

Emil Herman Ekloff. Born December 5, 1891 on Öland, Sweden. Öland is an island in the Baltic Sea.

PARENTS: Emma and Lars Edvard Eklöf. Father went to California in 1892. Stayed until 1900. Spring of 1900, he wrote and asked if Emma could buy a farm. Before that, they'd been living with Emil's mother's mother. His maternal grandfather had been in America in the 1880s. Emil was only 2 when he died. His mother got a farm for 2,300 crowns. His dad came home during the summer. The buildings on the farm were in bad shape. Would have to be rebuilt. Emil's maternal grandfather had been a carpenter. He built the house they'd been living in. The old buildings on the new farm had been torn down. Emil's dad's brother was a carpenter. He took down the grandfather's old house. He marked all the planks. Moved it to the new farm a little more than an English mile away. Rebuilt the house. Emil's father went back to California in 1903. They were out of money again. He worked in logging camps in the Redwood Forest. Came back to Öland in 1908.

ÖLAND: Eighty-five English miles north to south, twenty-five English miles at the widest place. There used to be only small farms there. Everybody raised what they needed. They never starved. They sent food to northern Sweden.

GRANDPARENTS: Maternal, Olof Svensson and Christina. Paternal, Anders Andersson and Elisabet Ekelöf. Emil's grandparents worked on other people's farms.

SCHOOL: Twelve years old when he finished school. They only had six grades. Always had women teachers for the first two grades. Men teachers after that. They studied Swedish history first and then American history. The last teacher taught them how to pronounce American names correctly. Emil found that when he came to America, he knew more about American history than some of the kids at Ballard High School.

WORK: Worked five and a half years for the family that leased the church's farm. One son was in San Francisco. Then the other son left.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Two brothers, both live in Sweden. Einar Rudolf came to the U.S. in 1912. Fought in WWI. Came back to the U.S. in 1919. Went back to Sweden in 1924. Took over the family farm. Edde Wilhelm was born in 1902.

WORK: (See also I-334) Emil wanted to learn to be a carpenter. He worked with a carpenter during the last two winters he was home. He didn't get paid for this. During the last two summers he worked for a farmer who had been a seaman. He jumped ship in Boston and joined the U.S. Navy. Was a lieutenant during the Spanish-American War in the 1890s. He tried to teach Emil some English.

REASONS FOR EMIGRATION: Everybody was going to America. More than 25,000 people left Öland between 1880 and 1920. Sweden had bad crops in the 1880s.

FEELINGS ABOUT LEAVING HOME: Father told him not to get a job from a Swede, they'll make you work too hard. Get a job from an American. They don't know how to work.

TRIP TO AMERICA: Father's cousin, Louis Larson lived in Port Gambel, Washington. He had a wife, a daughter, a son in Puyallup, and a son in Kent. Louis came back to Sweden every other year. Emil came to America with him on March 7, 1910. They traveled third class. Had to send birth certificate to the police before he could buy his ticket. Those traveling first class could just come. 'That's how crooks came. I knew two from my place.' Took a boat to Kalmar from Oeland. Took a train from Kalmar to Goeteborg (Gothenburg). Stayed there three nights in a hotel. Louis was never home at night. He'd traveled back and forth so much that he knew people there. Emil's uncle almost missed the boat. They had their own blankets with them and slept on seats. Louis went to the upper deck and got free beer for singing. He had given his ticket and watch to Emil and had forgotten the next day. The boat landed in Hull, England. Boat (Cunnard Line) to America left from Liverpool. Boat was the 'McGanty.'

Emil's Uncle Louis showed him his first American saloon. Also tells about the first time he tasted a banana. His cousin, Jenny Lind got a bag of bananas from Uncle Louis.

TRIP TO AMERICA: (See also I-561) Stopped in Ireland to pick up more people. Jews and Russians were in the bottom of the boat. Scandinavians, Germans, and the English were on the main deck. It took nine days to get to Boston. They had a tug-of-war with the Irish on the boat. They couldn't understand each other. They were supposed to land in Montreal, Canada but there was too much ice in that area so they landed in Boston. They had to go through inspection there. Boston looked like Liverpool. Buildings had three or four steps up to the door so they wouldn't have to shovel snow as often. The city had cobblestone streets.

They were put on a train to Montreal. Went to Chicago from Montreal. Went from Chicago to St. Paul. Emil was with a friend in St. Paul. They were looking in a store window. A man came out and spoke to them in Swedish. Emil told his friend that they should stay in St. Paul so they wouldn't have to learn English. Emil tells about the first Indian he saw in the Dakotas. Was different than he'd expected. He expected Indians to look like those in the Buffalo Bill book his father had brought home to Sweden.

ARRIVAL: Came to Seattle on March 26, 1910. Cousin's wife, Ella Lind, met them at the train station. They lived by Leschi Park in Seattle. Mostly Swedes and Japanese lived in this area. Emil's cousin worked on the boat running between Leschi and Bellevue. Many Swedes worked in the sawmills in the area. The Japanese raised strawberries and tomatoes. John Anderson owned Anderson's Timber Co., located where part of the University of Washington is now. His brother was captain of the boat, 'Atlanta' that Emil's cousin worked on. Emil describes the boat. Shaw (?) was the engineer. Wasn't Scandinavian but spoke Swedish. He'd worked in logging camps. Said you couldn't hold a job there if you couldn't speak Swedish and chew snooze so he learned both.

WORK: (See also I-334 and I-419) Worked for a Danish man, Underline, who was building a house in Bellevue. Emil couldn't understand Danish, but the man's wife was Norwegian so he understood her. They were very nice people. Worked for them for a month.

Emil worked for two Swedish brothers who owned a nine acre park called Wildwood. There was a big dance hall in the park. A Swede, Charlie Lindmark, took care of the park. He ran the store in the dance hall and the kitchen. There was another store by the boat landing. Emil cleaned up in the park.

LEARNING ENGLISH: Charlie Lindmark said he liked to speak Swedish, but Emil would learn English faster if they spoke English. Because many Swedish and English words are similar, Emil understood quite a bit. It was more difficult to speak.

LAKE WASHINGTON: A lot different in the old days. The water was higher then. Lindmark had a big float, 24' X 30' X 40'. He had two tanks in the float that could be lowered for swimming. One was for the men and one for the women. Dressing rooms were in the middle. Emil tells about one winter morning when he had to chase some kids off the float. Two red-headed girls cornered him and asked which he liked the best. He has never liked red hair. He earned \$30 per month and got room and board. Since he sold ice cream, he could eat as much as he wanted to. There were swings in the park so young kids came to the park throughout the summer. Emil learned a lot of English from them and they wanted him to teach them Swedish.

SCHOOL: Emil intended to find work in Seattle for the winter. Lindmark said Emil should go to school instead. He offered Emil a place to stay and spending money. Louise Woods was his first teacher. She taught him in her home for four hours every day except Saturday and Sunday. His next teacher was a retired school teacher. She read him many of Longfellow's poems about Vikings. He had his first Thanksgiving with her.

Worked for Lindmark in the spring. His teacher said he should go to the high school on Broadway in Seattle, but he stayed with his old job. In May they had to start cleaning up the park. The first picnic was the first Sunday in June at Fortuna Park on Mercer Island. Lindmark ran this park as well. Both parks were owned by the brothers. Gut Lindquist, from Goeteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden was supposed to have the dance hall and kitchen ready for the picnic.

Emil and Lindquist went to the 20-acre park in Lindmark's motorboat. When they found Lindquist, he had been drinking quite a lot. He was fired and Emil took over Lindquist's responsibilities. Emil lived in a two-room cabin on Mercer Island. His closet neighbors were a Swedish couple who lived a quarter of a mile away. An Irishman lived half a mile away. This was in 1911. Emil was 19 years old.

He tells about the Swedish Club picnic. Anderson could only let 50 people on his boat so he told Emil to guard the entrance and close the door when the boat started to go. There were two girls who wanted to get on the boat but were too late. They called Emil dirty names in Swedish.

The cost for renting the park's kitchen was \$10. Emil always made the coffee. People would always ask, 'Did the kid make the coffee?' Emil made good coffee evidently. Emil enjoyed those picnics. Once two men and two ladies stayed at a picnic there until 10pm. The next boat didn't go until 6am. They each paid Emil a dollar and he rowed them Leschi Park on the mainland. After that experience, Carl went around the boat with his lantern and dog and announced to everyone that the last boat would be leaving soon

In the fall of 1911, Emil went to Seattle to look for work. Not much work there. They were just starting to build the Smith Building, but they had their own crew. Emil met three brothers: Axel, Gust, and Alek Eckloff. Emil knew their mother and brother in Sweden. Axel had a cabinet shop on West Lake and Virginia in Seattle. Axel offered

Emil a job. He worked at Axel's house first. Finished this job in November.

Swedes were building a new church on Bainbridge Island. Axel was doing some work for them and needed some help. Emil starting working in his cabinet shop on December 1, 1911. He was earning one dollar per day. His work was good so he got a raise to \$1.50 per day. In the spring of 1912, Axel said Emil could earn \$2.50 per day if he bought his own tools. Emil had learned carpentry when 8 years old. He attended a manual training school on Saturdays while in Sweden. He had worked with a carpenter during his last two years in Sweden. (See also I-334, I-419, I-1054)

YOUNGEST BROTHER: (See also I-371) Wanted to be a carpenter like Emil. He became a contractor and did well. He has two sons and a daughter. One son spent a summer in San Francisco. He is an architect and his wife is a schoolteacher in Sweden. They spoke English well. All young people in Sweden start to study English when in the third grade.

CARPENTRY: (See also I-334, I-419, I-1054, II-686) Emil still has the first handsaw he bought. He worked for Axel until 1913. There wasn't enough work after that. Emil and another man were working half weeks. The other man had a wife and baby to take care of so Emil said he's find work elsewhere so the other man could work full weeks. Emil joined the Middleman's Union in 1912. Still belongs. Most the cabinetmakers, carpenters, and contractors in this area were Scandinavians at that time.

There were places on Washington St. where you could buy a job for a dollar. Emil went there and bought a job at Three Lakes Sawmill in Snohomish, Washington. Piled lumber. Worked there for the summer. Came to Seattle just before Labor Day to meet his brother who'd been working in Hobart, Washington. They were celebrating Potlatch in Seattle, which is similar to today's SeaFair. Emil and his cousin dressed up as Indians. Emil got a job in a logging camp in Port Angeles. He left on a boat from Seattle shortly after the parade. This was in 1914.

LOGGING CAMP IN PORT ANGELES: Didn't like it. Had been there for a week and they had a big forest fire. They wouldn't let anybody quit working until the fire was under control. A week after it was under control, Emil quit. He walked eight miles to Port Angeles, Washington and then came back to Seattle.

Emil met a man he had known in Sweden. They both got jobs working on the road going over Snoqualmie Pass. This was 1914. They stayed in a hotel owned by an Irishman. Emil got a job working in the kitchen with an Italian. He looked Swedish and spoke Swedish. He said he'd been a steward on the Cunnard Line ships and learned Swedish from immigrants. An Irishman did the baking at night. He never cleaned up his dirty dishes. Emil and Henry weren't supposed to have to do his dishes so Emil told the Irishman to do his dishes. They got into an argument and the Irishman quit. Emil and Henry said they would do the baking so they got a raise.

The same employer was building a road between Issaquah, Washington and Fall City, Washington. Said he was only hiring Swedes, no Russians. There were quite a few Russians. While other's paychecks were for \$100, the Russians would only get \$10.

A camp needed to be set up at Preston. Emil was hired to put the camp up. They had the tent with the kitchen set up

by 10am. The superintendent suggested they get some lunch started. He asked Emil to make biscuits. Emil had never made biscuits before. They turned out like rocks. The workers must have been hungry, they said the lunch was good.

Emil tells more about Henry, the Italian who spoke Swedish. There was a Swedish newspaper in Preston that had written about the two Swedish cooks in the camp. Emil hadn't told anyone that Henry was Italian. There were many Swedish families in Preston because of the big sawmill. Emil and Henry were invited to many Christmas parties there. That winter another sawmill was built at High Point, outside of Issaquah. Emil set up the camp there. Only one family spoke English there. He worked for Billy Fudge, a Canadian. He tells about his responsibilities in the camp.

He continues talking about his responsibilities at the camp: chopping wood, caring for the horses, and even doing some blacksmith work. Conditions got bad at the camp. People were only making 20 cents an hour and had to pay six dollars a week for board in a tent. They all quit. Emil was making \$2.25 a day which was the same as the straw bosses. The camp wasn't doing anything and Emil was offered a job by some sawmill owners, but when he tried to quit Billy gave him \$2.50 a day and persuaded him to stay a few more weeks until the road was finished and to go with him to Seattle to build the road on the west side of Greenlake.

SEATTLE WORK: They took dirt from a hill on Puget Power and Light Co. land and used it to fill for the road by Greenlake.

WINTER 1915: His brother came to visit and Emil returned with him to the sawmill in Hobart, Washington. There was 22 inches of snow in Seattle. All they could do was shovel snow off the roofs and play cards. They couldn't get logs through the millpond. After the weather improved Emil and his brother worked piling lumber.

MARRIAGE ADVICE: John Engstrom (?) whom they were working for told them not to marry a dance hall girl, but one that they found in church.

CLEARING LAND: Went to Seattle to find work and found out about a job clearing land on Vashon Island, Washington. The pay was \$2.50 a day and they had to supply their own housing. Emil had a tent and a little stove. There were a lot of chicken farms on Vashon Island. At the place where he working, a horse broke its leg. Emil butchered it and dried the meat which was later used to make chicken feed.

These same people started to raise some kind of bird (pigeon) which was a delicacy. Emil and his brother had to build a building for these birds. They even had to pour the concrete which he had never done before. After this his brother quit and Emil got a 25 cent increase to stay.

CARPENTRY WORK: He took a day off to go into town and pick up his carpentry tools. Then he started building chicken houses.

MEETING SPOUSE: Her father worked at the farm doing plumbing work and daughter would come and bring him his lunch. His name was Edward Mays (?). Emil went and visited them and that was how he met Della.

RANCH OWNER: He was a banker and broker that had his office in the Pioneer Building in Pioneer Square. His name was P.C. Ellsworth. This man and his wife were in their 70s and came to Seattle right after the fire in 1889.

EARLY VASHON: There were no real entertainment places on the island. Sunday evenings there were young peoples' meetings in the log Methodist church.

TRANSPORTATION: They had a Ford truck and a Ford passenger car. Emil used to have a motorcycle but he sold it because he could use their car when he needed it. The first car he ever drove was a 1910 Cadillac that had been made into a truck. Ellsworth's had a big car designed by Durant who started the Chevrolet Co.. They had a Japanese chauffeur.

THE RANCH: There was a large house with a Swedish maid. The Ellsworth's would come on Saturday afternoon and leave again on Sunday. There were 14 cars there, 9 broad saws (?), sheep and chickens. Emil ran the incubator.

CITIZENSHIP: He had his first papers and went in to get his second. Ellsworth and his bookkeeper were his witnesses. He talks about a man called 'Speed' Smith that would try to upset people getting their citizenship. It cost \$4 to get the papers. He never got his papers because he was drafted a few days later.

DRAFT: There were 192 men from Oregon and Washington, all had enlisted expect for Emil and another man. They were sent to Oakland Technical High School where they were taught trades. Emil was put in the carpentry group. There was another man in the group who had worked for the architect which had built the Olympic Hotel (Seattle). The group started building a gymnasium. Emil and this other man were the only ones that could understand the blueprints. After the foundation was laid their instructor took ill and Emil was put in charge of the project.

FINDING RELATIVES: Found a second cousin in Oakland, California. Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Johnson (?). Emil's father also had cousins in Berkeley, California and in Collinsville, California. The cousins name in Collinsville was Kristin Klat (?).

MARRIAGE: He and Della were married at the home of his cousin in Oakland. Della came down to see him. They had some difficulty finding a pastor.

CALIFORNIA TRAVELS: Tells about a trip he took to Lomas, California where some friends were supposed to meet him in Sacramento, California but they never got the message. He was short of money. He earned \$30 a month at that time. He stayed at the YMCA for a dollar.

The gymnasium was ready to put the roof on and they were transferred to Fort Scott. Soon after they were sent to Fort Baker on the rifle range. The flu was going around at this time. Then they were to be sent to another fort to get their things to go to the east and from there they would go to France to repair things behind the lines but Emil fell sick.

FLU: He was taken to Lettermans Hospital in Placedeo, California (?) where he was for three weeks. There were twenty-two in his ward. From his window he could see people being taken to the ward. He was released with the orders that he couldn't be drilled and that he should have a wool uniform. Instead he worked cleaning offices and the dining room.

FORT MILEY: This was near San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. While he was there the war ended and they started discharging people.

Continues talking about his time in the military.

CHRISTMAS IN SWEDEN: The main meal was at Christmas Eve. Christmas preparations began the last week in November with butchering the pig and preparing lutefisk. He tells how they prepared lutefisk. Lutefisk and rice pudding were the main dishes. He talks about the dough decoration that they made. They didn't have a tree because trees were scarce on the island.

CHRISTMAS MORNING: Went to church at 6am no matter how much snow there was. There was no heat in the church and the lights were candles.

CHURCH LIFE IN SWEDEN: The church was about a quarter mile from their home and they went often.

CHILDHOOD: His grandmother practically raised him because his father was in California and his mother had to work. He talks about the creek that they used to take baths and play in the water. His brother, Einar and a friend played in the water in early spring and got sick. Mormor (Mother's mother) cured them with a cognac mixture.

FAMILY FARM: They had ten or twelve acres of land that they used. His grandparents had an agreement with the community. There were thousand of acres of fenced in land that they could put their animals on in the summertime. They had to watch the land and got paid for it.

GOLD COIN: His mother while sowing oats found a gold coin which they discovered to be a Roman coin. His mother sold it to a museum in Stockholm for 30 Skr. His mother bought a dozen silver table spoons with the money. Before that they had spoons made of horn.

CHRISTMAS DAY: You couldn't do anything, but read. There were leftovers to eat from Christmas Eve.

THEY RETURN TO DISCUSSING HIS TIME IN THE MILITARY: They went to Camp Lewis. They were supposed to be discharged, but they were quarantined because of some sickness and had to go see the doctor two times a week. None became ill.

CAMP LEWIS: He tells about some of the pranks they played in the camp such as keeping each other awake at night and putting something in their coffee which made them all line up at the toilets the next day. Their punishment was often KP duty. His time in the military wasn't too bad. They always had plenty to eat. He talks about the period before their discharge and that things weren't as orderly.

AFTER THE MILITARY: He stayed at Della's parents house for a month fixing up around the house and then they moved to Seattle. He tried to get a room with the Foss' of Seattle but they ended up renting from another.

WAR BOND: He had to cash one at a loss of \$10 to get food money.

WORK: Got a job with his old employer there and stayed with him for about two years. Got work with another firm in Ballard, Washington. In between the two he worked for Suess Glass Company in the cabinet shop. At this same time he worked building window frames with a Finn. Some Scandinavian men got together and started a shop where Dalk and Lindberg had been. They needed someone that could make window frames and offered him more money so Emil went to work for them for twelve years. This company began in 1924.

DEPRESSION: Before the Depression, there were thirty people working at the firm, but soon he was the only one remaining. The firm he was working for was called Guarantee (?). He tells a story about trying to charge some lumber to use in his work. He mentions a man named Oliver that started Goodwill Industries. Times started getting better. He was making \$3.50 a day and asked for \$1 more, but only got 50 cents.

NEW JOB: Emil's boss was fired and sued Martin Larson (?) the owner. This man started a new business and Emil went to work for them and got his full dollar raise. The old shop went bankrupt and was unable to pay the new business so they had to shut down to.

RAILROAD WORK: In Shelton, Washington. He would work there during the week and come back to Seattle on the weekends.

NORQUIST AND ENGSTROM: They were known to do the best work in Seattle building for rich people. Emil got a job with them making window frames. They had a lot of work and were never laid off. He stayed for thirty years until 1957 when he retired. Norquist had three sons, Clifford, Clarence, and Edward (?) that took over after their father's death. Oscar Engstrom he had known since 1912 bought in Norquist in 1918. Norquist started his shop in 1906. This was the best place Emil ever worked. Emil got \$200 worth of vacation pay when he retired.

HOUSING: They decided they couldn't live in an apartment. They went to Greenwood where he found a lot for \$750 with a \$250 down payment. His real estate man was named Olmstad (?) who had a son who was caught running booze during the Prohibition. In 1922, he built a house. Emil built other houses in this area. He talks about a house he built for a man who worked for the Alaska Steamship Co.. He built it in 1925 for about \$3,500 and three years ago it was sold for \$59,000.

FAMILY: Bessie Ekloff works in a flower store. Bea is married to a Finn. His son lives in Maltby, Washington and is retired from working for the (George) Heiser Body Co. of Seattle.

Things weren't bad for them. They never had to go on welfare.

CHURCH LIFE: They and their children went to church.

ORGANIZATIONS: Belongs to Vasa Lodge where he is the Outer Guard, the Swedish Club where he used to be a trustee, American Legion, and the Grange in Bothell, Washington. He is also a member of the Eagles and of his union. Has never been back to Sweden.

DEPRESSION: He remembers in 1930 going to a place where people could get some money. Emil wasn't getting any money.

SWEDISH LANGUAGE: He can still speak it, but he is surprised by all the new words.

IMPORTANCE OF HERITAGE SPOKEN IN SWEDISH: He is proud of his heritage and says that Sweden is a good land. He talks about the war between England and Napoleon. Sweden helped England who in turned promised to help Sweden take Norway.

SWEDISH TRADITIONS: He tells in part Swedish and part English about the Swedish foods they have like kroppkaka (potato dumplings stuffed with chopped pork), Swedish brown beans, potatis pannkakor. Wife cooks Swedish food. They bought five acres of land near Bear Creek, north of Woodinville, Washington in 1929. They bought this place for when they retired. They joined Horse Shoe Grange. His wife brought rice pudding there for a Christmas celebration one year. She told people how to make it. The next day, the little store in their area ran out of rice.