

Here is a copy of a letter sent by Ola Andreas Saltveit, my grandfather, to his son Harald Magnus Saltveit, my uncle, in May 1936: from Karlstad, Minnesota.

Dear Harald: The date of your fortieth birthday anniversary is now only a few days off, so I decided I should write you my congratulations and good wishes on that date. Then we hope this little missive will reach you on the 21st. The place of your birth I remember well and think about the ups and downs your Mother and I were having while we lived there the two years and two months, from in March 1895 until in May or June 1897. We were married on April 20th 1895 by Soren skriver Ove Gude, my Father and Bokbinder Ludvig Eriksen acting as witnesses. Ove Gude was brother to Artist painter Hans Gude.

Marriages consummated outside of church were very few in that country at that time. Your birthplace Storsten was owned by Stortingsmand Haakon Johannesen. Storsten's parents: Johannes og Olina Storsten. Johannes I never saw but the widow I saw a number of times.

.....to leave you alone in the living room then, but you managed to open the door and crawl out to where she was. The kitchen was a drafty cold place, so she endeavored to hold you in her lap while working at the dough and the cakes. But that was not in line with your ambitions, because you wanted to have a helping hand in the job. We decided that to buy bakers bread from town was really the best and most satisfactory way to solve the bread problem. And her arguments for that arrangement were that while we were in the living room with you she could devote her time to knitting and sewing.

When leaving Storsten we moved to your grandmother Oluffa Vikse where we stayed until we started for Lebanon, Oregon. Poor Grandma! She became grief stricken and sad upon learning that I had decided to immigrate. At first I had in mind to go to New Zealand, but your mother flatly refused to consider such a move. So we compromised on going to Oregon. We left your grandmother on the 20th of August and on the 21st we embarked at Stavanger for Hull. That day you were 15 months. We came to the end of our journey on the 11th of September. Apples, prunes and plums were then plentiful and about one of the worst things you did to yourself was to eat too many sweet plums that grew in Mrs. Carlson's yard, so many that you became sick for a few days. I think bringing you to Dr. Davis for that little ailment done you more harms than the plums you ate.What I think about you, you're Mother, her Mother and your five brothers would fill a small volume; and I would have to be there as the narrator of the many incidents and events, possibly one volume would not hold it all, unless we made it a tome.

A week ago or so it was just twenty years since you, Olaf and Trygve came to Thief River Falls from Haugesund. I think the first morning you woke up in my homestead was the 13th of May, that morning was white with snow. The first day of June you left Olaf and me to go and seek work at your trade. At Detroit you worked a while, at first. You have had a great many jobs since then; one was to serve in the United States Army. It grieved me more than anything else that you had to go there, so I was very glad that you came back hale and hearty. In a couple of months it will be 17 years since you came to my homestead from the travels and travails is dent to that frightful struggle in France. I hope you are getting along nicely, you and your family.

With all good wishes, your father.. Ola