

Jonas Walfred Norberg was born on March 10, 1899 in Nybyn, Sweden. This is in northern Sweden.

PARENTS Nils and Maria Norberg. Father was a farmer and owner of a general store.

Mother died in 1913 when Walfred was 14 years old. There were 4 children in the family. Father remarried and came to America in 1915.

In 1916 Walfred and his oldest sister came to America. Walfred had been working in a flour mill until he came.

Father died from injuries in the woods. Walfred was the oldest child.

GRANDPARENTS Farmers. Maternal - Olof and Sara Sundberg. Paternal - Jonas Olovson and Kristina Nilsdotter. Walfred explains about the name Olovson and Norberg, how they changed.

GRANDPARENTS FARMING: They raised hay, beef, 'little of everything.' They raised things to live on, support themselves.

FATHER'S STORE: Sold sugar, fabric and other staples that could not be grown on the farm.

Norberg's home in Sweden was good sized. They first lived with grandparents and then father built a house.

Mother was sick. Her parents helped them out. Lived in the store until they sold it when they came to America in 1913.

Walfred worked in the flour mill when his father immigrated, grinded seed to flour.

Father married daughter of the owner of the mill. Berglund was her maiden name.

On his trip to Sweden in 1969, the mill had been torn down.

Christmas in Sweden no different from Christmas here. Presents, trees, went to church.

CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS: Stories of trolls.

Came to America in 1916.

Reasons why his father had come to America. His brothers were here. They went to business school in Sweden, then came to the U.S.

Father died in 1919. Walfred was left with the family, six younger brothers and sisters. All siblings were in the U.S. One brother killed in the woods.

Walfred came to the U.S. because his family was here. Left the flour mill where he had been for 14 months.

Went to the woods to work. Lived in a small cabin. Describes this. Paid 10 cents a log. Describes working in the woods.

Moving logs in the winter. Floating logs in the spring. Sorting logs in the river.

Trip over to America Aug. 9, 1916. Took a train to Trondheim, then to Oslo. Took boat Hellig Olaf to the U.S.

BOAT TRIP: Sick much of the time. Plenty of food available. It was a nice passenger boat. Rough seas. Took 9 to 10 days.

ELLIS ISLAND: They okayed the papers. Sister had trouble because she was 15. Walfred was 17. Sent a telegram to their father in Alder, WA. Ellis Island was crowded, plenty of accommodations. Some people stayed for months. Some sent back to their country.

TRAIN TRIP: Stopped twice to change trains. 5 days.

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES: Could not understand English.

Arrived in Tacoma very hungry. Had not eaten much on the train. Met someone who spoke Swedish and did some translating.

Nobody to meet them when they arrived in Tacoma. Looked at the railway map to find out where Morton and Alder were. This is where their father lived. Bought tickets at the train station.

Met father and family. Went to work right away in the woods. Began learning English.

Comparing work between Sweden and the U.S.

Dangers of working in the woods. Uncle and father were both killed from logging accidents.

SCHOOLING: 6 years in Sweden. Finished at age 13.

WORKING: Began at age 12, hauling freight for his father's store.

1 Describes hauling by horse and wagon. The difficulties, loading the wagon, what was hauled.

Women did not work as early as the men in Sweden. They began working at the age of 16 or 17. Helped around the house, hired out to others.

Life is comfortable in America. Think more of memories when you get older.

Contact with many minorities in the woods. Many Austrians and Scandinavians.

AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP: Age 30 or so. Took a test. Two witnesses testified. Did not get citizenship the first time he tried. Got his citizenship the second time he tried.

Met his wife at a Scandinavian picnic in 1925. They were married a year later on the same date.

Walfred and wife have one son, born 1927 named Jay. He works for the government and has 2 children. Talks about great grandchildren.

WORK IN TACOMA: Several different jobs. Lumber piler, car loader and a Superintendent.

Went to California from 1947 to '52. Others were also going. Started a saw mill company.

Working for St. Paul and St. Regis in Tacoma. Working days about 10 hours, 2 dollars a day. The same as in Sweden.

Life in the lumber camps, bunkhouses and other conditions.

Quit lumber work because it was too dangerous, rough conditions.

CHANGES IN THE LUMBER BUSINESS: Safety conditions improved. Less dangerous now than it was before. New ways to transport logs.

CHANGES IN TACOMA: More crime. Children have idle time, are running around.

CHURCH ACTIVITY: None in Tacoma. In Sweden went to church on Sundays only. Bible was at home to read.

ORGANIZATIONS: Eagles and Swedish Order of Valhalla and Vasa. He was on the Eagles drill team and attended meetings.

Trip back to Sweden 1969 and 1974. Changes about the same as in the U.S. wages higher and good living. Farming changes in Sweden are as they are in the U.S. Can't make a living on the farm. Big machinery.

FEELINGS ABOUT BEING SWEDISH: Proud of Swedish heritage.

Much family here, they gather for family reunions. Over 100 used to get together. Now about 60.

SPEAKING SWEDISH: Still speaks it.

I mentioned before that while working in the woods, I guess I did everything there was to do in the woods, except cook and donkey locomotive engineer, reason being, when not donkey engineer, I had a job called 'handy man.' When a worker quit, was fired, or got injured, the handy man was put in his place until a new man was hired through an employment office in the city. This took a matter of 2 or 3 days.

1924: When I quit the woods and came in to the city, I got a job on the then being built Washington Building. I got a job as loadman on the concrete crew. I mixed all concrete for the Washington Building from the 4th to the 17th floor.

1932: Hart Construction. Got a job building the river road to Puyallup on the south side of the river. My job then was shift foreman. We used material for the road dug from the river bottom.

After this job was finished, I went back to the sawmills again, having worked there a few years, before the depression struck, as a lumber piler, car loader, carpenter, leadman, and two times as superintendent.