

FAMILY BACKGROUND Full name is Hilma Johnson; maiden name was Lundli. Born in northern part of Norway on a farm not far from town. Can't remember her birthday but she's 86 now. Parents names were Peder and Anne Lundli, and there were six children in the family: Peder, Mette, Hilma, Mari, Astrid, and ?. Astrid was the youngest.

Can't remember paternal grandparents, but remembers maternal grandparents who lived close.

Hilma was about 44-45 when she emigrated. She had been married in Norway and had five children. They had a small farm, but her husband also worked at the Sulitjelma mine where he died in an accident. These mines were large—employed over 1000 people—and produced gold and copper. The place was like a big town, and her husband stayed there at a big company house. Before marriage Hilma waited tables at a little Sulitjelma restaurant owned by her sister, Mette.

After marriage, she lived at her husband's [Karl] farm. There was a big place nearby that took people that couldn't care for themselves. Most of the people were elderly, but some were kids. The home didn't like to raise the kids with the elderly. So, Hilma was able to get a girl from there to help her on the farm. The girl's parents had parted, and she needed a home. She was a nice girl and lived with them until they emigrated. Someone wrote to Hilma later and said she died a few years after Hilma left. Hilma planned to bring her with, but wasn't allowed.

EMIGRATION Hilma left because her husband died. She needed to hire someone to run the farm, and there was a big squabble among her husband's people, which she didn't like. 'So I got away because, you know, they listen to the men—they bought so much in (?) with everything—whoever's going to hire, whoever's going to marry...his people. So I thought, I'm going to get away and I did'.

She and the children came to a sister in Seattle. On the farm she just couldn't do everything. They made their living by selling milk, so in summer she needed help to cut the hay. That's when the male relatives started telling her what to do.

SETTLING IN She got work here as did her older children. The young ones stayed with her sister, Mari. Hilma learned English here after her sister found her a job, keeping house for a Norwegian family. They talked half English and half Norwegian, so it wasn't so bad. She stayed there a couple of years. Hilma liked America real well; it was just a little trouble learning English. She received her citizenship papers after two years.

WORK Her sister's husband was the boss of an Alaskan fishing outfit [herring], so her next job 'went kind of easy'. Some of the children went with her to Alaska, but the oldest girl was working in Seattle and didn't go. At first, Hilma worked in a kitchen, helped wait on tables and scrubbed the floors. They had about 25 workers eating and working there. The cook had Hilma prepare some of the foods before she arrived.

'Ja. I think the woman works harder [than the man] because we had to work before the men go to work. We had to work after the man is through eating and everything. The men worked the day, but the women had to wash the dishes and scrub the floors after them'. The farms in Norway weren't so big, but she cared for all the cattle. When

the kids were small, she also helped plowing, sowing, *etc.*

TRADITIONS In Norway, they had a Christmas tree. She fixed mostly lefse. And they had a 'bedehus' with preaching and singing. They lived so close they could hear the music which was so nice. She wouldn't have left if it wasn't for his relations. They had enough to eat, because she got money from the mine after her husband's death. She belonged to the Lutheran church in Norway. Some women got together in 'kvinneforening' [women's club]—knitting, crocheting, talking and drinking coffee. But she never had the time for that. 'When my husband died, my kids were too small, so I had to work like a horse'. Before marriage, she did 'Hardangersoem'. In Hardanger they do so much of this work on aprons and blouses.

RETURN TRIP TO NORWAY When Hilma left, she didn't sell the farm; she thought maybe the kids would return. She kept it, and many years later she returned to Norway to try and sell the homeplace. She has relatives there, but she's been gone so long they don't care.

She didn't manage to sell the farm, so her son and daughter-in-law are in Norway trying to sell it now. She had to borrow the money to come to America. Her kids can speak Norwegian if they want to, even though they say they've forgotten.

In Alaska, she sometimes stayed during the summer and took a big steamer back to Seattle in winter. She married again to a Norwegian fisherman, and they fished in Alaska. Sometimes they wintered there and did trapping. She had a small boat and paddled alone around the bays trapping foxes. Her husband wasn't interested in that. He also had to care for the camp, the buildings, and the store there. Natives were around, and everyone got along fine. Some Norwegians married the native girls; it was mixed races up there. The natives came to the store during the wintertime to buy supplies and food. Bigfoot and Littlefoot were places near where they lived in southeast Alaska not far from Petersburg. The bay was Bigfoot with lots of buildings.

Not many women had traplines. 'With only two people in the place, you get kind of—you like to get out'. One of the fishermen built her a rowboat one summer, and she was well set for trapping. She skinned, dried and sold the furs. She nailed the skins on a couple of boards. Her husband wasn't interested in that part either. She got 40-50 dollars for each silver fox skin; the red fox was less valuable. She liked Alaska because she could do as she pleased.

Bears were around daily, but were no trouble. There were also deer which they hunted for meat. Alaska reminded her somewhat of Norway, although the weather and country were different in the Alaskan bays.

SPEAKING NORWEGIAN Hilma recites part of the Norwegian national anthem 'Ja, vi elsker dette landet'.

[Donna speaks briefly with Hilma's husband.] He was invited by a friend to emigrate to Canada in 1910. He left Norway to go sailing, and came to Vancouver when he was 18. He now lives at home.

A look at Hilma's handwork.