

Signe Andrea Anderson Kneeland. Born in Norbostad on the Rana Fjord in northern Norway. She was born on June 22, 1889.

PARENTS Johannes Anderson and Johanna Sylvester (?) Anderson. They were both from the area where Signe was born. Her father fished in the winter and farmed in the summer.

CHILDHOOD HOME Grew up on a farm. Had nine cows and a horse. Raised pigs. Signe raised chickens when she was big enough to do it. Her aunt gave her a hen to get started with. Sometimes they'd pick moltebaer (cloudberries) in the mountains and sell them.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS She had three brothers and four sisters. Kristen came to the U.S. and fished in Anacortes, Washington. Anders worked in the ironworks in Mo i Rana, Norway. Johannes, the youngest and twin to Jacobia took the name of the place where they lived in before they moved to Velsvaag. Mathilde got married and stayed in Norway. Augusta, Ursula, and Jacobia stayed in Norway.

GRANDPARENTS Paternal, Kristen Anderson was a captain on a boat. He died before Signe was born. Grandmother remarried Andreas Paterson. Captain Anderson died when his children were quite young. Signe remembers her grandmother. She died when Signe was 7. Remembers her step-grandfather too. Maternal grandfather, Sylvester was a carpenter. He and his wife died when their children were young. People didn't live long in Norway then, especially in the northern part. There were many accidents because people had to travel on the water to get where they were going. It's different now. Signe was there in 1954. Saw that they had roads and trains.

CHILDHOOD HOME (See also I-111) Remembers watching over the little chicken she got from her aunt. Had to help with the milking when they took the cows up in the mountains for the summer. Had to bring them to the place where they were milked.

SCHOOL Went to school in Lavong, a town five miles away. Had to cross the water. Stayed with a family by the school. Came home on the weekends. Mother stayed home with the younger children. Father was out fishing.

CHURCH Had to cross the water to go to church too. Didn't get to church often in the winter, but never missed it in the summer. The minister preached every third Sunday at her church. He had two other churches too. They were taught religion in school too.

CHRISTMAS Always had a Christmas tree with candles. Didn't live on an island, lived on solid land with mountains quite high. River ran through the lower part of their property. Skied in the winter. Didn't learn to skate. Family had one pair of skates and her brother always used them. For Christmas they would get homemade shoes. Otherwise they'd wear rag shoes in the winter. Never got anything other than shoes. There was a man who would put the soles on and stitch them. Wore wool stockings with rag bottoms in the winter. The other shoes were for church. Had good food on Christmas. Lots of milk, heated up. Signe liked it but some kids didn't. Had only sour milk in the summer. Ate lutefisk. Had a roast and potatoes for Christmas Day. Had a certain kind of soup. Was a sweet soup with plums, figs, and raisins. Signe made it once for a group of men in Tacoma, WA. One man said he

liked it. The others ate it but Signe never made it again.

REASONS FOR EMIGRATING Was only 13 when she left. Hadn't been confirmed yet. Remembers seeing pictures of things from America in her father's illustrated journal. It seemed like Americans only wore white clothes. Could have all the eggs they wanted. Father knew she wanted to go to America. Came home one time and told her that her chance to go was coming. A girl got a ticket from someone in America and she didn't want to go. This was in the summer of 1902. In 1903 she was in America. Signe went to school in the fall of 1902. In March she went to see the parents of the people who'd sent the ticket (Thomas Nilsen and family). They were in Irvin (?), Minnesota. Was confirmed there. Signe's mother had died three years before Signe left Norway. Her father was left with five girls and three boys. Took a couple of days to get from her home in Helgeland to Trondheim. Traveled with a lady, Nikoline who was in her way back to America. Stopped along some of the fjords but couldn't get out of the boat until they got to Bergen.

TRIP TO AMERICA Father brought her to the boat, which would take her to Nesne. Got to Trondheim on April 1, 1903. Remembers this because a girl tried to play a joke on her. Said she'd dropped her handkerchief. Took a couple of days to get from her home in Helgeland to Trondheim. Traveled with a lady, Nikoline who was in her way back to America. Stopped along some of the fjords but couldn't get out of the boat until they got to Bergen. Signe, who was almost 13, started menstruating while in Bergen. Nikoline wanted to get off the boat for a while. Signe told her that she wasn't feeling well. Nikoline left. Signe started to feel better. Decided to go off the boat. Signe went into Bergen with a Swedish boy and girl. They treated her to everything. Let her do what she wanted. Nikoline was concerned about Signe not feeling well. Came back to the boat early and found Signe missing. Had police looking for her all day. Nikoline was worried she had neglected Signe. It was the other way around. Signe had been having a good time. Signe did the same thing in Liverpool, England. They went to a dance. Signe didn't dance. Just sat there. Got tired of waiting for Nikoline. Went back to the hotel. Another time she said she was going back to the hotel. Nikoline asked if she knew the way. Signe said she did. After walking several blocks, everything looked the same. Finally she saw some Norwegian people. Stopped to ask them the way. Right behind her was Nikoline. She was very careful not to let Signe get lost. Had to stay in Liverpool, England for five days. (Problems with the microphone here.) had to wait for the boat to come back from America. Got tired of waiting. Got a ride on a tramper boat, along with many others that were waiting. It was much faster. Took 4 or 5 days to cross the Atlantic. Stopped in Ireland to pick up some girls who worked in America. Ride was rough.

ARRIVAL They were on a Canadian boat. Landed on Ellis Island were put on a Canadian train to Montreal. Had to have \$5 to get their train tickets. Had to bring their luggage through customs. All Signe had was a box. The official didn't open hers. People crowded around to get their train tickets. A man shoved them back. Signe squeezed to the front and got her ticket. Had to find Nikoline. Signe had been sent to the 'B' line and Nikoline to the 'W' line.

TRAIN TRIP Took the train to Montreal, Canada. Spent a day in Montreal. Took the train down across the prairies. They were selling food on the train. Signe didn't understand the money. She took what she wanted from the basket, gave money to the man, and let him give her the change. Signe was still traveling with Nikoline. She had friends in the place where Signe was going. Landed first in Willmar, Minnesota. Stopped in Havik (?), Minnesota where Nikoline's parents lived. They took Signe to Thomas Nilsen's.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE U.S. All new to her. The first two years were really good. Got lonesome during the third year for some reason.

WORK Signe worked on the farm. Signe was supposed to take care of the babies while Mrs. Nilsen worked outside. Signe ended up doing most of the work outside while she took care of her one year old and the newly born baby.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AMERICA AND NORWAY Didn't have to travel on water. Used a horse and cart for going to the store. Signe's mother was afraid of the water. Signe wasn't afraid of the water, especially if her father was rowing or sailing.

SCHOOL Went to school in America for about three months. Signe didn't learn English until she started working in a hotel. The Nilsen's spoke Norwegian at home. Mrs. Nilsen was from Norway.

TRIPS TO NORWAY Got homesick during her third year in American maybe because she had more responsibility. Didn't get back to Norway until 1954. Sisters were still living and two of her brothers were also living, Kristen and John.

WORK Learned to bake bread while living with this Danish family. Learned to cook by watching the mother of this family cook. Didn't stay there for more than 6 months. Went back to Willmar, Minnesota. Met Inga Tollefson, a girl working at Sambo's Restaurant. They both worked there until the restaurant went out of business. Signe got a job cooking for another family. Got a job in another Sambo's Restaurant. Signe and Inga heard about a \$25 excursion to Washington State on the train. They decided to homestead in Montana, but they ended up not liking the land there. Worked in a restaurant for a couple of days in order to look over the land. Worked for a man named Moon. They were in Sedro Woolley (probably means Selby), Montana. Took the train to Everett, Washington.

WASHINGTON Decided this was where she wanted to stay. She liked the trees. In Minnesota, she missed the trees that were in Norway. Everett looked more like Norway. She and Inga went to Anacortes, Washington to visit Signe's cousin. Stayed for a couple of nights. Cousin got lice from Norwegian boys who'd just come from Norway. Signe didn't get it. Inga had some friends in Parkland, Washington. Signe and Inga went to visit them. She describes this man and woman, but doesn't remember their names. He may have been a teacher. They were just starting the school there (PLU-1910?). Inga found work with a family in Tacoma, Washington. Signe worked in some kind of boarding house. Went back to Anacortes to visit her cousin for a while. Inga went to Shelton, Washington. Met the Kneeland's.

MEETING SPOUSE Went to Shelton to visit Inga. Met the Kneeland's. Did housework for the Kneeland's. Went to California for four months. Came back to Shelton. This was still in 1910. By 1911, Inga had married one of the Kneeland boys. Then Signe married one of them. Signe married Alan Kneeland, a logger. Inga was working for W.H. Kneeland in Shelton when she met the Kneeland she married. Signe met Alan at the place where Inga was working. Signe worked for W.H. Kneeland after Inga got married.

MARRIAGE Got married four months after they met. Married in October 1912. Didn't have a wedding. Married by the Justice of the Peace. Signe and Alan lived in a little shack in Shelton, Washington. One of their boys was born there. When he was a year old, they moved five miles up the valley. Had a house there. Lived there for 41 years. Moved to the house she lives in now in 1951. Husband was killed in an accident in 1922; he was 39 years old. Has lived by herself and raised her children alone. Had a man help on her place for three months once. Didn't work out. Her youngest child was one and a half when her husband was killed.

CHILDREN John, the oldest is retired. He worked with machinery. He and his wife live on the canal. Alpheus was a golf pro until he retired. George is a lawyer in Sun Valley, Idaho. Joe passed away three years ago. Worked the State Department of Labor and Industry.

LEARNING TO DRIVE Had to learn after her husband died. She had a Ford. Drove school children for ten years. Drove over the worst roads. Never had any accidents. Came into Shelton in 1951. Worked six years as a custodian, cleaning the courthouse until she got her social security.

SCANDINAVIAN ORGANIZATIONS Doesn't belong to any.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS Belonged to the Grange and the Democratic Club. Had to be elected to the work she did for the club. Got people to vote.

HOBBIES Likes bird watching.

CHURCH Wasn't very active.

TRIPS TO NORWAY (See also I-1063) Went to Norway in 1954. Flew to New York. Took the boat to Norway. Flew all the way back. Visited three sisters. Talked on the phone to the sister in Oslo. Norway hadn't changed much then. Is different now than in 1954. Better roads.

NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE Married an American. He didn't want her to teach the kids Norwegian. Eldest boy learned 'seeladropie' or freshly milked.

NORWEGIAN FOOD Husband wanted American food. Didn't learn to cook much in Norway because her mother passed away. Learned to knit and scrub floors while her mother was living.

BROTHERS Helped them to come to the U.S. One brother came in 1908 while Signe was working for the Danish people. John, her younger brother, came in 1925. Was in Wisconsin until 1927 then came to Washington. They've both passed away. Signe is the only one of eight children living.