

PERSONAL BACKGROUND Name is Sverre Halvorsen. Born the 28th of November 1895 in Trondheim, Norway.

PARENTS Father was Aksel Halvorsen and his mother's name was Pauline Petersen. Father was a violin player in the symphony in Trondheim. They lost everything in a house fire. Sverre was thrown out the window in a blanket. After that his father worked in the railroad station because he had lost his expensive violins and didn't have the money to replace them. Sverre's mother was a housewife.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS There were six of them and Sverre was the oldest. Then there was Lilly, Per, Ingrid, and Bjarne.

GRANDPARENTS After the fire, Sverre was given to his maternal grandfather to raise. Sverre stayed with his grandfather until 1903 when he died and his uncle who inherited the farm sent him home to his parents. His grandfather was a pilot on the coast of Norway. They lived in Flatanger, Norway, which is north of Trondheim. He had to go back with his parents in 1903 and stayed until 1905 when he was farmed out. His grandmother was there too. Their name was Petersen. Sverre got ride with his grandfather to the bigger ships he piloted.

HOUSE FIRE It was a two-story house in Trondheim. He was thrown in a blanket from the second story window and someone caught him.

GRANDFATHER'S HOME A two-story home with a lean-to, which protected the house from the cold weather when you opened the door. There was a front room, a dining room, a kitchen, and an upstairs with lots of bunks. Grandmother died in about 1900 and then his grandfather and uncle.

SCHOOL They didn't start until 6 or 7 years. They learned quite a bit at home before they went to school.

They lived by themselves on an island. There was a store on the neighboring island and his uncle worked at the warehouse there.

SCHOOL Started school when he returned to Trondheim. He recalls getting in trouble for not tipping his hat at his teacher.

CUSTOMS You were respectful of your parents or elders and you'd better behave for your teacher.

WORK He would got to the wood yard and collect scraps of wood and lumps of coal. This was for the family fire.

FAMILY They were living in Trondheim. There were other brothers and sisters.

TRONDHEIM It was a fairly big city. He describes the area a little. There were farms outside and a hill with a fort on it.

POLICEMEN They were respected. They always went to the policemen when they needed something.

FARMED OUT In 1905 he was sent to a family not too far from where his grandfather had lived. It was like a foster home. He had to earn his keep by collecting wood, herding cows, and fishing.

FISHING His foster father bought a sailing schooner and he begged to go with him up to the North Cape for fishing. He tells about how he saved himself from drowning. He was so cold he couldn't holler.

LUMBER SCHOONER Got a job on a ship, which sailed lumber up from Namsos to the northern coast of Norway to Bodø and Tromsø.

REASONS FOR COMING TO AMERICA He ran into an aunt from Trondheim who asked why didn't he go to America. He didn't have any money to go. This aunt told him that he had an uncle in America. About two months later, he got tickets to Seattle, Washington from his uncle. The aunt had made the contacts. He was about 17 and hadn't thought about America.

TRIP TO THE U.S. Left from Trondheim on the Wilson Line. They landed in Hull, England where he got on the train to Liverpool, England. He stayed there for about a week. Traveled alone. He just took off and didn't think too much about the fact that he was leaving.

LUGGAGE He had a trunk with clothes in it.

DESTINATION SEATTLE Had a note that he was supposed to go to Pier 6. He didn't know anything about Seattle. He arrived on May 4, 1913 at 5am. He had arrived in New York on April 27th after traveling for 6-7 days.

TRAVEL TO U.S. Had to wait in England for the ship to come. The hotel was full. He came over on the Carmania. On the water it would be rough for days and then it would be real nice. There were people from Turkey, Italy, Austria, Ireland, and all over. The Italians were on the deck below and he could smell the garlic. There were six in a room. He had to repay his uncle about \$100.

ARRIVAL DAY The health department came aboard and they had to walk by them. Then they went to Ellis Island on a ferry. It was a mixed up conglomeration. They were divided in groups by numbers and destination. That

evening they got on the train.

TRAIN TRAVEL: He had a bag with a leg of mutton and some hard tack to eat on the way. He stayed with his assigned group to the train. He was taken aback by the vast expanse of the land. He remembers seeing a lot of pigs. The trip took from the evening of April 27th to the morning of May 4th. Came to the King Street Station.

FIRST DAY IN SEATTLE He couldn't read anything. One of his uncles in Norway who had been there before told him where the pier was. He showed the policeman his piece of paper. The policeman got him on the streetcar and the conductor showed him where to get off. He found Pacific Net and Pier 6 but it was too early and it wasn't open. Soon some men came to work and they spoke Norwegian. They took him out to breakfast. His uncle's name was Ed Kverne (?). He didn't come that day so a man took him out to Ballard where he thought that uncle lived.

FINDING HIS UNCLE He walked along the beach and said the name and the address hoping he would find someone who knew him. He found a Norwegian that told him that his uncle lived next door but that he was in town getting a bed for Sverre and that the uncle expected him tomorrow. Would have been in trouble if he hadn't run into some Norwegians.

The uncle came and fixed him dinner and the next day they sat and got acquainted. The uncle came the day after the Seattle fire.

WORK The neighbors were working on a project to build a bridge across the canal. He worked there for 4-5 days. That summer he fished with his uncle at Cape Flattery. Then his uncle got him a job on a tugboat. The owner was the brother of the woman that raised him in Bjoergan. Sverre was a deck hand. They worked in Seattle and up to Cape Flattery, Washington or Neah Bay, Washington. Business got slow in January about the time that Wilson got in and Sverre was laid off.

SCHOOL Got a room at the YMCA and started going to night school to learn English. He was looking for work everyday.

LANGUAGE Had problems with 'W' and 'TH'. He picked up English the best he could. There were lots of Norwegians on the waterfront.

Ran out of money and his food was going fast. He would get some corn sometimes down at the docks.

WORK A steamer came into the Moran Shipyard. He asked the Swedish first mate for a job and he sent him to the Chlopeck Fish Co. to talk to the port captain from the fish company who happened to come from a place a few miles away from his grandfather's place. He got the job. The second mate was raised in north Norway and the skipper was from Trondheim. Sverre was a deckhand. They fished in Alaska near Portlock which is east of Kodiak Island and south of Middleton Island. He stayed with them for a long time.

DORY FISHING They would set out about four skates of halibut gear and each had 240 hooks that were 9' apart on them. He would haul the fish in by turning the gurdy and taking each fish off. He fished until April 1916 when the second mate got a job as skipper on a whaling boat.

WHALING They went up to Port Armstrong, Alaska. The gunner on the whaler was from Norway and came to the U.S. every year for the whaling season. This was for the Norway Pacific Whaling Co.. They would hunt Grey whales which were small, Finback which are about 60', Humpback which are about 45', Sperm, and Blue whales which ran about 80-85'.

He took a steamer from Seattle to Poulsbo, Washington. He was looking for a job which would give him the chance to go to high school. The mate on the ship suggested that he join the Coast Guard. He had seen the Coast Guard ship 'Snohomish.' This man gave him the name of an officer and told him to go to Winslow, Washington. He walked to Winslow in a couple of days.

COAST GUARD It was required to stay one year and then you would get your citizenship papers. Since he had been on the water so much he got to start at first class. 99 percent of the crew were Europeans. He joined in 1916 and before his year was up the war broke out so he served during the First World War and wasn't even a citizen.

CITIZENSHIP He went to Seattle after being overseas. He had two men from the ship with him as witnesses. There was a mean examiner called 'Speed' Smith whom the judge finally made shut up. This was in 1919.

COAST GUARD He stayed in the service until 1947. He tells where he has been stationed: Port Angeles, Washington; Alaska three times; Oakland, California; Eureka, California; San Francisco, Washington; New Orleans, Louisiana; Delport (?); New London, Connecticut. During WWII and all around at 24 hours notice. His wife stayed here.

MEETING SPOUSE Saw her in Port Angeles, but met officially in Seattle. He got her phone number through a friend and called her when he got to Seattle. They met at Woodland park Zoo. They met on the 4th of April and were married on the 27th of October. He had written her a letter everyday, but sent them to the wrong address after they first met.

CHILDREN They have Norman and Marie. They have two grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Norman was in the Army and Marie in the Marines. Norman was in the Navy, the National Guard, the Air Force, and the Army. Their family took in every outfit in the service. The girl was in the Red Cross in Algeria and Louisiana.

RETIREMENT Settled on Bainbridge Island, Washington. He got his uncle's place. He prefers the Puget Sound area. After his retirement he went to Alaska and worked fishing for Libby McNeil Co. 'A Norwegian can't be away from salt water.'

ORGANIZATIONS They were members of Sons of Norway but not active. They were active on Bainbridge Island, but now that they have moved to Gig Harbor in 1975. He was active in Eastern Star and the Masonic Order. His wife has been active in the Presbyterian church.

VISITS TO NORWAY They returned in 1975. They visited with his sister and some distant relatives. They went from Oslo by bus to Bergen and by steamer to Trondheim. A relative, Sverre Lindoey arranged travel in Norway for them.

CONTACT WITH NORWAY He exchanges birthday and Christmas cards with his sister.

LANGUAGE Very few in Norway that don't write and speak English. He spoke some Norwegian in Norway.

NAME People had a hard time with the Sverre here so many called him Hal.

LANGUAGE They don't speak Norwegian in the home and the children don't speak it.

FOOD He likes pickled herring. Fish and potatoes were the main foods. Ate boiled fish and fish eggs and how to prepare fish.

POULSBO CODFISH DINNER The Sons of Norway there put on a Codfish egg and liver dinner.

SHOP He has a shop where he makes woodwork things and repairs things. It is orderly because when he was in Norway they would have everything orderly so that they could find it in the dark without electricity.

FISHING They used to have a boat and fish for fun.

IMPORTANCE OF NORWEGIAN HERITAGE It means a lot. Norway is independent and minds their own business. He tells about Norway getting free of the Swedish king, King Oscar II.