

FAMILY BACKGROUND Full name is Elise Myklebust; maiden name was Muriås. Her brother, Berte, was the first to emigrate and changed the name to Murray in America. The name Muriås came from Valldalen. Her uncle [father's brother] was a telegrafist in Ålesund; he was well-known.

Elise was born the 18th of May, 1893 in Muriås, Valldalen. She is 91 years old now. Muriås has been bought by an Englishman.

Her father's name was Ole Muriås who was born in Muriås. He married Nikoline Dalstad; she came from a farm over one Norwegian mile away. She enjoyed visiting her grandparents as a child. Mother and Father had a large farm; her mother came from the largest in the entire valley. They had cows, sheep, and goats.

There were nine children in the family; seven girls and two boys. Elise was the youngest in the family; that's why she's so small!

During her school days, she had to help in the barn, a job she liked. They had nine cows plus many sheep and goats. They also had a seter and needed to cut large quantities of hay. She didn't do the 'seter' [mountain dairy] work as much as the work on the farm itself. There was so much to do by hand, including cutting the hay by hand.

At Christmas time, they killed a pig and calf, and made lots of good food like 'sylteflesk' [pickled pork]. Describes a storehouse, which contained chests, bedding, etc—a cool airy place. Some of the meat was hung in the rafters to dry.

Elise attended school seven years. The school was a long way off near the water, and if the weather was bad, they stayed overnight down there. She remembers it so well; strange after so many years. Same with the days in America.

After confirmation, she worked with a seamstress, learning the trade. Tells about girlfriend and about social life among the young people.

EMIGRATION She had turned 19 and went to Örskog, a town further up the fjord not far from Valldalen, where she learned more about dressmaking. Didn't like that situation very much. Her sister and husband came home after two years in America. There was a Norwegian choral society from Portland who traveled on the boat, 'Kristianiafjord', and performed. Her sister and husband traveled with the choir because he was a member. His name was Daniel Hanson and he was married to Lina. The other sister, Karoline, was married to Hans Thorson; they didn't like the choir trip. Both sisters had left Norway because they got the 'fever'.

The war came and jobs were limited in Norway and life was hard, not enough food. Many people left Norway then because of the conditions.

Elise wanted badly to return with them to America, nobody could stop her. Mother cried. In November 1914, Elise accompanied her sister back to America. She borrowed the money to buy a ticket. They first went to Bergen and then Oslo on a local boat, and then crossed the ocean on the 'Bergensfjord'. Her brother had emigrated first; then Karoline. They began life in Minneapolis, but then both moved to the West Coast, stopping first in California to visit an uncle who owned a large farm there. He didn't like the climate so they went to Portland. Brother returned to take over the farm before Elise emigrated. His help was needed because the younger brother had died.

LIFE IN AMERICA Lina and Karoline did housework in America, mostly cooking and washing. Elise was impressed with everything in America; she liked it all so well. Met Norwegian-Americans and liked speaking Norwegian with them. Before emigrating, she had learned a little English but had forgotten it after three days. She got a job with an American family, which went very well. The woman there called Karoline, and told her what Elise was to do that day, and Karoline told her the assignment in Norwegian. She lived with the family and received 20 dollars a month in wages. She also worked in the Portland Heights area, which is very fancy. Both she and a sister worked at the same place for two years; her sister was the cook. Elise learned to cook a little American food at this place. The family had two grown daughters. This area in Portland is a very fine location, and the man was a millionaire businessman. She quit there, because she wanted to learn more cooking. Got a job with this employer's sister.

The differences that Elise noted in American food versus Norwegian food was the type of food items, like pie and the frequent use of meats, and the mealtime. Tells a story about waking the son so he could open the store on time. She worked in her last position for at least two years. Had these three housework jobs, and then a final one for a doctor.

It was hard to understand English recipes and instructions in the beginning. But she understood enough to get by without taking any courses. Folks generally liked Norwegian girls for workers because they were 'kjekke folk'. After awhile, her wages increased as she understood English better and learned more about the job. Had to save, put money in the bank because there was no health insurance and no parents to ask for assistance there.

She had one free day per week, Thursday, and also evenings after work was done. The Norwegian girls got together at the Sons or Daughters of Norway; had a good time there. She saved her money, so unfortunately it was the guys who had to spend their money on the girls. At parties, the girls would bring food like cake. The girls liked best to go out with other Norwegians.

While in America, she read a Norwegian paper that was published in the Portland area, but it was so long ago, she can't remember the name.

She met her husband in Portland at a youth meeting at the church in 1917. Can't remember the church's name, but it was a Norwegian Lutheran Church. Her husband went to Alaska to fish for two summers. He was in America for ten years altogether; came from Myklebust, Norway, and emigrated at the age of 16.

EASIER FOR WOMEN TO EMIGRATE THAN MEN Men had to take the worst jobs. Tells about husband's difficulties. His name was Oskar Antonson Myklebust in both Norway and America. She was called Elise Murray

in the USA. Tells about games they played at youth group and about their happy relationship.

RE-EMIGRATION When she came here, she planned on staying in America for only five years. It happened that he [husband] needed to return home. Family wanted him to avoid military service in the war if possible, so they wrote on his behalf. When the war was over, they had to travel home. Had to leave nice five-room house they were renting. When they came to Norway, it was bad times. They thought about returning to America, but the folks were old and they decided to stay and take over the homeplace.

Not sure about husband's thoughts on coming and going to America and Norway. Tells about how people celebrated the end of WWI.

Elise and Oskar were married in 1918, the 18th of September. After marriage, they remained in America for one more year. Her husband fished in Alaska, and she worked out on Monday and Tuesday washing and ironing clothes. He didn't like it so well, but was gone fishing a lot.

Liked the Americans very much; her employer invited her to join them in the parlor with her embroidery. Elise talks about her first Christmas in America, national costume, and May 17th celebration. She used the bunad quite often for Norwegian festivals. Lent it to a friend and it got ruined.

For her wedding, she wore a white dress. They had a double-layer cake. They were married at home by a Norwegian pastor in a Norwegian service. Had dinner afterwards. Tells about the guests.

Husband was not an American citizen, but her sisters were.

FAMILY After returning to Norway, they had their first child, a son born the 20th of February, 1920 at Myklebust. His name is Aasmund. Then they had two girls, Nellie Kleppe and Adled. Pastor thought that was an American name [Adelaide].

CONNECTIONS WITH AMERICA Her sisters were here, and they wrote. One time they called Karoline. Her sister had it very fine; she was 96 years of age. Her daughter came to Norway for two years. Elise has not been back to visit the USA, but would have liked that. She only writes in Norwegian. It was her grandchild who wrote the English response about the interview.

An American custom that she retained in Norway was pie making. Her husband was so fond of pie—lemon, apple, *etc.*

Elise was positively impressed with America and the Americans. The only thing negative could have been learning English. But everything was so much better here.

After returning to Norway, she has lived her entire life in Myklebust in her husband's childhood home. Once a year, she got back to her childhood home in Valldalen. She has had a very good life.