

FAMILY BACKGROUND Jonhaga Olea Olsen was born July 23, 1897 at Finnjord, Lenvik, Troms, Norway. Finnjord is about 20 km due south of TromsÅ, in northern Norway.

Parents were Anton Kristian and Olena Olsen. Father was fisherman-farmer-painter; did many things.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS There were nine children in all: Toralf, JÅrgen, Bergen (?), Jonhaga, Alf, Gudrun, Anne Victoria, Elsie, and Hannah.

Jonhaga can only remember her maternal grandfather because they visited with him. His first name was JÅrgen.

The family home had four big rooms with painted walls and scrubbed floors. She tells a story about when she and a sister were playing at the beach. She had to grab her sister to keep her from falling in the water. They had to work hard, carrying water and chopping wood. They went skating and skiing in the winter.

SCHOOL When she started, school was held in a private home. Then a schoolhouse was built quite far off. They lived on the top of a hill, so they could ski straight down to the school, which was fun.

The church was far away also. They didn't go too often, especially in winter because of the weather. When she was confirmed, she 'stayed out' with people; that was lonesome. The confirmation session was a few weeks long.

CHRISTMAS Jonhaga's aunt, her mother's sister, put out treats and goodies for the children; she and her husband had more money than the Olsens. Mother had a big baking oven and made lefse, fattigmann, and good rye bread. They didn't go to church; went to another family's house to meet and sing hymns in lieu of church. There was a layperson in charge of the meeting.

EMIGRATION After confirmation she immigrated to America at the age of 15. Her mother's sister, Ingeborg JÅrgenson, lived in America. She visited them and wanted to take Jonhaga back with her. Jonhaga wasn't too strong or healthy, and her mother had a lot of children. So, it was best for all if Jonhaga went to her aunt's. She got her clothes and trunk ready. Mother was sad even though she, too, felt it was for the best. Some relatives took them by boat to Bergen in the early spring of 1913 (probably March - April). There, they caught a steamer, an old boat. The North Sea was 'so wild-it was awful' with waves. The men put the women in the hold for safety, so as not to be washed overboard. In England they boarded another boat and sailed directly to Philadelphia. Jonhaga traveled with an older cousin. Jonhaga's transportation means (probably train ticket) was lost for two weeks in Philadelphia. Her aunt in Astoria, Oregon was angry and telegraphed the emigration department. The emigrations found the ticket later and the girls took the train to Astoria. So all was okay.

This cousin of Jonhaga's had more money and liked to play the guitar. She moved to different towns after Astoria, including Chicago. Jonhaga lost track of her.

SETTLING IN AND WORK Jonhaga stayed in Astoria and attended school to learn the language. She learned quite a bit and could have gone to high school. But she 'was stubborn - I should have gone but didn't'. Instead she stayed at home with her aunt and helped her out.

WORK She worked as a housekeeper for awhile in Astoria. Many a time she was lonesome. Her cousin (another one) came to visit from Minneapolis. Jonhaga went back with her. In Minneapolis she worked in a 'mill' sewing clothes (underwear). It was better work than housework and paid more. She liked Oregon better than Minnesota because of the weather. Housework jobs included cooking, serving, and cleaning. For the banker's family in Astoria, she wore a black/white uniform. This was a nice family, and the wife (Mrs. Higgens) showed Jonhaga how to set the table and cook the food. She learned how to prepare roasts, which they had in Norway, but which her mother always made.

MEETING SPOUSE AND FAMILY LIFE In Minneapolis Jonhaga lived in a house with her cousin, and that is where she met her future husband, Hans Frederick Olsen. He was born in America of parents who had emigrated from Norway. They came from the same place in Norway but she didn't know of the family. Hans was a typesetter. They had a small church wedding. A good friend gave them a wedding breakfast. Then they took a trip to the north woods around Bemidji. Went fishing on Lake Minnewawa(?) and stayed in a cottage. They rented a house in Minneapolis. Hans didn't want her to work, so she quit. He had a very good job.

CHILDREN They had four children: Howard, John, Lorraine, and Joanne. Joanne married, but her husband was killed in Alaska. She didn't re-marry, but works. Lorraine lives in California, is married and has three or four children. Howard is in Minneapolis and has two daughters. John is in Wichita, married, and no children.

The Olsen family lived in Minneapolis for several years. She and the children were active with choir and Sunday school at Christ Lutheran Church. They moved out to California because of her asthma, and Hans worked as a printer in Sacramento. Then they moved to Oregon, but couldn't get any work. Eventually, they came to Seattle, and Hans got into the Foshay Towers, working there until he died.

MISCELLANEOUS Jonhaga never returned to Norway. She really didn't like to travel, and her husband felt he had no reason to go.

She was active in the Sons of Norway in Astoria, but only because her aunt was.

Norwegian was spoken in the home to the children sometimes. She speaks little Norwegian now as she forgets the words; could speak Norwegian to some of the Home's residents but doesn't.

Jonhaga has been in the Home for two years. Before then, she and her husband had their own home. After he died, she lived with her daughter for a while.

She attended a Lutheran church in Seattle. Services are held in the Home on Sunday and also Wednesday night. She thinks the chapel is very nice.