

Gertrude Sinnes Simonseth. Born in Rindal, Norway, south of Trondheim on January 9, 1904.

PARENTS John and Eli Sinnes. Mother's maiden name was Dalseg, which is the name of a place. Sinnes is from the area north of Trondheim.

GRANDPARENTS Maternal grandparents were Gertrude and Rolf Dalseg. Gertrude's maiden name was Bolme, she was from Rindal. Rolf was a farmer. Paternal grandparents were Tore and Elen Sinnes. Her maiden name was Sinnes. Sinnes is a place by the fjords. Several people are named Sinnes after this place. Did farming on small scale, dairy farming.

Sold milk from the farm. Had a creamery where butter and cheese were made. Farmers took turns taking milk to the creamery.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Four children. Torval was a farmer and did some work in the mines. Her sisters married farmers. Tells the names of her sisters' husbands.

CHILDHOOD HOME Small, upstairs and downstairs. Had 4-5 cows. Had stabbur where meat and grain were stored. Made a living by selling milk. Parents were in their early 80s when they died. They had lived off the small farm.

CHILDHOOD Helped her mother with her work. Also helped others on their farms. Women did the chores. She loved working in the barn.

SCHOOL Went by skis in the winter. Stayed all week at school because of the snow. Went one week and stayed home the next. 8-12 kids in her class. They had three classes. 3-4 years in each class.

ENTERTAINMENT Met on the roads, sang, and danced. Public dancing in the big halls. Parties at the homes of people.

CHRISTMAS Fixed up so much. Had a tree, baked, and butchered. Between Christmas and New Year's did not do very much. Began preparing for Christmas weeks before.

CHRISTMAS BAKING Fattigmand, krumkake, good bread, and lefse.

CHRISTMAS EVE MEAL Lutefisk, made their own beer, had kegs in the basement. It was good with the meal.

PRESENTS Not many in Norway. Supposed to have something new for Christmas or you would have to sit on the wood box, this was an old custom. Christmas morning you went to church unless it was cold and snowy. Church was in the valley about 12 miles away.

Father was strict on certain things. Could not do anything where the preacher was in the pulpit. Could not work during this time.

Father was not home during the weeks in the winter. He worked in the mines. Mother did the work at home. Father was home during the summer.

CHRISTMAS Christmas Day has special food. Second day was also special. Christmas Day was the home day, did not even go to church, and ate sweet soup and lutefisk. Second day they ate meat and sodd. Went to church on the second day.

FOLK STORIES Put out food for the julenissen. Put grain by the woodpile for birds and juleneget.

CONFIRMATION Worked at home after confirmation. During confirmation they met once a week with the pastor for a few months.

Had ideas to go to America since she was small. She had read letter from her uncle, Lars Dalseg, who was in America. He came in 1903.

He came back to Norway in 1908 and told Gertrude about America. He took apart his mother's spinning wheel and put it in his trunk.

Gertrude remembers getting a cup and saucer from her father, he said 'flink pike.'

WORK Gertrude worked in many different homes, she learned many things from this.

Mother worked outside a great deal, did not teach her girls much about housekeeping. Made bread for her mother. Gertrude did a lot for only being 11 years old. She did knitting. Rocked the kids in the kitchen.

MEETING SPOUSE Met Nels, her husband in 1922. They decided to go to America. Her mother was not crazy about the idea. Her brother was in the U.S.

TRIP OVER Seasickness. Three others in the same lugar. Describes this. One woman snuck a plant into the states. The others were crazy about the homemade bread Gertrude had with her. Two of her roommates got friendly with the helpers on the boat and got special food.

The seas were rough, sound was loud. Dancing up on deck to accordion music.

TRIP Left from Trondheim, by train, beautiful sight of the Dovrefjell. Same guy played the accordion on the train as on the ship. Food was good on the boat although Gertrude did not eat much because she was sick. Had laundry rooms to do laundry on the ships.

Talks about the different kinds of potatoes, the different ways to prepare them. Fish seldom fried, usually broiled, meat broiled. Did this on a wood stove.

ARRIVAL Stayed in New York 3-4 days because Ellis Island was so full. Boat trip took 8-10 days. Took the train to Minnesota

FIRST IMPRESSIONS First time she saw Negroes was in New York. First impression of the U.S., was that it was 'swell' and had good food.

MARRIAGE Married in Madison, Minnesota. Had a big dinner. Went to the minister's house with two neighbors. All Norwegians around town.

They lived with a bachelor who was rich, careless with his money. She tells a few stories about this man.

Mostly Norwegians in the area around Madison.

Took a long time to learn English. Helped when her kids went to school. Two children were born in Minnesota, Marie and Esther.

Lived in Milltown, Montana for a while. Moved to Freeborn, Minnesota and lived there for a few years.

Gertrude worked at Cedar Inn Restaurant when Agnes finished school. Worked at an old peoples home, Josephine's Sunset Home. Did cooking and cleaning for 15 years.

Had a small farm in Freeborn, Minnesota. Had one cow, a calf, a few chickens, and pigs. Had a garden and grew vegetables.

CHILDREN Had seven. Marie is married and lives in Stanwood, Washington. Her husband is Roy Anderson. Esther married a man from Ohio. Talks about what Esther's and Marie's children are doing. Grace lives in Mt. Vernon. Edmund and John are next. She talks about their children. Norman worked for Carnation Co. for 36 years. Agnes lives in Canada.

Have big family reunions when they all get together.

NORWEGIAN TRADITIONS IN THE HOME Mostly Norwegian in the home. Eat flatbroed and lefse. Speak Norwegian in the home.

SONS OF NORWAY Went to the Sons of Norway when they were in Canada. Worked for the Sons of Norway years ago, helped with the lutefisk dinner.

CHURCH Was active before, not to involved anymore.

TRIPS BACK TO NORWAY 1956, 1963, and 1970. In 1956, she went by herself. Her mother was getting old, spent the summer with her. Many changes.

CHURCH Church in Norway the same as in America. Still is community church in the valley where Gertrude grew up. Young people attend church, mostly the Lutheran church.

Gertrude says a few words in Norwegian.