

**FAMILY BACKGROUND** Anna was born in Hemne, Soer-Trondelag, Norway on December 24, 1897. Hemne is west-southwest of Trondheim and is on the tip of Hemnefjord near Kyrksaeteroera.

Her father was Andreas Aunli and mother was Ingeborg Aunli. In America, Anna changed her name from Aunli to Lee. Andreas was a fisherman and did odd jobs. They had a small house on a little piece of land where they grew potatoes and carrots for their own use. They raised a few sheep, but there was not enough land to support a cow. The wool was used for clothes and the mutton for food. The house had three rooms including the upstairs. Water was carried in from a well and heated on the stove. There was a small oven for baking.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS** There were seven children in the family: Ellen, Hilmer, Lars, Anna, Ingebrit, Og, and another Ellen. Ellen, the oldest girl, came to America and married. She lived in ND and died in 1915. Hilmer did road construction; used blasting powder in his work. He married Litet Odegard and lived in Kristiansund, Norway. His wife had two brothers and one sister in America.

Lars was seven years older than Anna. He lives in Canada and was a fisherman. Now he is in a nursing home and was 93 on his birthday, April 13, 1983. Ingebrit came to America and then moved to Canada. He was two years younger than Anna. He was a fisherman by trade and drowned while on a fishing expedition. Og, the youngest brother, went to Canada but returned to Hemne. He married and lived on his wife's father's farm. Both are now in a nursing home, and the oldest son has the farm. Ellen, the youngest sister, was named after the first girl who had emigrated. She lived in Trondheim. She married but had no children. She died in 1982.

**GRANDPARENTS** Her maternal grandmother was Ellen Aunli, and her husband was Ole Aunli. They came from the Settemsdal-Halsa-Nordmoere area where Ole was a fisherman. Ole's former surname was Halvorson, but he took the name Aunli because he lived on his wife's family place, which had that name.

The paternal grandparents were Halvor and Maudie Halvorson. He was a tailor by profession and taught his sons the trade. One son (Ingebrit Halvorson) had a tailoring business in Chicago. His shop was in back of his residence on Logan Square Boulevard. The shop specialized in tuxedos and employed 26 people. The Marshall-Fields Department Store placed orders at this shop.

**FAMOUS RELATIVES** The current ski champions, Ove and Berit Aunli, are related to Anna. Ove's father, Odd, is Anna's nephew. Anna relates some experiences in international contests.

**REMEMBRANCES OF GRANDMOTHER** Anna's grandmother died when Anna was quite young, but she remembers her beautiful white hair. Grandmother Ellen moved away to live with her son, but Anna does not remember particular details. Anna was six years old when Grandmother Ellen died.

**SCHOOL** The school was far off, and there were no roads to walk on. It was difficult for a young child bundled up against the weather. Anna wonders now how they survived during the winter. There were only three grades at school. The pupils stayed in each grade two years before they advanced to the next. Anna had a woman teacher and then a man teacher. She remembers that the man teacher (Andrew) used to come outside and play games with them.

Andrew lived at the school with his wife and small children.

**CHURCH ACTIVITIES** The church was located at Kyrksaeteroera. They walked to church, which took 45 minutes; seldom rode. The minister served many churches in the area, so services were not held every Sunday in this church. She was confirmed here.

**CHRISTMAS** Baking was the speciality at Christmas. The family was too poor so there were not many presents. Fattigmann was a treat. They usually did not have a Christmas tree. Sometimes they attended church on Christmas Eve. Anna knitted mittens for everyone in her family when she was 10 years old.

Risgrynsgroet was eaten on Christmas Eve. They went to a farmer to buy skimmed milk for this dish. The usual foods were boiled meat, previously dried and salted, or fish in all forms.

**CLOTHING** Anna wore hand-me-downs and clothes that her mother made over. She feels she was dressed as well as anyone. Anna's aunt worked for wealthy people in Trondheim; she took care of invalids. The discarded clothing was collected by her aunt and given to Anna's mother for make-overs. Sometimes Mother would dye the material before sewing the clothes. She had an old sewing machine, and another woman would cut the pattern while she did the sewing.

**WORK IN NORWAY** After finishing school she worked on an estate haying. She was small for her age and wonders how she got the job. She had asked one of the hired men at the estate where to apply for a job, and he directed her to an office in Trondheim. Anna had a cousin who was a policeman in Trondheim; he almost discouraged her in seeking a job at that estate. Because of her eagerness to work, she was hired by the interviewer. She was ecstatic.

**FIELD WORK** After the hay was cut for drying, Anna and other workers had to tramp it down for the horse-drawn rake. Anna was a hard worker. The foreman, Finney, saw how she was wearing herself out, so he told her to sit on the hay as it was being stacked. That was easier work. She learned to drive the horses, and one of the workers became jealous because she had an easier job than he did. He gave her orders to pull hay from the barn instead. It was backbreaking work. Foreman Finney came along and reprimanded the field hand, and put Anna back to driving the horses.

She was 16 years old while working on the farm. After being confirmed at 14 she worked two years as a housekeeper for a minister in Trondheim.

**WORLD WAR I** In 1914 just before the war broke out, there were German, Russian, and English troops in Trondheim. Although it was a neutral harbor, there was some bombardment when war was declared. Most of the warring parties left without serious injury, but the Russian ships stayed.

**EMIGRATION** In March 1915 her sister Ellen in North Dakota sent her a ticket to come to America. Anna felt that

job opportunities were much better in America, and she wanted to be on her own.

**PREPARATION FOR EMIGRATION** When she decided to go she was working on a different farm in Selva, Norway, milking cows. She went home to Hemne and stayed with her family for a month. It was snowing when she left. She visited with her aunt in Trondheim, and then boarded the boat for England. She was very sick sailing on the North Sea; she thought she'd die. When the ship docked in Newcastle, England, she felt like returning home. But the captain told her that if she had sailed the North Sea, she could make it over the Atlantic. She continued by train to Liverpool, staying there a week before boarding a ship from the White Star line. In Liverpool, German planes flew over; passage to America was considered unsafe. They had to travel a different shipping route for safety purposes.

It took two weeks to cross the Atlantic. Anna had a third class ticket, but the steward changed her to second class; she couldn't sleep because of the noisy cabin next door. The inhabitants were Polish emigrants, and she was frightened at their noise. A woman who had befriended her in Liverpool shared her cabin with Anna at no extra charge to Anna. She met a man from Finland who escorted her around the ship. He spoke English.

Everyone on board was supposed to have been vaccinated for smallpox. Anna had been vaccinated as a small child, but it didn't take. She had only a small scar on her arm. Because of her bout with seasickness, the doctor had her hide under the stairway until it was over. He did not want her to suffer a reaction on top of her seasickness.

The ship landed in Montreal, Canada. She was put on a train to Chicago, then the Milwaukee Road line to North Dakota. The train ride across America was so slow; people called it a cow train. Anna sat up the entire way. Passengers bought sandwiches, which were served by train personnel. Three men, sitting in back of her, discussed her using the Swedish language. She could understand them. This started a friendship, and they bought her oranges and sandwiches. These men were heading further West.

**SETTLING IN AND WORK** Anna did not like the weather in North Dakota. It was too cold in winter and too Hot in summer. There were terrible hailstorms, and she was so very homesick. She obtained a job in a restaurant owned by a Danish woman, Mrs. Evans. Two of the workers could speak Swedish and Danish; one had been born in America. Sigrid a kitchen worker was Norwegian. She'd been here three years and was 34 years old.

Anna's sister Ellen died when Anna was living in the town of Bowman, North Dakota. She had been there six months. Being underage (17), she required guardianship. Her brother-in-law did not want the responsibility. A Swedish man, Markland, from Scranton, North Dakota owned a hardware store and took over her guardianship. He was nice to her, and her friends considered him a good 'catch' because he was rich.

Mrs. Evans baked all the pastries for the restaurant. At first Anna was the dishwasher, but a new girl was hired, and Anna advanced to cook status. Mrs. Evans and Sigrid taught her cooking. She was paid \$35 a month including board and room. The rooms were above the restaurant.

**LEARNING ENGLISH** Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish were spoken by workers and customers. She picked up English by listening to those who did speak it. Dr. Meisner (?), a German, was instrumental in teaching Anna

English. Also, Dr. Kruseker (?) the veterinary. These two doctors would leave verbal messages with Anna to relay to each other. This way she could practice her English. Anna relates how Dr. Kruseker tricked her into telling Dr. Meisner that he was so nice and that she loved him very much. This brought a hilarious reaction from the observers, but Dr. Meisner forbade them to tell her what she had said. He was afraid that she would be too embarrassed to continue on with English. Learning the language was the hardest part of being in a new country. Sigrid, her friend, was still homesick; Anna comforted her with singing.

Anna moved to Tacoma on July 4, 1916. The Sagen's had heard from friends in Norway that Anna's sister had died and wrote and asked her to come live with them. They had been neighbors in Norway. Eric and Marie Sagen had two children, Lars and Bjerne. Lars lived and died in Blaine, Washington. Bjerne was a policeman in Tacoma. He lived at 610 E. Wright Ave. A third son, Eric, worked at the Fisher Flour Mills in Tacoma.

Anna traveled by train from North Dakota to Tacoma. She made friends with one of the employees on the train. When they reached their destination, he escorted her to the Sagen household. The train had arrived early, so that's why the Sagen's weren't at the station to greet her.

**WORK IN TACOMA** Anna did housework and lived with the Sagens. She was first employed by an English lady with two children. Anna soon became disgusted with this position, because she couldn't burn a light in her room. She quit.

Her next position was at the Dempsey's, a prominent lumber family in Tacoma. Anna took care of the two children. Counting Anna, there were two maids and a cook, Dagmar Williams (married name) who was from Oslo. For work she had to wear furnished uniforms and shoes. The employees were treated quite well, given presents. The children's names were Johnny, four years old, and Danny, eight months old. Mrs. Dempsey traveled extensively, so taking care of the children was Anna's full time job. Johnny proved to be a problem child. Anna tells some of the incidents in detail how he acted. In time, Johnny learned to love her very much, and it broke his heart when she had to leave.

**LUMBER CAMP** After working for the Dempsey's for two and a half years, she went to work as a cook in a lumber camp earning \$75-80 a month, including room and board. She worked until the war was over in 1918. The cooks were assigned tables, and her table happened to seat the section gang which was Greek loggers. They liked Anna and vied for her attention, winning candy from punchboards and bringing it to her. This lumber camp was located in Darrington, WA. She worked at Camp Daniher (?), which was named after Mr. Dempsey's father. Later she worked at Camp #3 near Clear Lake. The lumber camps closed in 1921.

Then she applied for a job at City Dry Cleaners in Seattle. She was accepted and worked there 22 years.

**MEETING SPOUSE, MARRIAGE, AND WORK** She first met her husband at a Christmas party at Anna's rented house on Minor Street in Seattle. There were many Norwegian friends at the party, including John Haugen. She married him in 1942 after knowing him for 20 years. He came to America in 1924; worked in the woods at first, later for Puget Sound Window Cleaners. Anna liked being on her own that is why she waited to get married.

**WORKING CONDITIONS** After a training period, Anna became a presser doing piece work. She made good wages because of her high production. She saved money and bought a new Chrysler. Her employer was Frank Hart, and the cleaners was located at 5th and John Street in Seattle. While training paid \$18 a week, she earned \$60 a week afterwards.

**RETURN TRIPS TO NORWAY** Her first trip home to Norway was in 1930; lifestyle was still the same. She revisited in 1965; many changes had taken place.

Before her visit to Norway in 1930 the owner of the dry cleaners died. The shop changed hands and was renamed Troy Cleaners. Anna worked five months at Troy, then transferred to I. Magnin and worked in alterations there for two years. She relates in detail her experiences at I. Magnin and her subsequent return to Troy Cleaners.

**WEDDING** She and John had a small church wedding. The couple that stood up for them was the only one in attendance. They all went out for dinner. The newlyweds lived in Anna's apartment on Melrose Street.

John worked in the woods. There were no children from this marriage.

**SECOND TRIP TO NORWAY** She went back in 1965 alone as John was feeling too ill. He died while Anna was visiting in Hemne, Norway. She relates in great detail about his heart attack and her difficulty in returning to Seattle. It took fourteen days before she could get a plane back.

**ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS** Anna is a life member of the Sons of Norway but doesn't participate in activities. She seldom attends church. States that she is an old-fashioned Lutheran, living by the Ten Commandments.

**NORWEGIAN HERITAGE** Anna still speaks Norwegian. She relates the story about being in Norway and the women there telling her that she spoke better Norwegian than they did. She phrases this in English and Norwegian.