

NEWS FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

To meet a countryman who is about to be 92 years old and who has lived through the struggles of the pioneer times, who still has a fresh memory and a bright alert mind, is an experience. Such an opportunity was offered the other day when Eric Nelson called and asked me to go with him to see an older member of Valhalla, one who received his 50 year pin several years ago.

The Senior citizen was Edward B. Johnson, 2918 North 21st Street here in Tacoma. He was born in Vanersborg on September 15, 1868. When he was 15 years old, he learned to be a carpenter in a shipyard in his home town, and a ship builder he remained his whole life long. The learning time was six years. And, as an apprentice, he was hired by Langholmens Ship Yard and Mechanical Work Shop in Stockholm. He still retains his diploma and it says that his knowledge of the work was "very good." His behavior was "honorary", and that he quit at his "own request." From that time Johnson still vividly remembers when the American cruiser, "The Baltimore" steamed up Strommen with John Erickson's body on board.

The summer of 1891 he went to America. His goal was Omaha, Nebraska where he was hired as a carpenter. But the financial crisis had begun to be felt and the flat land of Nebraska was probably not very attractive to a boat builder. So the following year we already find him in Tacoma.

If the times were bad in the middle West, they were not better here at the coast. A lot of people went jobless here and there was no welfare at that time, so people went hungry.

Like many others, Johnson got the gold fever toward the end of the 1890's and he spent a year up in Klondike. Many formalities had to be taken care of before looking for the yellow metal. Food, tools and utensils for a year had to be bought. The certificate he got from the authorities in Dawson he still has. To the question whether he found any gold nuggets up there, the answer was "Not very well". And that was it!

International Fish Company that was organized here toward the end of the 90's was the first to try sending fish East in ice containers. The first boat that was bought by the company for halibut fishing was a yacht that belonged to the N.P. Railroad. What it originally had been used for was not mentioned, but anyhow, it had been laying for years in the Sacramento River down in California, so that the bottom had become "sour", as they say in the boat builders language, and it was Johnson's task to put a new bottom in it.

For several years, he was Forman at Crawford and Reid's Ship Yard in Tacoma. In the year 1905, they built the Zepora, the first boat that was used exclusively for halibut fishing. As you know, halibut is fished out at sea from big rowing boats that are sent out from a Mother ship. Later on, International Fisheries built two fishing boats, "The Puritan" and the "Commonwealth", at the same ship yard under Johnson's supervision. In 1911, Johnson started on his own again. His activities were located at East 21st and "D" Streets, usually called "Head of the Bay". In 1912, a schooner for halibut fishing was built for a Bolivar Olson. This schooner is still used for what it was originally intended. So it is a product of good workmanship. The work was continued up to 1935 when Johnson was 67 years old when he decided to retire, so the company was sold.

"Even if it was troublesome for many men during the depression in the thirty's, it would not compare to the conditions when I first came here, especially the year 1894," said Mr. Johnson.

The Steam Era had not yet arrived and it was mostly sailing ships that anchored here in the harbor. After having been thrown about by the waves, they were often badly damaged, especially those that had come around the Horn from the East coast of Europe. They needed to be looked after by experienced ship builders. Johnson soon became known and he was often called upon to make this repair work. In the spring of 1893, he received an offer from North American Trading and Transfer Company to go to St. Michael, Alaska where he would build the first steam river boat to sail the Yukon River. It turned out to be a real giant, 250 feet long. It was probably a little bit hard to navigate for the company never built any more of that size. The company was trading with Indians and trappers. The gold rush had not started yet, and Nome was not even on the map. A banker from Chicago financed the company and he spent the summer up there. Before the sea froze, the workers were fetched by a customs boat which took them to Dutch Harbor. From there, it took 10 days on a sailing ship to get to Port Angeles where they took a smaller boat to Tacoma.

After coming home, Johnson and a friend started their own company which had its docks near old Tacoma. Among other things, they built a big fisher boat for Peter Bushman, Norwegian by birth. He was fishing on a large scale and he had factories in Alaska where he salted fish. The harbor had no name so the citizens decided to call the place Petersburg to honor Peter Bushman. So Petersburg is not a remnant of the Russian empire as many of us probably thought.

1961

EDWARD E. JOHNSON

Edward Emanuel Johnson, 92, died on the Fourth of July in a local hospital. He was a retired boatbuilder, formerly owning his own firm on East D St.

He was born in Vanesborg, Sweden, and came to Tacoma in 1891. The family home is at 508 No. 11th St. Mr. Johnson was a member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen Lodge and the Lutheran Church.

He leaves a daughter, Mrs. Harry N. (Olga) Fellman of Tacoma; five grandchildren, Lloyd, Allan, Donald and Nancy White, and Mrs. Marjorie Dial; and seven great-grandchildren.

Services will be announced by the Buckley-King Mortuary.

Anne Oberg Edward Johnson's wedding photo 1892



1. N:o 101

Flyttningsbevis.

2.

3. Jungfru Anna Josefina Berg frän Lyrestad,
4. Född år 1867 (septiojua) den 19 Sept.
i Lyrestads förs.g af Skaraborgs län,

5. Är döpt,

6. Till ältenskap ledig,

7.

8.

9. Har haft skyddskoppor,

10. Läser inantill förvärdigt,

11. Kristendoms-kunskap förvärdigt,

12. Betygs förhållanden

13. Har inom svenska kyrkan begått Herrns nattvard och är dertill oförhindrad,

14.

15. Åtnjuter till frejden medborgarligt förhållande,

16.

17.

18. Såsom värnpliktig inskrifven vid jömanhus i _____ frikallad,
vapenöfriad 1. 2. året. Inskrifning _____ egt. rum _____

19. Aflyttar till Höckholms förs.g af _____ län

20. _____ myndatskrifven här till nästa år,

21. Betygas Lyrestads förs.g af Skarab. län

22. den 19 Nov. 1891 (utliscell)

Anm. i Helsingborgs
d. 7/12 1891 Ed. Rubin

L. Nyberg
Pastor.

20. R.
5- DEC. 91
STOCKHOLM

16. R.
24 MAJ 92

Det tillägger husbonde som under året flyttat i en församling, att angående sig och medföljande personer fördröjes, och inom fjorton dagar efter inflyttningen, samt i alla händelser före den 9 November samma år, hos pastor förete prestbevis från utflyttningsorten. Skulle någon under tiden emellan den 8 November och årets slut hafva inflyttat i annan församling än den han förut tillhört, för han sist på åttioende dagen efter inflyttningen hafva till pastor aflemnat prestbevis, underlåter någon att fullgöra dessa föreskrifter, böte 2 kr. 50 öre.

Husbonde vare, derest inflyttadt tjenstehjon icke redan hos pastor företett, sitt prestbevis, pligtig att, vid vite af 2 kr. 50 öre, inom fjorton dagar sedan tjenstehjonet inträdt i tjenst, affordra och till pastor aflemna sådant betyg. Skulle hinder möta att på förenämnda sätt aflemna prestbevis, bör anmälan derom hos pastor göras inom den utsatta tiden. Undandrager sig någon att prestbevis såunda tillhandahållas, eller aflemnas, drabbas ansvaret den tredskande.

Böter för ådagalagd tredska att fullgöras i mom. 2 och 3 af denna § gälla, föreskrifter förnyas med enahanda belopp för hvarje månad, hvarunder prestbevis aflemnande eller tillhandahållande fördröjes utöfver den bestämda tiden.

Innehafvare af fast egendom i stad eller på landet, eller den hans ställe fört äder, vare vid vite af 2 kr. 50 öre, förbunden att, efter det husbonde eller annan person, med hvilken afstal om bostad afslutats, inflyttat från annan församling till huset eller på egorna, derom underrätta pastor inom fjorton dagar från inflyttningen, så vida icke den inflyttade sjelf det redan tillkännagifvit. (Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga förordning angående mantals- och skattskrifningarnes förordning den 20 Juli 1861 § 5 mom. 2, 3, 4 och 5.)

Tjenstehjon, som flyttar från en till annan församling, åligger att för kyrkoherden i den församling, derifrån flyttningen sker, förete sitt erhållna afskedsbetyg, i hvilket hvaraf kyrkoherde prestbevis icke meddela må. (Kongl. Lego-Städgan den 23 Nov. 1833 § 46.)

Lika till Maria från Hedvig Eleonora d. 24/5 92
A. 20 Maria d. 25/5 92
Lika till America fr
Helsingfors d. 14/9 1893
J. G. Grand
Helsingfors

01 1101112

Personernas Namn,
stånd, embete, yrke och näringsfång
hvises och fällighjon nationalitet (om främmande)
sina, blinda, distsumma) Lyten

Födelse-
År mån och dag
Ort
Giff.
Äkten

1	Åke Erik	1882	10	10	
2	Syren Johanna	1888	8	10	
3	Jan Johansson	1889	9	10	
4	Carl Erik	1889	11	10	
5	Hel. Svanda	1885	10	10	
6	Helena Gustafson	1887	8	10	
7	Ellena Johansson	1887	7	10	
8	Helena Johansson	1880	13	10	
9					
10					
11					

Anna Oberg
Johansson

FORM H.

APPLICATION FOR GRANT FOR PLACED MINING, AND AFFIDAVIT OF APPLICANT.

I, Edward Johnson
 of Dawson
 hereby apply, under the Dominion Mining Regulations, for a grant of a claim for
 placer mining as defined in the said Regulations, in the Yukon District
Mining Division of the Yukon District
 more particularly described as Placer
Claim No 2, Barber's field.
A tributary which joins Dominion Creek
Southwest about claim No 25 or 50 below
the upper divide joining the valley of the
river from the right side

and I solemnly swear :-

1. That I have discovered therein a deposit of gold
2. That I am, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the first discoverer of the said deposit ; OR
3. ~~That the said claim was previously granted~~
4. That I am unaware that the land is other than unoccupied Dominion land.
5. That I did, on the 16th day of June 1897, mark out on the ground, in accordance in every particular with the provisions of sub-section (3) of clause eighteen of the said Mining Regulations, the claim for which I make this application, and that in so doing I did not encroach on any other claim or mining location previously laid out by any other person.
6. That the said claim contains as nearly as I could measure or estimate an area of 100 or more square feet, and that the description and sketch of this date hereto attached, signed by me, set forth in detail, to the best of my knowledge and ability, its position, form and dimensions.
7. That I make this application in good faith to secure the claim for the sole purpose of mining to be prosecuted by myself, or by myself and associates, or by my assigns.

Affirmed before me at Dawson) Edward Johnson
the Yukon District)
 this 9th day of August)
Thos. Fenwick
Field Commissioner

DOMINION



OF CANADA

FREE MINER'S CERTIFICATE.

NON-TRANSFERABLE.

VALID FOR ONE YEAR ONLY.

PLACE OF ISSUE

Montreal

This is to certify that *Edward E. Huard*

has paid me this day the

sum of *Five Dollars*

and is entitled to all the rights and

privileges of a Free Miner, under any *Ministry Regulations of the Government* of Canada, for one year from the *23rd* day of *April* 18*98*

This Certificate shall also grant to the holder thereof the privilege of *Quitting* and *Striking*, subject to the provisions of any Act which has been passed, or which may hereafter be passed for the protection of game and fish; also the privilege of *Quitting* Canada for actual necessities, for building houses, boats, and for general mining operations; such timber, however, to be for the exclusive use of the miner himself, but such permission shall not extend to timber which may have been heretofore or which may hereafter be granted to other persons or corporations.

Warranted,

Ed. J. Huard

Commissioner of the *Gold* Commission,

Ministry of *Resources*, as by an *Order* or *Agent* of the *Department* of *Antiquities*.

Ed. J. Huard

Minister of the *Antiquities*



Shirley Wood
James Jones
Sawyer
Edward Johnson
2nd Lt. C. S. ...

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THE SEA CHEST

JOURNAL OF
THE PUGET SOUND MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 21

Number 3

March 1988

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FRONT COVER

Halibut Schooner LIBERTY in Seattle Harbor with Ferry LIBERTY in the background. Photo courtesy Harold E. Lokken Collection. P.S.M.H.S. # 7232-4

BACK COVER

CY PECK leaving Fulford Harbour, Salt Spring Island. P.S.M.H.S. Williamson Collection Neg. #5945-1



THE PUGET SOUND MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership in the Society is open to anyone interested in Maritime History. Membership is solicited, and inquiries should be addressed to: The Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society, 2700 24th Ave. East, Seattle, WA 98112. Monthly meetings are held September through June on the first Wednesday of each month. Meeting place and programs are announced to members by mail. Membership is \$20.00 per year for a regular member; Sustaining \$35.00; Corporate Membership \$100.00 and Life Member \$500.00. THE SEA CHEST is free to members, however, additional or back copies may be obtained, while they last, at \$5.00 per copy, plus 50¢ for shipping and handling. EDITORIAL ADDRESS: Austen Hemion, 415 West Mercer, #604, Seattle, WA 98119.

The Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society (ISSN-0582-3471) assumes no responsibility for statements of contributors.

diction of the two countries to 200 miles from the previous limit of three. Recent inquiries indicate that the vessel is tied up in Steveston, B.C., inactive and out-of-service in the fishing industry.

Probably the busiest builder of all types of vessels including halibut schooners was Sivert E. Sagstad. Born in the town of Lysekloster near Bergen, Norway, on February 17, 1880, Sagstad learned the art of shipbuilding from his father. His formal education consisted of but six grades of school so most of his skills were either native to him or acquired on the job. He emigrated to the United States in 1905 as many others did at the time to take advantage of better opportunities in the developing industries of the Pacific Northwest. Coming direct to Seattle, he lost no time in pursuing his skills as a ship carpenter. He arrived in May and by September of the same year established himself as a boat builder at the foot of 36th Avenue N.W. (then 10th Avenue N.W.) in Ballard under the name of Ballard Boat Works. He operated at this location until 1916 when he moved to the foot of 20th N.W. where he continued to build boats of all kinds under the name of Sagstad Shipyards.

During his career, he is reputed to have built over 300 vessels of all kinds. One of his more notable accomplishments was the building of a viking ship for the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exhibition in Seattle. He was assigned this task after having been in the country for only four years.

In the war years of 1942 to 1944, he was the builder of 18 ships of various kinds for the United States Army, Navy and Air Force.

The elder Sagstad died in November 1946. His sons, Howard and Stanley, succeeded him in the business which is now operating under the name Sagstad Marina. Howard Sagstad is still connected with the firm but Stanley Sagstad is inactive due to a protracted disability.

Of the eight halibut schooners built by Sagstad and his associates during the period from 1917 to 1928, all but one are still in existence and active, a fitting tribute to the craftsmanship of this pioneer boat builder.

Edward E. Johnson was born in 1868 in Vanersborg, Sweden. His connection with boats began at age 15 when he learned the carpenter trade in his



May, 1939 - Edward E. Johnson

Author's Collection, photo by Ray Krantz Photos #4699

home town. Then followed an apprenticeship at the Langholmens Shipyard in Stockholm. His early years in Sweden included a stint in the Swedish army. In 1891, he emigrated to the United States, settling for a time in Omaha, Nebraska. While there he worked as a farm hand. His duties included the building of corn cribs, an activity which took advantage of his training as a carpenter. Before long, he switched to working on a railroad checking tracks for those needing repair. Traveling in blizzards on an open hand car didn't appeal too long for a Swedish carpenter so he left the midwest for Tacoma. There his first work was to put copper on the hulls of sailing ships many of which had come from the East Coast by way of Cape Horn. Around 1892, he went to Smith Cove in Seattle where he built a shallow draft vessel for use on the Yukon River in Alaska. The boat was then taken apart and shipped in pieces to St. Michael where it was reassembled for service on the river. Returning to Seattle, he tried his hand at sealing which was popular at the time, but as this had little appeal to him, he didn't remain very long.

Johnson had a top reputation for craftsmanship. Typically Scandinavian, he kept most of his records either in his head or in the pockets of his well-worn shirt. His boat yard was characterized by low overhead consisting of a small office with a single dim

light bulb and windows dirtied with sawdust. His methods matched his records. On one occasion he was asked to quote a price on a new boat. After he quoted a price of \$9,000.00 (this was in the early 1900s) and a delivery date in the following spring, the buyer asked Johnson if there shouldn't be a written agreement on the transaction. "Sure," said Johnson. Whereupon, he reached over to one side of the office, tore off the top of a paper sack full of nails and wrote on the scrap of paper: "I agree to build a boat for you for \$9,000.00 with delivery in the spring." That was all. He did carry through, however. He was known as "Honest Johnson" by those who did business with him. I personally can testify as to his fairness when I had business with him in 1925.

Although he was a Swede working in a predominantly Norwegian environment, it was no handicap for him. In the early years, he conducted many of his negotiations in the Norwegian language but when he was asked to join the Sons of Norway lodge, he drew the line. "Enough is enough" was his response. Among his accomplishments was a knowledge of the French language acquired during his service for a year in the Swedish army, a skill of not much practical use for a son of Sweden working primarily with Norwegians.

As told by Johnson's grandson, Lloyd E. White, who worked for a time with his grandfather and who has competence in his own field of engineering design, Johnson had a reputation for building clean-running hulls. With the advent of light weight high-powered engines and increasingly efficient propellers, White notes that designers and boat builders had to turn away from the practices of those who preceded them. Where it was common to find persons admiring the beautiful bow of a vessel, he found the old-timers taking a different view, contending that the wrong end of the vessel was being judged. White remembers comments from vessel owners and Johnson's boat building peers to the effect that vessels from Edward Johnson's yard "tended to leave scarcely more wake than a duck."

In 1894, Johnson collaborated with John Strand in the building of the halibut fishing vessel ANNIE M. NIXON. In common with other boat builders of this period and later, ship carpenters operated ship yards by themselves or in partnership with others.

This relationship would generally be on a temporary basis for the building of a single vessel or two following which the collaboration would end. When orders were not forthcoming, the builders would seek employment in larger ship building firms. Thus Johnson found employment for a number of years as a foreman at the Crawford and Reid Shipyard in Old Tacoma. An interesting facet of the history of this yard was the system used in launching vessels. As the tracks of the Northern Pacific Railroad ran between the yard and Commencement Bay, the tracks had to be removed each time a vessel was launched. For this purpose, the railroad built the rails on trucks in four sections each 25 feet long. Then at launchings, the railroad men brought in heavy tackle and rolled the tracks away. Following the launching, the tracks were replaced in their original position. Luckily at that time the trains ran not oftener than once a week so not much rail traffic was disturbed.

In the late 1890s, Johnson was bitten by gold fever and, in the company of many others, including Jack London, the noted novelist, left Tacoma on the steamer WILLAMETTE, for Skagway and the Klondike. After a year in search of the elusive mineral, he returned to Tacoma and resumed his career in building boats.

Johnson built many vessels of all kinds during his lifetime. Most of them were fishing vessels but one non-fishing craft was a handsome 65-foot yacht built for a Tacoma doctor in 1925. Government documentation records show eight halibut schooners as having been built by Johnson although he undoubtedly worked on many others while allied with other builders. Of these eight vessels, three were actively fishing halibut during the 1987 season. These were the SEYMOUR, built in 1913, the THOR in 1925 and the MASONIC (formerly named LIAHONA) in 1929.

Johnson left the employ of Crawford and Reid in 1911 and started his own yard at East 21st and D Street in Tacoma where the eight vessels were undoubtedly built. He retired in 1935 at age 67 and died in 1961 at age 93 to close out a distinguished career. His wife, Anna, preceded him in death by eight years. The Johnsons had three children, one boy and two girls.

Another important builder of halibut schooners,

RECORD OF NATURALIZATION.



United States District Court, District of Washington.

In the Matter of the Application of

Edward Emmanuel Johnson
An Alien,

To Become a Citizen of the United States of America.

In open Court, this

17th

24

day of

October 1896

It appearing to the satisfaction of this Court, by the oaths of

Charles Reed

and *V. Mann*

citizens of the United States of America, witnesses for that

purpose, first duly sworn and examined, that

Edward Emmanuel Johnson

a native of *Sweden*

has resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction

of the United States five years at least, last past; and within the State of Washington for one year at least, last past; and that during all of said time he has behaved as a man of good moral character; that he is attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same; and it also appearing to the Court, by competent evidence, that the said applicant has heretofore, and more than two years since, and in due form of law, declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and now having here, before this Court, taken an oath that he will support the Constitution of the United States of America, and that he doth absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to every foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty whatsoever, and particularly to *Italy*

King of Sardinia

It is therefore ordered, adjudged and decreed by the Court that the said

Edward Emmanuel Johnson be and is hereby admitted and declared

to be a citizen of the United States of America.

Enter:

C. W. ...
U. S. District Judge, District of Washington.

Clerk's Office, U. S. District Court,

District of Washington.

} ss.

I, R. M. HOPKINS, Clerk of the United States District Court for the District of Washington, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a record now remaining in my office.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Court at

Meconna the *17* day of *October* A. D. 1896 and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and *21* day

R. M. Hopkins Clerk

Amos ... Deputy Clerk

