

**FAMILY BACKGROUND** Frank Buorklund was born Thor Franke Björklund in Bovallstrand on January 25, 1904. This small port town is on the west coast of Sweden in the district of Göteborgs och Bohus län. His mother was Maria Amundsen and his father, Frans Björklund; both came from this same district. Frans was a fisherman and a stonecutter. He and 11 other men had shares in a boat and fished for herring and anchovies from July 1 till Christmas inside the fjords around Oslo. Fishing was very good from 1919 to 1928.

Frank worked at a big quarry near his home and as a fisherman also, having his own net.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS** There were nine children in all. They lived in a small house in a small fishing town. Two sisters and an older brother emigrated before Frank.

**CHILDHOOD** Mother was a housewife except during WWI when she worked on a farm. The older children including Frank went fishing in the morning until 9-10 o'clock. Then it was Frank's job to sell the fish, 20 to a 'tjog' (score, unit of measure). He biked into the country to trade them for something to eat. It was also his job to care for the younger children at this time.

**SCHOOL AND CONFIRMATION** Frank attended for four years from age 7 - 11 plus one year of confirmation. During the war, the army took over the schoolhouses, so there was no school. Beginning at the age of 12, he spent the war years fishing, while his father and brother worked in Norway.

1 Memories of those years are of 'all hard work' (fishing for two weeks at a time) and a mother (always kind and working).

**CONFIRMATION** His class contained older kids, up to 21. In Sweden, one had to pass in order to be married, so some moved from place to place until they passed. Frank attended confirmation one year earlier than usual because he came from a poor family. He also worked one month for the minister cutting wood, carrying water, and scrubbing the kitchen floor. This confirmation year also substituted for his last year in regular school. He attended every day from 8 to 4, walking one-half Swedish mile, summer and winter. Passed with no problem.

**WORK** After the job at the minister's, Frank worked on a farm from 3 -4 am to dark. There was no rest, so after one month he went back home. Then he began work at the stone quarry, drilling holes in stone using a hammer and a drill (a steel object which was hammered into the stone to make a space for the stonecutter's wedge). He was paid 3 cents a small hole and 5 cents a large hole. Did that until he was old enough to cut stones. Stonecutters were well paid (by the piece), and could earn 32 crowns a day. At this point he lived at home - fishing from July to Christmas and working in the stone quarry the remainder of the year from 1919 - 1928, except for a short time when he worked for the government as a stonecutter, remodeling an old fort in the town of Varberg.

**CHRISTMAS** Was a nice time. Mother made headcheese and lutefisk.

**FAMILY NAME** Bjorklund is a taken name. His father was a Hermansson, but in the early 1900's he paid five crowns to change from -son style of name to a less common name. Bjorklund was Americanized to Buorklund by his older brother, Pete.

**PETE** Pete (Per) emigrated in 1919 at 22 years of age, first to Canada and then to Spokane. Both he and Frank emigrated to escape the high tax (52% on each crown). Pete married Anne Madsen in Spokane and was a contractor.

**SISTERS** Astrid and Marta immigrated to Chicago where they had friends in 1922 and 1927 respectively. Marta ran a delicatessen, which sold Scandinavian food - Man's (?) Delicatessen (Nils Man (?) was her husband). Astrid worked for a clothing manufacturer, then for Mr. Dryden (a well known man and big game hunter during the 1920's and 30's) as a chambermaid. There were nine Swedish chambermaids in this home.

**EMIGRATION** Frank emigrated in the fall of 1929. Besides the high tax, Frank wanted a better life. He'd heard about America through Pete's letters, visiting Swedish Americans, and newspaper headlines. The visitors 'always had gold teeth and a silver dollar dingling in their pocket'. The newspapers encouraged emigration to America not Canada because of job opportunities. Parents wanted Frank to stay and help support the family. But when his

brother sent him a ticket, Frank did what he wanted and emigrated on the 'Stockholm' on September 29, 1929 from the port of Göteborg. (After this trip, the 'Stockholm' was bought by Norway and used in whale fishing.)

His parents weren't happy, but Frank returned quite a few times to visit in Sweden. He didn't know how things would turn out in America, but there was no future in stonecutting.

WORK Pete was the rigging foreman working on the construction of the Paulson building, so Frank got a job as a laborer. He was laid off after two weeks because he couldn't speak English; there was some concern for his safety not being able to understand English. Later, he got the job back, earning 65 cents an hour. He also worked a second job cleaning Pullman (railroad) cars, earning 42 cents an hour. He deposited his savings in the American Bank and lost it during the Depression. Arriving in 1929 during poor economic conditions caused him problems, but as a young person, he hadn't thought about it beforehand.

BOAT TRIP OVER Had to have \$20 and a friend to stay with. Sailed directly to New York in 12 days. About 900 young people came over at one time, and met new friends on the boat at dances every evening.

NEW YORK Had to wear a nametag with Chicago on it and was helped by Swedish speaking people to catch his train, which stopped at Niagara Falls on the way to Chicago. He bought food on the train by pointing out his selection. As for tips, he always held out his hand, and they took what they wanted; his \$20 was gone before he reached Spokane.

CHICAGO Frank spent two weeks in Chicago with his sister Marta. The deli was on 3364 North Clark St. and most everything was Swedish: the food, the language, and the neighborhood. He got along fine, but didn't like Chicago as it was too big and there were too many gangsters and raids. There was a bootlegger in the store's neighborhood. One evening the police raided and shot two of the bootleggers who fell into his sister's garbage cans. Hard to walk around Chicago after dark.

The Swedish paper printed in Chicago was the Svenska-Amerikanaren. He met some of the people who worked at the paper.

SWEDISH FOODS IN AMERICA Easy for the store to procure Swedish foods from a Swedish salesman: anchovies, salted herring, delicacies, and a Swedish sausage 'Göteborgskorv'. The deli advertised on the radio and was well patronized by the Swedish community.

SETTLING IN DURING THE DEPRESSION Frank traveled on the Northern Pacific; the country looked pretty good, but lonely. Spokane looked like a clean, nice sized city. He was satisfied with an inland city, as he gave up fishing due to sea sickness. When he began fishing, there was no problem, but the condition worsened. This had happened to his father also. Spokane's climate was nice and sunny, but its Scandinavian community didn't compare to Chicago. Frank went to dances in Forest Hall in Spokane sponsored by Scandinavian lodges. It cost 50 cents every Saturday night and was a main way to meet other Scandinavians. There was also a Scandinavian rooming house called Chicago Hotel and Johnson's Fish Market on Sprague Avenue, which sold salted herring, lutefisk, and anchovies. Frank did not join any lodge, but attended Our Saviour Church, which originally was Norwegian. The Svenska-Amerikanaren was available at a local cigar store on Washington and Main - also, Swedish Christmas cards.

SETTLING IN Frank first resided at Mrs. Wall's boarding house at were Scandinavian. Mrs. Wall was Irish and her husband Welsh.

PROBLEMS WITH LANGUAGE Tells a story about repeating his first American phrases (swearing learned at work) to Mrs. Wall. When he found out what he said, he didn't speak English for a month. Was also released from the Paulson job due to his lack of English. Didn't work all winter, but got the two jobs in spring, at Paulson's and with the Pullman cars.

SCHOOL Went to night school and citizenship school. The night school was held three evenings a week at Lewis and Clark High School. The class went from fall to spring and contained mostly Scandinavians and Germans.

CITIZENSHIP Was asked four questions and that was enough. He received citizenship and also Americanized his

name to Frank T. Buorkland.

**BANKING** He patronized the American Bank ran by a Swede named Johnson. Had saved \$1400 to buy a house. He was purchasing a new suit at 'Upstairs' when the bank closed. Eventually, he got 50 cents back on the dollar. Besides losing his savings, he lost the Pullman job on March 15, and Elsa went back to work and paid his room and board for the summer.

**GOLD MINING IN IDAHO** Frank, Pete, and a German fellow scraped enough money together to try gold mining close to Elk City, Idaho, for three months in 1930. Finding only a little gold, Frank then wrote to his sister in Chicago and moved there in the fall of 1930. Elsa remained in Spokane working as a live in maid for Mrs. Burns on 1500 Cedar. (She joined Frank in Chicago in late 1930.)

**MARRIAGE AND FAMILY** Frank met Elsa Eklund in 1927 at a dance in Ulebergshamn, Sweden (near Bovallstrand), where she was born. She was 16 at the time and the only daughter; her father had immigrated to New York and worked as a carpenter. When she emigrated from Sweden in the spring of 1930, she stopped in New York to visit her dad but he couldn't get off work. She continued to Chicago visiting Frank's sister for a month. As a lone, female traveler, she had no problems; learned English quickly and began work for Mrs. Burns immediately upon arrival in Spokane. After Elsa and Frank returned from Chicago in May 1932, she became a cook for rich people on the south side of Spokane. She had liked the job at Mrs. Burn's house for which she received room, board, and \$35 a month, but cooking paid better. She worked with and learned cooking from Mrs. Johnson (Swedish).

**MARRIAGE** They were married November 29, 1931 in Spokane. Rented a place on the north side from Alice Bjork (maiden name), a friend originally from a town on the west coast of Sweden.

**CHICAGO 1931 - 1932.** Frank worked at the deli earning \$5 a week and roomed in back of the store. Elsa joined him in late 1931 and began work as a maid in the spring of 1932. They saved enough money to return to Spokane (Notes from back of family background sheet: Confusion about dates here. They were actually married in 1931; he went to Chicago, and she came later.

Pete lived on his savings in a Spokane boarding house during the Depression.

**WEDDING** Small - attended by Pete and a good friend, Edith Bjork at Salem (Swedish) Lutheran Church parsonage on the north side. November 29, 1931 was a very cold Sunday. Alice gave them a reception with coffee and cake.

**HOUSING** During the Depression, they had an apartment at Alice's and then bought an older home on 11th and Perry, which they remodeled and moved into in 1934.

**WORK IN THE 1930s** Elsa and Mrs. Johnson worked steadily for four years as caterers, making 75 cents an hour. Frank's job with the Pullman cars paid 42 cents an hour. He worked there 40 years being promoted to assistant foreman. Benefits from this job included free railroad travel and an expense account on out of town jobs: Chicago, St. Paul, and San Francisco. During the war when the railroad was taken over by the government, he traveled quite a bit.

**CHILDREN** He has two, Stanley and Sonja. Frank thought the children were awfully nice, but were cared for by his wife exclusively. Swedish was not spoken in the home or taught to the kids. Stanley lives in Spokane and is a teacher, having earned bachelor and master degrees from the University of Washington and a doctorate from WSU. Sonja was born November 7, 1944, and lives in Spokane with Frank. She attended business school and worked for Aetna Insurance. The children were encouraged to do what they liked.

**RETURN TRIPS TO SWEDEN** The first of many was for six months in 1937. They stayed at Elsa's home, visiting and fishing for mackerel just for fun. After the war in 1948, Elsa and the children lived in Sweden for one year; Elsa was an only child and she wanted to see her parents. Elsa and Frank visited in 1953 and every five years thereafter. The last trip was in 1977; Sweden always seemed peaceful and nice - no locked doors.

**SWEDISH HERITAGE** Frank can still write, read, and speak Swedish. He knows how to make headcheese, lutfisk,

Swedish ham, and pickled herring. SPEAKING SWEDISH