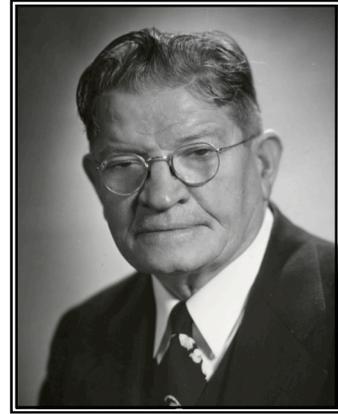


“Service They Rendered”



A speech delivered by
Torleif S. Knaphus around
1957

*about his family research and the service
his ancestors rendered in their communities*



Torleif S. Knaphus

I have been asked to come here his evening to show you my pedigree chart on which I have 586 of my Grandparents' names and to say something about them. So in this attempt I humbly desire that the “Spirit of God” will assist me and be with us that we may more fully understand the great responsibility which is ours and sincerely carry on with this work while there is yet time. I am grateful and have been amazed to see the willingness of men to assist in this work and have noticed their desire to find out more about their ancestors of long ago.

And so to us, the first and most important thing is that we:

- 1. Get a desire;**
- 2. Have sufficient love to go ahead, and**
- 3. Do something about it.**

As we carry on, things unfold themselves before us and we find more, and accomplish more than we ever dreamed to accomplish; and as we proceed three, four, and five hundred years back, it becomes extremely interesting. The dark clouds which have rested over our ancestors' lives and existence have nearly altogether disappeared and the Middle Ages have seemingly become so near to us. And when we find our ancestors who lived that long ago and read about their good works, it gives us a feeling of joy similar to that of having a child or a grandchild born unto us and we love them as our immediate family.

Now let us for a moment forget the present and flash back four hundred years and mention some of my grandparents who were born between the years 1500 and 1600, an average of four hundred years ago and see if they are worthwhile to be remembered. I do this for your sake so you can imagine the joy which comes to one who finds his ancestors of that long ago.

Note: *It is not imperative, but if you can refer to Torleif S. Knaphus' large pedigree chart while reading this, it will help you visualize the relationships of his ancestors as he discusses them.*

We will start here at the top of my big pedigree chart; as you will notice, it is properly connected from children to parents beginning with myself and going back twelve generations to:

- **My eighth great grandfather, Knut Håland of Randa Ætten**, mostly know for his great wealth.
- **His son, Olaf**, married **Gudrun**, a daughter of **Sebjorn Toresen Tolga**, and...
- **His grandson, Alf Olavsens Sheftun**, married **Engeborg**, a daughter of...
- **Elling Simonsen**, the Lutheran minister of Finnøy who assisted **Bishop Jørgen Eriksen** in the reformation to the Lutheran faith. **Elling Simonsen's** wife was **Ingred**, a daughter of...
- **Orm Olavsens** of Losna Ætten, an old democratic well-known line of nobility in Norway.

As you see, I have his ancestors line connected from one generation to another back to:

- **My fifteenth great grandfather Felepus Erlandsens** of Losna.
- **Orm Olavsens**'s wife was **Bergeta Sevotsens Favold**. Previous to her marriage to **Orm Olavsens**, she was married to the rich *The Losna Coat of Arms* nobleman, **Olav Kåll** of **Kåll Ætten**, another of my eighth great grandfathers, so twice she became my eighth great grandmother on my father's lines.



I will also mention:

- **My eighth great grandparents, Lendsman (Sheriff) Johanes Osmudsen Stokka and Brynilla Knudsen**, a very rich, God-fearing and interesting family. An oil painting of them, with their many children, has hung in the church in Vats for nearly 350 years (*Now it's been there for 400 years*).

(See the painting on the next page)

Three of my ancestral lines go back to this family. This painting has not only interest for being a picture of my forefathers from so long ago, but it seems to have been the starting point for the great genealogical research work in Norway.

There was an old legend held in some families concerning this picture that it was a painting of their ancestors from long ago; so in about 1902 Captain Munthe of Oslo started his research work; later John Haukanes, Erik Bakevik and Berge Velde of Oslo. All of them are now most outstanding genealogical researchers and have traced their lineage back to this **Stokka family**.



*The Johanes Osmudsen Stokka Family
Painting hangs in the Vats Church*



Vats Church

There was another old legend at my home in Vats which runs like this:

*“Long, long ago there came a great nobleman from far off, whose name was Alf, and settled there. From that time, the place was called **Alfseike**, in this honor.”*

It was also said we were descended from this man but after I had proceeded with my research work for 27 years, having already found several thousand of my ancestors and relatives names, yet there was not one among them named Alf.

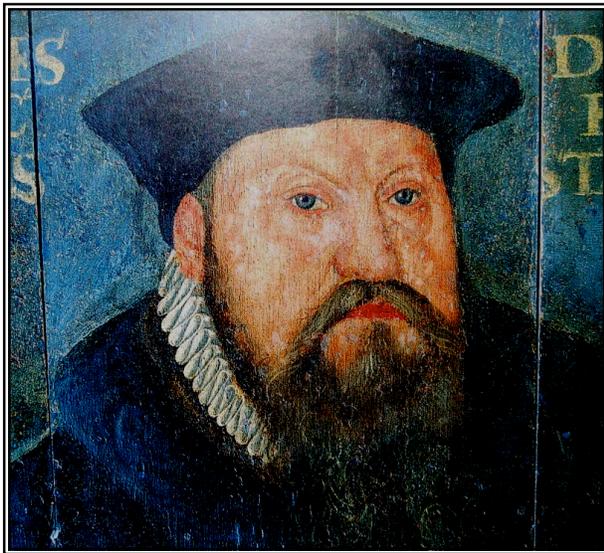
But shortly afterwards, I found on my father’s line an **Alf Olafsen Alfseike** and presumed he was this man. About four years later, I obtained information from my friend, John Dalsbo, then in Norway, that **Alf Olafsen Sjeftun**, in Hjelmeland, received as part of his inheritance, the old estate Eike in Vats and decided to live there. This made the old legend of nearly 400 years ago a true event. He was the grandfather to the **Alf Olafsen** I have previously mentioned.

- I will also mention **Gunner Mikkelsen**, Lutheran minister of Vats and Skjold, and his father, **Mikkael Pedersen**, my seventh great grandfather, born about 1530, who was the first Lutheran minister in Skjold and Prost of Stavanger.
- Then on my father’s maternal line, we have **Sebjorn Toresen Talga** of Talga Ætten, whose ancestors are on my father’s paternal lines. But the genealogy of his wife, **Marita Bergesen**, of Losna and Galtong Ætten, is here recorded back to 1360.

- On this line **Sebjorn Toresen Talga** comes in as my tenth great grandfather, whereas on my father's line he comes in as my eighth great grandfather.

For this, and other reasons, I think it is nice to have a pedigree chart made out like this so we can see as on a blue print, how our lines divide and again meet many generations back.

- Then we have **Lars Aslaksen Sukka**. I do not know much of this man, only that he was married to **Sire Jonsen Foss** of Foss Ætten and that they had some remarkable descendants. The late church leader, **Mathew Cowley's** grandmother was also of this Foss Ætten.
- I will also mention my two seventh great grandfathers, **Jacob Nilsen Haug** and **Hans Rasmussen Piel**. Both were Lutheran ministers and both were sons-in-law of **Daniel Jorgensen**, Prost of Hjelmeland.
- Another seventh great grandfather was **Sten Sivertsen Jelsa**, known to be a very quarrelsome man. Much is said and written of his many quarrels and court proceedings, mostly against the Lutheran ministers of Jelsa. He was the Lensman (*a Sheriff*) of Jelsa.
- I will also mention the well-spoken-of **Laurits Knutsen Hoganvik**, **Lagrettemann** (*a prestigious court member*) of Vikedal, born about 1570; and...
- My two ninth great grandfathers, **Osten Jonsen Radman** of Stavanger and **John Villumsen Borger** of Stavanger.
- Then we have my ninth great grandparents, **Adrienne Jensdatter**



*Jørgen Eriksen (1535-1604), Bishop of Stavanger
Painting hangs in the Stavanger Church*

and the famous **Jørgen Eriksen**, Bishop of Stavanger, born in Hederslev, Denmark in about 1535 and often called the "Martin Luther of Norway" as he most wisely and effectively established the Lutheran faith in Norway. He did not dismiss the Catholic priests from office but waited until a good job could be secured for them or until they retired or died. Then when a vacancy came, he let twelve wise men of that district be named to select a man for their Lutheran Minister and after they were their unanimous in their decision, they prayed about it. If they were still unanimous, they brought him to the Bishop for his approval and examination as to his qualifications.

