

Jones Girls Get Together For Reunion

The Jones girls say that 820 W. Fourth Ave. isn't the Anchorage Times building. It's Mr. Conway's second-hand store where they buy their books.

Together in Alaska with their mother for the first time in 33 years, the daughters of the late Evan Jones, whose mine is a landmark some 15 miles northwest of Palmer, stopped in to the family home, now Gene's Realty at 815 W. Fifth Ave., and reminisced about growing up in Anchorage.

Two of the Jones girls still make their homes in Alaska and have been integral parts of the growth and history of Anchorage and the Matanuska Valley. The other two are residents of Eugene, Ore., and San Diego, Calif., but say that one of the things that's most special is that they have all maintained their family ties and feel close to each other and to the state.

Vanny Davenport, curator of the Heritage Library at the National Bank of Alaska, and Vivian Teeland, who with her husband Walter has been selling merchandise to Matanuska Valley residents for a generation before a recent retirement, are the two Joneses who stayed in Alaska.

Their mother, Bronwen, still perky at almost 90, is a resident of the Palmer Pioneers' Home. She has visited Alyeska and Portage Glacier this week with her daughters and entertained them at the Pioneers Home, where they enjoyed a performance of the kitchen band.

Marnice Visger, the Eugene resident, and Margaret Bennett, now from San Diego, were both born in Anchorage. All four Jones girls graduated from Anchorage High School. Vanny's birthplace was Connellsville, Mo., and Vivian's was Beckman, Wash., and both were tiny when their father came to Alaska in 1917.

A Welshman, as his name and that of his wife indicates, he had

been a miner all his life, coming first to Canada at the age of 16. When he came to Alaska he worked for the Daugherty mine at Moose Creek, then when the Alaska Railroad opened the Eska mine he was its superintendent. He opened his own mine in Jonesville in 1921 and the girls attended school there before moving to Anchorage in 1928.

Summers were always spent at the mine ("no camps then," Margaret said), and each of the girls had her own pit cap and carbide lantern. Memories of a favorite horse Nellie and an old mule who sometimes objected to having a rider brought smiles when they talked about their early days here.

Margaret is now secretary to the assistant food manager of San Diego State University, helping plan for the sustenance of 32,000 students. "Like feeding a city," she said.

Marnice, a registered nurse, spends hours volunteering at a nurs-



REVISITING THEIR FAMILY HOME

Pleased that the home where they grew up still stands, the daughters of the late Evan Jones gather in front of Gene's Realty at 815 W. Fifth Ave., their home as children. Vanny Davenport, left, curator of the Heritage Library of the National Bank of Alaska, and her sisters Margaret Bennett of San Diego, Calif., Marnice Viger of Eugene, Ore., and Vivian Teeland of Wasilla, are all together in Alaska for the first time in 33 years. (Times Photo By Alice Puster)

ing home and was heading back to Eugene yesterday to be home for Father's Day.

The two out-of-town Jones sisters were amazed at Anchorage's growth and pleased that their family home still stands. It had been five years since Margaret's last visit here, and

seven since Marnice had been in Alaska.

With four daughters, the Joneses' home was a hub of activity in earlier days. "The dances were very important," one said, as they exchanged stories about the regularly scheduled soirees at the Elks' and the Masonic Hall.

"They were integrated with all the generations," chimed in Walter Teeland, Vivian's husband, who is on the board of directors of the Alaska Bank of Commerce, adding that not only did he marry into the family of four Jones girls, he had three sisters of his own.

"We'd each get one or two new formals (gowns) every year," Vanny said, "and then use last year's to carry us through." She counted a list of the special dances, the New Year's Ball, Thanksgiving, Valentines and on and on, each one bringing memories and smiles.

The Empress theater, just down the block, was a drawing card for the youth of Anchorage. "Silent movies and Ken Laughlin playing the organ," Mrs. Teeland said. "And then the first talkie. The M... Brothers in 'Coconuts.' The w... town turned out for that one."

The Jones girls' children

in Anchorage soon for the 20th reunion of his West Anchorage High School class, a two-day event planned for next weekend.

Laughing about going to Mr. Porter's grocery with 50 cents, enough to buy round steak for the entire family, the Jones girls left Mr. Con-

way's second-hand store to re-visit more of the friends and sites of their childhood.

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