

FAMILY BACKGROUND Born Olga MedgÅŸrd on June 18, 1901, in Baerum which lies just west of the Oslo city limit.

Parents were Johannes Johanneson and Sisiel OlavsgÅŸrd. Johannes changed his name to Johnson and then to MedgÅŸrd, the name of the farm. They had come from the Hallingdal area in the mountainous northwest corner of Buskerud. When Olga was two years old, the family moved into Oslo.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS There were seven children in the family: Thuri, Birgit (Bertha), John (Johannes), Kristi, Gunhild, and the twins Olga and Caroline.

GRANDPARENTS Olga was too young to recall the grandparents, their names, the relatives in the Hallingdal area, or why her father moved away from Buskerud.

Olga remembers a time in Oslo when her mother took her and Caroline to an Oslo park where they ran around and played while she knitted. Her mother died young at the age of 35 in Oslo when Olga was four. Other memories of Oslo are the 17th of May. The King and Queen drove through downtown streets in a beautiful carriage, and there lots of flags around. The older children took care of the younger ones when Mother died; Thuri was 20, and Birgit 19. They lived in an apartment, as single houses are not that common in Oslo. In the summertime they stayed in the country with good friends of Dad. He worked for a brewery in Norway, delivering beer and wine to shops and homes. Olga remembers that before she and John came to America in 1907, they went around and said good-bye to everyone. At Christmas they 'had a tree that reached clear to the ceiling' in the apartment. Heart-shaped baskets made of paper filled with candy were hung on the tree. They walked around the tree and sang Christmas songs. There was a lot of visiting at Christmas. At one friend's house, there were no children, just a black, curly dog - just like a child-and there was a basket for him on the tree also. She doesn't remember about gifts or special foods.

EMIGRATION Thuri and Birgit were in America already, so she and John had them to come to. Father, Caroline, Kristi, and Gunhild came the following year in 1908. She and John left the first part of April in 1907. The weather was very stormy. Olga had just had the measles before she left Norway and was seasick on the trip over. 'So when I got here, there wasn't much left of me.' She weighed 30 pounds at the age of six. She was also small because at birth (homebirth), she weighed only two pounds. Birgit was married and had a home in Tagus. Her husband, Ander Simons, was a farmer whose folks had come from Norway.

The ship went directly to Montreal, from there they took the train to Tagus (?), North Dakota which consisted of a post office-store, a few houses, a depot, and a little schoolhouse. Doesn't remember if Birgit met them. Olga recalls she was six years old because she was getting her 6-year molars; was sick with that too.

SETTLING IN When she started school in the one-room schoolhouse, she would say 'ja' and 'nei'. She didn't know any English before school because everyone talked Norwegian. Dad bought a house in town when she was eight years old. He was a carpenter in summer and a shoemaker in winter. While Dad was out on the farms building barns, etc., during the summer and there was no school, Olga stayed with Birgit. Birgit was a good seamstress and sewed dresses for the younger girls.

SCHOOL Olga went through the 8th grade. After she was confirmed she went to her other sister's (Thuri) in Stanley, North Dakota, and helped her take care of the kids.

Dad was good at making 'potetkaker' - just like lefse and just as good. They had plenty to eat. He was also a fine shoemaker; repaired shoes in his shop and also made shoes for the family.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE She did housework for a while until she married a fellow by the name of Carl Johnson from Minnesota. He had a farm by Stanley, and it was in Stanley where they met. Not much ado about the wedding; went to Minot, North Dakota, and were married in the parsonage. They returned to Stanley for a nice chicken dinner with the family. She wore a blue satin dress that Birgit had made.

She and husband farmed awhile taking over his uncle's farm when he died. Later they moved into town, and Carl did cement and carpentry work.

CHILDREN They had two children: Alvin J. Johnson and Carl Norman. Alvin lives in Fircrest, Washington and works for the telephone company. Carl is vice chancellor in charge of development and planning for the state colleges in Tennessee (Nashville).

MOVE TO WASHINGTON Olga and Carl were married in 1920. They stayed in North Dakota until 1937, as which time there was nothing to do in North Dakota: no crops, no jobs, 'didn't even have green grass' during the Depression. They had visited Birgit in Oregon and a nephew in Tacoma and had liked it, so the family moved out West by car. Carl got work almost right away. They moved around July 4th; stopped at night and cooked meals for themselves in 'motels' (not exactly the same as motels today - had to carry your own bedding). They stayed with the nephew (Thuri's oldest son) a few weeks in Tacoma until they found a house. The nephew, Oscar Frederickson, worked in a chair factory.

The weather was wonderful in Washington compared with North Dakota, and it was so green. A few days after they arrived, they attended a North Dakota picnic and knew quite a lot of folks. They found a house in the Roosevelt Heights area, and her husband fixed it up into a nice home. The weather the first year was strange. There was no snow, just all rain. Had so much rain, that some of the houses were floating in the Puyallup Valley.

One Sunday they went to Mercer Island to visit friends of Carl's who had been neighbors in Minnesota. They invited them down for the first Christmas; visited and traveled with these good friends (Thompsons) through the years.

Her husband liked his work in a lumber mill in Tacoma. Later he worked in the Tideflats area. Olga raised the boys and took care of the house and husband. If she had wanted to work, she could have. During the war she did - at Pierce County Hospital. So many people left their regular jobs to work at the shipyards, the hospital needed help. She worked in the surgery unit preparing patients, and she liked the work very much. Her oldest boy had graduated from school in the spring. He was working when he was called into the service. Spent some time in Texas and 13 months overseas.

Norman graduated from Pullman. He was in the reserve (ROTC) and went into the military as a 2nd lieutenant and was stationed in the Azores during peacetime.

ACTIVITIES Olga was in the PTA while the kids were in grade school. They belonged to Messiah Lutheran (now Gloria Dei); she was very active in the circle. They transferred to Mt. View Lutheran Church and eventually to Trinity in Parkland.

She was very active in the circle at Trinity and enjoyed the work and group. Now she helps with Emmanuel Church. Olga worked at PLU for a while as a housekeeper. She also helped Mrs. Eastvold in the house. At that time she lived on South K.

Her husband died in 1951(?). She continued to work at PLU doing a variety of jobs. There were lots of nice students, including two girls from Norway. She helped them with shopping, washing, *etc.* She enjoyed the young people at PLU very much and has good memories of her time there.

Her husband was a charter member in the Sons of Norway in North Dakota, and she is a life member. Served as an officer many times. She is still active in this and church.

She keeps up with Norwegian cooking yet; makes roemmegroet, lutefisk, and lefse for Christmas plus American foods like salads, ham, and potatoes. Talks shortly about Scandinavian cooking.

SPEAKING NORWEGIAN She still is able to speak Norwegian. Sings a song 'Ja, vi elsker...'