

March 20, 1979

Dear Relative,

On this last day of winter I shall call this project complete for now. It is the culmination of over 500 letters written in nearly 3 years. I am indebted to the many good cousins in Norway, Canada and USA who have been so generous with their time & efforts & interesting letters.

No doubt many of you will be amazed to acquire so many new cousins at one time. I have had thrilling moments each time I discovered a new family, especially after I had given up hope of ever locating them; the descendants of brothers and sisters of my grandparents. Each time it was through the help of other cousins.

Additional information will probably be sent to you at a later date, along with some family histories which I plan to compile. If any of you recall anecdotes about your ancestors I will appreciate hearing them. Such items as their travels, occupations, hardships, military service, etc. Each thing I have learned so far has built a greater pride and admiration for my ancestors. I would like to think I inherited a bit of their fortitude.

Some of the enclosed pages are rather crowded. I wonder how large the paper would be if all this information was put on one sheet. That could be interesting.

A little explanation for the English speaking cousins: The Norwegian language has 3 additional letters in the alphabet and each might be used in one of two ways: - Æ = AE, Ö = Ø, and å = aa. So if you see "Ø" in a name it is not a typographical error.

In the old days Norwegians were identified by their Christian name and the name of their father with "sen" added for a son and "datter" added for a daughter. Thus, Peter Olsen's son would be Ivar Petersen and his daughter would be Anna Petersdatter. In addition a third name was used, usually a farm name. That name was used whether one was the owner, a tenant or just a helper on the farm. When he moved to another farm he would then use that farm name as his own.

On arrival in USA some took the immediate farm name or even a name of a farm where they had one time lived. Others used the patronymic name or maybe used the name as it was spelled by the immigration officer. The name Lina is pronounced Leena in Norway so the immigration officer would write it Lena. Only recently did I learn that my father, John Olson, was baptized Johan Olsen.

You will notice a Christian name is sometimes used twice in a family. When a child died, the next born of the same sex was given the same name. All babies were baptized quite soon after birth. The Church was an important part of their lives as was their family according to material gathered up to now.

Quite often new parents are seeking a name for their child that is different. On these pages are many beautiful names from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. And naturally the owners of the names are beautiful people.

Hilsen, John H. Olson

FIRST COUSIN = Children of brothers and sisters
SECOND COUSIN = Children of first cousins
THIRD COUSIN = Grandchild of a first cousin, etc. etc.
FIRST COUSIN ONCE REMOVED = The child of one's first cousin
FIRST COUSIN TWICE REMOVED = Grandchild of one's first cousin, etc. etc.
GRANDAUNT or GREAT-AUNT = The aunt of one's parent or
The sister of one's grandparent
GRANDNEPHEW or GREAT-NEPHEW = The son of one's nephew or niece or
The grandson of one's brother or sister
GREAT-UNCLE or GREAT-NIECE = Similar to the above