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Gerry Patrick - Matriarch in Seldovia

by Tamara Blodgett



A "mother" to many and more...

A mother to seven children, thirty-two grandchildren and five great grandchildren Gerry Patrick has earned her role as beloved matriarch. Having first lived in Seldovia as a newly married nineteen-year-old in 1952, she fell in love with this elusive jewel of the Kenai Peninsula. However, like everyone, lack of work forced she and husband Bill to find stable work in their hometown of Palmer.

Hard work and a spirit for adventure combine to build success...

taking in the car battery and hooking it up to the radio in the house for a couple hours of entertainment! Besides their home, a barn, chicken coop and well house were part of the homesteading package, which sat on eighty acres. Gerry said the family mainly got by on farming, but in '37, Gerry's dad picked up a fish trap job in Bristol Bay that he kept each summer until mid-1950.

The first year Gerry was married saw she and Bill living in a converted chicken coop until more "sound" accommodations were forthcoming! However, the next year was their fateful move to Seldovia, which changed the course of their lives forever. Although the family ended up living in the Palmer-

Gerry was born in Warroad , Minnesota . Warroad is a Native American name meaning, “ The ‘ War Road ’ between Canada and the United States .” This unique neck of the woods was but a brief stepping-stone to her permanent residence in tent city Alaska, located in current day Matsuka Valley . Living there from 1935 until 1951, she met and married Bill, stationed there in the military. After the first year of marriage, the following years’ stay in Seldovia whetted their appetite for wanderlust and they headed off to live first to live briefly near Bill’s parents in Virginia . From there, they moved to Kansas for two years and lived near Bill’s extended family. Having to work two to three jobs in Kansas soon got old. The family, remembering the better wages of Alaska traveled through Canada. Eventually they made their way back to the Palmer-Wasilla area and began operation of a commercial transporting company. This company was responsible for shipping the milk to the dairy farms. Their business thrived and they remained there with their eventual nine- member family doing much to manage the family business.

A rugged life molds Gerry into a woman with mettle...

The success of their business was a far cry of the rustic pioneer upbringing Gerry experienced growing up. Post depression families “colonized” together, living without electricity, living in tents until homes could be built for them. Gerry speaks wistfully of the natural creativity of her childhood, when the highlight of the evening was her father

Wasilla area and managing the transport business until about 1982, Bill decided to buy a place here in Seldovia. Once secured, Bill moved here and Gerry began a two-year commute strategy to and from her job. Once retired from that, she was able to move over here permanently. She fondly remembers her grandchildren staying with she and Bill during the summers, a memory that never left the mind of one grandchild, Josh Patrick, manager of Seldovia Fuel & Hardware and full time Seldovia resident. She also enjoys the close access to eldest son Roland “Shot” Patrick.

Now that Gerry is “retired” she can actively give in to her passion for gardening! Our local nurserywoman, Gerry has an eclectic style of gardening. Not “Seldovian,” rather “Gerry’s style.” Where she effortlessly mixes different elements of indigenous species/materials, with whimsy and traditional, it is uniquely her own. Gerry is also an active traveler. When she is not visiting the scads of extended family scattered about, Gerry serves on the City Council. A trained EMT II, Gerry works in a volunteer capacity of the Seldovia Fire and EMS . When a “call” comes in by radio, Gerry is there to answer!

Like many Seldovians, Gerry wears many hats: mother, grandmother, councilwoman, medic, gardener, mentor, counselor and friend, she is another piece of the Seldovian puzzle, fitting in just perfectly.