

Baptized as Elna Margrethe Jensen. Goes by the name Greta. She had her name officially changed to Greta on her US citizenship papers. Born in Give, Denmark. Give is on the east coast of Jutland, three Danish miles west of Vejle. Give had a couple of churches and a lot of stores.

In comparison to Seattle, Give hasn't grown much. It was a farming community. No big industry there. A place where pigs were slaughtered and a candy factory. Born on March 8, 1900.

PARENTS Soeren Peter Jensen and Mette Kathrine Larsen Jensen. They got married in 1892. Soeren was in Nebraska for two years before he got married. He had some uncles there. Greta remembers him saying 'all right!' Soeren and Mette came from farming communities in Vejle. Greta's father was a farmer first. Then opened a butcher shop in Give. He went back to farming when Greta was 7 years old. In 1912 they came back to Give and they bought a house which is still in the family.

CHILDHOOD Greta got her first job when 12 years old. She took care of a little boy on a farm in Give. She took care of the oil lamps in the morning and shined shoes there as well. It was fun to go down where the cows were and be with the milkmaids and the boys who took care of the horses. When she was 11, she took care of an old school teacher who had had a stroke. This was when they lived on a farm. He died during August before Greta moved back to Give. His funeral was big. About six ladies cooked for days for that funeral.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Henriette Sofie made hats in a big store. Got a bladder infection. Died when 25. Jens Kring was a mason. Built houses. Stayed in Give all his life. Died only a short time ago. Thyra Amalie - married Elke (?) Nilsen who had a bookstore in Horsens not far from Give. Amalie is still living. She's 86 years old and lives with her daughter. Jenny Emilie worked in Copenhagen for a while. Later, she and her husband had a dairy store in Kolding, which is also on the east coast of Jutland. She was hit by a bicycle and died.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Greta was the middle child. After her comes Dagmar. Her married name is Mattson. She didn't marry until she came to America in 1950. Svend Aage was a carpenter. He stayed at the family home. He had five children. His wife is still living. Gunhild Valborg lives in California. She visited Greta in 1937. Greta was involved in a Danish drama club. The club went to San Francisco for a Danish play. Gunhild went with Greta and met her husband there. He was from Seattle so Greta knew him. Gunhild was only visiting the US but in 1939, Tage Jensen went to Denmark to marry her. He was from Sapsoe (?) a small island. The war started just after they got married. They couldn't leave the island until after the war was over in 1946, even though he was an American citizen. When they came back to the US, they went to California where Tage worked for wholesale business. They didn't have any children. They still live in Ventura, California. He sold this business and now sells glassware. He's 77 and still working.

GRANDPARENTS Greta remembers her father's mother, although she wasn't very old when she died. Her name was Henriette Soerensen. Paternal grandfather, Jens Soerensen. Maternal grandparents, she remembers her grandfather. She was about 4 years old when he died. His name was Lars Larsen. Maternal grandmother was Else Larsen.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH Everybody had a lot of kids. They started working when they were 10 years old. Greta had to do chores in the morning before she went to school. It wasn't far to go to school or church. Her parents

weren't extremely religious. She was confirmed when 14 years.

CHRISTMAS They looked forward to making decorations for Christmas tree. Didn't get many presents, an apple, an orange, and some candy. Her mother made a bag of hornula (?) for each child. It was a tradition to get this on Christmas Eve. Christmas tree was lit with real candles. Neighbors and her father's Craftsmen's Association had Christmas parties. They sang and danced around the tree. Sometimes went to church.

CHRISTMAS FOODS Many families had goose. Greta's family was large so they had a leg of pork and red cabbage. They also had rice pudding. An almond was put in the pudding, whoever got it won a prize. They still have rice pudding. When it's made with whipped cream, it's a dessert; when it's made with milk, it's mush or groet. Her mother did a lot of baking.

WORK Took care of two little boys in Grindsted. It was hard work. Started this job when 15 years old. She got room and board but no wages. She worked there for 1 1/2 years. When she left, they gave her 60 crowns. They'd give her 2 or 3 crowns if she needed to buy something. Her next job was in Ribe, an old town near the German border, working for a doctor. She earned 15 crowns a month and meals. This was during WWI so they had food stamps. They could only have so much sugar. They could have as much oatmeal mush as they wanted. There was a bakery across the street from the doctor's office.

She would often spend her 15 crowns there. Her next job was on north Sjælland (Zealand). She was there for one summer. She worked for a well-to-do man who'd made money on threshing machines. She got a job at Vejle Fjord Sanatorium through her sister. She made more money there. During the summer, there was a place for dancing by the beach. Her husband used to go there too but they didn't meet until they were in the U.S. There were about 50 girls working at the sanatorium. At first, Greta worked in the dining room. Later she got a job sewing linens, curtains, *etc.* She liked this job. She got evenings and Sundays off. She earned 60 crowns per month at first and then earned 80 crowns per month. She stayed there for four years. She got her own room there. They had a big dining room for the girls who worked there. Some girls stayed there for 10 or 20 years. You couldn't meet boys there. She was 22 when she left the sanatorium.

Greta went home to Give. One Sunday, she and her sister went to a picnic in Vejle. They ran into a family they knew. Jens Lauritzen (?) was with this family. He invited Greta to go to America with him.

PREPARING FOR THE TRIP She had ten days before the ship would leave. She went home to Give and sewed. Her father let use the old steamer trunk that he'd got in America. She later sent it back to Denmark. She packed a lot of clothes into the trunk. Her mother didn't want her to go. A few years before Greta's sister, Amalie was planing on going to America. There was a fire on the boat after the passengers boarded so they had to get off the boat. After she got off of the boat, she was talked in staying in Denmark.

THE TRIP OVER Greta was 22 years old when left for America. The name of the boat was Hellig Olaf Scandinavian-American Lines. It left from Copenhagen. Most of the people got sick on the boat, but Greta had a terrific time. There were a lot of young people on the boat. It took ten days to get from Copenhagen to New York. She left August 11, 1922. The family she came over with traveled 2nd class.

She had no problems at Ellis Island. They checked her throat and her eyes and wanted to know if she could read (in Danish). Jens Lauritzen (?) knew somebody in New York who had a hotel. They stayed over night there. They went out to see New York in the evening. Having ice cream at the drugstore was new to them. She met a man on the boat who was from Chicago. He tried to get Greta to stay in Chicago. He called Seattle 'wild country'. He took them through the lobby of one of the biggest hotels in New York. He showed them how to act in the lobby.

Greta and four other girls stayed in one room at the hotel owned by Jens Lauritsen's acquaintance. When they turned on the lights, they saw bugs on the floor. They left the lights on all night. They had a big breakfast the next day, two fried eggs each, toast, and fried potatoes. Greta had never had a breakfast like that before.

CHICAGO They took the train to Chicago, had to wait a few hours for the train to Seattle. They were in Chicago during the afternoon but they didn't get to see the city. Mrs. Lauritzen (?) didn't want them to venture too far away from the train station.

TRAIN TRIP TO SEATTLE The train wasn't very clean. It was really hot when they went through Montana. They got to Seattle on August 26. A bunch of Danish boys who were staying at a Danish boarding house met them at the train station. They were interested in meeting the Danish girls. There were a couple of Danish girls who had come from Sweden as well as Greta and Jens' sister. The boys invited them to a party that night at the boarding house. The food on the train was pretty good. She had no problem ordering food because she was with people who could speak English. The porters on the train were black. She was in Give, Denmark when she saw a black person for the first time. One of the black waiters was very handsome.

FIRST NIGHT IN SEATTLE They heard songs they knew in this Danish boarding house. Greta didn't want to go in the condition they were in after the long train ride. Greta's hair was like wire. She met her husband-to-be at this party. He had another girl then. The guys wanted to see the girls from Denmark but were not impressed when they saw the condition they were in. They were black because of the train ride. The name of the boarding house was Washington Hall. (see II-477)

WORK Greta lived and worked at the Danish boarding house. She cleaned the eighteen rooms there. Many came there just to eat.

DANISH ORGANIZATIONS She joined a club called 'Harmonien.' They played Danish plays. Her husband was president of this club for more than 20 years. Greta is now serving her 5th year as president. It is now more of a social club than a drama club.

WORK (See II-420) Received \$35 and room and board at the Danish boarding house. She felt this was adequate. She didn't need much.

She had brought some nice clothes from Denmark. A dressmaker, Mrs. Thomas made her the first dress she got in Seattle. She got her second dress at Rhode's Department Store on 2nd Avenue. The fellows always took the girls out to the movies. After the movie they had to go out for coffee at Baasch coffee shop. They had a good time. They had a Danish society. They had dances.

DANISH ORGANIZATIONS Harmonien Club. She joined this club in September 1922. She had a 60th anniversary party in 1982. She and her daughter served coffee for the whole club. They made Danish layer cakes and Danish 'klejner', a type of cookie. The club meets at their clubhouse on the grounds of the Danish old people's home on Des Moines Way.

MEETING SPOUSE She saw him everyday at the Danish boarding house. He was very active in the Harmonien Drama Club. His name was John Petersen. He worked at Wonder Bakery. It was called Butter Loaf Bakery then. He was a creamer-man from Denmark. He was accustomed to the machinery the bakery used because of the work he'd done in Denmark. He was from Copenhagen. Came to Minneapolis in 1920. He had come to Seattle the spring before Greta came.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE Greta worked at Washington Hall for about nine months. She wasn't learning any English because she was with Danish people most of the time. She got a job as a housekeeper from the Richmond's, a wealthy family in Laurelhurst. Another girl worked there. Her parents were Danish. She helped Greta with her English. Greta did a lot of cooking there. Stayed one summer. Her English improved.

NIGHT SCHOOL Greta wanted to go to night school. Laurelhurst was too far away. She got a job in Seattle as a housekeeper for the Norwegian consulate. She had to make dinner for him before she went to night school. It was hard to find time for school most of the time. He was a bachelor and often brought people home for dinner. Greta went to night school only a few times. After this she got married.

MARRIAGE She got married in 1924. Lots of friends came to their wedding. Bert and Sigrid Nielsen had a wedding party at their house on Queen Anne Hill. The wedding took place in a Danish church. The Niensens had a rented house but it was good sized. Sigrid fixed dinner for the guests and had the house decorated with streamers. They played a kissing game afterwards. Greta didn't have a wedding dress. They went to Mukilteo, south of Everett for their honeymoon. Greta and three other girls had bought a cabin on the beach up there. The other three girls had the cabin fixed up for them and had prepared all kinds of food. Greta and John rented the upstairs part of a house on 25th Avenue. This was close to the Danish church. Later they moved into the house of a Danish man who was going to Denmark for the summer. From there, they moved to Ballard.

Greta's husband and Bert Nielsen had a dairy store on Market Street. In 1931, John and Bert's partnership broke up. Hans Petersen built a building on 33rd Street. John put a new dairy store there. They stayed there until after the war. In 1934, Greta took her two children to Denmark.

Mrs. Hansen, an acquaintance in Seattle had a brother in Vejle, Denmark. He had a business in which he made rullepølse. He showed Greta how to make this. When she came back to Seattle, she started selling rullepølse, sylte, syltefløsk. The Norwegians in Ballard were good customers. One time, something was going on at the Norway Hall and they had to have 10 gallons of sour cream for rommegrot.

They bought a house in Ballard on 25th and 75th. It was too far away so they got another house on 73rd. They stayed there for six years. In 1938 they bought the house they have now.

CHILDREN Erik Harley Petersen. He is an accountant. He lives in Fort Myers Beach, Florida. He got married when he was 42 years old. They have no children. They have a beautiful home. Lillian Greta Petersen. She is called Greta. She's married and has four children, three boys and one girl. Her married name is Larsen. Her husband is a professor of sociology at the University of Washington.

CHURCH Greta goes to St. John's Lutheran Church. She is one of the older members of the church. She has helped make cookies and dolls. Helped buy the carpeting for the church. She's not as active now as she was when she was younger.

DANISH ORGANIZATIONS She belongs to the Danish Sisterhood. She had served as president and has hardly missed a meeting. In February 1983 she celebrates her 60th year as a member of the Danish Sisterhood. She is the longest member (not the oldest).

TRIPS BACK TO DENMARK Eight trips. Lots of changes.

DANISH CUSTOMS They still like medisterpoelser, a kind of sausage. They also have Krideneres (?) which is made from ground pork. They spoke in Danish in the home so both of the kids speak it. Her daughter spent a year over there when her husband was teaching at the university there. Her little kids went as well.

She speaks in Danish. She tells about her trips back to Denmark. They went first in 1934, after WWII, they went again. They sold their business in 1946 and went to Denmark. They drove across the US and brought their American car with them. The third time they went was in 1960 when their daughter and son-in-law were there for a year. Greta and her husband stayed for three months. They went to a silver wedding anniversary for both Greta's brother and sister. They rented a car in Denmark so that they could drive to the different places.

When they came back from the trip, they were looking for a store to take care of. They ended up running the old Danish boarding house.

Greta's husband died on August 21, 1968. He had retired four years before. He worked as a cashier for the state liquor wholesale for 12 years. Greta hasn't worked since they quit working at the boarding house.

CHURCH (See counter II-689 and II-952) Greta was married in St. John's Danish Mission Lutheran Church. They were married by Pastor Sorensen. At that time, (1924), the church was on 24th and East Spruce Street. They didn't actually have a church yet. They were married in the basement of the parsonage. Later, they built a beautiful church right next to the parsonage. Greta's daughter was the first to be baptized in it. Her children went to summer school there. They actually lived there while going to school. They could learn Danish at the summer school.

Her daughter was married in this church. Greta's children were instrumental in getting the choir started there. The

Danish Society had Danish plays there. When her son was 16 years old, he got a car. The church was quite a ways from their home. He always had to take other boys and girls home from meetings at the church. Greta's first grandson was baptized in that church.

In 1955, they built a new church. Greta and her husband were there for the dedication of the new church.

LIFE IN AMERICA Greta says she has had a wonderful life here. In 1950 Greta's sister came to help her at the boarding house. She had never been married, but she met someone after she came to America. She got married when she was 42, the same year that she had come to the US. She lives in Des Moines, Washington now. Greta has spent a lot of time with her sister over the years. They have a sister in California too. They like to make a trip down there once in a while. The three sisters try to get together once a year.

Greta also belongs to a singing society. They meet in each other's homes.

Six years ago (1976), Greta initiated the idea of having a Danish Christmas Eve (Juleaften) service. Christmas Eve traditions in different parts of Denmark varied. They would have aebleskiver in some parts of Denmark. At their Juleaften service in Seattle, they sing Danish hymns. They had a Danish minister once who spoke Danish. After the service, they have coffee, julekage (Christmas cake), klejner (Danish cookies). They have big crowds every year.

Greta's husband: John Petersen was well known as an actor in Vig, a town on Zealand, Denmark. He was a 'creamer man' but he belonged to an acting society. He played the part of the 'skriverhand' (writing hand) in one play and that name stuck with him all his life in that town. When he came to America, he joined drama club, which played Danish plays. Greta joined this club too. Greta's daughter became an actress too. Greta went to Santa Barbara to see her perform in 'Mr. and Mrs. North.' Lillian's daughter, Lori Larsen, was also an actress, first at Roosevelt High School and then at the University of Washington. She had been in many plays in Seattle and has had good reviews in the newspapers.

Soendag paa Amager: This play means 'Sunday on Amager.' Amager is an island connected to Copenhagen. Greta played the young girl, Elizebeth, in this play in the 1930's for the 25th anniversary of this drama club. On the 50th anniversary, Greta's daughter, Lillian played the same part in the play. They plan on having Lori, Lillian's daughter play that same part in 1984, when they celebrate the 75th anniversary.