

Oral History Interview made with Oscar Hokold (O). Person interviewing is Kerstin Ringdahl (K), University Archivist at Pacific Lutheran University.

K: So when and where were you born?

O: I was born on fifty-four . . . thirty-one . . . South K Street, in 1915.

K: And when is your birthday?

O: April the 23<sup>rd</sup>, in 1915.

K: Did you grow up in that same place? In that same house?

O: No, we were there a short time and my folks sold the house and we moved to 609 South 40th Street, that was down in the 38<sup>th</sup> Street district, in Tacoma.

K: What was it like where you grew up? Was it nice . . . was it safe? Very different? Very few houses? How was it in that area where you grew up?

O: No it was a well-developed area, very nice neighborhood, and I could see from Tacoma Avenue—38 56 South Tacoma Avenue—up to Whitman school, which was up on 40<sup>th</sup> and M Street, where I went to grade school. So my mother would watch when I went to school, to see if I safely came home. But there weren't that many cars in those times and what-have-you, so . . .

K: So who were your parents? What were their names?

O: Oh, my mother's name was Dina Sola, and my dad's name was Ola (Ole) Hokold. H-O-K-O-L-D.

K: So were they born in Norway?

O: They were both born in Norway. My dad was from Trondheim, Norway, in a small town in Meldalen, and my mother was from Sola, a small village . . . near Stavanger. And, in fact, the farm that my grandfather had, is the international airport in Stavanger today. Sola Flygeplassen.

K: Flyplass. So, did your parents live in Norway?

O: No, my dad came to Norway . . . to America first, and he stayed with some cousins on the south end of Tacoma. So the street behind, he bought a lot, and built a house, and his brother was with him, and his brother bought the lot next door. But his brother wasn't well, and he went back to Norway. And eventually, the first house I built, my mother gave me the property that my uncle had. And the first house I built was there at 5422 South J Street.

K: So when did your Mother come to the United States?

O: My mother came to the United States a few years later. She had a friend who lived up on K Street, that sponsored her, and my mother went to work for a dentist out in the north end of Tacoma, and got acquainted with different neighbors. And she finally met my dad, my father Ole, and they were married. And the first child was my sister, Bertha Marie Hokold, and she was very studious, and very straight-laced, and very good, and she went in for training to become a nurse. She contacted a contagious disease from some patient, and shortly she passed away. And Gladys Houglum was her best friend the two of them were together.

K: So were you the second child then?

O: I was the second child.

K: Do you have other siblings?

O: That was only just the two us. That's all.

K: How, uh, what were your parents like?

O: Hard-working, conservative, and no alcoholic or no . . . they lived a very clean Christian life.

K: How was your relationship with your parents?

O: How was what?

K: How was your relationship with your parents? Were you spoiled? Were they strict with you? Or . . . how were your parents?

O: Well, my dad always called me "Baby Boy" because my mother babied me and took very good care of me, and fed me, clothed me, and I was never set with baby-sitters, I had no hospitalization, she had a friend of hers who was a midwife. And, uh, but I have been . . . I'm really baby . . . my dad would say a baby, I'm a baby, and I'm still my mother's baby.

K: What kind of Norwegian traditions did you have when you grew up?

O: Well, it was all Norwegian traditions, because if you had . . . you couldn't sleep, they put Nafta drops on a piece of sugar, and that Nafta would make you go to sleep. Even if you was teething, I don't know . . . what it was. And then they had, if you got a cold and stuff like that, they went for mustard plaster, and you would have quite a design on your chest for quite a while and itch quite a bit too. But it seemed like these cures worked for the best.

K: How were your Christmases with your parents? When you grew up?

O: How was my what?

K: Your Christmas celebrations?

O: We had a hundred percent Norwegian Christmas. We would get a tree, and a lot of times my dad would drill and put in (if it was scant) branches in certain places like that. And the first tree we had, we had candles that you lit. And after that we had those electric globes, and if one of them burned out, you'd have to take . . . it was always the last one that was the dead one. So there's been a lot of changes since that time. And it was our Christmas box, I had that until I was married, it was a cardboard box, and a lot of the decorations got beat up and what-have-you, but it was strictly a hundred percent Christian Christmas. Not overdone with Santa Claus.

K: Right. What kind of food did you have?

O: We had a hundred percent Norwegian food. We had kumla, we had spisekött, and we had . . . all Norwegian food that you could think of. And my mother was noted for making fish balls. She was an outstanding cook, as far as that's concerned, but no I had the very finest of food. And my daughter has followed in her tradition; she puts out a very, very Norwegian, un-Americanized food.

K: So, how was your childhood? Was it a happy childhood?

O: I was mischievous, and at school I guess I was a spoiled boy, and the kids would kid me because I had a Norwegian accent. Rather than "fog" I would call it "scud" and different words like that, and they ridiculed me for that. So I guess I was vain, and it bothered me you know. And

I never spoke Norwegian too much except to my mother. But after I got over it, I wish that I'd pushed it harder.

K: Yeah, yeah I bet.

O: But it has been a beneficial to me, not only in business but traveling to Europe cause I speak German, Norwegian, I get by in Swedish, Danish, and it's been very, very beneficial.

K: Where did you learn German?

O: Well, I traveled throughout Germany and what-have-you, but I have so many that I associate with I get by. But as I travel by train though Germany and foreign countries, I don't use American language. I use Norwegian, because as we go into different European countries, they're not that proud of us in America.

K: Not always, that's true. So what's your best memory of childhood? Or, your worst memory of childhood?

O: Well, I had a wonderful childhood, and I have no complaints, and had I to do it over again I wish I could do it the same way.

K: That's pretty darn good. So, uh, what . . . did you think your life would be like it is when you were a child? Did you ever dream that you would have all this big-league. . . this empire when you were a child, or did it just kind of happen?

O: No, I was baptized at Lincoln Park Christian Church as a Christian. . . at Lincoln Park Church and I was old enough that I was submerged in water and I did it through my heart and my soul.

K: Uh huh.

O: And not that I am without sin I'm a sinful person too because I have evil thoughts and evil things that I've got into. So, no, I am not ashamed of my background but I have . . . I'm not without sin, but I've got a lotta that....

K: What are your favorite stories from your childhood? Any favorites that you think back on?

O: Stories?

K: Favorite stories from childhood? What would you do in summertime? Would you go swimming in the lake? Or did you do fun things like that?

O: Well, uh, we went camping. We had a tent and a 1922 Dodge Charing, and we spent time down at the ocean, and, uh, along the Columbia River, on different holidays and what-have-you. And being there were . . . the only relative I have are third cousins on my dad's side of the family. Or third, or fourth, or fifth. And, uh, so we would do things and nothing in a sinful way but we were always mischievous.

K: Oh sure.

O: With firecrackers and things like that but nothing as far as drugs or. . . you know, taking advantage of anyone.

K: Right. So did you enjoy going to school?

O: Enjoy what?

K: Going to school? Going to school? What school did you go to?

O: Oh, yes, I went to Whitman School, and I wanted to continue to go to Whitman School, but I was in the wrong district, and they forced me to go to Willard School.

K: Ooh.

O: And it was a kind of a clannish school, and there were some influential people there, and the principal told my mother one time, "He'll never make it through high school."

K: But you did.

O: But I fooled her. I made it

K: How, uh, what classes did you enjoy the most?

O: What what?

K: What classes, what subjects did you like the most?

O: Recess. No, I don't know. I wasn't very studious, I would rather play than. . .and I feel sorry that I didn't apply myself more at that time. And I feel, and I think a lotta times that I probably could've accomplished more academically had I followed.

K: I think you've done quite well. What did you do for fun when you were in school?

O: Well, I played baseball, hockey, and all the different sports and things like that. And we had ball teams, games, and we played hockey on roller skates, and basketball, so there was always something going on in that way.

K: So how. . .do you still enjoy sports?

O: Yes. I think we overdo ourselves on sports. Today with this football and different games like that. And I'm fortunate that I had to work and I never applied myself into football, but I was skinny and not too great at it.

K: Uh huh.

O: One time, my neighbor. . .she had a son the same age as I was, and. . .don't play football, because there was one boy in high school at that time, and we would drive by his house and they'd point it out that he was crippled up from playing football. And maybe it was fear or fright of hurting myself permanently.

K: Right, right.

O: So I never. . .we played kid's football in the field, but not in uniform or things like that.

K: How, uh, are you still friends with anyone from that time? From the school times?

O: At any one?

K: Are you still friends with anyone from that time?

O: Not too many, when I went to Lincoln High School, I took an active part in drama. And in. . .I was treasurer of the junior class. And I could've been further on, but at that time, I. . .it was during the depression, and I was fortunate to get a job in Olympia. So I lived in a boarding house, and I went to school until 11:30, and I had to be with these Swedish Finns by noon, and I was through at six at night and I'd come and I lived in a boarding house.

K: So you did that when you were in high school?

O: Pardon?

K: You did that. . .you lived in Olympia and worked when you were in high school?

O: Yes.

K: Oh, okay.

O: And then I graduated from high school and then I come back because a mill had shut down and I couldn't work. I didn't have enough money to ride it out, and I come home to Momma again. Then I was lucky enough through a friend of my mother's, another Norwegian from Stavanger, that I got another job in a furniture factory.

K: Uh huh.

O: So, I was there for quite a while.

K: Are there any special teachers you had at that time that you remember? Anything special about the teacher?

O: Yes, at Lincoln High School the teacher was my drafting and architectural teacher. And it was a role that I was born into too. And I think rather than trying to be a scientist had I stayed with architectural work because I was considered handy with my drawing out plans and things like that. And the first buildings that I built, I would, with my wife. . .but I had enough background in architectural work that I could put out the drawing and. . .being I was in dirty clothes because I was not only digging ditches, but I could do plumbing, wiring, any part of it. I could do all phases of it, that she would go down to the bank and negotiate for loans and things like that.

K: Uh huh.

O: That red light's on. Is that all. . . ?

K: Yeah. As long as this moves over there when we talk, it's good. So here. So what happened after you graduated from high school? Is that when you went fishing? Or what happened after?

O: Well, I worked for F. S. Harmon for quite a while, and finally I got in the shipping department, and then I decided I was going to go to college, and. . . .

K: So when did you go to PLU? What years?

O: I don't recall what year it was.

K: I could look it up in the archives, I probably have it there.

K: How long did you go to PLU?

O: Well, one semester, one year. And then, in May, I had to leave for Alaska, because I was up there for five months. . .and so, I had completed my course and what-have-you, and I got credit four, I believe. And then, a friend of mine got married and I was at his wedding. . .Einer Jacobs, in fact, his brother was in charge of the golf course out there for years. And the other brother. . . .

K: Ken Jacobs?

O: . . .ended up a school teacher for PLU. So I mentioned to this. . . .

K: Ken Jacobs maybe?

O: No I mentioned to this the head of the mathematical department that I was having trouble with calculus, because I hadn't had a good enough background in algebra, and math and things like that. I'd slobbered through it, which, I think that the teachers, they didn't kind of press it at high school at this time. So, in other words, in mathematics, it's a chain of events; you have to have a foundation, and keep working step by step. But I tried to jump it too fast, and I had trouble with it and when I went to the University of Washington, a larger school like that, they have no patience.

K: That's true.

O: Because the professors get up and say- I come right out and tell you this, I'm not going to teach 150 people. So I'm gonna get this down to about 30 or 40. So you take the examination, and they'd use numbers, and if you got a 35 or 40, you'd get a passing grade, so then he'd dump the rest of them out. So, uh, and another thing at the University of Washington, like withdrawing and things like that. so I had to make different forms in geology, we had to submit it to this professor. It was a lady professor, and we had to stand in line, and she'd look over the paper and say; "You made it" or "You didn't make it".

K: Oh.

O: And one kid in front of me—and I'd been out of school for a while too, so I was older than some of them—he kind of moaned that he had to wait that long. And she pointed to me and said; "Step over there" and so I stepped over there. She said; "I'll do this as quickly as I could. Now you get back in line." So I got back in line, and when I come up, she looked at my paper - failure. I never said a word about it. But it probably worked out for the best.

K: Yeah.

O: Because had I followed through, I'd be probably standing in cold water up to my knees counting "smolts" in some bay some place.

K: Maybe, maybe. Yeah, you never know.

O: So I've had a lot of fun along the way.

K: Sure.

O: And being with Scandinavians like that I appreciate it just like they would say in Norwegian, like the different humor they have. One of them says; "Jeg er så fattig på polska" and I'd say, well, what do you mean? "Well, at least" he says "I had half an egg on Easter." So, you know, they got different. . . .

K: Jokes?

O: Stories like that they come with all the time.

K: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

O: So I think a lot of that, just kind of wore off on me, you know what I'm saying?

K: Sure.

O: So. . .but, uh. . .and I've been real fortunate being in a building business. I spent enough money with these different corporations; General Electric, Hot Point, Whirlpool and what-have-you. They've sent me all around the world. I've never been in Russia. I've been to Africa,

Canary Islands, you name it. In fact, I had a chance to get into South Africa too. But I've been in Northern Africa, Canary Islands, you name it. Fiji, Tahiti, you know.

K: Was that before you were married that you did that?

O: No, no. It was when I was married.

K: Oh, okay.

O: Yeah, yeah.

K: So where did you meet your wife?

O: Uh, well. . . .

K: Maybe you should hold that microphone a little closer.

O: I met her at Zion Lutheran Church. And I sang in the choir. And I was president of the Luther League.

K: Oh really?

O: And when I was president of the Luther League, I didn't fulfill my president's term because I had to go to Alaska, and the minister was there, and I said; Well, Elisabeth Fister—the vice president—is gonna have to take over. I appreciate it, and I hate to leave, but I said I had a calling. You know they never got another job. So I. . . I didn't make the minister happy.

K: I'll bet not. So did she sing in the choir too? Or was she part of the Luther League?

O: Oh I sang in a choir but I have no voice.

K: What about your wife?

O: Yeah, she sang in a choir too.

K: So that's how you met?

O: Yeah, and I'd even sang with the Runebergs.

K: Oh did you?

O: Yeah, in Olympia. Because I used to love to dance, ballroom dancing, and I met some Runebergs had a convention up in Olympia. And half of a choir never showed up, and a girl asked me—me and another fella down there—if we had a dark suit. Yeah, we got a dark suit. And she says; "You're gonna go get something to eat and everything else. But if you'll—at the Liberty Theatre—put a dark suit and a dark necktie on, and who's going to be up on the stage like that." So while I can't sing, you don't have to. All you have to do is hum a little bit. So my jokes it that my mouth still itches from just humming.

K: That's funny. So how long were you dating your wife before you were married?

O: Oh I don't know. About a year.

K: Where you married here in Tacoma?

O: Yes, yes.

K: Which church?

O: We were married at Zion Lutheran Church, but I wasn't married in it. It was at her aunt's home on 43<sup>rd</sup> and Fawcett.

K: Uh huh. So where did you first live when you were married?

O: Oh, yeah, when I first . . . before I was married, that's the first house I built. I got the property from my . . . my mother got it because my uncle was dead, and my mother paid taxes on it for years. So my dad signed the papers, and I got it in my name. So I had a, I don't know, Roarem. They belonged to the church up on K Street, and he was always . . . every Sunday afternoon he went to church—it was a Lutheran church—and they always say that him and Momma, they called his Momma. And they'd sit in the front row and they'd both fall asleep. But no, but with him. And then Roarem, worked with me on building this house.

K: Oh okay.

O: So I built this house, and when I built it they told me at that time that I should have gone into the building business. So I built that house, and after I built that house, my son was a little unruly and a doctor said; he needs to be out in the country or something like that. So I bought some property out by Redondo Beach, and I was working six days a week. And I shouldn't have done . . . but I went out on Sunday, no skill-saw, everything in an old car that I had, this box full of tools. And I built a two-bedroom house out there, and it's still out there. I even split the handshakes, did the plumbing and the wiring, I did everything on that house. I had one fella help me, the two of us, because I got free brick when I . . . from the street car company. And there's a dentist that lived in a house out at Redondo Beach. He loves the house.

K: It's pretty out there.

O: Yeah.

K: So how many children do you have?

O: I have three: Harry, Jean, and Jack. And my youngest son was around home all the time, very nice . . . real nice boy. And he got with kids where they were . . . they got some kind of a cough syrup they were taking. So he got on drugs, and I went to every religious organization that I could think of, and uh . . . hoping to get him back. And finally, I'm sitting home one Saturday, you know, nothing's going on, by myself, and the front doorbell rang. I went to the door, and he said; "Your son's dead." He got some stuff . . . it's horrible stuff.

K: Terrible stuff. What about your other children? Is Harry the oldest?

O: Harry was very mischievous and what-have-you, and he was married, and there's ups and downs all the time. But he's doing better, I talked to him last night, but he's had a little heart attack. He's seventy years old now.

K: Does he live in Tacoma?

O: Yeah he lives in Spanaway. He lives out in Spanaway. Yeah, quite a bit off Spanaway. But he's selling everything up, and he was married, and then he married a Korean, he's married to a Korean now. So that was about it. And Jean, my daughter, married Harlem Patterson, he went to UPS. And summer vacations, he come to work for me, and ah Colin, you don't know what you're doing. Do this, do that. But the guy applied himself and I had to lay him off, and then I had to . . . then he got onto . . .

K: Is that her husband?



O: Yeah, her husband. And he got on over in eastern Washington because of college. He was a football player at PLU.

K: Oh, okay.

O: And he got on with B.A. Construction Company, and being playing football, he got a brain tumor, and so he was sick, then he got better, then he died. But he was in charge, and I admire him real good. But he would listen, he would listen, he would listen. But life to me is simple; if you apply yourself, mentally, physically, without . . . it's beneficial. But you have to have the will to go ahead. Now he had just an ordinary business administration at college, but when he got into construction, I'll show you how to do sheet rock, I'll show you how to do formica work, I'll show you how to do tile. But see, I can . . . I know . . . I don't know . . . I get by, but I've been with Scandinavians.

K: Right.

O: And I suppose that some of that I inherited from my dad.

K: Right.

O: Because he was a coach builder for the railroad.

K: Oh really?

O: Yeah, the railroad. Very precise type of work to do.

K: So how many grandchildren do you have?

O: Well . . . see . . . five . . . around fifteen.

K: Wow, quite a lot.

O: See Jean, my daughter . . . Harry had three, one of them he don't admit to, but he's got three. Jean's got five . . . .

K: Did Jack . . . ?

O: And great-grandkids, I've got a house full of them too.

K: Wow, wow.

O: Yeah, and they're all good, and great.

K: That's great.

O: So no, I've got a beautiful family, none of them are on drugs or anything like that.

K: Great. Did they all go to college? Did any of them come to PLU? Any of your grandchildren?

O: No, my grandchildren those . . . one of them is being . . . my grandson is in Eastern Washington, he's in a school . . . they're going through college over there. And then the other one, Harry's kids never went to college, any of them. So no, not many of them went, and Jean went to . . . but I honestly say this; when I went to the University of Washington, I would have been better off if I had started taking it one step at a time at PLU.

K: Of course you have more individual attention from the teachers.

O: That's right, that's exactly what I needed.

K: That's what good about PLU. You have good teachers and they pay attention to you.

O: Well, I'll tell you what. I've been out of school for quite a while, I went with the University of Washington, and one of the fellows was editor of the *University of Washington Daily*. Another guy was a graduate student, and he was in oceanographic. And there was this other fellow by the name of . . . Dibble, that lived in Longview and what-have-you. And you take the book ahead of them, but there was no social life, there was nothing. It was just strictly books, books, books. And this Dibble, he would get his A's and . . . but no personality.

K: Yeah that's not good. You need to be a little bit of both. Needs to be smart. So when you were married, did you have Norwegian . . . did your wife have . . . she was Norwegian too, right? Norwegian heritage?

O: Who?

K: Your wife?

O: Yes.

K: So you had . . . you celebrated Norwegian traditions and stuff?

O: Well, we had . . . yes, everything my mother had was Norwegian you know, as far as my in-laws and those are concerned. There wasn't too much sociability there, so . . .

K: So tell me about your work. I mean, how did you decide to start building? I mean, I know you started working in Olympia and all, and then you just decided that this is what you were going to do.

O: Well the first house I built when I come back from Alaska . . . I have been blessed with opportunities . . . when I come back from Alaska, they told me that time that if I stayed with a company for five years, they'd give me a boat of my own.

K: Uh oh.

O: Then I fished albacore and salmon, and New England Fish Company said that if I got in with shrimp on a Kodiak, they would give me tanner pots and things like that. In fact, at that time, I bought a eighty-six foot boat in Brownsville Texas, and I took a partner on because I was in the building business too at the same time, two and two things at the same time. So, doing the same things at the same time. So, there are too many people that always want the return, before they have the return coming. And there are too many people that can't see ahead of themselves. And I'm known as a tightwad, and I am a tightwad, I'm a cheapskate.

K: You earned what you have.

O: And we saved everything, because when I went to school, when I blew my nose, if I held the handkerchief up, it'd say "Leslie Salt" on it 'cause it's a salt sack and things like that. And when I was a kid, I had livstykke on, and this and stuff. And if I had a hole in my stockings, my mother would fix it. And . . . didn't go around like a slob . . . you gotta have lite oppdragelse in it. And that's the trouble in this country, they're forgetting the word of oppdragelse. So I'm glad I've had it, and I go to Norway, and I was with the President and the Crown Prince.

K: Did you meet them?

O: Yeah, when he was here?

K: Oh yeah.

O: So he says; “Do you now them?” and I said yeah I know them . . . and we was out at the president’s home. So we got along real good. But they’re all human you know like you and me.

K: Absolutely. How many times have you been back to Norway?

O: Three or four times.

K: Have you ever come out to the Syttende Mai celebration at PLU?

O: Well . . . there isn’t much going on as far as I’m concerned. What is it?

K: I’m gonna invite you this spring.

O: Yeah, but what goes on?

K: Well, first of all, they raise the Norwegian flag, of course the Norwegian flag is always hanging at PLU.

O: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

K: So they raise the Norwegian flag, then they sing the Norwegian national anthem, and they always have some dignitary from Norway come in. This year they had . . . the secretary to the king was here. And he was actually a nephew of Audun Toven. So he came out, and then they had a really nice Norwegian food, and kind of a nice celebration. So I’m gonna invite you this spring, to come to that.

O: Okay, yeah. No I . . . well, I’m kinda biased too. I see a lot of people . . . that maybe I’m too critical.

K: That’s alright

O: That . . . But I personally think that there are not only the Norwegians, but I’m not mad at anyone because I have Irish, I have Koreans, I have different nationalities, and I try to see the good in all of them. Because you can’t tell me . . . tell me of one war that paid off.

K: None.

O: And there’s always money for war.

K: The Second World War maybe. We got rid of Hitler.

O: World War I.

K: World War II, where we got rid of Hitler and the Nazis.

O: Well, yeah but Hitler was a brave man because he . . . the Swedes kinda liked him.

K: Well, some Swedes did, not all, but some did, that’s true.

O: Yeah, and I think the—what was it—Chase National Bank financed him. Where did he get his finance from? It wasn’t from Switzerland or stuff like that. And you take . . . Hitler come in there, and . . . Lindbergh liked him. A lot of people liked him and what-have-you. But right now, you talk to any German, nix Nazi.

K: I know exactly what you’re talking about.

O: And that was back after the Second World War, I’d traveled back there and I met a lot of those Germans. Nix Nazi. Italians, I’ve been to Italy too and the Italians, they like Mussolini and

they'll come right out and say so. But . . . just like this Swedish store that was part of Hitler's . . . what was that?

K: IKEA?

O: Yeah. But just like today, the president and what-have-you, they sleeping with other women and they're doing this, and . . . no, no, I didn't do that, and they can talk themselves out of anything.

K: Well I don't think this president sleeps with other women, the one we have now.

O: You know, my position that I'm standing in, I'm not standing here alone. I being sued, I got sued today for \$75,000. A colored guy that worked for me for years, and my manager here, gave him a free apartment, he didn't pay anything for it. And so finally I found out, "You're getting a free apartment." Whoa, whoa, double talk back. "Come on," I said. "You know that's dishonest." So I let him go. So now he's . . . his . . .

K: Suing you?

O: Hue. His hue is different than you and I. But don't use that other word. But, I mean, these attorneys nowadays and what-have-you. So I go through that and they double-talk, on that high-rise I built, you've seen that high-rise?

K: Yeah, it's beautiful.

O: I'm proud of the building. There's another one, I've been sued there.

K: Really?

O: Oh yeah. Why don't you do this? Why don't you do that? So I went out, but we still have to pay those attorneys, so no one comes out ahead on stuff like that. But I've got a trial coming up, just yesterday I got another one coming up like that. So what I've made, I get sued for. So everyone wants a free ride.

K: Yeah, that's true.

O: So, like, PLU loves me now, but had I been broke they wouldn't have been so happy with me.

K: I would have still interviewed you; even if you had been broke. Because a lot of these people we interviewed for PLU had no money at all.

O: Yeah, but a lot of them do, too.

K: Well, some, but . . .

O: Yeah, but anyhow . . . right now, I'll give the money away, someone's going to get it. My daughter is on at that but . . . it's easy to make money it's hard to give it away at the right plan too.

K: Yeah, you have to choose what you want to give it to. You don't have anyone who's going to become the heir to you? The next Oscar Hokold? Who's gonna run your business?

O: My daughter is taking over.

K: Oh, that's good.

O: Jean Patterson. She's smart, and she's wise on that. But we're keeping on now, because right now, I'm always looking for something, but right now I just finished up so I've got fifty more

units that I'm gonna add on. And I'm getting sued all the time, the city; "You didn't do that" and "This isn't right" and "That isn't right". But I brought in more taxes myself than warehouses brought in.

K: I'll bet, don't forget the microphone.

O: More than anyone else.

K: Well, it's hard. I mean, it can be a curse to be broke and it can be a curse to be rich, because . . . knowing what to do with everything, so it's a responsibility.

O: Yeah, well, like myself. I had a bowl of instant mush this morning, I had a sandwich for lunch, and I'll probably go down to the restaurant tonight, and that was it. You know, I'll do some reading, watch a little T.V., and go to bed, and get up in the morning, and I got a Chinese woman that comes in there . . . .

K: And cleans for you?

O: Cleans for me on Friday, and . . . there's a lot of these old widows around that would love to move in too.

K: I'm sure, I'm sure of that.

O: So . . . and . . . .

K: Well, you can always get married again.

O: Well, no, I . . . it's just like anything else. If I decide to do something, I'll do it, but if I don't want to do it than I'll . . . but there are so many of them to get married at half a dozen different times and what-have-you.

K: Yeah.

O: So I . . . .

K: So had your wife been ill before she died? A long time?

O: Yeah, she hasn't been well, and it was a blessing, and she . . . they were very strong in the Lutheran Church and she kinda dropped away from it . . . more so later on. So we went up to the Baptist church up on 64<sup>th</sup>, and she felt at home there.

K: Uh huh.

O: So I have a fellow that's very . . . it was a minister that was very religious that works for me. And she said—when she died—that she wanted just a small funeral, with my daughter, my son, and the family, and not a big deal like that. So it was discussed whether I could take in my hotel . . . or motel restaurant down there, I can take in 200 people upstairs there. I could have a whole group up there. And I certainly can afford it. So I did what she wanted to the best of my ability. And . . . I'm no angel, so with my wife and I, we got along at times I suppose. She was kind of, disgusted with me so . . . but I don't blame her.

K: So, is church very important to you?

O: Pardon?

K: Is church important to you?

O: Not really. I listen to a radio program on channel 18 every Sunday. And I pray, I try and live a Christian life, but . . . my story is this way. When I lost my son, on narcotics, I went to every study I could think of. Even to breakfasts for Christian businessmen or what-have-you. And there'd be some minister up there says; "Yes Mr. Jones, what do you want to say?" "Oh yes," he says "I was sitting there, I had a blond on this knee, a brunette on that, I had a glass of whiskey in this hand and opium in the other hand."

K: Oh my gosh.

O: ". . . and I met Jesus." And any who I don't do the same as you.

K: Of course.

O: Some of them do it over and over again.

K: Sort of like the Catholics, where they can get forgiven right away for everything, they don't have confession.

O: Well, yeah, 'cause like the Catholic Church . . . the Catholic like I say they're always in a game. Because "Let's play another game of Dominoes" they keep saying that over and over.

K: Who has been the most important person in your life?

O: What . . . you mean . . . ?

K: That's had the biggest influence on your life?

O: Well, I think Jesus is more of an influence than anything in my life. And then I have . . . secondly right now, my daughter is the biggest influence in my life. And I have workers . . . you know, I'd been on fish boats and I've had fellows come up and say, "You know, I wish I had a son like you." I've had a lot of these fishermen, rough, tough, terrible shape, you know. But sincerely in their hearts they had a house of gold.

K: So do you feel that your life has been great? Do you have any regrets about anything? Or do you feel that your life has been great?

O: Well, in their life everyone has some disappointments.

K: Sure.

O: But I haven't had that many disappointments, but that couldn't be worked out. I feel good, I thank the Lord . . . .

K: You're in great shape. For your age.

O: Yeah, so I get by. So . . . I say the wrong things at the right time. Like . . . like you come in today, and I was discussing what we could do there. We had an incident at one of my rentals. The girl was running it, and I said; "Well . . ." one of my superintendents come in and said; "You know, they're letting two families live in a place there. They're bringing in mattresses and sleeping on the floor, now it's getting moldy and they cook Mexican food, they don't speak English." "We can't have that." I said. "Those apartments are for one family. And if they haven't got more than one family . . ." and I said to the woman who's running that out there, "You'd better go out there, I don't want to go over your your head, that's the head this apartment right here, and explain it to them." So they go out there and they said; "Oscar don't want you to have two families." They won't take the blame themselves. They try to throw it on my back.

K: That's not fair. Well, you can handle it.

O: Well, I'm not going to take it because I've got enough wrongdoings against me.

K: But you've had a good life, haven't you?

O: Oh yeah, but you got to make your own life.

K: Absolutely, you have to make your own fortune.

O: Well you know, during the Second World War, one fellow said this one time, and he was in there when they were marching in snow in the wintertime, and he got up, and they were cold and wet and what-have-you.

K: Uh huh.

O: And they got up, and this guy from Oklahoma, a hillbilly, got up. And this fellow that was worried about getting killed and freezing to death, and he says, "You know, Walt?" he says "You know, a guy could get hurt over here." That's all he said. But there was enough sharpness or humor.

K: Yeah, that's pretty good.

O: So just like they say, oh fishing in Alaska, I wouldn't do that. But there's weather that's bad, that's tough and what-have-you. But it's a part of life that you have to take.

K: Yeah, you have to work hard, that's for sure.

O: But no, no, I've . . . I remember when I lived up in Stanwood. This fellow there, in Stanwood, I looked and that was my second mother and father, his name was Charlie Olsen and hers was Rachel, he's Swedish, and she's Norwegian. And he was working at a logging camp, and she had a baby out of wedlock in Norway and come to this country, and she got a job cooking in this here logging camp. So she met this Swedish logger, and they got forty acres up in Stanwood. Did you ever go up to Stanwood?

K: I've been up there. There are a lot of Scandinavians up there.

O: You bet your life. And she was from . . . and they got to be awfully good friends. So when I was . . . it was in the summertime before I went to Olympia, they sent me up there. And they had forty acres of trees, and they were cutting them down. And the fellow, the name of the logging company was . . . Davis. And so, here I'm just a kid and they gave me two old horses . . . two horses, and I have to get up early in the morning and go up there, and I had to drag these logs down with a cable so they could load them on a truck and take them to Everett. You don't say Everett, you know . . . .

K: Oh really?

O: So I did that. And I went up there and they apologized 'cause they never got paid and I never got paid. But she was like a mother to me, and he was like a father. But they was the happiest couple in the world. His son worked in Everett, come home with a roll of snus for his dad, every week, that's all he had.

K: That's pretty nice.

O: And she made a Norwegian bread, a heavy brown bread, and I've never tasted anything better than that.

K: I'll bet, they have good bread in Norway. Best bread I've had in my life.

O: Yeah well, my mother, she always baked bread at home. But this Wonderbread, it's a wonder they can sell it.

K: I know, it's bad. It's not good for you either, there's no nutrition in it at all.

O: No, no, Jean gets a bakery now . . . my daughter Jean can bake good . . . but she's got a German bakery in Seattle that sells that, and she buys, so I have that homemade . . . .

K: Does your daughter come down here once a week or something?

O: What?

K: Does your daughter come down here often?

O: Yeah, she'll be here while . . . she's got . . . one son who got hurt in a logging camp, and they live in Eastern Washington, and he's got a house full of kids. And her grandson got his shoulder dislocated, so she's been taking care of him. And they have a hospital at University of Washington, at the hospital there, so that's taken care of. She got a daughter that's going to college over there.

K: So she's busy.

O: She is busy. Then I got another son, he lives . . . he graduated from PLU, but I don't know why because . . . half those kids that go to PLU, they got a keg of beer in the kitchen . . . .

K: Sometimes.

O: Yeah and they set it out, and the folks send them to school, and they don't get anything out of it. You gotta apply yourself, and what I'm doing is applying myself. I'm thinking all the time. But see, I went up there to Homer Alaska, right behind you there.

K: Right, right.

O: So I go up there, and I think; well, I love to fish, sports fish. So I bought this boat up there, and then I looked at a house up there, and Jean wasn't up there, and by golly I bought it. It belonged to a Russian before. So I turned it into a duplex, and then I added on to the garage, and then I thought, well I could make another units I got another run at it there. And then there was a lot next door and I thought, well . . . so I banged up a house there, and I rented that out. And then I build a bed-and-breakfast, and it was going to be an ordinary house but it ended up a six bedroom house. And now, some guy in Hawaii bought it, and then I got . . . if you go up there right now, the minute you drive down . . . towards that spit, you're going down that trail, there it is, Beluga Apartments. That lake, the name of that lake is Beluga Lake. So I got Beluga . . . I had other opportunities up there that I wouldn't jump at. But no, I look at different properties and different things. I still am.

K: It's almost like a game for you, isn't it?

O: Well, it is a game. Am I supposed to sit around?

K: No, no, no. Absolutely not. I think it's great that you keep on going. I've worked at PLU for almost fifty years now and I'm not . . . I'm seventy-six years old and I'm not quitting. I enjoy what I do.

O: You went to PLU here in Tacoma?



K: Mmm-hmm, and I worked there for forty-six years.

O: What department?

K: I work in the archives. I keep all the records from 1890 on. I keep all the stuff.

O: Oh so you know the Eastvolds then.

K: Well no, I came right after the Eastvolds they had just left when I came.

O: Well, Gladys Houglum was the head nurse.

K: Oh yeah, I know her. Her name was Gladys Belgum later on, when she married.

O: What was the name?

K: Belgum. B-E-L-G-U-M.

O: Yeah, I didn't know that. See, her and my sister were . . . .

K: Good friends.

O: . . . yeah, studying to be nurses at Tacoma General Hospital.

K: You know, the school of nursing at PLU just celebrated its sixtieth anniversary.

O: Is that right?

K: Yeah, sixty years, they just had a big celebration at Homecoming.

O: Did you know . . . the professor . . . the Norwegian professor's wife?

K: Yeah, Iral?

O: Yeah, and her sister, she's divorced too, I guess.

K: There's one in Chicago?

O: Yeah.

K: I don't know her.

O: I know her, I knew the whole family, they were twins. And her father's name was . . . Mobroten. Yeah and . . . strid Mobroten . And it was Anderson before. And it was Arnold Anderson, was her brother. And the Anderson family.

K: And they have a daughter named Nadine, too. The youngest.

O: Yeah, I know her too.

K: They just . . . about a week ago, they had a memorial service for Audun Toven. And his two children were there, and Nadine, and Iral.

O: How's Nadine? Did you see her?

K: Yeah, she's fine.

O: Isn't she kind of a head of some Lutheran church on McKinley Hill?

K: I don't know, it could be. This memorial service was at PLU.

O: You didn't know her grandmother, Mrs. Anderson, did you?

K: No, no. What was her first name?

O: I don't know what her first . . . or, no . . . .

K: Of course, we might have interviewed them but I don't know . . . .

O: Well, she was in the real estate business end too.

K: Oh really?

O: The professor's . . . .

K: Oh Irla, yeah, she was. Now she lives in California.

O: Did she get married again?

K: Yeah, and she got divorced again too.

O: Well, she'll kind of flippant.

K: Maybe, a little bit. She now lives in California.

O: Is she still selling real estate?

K: No, she's now selling handbags. She works at Bloomingdales and sells these very fancy handbags that cost hundreds of dollars. And hers and Audun's children live down in California so she moved down there, to be with his kids.

O: Well, is she still married, or divorced again?

K: Divorced again.

O: No, she was up here taking over the real estate business for a while.

K: Did she work for you?

O: No, no, no. But she was always sending letters and what-have-you to do this, and that, and the other thing. No I had . . . my deal . . . I do my own . . . I'm a real estate man and everything else, because . . . in other words, there are too many leeches in this country; because so help me, those real estate men, they promise this, and they don't back it up and what-have-you, and . . . they don't want to work. No one wants to work.

K: Well, some people do. But that's a big responsibility for Jean, to do all this stuff, to be a real estate agent and everything.

O: Well . . . it's gotta take a load. If you don't carry a load, you won't have anything when you get there.

K: That's true. That's true.

O: So no, I'm in cabinetry too. I've got Viking Supply up on 25<sup>th</sup> and Pacific Avenue.

K: Oh, do you?

O: So we manufacture pre-hung doors, kitchen cabinets, store fixtures. And I make all the parts for my . . . and I got enough with a number of units that I got. The cabinets get tearing apart, they break the doors, and people are rough. A lot of people take good care of them, but . . . you can have an apartment, a new one, and six months later you can rebuild it. Some people . . . .

K: They don't take care of things properly.

O: Yeah. Well, no, I'm Norwegian. You go into my apartment, I'm home there now, the bed is fixed, the dishes are washed, and I go home . . . I ain't gonna be no pig. Because I was in Norway, and a cousin of mine in Norway went out in the yard there, and there was a cigarette butt . . . you know. But he's throwing this cigarette butt down there.

K: That's not very good.

O: But you know, like, you see yourself, you know, like, if you go to a public restroom—course you can hardly get in—they'll break it, and tear it apart. They do it right at the colleges too, I imagine.

K: I'm sure there's a lot. We have a big . . . a lot of people: a plumber . . . we have plumbers and electricians and everyone working to take care of PLU. Of course, there are a lot of buildings, a lot of dorms and stuff for students.

O: Yeah. No, I see with . . . Lagerquist. And Lagerquists's dad had a grocery store, and when I went to University of Washington, Elmer Voglund and him were good friends. So we'd go up and Elmer worked in that grocery store. The screen door going inside that says; "Chew Copenhagen snooze" and just an old man like that. And Lagerquist had feet that big, you know.

K: Really? George or his father?

O: George.

K: Oh, okay.

O: So anyhow, then . . . kinda odd. Did you know him?

K: Yep.

O: Not much personality. But anyhow . . . so anyhow, there used to be a Johnson and Lundgren. Lundgren, have you ever heard of Lundgren?

K: Yeah.

O: Lundgren was in the lumber business. I knew him well, Art Lundgren. So anyhow, he's dead now, and Johnson quit beforehand and went up to Anchorage. And started, Spenard, Johnson did. So, Lagerquist is a CPA, you know that. So, he had done some lumber work, so he went up there, and he run it, and the one that had it was Jack Peterson, and another one, they were up there . All of them, very well to do. In fact, one of them run for governor up there. In fact, I stayed with him. Really expensive house in Anchorage and what-have-you. So for some reason, I've been able to rub with some of them people.

K: I don't see why not. Go ahead.

O: So anyhow, he got another male someplace here and stuff like that. And Moe got a hold of him, and Moe . . . so we know, "Oh, how much money do you want?" And he was getting a little senile towards the last.

K: Who, George?

O: George was.

K: Yeah, I think he was a little bit. But I don't think when he gave him the money, I don't think he was senile then. But he got later on.

O: Well, Moe looks at it in kind of a different light, you know Moe. So . . . does he sing, or what does he do? I know he was in the music department, wasn't he?

K: Well, he was dean for all the arts at PLU: he was the dean for theater, and music, and like, everything. Everything that had to do with the arts. But I have to tell you about this Lagerquist Concert Hall. Thinking about a testament to George because, number one; it's a beautiful, beautiful room. And then there's a chair sitting right there that has a sort of . . . something over it. No one can sit in that chair because that's George's chair forever, because it is his concert hall. So George Lagerquist will always be remembered at PLU.

O: Oh yeah, yeah, no, no. It was the finest thing he's ever done in his life.

K: You should see it sometime.

O: Oh I've been through there.

K: Have you been to the building?

O: Oh, I was out there as the guest of Johnson the president. I've been through that with Moe and his wife . . .

K: Pretty nice, isn't it?

O: Yeah, and I met a Weyerhauser who was out there, you name them. No I've . . . I flew with the highest of them. So, it got away with us. But no, it's a . . . that concert hall is good. Did you know Jacobs that ran the golf course?

K: Uh huh. They just closed the golf course this year. In October.

O: Well, they're gonna take it apart now, aren't they?

K: Well, they're gonna build athletic fields, because we don't have any athletic fields at PLU.

O: Yeah.

K: And they're also gonna build some housing further down that is for kind of different generations to live in. A kind of different housing.

O: That right?

K: So you can have some assisted living, and some people who are retiring can live there, and stuff so it varies . . . this is going to build some of that housing down there.

O: Yeah.

K: Which would be really nice.

O: Yeah, that's the president who put that package together, he's done good. And Moe is in on that too.

K: Yeah, and also Sheri. . . did you know Sheri Tonn at all? She's the vice president for finance. She's really worked hard on this thing, too.

O: Who's that?

K: Sheri Tonn. She's the vice president for finance.

O: Oh, yeah.

K: Yeah, and she's very good, too. And very active and stuff.

O: Yeah, that's what it takes for promoters like that.

K: Absolutely.

O: Johnson is a good promoter.

K: You mean Anderson?

O: Anderson, yeah.

K: Loren Anderson.

O: Yeah, because he gets in articles in the Norwegian papers in Seattle.

K: And he's a member of the Norwegian American Foundation. So he's been very involved in Norwegian stuff. He's been the best president we've had, I think.

O: Yeah, well, why does he want to retire?

K: Well, he's sixty-five years old, he's been working at PLU for twenty years, and I think he's ready for something new. I don't think he's going to retire. He says, "I'm not retiring, I'm just leaving to do something else." So I think he has all sorts of ideas about what he wants to do, but that no one really knows. So he . . . his wife is much younger than he is, so I can . . . so I think they probably will, you know, do other stuff.

O: Yeah, well, my wife had . . . Moe's wife and the president's wife, teach them how to make flatbread.

K: Oh, really?

O: Yeah.

K: This president?

O: Yes.

K: And was it Marcia Moe or Lila Moe?

O: No, no, it was . . . the one who . . . she used to be on the stage, or wasn't she? No, the one he's got now.

K: Oh, okay. Marcia.

O: Nice lady.

K: Very nice. Very, very nice woman. I like her. I like Dick Moe too, is there . . . he was a very good dean, he was excellent.

O: Yeah, well, he belongs to every golf course in Tacoma.

K: Probably, yeah.

O: Yeah, he loves that.

K: Yeah, and the president we have has been excellent too.

O: Well, then he had another good donator, was Flett Dairy.

K: I don't know about that. It could be, I don't know about that. Well, you know, it is important to make sure that a place like PLU is supported because there's not too many schools like that that have a Norwegian heritage, which is important.

O: Well, the tuition isn't too cheap anymore either.

K: No, it isn't. But, you know, it's not . . . it's what it costs, unfortunately. And students get a lot of loans and there's a lot of things that they can get help with. Lots of financial aid for students. So there are a lot of people who can give out money to help students and stuff. And you know, where I work, and it's really interesting because, I work with the Scandinavian Immigrant Collection—you should come by and visit sometime. It's really nice, and we have “saved” what happened to the Scandinavian immigrants. Like, we have books they have written when they came over here, you know, how to raise your children, how to take care of your animals that you're farming, and how-to-cook books, and everything like that. And then we have lots of books that they had published for them over here, lots of books they liked to read, so we have lots of books like that. And then we have things like . . . we have interviewed a lot of immigrants too about, like I'm interviewing you now: about their heritage, and about their lives, and why they immigrated, and how they back on how to keep the Norwegian things here. And then we have things like, personal biographies of people, and then we have books . . . Daughters of Norway and Sons of Norway, and all those references and stuff. It's really interesting work to work with. I really like it a lot.

O: Yeah.

K: So that's why I stay around; because I like it. It's really interesting.

O: Well, you know a lot of times these Norwegians come over here, and when I was a kid, I'd go up the room in the hall, and oh they'd drink! Oh my! Just terrible, terrible.

K: I know.

O: And they kill themselves off with stuff like that.

K: Yeah, it's unfortunate. Not everyone does. I don't think it's so much anymore. So much drinking. But I think at first . . .

O: Well just like . . . but no, there's a lot of humor in it. We don't like . . . they used to have a theater up on K Street. Do you remember the moving house up there?

K: Yeah, I kind of.

O: You know Vasa there?

K: Yeah.

O: Well, some of those Swedes up there went to that theater, and it was open Sunday. You know, they worked six days a week at the mills down there. Stand there and push lumber through . . . work like slaves. There was no hardship deal. So they go to this movie, and the three of them are sitting there, where the projection is cranked a movie over at ten o'clock in the morning, and the movie went good, and they put it in, and then it was noon. So, there wasn't much there, and he said, “Well, I'm gonna go and eat and then I'll be back.” And these guys are still sitting there. So he figured; well, he would come back . . . so he run it through again, the same movie. And gee, it was about nine o'clock that night and the guys are getting tired. They're the only guys still sitting there.

K: Nothing else to do.

O: Well, and so he thought; well, I'm gonna find out, he says, "Say fellows," he says "you know," he says, "this movie, you've seen it many times. What's . . . ?" "Oh, that's the finest movie. We'd like to see it one more time." And I said, "Well, fascinating." "Well," he says, "there's this one scene where these ladies, these three ladies, walk across the railroad track there, and start taking their clothes off, and gonna go swimming, had a bathing suit in there."

K: Uh oh.

O: And then the train come by, and by the train the train went through, they were in their bathing suits, and halfway down to the water to swim. We was hoping the train was gonna be late.

K: Ha, ha, ha. That's pretty funny.

O: You know it.

K: Ha, ha, ha.

O: But, there's always something like that.

K: Sat there all day long and waited for the train to be late, that's pretty funny.

O: And that Vasa, oh gosh, they used to have that Vasa drink. They had, the Swedes, put on a program. They'd feed him, they could drink all day long. Oh, it was *horrible*.

K: Oh, I know, I'm sure. Well, they worked hard, they needed some . . . .

O: Was you here when the Strom family run Normanna Hall?

K: . . . I've heard the name, but I don't . . . .

O: The Stroms, yeah, I knew all of them. In fact, a friend of mine, Clara Smith-Hayson went to a Trudy Strom. And I knew all of the Strom and the whole bunch of them up there. Uppå gatan they call K Street. There's all of it Lutheran Church up there, whole bunch of Lutheran churches.

K: It's too bad that all that stuff is all gone. Well, Normanna Hall is still there, but Valhalla is gone.

O: Yeah, well, that Normanna Hall, that's a terrible hall. They were figuring on coming out here in the south end at one time.

K: Oh, really?

O: Yeah, this fellow, he's a machinist, he belongs to the Vasa now. But he did belong to the Normanna Hall and what-have-you.

K: Wow.

O: But in Seattle, they got more active.

K: They have a nice Swedish Club in Seattle

O: Yeah.

K: Really nice, I belong to it.

O: But no, being . . . I was born in this country, I'm kind of a mulatto Norwegian. Half Norwegian and half . . . .

K: Well, Norwegian American. That's all right.

O: Well, no they said, I kid them on different . . . .

K: Perhaps we have . . . the mike.

O: . . . and they would say that you're . . . that's terrible, terrible. Come on, I said, you guys are from the old countries. Super strong. Terrible, terrible. So I'd give them a bad, yeah . . . .

K: Ha, ha, ha, that's funny.

O: But no, it's funny but . . . one thing about it, I'm kind of proud that I've been around Scandinavians people that way. But I find that some of these other . . . but no, I've worked with Hindus, Koreans, and there's a lot of good Koreans too.

K: You have a Korean daughter-in-law. Don't you?

O: Daughter-in-law . . . yeah.

K: Isn't your daughter-in-law Korean?

O: Who?

K: Your daughter-in-law, Harry's wife?

O: Yeah, Harry's . . . .

K: Harry's wife is Korean, right?

O: Yeah, she's Korean, yeah. She's taking a good chance . . . taking care of him. And I have right in this building here . . . he's a teacher, nicest man in the world, him and his wife.

K: Good, that's great.

O: And I have a black girl that I built a house for her parents long ago, and she's on a . . . she cooks on a boat, and I've got a check here, and she won't be back for another five months. So she wants someone to take care of that check till she gets back, so I got it here for her. Am I doing the wrong thing?

K: No.

O: No, I don't want it. But no, so . . . .

K: Of course, it's nice to do things for people.

O: Well, like this woman, I don't remember their names. My memory is bad on that part. But this lady, real nice, that come and talk to me today. She made my day. It just made my day. And I'd go around to different tables, as I leave a lot of the time. I'll go around and talk to them and what-have-you.

K: Did you know her before, that woman who come by to talk to you? Have you seen her before at the restaurant?

O: Oh she's, I've talked to her . . . I don't know her name, I don't know where she lives.

K: She just comes by the restaurant.

O: Yeah.

K: That's nice.



O: So, it's friends you make along the way.

K: Absolutely.

O: Because I ended up in France, and I talked to a fellow—he was white, and had a boy with him—and I asked him if he talked German, or Norwegian, or knows to speak English. So I said, “What do you do?” Well, he had a wandering circus in South Africa, so I ended up with him.

K: Really?

O: Yeah, real good friend. I was in Germany, and I met . . . it was a singer out of Canada that come back and forth. And . . . meet people, you know. Just like, for example, this Norwegian, he lives up in Anacortes now . . . what's his name? He's got that Christmas songs, used to be on T.V. all the time, plays accordion.

K: Oh, that had a basset hound?

O: Yeah.

K: Stan Borreson.

O: Yeah, I know him.

K: Oh yeah?

O: Yeah, but he's living in Anacortes. Yeah I was with him, but him and I are the same, see. His mother is from Trondheim.

K: Oh really?

O: And his father is from Stavanger. And I'm just the opposite. My mother is from Stavanger and like that. So, but he's . . . with an accordion. He's a small man, not very big.

K: I've seen him once with his dog. Remember that sad dog that he had? Slow-Mo, or Low-Mo, or something like that it was called. He had a good radio program.

O: Yeah, he did. Did you ever listen to Scandinavian hour?

K: Mmm-hmm, sometimes. Have you ever listened to any of his other C.D.'s, when he sings about Christmas?

O: Oh yeah, he's good. No, but last time I met him, I think it was on a cruise, and he was making this cruise too. But he was going to take a group over himself on a cruise to some place like that. But he lives up on Camano Island, up by Stanwood. Did you ever go up to Stanwood?

K: I've been up there, yeah. Not very often, but I've been up there.

O: You go to Stanwood, downtown, and did you ever go to that restaurant downtown? That's all Scandinavian. My cousin was cook down there.

K: Really?

O: Yeah. So . . . I remember when I lived up in . . . I was asking one of them to . . . who was this Norwegian—that says this tour—in the restaurant there? And there was a dance hall there by the name of Florin. And we used to go to that dance hall all the time. All the farmers, and it really decked out. She says; oh yeah, yeah, I've been Florin. So if they knew soon to usher and what-have-you.

K: Uh huh.

O: And they had this Stavanger Laget, a different kind of a lodges and what-have-you. My mother belonged to that one, up to that. They'd all get together and talk about their childhood in the old country. It was always some kind of a funny story.

K: I'll bet, I'll bet.

O: So what would happen there was . . . one of the dancers, one of mine, says, "I stopped and ate at the restaurant." So I started talking to him. Oh yeah, they were all sitting and had coffee. At least, ladies. And I says, "Er du Norks . . . Jeg er Norsk?" "Nei!" that's the biggest mistake I've made. He is Swedish.

K: Oh, ha, ha, ha, ha.

O: It was just a joke.

K: Oh sure.

O: But no, it's funny how those people, they thought they wanted to make a big living on that little farms up there. They get about . . . they're lucky to milk the cow and just get by.

K: Exactly, exactly. You know, maybe they're happy, you never know.

O: Oh yeah, there's this one Swede that the farm I stayed on, his son come from Everett, worked in the mills in Everett. And on Friday, when he come home, you know what he gave his dad? One of those rolls of snus.

K: Oh sure. Copenhagen snus?

O: That was enough . . . yeah, Copenhagen snus. That would last him . . .

K: A long time?

O: Yeah, for the week. And that's all he got. And we had him at Tacoma—my folks had him at Tacoma—and he was so anxious to get back on that farm. And to get out there, he had a horse in the yard, he had sheep, and what-have you, and animals, and milk the cow, and there was no money. They'd milk the cow and then take that down to the road, and they'd take it to the creamery, they'd get by. And if they plowed on the road a little bit with the horse, I think they'd cut down a bit on their taxes. And they got the weekly newspapers, the Stanwood newspapers, but he'd had to cut a load of wood. The guy would come and pick it up, but he had to cut a load of wood for him to get the paper for free.

K: I have a question for you. How did you decide to name your motel and your restaurant "King Oscar"?

O: Well, my mother . . . that's a good question.

K: You were the "baby", I know that.

O: Yeah, I'll tell you what happened. My mother was a housemaid, and she got a job with Chrstian Bjelland. And when she got the job with Christian Bjelland, he went around—the story of when he first started in—and they got apartments there, and they got an outhouse right in the stairway. I don't know if you've been there. They probably have them in Sweden, the same thing.

K: Oh sure.

O: So, this one girl I went with one time, and she always talked about her dad was a rich farmer, had race horse, they have no race horses. In Norway they're little horses. So, he would go around with this wagon, and he would empty those out and put it on the field.

K: Oh, sure.

O: So the city . . . he told me the story that they made him put springs on the wagons, because when there wasn't springs, some of these stuff would bounce out of these cans 'cause they were full, and they would get in-between the cobblestones. I guess they didn't like that look.

K: Probably not. Ha, ha, ha.

O: So that's how that come about. But there's all kinds of stories on that. But then, my mother was talking about, there was one of them, Douse . . . Doss . . . Dass . . . .

K: Dass. It's a Dass.

O: Dass. Man går på utedass..

K: Yeah, look it up. But sometimes you go på utedass when he's outside.

O: Yeah well, Dass . . . you know what it was? There was a guy that had a boat but they'd come . . . they'd bring from the bigger cities kegs full of human waste, and these kegs—from Oslo and what-have-you—to the farming countries.

K: Sure, sure.

O: And they could smell that boat when it was coming in. And the guy that was supposed to run it, they called him Peter Dass.

K: So what about the "King Oscar"?

O: Oh yeah, well it's King Oscar. Well anyhow, getting back to King Oscar . . . then he went around, and he got rags, mother says . . . he got rags—they didn't have toilet paper—out of the outhouse, and he washed those, and he sold the rags. Then he went around selling Mackerel and different fish that he caught there, door-to-door.

K: And his rags?

O: Yeah, after he got done with . . . and very ambitious. Then there were so many sardines there in Stavanger that they had a mork pump. The mork is a fish, there were so many of them there was a pump in the middle of the motel, the Lanzinger Motel, a mork pump, and there were so many fish there they would just pump them out of the water, these herring. So anyhow, those fish like that . . . then he started in canning them. Well, then he got so many of them, so then he went in a boat building business, and he had boats that went to different countries and they would trade them for spices and stuff like that. So he kept on going like that. So Christian Bjelland kept doing that, and finally, they discovered oil, and he was in the oil business. And when he was in the oil business, the fellow that just bought him out a few years ago was Frederickson. And Frederickson lives in a town in Italy or someplace like that, so he doesn't have to pay taxes, and his office is in Bermuda and in England, and yet he is an American citizen. And he's big on that oil. And I'm in on oil in Norway myself, it's a stock over there, because it's good business, there's an enologist that's discovered more oil over there.

K: Is that how "King Oscar" came about?

O: So anyhow . . . he named his cans . . . his fish, “King Oscar”. And my mother named me Oscar because she admired Christian Bjelland, but I have no relation to him. But the skröna that they have is Kung Oskar den ann be shiten upon. I don’t know if you’ve heard that or not.

K: No, I haven’t heard that. Ha, ha, ha.

O: Well, that’s what they said. Because it was kind of a joke ‘cause it was supposed to be Swedish.

K: Right.

O: So, excuse the language, but that’s what they called him. So in fact I told . . . they even asked me, and I got a letter from the factory that if I would want to carry sardines in my motel. So it gave it a kind of sticky name, King Oscar.

K: I’m sure.

O: So, I could have called it: “Napoleon”, I could have called it . . . .

K: Anything, yeah.

O: Yeah. Like the next apartment I got a lot of apartments with different bird’s names, you know . . . .

K: Sure.

O: . . . Bluebird, you know, Canary, and the next one is going to be “Swan”. But no, so I did that . . . .

K: So that’s how King Oscar . . . .

O: So I was tied in with the Comfort Inn, and Best Western, and what-have-you. So they send these high school girls out, and they’ll come out here from California and say; “Well, let’s go out to McChord field and see if I get them for a business.” Well, where is McChord field? And I don’t need those high school girls walking around. And you got to pay a percentage.

K: Sure.

O: So I decided to go into a business for myself. So my restaurant is Oscar’s, or King Oscar’s, and what-have-you. So, it’s easier to remember it.

K: Oh yeah, absolutely. That’s a great name, I was just wondering how it came about. I’ve had some King Oscar sardines, I’ve had some of those.

O: Yeah, yeah.

K: He’s well known.

O: Yeah, you think of fish or something . . . King Oscar, it’s always kind of associated with that.

K: Absolutely, absolutely.

O: But I’m not hurting anyone. The guy is dead so he can’t sue me.

K: No, you’re not hurting anyone, absolutely not.

O: But, I’ll give you something here . . . and her picture is in it. And now, this is the beginning of it, read that, but be sure you bring it back.

K: I will, I will.

O: You read that. See that?

K: Yep.

O: Look at the pictures of . . . .

K: Wow, interesting.

O: But that gives it the whole history of . . . and that's, see the ship building. From to getting rags out of an outhouse, talking about going ahead. Now he's a . . . .

K: Pretty interesting. And he's done well for himself since, hasn't he?

O: What is that?

K: Sailing certificate, 26 issues at \$59.95. Well, what do you think? Should we close up for today?

O: Yeah, well, what else indeed?

K: Well, you know, I'm going to type this up, and then I'll have you look at it, and see what you think.

O: Yeah.

K: And then you can read it and see if there's something else, and I can come back, and we can add onto it.

O: Yeah well . . . but anyhow, I would never be where I am today if it hadn't have been for my mother. And with Jean it's been a blessing for me . . . .

K: That's great.

O: . . . in my business. And I've had newcomers come here from Norway, and Torleif Berheim was one of them, and he was a very poor carpenter to tell you the truth, I think he was in the first place. But there's good and the bad. And you speak of companionship and clean humor. General-like, you can't tell a skröna or anything in you might say unless it's dirty.

K: Right.

O: But a lot of their stories that they have . . . and then, with like the puts-on-pair-doo-ah-kiss-ah-bong and all those different rhymes they had. And some of the storybooks that we had in this country when I was a kid, *Alice in Wonderland*, I never did get that through my . . . .

K: I want to take your picture.

O: . . . I should've had a necktie on. So anyhow, yeah.

K: So, this was fun. I'm going to stop it right now (*click*).