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### Pat and Vince Bates -- A delightful couple with great attitudes !

by Mary Glover



Vince and Pat Bates live in the house that Vince built on Young St. in Seldovia. I was graciously given the opportunity to interview this delightful couple. We laughed a lot during the interview as they both have a wonderful sense of humor. For example, they have been married almost 59 years and Pat said, "My family has finally decided we are going to make it." They first purchased the lot where their house is located as a place to store their commercial fishing gear. Vince first built a storage shed and then later built the house. Their house displays his carpentry skills, as the kitchen cabinets are outstandingly beautiful. In addition, the home reflects many pieces of furniture that he has made. Pat keeps a meticulous house.

Throughout the year, Pat has worked in several different industries. However, her last job was working with the Agriculture and Forestry Experimentation Station in Palmer. Pat retired from being a lab technician in 1982 where one of her primary jobs was soil testing.

themselves by cutting up the metal deck and using that metal for the boiler. Vince said that another exciting time was when he was helping construct an airstrip. He said that he would look up into the sky and see the Kamikazes flying towards the harbor. Vince said that they "shot at them with 30 caliber rifles...that was all we had and it didn't do much." The Kamikazes waved back! Pat and Vince said that "everyone was 100% for the war effort, not like it is today. The attack on Pearl Harbor solidified the war effort."

After the war they went back to Seattle in 1956. Vince had heard that there were dollars to be made in Alaska. He was a carpenter at the time. So Vince came to Fairbanks just as the carpenters went on strike. Not having enough money to return, he stayed and found various jobs. He even got to pan for gold at this time. When he gathered enough money to return to Pat, he went home to Seattle. Then in 1966, he came again to Alaska and went on a fishing trip to Iliamna. The fishing trip was not without adventure as great winds came up and tore up the airplane. They radioed in their distress and got a new wing

Vince was a carpenter and a licensed contractor. The predecessor of the [Lindal Cedar Homes](#) was a company called Justice Cedar Homes. Vince built several of these homes as a developer. According to Vince, "Lindal bought out Justice."

Pat was the youngest of three girls in her family. She was born in Billings, Montana. She spoke very fondly of her father and stepmother. Her father was a rancher south of Glacier Park in Montana. Her mother worked in the family business which was one of the first dry cleaning businesses in Helena, Montana.

Vince said his father was a "jack of all trades." He was an excellent boot maker and made all kinds of boots including working boots and hunting boots. During the depression his father was a hunter and trapper--what we call subsistence hunting today. He also made beautiful gun stocks. Vince said he played "a wonderful banjo." Vince grew up in a happy family with three brothers and one-half brother. His mother was a stay-at-home mom. They lived near Seattle, Washington in a place called North City.

Vince and Pat met at a place named "The Cabaret," a "hang-out place" where the young people would go to dance and have fun. Pat loved to dance. Vince said he, "got tired of dancing so I would go around and get guys to dance with her!" This was during WWII and there were many service men in Seattle. When there was "a shortage of females, the sailors would just dance together. They had to on the ships." Vince said, "got married in '48, just after the war. Pat robbed the cradle, I'm 1½ years younger!"

Pat said that there were "jobs galore" during WWII for the women as all the men were off to war. She worked in a grocery store as a clerk at the time. This was Pat's first experience with the unions. She was hesitant to join the union as at that time some negative connotations were connected with the unions. One day, Pat said, "two huge men came in an escorted me out the store and down to the union headquarters. I signed up." As it turned out, Pat said the union was good because they pushed for "equal pay for equal work. It was the first time that women got equal pay for equal work."

Vince was in the Navy during WWII. He was in the Battle of Okinawa, the bloodiest battle of the Pacific war. He was also stranded at sea for 45 days on a troop transport ship. The ship had 11,000 men aboard. The ship was in distress because the "boilers blew." They radioed for help, but none came. Finally the CBs (construction battalion) fixed the ship

flown in; however, a strut poll was not included. The strut poll was necessary to support the wing. The guys got together and used a tent poll for a strut and lots of duct tape. Yes! Duct tape. They then flew out 100 miles with a plane wing and parts of the plane held together with duct tape. Vince said that while they were stranded over there, they only tried to catch little ones that would fit in a frying pan. That was a challenge as most of the fish were over 15 lbs. Pat said she thought he "was staying so long, not because of all the trouble, but because they really were having fun."

Pat and Vince moved to Anchorage in 1968. They were attracted to the Kenai Peninsula and had friends in Soldotna. However, the job opportunities were in the Anchorage area. They lived in a house on Lake Otis and O'Malley in Anchorage, a house that is still located there today. Vince built a Justice Home in Eagle River and due to the economy problems of those days; they had to repossess the home after it had sold. Pat and Vince then lived in that home. At one time Vince built about five Justice Homes in the Eagle River area. Later they moved to Wasilla and built another home there. Then in the '70's Vince bought a commercial boat named the "Kay-T." He told me he had one of the first drift net permits in Kachemak Bay. He sold this boat in 1978 and bought a pleasure boat in 1985. Pat was still working, so they would come to Seldovia on the weekends and stay on the boat. Then they found out that they could get the Longevity Bonus and they decided to retire in Seldovia.

Pat and Vince speak very fondly of the times they took their boat out and explored Kachemak Bay. They said that the 1964 earthquake demolished Jakolof Bay Dock - "left nothing there" and that they explored Tutka Bay, Seldovia Bay and many other places in Kachemak Bay. Pat said that they "just fell in love with the beauty" of the area.

Pat and Vince had two sons together. Courtney Bates was tragically killed in an automobile accident after returning from the Vietnam War. Rick Bates lives in Homer, works for GCI and visits his parents when he is able to do so.

In 1998 several of the Bates' friends threw them a 50th Wedding Anniversary Party. Liza Bieri made the cake and they still have pictures of this party on the their wall. Both Pat and Vince say, "Everyone here has been so kind to us and they always are." They have some health issues, but their attitude is very positive. No wonder with an attitudes like that, they both have so many friends here in Seldovia.



Bed, nightstand and lamp, some of the beautiful furniture Vince has made.



Rick Bates, son of Vince and Pat

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