

PERSONAL BACKGROUND Name is Einar Nerland. He was born on October 3, 1908 in Naerbo which is close to Stavanger, Norway.

PARENTS Father was Elling Nerland and his mother was Malene Tunheim. His father was a farmer and a fisherman, and his mother was a housewife.

The name of the farm was Nerland. There were about ten farmers that went by that name.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS There were Berta, Elias, Axel, Eivend, Einar, Borghild, Borgny, Gustav, Alf, and Malene.

GRANDPARENTS They were farmers on both sides. His maternal grandfather's name was Axel Tunheim. His paternal grandfather's name was Eliassen (?).

NERLAND His name hasn't changed and there are still Nerlands in Norway.

CHILDHOOD The area was a lot like Washington with good farmland and fishing. They had their own home. They would go down to the ocean and fish. The kids worked from the time they were big enough. They would clean the barn and carry wood. He came to the U.S. when he was 20.

SCHOOL Started at a one-teacher schoolhouse. After the first and second grade they had to go further. They had to walk.

WEATHER They would get plenty of snow, but it wouldn't last long. They would have 6' snow banks. You had to go further inland to ski.

Finished school when he was 15 years old and then you were grown up and got to wear long pants. This was after they were confirmed.

CONFIRMATION Went to read with the minister, almost the same as here.

WORK Worked like a man on his father's farm. The other brothers were there too. After they got to be about 20 they left for the U.S.

STORIES OF AMERICA They thought that they were making lots of money in the U.S. There were too many at home so some of them had to leave.

EMIGRATION OF FAMILY Axel came to the U.S. in 1923 and Elias came in 1925. Axel came with a relative but there wasn't family in the U.S.

COMING TO THE U.S. His brothers were here. He was going to leave when he was 18 but his mother said he was too young so he cancelled his first trip and signed up again. By the time that went through he was 20. He thought he was traveling alone until he saw some friends on the ship.

Einar's brothers settled in Pierpoint, South Dakota.

FEELINGS LEAVING NORWAY He was happy to go and see the world. He always knew that he would go back for a visit. 35 years later he did.

LUGGAGE He took just enough clothing to get along.

TRIP TO THE U.S. He took the train to Stavanger and then he took the Bergensfjord. This was in 1929 in February. The ocean was pretty rough the whole way. There were storms every day and the people were sick. It cost 700Nkr for passage. The trip took seven days. He arrived at New York. He didn't go to Ellis Island, but was taken directly to the depot.

TRAIN TRAVEL His ticket took him all the way to Pierpoint, South Dakota. In New York there was a man that told you where to go. They were herded like sheep.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS Saw the Statue of Liberty. It was so foggy the first day they came that they had to wait for the fog to clear.

LANGUAGE PROBLEMS 'It was just like coming into a beehive.'

TRAIN TRIP He liked New York and the country looked pretty good until he got to Chicago, Illinois. He got off at the worst place he had seen on the whole trip at Pierpoint, South Dakota. Everything was bare. There were only dirt roads. He thought he had better stick it out. At one point the train broke an axle and they were stopped for half a day. Food was expensive and not very good.

PIERPOINT, SOUTH DAKOTA This was a farming community. His brother met him at the train. His brother was working at a farm. At first he stayed at a hotel and then the farmer said he could stay with them. Soon spring came

and help was needed on the farms.

WORK He got a job on a Swedish man's farm.

LANGUAGE The area was full of Swedes, Norwegians and Germans. He couldn't speak any English. He had been here a year before a farmer he was working for told him that he would never learn English by only speaking and hearing Norwegian, so this farmer started speaking English to him and Einar would answer in Norwegian and he started to pick up the language.

FARM WORK Plowing and preparing the fields for wheat, barley, oats, and corn. He lived with the farmers he was working for like he was one of the family. He started to like the area better. There was no use getting homesick for Norway because there was no money to go back to.

DEPRESSION They couldn't grow any crops because everything was dried up. If you did get a crop it cost too much to harvest it. Kansas was really the dust bowl, but South Dakota would become pitch dark in the middle of the day because of the dust. Farms were failing. People survived because they had a few cows, potatoes, and meat. People got credit at the store for food.

ENTERTAINMENT There were barn dances. They played pool in town. People didn't celebrate the holidays in the Norwegian ways.

CHRISTMAS It was only a one-day holiday in the U.S. and in Norway they had almost a week.

PREJUDICES There were none against him.

DIFFICULTIES The language was the hardest. Sometimes the Native Americans would tease him.

Best thing about coming to American was to be able to get an automobile. He got one about a year after he came. Then he had fun taking the girls out and going to dances and shows.

FARM WORK He got \$40 a month plus room and board, but the wages went down each year until he got \$35 a month for his 10 hour days. He did farm work for about five years.

CARPENTRY WORK When the farmers lost their farms to insurance companies, the companies would come in and fix up the farms. Einar wasn't a carpenter but with the help of his brother he got the job. Then he stayed with the carpentry work until 1940 or 1941.

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN He was building houses and stayed for about one year until the war broke out and then they left for the west coast.

MEETING SPOUSE They met in South Dakota. Her mother was Norwegian and her father called himself a 'blue belly Yankee.' They had one boy there and one boy here.

CHURCH LIFE IN SOUTH DAKOTA There was a small congregation in their town and they shared their pastor with another church.

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN Moved there because he could make more money.

WEST COAST His wife had a couple of brothers out here that were making good money in the shipyards.

TACOMA, WASHINGTON Got a job at the Todd Shipyard building for the war. They have lived in Tacoma ever since then. He started welding and after the war he went back to carpentry work.

CITIZENSHIP Obtained in 1935 or 1936.

VISITS TO NORWAY He has returned twice. They left from Vancouver, B.C. stopped to refuel in Greenland, and then landed in Oslo where he took another small plane to Stavanger where the whole family met him. He didn't know very many of them. He thought they talked very fast. He was there for two months. This was in about 1956. Everything had changed. The little town was completely different. The farming was different. They had silos and didn't work much with hay like they used to.

SECOND TRIP About five years, he and his wife left from Sea-Tac. The first trip had taken 18 hours by a DC-7 to get there. This trip was on a DC-10. They stayed for three weeks. They traveled around Bergen and the southern part of Norway. They visited relatives.

CONTACT WITH NORWAY They still keep in contact. He has a sister in Kopervik, Norway and another one in Mandal. They write to each other.

LANGUAGE The younger people can speak American.

VISITS FROM NORWAY There were six of them that came over at one time.

FAMILY They have two sons, Dale and James. Dale works for the Tacoma Sanitation. James works for a door plant in Tacoma. The sons don't have much interest in Norway. Norwegian wasn't spoken in the home.

IMPRESSIONS OF TACOMA The area is more like Norway and he likes it.

SONS OF NORWAY He is a member but not very active.

CARPENTERS UNION He also belongs to this. As a carpenter he built mainly homes. He helped put up some dormitories at PLU and at the University of Puget Sound. He retired as a carpenter.

CHURCH He is a member of Bethlehem Lutheran.

He's not sure if he will go back to Norway again. He'd like to.

SPOKEN NORWEGIAN He recites the table prayer, I Jesus Navn.

NORWEGIAN TRADITIONS His wife makes Norwegian food, kumla-potato dumplings, cookies, krumkake, and fattigmand.

NORWEGIAN PEOPLE They are aggressive and smart.

IMPORTANCE OF BEING NORWEGIAN He is a human being. One man is as good as another.

REFLECTIONS ON EMIGRATION He is glad that he came. He feels that he is better here than he would have had it in Norway. Now they have just as much as we have, but it didn't used to be that way. You are freer here.