

Pete the Pot

By Capt'n Natural – Lee Young

There are some things we come across in our life that take on special meanings and we wouldn't give them up for any amount of money. I have attached myself to, of all things, a 4 gal aluminum pot. Yep, it's just a pot to some, but to me it's an item that I just couldn't live without. And I'd like it used as my headstone, should my body and gear ever be found.



Good ol' Pete the Pot, a friend in time of need. My dad used the old boy to steam live crabs in and you can still hear the screams of the creatures as water boils. When water is boiling in this pot there is a resonance of a tone that sounds like high pitch screams of tiny creatures. When the old man steamed his crabs he used a little beer, so the screams were a little slurred because they were a little drunk as they passed on into the bellies of me and my siblings. Ummm Ummm Good!

I inherited this lowly utensil in 1982, I believe. That was about the time I sent the old man packing because he wouldn't even try to give up his alcoholic ways. He had come to live with me when he had no place to go, and we got along pretty well, but he insisted on spending all his money on booze and I barely had the means to take care of myself, with child support and all, much less a man who gave his life to the beer. Anyway, the old man did have some redeeming qualities, and one of them was that he was a damn good cook. Besides using the pot to steam the crabs, ol' Mel Young mixed his famous catfish fritter batter in Pete.



From day one Pete has been used to the point that he became a part of the family, not just a mere vessel to utilize as a tool. He is no tool! Pete has taken on a life of his own and will out live me and all my descendents as long as nobody melts him down. Aluminum, the most common of elements found on earth, will live on forever! That's why I'd like him to be used as a marker for my place of burial. I would like an inscription placed on the side that says, "Here lies the last owner of Pete the Pot, may he rest in peace. He always had his pot to pee in!"

When living the minimal life you have to have things that serve at least 2 purposes. Some items I carried on my many journeys have served up to about 3 uses, but Pete, well he has served many, many more purposes that he was intended when manufactured. I used Pete to feed all kinds of animals out of, including horses, mules, dogs, goats, cows and even me. Pete made a handy bucket for hauling water, grain, dirt and rocks. There has been many a piece of laundry washed and rinsed in the ol'boy. In desperate times of need he even served as a toilet. (Lined with a plastic trash bag of course and thoroughly sanitized before using it to cook or feed any critters.) Pete also has made a good stool for sitting around the camp fire.

Before taking a bath using Pete, I liked to heat the water to a comfortable temperature. My source of energy was my trusty old one burner propane stove. The girth on Pete is about 3 times that of the stove and many a pot full of warm water has slipped off spilling all the water and wasting precious water and fuel. So, in order to correct this problem I took hammer in hand and pounded into a concave shape Pete's bottom to form fit on the stove. This helped in two ways. It helped keep the pot steady so he wouldn't tip over, and it helped distribute the heat better through the water in the pot and thus heat up faster and use less fuel in the process. Not a bad idea, if I say so myself!

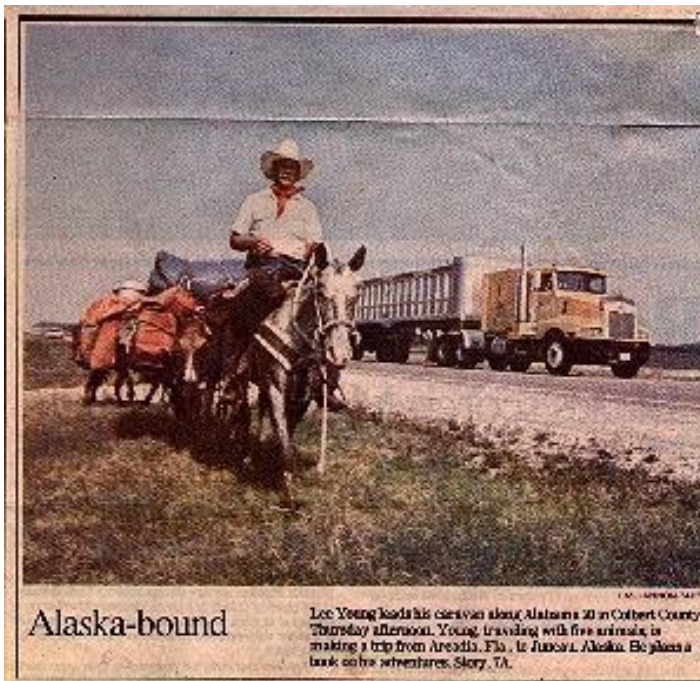
Pete was always the first thing that was taken off the packs at the end of the day and the last thing to go on at the start. Since Pete didn't collapse he had to be given the room to ride out in the open where he could breathe the fresh air and view the fabulous scenery. Like me, Pete was exposed to the elements that we both endured gallantly. Pete, as well as I, had many falls and stumbles. Pete and I rode some pretty wiry critters in our day. Once a spooked crazy horse named Frostie was carrying Pete when he came loose during her rampage down the middle of a road. The more Pete flopped around the faster the crazy horse ran and the higher she kicked and bucked. It was a sight to behold and I figured that was the end of poor old Pete, and if had acted on what I really wanted to do, the horse would have been history too. For about 3 hours I road the pathway picking up pieces of packs, saddles and gear, luckily finding Pete lying in a ditch sitting upright. He would have been crying if he had eyes to shed a tear. I'm sure he really was glad to separate from that lunatic animal! I was sure happy to see him!

During the times that me, Pete and the others critters were set up in a so called civilized world, Pete took on other tasks. During the days when I was doing my leather thing, I used Pete to hold the neat's-foot oil and act as a drip pan under the saddle, or some other piece I was working on, catching the drips. Continuing his catch all roll, Pete also joined me under many cars and trucks to catch the oil when I drained the engines, transmissions and rear ends. Also, during these mechanical episodes Pete helped me to clean the nuts and bolts as well as other various engine parts. He sure took a banging up from all those metal pieces being slammed against his thin made exterior.

At one point I bought a stepbrother for Pete. He was an OK pot, but he just didn't have the durability ol'Pete had. This faux Pete was made poorly and his handles were the first to go, and a pot without handles ain't much use. So, I left the pot somewhere in Colorado where I hope someone will find him and take care of him. It was nice having Pete and his adopted stepbrother for a spell because carrying two pots balances a feller out.

Yep, ol'Pete the Pot is still part of the family and will be made use of in my future adventures, because without a pot to pee in, a feller truly is homeless.

Can you find Pete in these pictures?
He's as big a ham as me!



The patiently waiting pot.



Pete always was part of any gear I ever used.



Pete was my lookout for shoals on the Flint.



Is he a pot or a bucket?



Pete is always in the forefront!



Pay no attention to the fat guy!