

Jorgen Jorgenson. Changed his name from Aadneram to Jorgenson when he came to America. Born in Sirdalen, Norway on February 17, 1909.

PARENTS Tarjei Aadneram and Ingeborg Kveven. Father was a farmer. Mother was a housewife. Jorgen's parents bought his mother's home at Kveven in Sirdalen when he was four years old. Jorgen lived here until he left for America.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Jorgen was the oldest child in the family. He had six sisters.

GRANDPARENTS Paternal grandparents had a small farm at the top of Sirdal, which is about five Norwegian miles long (50 kilometers). Maternal grandparents had a small farm about four Norwegian miles from the bottom of the valley. When Jorgen's father was born, there were no roads. One had to travel by foot or boat. Had to carry groceries over the mountain in the winter. It was a tough life. People hadn't been anywhere else so they liked where they were. His grandfather raised beef and butter. Caught ptarmigans up in the mountains. Jorgen remembers hunting ptarmigan in the winter of 1929. They had a cabin up in the mountains where they stayed for six days. His uncle had 80 ptarmigans, Jorgen had 50, and his cousin had 30. They sold their catch, but didn't get much for them.

SISTERS When Jorgen left Norway at age 20, his youngest sister was 11. His mother died when he was 11 and the youngest was only 1. Jorgen's father said he wouldn't remarry. He was going to take care of his children. He did and his children lived with him. He always had his kids around him.

TRIPS BACK TO NORWAY Jorgen was the only one far away from home, but he has visited Norway six times. His first trip was in 1947, after WWII. He hadn't heard from his family since before the war broke out in 1939. He got a letter from them through the Red Cross and found out that everyone was alive. They found out that he was married and had a boy.

PARENTS Father was a farmer. Raised beef, grain, and potatoes.

SISTERS Names were Klara, Guri, Sigrid, Tonny, Tobine, and Olga.

CHILDHOOD HOME Happy, although they missed their mother. They had a very good father. They have always been a close family. He still corresponds with his family.

VISITS FROM NORWAY In 1956, Jorgen sent his father a ticket to come to the U.S. His father didn't want to fly so he refused the ticket. Jorgen's aunt flew to Norway for a visit. After this Jorgen's father decided he would fly to America. He came in November 1956. He stayed until March 1957. He enjoyed the trip. He had many people to visit. He still liked Norway better. Jorgen's oldest and youngest sisters came to visit as well. They stayed for 21 days. This was after Olga's husband died in 1976. They were impressed with all the fruit in eastern Washington. They met many people in Tacoma who they knew from Norway.

**TRIPS BACK TO NORWAY** First trip was in 1947. Traveled on a Swedish ship, 'Gripsholm.' There weren't many Norwegian liners running that soon after the war. This Swedish ship hadn't been converted from a troop ship to a passenger ship yet so the men and women were separated. The trip was a little rough. Jorgen's wife was in bed and he had their three and a half year old son, Terry. He tells about how the boat really leaned to one side because of the tidal wave. Some people were injured. When they got to Gothenburg (Göteborg), Sweden, an icebreaker had to clear a path for the boat so it could get to the dock. They wanted to spend the night in Gothenburg but there were no vacancies in the hotels there. The captain of the ship said they could spend the night on the ship but Jorgen had already arranged for them to take the next train to Norway, which left at 2:30am. Had a hard time finding a hotel in Norway too. They stayed at the Seaman's Mission Hotel.

**NORWAY AFTER WWII** Food was rationed. Only children could have milk. Not much to buy in the stores. The situation was better by then time they left in September, 1947. Sugar, coffee, flour, *etc.* were rationed. They got food from the U.S. Jorgen's family in Sirdal didn't suffer much. They had their farm and meat. It was more difficult for the people in the cities. Jorgen had an aunt and uncle in Moss, just outside of Oslo. Everything was rationed. They had a lock on the bread drawer. They had five children. When they ate, they'd divided a couple of pieces of bread among the children. They were not in good health. Jorgen only lost one relative in WWII. Sirdal wasn't affected much by the war. Jorgen's father spent a day in jail for collection money for the pastor. The Germans didn't allow for this.

**EMIGRATION FROM NORWAY** Left Sirdal on March 5, 1929. Could have taken the train to Stavanger but chose to save money and walk. He walked over the mountain to Hunnedalen. Father's youngest brother had a farm there. Jorgen and his uncle both had skis so they made good time to the next town, Åvstebo (?). They had something to eat there. His father knew some people there. They spent the night with his father's brother. The roads started to get bare so they left their skis there. The next day they walked to Randaberg (?), which is 10 kilometers from Stavanger. It took two days to get from Sirdal to Stavanger. His father and neighbor came with. They took turns carrying his suitcase. It wasn't very heavy. He didn't bring many clothes with him.

**REASONS FOR COMING TO THE U.S.** Things were tough in Norway and they were a big family. Jorgen's father said he was thinking about going to Canada. He figured his children were big enough to take care of themselves. Jorgen told his father to stay in Norway. He wanted to go to the U.S. He had an uncle living in Tacoma, Washington. Jorgen's uncle arranged the papers for immigration into the U.S. This was much faster than waiting for the quota, which took a long time. Jorgen planned to work for five years in the U.S. and then come back and take over the family farm. Jorgen decided not to go back to Norway.

**1 TRIP TO AMERICA** Heard in 1928 that things in the U.S. were supposed to be really good. Left Norway in March 9, 1929. Took a smaller boat across the North Sea. Spent three days in London. Took a ship from Southampton, England to Halifax, Canada. Left Southampton on the fourth day. Got to Halifax on March 21. Had a rough crossing.

**TRAIN TRIP** Took the train from Halifax to Vancouver, B.C. Jorgen was traveling with a friend, Anton Austad who had three brothers in Bellingham, Washington. Jorgen stayed at the Commercial Hotel there. Met friends and relatives.

**TRAVELING** Was never alone while traveling. Anton got sick while crossing the Atlantic. Jorgen had to bring food to him. Anton had a sad ending. Died in an automobile accident in 1931. He and Jorgen had gone to Seattle, looking for fishing jobs in Alaska. Anton dropped Jorgen in Saxon, WA (by Sedro Woolley) and was killed instantly in an automobile accident between Saxon and Bellingham. Jorgen actually came into the U.S. on March 28, 1929. Anton's brothers met them in Vancouver B.C. They went directly to Bellingham from there.

**WORK IN THE U.S.** Jorgen had some friends working for Bodell and Donovan about 30 miles out of Bellingham. 250 men were worked in the camp. Jorgen started working for them on April 18, 1929. Worked on the foundation of a 22-car garage. They worked with picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. Jorgen worked hard. Was stiff and tired when he came home in the evening. The two men he worked with said he worked too hard, but they were fired a short time later. Jorgen worked there until July 4, 1930, when the camp was shut down. All logging camps in Washington State shut down at that time.

**THE DEPRESSION** Hard times came in the next few years. Jorgen managed. He always worked but had to take jobs that didn't pay much at times.

**WORK DURING THE DEPRESSION** Worked on a farm in Mt. Vernon for a dollar a day in 1932. When he first worked in a logging camp in 1929, he made \$4.50 a day. When the camps started up again in 1931 their wages were cut to \$1.98 a day. It came to less than a dollar a day after they paid room and board. In 1932, he decided to go to Nome, Alaska. He got a job, which would last for 15 days and could be extended for the whole summer if they liked his work. He earned \$5.00 a day plus room and board. They worked 10 hours days. He worked in the Plaster Gold Mine (?) located at Bluff (?), which is 60 miles west of Nome. Jorgen was young and worked hard so the boss put him on the night shift and had him do the most dangerous job. They had to work under a slack skyline, which broke three times during the summer, taking the head off his partner one time. Jorgen decided that working in the woods was safer so he didn't return to the mine in 1938.

**LOGGING AND FISHING** Jorgen started working for Bodell and Donovan in Bellingham again. They had a large logging company. They had mills at Lake Whatcom and in Bellingham. He worked for the logging camp off and on until 1941. He fished in Alaska in 1939-1941 by percentage. Fished in King Cove, near the Bering Sea in 1939-1941. Started working in Cold Bay, Alaska in 1941 before the war broke out. Morrison and Knudsen (?) had some big contracts in Alaska. Cold Bay, which wasn't far from King Cove was one of their contracts. When fishing season was over in the fall, they tried to hire people in the canneries to set up their camp. They were going to build a big railway. Only three of them stayed to work on their camp. Jorgen was going to be a carpenter, but had to wait a month to get his carpenter tools. In the meantime, he worked in the cook house. When the war started, he asked for a transfer to Cordova. The company flew him to Anchorage, paid his expenses, and gave him a vacation. They flew in a 4-5 man plane. The weather was so bad on their first attempt at leaving Cold Bay that they had to turn back. They tried again on the next day. They were between Cold Bay and Naknek when it became too foggy to navigate so they landed on the sandy beach. It was clear enough to fly after a couple of hours. Flew to Naknek (?) and put gas in the plane. They headed towards Anchorage but couldn't make it through the pass. They turned around and landed on Iliamna Lake. They cut holes in the ice and tied the plane down. Walked three miles to a roadhouse. Listened to the weather report everyday. Had to stay there for three days. When preparing to leave, they had to build a fire underneath the plane to warm up the oil. It was so foggy near the pass that they couldn't see anything. The pilot circled around until they reached 12,000 feet. The highest mountain in the area was 9,000 feet. By the compass, they got over Cook Inlet. They dove down under the fog and soon the sun was shining. They had to wait until the weather was better to fly from Anchorage to Cordova. It took twelve days to get from Cold Bay to Cordova. Jorgen worked for Morrison and Knudsen (?) for two years during the war. They had sixteen of their own planes plus some charter planes because they had so many men working for them and their headquarters were in Anchorage. Jorgen was doing carpentry work for them. Got to see a lot of Alaska through this company.

**LEARNING ENGLISH** He worked with some Norwegians and Swedes in logging camps, but he picked up English pretty fast. They'd send him down to the warehouse and he'd come back with the wrong thing.

**MEETING SPOUSE** After he came down from Alaska in 1943. His second cousin in Bellingham invited him to dinner at his house in Bellingham. Jorgen had been to Seattle that day and hadn't shaved. When he got to Bellingham his cousin's wife said she invited a nice girl to have dinner with them and he'd better shave. Jorgen and Florence got married 14 days later. They have one son, Terry Jorgenson. He was born on November 3, 1943. They were living in Bellingham at that time. They got married so soon because Jorgen thought he was going to be drafted and that she wouldn't wait for him.

**WORK DURING WWII** Jorgen wasn't drafted and was allowed to go back to Alaska and continue working for Morrison and Knudsen (?). He stayed for six months after he got his deferment. Then he got his induction papers for the army. He was to have his examination in Anchorage. Jorgen wanted to go home and see his wife so he went back to Bellingham. He signed in for his induction in October. He chose to join the army. He was number 324 on the draft when the war broke out but because of an eye injury received in 1933 he wasn't drafted in 1941. The army would have had to operate on his eye. By 1944, the hospitals were full of men coming back from overseas so the army didn't take him this time either.

Jorgen didn't go back to Morrison and Knudsen (?). Worked in a shipyard in Bellingham for a while. Bought a farm in Clipper, Washington. Lived on the farm until 1946. His wife had asthma and couldn't stand the dust. They sold the farm and Jorgen built the house in Bellingham, which they live in now. Jorgen did carpentry work, sometimes for himself and sometimes for others. Worked for a company in Seattle for seven years before he retired. They were working on the university. He always managed to find work.

**CHURCH** Jorgen and his wife belong to St. John's Lutheran Church in Bellingham.

**NORWEGIAN ORGANIZATIONS** They don't belong to any but they like to go to lutefisk dinners and the 17th of May celebration.

Jorgen's son speaks Norwegian. They took him with them to Norway in 1947. They left Terry with Jorgen's father and sister when they went to visit his wife's parents. When they came back three weeks later, he was speaking Norwegian. He was three and a half then. He had forgotten most of it when Jorgen's father came to visit in 1956, but re-learned it when he studied Norwegian at the University of Washington. He got along pretty well when he and his wife went to Norway in 1968. Terry, his wife, his two children, and Jorgen and his wife went to Norway in 1979.

Jorgen's wife was born in Bellingham, Washington but her mother was born in Norway so she speaks Norwegian. Her father was born in North Dakota and lived with many Norwegians and Swedes so he could speak Norwegian pretty well.

**CHRISTMAS** As a child in Norway, he didn't get many presents but they always had a very nice Christmas. His father could cook. He'd get up in the morning and bake cookies, until Jorgen's sister was old enough to do it. They always had a Christmas tree. His father would always sit down and have a devotion before they ate Christmas Eve dinner. It took over an hour to read it. They would sit around the table and listen to their father read the Christmas story. Then they'd open presents and dance around the Christmas tree. At about 11pm they'd have Christmas pudding, which is made out of rice. Jorgen's father would go to bed then and the children could stay up as late as they wanted to since it was Christmas. Jorgen has only good memories about his childhood. He had a wonderful father.

**FAMILY IN NORWAY** Only one of Jorgen's six sisters has passed away. She found out she had cancer of the pancreas in February 1979 and she died on April 20, 1979 exactly 59 years after their mother died, April 20, 1920. She had everything planned for Jorgen's trip to Norway in 1979.

**TRAPPING IN NORWAY** Jorgen's grandfather didn't like them to shoot ptarmigan so they set snares instead. They'd put the snares under the snow and put food instead of the snares. The birds would walk into the snares.

Jorgen describes the large photo on his wall of Sirdalen valley. A mountain valley with a river running through it. Family home, Skjeia is in the lower right of the picture.

Jorgen and his family are close. His son has always been really good. They think a lot of each other. Jorgen has been to Norway six times, his wife four times, Terry three times, and Terry's wife two times.

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**INTERVIEWER'S WRITTEN COMMENTS:** Jorgen showed Cindy a tool used for making wooden shoes. He wore wooden shoes in the winter as a child, and went barefoot in the summer. He had to watch out for snakes. He got his U.S. citizenship in 1937. He bought a U.S. history and constitution textbook and studied it. He passed the exam easily. He has expressed a love for this country and wanted to make a home and work here.