

PERSONAL BACKGROUND Full name, Hans Peter Hansen. Born November 9, 1888 in Vejen, Jylland, Denmark. Vejen means road.

PARENTS Jens Nikolaj Hansen, builder of homes. Mother, Ane Kathrine Mads Bergitta Madsen, housewife.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Four in the family, Kathrine, Karen, Mads, and Hans.

GRANDPARENTS Named after his paternal grandfather, Hans Peter Hansen. Maternal grandparents were large farmers and his paternal grandparents were house farmers (small farmers). He talks about the area he lived in Jutland which was three miles from the border when he left. The borderline was the Kongeaa (river). After WWI the allies conducted a vote to see if the areas taken away from Denmark by Germany in 1864 wanted to return to Denmark. This area was divided into three sections. The first section down to Flensborg voted to return to Denmark and the next section decided to remain German so the third section remained German too.

BACKGROUND ON DANISH HOME They lived about fifteen miles from the East coast and twenty-four to twenty-five miles from the west. This was the border then but it moved down to Flensborg.

GROWING UP IN DENMARK They lived in a farming area. The town was called Vejen. They moved to the city when he was eight years. He talks about travel difficulties in those days and the resulting dialects that developed.

Arrived US April 14, 1914. He went alone, but two friends were aboard.

REASONS FOR LEAVING DENMARK Didn't have a trade.

BICYCLING He had a bicycle with one big wheel and one little wheel. His father sold bicycles. He talks some about the evolution of the bicycle. Brother first had a motorcycle in about 1904. Hans got one later this was the second motorcycle in the area. These were German made. They had pedals on them too because they weren't very powerful. He worked fixing bicycles for a period for his father.

SCHOOL DAYS IN DENMARK Went to a private school this was called the Danish Latin School, which was a preparatory school for the university. Denmark had a mandatory draft and Hans went in at age eighteen. Never seen the Royal Guard. This was a special group. You had to be 6 foot tall to get into it. There were many wealthy and good citizen families involved in this group. They had a five-month service in boot camp. At this time numbers were drawn to determine whether you stayed or went home. These numbers could be sold. Hans signed up for officers training.

This lasted for seven months. For the next five months, after that he was a Corporal training the new boys. The

commander of the Royal Guard at this time was the Crown Prince Christian who later was King Christian X. He had a farewell party at the prince's home in Lyngby. The castle's name was Sorgenfri. At this time, Prince Christian was being advanced in rank. He was a Colonel in the Royal Guard then he became a general and moved over to the infantry in Aarhus in Jylland. Christian loved the guard. Hans had guard duty with the royal family when they were in residence in Copenhagen and in Frederiksborg. The day they left. Crown Prince Christian, his wife's,

Alexandrine, and their two boys, Knud and Frederik stood by the gate when they walked out. The Crown Prince cried. Then they (Hans) took over the Guard as Corporal of the Guard at the Frederiksborg Castle. Checked the castle twice during the night. He talks about the castle. They ran into Frederik and Knud. They had just gotten new bicycles. They gave them their first lesson on the bicycle. He talks about some other experiences of working as Corporal of the Guard. Hans was in the service seventeen months. They had a marksmanship competition and Hans was the best marksman in his company and received a cup from the future King of Denmark. Talks about like in the military. They got two loaves of bread a week and one Danish Krone a day. He talks about their barracks which had no indoor plumbing or kitchens. The armory where he was at was part of the Rosenborg castle. Hans traded his bread and money for food at the YMCA which was nearby. Met a man at the YMCA who started questioning him about the royal guard and it was Prince Gustav of Denmark who was the brother of the Crown Prince. Gustav had a lot of work to do to lose weight to get into the guard. Later, Gustav was in his company and so was a cousin of Gustav's. Talks about Gustav's training. He wasn't quite strong enough and others helped him. Gustav told Hans about his life. He said that Frederiksborg castle was like heaven. Hans' sidekick in the Royal Guard was a Danish count. They stayed friends for years.

WHAT BROUGHT HIM TO THE U.S. He was 25 years old when he came. Hans had no trade. His father wanted him to take over the shop. Hans had a friend in Johannesburg who had a job mining (in South Africa), but this area went under martial law so they couldn't work. A friend of Hans' dad came to Denmark for a visit so Hans decided to come here instead. This man was building a girls reform school in the Tacoma area. Hans came on the 14th of April.

LEAVING DENMARK Sailed from Copenhagen. Ticket about 200 Kroner. Went to Oslo (Kristiania, Norway). He and a friend got off the ship and went to Holmenkollen. Then they took off to England where they ran into a terrific storm. They were locked below for three days with no ventilation. They started getting acquainted with other young people from Norway, Sweden, and Finland. There was a person playing the accordion and they would dance on the deck. The trip took two weeks.

ARRIVAL AT ELLIS ISLAND Talks about passing inspection. One girl looked pregnant, if she was she would have been sent home.

TRAIN TRIP TO TACOMA Train had a stove at one end and people could cook on it. Only knew how to say doughnuts and coffee at the restaurants. So that was all he ate on the trip. The trip took seven days.

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST DAY IN TACOMA Train stopped at the depot on Puyallup Ave. There was a girl who got off the train who he hadn't seen eating the entire trip. There was no one there to greet her, but she had the address. Hans fixed her up with a car. Hans went and got a shave. He had trouble explaining where he wanted to go, language difficulties. He thought 'streetcar' sounded like 'street map. He finally got on the streetcar and made his way to the house, but no one was there. There was a ball game going on, he thought the Eriksons would be

there. He couldn't understand the game or find the Eriksons. It started raining. He went to find something to eat. He went to a saloon, (he didn't know what a saloon was). Then he had to find a room for the night. Went to a Swedish boardinghouse. The next morning he found a place that sold coffee and doughnuts. Went back to the Eriksons. There still wasn't anybody home. He went to the neighbors and asked where they were. They had moved a couple of blocks away. Mrs. Erikson had a sister Irene Minhard (?), she spoke German and hardly any English. Luckily Hans knew some German. She took him over to the Petersons where arrangements had been made for him to stay.

HIS EXPERIENCES AT THE METHODIST CHURCH This was with Charlie, John, and Mathia Peterson. Heard a Danish-Norwegian Methodist preacher named Nelson. He spoke Norwegian. Charlie started going down on his knees for prayer. They never did this in the Lutheran Church. He was introduced to the pastor after the service and they became good friends. This pastor's son was Sirius Nelson (?) an architect. He was the architect for Hans' home. Pastor Nelson moved to Oregon and later back again.

OPENED AN AUTO REPAIR SHOP November 1915. (see counter I-631, II-009)

MEETING WIFE Met at the Danish Lutheran Young People's Society. They were married in 1916.

Member of the Danish Sports Club in Vejen, Denmark.

LEARNING ENGLISH Night school at Franklin High School for one winter. Had had a good deal of English in school. He speaks about his wife and her family. They came from Denmark. He talks about some of the jobs he worked at.

THE AUTOMOBILE BUSINESS Previously the Thompson Brothers, a Model T repair shop.

H.P. HANSEN AND CO. In November 1915, Hans and his friend Jon Hansen started this shop together. Not enough business so his friend returned to his previous job with McNeill and Libby; fishing in Alaska for awhile. Business built up. They worked on only Model T Fords. He rented the shop on Mt. Tahoma Ave. for \$15 a month. Later expanded. Quit in 1958. Started working on Model A's too. Talks about his mechanics. (see counter I-560, I-631)

FEELING AT HOME IN THE U.S. Only planned to stay for about five years. He wanted to visit California and Hawaii and then go home from there, but he met his wife and stayed here. Also had many other friends he made through his business. He mentions Dr. Cravelly (?).

DANISH SOCIAL CLUB Changed group got smaller. His wife started going to the First Presbyterian Church. Stayed with this church for about twenty years.

WIFE AND CHILDREN Wife, Clara Anette Hansen. Children, Bergitte and Margaret. Grandchildren, five girls and one boy. Great-grandchildren, four.

TRIPS BACK TO DENMARK Wife died in 1976 after their 60th anniversary. Built house in 1928. Used to have a summer home.

ORGANIZATIONS Commercial Club, Danish Society for awhile, Leif Erikson League.

Honored as the oldest immigrant by the Leif Erikson League on Danish Day during Scandinavian Days in 1980.

TRIPS BACK TO DENMARK Had a wonderful time. Talks about his experiences on the airplane from which he saw the midnight sun. Talks about his sister-in-law first husband, Ray Roberts, who is a WWII hero. There is a veterans club here in Tacoma named after him, the Ray Roberts Club. He talks about some other war figures, John Cabe (?), a colonel and Tage Hansen (?). Tage had been in the Royal Guard with Hans. Saw a performance of the Royal Guard at Rosenborg Castle and met the Queen. Afterward they were invited to Tage's house, which was full of antiques.

Meeting the family again. They had a big family reunion in a pavilion near where he was born. There were 70-80 people there. There was music from the Girl Guards (a club). Talks about his sister Kathrine's husband who had a fish hatchery and she worked in a bank. His other sister Karen plays the organ and teaches it.

KEPT FAMILY TIES He wrote all these years.

Loves Denmark, but happy to be in the US. He talks about lifestyles in Denmark and the US. He was talking to a minister who said that he was beginning to feel if a couple hadn't been living together they weren't ready for marriage.

Owned a wristwatch before they became popular (1909). After WWI, they became popular.

TALKS ABOUT SWIMMING AT AMERICAN LAKE Hans had brought his trunks from Denmark, but had to go buy some with a skirt on them. His wife wore the sailor suit complete with stockings for swimming.

DANISH HOLIDAYS Christmas. Try to maintain the traditions from Denmark. They always had candles on the tree. They had rice every Christmas. They also had lots of cookies and coffeecakes. Easter was a four-day holiday and so was Pentecost. New Years Eve, they shoot fire crackers and play tricks.

Sings Norwegian National Hymn 'Ja Vi Elsker' followed by the Danish National Hymn 'Det er et yndigt land.'

Joke about Model T days before the end of the 1920s.

IMPORTANCE OF DANISH HERITAGE One of the big things of his life. He's very proud of being Danish. He'd rather be called Norsk than Swedish. In Denmark in 1908, Hans celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Royal Guard. The Royal Theater gave a performance. He talks about a Danish opera singer who became president of the Royal Guard Association in the US. Hans and his wife celebrated the 300th anniversary of the Royal Guard in the U.S. He got an invitation from Tage Hansen in Copenhagen to celebrate the 319th anniversary of the Royal Guard. Was introduced to the Queen again. 250th anniversary of the Royal Guard in the US. Received tickets to attend the celebration from the Danish Association. Gave them to his daughter and son-in-law. He hadn't driven on the freeway for sometime. The dinner was in Olympia. About 10 days before the Queen and her husband came, Hans got a special invitation from the Danish consulate to be his guest and to have an audience with the Queen before the dinner. The governor of Washington state at that time, Daniel Evans, was there at the meeting with the Queen. Several Jews were there. They honored the country of Denmark with a plaque they gave to the Queen. Denmark was occupied by Germany during WWII. The Danes helped many Jews escape to Sweden.