

NAME He was born Alf Løvoll, however, he used the name Lowell when he arrived in America. Three of his uncles currently living there use Lowell as their last name. All his official documents, including the citizenship papers, had the name, Alf Lowell. Changed the name back to Løvoll when he returned to Norway.

FAMILY Alf was born on the parent's farm on October 9, 1901 in Søvde parish, on Sunnmøre, Norway. Father's name was Morten and his mother's name was Birte. His father came from Vanylven and his mother from Sande; both are places close to where Alf grew up. His grandfather moved from Vanylven and bought a farm in Søvde. Alf's parents took over a smaller farm and his father combined working on the farm with fishing.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Alf had eight brothers and sisters. Alf was number three in the line. There were five girls: (Name mentioned, impossible to hear), Louise, Dina, Kjellaug and Alfhild, and four boys: Petter, Lars, Bendikk and Alf. The youngest brother took over the farm, because no other wanted it. Alf was the oldest boy, but he bought a larger farm that lay close to the family farm. He still owned this farm when he went whaling, after a while he sold the farm to one of his brothers.

GROWING UP ON THE FAMILY FARM Growing up on a farm in that period was not good. The family did not have much money, and the work was hard. His father had to get jobs other places to earn money to enable the family to survive, so the women and kids ran the farm. All had to work hard, and the family did not get much money for the goods produced on the farm. They mainly sold eggs, milk, and some meat. The family owned 5-6 cows and some sheep.

SCHOOL Started elementary school when he was 7 years old and finished 14 years old. He was confirmed 14 years old, and had to start working then to help support the family.

WORK IN NORWAY His first job was on a fishing boat. He earned quite well on this job.

PATERNAL UNCLE His paternal uncle married in 1920. Both he and his wife had been in America before, and his wife returned to Norway before World War I started. The uncle however, was enrolled and fought in World War I. His uncle returned to Norway in 1919 and returned to America the year after.

ALF'S FIRST JOURNEY TO ALASKA Alf decided to join his uncle on his trip. His uncle fished in Alaska. Alf went to Alaska and worked for his uncle for some years. Alf returned to Norway around Christmas 1926. He pondered if he was going to return to America, the chance was 50-50. Bad times both in America and Norway. Alf had some money from his first trip to Alaska so he bought a farm. The houses were bad so he had to build new houses. However, America was bad in the 1930s as well. Letters from friends told him of boats filled with fish, but the fish was impossible to sell. The boats had to get rid of the fish, and get out again.

WHALING After a couple of years he was offered a job on one of the large whale factory ships that went to the Antarctic Ocean. He accepted and got a job in the cannery. The journey was long and Alf was away from home the whole winter, The boat went there in the fall and returned in the spring, approximately four months later. These jobs paid good money and they were hard to come by. His experience from Alaska did not matter much, he knew

someone who had some power with the management of the company and he helped Alf get a job. These ships were located in Sandefjord, and they were owned by Anders Jahre's shipping company (KOSMOS). His first journey was in the winter of 1936 on the boat named Fraternitas. During the journey the ship was sold to Union Whaling Company, Durban, South Africa, a company owned by a Norwegian. The company wanted as many Norwegians as possible because of their experience. All Norwegians who wanted a job got good jobs. The ship went to Madagascar in the summer, which is wintertime in this area. He therefore caught whales there in the summer and went down to the Antarctic again in the winter, which meant that he had two seasons without a break. The company paid the trip back to Norway afterwards. This was a long period to be away from home, especially since his daughter was born on this trip. Therefore he wanted to go home, and came home July 18, 1938. He now had two trips to the Antarctic.

TYPE OF WORK After the whale was caught the ship sailed into a fjord in the ice. They had to watch for ice floes. The ships managed some ice but they also had to be careful not to get onto the Antarctic ice. He worked in the cannery while the boat lay in one of the ice fjords. He steam-boiled the whalebones, the best oil comes from the bones. The oil was drained out until the oil has some blood color, more like a rose color. The oil was then filled into tanks and then given time to settle. Then the ship drove out to sea again. The bones were thrown overboard after the boiling was finished. Some of the companies had plants on the land stations that made bone meal but his ship only made oil. The meat and intestines were also used to create oil, but the quantity of oil from this part of the whale was limited. The Norwegian Government sent inspectors with the ships to ensure that all possible parts of the whales were used. For example if the ship came into a swarm of whales, it could be tempting to make oil only of the best parts of the whale. However, this was illegal and all parts of the whale had to be boiled in the cannery before it could be thrown over board. The crew ate some of the meat. Some of it was dried and mixed together with other meats so they could make meatballs. The skipper could sometime say, this is a good piece of meat, cut it off and hang it to dry. After he returned from Africa he got a new job for the next season. People envied him because of his jobs. Once again he got this job through the same contacts but it also helped that he previously had worked for the company.

PEOPLE ON BOARD THE SHIPS Mostly Norwegians on the trips from Norway and they spoke Norwegian together. On the trip from Durban to Madagascar the crew was mixed, Norwegians, Boers, and some Africans. The Africans and Boers did not eat fish-balls and fish so they complained that they did not get the right food to enable them to work. They wanted curry and rice, and the mate promised them that if they continued they would get the food they wanted. The Boers spoke English and their own Boer language. Alf knew the English language since he had returned from Alaska a couple of years before.

TRIP TO ALASKA In 1920 Alf left Norway and headed for Alaska. His uncle asked if he wanted to join him, Alf had not considered this before, but liked the idea when the uncle proposed it. The uncle felt work in America suited Alf but feared that Alf would never return to Norway.

FATHER'S REACTION Father did not like it when Alf left. Alf's mother had died when Alf was three during childbirth and his father remarried. His mother died when she gave birth to the sixth kid. On the day he left his father said he had to be careful and that he had to stay out of trouble. Alf's plan was to return to take over the farm after he had earned money in America. When he returned there was a larger farm for sale, and he bought this farm.

TRIP TO AMERICA Alf, his uncle and aunt traveled with 'Stavangerfjord,' which was an almost new boat from that Norwegian-American Line (NAL). The trip took 8-9 days, and the weather was mostly bad. When they arrived on Ellis Island he was separated from aunt and uncle. His uncle was American citizen and his aunt automatically got the citizenship since they were married. Alf, on the other hand had to follow the other immigrants. Doctors

checked up on the people that wanted to immigrate. He was not sick so he did not have to wait. Some actually had to return if they were sick. The three of them took the train across the continent, no other travel possibilities at the time. They arrived in Seattle, his uncle lived there earlier, but he did not own house there.

LIFE IN ALASKA His uncle was Johan (John) Lowell. John owned his own boat in Alaska that was 42 feet long. The people in Alaska usually used small boats that fished in the fjords and along the coast and that went to the harbors in the evenings, especially during winter. The boats anchored offshore in the summer if the weather was good. The boat usually had a crew of 3-4 men. They usually fished for halibut. Alf and his uncle fished the year around in the beginning. The boat could be iced down and they might have to lie ashore for as much as eight days to get the ice away. When going out to sea, the sea splash usually froze to the boats, making it difficult to work. The winters were very cold so some quit after one month but some managed to continue. The number of boats increased. Big boats from Seattle came up the coast to fish. Some boats used equipment, which made it difficult to work especially in the storms. Later, all the ships got winches and the crew usually worked in two shifts, one night and one day. Alf rented a room in Juneau. The wages was good under the circumstances so he managed to save some of the money. He spent his time mostly together with Norwegians.

LANGUAGE He took evening classes to learn English in the winter when he had some time off work. The fleet grew, so it was not enough fish for everybody and the price was not good enough. His uncle decided to stop fishing for three months in the winter, which opened the possibility for evening classes. Classes held by English teachers. Men unfortunately dominated Juneau's population, and there were many native Americans in the area. Almost all of the people that owned boats had family, so there were many families there. His uncle bought a house in Alaska and the family owns the same house today. John died two years ago, but his aunt still lives there, she is 93 years old. They had four sons, two live in Juneau, one in Seattle, and one in Denver. None of the sons continued fishing, they had fine jobs in other places.

OTHER JOBS IN ALASKA Alf worked also for other people. His uncle got a job transporting logs to a lumber mill so Alf got a job at another fishing boat in Stewart, AK. This was a good summer for fishing so he was employed on different ships. Uncle bought another boat and now they bought the boat together.

RETURN FROM WHALING/WAR World War II started when he came to Dakar, West Africa after a season in the Antarctic. The ship was ordered to go to Dakar, which was a French harbor. The ship lay there for a couple of weeks, until the Germans occupied France. They then left Dakar immediately and returned to South Africa to pick up people. When they arrived in South Africa the crew was given a choice. They could join the whaling ships again or be sent to England to serve there. Alf did not see any future in that, so he went to Halifax with the ship. When they arrived there, NORTRASHIP, which managed the fleet helped people get jobs on get jobs on farms. Alf also got a job where he worked for a couple of weeks. The salary was only 30 dollars a month, so Alf dropped job after two weeks. He returned to Halifax and said to the people at NORTRASHIP that he wanted to return to fishing. He filled out an application but they did not want to give him job on a boat. He took some painting jobs, before he returned to West Coast, to Vancouver, BC. Alf applied for a residence permit in Canada, and got one for the rest of the war.

BACK TO AMERICA Alf wanted to return to America, so he went to the American Consulate, but his papers were in Norway so they could not help him. His uncle in Everett, WA, wrote to Senator Jackson, and the Senator confirm the Alf's citizenship and helped him get a visa to America.

BACK TO AMERICA So Alf went to Juneau again. When the summer of 1941 was finished he joined a boat to Seattle and was based in Seattle for the rest of the winter. He stayed in Seattle until 1952. His family came to America in 1946 but the whole family returned to the farm in 1952. Alf traveled back and forth the following years, he continued fishing in Seattle but returned to Norway every winter until his retirement in 1966. He kept his American citizenship. He did not have much contact with the family during the war years, and except for a couple of letters, he actually did not have any contact with his family for seven years.

WIFE His wife's name is Astrid, maiden name Aase and she came from Volda. Alf met her when she worked on a farm not far from him. They met each other, could not stay away from each other, so they got married.

KIDS Alf and Astrid had three kids. The oldest son died in a fishing accident. The other son's name is Odd, he currently lives in America. They also have a daughter, named Svanhild. She works for social services (Trygdekassen) in Volda.

NORWEGIAN ASSOCIATIONS Alf was member of Sons of Norway in Juneau. Their activities included speeches, dances, celebrations, and parties. He also was a member in Seattle, where they use Norway Hall. The young are not so interested in Norwegian heritage anymore in Juneau, they are more together with others. The difference in Juneau from example cities in Minnesota, is that Norwegians lived closer together in Minnesota. In Juneau people was more mixed across nationality. There was no Norwegian church in Juneau, but they had a Lutheran church there. The priests in Juneau were Americans, so they did not have any Norwegian sermons. There were some Norwegian priests in Seattle, but they mostly spoke English.

NORWEGIAN NEWSPAPERS He read the Norwegian Viking and he subscribed for Washington Posten while staying in Juneau. Alf thought it was interesting to be updated on different stories from Norway and America. Alf still gets copies of Western Viking from friend in California. He still are in contact with cousins in America, several of his paternal uncles immigrated to America.

TRIPS TO AMERICA Alf and his wife were also on a trip to America in 1967 or 1968.

AMERICAN CUSTOMS BROUGHT TO NORWAY He usually ate toast for breakfast. They used American customs more right after their return, but they returned to Norwegian customs after some years, for example, he used bacon and eggs for breakfast in America. The first American breakfast he tried was Ham and eggs. His uncle told him to order that on a restaurant, but he was not sure what it was, so it took a while before tried this meal. They usually ate much fish.

COMPARISON NORWAY/AMERICA Alf would prefer America from anywhere else in the world, because of the freedom, the good work environment, and the few restrictions. There are more possibilities in America than in Norway, because it is a bigger country, with more things to do. Alf believes that Norway is just as good as America for retired people. His wife thinks that it is more peaceful in Norway, because they are living in a small place. One thing that is better with Norway, is that a person get the weekend off to do other things. Alf does not know of others that returned after retirement, but he has heard that it was normal custom to do so.

KING CRAB AND TUNA FISHING IN AMERICA After Halibut season was finished, he started fishing for king crabs. In 1955-56 there were much King Crabs by Kodiak Island and Aleutian Islands. They used big King Crab traps that measured 6x8 foot, with a line fastened to it. When they threw the trap into the ocean, the trap was filled quickly, and sometimes crabs hung on the outside of the trap. They used large tank ships with pumps. The crabs were thrown into tank and they could live there for 14 days because the crabs did not need food. The crabs were delivered to a canned food factory. The crab's feet, which could be up to 3 feet long, was iced and sent to other states. He also joined ships that fished for tuna. They used trolling lines and trawl nets to catch the fish. They steered the ship around looking for the fish and when they saw a tuna swarm, they set out the trawl and filled it. The swarm could suddenly appear and it was difficult to control where the fish swam. Another way of fishing tuna used live bait. They used a tanker with water in it. The living bait was placed in the tank, usually small fish caught in the rivers. Water circulated in the tank, and they had to feed the bait with oatmeal. The ship found a spot, lay there to calm the surroundings with the front open and when they saw a swarm of tuna they drove the boat there and trapped the fish in the tank. An easy way to catch fish. Alf sometimes used a fishing rod that was a couple of meters long. The fishes were not large, maybe one meter, and several different types existed. The ships sailed to California and Mexico to fish for tuna. They had to measure the temperature of the water, and the water had to be blue and clear. Alf owned his own boat in the 50s, and there were three men on this boat. The crew counted four people when they used trolling lines, and when live bait was used the crew counted at least six people.