

EI-1353

JOHN HENDRICKS

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DALEY: Good morning. This is Kevin Daley for the National Park Service, and the Ellis Island Oral History Program. Today is October 21, 2004. I'm in the Ballard section of Seattle, Washington state, with John Hendricks, who came through Ellis Island in 1930, from Norway. This interview was assisted and arranged by Maryann Forsblad of the Nordic Heritage Museum, and we appreciate her help in arranging this interview. So, good morning and thank you for allowing us to interview you.

HENDRICKS: You're welcome.

DALEY: Can you give me your birth date, please?

HENDRICKS: It was February 7th, 1921.

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DALEY: And what was the name of the town, or the city, that you were born in?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was Aurdal, A-U-R-D-A-L, in the county of Sykkyliden. And that's spelled S-Y-K-K-Y-L-D-E-N.

DALEY: And which part of Norway was that in?

HENDRICKS: Well, it's in the—well, it's not the southern, not quite the southern part. It's in the vicinity of Olusand [PH], and that's north of Bergen. But it's not the northern, it's called southern Norway, southern part.

DALEY: And what kind of a town was this? Was this a small town?

HENDRICKS: Well, oh, yes, it was a small town. We knew everybody in town! [Laughs] Well, the place where I called Aurdal, that was only ten homes, and within walking distance there were five, six more places, with the same amount, eight, ten, twelve homes. And it was a different—different.

DALEY: Was this a hilly area?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes.

DALEY: Mountainous?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was on a fjord, and there was the mountains behind it. We live about, on, approximately three miles from the fjord, our home was. But we could see the water; it was all beautiful scenery.

DALEY: And did this particular fjord have a name?

HENDRICKS: No, it didn't have a name. It was close to Nord Fjord, N-O-R-D-F, Nord Fjord. Nord Fjord is N-O-R-D, F-J-O-R-D, which is North Fjord. But it was, well, I don't know just what I was trying to say.

DALEY: Okay, can you describe your house?

HENDRICKS: Well, the house was built probably in the 1700's, and it had, well, it was well-insulated. And the roof was sod. Grass grew on it, and it was dirt. That's—that was the roof, and it never seemed to leak!

DALEY: And what were the walls made out of?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was wood. It was wood, and it all came from [laughs] the woods around us!

DALEY: Was it one story, two stories?

HENDRICKS: It was really one story, and well, it had a basement dug out. And this basement wasn't concrete; it was big stones all the way around. The walls must have been fourteen, eighteen inches thick! [Laughs]

DALEY: And who lived in this house? Could you--?

HENDRICKS: Well, to start out, my great-grandfather and my grandfather, and my mother's folks. My grandfather—they had nine children; my mother was the youngest of nine. They all were born in that house.

DALEY: But there were four generations living in that house?

HENDRICKS: No, not at one time, no.

DALEY: Oh, not at one time?

HENDRICKS: No, no. We had my grandmother and grandparents, and my folks, and us, so there was three generations at one time.

DALEY: Three generations.

HENDRICKS: My Dad didn't live there very long. Well, we had five kids, and my Dad had to—he came back to America to, well, he had a fishing boat in Norway. And he lost it in a storm. And, it was a terrific loss, and he had [unclear] a way of repaying all the bills, so he went back. He'd been to the United States in 1913 and '14, before he was married, and came back. And in order to make a few dollars, he came to this country in 1923. And it took seven years before he had enough money together to bring my mother and the five kids over.

DALEY: Oh, okay. Let's start with your grandparents. What were their names?

HENDRICKS: Well, my grandparents on my mother's side was Olie Aurdal and, oh boy, Petrina. And on my father's side, his name was Olaf Rafteseth, but he didn't—he was in another part of Norway. Not too far away, but it was a long ways for us, who didn't have automobiles to drive around, you know, so. And they lived on an island near Ulstangbik [PH]. But he had, Dad, a big family, too, my Dad. As a matter of fact, he was one of thirteen. But of the thirteen kids, he was the only one that immigrated to the United States. On my mother's side, there was nine in her family—she was the last one. They all came! [Laughs]

DALEY: What were your parents' names?

HENDRICKS: My father was Oscar, and my mother's name was Oluffa, O-L-U-F-F-A.

DALEY: That was her maiden name?

HENDRICKS: That was her first name, yes.

DALEY: Oh.

HENDRICKS: Oluffa Aurdal was the maiden name. They had the name of the town they were living in. That was her maiden name, and my father was Oscar Rafteseth. His name was Oscar Hendrick Rafteseth, and when he came to this country and was a naturalized citizen, he took his middle name and added an S to it, and took that, because no one could spell Rafteseth.

DALEY: Oh, can you spell it for us?

HENDRICKS: Yes, it's R-A-F-T-E-S-E-T-H.

DALEY: Thank you.

HENDRICKS: There's a copy of my immigration card on a book that they sell out here, *Voices of Ballard*. I was interviewed for that, and it's in the book. And my picture is on the front page!

DALEY: And brothers and sisters?

HENDRICKS: Well, there were five boys and one girl. The youngest boy was born in Ballard; the rest of us all came from Norway. But, and I was the fourth; of the five kids that came, I was number four. Now number one, two and three have all passed away. They passed away, one of them last—passed away June of this year, and another one was about a year and a half ago. And the oldest brother, Olaf, passed away in '87, I believe it was.

DALEY: Can you name the children from the oldest to the youngest?

HENDRICKS: My brothers?

DALEY: Yeah.

HENDRICKS: Olaf, and Olie. They were the first two; they were named for the two grandfathers [laughs]. And Sigmund, and I'm John, and Rolf, R-O-L-F, was born in Ballard.

DALEY: And your sister?

HENDRICKS: Perdy, P-E-R-D-Y.

DALEY: And she was born in Norway?

HENDRICKS: She was born in Norway, yes. And she lives here in the Redmond area, across, other side of Lake Washington.

DALEY: Can you describe your parents' personality?

HENDRICKS: Well, [laughs] my Dad was a hard-working, real hard-working. He was a commercial fisherman, for one thing, and he did a little bit of building, you know, construction work. Mostly for himself! So he bought some acreage out in Kitsap County, across Puget Sound here, before we came over, and all it had was some old buildings on it, you know, not much of a house. But we replaced all the buildings in the ten years that we lived out there. We came here in 1930, but in 1941 he was working with, working on the, building a new house, and it was, the framing was just about done. And he fell off the scaffolding and broke his neck. And it killed him. And [unclear] he didn't get a chance to see the new home, but otherwise, he was well-liked in the neighborhood, and a hard worker. And my mother was, same thing. She took care of—she was very sociable, and she got along with all the neighbors, and she enjoyed life. And she lived up 'til, oh, she lived, I think it was 1975. She was in her—well, she was in her eighties [laughs], late eighties. And she was in good health, and she enjoyed living. And she liked to get together with friends. She liked to play cards. She liked to play pinochle! [Laughs] And she lived in a home up on Tinney [PH] Ridge here, they call it Norse Home. It's a retirement home. And she spent her last few years up there. Just about every Friday night we would, my wife and I would go down to see her, and play cards with her. Or, we'd go down and pick her up, and bring her out to our house, and have dinner, and she'd play cards at our house. She enjoyed it!

DALEY: So the livelihood in your village was mainly fishing?

HENDRICKS: Well, in Norway?

DALEY: Mm-hm.

HENDRICKS: It was fishing, and there was a little bit of, well, at the time it wasn't really booming, but there is a furniture factory in Sykkyliden, in that area, and it's the biggest furniture factory in Western Europe. And it's high-class furniture. Ekorness--I don't know whether you've ever heard of it, but it's quality furniture.

DALEY: Can you spell that name, please?

HENDRICKS: E-K-O-R-N-E-S-S. And they ship a lot of furniture to the United States. Matter of fact, there are stores here--In Ikea, which is a Swedish store here, they carry furniture from Ekorness. And one of my relatives is one of the owners [laughs], you know. But I don't have any of their furniture! [Laughs] I can't afford it!

DALEY: Can you describe your home life? Were you a religious family?

HENDRICKS: Well, yes. In Norway, we were all, everybody [unclear] was a Lutheran [laughs]. And we went to—everybody went to confirmation, was confirmed in the Lutheran church. Well, I wasn't confirmed in Norway; I was confirmed in the Lutheran church after we came to the States here. But—

DALEY: Did you attend church every Sunday?

HENDRICKS: Yes, normally we did. In the winter time it wasn't that easy; the church was about, oh, two and a half to three miles, and sometimes, you know, we didn't have any—nobody had automobiles to drive, and in the winter time [laughs] you couldn't get through if you had one. So, but—

DALEY: And do you remember how you celebrated the big holidays, like Christmas and Easter?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes. I don't remember so much about Easter, but I can remember Christmas. We always had a Christmas party at the schoolhouse. And the Christmas was decorated. How come we didn't burn it down—they used real live candles and flames. And why we didn't burn the place down, I'll never down understand! But it never did happen. School is still standing, by the way. And it's been upgraded a little bit, but it's still the same building. I saw it here about twenty years ago; I come through the school. It's still there!

DALEY: Did you have a Christmas tree in your home?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes, everybody had a Christmas tree! I mean, that was tradition. But we didn't have to go out and buy it, because [laughs] we chopped it down on our own property. But everybody had a Christmas tree.

DALEY: And did you have a special Christmas Eve celebration or meal?

HENDRICKS: That was—Christmas Eve was a bigger celebration than Christmas Day, in most cases. Well, it still is, in some parts of this country. Scandinavians, we still—my family, we still celebrate Christmas Eve, very much so.

DALEY: Do you have a special meal, or--?

HENDRICKS: Well, we used to have a special meal for Christmas Eve. It used to be salted and cured mutton. And it's cured, salted, and dried, and you could just slice that meat off, and you can eat it. It had not be cooked; it's already cured. Well, you've eaten chipped beef. It's never cooked, you know—same thing. And we'd have the ribs. They would—sometimes we'd just have the ribs, dried like that, and they'd be steamed. We'd steam them, and boy, they are delicious! We don't eat them too much here. I would like to eat them, but my doctor won't let me! [Laughs] There's too much cholesterol. But it's good eating! That, and we also had steamed pork ribs. And that was—we never heard of turkey! [Laughs] But we did have, it was mostly, mutton was used more. We very seldom ate what they call lamb. We didn't butcher a lamb. We let them grow full-size [laughs] before they were butchered. But that was, the main course was lamb. And of course, we raised our own. We had our own pigs that we raised. And we had, well, we ate some beef, but we didn't have beef cattle; we had dairy cows, you know. We didn't—when we, if we butchered a dairy cow, most of it would be—well, it would be salted or ground up to hamburger.

DALEY: So you had a lot of land around your house?

HENDRICKS: Land?

DALEY: Yeah.

HENDRICKS: Well, [laughs] as far as tillable land, we probably only had about five acres, but you know, if you tend the five acres, you can do an awful lot! But it wasn't—well, it was hilly land. It was up at the base of the mountain, you know? But things did grow! We had good crops there, and we didn't have the same crops: potatoes, carrots, and rutabagas or turnips, and, oh, I don't know—and lots of berries. All kinds of berries: raspberries. Didn't have any strawberries, but raspberries grew quite well. And we had currants, red, black currants, and gooseberries—oh, lost of gooseberries! And I forget—and cabbage was another vegetable that grew quite well there.

DALEY: So you planted and cultivated both the fruit and the vegetables?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes. We had cherry trees, too, on our place. We didn't have any apple, but one of the neighbors—apples didn't do too well around, but one of the neighbors had a couple of apple trees. But we had mostly cherry and we had one pear tree, I think. But we were able to make a living. [Laughs]

DALEY: It sounded like you had a very varied diet.

HENDRICKS: Well, we did. We didn't realize it 'til later on; we were pretty well off. Even after we came to this country, we had twenty-five acres across the sound here, and we didn't have any—we didn't have anything that we had to go to the store to buy! But we had lots of—we had meat from the neighbors. And my Dad was able to catch fish, and when he was commercial fishing he would bring fish in from the boats, and give to the neighbors, and they would give us meat in exchange. And you don't realize it until now—we lived pretty good during the Depression. We lived better than—sometimes I'm not too sure that we can afford to eat good!

DALEY: And what was your typical meals like? The everyday meals?

HENDRICKS: What, in Norway?

DALEY: In Norway, yes.

HENDRICKS: Well, we had lots of breads, baked our own bread. And we had, well, we had fish. It was salted. We had all kinds of fish that were caught locally, and they were salted. Except in season, you know, in the winter time, if we would catch fish, we'd just take them out behind the house and bury them in the snow and what, and dig them out when we needed them! It was refrigeration!

DALEY: Free refrigeration.

HENDRICKS: Yeah, and we didn't have refrigeration of any other type. That was it! But if we didn't, couldn't refrigerate it, we salted it. And then we—then all we had to do was soak it out a little bit, and cook it, and it was ready to eat!

DALEY: I just want to pause for one second. Okay, we're continuing. And in terms of an everyday meal, would it be meat and potatoes, and things like that?

HENDRICKS: Ordinarily that would be—potatoes were practically on every meal, because we [laughs]—they were readily available. And salt meat, even if we cooked a main meal, the next meal sometimes we would warm it up, leftover meats would be warmed up with the potatoes, and—we never threw anything away.

DALEY: And in terms of going to school, did you attend school in Norway?

HENDRICKS: Yes, I attended school, about three years in grade school.

DALEY: Was this a public school?

HENDRICKS: Well yes, it was a public school. It had eight grades in one school. But we went—if I remember correctly, I don't remember now it was, but we went three days a week. And that's the first through the fourth grade. In the fourth grade, they went three days, but they alternated. So in other words, we went, if we went Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the other ones would go Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. And I don't remember whether I went to one, or—but I was in the, I was just in the first three grades.

DALEY: And was this a year-round school?

HENDRICKS: No, it had a summer vacation. But, it was very similar to—I don't remember the exact time, but it was about the same as they have in this country, two and a half months or so in the summer time.

DALEY: And did you—what kind of subjects did you learn?

HENDRICKS: Well, we learned basically, well, reading, and we had writing, and there was a Bible class in school. And I don't remember what else they taught. I didn't—actually, I started school a year later than normal, so I only really got two years of schooling in Norway. I started school a year late because I was born a cripple. I was born with clubfoot, so I couldn't walk. And I spent nine months in the hospital, and then got me out, and I had braces on my feet. And so, in other words, it was pretty hard for me to go to school, so I was delayed a year. So I started school the same time my sister, who was a year younger, and we went in the same grade.

DALEY: And were you able to be, to an extent, cured of the clubfoot, in the hospital?

HENDRICKS: Well, no, they—well, yes. Well, now at five years old. I was in the hospital once when I was, oh, just a baby, I spent nine months in the hospital at one stretch. And all my left foot, up to my knee, was in a cast. And they took the cast off. In a couple of days, it was back to where it started [laughs]. So when I was five years old, my mother took me into another town, and there was a doctor there. It was Dr. Aurdal. He grew up with our neighbors. And he said, "I can operate on that." And he did. He operated on that foot, and I don't say it's normal, but by God [laughs], it's good enough so that when I grew up and came to this country, and I got older, I was able to play baseball and run like the rest of the kids. But I was told—or my mother was told, I never would be

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able to walk normal, like any other kid. But they didn't tell me, and I didn't know any better, so I went out and did it anyway! [Laughs] So that's why I was late getting started in school. But, I don't know that I ever caught up; I probably never will. But does that make any difference? I have enjoyed life! [Laughs]

DALEY: And what was the name of the school? Did it have a specific name?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was Aurdal School, they called it. But actually, it was in a place where there was about four of these little towns, all went to the same school.

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DALEY: And how big was a typical class size? How many children?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was probably only about twenty to twenty-five, the total in three grades, in the four grades that was in that one time. I don't think it was—I don't think there were over forty or fifty in the whole school, you know, if they all got together. It wasn't a big school. It was all in one room.

DALEY: Oh.

HENDRICKS: No. [Laughs] No, it wasn't a big school. It had one teacher, and that's it.

DALEY: Do you remember the teacher?

HENDRICKS: Oh yes, I remember the teacher. He was quite, quite stern teacher. But—

DALEY: What was his name?

HENDRICKS: Tanstad, T-A-N-S-T-A-D. Carl Tanstad. And he immigrated to the United States, or came to the United States, in '89, went up to the Yukon gold rush, and made enough money to come back to Norway, went to school, got his education and become a teacher. So, but I can remember that teacher. He was quiet, and he chewed tobacco! [Laughs]

DALEY: During class he chewed tobacco?

HENDRICKS: Oh, well, yes. That didn't make—I guess it didn't bother anybody. I think he had a spittoon right by his desk; I'm not sure. I didn't pay that much attention!

DALEY: So it was his job to teach all the children?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

DALEY: And did you have a favorite—did you enjoy school?

HENDRICKS: Well, yes, I think I enjoyed school. I enjoyed school—well, I enjoyed school in this country more than in Norway, I guess. But I enjoyed it there, too. It was nothing, you know, well everybody goes to school. You took it for granted, so why not enjoy it? [Laughs]

DALEY: And after school was over, did you have chores to do, or did you play?

HENDRICKS: Well, we had—well sure, we had chores to do. We had, by the time I got to school, we had five kids and my mother, and we lived on a farm, and we had cows and livestock to take care of. And it was us kids that had to do the work! [Laughs] So yes, we had work to do.

DALEY: You had to get up before school and do work?

HENDRICKS: Well, I don't remember that so much as I had to, at that time, because I had three brothers who were older than me, so I guess I didn't do too much. And because I had been, even after, I was still wearing braces on my leg until I was about seven or eight years old, I think, before the steel braces came off, that tried to hold it, support, so I was favored a little bit. I didn't have to do some of the work! But I did work around the house. I can remember doing dishes, and helping with everything so.

DALEY: And let's talk about coming to America. You said your father had come to America on a number of occasions?

HENDRICKS: Well, he came once before he was married, and then he came back in 1923. And we stayed in Norway 'til 1930, so seven years he was in this country. And while he's up in Alaska most [unclear], in Petersburg and Ketchikan, Alaska. And of course he was in Seattle, too, because my mother had some relatives here in Seattle, had a cousin in Seattle. So he stayed with them quite a bit.

DALEY: And what kind of work did he do while he was here?

HENDRICKS: Well, he was a commercial fisherman. He had a small boat out of Petersburg, Alaska. He was salmon, trolling for salmon. And then he went halibut fishing, and he was fishing on some of the halibut schooners when we came to this country.

DALEY: Do you remember, because you were three when he left, then?

HENDRICKS: Well, let's see. I was only about two when he left.

DALEY: Two.

HENDRICKS: I don't remember. I didn't know my Dad 'til we came to this country. I—in other words, I don't remember him.

DALEY: But did he communicate with you a lot?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes, oh—well, yes, he wrote letters regularly. I got a letter at home that he'd sent to my mother. I think it cost—I forget, it was seven or eight cents it cost, from here to Norway! You know, you'd mail it all over the country, two cents, I think it was. I think it was six or seven cents stamp on it. I forget now—it wasn't very much! [Laughs]

DALEY: How did you feel, growing up, knowing that your father was so far away? Did you feel lonely, or--?

HENDRICKS: Well, with me, I never had a father, so I didn't [laughs], it didn't enter my mind so much, you know. Maybe my older brother, who would have been—he was born in '16, so he would have—he was old enough to remember him, you know. So he would probably, and well, three of my brothers were older than me, so they would probably remember. I'm sure my younger, my other brother that's born in 1918, '23, I think he would have remembered him a little bit, you know. But me, I was a little too young to remember.

DALEY: And did you have an extended family of uncles and aunts and cousins around you?

HENDRICKS: What, in Norway?

DALEY: In Norway?

HENDRICKS: No. We had—I had a couple of uncles that—well, we had a lot, my Dad had a lot of relatives, but there was only about two of them that were close enough that we saw quite regularly. And one of them was just like catching a ferry across a fjord, and less than a one hour trip. And

we went into Olsen, and this one brother, he owned a hotel in that town, so we always went in and visited him. And another brother that was a commercial fisherman, and he traveled around, and he came out to see us quite often. And so, but otherwise, on my mother's side, she was the last one. Well, she had cousins, and so forth, but I mean, not any—they weren't as close, like aunts or anything.

DALEY: So what was the deciding factor for your mother and your family to come to the United States?

HENDRICKS: Well, I don't know just what—well, there was no way of—my Dad figured there was no way that he could back to Norway and make a fair living there, on the place, on that small farm. So he thought it would be better if he could bring the family over here where he was, and I think it was a good move. But that was what he had in mind, because the opportunities were greater here than they were in Norway at that time. And of course, when we came here, it was just in the height, the Depression was just getting started. So we were poor in Norway, and here no different. We were still poor when we came here! [Laughs] But we managed—we had a land; he bought this piece of property, had twenty-five acres of land. And we had, somehow he'd managed to buy a couple of cows from one of the neighbors, so we had something to start with.

DALEY: He bought this land in the twenties?

HENDRICKS: Yeah, he bought it—oh yes, he bought it in, I think it was '29, a year before we came. And it needed a lot of work, but [unclear].

DALEY: And that was in Washington state?

HENDRICKS: It was in Washington state, yup.

DALEY: Which town was it near?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was a town called Olalla, O-L-A-L-L-A. That's in Kitsap County, or right across the sound here. So it isn't too far.

DALEY: So when did you start to begin to pack and plan for your trip to the United States?

HENDRICKS: Well, that was in, we came to the United States—I think it was November 19th when we landed. No, it was later than that. Anyway, it was in November of 1930 when we packed up. We left, and came—it took eight days to cross, and then there was, we got on a train in New York, and stopped in Saint Paul.

DALEY: But before we do that, I just wanted to get an idea of what the, what happened in Norway. Did you have a party or some sort of a gathering of your family and friends before you left?

HENDRICKS: Well, oh, yes, yes. The neighbors, they had a get-together to say goodbye. And they knew that that would be, probably, the last they would see of us! [Laughs] But that wasn't unusual, because an awful lot of people immigrated, you know, and that was it, you know. Very seldom—of course, I say never to come back. We did come back. My mother even made a trip back. Before she passed away, she made a trip back. And my brother and sister, we've all made trips back there. My youngest brother that was born here in Ballard, he's never been to Norway. He could care less! [Laughs] But—

DALEY: And your grandparents stayed in Norway?

HENDRICKS: Well, yeah. Well, no, they were dead before we left. The grandparents were; they died before we left. One of the reasons we stayed as long: my grandparents died, but my grandmother's sister was a widow, and she lived with us. And my mother wouldn't leave her. It was her aunt. She wouldn't leave her aunt, so she stayed. And when she passed away, then my Dad figured he could—it was safe to bring the family over this way.

DALEY: So do you remember the trip from your hometown to the port? Which port did you leave from?

HENDRICKS: Well, we left from Bergen, and that was where the Norwegian American Line, where they left, from there, their port. The Stavangerfjord was the name of the boat, and it took off from there and landed in New York, eight days later.

DALEY: Do you remember the trip from your hometown to Bergen?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes.

DALEY: Was it by train or rail?

HENDRICKS: No, well, it was—there was, we took the ferry to Olusand, and then from Olusand to Bergen. It isn't that far, and there was another ferry; there was a boat that went down.

DALEY: And how much, how many things did you take with you? Did you take suitcases?

HENDRICKS: Well, we took a suitcase. We had one big box, wood box, that the neighbors built, and we packed a few of the things, household goods that we could, you know, that were, we felt were worthwhile shipping. Furniture, anything in the house, you couldn't take it with. It was auctioned off, and sold along with the house. But we brought a few cooking utensils, and brought a clock that was a wedding present to my parents that was shipped from—I think they were bought in this country or Canada, I don't know. I forget. One of my mother's brothers, sisters, the family got together and they bought that clock. It was a eight-day clock, that rings bells, and you know, chimes every half-hour. It's in my house. It chimed this morning, just about the time Maryann called.

DALEY: What is an eight day clock?

HENDRICKS: Well, you wind it up, and it runs for eight days. They were common; they were in this country, you know. But this was a nice clock, and by golly, the workmanship on those clocks was pretty good! That's, that was eighty-five years old, and it's still running!

DALEY: And it was made in the United States, shipped--?

HENDRICKS: I think it was made, yeah.

DALEY: Shipped to Norway--?

HENDRICKS: Yeah.

DALEY: Then it came back with you?

HENDRICKS: Then it came back with us. And my mother had it, and one of my brothers had it, and I've had it for the last twenty-five years. And it's still running, and it runs beautiful! [Laughs] I wouldn't part with it now. It's worth more now!

DALEY: And what was the name of the ship again?

HENDRICKS: Stavangerfjord.

DALEY: Can you spell it, please?

HENDRICKS: S-T-A-V-A-N-G-E-R-F-J-O-R-D. Stavanger is the name of a town, that's the biggest oil town, where they do oil drilling, Stavanger. Fjord, that's the name of the fjord that the town of Stavanger is.

DALEY: And this was the Norway American Line?

HENDRICKS: Norwegian American Line, yes. NAL, yeah.

DALEY: And what did you think when you first saw the boat? Was it an amazing sight to see?

HENDRICKS: Well, to us kids, why, yes. We'd never been on a boat that big. It wasn't that big, but it was a good ocean liner. I mean, it wasn't exactly a rowboat! [Laughs] No, it was nice, and they—we didn't have, we went tourist class, you know, the cheapest fare we could get. But they fed good. It was good food, so.

DALEY: And what was it like on the trip over? Did you have a cabin to yourself, your family?

HENDRICKS: Well, yes, it was, yes, it was six of us in one cabin! [Laughs] And they weren't very fancy; it was one bunk above the other, you know. And it wasn't anything fancy, but everybody got along. Nobody got seasick, so, and even though it was a little rough weather, but it didn't seem to bother anybody.

DALEY: And what did you do on the ship? Did you walk around the ship?

HENDRICKS: Well, we were running around. We were kids, and nobody stopped us. We were running around! [Laughs] We had to stay out of the first-class area, I guess. I don't remember it, but they wouldn't—they must have kept us clear of where we shouldn't be. But nobody really—all we had to remember was when meal time was, and we never forgot! We made it!

DALEY: Did they feed you three times a day?

HENDRICKS: I don't remember, but yes, I'm sure they did. They had regular meals, I know that. I don't remember. I can't recall how many times, but it was—they had regular meals. It must have been three times a day.

DALEY: And anything special about the meals that you remember?

HENDRICKS: No. Now, one thing that I remember was one dinner we had dessert. We had ice cream for dessert, and I think that's the first time we'd ever, I'd ever tasted ice cream. But they had it on the boat. But otherwise it was—it was the same kind of food that we ate at home.

DALEY: And the people around you—were they immigrants also, coming to America?

HENDRICKS: Most. Some were [laughs]. I think that was—

DALEY: And mostly Norwegian?

HENDRICKS: Well, they were all Norwegians. That's—I don't think there were any, because it left from Norway and that. I don't think there were any, anybody else besides Norwegians that left from Norway to go to the United States.

DALEY: So it was an eight day journey?

HENDRICKS: Eight days to New York, yes.

DALEY: Okay, and it was fairly pleasant?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes, it was pleasant.

DALEY: And do you remember coming into New York Harbor?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes! I can remember that they had, well, the American Line, they had personnel aboard that spoke good English, you know, and they were Norwegians who could speak English. And they were able to explain, in other words, they made it a point to come down to the immigrants and tell them, "This is the Statue of Liberty we're coming to." And they showed us, you know. And of course, we didn't pay too much attention, but they talked to us in Norwegian, told us what we were looking at, and so.

DALEY: Was everybody on the upper deck looking at the Statue?

HENDRICKS: Well, they got us out so we could see it, yes.

DALEY: And what did you think of when you saw the large lady?

HENDRICKS: Well, I didn't think. I can remember this, it was—in Norway, we were, we had cold winters. But it never seemed to bother us; we were dressed for it. But it was a different cold in New York. It was cold that day! It went right through us. I've never been so cold in all my life! That was the coldest I'd been; never saw it that cold in Norway! I don't know what the temperature was, but it was a different type of cold.

DALEY: Well, maybe it's more humid in New York; I don't know.

HENDRICKS: I don't know, but it was, it seemed to penetrate. But that's what I thought, I remember most about New York: it was so darn cold!

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- DALEY: So your boat came into New York Harbor?
- HENDRICKS: Mm-hm.
- DALEY: Did—you were then taken to Ellis Island?
- HENDRICKS: That's right. We had a ferry that we got to Ellis Island.
- DALEY: Do you remember the ferry that took you over?
- HENDRICKS: No, I don't remember, but I know it was, sitting—I can remember it. Everybody was sitting. You could see out both sides, you know. And they probably still have the same type of ferries! [Laughs] I don't know.
- DALEY: And you stepped on shore, on Ellis Island. What happened to you after you arrived on Ellis Island?
- HENDRICKS: I don't remember what they did. They ran us through there, checked the papers and so forth, and put us back on the ferry. And I don't remember how they had it arranged, but they had a guide who made sure that we went to the right place. And they got us back, and got us down to the railroad depot, and got us on the train.
- DALEY: So your experience at Ellis Island was very quick?
- HENDRICKS: It was. It was. It went on—it was just a process of paperwork, I imagine. And I imagine that my mother took care of most of the stuff—us kids, five kids, didn't have much to do with it.
- DALEY: So nobody met you at Ellis Island, did they? It was just--?
- HENDRICKS: No, no relatives, no. No, no, nobody that we knew.
- DALEY: And do you remember the building at all?
- HENDRICKS: No, I don't. I don't remember the building. But, probably should have, but I didn't see any [laughs], any reason to make a point of it, so.
- DALEY: Okay, so you left the island, and did you go back to Manhattan to get the next part of the trip going?
- HENDRICKS: Well, wherever the train left from, and I don't remember what the train was. I know which, from New York to Saint Paul is where we took the first section, and I don't know what railroad that was on. But out of Saint Paul to Seattle, we took the Great Northern. But we stopped in Saint Paul because my mother had two sisters and a brother in Saint

Paul, and another sister and a brother-in-law about a hundred and fifty miles out of Saint Paul. So, we stayed two weeks visiting the relatives that she hadn't—some of them my mother hadn't seen—the last one left in 1905. So it was twenty-five years since she had seen any of her sisters, so.

DALEY: So, the Saint Paul area, are there a lot of people from Sweden and Norway?

HENDRICKS: A lot! Lot, Saint Paul, Minneapolis, lots of Scandinavians!

DALEY: So you got on the next train, and then you went to Seattle?

HENDRICKS: And we went to Seattle, yes.

DALEY: And did your father meet you at the station?

HENDRICKS: Oh, he met us at the station in Seattle, on December 19th, 1930. It was my mother's birthday [laughs].

DALEY: How did it feel to see your father, after--?

HENDRICKS: Well, I'd never seen him before. Well, I mean, except I didn't remember him, so it was nice to have, you know, to realize that we had a father. But up 'til that point, I hadn't known a father, so. And after that, it was 1930, and it was about eleven years that I had a father, and then he died in an accident, so he was just fifty-one years old when he died.

DALEY: And what was the feeling when your mother and your older brothers met your father again? Were they very, very happy?

HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, evidently they were. Of course, I didn't pay attention [laughs] to their happiness; I was more concerned with mine. But they evidently were—I know that two—all three of my brothers were older than me. [Unclear] that my other brother, youngest brother Sig was, he was seven, I guess, when we left. No, no, he was only five. No, he was only five years old, so he would have remembered a little bit. But the other brother was, from 1906, he was eight—almost eight years old, so he'd remember.

DALEY: So, you're in Seattle, and you went to your father's property then, correct?

HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, we spent one day in Seattle, I think. We spent one night in Seattle, and the following day we went out to the property.

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DALEY: And did you go by car?

HENDRICKS: Well, we had—my Dad had a car, and then we got on the ferry here in Seattle, and across the sound. It's a one hour crossing, and then about three miles from the ferry landing on the other side, and we were home.

DALEY: And did you have any impressions of Seattle? What was Seattle like?

HENDRICKS: Well, we thought Seattle was nice. It was, well, it was bigger than the towns that we were used to in Norway, you know. Well, it was quite a bit bigger than any town in Norway. Well, there are bigger towns, towns as big as—Oslo and Bergen are both almost as big as Seattle, but—

DALEY: Did it remind you at all about Norway, because you could see a lot of forests, and you could see the mountains in the distance?

HENDRICKS: Well, Seattle isn't exactly like Norway! [Laughs] I can go up to Alaska and see more of Norway than you can here in Seattle. But Norway isn't anywhere near the density of the Seattle area.

DALEY: Okay, we're going to pause now and change the tape, and we'll continue in a moment.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE B

BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE A

DALEY: --the second tape of the interview with John Hendricks, and we have the family now in Seattle, reunited with their father. And can you describe what the property looked like when you arrived at the property your father had bought?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was an old house that had been vacant for a couple of years since the owner had died, and his widow sold it. And so my Dad had spent, oh, a few months in his spare time trying to get it back in shape. So it was livable; it wasn't anything fancy. There was no electricity. In other words, it had never been wired, so we had kerosene lights and lamps. And that's the first time we'd really seen kerosene, because in Norway we had all the electric lights we wanted! But we had that, and wood stoves for heat. And it was mostly the stove in the kitchen heated the whole house. And, but it was, I guess it was comfortable. We got along all right!

DALEY: Was it a lot of property?

HENDRICKS: There was twenty-five acres of land, and an old barn building. And we had a couple of—Dad had bought a couple of cows we had, so we got some milk. We didn't have—he didn't have much of a garden that first year, but the neighbors [unclear] potatoes, so we got all the potatoes. They must have known we were coming, because they'd canned enough vegetables, so—the neighbors had, so we got along fine.

DALEY: And did you go to school immediately?

HENDRICKS: Well, we came here on the 19th of December, and we started school right after the Christmas holidays. I started in grade school in Olalla, and of course, couldn't speak a word of English. And there was—there was four of us that went to school. My oldest brother had already—he didn't start school at that time. He did go to the grade school. That fall he went, just to learn a little bit of language, but he'd been through the eighth grade when he left Norway. But the other two, they went through the grades. Actually, I started in the first grade, in spring of '31, and went through the grades. And in spring of '39, I graduated from high school! [Laughs]

DALEY: Was it very hard, not knowing English and going to an American school?

HENDRICKS: Well, you know, kids, when they get together with other kids, I think they learn pretty fast. I don't think we had any trouble. I learned to speak English within a matter of a couple of months. I was able to get along with almost anybody. I may not be very good at English; I'm probably not now, even. In my eighties, and I still ain't very good at English! [Laughs] But I was able to learn enough English to get along.

DALEY: And the children that you went to school with—were they immigrant children, or mostly American-born children?

HENDRICKS: They were mostly American in the grade school, but they were—a lot of them were of Scandinavian, you know. As a matter of fact, a couple of them, their parents were from the same place in Norway that we were, they were! But the kids that went to school were born in this country, but their parents were born in the same place.

DALEY: And did you all get along together pretty well in school?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah. We did. There were no problems. Everybody—in the thirties, people got along pretty well out in the country! [Laughs]

Anybody needed help, the neighbors would help them out. And it's the same people that needed help, they'd come and help you when you needed it.

DALEY: And what kind of work was your father doing at this point?

HENDRICKS: Well, at this point it was between fishing seasons, so he was working around the farm, you know, trying to get that in shape. But about, must have been around March of the first year we were here, he had to take off and go up to Alaska and go fishing again, you know, so.

DALEY: Why did he have to go all the way up to Alaska?

HENDRICKS: Well, that's where the halibut fishing is. I mean, well, he went, got on a boat here in Seattle, and the boat went to Alaska, and they brought, and they would bring the fish back to Seattle to sell. In other words, they would go up and catch a boat load and bring it back to Seattle, and then go back up again.

DALEY: How long would one of these trips take?

HENDRICKS: Well, it would take about three weeks in a trip, but sometimes they would sell the fish in Alaska, and then keep on fishing. So sometimes—so that first year, I think he only came to Seattle once or twice in the middle of the season, just 'til it was over. And at that time the season lasted up 'til, oh, the end of November.

DALEY: And when did it begin?

HENDRICKS: In March. So [laughs] it was a long season!

DALEY: And what did your mother do on the farm?

HENDRICKS: Well, [laughs] with the five kids, she'd take care of the house, and do the cooking for us kids. And by that time, my oldest brother, and we're all big enough. We had to—I had to go take care of the livestock, and we did the—we went out in the garden, did the outside work. And mother was out doing her share, too. But we all had to chip in; nobody sat home and played when there was work to be done.

DALEY: And did your father learn English on his first trips to America?

HENDRICKS: Oh, on the first—yes, he learned English.

DALEY: And did your mother pick up English also?

HENDRICKS: Well, she picked up, because, well, us kids probably taught her most of the English. And of course, she got out in the country and she—she wasn't shy. She was outgoing. She wanted to associate with people, so she got on with the neighbors, women.

DALEY: Playing cards?

HENDRICKS: Playing cards, or church group, or they just had a get-together with coffee. And Ladies Aid in church, things like that. And she was able to talk; she learned. Well, she learned enough English to get along!

DALEY: And did your parents, when they were in your home, did they speak English to each other, or did they still continue to talk in Norwegian?

HENDRICKS: Well, the first year or two it was mostly Norwegian, but gradually it got to be more English. And I know [unclear], by the time I was in high school, it was—they were talking mostly English to each other.

DALEY: And you had one brother who was born in the United States?

HENDRICKS: Yeah, yeah, he was born here, in Ballard, actually, yeah. [Laughs] He was—in 1935 he was born.

DALEY: So what year did you graduate primary school?

HENDRICKS: Primary school? Thirty-five, I left. Yeah, spring of '35, I was through the eighth grade. And then in May of '39 I graduated from high school. And then I went up to Alaska. I did a little fishing up in Alaska, then I came back. And then I, well, I worked downtown Seattle in a clothing store as a salesman, and a fisherman's outfitting store. And I got a call from the Navy to go to work serving an apprenticeship. And I went in to Bremerton Navy Yard.

DALEY: Is that near here?

HENDRICKS: That's across the sound here, yes. It's about, oh, just about fifteen miles north of where we were living out there. And it's across the sound here, and that's a big Naval shipyard.

DALEY: That was during the war years?

HENDRICKS: Well, it was 1941. The war hadn't started here. It didn't start here 'til—but I went to work there and served my apprenticeship as an electrician, up 'til 1944. And the Draft Board had to fill their quota, so they told me to go in to check out, you know. And I figured, well, no big deal. Just go and—right now I was classified, I forget what it was. It was an

occupational deferment, because you know, I was working for the Navy Yard. I says, "Well, I'll just go in there to the Draft Board, and then I'll get reclassified, go back to work." No, I walked in; I figured I'd be Four-F, you know, that's physical disability. I walked in on my own two feet, and he says, "You can walk in, you're in the Army!" [Laughs] Well, I wasn't really in the Army, but I could fill the quota. So, and I had a couple of weeks to make arrangements, I arranged to join the Navy. So I joined the Navy, and they were going to send me to Northwestern University in Chicago for a year and a half, electronics. And I went to Great Lakes Naval Training Station, and got there on a Saturday morning. They didn't do anything 'til Monday morning. Then they ran us through the processing, the physical, and flunked, and they says, "You're getting a discharge." I was there, had been there two days! In the mean time, I'd bought some property, my wife and I had bought some property. I did it after I was told I was going—just called from the Draft Board. I figured it was no big deal, I was going to be there. Well, I put the property up for sale, and sold some of the—I figured, well, if I'm in, I'm in for the duration. There were some things that you couldn't buy, like washing machines. You couldn't buy a washing machine for anything! You know, it was during the war. You could buy a used one, if you could find it. Well, we had a fairly good one. Somebody needed it, and I didn't see much sense in storing it for the duration of the war, because I had no place else to put it. So I sold that. Two days later—[laughs] I get discharged! So I said, "The heck with it," and I came back from there, and went back to my job in the Navy Yard. And it was quite a deal, because all the time, when you're working on civil service sometimes, some of the higher-ups are envious of their jobs. And you do this and that. And they had, during the war, they says, "Well, you behave or we'll tell the Draft Board." So I called the Draft Board when I come out. I was free to do what I wanted. In other words, you were [unclear] to your job as everybody else. I was free to go where I wanted. In other words, they wouldn't. Of course, I mean, I was free to go, if somebody would hire me. I mean, they couldn't hold it against me, so. But I went back in the Navy Yard anyway; I went to work. And when I went back to work, they had a classification at that time—I don't know whether they still do—they'd give you, the ones that served an apprenticeship, they'd give them a rating, monthly. And if you're ninety or above for three consecutive months, you get the next pay scale up. I don't know whether they're still doing that, but that's the way they were doing it at that time. Well, but you see, the third month, they can drop you to eighty-nine; then you've got to start over again, see. So they could keep you in line. Well, I had two months of ninety, and then I came back from the service. But you know that I was a veteran. I had a veteran's preference, and that automatically put five points on there! And they couldn't drop you more than three points without having a hearing. In other words, you had to have a trial. It was impossible to

prove that I was unfit. So that automatically gave me the next rating up. Well, to make a long story short, I would have been the youngest foreman in the whole Navy Yard. I was just a young punk kid; everybody else that was up there, late forties before you get that far. And I figured, well, here's a good time. I accepted the job, and turned in my resignation immediately. So when I left, what vacation I had coming, I got it! [Laughs] That's [unclear]. And I quit, and I haven't been back since. So, and then I went commercial fishing for a couple of years. I went down to California, fished. I was fishing for shark liver. They make vitamins out of them. That was big business during the war. And that was the biggest money-maker in commercial fishing at that time. And then in the spring, the following spring, I took, went to the same boat, and went up, went halibut fishing. And my ankle gave me such a rough time there that I had to get off in Ketchikan and fly, and take a steamer back home. So I quit fishing again. And then I went back to work in the electrical business here, in the shipyards, you know, in Seattle.

DALEY: Now, when you were working in the shipyards originally, you had been married?

HENDRICKS: Well, we got—no, I got my, I finished my apprenticeship, and we got married in 1943. And I had just finished my apprenticeship, and we got married in May of '43, and so.

DALEY: What's your wife's name?

HENDRICKS: Doris.

DALEY: And her maiden name?

HENDRICKS: It was Carlson.

DALEY: And she's Swedish?

HENDRICKS: Well, her, on her Dad's side is all Swede. Her mother's side is English and Irish and German, and oh, man, everything! But she considers herself Swedish.

DALEY: How did you meet?

HENDRICKS: Well, how did we meet? Well, they were living in a town called Poulsbo, which is called Little Norway. [Laughs] It's a Norwegian settlement over in Kitsap County. It's on the north end of the county, and we were living in the south end of the county. But in 1935, the Carlson family left Poulsbo. They bought some property, and they

bought it in Olalla; they bought it right next door to where we lived. And you know, it was during—of course, it was during, that was in '35, but, or '35 or '36. But when, after we got married, you asked where we met, and I said, well, it was war time; gas was rationed, and I couldn't go very far. She lived right next door! [Laughs]

DALEY: That's very convenient.

HENDRICKS: Yeah, very convenient.

DALEY: And what year and month were you married?

HENDRICKS: May 15th, 1943. So, we got sixty-one years last May.

DALEY: Congratulations.

HENDRICKS: Same wife, yeah.

DALEY: And going back a little bit, did your parents both eventually become citizens?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes. Well, my Dad was a citizen, he became a citizen in Alaska while we were still in Norway. But, the five kids were all on—when he was naturalized, with five kids. But my mother had to—came to this country, and when we came here she went to classes, and took a test, and passed it. And she was naturalized on her own.

DALEY: Oh, she didn't automatically become--?

HENDRICKS: No, no, she had to be naturalized on her own. Us kids, minor kids, we could—we got in on his papers. But if we were twenty-one or older, we would have had to do it on our own. But she did, she got her own papers, so.

DALEY: And what did you do after the war, when you went back to electronics?

HENDRICKS: Well, after the war, after I—in '44, after I quit fishing, when the ankle give me—I came to the shipyard here in Seattle, and I got, I [unclear] yard that did a lot of repair work for the Army transports and so forth. And I got a foreman's job, hired out as a foreman. I had the experience, and I had the clearance to install radar. I was in one of the first radar installations done in the U.S. Navy. It was not done on a U.S. Navy ship. The first radar was installed on a British battleship. The British battleship was in the Bremerton Navy Yard. The Americans repaired it; it got damaged way down in Australia someplace, and they brought it all the way to Bremerton for repairs. But, and radar was

invented in Britain. So, with the installation, I worked on [unclear], the biggest battleship that England had. I worked on it in the Bremerton Navy Yard. And so when I went in on repairs, or installation, I had—that was highly secret stuff. I mean, at that time. And I had the clearance from the Navy to work on radar, so I was able to come in on a big yard and get a job as a foreman, and that yard then could take on radar installations on the Army transports, which it couldn't do without somebody. I wasn't that qualified, but I had the clearance. Somebody else were qualified to do it, but that's how I got that job. So I worked there, oh, for quite a few years. Then I went to work for another outfit called the Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging. And they were a ship-building, and they were also construction. They did dredging channels and so forth. And I worked as an electrician for them. And then they built a dredge, it was the biggest dredge in the world at the time. And we built it. I was electrical foreman on the building, and then the [unclear] came down, and he said, "John," he said, "This is going to go up to Alaska, and they're going to dredge Rangel Narrows. But," he says, "The dredging crew has never seen anything this big before." You know, that pump, twenty-four inch pipe, discharge. You know, that's a lot of—that's a big pump! And imagine the amount of horsepower we had, electric motors, run on twenty-three hundred volts. I mean, it was higher voltage stuff. And high horsepower, too. It was three thousand horsepower in one electric motor. And they'd never seen anything that big before! And I really, I did some of the installation, but I wasn't sure I could operate it either! [Laughs] But I was supposed to go up and break in the crew. So I shipped out a chief engineer on the biggest dredge in the world, and I'd never been dredging before. But, I went up there to break in a new crew. I thought it'd take me a couple of weeks. I was there four months! [Laughs] But I made good money at it; no doubt about it. And it was a nice dredge, and I got a lot of experience. And I came back, after four months I came back, and they needed—they had another job in the shipyard, in the ship repairs division. So they gave me a job; I became Superintendent of ship repair for Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging. And that was, that yard, after I left, it was sold. Lockheed Shipbuilding bought it. So that became Lockheed Shipbuilding, but anyway, I took that job, and I had that job for, oh, I don't know, three or four years. And I just said, "If I'm going to work as hard as that, I'm going to work for myself." I came out here to Ballard, and I started Hendricks Electric, Incorporated. And we were in business for forty-two years. And we do repair, we did fishing boats, yachts. Well, and anything else that—

DALEY: And that's the job you retired from?

HENDRICKS: Yeah. Well, I retired—I turned it over to the kids, and the kids now have decided that they'd close that business now. And they're, well, one of

them is in the same business with one of my competitors. He's running, the youngest son is running the store for one of the biggest electrical contractors. And the other one is in the water purification business, you know, purify water for construction outfits. You use water now, and you can't dump it back—you can't dump it back into the drains or anything. You've got to purify so it's drinkable before you can dump it. And that's big business nowadays.

DALEY: So, how many--?

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE B

DALEY: --children did you have?

HENDRICKS: Well, I had three kids, and six grandchildren, and two great-grandsons.

DALEY: And what are your children's names?

HENDRICKS: Oldest one is Jean, is my daughter. And Stan is my oldest son, and Paul is the youngest son. Paul will be fifty years old next Monday! [Laughs] He's the youngest.

DALEY: Getting back to your family, and talking about their experience, did they continue, when you were growing up in Washington state, did they continue a lot of the Norwegian traditions?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes! My family? Oh, yes, absolutely! We were—part of the traditions are some of the cooking, and Scandinavian cooking. My wife learned an awful lot from my mother. And there are certain delicacies which are Scandinavian, or, you know, that she cooks. She takes up a certain delicacy, Norwegian lefse. I don't know, have you ever heard of it, lefse?

DALEY: No, how do you spell that?

HENDRICKS: L-E-F-S-E. All it is is a thin, flat bread. It's, but you get it, it's nice. It's so crisp, you know, you drop it, it's break into pieces. But, and you roll it out with a rolling pin, and you bake it. Then you can stack it, and you can keep them for a whole year or two. And, you know, when you need it, you take it out and lay it, and you sprinkle it with water, and it'll soften

up. And then you butter it. And put sugar and cinnamon on there, and roll it up. And that's a delicacy, and it's delicious! And there's very few people that can, that know how to bake it.

DALEY: And what are some of the other delicacies that--?

HENDRICKS: Well, there's a difference. All the Scandinavian cooking, well, you take fish. There are lots of ways besides fish, you take fish, and you can grind it up, you know, and you can bake it, like a loaf, or make fish cakes. Well, that's a trick! [Laughs] Get them the right consistency. Very few people know how to do it right.

DALEY: And what kind of fish would you use for this?

HENDRICKS: Well, we use a link [PH] cod, mostly. We use regular codfish, too, you know. But it's a white fish, but the link cods works better. It's more tender, you know.

DALEY: Is that a fish that you get in the Northwest?

HENDRICKS: Well, yes, mostly. Well, you get it on the Atlantic Coast, too. I don't know whether link cod is around the Atlantic. There's a fish similar to it in Norway; I don't remember what they call it. But, in other words, that's some of the things, and some of the way to take, cure the lamb and mutton, you know. That's all Scandinavian. But, those are the things. And the way we celebrate the holidays. I mean, I think the Scandinavians are the ones that Christmas Eve is more important than Christmas Day, as a rule. That tradition is still [laughs] in our family.

DALEY: Now, you mentioned that you cured meats, special—there was a special way to cure meats?

HENDRICKS: Well, yeah. You don't—you take a leg of lamb, or something like that. You take the whole leg, and you put it in a salt brine, and get it good and, so that you know that it's cured, that way. And then you hang it up and dry it. And then you can—then you can just take a knife and slice off, and eat that [unclear]. And, what happened, when my oldest son went to high school, what they called Ballard High, he got the leg of lamb. He had it in his locker, and between classes he'd cut off a piece of that! [Laughs] I don't think anybody else did. Right now they wouldn't allow that. He had that and a butcher knife in his locker! [Laughs] But, he wanted, when my older son was in the service, he was in the Air Force, he was a nuclear weapons specialist. He was a master sergeant is all he got; they wanted to give him a commission, and he didn't want it. He liked, he wanted—he liked the people better, non-commissioned. But anyway, he was stationed in Turkey. And I asked

him—he wasn't much for writing letters, but he had one of the first—he was taping. That was a little reel, you know, battery-operated. He'd send us a tape. And whenever he had something to say, why, he'd say it on, and then he'd ship it. We had to buy a machine; they don't use that type of reel anymore. You know, a little reel, you know. And we'd answer him, and ship it back to him. We'd use the same reel back, over and over again. And anyway, we asked him what he would like, anything for Christmas. We tried to—we sent him a package of Scandinavian cookies, and then we got a leg of lamb that had been cured, and wrapped up. And we sent them, both of them, to Turkey! [Laughs] That leg of lamb, with the cost of buying it and shipping it, it must have cost me fifty bucks, pretty close! But the cookies were all crumbled up, but that leg of lamb, boy, that was gourmet dining! For him, it was.

DALEY: Was it important for both your parents to become Americanized? To adopt American attitudes and customs?

HENDRICKS: Absolutely! My mother thought that she was in this country, and she wanted to live like, you know, like our neighbors. So she enjoyed learning. So she didn't have any trouble learning. She learned—she was fast learning. She caught on quick.

DALEY: So she was able to integrate both—

HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah.

DALEY: --the tradition Norwegian life—

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes.

DALEY: --and her life in America?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes, that was no problem.

DALEY: And how did you feel growing up? How did you and your brothers feel? Did you feel like you were—was it easy to become an American?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, we felt it was an adventure. We were looking forward to what's coming next. We were happy that we were here, so, of course, my older, my brothers, they were all older. All three of my brothers were older than me. They were looking forward to be big enough to get a job on fishing boat, you know, so! [Laughs] That's where most of the family ended up, you know.

DALEY: And you mentioned that your wife is mostly Swedish heritage?

HENDRICKS: Well, yes.

DALEY: Did the different people from the different Scandinavian countries get along in the United States?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, I think so. [Laughs] I don't think—there was always friendly rivalry with Norwegians and Swedes, but we got along fine. As a matter of fact, we bought, my Dad bought property that was strictly, a hundred percent Swedish, the family he bought from. And they were good neighbors. And then the people moved on the other side of us, that was where my wife moved in, he was Swede. So, we didn't have any trouble with the rest of them. The community where I lived in was—it was Norwegians, Swedes, and Swedish Finns. And that was mostly—there was one or two German families, but the community, of course, it had an awful lot of Norwegians in there. And there was, but Olalla, where I went to school, there were six or seven families that all immigrated from the same place in Norway. So, in other words, and some of them were even related. And then there were a lot of Swedes, and a lot of Swedish Finns. They talked Swedish, but they were born in Finland.

DALEY: Was Finland always a separate country?

HENDRICKS: Well, yes, but, well, Sweden and Finland were integrated to a certain extent. [Tape off/on]

DALEY: Okay, we're continuing again. We're in a classroom in the Nordic Heritage Museum, and there will be a class starting in a few minutes. So, we have a little bit of the students coming in. And I wanted to ask Mr. Hendricks about his association with the museum.

HENDRICKS: Well, back in '88 there was a friend of mine that, why, he was past President of the Norwegian Commercial Club. I'd known him, and he was vice president of the museum board at that time. But he said, "Oh, I have some stuff I have to haul." He knew that I had a fleet of trucks. He says, "Can you haul something?" So I says, "Okay, Crig, I'll come on over." So I come over and hauled some stuff for him into the museum. I'd already retired at that time, so he says, "Will you come over here every Thursday morning," you know, "and work?" So I says, "All right." So I came over to see what they were doing, and first thing you knew, I was picking up—I became part of the Thursday crew. And I'd been on the Thursday crew for about a year or so, when Crig, the guy that was running it, Crigwood Jorgensen, came in and he said, "Well," he says, "One of the board members just retired." He says, "Can you, would you like to take his place?" So, "Okay." I says, "I'll

take his place.” And I did, and I thought that he only had about a year left on the term. Well, the year was up; they had an election, and they elected me. They wanted me for another term. I ended up eleven years on the board. And I guess, [unclear], “Next time,” I says, “That’s enough. Let somebody else do it.” They need new blood, that’s it, see. I think I’m doing them a favor by getting off of the board.

DALEY: And now you’re a volunteer here?

HENDRICKS: Well, I’ve always—I never quit being a volunteer. Well, I really, I come over on Thursday morning for the coffee break—that’s it! [Laughs] But I’m a consultant. In other words, electrical problems and so forth, yes. I’ll come over and I’ll help when they need it. And we do have a retired electrical engineer that’s supposed to be on the Thursday crew. He took today off, today. But he’s supposed to be here. But that’s mainly what I volunteer for.

DALEY: What’s the main mission of the Nordic Heritage Museum?

HENDRICKS: Well, it’s to maintain and continue our heritage, that’s, I think that’s almost all heritage museums are for that same purpose. We don’t want to forget. We don’t want our great-grandkids to forget it.

DALEY: And one of the things that they do here is the language classes.

HENDRICKS: Language classes.

DALEY: They have exhibits downstairs.

HENDRICKS: They have exhibits, and they have language classes. I assume you’ve been through some of the rooms? You know, the Norway room and the Swedish room and the Danish room, and so forth. And the Fishing room up there. [Unclear] in the fishing room, part of that gear is the halibut gear. My brother donated part of that, and so.

DALEY: And, what are you most proud of in your life?

HENDRICKS: Well, [laughs] I don’t know. Probably the fact that I got a good family, and I’m proud of the fact that I think I’ve done some good, in being here. I’ve enjoyed being a volunteer. I don’t think that the museum owes me anything for what I’ve put in, because I’ve gotten my money’s worth out of it! That’s my feeling. And any volunteer that doesn’t feel that way isn’t a very good volunteer, I don’t think!

DALEY: Now, do you feel mostly American, or do you feel part American and part Norwegian?

HENDRICKS: No, I fell I'm American, but I'm proud of my heritage. I'm proud of being a Norwegian. I'm not a bit ashamed of being a Norwegian!

DALEY: And you've been back there a number of times?

HENDRICKS: Oh, yes! I still have lots of relatives in Norway. All of my Dad's side. On my mother's side, they all came to this country, but on my Dad's side, I have lots of relatives.

DALEY: And how did it feel, going back? Did it feel good?

HENDRICKS: The first time we went back, we went back to where I came, my mother came from. It was the middle of the week, and it was during the summer time, when everybody is, you know, they were in the farming community, and so forth. I mean, they were farmers, and fishermen. But they had farms, and everybody is working on the farm. You know, the day we came, my wife and I came, it was like a holiday! [Laughs] I didn't expect anything like that! I don't know how many people lived, but there was a hundred and fifty people that greeted us! And we hadn't been there for forty-three years, since I'd been there! I mean, that was amazing! So, [laughs] then my wife looked at the scenery there, and she says, "Why in the world did you ever leave?" Well, it is beautiful country. It's hard to—see, I'll tell you, the west coast of Ireland is probably the closest to the west coast of Norway. I mean, but you don't have the fjords in Ireland that we have in Norway. But otherwise, it's beautiful country.

DALEY: Now, do you remember—well, are you still fluent in--?

HENDRICKS: In Norwegian?

DALEY: --in Norwegian? Can you--?

HENDRICKS: Well, I can make myself understood, but the big problem I have: as a ten year old I didn't have the vocabulary that, you know, that you would have by the time you're fully grown. And so those words I learned, and it was harder to go back and get the vocabulary. So in other words, but I don't have any problem understanding. I can go to Norway or Sweden, and I can understand what they're talking about. I have no problem; I can make myself understood. But it's—I found that when I go back there, people that are younger than me are way better at English than I am at their language. So in other words, if you travel in almost any European country—and I've gone to Germany, and of course, I don't speak any German—but the kids, most kids, kids that are under fifty in Germany, talk fluent English!

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DALEY: Can you say anything, a saying, a proverb, or a prayer, or something like that, in Norwegian, for the tape?

HENDRICKS: [Laughs] Well, oh, for the tape? Yeah. [Norwegian] I'm speaking Norwegian. [Norwegian] I'm not that good on Norwegian, but I can understand what anybody says, and I can, yeah, yeah.

DALEY: Okay, well I want to thank you very much. I want to thank John Hendricks for giving us this interview, and to Maryann Forsblad for arranging it. And anything else you'd like to say before we finish?

HENDRICKS: No, I think that's—I've enjoyed talking with you, and answering what I'm able to answer. I'm not so sure that you gained much information from me. I'm not that good at—I don't have that much information to pass out!

DALEY: Well, we covered a lot of ground.

HENDRICKS: We covered a lot of ground, and I appreciate that. I do have one question. You'll get this tape? When I have been interviewed, they made a tape, they made copies.

DALEY: Yeah, we'll send you.

HENDRICKS: You'll send me a copy?

DALEY: Yeah, okay.

HENDRICKS: I would really appreciate that.

DALEY: Oh, yes, definitely. Okay, well I'm going to sign off now. The Norwegian class is going to start pretty soon. So this is Kevin Daley. I'm at the Nordic Heritage Museum with John Hendricks, in Seattle, Washington state. It's October 21st, 2004, and I'm signing off. Thank you.

HENDRICKS: And thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW