

## Picnic up Lowell Canyon

One Saturday afternoon, dad and mom decided to hike up Lowell Canyon. The objective was to get a good look at the Diversion Dam that the Army Corps of Engineers had constructed. Prior to having this diversion tunnel in place. Spring run-offs destroyed a great deal of property in Seward. Lowell River is the river that had created the alluvial fan on which Seward



was built which means it was a powerful river in certain times of the year. Mom's standing on the dam built across the narrow canyon to force the water to enter the tunnel that was to her right.

Lowell Canyon wasn't very far from their new home. Nothing is really. Mt. Marathon is the mountain on the right and Big Bear is the mountain on the left, forming a narrow canyon that would create powerful currents. When I showed mom these photos last month, she remarked, "You're the reason my jacket didn't fit." I asked why and she said she was carrying me. The top photo shows that's true.



## Homestead Site

Another memory I have that reaches back to mom's and dad's first stay in Seward involves a homestead. As already noted, Dick and Lavon Lynch of SLC enticed dad

into going to Alaska to homestead. He told Marie, his wife-to-be, that he was going to do that. She said that he didn't give her any choice, typical for their entire life together. But after he got up there, the idea didn't



**Figure 3 Homestead Site North of Seward**

seem so appealing so he never did anything about it. That's why they didn't file. Too much work but more importantly, it would have tied him down, something he hated.

Each time we drove out of Seward far enough north they would point out a plot of land that they called their "homestead". Mom said that they had planned on homesteading in Seward, and that WW II interrupted that plan because they had not gotten around to filing any papers with the proper agency to protect the land they were interested in.

The site was about Mile 13, a long way from the coast. But it was a property



on a river, overlooking beautiful mountains that rose steeply from their feet. The river was named Snowy River, I believe. Actually, this was the confluence of two rivers but I don't remember the name of either of them.

The amount of work required to homestead a piece of land is extraordinary. I understood that while we lived in Seward. Only tough, dedicated, single-minded people took the task on -though there were a few Cheechakos who had wild visions of getting rich quick who came up and tried it for a year. One round of seasons was sufficient for that type. The trees have to be felled, the roots have to be removed, the land must be leveled for whatever purpose one needed level land. A house had to be constructed and meantime water had to be arranged, a septic field had to be created, electricity would be a nice thing to have, a garden, storage sheds and so on. Monumental task. It was more than dad cared to take on. He had enough of that sort of stuff as a kid in Leamington so while Dick got him excited, he was clear-eyed enough to know he'd fail if he tried. But they held onto the dream anyway.

This is the view from another direction, showing how beautiful the region was that they identified as "their homestead site".



You can see how difficult it would be to clear and farm any land at all. No wonder he changed his mind.