

Emma Severine Mattson. Maiden name is Bratten. Born in Bergen, Norway on April 25, 1913.

PARENTS Engel and Severine Bratten. Mother's maiden name was Bjørndal. Father was a farmer and did fishing in Norway. In America he worked on the railroad. Emma's mother did housework.

Lived outside of Bergen in Bjørndal, fifteen minute drive from Bergen. It was close to two lakes. Emma was the only child.

GRANDPARENTS There was one living grandparents. Mother's father's name was Ole Knutson.

Name Bjørndal comes from a place outside of Bergen. Bratten is the name of a town west of Bergen where her father is from. Now is called Sotra. This is a big island.

CHILDHOOD HOME Parents rented a place until she was 5. They bought land and built a house where Emma lived until they came to the U.S.

CHILDHOOD Remembers being alone. Played with the neighbor kids, one friend still visits her in Tacoma. They went to school together.

CONFIRMATION Confirmed when she was 14 an important time. A dividing time between childhood and adulthood. They really celebrated it.

CONFIRMATION CELEBRATION Family invited over to dinner, celebrate the whole day. Received gifts. Mentions one girl who received 6,000 kroner. Some girls got special Norwegian costumes for confirmation.

Finished school in Norway. Did housework after she finished.

REASONS FOR COMING TO AMERICA Father had been to the U.S. (Tacoma, Seattle, Montana) two times before they all went. He had a brother in California. He thought he could make a better living in the U.S. He did work for the railroad painting railroad signs.

Emma first came to the U.S. with her mother in 1928. Took Stavangerfjord over. Rough seas, seasickness. Landed in New York. Took train to Tacoma.

FEELINGS LEAVING NORWAY Not crazy about going, all her friends were in Norway. Did not understand anybody in U.S. because of the language barrier.

LANDING IN NEW YORK Nothing special, just went through customs.

TOOK TRAIN Was with her mother. Father was already in Tacoma. Mother spoke English already because she had been in Illinois during her youth.

TACOMA Rented a house from Norwegian people. The renters daughter helped Emma with the language. Went to Central High School and learned English which helped a lot.

WORK Stayed home with her parents. Depression hit so it was hard to find work. Came to Tacoma in May 1928. Father worked through the Depression.

Family stayed in a Norwegian community. Father was gone a lot, home on weekends. Used to go to 14th and L to a Norwegian service.

Worked outside home part-time doing housework. Got work through acquaintances. Upper-class people usually employed her.

Upon return from Norway in 1937 she went to work in a home of the people who had KOMO radio station, Karl Haymond. She lived with them.

She did general housework. Had her own room. Scandinavians known as a reliable workers. She did cooking and cleaning. Had Thursday afternoons off as did all the other girls. Had Sunday afternoons off.

GOING BACK TO NORWAY 1936. Her mother was not happy in the states. Father built a home in Norway. Returned to the same part of Norway.

Emma came back to the U.S. She had friends in Tacoma. Decided she liked it here better.

Husband was a logger and a fisherman. He was gone fishing in the summer. She spent 26 summers alone with the children.

This was a hardship to have all the responsibilities, 'keep the home fire going.'

CHILDREN Shirley, Kenneth, and Dennis. Dennis drives a bus in Tacoma. Kenneth lives in Seattle. Shirley went to PLU for one and a half years.

FISHERMAN'S WIFE Alone most of the year when husband fished in California. Other women were in the same situation.

NORWEGIAN CUSTOMS Some maintained in Tacoma. Make certain foods, baked goods, cookies, and pastries. They prefer these foods.

Does not belong to Scandinavian Organizations. Pastor is Martin Linnerud. He rents Gloria Dei once a month for Norwegian services.

Still uses the Norwegian language. Has cousins left in Norway.

TRIPS BACK TO NORWAY 1947, took the family back and stayed for a year. A hardship because everything was rationed, two pounds of meat for six weeks, one cup of sugar a week. This was right after the war. She went to see her mother.

Enjoys visiting Norway. Because of the weather she would not want to live there. Long winter, short summers.

DESCRIBES NORWEGIAN PEOPLE Some good, some not good. Norway takes better care of the old people. They have good old folks homes, clean. They have socialized medicine.

FAMILY KEEPSAKES Pictures, mother's belongings.

BEING NORWEGIAN A drawback to be here with the language, she cannot learn it perfectly.

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES Some people rude about language problems.

Daughter interested in Norwegian heritage. Speaks the language pretty well.