thinking, "I can't make it through the winter on what I have now, the salmon are gone, and the squirrels and rabbits I trap don't have enough fat. Even with the three caribou I shot today, I'm going to be on short rations. Oliver won't be happy either, and that could be dangerous. If I could bag another couple of Caribou, I'd have plenty of meat, and I could fashion clothes for me out of the skins and moccasins for my feet so my boots last longer. But getting those caribou carcasses home was Hard Work. Oh Well, as my Dad used to say, No one ever drowned in sweat!" He finished the fish he was eating, got up and laid the drying fish, and all the other junk he brought with him to the lake on the travois, woke up Oliver who looked at Roy like "All Right Already - I'm UP! Man, you ruined a perfectly good doggie dream!" and they trudged back to the cabin. They got to the cabin just as it was getting really dark, He took the time to put the fish into the smokehouse, bring the meat that had dried in, and put the skins over the roof of the smokehouse to dry, then he brought his smokepole inside, and gave it a thorough cleaning, pulled the ball and patch, recovered as much powder as he could, then swabbed the bore, and wiped down the exterior. As soon as the bore was dry and clean, Roy reloaded the powder, ball and patch he just pulled, and hung the rifle over the door. He thought it would take two days for the meat to dry, and about a week round trip to walk to the caribou hunting ground, shoot and skin the caribou, and drag it back to the cabin. He flopped down on his bed, dead tired and slept soundly.

The next morning, Roy quickly packed his gear, refilled his possibles bag, cleaned and sharpened his knife and hatchet, and repacked his pack with jerky and dried fish, taking about 2 weeks worth to be on the safe side. Since his canteen was already full from last night, as soon as he packed, he walked out of the cabin with his pack, possibles bag, knife, hatchet, and his flintlock rifle. He whistled for Oliver to come, and took a compass bearing to make sure he walked the right way. He closed the door to the cabin, shouldered his gear, and started walking back to the caribou hunting grounds. He made it to his first overnight spot easily, and they made camp and He wrapped himself in his bearskin and went to sleep. The next morning, they ate and Oliver did his business, then they broke camp and trudged off heading east. Knowing that the moose were probably gone, He didn't hesitate when he got to the moose clearing, and sure enough, it was empty. He hiked over the ridge again, and immediately spotted the caribou. The herd was even bigger than last time, and they had totally filled the clearing. Again the wind was in Roy's face, and he hiked down to the edge of the clearing, set up at the same log, and took aim at a big bull. He sighted in on the heart/lung area of the bull, and pulled the trigger, and a flash fired, but nothing else. "Damn...should have reloaded this thing!" He swore. He quickly grabbed the wire the old trapper had provided for this very emergency and cleared the touchhole then quickly added some more pan powder. Amazingly, the bull was still standing there feeding as if nothing had happened. Saying a quick prayer, He shouldered his rifle, put the sight on the bull's heart, and squeezed the trigger, then the second trigger in rapid

succession. This time the gun went off with a roar, and He reloaded as fast as he could, spotting a second bull 50 yards away, he got the rifle on his shoulder, put the sight right on the bull's heart, and pulled the trigger. He was rewarded with another roar, and even before the smoke had cleared, He was reloading for a third shot at another huge bull. As soon as he had rammed the load home and cocked the lock, He shouldered his rifle a third time, put the sights dead on the bull's heart, and pulled the trigger. He was three for three, except for the first misfire, as the rifle roared again.

As the smoke cleared, He could see three bulls on the ground. Oliver finally made a showing, and as soon as the herd got a look at Oliver, they spooked. Since Roy was done shooting anyway, he wasn't mad at Oliver. Oliver walked over to the three bulls, sniffed the carcasses, and yawned, showing his teeth. Roy asked Oliver, "What are you so excited about, I did all the work!" Oliver promptly lost interest in the carcasses, and sat down to take a nap. He gathered up his gear, and moved over to the first bull he shot. He slit the bulls' throats and when they bled out, proceeded to gut all 3 animals. All He needed this time was the meat, hide, tallow, and sinew from each bull. Anything Oliver couldn't eat would be left for the scavengers. It took Roy the rest of the day to gut all 3 animals, and he propped the ribs open with sticks to quickly cool the meat. He washed his hands, then sat down and ate some jerky before rolling up and going to sleep.

The next morning, he skinned the bulls, and scraped the hides as clean as he could get. Meanwhile, Oliver pigged out on the pile of guts Roy set near Oliver. Once he had skinned and cleaned all 3 hides, he broke open the skulls of the bulls and brain tanned the hides. He rolled up the hides, then went over to some nearby trees, and made a travois. When he finished, the meat was thoroughly cooled, and he piled the skins on the travois, leaving one open to hold all the meat and stuff he'd need. The next day, He butchered the meat, and piled the meat onto the travois in the center of the skin. It took Roy the whole day to butcher the 3 caribou bulls and separate the meat and tallow from the unusable portions of the carcass. He saved the sinews since he knew he would need that to make stuff later. He washed his hands, ate some jerky, and sacked out. Finally the next morning they were ready to go back to the cabin. Oliver dragged himself to his feet, his belly almost scraping the ground. He looked at Oliver and said "Well, you made a pig of yourself, now you have to pay the piper." Roy groaned as he picked up the travois - he didn't remember it being so heavy last time. Then he remembered he had 3 bulls worth of meat - "Maybe I overdid it this time. As long as I can get it over the hill, I'll be OK." He struggled over the hill, only making it as far as the moose's meadow before the light failed. He sank to the ground, exhausted and grabbed his bearskin. Rolling up in the skin, He went right to sleep. Oliver dragged his tired wolf body over to Roy, and plopped down next to him. If he saw a bear right now, they'd probably both be dead - neither of them was in any condition to lift a finger. Luckily for them, there were no bears in the neighborhood, and the slept peacefully.

The next morning, Roy woke up stiff and sore, and decided to take 3 Advil from his meager store of meds. He washed it down with a swallow of water from his canteen, and ate a piece of

jerky. After about an hour, He felt good enough to try to drag the travois to the next campsite. Oliver lay on the ground like he'd partied too hard the last night and was seriously hung over. Roy called to Oliver, "If I've got to get up, so do you ya big pig." Oliver rolled over and belched, then finally stood. Roy broke camp, shouldered all his gear, and picked up the travois. It took Roy 2 days to get back to the cabin, but they made it - barely. He decided to jerk the meat tomorrow, and went to bed. The next morning, they walked down to the lake to refill his water supplies, and when he got back, Roy removed all the jerky from the smokehouse, and put it in his food box. When he had made room for the fresh meat, Roy started slicing the meat into strips to make jerky out of it. When he ran out of room on the table, he took the strips, and put them up in the smokehouse. He finished jerking the meat shortly before sundown, and lit a fire in the smokehouse, and closed the door. Roy and Oliver went back in the cabin, and Roy ate some jerky, drank from his canteen, and went to bed. Oliver sacked out right next to him on his bearskin rug.

Chapter 23 - Making pots

The next morning, Roy took inventory of his stock, and decided he needed a large pot to make stuff with. He had way more tallow than he could use and he thought that if they were going to stay indoors during the winter, they might need some soap. If he needed soap, he was going to need a large pot to render all the fat. He ate some jerky for breakfast, fed a piece of dried fish to Oliver, grabbed his gear and the small travois, and went down to the lake to get some clay. He dug as much clay as he could comfortably carry, put it on the travois, wrapped it in his opened trash bag, then found some clean quartz sand and mixed a couple of shovel fulls into the clay. When the clay/sand mix was thoroughly mixed, he carried it back to the cabin, and put it on the table. He took a handful of clay, rolled it into a snake, and made a circle of it. He took some more clay, flattened it, cut it into a disc, and dropped the circle of clay around the disk. He pinched the edges together and continued adding larger and larger rings, until the largest ring was almost 12 inches in diameter, then he started adding smaller rings, until the opening was 10 inches in diameter, and the pot was about 2 feet high. Wetting his hands, He started smoothing the clay on the inside and the outside until both surfaces were as smooth as he could make them. He left the clay pot to dry in the cabin while he and Oliver went outside to chop some wood. He was going to need a big hot fire to properly fire this clay to the bisque stage. He hoped he got the ratio of clay to sand right, otherwise the whole morning was wasted. He picked up a log, propped it up over another log, and took his home built axe, and started cutting 2 ft lengths off the tree until the entire tree was in 2 foot pieces. Next, he split the 2 ft pieces into half, then he halves into quarters. When he finished quartering the logs, he had quite a pile of wood.

He walked back into the cabin to check on the pot, and it needed a few more hours. He decided to go fishing, even if he didn't catch anything, he found fishing relaxing. He strapped on his fanny pack, picked up his possibles bag and his rifle, whistled for Oliver, then walked to the Lake. Oliver had recovered from his excesses of the last couple of days, and was trotting right along with Roy. When He got to the lake, he walked north to his favorite fishing hole, opened his fanny pack, took out his fishing kit, baited a hook, spun the baited hook and weight in a circle, then let it fly. The fishing hook hit the water with a soft pop, and He continued paying out line until it went slack. Figuring he was on the bottom, Roy let the bait settle, and he sat down with the line held loosely in his hands. He didn't have long to wait, after a couple of minutes, He felt a tug on the line, but he let the fish take some more line, then he set the hook. He thought he'd snagged a log when he set the hook, but then it pulled back, and the fight was on. He battled the fish for almost a half hour, when he finally landed the fish it was almost 3 feet long, and looked like his mother-in-law. It obviously wasn't a salmon, since they had already spawned, and He wasn't sure WHAT he had caught. Dragging the fish ashore, He cut the fish's head off with his Ulu/hatchet since he didn't want to get anywhere near that mouth while the fish was still alive. After the fish had bled out, He gutted the fish, and cut the body into two fillets. As usual, Oliver was more than eager to help Roy clean up.

He carried the fish to his old campsite, laid the fish on the drying rack, quickly made a fire, then skewered one of the fillets on a stick, and propped it up near the fire to roast. Roy sat down near the fire to await his lunch, and Oliver parked it next to him. He reached over, and scratched behind Oliver's ears, right where he liked it. Oliver's tail started wagging, and Roy knew he had hit the right spot. After a while, He lay down to take a nap, and Oliver joined him. Roy had a dream about Susan when they were first dating, remembering all the places they used to go, then the image switched to their wedding day - Susan said that was the happiest day of her life. Then the scene changed to Roy opening his first machine shop, and buying their first home 2 years later. Roy was so proud how he had managed to save enough to pay 20% down and get much more favorable terms from the bank. Next, He re-lived the birth of his first son Steve, and Bill 2 years later. He later said that Bill looked just like her, and that got him a big kiss. The memories made Roy start to cry and Oliver walked over next to him, and laid down next to Roy. He wrapped his arm around the big wolf, and held him while he continued to dream. The next image was the baptism of his sons at the Baptist Church they had joined when they moved into their new house. He remembered looking over at his wife, and catching a glimpse of his Mother-in-law smiling at him. That was the last time he could remember that she was happy with him. She probably felt he was a failure as a husband and father, but he worked long hard hours at the Machine shop to make sure there was a roof over their heads, food on the table, and something left over for their retirement.

He guessed they could have moved into a smaller house, but they always planned on having more children, until Susan had a lump removed from her left breast right after her 40th birthday and had to start chemotherapy. He was overcome with guilt by remembering how he felt after she was diagnosed with breast cancer. First, he was mad at her, then he was mad at God, then he was mad at himself, then he was yelling at the boys, next he was yelling at her parents when they came to be with her during the surgery, and stayed for 2 months. After Susan recovered, she slowly resumed her activities, but she was never the same after that. Their infrequent sex life became non-existent when Susan couldn't get over her small scar on her breast, and wouldn't let Roy touch her. After that, He started to look, but luckily never went through with any affairs. By now, the boys were in High School, both excelled at Athletics, which made their dad proud, but guilty at the same time, since he couldn't take time off from work to see a game, and there always was that next project that he had to get done Right now. He never learned balance until it was too late. Next, the scene shifted to the day Susan was diagnosed with Terminal Ovarian Cancer, and He cried again remembering the feelings of abandonment. He always thought he would have more time to spend with Susan.

Roy woke up then to the smell of burning fish. "YIKES... I forgot the fish!" He quickly got up and removed what was left of the fish from the fire, ate what he could, and fed the rest to Oliver. Obviously, Oliver wasn't a picky eater, and wolfed the scraps of fish down in a few bites. He took the other piece of fish off the drying rack and fed that to Oliver, since it had a real gamy smell. He quickly refilled his water containers while he waited for Oliver. When Oliver was done eating, they packed up and headed back to the cabin. By now, it was getting dark, and He decided to try firing the clay tomorrow. They went into the cabin, He ate another piece of jerky,

then laid down on the bed and went to sleep, with Oliver curled up on the floor right next to him on his own bearskin rug.

The next morning, He carefully detached the now dry clay pot from the table, and went outside to start the bonfire he was going to need to fire the clay pot. When he had the fire blazing, he added the large pieces of wood, knocking the fire down by laying the wood flat, and carefully laid the clay pot on top of the wood. Carefully taking a burning branch from the fire, Roy set another fire inside the pot to even out the heat. When he had both fires going well, he added several large pieces of wood to the outside teepee fashion. Roy let that fire burn out, and later that afternoon, when the fire had cooled to ash and the clay pot had cooled, he picked up the pot with a scrap of moosehide and carried it into the cabin. He prepared a slip of clay and water, and applied it using a small piece of bearskin as a brush. He covered the entire pot, inside and out, and allowed the pot to dry. The next day, He built another roaring fire, set the pot on top of a raft of logs, and set another fire inside the pot. Several hours later, He picked the pot out of the fire ring when everything had cooled down, and set the pot on ground. “Now for the Moment of Truth” thought Roy as he poured water into the pot. If he made the walls too thick, they’d shatter, if they were too thin, it wouldn’t have enough strength to work as a pot. He filled the pot with water, and nothing happened. YES! Roy yelled - Success! The pot was thick enough to not shatter when he put cold water into a warm pot. Now he needed to make at least 2 more pots, and one of them should have feet so it could stand up in a fire pit.

He picked up what was left of the clay/sand mix, and started building another pot. He thought that he might need a bigger pot to render tallow to make candles and soap. He just hoped he remembered what he read on the internet about making rustic lye/tallow soap using primitive methods. He sat down at the table, cut a piece of clay out, flattened it, cut a 16-inch disc out of it, and started rolling snakes. The first one was almost 2 ft long, and it didn’t quite fit around the disc, so he took the next snake and attached it to the previous one, then pinched and bonded the snake to the disc. Then he took the next snake, stacked it above and to the outside of the previous one, and gradually built up the wall of the pot. This time, he started smoothing sooner in the process since the pot was so big. A couple of hours later, he had a pot that was almost twice the size of the previous one. He left it to dry, went out back, and started chopping wood. When he was finished, it was dry enough to attach feet to it, so he molded 4 pieces of clay into cones, and carefully molded them to the bottom of the pot. He inverted the pot to give the feet a chance to dry. He left the pot overnight to dry, and started making a third pot. Halfway through, he ran out of clay, and muttering to himself, Roy trudged down to the lake with the travois to dig some more clay. By the time he got back, it was almost dark, so he dropped the clay outside the porch, and dumped a couple of shovels of sand into the mix, and mixed it thoroughly with his hands. When he was finished, He walked into the cabin, washed his hands, ate a piece of jerky, and went to sleep.

Chapter 24 - A minor Disaster!

The next morning, Roy went back to work, and quickly finished the third pot. He decided to fire the second pot he made while the third was drying, so he made a fire, and set the pot on a platform of log quarters, and then he made a fire inside the pot to keep the heat even. He was in a hurry, and wasn't careful laying the logs onto the outside of his pot. As he turned to get more wood, a large log shifted as the fire burned down, and landed square on the pot, shattering it into pieces. Roy was so mad he said some words he hadn't used in several years. Even Oliver was upset, since he never heard Roy swearing like a sailor, which he was now doing! @\$@#\$! @#\$%\$%%\$^^! @#\$%#@%#^^\$**&! All that @#\$#\$ing work WASTED!!!! He poked around the pot with a stick, and there wasn't much left to salvage, maybe a few pieces that he could use for other things. Looking at the pieces, Roy had a brilliant idea - since he was staying in a cabin - he should be eating with a plate, cup, and bowl. He thought he could do that. The now much calmer Roy walked back into the cabin, and made some simple earthenware out of the clay he had. The easiest one was the plate, then the bowl. Roy had a little difficulty with the coffee mug style cup, finally he made it about the size and shape of a beer stein, which turned out to be easier to make, and easier to hold with the big handle. When he was finished, Roy chopped some more wood since he'd need a big fire to bisque fire that many pieces at once. When the bonfire he'd lit earlier had finally died out, and the shattered pieces had cooled, He picked out the bigger pieces, and put them in a pile for later use. Some of the smaller pieces had very sharp edges, and he saved those to use as knives.

Later that afternoon, He decided to try again, and laid all the pottery onto a raft of quartered logs, then carefully built a fire around them, and another fire inside the pot to keep the heat consistent. He lit the fire, and carefully tended it, as to not let any pieces fall down onto the pottery. Several hours later, the fire had burned down to coals, and Roy could do something else, so he decided to try the big pot again. He followed the same steps as last time he built it, and this time, it came together much faster. When he had finished building the big pot, Roy went and checked on his firing, and found the fire had gone out, and the pottery was cool enough to handle with a piece of moosehide, so he took the pieces back into the cabin to put a slip on them so they were waterproof. Using the same piece of bearskin as before, Roy wiped some clay mixed with water over the surfaces of the pottery, then set them aside to dry. Since it was getting late, he decided to fire the pieces the next morning. Roy called Oliver, who trotted out of the forest, and gave him a look like "You Rang?" then proceeded to walk into the cabin like he owned the place. Roy wasn't going to argue the point, so decided to pack it in and call it a day. Roy walked into the cabin, closed the door, and set down at the table to eat dinner.

Oliver sat there drooling, and Roy fed him a piece of dried fish - he figured Oliver was still getting plenty to eat, so he cut his rations back to save food. Oliver ate the fish, and then laid down on the wood floor of the cabin, waiting for Roy to finish so he could pet him. Just as soon as Roy's cup scraped, indicating that he was done eating, Oliver sat up, and assumed the scratching position. Knowing what Oliver wanted, he obliged, scratching Oliver between his

ears, and around the ruff of his collar. Roy walked over to his bed, kicked his shoes off, and sat down to pet Oliver before going to bed. When he finally went to sleep, Oliver sacked out right next to his bed on his very own bearskin rug.

The next morning Roy ate breakfast, got dressed, and started laying a fire outside to fire the pottery. First, he laid down a raft of quartered logs, then he placed the pottery pieces on top of the logs. He built a fire inside the big pot to keep the heat even, and then set up some more quartered logs around the pot and the other pieces in a teepee, making sure there was enough room between the logs for air to circulate. He was very careful setting up the logs, and when he was finished, he lit the fire, and stood back to admire his handy work. As the logs burned, he added more and more, until he had a roaring bonfire going. Once it had reached the bonfire stage, he figured the fire was hot enough to finish firing the clay, and went back inside. Roy picked up his homemade Axe, and walked out to the stand of trees, and started felling as many trees as he could - making this pottery had wiped out almost a third of his woodpile. When he took a break several hours later, 6 medium trees were down. Roy walked over to inspect the fire, and it was still burning, but it was down to coals. He guessed that it would burn for a couple more hours, so he went inside, sat down, took a big drink of water, and ate some jerky. About an hour later, when he was feeling stronger, He went back to chopping some more trees. By the end of the day, Roy had another 15 trees down, and had started chopping off the branches and piling the branches into a large mound to use for kindling and small projects.

By the time he was finished, it was getting dark, the bonfire had cooled, and Oliver was nowhere to be seen. Roy carried the axe back into the cabin, grabbed the scrap of moosehide he was using to insulate his hand from the pottery just in case it was hotter than he thought, and took a stick to un-bury the pottery. The large pot was perfect, the plates had smoke marks on them, but didn't affect their utility, the bowl and the large mug came out OK without any marks or cracks. He reminded himself the big pot still needed to be glazed with slip, and fired a second time, so he was going to need even more wood. He sat the pottery down on the table in the cabin, opened the door, and whistled for Oliver. Oliver came bounding out of the woods like "It's Dinner Time Already?" ran up to Roy and rubbed up against him repeatedly like he was greeting a long-lost buddy. "OK Oliver, Dinner will be served in a minute - did you want service in the dining room, or the open-air café?" Oliver walked in the door, and Roy said, "Dining Room it is - Table for one?" Oliver looked up like he was saying "Forget the Fancy Matre' de stuff and sling me some hash Cookie!" Roy pulled out a piece of dried Salmon, and Oliver, being a Wolf, wolfed it down. Roy dug into the stew pot to see what was for dinner. It wasn't the most appetizing dish he had seen, but the variety and greens should keep him healthy.

Chapter 25 - Setting Priorities

When Roy woke up, He could feel a change in the air, looked at his Casio watch, and realized that today was August 5th, Summer was almost over. He realized he was way behind on his chores, and needed to prioritize his tasks, so he made a list of things he needed:

Soap Candles Clothes Snowshoes Moccasins Wood Food Water

then he prioritized it:

Food Wood Water Snowshoes Moccasins Clothes Soap & Candles

When he had his list prioritized, he sorted it into stuff he'd have to do now vs. stuff he could do during the winter. The Wood would have to come first - he didn't have a lot chopped, and he thought he'd burn almost a cord a month even with the small cabin. Food was OK, but he needed more just to be safe, and to keep Oliver happy. Water was an ongoing chore, but he needed to build some more pots to hold water inside the cabin. Snowshoes would have to be built before the snow got deep, or he couldn't work outside at all. Moccasins and Clothes could be made during the long periods of enforced cabin activity. Soap and Candles was a task he was already working on, but he needed to bump it back a little until he had more pots ready to go. In addition, he decided to make small container candles, since it was easier to pour melted tallow into a container and insert a wick then it was to cast tallow hard enough not to melt while it burned. His first priority would be chopping down a lot more wood, then making more pottery, and bagging a few more caribou if he had time. Roy picked up his axe, walked out to the stand of trees, and started chopping. He kept at it all day, and by the end of the day, he had another cord of wood felled, and half of it limbed. Roy dragged himself into the cabin, exhausted, and went to sleep.

The next morning, he got up, finished de-limbing the trees he felled, then started the brutal process of dragging the logs to his woodpile. He took a break for lunch, ate a piece of jerky, played with Oliver, then got back to work. When he finished, Roy felt like his arms were a foot longer than he started, and his back was killing him. Roy went into the cabin, washed his hands, ate a piece of jerky, took 2 Advil and washed them down with some of his water. He now had 4 cords of wood stacked, but it still needed to be cut to fireplace length - he was NOT looking forward to that. He called Oliver in for the night, laid on his bed and petted Oliver until he fell asleep. That night Roy dreamed he was a beaver, and his teeth hurt from chewing all that wood. He woke the next morning, and Oliver was giving him a funny look - Roy must have been talking in his sleep. Roy ate breakfast, drank the rest of his water, and went down to the lake to fill up his water containers, and dig some more clay. He must have gotten used to the hard labor, because when he dragged the travois back from the lake, his arms didn't hurt as much. Matter of fact, Roy had noticed lately that his clothes were fitting looser, and his arms were getting bigger. Before he could get too puffed up, he tripped over a root, and fell flat on

his face. He thought to himself, "I guess Pride really doth go before the fall. That ought to keep my ego in check!"

He dragged the clay to the cabin, mixed a couple of shovels of sand into the mix, then picked it up and carried it into the cabin and sat it on the table. Roy had a lot of pottery to make today, so he needed to get busy. He started rolling snakes of clay to form pots, and forming large balls of clay into containers for tallow candles. By the end of the day, he had finished 2 large pots, a pitcher for lye to make soap with, and about a dozen tallow candle containers. He left these to dry overnight, and started chopping wood to build a bonfire to fire the pottery in. By sundown, He had a large stack of wood, mostly quarters of logs he'd cut earlier that were well dried. Roy suddenly realized he had hardly any dry wood. That means he was going to need twice as much wood, since green wood wasn't as efficient as dry wood, and smoked terribly. He shook his head, called Oliver, ate dinner, and the two of them went to bed early.

Chapter 26 - Roy Gets Lucky

When Roy got up, he had a brilliant idea. Instead of risking getting burned making lye the way he was going to - why not use a drip system with 2 nested pots? Poke some small holes in the one on top, add a layer of sand, and let the wood ash/water combination drip into the lower pot, which has a pour spout and handle to make it safer. Roy needed more clay to build this idea, so he dragged the travois to the lake to dig some more clay. When he got there, he filled up his water containers, then he looked up and spotted a yellow object near the middle of the lake. Rushing to the water's edge, He saw that it was another of his bags, obviously the plane was starting to break up, and the bags might still float to the surface if they had enough buoyancy.

He grabbed a flat piece of wood he had found and set aside just in case, which floated well with him and some extra weight. He quickly paddled out to the bag, tied a piece of Paracord to the handles, and around his arm, turned for home paddling for all he was worth. By the time he reached the shore, he was wet, cold, and tired. The first thing he did was to start a fire in his old fire ring, then get some water heating for what passed for tea in his area. He wrapped himself with his Mylar blanket, took off his wet clothes, and sat as close to the fire as he could. When he finally stopped shivering, he drank the hot tea, which finished warming him up, then opened the bag to see what he had found. In the top of his bag was a small lockable Pelican case, Roy checked his pockets, and luckily he still had the key. When he opened the case, he found a suppressed Ruger 22/45 with a 3x40mm pistol scope and three 15 round magazines. Digging deeper, he uncovered a double shrink-wrapped brick (500 rounds) of CCI Minimag Hollow point .22lr ammo. Underneath that was his daybag that had a larger version of his emergency kit, including a larger First Aid Kit including some more Advil, Vitamins, Benedryl, and some salves and lotions that would come in handy. The most useful thing he found was a bow saw with a set of 6 blades: 1 bone saw, and 5 wood blades. These blades were over 2 feet long, and would make cutting logs from trees much easier. He surveyed the contents of his daybag, and it was mostly more of the stuff he already had, but it included a 90oz Camelback water container, a large Voyager water filter and a spare cartridge. He had a Cold Steel Voyager folding knife, which would take some wear and tear off his Bowie, also a full set of mess gear. The two most important ingredients were a SF First Aid manual, and a paperback copy of Edible Plants of North America - with several pages tabbed with post-its. The pleasant surprise was the packets of instant coffee and creamer, a half-dozen tea bags, 2 dozen packets of sugar, extra dehydrated food and spices. He had Rice, Oatmeal, dehydrated chicken-noodle soup, a Ziploc bag full of beef and chicken ramen soup base packets, a hiker's seasoning kit, and 2 35mm film cans full of salt and a 35mm film can full of pepper. Digging deeper, he found an old Good News for Modern Man that Susan must have packed for him. He opened the cover, and she had written a note inside.

Dear Roy:

I hope these words bring you comfort and peace. Know that I love you always, and we will be together forever. Don't give up hope!

Love,

Susan

When Roy finished crying, he dried his eyes, and looking up, he said "Thanks Susan - I love you too, and I know we'll be together again in Heaven!"

At this point Oliver walked over, and was nuzzling Roy since he wasn't petting him. Roy reached down and began petting Oliver, then sat down and buried his face in Oliver's fur. Oliver didn't know what to think about all the strange behavior, but he sensed Roy needed him, and sat down next to him.

When Roy finally regained his composure, he put all the stuff back in the bag except the camelback, which he filled with water, dumped it out and re-filled it. He put the daypack on his back since it would ride there better than on the travois, walked over to the clay deposit, dug enough clay for his project and a little more just in case, mixed in some sand, then picked up the travois and headed home.

Chapter 27 - Christmas comes early

When Roy got home, he totally forgot about making pottery, and put the waterproof River Runner bag on the floor next to his table, and started inventorying the contents.

First of all there was the Ruger 22/45 with the integral Ares suppressor. He remembered when he bought it - that was a day to remember. He was going Yard Shopping with Susan since it was her favorite activity, and He usually scored some good stuff, especially hand cranked antique appliances that would work without power. He always made a point to check any firearms they had to offer. One day they were going to a yard sale that was also an Estate Sale, since the widow was selling her husband's extensive gun collection - she didn't want them around, she always secretly despised guns, and barely tolerated her husband's obsession with them. Roy walked up to the young widow (she was 55 years old if that.) and asked where she had the guns - she pointed to a stack over in the corner, told him to help himself, she didn't know anything about guns, didn't want to touch them, and told him the sooner they were gone, the better she'd feel. He looked through the collection, and this guy had a very unusual collection. He had several Class III weapons, including a FA suppressed Ingram MAC-9 in 9mm, and a Stainless Ruger 22/45 with an integral Ares suppressor and 3 mags in a pelican case. It looked practically brand new. He picked up the case with the 22/45, and closed it, and looked for some other deals. He spotted a S&W .44 Magnum in stainless that looked like it had been fired but well maintained, and picked that up as well. His biggest score was a Remington 7mm with a 3-12x60 Leupold scope all stainless that looked like it had never been fired. By that time other Gun Nuts had showed up, so Roy took his stuff to the widow, and asked how much she wanted. She said "Whatever - I don't care!" He asked her if she'd take \$300.00 in cash. She looked at the rifles, and the cash, and took the cash without asking for his driver's license or anything. He picked up his stuff, and put it in the truck. When Susan came back, they got everything in the back, and He drove off. When they got home, Susan asked Roy what he had bought. Roy was grinning from ear to ear when he told her he'd scored about 3 thousand dollars worth of guns for 300 dollars! Best of all- he was taking guns from an anti-gunner who wanted to get rid of them! Susan was seriously interested at that time, and Roy showed her the haul.

Later that week, He placed a call to an internet sporting goods store to purchase a Pachmyr Decelerator grip for the 22/45 that covered the back strap so he could shoot it in cold weather and a 3x40 pistol scope with a weaver mount. Since He was a machinist, he took the receiver to his shop, drilled and tapped it for the weaver mount, and installed the scope when they showed up. Roy took the paperless 22/45 to a remote shooting area and sighted the pistol in and zeroed it for 50 yards. Then he purchased a Kydex shoulder holster for the 22/45, and a offside mag carrier. Later when he packed the pistol to go on his trip, the Ticket Agent didn't even look at it twice. She saw the little hole in the end of the barrel, and assumed it was a .22 target pistol - which it was in a way, and checked it right through. Roy packed it in his waterproof bag, which the ticket agent sealed with a break-resistant tamper-evident tag.

Putting the 22/45 down, He continued to look at the contents of the day bag. He found a roll of stainless snare wire that would come in handy - almost 100 feet! He also had another Minimag AA flashlight and a dozen AA batteries. The firestarting kit would come in handy later if he ran out of stuff. He also found a large poly tarp that was almost 10x10, another roll of Paracord, several tent stakes and a tent mallet. The food was nice, but what he really appreciated was the spices and salt! He opened his copy of "Edible Plants of North America" and started reading - there were a lot more plants around there that he could eat, and he decided to carry the book with him until he could identify them easily. Digging deeper, He unpacked a pack of topo maps that had been vacuum sealed with a second compass. Roy opened the pack, and it was the set of topo maps that included this area - first thing tomorrow, He promised himself that he would walk out to the lake where he could see the mountains, and try to triangulate his position. He knew it was too late to try and hike out, since he'd have to hike above the snow line to make it through the passes, and right now the upper mountains were getting snow when the occasional storm rolled through. He knew these storms would be much stronger at altitude. Roy thought correctly that his best chance was right after the Spring snowmelt, when all the snow that was going to avalanche had already fallen. It would also be wise, he thought to carefully plan his route, and not necessarily take the straightest route, but the lowest and flattest. Roy could do this while he was snowbound in his cabin this winter.

He thought it would also be a good idea to make a better shovel for shoveling snow, since he was probably going to have to shovel a route out to his woodpile. Roy guessed if he kept some water in the cabin, he'd only need to melt snow to supplement it - he remembered the rule of thumb of 1/3 liquid water to 2/3 snow since snow was mostly air it needed some liquid water to melt properly. He sorted through his First Aid Kit, and noted the expiration dates on the meds were at least a year away - good thing. He found an old Penicillin prescription that had at least 20 horse pills left, and over a year to go until the expiration date. That would come in handy in case he cut himself. Roy remembered getting all his shots updated right before he left - good thing too, he didn't have access to a tetanus vaccine out here. He now had plenty of bandages, Ace wraps in case he twisted an ankle, a couple of extra large bandannas that Susan had made for him, and a couple of items that made him laugh. He remembered Susan's strange look when he asked her where the panty shields were. He had to explain that they were a great item for a FAK, since they served double duty. Susan had to admit that it made sense. The Sawyer extractor might come in handy, since he'd been allergic to bee stings. He almost jumped for joy when he uncovered an Epi pen. He didn't remember packing it - maybe Susan had put it in there - she was always looking out for him.

Chapter 28 - Making more pottery

The next morning, Roy got up and ate breakfast, then he started making the pottery he'd need to safely make tallow soap. He already had the large pots to render the fat, now he needed 2 containers to make lye from wood ash. He fashioned 2 large circles of clay about 10-12 inches in diameter, then he started rolling snakes to build up the sides. As the sides grew higher, He smoothed the sides. Finally the lower pot was big enough to hold about ½ gallon, and that was all the lye he wanted to have laying around. He carefully fashioned the lip of the lower so the upper container would be held securely with a ¾" lip covering the joint between the two containers. He built the upper container, then modified the lower container with a pour lip and a large heavy handle. Once they were made, He set them aside, and let them dry. Roy fashioned more water jars and tallow candle containers from the leftover clay. When he was done, He decided to try out his new bow saw, and cut some wood to fit the fireplace. Since the fireplace was slightly larger than 2 feet wide, he'd cut the logs to about 2 feet. He assembled the bow saw, making sure the teeth were aligned so the blade would cut on the pull, and locked it down tight. Roy walked over to the woodpile, grabbed a tree, put the end in the sawhorse he'd made, and left about 2 feet hanging out. He used his arm from his elbow to fingertips to approximate 2 feet since he knew that the fireplace was wider than his arm - he'd measured it before when he first started cutting wood.

He finally got to cutting with the bow saw, and it only took less than a minute to saw through the log. At this rate, he'd have the whole pile cut up within a week. Roy said a silent prayer of Thanksgiving for the saw, and moved the tree 2 feet further up the line. Within minutes, the entire tree had been cut into fireplace sized logs. He threw the next tree up, and had that cut in a matter of minutes. The logs were starting to pile up, so He started a pile of sawn logs next to the cabin door. By the end of the day, the pile next to the door was almost 6 feet high, 6 feet wide, and about 8 feet long. He looked at the pile of wood he'd cut, and was amazed. Roy whistled for Oliver, and the two of them went into the cabin. He gave Oliver a piece of fish, Roy ate a piece of jerky and drank some water. After petting Oliver, He lay down and went to sleep. The next morning, Roy finished the wood he had felled, and had a huge pile of cut logs for the fireplace. Once the pottery had fully dried, He split some logs to act as a base for the pottery, and carefully laid the pottery on the base. Roy made small fires inside the larger pots, and arranged the wood around the pots in a teepee. He lit the fire, then carefully monitored the fire, adding wood, and moving logs to keep the fire burning evenly.

When the fire had burned down to coals, He went into the cabin, put on his shoulder holster with the 22/45 and the spare mags, picked up his daybag with the full camelback and walked down to the lake to fill his water containers, and check the margins of the lake for edible plants. Roy filled his water containers, then looked around at the flora and fauna. Seeing several plants that matched the descriptions in the book, he picked them and took them home to try them out. He picked some more cattails, since he knew that the whole plant was usable. He was heading back when he ran into Oliver, and Oliver was panting heavily and favoring his right front paw.

Roy dropped his pack, called Oliver over, and noticed he had a torn and bleeding paw. He wondered what had happened. He took Oliver over to the lake, washed his cut paw, broke out the first aid kit, cleaned and bandaged the wound. Oliver was amazingly patient, even as Roy used a Betadine wipe to disinfect the wound. He put some Neosporin on a bandage, and wrapped it with roller gauze, and some duct tape so Oliver wouldn't chew it off. Once they were done cleaning the wound, Oliver limped back to the cabin with Roy watching carefully for whatever caused Oliver's wound. As they got closer to the cabin, He spotted a blood trail, unholstered his Ruger 22/45, cycled the action to load the chamber, and took the safety off. Oliver's hackles were up, and as Roy got closer to the edge of the forest, Oliver growled deep in his chest. At the end of the blood trail was a wounded wolverine! As the wolverine turned to attack, Roy put 2 quick rounds into the wolverine, and it finally succumbed. He waited several minutes to make sure the wolverine was truly dead, and then poked it with a stick. Seeing no reaction, He bent down to pick up the body and took it home to skin it.

Roy carried the wolverine the 20 yards to the cabin, set the body on the porch, dropped the pack on the floor, and picked up his Ulu to skin the wolverine. When he had it skinned, he proceeded to gut it and remove the meat. He spread the skin out to dry, and gave all the innards and most of the meat to Oliver, since he was wounded by the same wolverine and needed the food to get well. When Oliver finished eating, Roy put the wolverine skin on the smokehouse roof to dry, and walked into the cabin, threw the meat into the stewpot, added the cattails and some other plants he knew tasted OK, then set down to pet Oliver. "Glad you're OK, you keep tangling with wolverines, and you're going to wind up as a Dead Oliver." Oliver seemed to understand, and licked Roy's hand. After a while, He checked the stewpot, and took a taste. "Glad I have those seasoning packets." He added a beef ramen seasoning packet to the stew, tasted it again, and it was much better. He spooned some stew into his canteen cup, and ate it up while Oliver laid on the floor. When he was finished, he drank some water and went to bed. Oliver fell asleep where he was, on his bearskin rug.

Chapter 29 - Firing pottery

When He awoke, Oliver was still laying on his side. Roy checked him, and he was OK, just sleeping. When He got up, Oliver rolled over but didn't stand immediately. Roy bent over to check the bandage, the wound had stopped bleeding, so He took off the duct tape, unwound the bandage, and carefully removed the pad. There was some blood in the pad, but the wound was healing nicely, and didn't look infected. Since he had his main kit, decided to re-bandage Oliver's wound with a fresh bandage and Neosporin. Roy re-used the roller gauze, since it wasn't sterile anyway, and put a fresh piece of duct tape over the bandage to hold it in place. Roy decided the best thing for Oliver was to stay around the cabin for a few days. Roy ate some jerky, washed it down with a canteen of water, went outside to cut some logs to build another bonfire to fire all the pottery pieces he'd made after he glazed them with slip. Roy picked up the scrap of bearskin to brush some slip on the fired pieces to waterproof them, then he left them to dry while he chopped some more wood while he had the time. Roy thought about what happened to Oliver yesterday, walked back in the cabin, slid into his shoulder holster, ejected the mag, replaced it with a full one, and put the 22/45 back in the Kydex holster. Suitably armed, Roy grabbed his bow saw, told Oliver to stay - Oliver looked up at him to say, "OK, whatever you say, I'll just lay here." and promptly sacked out. With that Roy closed the door, and walked over to his stack of downed trees, picked up the largest one and set the end on his sawhorse so about 2 feet stuck out. Roy started sawing, and within a minute or so, the cut log was laying on the ground. Roy quickly made work of the tree, then sawed several more in the next couple of hours. Roy was running out of room, so he started stacking logs on the pile next to the cabin door. By now, he had a stack almost as high as the door top, so he decided to start stacking it on the other side of the door. Roy figured the stacked logs would be close enough for him to grab during the winter without having to risk freezing, and they would keep drifted snow away from the door. Roy thought better of that, and decided to use the wood stack as a windbreak, and stack them on the windward side of the door, and gradually fan the wood out away from the door, so any drifting snow would be deflected by the stack of wood, and help keep the door clear. Luckily the windward side of the door matched the hinge side, and the door opened out, so as long as the snow didn't pack in front of the door, he'd be able to get out, and hopefully he wouldn't have to shovel as much snow. Roy walked inside to check on Oliver, and he was up and wanting to go out. Roy let Oliver out, keeping a close watch on him. Oliver didn't seem to limp as much as yesterday as he trotted off to do his business. A couple of minutes later, Oliver walked back to the cabin, Roy decided Oliver would need a dog bowl for water this winter, so he gave Oliver one of the bowls he'd made earlier, and filled it full of water. Oliver noisily lapped up the water, and grinned like "Thanks, that hit the spot!"

Roy checked the pottery, and it was bone dry - time for the second firing. Roy cut some sawn logs in quarters, and arranged them as a raft to carry the pottery, then built a teepee bonfire around it. Roy lit the fire, and carefully tended it until it was a roaring bonfire. Once it was going well, Roy went inside to take a nap and eat lunch. After lunch, Roy was back to chopping, sawing and stacking the wood. By the time he was done that evening, he had a huge

pile of wood stacked up in front of the cabin - any snowstorm was going to have to try real hard to snow him in. Right before nightfall, Roy checked the pottery, and it had cooled enough for him to pick it up and check it out. Both pieces were well glazed, and had no visible cracks. Roy hoped the holes he'd punched with a large needle were big enough to work, he figured that he'd find out when he tried it. Roy scooped up some sand, poured it in the bottom of the upper container until it covered the bottom about an inch deep. Roy then scooped shovelfuls of dry clean ash into the container, carefully packing it down, then he set both pieces on the table, and put the pieces together, they fit like a glove, but not too tight. Roy soaked the ashes with water, then added some more water until the ashes were saturated. Roy left the containers to percolate overnight. He checked on Oliver, who was obviously sleeping since his legs and tail were twitching - Oliver must be having doggie dreams again. Roy ate some jerky, drank some water, and went to bed.

Chapter 30 First Attempts

When Roy got up, Oliver was already up and looking right in his eyes - It was a little disconcerting to wake up nose to nose with a Wolf! Roy reached out his right hand, and carefully patted Oliver's head. Oliver licked Roy's hand and sat down. Roy swung his feet out of the bed, and took a look at Oliver's bandage. It didn't look bloody or dirty, so he thought he'd leave it on today, and check it tomorrow. Roy walked over to his food box, and grabbed a piece of smoked salmon, fed it to Oliver, and ate a piece of moose jerky then drank some water. Roy checked the pot that he was using to make lye, thought better of it, opened the door to let Oliver out, then closed the door. He carefully lifted the upper pot, and sure enough, there was about 2 cups of liquid in the bottom chamber. The upper chamber was not dripping anymore, and Roy felt safe dumping the contents and refilling with fresh ash. Roy thought he'd have to cycle the water through the ash 3 or 4 times to get the required concentration of lye. Roy carefully walked the container over to his garbage pile and dumped it. The garbage began to smolder almost immediately, and Roy walked away quickly to avoid inhaling the fumes. Roy refilled the sand in the bottom of the container, and added enough ash to fill the container within an inch of the top. When he got back inside, Roy took the lower container, poured it into the upper, and quickly put it back under to catch the drippings. Just as Roy got the containers together, the upper started dripping into the lower chamber. Roy felt if he left it alone for the rest of the day, it would be just about done.

While he was waiting, he thought he should chop some more wood. Before he set foot outside, Roy put on his shoulder holster with the 22/45 and 2 spare clips. He decided from now on, if he were to go more than 20 feet from the cabin, he was going to carry either his fanny pack or his daybag as well - he'd been lucky so far, but the whole reason for having the emergency gear is that you never know when an emergency could happen. Roy thought about it for a second, and decided to buckle on his fanny pack as well, just to be on the safe side. Then he took the 22/45 out of its holster, dropped the mag, topped off all the mags to make sure they were fully loaded, reloaded the gun, cycled the action, engaged the safety, topped off the mag, holstered it, and stuck the 2 fully loaded mags in the off-side mag carrier. Roy walked outside, called Oliver, who trotted out of the woods with a rabbit in his mouth, and looked at Roy like "don't bug me while I'm eating, OK!" Oliver dropped the dead rabbit, and proceeded to eat it whole. Roy was fascinated and grossed out by the sight of Oliver killing and eating an animal, just like a Wolf was supposed to do. Seeing Oliver was OK and preoccupied, Roy picked up his axe, trudged off to the stand of trees, and proceeded to drop a bunch of them. By the time Roy took his lunch break, Oliver was laying on the dirt in front of the cabin taking a doggie nap. As Roy approached the cabin, Oliver rolled over and got up. Roy walked inside, grabbed a piece of jerky, poured some water into his canteen cup, and sat down to enjoy lunch. Before he had eaten, he remembered he hadn't said Grace. With a heavy heart, Roy realized he hadn't prayed since Susan had appeared to him. Roy fell to his knees, and just started talking to God, thanking him for saving his life, for bringing him Oliver to keep him company and protect him, and for the bounty of the food he had provided. When he was finished, he got up, washed his hands, ate

his lunch, drank his water, and laid down for a short nap. About an hour later, Roy got up, put his gear on, opened the cabin door to let Oliver out, and went back to chopping wood. He cut the limbs off the trees he'd felled, and by nightfall he had almost 20 trees ready to cut into logs. Roy whistled for Oliver, who came running back to him. When he caught up to Roy, they went into the cabin together. Roy made a fire in the fireplace since it was cool out, waited while the stew warmed up, and petted Oliver. Oliver's paw looked better than the previous day, and he didn't seem to be limping at all. When the stew was hot, Roy scooped some into a new clay pottery bowl and ate with the spoon he had in his kit. Roy felt more civilized since he was eating with regular utensils and bowls. The Stew still tasted like last week's hash though. When he finished, Roy let Oliver clean the bowl, then he rinsed it out, and put it up. Then he fed Oliver and went to bed.

Chapter 31 Chop till you Drop!

Roy got up early, put on his shoulder holster and belted on his fanny pack. He picked up his bow saw, grabbed a piece of jerky and headed out the door to saw some logs. Roy dropped the saw next to the saw horse, grabbed his drag setup, and started dragging trees over by the saw horse. When he had all the downed trees dragged over to the sawhorse, he sat down to eat breakfast and catch his breath. When he was finished, he lifted the first tree into the sawhorse, picked up his bow saw, and started sawing the tree into about 2 ft sections. He was able to work much faster now that he had the right equipment, although a gas powered chain saw would be real nice right now. When he had a large stack built up, he moved them to a spot he'd picked out yesterday, near the front door, and downwind of the cabin so snow wouldn't accumulate too fast on it. Between the windbreak of logs next to the door, and the cabin itself, very few breezes were felt where he started the new log pile. When he got the area around the sawhorse cleared out, he grabbed another tree and started cutting it into logs. Roy took another break around lunchtime, and Oliver came trotting out of the woods as Roy headed into the cabin. Roy looked at Oliver and said, "What do you think you're doing, you big Mooch!" Oliver walked right up to Roy and started nuzzling him, clearly Oliver wanted to play. Roy bent down, picked up a stick, and threw it about 50 ft away, and yelled, "Fetch Oliver!" Oliver stood there looking at Roy like "Duh - I'm a WOLF, Remember!" Roy started to laugh, "Guess Wolves don't fetch?" Oliver looked at him like he was thinking "No, and we don't do windows either, but if you want me to, I might be able to round us up a rabbit!" Roy walked into the cabin, shaking his head and laughing.

He walked over to the "science project" as he called it, and saw the ashes were pretty dry. He carefully picked up the upper container, walked over to the trash pile, dumped the wet ashes into the trash, and watched the trash smolder. He then added some more sand to the pot, and filled it full of ashes. Roy carefully picked up the container full of weak lye, and poured it quickly into the ashes, set the pot on top, and made sure the containers were secure. As he watched, the water started dripping into the lower container fairly steadily. Roy washed his hands, grabbed a piece of jerky, and a small piece of fish for Oliver, sat on the bed, and fed Oliver his lunch while he chewed on his jerky. Roy emptied his canteen, finished his jerky, and re-fastening his fanny pack, grabbed the daypack to re-fill the camelback unit and his other water containers. As Roy went to the door, Oliver got up and followed Roy out of the cabin. They hiked to the lake and Roy filled his canteen, his camelback, and his other water containers, then turned around and hiked back to the cabin. As they were walking back, Roy noticed Oliver staring into the brush, and saw the big long ears of a huge rabbit. Roy pulled his 22/45, and dispatched the rabbit with one shot to the head. Roy slit the rabbit's throat, and carried the carcass back to the cabin so he could clean it. "Looks like we're having Rabbit Stew for dinner!" Roy reached down to pet Oliver and said "Thanks Boy!" As they reached the cabin, Roy opened the door, and dropped all his gear in the corner, then proceeded to skin and gut the rabbit. As usual, Oliver got his share of the Rabbit, and Roy put the leg muscles and other big pieces of meat into the stew pot. When he was done skinning the rabbit, he took the skin and

set it on top of the smokehouse to dry. Then he went back to sawing logs for the rest of the day. They had rabbit stew for dinner, and Roy even gave Oliver some. Roy petted Oliver for a while after dinner, then rolled into bed and went to sleep.

Chapter 32 - Roy makes Soap

Roy woke up, checked Oliver's paw, and took off the bandage. Oliver's paw was almost totally healed. Roy left it uncovered so Oliver could walk freely and use the foot. Roy checked his pot of lye, and saw the ashes were dry again. Lifting off the upper container, the lower container was full, and had a strong odor to it. He took a thin piece of moosehide, dipped it in the liquid, and it immediately started smoking, and was dissolved before he could pull it out of the solution. Roy figured that was good enough to make soap with. Roy thought about a cup of lye to a pot of tallow would be a good start, and he had several cups in the lower container. He took the wet ashes over to the garbage pile and dumped it out, then took it back inside the cabin to cover the lye. Roy then took the pot with the feet out to where he had been firing pots, and set a fire underneath the pot. Before he lit it, he took about a pound of fat, and an equal amount of water, and added it to the pot, leaving a couple of inches from the top. Roy lit the fire, and waited until the water boiled, and started stirring. After about an hour, he let the fire go out, waited until the fat had cooled, and added what he thought was about the amount of water that was boiled off, so the clean fat would congeal on the surface. Roy decided to leave the pot right where it was overnight, and check it in the morning. Roy picked up his axe, and started chopping some more wood, since he was going to need a long hot fire to make soap. He finished chopping wood that evening, and left the trees where they fell. He checked on the pot, and the fat was starting to congeal. The fat would be well congealed by the morning. Roy called Oliver, who came running from the forest. Roy opened the cabin door, let Oliver in, and sat down by the fireplace to eat dinner. Oliver sat down in front of Roy, and waited until Roy took a piece of dried fish out and fed it to him, then went and laid down. Roy scooped some of the leftover rabbit stew out of the pot. For some reason, the stew was almost edible today. Roy decided to say Grace since he actually had something to be thankful for. After petting Oliver for a while, Roy went to bed.

The next morning, Roy got up and went out to check on the pot of rendered fat. There was a layer of creamy white fat on the surface, that Roy carefully removed, then dumped the contents of the pot on the garbage pile. Roy picked up the piece of congealed rendered fat, added it back to the pot, set the pot on the fire ring, and started laying a fire, then lit it. As the fat melted, Roy walked into the cabin, carefully picked up the container full of what appeared to be a brownish liquid, and carried it to the fire. Once the fat was melted, Roy carefully added about a cup of lye to the fat, and started stirring. Immediately, the fat started to trace, and change color. Roy kept stirring for hours as the pot continued to boil and foam. About 6 hours later, the mass had the consistency of jell-O, and he guessed that it was now soap, so he let the fire die and the mass of stuff cool. Roy decided to call it a day, and picked up the container of lye to keep it in the cabin where it was safe. They ate dinner, and then went to bed.

The next morning, Roy was surprised to find a slippery brown gel at the bottom of the pot. Roy thought that when he was done, it would look like Ivory Soap. Roy scooped some of it out, added some water, and rubbed his hands together, and presto - suds. Roy was very happy, now

he and Oliver could take a real bath. Since the pot was already wrecked for doing anything else in it, Roy took the whole pot back inside, and set it on the floor next to the front door in the corner. Roy grabbed his gun and fanny pack, scooped up some more soap and put it in a small cup, and they walked down to the lake. "Oh boy Oliver, you're in for a treat now!" When they got to the lake, Roy built a fire in the fire ring, stripped off his grungy clothes, and called Oliver over to him. Oliver figured what was up, but Roy gave him a look and he decided it was easier not to fight him. The two of them splashed around in the frigid water, and Roy grabbed the cup of soap, and started rubbing it all over himself and Oliver. Oliver didn't know what to think of the bubbles, and tried snapping at them until one burst in his mouth - He didn't like that taste one bit! Roy quickly rinsed off Oliver, then dunked under the water to clean himself off. Then they ran over to the fire and warmed up. When he was sufficiently warm, Roy took the soap, and washed his clothes. When he was finished, he hung them to dry over the drying rack in front of the fire. Oliver stretched out, smelling like a wet dog, and Roy wrapped himself back up in his Mylar blanket, and took a nap. A couple of hours later, Roy woke up, checked his clothes, and they were dry, so he put them back on. They walked back to the cabin, and Roy treated Oliver to a big piece of smoked salmon.

Chapter 33- Hunting Again!

After he was all clean and well rested, Roy took a look at his list, and his food storage. It would be nice to have another Caribou or two before winter - he could use the meat and tallow, and the skins would make clothes to wear during the winter. Roy walked outside, took a look at the woodpile, and thought he had enough for a while, so he decided he'd go hunting the next day, and spend today getting ready. He thoroughly cleaned his flintlock, sharpened the flint with the file, checked on his balls and patches (he had 10 of each ready to go), loaded his powder horn with 11 measured loads of powder, cleaned out the flash hole of his rifle, packed a bag full of jerky. Then he walked down to the lake to fill up his canteen, camelback, and other water containers. As usual, Oliver trotted right along with him. When they got back, Roy cleaned and re-loaded the mags for his pistol as well. Roy thought 3 15-rd magazines were enough for this trip since he had the flintlock, and left the rest of the ammo at the cabin. Roy packed all the stuff into his daybag, and was ready to go the next morning. Since he had time, Roy walked outside and spent the rest of the day sawing wood. When the sun went down, all the trees he had felled the previous day were now cut into 2 ft lengths and stacked against the cabin for the winter. He called Oliver when he opened the cabin door, and Oliver came running. Roy fed Oliver a piece of dried salmon, and he ate some more stew, then he played with Oliver for a while, and went to bed.

The next morning at first light, Roy got up, checked his gear, put on his shoulder holster, his daybag with his possibles bag and everything else he needed, and his fanny pack around his waist, then slung the flintlock over his shoulder. By now Oliver was wide awake, so Roy gave him a piece of dried salmon, and he ate a piece of jerky before opening the door. As soon as he was outside, he took a bearing to the "happy hunting ground" where he found the caribou last, and headed off to bag some more caribou. As he headed East, Oliver trotted along side, knowing in a few days if they were lucky, he'd have a very full belly. Roy easily made it to their first night's camping site from the previous trips, made camp and started a fire. Roy chewed a piece of jerky, and Oliver ate a small piece of fish, then walked over to the stream and drank his fill, then he laid down next to Roy while he scratched his ears. As it got dark, it was much colder than Roy remembered, and he broke out his jacket and his Mylar sleeping bag. soon he was nice and warm, and fell to sleep next to Oliver.

The next morning when Roy woke up, Oliver was missing! He looked around, and spotted Oliver off watering a tree. Roy whistled for Oliver, who trotted right over. Roy gave him another small piece of smoked salmon, which Oliver wolfed down, then he trotted over to the stream and tanked up. Roy ate a piece of jerky, then drank his canteen and walked over to the stream and filled it up upstream of where Oliver drank from. When he was finished, Roy broke camp, repacked his bags and saddled up. He took a bearing with his compass, then struck out for his second day of hiking, hopefully he'd reach his hunting grounds today. As he walked, Roy had plenty of time to reflect on his life, and what he had done so far in Alaska. Roy felt OK, knowing that even if he didn't make it, he'd probably be with a friend when he died, and

stopped to pet Oliver.

As soon as he stopped, Oliver's ears went up and he alerted to something off the trail to their left. Roy quickly unslung his flintlock and cocked the action. Oliver growled, and a large bear reared up no more than 40 yards away. Roy thought a bear would be just as nice as a couple of Caribou, and not as far to walk, so he quickly kneeled and braced the rifle for a shot at the bear. As the sight steadied on the bear's chest, Roy squeezed the first trigger, then held his breath and gently touched the second trigger. The gun went off with a roar, and the bear made it a couple of steps toward them before collapsing at the edge of the woods. Roy quickly reloaded his flintlock just in case, but the bear was down permanently. Roy called Oliver over to his side, and praised him and petted him "Well Done, Oliver! You not only saved my life again, you saved us a couple of days hiking!" Roy walked over to the bear, and poked it with the rifle, but the bear was deader than a doornail. It was a huge male grizzly bear, and was very fat - Roy guessed he'd interrupted the bear while he was eating to prepare for the long winter's nap. Roy took out his Frontier Bowie, slit the bear's throat to bleed it out, then took his Ulu and started skinning and gutting the bear. When he was finished, he gave Oliver all the offal he didn't want, and walked over to a bunch of trees, and chopped a couple down to make a travois. He wanted to drag the bear back to the stream so he could use the water to help clean the bear. Roy quickly made a travois, then loaded the bear onto it, picked it up and started back to his other campground just a few miles back.

Roy reached the campground just before dark, dropped the travois, cleaned the skin and rinsed it off, then cracked the bear's skull to brain tan it. After rinsing his hands, Roy set about butchering the meat, removing the sinews and large fat deposits as well as the heart, kidneys, liver, intestines and stomach. Just as it was getting dark, Roy started a fire and roasted some bear meat for dinner. The next morning, Roy finished his butchering tasks, loaded the meat and other stuff he wanted back onto the travois while Oliver wolfed down the pile of stuff Roy had left him. When Oliver was finished eating, Roy picked up the much lighter travois and headed back to the cabin. They made it just before dark, so Roy took the skin and laid it over the smokehouse roof to dry, and brought the meat, etc. into the cabin and set it on the table. Roy was so tired that he decided to eat a piece of jerky and go right to bed.

The next morning, Roy finished butchering the bear meat, and sliced it into strips to make jerky. He put the bear fat into a large pot to render later. He walked outside the cabin to put the meat in the smokehouse, and Oliver practically ran him down in his haste to go relieve himself. Roy got the smokehouse door open, then came back inside the cabin and took arm loads of bear meat to hang inside the smokehouse. When he was finished loading the smokehouse, Roy lit a small smoky fire inside the smokehouse, closed the door, pulled the now dry bearskin off the roof, rolled it up, then grabbed his shoulder holster, fanny pack, and water containers, then set off for the lake. Oliver's belly was full, but he tagged along anyway. When they reached the lake, Roy filled his water containers first, then cleaned the bearskin. He carried the bearskin back to the cabin, put it back on the smokehouse roof to dry, went inside and transferred the soap to a smaller container, and took the pot outside and set it in the fire ring he used to make pottery. He

set a fire underneath the pot, and added 1/3 of the pot full of water, then added the bear fat. When the water started boiling, he stirred it occasionally, then left it boiling on the fire. Roy walked over to the wood pile, picked up his axe, set a log on end, and split it with a single stroke of the axe. Roy split about 1/4 of the wood he had sawed that day, and stacked it in a separate pile closer to the cabin. When he was finished, he checked the pot of bear fat. The fire had gone out and the fat was starting to congeal. Roy left the pot sitting where it was until morning, when the layer of clear fat would harden. Roy checked the smokehouse, rearranged the strips of bear meat, and stoked the fire. Roy checked the bearskin, but decided to leave it for now since it didn't appear to be totally dry. Since it was starting to grow dark, Roy called Oliver and they went inside the cabin together. Oliver just laid down instead of mooching for food, so Roy thought he was still stuffed with the leftovers of the bear. Roy ate some stew, sat down to pet Oliver, then picked up his Bible and started reading Corinthians. Roy read a couple of chapters, and as the fire died down, put the Bible back up, rolled over and went to sleep.

Chapter 33 Time to build a snow shovel

Roy got up, and let Oliver out, ate breakfast, then checked his checklist. Then he remembered that he might need to shovel some snow if it drifted in front of the cabin door. Roy picked up his fanny pack and shoulder holster, and grabbed the bow saw. He walked outside, picked up the axe, then took a hike to a spot about 100 yards behind the cabin where some bigger hardwood trees grew. When Roy found a suitable tree, he started to chop it down. When it was finally down, Roy cut a 6 foot section out of it, then carefully split the log in half, and cut a 4 inch section out of the middle of it, leaving an 18 inch wide plank 4 inches thick and 6 feet long. Roy took his Gerber tool knife and scribed 2 parallel lines about 6 inches apart and 3 feet long. Roy took the bow saw and cut both lines out, then turned the plank 90 degrees, and cut to the base of the line, leaving a 3ft by 18 inch rectangle and a 3 ft long handle. Roy cut a pair of triangles out of the scraps to make braces for the shovel, and then picked all the pieces up and carried it back to the cabin. When he got back, Roy set the pieces of wood on the cabin's table, then checked on the fat, which had congealed. Roy lifted the fat out, and carried the pot to the garbage heap, and dumped the pot. Roy put the congealed fat back in the pot, and left it near the fire ring. Roy went inside the cabin and took some leather scraps, fitted the triangular braces to the junction of the handle and the shovel, then wrapped it with leather and tied it off with sinew. Roy took it outside and poured some water onto the leather so it would shrink and tighten up, and make the junction much stronger. Roy put the shovel in the corner, and picked up the clay containers he had made for tallow candles, and set them on the table. Roy smacked his forehead - he'd forgot the wicks. Rummaging around, Roy found an old cotton handkerchief in his pants pocket, and had a flash of inspiration - He could cut wicks out of the cotton handkerchief. Roy got out his Gerber tool again, and using the scissors, cut 4x 1/2-inch strips of cloth from one corner of the material, until he had enough to make wicks for each of the candles. Roy curled them into thin ropes, and set them aside. Roy went outside and built a fire under the pot with the clean fat in it, and lit it. As soon as the fat had melted, Roy picked up the pot carefully, and carried it back into the cabin, where he poured melted fat into the containers, and waited until they cooled to stick wicks into them. Roy grabbed the tin of patch lube out of his possibles bag, and filled it with the rest of the melted Bear Grease. Roy poured the remainder into another container for other projects. Roy left the candle containers to cool, but cleaned up the rest of the cabin, putting everything in its place.

Roy checked his watch, and he had plenty of time left, so he went outside again, checked the smokehouse, rearranged the meat and removed the bear meat that was done, sticking it in his meat box. Roy then took down the bearskin to check and see if it was dry. The skin was dry, and didn't have hardly any odor. Roy now had 3 bear skins, 3 caribou skins, a moose skin, a wolverine and some rabbit and squirrel pelts, plus all the sinews and some caribou antler Roy kept for projects. Roy re-stacked the pelts in a pile in the corner, and checked his list - He needed some snowshoes. Roy went outside to his woodpile, and picked 2 long supple branches that were between 1/2 and 1 inch thick, and bent them into a large oval, and tied them with some Paracord. Roy had a couple of miscellaneous pieces of moose hide left over from projects, and

they were just big enough to fit inside the hoops with room to spare. Roy cut some wide straps from the same hide to strap his foot into, located the strap in the center of the loop, and sewed them to the covers with sinew. Roy then laced the covers to the frames using some more sinew, and Roy finished the first one just as the sun was setting. Roy had a fire going, since it was getting colder, and he needed to decide if he really needed to hunt again, since the caribou were just about ready to take off for their winter range. Roy checked the larder, and it was almost full, and he still had over half the bear meat still in the smoker. Roy wanted to make some clothes for the winter, but guessed 3 skins would be enough for a tunic, pants, and boots. Roy wanted to have warm feet this winter, so he had been saving all the rabbit pelts he had taken, and he was sure he had enough to line a knee-high pair of lace-up Apache style moccasins. Roy thought he could really use another Caribou or two, so he re-packed his gear, added some more jerky to his bag, and got his stuff organized for another hunting trip. Roy called Oliver inside, and they sat down while Roy petted Oliver and Roy ate. When he was done eating, he gave the leftovers to Oliver, since the stew was starting to turn. Oliver gobbled the entire bowl full down in a minute, then walked over to Roy and lay down next to him. Roy got up, sat on the bed, and got ready to go to sleep. Roy petted Oliver, then rolled over and went to sleep.

Chapter 34 - One Last Try for Caribou

As soon as Roy got up, he put on all the stuff he carried last time he went hunting, grabbed his rifle, woke up Oliver, made sure the fire was out, dragged Oliver out of the cabin, shut the door, and walked to the lake to re-fill his canteen and camelback. When he had everything (including himself and Oliver) full of water, he took a compass bearing to his first overnight camping spot and started walking. He set a fast pace, because he knew Oliver would let him know if any large predators were roaming about in his path. He made his first campsite with several hours to spare, so he made camp, got a fire started, and set out some snares just in case. Even though he had his 22/45 with him, he wanted to conserve ammo since he only had 45 rounds on him, and let the snares work for him. Roy and Oliver sat by the fire and played. Oliver's favorite game was "tug of war" and he was the reigning champion. Roy learned long ago to let Oliver win after a lengthy struggle, or Oliver would keep playing until he won, besides it wasn't real smart to get a wolf mad at you. As the light failed, Roy fed Oliver a piece of smoked salmon, and he ate a piece of jerky - tasted like squirrel, but he had lost track since he had so many different animal meats in his box. Roy worried about his teeth eating all this jerky, but he figured that if his teeth got sore, he could cut it into small pieces with his knife, and let the meat soften in his mouth until it was easily chewed. Just before it got full dark, Roy opened his Mylar sleeping bag, slid inside it as Oliver curled up next to him, and went to sleep.

When Roy got up the next morning, he found a couple of large rabbits caught in his snares. He quickly skinned and gutted the rabbits, and roasted the meat over his fire. He shared the meat with Oliver, but Oliver got more than his share since Roy wasn't about to eat SOME parts of the Rabbit. Roy rolled the skins up and stuffed them in his bag, broke camp, made sure the fire was OUT, re-packed and buckled on his gear, grabbed the rifle, took a compass bearing to his next stop - hopefully he could reach the Caribou hunting grounds with enough light left to shoot, and set off at a rapid pace. Oliver trotted right along, and soon they were to the ridge just before the caribou grounds. Since they had a couple of hours left, Roy pushed ahead, cleared the ridge, and while it wasn't as packed as before, there still were some caribou in the clearing ahead. Roy stalked down the hill, trying to make as little noise as possible. Oliver was in "hunting mode" as well when he smelled the caribou - Roy was thankful the wind was in his face, so the caribou didn't smell Oliver's scent. As Roy reached his old shooting position, a few elderly bulls wandered within 50 yards or so of the edge of the clearing. While they weren't prime bulls, Roy was there for meat and hides, so he sat behind the log and got his possibles bag out and had another shot ready to load, Oliver laid down next to him, and Roy sighted in on the first big bull. Roy steadied his breathing, then clicked the first trigger, held his breath as the front sight settled on the bull's heart, and squeezed the second trigger. The gun went off with a roar, and as the smoke cleared, Roy could see the bull was down for good. Spotting a nearby bull that was just standing around feeding like nothing had happened, Roy quickly reloaded, cocked the hammer, got into a stable shooting position again, settled the front sight on the second bull, squeezed the first trigger, held his breath, and as the sight settled on the heart of the second bull, gently squeezed the second trigger, and again the gun worked perfectly. Roy reloaded again

just in case, but by now the herd had spooked and wandered off out of shooting range. Roy thought of the Military Sniper book he read years ago - "One Shot, One Kill" and thought "It really does work that way when you do things right." Roy stood up, both bulls were deader than a doornail, so he picked up his gear, and checked out the bulls. Roy slit their throats to bleed them out, then quickly gutted both bulls, throwing most of the organs into a pile for Oliver. Roy saved the stomach and intestines in case he needed them, and then started skinning both bulls. He barely got the first bull skinned when he noticed the light was failing, so he had better make camp. Roy started a fire, and set up his stuff. Oliver was still pigging out on the remainder of the bulls, so Roy didn't disturb him. Roy grabbed his canteen, washed his hands, ate some jerky, drank the rest of his canteen, slid into his Mylar bag, and went to sleep.

The next morning, Roy finished skinning both bulls, cracked open their skulls, and brain tanned their hides. Roy walked to the stream to wash his hands, then started quartering the meat. He'd wait until he got to the cabin to properly butcher it. Roy made sure he removed all the sinews from the skeleton and looked around for a few trees to fashion a travois from. Taking his hatchet, Roy quickly felled a couple of small trees, fashioned them into a travois, rolled the meat and stuff into the skins after rinsing the skins off, whistled to Oliver, grabbed his stuff, and picked up the handles of the travois and started the long trek home. He was glad that he only shot 2 caribou this time, because 3 was way too heavy. Roy got his load over the ridge, and down the other side before night fell, so he made camp in the clearing where he shot the moose earlier that year. Roy made a fire, ate some jerky, Oliver looked like he couldn't eat another bite so Roy didn't feed him, got out his Mylar bag and went to sleep.

Roy wanted to get an early start the next morning so he broke camp at dawn, packed his bags, strapped and shouldered all his gear, woke Oliver, and picked up the travois and started dragging it home again. "Oliver, I hope you're not too much of a pig this winter, because if I do this again, my arms will be so long people might mistake me for an Orangutan." Roy trudged on, and Oliver suffered silently dragging his very full belly, hoping there weren't any large sharp rocks on the trail ahead.

After a long day dragging the travois, Roy made it to his next campground, dropped the travois with a thud, drank the rest of his water, then walked over to the stream before Oliver could, filled his canteen and camelback, then walked over to his campsite and sat down. When Roy regained his strength, he got up, checked his snares, and there were 2 more very fat furry rabbits caught in his snares. "Well Oliver, I don't know if you're got room in there, but I'm having Rabbit for Dinner." Oliver looked up as if to say, "No, you go ahead, I'll just lay here. I'm too stuffed to eat another bite - Why am I such a Pig!"

Roy swiftly skinned and gutted the rabbits, leaving a pile in front of Oliver in case he changed his mind, stuck the rabbits on a stick, and roasted them over the fire. Roy got up to get some extra wood, he was cold last night, and wanted some more wood for the fire. Staying within sight of the camp, Roy gathered an armload of downed wood, carried it back to camp, turned the rabbit so it would cook evenly, and sat down to wait for dinner. A couple of hours later as it

was getting dark, Roy checked the rabbit, and he felt it was done enough, so he started cutting meat off the first rabbit, and left the second one to cook some more. When he was done, Roy tossed the rabbit carcass over to the pile in front of Oliver, who looked at it, and laid back down. When Roy finished his dinner, he got out his Mylar bag, put some more wood on the fire, slid into the bag, and went to sleep. Roy slept straight through since he knew Oliver would wake up and growl if anything showed up that he needed to know about.

The next morning, Roy noticed the pile in front of Oliver was gone, and so was Oliver. Roy looked around to find him, and not seeing him, whistled for him. A few minutes later Oliver trotted over and Roy thought Oliver had finally processed some of the food he ate, since he didn't appear as stuffed as the previous day. Oliver sat down with a big sigh of relief, and Roy checked on the Rabbit that was still cooking over the coals of his fire. The now thoroughly done rabbit was extra chewy, but Roy ate as much of it as he could, since he was going to need the energy to get home. Roy tossed the scraps to Oliver, who promptly ignored it. Roy refilled his canteen and Camelback, put out the fire and broke camp, repacked his stuff and shouldered his bags and fanny pack, grabbed the travois, and resumed his trek home. Roy felt better today, because he knew tonight he would be sleeping in a nice warm cabin with a comfortable bed. Roy thought about that, and made a mental note to sleep on one bearskin, and use the other as a blanket. If it got real cold, he'd use the Mylar bag underneath the bearskin. As he hiked home, Roy spotted a straight hardwood tree that was about 6 feet tall and about 2 inches wide. Roy immediately thought that it would make an excellent walking stick, so he dropped the travois, grabbed his hatchet, and chopped it down then cut the few branches off the tree. Roy dropped the tree on the travois, picked up his burden, and resumed his journey. This section of the trail was smoother and flat, so he made excellent time, and soon found his cabin. Dropping his load on the porch, Roy saw the door was still closed, and hoped nothing had gotten into his cabin while he was away. When he opened the door, everything was just as he left it. Roy quickly got a fire going, walked out to unload the travois, picked up his new hiking stick, and walked with Oliver down to the lake to refill his water containers, which were now empty. By the time he got back, it was getting dark, so Roy decided to butcher and jerk the meat in the morning.

Chapter 35 - Getting ready for winter

When Roy woke up, he noticed it was much colder, and started a fire as soon as he got up. Poor Oliver was standing by the door with his back legs crossed, so Roy let him out. Oliver ran into the woods as fast as he could. Roy knew winter was coming soon, so he reviewed his list.

“OK, I need to chop some more wood, maybe another 3 cords. I need to go over that book of Edible Wild foods, and stock up for winter. I need to finish those snowshoes. I’ve got a large pot for water and melting snow. I’ve already made all the soap I need, maybe I’ll make some more candle containers, and use that extra bear fat for candles. I’ve got a whole bunch of pemmican made - that should last through the winter. With the 5 caribou skins I have, I’ll make the moccasins and clothes while it’s snowing out - that will give me something to do. Also, I really should read my Bible.” Roy ate a piece of jerky, sat down and started butchering the caribou meat, slicing it into pieces suitable for making jerky. When he was too crowded to cut anymore, Roy went to the smokehouse, took out all the dried bear meat that was in there, put it in the food box, and started hanging the caribou meat. Roy then picked up the bearskin and dropped it on his bed, and picked up the caribou skins, and laid them over the roof of the smokehouse to dry. Later that afternoon when he had finished slicing all the caribou meat into jerky, Roy put the rest of it up in the smokehouse, started a fire, and closed the door to let the meat smoke. By now Roy was tired, so he ate some jerky, sat down and read his Bible, then when it got dark, opened the cabin door and called Oliver inside the cabin. Oliver trotted right in, and laid down on his own bearskin rug. Roy decided now was as good a time as any to remake his bed, took one bearskin and laid it over the moosehide, then took the other bearskin and folded it at the foot of the bed. Roy sat down on the new bed, and it was much softer, and hopefully warmer. Soon Roy laid down, pulled the bearskin over him, and was soon fast asleep.

Chapter 36 - November Snow

Roy woke to a cold cabin. He got out of bed, walked to the door, and tried to push it open. It was STUCK! Roy got better footing on the floor, and really put his shoulder into it. Slowly, the door opened, creaking and groaning as Roy kept pushing. As he got the door more open, snow started to invade the open space. Roy wasn't looking forward to this, good thing he got all his outdoor stuff done over a week ago. He had a massive stockpile of wood outside the cabin, and a 3-day supply inside the cabin. The food box was stuffed with dried jerky and he had a bag full of greens and other foodstuffs to supplement his jerky and pemmican. He had a pot of water next to the fireplace where it wouldn't freeze, or he could easily melt it when he made a fire. Roy closed the door after opening it fully to make sure he wouldn't get trapped in his cabin. He sat on the bed, and put on his winter gear including his snowmobile suit, his pack boots, and his parka. Then he picked up the snow shovel to clear the doorway. When he had the door fully open, Oliver made tracks outside, and fell into a snowbank as soon as he got off the porch. Roy busted out laughing, then remembered NOT to step off the porch without his snowshoes, since he might not be able to get back to the cabin if the snow was deep enough. Roy used the snow shovel to clear the area around the door of snow, piling it out front. Oliver got up again, and struggled to make progress in the deep snow. Finally Oliver realized that if he bounded, he could move after a fashion, but he was going to be seriously slowed by the snow.

Roy walked back inside, grabbed his snowshoes, and decided to try them out before the snow was too deep. Roy decided to use his walking stick too, just in case. He carried them out to the porch, slipped his boots into the straps, and tried a few experimental steps. As long as he waddled like a duck, they worked OK, but as soon as he started walking normally, he fell on his butt. The walking stick helped immensely, mostly as a snow probe, and an anchor point when walking on snow and ice. Roy figured correctly that he wasn't going to be going out too much for the next couple of months, and waddled back toward the cabin. Before he got there, he remembered why he built an outhouse a month ago, and went to go and use it. Good thing too, because it was cold out there. Roy thought if he ever needed to use the facilities outside of his outhouse during freezing weather, he might freeze something off he might need later. Roy had made a fairly large and deep single seat outhouse by chopping several large trees, and cutting planks by hand to cover the sides. Roy also made a steeply pitched roof to keep the snow off. Instead of a V roof, he decided to use a shed style roof that would dump the snow behind the outhouse, where it wouldn't fall on him. He put a small corner table in it to hold a tallow candle in a special holder that acted as a chimney for the flame, but cut down on the light, so he would have some light and heat during the winter. Since it wasn't totally wind-tight, he didn't have to worry about ventilation, just freezing. Roy did his business, then quickly got dressed, and headed back to the cabin. Roy built a big roaring fire in the fireplace to warm up, and decided Oliver might want to come in out of the cold. Oliver was standing outside the door with a look on his face like "What took you so long, it's freezing out here!" Roy said, "You'd better not let the other wolves hear you, they'd kick you out of the Union!" and let Oliver in.

Oliver walked into the cabin, and sat down on the bearskin rug. Roy picked up a caribou skin, laid it flesh side up on the table, took off his shirt, picked up a piece of coal from the fireplace, and traced the outline of his shirt, plus an inch for the seam onto the leather. Since it was a long-sleeve shirt, it was almost a direct copy process. When he had the outline traced, he took the scissors on his SAK and carefully cut out the outline he had traced. When he was finished, he laid the outline over the other half of the caribou skin, and traced it exactly. When he was finished, he cut the outline out with the scissors. Roy now had a front and back panel for a pullover shirt. Roy deliberately left the bottom edge long for warmth. Next, Roy opened his survival kit, took out the pilot's sewing kit, and there was a large bobbin full of black poly thread - perfect for this kind of work, and a bunch of easy-thread needles. Good thing too, because Roy's vision wasn't what it used to be.

Roy thought about the easiest way to sew the panels together was to sew it inside out, so the seam was inside, then turn it right side in later. Roy took some straight pins from the pilot's kit, and pinned the two halves together so the seams were even. Once he did that, Roy threaded the needle with a long piece of thread, tied a knot in the end, and started sewing the shirt together from the bottom. Roy thought he could do it as one long seam as long as he was using a lock stitch that tied a knot in each stitch. It would be slower, but it wouldn't unravel. Roy started in the lower right corner, then was going around the right sleeve, then started a new seam and sewed up to the neck. He'd start another seam going down the left side. Roy used a small hand-sized piece of moosehide as a pusher to punch the needle through the tough caribou hide without poking holes in his hand. As Roy started sewing, he thought this would take a week, then he could work on the pants and boots. The first couple of stitches were a struggle, but then Roy got the hang of it, and was soon stitching away. Roy started whistling to himself, and Oliver rolled over and covered his ears like "Do you really HAVE to do that! I mean as a Wolf, I've heard better howling from a bunch of out of tune lobos from the Rio Grande! I mean - this isn't exactly "Three Dog Night" quality here!" As Roy continued to whistle, Oliver tried to shut him out, to no avail. When he couldn't shut him out, Oliver tried drowning him out, and started HOWLING! Roy just whistled louder. Finally, Oliver gave up in doggie disgust "I think this is going to be a LONG winter!" and rolled back over to put his head as far from Roy as possible. After a couple of hours, Roy's hands got tired, set his sewing down, and picked up his Bible, wrapped his bearskin blanket around himself, and sat on the bed and read. Since it was winter, it got dark earlier than usual, and Roy decided to go to bed after he ate some dinner out of the stewpot. Oliver got a piece of dried fish, and when they had finished eating, Roy added some wood to the fire, and a big log that should burn most of the night, then laid down and went to sleep.

Chapter 37 - Snow Expedition

The next morning, the snow had stopped falling, and Roy decided to check out the neighborhood. He put on his longjohns, his snowmobile suit, his sorrels, then put his shoulder holster and fanny pack on, then his parka and gloves. He picked up his snowshoes, daybag, walking stick and walked out the door. He set his snowshoes down on the porch, stepped into them, loosened the straps on his daybag, and slipped them over his shoulders. Roy called Oliver, who came trotting out of the cabin, looked at the snow, and turned back around. "Oh no you don't - If I'm going to freeze, you are too!" and closed the door before Oliver could sneak back inside. Roy cleared the snow off the porch, and the smaller of the two woodpiles, checked the cabin for snow damage, and looked at the outhouse. Everything appeared OK, so he turned around to look at the lake. The lake looked smaller for some reason, when Roy figured out that the lake was freezing over starting in the shallow water. "Oh well, I guess this means no more fishing." Roy checked his snares, and was surprised to find 2 white snowshoe rabbits and a big fat squirrel. Even with his overflowing food bin, Roy thought it would be smart to keep trapping, since it was basically free food as long as he could check his snares, and he didn't need to eat his stored food. Roy turned to Oliver and said "Looks like we're having Rabbit Stew for diner." Oliver was too busy trying to move through the deep snow to care. Roy had to be real careful to keep from falling, since he had already fallen three times. Since the snow was still fairly shallow, the only thing hurt was his pride. Roy wanted to develop his "snow legs" while the snow was still fairly shallow. If he fell like that into a deep drift, he could be in trouble. So far, Roy hadn't encountered any ice, but he thought he had a solution to that when he got back to the cabin - he would take some snare wire and twist it around the snowshoe frame, then leave the ends facing downward to catch on ice and give him traction. He'd probably only need 4 or 6 per snowshoe to give him enough traction on ice without sticking too hard. Roy was starting to get cold, so he decided to walk back to the cabin.

Roy wanted to use the outhouse while he was out here and dressed for it, so he placed the day bag on the porch, kicked off his snowshoes since he had tramped a path of packed snow between the outhouse and the cabin, and walked into the outhouse. When he got in and took off his gloves, it was dark and cold, so he lit the candle with his butane lighter that was nice and warm from being in his pocket. Roy quickly did his business, blew out the candle, stepped out the door, and promptly fell on his face. Oliver would have laughed his head off if he was capable, but Roy could swear that the wolf was grinning from ear to ear. Roy struggled to his feet, grabbed the edge of the outhouse door and his walking stick for support, and slowly got up. Roy looked down at what had caused him to slip, and there was a patch of yellow ice with distinctive wolf tracks and scratch marks around it. "Oliver, I swear you did that on purpose! From now on, you go on the other side of the cabin!" Roy walked as quickly as he could back into the cabin, before anything else happened to him. Roy picked up his snowshoes and daybag, opened the cabin door, and walked inside. As soon as he set his burden down, Roy started poking and prodding the fire, and added some thin slivers of wood to get the fire going again. Luckily there was just enough life left in the old embers so that Roy didn't have to waste his

limited supply of tinder to start from scratch, and as he added bigger and bigger sticks to the fire, he had a nice fire going in minutes. Once he had a nice fire going, Roy added a couple of bigger logs to keep it burning for a while, then sat down to skin the rabbits and squirrel. Roy was very nice to Oliver, and gave him the rabbit and squirrel guts even though he was sure Oliver peed right where he did on purpose.

Roy took the large meaty sections, added them and some greens and cattail tubers to his Dutch oven with a couple of quarts of water, and set it on the fire to cook. Roy added the skins to his collection. He was going to have a pair of fur lined apache style moccasins - right after he made a shirt and pants out of the caribou hide. Roy was finally warming up, so he took off the parka and the shoulder holster, and set them over out of the way. Roy left his flintlock right over the door where the old trapper had it, and it was loaded but the hammer was down. Roy stepped outside, and washed his hands off in the snow. When he came back, Oliver was laying on his bearskin rug sleeping. Roy thought he could do some more sewing, so he got his caribou hide shirt, the needle, thread and moosehide palm protector, and sat down at the table where the light was better, and started sewing. Soon Roy was whistling again, and luckily for Oliver, he was sound asleep. Roy finished the right side seam, and threaded another long piece of thread through the needle, tied a big knot in the end, then started sewing up the left side. It was hard tedious work, since the skin was about 3 times tougher than heavy denim, and he didn't have all the modern conveniences. Roy had plenty of time, and the light was good enough, and that would have to do.

A couple of hours later, Roy set aside his sewing, since his hands were starting to hurt, and picked up his Bible. He resumed reading in Corinthians from where he left off. Roy felt like Paul was speaking directly to him, and the more he read, the greater was his sense of peace. Roy thanked God for having placed him in the season of solitude, with only a smart-alec wolf as company. Roy thought he shouldn't be so hard on Oliver, after all he HAD saved his life twice. Roy got up to feed the fire another log, and resumed reading. Later that evening, he ate the Rabbit stew, which was much better now that he had some seasonings, even if he did have to use them sparingly. Oliver slept through the whole afternoon and evening. When it was dark out, Roy got undressed to his longjohns, and went to bed.

The next morning Roy looked at his woodpile by the fire, and it had shrunk noticeably. Roy put on all his winter gear and went outside to the big woodpile on the leeward side of the house - Roy made sure he took the wood from the pile furthest from the house first, just in case there was a really bad snowstorm. After a couple of dozen trips, Roy had his 3-day supply built back up. Roy realized he shouldn't go more than a day without restocking the pile indoors, since the whole reason for having the indoor pile was if there were a big blizzard, he wouldn't freeze. Roy took his water pot outside, and filled it with clean snow. Since there already was some water in the bottom, Roy knew it would melt by the fire. Once he had finished his chores, Roy sat down and ate a piece of jerky for breakfast. Sometime during his chores, Oliver had decided to let himself out while the door was open. Roy didn't worry too much about Oliver now, since he stayed close to home because he couldn't get far in the deep snow. Roy walked to the door,

but he didn't see Oliver. Roy put his Parka back on, and his shoulder holster and fanny pack, grabbed his snowshoes and walking stick, and opened the door to search for Oliver. Roy whistled for Oliver, but he didn't come right when he called, so he thought something must be wrong. Roy saw Oliver's fresh tracks leading around the right side of the cabin, and he followed them around. Roy walked to the edge of the clearing, still no sign of Oliver. Roy yelled Oliver's name, still nothing. Roy quickly walked back to the cabin to grab his daybag and the flintlock. Roy walked as quickly as he could back to the edge of the clearing, and yelled Oliver's name again - still nothing. Roy decided something must have happened to Oliver, so Roy started following his tracks. Roy got about 20 yards into the woods, and spotted a blood trail alongside Oliver's tracks. Roy was now seriously worried about Oliver, and yelled his name again - still nothing. Roy hiked a little deeper into the woods, and the blood trail stopped. And there was Oliver, eating a large snowshoe rabbit. Roy couldn't decide whether to hug Oliver or kick him for scaring him like that. Then Roy remembered Oliver was a Wolf, and wolves hunted for food. All of a sudden, Roy remembered he shouldn't be so close to a wolf with a fresh kill, and quietly backed off.

Roy walked back to the cabin, where he sat down and had a long drink of water from his canteen, and caught his breath. About a couple of hours later, Oliver came trotting into the cabin as if nothing had happened. He sat down right in front of Roy, and after waiting a second or two, relief won over Roy's emotions, and he gave Oliver a big hug. Oliver licked Roy's face, and all was forgiven. "Oliver - please don't do that to me again - you scared me when you didn't come!" If Roy would have been able to read Oliver's thoughts, he would have said, "Sorry boss, but Nature called - that fat dumb rabbit mistook me for a Domestic Dog, and I just HAD to prove him wrong!" With that, Oliver walked over to his bearskin rug, laid down, and went to sleep.

Roy picked up his tunic, and started sewing where he left off, he was in the home stretch, and all he had to do is finish sewing up the left sleeve and down the left seam of the shirt. First thing he did was start a new seam at the edge of the sleeve, then stitching down the arm, past the underarm, and down the main seam to the bottom of the shirt. It took Roy a couple of hours, and he wiled away the time whistling. Oliver seemed to know when Roy was going to start whistling, and probably figured if he was unconscious, he wouldn't have to listen. When Roy finished, he removed the pins, and carefully turned the shirt back right-side out, so he could try it on. Roy was amazed that the shirt fit perfectly and was much warmer than the flannel shirt he was wearing. Roy decided to leave it on, and make sure it was going to work, and not bust seams. It was several inches longer than the shirt it replaced, and the tan color and the hair on the hide would make it easier to blend in when he was out hunting.

Roy decided he should start on the pants, and picked up another Caribou skin, took off his jeans, laid them on the table with the caribou hide skin side up, picked up a piece of coal, and traced the outline of the jeans, adding about 2 inches so even with a 1-inch seam they would fit a little more loosely. Roy also added a couple of inches to the top so he could thread a piece of Paracord to use as a drawstring waistband. When he was done, he cut out the outline carefully

with the scissors from his SAK. Then he laid the jeans down again, and marked another panel on the hide about 2 inches wider than the existing jeans, and cut that out. Roy then put the front and back panels together with the hair sides together, since sewing inside out had worked so well making the shirt. When he got the panels matched up, he used the pins to hold the two pieces together in alignment. By now, it was getting dark, and Roy threw another log on the fire, sat down to leftover Rabbit Stew, said grace, and ate quietly, then read his Bible for an hour or so, and then went to bed in his nice warm Bearskin covered bed.

Chapter 38 - Roy dresses like a Mountain Man

The next morning, Roy awoke to a freezing cold cabin. Either it had gotten REAL cold last night, or the fire went out. Roy staggered to the fireplace, teeth chattering and knees knocking. The fire was still burning, but was down to coals. The water bucket had frozen over, and Oliver was rolled up in his bearskin with just his nose sticking out. Roy wondered how Oliver managed to do that. Roy decided that getting the fire going ASAP would be a good idea, and quickly added some wood shavings to the coals, and as the shavings caught, Roy added bigger and bigger sticks, until he had a full fledged fire going in the fireplace. Roy added a large log to the fireplace to keep it burning for a while, and went back to bed where it was warm. About an hour later, Roy felt warm enough to try getting up again. Oliver was looking at him like “You first Jack!” and stayed rolled up in the bearskin. Roy quickly slipped his pants and the caribou shirt on, and put on his sorrels to keep his feet warm. Roy grabbed a piece of jerky, and heated some water up for his tea using his canteen cup. Roy had looked closely through his copy of Edible Plants of North America, and had discovered a couple of local plants that would make a tasty and vitamin C rich tea. Roy found a bunch of the plants, and had collected enough material to keep himself in tea until Spring. He also collected a trash bag full of wild greens and tubers to use in stews. Once the water was hot, Roy added a teaspoon full of tea blend, and let it steep while he enjoyed the aroma of the tea. By now, Oliver was up and obviously needed to go outside, so Roy tried the door, and it opened without too much difficulty. Thinking Oliver had a good idea, Roy grabbed his Parka and his fanny pack, and went out to use the outhouse. When he came back inside, his tea was done, and Roy sat in the chair sipping his tea, contemplating the quiet and cold.

When he finished his tea, Roy picked up the caribou hide pants, grabbed a needle, thread, and the moosehide palm pad, threaded the needle, tied a big knot in the end, and started sewing. Roy started at the outside corner of the leg, and started sewing up the leg. His hand grew tired after a few hours, and he set the sewing down to read his Bible, and added a log to the fire. Roy resumed reading in Matthew, and what he read hit home. Roy had gone to church off and on all his life, but until now, the words were just words. Now he felt as if God was speaking directly to him. When Roy finished reading, he opened the cabin door to check on Oliver, gave him a whistle, and Oliver appeared out of the edge of the woods, looked at the cabin, turned around and trotted back into the woods. Roy looked at his indoor woodpile, saw that it needed re-filling, put on his parka, went outside to the far woodpile, and started hauling in logs. Between the snow and the weather, it took Roy almost an hour to fill the woodpile. Roy then refilled his water pot with snow, and set it near the fireplace to melt. Roy decided to keep his canteen and camelback as full as practical just in case he needed to go somewhere in a hurry. When the snow melted, Roy refilled his canteen, saving enough water to melt another batch of snow. Roy kept the canteen and camelback near the fireplace to hopefully keep the water from freezing. Roy put his parka back on, and refilled the water pot with snow and set it on the hearth to melt. Roy decided to visit the outhouse while he still had his parka on, and it was still light out. When he came back, he whistled for Oliver again, and this time Oliver came running, and they

both settled in for the evening. Roy resumed sewing his pants while he had light before supper, and Oliver drank noisily from his clay water bowl that Roy made. By the time the sun had set, Roy had finished the outside seam for the left leg, and started on the outside seam of the right leg. Roy shifted the pins from the outer left leg to the inside of the left leg, to make sure the inside seam didn't shift while he sewed the other seams. Roy set his sewing down, checked the pot of stew, scooped out a canteen cup full, and plopped it into a ceramic bowl. Roy tasted it, and decided to give Oliver the rest. Oliver chowed down, and his bowl was empty in a minute. Roy ate his portion of the stew with a little less gusto than Oliver. Roy made a mental note to himself to check his snares tomorrow, weather permitting. Roy added a couple of logs to the fire then read his Bible by firelight for a while, then decided it was time to turn in, undressed, and crawled into bed between his bearskin blankets.

Chapter 39 Blizzard!

Roy awoke to a freezing cabin. He quickly donned his caribou shirt, his pants and his sorrels, then decided to wear his parka. He walked over to the fireplace, and the fire was OUT! Roy stirred the ashes, uncovered some glowing embers, and used a few paper-thin slices of wood to encourage them back to life. As the tinder caught fire, Roy fed small pieces of wood into the fireplace until he had a good-sized fire, then he added a log to keep it burning for a while. Roy heard a moaning sound, and looked at Oliver, who was sound asleep, curled up in his bearskin rug. Roy heard it again, and realized it was the wind. The wind was powerful enough to rattle the door of the cabin. Roy knew they were in a Blizzard, and grabbed the snow shovel to clear the area around the door to keep them from getting snowed in. As he opened the door, he was greeted by a blast of frigid Arctic wind. It must have been 30 below zero outside, and a couple of feet of snow covered everything around him. Roy quickly cleared the area around the door, then closed the door before he let the rest of the heat out. Roy checked his woodpile, Thank God it was full. Roy checked his stash of tinder, and realized he was almost out. Roy picked up a smaller log from the pile, and his Ulu/hatchet, and carefully sliced thin strips from the log until he had a large pile of paper-thin wood shavings. He added them to the pile stashed in the corner of the hearth away from the fireplace opening.

Roy was warm by now, and he noticed the wind had died down, so he woke Oliver, grabbed his shovel, and shoveled a path to the outhouse while Oliver quickly ran around the corner to take care of business. Roy got the path cleared, then quickly used the outhouse while he had the chance. When he was finished, Roy heard the wind getting louder and louder. Roy quickly got out of the Outhouse, called Oliver, who trotted back into the cabin. Roy picked up the snow shovel, and joined Oliver, closing the door behind him. Roy refilled his canteen and camelback, then quickly refilled the water pot with snow, leaving 1/3 of the liquid water in the bottom to encourage the snow to melt. Roy made sure the door was closed, then set the pot on the hearth next to the fire. When the water had melted, he refilled Oliver's water bowl, then quickly refilled the water pot with snow. By now the wind was numbingly cold, and the snow was so thick that he couldn't see the outhouse 20 feet away. Roy quickly got back inside the cabin, secured the door, and set the pot on the hearth again to melt. Roy was going to check his traps, but this blizzard was too powerful. Roy rightly decided the safe thing was to stay indoors today. Roy hoped Oliver had emptied his tanks when he was outside.

Roy went rummaging in his food bin, found a large piece of smoked salmon, broke a piece of it off and fed it to Oliver, then grabbed a piece of jerky, chopped it into small pieces, added it to the Dutch oven with a quart of water, a handful of greens, 5 cattail tubers, and a packet of Ramen Beef Seasoning mix. Roy set the stew on the fireplace hook to heat it up. Roy took another piece of jerky, and chewed it for breakfast. Roy heated some water for tea, then picked up his pants, and started sewing. A couple of hours later, Roy had finished the other outside seam, and re-threaded the needle to start the inside seam. Since he could do the inside seam as one long seam, Roy took a very long thread, tied a big knot in the end, and started sewing from

the inside of the left leg. Poor Oliver was wide awake as Roy started whistling. Oliver suffered in silence this time, knowing that howling only encouraged Roy to whistle louder. Oliver laid on his side, and rolled in his bearskin rug until he was wrapped up like a burrito. Five minutes later, Oliver was sound asleep.

Roy remembered he'd left the water heating on the hearth, and removed the now steaming mug from in front of the fireplace, set it on the table, and added a teaspoon of his tea mix to the water, and let it steep for a while. Roy resumed sewing, checked on the tea about 5 minutes later, and took an experimental sip - the hot tea warmed him from the inside to the point that he took off his parka and added it to the pile in the corner of the cabin. Roy picked up his sewing again, and was whistling away. Roy took a break about 2 hours later when his hands started to ache again, and picked up his Bible.

Roy decided to tackle Revelation, he had read it occasionally through the years, but never really understood it. As Roy read John's letter to the Seven Churches, he saw himself in their shortcomings, and was convicted by his sense of sin. Roy then remembered his favorite theme from the Bible that a lot of Christians printed as a Bumper Sticker "Christians aren't Perfect, Just Forgiven." Roy remembered back when he first accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior over 40 years ago at Christian Youth Summer Camp, and how he was baptized in the cold lake by Pastor John. He was one of twenty kids that was baptized that day, and remembered the Pastor telling him he was now a member of God's family.

Then he remembered when he attended his first party at College, how the beer was free, and so were the women. Roy shook his head with disgust as he remembered his behavior at that party, how several Fraternity members had women making a steady stream upstairs to their bedrooms, and that cute buxom blond that sat on his lap while they were drinking. Roy thanked God that nothing more had happened that night. Several of his fraternity buddies wound up Alcoholics, some of those women wound up pregnant out of wedlock and had to give their babies up. He remembered one or two of them, as well as a Fraternity Brother who had ruined his life and almost succeeded committing suicide. When Roy met Susan fresh out of College, she made him promise to quit drinking. Susan told Roy her parents were teetotalers, and wouldn't let her date anyone who drank. Roy asked her why, she explained that her Parents felt that excessive drinking caused a bunch of problems, destroyed marriages, and wasn't good for you, and to avoid the whole problem, their congregation had decided not to drink after praying about it.

Roy kept his promise until his first son was born, 3 years after they were married. Roy told Susan it was just a beer, and he needed it to cope with the pressure of running a new business, and being a new Dad. Susan and Roy had their first real fight as a result of that, and Roy stormed off to the local bar to drown his sorrows. Roy came home drunk that night, and Susan had stayed up reading her Bible. When Roy got home, he could see how badly he'd hurt Susan, and promised never to drink again. Susan kissed him goodnight, and told him to sleep on the couch tonight until he'd sobered up, and she'd talk to him in the morning. Susan said goodnight, and closed the bedroom door. Roy got a blanket out of the hall closet, and a pillow,

and slept on the couch that night. Remembering how he felt, Roy was crying hard. Why did he hurt the one person who really loved him so much! He cried out in his anguish “God Forgive Me!” and almost immediately, a feeling of great peace overwhelmed him. Roy remembered God’s promise, that if he repented, God would forgive his sin. Roy thanked God for forgiving him, and then he resumed reading.

A couple of hours later, Roy set down his Bible, and picked up his pants to resume sewing it up. Roy spent a couple of hours sewing, and finished it up right before evening, even finishing the drawstring waistband. Roy turned it right side out, took off his jeans and sorrels, then slipped on his new pants. They were a little loose, but Roy had planned them to be, and tied the drawstring waistband to hold his pants up. Roy quickly put his sorrels back on, since his feet were cold. Roy now had Caribou hide pants and shirt to keep him warm. Roy felt much warmer with the caribou hide clothes than he had with the cotton clothes he was wearing. The tan color and hair would help him blend into the woods. Roy just hoped he’d never meet any hunters while he was wearing this outfit. Roy had heard hunting stories of some hunters mistakenly shooting Cows instead of deer or Elk. Roy thought those guys should either check into AA, or an Optometrist. Even at 300 yds, Roy could tell the difference between a deer and a cow.

Roy checked his watch, decided it was late enough, and sat down to eat dinner. Oliver got up when Roy started eating, and looked like he was hungry. Roy walked over to the food bin, took out another piece of dried salmon, and fed Oliver. Oliver inhaled it, then walked over to his bowl, and drank most of it. Roy finished his dinner, picked up his Bible, and resumed reading in Revelation. A couple of hours later, Roy took off his caribou hide clothes, and went to bed. Oliver sacked out on his rug.

Chapter 40 - Making Moccasins

Roy's next project would be building a pair of knee-high Apache style moccasins using the caribou hide, and lining them with Rabbit pelts, and using the extra-thick moose hide bellies for soles. They would be as warm as his sorrels, and he had enough materials to make extra soles as the soles of his moccasins wore out. This would be a complicated project, and he wasn't sure how to proceed. He needed to sew the rabbit pelts to the inside of the caribou hide to line the boots. He also needed to accurately place the soles, and still make the boots look good. He thought he'd make a simple 2-piece design with an outside seam. He thought he could punch holes in the seam to lace up the boots, but what would he use for grommets? He didn't have any metal, plastic or any other material he could easily make grommets out of. Maybe he didn't need grommets - after all the lace was going through 2 layers of caribou, plus 2 layers of rabbit skin. Roy smacked himself figuratively on the forehead when he figured out that if he moved the seams in an inch, he'd have loads of material to use. The only interior seam he needed was to incorporate the bend at the ankle. If he figured it right, he'd need 2 pieces of caribou hide, one with a dart missing to accommodate the bend at the ankle, and another to form the upper and extended tongue of the boot. Roy was going to sew the tongue in place to make the boot warmer.

Roy then took out several Caribou hides, laid them on the table flesh side up, and using a string and a piece of coal, transferred the measurements of his foot and leg to the first piece of hide. The result was 4 strips of hide about 4 feet long, two about 2 feet wide, and the other two about 1 foot wide. Roy deliberately cut them bigger than he needed to be on the safe side. Roy set one of the bigger strips on the floor to get an idea of where the ankle bend should go. Roy stepped on the end, leaving about 6 inches at the end to form the toe box, and then carefully marked the start of the ankle dart. then transferred the measurement to the other piece, next he carefully checked his measurements before he made any cuts, and once he was sure of his measurements, wrapped the upper around his calf, noted how much material overlapped, squeezed the flap together with his fingertips and let the rest of the hide go. Roy carefully marked the inside of the hide where the edges of the flap came together, then laid the hide back on the table, and transferred the measurements to the other piece.

Roy thought he needed to cut a small wedge of hide out of both sides, no greater than an inch at the widest. Roy got out his SAK, and used the scissors to carefully cut out the wedges, then grabbed his pile of rabbit skins and laid them out on the flesh side of the caribou hides flesh side to flesh side. Roy got lucky, because most of the skins were very large, and was able to cover the full width of the caribou hide with rabbit skins without too much cutting and fitting. When he was done laying out the rabbit skins, he took a needle and a long piece of thread, threaded the needle, doubled the thread, and tied a big knot in the end. Then he started carefully sewing the rabbit skin to the caribou hide. This time he just used a running stitch, since he didn't need a lock stitch to keep it from unraveling. By the time he had gotten several pieces stitched down, he was getting tired, and his hands ached.

Roy put down his sewing, picked up his Bible, and continued reading in Revelation. Roy didn't understand the symbolism, but he understood there were two kinds of people in this world. Those who had committed their lives to Jesus, and were eventually going to join him in Heaven, and everyone else. Roy didn't want to be in the "everyone else" group. Roy felt pity for those who didn't accept Jesus, because he knew that they would find out in the end the depth of their mistakes. Roy's heart ached just thinking of all the people who had heard the Good News, and rejected it. Roy knew he was a Sinner, and he knew his Sins were as black as night, but the Good News was that Jesus died in his place, and he had accepted Jesus' death for him, and thereby gained eternal life. The descriptions of God's Wrath on the Earth were almost too much to contemplate. He thanked God that he'd been saved, and also given a second chance way up here to spend time alone with God without any distractions. He really missed Susan, but understood God wanted her in Heaven and without her, he could get his spiritual act together. Roy hung his head and wept.

Chapter 41 - The Storm lets up

The next morning, the wind had subsided, and Oliver was raring to go. Roy quickly got dressed, with his caribou shirt and pants, his sorrels and his parka, then Roy tried to open the door. While it wasn't stuck, it was definitely hard to open, and a bunch of snow had piled in front of the door. When Roy got it all the way open, Oliver was through the door like he was getting chased by a grizzly bear, made a sharp left at the end of the porch, and headed out to do his business. Roy thought that was a good idea, and headed for the outhouse. Roy had to clear some snow from in front of the outhouse door, closed it behind him, lit the candle, and took care of business quickly because the temperature was hovering near zero. Roy got dressed, blew out the candle, opened the outhouse door, and looked down before stepping out. The snow held his weight, and he trudged back to the cabin. Roy looked at the woodpile inside the cabin, and it really needed loading, so he knocked the snow off the far woodpile, and started hauling wood into the cabin. Between the snow and the brutally cold weather, it took him almost an hour to refill the indoor woodpile. Roy selected a large log and carried it inside, where he split it in two, and cut thin slices from it until he had a large pile of wood shavings to add to his pile. Roy then refilled his water pot, and set it next to the fire to melt. As the snow melted into water, he kept melting snow until he had all his containers, and Oliver's bowl full of water, since the storm had depleted his supply of water, not dangerously, but low enough that he was concerned.

When Roy finished his chores, he walked outside, whistled for Oliver. Oliver stuck his head out from behind a tree as if to say "What!" but stayed where he was. Roy thought Oliver had cabin fever, either that, or else he'd taken all of his whistling he could stand, and was going to take a contract out on him. Roy walked back into the cabin, opened the food box, took out a piece of jerky, and started chewing on it, then he poured some water into his canteen cup, set it next to the fireplace to heat up for tea. Roy picked up his sewing, and resumed sewing the rabbit fur lining into the caribou hide. Roy checked the cup after about 10 minutes, and the cup was steaming hot, so he transferred the water to his ceramic mug he made, and added the tea. After letting it steep for about 5 minutes, Roy sipped the tea, and sat back and relaxed.

When he finished his tea, Roy picked up the part of the boot he was working on, and resumed sewing. A couple of hours later, he was growing tired of sewing, picked up his parka, and opened the door to whistle for Oliver. As soon as he opened the door, he saw Oliver sitting there with a look that said "took you long enough! Good thing I have this fur coat, or I'd have been a Wolfsicle! Oliver walked inside the cabin as if he owned the place, sat down next to the food bin, and waited until Roy fed him a piece of dried salmon. Oliver then tanked up at his water bowl, then strolled over to Roy and rubbed his leg until he reached down and petted Oliver. Roy took off his parka, sat on the bed and petted Oliver for a while. Oliver even rolled over to get his belly rubbed. Oliver rarely rolled over, it was too undignified for him. He was a Wolf after all, not some domesticated mutt. When Roy finished petting Oliver, Oliver zonked

out on the bearskin rug and took a nap.

Roy walked back over to the table, picked up his boots, and resumed sewing the rabbit fur to the caribou hide. Roy started whistling since Oliver was asleep and wouldn't mind. A couple of hours later, Roy finished lining that piece of the boot with rabbit fur, and set it aside. Roy put another couple of logs on the fire, since it was cold in the cabin. Roy picked up his Bible and resumed reading. Roy was just about finished with Revelation, and the passages haunted him. He knew he was safe and secure, but he wasn't sure about his own sons. Roy felt bitter regret when he realized he'd reaped as he had sown, his sons were just like he was, a couple of self-absorbed materialists. Roy vowed if he ever got home, he would try to talk to his sons, and apologize to them for all he had neglected to do. Meanwhile, he apologized to God and asked him to take care of his sons and their families. Roy wondered if they had looked for him, if they had called off the search by now, and declared him lost and presumed dead. Roy wished he could be with his sons, but first he had to get home, and to do that, he had to survive a winter in a trapper's cabin, then hike over a hundred miles over inhospitable and rugged territory. Roy was wondering where the river that emptied the lake went to. Roy got out his topo maps of the area, and if he was where he thought he was, the lake eventually emptied into the Alatna River. It was a fairly flat and smooth river, which meant that it should be navigable after the spring floods, if he just had a boat or a canoe. Roy decided he was going to try and find a suitable tree to make a dugout canoe. Roy checked the Dutch Oven to see what was for dinner. Since he hadn't checked his snares lately, it was looking kind of grim. Roy dumped what was left of the stew into Oliver's bowl, and chewed on a piece of jerky, then went to sleep.

Chapter 42 - Roy the Trapper

The next morning was bright and clear, and COLD... Roy got dressed as quickly as he could, resuscitated the fire without using more than a couple of pieces of wood shavings, and set his water for tea near the fire to get hot. Remembering that his Dutch oven was empty, Roy decided that he needed to check his snares since the weather was OK. Roy opened the front door to let Oliver out, drank his tea, and ate a piece of jerky. Roy put on his shoulder holster, his parka, and fanny pack, picked up his snowshoes, and opened the door. Roy zipped up his parka, put on his snowshoes, and whistled for Oliver. Oliver bounded through the deep snow, to check out what the silly 2-legger was up to. Roy stuck his walking stick into the snow, then carefully stepped off the porch into the deep snow. Roy sank deeper than he had last time, but the snowshoes still worked, but he wasn't going to be moving very fast in the deep snow. Roy maneuvered so he was facing his first snare site, then trudged through the snow to his first snare. It was empty, so Roy went on down the line, checking snares. Finally, one of his snares laid over a game trail caught a large snowshoe rabbit. Roy untangled the frozen rabbit carcass from the snare, reset the snare, and carried the rabbit by the ears to his next snare.

By the time he had checked all his snares, he had 3 large rabbits, and was very tired. Roy turned for home, and Oliver followed along. An hour later, he made it into the cabin, kicked off his snowshoes, set the rabbits on the table, and turned back outside to use the outhouse. After he was finished, Roy went back inside the cabin, sat down to skin and gut the rabbits. Oliver was waiting for him to put the guts into his bowl, and Roy obliged a couple of minutes later. Roy finished skinning the rabbits, then set the larger pieces of meat into the pot, added some greens, the cattail tubers, a couple of quarts of water, and set the pot on the fireplace hook to cook. Roy then refilled the snow pot to melt some more water. While he had his jacket on, Roy walked out back to the woodpile, and refilled his indoor wood pile just in case

When he was finished, he sat down for a while, then picked up his boots, and resumed sewing. Later that afternoon, Roy finished sewing the rabbit skin liner to the caribou hide, and started sewing the liner to the other 2 pieces of hide. At least this would keep him occupied for a few days. After a couple of hours sewing, his hands grew tired, so Roy put down his sewing, added a log to the fire, and went to check on Oliver. As he opened the door, Oliver was sitting there looking at him. As Roy stepped aside, Oliver trotted in, and lay down on his bearskin rug. Roy picked up his Bible, and decided to read the book of John next, opened to the first page of John and started reading. After a while, Roy noticed it was getting darker, checked his stew, and it was done, so he decided now would be a good time to eat dinner. Roy scooped some of his stew into a bowl, sat down and said grace, then ate his dinner. Oliver slept through the whole thing, and when Roy was done eating, he cleaned up after himself, and went to bed.

Chapter 43- Snowbound

Roy awoke the next morning to a freezing cabin, and the wind was howling. This was not a good sign. Roy got out of bed and quickly got dressed including his sorrels, got the fire going, and tried pushing against the door - it was STUCK... Roy looked around the edges, and all he could see was white. Roy grabbed his Bowie knife, and cut the ice from between the door and the frame. Roy stuck the knife as far as he could into the gap, and slowly cut the door loose. As soon as he could, Roy pushed on the door as hard as he could, and it slowly moved, but it was HEAVY... Roy put the shovel next to the door, grabbed his parka, and then resumed pushing on the door, straining his leg muscles until he burned with effort, and slowly the door budged, and slowly opened more and more. Roy felt like he was moving a 1 ton truck with the brakes on, but the door kept moving. Finally the door was open enough to get the snow shovel out, and Roy pushed as much of the snow out of the way of the door as he could reach, then resumed pushing, it was still hard, but at least now it was down to a Volkswagen. As he opened the door more and more, Roy continued shoveling the snow out of the way, until he had the door open enough to squeeze through.

Roy took the snow shovel with him onto the porch, and the snow had drifted up to the roof in front of the door, and much deeper in front of the woodpile he set earlier as a windbreak. Roy thanked God that he had made the windbreak, or he wouldn't get out of his cabin until spring. Roy shoveled snow for a couple of hours, then made some tea, and sat down to drink it. When he went outside the second time, Oliver followed him since it had been a while since he had went. Roy thought Oliver had the right idea, and turned back into the cabin to grab his snowshoes next to the door. Roy put on his snowshoes, since the snow around the cabin was several feet deep, and over 6 feet in places, and waddled out to the outhouse. Roy kicked off his snowshoes at the door, pulled the door open, and lit the candle, quickly did his business, got dressed, blew out the candle, and stepped back into his snowshoes for the trip home. On the way home, Roy tried to pack the snow as much as possible so he wouldn't need the snowshoes next time.

When he got back to the cabin, Oliver was already inside and fast asleep on his bearskin rug. Roy refilled his water pot with snow, and gathered as much wood as he could get to, overfilling his indoor woodpile and making another woodpile on the floor in front of the fireplace, but safely off to one side. Roy split one of his larger logs, and sliced thin strips of wood from it for tinder. When the snow had melted, Roy filled up his canteen and other water containers, and kept refilling his water pot with snow as long as he could see outside. Eventually, the snowfall got too hard, and he couldn't see the outhouse anymore, and he knew it was time to stay indoors until the snowstorm stopped. Roy was freezing, so he made a second cup of tea, and it warmed him up. Roy then resumed sewing, and soon had the rabbit fur lining sewn into all the pieces of the boots. Roy then threaded shorter pieces of thread into the needle, since he only needed to

sew up the darts he had cut earlier to make the ankle of the boot. Once he had the ankles sewn, Roy turned the boots right-side in again, got a longer piece of thread, doubled it, and tied a big knot in the end. Roy then trial fitted his boots to his feet, and marked the excess with a piece of coal, so he knew where to make the seam. Roy pinned the boots together along the seams so he could stitch from pin to pin, and have a straight seam. Luckily between the pilot's sewing kit and his, he had enough pins to do one boot at a time with all the seams marked every couple of inches with a straight pin. Since he couldn't sew this seam from the inside, Roy needed to sew a leather maker's stitch with one needle - this was going to take some time. The one thing he wasn't sure of was with one needle, only every other stitch would be a lock stitch, and he'd have to lock the stitch to the last stitch sewn. He hoped this wouldn't result in the sewing unraveling, but even with every other stitch a lock stitch, it couldn't unravel far. As Roy started sewing, he started whistling old Gospel hymns and show tunes. Good thing Oliver was asleep, since if anyone else had heard him, they'd probably have asked if he could carry a tune, and when he said "Yes" they'd tell him to take it outside and bury it! Roy kept at it for a couple of hours, and when he got tired, he put down his sewing, picked up his Bible and continued reading in the Book of John.

Chapter 44 - The Storm Continues

Roy woke up the next morning, not remembering how he got to bed. At least he was warm and well covered. He looked on the floor, and Oliver was rolled up in his bearskin blanket again. Roy decided to get up, quickly put on his caribou shirt and pants, and his sorrels. Then he stoked the fire, and added wood to the fire to get it burning brightly. Roy couldn't hear the wind, which was a good sign, but when he tried the door, it was stuck again. Roy pushed harder, and it started to budge, so at least it wasn't frozen in place. Roy grabbed his parka, his snow shovel, and his snowshoes, and set them all near the door. As Roy forced the door open, he bent down and put on his parka, because what breeze was getting in was COLD. Roy continued pushing the door, finally getting it open enough to stick his snow shovel outside and push some of the snow away from the door. After moving a fairly large pile of snow, Roy got the door open all the way, and grabbed his snowshoes in case he needed them, and went out on the porch. It was still snowing heavily, but the wind had died down.

The outhouse door was half covered in drifting snow, and both the outhouse and the cabin had a fairly thick blanket of snow on the roof. Roy shoveled off the porch, then put on his snowshoes, and cleared the path to the outhouse, and dug out the outhouse door. Roy thought it would be a good idea to use the outhouse while he was there, and kicked off the snowshoes. A couple of minutes later, a much colder Roy quickly put his snowshoes back on, then checked on Oliver, who had taken care of "the call of Nature" as well, and was checking out the neighborhood. Oliver was really having trouble moving through the deep snow. Roy looked into the cabin, and thought he had room for some more wood, and quickly refilled the indoor woodpile, then filled the water pot with snow to melt, and kept refilling it until every water container in the cabin was full, including him and Oliver. Roy made some hot tea to warm up, and soon was feeling much warmer as he sipped his tea. When he was finished, Roy thought it would be a good idea to use the outhouse again, just in case. When he came back in, Oliver was laying on his bearskin rug. Roy reached into his food box, and pulled out a large piece of smoked salmon that Oliver loved - good thing too, since Roy couldn't stand the taste of it without salt. Roy gave Oliver half of it, and put the other half back in the box, and he got out a piece of moose jerky for breakfast for himself. Roy looked outside, and it was snowing heavily again, so he decided that he was working inside today, and his snares would have to wait a day or so.

Roy picked up his sewing, and finished one of his boots, then started sewing the other boot. When he finished both boots, he was going to punch some holes in the material with the awl on his Swiss Army Knife, and use Paracord for laces. Then he needed to stitch some moose belly leather, the thickest and toughest leather on the moose, to make some soles for his shoes. He couldn't figure whether to sew it flesh down, or hair down. The hair would either make it more or less slippery than the flesh side, but he figured it would last longer if he attached it hair side down, and walked on the hairy side of the sole. A couple of hours later, Roy finished sewing the other boot together, so he felt now would be a good time for a trial fit. First he removed all the pins, made sure all the stitches were tight, took off his right sorrel, and carefully slid his

right foot and leg into the boot, then turned the corner, and had his foot all the way in the boot. It felt loose, but he knew that the lacing would take care of that. Roy tried standing, and the boots fit nicely, if a bit loose. Roy then tried the other boot on, and it fit loose as well. Roy took the boots off again, and put his sorrels back on. Roy took out his Swiss Army Knife, opened the awl, and started punching holes in the leather every 1 ½ inches from the foot to the top. Roy then made sure that the other side lined up as closely as possible. Roy laced up the boot, then repeated the process with the other boot. Finally Roy had both boots laced, took off his sorrels, and put his boots on, and tightened up the laces. As he tightened up the laces, Roy noticed the boots fit as perfectly as any boots he had bought in a store, and they were WARM. They were as warm as his sorrels, and since they were made from all natural materials, they should breathe better, although they probably weren't waterproof. Roy could waterproof them with bear fat, but then they wouldn't breathe. Roy thought he'd wear these boots indoors and around the cabin during the winter, and wear the sorrels when he was checking his snares, etc.

Roy then took the piece of moosehide he had been saving for soles for his moccasins, set it on the floor flesh side up, took a piece of charcoal, and carefully traced the outline of his moccasins onto the moosehide. Then he cut the outline out of the moosehide with his small knife blade of his SAK, since the leather was too thick for the scissors of his SAK to cut. Roy took the boots off again, put his sorrels back on to keep his feet warm, grabbed a needle and thread, pinned the moosehide to the sole of the boots with the hair side of the moosehide down, and started sewing the moosehide to the caribou hide. It was slow going, since the moosehide resisted the needle, and Roy had to use the palm protector repeatedly to help the needle through. A couple of times, Roy was forced to pull the needle through with his Gerber Multi-tool - He laughed to himself - "I guess that's why they're called Needlenose." Roy finished the boots as it was getting dark, so Roy decided to wait until tomorrow to try them on. Roy put a couple of logs on the fire to bank it, ate his dinner, and as the cabin got colder, took off his clothes, got between the bearskins of his bed, and was soon fast asleep.

Chapter 45 - Roy the Mountain Man

The next morning, Roy got up, put on his caribou shirt and pants, carefully put on his boots, tied the laces, then stood up. The moosehide gave a surprising amount of traction - much more than he remembered from the last pair of leather moccasins he owned. Roy got out his signal mirror to take a look at himself. He looked like Grizzly Adams or Jeddadiah Smith - All he needed was a coonskin cap. Wait a minute - he had one better, he had a wolverine skin sitting around collecting dust. Roy quickly picked up the Wolverine Skin (with the tail still on), laid the skin on top of his head, and the skin was almost twice as big as his head. Roy knew that anyone from the lower 48 that saw him with it on would tell him where the closest Mental Health facility was, but what the heck - the only creature that could laugh at him was Oliver.

Roy sat down to design his wolverine fur hat, but he needed an elastic gather to do the style he wanted - then he remembered he had a spare Ace bandage in his kit - he'd packed 3 and he wasn't going to need all of it for this project. This was going to take a while. Roy set the hide on his head again, and took the mirror to note where he wanted the cap to end so it would work best. Then Roy got the brilliant idea about ear flaps. Since he had extra hide (it came down to his nose in front, and way past his ears on the side) he would make a different style, and he wouldn't need the elastic to hold it on, since the hide on the sides and back would conform to his skull. Roy took a piece of string, measured from his eyebrow ridge, along the crown of his head, to the base of his neck, then transferred those marks from the tail of the wolverine hide forward, to set the front to back of the hat. Next he measured from the bottom of his left ear, over the top of his head, to his right ear, and transferred that measurement to the skin. This would give him the width of the hide he'd need. All he'd have to do is cut the opening for his face in the front, then the whole hide should fit like a stocking cap with much better coverage.

Roy cut a big oval out of the skin to the marks he made, stretched the skin over his head, and it was a total disaster. He forgot a stocking cap was made out of elastic and yarn, not Wolverine hide. Maybe there was hope yet, if he could get the bottom of the hide to ... Nah - that won't work either. How the heck did mountain men make their caps?

Roy put the whole project on hold when he remembered he had a parka with a HOOD and he didn't NEED a wolverine fur hat. He even had a Balaclava in his parka's inside pocket. Roy started to laugh, then thought, "If I was going to screw something up, at least it wasn't something that was going to kill me. Now that I've got that out of my system, everything should be OK." So Roy decided to be the Hatless Mountain Man - come to think of it, he didn't see Grizzly Adams wearing a hat a lot... but then that was Hollywood, and the guy playing Grizzly Adams was just an actor. I wonder what Jim Bridger would have felt?

Roy put on his parka, pushed open the door, let Oliver out, and carefully walked to the outhouse. Roy was amazed at the traction these soles gave him on snow, and his feet weren't even cold. Roy opened the outhouse door, lit the candle, took care of business, was going to

step outside, thought better of it, looked down, and sure enough, Oliver had left another frozen yellow puddle. “OLIVER!!! WHERE ARE YOU?” When Oliver walked around the corner, he was looking at Roy like “Who Me?” Roy carefully stepped over the frozen puddle, walked into the cabin, grabbed the snow shovel, chopped the yellow ice out of the ground, and threw it into the trees. Roy walked back into the cabin, and Oliver followed, not even looking at Roy, walked over to his blanket and laid down. Roy guessed Oliver knew he was in the doghouse. Roy walked over to Oliver, sat on the bed, and slowly reached down to pet Oliver, saying “It’s OK, no harm - no foul!” Oliver’s ears perked up, Roy started petting him, and Oliver rolled over for Roy to scratch his belly. Roy gave Oliver a thorough belly scratching, then put some wood on the fire, took off his parka, and picked up his Bible to continue reading in the book of John. Later that evening, Roy gave Oliver a piece of dried fish, and Roy ate a piece of jerky, then they went to bed.

Chapter 46- Roy Checks his Snares

The next morning, Roy got up, got dressed quickly because the cabin was cold, but at least the wind had died down. Roy stoked the fire, and added a bunch of wood, poured some water for tea, grabbed a piece of moose jerky for him and a piece of dried salmon for Oliver, who by this time had decided since Roy had food, he'd better get up. Roy added his tea blend to the now hot water and let it steep. When it had cooled to a safe temperature, Roy poured it into his mug, and sipped it while he ate his jerky. When he was finished, he opened the door, and the storm had stopped, but the snow was deep. Roy was glad he had the snowshoes. Roy quickly filled the water pot with snow to melt, slipped on his snowshoes, and refilled the indoor woodpile from the farthest woodpile. Roy was worried about how fast he was going through his wood supply, he'd almost used up his farthest woodpile, but he had 2 more even larger woodpiles closer to the cabin door, and a huge pile he was using for a windbreak that he could use if he had to.

Roy kicked off his snowshoes on the porch, slid on his shoulder holster, clipped on his fanny pack, put his parka, stocking cap and gloves back on, then went outside to put his snowshoes back on. Roy whistled for Oliver, who lumbered through the deep snow to Roy's side. Roy turned to face his first snare location, and walked out into the woods to check his snares. There was a big snowshoe rabbit at the first snare, so Roy untangled the frozen rabbit carcass from the snare, re-set the snare over the rabbit trail, and went on to his next snare. It was empty, so he made sure it was well-set, and adjusted it slightly. He walked on to check his other snares, and some were empty, but some had rabbits in them. Roy wondered why he didn't catch any more squirrels, but then he remembered reading something about squirrels hibernating for the winter. Roy finished checking his line when Oliver growled.

Roy quickly unzipped his parka, grabbed his 22/45 and pulled it out of the holster. Roy looked around, but he didn't see anything, but one look at Oliver told him things weren't good. Oliver's neck fur was standing on end, and Oliver was showing his teeth. Roy looked where Oliver was looking, but he still didn't see anything. Whatever it was, Oliver must have smelled something, since Roy didn't see it. Roy crouched down to pick up the rabbits, slung them over his shoulder, but kept the 22/45 in his hand. Roy walked away from the edge of the woods, heading into the clearing so if something decided to push its luck Roy would have a better chance of seeing it first. As he slowly walked away from the woods, Roy kept looking at Oliver, who was following along, but hadn't calmed down much. Roy got to the middle of the clearing, when he heard Oliver growl, and as he turned to investigate, he saw something that could have been a Bobcat or Lynx. Oliver turned to face the threat, and Roy thought he'd better get in the first shot before Oliver got hurt, dropped the rabbits, got a good steady two-handed grip on the pistol, and put the crosshairs on the head of the lynx, cleared the safety, and squeezed the trigger. There was an audible pop, then the Lynx flipped over in midair, landed on its back with its head blown out. Roy thought "Not bad for a rookie" and holstered his gun, zipped up his parka, and picked up the now very dead lynx. Oliver walked over to sniff the

carcass, and was satisfied it was dead, so he calmed down. Roy hoped there wasn't anything else in the woods, because his hands were full. Luckily, Roy could see the cabin, and they were only about 100 yds away. Roy trudged through the deep snow, and finally made it to the cabin. When he got onto the porch, he stepped out of his snowshoes, and carried the lynx and the rabbits to the table to skin and gut them. Oliver was going to eat well today. Roy took a couple of hours to skin and gut the rabbits and lynx, then Roy put all the entrails into Oliver's bowl, and Oliver chowed down.

Roy took the good pieces of meat, and added them to his Dutch oven with some greens and the cattail tubers, then he added 2 quarts of water and a Ramen seasoning packet. Roy put the pot onto the fireplace hook, and swung it over the fire to cook. Roy picked up his Bible, sat on the bed, and continued reading in the Book of John. When Oliver was done eating, he walked over to the bed, and stared at Roy until he noticed him. Roy set his Bible down as Oliver nuzzled up to him, and Roy petted Oliver for a while. Oliver was one happy wolf. He had a full belly, a warm shelter from the storm, and a boss that gave the best belly rubs in the Yukon. After a while, Oliver laid down on the bearskin rug and went to sleep. Roy continued reading his Bible for a while, got undressed, and went to bed.

Chapter 47 - Roy makes Arrowheads

The next morning, Roy woke up, got dressed, stoked the fire, ate breakfast and made some tea; then put on his parka, opened the cabin door for Oliver, who ran around the corner and dove into the snowbank in his haste to get outside. Roy decided to use the outhouse as well, checked for patches of yellow ice in his path, and the coast was clear. Roy opened the outhouse door, lit the candle, took care of business, blew out the candle, checked outside the outhouse door, then stepped down onto the snow. His moccasins gave him almost as much traction as his sorrels, so Roy walked around the corner to carry a load of wood into the cabin, grabbed a load of wood, and carried it into the cabin and filled up the woodpile. Roy refilled the water pot with snow, and kept refilling it as the snow melted.

It started snowing again, so Roy decided today was going to be an indoor day. Roy looked through his stuff, found a big glass-like rock that he'd picked up months ago, then looked for the caribou antler he'd saved, and he found it in the bottom of the pile. Roy took a scrap of leather, and using the saw on the Gerber Multi-tool, sawed a 6 inch piece off the antler tip, and another 6 inch piece from where it attached to the skull. Roy now had tools to try flintknapping. Roy had never tried this before, but had read about it on the Internet, so he was a little apprehensive, but thought the worst case scenario would be a rock busted into useless shards. Roy set the rock into a piece of moosehide to protect his hands and legs from sharp splinters, grabbed the big piece of caribou antler, and struck the edge of the rock with a glancing blow. Roy tried hitting harder, then hitting further into the rock, when finally he heard a crack, and when he checked the rock, a large piece had broken off. Setting the larger piece back on the table, Roy used the moosehide to carefully pick up the shard of rock. The edge looked sharp, and Roy tested it on the moosehide, and it sliced it easily. The piece was about 2 x 3 inches, and roughly oval in shape.

Remembering what he saw on the Internet, Roy took the piece of antler tip in one hand, and the shard in the other, with the moosehide protecting his hand, started shaping the shard into an arrow shape using the tip of the antler to press onto the shard and break a small piece off. It was tough going, and Roy was careful to only apply the pressure necessary to crush the part he wanted to break. Slowly, the arrowhead took shape - it wasn't a masterpiece by any means, but it did resemble the arrowheads Roy saw on the internet. It was looking like it would be a medium sized arrowhead, suitable for hunting caribou or smaller game.

Roy worked on the arrowhead the rest of the day, and by evening, he'd finished pressure flaking the shard into an arrowhead. Roy was amazed that he could actually do it. Roy set the arrowhead someplace safe so it wouldn't break or get stepped on, opened the door, and whistled for Oliver. A few seconds later, Oliver came into the cabin, tanked up at his water bowl, then laid down on his bearskin rug. Roy scooped out a large portion of the stew in the pot, said Grace, and ate his dinner. Oliver laid there dreaming away. When Roy finished dinner, he washed his bowl, added some wood to the fire including a large log to keep it burning through

the night, then picked up his Bible to finish the Book of John. A couple of hours later, Roy got undressed and went to bed.

The next morning, Roy got up, got dressed and stoked the fireplace, made tea, ate a piece of jerky, then let Oliver out. Roy grabbed his jacket and joined him outside. The weather was clear and cold as Roy made his way to the outhouse. Roy was glad he had packed the snow along his path to the outhouse, because there was a couple more feet on the ground and he would have sank to his waist if he weren't wearing snowshoes. Roy opened the outhouse door, and as he did, he heard a loud noise, looked up, and a huge pile of snow was sliding off the outhouse roof. Luckily for Roy, the roof worked as designed, and the snow slid off the back, away from him. Roy climbed inside the outhouse, lit the candle, took care of business, blew out the candle, checked outside for any yellow ice, and stepped out into the snow. Roy walked around to his woodpile, and carried an armload back inside the cabin, then refilled the snow pot, and as the snow melted, refilled all his containers, including Oliver's water bowl. Roy picked up the rock he was chipping flakes from the other day, his antler tools, and the piece of moosehide he was using to protect his hand, then he sat at the table and started trying to knock a large flake off the rock. This time he had more luck, and after a dozen swings, had a good sized flake which he set on the table, and knocked another 6 pieces off the rock in about ½ hour. Roy put the now much smaller rock back, picked up one of the flakes with the moosehide to protect his hand from the sharp flake, and picked up the antler tip to pressure flake the pieces into arrowhead shapes. It took him an hour to do the first one, and about 50 minutes to do each successive one after that.

Roy took a break around lunch and checked on Oliver. Oliver was waiting outside as Roy opened the door, and Oliver strolled inside, and laid down on his rug. Roy opened his food box, and it was still 2/3 full. Roy was glad he was going through food slower than wood, since he didn't think there were any large game animals within 100 miles. Roy was OK on 2 meals a day, and Oliver was looking fine. Roy took out a piece of smoked salmon, gave it to Oliver, who - being a wolf - wolfed it down. Roy chewed his moose jerky a little more sedately than Oliver, and when he was finished, he started in on flaking arrow points again. By the time evening rolled around, Roy had finished 6 more arrowheads. Tomorrow he was going to work on the bow.

Roy found the piece of wood he had cut down that he thought would make a good bow. It was now dried, but it hadn't cracked. It was about 8 feet long and about 6 inches in diameter. He thought by the time he whittled it down to size, it would be about 6 feet tall, and about 3 inches at its widest point. Next Roy checked his collection of sinew. He had a couple of long pieces, and he felt he could make an excellent bowstring out of them. Roy was going to wrap the grip in leather and cut notches at both ends to hold the bowstring. The only thing Roy was missing was feathers for fletching. Roy would make the arrows and fletch them in the spring when the larger birds returned. Roy thought about what he'd seen on his topo maps, and remembered something he read about Indians making dugout canoes from large trees. Since he didn't have the know-how or tools to build a birch bark canoe, he'd have to build a dugout canoe. He knew

it would be heavy and awkward, but it beat floating on a raft or walking.

He thought he'd also need a couple of paddles. Roy remembered that tree he cut down to make the snow shovel with. If it wasn't totally covered in snow, he could make a couple of paddles out of it this winter while he was waiting. He hoped he would remember in the morning. As it grew dark, Roy spooned some of the stew out of the pot, gave Oliver some salmon, said Grace, and ate dinner. After he'd cleaned up after himself, Roy got out his Bible, and decided to finish up the book of John before bed since he only had a few more chapters to go. Roy banked the fire for the night, got undressed, and slipped under the blankets to read his Bible by firelight. As soon as Oliver finished eating, he sacked out on his rug, and was soon fast asleep. Roy read for a few hours, then as the fire started growing dimmer, set the Bible down, rolled over and went to sleep.

Chapter 48 - Roy makes a longbow

Roy got up the next morning, took care of his daily chores, let Oliver out, then started working on his longbow. Roy planned to carve the wood away from the long pole he now had until he had only the heartwood left. He thought it would take him the better part of a week to carve his bow, fashion a leather grip with an arrow rest for it. Roy knew that Traditional Longbows didn't have a rest, but he wasn't a Traditionalist, he needed this bow to survive when he ran out of ammo, or to conserve ammo for later, and he couldn't build a compound bow like what he shot at home. Roy took his bow saw, cut the pole down to a little over 6 feet in length, then taking the axe, carefully chopped the outer wood off the pole. Roy took the rest of the day chopping the wood from the log, trying to keep his blows square so he would have a 3-4 inch thick board when he was finished.

The next time Roy checked, it was getting dark, so he put down his work, opened the cabin door, and called for Oliver. Roy looked towards the woods, and Oliver was bounding through the snow toward home like, "I'm coming - don't close the door!" Oliver made it to the cabin all out of breath, and staggered in dog tired. Roy filled Oliver's water bowl, which Oliver promptly drained, so Roy refilled his bowl. Roy then fed Oliver a piece of Salmon, Roy ate a piece of jerky and drank some water. Roy refilled the water pot with snow, and set it next to the fireplace to melt, then added some wood to the fire. Roy opened the cabin door, and Oliver decided he should go outside and take care of business after drinking all that water, Roy walked over to the outhouse to do the same. On his way back, Roy picked up a load of wood out of the woodpile, then carried it inside. Oliver was already laying on his rug when Roy came in. Roy checked the snow pot, and the water had melted, so Roy refilled his water containers, and refilled the water pot with snow to melt. When it got full dark, Roy decided to go right to bed since he was tired.

When Roy woke up the next morning, it was cold, and the wind was howling. "Dang, not another Blizzard!" Roy got dressed quickly, stoked the fire, then tried the door. Roy said a quick prayer of thanks when the door opened easily. For some reason, even though the wind was howling, and the snow was blowing all around, there wasn't much snow on the porch. Roy looked at the nearby trees, and figured out why - the storm was blowing from the opposite direction as the last one, and the door was on the downwind side of the house. Since he couldn't see the outhouse, Roy decided to stand off the end of the end of the porch, and relieve his bladder while he could. Oliver trotted out at that minute, and Roy could almost hear Oliver saying "Hey - you do that in YOUR bathroom, you're in MINE!" Roy quickly pulled his pants up before he froze something off he might need later. Roy decided to forget about the wood, and get back inside where it was warm. Evidently Oliver had the same idea, and they almost collided in the doorway. Roy stopped just long enough for Oliver to get inside, then he walked quickly inside the cabin and closed the door.

Roy threw a couple of logs on the fire, heated some water for tea, fed Oliver some salmon, and

ate a piece of jerky while he waited for the water to heat up. When the water was hot, he poured it into his mug and added his tea blend. When it had steeped, Roy sat down and sipped his tea then took the piece of wood and a piece of coal, and drew the shape of the longbow onto the wood. He made the center fat, and the tips thin. He figured about 3 inches at the center, to about ½ inch at the tips. Roy had a brilliant idea that would speed up the process. What if he took the fine saw blade on his Gerber Multi-tool to cut the lines on the wood. He had 6 blades available, so he thought that using one of them would be a good use of a blade. Roy took out his Gerber Multi-tool, opened the saw blade up, and started sawing from the tip to the grip along one side. It took Roy about an hour to completely saw one quarter of the bow, then he flipped the wood over, and started on the other side. Meanwhile Oliver was sound asleep on the rug. Roy kind of envied Oliver's ability to sleep through anything. Roy resumed sawing, and by dinnertime, Roy had sawn out the blank for his bow. It still needed to be smoothed and shaped, the notches cut, and the grip fixed to the bow.

Roy let Oliver sleep, and scooped out some more stew. It wasn't half bad, and actually contained vitamins and minerals he needed to keep healthy. Good thing it did, otherwise Roy would just eat jerky, because it never tasted as good as Susan's cooking. Even with the Ramen flavoring packets, the stew was bland and gamy from the rabbit and other wild meat. When he finished dinner, Roy put a couple of logs on the fire, grabbed his Bible, and sat down to read for a while before going to sleep. He was reading in the Book of John, starting at Chapter 13, how Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for a paltry sum, then later killed himself in remorse. Roy could relate to Remorse, but remembered the time at his Church's Summer Camp when he gave his heart to Christ, and how the Pastor told them that God had forgiven all their sins, and realized that God had even forgiven him for not bringing his sons up the way he should have. Roy felt much better when he remembered that, and continued in the book. When he read the part about Peter denying with an oath that he didn't know Jesus, Roy realized he didn't really know Jesus either, but he was going to try, and reading the Bible helped, but he needed to spend a lot more time talking to God, and appreciating his surroundings that God had so graciously provided for him.

Roy fell to his knees, crying and praying, when all of a sudden, he thought he heard Angels singing. That couldn't be right, but he felt he needed to investigate, so he put on his parka, grabbed his snowshoes, and opened the cabin door. The blast of cold air woke Oliver up, and saw Roy was going outside, and grudgingly decided to follow. When Roy got clear of the cabin, and his eyes dark adapted, he saw a beautiful sight. It wasn't Angels, it was the Aurora Borealis. He'd never seen a more beautiful sight, and stood there for several minutes, awestruck at the sight. The singing he thought he heard was the wind blowing gently through the trees. Roy lifted his hands high, and gave praise to God, "Thank You God! You are so Awesome, and Your Creation is Beautiful beyond imagination!" After a couple of hours, the display started to fade, and Roy realized it was freezing out there. Roy hurried back into the cabin, made some tea to warm up. Oliver rolled back into his blanket. When Roy drank his tea, he put his Bible back up, threw a couple of logs on the fire so it would stay warm for a couple of hours, then got undressed and slid between the bearskin blankets, and went to sleep.

Roy slept in the next morning, and woke up around noon. Oliver was standing next to the door as if he were saying, "Come On Boss, I can't hold it much longer!" Seeing the look on Oliver's face, Roy got up and let him out first, then got dressed and went to use the outhouse. It was clear but COLD outside, and Roy's breath froze on his beard. Roy quickly walked over to the outhouse, opened the door, lit the candle, then broke the world's record for taking care of the Call of Nature. Roy got dressed quickly, opened the door, blew out the candle, and walked as quickly as he could back into the cabin.

Oliver came bounding around the corner, and almost flattened Roy in his haste to get back inside where it was warm. Roy put a cup of water next to the fire to get hot. When the water was hot enough, Roy poured it into his ceramic mug and added his tea blend. While it steeped, Roy got out a piece of jerky for him, and a piece of dried fish for Oliver. Roy tossed it to Oliver, who caught it in mid-air. Roy drank his tea while he chewed the rest of his jerky. When he had finished breakfast, Roy put his parka on, and went outside to the woodpile to refill his indoor woodpile. Roy then sat down, picked up his SAK, and used the large blade to smooth out the blank for his longbow. He worked on it the rest of the day, and as it was growing dark, Roy set down the bow, scooped up some stew into his bowl for dinner, said Grace, then started eating dinner. For some reason, stew didn't taste as well the third day, so when he had finished, Roy emptied the rest of the pot into Oliver's bowl. Oliver got up, sniffed his bowl, then started eating. Obviously Oliver wasn't a picky eater. After dinner, Roy cleaned out the Dutch Oven with some snow, then cleaned his bowl and utensils. Roy then picked up his Bible, turned to the Book of John, and continued reading. After a couple of hours, Roy was getting tired, so he put up his Bible, got undressed, and went to sleep.

When Roy got up, he let Oliver out, took care of his chores, ate a piece of jerky and drank some tea, then started in on smoothing out his longbow with his Swiss Army Knife. He was slicing paper thin pieces of wood off the bow, shaping and smoothing the surface, and making a graceful curve out of straight line cuts. At the end of the day, he had the final shape of the bow. Now he needed to mount the arrow rest, the grip, and notch the tips to take the string. The first thing he did was to take a large wedge of wood he had sawn off earlier, and cut across it so the cut end was slightly wider than the arrow shaft. Then he took a scrap of moosehide, shaved the hair off of it, and wrapped it around the bow, holding the shelf in place, and providing a grip surface for his hand. He took his needle and tread, and sewed the seam together, since he needed his sinew for other projects. The needlework pulled the leather tightly around the grip, anchoring the shelf very firmly. Roy took a pinch of bear grease from his kit, and rubbed it into the leather to waterproof it and seal it. It was getting late, so Roy opened the front door, whistled for Oliver, who came running in the door. Roy closed the door, and sat down to eat dinner, but first he fed Oliver, then said grace. When he was finished with dinner, he opened his Bible to read for a couple of hours before bed.

The next morning Roy woke up freezing COLD. Roy wrapped the bearskin blanket around his shoulders, got his pants and shirt on, then put his boots on and walked over to check the fire. Good news was he couldn't hear the wind - the bad news was the fire was Out Cold. Roy

needed to light the fire quickly. He fumbled in his pockets for his butane lighter, and some paper thin pieces of wood, then quickly built a small teepee out of kindling. Roy tried lighting the lighter, but it must have been too cold for the butane gas to ignite since the lighter was very cold. Thinking fast, Roy dug into his emergency kit, took out his MFS and his SAK, scraped a small pile of magnesium onto the piece of wood, then turned the MFS over, and forcefully scraped the blade down the length of the ferrochromium rod. A shower of sparks erupted from the rod, and the Magnesium shavings flared into a bright white hot miniature volcano of fire, immediately igniting the wood in the fireplace. While the magnesium still burned, Roy quickly added larger and larger pieces of wood, until he had a nice large fire burning in the fireplace. Roy returned the MFS and SAK to his fanny pack kit, and the lighter back to his pocket, then said a brief prayer of thanksgiving that he had the tools to save his life. The Roy remembered something his Scoutmaster had told him when he was in Boy Scouts - Always have 3 means of starting a fire, and carry tinder that will light 100 percent of the time on your person at all times. Roy re-checked his fanny pack, and the 35mm film can full of Petroleum jelly saturated cotton balls was still there. He'd used a few, but the canister was still 2/3 full, and the petroleum jelly was intact.

Since he was now wide awake and dressed, Roy made tea, ate a piece of caribou jerky just to be different, and woke Oliver with a piece of smoked Salmon. Roy was getting low on fish, but had plenty of jerky and pemmican to last the winter. Oliver finally extricated himself from the bearskin he was rolled up in, ate his breakfast, then trotted over to the door. Oliver looked over his shoulder at Roy like "I'm waiting." so Roy set down his mug, opened the door, grabbed his parka, and walked over to the outhouse. The outhouse door was stuck, but not badly, so Roy managed to get it open after a brief struggle, then he lit the tallow candle on the shelf inside the outhouse, and quickly did his business, since it was brutally cold outside. Roy got dressed, opened the door, blew out the candle, checked for yellow snow, and since the coast was clear, stepped into the snow, and made a brief detour to the woodpile to carry a load inside. Roy checked the clouds as he walked back to the cabin door, and noticed the clear blue sky, and thought "That's why it was so COLD this morning - the clouds must have kept the heat close to the earth." Since his Dutch oven was empty, and he didn't know what the weather tomorrow would be, he took off his parka, slipped on his shoulder holster and fanny pack, put his parka back on and picked up his snowshoes, and headed off to check his snares. The snow was so deep that he needed his hiking staff to keep upright. This was going to take longer than he thought. Looking down, Roy saw Oliver struggling through the snow to catch up, so Roy waited for Oliver, and when Oliver stopped next to him, Roy reached down and scratched between Oliver's ears. That done, Roy set off again to locate his first snare. He found the anchor point, but the snare was buried under the snow. Roy followed the wire, and to his surprise, there was a large snowshoe rabbit on the other end. Roy removed the frozen carcass, and relocated the snare higher up out of the snow. Roy guessed this rabbit was caught before the last snowstorm, and got buried after it had died. Roy went to check the rest of his snares, and found a few more rabbits. He had to relocate most of his snares, since the snow had covered almost all of them. When he had finished, Roy turned for home, and Oliver bounded through the snow beside him.

They got back to the cabin about an hour later, and Roy laid the rabbits on the table, threw some wood on the fire, and refilled his water containers, then refilled the snow pot to make some more water. Roy sat down at the table to skin and gut the frozen rabbits, and for some reason, the skin separated easily from the bodies. This had happened the last couple of times, but Roy took no special notice. Roy remembered Susan pulling the skin off frozen chickens, and told him it was easier to do when the carcass was frozen rather than defrosted. Roy finished skinning and gutting the rabbits about an hour later, and as usual, Oliver got the guts in his bowl, and Roy got the meat in his pot, and the fur and sinews in his collection. Oliver pigged out, and soon the bowl was empty, Oliver's belly was full, and he laid down for a nap. Roy thoroughly cleaned the table, took out his bow and his SAK, and using the smallest blade, cut notches on both sides of the tips to hold the bowstring. Roy tried to make them as round and smooth as he could. As it was growing dark, Roy set the bow down, threw a couple of logs on the fire, and since the stew wasn't done yet, ate some jerky for dinner. Oliver was already fed, so Roy picked up his Bible when he was finished eating and started reading.

Roy woke up the next morning, and for once he wasn't cold. The fire was still glowing, and Oliver was laying on his rug instead of rolled up in it. Roy got up, got dressed, added some wood to the fire, which burst into flame as soon as it got fresh fuel. Roy filled his canteen cup with water for tea, grabbed some jerky for Oliver and him, tossed Oliver his piece, and slowly chewed his piece while he waited for the water to get hot. A couple of minutes later, the water was hot, and he poured it into his mug, added the tea, and let it steep. Roy finished eating his jerky, then drank his tea when it had cooled to a safer temperature. Roy picked up his bow, then remembered he had a file on his Gerber Multi-tool, took out his tool, and opened the file. Roy used the file to further smooth the bow until he had smoothed off all the knife marks. When he was finished, Roy closed his Gerber tool and put it back up.

Roy rummaged around his collection of stuff, found all the sinew he had been collecting, and started rolling the longer strands together until he had a piece about $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the bow. Roy made loops in the end, and wrapped the ends with thread to keep them for coming undone. Roy hooked the loop over the bottom notch of his bow, then put the bow tip on the floor, and used his thigh to bend the bow and attach the bowstring to the upper notch. Roy carefully released tension on the bow, and the string held. Roy was beside himself - he never thought that it would actually work. Roy pulled the bowstring, and the bow flexed just like it was supposed to. He didn't pull the string all the way back to his full draw, because you should never take a bow to full draw without an arrow attached to the string, because if your grip slipped, the unencumbered string would whiplash and stress the bow to the breaking point. Roy carefully unstrung the bow, since he wouldn't be able to use it until he finished his arrows, and he didn't have feathers for fletching yet.

Roy did have some very straight hardwood sticks he was going to try and make shafts out of. Roy kept the bow out so he could measure the shafts to get the right length. He wanted the obsidian arrowheads well ahead of his hand at full draw so it wouldn't cut his hand on the draw. Roy held the bow, placed a stick on the rest, and held his hand in the full draw position, and left

3 inches in front of his hand for safety. Roy marked the stick at the correct point, then cut all the other sticks to that length with the saw on his SAK. Next he cut notches in both ends of the shafts to fit the heads, and to act as a nock for the string. Roy knew he was going to lose some accuracy without a modern nock, but he wasn't going to shoot anything more than 30 yards away anyway.

Roy almost smacked himself on the head when he remembered if he was going to use a bow and arrows, he'd need a quiver. Good thing he had some hides left. He had a log that was about 6 to 8 inches in diameter that he cut a 1 inch thick cross section off to use as a stiffener for the bottom of the quiver. Roy thought he'd use a twig to shape the top opening. Now all he needed was to cut a piece of hide about 6 inches shorter than his arrow shafts, and wide enough to fit comfortably around the wood section. Roy rolled the piece of wood on the hide just to be sure, and cut about 1 inch past the mark. Roy cut a strip of the same hide about 2 inches wide and 4 feet long for the sling to carry it over his shoulder.

Roy double checked his measurements before he cut them, and he lengthened the sling slightly to give him room for a jacket. Roy turned the hide inside out, grabbed a needle and black thread, and started sewing up his quiver. Roy sewed the bottom closed first, then started on the bottom corner, then sewed the rest of the side seam. Roy rolled the top over a thin twig to hold the top open, and stitched the top in place. Roy turned the quiver right side in, and attached the sling at the top and bottom of the seam, sewing several inches to the quiver to make sure it wouldn't come loose. Roy took the section of wood, and stuck it in the bottom of the quiver to hold its shape. Roy next tied the arrowheads to the shafts with sinew. He stuck the arrowheads into the notches he cut, and tightly wound the sinew around the junction, making sure the sinew stayed inside the notches he had chipped in the arrowheads to secure the sinew. After about a dozen turns, he tucked the wrapping under the previous wrap, and pulled until the sinew snapped. This tucked the end neatly inside the wrapping, and in the spring, he would cement the connection with pine pitch glue. By now it was starting to get dark, so Roy set his project back on top of the pile, opened the door, and Oliver was standing there. Roy thought "How did he know I was going to open the door?" as Oliver walked in and plopped himself down on the rug. Oliver was Dog Tired. Roy scooped up some stew for dinner, and gave Oliver a bowl as well. Master and Wolf chowed down the hot stew. Oliver finished in under a minute, and looked up like his namesake holding up a bowl of thin gruel, and asking "Please Sir, may I have some more?" Roy had way more compassion in his little toe than the Workhouse manager had in his whole body, so he gave Oliver seconds. Roy finished his dinner in peace, and Oliver drank noisily from his bowl of water.

Chapter 49 - Oliver finds a Girlfriend

The morning broke clean and clear, Roy got up, got dressed, stoked the fire, grabbed some jerky for Oliver and him, fed Oliver, and slowly ate his jerky while the water for his tea heated next to the fireplace. When Oliver finished eating, he walked to the door, and Roy let him out. Oliver took off like a shot for the woods, barking like he was having fun as he charged through the deep snow. Roy looked out at Oliver, and saw another wolf in the tree line, it was a black wolf with white markings and bright blue eyes. Oliver ran up next to it, and they started to smell each other like they were friends, so Roy decided everything was OK, and went to use the outhouse and refill the indoor woodpile. Oliver was still playing around with the other wolf as Roy went back inside the cabin to drink his tea.

A couple of hours later, Roy went to go check his snares, and for once Oliver didn't tag along - Roy thought this was strange, but continued anyway. Roy found 5 rabbits in his snares, and after resetting them, carried his burden home. By now it was late afternoon, and as Roy approached the cabin, Oliver was still frolicking with the other wolf. It finally dawned on Roy that the other wolf was a female - well how about that, Oliver had a girlfriend. Roy suddenly felt sad because he realized that Oliver could abandon him, and he would miss him, but then remembered that God made wolves to live in the wild, and that Oliver belonged with his own kind. Roy wasn't sure what to do, so he prayed, "God, you gave me Oliver to help me through this trial, I understand that he still is a wild wolf, and belongs with his own kind, so please show me what you want me to do!" As he finished his prayer, he reached the door, and opened it. Without calling him, Oliver and his girlfriend ran over to the cabin, and Oliver introduced Roy to his girlfriend. She was the shy type, and took several minutes to warm up to Roy. Finally she sniffed Roy's hand, and smelling Oliver's scent on it, realized that Roy was OK, then they both walked into the cabin. Roy said "Thanks God, looks like I've gained another friend!" Roy sat down, and skinned the rabbits, and threw the guts into Oliver's bowl. Roy put most of the meat into the pot, and since he had some left, added it to Oliver's Bowl. Oliver let his girlfriend eat first, then he ate the other half. Roy thought about this for a while, and decided that if she were to stay, he'd need to give her a name. Francine was Susan's middle name, and it kind of suited Oliver's Girlfriend, since she was a real pretty wolf. Roy called to her, and she came over with Oliver, and they both got their ears scratched, then they sacked out together on Oliver's rug, just giving Roy enough room to get into and out of bed.

Roy looked at his food box, and it was still 2/3 full - the trapping had been good, and he hadn't hit his jerky too hard. He figured if he was able to keep up trapping, he could afford to feed another wolf. Since the stew wouldn't be fit to eat until tomorrow, Roy slowly chewed a piece of jerky. Roy thought that this would solve one of his problems - what to do with Oliver when he paddled back to civilization. If Oliver had a family, he'd probably stay here. Since it was past breeding season for wolves, Roy knew he wouldn't have to worry about raising wolf pups as well. Roy shook his head, then thanked God for solving his problems. He got to keep his best friend, and he would be OK when Roy had to leave. Even if he didn't stay in Civilization,

he had to let someone know he was still alive, and what happened to the pilot.

Roy thought about that for a long time, and realized the Insurance company had probably already paid his sons the proceeds of his life insurance, but the money he could get for his motor home, which was parked in a storage facility in Washington could easily pay for him to buy this piece of land, and pay for years of supplies, even hire a diver to recover his bags, or buy new stuff. Roy had a lot of thinking to do. Meanwhile, he had to survive the winter, and now he had two wolves to keep fed and warm - good thing the winter had been mild so far, and he had all that stored jerky and wood. When he finished eating, Roy picked up his Bible and continued reading. Before he went to bed, he banked the fire and threw a big log in to keep it burning all night.

Chapter 50 - Spring Finally

After 3 months of snow, blizzards, hauling wood, etc. Roy had survived the winter without any major incidents. Oliver and Francine were spending more and more time away from the cabin as the weather warmed and the snow melted. Roy had completed all his projects, and as soon as the snow melted enough for him to walk around without snowshoes, Roy located a large tree that would be suitable for making a dugout canoe. Roy took several days to drop the tree, delimb it, and drag it over to the cabin after he fashioned a harness to make it easier for him to drag it. Roy finally has the canoe next to the cabin, and he was in the process of figuring the fastest way to hollow out and shape the log into a canoe. Since it was just himself and his meager supplies, Roy decided to make a canoe between 6 and 8 feet long, and to shape the bow so it would rise up instead of dig in if he caught any rough water. Roy used his old saw blade to slice the bark off one side of the log, then built small fires along the centerline to burn out the center of the tree. Roy decided the easiest way to get the canoe to the lake was to use log rollers, so he picked 4 logs about 4 feet long, and 6 inches in diameter to act as rollers. As he shaped the tree into a canoe, it was resting on the logs. Over several days, the fires burned into the interior of the tree, and Roy chopped away the soft coals and shaped the outside of the log so the bow and stern into a more canoe-like shape. Roy started with the small axe, and chopped away most of the wood in what would become the bow of the boat, until he had a 3 inch wide bow that gradually tapered back to almost the full width of the log. Roy then shaved the bottom of the bow section to form a hollow that would lift the bow when it struck any rough water.

It took almost a month for Roy to finish the canoe, and the snow had melted, and the lake was free of ice. Roy checked his supply of jerky, and he had over a month's worth left, and what he figured was a week long trip down the river if he traveled 10 miles a day. The topo didn't show any rapids, or spots he'd need to get out and portage, so unless he got caught in a snag, or something else happened, he figured it would take about a week to paddle the length of the Helpmejack River, and make his way to the Alatna River, then 80 miles to the town of Allakaket. Roy hoped the SOB that was storing his two hundred thousand dollar motor home hadn't sold it for storage fees. He left a deposit large enough for 1 year's storage, and he had about 3 weeks left on that year. Oliver and Francine still stopped by in the evening, but Roy followed them one day, and they had already made a den about a mile away. Roy thought Francine might be pregnant, but he wasn't sure. Oliver had remembered how to hunt and act like a wolf, and Roy had heard Oliver and Francine howling a beautiful duet during the last full moon. No wonder Oliver complained about his whistling. Compared to Roy, Oliver was as good as Pavarotti. And he could harmonize better than the guys in America!

After another week, Roy was almost finished with his dugout canoe, and walked to the lake to get an accurate bearing to triangulate his position on the map. Roy recognized 2 peaks, got a cross-bearing, and wrote the numbers down, then took his map and compass back to the cabin to figure exactly where he was. Roy drew in the bearing lines he had shot from the landmarks, and they crossed within a mile of where he thought he was - close enough for government work.

Roy spent the next day packing all his stuff into waterproof bags, stowing them into the canoe, and lashing them in with the Paracord, then he secured the cabin. The next morning, Roy started pushing the canoe to the lake using the rollers. It was slow but steady, and within an hour, he had made it to the lake. Before he got in, he whistled for Oliver, who came trotting out of the forest. Roy told Oliver he had to go now, but he planned to be back. Roy had thought long and hard about this, realized there was nothing in the Lower 48 he needed, and he was happy here. He had survived the wild, and he never felt more alive in his life. He was going to sell his motor home, and use the money to buy the land he had survived the winter on, buy some provisions and equipment, and come back here as soon as he could. Roy still said a tearful goodbye to Oliver since he didn't know if he'd ever see him again. Oliver must have understood, since he licked Roy right on the face like "It's OK boss, we'll be right here when you get back. I'll watch the place for you while you're gone." Roy gave Oliver a big tearful hug, then he looked up, and Francine was standing in the clearing, and as Roy let Oliver go, Oliver turned as if to say, "Sorry Boss, but the Missus is in a hurry!"

Roy turned away, picked up one of the two paddles he made, slid the canoe into the water, and stepped into the back of the canoe, kneeling on a large pad. Roy remembered the best way to row a large canoe is to kneel towards the back, and do a combination of straight pulls and j-strokes to steer the canoe. Roy looked back one last time, to see Oliver and Francine standing there. Francine turned to Oliver, and gave him a big doggie kiss, and Oliver returned the favor. As Roy paddled away, he couldn't see the wolves, but he heard a sweet duet howl, and he would have howled in return if he hadn't remembered that Oliver didn't think too much of his musical talent. Roy dug in with his paddle, and soon was out of earshot.

Roy established a good paddling rhythm, and soon reached the output of the lake. It was marked as a major stream in Roy's topo map, but it was behaving more like a minor river due to the spring runoff. It was flowing fast enough that Roy didn't need any more bow strokes, and just j-stroked to keep the canoe in the center of the stream. An hour later, Roy emerged onto the Alatna River. The current picked up immediately, and Roy spent all his time keeping the canoe in the center of the river. Between the way he balanced the canoe fore and aft, and the way he built the bow, the bow was riding slightly higher in the water than the stern, but the stern wasn't digging in, which meant that Roy probably had to paddle from a kneeling position for the rest of the trip. When it started to get dark, Roy turned the canoe into the bank where there was a low spot to beach the canoe. Roy ran the canoe up on the shore, and tied the canoe to a tree with some of his Paracord just in case.

Roy had his fanny pack with his knife and hatchet already on, he'd learned his lesson when the plane went down - "If it's not on you, you don't have it!" Roy was also wearing his 22/45 in the shoulder holster. He had 100 rounds in his fanny pack, and the rest in his daybag, which was packed in the river bags. Since he didn't need anything from his river bags, he left them lashed into the canoe, but he checked the lashings just to make sure. Everything was still tight. Roy gathered some wood to make a fire. Since the river had just flooded, there was plenty of wood along the banks, so Roy had a big pile of wood in minutes. Roy took his Bowie knife and

made tinder out of one of the pieces of wood, then took his MFS and shaved a small pile of magnesium shavings onto the tinder, then flipped the MFS over, and struck a huge shower of sparks. The magnesium flared into a huge fire, and Roy quickly added larger and larger pieces of wood until he had a nice fire going. Roy made some tea and ate a piece of jerky from his pack, then wrapped up in his bearskin to sleep.

Chapter 51 - Rolling on the River

At first light, Roy ate a piece of jerky, made some tea, then packed up all his stuff, untied the canoe, and entering on the downstream side to make sure the canoe didn't get away from him, pushed the canoe into the river and jumped in. Roy picked up his paddle, got into his kneeling position again, and after making sure everything was as it should be and the canoe was balanced, turned the bow of the canoe into the current and set off. Roy made excellent time since the current was flowing fast, and Roy only had to swerve about once per mile to avoid boulders and other obstructions. At the end of the day, Roy estimated he had traveled almost 30 miles that day, and Roy sought out a good beaching site. Roy spotted one ahead, and quickly stroked out of the main current into a slower current, then settled into the relatively calm water ahead of his beaching site. Roy grounded the canoe, jumped out, picked up the bow, and pulled it further on the beach, then tied the canoe to a tree. Roy made a fire, set up camp, ate dinner, then curled up in his bearskin blanket and went to sleep.

Roy was off again at first light, right after he ate and drank some tea. Roy packed what little stuff remained to be packed into the canoe, checked the lashings, untied the canoe from the tree, pushed it off the beach, and jumped in. Roy quickly got into his kneeling position, tested the balance of the canoe, then turned into the main channel and stroked out into the center of the river. At this point, the river was about 150 feet across, and he estimated about 15 feet deep. It must have been glacier fed, because it was COLD. Roy had packed his caribou hide clothes, but he was wearing his jeans, flannel shirt, and had his jacket tied around his waist. As it got colder on the water, Roy stopped paddling, and put on the jacket. Roy resumed paddling just to keep the canoe in the center of the river where it was safest. Roy had to avoid some snags and boulders, but other than that, it was a nice pleasant trip. Roy thought about Oliver, and he hoped that the two wolves were happy. Roy snapped out of his reverie just in time to avoid a huge boulder that was hidden under the water that would have wrecked the canoe. Roy was glad he decided not to run the river at night - he'd never see hidden obstacles like that.

After the close call, Roy paid attention to the river, and noticed it was dropping faster and getting narrower. Roy remembered there weren't any marked rapids on the river, but that didn't mean there weren't any seasonal rapids. As long as they didn't get too hairy, he could handle it. For the next couple of miles, Roy had to work to keep the canoe upright and away from the rocks. The canoe scraped off a couple of boulders, and fell into several holes, but shot right out. Finally the river widened out and slowed down. Roy took the chance to catch his breath, and drink some water. Roy kept paddling through the fast-flowing but smooth water, and at the evening, found an excellent beaching site. Roy thought the river was flowing at 3-5mph and he had been on the river for 10 hours before he beached the canoe for the night. He should reach Allakaket sometime tomorrow if his numbers were right. Roy made camp, started a fire, ate some jerky, drank some tea, and curled up in his bearskin to sleep until daylight.

Chapter 52 - Civilization at Last!

At first light, Roy repacked his bag, checked the canoe, untied it, then got in on the downstream side, and got into his kneeling position. Roy figured as long as he was kneeling, he should pray, so he gave thanks to God for getting him through the wilderness, then asked his blessing on the rest of the trip. With that, he checked the balance of the canoe, then turned downstream and entered the main channel of the river. Sometime after noon, he started seeing signs of habitation. A couple of minutes later, he saw a flag pole, and made for it. Roy paddled for all he was worth, and beached his canoe right in front of the pole. Roy secured his canoe, then grabbed his bags, and dragged them to the nearest building, which just happened to be the Sheriff's Office and City Hall all rolled into one. As he walked through the door, the Deputy looked up, and asked him, "Who are you? You're not from around here, are you?" Roy dropped his bags, walked up to the deputy, and said, "You wouldn't believe me if I told you! Is the Sheriff in?" The Deputy walked into the back office, and got the Sheriff.

"All Right, enough of the Mystery. Who are you?"

"You're not going to believe this, but I'm Roy Williams!"

"Never heard of you! Are you a fugitive?"

"Hardly, I'm probably listed as missing and presumed dead!"

Roy then told the sheriff his story, and the deputy got a tape recorder so he could take notes. The sheriff ran his Social Security number through the system, and sure enough, he was listed as a missing person, presumed dead from a plane accident. The sheriff asked Roy if he could take his prints to verify his ID, and Roy agreed as long as he could use the telephone while they were waiting for the ID to come back. The Sheriff said OK, so Roy dialed his son in California, and at first his son didn't believe him until Roy told him of an event no one else knew about. Roy's son burst into tears, and Roy was crying too. Roy's son told him that he had been declared dead, and that the insurance company had settled his life insurance claim, and they used it to pay off the house. Roy told him that was OK, he expected it, and he was glad they used the money for a good purpose, and didn't blow it on a new boat. Roy's son told him he had thought about it, but his wife convinced him to pay off the house. Roy asked his son if he could loan him \$3,000.00 until the motor home was sold, so he could get a plane ticket to Washington. Roy's son hemmed and hawed, and finally his wife told him to lend his dad the money. Roy gave him the info for where to send it, and said goodbye.

The prints still hadn't come in, so Roy made another call - this time to the storage yard. The Guy who owned it was amazed to hear from him, he'd heard Roy was dead. Roy asked him if his motor home was still there, and the storage manager admitted he was about ready to sell it. Roy told him that if he could get over \$150,000.00 for it to sell it, and Roy would give him 10%

of the money for his trouble. The manager admitted he was interested in buying it - so Roy told him he could have it for \$135,000.00 cash. The manager told him he'd arrange it, and Roy said he was flying into Washington later that week to take care of business. After Roy hung up, the Sheriff told him his prints had come back, and he was who he said he was. Roy asked if they had a direct flight to Washington. The Sheriff told him the plane would be there in 3 days. The sheriff asked him where he was staying, and when Roy told him, he said that was one of the prettiest lakes in the area. Roy asked how he could find if the land was for sale, and the Sheriff walked him over to the Mayor's office, right next door. The mayor handled all the county's business, and had all the plat maps showing ownership.

Roy gave him the co-ordinates, and the Mayor pulled out the right map, located the area, and told Roy the good news, "Nobody owns it, some old trapper was working it 50 years ago, but he never had title. The State of Alaska can give you free and clear title to it for \$10.00 per acre if you file a homesteader's title that states you intend to improve the land, and stay on it at least 5 years." Roy said "I plan to stay the rest of my life. How's that." The mayor asked him how much land would he want, and Roy asked him how much was available. The Mayor said that the nearest landowner was over 100 miles away, and the land was undeveloped wilderness, so he could buy as much as he liked as long as he signed some stipulations not to commercially log or hunt in the area. Roy asked him about subsistence hunting and logging, and the Mayor explained that as long as it was for your own personal use, there wasn't any problem. Roy looked at the map, and figured that about 1,000 acres would be about right. When he told the Mayor, his jaw hit the floor. "Mister, we've NEVER had anyone buy 1,000 acres before!" Roy explained the situation to him, and the mayor appreciated his point of view. Roy told him he was selling a 150K motor home, and he'd have the money by Friday. The Mayor said he'd start the paperwork right away, and give Roy a temporary receipt good for 30 days just in case.

Roy thanked him, then asked him where the Post Office was - and the mayor pointed to the Left. Roy asked about Wire transfers, and the Mayor said they came in on the computer to his left. Roy asked if he could do a wire transfer of \$135,000 to a local account, and the mayor said he could set one up for him right then and there. Roy signed the paperwork, and got an account number. He then called his Son and gave him the number, and 15 minutes later, the money showed up. Roy then called the Storage yard in Washington, and the manager said he had talked to his bank, and they would loan the difference with the motor home as collateral. Roy asked him when the deal would close, and the manager said it was a done deal. Roy looked around, and the Mayor had a fax machine. He asked the Mayor if he could receive and send a fax, and the Mayor said yes. Roy gave the manager the fax number, and asked him to fax a sales contract for 135K cash as is, and he would sign it as soon as the mayor verified the \$135K was in his account. Roy then gave him the account number, and the Manager said he'd wire transfer within the hour. 5 minutes later, the fax showed up, and half an hour later, the mayor said the \$135K was there. Roy signed the bill of sale, and faxed it back to the manager. Roy then asked the Mayor to take \$10K out of his account, and pay for the land. The Mayor did the transaction while Roy waited. Roy asked if he had the phone number of the bush pilot that flew out of here to Washington, and the mayor gave him the number. Roy called the bush pilot, and

he said he could pick up a load of up to a ton in Anchorage for him, and then pick him up and fly him to his lake.

Roy said that would be great, and told him he would call back tomorrow. Roy sent the money back to his son since he didn't need it. and asked the Mayor how to check into the local Hotel. The mayor reached into a drawer, and removed a key, and said, "You just did. 2 doors down, Room 15 on the ground floor, Hot and Cold running water, TV and phone service. Dinner is at 6 o'clock. Roy asked him if he could borrow a legal pad and a pen, he needed to make a list.

With that, Roy picked up his bags, and checked into his room. Roy was still in Culture Shock. This room was bigger than his entire cabin, and the bed was huge. Roy sat down and started composing a list of all the stuff he'd need for the cabin. Roy started writing a list of all the stuff he wanted:

Homestead List:

Budget - 125,000.00

Food

A) Staples

- a) Fat
- b) Salt
- c) Sugar
- d) Flour
- e) Coffee & Tea
- f) Canned food
- g) Potatoes, Rice, Beans, etc.
- h) Yeast and Baking stuff

B) Pots and Pans

- a) Skillet
- b) Pot
- c) spatula
- d) cutlery
- e) kitchen tools

Clothing

- C) Jeans
- D) Shirts
- E) Underwear
- F) Gloves
- G) Boots

Tools

- H) Shovel
- I) Chainsaw
- J) Axe
- K) Big Saw
- L) Pickaxe
- M) Wheels/Carts
- N) Ladder
- O) Hammer
- P) Hand Wood Working Tools

Equipment

- Q) Two-way Radio and Rechargeable Battery
- R) Hand Crank Generator for Radio

Guns & Ammo/Fishing Gear

- S) Rifle Browning A-Bolt .308 w/ 3x12x50AO scope (fog proof)
- T) 1000 rounds Hunting Ammo
- U) Spin cast Fishing Kit w/ Lures
- V) Cleaning Kit

Gardening Stuff

- W) Seeds
- X) Gardening Tools
- Y) PVC Pipe and Solar powered 12v water pump (Shurflo RV type w/ 50 gal tank.)
- Z) Greenhouse materials ?

Ongoing Supplies

- AA) Paper & Pens
- BB) Toiletries/TP
- CC) Kerosene Lamps, Oil, Wicks, etc.

When he finished, he went into the bathroom, and showered off all the accumulated grunge, turning the rinse water black. Roy got dried off, put on his cleanest long johns and his caribou skin clothes since they were the cleanest, and went into dinner. No one gave him any problem with his attire, since some of the other residents were dressed like him.. One of the women complimented him on his needlework, and Roy told her that his wife had shown him how to sew before she died. The lady was apologetic, but Roy told her that it was OK. The Hotel served dinner family style, and soon Roy was staring at piles of unfamiliar food (he knew what they were, it's just he'd been eating a simple diet for the last year or so. Roy took a helping of each anyway, and was soon enjoying his first home cooked meal in over a year. When dinner was finished, Roy excused himself, and approached the Mayor, who also happened to own the Hotel, and ask him if there was a computer connected to the Internet he could use. The Mayor said that he had one with a DSL connection that he could use. Roy explained that he needed to

buy some stuff in Anchorage for the bush pilot to ship up later that week, and he needed a credit card. The Mayor said his card was unlimited, and Roy could pay him with a balance transfer since he didn't have any checks. The mayor showed him where the computer was, and gave him his Platinum Visa. Roy checked for Dry Goods Dealers in Anchorage, and found someone who could handle almost everything. He even recommended the perfect Military Surplus 2-way radio and hand-crank generator set for his cabin. This was going to be easier than he thought it was. He'd have to order the Rifle from someone else, since he wasn't an FFL, but Roy knew someone in WA, and sent them an E-mail telling him what he needed, and where he needed it.

Next he checked out the State of Alaska's Dept of Agriculture to see what kind of vegetables would grow in his area, and got a list. He then surfed over to the Heirloom Seeds web page, and ordered a bunch of heirloom seeds, and had them next-day Red Label it to Anchorage. He got a confirming e-mail from Heirloom seeds that the seeds were in stock. Roy sent an e-mail to the Bush Pilot with the list of stuff he was to pick up and ship to him, noting that the entire order was already paid for by credit card, so all he owed the pilot was the shipping charges.

Roy turned off the computer, gave the credit card back to the mayor, and walked with him back to the office to do a balance transfer. Roy took care of the balance transfer, and was still left with over 100 thousand dollars. Roy asked if the bank paid interest, and the Mayor said it was a credit union, and with that kind of money, he could pay 15% Interest on deposits, plus as a resident of Alaska, he received an annual disbursement from the state, and if he agreed to direct deposit those funds, the mayor could handle all his transactions for supplies from here on out for 10% over the cost plus shipping, and deduct the amount from his account. Roy thought this was an excellent idea, and the mayor told him that he did that for all the homesteaders in the county, since it cost money to travel into town to transact business, and it was cheaper to pay him 10% over cost and have the bush pilot run it out instead. It gave him an income, and was easier for the homesteaders, some of them he hadn't seen for years. Roy had 2 days to kill while he waited for the bush plane to deliver his stuff, so he checked out the rest of the town. There was a bar, and a small grocery/dry goods business, and a sign that said Medical Clinic. Roy asked the mayor about that later, and discovered that they had a doctor in residence that was working off his student loan debt to the state. Roy said, "Just like Northern Exposure." and the Mayor laughed, "Yeah, but we don't have a moose walking through town yet." Since it was getting late, and Roy was tired, he said goodnight, and went to his room. Roy turned the light on as he entered, locked the door behind him, used the toilet, took another shower, and went to bed.

The next morning, he got up for breakfast, which included piles of food, since Roy's stomach was feeling better, he ate heartily, and drank several cups of coffee. When he was finished, he checked out the dry goods store, which was closed last night, and they had some underwear in his size, so he bought a new pair of longjohns. The clerk said not to worry, they'd charge his room so he could pay it all at once. Roy went into his room, locked the door, got undressed, took off his filthy longjohns, and threw them in the trash. Then he put on the brand new clean

pair and immediately felt better. He sat down, picked up the phone, and called his son, and told him he had decided not to come to California, and his son said that was OK, since he didn't have the time anyway, his company was right in the middle of a big project. Roy hung up after saying goodbye, and he realized he would probably never see his sons again. That thought floored him, but there was nothing he could do, and regret wasn't going to help the situation. Roy walked over to the Sheriff's Station, and talked with the Sheriff about the pilot of his bush plane, and showed him the dog tag taken from his body, and told the sheriff where he was buried. The Sheriff thanked Roy for telling him, the pilot was a friend of his, and he had never known what had happened to him. He assumed he was dead, but he wasn't sure when Roy showed up until Roy told him about the accident and the pilot's death. The Sheriff would take care of notifying his family. Roy returned the pilot's Rolex Watch he was wearing, and asked the Sheriff to give it to the family, saying that it was the only thing of the pilot's that survived the crash. The sheriff thanked Roy, and told him he'd make sure the family got it. Later that evening, Roy got a call at the Hotel, it was the Bush Pilot telling him that everything but the rifle had shown up, and the rifle was due there tomorrow before he left. Roy thanked the pilot, then hung up.

Roy spent the rest of the day walking around thinking when the town news reporter grabbed him and asked him about his story. She offered to buy him a beer while he talked. Since he had nothing better to do, he took her up on the offer, besides she was kind of cute! They walked over to the Bar, and she opened the door and the first thing Roy saw was the largest mounted moose head he had ever seen. The reporter walked up to the bar, ordered two Moose Drool Ales, and walked over to a corner booth. Roy followed, admiring the figure of the reporter. She set down the beers, and motioned Roy over to the opposite seat, and took out a tape recorder. She told Roy the Deputy had played the tape from yesterday to him, and she had some follow-up questions for a story she wanted to publish in the paper. For a couple of hours, they talked while the tape recorder spun. Finally, she ran out of questions, and Roy was exhausted since he hadn't talked that much in a year. Roy finished his beer, thanked the Reporter, and said Good Afternoon - He needed a nap. Roy walked back to his hotel, opened the door, locked it behind him, took his clothes off, and passed out on the bed.

The phone by his bed chirped twice at 6:00pm for dinner, and Roy got up, got dressed, and walked into the dining room. The whole town had shown up and crowded the dining room. Roy didn't know what this was all about until the reporter walked up to him, and gave him a big kiss and a hug, then told Roy the pilot was her brother, and she wanted to thank Roy for giving him a decent burial. Roy thought to himself "That explained all the questions about the pilot." the reporter was wearing her brother's Rolex watch now, even though it was way too big for her. The sheriff walked up next and shook his hand since the pilot was his best friend, and then the Mayor gave a speech, and they all sat down for dinner. After dinner, the whole town wanted to talk to Roy about his adventure, and find out why he wanted to go back, but most of the townsfolk already knew, since they too were refugees from the rat race. After several hours, they finally let Roy go to bed, good thing too, since he was about to collapse. Roy went to his room, locked the door, took off his clothes, took a hot shower, and went to bed.

The next morning, the phone by his bed rang, and the pilot told him all the stuff he ordered was in the plane, and he was leaving within the hour. The Rifle and seeds had shown up, as well as a large print copy of the New King James Bible with an engraved leather cover. Roy ordered the large print so he wouldn't have to strain his eyes in the poor light. Roy also ordered several new batteries for his Casio Watch, and a bunch of wicking and lamp oil for oil lamps so he could see better at night. The pilot told him he was glad Roy lived on a big lake, because he was going to be near max load with Roy and all his stuff in there. He told Roy not to worry, the DeHaviland Otter was one of the best bush planes in the business, and could haul the most weight.

He told Roy to be ready by noon at the airstrip, since it was a long flight, and would take a while to unload. Roy told the pilot that the cabin was ¼ mile away from the lake, and he said not to worry, the Otter was an amphibian. Roy asked what an amphibian was, and the pilot explained that it had wheels and floats, and that he could land on either, so he could land on the lake, and if the ground was flat enough, taxi right up to the cabin. Roy thought that was a great idea, and thanked the pilot. The pilot told him they'd talk when he got there, and hung up.

Roy packed up, and went to settle his bill, only to find out the townspeople had paid it for him, including all the long distance calls and the longjohns. Roy didn't know what to say except "Thanks!" He hung out in the lobby for an hour, then the mayor ran him out to the airstrip in his truck. Just as he got there, the mayor handed Roy something - it was two cigars. He had one request, that he and the bush pilot would smoke them over the dead pilot's grave, since it was a bush tradition to either have a drink or a smoke over your friend's grave, so they could be with you again. Roy agreed, and then grabbed his bags as the plane approached the runway. The mayor sped off since the plane needed all the runway, and the truck was in the way, leaving Roy standing next to the runway while the biggest bush plane Roy had ever seen was coming in for a landing. The Otter landed with a thump, ran down the length of the runway, then turned around to head back upwind. The plane stopped next to Roy, and the door popped open. Roy threw his bags in the back, made sure his fanny pack was secured around his waist, because he knew what happened last time. Roy got in buckled his seatbelt, closed and locked the door, and the pilot revved his engines in preparation for take-off.

Roy said, "Isn't the Runway a little short?" The pilot replied, "yea, but I use the water at the end of the runway to extend my takeoff roll so you better hang on!" With that, the pilot shoved the throttles to the stops, and the plane leapt forward. Roy couldn't believe anything so big could accelerate so fast, then all of a sudden, the end of the runway appeared, and they still weren't in the air. The pontoons hit the water with a splash, and the Otter continued to accelerate, finally reaching Rotation velocity, the pilot pulled back on the yoke, and they were flying. The pilot noticed Roy's white knuckles, and commented about it. Roy told him the last time he was in a float plane he almost died in a crash, and the pilot did. The Pilot blanched, and asked if the pilot was Ron Fellows? When Roy replied in the Affirmative - the pilot told Roy that Ron was his business partner, and he inherited the business from him when Ron willed the

business to him. Roy told him that he had found and buried the body, and the Mayor had given him 2 cigars to smoke over Ron's grave. The pilot nodded, and said that would be the right thing to do. There wasn't much talk for the rest of the flight, and what seemed minutes later, they spotted Roy's lake.

The pilot made a low pass to gauge the wind direction, then turned on final approach along the long axis of the lake. He set down smooth as glass, and when he had stopped, he turned toward Roy's cabin, and increased power to taxi. When he came to the edge of the lake, Roy felt the wheels making contact, and the plane rolled onto the ground. He taxied within 50 feet of the cabin, then shut off the engines and opened the doors. Roy hopped out, and checked out the cabin, everything was as he left it. He walked back to the plane, and helped the pilot unload all the stuff. The pilot looked at the cabin and whistled, then said "You spent the winter in that thing? You're either very brave or very desperate!" Roy retorted, "Since beggars can't be choosers, it beat sleeping outdoors in a blizzard!" The pilot had to agree with that. Roy told him he was going to build an attached shed to house all the tools and stuff he bought that couldn't fit in the cabin.

It took them 2 hours to unload everything in the plane, and when the pilot turned the plane around to taxi back to the lake, he motioned Roy to hop in, and he'd give him a lift - they still needed to smoke those cigars, and he had a flask around there somewhere. They taxied out to the lake, and Roy directed him to the spot where Ron Fellows was buried. The pilot nosed the plane into the shore, and they both hopped out. Taking his butane lighter, Roy lit both cigars as they walked to Ron's grave. The marker was still there, along with the other dog tag. The pilot got quiet all of a sudden, then kneeled next to the grave, and removed the dog tag. Roy kneeled next to him, and started praying. The pilot looked kind of funny at Roy, then joined him. When they were done, they sat on a rock nearby, smoked their cigars, and the pilot handed Roy his flask of brandy, so they drank a toast to Ron Fellows. The pilot told Roy he always figured Ron would die in a plane accident since he was such a hotdog. He remembered a famous quote his IP once told him, "There are Old Pilots, There are Bold Pilots, but there aren't many Old Bold pilots!" Roy said "Amen" to that! They finished their cigars, and Roy shook the pilot's hand, who told him what frequency to broadcast on if he needed help, since that frequency was monitored 24/7. Roy thanked him for the information, and the pilot walked back to his plane, and Roy walked back to his cabin.

The End

The saga continues in the next book in the Series - Escape From the Rat Race.