

Nordic American Voices  
Nordic Heritage Museum

Interview of Nan Bentley  
June 27, 2015  
Seattle, Washington

Interviewers: Brandon Benson; Sandra Magnussen Martin

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**Brandon Benson:** [0:08] This is an interview for the Nordic American Voices oral history project. Today is the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, 2015, and we'll be interviewing Nan Bentley. We are at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood. My name is Brandon Benson, and assisting me is Sandra Magnussen Martin. So, welcome, Nan. Could you tell us... Maybe just tell us your name and where you were born.

**Nan Bentley:** [0:34] Okay. My name is Nan Bentley, and I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. And I come from a Yankee and Norwegian family. My first North American relative was Isaac Allerton, who came over on the Mayflower. And he was a signer of the Mayflower Compact. The Mayflower Compact was, before the people got off of the ship, they realized that they were not where they were supposed to be. They were supposed to be going into Virginia. So they realized that they were going into uncharted territory. So they had to have a compact. He is listed as #5 signer.

[1:19] So, he lived there. His wife died soon after they landed, so then he married the daughter of Mr. Brewster, who was the assistant or associate governor of the colony. So he became kind of the businessman for the colony. And they were dealing in furs, and this and that. So they would ship the furs back to England. So he became the person that took things to London and did the business. But unfortunately, he comingled funds, so that did not go over very well in Massachusetts. So he kept on with that for a while, but after a while he was banished to Connecticut. So life was different after that.

[2:08] So then I'm going to kind of talk about how my family interacted with important events in U.S. history. So, the next big event was the Revolution. In 1776, my great-great-great grandfather James Gilmore was at the Battle of Bunker Hill. He served with the forces. Everything was a little loose, so he signed up, I think three different times for a total of eleven months. Nobody served too long. In 1835 his wife was getting a pension of ninety-five dollars per year for his services.

[3:04] Then in 1777... This is the worst thing in our whole family history. My... I think it's four-great-grandfather, Joshua Porter, lived in Danbury, Connecticut, and the Redcoats came. All the supplies for the Revolutionary Army were in Danbury, so they wanted to destroy those. So he was in a house with two other people, and a black man. One of the British guys just beheaded the black man, and they left everybody in the house, and they burned it up. So that was pretty terrible.

[3:54] But more interesting... I have this cousin who was doing family history, and he contacted and found the descendants of the British guy. He's a Lord in the House of Lords. So then they became pen pals, email pals. And then he actually went to England and met him, and he got an apology. So I

think that's the most important thing that ever happened in our family history. So, that was the last time in Danbury that the British tried to come and do anything like that.

[4:32] Then another part of my family during the Revolution, they were Loyalists. Their last name was Whitcomb. So they went up to Ontario and lived there until they left there. But basically, the family kept moving west, which is the American story, right?

[4:59] One of my great-grandmothers, her name was Clementine. She came from Ontario out to Nevada when she was seventeen to teach school. And I think that was rather intrepid of her. That was a very long journey. She stayed there maybe two, three years, and then she probably met my great-grandfather, and then they went back to Minnesota. Most of the people ended up gradually in Minnesota.

[5:33] In the War of 1812, I had a great-great-great grandfather, Joel Porter, and he fought in the Battle of Lundy's Lane, which in the War of 1812 was compared to Gettysburg as far as the amount of killing. And it was a somewhat decisive battle in that war. The interesting thing about him is, after the War of 1812, he returned to Upstate New York, which is where he was living. It's where the battle took place. And he became a circuit-riding Universalist minister. So he went around to several different towns.

[6:27] But even more interesting, he died on July 4, 1837 in Trumansburg, New York. We know some other famous people from that era, Jefferson and Adams, also died on July 4. I don't think it was that year. But it's just kind of an interesting thing, that maybe the people had so much impelling them, that that was a day to celebrate. He had his knife and fork in his hand, and that was it. So I think that's a good story.

[7:06] My first Norwegian relatives came in 1850, and they settled in Illinois. It is said that one settled on property that did become Union Station in Chicago. So, too bad they didn't hang onto that property. That man's name was David Stevens Een. It was probably "stein." So then they sometimes were called Stevenson. They were from Voss. Like most of the people, they were farmers, because that's what everybody did. They took the land as they went west.

**Brandon:** [7:56] Were they farmers in Norway before?

**Nan:** [7:57] Well, everybody was a farmer in Norway. [Laughter] So his whole family came out. This particular part of the family, we still have contact with quite a bit. Good Facebook friends. I have a daughter who is living in Vilnius, Lithuania, and she has been having quite a bit of contact with them. But anyway, they used one name here. It was hyphenated, Stevens-Moe. That whole family had come out, but then the oldest one went back to Norway because of the right of primogeniture, so he got all the land. That branch of the family, they just call themselves Moe. But some of them actually came at one point to Seattle. I saw one of them once like forty years ago, but I lost contact. But they could be members of the museum, as far as I know.

[8:58] So, that was a grandfather. His brother is the one that went back to Norway. He's kind of interesting, because he was a Hardanger fiddle player. So they had beautiful land. The land was gorgeous. I did go to this Voss farm once, and it was so beautiful. Oh, my gosh. I couldn't understand how anyone could leave it. And there's a waterfall in the backyard. Gold medal skier

came from the farm. Very nice.

[9:34] During the Gold Rush, which was in the 1850s, one of the Norwegians- the brother of my great-great-grandfather- he did come out, never to be heard from again, which was more common than not. My great-great grandfather Porter, he went out with his brother. He didn't find anything, either, because nobody really found anything. The famous story in the family is the night before he was supposed to board this ship to go around South America, his mom came to him in a dream and told him not to go. He always listened to his mother, of course. And he didn't go, and the ship was shipwrecked, which more often than not, they were shipwrecked. You were always taking their chances.

[10:39] So he came back with his brother, who was named Miles. And they got back, working on their farms. And the brother was kicked by a horse, and that was the end of that poor Miles. So then my grandfather Miles was born like a week later, or within the month. So he was named Miles. And that has stuck. So we had at one point, like ten years ago, four living Mileses in my family. One of them is my grandson. There is another one that lives near Tacoma. So it's kind of funny- because he was kicked by a horse, this name just kept going. So that's a good story.

[11:30] The Norwegian one, his name was Nils Jensen Moe. And that was probably the most famous thing he ever did, was to disappear in the Gold Rush. [Laughter] Very sad. My Norwegian grandfather, David Stevens Een served in the Civil War, in an Illinois regiment. I'm not sure... I think probably a lot of the other... my Yankee relatives did, too. But people served in different ways. But the most famous story from the Civil War era is my great-grandmother, for whom I'm named, there was what used to be called the Battle of the New Ulm Massacre, but now it's called the Dakota War. Have you heard of that?

**Brandon:** [12:36] No.

**Nan:** [12:37] That was in 1863 in southern Minnesota. The Dakota Sioux were really upset because all their land had been taken away from them. By treaty, they were promised stipends. And they didn't have farm land, or anything. They really had nothing. They weren't getting this money so that they could at least buy some supplies. So they decided to have this massacre. It went all along the Minnesota River in southern Minnesota. They say up to 800 people were killed, which is a lot, because it wasn't that widely populated.

[13:27] So it's said that my great-grandmother, Nancy Gilmore Parks, fought off the Indians on her farm with all of the other ladies, because all the men were off. They used their pots and pans and beat on the chimneys and made as much noise as they could. So, they were not harmed. But I have talked with other people, even here in Seattle, whose families were [inaudible 13:56]. And that kind of stuff. So that was a good one for our family, but not for other families.

[14:07] Then in 1873 came the Great Grasshopper Plague. I don't know if you've ever heard of that. But I read that rather recently in the newspaper, apparently there's a fear that this might happen again. So in all of the Midwest... It was probably a year like this, where it was so hot, and there had been drought. All of the grasshoppers just descended, and all of the crops were ruined. That was a really bad year for everything.

[14:38] And it was noisy, because they make a lot of noise while they're munching away. I know that my grandmother was quoted in the newspaper, talking about that. And later in her life, also, she was interviewed about the massacre, and she said that she understood perfectly why the Indians did that, because they were desperate, and we had done this terrible thing to them. That was her Universalism, I think, that gave her that feeling.

[15:13] So in 1883, my grandfather Niri Breiseth came to this country with his family. They came through Baltimore. And they came because his mother died, and they were living on the family farm called Brenna. It's near Hovin in Telemark. And they didn't feel comfortable staying there. So, my grandfather brought the whole family over, and they went to Iowa. But my grandfather, he didn't want to stay with him. I think that my great grandfather was kind of a ne'er-do-well. [Laughter] He never did what he was supposed to do. I've got his name down in the Leif Erikson business.

[16:14] So he just went and made his way doing odd jobs, and then eventually he ended up in southern Minnesota, and he found my grandmother. It was her father that came to Chicago. So they married. He was a saloon keeper. Not everyone in the family liked that. But they had a hotel and a saloon. They were quite successful in this town of Rushford which is a nice little town on the river.

[16:52] Then my grandmother had my father, and he was reputed to be thirteen pounds at birth. So, she gave up. [Laughter] I think it's a lot of work running a hotel, and everything like that. So they went to a different town. He probably had some saloons or little luncheonettes, or something like that. Things didn't work out, so they came to Minneapolis, probably around... maybe in the 1920s. And he did some business there, but he was never very successful.

[17:35] But I remember going to visit them on Sunday afternoons. We always had to go visit them. And this was the only Norwegian food that I ever got, which was *gjøst*. And I thought that was the worst thing I ever ate. [Laughter] So I always remember that. So then we always... to cleanse our mouths, I guess, we went and had fried chicken, because there was a chicken shack right at the bottom of their apartment building. So that's what we did when we were kids. But then they left Minneapolis to go visit with my aunt in Wisconsin in about 1943.

[18:14] And my grandmother died. But every once in a while my grandfather would come visit us. He was a really lovely man. Very gentle. He didn't tell too many stories, but he had his habits. Every lunch, he had Campbell's tomato soup. That was just the most regular... Nobody else really ate that much Campbell's tomato soup. But he always ate his Campbell's tomato soup.

[18:44] So my grandmother Breiseth was born in this country. And she had the heaviest Norwegian accent. She always said "jello" for "yellow," and vice versa. Whereas my grandfather, his English was just perfect, and he came when he was sixteen, or something. It was just an interesting phenomenon, how people adapt. She kind of decided that she had done her job once my father was born, so she just sat back in her chair and did whatever. And he had to go on and do his things.

[19:24] But from her family, the one that we keep contact with in Norway, of my father's generation, the person we had the most contact with was Torjus Moe. And he was Sonja Henie's physician. He was a really lovely man, too. His wife's name was Vipsen. She was Danish. She was very beautiful, and an actress. They were really nice people to go visit- very warm and welcoming. We visited them in their seaside place. I can't think of the name of the town right now, but it's near Mandal.

[20:16] My grandfather's brother Knut... there were two of them with the name Knut, but then they had middle names, so nobody really knew... Anyway, he served in the Spanish-American War. He is buried in the Golden Gate Cemetery in San Francisco. But I didn't know that until very recently. I used to live in the Bay Area, so I certainly should have gone to look for that grave. I'm kind of sorry about that. But I don't plan to go back there for a while.

[20:55] I was thinking about other war service, so I'm just going to go through war service. So that was Spanish-American War. Then my grandfather, Miles Porter was in the National Guard during World War One. During World War Two, my uncle Miles Porter was in the Navy Air Force. He apparently able was able to fly every kind of those little planes that they used. He was very good at that. And he was a lawyer, and his father was also a lawyer. There were a lot of lawyers in the family.

[21:37] Both of my parents were born in the year 1909 in southern Minnesota. Then they came to Minneapolis when they were high school age. They met there, but they weren't dating. They started dating when they were in college at the University of Minnesota. My father graduated in three years, Phi Beta Kappa. And he really should have gone on to graduate school, but he had to support the family, since he had this father and mother who weren't doing too much.

[22:17] So he did that, and he went into business with his brother-in-law, Bill Guindon. They had this successful business of selling sundries to drugstores. Then they started selling Old Spice, so they became the outlet for Old Spice in the whole Midwest. So he traveled around, and did this and that.

[22:46] Then my uncle went to Chicago to run the Midwest thing in Chicago. My father went to L.A. to run the west coast for that. Then when my uncle died, my parents moved from L.A., which was paradise to them, back and took over the Chicago business. So that was the big life, was for Old Spice. So if we see interesting bits of Old Spice around the world... Like I saw something in Vilnius, Lithuania this year... And the packaging and everything is different. So I brought it to my brother for his birthday, and he was very happy about that.

[23:35] My father's brother, I guess he went to the University of Minnesota. He lived in Greenwich Village most of his life. He was gay, and he was a playwright, and he wrote a lot of plays about the Scandinavian forebears. They're quite incisive. He's had a couple of them produced in New York, so that was really nice. The most interesting thing that he did- one year he went to Oslo and he taught at the University of Oslo. He taught a course on Ibsen, and other playwrights. He taught it all *på norsk*. So that was a big feat. The family couldn't believe that he could do that, because growing up, they really didn't speak much Norwegian, and I never really heard any Norwegian until... I never became a "Norwegian" until I moved to Seattle exactly fourteen years ago. It was just really different.

[24:46] My mother's mother went to college, so that would have been in the 1890s. And she was a teacher. And she was a member of the NAACP, and the WCTU. [Laughter] Those things were kind of incongruous. We used to joke about the WCTU stuff, because she used a lot of Lydia Pinkham's Tonic, which was alcohol. [Laughter] But forget that. Anyway, they had five children, one of whom died. So my mother had three sisters and she had one brother, Miles. And he was a lawyer.

[25:39] He unfortunately died from drowning while saving my mother. That was a very sad story in

the family. So then that child, of course, was named Miles. My grandmother was pregnant when all this happened. So then there came another Miles. I don't know, maybe it's a little bit bad luck with this name, I'm thinking. But anyway, most of them are doing well, the ones that are alive now. They're all doing okay.

[26:18] So, she died. She had colon cancer. So she died. Two of the children were teenagers. So they had to kind of grow up then. My Aunt Pat, who is my godmother, she also married a Norwegian. His name was David Struxness. And his father was a Lutheran minister. For these two sisters to marry Norwegians was really bad. And for the Norwegians to marry the Yankees, that was really bad, too. You had these opposing forces. That was in 1931 that my parents got married. That was a hard thing. And that's why I think my mother was very glad to go to California so she was away from the family.

[27:23] I mean, they co-existed, but there was not a whole lot of friendliness there. Different cultures. Totally different cultures. Then there was the Lutheranism, and then the Congregationalism or Unitarianism. And those were very different. I had to go to a Lutheran Sunday school. And this is no aspersion on any Lutherans in the room, but I didn't like it, so I left when I was nine years old. I left the church. I don't think my grandmother liked that very well. So I went to a Congregational Church all by myself.

[28:05] This is another interesting thing. In Minneapolis during the war, we had what was called released time for religious education. So everybody in the school went except me. And that was around 1943. That meant a teacher had to stay with me. And I think they didn't like that very well. So the next year I was forced to go. But we survived all that.

[28:38] Politics has always been very important in my family. My grandfather Miles was in the Minnesota State Legislature during the time that he died. So that was a very sad thing. My uncle Frank Clague was a member of Congress. That was in about probably 1928. Republican, for southern Minnesota. My mother went to visit there. Her favorite story from visiting her uncle and auntie was that they went to some reception at the White House, and there was Mr. Hoover's underwear and everything out on the clothesline, drying. Back then they didn't have as much cover up as we have now. She was there for a while.

[29:36] There's another interesting story that I don't think everyone in the family knows. My uncle was... It was in the newspapers that he was censured because he exerted a bit of nepotism, and he employed his wife. I think it was five thousand dollars or something. But five thousand dollars in 1930 was a lot of money, as opposed to what it is now. But you know that people in Congress always employ their families. That's a long-term sort of tradition. But anyway, that's what they did.

[30:20] My father ran for the legislature in Illinois when he was living there. This was in DeKalb County. He got more votes than any Democrat ever got before, so that was to his credit. He did serve on the police and fire commission in the city of Wheaton, which is a very conservative town. You might know there's no alcohol allowed there. Everything gets delivered in white panel trucks.

[30:53] So they lived there until my father died in 1971. Then my mother moved out to Palo Alto, which is where I was living. That's where she died. Actually, she died over in Oakland, because she went to live in my brother's house. She used to live around the corner from me.

[31:16] I am the oldest child in the family, and I have four brothers. My brother next to me, Christopher, is an academic. He went to UCLA and Cornell and Oxford. He got his Ph.D. in English history, but he has really operated on American history all his life. He was college president in Pennsylvania, of Wilkes University. He did that for seventeen years, and then he decided to retire. So he retired and became the CEO of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute in Hyde Park. So he lived in one of the Roosevelt houses. Then he retired from that. Then he became the CEO of the Frances Perkins Center up in Maine. That's the thing that is dearest to his heart, Frances Perkins. Do you know about Frances Perkins?

**Brandon:** [32:30] No.

**Nan:** [32:31] She is probably one of the most unusual people in American History. She herself devised the New Deal. She put into effect Social Security, the minimum wage, the work week. But she was a very modest person, and she never wanted the limelight. In all of probably recorded history, maybe someone like Queen Isabel in Spain was the only comparable person. Frances Perkins was the only person that did something like this totally on her own steam. She didn't have any male family figure that pushed her along. She actually had a husband who was mentally ill, and a daughter who was obstreperous. But she kept on, and she really was responsible for transforming the country. He's trying to get more recognition for her. There was a push to get her on the new bill... they're going to change the currency. That would be really nice if that would happen.

[33:55] Anyway, I have two daughters. They're both musicians- Karen and Heather. Karen has lived in a lot of places. She is a concert violinist. I think she has played on every continent except Africa. Right now she is living in Vilnius, Lithuania with her husband. He is the Rector of the European Humanities University, which is a university in exile from Belarus. There are a lot of politics that go on here. I visited there last fall, and it was a wonderful place to visit, because they live in a UNESCO World Heritage Site, so it was so interesting to be there.

[34:49] They follow a lot of the Nordic, Baltic customs. So last week they were having the Midsummer celebrations. That went on for days. They really do everything up, because they're finally free to celebrate. They've only had twenty-five years of freedom since 1300. Sweden was over them, and Poland was over them, and France, and Russia, and Germany. They are really feeling good. That's one reason why they really want to support NATO and everything.

[35:30] My other daughter lives here in Shoreline, and that's why I live here, because I want to be near. Since I only have two grandchildren, I wanted to be near them. So as I say, I moved up here July 1, 2001. So now I've been here fourteen years. I feel that this is the place I was meant to live. So that's when I became a Norwegian. You know, there was never much Norwegian stuff going around me, and nobody cooked any Norwegian dishes. The only thing we ever had was lefse, and we did celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve. Then we had the other customs. The next day was Santa Claus. We always got a silver dollar and an orange in the bottom of our stockings. But I think that tradition has gone.

[36:33] So the first thing, when I came... I don't know why I did this, but I saw this little notice about the Norwegian Ladies' Chorus. So I called up, and I've been a member of the Norwegian Ladies' Chorus since that time. I've been president. We have a lot of fun. We're always going

somewhere. If there's anything Nordic that's happening, we're there. It gives you a really interesting flavor. And I'm a member of the museum, and I take Norwegian class from Ed. But that's a social experience. [Laughter] But I have some knowledge of Norwegian. I should, because it's been quite a few years, and I don't want to think how many years it's been. My proficiency is not very great.

[37:27] My other daughter Heather here, she is also a musician. She is a composer, and she just composed her first opera, which was performed in January- three performances- sold out performances. So we're very proud of her.

[37:48] I worked at Stanford my whole life as an administrator in various departments. I actually got to know, literally, the entire faculty. I first started working there in 1960. I took a little time off when my kids were young, and then started in again in 1976, and retired in 1999. So I really got a feeling for every... Except I never worked in engineering, but all the other things. It was really an interesting life. It was as good as it could be.

**Saundra:** [38:33] What was the award that you received from Stanford?

**Nan:** [38:36] It was for being a good administrator. Something like that.

**Brandon:** [38:43] Nan, you mentioned that you have some relatives that you keep in touch with in Norway. Do you visit there?

**Nan:** [38:49] Yeah. I visit.

**Brandon:** [38:50] And you've seen them; it's not just Facebook?

**Nan:** [38:52] No. I have visited them twice.

**Brandon:** [38:54] Have they visited here?

**Nan:** [38:56] No, they don't seem to come here. I think they did come, but they didn't tell us. They're shyer than we are, because they're Norwegians. The one from the generation of my kids, she works for the Nobel Institute. And her brother is in oil. He works for Geocap. Their father Paul worked in Foreign Service. He retired a few years ago. He was the ambassador to Chile. The young lady, her name is Vibeca, she is going to come visit my daughter in Vilnius, because there are so many elements of the Holocaust left there. Vibeca's research does follow the Holocaust. She is a very interesting young woman.

[39:58] There are all these things going on. None of them have very many children. Everyone in Vibeca's generation, maybe people had two kids, and now they all have one. So I don't know, that was true with my father's family, too. I mean, he had five kids, and he had one sister that had one child. Then his other brother and sister had no children. But then in the generation before that, there were not that many children, either. So it went from this abundance of thirteen children, coming down to not very many. Just an interesting way of looking at things. Pragmatic, I guess.

**Brandon:** [40:50] Do you have anything?



**Saundra:** [40:52] No, I don't have any more questions.

**Nan:** [40:53] No questions?

**Brandon:** [40:54] It sounds like you're active on the community here.

**Nan:** [40:58] Right.

**Brandon:** [40:58] With the chorus and also the museum. Are there other organizations?

**Nan:** [41:04] I have a couple book clubs and discussion clubs. I'm active at the University Unitarian Church, and I have a forum that I'm responsible for every Wednesday of the year. So I have to think up something for people to discuss, or find a speaker, or show a movie every week. But that's kind of fun. It keeps everybody on their toes, and it's a very nice group. They're very compatible.

**Saundra:** [41:34] I do have some questions about the chorus. Do you sing in Norwegian?

**Nan:** [41:39] We sing in Norwegian; Swedish; Finnish, sometimes. Almost any language. But I would say at least fifty percent is in Norwegian, and Latin.

**Saundra:** [41:53] Has the group traveled to Norway?

**Nan:** [41:57] Yes.

**Saundra:** [41:57] Or hosted Norwegian choruses here?

**Nan:** [41:59] I've been to Norway twice with the chorus, in 2003 and 2007. In 2007 we went up to north Norway. We went up as far as Harstad, I guess. So that was a lot of fun. You see a lot of open territory that way. [Laughter] Have you been to north Norway?

**Brandon:** [42:21] No. [Inaudible]

**Nan:** [42:23] Yeah, it is. Nobody around. I think there are 24,000 people that live there, in a very long expanse of territory. So I've been to Stavanger a few times. I don't know why I always end up in Stavanger. That's an interesting... I love that town. It's so beautiful. Have you been there?

**Brandon:** [42:49] I haven't.

**Saundra:** [42:50] I've been there, to a fish market.

**Nan:** [42:51] Yeah. The buildings, everything is so clean. The little streets, not as wide as this room, with houses, and they're all clean, and it's really nice.

**Saundra:** [43:05] Are there choruses that come from Norway...

**Nan:** [43:07] Yes.

**Saundra:** [43:08] That you host here?

**Nan:** [43:09] Well, we haven't exactly hosted them, because we're... I don't know, maybe 25 people at most. So usually when those choruses come, they're hosted by a Lutheran church, because they have a lot of members to draw on. But mostly when these choruses come, they stay in hotels. They don't want to stay in people's houses. And we stay in hotels. It's just an imposition. I have gone on trips with other kinds of groups where you stay in people's houses, and it's really nice, but it's a big imposition. And then you have to get people here and there. It's easier to do the hotel and bus routine if you've got a large group. Because if we tour, then significant others come along, too. So it's usually at least 50 people. That's a lot to keep track of. But anyone is welcome to come and join the Norwegian Ladies' Chorus. We rehearse on Tuesdays at seven or seven-thirty at the Lodge.

**Saundra:** [44:26] The Leif Erickson Lodge here in Ballard?

**Nan:** [44:29] Yeah, in Ballard. So, yeah. And it's a very loyal and supportive group of ladies. We range from the 30s to the 90s. Anyone can sing. Even if you can't sing, you can come and sing. It usually ends up sounding fine. It's just that some people can't really sing, so the other people have to carry it.

**Saundra:** [44:54] Do you do other activities in the Lodge? Are you a member of the Lodge?

**Nan:** [44:59] Yeah, I'm a member of the Lodge. Yeah, I sometimes help out with being a cashier, or something like that. I've actually got a lot to do. Most every day, I have some activity, and then I have to read my books for all my book clubs. It keeps you busy. And reading the newspapers, and... What else. Let's see if there's anything else I wanted to say...

[45:33] Oh, one interesting thing. My parents were married in 1931. They both went to the University of Minnesota. And then they built this house in Minneapolis, and it was one of five houses that were built during that year because of the Depression. It was a really nice house. It was more like a little Seattle house, kind of a little Cape Cod house up on a little knoll. It was nice, because it had a... what do you call the thing in the back? I don't have one of these, so... An alley. [Laughter] I'm always wishing I had an alley. On Queen Anne, people don't have alleys very much. And it would really help some people, like the ones across the street from me. Some have 44 steps, or more, and no elevator.

[46:31] Anyway, I am very happy to be in Seattle, and to have found my Norwegian roots, and to have actually eaten some Norwegian food. That was the interesting thing- since that family came in 1850, basically they just adopted American food. So whereas most of the people that I met here came over a hundred years later, so they still remember all these things, and the customs, and everything. So it's quite different.

[47:09] I had never heard of the Sons of Norway until... Actually, I went with my brother to Norway the first time I went, in 1986, on a Sons of Norway trip, and it was out of Minneapolis. But I was living in California. I don't know how my brother hooked up with this, but it was a very nice trip. That was, I think, motivated by the whole Roots phenomenon. You know, when they showed Roots? And that's how we got our family histories going, too, because my daughter Karen had to do something in seventh grade about her genealogy.

[47:47] So then my brother, the historian, really got into it. Then we had this other cousin in Minneapolis, and he really got into it. He did my mother's side, and then my brother found all this stuff about my father's side. Actually with the Norwegian stuff, if you want to go back, you can go to the year 1000. It just takes a lot of looking at microfilm. But that's all thanks to the Mormons. They're the ones that did it all.

**Brandon:** [48:24] Well, Nan, this was great. It sounds like your family has a rich history going back generations.

**Nan:** [48:28] I think so. I think we're very lucky. And to have participated in everything that went on in this country is a very lucky feeling.

**Brandon:** [48:41] Mm hmm.

**Saundra:** [48:42] And to know that history, because a lot of people don't.

**Nan:** [48:43] Yeah. It's all written down.

**Saundra:** [48:45] That's wonderful.

**Nan:** [48:46] So it's up to my kids to keep adding to it. But you don't know if they will do that. But I hope they will. Because I think we're basically all very lucky. And you guys are great for doing this project, too.

**Saundra:** [49:01] Well, it's very fun for us to hear people's stories.

**Nan:** [49:05] Yeah.

**Brandon:** [49:06] Well, thanks, Nan, for participating.

**Nan:** [49:07] Thank you.

END OF RECORDING.

Transcription by Alison DeRiemer.