

Ester Irene Sundvik Maiden name was Fristedt. Born in Ödkarby on the Åland Islands. The islands belong to Finland but the people speak Swedish. Located half way between Sweden and Finland.

Lived out in the country by the woods, firs and pines. Close to the water. Took cows to the pasture.

PARENTS Julia Adarina Hinder and Gustav Fristedt. Father spoke both Swedish and Finnish. Some relatives changed their name to a Finnish name. Father was a baker. He met his wife in a bakery where she sold bread. Father was born in Björneborg (Pori in Finnish), Finland.

GRANDPARENTS Maternal grandfather was a ceramic maker, sold his wares in Finland. Made bowls, flower pots, vases, and candlesticks.

SISTERS Two older. Wilhemina and Ingrid. Ingrid is a nurse in Finland.

FATHER When Ester was 3 months old her father went to America. Ester, her mother and 2 sisters stayed on the little farm. Sold calves, butter, milk. Mother was a midwife in town. She also taught kindergarten in her home.

Father was never seen again. Ester never interested in seeing him again. Mother was a hard worker, she never complained, never was idle. Knit, sewed. She died at age 89.

CHILDHOOD HOME Can still see it when she closes her eyes. Has a little fireplace in the bedroom. This was the heat source.

FOODS Mother was a good cook. She had experience from the bakery, carrot pudding, leverlår (ground liver, rice, raisins with egg custard on top of it.) Meatballs, pork roast, side roast. Made sausage, head cheese, rullepölsa. Everything was put in the brine so it would keep longer.

Had a garden. Beets, cabbage, carrots, rutabaga. Kept food in a fruit cellar. This was dug in dirt, lined with bricks, had a roof made of shingles. Kept vegetables and dairy products in it in the summer.

Land was separated from the house. Had a big lawn, wood shed, barn. Did not have inside plumbing.

Mother raised flowers. Daughters were in charge of them: lilacs, cornflowers, irises, forget-me-nots, violets, and lily of the valley.

1 Picked berries in the woods. Blueberries, lingonberries, cranberries, and smultron, like small strawberries.

Mother used linament made of turpentine and ammonia for pains. Made juice out of black currant, used this for winters colds and coughs. Also used chamomile tea when the girls were sick. Was a doctor not far away, but Ester did not go to the doctor until she came to the US.

CHRISTMAS Lasted 20 days. Neighbors all had parties. Cut the tree down from the woods. Snow up to their waist. Decorated the tree with baskets, handmade decorations. Candles on the tree.

Midsummer another highlight in their lives. Decorated outside with birch trees.

Had bonfires on the beach the 1st day of May. Climbed the mountain to see all the fires. Sang 'I dag är det första maj.'

SCHOOL Went for 6 years. Could go on for further learning. Ester wanted domestic education.

CONFIRMATION Went away and lived with an older lady. Went for 1 year. Learned many hymns.

Stayed home after confirmation. Went to Stockholm and worked for a captain's widow for 1 year. She had a guestroom to serve people who came to Stockholm. Ester worked hard. She was homesick. Went home to help her mother. Went to work for a minister, she lived at the parsonage. Knitted wives stockings, cared for the plants, brought wood in. Made fires every morning. Pastor's wife was the sister of the famous architect in Finland, Lars Sonk.

It just happened that Ester went to America. Ester's friend Edith went to America and asked Ester to go. Mother and minister didn't want her to go.

BOAT TRIP Brought a few clothes over and bread. Took 11 days to get from Goeteborg to New York. 1922 was the year of emigration. Seasick.

ELLIS ISLAND Saddest thing that Ester had ever seen. Spent one night there. Six people in one small room. 'Is this America...thought it would be beautiful.' Gives good account of Ellis Island.

Stayed in New York. Knew someone there. Was sponsored by friend's sister. Came to a very famous place 711 5th Avenue. Her friends were caretakers there.

WORK Went to employment agency with her friend Edith. Woman came looking for 2 girls. Needed interpreters, could not understand any English. The lady was of Swedish descent so she could speak fluent Swedish. She did not want the girls to learn English or they might leave.

One of Ester's friends worked for Ethyl Barrymoore. Ester visited them sometimes.

Worked there for 9-10 months. A friend who had come over with them on the boat looked after them. They quit this job and their boss got angry.

They left to learn English. Ester continues talking about experiences with this Swedish boss.

Ester and Edith were sick, malnutrition while working for this lady. They were not fed well.

Needed a girl at Ethyl Barrymoore's place. Ester took care of the children. Worked for them during the summer.

Got a job in Connecticut during the summer, did cooking. This was for the Stantons. This was the best job she ever had. Cooked for 2. Lived by the water. Gives more details about this work experience.

Met husband in New York.

Came back to New York from Connecticut. A friend from Finland told her Boston was nicer than New York. Ester went to Boston.

WORK Went to employment agency looking for work, a Swedish agency. A lady came and interviewed her. There were 4 children to care for. The lady was skeptical because Ester was so young. Had a two weeks trial period.

2 Took a taxi to their house. Lived in Massachusetts. The biggest house Ester had ever seen. She describes the home. Children ate separately from the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Perkins.

Had fish the first night she was there. Could not read cookbooks so fixed it the way that her mother had. Ester did substituting of things.

2 Baked bread. Turned out quite well. She became good friends with the children. Oldest son helped her to learn English. Stayed for 3 years.

Ester had saved enough money to go visit her mother in Finland. She made \$90 a month, good for the times. Spent Christmas in Finland.

She returned and stayed in New York. Met her husband who was staying with some friends.

Got a job in Brooklyn for a lady. Cooking, cleaning, and washing. Made \$75 a month. Worked there for years.

Got a job with her husband on Long Island. Did housework, her husband chauffeured. Ester taught him how to do his job.

Daughter born in New York. Husband got a job with the Pentagon in Washington D.C. Ester worked for a dentist part-time in D.C. Husband sent her tickets to leave September 20, 1943 for Vancouver, Washington.

Got an apartment in Vancouver. Had coal stove for cooking and heat. Lots of people in Vancouver working in shipyards.

NURSERY In October, Ester started a Nursery for Shipyard workers children. The workers were paid quite well. Everything on ration cards. Had buses for transportation.

Did not have time to join Scandinavian groups. Did catering for people. Cleaned houses and did cooking for people.

A highlight for Ester's life was working in the Nursery. Ester also christened a ship in Vancouver. They were celebrating because they had made 2 extra ships for the Navy. She also received a promotion as cook. The ship was named the U.S.S. Hoggatt Bay.

DESCRIBES THE FINNISH/SWEDISH PEOPLE Cannot really say. Has met every kind of people. There is a resemblance in every nationality. Some differences in thinking, beliefs, *etc.* Finns are supposed to be temperamental, clean people.

Ester says her favorite saying that her mother taught her. She says this every night. She says this in Swedish.

HOUSE IN VANCOUVER, WASH. Built their own home while husband alive. Husband died from two shots of penicillin, he had a negative reaction. He was sick from May - August.

They came and told Ester that the highway was going by where their house was. This losing her home and her husband were the saddest things that happened to her while in America.

Ester moved to Illinois when they tore down her home. She now lives in an apartment in Vancouver, Wash.