

**PHIEA PETERSEN** Born in Tinning, Denmark. Tinning is on Jylland (Jutland). Jylland is the peninsula, which connects Denmark with Germany. The nearest large city is Aarhus. Born on August 6, 1901.

**PARENTS** Petrea and Kristian Petersen. Mother was born in Tinning. Father was born in nearby Haurum. He was a farmer, known as 'Gaardmand Kristian.' Had a dairy farm and raised horses. The royalty's forest was connected to Phiea's parent's property.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS** Phiea is the eldest. Left Denmark when 10. Doesn't know too much about her family. About seven children, Nils, Jens, Marie, Sina, and Sern. One child who Phiea didn't know died. Phiea is the only one who came to America.

**GRANDPARENTS** Maternal - Maren Marie Petersen. Phiea remembers her because she stayed with her for some time. It was a custom for the eldest daughter to stay with her grandmother. She stayed with her grandmother until she was 7. Stayed with her mother for three years and then came to America. Maternal grandfather passed away before Phiea was born. Never knew her paternal grandparents.

**SCHOOL** One room school. The teacher was a sweet and kind lady. The minister came in the mornings for worship. He taught them the catechism and prayers for confirmation. One day, Phiea didn't memorize what she was supposed to. The minister rapped over her fingers with a stick. She started studying for confirmation when she was 7 and had moved to her mother's home. She had to learn the whole Bible by heart

**CHILDHOOD HOME** Large home. Front parlour, everyday parlour, and three bedrooms. One-story house.

**CHRISTMAS** Went to church at midnight. Before the service everyone met in the church's reception hall. Marched around Christmas tree. Received a small bag of candy and an orange. Didn't have a tree at home.

**CHRISTMAS** Had a community dinner on Christmas Eve. Everyone brought something. Christmas day had a roast goose. Each child in the family would make a gift for grandparents or aunts that were alone. They visited on Christmas Day. Had Christmas cookies, kringle, and a special kind of coffee bread with prunes, raisins, and nuts. Had fattigmand. Christmas dinner started with the adults having drinks and the children having juice. Had some fruit and then goose. Had potatoes and cabbage. Always had rice. Put a thimble and a penny in it. Whoever got the thimble would become an old maid. Whoever got the penny would get married. Cooked the rice in milk. Ate it with sugar and cinnamon.

**LEAVING DENMARK** Left on August 6, 1911. Was 10 years old. Phiea's mother's oldest brother lived in the US. His name was Anton P. Stahl (?). Anton and his wife came to Denmark to visit in 1910. Phiea was to go back to the US but her foster mother got sick. She left Denmark at 4:00am on her birthday in 1911. Phiea was at her grandmother's. Her mother came and brought her to a small town where a boat would take her across the North Sea. Phiea remembers getting seasick on the boat. Was traveling with a lady who laughed at her for getting sick. This lady got sick when they got to Liverpool, England. They had to stay there for three days. Phiea left the room where they were staying in. Met the caretaker's daughter who was the same age. Phiea bought some food. The girl

asked where she got the money and then took it. Uncle had sent plenty of money for Phiea's 1st class ticket and new clothes. All Phiea got was a new dress from her mother. She was traveling with a friend of the family. The woman pocketed the money, bought a 3rd class ticket and bought her niece new clothes in New York.

REASONS FOR ADOPTION Custom in family was that if the oldest son in family has no children, he will adopt the oldest child of his youngest sister to carry on the family name. Phiea's son has the name Anton P. Stahl (?) Johnson. Phiea's great-grandmother was in the same situation.

TRIP ACROSS THE ATLANTIC Traveled on the Lusitania. Storm on the first night out. Everybody got seasick except for Phiea. The woman she was traveling with never got out of bed. A stewardess would come for Phiea when it was time to eat. Trip was stormy. Took nine days to cross the Atlantic. Normally took seven days.

ELLIS ISLAND Had to go through Ellis Island like all other immigrants because she traveled third class. Wouldn't have had to do this if she'd traveled first class. The woman brought Phiea into the US under her name. Told Phiea in Danish to call her mother. She had to do this or she would run into difficulties. She had 1st class papers for Phiea in the name of Phiea's uncle. Phiea didn't realize what had happened until she had taken out her citizen papers. She had changed her name from Sophiea Petersen to her adopted name Phiea Stahl (?) Johnson. Her adopted mother, Elizabeth, didn't like the name Sophiea.

TRAIN TRIP Met aunt and uncle (adopted parents) and another uncle in Tacoma, Washington on August 18. Passed through on the 16th but the woman she was with took her to Everett, Washington and called the uncle from there. Phiea was glad to see them.

TACOMA, WASH. Uncle was a contractor. Quite well liked. Built quite a few of the highways in the area. Excavated for St. Leo's Church, Holy Rosary Church, and the Lincoln Bowl. His partner was Jones. They built the highway from Longmire up to Nerrada Falls. They had to bring their own tools and work horses. They built their own cookhouse at Longmire. Phiea's aunt had her own horse and buggy. She'd drive back and forth between Tacoma and Longmire. This was the year before Phiea came. They had a nice house in the middle of Tacoma near J Street.

SCHOOL English was difficult. First principal and teacher was an Englishwoman. Gave Phiea a hard time. Put her in the 1st grade. Teacher in that class was sweet. Said Phiea didn't belong there. 2nd grade teacher had the same argument. She started school after Christmas. Had learned some English by then. Teachers with an English background were not helpful or patient. There was another Danish girl who had the same difficulties. One teacher with a German background was very kind. Went to Lincoln School (not related to Lincoln H.S.) an old wooden school that had been there for years. The only man working at the school was the janitor. Phiea finished the 8th grade.

GROWING UP IN AMERICA Her father passed away in 1917, the year the flu was so bad. He had a heart condition. Died of a heart attack one month after he got over the flu. Her mother was a jealous person. Made it difficult for Phiea to make friends. Still she was good to Phiea. Tell about her mother's background. Phiea had to help with the dinner, learn to knit and sew. Longed for Denmark sometimes. Cried when she was alone many times. Missed her sisters and brothers. She never said anything about it. Phiea's mother didn't know she cried. A friend who was staying with the family heard Phiea crying at night. Told her father. Her father made up for it. Played with

her in the snow. He loved children. The children in the neighborhood were his friends. They lived in a Catholic neighborhood. When he died, they paid for his mass.

CITIZENSHIP Took out her papers when 18 years old. Their lawyer who was a friend said he would go with her. They could find no records. The examiner advised them to get her baptismal records from Denmark. Phiea could have got her papers then but she would have deprived the woman who falsely brought her into the US of her citizenship. Her lawyer said she could apply again and move to Canada for four years. She finally got her citizen papers after she got married.

WORK Phiea's father left quite a lot of property when he died. Her mother didn't want to tend to it so she had to take care of it. Had to take care of the banking, the rent, and cleaning. Phiea worked in a telephone office for one year. Her mother was angry about that so she quit.

MEETING SPOUSE They rented out rooms and he rented a room for about seven years. He went home to Sweden for two years. They got married when he came back.

MARRIAGE Husband painted for Richfield Oil Co. Quit doing that and got work doing contracting. They went to Seattle to get married. She wore a nice new street dress. Her mother came and her mother's friend, 'Mother Curley.' Phiea and her husband moved into her mother's house. She took care of her mother until she died at age 96. An uncle who was a bachelor lived there too.

CHILDREN Phiea's first son, Anton was his grandmother's sunshine. (See also I-616) He never needed correcting. Kind and thoughtful. Five years later, Phiea's daughter Gretchen was born. Phiea's mother loved Gretchen, but not like she loved Anton. Tells about the one time Anton got a spanking. He was 6 and was playing with a friend. They heard some swearing at a rented house in the area. Anton came home and said one of the new words he'd learned to his grandmother. She got quite upset and his father had to spank him. Both Anton and Greta started taking violin lessons when 5 years old. Anton learned to play the clarinet and Greta the piano. Both graduated from Pacific Lutheran University. Anton is a minister in Sweet Home, Oregon. He has four children, John, Margaret, Martin, and Suzanne. Suzanne goes to PLU. Martin graduated from PLU. Is in Germany now on a scholarship. Daughter, Greta works for Northwest Airlines at Sea-Tac. Has worked there for 20 years. Graduated as a teacher. Got a job in Texas but didn't want to go. Got a job at Northwest instead. Had to go to school in St. Paul, Minnesota for three months. She is married but separated. Has three children.

CHURCH Was confirmed at St. John's Lutheran Church was in now Luther Memorial. She's been a member there since 1911. Was confirmed by Rev. Stover who helped build the church. Didn't go to church all of the time during the summer because her father was working out of town often and he'd take the family with him. Pastor Loma told Phiea and another girl in the same situation that they were sinners. Phiea quit going to church there until a new pastor came. The other girl ended up dying in an asylum. Phiea continued going to Luther Memorial every Sunday as long as she could drive. Her husband went to Augustana First Church. He did take communion when Anton got married. He went into the church but was never active like at Augustana. He would go to Luther Memorial's 4:00 Easter service and midnight Christmas Eve service. He took the kids to Sunday school but later only went when he wanted to

SCANDINAVIAN ORGANIZATIONS Never belonged to any.

**TRIPS BACK TO DENMARK** Took Anton and Greta to Denmark in 1946. Phiea had received notice at Christmas that her father was dying of cancer. She wrote, saying that she'd come in the spring. They were a month later getting back to the US because the boat they were supposed to take from Liverpool, England was set on fire. They stayed in Denmark for three months. Phiea felt like a stranger. Had to learn the language over again. Denmark didn't have the dialects like it did when she was young. Spent a week in Copenhagen with a cousin before going to Jylland (Jutland). Phiea picked up Danish fast. Anton and Greta learned some. Kind of a strain being with her parents in Denmark at first. Felt like she'd had never been away from her brothers and sisters, although two of them had been born after she left. Phiea went to Denmark right after WWII. Saw a lot of destruction that had occurred during the German occupation. People suffered during the war. People felt very bitter towards the Germans. American paratroopers would land in her parent's field. Hid in the barn. Phiea's brother and sister would take them to the forest at night. Then they'd be taken to Sweden. One cousin was caught doing this. Spent the last month of the war in a German prison camp. The Germans would enter homes and take what they wanted. Phiea has only made this trip once. Her daughter has been back three times.

**DANISH HERITAGE** Proud. Doesn't remember many customs. Was only 1 when she left.

**DANISH LANGUAGE** Can still speak some. Has a sister who can speak English but writes to Phiea in Danish. Phiea had to have an up-to-date Danish dictionary because many words have changed.

**DANISH FOOD** Have fattigmand and rice pudding at Christmas.

**ADOPTED MOTHER** Never spoke Danish to Phiea. Phiea's father would explain things to her in Danish in the basement. Mother wanted Phiea to learn English. Was only three years old when she came to the US. Was adopted by a Mormon family when 5 years old. Was raised in a German settlement. Learned high Dutch in school. Kept the Danish because the people she lived with were Danish. Was raised as a Mormon but baptized as a Lutheran. Joined the Lutheran Church after Anton had gone through seminary. Pastor E. Arthur Larson, pastor at Augustana Church gave her instruction and she joined his church. She met Pastor Larson while with a friend who went to his church. Pastor Larson knew her grandson Anton from PLU. Phiea's mother had been married once before she married Phiea's uncle (adopted father). Was married in the Mormon Church when 14. She had promised Phiea's mother in Denmark that Phiea would be raised a Lutheran.

**ADOPTED FATHER** Was a contractor. Danes wanted him to hire only Danish immigrants. Felt he couldn't do this. Went to St. John's Church. Had an Italian crew, a Russian crew, an America crew, and a couple of Danes. He didn't want a Danish crew that couldn't speak English. Didn't want to hire Danes for labor work. He had his crews doing sewers and planking jobs. Had street and road jobs. Built roads at Fircrest and parts of Tacoma. Father felt the Danes had enough education to find better jobs than labor jobs.

**ORGANIZATIONS** Active in Luther Memorial Church. Member of the Rebekahs. Joined the North American Dinner Association after she got married. This is an insurance organization. Is still active in it. They take care of the sick. Phiea is the paternal supervisor. Calls on the sick. Brings things to them. They give financial assistance when needed.