

ORAL HISTORY
2017-01-02

Wanda Warner
12/3/09
Skagway, AK
Skagway Oral History Project

- **Wanda:** born in 1922 in Emmett Idaho. Her childhood took place on a small farm with animals, fruit trees and huge gardens. Horses were used to transport materials, and people were very helpful. She was the oldest child, and had two brothers and one sister. She has a good family, and attended the Four Square Church, which was a very good source of entertainment, and a nice place to be.
- **Education:** She graduated in 1940 from high school, in the upper class. Wanda was a very intelligent student, and married soon after graduating from school. Unfortunately, the marriage fell apart. She then worked as a baker, then for Leslie Scott- a meat freezer, where she learned about a nursing school in Boise. She began working at the hospital as a nurse, and met a miss Loskey who suggested they move to Alaska to work. They called the White Pass in Seattle, flew to Seattle, flew to Whitehorse and the army was still there. She and miss Loskey got a room on the second floor and looked out the window at the craziness and business of the town. The next morning they took the White Pass train to Skagway. The superintendent and his wife of the railroad met Wanda and miss Loskey and took them to the hospital. The town responds well if you need something- they're like a family.
- **Hospital Patients:** Everyone from town. All the baby deliveries etc. It was very enjoyable work, people knew the nurses were available no matter what. Any big injuries or diseases were sent to Juneau at the time. The Skagway W.P. Hospital had an operating room, and at that time there was a regular doctor- not now. There weren't any lab tests or anything- it was mostly just patient care.
- **Nova:** Wanda's future husband, Nova Warner worked as an oil truck driver and delivered oil to the hospital, where they met. He was Canadian, and had previously worked on the North Slope, working out of Whitehorse.
- **The Whitehouse:** Nova and Wanda owned the Whitehouse; it was once used as a guest house. They rented rooms to tourists in the summer, but there was a fire in the early 1990's, and they sold the place and moved to the other end of town. While she and Nova were running the Whitehouse, they were raising 4 children and working at their own full time jobs.
- **Wanda's work history:** Post office for 21 years, and was the post master from 1975 to 1989 when she retired. Started working in 1968 and worked on the books. Same people, different job, in comparison to working as a nurse in Skagway. In the summer there was a huge increase in mail from the tourists, and it was very busy- there were usually 3 workers. The boats also brought bags of mail. But since there was no overtime work, if there was too much mail it was sent to Juneau. Wanda mentions that though she was postmaster of Skagway, she never felt too important. She enjoyed the job, and it was the hub of social activity in Skagway. She knew everything that was going on in town. It was a strong family town, with nice churches and schools.