

GUNNAR ANDERSON

Born in Leksand, Sweden on January 9, 1901.

PARENTS: Kristina and Matts Anderson. His father was a bricklayer in Sweden. After he came to the U.S., he had a variety of jobs.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: A sister in Sweden, a sister in the U.S. and a brother in Colorado.

GRANDPARENTS: Remembers maternal grandparents, Hans Hansson and Brita. Grandfather died when he was 95 years old. Grandmother died in her 80's. His grandfather was a farmer.

CHILDHOOD: They lived in the country so he had to help in the fields as soon as he was big enough to do anything. Had to help plant and dig potatoes. Chop wood. They had one cow. His grandparents had five or six cows and a horse. He helped them a lot in the summer.

Falun was the nearest town. Leksand was the closest community. He went to school there. It was four kilometers from his home.

They always went to school, even when it was cold or snowing. He went to a one-room schoolhouse his first three years, not far from home. He went to school in Leksand starting with his fourth year of school. Several communities shared the same school. 40-50 kids in one classroom. They had to study their lessons at home. They were expected to learn most of their lessons by heart. They had to study by kerosene lamps until his last year of school. Then they got electricity. They had to study a little of everything, geography, geometry, history, Bible, *etc.*

AFTER SCHOOL: 'I graduated for the sawmill at age 14.' Worked from 6:00am to 6:00pm in the lumberyard. Hard work for a kid. He put in seven years at the sawmill.

Drafted into the Swedish Army in 1920-1921. There was no war so they didn't suffer, but the discipline was very strict. He was in Stockholm. They had a very cold winter that year. The worst part was doing guard duty in the horse barn at night and still do your duties the next day.

COMING TO AMERICA: Went home for two months after getting out of the army. Came to America in 1922. There wasn't much work in Sweden after WWI. If you had a job, wages were poor. He had relatives in the U.S. Had heard a lot about America so he came. Gunnar's father, sisters, and brother were already in the U.S. Gunnar came in 1922 and his mother came in 1923. His sister was married so she got stuck there.

She seems pretty well off now. He was only 21 when he came. His cousin, 19, and another fellow, 18 came along. It seemed like an adventure. They took a boat to New York and then a train to Tacoma. It took two weeks to get from Sweden to Tacoma. Eleven days on the boat, four days on the train, one day in New York.

WORK: Found work in Tacoma after a few days. Worked at the St. Paul Mill.

Met his wife a year later. He was living in Seattle at the time. They rented a house there.

INGEBORG ANDERSON

Ingeborg Anderson. Born NÅs, Dalarna, Sweden.

PARENTS: Brita and Lars Smed. Her father did a little of everything. He was mostly a blacksmith. In the summer he worked down at the river. He helped with the lumber coming down the river.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Ingeborg is the eighth of ten children.

GRANDPARENTS: Her mother's father died very young. She remembers both of her paternal grandparents. They lived into their 90's. Paternal grandfather was a wood craver.

FAMILY NAME: Her father took the name 'Smed' when he was in the army. In English it would be Smith.

CHILDHOOD: A small house and a lot of kids. Twelve around the table. Her grandmother lived with them too. They had a couple of cows, some sheep, and a pig. She moved in with her mother's sister when she was seven years old. They had a big farm, eight or nine cows, and two horses. She stayed there in the summer.

She came home and went to school in the winter. A long cold walk to the school. A lake was on one side of the road and a field was on the other.

After she finished school, she stayed on her aunt's farm all year. She learned to milk cows and other farm jobs.

She decided to come to the U.S. when she was 17 years old. She came with two brothers and a cousin. She got sea-sick on the boat. They took a train to Gothenburg. Traveled 3rd class on the boat. Had to go through Ellis Island. It wasn't too bad. They looked in her mouth and asked how much money she had.

They were on Ellis Island for only a day. They took the train to Chicago the next day. It took a week to get from Chicago to Tacoma by train.

WORK: Did housework when she got to Tacoma.

MARRIAGE: She met Gunnar. They went together for three years. Got married in 1927.

SCANDINAVIAN ORGANIZATIONS: She belongs to the Order of Vasa.

ALVA PEARSON

Born in Borlänge, Dalarna, Sweden in 1894.

CAME TO THE U.S IN 1910 AT AGE 16. Her mother died when Alva was 2. Father died when she was 14. Had to be 16 to leave Sweden alone. Had a brother in the U.S.

Started working when she was 11. She babysat. Did housework in Tacoma after she came to the U.S. Got \$10 a month plus room and board. Came to Tacoma from Boston by train. It took 6-7 days. She was scared when she got to Chicago. A policeman found her and asked for her ticket. She didn't understand. He helped her get to the right train. Nobody met her at the train station. A teacher from the Indian reservation helped her. She came to Portland Ave. The address she had took her to Station P, the post office. She had no house number. She got married early and settled down in Tacoma.

THE BEGINNING OF THE VASA LODGE: Started July 26, 1912 by sixteen men. They decided to let women join on September 27, 1912. She was the first lady to sign the charter. There were twenty-five ladies all together. Alva is the only charter member left. Sometimes the lodge would have programs and dinners. They would help sick people and people having a hard time. Alva was on the first serving committee. Everyone had to be on it for one year. There were a lot of Swedish people around in those years.

GUNNAR ANDERSON

Joined the Vasa Lodge in September 1922. He came to Tacoma on July 24, 1922. He came to his sister's house on that day and met Mrs. Pearson, who lived across the street.

EARLY DAYS IN THE VASA LODGE: They were all young. They took in new members as more immigrants came. They all spoke Swedish so they felt at home. They had dances, dinners, and had a lot of fun. They all worked together. At one point, they had 500 members. The membership dropped as people got married and moved away. Some members have passed away. They have about 200 members now.

Gunnar belonged to the Vasa Lodge for 58 years. He has been president five times, 1938, 1948, 1949, 1950.

TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VASA LODGE: 1962. They treated the entire membership to prime roast beef dinner at the New Yorker. 50 year members were presented 50 year pins.

07 VASA LODGE'S TIES WITH SWEDEN: Sweden has Vasa Lodges now. They are called Vasa Order of America. During the Grand lodge Convention, they send over delegates from Sweden to represent the Swedish Vasa lodges. They seem to be doing very well.

The Swedish Vasa lodges are not organized exactly like the America Vasa lodges. From the beginning, American Vasa lodges were organized as sick benefit lodges. Their purpose was to take care of members who became sick or needed help. There was no social security when the lodge started.

Members pay dues. They also have fund raising activities. They would raise money with the dinners they had. They had one dinner a month for three years to raise money to treat the entire membership of about 350 to prime roast beef dinner at the New Yorker Restaurant for their 50th anniversary. They had \$200 left over from the dinner.

The Vasa Lodge sponsored dancers from Sweden at Pacific Lutheran University. They more or less got roped into it. The dancers were a group of students from Uppsala University in Sweden. They were actually a group that was touring the U.S. They took advantage of the Vasa Order. The Vasa Lodge hosted a dinner for them and then took them to Olson Auditorium at PLU where they performed. They were called Ungdomsringen, which means they were a group of youth. Ages in the group varied from 17-50.

The Vasa Lodge sponsored The Sofia flickornas gymnasts, a group of young girls from Sweden. They performed at the University of Puget Sound. They also got a lot of help from businessmen in town. This group was quite a success.

LEIF ERICKSON COMMITTEE: Made up of all the Scandinavian organizations. Sponsors Scandinavian Days at the Bicentennial Pavilion during the first week of October each year. Each lodge has one day in which they are represented. There is a program and dance on Saturday night, the last day of the festival. Scholarships are given to students from Tacoma Community College, Pacific Lutheran University, and University of Puget Sound during the program.

HANDICRAFTS AND FOODS AT SCANDINAVIAN DAYS: They demonstrate how to make rya rugs, weaving, carding wool, wood carving, spinning, *etc.* Different food, fattigmand, lefse, vikings (meatballs deep-fried in a batter). There are all kinds of fancy sandwiches and baked goods.

GUNNAR ANDERSON - INTEREST IN THE VASA LODGE: Members are getting old. The younger generation isn't as interested. They used to have bazaars and bake sales. Nobody wants to work anymore. They had plays. Made money that way. Meetings were always conducted in Swedish in the old days. Gunnar was a delegate at the convention in Portland in 1938 and meetings were still conducted in Swedish then. There were some delegates there who were second generation. It was hard for them to understand what was going on. Gunnar thought it would have been better to use the English language then so everyone could understand. It wasn't until a couple of years later that they switched to English.

Lost some members. Girls of the second generation could speak Swedish but their husbands couldn't. People

drifted away. Other activities to do. The television was very influential in the decreasing activity and membership of the lodge. This has happened in many other lodges too.

VALHALLA LODGE: A men's lodge. Meetings used to be conducted in Swedish too. Everything done in English now. Lodge is doing very well. Many young men have joined. This lodge is independent; can make its own rules. Valhalla Lodge started before he came to the U.S. He joined in 1946. It is over 90 years old. Like the Vasa Lodge, it is a sick benefit organization.

TRIPS BACK TO SWEDEN: Three trips. It's a lot different from when Gunnar was there. Wonderful medical system there. 'They holler about paying taxes, but they get something out of it.' Ingeborg also found a lot of changes. They have it so much nicer. Women don't have to work like they do before. Much nicer home. Gunnar, Ingeborg, and Alva don't regret coming to the U.S. Alva has been back to Sweden eight times. She was in the U.S. 46 years before she went back to Sweden. It was altogether different. The school she went to was gone. It was 34 years before Gunnar went back to Sweden. He had no desire to go back before then.

SWEDISH IN THE HOME: They use it at times. Gunnar's niece, husband and her daughter visited from six weeks so they had to speak Swedish then. They've kept in contact with family in Sweden. Ingeborg's two sisters came to visit too. Alva has three children. The oldest girl couldn't speak English when she started school. Swedish was all you heard in the neighborhood.

SWEDISH TRADITIONS: They have lutefisk dinner on Christmas Eve. They have homemade potatiskorv and sylta (headcheese) risgrynsgrött and pickled herring.

MID-SUMMER: June 24. Vasa sponsors festivities at the Vasa Park in Seattle.

SWEDISH EXPRESSIONS: When you greet someone or come into a home in Sweden you say, 'God dag God dag!' When you've invited someone to your home you say 'Välkommen' welcome when they come. When you leave you say, 'Hej!' The proper good-bye is 'adjö.' Slang is used now in Sweden, just like it is in the U.S. Young people in Sweden speak to older person as they do to their peers. You couldn't do that before. They have hippies and motorcycle gangs in Sweden, just like in the U.S.

Gunnar introduces Ed Rosenquist who is also a member of Vasa. He is from Åland, Finland, the islands between Sweden and Finland.