

**NAME** Ole Hoset was born on the Hoset farm in Grindal on February 26, 1908. He used the name Ole Hoset in America as well. His parents were Marit and Ola Hoset. Both of his parents came from Meldal, the neighboring community to Rennebu and moved to Grindal in 1896. Ole's father was farmer and the farm was approximately 20 acres. They also had 10-12 cows. Ole had nine brothers and sisters, and eight of them are still alive today. Ole is number six in the line.

**CHILDHOOD HOME** He remembers playing with his brothers and sisters. They played hopscotch, and 'tresteg,' a game where you perform two leaps and then a jump, to see who managed to jump farthest (This jump is performed once during the interview). They also had broad jump and high jump competitions.

**SOAPBOX DERBY CARS** They made pedal cars out of boards, and thin boards were cut to a circle and used as wheels. The kids were not used to many toys, so they were satisfied with what they were able to build themselves.

**WORK** His job was to clear stones from the farm's fields, before planting the crops. They had potato fields. Ole helped his parents with planting seed potatoes and harvesting potatoes in the fall. Other duties included carrying firewood into the house in the winter.

**SCHOOL** The school was close to the farm. Ole attended elementary school for seven years. Not many people he knew took higher education, but they managed anyway. School was off early in spring, in order for the children to help their parents on the farm. A normal school week was Monday through Wednesday, and then the rest of the week off, to help on the home farm. However, some of his brothers and sisters received some of their education on the farm. A teacher called 'Småbarnlærer' (direct translation: small kids teacher), usually traveled around on the farms. Ole usually sat together with them when they had classes with the teacher. He was around six years at the time. When he went to school, the kids were divided into seven different classes. He had four different teachers during his years in school. The classes have changed much since he attended school. Normal classes were Geography, Church History, Mathematics, Spelling, and Dictation. The kids also had a lot of homework so it was hard to go to school.

**CONFIRMATION** Ole was confirmed 14 years old, because he started one year early in elementary. The rest of the confirmation class was born in 1907, but Ole was born in 1908. The priest held lectures before the confirmation and all had to attend these lectures. The lectures were held in the religious meetinghouse next to the church. There were homework in the confirmation class as well, the pupils had to learn hymn verses between classes. The exam was in the church on the day of the confirmation. They were arranged in two lines, and the priest walked between the rows, asking each person questions. Ole had new clothes for confirmation and wore homemade shoes.

**SHOEMAKER** One neighbor was a shoemaker and made all of Ole's shoes. These shoes were just as good as shoes bought in stores. The shoes were made from ox leather. The ox leather was treated in a tannery. These were normal shoes, not clogs; clogs were not used much on the farm.

**WORK IN NORWAY/SALARY** Ole worked on the home farm for one year before he started working as a hired man on his teacher's farm. Ole had that job for four years. His tasks included working in the barn and chopping wood and transportation of lumber from the forest to the farm. Other tasks included transporting manure and hay with horses and wagons. The weekly salary was 10 NOK and the job paid the same the whole year through. He got

food from his employer, but had to buy clothes himself. He stayed on the farm in the week, and went home in the weekends.

**CITY** The nearest city was Trondheim and Ole did not visit the city until after he was confirmed. The trip to Trondheim was long. Ole had to ride his bike to Meldal, take the bus from Meldal to Orkanger, and then board the boat, 'Orkla,' to Trondheim.

**MILITARY** He was home on the farm for a couple of years and then in the summer of 1929 he served in the military. Ole was then 20 years old. He tried to get out of the military service so he could go to America in spring 1929. He was not allowed to skip military training, so he had to wait until November before he could go to America. Ole served in the artillery division. He was at Værnes just outside Trondheim and his job was to take care of the horses that were used for transporting cannons. Six horses pulled each cannon and then three horses were on each side of a long pole in front of the cannon.

**TROUBLES IN AMERICA** Ole had planned to go to America to earn money but his stay did not go as well as he planned because he did not find a job right away. Ole had contacted a friend who was in America and the friend guaranteed for him so he was able to get to America. His friend was from Sunnfjord and was Ole's sister's ex-fiancé. He was lucky because he did not have to be on a waiting list to go to America. Ole had not planned much as to what he was going to do except that he wanted to earn some money since he was not able to earn money in Norway. However, conditions in America were just as bad. He stayed in Tacoma a couple of months before he traveled to Montana. He stayed at Stratford Hotel together with someone from Sunnfjord. None of them had a job and they made their meals themselves in the hotel room.

**FRIEND** His friend was fired as well, due to the bad economy. His friend's name was Gabriel Vatne. He was enlisted during the war, and died shortly after the war was over.

**TRIP TO AMERICA** The ticket cost 642 NOK from Berkåk to Vancouver and he traveled on the 'Stavangerfjord' from Oslo. He spent one night in Oslo, at the City Hotel. Ole went to the movies that evening and this was the first time he ever had been to a movie. When the ship arrived in Halifax the immigrants bought supplies and food they take with them on their train ride across Canada. Ole left Berkåk on November 6 and came to Halifax on November 15. He received a big paper bag with canned food, bread, and different supplies. The food bag was empty by the time the train arrived in Winnipeg, so the immigrants received a new paper bag there. The food was covered by the cost of the ticket. Crossing Canada took six days and Ole arrived in Tacoma on November 23. There were many immigrants on the train trip across Canada. The rest stayed in Canada but Ole traveled from Vancouver to Tacoma. He did not know anyone when he started the trip, but he met someone who was going to Canada, so he had a travel companion. An older man on the train had been on a visit to Norway and was going back to Canada again. He helped the other immigrants getting fresh supplies when they arrived in Winnipeg.

**LANGUAGE** Ole did not know the language so he took a correspondence course to learn English.

**FIRST IMPRESSION OF AMERICA** He was young. He had a positive attitude. Not many jobs to get, but he could do without a lot.

**GOING TO MONTANA** Ole contacted a relative in Montana to see if he needed an extra man on the farm. He needed help, so the relative sent a train ticket to Ole and he moved to Montana. The relative lived near Scobey, MT on a small farm with approximately 400 acres. The main product on this farm was wheat and corn. They used horses on the field and the relative had nine horses so Ole had to learn to deal with the horses; some were used for the plow, and others for the sowing machine. The relative was Ole's second cousin. He immigrated to America when he was young and he had been back in Norway a couple of times before Ole decided to go to America. He lived in Montana his whole life and never married. The farm was called a homestead. He had a small house and an outhouse. They bought some cows and started to churn butter in the spring. They bought chickens to get eggs. They managed their food themselves. There were no other people on the farm.

**WORK IN AMERICA** Ole lived in America for approximately one year and worked for other farmers. A company owned a thresher, traveled around to the farms and rented the machines to the farmers. He joined the team working on this machine, along with 7-8 other people. A steam tractor powered this machine.

**CLIMATE** It could be cold during the winter in Montana. The terrain did not resemble the terrain around Rennebu, Norway. Ole was used to hilly terrain not the large plains in Montana.

**SALARY** When he worked on the thresher, he received two dollars a day. The farm they worked for provided board. They slept outside in the straw stacks, which was nice in the summer.

**SPEAKING ENGLISH** Ole did not speak much English when he was in America because his relative did not want to speak English. His relative had not spoken Norwegian for some years and he enjoyed the possibility of speaking Norwegian. Ole did speak some English, but he has forgotten it after 50 years. He remembers some phrases, but would not be able to have a conversation in English.

**NEWSPAPERS** He read Decorah Posten and Western Viking while in America. His parents sent him some Norwegian newspapers, so he was updated on the news from Norway. He also received letters from his brothers and sisters. He was the only sibling who immigrated to America. One of them visited America in 1980.

**RETURNING TO NORWAY** Ole figured the economy was not going to improve, so he returned to Norway after three years. He took the train to New York and returned on the ship, 'President Roosevelt.' He passed through Dover, England, Le Havre, France, and Germany before he traveled to Haugesund and Bergen. In Bergen, he spent the night in a hotel before he returned on the 'Nordenfjeldske Dampskibsselskab' to Trondheim. Then he boarded 'Orkla' to Orkanger, took the train to Løkken and then someone picked him up and transported him home from there.

**ARRIVING ON THE HOME FARM** He arrived home at 11pm. His parents were up waiting for him because he called them from Trondheim. They were glad when he arrived home because they knew when he had left America and began to worry because the trip took longer. It was strange to come back to the hills in Norway because he was used to the plains in Montana. He worked on the home farm the first months after he returned to Norway.

**TRAPPING IN AMERICA** He set up traps and caught badgers and weasels. The price was good on the furs. He

usually sent them away and then received payment for them.

**WIFE** His wife is Gjertrud Grindal and he knew her before he immigrated to America. They knew each other before they were confirmed. He did not have to look far for her because she lived 300 meters from his farm. Ole and Gjertrud were married in 1935. The following months they lived on her home farm. Gjertrud and her two sisters were living there before they got married. Ole worked there on the farm for eight years, before they bought the farm where they live today.

**CHILDREN** They have one girl, named Marit. She is named after both her maternal and paternal grandmother. She lives in Oppdal today. She attended business school in Trondheim and started working in a shop in Oppdal. She also married there and has two kids a boy and a girl. The son attends the University in Trondheim and the daughter goes to high school in Trondheim. Their son-in-law works for the Public Road Administration.

**HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION** One night after the two had gone to bed in Montana. Someone knocked on the door and wanted to get in. They both were afraid. His relative finally got up and opened the door. Someone had placed a scarecrow leaning to the door, so it fell into the hall when someone opened the door. Ole was afraid and did not want to get out of bed. After a while they found out that the person guilty for the prank was the female teacher in the area and some other people. Other pranks included rolling over outhouses in the night.

**COMMUNITY** The spirit in the community was good. The community was not Norwegian; there was a mix of many different nationalities. He liked living on the farm rather than the city because that was what he was used to from Norway.

**CONTACT WITH AMERICA** He writes letters with a cousin that lives in Vancouver, BC. He also writes letters with a friend from school who lives on Vancouver Island. He visited America six years ago. Ole visited his cousin and the school friend, but he did not have time to visit Montana. These people have also visited Norway.

**REFLECTIONS** Ole did not remain long in America and he was not satisfied with the job search. However, he never regretted that he left even if he had some problems, because seeing America was an experience. There were big differences between the two countries when he immigrated. The two countries have become similar in the last years, because Norway has changed much lately. Ole immigrated in 1929 and returned home just before Christmas 1932. Ole liked the food in America. He ate turkey for the first time when he got to America. He did not get the citizenship because he was not there long enough.

**TRIP IN AMERICA/CAR** He took one trip to Willestone, North Dakota when he stayed in Montana. A neighbor drove them down with his new Ford 1930-model to visit a friend, who was from Meldal. Ole bought an old truck in 1930 when he was in Montana, a 1926-model Pedal Ford. The cars had pedals before gears were used. He bought the car for \$25 from an old farmer. He learned to drive the car there because he had never driven a car before. One of the neighbor boys used his father's car. He was only 14, but no one questioned his age then. Ole joined him and they drove to Scobey, MT to see a movie.

**CINEMA** The cinema still showed silent movies because no other movies existed then. Some movies had speech,

but Ole enjoyed silent movies more, since he was able to read. He was insecure about the language but it was easier to read than to hear.

**CONTACT WITH AMERICA AFTER WORLD WAR II** The family received groceries and clothes from America. The clothes were used and they shared them with other people in the area. Gjertrud remembers that they received cocoa, grain, canned food (meat), and some food they had not seen before in a big crate. The farmer in Montana, John Grendal sent the food to them. The clothes were for all families in the area but the food was just for the family. These shipments came three times, and helped them a lot. They usually had enough food on the farm since they produced food themselves. Ole also sent some letters during the war to friends in America. They were censored but all arrived to the addressee.