

My father Magnus, and sjarken (fishing boat) N 32 NF

Some of what I remember about him and what he was doing

Magnus was born July 19, 1904. His father died when he was 3 years old, and then his mother and the older siblings had to take the responsibility for the family. It was not easy at that time, but they were busy people and then this had to work. I was told that when his mother died he was fishing herring outside Haugesund, but it was no possibility to go home for the funeral. We can well understand how it must have been. At that time it would have taken a long time to go home from Haugesund.

It is hard to tell, but if you did not have enough money to go so far, then it was no other possibility. He was 21 years old at the time, and the trip down to Haugesund was by a seine boat from the area where he lived.

He was always working, and most of the work was on his small farm. It was a lot of ditch digging to drain the land, and this had to be done by pick and spade, hard and tiring work. Everything had to be done by hand, but in 1945 he bought a horse and the work became a little less tiring.

He was very interested in learning about farming, and subscribed to a magazine called Norden, and it dealt no doubt a lot about farming. After he was dead and we should share what was left, I got a book about farming. It was most probably from this book he got his farming knowledge.

After we got the horse it was a lot to take part in when it was used. Some of the earliest I remember from this time happened during the winter 45-46. The Germans had left Norway, and in the upper end of Sildhopvatnet there was a large stock of coal after the Germans, and my father had bought part of this. I was now 9 years old and participated to help with the coal stock.

We drove on the ice to cross the lake, but we had to wait until the ice was thick enough to drive upon, and it was probably in the winter of 1946.

I had a good time taking part in this, the ice was clear and fine and the horse had shoes on so everything was safe. Besides this it was many trips to the outlying field for firewood. We used a lot of turf for firewood, but not of all we used birch.

This work to fetch firewood was done during the winter, and it was always many trips during a day. The horse was always happy when we had loaded and then it went home with speed, but he did not like to return for another load and then the speed was slow.

In addition to this work we had to take care of the cows, sheep, goats and some years a pig. But perhaps most of the worktime he was spending on the hens. It started rather slowly, but the number increased and at the most it was 300. He also had a special incubator so he did not have to buy the chickens. It was a lot of fun when these small butterballs popped out of the eggs, and he probably had a special way to care for the small ones so most of the chickens lived on.

The chickens had to grow enough old so he could distinguish the males from the females by the shape of their combs, and it used to be about the same amount of each kind. This meant that we could eat as much chicken as we would like. Here I have to mention my mother Elfrida. She was a clever cook, and the chicken she prepared was very tasty. It was also a lot of eggs for food because some of them could not be sold.

My father was also one of the first men in the community who bought a tractor. It was not a big tractor, but a good replacement of the horse when it was gone. This tractor still exists,

and is safe for driving.

I believe my father resembled his grand father Peder Olsen, the farming was probably the work he preferred. But he was also a clever fisherman, and he did a lot of fishing in Mørsvikfjorden. Fishing for food and for sale to increase the household budget. The small farming needed different equipment. In addition to the tractor he was one of the first men in the community who bought a mower, and this was a great progress at the time. It was ok to avoid cutting the grass with the schyte, it was hard to handle.

I would like to mention that my father also was a good hunter, and it was mostly grouse he hunted for. After the end of the war in 1945 it was a lot of wildlife, and it had not been any hunting for 5 years. It was not allowed to have a gun during the war.

Some times there was work to do besides the work at home. In the autumn 1945 he went to Hammerfest in Finnmark to take part in the restoration of the buildings the Germans had burnt down.

He also went many winters to Stamsund (in Lofoten) to work on the fishing station there. He told us about when he asked for work at that station, and when they realized that he was hard of hearing he could not have the job, but in the end everything turned out all right and he stayed there many years. This work took place in winter time during the fishing for cod.

In the autumn of 1948 he bought a 18 fot sjark (fishing boat), and it was registered in the municipality of Nordfold, N32NF. This was a new hull only, so he had to make the house and a few other necessary things himself. The first years after the war it was not possible to buy new engines, but he was able to buy a used 3 horsepower Sabb. The boat was placed in the boathouse (naust), and he got help to mount the engine and make it ready for use. When everything was ready, he used the boat himself, but he never was confident with this Sabb. The engine was a little difficult to get started. Once we were at the fishing station belonging to Erling and my dad should start it, he tried several times without any luck. Then suddenly it started with a terrible noise like a plane engine and the boat shook terribly. After a while it calmed down and we got some help and then everything went ok.

When we had used the boat and engine for some time things worked better, but when I grew older my father preferred that I used it.

I would also like to tell a little about the fishing at the firth Belkjosen. The first year was in 1949, we went there to fish cod in the winter season. This we could do for three weeks when I had days off from school. The boat was small, so it was not much space except the bed. My dad was always early up in the morning, long before daylight, therefore it was long evenings with not much to do after we had prepared the catch. We used fishing nets, so the job was to haul in the nets, take care of the fish and then put out the nets again. At that time it was not much luxury for anybody, we did not even have a radio. We mostly had to sit and wait for time to pass. We used to anchor at Nøtnesvika (a small bay), but I did not know the people who lived there. However once I gathered up my courage and rowed ashore to Nøtnes to visit some of the people there. I arrived at Erlig Nøtnes place, and was well received there, but I was only 13 at that time so I did not have much to talk about, but it went all right and I had a good time. They had a daughter there, Henny, who was 9 years old at the time. In those days it was a lot of fish in Belkjosen, and as far as I recall we got plenty of cod. We delivered the fish at a fishing station at Nøtnes, and if necessary we also could take the nets on to the pier. This was very straightforward for us, but then one day a buyer of the fish came from Nordfold and he wanted to buy our fish. He could give us a little better price than the fishing station at Nøtnes, so we sold the fish to him. This we should not have done because the buyer at Nøtnes got offended and later on would not buy our fish any more.

I looked forward to the weekend because we went home on Saturday. But my father always liked to start early for everything he should do, therefore he started back to Belkjosen Sunday around noon even if it only took about 2 hours to go with our boat. This was his way to do things and of course it had to be respected.

Gradually we had many trips with the boat, fishing for cod and flounder. My share of the catch was that I got a small share of the boat for every time we were out fishing. At last we owned the boat together. Daddy also hold a share of a seines, and it was some work related to this. The seines should be shipshaped, and the boats had to be painted and tared. He also took part in the herring fishery during the autumn.

I would also like to mention that when he returned from America in 1931, after a 5 year stay there, he and his brother Ingvald bought a Nordlandsbåt of about 30 fot with a 10 horsepower Union engine. This boat was only utilized by his brother. Besides this Nordlandsbåt and the sjark (fising boat) he also wore out two ouboard motors, in addition he had a wooden boat with a Japp engine which he used when he had finished the sjark. Two of my brothers, Marvin and Finn, have renovated this boat so it fully can be used. This tells a little about dad that he was active in his profession both on land and at sea.

I have mentioned that daddy was hard of hearing, and it was not always sympathized with, but he was a good working man and the hard of hearing problem was nothing he could do anything about. But he was always keen to find out if something could be done with the hearing problem, so when the hospital could operate he went away there. In order for him to hear we were always used to speak loudly close to his ear.

He was operated on during the night, and I visited him in the morning, and as usual I spoke loudly close to his ear, but then he hold his hand in front of the ear and said: «you must not shout because now I can hear normally». This was a kind of unreal, but unfortunately this did not last long.

At last I will tell a little about him as a human being. Calm and kind, and sometimes he also could be jocular. When he got his brother Hans Peterson on visit from America, they had many fine moments together. It was told a lot of hunting stories from old times, and it was much laughter.

I also remember from a Christmas celebration at the old peoples' home where daddy lived, and we went there with him and another man. They both were close to 100 years old, and we had eaten and had a good time. It was also served red wine to the meal, but daddy and the other man had Sprite which is a kind of soda (the name is almost the same as spirit). Dad is looking at the bottle, and than he says to the other man: «here you see what we have been drinking, clean spirit», and pointed at the label of the bottle. Yes, it was a lot of laughter, and a fine mood for a while.

This tells a little about daddy, he could joke and have fun till his last moments. His good laughter when he enjoyed something will always live in my memory.

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