

OLAUS JELDNESS

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Comments, objections, criticisms, suggestions, etc. are all most welcome.

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The information presented in this paper has been compiled from many sources: private papers, correspondence and other documents held by archives, mining handbooks, city street directories and historical newspapers. The accuracy of information in newspaper stories is always somewhat suspect, but it represents a large part of what is knowable about Olaus Jeldness. I have tried to be cautious about newspaper stories and in those few cases where it was possible, to check against other sources of information. However, because of my reliance on newspapers, it is inevitable that some errors of fact and interpretation are reported here. Also, there are many gaps in the available information -- gaps that are beyond my research skills to fill -- and the reasons behind many events are obscure. In some of these cases I have offered my speculations about what might have happened or why. I have identified these instances as speculations; they should be treated as nothing more than that. I have also left many questions hanging.

Two technologies made possible the research underlying this paper, one relatively old and the other relatively new. The older technology is microfilm. Many documents and particularly old newspapers that would be otherwise very difficult if not impossible to access are preserved on microfilm and I have made intensive use of several collections. The main depository for microfilms of old British Columbia newspapers is the British Columbia Archives in Victoria, but Selkirk College Library also has a remarkable collection of microfilms of newspapers of the Kootenays. The Vancouver Public Library obtained the microfilms from Selkirk College through inter-library loan and provided the facilities for me to read them. Some issues of the *Rosslund Miner* are missing from the Archives and Selkirk collections. I was able to read these at the British Library's newspaper library at Colindale, London, England. A crucial collection of microfilms of back issues of the *Spokesman Review* at the University of Washington's Suzzallo Library proved indispensable in researching Olaus Jeldness' life after he moved to Spokane. I also made important use of microfilmed issues of the *Oregonian* in the Multnomah County Library, Portland, Oregon. Microfilms of some old Colorado newspapers were obtained through the University of British Columbia Library.

The newer technology is the internet, the resources of which continue to expand. Some of the research reported in this paper would not have been possible without access to the BC Historical newspapers digitized by the UBC library, the Digital Archives of the State of Washington, the Archives of the State of Oregon, the Oregon Digital Newspaper program of the University of Oregon, the Northwest History Database of Washington State University, the Chronicling America project of the Library of Congress, the Utah Digital Newspapers of the University of Utah, Newspaperarchives.com and Googleneewsarchive.com. The Google news archive is particularly valuable because it indexes early Spokane newspapers. Unfortunately, Google has not maintained the service and the search engine has some quirks and serious failings, including assigning incorrect dates to some articles. Moreover, the coverage of the Spokane papers is very incomplete.

Much of my research concerned the Jeldness genealogy. In this regard I have made intensive use of the internet-based genealogical services of Ancestry.com and FirstSearch.com. Indeed, these genealogical services were invaluable. A remarkable book, in Norwegian, by Magne Holten, *Amerikafeber* (America Fever), documents emigration from the Surnadal region of Norway to North America. With the help of a Norwegian-English dictionary, it has provided evidence that I have been unable to find elsewhere.

More traditional sources, printed works and manuscripts have also been vital. I must thank the Spokane Public Library for access to the *Spokane City Directories*; the University of British Columbia

Library and the British Library's newspaper library at Colindale, London, for access to old mining books and mining magazines, some of them on microfilm; the British National Archives in London for access to files on long defunct British corporations; Special Collections and Archives of the University of Oregon Knight Library for access to the Jonathan Bourne Papers; and the Spokane County Clerk's Office for access to Olaus Jeldness' probated will. In his book, *The Ski Race*, Sam Wormington provides a unique and accessible collection of many, but not all, of the relevant clippings from the *Rossland Miner*. Wormington was a devoted admirer of the Olaus Jeldness of legend.

The Morgan family has a collection of Jeldness papers and photographs that Diana Morgan graciously permitted me to examine. They proved to be invaluable as a source of information about Olaus Jeldness that could not be found elsewhere. Similarly, the Rossland City Archives has a collection of Jeldness papers, donated by the Morgan family and city taxation records that I was permitted to pore over. Both collections have been immensely useful. I am grateful for access to them.

Marcie showed remarkable patience with and understanding of my quirky, compulsive research and writing habits, read the manuscript and graciously corrected some of my egregious grammatical errors.

I am indebted to you all

Of course, all errors in research, interpretation and writing are mine and mine alone.

Vancouver
January, 2013

FOOTNOTES AND ENDNOTES

This manuscript has two types of notes. Footnotes, indexed by superscript letters (^a, ^b, ... ^{zzz}) contain information that I consider relevant but not of sufficient importance to include in the text. Some footnotes elaborate on a point in the text, others provide context or background. Some footnotes also contain source references. Endnotes, indexed by superscript numerals (¹, ², ³ ... ⁵⁹⁹) contain source references only. They are printed at the end of the manuscript.

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Olaus Jeldness

Ronald A. Shearer

Olaus Jeldness was a "mining man," but he is a legend in Rossland, British Columbia, not for his accomplishments in mining, but for his exploits on skis. Yet, despite his local fame, surprisingly little is known about his life and some of the details regularly repeated in the extant literature are incorrect. In his adult life, skiing was important, at times a basic means of locomotion in winter, but more generally a relaxing and exhilarating relief from the stresses and anxieties of dangerous and demanding everyday activities. However, at root his life was an odyssey through the mining camps of North America (and some in Europe), in a determined quest for ever elusive riches, always guided by the optimistic belief that the next hole in the ground would deliver the big bonanza. His personal bonanza was found on an isolated mountainside outside Rossland. It gave him a modest personal fortune and for an extended time he led a prosperous life style. However, he died in less than prosperous circumstances, a victim of his own speculative nature and the depression of the 1930s. This paper reports what I have discovered in my attempt to understand Olaus Jeldness and his life.

Olaus Nilsen Jeldness was born Olaus Nilsen Gjeldnes, one of seven children in the family of Nils Gjeldnes on a farm in what was then the rural municipality of Stangvik, Norway, on October 1, 1856.¹ Following administrative reorganizations, Stangvik is now a village in the larger municipality of Sarnadal, in the district of Nordmore, in the county of More og Romsdal.² Stangvik is deep in a fiord on the southwest coast of Norway, about 375 kilometres north and somewhat west of Oslo and about 100 kilometres southwest of the famous ski resort of Trondheim. The Gjeldnes family had a farm, with a substantial farmhouse that is still in use. Olaus, like other family members, changed the spelling of his name to Jeldness (or, perhaps the immigration officials changed it for him) when he immigrated to the United States.

I have discovered nothing about his early life in Norway, except that he was an accomplished skier and ski jumper from childhood. Olaus reported that before leaving Norway, he set a national (and by implication, a world) record with a ski jump of 92 feet, a record that he asserted stood until 1888 when it was bested by another Norwegian who jumped 100 feet.³ I have not been able to verify Olaus' claim; nor

could Wormington.^a However, Olaus had a reputation for honesty and even if it was not recognized as a national record, the jump was a remarkable achievement for the times. By today's standards, these records seem puny. However, it was very early in the history of jumping competitions, skiing equipment was primitive and science had not yet been applied to the refinement of jumping techniques and the design of ski jumps and jumping hills.

Olaus' education is a blank. He left Norway at age 16, but I do not know if he remained in school until his departure. However, given what I know about his subsequent accomplishments, whatever the number of years of formal schooling, I would be surprised if he was not also academically gifted. His letters and a few other writings show a mastery of the English language that, while not perfect, would be the envy of many native speakers. He also proved himself capable of self-directed advanced study in geology and mining engineering and thoughtful explorations in politics, religion and moral philosophy -- all of this while working hard in a variety of mining camps on the western mining frontier of North America. Regardless of his level of formal education, he was a highly intelligent man.

THE EARLY YEARS

San Juan County, Colorado.

Olaus Jeldness immigrated to the United States in May, 1873,⁴ when he was 16, to join two older brothers in Michigan and work in the iron mines.⁵ Sometime during the following year the three brothers moved on to the lead mines of Missouri. One did not get rich digging in lead mines, but one could get rich prospecting for gold or silver. In the mid-1870s, the Black Hills of Dakota Territory began to attract a horde of gold-crazed prospectors and in 1876 the Jeldness brothers joined the rush.⁶

By treaty, the Black Hills belonged to the Sioux tribe of Native Americans and non-aboriginal prospectors were prohibited from entering the area. However, as an offshoot of an 1874 military expedition under Colonel George Custer, gold was discovered in interesting quantities.⁷ Despite the prohibition on entering Sioux land -- which was not seriously enforced -- a gold rush began that reached a climax about 1876. It is reported that "Many of the miners came up the Missouri River from Kansas,"⁸ next door to Missouri, and that many Norwegians -- apparently, including the Jeldness

^a [Wormington, S. (1980). The Ski Race. Sandpoint, Idaho, Selkirk Press.]. Olaus' story is contradicted by another story that Sondre Nordheim jumped 30 or 30.5 metres, about 100 feet, in 1860 or 1862 [Shaw, M. and P. Bailey (2011, 2011). "Canadian Encyclopedia: Ski Jumping ". Retrieved January 2, 2012, from <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/ski-jumping>., Wikipedia (2012a). "Ski Jumping." from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ski_jumping.]. However, the source of this information is not cited in either report and its accuracy seems doubtful. Huntford, in his carefully researched history of skiing, describes, "... the first national championship, ... in fact of not in name," held at Christiania (now Oslo) in February, 1868. It was at that competition, not in 1860 or 1862, that Sondre Nordheim, "a newcomer," was the surprising winner of a ski race that included a jump (distance not noted) [Huntford, R. (2008). Two planks and a passion: the dramatic history of skiing. London, New York, Continuum.]. If Nordheim's jump was as long as reported, it is surprising that Huntford does not note it. Huntford also describes "the first reported ski-jumping competition," held at a place called Trysil, in central-eastern Norway, in February, 1862 [ibid.]. The race was won by someone variously called Halvard Morgedal or Halvor Dahl; not Sondre Nordheim. Again, the distance achieved is not reported. Jeldness is not mentioned in the standard English language histories of skiing and ski jumping.

brothers -- were part of the stream.⁹ The Sioux were outraged. Many moved off their reservations, organized alliances and assembled in a large, hostile group. The climax was the Battle of Little Big Horn in late June, 1876, in which George Custer's 7th Cavalry was annihilated, including Custer himself. Violence continued and the Hills were rather inhospitable territory for prospectors and miners until a couple of years later when the Sioux were attacked in strength by the US army, defeated and dissipated.

In this tumultuous period, several prospectors and miners, including some Norwegians,¹⁰ were killed by the Indians, both before and after the battle of Little Big Horn.¹¹ I don't know if it was the widespread violence that repelled them or if they were attracted by the lure of better prospects elsewhere, but the Jeldness brothers soon left the Black Hills. Colorado beckoned.

Following the discovery of gold at Pikes Peak in 1859, there had been several "rushes" to Colorado, initially for gold and later for silver.¹² In the mid-to-late 1870s the attraction was silver, high in the Colorado mountains. The excitement was intense, drawing people from all over the United States and abroad. The Jeldness brothers joined the silver rush to Leadville, Colorado, in 1877.¹³

Mining in Colorado

Generally, men joined a gold or silver rush intent on prospecting -- scouring unclaimed territory for signs of gold or silver, in streams or on land, seeking deposits that would result in a mine that would make them rich. That was probably the ambition of the Jeldness brothers, but I have no evidence of them prospecting in Colorado and, if they prospected, they did not locate a claim that developed into a mine. I have no information about their activities at their first stop in the famous mining camp of Leadville, but their stay there was brief. By 1878 they were in Poughkeepsie Gulch, San Juan County.

San Juan County is in the San Juan Mountain range, in southwest Colorado. It is part of the territory that was reserved to the Ute Indians and they jealously guarded their land, sometimes with violence. However, by 1870 some prospectors had edged into the mountains, finding rich deposits of silver. Pressure mounted on the government to do something about the Utes -- ideally, in the view of the miners, to expel them and open the area to prospecting, mining and non-Indian settlement. As a compromise, prolonged negotiations led, in 1874, to the opening of the area to prospecting and mining, but not to agriculture or settlement.^b The silver rush to the San Juans then began. However, Poughkeepsie Gulch is remote, high in the mountains, about 10 tortuous miles north of the town of Silverton, west of the Continental Divide. For this reason, prospecting was late in Poughkeepsie Gulch and mining did not begin there until 1877¹⁴ or 1878.¹⁵ The Alaska mine must have been one of the early

^b Inevitably, the agreement with the Utes was violated. There were disputes about hunting rights and agriculture and trespasses occurred, as did violent confrontations. The most serious was in 1879 when a government agent attached to one of the bands was killed by the Utes. That, of course, was when the Jeldness brothers were in Poughkeepsie so we can add Indian troubles to the potential dangers faced by the brothers. However, there is no evidence that they were ever directly involved in such incidents. The Utes were driven out of San Juan Country by the army and were essentially gone by September, 1881

ones opened. The gulch is now uninhabited, with abandoned mine workings and a "few remaining ruins,"¹⁶ a destination for adventurous four-wheelers (and the occasional geologist), over a rough, dangerous trail.^c A recent atlas described the gulch as "very remote...(with)... horrid winters."¹⁷ Snow could arrive in October and not leave until May or June and the temperature could dip to 20, 30 and occasionally 40 degrees below zero. It is not a salubrious environment for mining or settlement.

It seems likely that the Jeldness brothers were among the earliest employees at the Alaska, but I don't know when they signed on. They were relative neophytes at the silver-mining trade, with much to learn and the Alaska mine was in part their mining school. Thus, Olaus tells us that it was "in the mines of San Juan county" that the Jeldness brothers "accumulated respectable miners' competence before ... (they) ... drifted to other fields."¹⁸

Poughkeepsie Gulch must have been a rough and ready mining camp when the Jeldness brothers were there. The census taken in June, 1880,¹⁹ recorded only 51 inhabitants in the vicinity of the Alaska mine, including Olaus^d Of the 51 inhabitants, 49 were adult males, 47 of them miners (there was also a blacksmith and a baker). There was only one female, the wife of a miner, and with her was her 5-year old son. An additional 25 people were recorded living farther along the valley in the so-called "Gulch Town," all of them adult males. As well as 20 miners, the town included a mine supervisor, a clerk, a blacksmith and two "speculators." Poughkeepsie Gulch was hardly a normal, balanced community providing a comfortable style of living!^e The nearest point of semi-civilization was Silverton, 10 miles distant, with a population of a little over 500, but growing rapidly.

The Alaska mine was regarded as promising, with rich deposits of silver-bismuth ore, and "in 1879 and '80 this property was worked extensively, and a quantity of ore shipped, which netted a large profit."²⁰ However, in the difficult location of Poughkeepsie Gulch with its serious transport problems, a mine had to be very rich to survive, let alone prosper. Although a wagon road was built into the valley, the Alaska mine was on a mountainside above the gulch, at an altitude of 3,697 metres,²¹ only accessible by a rough mountain trail that was "steep and dangerous," navigable by a "sure-footed burro" and little else.²² Olaus reported that the Alaska mine ore "had to be sorted closely to bear transportation on burro" 150²³ or 100²⁴ miles to the nearest railhead, a staggeringly inefficient and expensive form of transport. This must have been near the beginning, because as the San Juan boom progressed wagon roads were gradually built

^c A trip through Poughkeepsie Gulch in 2009 is graphically described, with beautiful pictures, on a website "Mountains Rule," by Lisa Wilson of Telluride, Colorado [Wilson, L. (2009). "Mountains Rule." Retrieved July 8, 2011, from <http://mtsrool.blogspot.com/2009/08/poughkeepsie-gulch.html>].

^d For unknown reasons, none of the Jeldness brothers except Olaus were recorded in the 1880 census. In his later *Reminiscences*, Olaus tells us that all four brothers were in Colorado [Jeldness, O. (n.d. (b)). *Reminiscences. Jeldness Papers, Morgan Family Collection (Diana Morgan)*. Roberts Creek, B. C.]. There is other evidence that at least two of the other three, Ole and Anders, were also at Poughkeepsie Gulch at that time, but I have no independent evidence about the location of the oldest brother, Halvor.

^e There is another interesting dimension to the "community" of Poughkeepsie Gulch in 1880. Of the 76 inhabitants recorded in the census, 51 were foreign born. The largest number was from Britain and Ireland, but there was significant representation of Scandinavians (Norwegians and Swedes) and Canadians.

into the region and concentrators and smelters were erected at various locations in or close to the county. In 1878 it was reported that ore from the Alaska was being delivered, to a new smelter at Lake City. Nonetheless, this was a haul, by burro and wagon, of about 25-30 miles. The railroad did not reach Silverton, about 10 miles from Poughkeepsie Gulch, until July, 1882,²⁵ after the Jeldness brothers had departed, and it was never extended to the Gulch. The wagon road from Silverton to the Gulch was passable only in the summer months and the winter could wreak havoc on it. Thus, for example, in late April, 1881, it was reported that although the snow was rapidly disappearing on the road to Gladstone, "several of the bridges will need to be rebuilt before the road will be passable for wagons."²⁶ Gladstone was on the way to Poughkeepsie Gulch. The Alaska mine had a further complication. Unlike most mines, the rich silver-bismuth ore was found in discrete pockets, not in well-defined veins.²⁷ This made it more difficult to mine profitably. As a miner working in the narrow, dark, dangerous and poorly ventilated tunnels of the Alaska mine, Olaus would have earned about \$3-\$4 a day.^f Even without the high cost of living in an isolated mining camp, these wages would not have made him rich -- but he was learning the mining trade.

Sometime late in 1880 the Alaska mine was shut down and not reopened until a new party leased it in late 1883, after the Jeldness brothers had left the state (an August, 1883 visitor said the Alaska looked "lonely and neglected"²⁸). After the mine closed, the Jeldness brothers went into the mining business on their own account, becoming contractors in a mine called the Seven Thirty, probably in October, 1880.²⁹ Contractors did not own or lease the mine, but had a contract to do a specified amount and type of work, in a specified time period, for a specified sum of money. The contract could be profitable if the work could be done properly, on time and at low cost. Like many contractors, the Jeldness brothers probably did the work themselves, working long, hard hours.⁹ However, the Seven Thirty does not seem to have been a great success as a mine. It was reported in June, 1881, that "a good strike" had been made,³⁰ but then references to the mine disappear from the press, a sign that all was not well. In an 1883 review of the mines of Poughkeepsie Gulch³¹ and a later one of mines of the San Juan district,³² no mention was made of the Seven-Thirty.^h It seems likely that, like so many other remote mines, the Seven-Thirty did not survive for long.

^f Whittaker reported that Olaus rose to be superintendent of a silver mine in Colorado at a young age [Whittaker, L. H. (1949). *Rossland The Golden City*. Rossland, Rossland Miner.]. I have been unable to confirm this. If it happened, could it have been the Alaska mine? Or was Whittaker referring to Olaus' venture as a contractor on the Seven Thirty mine? Or, was he confused about the location? It seems likely that the superintendence in question related to the later venture in Norway, not in Colorado (see below, p. 13).

⁹ Working on a similar contract in a mine in the American west is described by Frank Crampton in his fascinating book, [Crampton, F. (1956a). *Deep enough: a working stiff in the western mine camps*. Denver, Sage Books.].

^h In his book, [Smith, D. A. (2009a). *The Trail of Gold and Silver: Mining in Colorado, 1859-2009 Boulder, Colorado, University Press of Colorado*.], Duane Smith scarcely mentions Poughkeepsie Gulch and does not notice the Alaska or the Seven Thirty. Apparently they were never major mines.

Skiing in Colorado

San Juan County was blessed with heavy snowfalls. Snow drifts in the valleys could be 25 feet or deeper. Winter usually arrived in November and the trails normally were not open again until April -- and in some remote areas it could be later. It was reported that the snow was just beginning to melt at Mineral Point, at the end of Poughkeepsie Valley, in June, 1881. Not surprisingly, skis were a common means by which people got around in the winter and they were used for recreation. The skis, generally homemade, were wide and long and referred to as "snowshoes." Thus, for example, a merchant advertised in *La Plata Miner*, a newspaper published in Silverton:³³

ASH SNOW SHOE TIMBER
Dressed, two lengths, 10 and 13 ft. Only a few pair left

In his book, *Mountains of Silver*, David Smith reproduces two pictures showing a group of miners with their long, wide skis, close to the area where the Jeldness brothers worked.³⁴ One shows two prospectors resting in a snow bank and the other a group of miners engaged in a skiing competition (I wonder if the Jeldness brothers were among them). While skis were "snow shoes," what we now call snow shoes were also used, but were referred to as "netting"³⁵ (in a letter written when he was in Rossland, Olaus called them "Indian webshoes"³⁶)

The Jeldness boys were in their element -- mountains and skis -- and they were noticed. Ole Jeldness was referred to in *La Plata Miner* as "the famous snow shoe runner ... (who) ... is still anxious to run for the championship of America."³⁷ When, in late December, 1879, a popular member of the Poughkeepsie community got caught in a blinding snow storm, took sick and died in an isolated miner's cabin, he was buried at Silverton. The funeral procession to the cemetery consisted of "40 men on snow shoes."³⁸ Representing the Alaska Mine was Ole Jeldness. In the winter of 1878-79 the Poughkeepsie miners built a ski jump and held a jumping contest for a Sunday's entertainment. Olaus and Anders, who were spectators, could not resist the temptation and, although they had only one pair of skis between them, on the spur of the moment took off and went over the jump -- each on one ski (see below, Annex 3, p. 97).³⁹ Ever competitive and, like good miners, playing for high stakes, on Christmas day, 1880, the three Jeldness brothers issued a public challenge:⁴⁰

SNOW SHOE CHALLENGE.

We, the undersigned, will at any time between now and the first of April next, run on snow shoes against any three men in America for \$2,000 a side; or I, Anders Jeldnes, will run against any one man on the American continent for \$1,000 and the championship of America. The race to be run in Poughkeepsie Gulch, San Juan county, Colorado, and according to the Norwegian snow shoe rules.

*Ole Jeldnes,
Olaus Jeldnes,
Anders Jeldnes.*

\$1000 was more than a normal annual income for a miner. The challenge was published in the Silverton newspaper as well as in a Scandinavian newspaper published in Chicago. One response was received. A Laplander, visiting the camp, offered to race Anders, "conditionally."⁴¹ He wanted to increase the individual prize to \$2,000 and to change the route, racing from the peak of one of the mountains near Silverton to a well-known mine. Anders considered the proposal a ridiculous "bluff," refused it and reiterated the original proposal.⁴² Apparently, the Jeldness brothers' reputations were such that no one took them up on the challenge on their terms.⁴³

Norway

Why the Jeldness brothers left San Juan County is not documented. It seems likely that the two mines, the Alaska and the Seven Thirty, had closed around them, but there is some evidence that they did well enough as contractors on the Seven Thirty to be set up financially, so they decided to move on.ⁱ Perhaps they also had other profitable mining ventures that I do not know about. In any case, in the fall of 1881 the Jeldness brothers left Colorado and traveled to their ancestral home at Stangvik, Norway, "to pay our old father a visit."⁴⁴ Their arrival in Stangvik was marked by considerable fanfare. Having missed the weekly steamer from the regional seaport, Kristiansund, that would have taken them up the fiord, they hired a boat, complete with a canon, for the rest of the trip home. The canon was fired repeatedly as the boat approached Stangvik, attracting a crowd of townfolk to greet them. The prodigal sons -- the long departed American miners -- had made a flamboyant return.

Olaus reports that while in the Norwegian seaport he was shown samples of ore from a new mine. The samples included some very rich specimens that, for unexplained reasons, had not been assayed. Intrigued, and accompanied by one of his brothers, he went to see the mine. What they found was a badly managed mine, with very rich ore, some of which had been incorrectly identified. Recognizing the mine's potential, the Jeldness brothers began to buy shares of stock in the company. The directors, who were local bankers and business people, not "mining men," were curious about their activity in the market and asked to meet. Taken on a tour of the mine, Olaus so impressed them with his knowledge of mining and his ability to visually assess the value of mineral specimens that they offered him the management of

ⁱ In a brief comment on his mining in Colorado, Olaus observed that "The Jeldness brothers, four in number, were well known mining men in southern Colorado and abutting territories, in the Seventies and early Eighties." He then noted that their "mining ventures" had "succeeded above all expectation." A probable interpretation is that they came away from Colorado with what was for them a considerable sum of money.

the mine -- at age 25. In his *Reminiscences*, Olaus reported that he picked the prime locations to mine, trained the miners in Colorado mining techniques and developed an efficient operation. The result was a profitable mining venture that set off a mining boom in the area. Olaus did not state the location of the mine in his *Reminiscences*, but another story placed it somewhere in the northern part of Norway.⁴⁵

Mining School?

After two years working the Norwegian silver mine, Olaus "again heard the irresistible call of the wilds of the rocky Mountains of North America."⁴⁶ However, he did not return to the Colorado silver mines. According to one report, he enrolled in a mining school.^j I am sceptical. Given Olaus' extensive mining experience and restless temperament, it would be surprising if he found the nature and length of a university course of study to his liking. If he did so enrol, he attended only briefly and never mentioned it in any of his surviving reminiscences or public utterances. If he arrived in Norway in the fall of 1881 and spent two years managing a silver mine, the earliest he could have left Norway was late in 1883. He began his prospecting trip to northern Idaho sometime in 1884, leaving a potential gap of little more than a year, if that. He might have begun a program, but a mining engineering course was then three or four years, depending on the university.⁴⁷ In any case, he did not have a mining engineering degree, even though in many newspaper stories, particularly later in his life, he was referred to as a mining engineer. Occasionally, such as on the 1927 birth registration for a daughter born in Rosslund,^k he identified himself as a "mining engineer," but normally he referred to himself simply as a "miner" or a "mining expert."⁴⁸ Many people recognized as mining engineers in the American west at this time, including some of the best, lacked the requisite formal education and degree.⁴⁹ They had learned their trade on the job. Olaus was among that group -- a mining engineer "trained in the school of experience."⁵⁰ At times he was also referred to as a "geologist" and so employed.⁵¹ As an extension of his on-the-job training, in a talk on geology to the Northwest Mining Association he said that he learned geology "from men, books and observation."⁵²

^j The Toronto *Globe* reports that Jeldness attended the Chicago School of Mines [Globe (1898a). Athletic Champions in British Columbia. *Globe* (April 16, 1898). Toronto.], but I find no evidence that there was a Chicago School of Mines at that time. Read notes that the Illinois Industrial University (later the University of Illinois) at Urbana offered a degree in mining engineering, but that the mining program was, in effect, the fourth year of a civil engineering program [Read, T. T. (1941). *The Development of Mineral Industry Education in the United States*. New York, American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers.]. In any case, Jeldness was said to have attended a mining school in 1883-84, but no students were enrolled in the Illinois mining program between 1881 and 1887. The two most famous mining engineering programs in the United States at that time were at Columbia University and Colorado [Spence, C. C. (1970). *Mining Engineers and the American West: The Lace Boot Brigade, 1849-1933*. New Haven, Yale University Press.]. I suspect that if Jeldness attended a mining engineering program it was at one of these and, given his earlier involvement in mining in Colorado, probably at the Colorado School of Mines. The Michigan School of Mines did not open until 1885 when Jeldness was already in the Pacific Northwest.

^k His daughter Agnes was born in Rosslund on May 18, 1896, but for unexplained reasons the birth was not registered until October 4, 1927, when she was already married [British Columbia, O., 1897 (1896a). Certificate of Registration of Birth, Agnes Marie Jeldness G. Division of Vital Statistics (BC Archives, Reel B13804) Victoria.]. Olaus went to Victoria to file the registration, perhaps so Agnes could get a birth certificate.

Having left Norway at age 16 he would have had little more than a basic education. Although perhaps not highly educated, it seems clear that he was a man of great intelligence with a practical bent, capable of self-study and learning on the job. Perhaps we should regard him simply as one of the species, "practical mining man" -- a man of very considerable intelligence, practical ability and wide experience, who was "looked upon with far more confidence than the geologists and engineers issuing from the few limited mining schools of the country."⁵³

Idaho and the Arlington Mine in Washington State

If he had attended a mining school, Olaus soon quit and continued his peripatetic ways. Drawn by a new gold-silver rush, he went to the Murray-Pritchard camp in the Bitterroot Mountains of Idaho's northern panhandle in 1884.⁵⁴ I have no information about his activities there, but he must have been sufficiently successful to build a stake for his next venture. In 1886 or 1887 a new boom in Okanogan County, Washington State, attracted him. In the words of the *Toronto Globe*, he was "the man who made the Arlington mine."⁵⁵ He bought and did development work on the claim that became the Arlington, a silver mine on Ruby Hill, about 16 kilometres northwest of Omak, Washington, on what had been the Moses Lake Indian Reservation.⁵⁶ The reservation was legally abolished on July 4, 1884, but was not opened to non-Indian settlement and mining until May 1, 1886.⁵⁷ Soon after, a group of prospectors staked several rewarding claims on Ruby Hill, including the Arlington.⁵⁸ The mine tunnel still exists and can be seen by a short walk from the hamlet of Concully, Washington.

I don't know when Olaus arrived or when he purchased the claim, but in June, 1887, it was reported that a syndicate from Oregon acquired the mine for between \$27,000 and \$45,000 (between \$630,000 and \$1,050,000 in today's dollars),^l a small fortune in 1887. Olaus is not mentioned in stories about the transaction, but he must have sold his interest in the claim to the syndicate. To develop and operate the mine, the Portland syndicate incorporated the Arlington Mining Company, headed by Jonathan Bourne, who was later elected a United States Senator from Oregon and who was to play major role in the next phase of Olaus' life. I don't know how much Olaus paid for the claim or what he had spent on development work, so I don't know how much he profited from the transaction. He must have had at least one partner in the claim because he later said that he had a 50% interest, so whatever the net sum, half was his.^m I also don't know if Olaus received any cash for selling the mine. He later owned shares of

^l A widely circulated contemporary newspaper report placed the price at \$30,000 [Oregonian (1887a). Mining Notes *Oregonian* (June 28, 1887). Portland, Oregon.]. Another contemporary story stated \$27,000 [Spokane Falls Review (1887a). Salmon River Mines. *Spokane Falls Review* (August 21, 1887). Spokane, Washington.]. An 1897 Seattle Post Intelligencer book on mining in the region is the source of the \$45,000 figure [Hodges, L. K. (1897). *Mining in the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle, The Post Intelligencer. I have no further evidence that would permit me to choose among these figures. The conversion to 2010 dollars reflects changes in the general level of prices over the intervening years. The conversion was made using the inflation calculator the website [<http://www.measuringworth.com>]. In assessing the significance of a given sum of money, however, attention should also be paid to the difference in income levels. Relatively highly paid miners in booming mining areas were earning in the vicinity \$3.00 - \$3.50 per day, or between \$1,000 and \$1,100 a year (\$23,350 and \$25,700 in 2008 dollars) in the unlikely event that they were fully employed, 10 hours a day, 6 days a week for 52 weeks.

^m In an 1889 letter to Bourne with respect to a mine that he was then developing in Montana, Jeldness said " I consider that I stand a better show to make a 'stake' at present than I did when I owned one half of the

stock in the Arlington company, so he was probably paid at least in part and perhaps almost entirely in shares, as was common in such transactions. If so, his new wealth would soon become nebulous.

One of the new owners, George Sheppard (or Shepard), was appointed superintendent of the Arlington,⁵⁹ so Olaus may have had little or no involvement in the operation of the mine after its acquisition by the Bourne group. However, he must have made a good impression on Bourne as a miner and as a person. Olaus and Bourne became business associates and Bourne placed considerable trust in Olaus in various business dealings. Olaus regarded Bourne as a friend; how strongly the feeling was reciprocated is difficult to tell. They carried on a lengthy correspondence about mining matters, some of which survives.ⁿ Olaus was in Spokane in July, 1887, but it is not clear whether he was working for Bourne (he identified himself as a miner).⁶⁰ The first certain example that I have found of Olaus acting as an agent for Bourne was in March, 1888, when he went to Chicago in an attempt to sell shares in mines in which Bourne had an interest.⁶¹ How successful he was, I don't know. He must then have spent some time essentially unemployed in Portland. In late February, 1889, he wrote to Bourne from Spokane that "My occupation here is the same as when in Portland -- that is to say nothing."⁶² Soon thereafter Olaus accepted a proposal from Bourne. The nature of the proposal is not explained in Olaus' letters, but in late May he was still in Spokane, trying to purchase a mining property for Bourne, and encountering serious resistance because of the price he was authorized to offer.⁶³ In October, 1889, although then engaged in mining in Montana, and again in October, 1890, he was said to be a resident of Portland when he attended meetings of the Oregon State Secular Union (see below, p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). He must have spent a good deal of time on train trips between Portland, Spokane and central Montana.

Montana

In July, 1889, Olaus was in Montana, on a much larger assignment. Bourne and Olaus had "bonded" six related silver mines called the Iron King group at Spring Gulch, in the Bitterroot Mountains about half way between Missoula and Kellogg. The contract, called a "bond" or a "working bond," was the common method of providing for the assessment of an underdeveloped mining property in the Pacific Northwest, on both sides of the border, by parties interested in purchasing the property. A bond was a

Arlington and therefor I decided to take the chance and either go out of this camp as a pauper or as a well to do man." It is inconceivable that Jeldness ever owned half of the shares in the Arlington Mining Company. Given the several members of the Portland syndicate, with half of the shares Jeldness would have had a controlling interest. That he did not have. In his letter to Bourne, he must have been referring to his share of the claim before it was sold to the Portland syndicate.

ⁿ The material about Jeldness' life from 1888-1894 largely comes from the [*Jonathan Bourne Papers, Ax019, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon*]. These papers contain three files of letters from Jeldness to Bourne with a few to another Bourne associate, H. E. Thompson, who seems to have been in charge of finances for the Bourne enterprises. There are also several indexed volumes of letters from Bourne, but only a few of these are to Jeldness. In his letters, although challenged by the tense and agreement of verbs and the occasional use of words in unusual contexts (which in some cases may have been "miner speak"), Jeldness revealed an amazingly fluid command of English. Some words are difficult to read and I could not decipher a few, but overall Jeldness' had enviable handwriting -- clear, bold and distinguished.

cross between a lease and an option.⁶⁴ Its terms could vary widely and, of course, were subject to negotiation, but the basic concept was that the working party, in this case Olaus and Bourne, would take possession of the property, develop and work it for a specified maximum period of time and then make a decision whether to abandon it or purchase it for a predetermined price. It was a method of dividing the risk of an uncertain venture between the owner of the property, perhaps the prospector who discovered it, and a potential purchaser, while giving the potential purchaser the opportunity to assess the value of the property by actually working it before making a final commitment. In the case of the Iron King group, Olaus and Bourne were already part owners (each held a 1/32 share),^o so the bond was between Olaus and Bourne on the one hand and the several other shareholders on the other.

For the Iron King venture, Bourne, who was a financier and not a "mining man," remained in Portland. He provided the funding and had the upper hand in critical decisions, while Olaus provided the mining and mine management skills, on site. He hired workers, arranged for the necessary equipment and supplies, decided on which of the mines to work and on a plan of development, supervised the mining activities, worked in the mines himself and made weekly written reports to Bourne. Olaus, enthusiastic about the mines, thought they were going to make fortunes for both men. Thus, when asked in October, 1889, what it would take for him to give up his interest in the properties he said \$25,000 before December 13 and \$50,000 thereafter, based on his assessment of the prospective value of the mine.⁶⁵ For the times, these were enormous sums (over \$600,000 and \$1,200,000 in today's dollars) that Bourne called "ridiculous."⁶⁶ Bourne hired two other experts to inspect the mines; both gave much less enthusiastic assessments. After their visits, Olaus acknowledged that "unless richer ore is discovered pretty soon the undertaking (I hate to say it) becomes a failure," but he was still optimistic that rich ore would be found and urged renegotiation and extension of the bond.⁶⁷

Despite the lukewarm assessments by the two mining experts and perhaps a measure of his respect for Olaus' abilities, Bourne agreed to attempt to extend the bond and entrusted Olaus with the negotiations, for which Olaus returned to Spokane where he met with some of the other principals. Their discussions continued from early February to mid-March, 1890, but ultimately foundered on the unwillingness of one of the owners to accept Bourne's terms.⁶⁸ Olaus then made a quick trip to the mine, walking several miles from the railroad station, through deep spring snow, in mountainous territory replete with the threat of avalanches, to get there, and close the mine.⁶⁹ He returned to Spokane, in debt to Bourne for his personal expenditures and, as he said, "dead broke."⁷⁰ He apologized for the failure of the venture but continued to assert that the project could have been a success if the bond had been

^o [Jeldness to Bourne, September 15, 1889, Bourne (1888-1891). Jonathan Bourne Papers]. It is possible that Bourne gave the 1/32 share to Jeldness in exchange for his cooperation in developing the mine. Thus, in a letter to Bourne's financial officer, Jeldness refers to agreements between Bourne and himself, and notes "The agreements between Mr. Bourne and myself should not by any means be recorded. They remain a secret between us only." [Jeldness to Thompson, October 8, 1889, *ibid.*]. In a later letter to Bourne: "I have been under the impression that the agreement between us left you perfectly free to dispose of this property as you saw fit. I were not aware that there existed loopholes in this case for me to take advantage of and I have supposed that even if you, for instance, sell the mine at cash, I would not be entitled to a cent." [Jeldness to Bourne, October 13, 1889, *ibid.*].

extended.

Although Olaus had earlier expressed such confidence in the future of the Arlington mine that "I will not dispose of a single (Arlington) share unless necessity compels me to do so,"⁷¹ as his personal financial situation worsened over the winter, he sought to sell some of his Arlington holdings, but could find no buyers.⁷² Financial relief came in the form of another assignment from Bourne. Olaus was dispatched to assess potential mining properties in the vicinity of Lewiston, Idaho, about a hundred kilometres south of Coeur d'Alene.⁷³ He spent about two months on horseback visiting properties, but found nothing of interest.⁷⁴ Upon his return to Spokane, on his own suggestion, he was dispatched to the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State to investigate recent discoveries of copper, but dismissed them as small in quantity and low in value.⁷⁵ While Olaus was ruminating about possible prospects in the Similkameen district of British Columbia and Granite Creek in Idaho,⁷⁶ Bourne peremptorily ordered him to go to the First Thought mine, near the Arlington, to fill in for the superintendent who was ill. Olaus went "reluctantly" (he wanted to go to Montana), but he went.⁷⁷ He later acted for Bourne in an attempt to sell the First Thought to representatives of an English concern, but failed.⁷⁸ In the fall of 1890 he explored other properties near Coeur d'Alene and Wallace, Idaho, either for himself or for Bourne, again to no avail.

Over the winter, 1890-91, Olaus was in Spokane and probably spent some time at the Ruby Hill mining camp. In mid-February, 1891, the Ruby Hill Mining Company, a new company, based in Spokane, was incorporated.⁷⁹ Olaus Jeldness was Secretary and his brother Andrew Superintendent of Mines. The company owned three claims on Ruby Hill, the Adelphi, Mohawk and Mountain Queen, each bordering on, or close to, an established, producing mine. The Adelphi adjoined the Arlington Mine ("a property of great value") and the Mountain Queen was a stone's throw from the First Thought ("valued at a million dollars or more"); Olaus had been instrumental in creating the Arlington and had a passing involvement with the First Thought. Andrew's role in the Ruby Hill company is interesting. This is one of only two instances in which I have found a direct relationship between the brothers in a mining venture. I don't know how successful the Ruby Hill company was. I have found no more information about it, so, like many such companies, it probably just faded away as its mines proved unrewarding.

In April, 1891, Olaus was again in Spokane, acting for Bourne, attempting to sell shares in the First Thought mine, on commission. He was to receive anything over \$2.00 that he could obtain for the shares, but was not to accept anything less than \$2.50.⁸⁰ Spokane was in the grips of financial stringency with interest rates in the range of 2% a month and up.⁸¹ Not surprisingly, Olaus could not find buyers for the shares. Olaus' efforts as Bourne's financial agent in Spokane were not a roaring success!

Apparently the owners of the Iron King group, after refusing to extend the bond of Bourne and Olaus, decided to open the mine and work it themselves. They hired Olaus, the man who knew the mines better than anyone. The nature of his position is not clear. It is possible that he was the superintendent, but he reported to his friend, Bourne, that:

They are doing considerable development work at the Keystone and I do their surveying. As I am hired and is under the same rules as any other man I obey orders without comment. I

*work as miner, house builder or surveyor at \$3.50 per day and I do the "outfile" business correspondence and bookkeeping at night for which they have agreed to pay me \$1.50 per day.*⁸²

He was a man of many talents who worked very hard -- perhaps too hard, because "I come home at nights from work (I live in town on acct. of the bookkeeping business) my brain is dull and my hand shivers and they refuse to respond."⁸³ He would not get rich working as he did, or even pay off his debts, but he could put bread on the table with a little left over.

Over the winter, the owners of the mines incorporated themselves as the Keystone and King Mining Company (reorganized in 1892 as the King Mining and Milling Company)⁸⁴. Olaus appears to have done much of the paperwork and somehow paid for his share of the costs to effect the incorporation. His part interest in the mines meant that he ended up with shares in the new company; shares that he planned to sell to obtain "enough money to put me on my feet again."⁸⁵ He then saw an opportunity to get out of debt and become rich. He used what money he had saved from his work over the winter to obtain a bond, this time for himself, on another nearby mine, the Little Anaconda. He noted that "I have no partners and I have not got one dollar ... but I have some credit."⁸⁶ When the "credit" that he thought was available proved illusory, he reluctantly sold some of his shares in the Keystone and King company to provide supplies for the mine.⁸⁷ Working hand to mouth, he hired some miners, paying monthly expenses of \$1,000 by shipments of ore to a smelter.⁸⁸ He ordered crushing equipment so that he could ship crushed ore, ready for the concentrator, reducing transport costs and increasing his net return, but he could not raise the \$2,500 required to pay for it.⁸⁹ The crusher sat in storage in Helena while Olaus seethed because the Keystone and King company, which he had worked so hard to create, named a shaft in the mine after him ("the Jeldness Shaft," which offers a delightful double entendre), but would not extend credit so that he could pay for the crusher.^p

It was a very difficult time for the operators of silver mines. In 1873, in what the silver interests called the "crime of '73," the United States had stopped coining the standard silver dollar and had abolished the official \$1.29 per ounce price at which the United States Treasury would buy all of the silver offered to it. For years, the world market price of silver had been higher than \$1.29, so little if any was sold to the Treasury and silver dollars essentially disappeared from circulation. Soon after the "crime of '73," however, production of silver increased significantly (in part a result of discoveries in the western states) and the market price fell below \$1.29 per ounce. There were pronounced fluctuations, but the trend was strongly downward (see Figure 1, p. 22)^q. By 1891, on average, the market price of bar silver in New

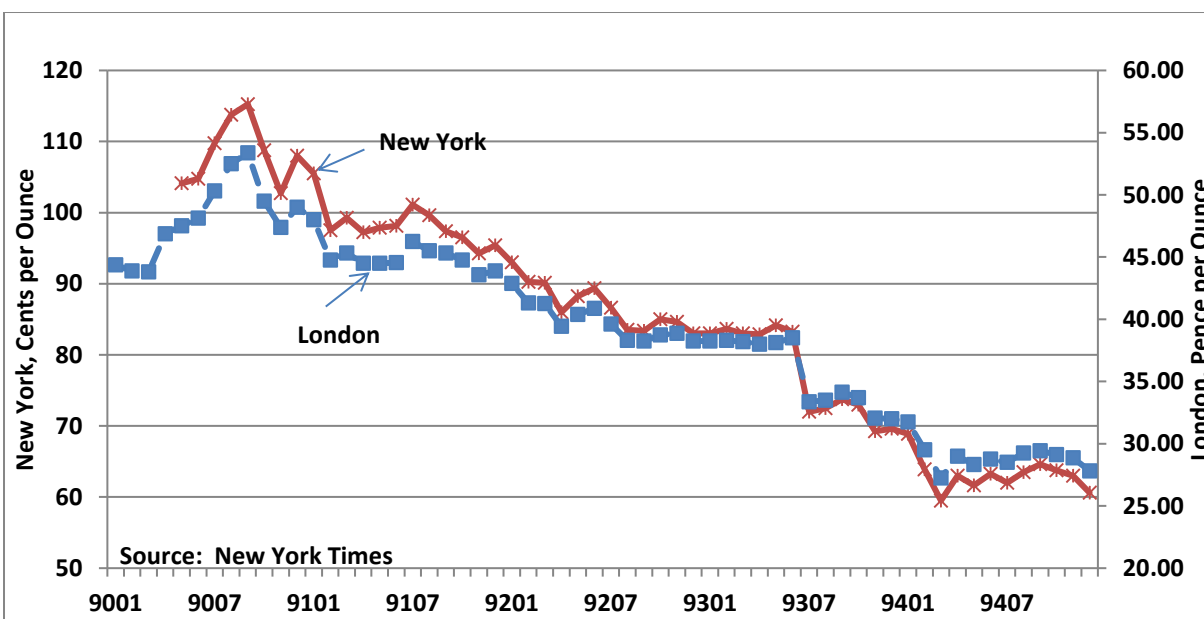
^p In a letter to Bourne he bemoaned "The somewhat doubtful honor of having a hole in the ground called the 'Jeldness shaft' and the fact that I am refused credit for \$2500 worth of machinery that would soon enable me to enter the independent list" [Jeldness to Bourne, March 13, 1888, Bourne (1888-1891). Jonathan Bourne Papers

^q Figure 1 shows the price of silver in bars in the two major open markets, in London and New York. The two prices follow each other closely but not perfectly, the differences reflecting changes in the London/New York exchange rate and in trans-Atlantic freight rates. The price quotations are from the New York Times. The price actually received by a western refinery, remote from the market, would be lower, of course, and the price

York was in the neighbourhood of 98 cents an ounce The politics of silver were intense as western silver interests -- the "free silver" movement that included Jonathan Bourne among its members -- attempted to persuade Congress to again buy unlimited amounts of silver at \$1.29 per ounce.⁹⁰ As the congressional support for the silver lobby waxed and waned, adding a speculative factor to the ebb and flow of market forces, the price of silver oscillated, but the general downward trend continued. By 1893 the average New York price had fallen to about 77 cents and by 1894 it was about 63 cents an ounce. It was not a great time to be opening a marginal silver mine.

Figure 1

**Price of Bar Silver, New York and London,
Mid-month, 1890-1894**



Although the Toronto Globe reported that in his Montana ventures Olaus "was on the high road to becoming a multimillionaire"⁹¹ -- undoubtedly his own optimistic assessment of his situation -- he was in fact engaged in a losing battle.[†] He struggled on through the winter of 1892-93, almost isolated in his cabin

received by the miner for unsmelted and unrefined silver ore would be lower still, reflecting charges for smelting, refining and transport.

[†] In one poignant observation he ended as letter to Bourne: "I have to leave for the mine as I have to sharpen tools for the night shift (I work 16 hours in every 24)"

... the mine that I am working is situate (sic) 5 miles from Carter and 2000 feet higher and as I have my wife & child at the mine I leave it only about once every week when I run down on snowshoes (i.e., skis) after mail and return in a few hours.⁹²

Olaus had come to Montana in November, 1891. Sigrid must have stayed in Spokane with their first child, Randie, who had been born there in May.⁹³ With the young baby, she had joined Olaus at the mine in November, 1892, just in time for the winter to set in. He worked hard for long hours, but as is so often the case the real hardship was borne by his wife. Poor and isolated in a small, snow bound cabin, with a very young baby and the nearest medical care a five mile trek through the snow, and with a husband who was increasingly distraught about their uncertain future, she must have become seriously distressed. When the summer came Olaus told Bourne,

Discouraged and sore at heart I moved my wife and child from the mine to Carter on July 1st. She had not then seen a person of her sex for seven months and 11 days.⁹⁴

I don't know where she was over the following winter.

As the price of silver continued to drop Olaus found that his sales of ore would not cover his costs.⁹⁵ To keep going he managed to borrow from a local bank, pledging his remaining shares in the Keystone and King company as collateral. Then, the sudden drop in the price of silver in July, 1893 (see Figure 1, p. 22) provided the "knockout blow."⁹⁶ He deeply prized the shares.

This stock alone would make me a fortune in ordinary times If I lose my stock at present in the Bank the last ray of hope of ever being able to rise above an ordinary laborer vanishes.⁹⁷

In late August, 1893, he made a desperate appeal to Bourne to lend him money or to purchase his shares from the bank.⁹⁸ When his appeal failed, he closed the mine and cast around for some method of supporting himself and his family.

Relief again came through the King group of mines. A local storekeeper obtained a bond on the Keystone, now the leading mine in the group, and hired Olaus, again at \$3.50 a day, to manage the operation.⁹⁹ He was uncharacteristically discouraged and depressed, facing another winter of isolation.

... if hard luck persists in following me much longer it will weaken instead of strengthening my ambition and hope and I shall become reconciled to the lot of the majority of men here -- namely a log cabin and a rifle.¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, his activities that winter and the following summer are not documented in his correspondence. He presumably continued to work in the Keystone mine, but eventually he left Montana, a disappointed man. The hoped for riches had not materialized.

ROSSLAND

After an interlude working as an ordinary miner in Montana, in November, 1894, Olaus went to Spokane, looking for his brother, Anders, but he was not there.¹⁰¹ It is no doubt while he was in Spokane that Olaus heard about the Rossland gold rush and off he went to seek his fortune, chasing another

mining bonanza. He arrived in Rosslund sometime between November 15, and November 29, 1894.^s Apparently, he had received a windfall of \$200 from his Montana venture (see below, p. 61). It was a substantial sum at the time and must have been much appreciated by Olaus, given his financial state. He took a job at the Josie mine. The Josie became one of Rosslund's premier mines, but at that time it was a partially developed property that was closed for the winter. The owners were in the east looking for money to further develop the mine, leaving Olaus as the only employee. Effectively, he was a caretaker, but he expected to become the superintendent when the mine reopened in the spring -- and in the meantime he could not resist being a prospector. He reported that he found a large body of ore on the Josie property of which the owners were not aware and was going to ask to have the find bonded to him so that he could seek capital from Montana friends to develop it to his own profit.¹⁰² Olaus left the employ of Josie on January 1, 1895. He said that he departed so that he could operate "independent of anyone,"¹⁰³ but given his interest in bonding a section of the Josie site, it is not obvious that the severance was voluntary. The owners may not have looked kindly on his attempt to obtain part of their valuable property, even though he had discovered it. They would have discovered the mineral deposit later, in any case.

Olaus then became an independent prospector, in some cases working with others. He reported that several claims in which he had a partial interest were promising and had been bonded to various large concerns with substantial option prices attached and reported confidently that "I expect to succeed here."¹⁰⁴ Probably because of the experience in the remote cabin in Montana, he had not brought his wife and child to Rosslund with him. They had been in the east for 10 months (Sigrid had family in Michigan), but in early August, 1895, having built a "nice house" opposite the court house on Columbia Avenue, Rosslund's main commercial street, he brought them to Rosslund.¹⁰⁵ However, the mining firms that had bonded his claims chose not to act on their options to purchase. He did not receive the large sum of money that he had expected and in October he reported that he had been "broke all summer."¹⁰⁶ Being broke must have been something of an exaggeration -- or perhaps a relative term -- if he acquired land, built a "nice house" and, as noted below, acquired claims on Sophie Mountain. In any case, a mining claim on remote Sophie Mountain would soon provide him with a handsome return.

The Velvet Mine

The Velvet mine was situated several kilometres southwest of Rosslund, across a formidable array of mountains that provided a dramatic backdrop to the city. The mine was on the far side of Sophie Mountain, very near the US border and overlooking the valley of Big Sheep Creek, one of the major

^s In the extant literature it is said, incorrectly, that Olaus arrived in Rosslund in 1896 [Rosslund Miner (1938a). Historical Edition. Rosslund Miner (October 11, 1938). Rosslund., Whittaker, L. H. (1949). Rosslund The Golden City. Rosslund, Rosslund Miner. Neither the anonymous writer in the Historical edition nor Whittaker, then the editor of the *Miner*, cites sources. Undoubtedly the files of the *Miner* were available to both, but it is also clear that the fallible memories of "old timers," some of who knew Jeldness personally, were a basic source. The statement that Olaus arrived in Rosslund in 1896 is repeated in the subsequent literature. It is a minor point, but it is incorrect.

creeks in the district. The discovery of the Velvet claim was a direct result of the earlier discovery of two other gold-copper claims, the Victory and the Triumph, on Sophie Mountain "by American prospectors who came up Big Sheep from the Colville Indian reservation in the summer of 1890."¹⁰⁷ † I don't know if Jefferson Lewis, an American, born in Missouri, was among those prospectors. When he was married in Rossland in 1897 he described himself simply as a "miner,"¹⁰⁸ not as a prospector, but other than that I know nothing about his background. In any case, whether by discovery or by purchase, Lewis acquired shares in both the Victory and Triumph claims and in late June, 1896, sold a quarter interest in them to Olaus.¹⁰⁹ There must have been at least one other partner in the ventures because Olaus subsequently acquired the interest of H.F Jacobson in the Victory.¹¹⁰ I have not discovered if he similarly increased his interest in the Triumph, but the two claims were soon merged, to be known as the Victory-Triumph claim.

Lewis and Olaus developed the Victory-Triumph claim to the point at which it would be attractive to larger mining companies. In the process they recognized the potential of the area around the claim and quickly expanded their control of the richest part of the mineralized belt of the western side of Sophie Mountain, acquiring the nearby Portland and Bluebell claims (apparently for \$5!)¹¹¹ and discovering the Velvet in the process. Olaus staked the Velvet claim on behalf of himself and Lewis in September, 1896.¹¹² Thus, by purchase and discovery, by late 1896 the partners owned four promising claims and had done sufficient development work to show that the Victory-Triumph, Portland, Bluebell and Velvet had potential as copper-gold mines. In May, 1897, Olaus and Lewis sold the Victory and Triumph claims to a British mining company, Kootenay Goldfields Syndicate, reportedly receiving \$20,000 each.¹¹³

New people then arrived on the scene, the representatives of a recently organized British company, New Goldfields of British Columbia. They inspected the Velvet and in August, 1897, purchased it for a reported \$62,500,^u \$12,500 in cash and the balance in shares of New Goldfields.¹¹⁴ In dollars of today's purchasing power, \$62,500 would be about \$1.8 million and \$12,500 about \$355,000. Another claim, the Portland, that was close to the Velvet, was said to have been discovered by John Cromie, a business associate of Olaus in Montana, in April, 1896.¹¹⁵ It must have been acquired by Olaus and Lewis along with the contiguous Bluebell claim soon thereafter. Both claims were almost adjacent to the Velvet and

† The Colville Indian Reservation extended up to the international boundary south of Rossland. The Reservation was closed to prospecting until early 1896 which may be why American prospectors jumped over the border to Sophie Mountain, reached relatively easily up Big Sheep Creek valley from the village of Northport on the Columbia River. The northern part of the reservation was opened to prospecting and mining in February, 1896, and then experienced its own prospecting rush. Several mines were established just south of the Velvet [Hodges, L. K. (1897). *Mining in the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle, The Post Intelligencer.]. The Indian Reserve's ore body was said to be similar to that in Rossland. A note in the *Mining Record* suggests that Jeldness had been involved in that rush and owned mining properties on the Colville Indian Reservation [Mining Record (1897a). Rossland notes. *The Mining Record (September, 1897)*. Vancouver, CIHM P04018.

^u In Jeldness' obituary it was stated that "His largest sale was that of the Velvet mine for which \$250,000 was paid" [Spokesman Review (1935a). O. Jeldness, 78, dies suddenly. *Spokesman Review (April 26, 1935)*. Spokane, Washington. It is not clear if this referred to the Velvet alone or to the Velvet and all of the miscellaneous properties associated with it. In either case it seems like an unlikely sum, probably a gross exaggeration. If this was the reported purchase price (in Sterling, about £51,000) it would have absorbed all of the working capital available to New Goldfields in 1897 and then some. I prefer the sales prices for the various claims as reported in the contemporary press as at least approximate estimates. The estimate in the obituary appears to be family mythology, amplified through the distorted lens of passing time.

New Goldfields purchased both from Olaus and Lewis in the fall of 1897, the Portland for \$19,000¹¹⁶ and the Bluebell for an undisclosed sum. The company also purchased some contiguous areas that were smaller than regular claims ("fractions")^v from Olaus and Lewis.¹¹⁷

The companies that New Goldfields spun off to operate the mines were not successful, in large part because of problems in transporting the relatively low grade ore to a smelter and with water (too much underground, not enough above ground).^w The companies went through a succession of reorganizations, each following the exhaustion of their funds, and within a few years had been liquidated. The Velvet continued to produce sporadically into the 1980s, with successive operators taking out considerable amounts of ore, but eventually giving up because of myriad problems. The Velvet and the associated properties were never major mines.

Despite the ill fortunes that later befell the operators of the mines on Sophie Mountain, Olaus and Lewis had become, by the standards of the day, moderately wealthy men.

The Number 1 Claim

Little is known about Olaus Jeldness' other prospecting and mine development activities in Rosslund. However, we do know that he was involved with the mining claim called the Number 1, located on Red Mountain.

In 1906, Thomas Greenough, a retired railway contractor and sometime prospector living in Missoula, Montana, reminisced about his life on the western frontier, noting that

*Nearly eight years ago Larson and Thomas Wren and Olaus Jeldness and myself sold the No 1 at Rosslund for \$175,000 to the British America corporation. That was a mighty good sale, for there was only a 10-foot hole on the property.*¹¹⁸

It was, indeed, "a mighty good sale." At first glance, the reported price seems high for what was simply a "prospect," not a mine of proven quality. Other prospects in Rosslund were changing hands at prices in the thousands or tens of thousands of dollars. However, the Number 1 was one of a cluster of mines and claims in the most prized mining area in the mining camp. It was adjacent to the Josie and the War Eagle mines, both properties of already proven value, and but one property away from the Le Roi, the richest and most famous of all Rosslund mines. This cluster of properties surrounding the Le Roi is shown on Map 1 (page 28). Perhaps location justified the high price.

^v If possible, regular claims were rectangular, with each corner a right angle and each side a maximum 1500 feet, although, given the other claims in the area and the terrain, many claims had irregular shapes. Claims could be located anywhere and did not have to be adjacent to each other. Often between nearby claims there were small, irregular shaped bits of land. They could become "fractions" (i.e., fractional claims) if someone thought it worthwhile to stake them. A "fraction" was a claim bordered by two other claims, that was smaller than 1500 feet by 1500 feet and irregular in shape. Such claims were valid, were normally named after one of the adjacent claims and were common in the Rosslund area. Thus, one of the "fractions" purchased by New Goldfields from Jeldness and Lewis was the "Portland Fraction." Two others were named after New Goldfields' people, the "Tupper Fraction" (after the company's chairman) and the "Captain Fraction" (after the first engineer, Captain Morrish).

^w I explore the history of the Velvet mine in a separate paper, "Anything That Could Go Wrong -- Did!: The Early History of the Velvet Mine."

The Number 1 was located in June 1890, long before Olaus arrived in Rosslund, by someone called Samuel Creston.¹¹⁹ By 1895 it was owned by another miner, William Springer. Thomas Greenough, Peter Larson and Thomas Wren, based in Montana, individually and in various combinations of partnerships were involved in railroad construction, mining, smelting, real estate and banking throughout the American northwest and plains states. They were wealthy capitalists, always on the hunt for potentially profitable investments, including mining properties. They did not seem to want to get into the long term business of operating mines. Rather, they sought promising prospects, developed their potential and sold them at a substantial profit.^x Both Wren and Larson were in Rosslund in 1895. Thus, in January of that year, it was reported that "Mr. T.F. Wren, of the firm Wren and Greenough, railroad contractors, is looking for investments here and is now figuring on several propositions."¹²⁰ Later, in June, "Peter Larsen (sic), the railroad contractor is in town."¹²¹ The announced purpose of Larson's visit concerned the construction of a railway between Rosslund and Trail,^y but he could well have been looking at mining properties at the same time. In any case, in February, 1895, it was reported that "Thos. F. Wren has bought in half interest in the Number One on Red Mountain from William Springer."¹²² Although in April it was reported that "Bill Springer is hard at work on the No. 1," that was the last we hear of Bill Springer. The Montana men must have bought him out. In the meantime, a richly-funded, English company appeared on the scene and began splashing money about, buying and optioning mining properties. That company had fixed its eyes on the Le Roi mine, the cluster of properties surrounding it and other properties on the same "ledge" or body of mineralized rock that extended across the north side of Rosslund. Finally, in mid-December 1897, it was revealed that "... the No. 1 on Red Mountain has been sold to Alexander Dick for \$200,000 with cash payment of \$50,000"¹²³. Mr. Dick was the agent for the London and Globe Finance Corporation, which was busy organizing a subsidiary, the British America Corporation to own and operate the many properties that it acquired in Rosslund and elsewhere in British Columbia and the Yukon.^z It was not stated if the balance was in shares or deferred payments. Mr. Dick

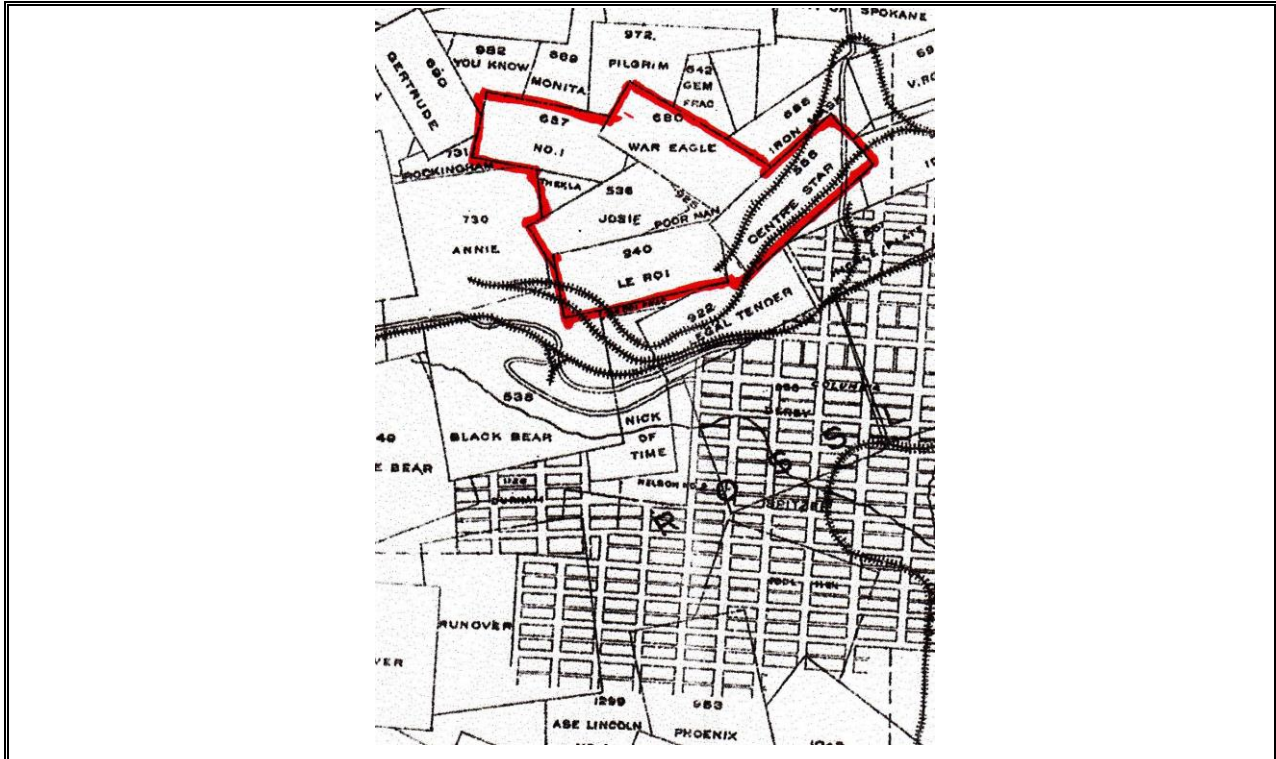
^x For example, in Idaho Greenough and Larson would soon acquire the Morning, a mine with a strong history but at the time deeply troubled and on the brink of bankruptcy. They developed the Morning so that it became one of the major mines in the Coeur d'Alene district [SL Tribune (1896a). Idaho: Coeur d'Alene Mines. Daily Tribune Salt Lake City, Utah, Library of Congress -- Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>)]. They worked the Morning for a time and then sold it for \$3 million to a major mine operating firm [Boston Globe (1905a). Federal Mining & Smelting Co. Boston Daily Globe. Boston, Library of Congress -- Chronicling America (<http://www.newspaperarchive.com>)]. Later they held several other mining properties in Pacific Northwest states. It was said that Peter Larson was the second most wealthy man in the Pacific Northwest [Pullman Herald (1907a). Death of P. Larson. Pullman Herald (July 20, 1907). Pullman, Washington Library of Congress -- Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>). 2011.]. If not as wealthy, presumably the other two came close.

^y Larson was planning to build a narrow gauge railway, called a "tramway," and had already purchased used rails from an Alberta mining company for the purpose. His plan was to connect the Rosslund mines with the smelter at Trail, owned by F. A. Heinze. Heinze chose to build that line himself and bought out Larson and another contender for the project [McDonald, J. D. (1991a). The Railways of Rosslund. Rosslund Rosslund Historical Museum Association.].

^z The prospectus for the British American Corporation, as published in the Times of London on December 13, 1897, listed the Number 1 as one of the "famous Gold Mines" on Red Mountain acquired or under option by agents of the BAC's parent company, the London and Globe Finance Corporation [BAC (1897a). British America Corporation (advert). Times of London (December 13, 1897). London.] The other properties listed were Josie, Nickel Plate, Oreonogo, Pack Train, Legal Tender, Derby, Surprise and Youknow. Some prospered; some were soon forgotten.

refused to confirm or deny the rumour, but observed that the report contained "some inaccuracies."¹²⁴ This suggests that the cited price or terms may not have been quite correct, but the rumour certainly gives credence to the Greenough story that the group sold the Number 1 for \$175,000.

Map 1
Map showing location of the Number 1 claim



What was Olaus' role in all of this? The direct answer is, I don't know. He may have used the proceeds of the sale of the Velvet and other properties on Sophie Mountain to participate financially. But he probably also had a more fundamental role. He had been employed at the adjacent Josie mine in December, 1894, (see above, p. 24) and because of his prospecting activities on that property (did he wander over the boundary to explore his neighbours' lands?) he would have become familiar with the geology of the area, including the geology of Josie's neighbours and he would have developed strong insights into the potential of the Number 1. That knowledge may have been key to the Montana men's speculative purchase of the Number 1. I have no evidence that the Wren-Greenough-Larson group were the "friends" in Montana that Olaus hoped would finance his acquisition of an option on part of the Josie property, but it seems likely. Indeed, it may have been an approach from Olaus that brought Wren to Rosslund. In any case, Olaus would have been exceptionally useful to the Montana capitalists advising

them of the qualities of the claim and, in the months between the purchase and resale of the Number 1, supervising, if not participating in, development work (the "ten-foot hole") designed to better illuminate its mineral potential. I don't know how large a share of the proceeds Olaus received, but it provided some addition, small or large, to his tangible wealth.

Skiing

The quest for wealth was central to Olaus Jeldness' life, but it was not the only thing that was important to him. Skiing and ski jumping were also vital to his well-being. Thus, in a poetic letter to his friend Bourne, who was experiencing a financial setback, he referred to hardships experienced while he was prospecting in Idaho or Montana, while offering optimistic counsel and urging the mining speculator to spend some time in the great outdoors:

I know the difference between riches and poverty. I have tasted the sweets of plenty and although life to me seems under all conditions pleasant, with riches this earth to me becomes Paradise.... When adversity overtakes us despondency follows as a rule, then the best cure of all is to go out and get acquainted with rough nature. It makes us feel the insignificance of ourselves and our small troubles. Many a time have I stood with rifle in hand on the slope of some peak of the Bitterroots, admiring the sublime view and in exuberant spirit exclaimed 'The world is mine.' At the same time I probably did not know where the following day's food for myself and my family were (sic) to come from unless I brought home a buck.¹²⁵

Any outdoor activity could revive the spirits, but the ultimate cure was a ride on skis down a steep mountain side. Thus, in an 1893 letter to Bourne, he eloquently expressed his deep passion for the sport:

.... snowshoeing is good (but) I look forward to the pleasure of skiing over cliff and crag and down steep mountain sides with childish glee . During the few moments I occupy in running the distance I am a boy again, my many disappointments and struggles in life is (sic) forgotten as I pass with more than Nancy Hawk swiftness over distances, sometimes down ugly gulches then bouncing over cliffs sailing 40, 50 & 60 feet in the air which however never checks the progress and while the run lasts the pleasure to me is sublime.¹²⁶

He adopted the counsel that he had given to Bourne, enthusiastically skiing on the mountains around Rosslund, particularly on Red Mountain.

All Rosslunders have heard the story of how Olaus, with his exploits in ski jumping and racing down Red Mountain, brought skiing to Rosslund in the late 1890s.¹²⁷ He revelled in it himself, but he also wanted others to enjoy the experience. A ski club was organized as early as 1896 or 1897. Stories about a planned ski race down Red Mountain in March of 1898 refer to Olaus as president of such a club.¹²⁸ Another story in October 1898 describes the organizational meeting of the ski club for 1898-99.¹²⁹ Olaus was again the president.

In addition to being a great skier, Olaus was a natural publicist and promoter. His stunts on skis are legendary, as is his generosity to his friends. The hallmark legend involved a "tea party" for 25 friends on top of Red Mountain to celebrate the sale of "a mine," usually assumed to be the Velvet and so stated in one of the early reports of the event,¹³⁰ but not in the earliest one that I have found.¹³¹ The date of the party is not noted in the sources. Olaus' major sale -- the one that made his fortune and hence the one most worth a

grand celebration -- was the Velvet. However, that sale occurred in August, 1897, hardly a time for a ski party on Red Mountain. If the sale of the Velvet was the reason for the party, it was probably held in March, 1898, when there was still snow on the face of Red, but the risk of extreme cold and early darkness were less of a problem. The same timing is likely if the occasion was the sale of the Victory-Triumph, which occurred in May, 1897. The third possibility is the sale of the Number 1 to the British America Corporation in December, 1897. The party could have been held then, but a March 1898 party would have been a more attractive option -- perhaps to celebrate all three sales. However, one source reports, tongue in cheek, that "Olaus Jeldness left Rosslund hurriedly after this ... and has had to live in Spokane ever since."¹³² Taken literally, this would imply that the party was in March 1899.

Whatever the date, according to the legend, the guests struggled up the mountain in deep snow, fortified along the way with generous draughts of liquor, either from bottles discovered in snow banks or supplied by helpful attendants, to be met by a joyful Olaus, at an open fire, merrily cooking an elaborate feast of Norwegian delicacies, including thirst-inducing salt fish.¹³³ When the feast and the party were over and the thirsts were slaked, it is said that Olaus equipped each guest with skis for the descent of the mountain, which was steep, partially forested and dotted with mine workings. They were met at the bottom by an ambulance, a doctor and a journalist.

Not all of the participants in the tea party are known, but they included some of the leading citizens of Rosslund, some of whom were reported to have been seriously injured.¹³⁴ Ross Thompson, the prospector turned real estate and security broker who had laid out the townsite and after whom the city was named, was said to have been "seriously wounded in both legs and arms and ...(had)... his head badly cut from the diorite and hornblende rocks." Lionel Webber, manager of the Silica Reduction Works and a member of the ski club, reportedly "lost three ribs and his left knee cap and had numerous wounds from unfriendly formations." Jim Sword "landed on Red Mountain railway tracks ... with a broken nose." "Frank Lascelles had one of his legs broken in three places and lost his voice." Joe Deschamps, co-owner of the major local sawmill, "boasted of losing only a pound or so of white meat." The fates of the other 20 participants were not individually recorded, but:

... every guest in that open air banquet of Jeldness' was done to a turn, with the exception of mine host, who made the world's record in ski jumping -- 319 feet and two inches -- covering the entire distance of nearly three miles in 1 minute and 53 seconds, landing at the Allen House bar on both feet and boasting of having had a most enjoyable time.¹³⁵

No one man escaped bruises, concussions or broken bones in that "glorious" adventure, and some of the party carried the marks of the event for the rest of their lives.¹³⁶

The 300-foot jump took Olaus to the Allen bar. Another curious assertion is that

One man, having descended the hill in one piece, piled good fortune on a fine evening by swearing that he had literally "lit" on a good showing of ore which he would make haste to record.¹³⁷

To this, another source added,

I think it was Archie Mackenzie whose body jarred loose the first showing of pay ore on the Monte Christo mine.¹³⁸

Whoops! The Monte Christo mine was on a different mountain.

Quite apart from the obvious hyperbole, as described the whole affair has an aura of improbability. Could anyone -- even the notorious risk-taker, Olaus Jeldness -- be so irresponsible as to send a group of his inebriated friends, at best neophyte skiers, down a mountain slope that he considered steep and dangerous for even expert skiers,¹³⁹ at dusk or in the dark (Whittaker suggests the party occurred in the evening¹⁴⁰)? The hillside was replete with brush, stumps, trees, large rocks, gullies, benches and mine workings. Serious injuries were almost certain.^{aa}

Did the famous tea party happen? If so, are the details of the common tale reasonably accurate?

Some of Olaus' descendants vigorously assert that the party was held much as described in the literature. Similarly, Whittaker insists that it happened, but wondered "How much of the story is fact and how much fancy ...?" What is perplexing is that I have not found a single *contemporary* newspaper account of it. As described, it was such a dramatic event, with injuries to so many prominent residents, that it should have attracted considerable attention by local newspapers, hungry for local news. The *Miner* and the *Record* regularly reported on much more benign events. Would a newspaper that reported that

Ross Thompson has been suffering for the past two days with a severe cold, but is much better and will probably be around today,¹⁴¹

not have given extensive coverage to the city's most revered citizen if he had suffered very serious injuries on a skiing escapade? Similarly, would a newspaper that reported that a relatively unknown, recent resident

was run into by a sled at the corner of Columbia avenue and Spokane street. The sled struck him fairly above the right ankle and the bones snapped clean,¹⁴²

not have commented on the shattered leg suffered by one prominent citizen and the broken ribs of the manager of one of the major enterprises in the area, the Silica Reduction Works, while skiing on Red Mountain? It is all very puzzling.

The oldest report on the tea party that I have discovered is a column by Cheney Cowles, published in the *Spokesman Review* in 1933, 35 years after the tea party's likely date.^{bb} The article cites an undated letter from "a contemporary journalist, Hector McRae," to a Spokane resident, as the source of the information about the party and the injuries. McRae asserted that he "accompanied Dr. Bowes in his ambulance to bring in the dead and wounded,"¹⁴³ making his a contemporary account. However, the letter is not available; it may have been written long after the event, relying on memory and embellished for effect. A similar account by Sydney Norman appeared in the *Vancouver Sun* in 1935, either drawing on the same McRae memoir or on the *Spokesman Review* story. These articles aside, the primary account of the tea party is in the 1938 Historical Edition of the *Rossland Miner*.¹⁴⁴ The main subsequent expositions are in the 1949 history of Rossland by Lance Whittaker

^{aa} There is a certain irony in the *Miner's* praise of Olaus' "thoughtfulness" in having Dr. Bowes' ambulance standing by at the bottom of the mountain.

^{bb} It is perhaps significant that Agnes saved this article for her scrapbook. The clipping is in the Morgan Family Papers.

and the more recent book by Jordan and Choukalos, but there are many others.^{cc} These secondary sources provide neither a date for the party nor a source for the story other than memories of "old timers."

A celebratory tea party probably occurred, but the details reported in the literature are surely gross embellishments.^{dd} Apparently an elaborate celebration of the sale of a mine was a custom in Rosslund; Jefferson Lewis celebrated his share of the sale of the Velvet with a sumptuous wedding feast.¹⁴⁵ That Olaus Jeldness would celebrate his with a party on top of Red would have been right in character. Moreover, an incident in 1904 confirmed that Olaus had made a practice of entertaining friends at celebratory "tea parties" on the top of Red Mountain. He was visiting Rosslund and officiating at the ski jumping competitions in the winter carnival. After the competition, the *Rosslund Miner* announced that

*Olaus Jeldness, the first winner of the ski-running championship of British Columbia, will give one of his famous "cold tea" parties on Red Mountain on Sunday. He invites all snowshoers and ski runners to assemble on the peak of Red mountain, where refreshments will be served promptly at 2 o'clock and social exercises indulged in.*¹⁴⁶

Everyone "possessing snowshoes or skis" was invited. Entertainment, including "exhibitions of ski jumping," was promised. Was Olaus going to attempt some of his old ski jumping tricks? In the event, the tea party was cancelled -- or, rather, it was postponed, "to avoid a conflict with the (carnival) sports on Monte Christo Mountain."¹⁴⁷ There is no evidence, however, that the "postponed" party was ever held. Olaus returned to Spokane as soon as the carnival was over.

I found another story in the contemporary press of an Olaus hosted "tea party" on the top of Red Mountain in March, 1898.¹⁴⁸ It involved six ski club members, including Olaus, who ascended the mountain on skis to participate in a race down its face. The race had been previously announced with a starting time at "1 o'clock sharp," and many people turned out to see it. As ski club members, the six men who intended to race down the mountain were almost certainly skiers of some experience, if not great ability. When they arrived at the top they found that their lunch had been converted into a Olaus "tea party," with a meal prepared by Olaus over an open fire. The race was abandoned; the spectators who had gathered to watch another Olaus spectacular were disappointed. Clearly, the "tea" was quite strong. When they finally got around to descending the mountain, the skiers flailed about and some got lost. Injuries were incurred, but not the serious ones reported in stories of the celebratory tea party. At least two of the participants -- Thompson and Weber -- were among those reported to have been seriously wounded in the other tea party. The other three were not so named, but they could have been among the undocumented 20, all of whom were said to be injured in some degree.

^{cc} The story has received wide circulation on the internet, in magazine articles and in at least one book about gold miners in the Pacific northwest [Battien, P. (1989). *The Gold Seekers*. Fairfield, Washington Ye Galleon Press.]

^{dd} As a minor example, to transport the food, drink, cooking implements and skis for 25 people to the top of the mountain Jeldness would have required considerable assistance. The result must have been a well defined path through the snow up the mountain side. The guests would not have had to struggle through deep snow unless they so chose.

Was this aborted ski race in fact the legendary "tea party," embellished by the familiar process of historical myth making? The presence of Thompson and Weber suggests that it may have been. In any case, even if it was a separate event, it was still notable, the mark of a man who embraced life to the full, who loved the outdoors and who reveled in outdoor adventures, particularly in the winter.

The "tea parties" were not the only instances of Olaus' hijinks on skis. On one occasion, he is reported to have skied down the face of the mountain on one long ski and one short ski to the amazement of all.¹⁴⁹ The standard skis of the day were very long, in the neighborhood of nine or ten feet; how short Olaus' short one was, is not reported. Skiing on one long and one short ski had a long history in old Scandinavia.¹⁵⁰ The underside of the short ski, called in Norwegian an "andor," was generally covered in fur, much like the "skins" of backcountry skiing today, and for the same purpose. The andor was not used for gliding, but for pushing. In effect, the skier skied only on the long ski, propelling himself on the flat or uphill by pushing with the andor in what was described as a "loping gait."¹⁵¹ For downhill runs, the andor would be held above the snow's surface. In this sense, the andor substituted for modern ski poles. The ancient Norwegian skier carried only one (long) pole and it did not have a basket. It was generally not useful for propelling a skier forward but could be used for balance, as a brake and as a rudder to assist in turning. The lengths of the andor and the ski undoubtedly varied, but among the ancient Lapps it is reported that the ski was about four metres long and the andor about half that.¹⁵² This style of skiing was taught to the Norwegian army's ski troops in the eighteenth century,¹⁵³ but by the mid-nineteenth century it had largely died out. However, in a 1900 story, attempting to explain skiing to people in Spokane, it was noted that

*"In nearly all parts of Europe ... both skis are of the same length, ranging from eight to nine feet. In Finland, however, one is much longer than the other."*¹⁵⁴

Apparently, the technique lived on in some locations.

I don't know what Olaus was attempting to accomplish with his stunt, aside from showing off and in the process generating interest in the sport. I doubt that he was trying to introduce an ancient style of skiing to Rossland -- but it might be fun to try it.

Faced with the popularity of snowshoeing Olaus wrote a letter to the editor of the Rossland Miner -- undoubtedly tongue-in-cheek -- denigrating the other winter sport and touting the superiority of skiing over "Indian webshoes" both for transportation and for recreation "... in any kind of territory or in any country where snow falls."¹⁵⁵ Olaus was probably an accomplished snowshoer who had used snow shoes for transport while prospecting, but skiing was his passion. As a result of his antics, when Olaus was in town skiing received considerable attention in the press; when he was not in town, however, snowshoeing ruled the publicity roost. When Olaus left Rossland in 1899 and settled in Spokane, Washington, skiing lost its focal point and for a number of years thereafter, with a few minor exceptions, the only press attention that skiing received was at Winter Carnival time.

As a final tribute to his love of skiing and of skiing on Red Mountain in particular, in accordance with his wishes, in September, 1935, his surviving daughter and friends scattered his ashes on the top of Red.¹⁵⁶

Winter Carnival.^{ee}

For many residents, winter in early Rosslund was a dismal experience. It was cold and houses were imperfectly heated with wood burning stoves. House fires were a constant danger. Clearing of streets was limited and deep snow often blocked walking paths, making transit difficult. Some people became almost cabin-bound. Even shopping trips to town could be an ordeal. Of course, there were the usual festivities surrounding Christmas and the New Year, but the annual winter carnival, held in the dreariest month, February, was the highlight of the season.

The first winter carnival was held in mid-February, 1898. Olaus is on record as claiming half the credit for originating the idea of a winter carnival, along with H.W.C. Jackson (see Annex 5, p. 104), who became the secretary of the organization.¹⁵⁷ That is quite plausible, and in any case the *Rosslund Miner* thought he was of sufficient importance to the success of the venture that it noted with favour that "Olaus Jeldness is taking much interest in the proposed carnival."¹⁵⁸ He was a member of the first "general committee" of 24 Rosslund worthies, chaired by the mayor, that planned and promoted the event.¹⁵⁹ Perhaps more to the point, he was one of four on a small committee "at work on the project."¹⁶⁰ He was, of course, in charge of the skiing events and to that end he planned the route of the downhill ("ski running") event and invited skiers that he knew in Montana and Colorado to participate.¹⁶¹ At least two came to town. In the days leading up to the carnival warm weather threatened both the skiing and the ice rink events. However, the day before the carnival was to open, it turned cold and began snowing. The race down Red Mountain was held as planned.^{ff} At least five racers were entered and "It is thought that there will be several entries from outside town,"¹⁶² but only three racers started, including none of the champion racers that Olaus had invited, except his brother. The race was from the top of the mountain and each racer chose his own route down. They started together and the first one crossing the finish line won. One racer broke his ski and did not finish. Olaus Jeldness came in first and his brother Anders second. It is reported that the conditions were so unfavorable that both skiers were exhausted by the race, collapsed at the finish line and immediately went home to bed.¹⁶³ The Ski jumping event was held the next day, on Spokane Street in the middle of the city to make it easy for people to watch the spectacle. The hill was reasonably steep but the run was short so long jumps were not possible. Again, Olaus won, but the length of the winning jump was not reported (it was probably embarrassingly short).¹⁶⁴ There were also ski races for novices and for boys.

The next year, 1899, the carnival was held in late January with the same group of ski races and again Olaus was deeply involved in the planning. He had laid out three possible courses for the downhill race:

^{ee} I discuss the winter carnival in more detail in another essay, "Mid-Winter Mardi Gras: Rosslund's Original Winter Carnival."

^{ff} It has been stated that "poor snow conditions in 1898 caused the location of the ski race to be changed from the summit of Red Mountain to a shorter course on nearby Monte Christo Mountain." Ski Museum (2000a). *The Story of a "First" in Canadian Skiing*. [The Canadian Ski Museum Newsletter](#). Ottawa. That is not correct. The race was held on Red Mountain.

the Red Mountain course; a second on Deer Park Mountain, across the valley from Red Mountain; and a third on Monte Cristo Mountain, the mountain on which the main part of the city was built. Olaus said that he preferred the Deer Park course which could be most easily seen from downtown Rosslund, and indeed he had cut a 15 foot wide trail up the face of the mountain for the contest.¹⁶⁵ In the end, however, the Red Mountain course was chosen. Three men entered the jumping competition, again held in town. Olaus' winning jump was 40 feet. Five men entered the ski running race down Red Mountain, which Olaus won handily, again in difficult snow conditions, including sections of glare ice. An American ski champion from Minneapolis, induced to come by Olaus, considered the snow conditions and chose not to race.¹⁶⁶

That summer Olaus left Rosslund, taking up residence in Spokane. However, he returned in February, 1900, for his third and final contest. He had business to attend to in Rosslund but was also attracted by the fact that if he won for the third time, under the standing rules, "those two large ski trophies become mine."¹⁶⁷ He was delighted that he won both competitions, but was embarrassed that he had won the "championship of Canada" with a jump of only 28 feet!¹⁶⁸ In practice, undoubtedly in a different location, he had cleared 73 feet, which he regarded as a worthy feat given his age (43 years).¹⁶⁹ As noted earlier, as a youth he had jumped of 92 feet before leaving Norway (see above, p. 9).¹⁷⁰

Ski running down either Red Mountain or Monte Cristo Mountain and ski jumping continued to be prominent features of the annual winter carnival. The ski jumping was sometimes held on Spokane Street in downtown Rosslund but usually on the side of Monte Cristo Mountain. The ski runners started together at the top of the mountain, found their own way down and the first across the finish line on the main street won. However, there were few participants and several were always from out of town, usually from one of the nearby mining camps. The winners were usually Norwegian immigrants. But there was nothing modest about Rosslund -- the winner of the skiing events was always declared "Canadian champion." Who had the right to ordain it the Canadian championship is not obvious. However, Rosslund seems to have been the pioneer in competitive skiing in Canada, so at least initially the title had substantial merit. As time passed and skiing developed in many other places, the title became more dubious. Nonetheless, as one commentator noted "this claim has never been challenged."¹⁷¹

Olaus Jeldness' influence on skiing in Rosslund did not stop when he moved away. He donated a new trophy to replace one of the two that he was entitled to keep for winning Winter Carnival ski running and jumping contests three times in a row. The committee assigned it to the ski running competition. When another Norwegian skier duplicated his success in ski running and claimed the trophy, Olaus donated another, even more elegant and expensive trophy as a replacement, but requested that it be used for ski jumping.¹⁷² On several occasions he visited Rosslund during the carnival, helping to organize and judge the jumping events. After he donated the trophy, he was named honorary "patron" of the carnival. In October, 1908, a dozen Norwegian devotees organized the Norwegian ski club with the twin ambitions of promoting skiing and shifting the location of skiing and ski jumping contests from the face of Monte Cristo Mountain on the northern

side of town, which was exposed to the sun, to a northern exposure on Deer Park Mountain on the south side of town. This was the site that on an earlier occasion Olaus had preferred for the Winter Carnival ski running races. Olaus agreed to serve as the honorary president of the club.

He also promoted skiing in Spokane. In part, this involved publicity. Thus, he was occasionally called upon to explain the unfamiliar sport of skiing to local newspaper readers.¹⁷³ But more significantly he developed a ski hill on the outskirts of Spokane and sponsored at least two ski jumping events that attracted many spectators and stimulated interest in the sport.¹⁷⁴ In the process he groomed a local jumper to compete in the Rossland carnival, with some success (see below, p. 56).

Although it was an important attraction at the winter carnival, skiing does not seem to have yet become a popular recreation for Rosslanders. It is clear that there were some recreational skiers and the ski club undertook some recreational activities. Thus, in October, 1905, it was noted that

*A number of ski runners were out yesterday and the day before, and report that they made good progress on their skis (presumably making them or getting equipment ready for the ski season). The interest in skiing is increasing, and the club expects to accomplish more in the way of increasing the number of lovers of this form of outdoor sport.*¹⁷⁵

When the ski season began, the club planned a ski trip to Trail, but it was aborted because of a lack of snow at the lower levels.¹⁷⁶ In its place, the club had an outing to Deer Park Mountain, south of the city.¹⁷⁷ A similar outing, involving a run around Red Mountain, was noted in 1911.¹⁷⁸ However, those are the only examples of recreational skiing activities by the Rossland ski club that I have found until the 1920s. That is not to say that recreational skiing did not occur; just that the ski club was not vigorous in promoting it and the activities that did occur did not attract the attention of the press.

When Olaus was in town skiing received much publicity, mainly centred on his exploits. When he was not in town, skiing received little publicity except at the winter carnival. Indeed, despite Olaus' attempt to denigrate snowshoeing as compared to skiing as recreation, exercise and transportation,¹⁷⁹ for a time, snowshoeing may well have been much more popular than skiing, at least among the relatively well-to-do.. There was a snowshoeing club for whom an elaborate French Canadian themed uniform had been devised:

*The coat is white blanket trimmed in red and blue and having a double row of large white buttons in front. There are epaulets on the shoulders of red and blue, and also a fancy capote. Underneath the coat is worn a white sweater. Around the waist was fastened a long blue sash. On the hands were heavy blue mitts. He wore white blanket knickerbockers with blue stockings. On his feet were a pair of fancy moccasins, and also a pair of snowshoes.*¹⁸⁰

If every member had a uniform it must have been quite a sight seeing them head down the main street out to a remote mountain destination. The club's "tramps", which were frequently at night with trampers holding torches, might include thirty to forty people. They sometimes ended up at a mine where they were hosted to a reception and a meal.¹⁸¹ On at least one occasion, the snowshoers were hosted at a private home at the foot of Kootenay-Columbia Mountain, for dinner, singing and dancing, before they tramped on home.¹⁸² Having a warm, comfortable destination, at which to eat, drink and party,

undoubtedly added to the attractiveness of the activity, particularly for the younger set. The ski club did not have a club house in the mountains that would provide such amenities and I have found no reports of the club organizing events like those of the snowshoe club.

Business Affairs.

Olaus' involvement in outdoor winter sports is well known. Is it also known that he became involved in indoor winter sports in Rosslund, not as a participant but as a business man?

Ice Rink

Among the early recreational facilities built in Rosslund were two skating rinks, the Rosslund Skating Rink at the corner of Washington Street and First Avenue, at the edge of what had been Sourdough Alley, the old centre of the mining camp,¹⁸³ and the Palace Skating Rink (commonly called the Ice Palace) up the hill at the corner of Washington and Second Avenue. Although one was planned, the former did not have a roof.⁹⁹ The Ice Palace, by contrast, was a fully enclosed building that was the preferred venue for carnival events. It was at the Ice Palace that the indoor festivities of the first Winter Carnival were held: a giant masquerade party, fancy skating and skating races, hockey games and curling matches. However, the building was poorly constructed for a mountain town that received heavy snow falls. Late on the night of March 29, 1898, following a fall of heavy wet snow, the roof collapsed, an hour after the completion of a public skating session and minutes after officials of the company that owned it had left the building after cleaning the ice.¹⁸⁴

What to do? The city had to have a covered ice rink! The success of the carnival depended on it. A company was formed to build a new and larger rink. The company conducted an intense and remarkable successful campaign to raise funds to build the arena, selling shares locally. Olaus was one of the original shareholders and one of the founding directors.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, he was the first managing director, responsible for the operation of the rink, a position that he held over the winter of 1898/99.¹⁸⁶ The construction of the arena was a great public service that contributed to the social and recreational activities of Rosslanders and promoted commercial business in the city for many years. However, the company had repeated financial difficulties and it is not clear that it paid any dividends so I doubt that Olaus' investment in the ice rink was financially rewarding. At the time of his death Olaus held 15 shares, representing an initial investment of \$375 (the value of a small house).¹⁸⁷ When his estate was probated his 15 shares were declared worthless (see Annex 1, p. 93). The ice rink was not well constructed and over the years had required frequent repairs and shoring up. By 1938 it was on the verge of collapsing, was condemned and torn down.

⁹⁹ The Rosslund Skating Rink lasted only one season. Instead of adding a roof, the rink was sold and a new building was constructed on the site in the fall of 1898. [Rosslund Miner (1898m). A Brick Block Rosslund Miner (November 30, 1898). Rosslund.]

Olaus' involvement with ice sports did not end when he left Rosslund. One year he was a major financial supporter of the Spokane hockey team that played at the Rosslund Winter Carnival.

Real Estate

Olaus Jeldness had also made real estate investments in Rosslund. As noted above, in 1895 he built a "nice house" for Sigrid and his daughter -- indeed, it was registered in Sigrid's name. The house was on Columbia Avenue, just outside the eastern edge of the business district, part way up what came to be known as Hospital Hill, across the street from the court house. It was a prime location. When Olaus and Sigrid moved to Spokane in 1899, they did not sell their Columbia Avenue home. I don't know whether they rented it out, but if they intended to sell it they must have been teased by steadily rising real estate prices, holding on in anticipation of still further increases. They waited too long. After 1900, employment in the mines and hence the population of the city stabilized and then fell. The real estate boom was over.

Of course, we cannot know the market value of any property in the absence of a reported transaction, but the assessed value for municipal taxation purposes must have reflected market value in a rough way. In any case it is the only index of the value of the property that is available. For the years 1897 through 1906 the assessed value of the Olaus residential property is shown in Table 1. For a number of years, as the mining economy of Rosslund boomed, the assessed value of the home increased, reaching a peak of \$2,300 in 1900. Then, as the real estate market collapsed, the assessed value of the Jeldness residence tumbled. When it was finally sold in 1906 the assessed value was less than half of what it had been in 1900 and less than 60% of that in 1897. Considered as a real estate investment, it was a failure.

Table 1
Assessed value of Jeldness' residential property on Hospital Hill
(Lot 7, Block 50, East Ward, District Lot 535)

| Assessment Year | Value of Land \$ | Value of Improvements \$ | Value of Property \$ |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1897 | 1500 | 400 | 1900 |
| 1898 | 1400 | 450 | 1850 |
| 1899 | 1400 | 500 | 1900 |
| 1900 | 1500 | 800 | 2300 |
| 1901 | 1500 | 600 | 2100 |
| 1902 | 1000 | 400 | 1400 |
| 1903 | 900 | 400 | 1300 |
| 1904 | 900 | 400 | 1300 |
| 1905 | 800 | 400 | 1200 |
| 1906 | 700 | 375 | 1075 |
| Source: (Rosslund City nd; Rosslund City nd). | | | |

Olaus had other real estate investments in Rosslund during his brief stay there. Between 1896 and 1898 he acquired four properties in the main business district and two properties a block away on Le Roi

Avenue at the corner of Spokane Street. Basic information about these properties is summarized in Table 2 (see below, p. 39).

Two of the business district properties were on the south side of Columbia Avenue between Lincoln Street (now Queen Street) and Washington Street (Block 40). These were difficult building sites because there was a sharp drop-off on that side of Columbia Avenue and to have an entrance at street level any building had to be very tall or be built on silts. Nonetheless, they were valuable commercial properties. When Olaus acquired them in 1897, one (Lot 20) already had a hotel on it that Olaus soon sold to C.A. Macintosh of the British America Corporation. The other was an empty lot, but apparently Olaus had a building constructed (or perhaps completed) on it that would house a shop with rooms above. His other two investments in the commercial district were a block to the west, again prime commercial properties. All four of these properties were sold soon after Olaus left Rossland, whether at a profit or not we cannot know. However, soon after he had moved to Spokane, Olaus noted to his friend Jonathan Bourne that "... what I have left of Rossland real estate have (sic) depreciated greatly in value since Mar."¹⁸⁸ That was certainly true of the "nice house" that he had built as his family home, but even more so of two lots at the corner of Le Roi Avenue and Spokane Street.

The lots in question were on a very steep embankment, across the street from the Central Hotel (later famous in Rossland as the Irvin Hotel) and one block off the main commercial street. When he bought them, Olaus probably saw no end to the Rossland mining boom and he must have been convinced that propelled by prosperity and population growth this area would soon become part of the commercial district. If shops were built on the south side of Columbia Avenue, why not on his lots on the south side of Le Roi Avenue? It didn't happen. These lots were unsalable -- indeed, they remain undeveloped today. As is evident in Table 2, from 1900, the value of these lots plummeted. Unable to sell them, Olaus simply stopped paying municipal taxes on them. In 1906 they were forfeited to the city. Some of Olaus Jeldness' investments in Rossland real estate were not a roaring success.

Table 2

Olaus Jeldness' Rossland real estate investments, other than the family

residence. Assessed value of land and buildings (\$)

| Assessment Year | Block 30 Le Roi at Spokane | | Block 40 Columbia Ave. between Queen and Washington | | Block 29 Columbia Ave. between Washington and Spokane | | Notes |
|---|-------------------------------|--------|--|--------|--|--------|--|
| | Lot 23 | Lot 24 | Lot 17 | Lot 20 | Lot 18 | Lot 20 | |
| 1897 | 700 | 900 | | | | | No buildings on Lots 23 & 24 |
| 1898 | 700 | 900 | 3400 | 4100 | | | Lot 17 land only; Lot 20 land and building |
| 1899 | 600 | 800 | 4800 | 5500 | 6000 | 6800 | \$600 building added to Lot 17 |
| 1900 | 600 | 800 | 5500 | | | | |
| 1901 | 500 | 600 | | | | | |
| 1902 | 400 | 500 | | | | | |
| 1903 | 360 | 450 | | | | | |
| 1904 | 360 | 450 | | | | | |
| 1905 | 250 | 400 | | | | | |
| 1906 | 150 | 275 | | | | | |
| 1907 | | | | | | | Lots 23 & 24, Block 30, forfeited to City for failure to pay taxes |
| Source: (Rossland City nd; Rossland City nd). | | | | | | | |

There was another Rossland-related real estate investment in which Olaus was involved. Over the winter of 1898-99 he joined a syndicate of Rossland people who bought lots in the townsite of Midway in the Boundary district, then a boom town. In September, 1899 he visited Midway in the company of a Rossland realtor, Arthur Clabon (see Annex 5, p. 104), to inspect their properties.¹⁸⁹ The members of the syndicate, how much was invested and whether they made any profitable transactions are not known. However, in 1911 several lots in the Midway townsite owned by "Jeldness and Goodeve" were forfeit for failure to pay taxes.¹⁹⁰ Apparently Arthur Goodeve (see Annex 5, p. 104), sometime mayor of Rossland and MP for the Kootenays, was also part of the syndicate. I don't know the overall results, but the syndicate's real estate speculations in Midway were not all successful.

SPOKANE

When he moved to Spokane in 1899, Olaus Jeldness took with him considerable wealth from the sale of the mines and claims on Sophie Mountain, the Number 1 claim, his real estate and possibly other unknown Rossland assets. He was not super-rich, but he was more than comfortably well-off. However, he did not retire to live on his riches -- quite the contrary. Rossland had important mines and the potential for more, and a stock market had been established in an attempt to make the city a centre for mining finance. However, the market had a short, fractious, life. Rossland was simply a booming mining town that was very much on the periphery of the regional mining industry. Olaus was moving to a commercial and financial centre that was then the throbbing heart of the mining industry in a large part of the Pacific Northwest, including south eastern British Columbia. Olaus had not given up on mining, but he wanted to be where the action was.

While living in Spokane, Olaus maintained intense involvement in mining, over a wide geographical area, but he did not want to be tied down to the longer-term routine of being on the ground, managing a producing mine. Rather, he became involved in the establishment, funding and management of some companies, sought out opportunities to be a consultant on potential mines and applied his considerable skills to the development of prospects, turning promising properties into producing mines then handing them over to others to operate. From time to time, a bit of prospecting was also on the agenda. He was never one of the major figures in mining and finance in Spokane, but he was significant. As a token of the respect in which he was held by the mining community, on the day of his funeral the hours of the stock exchange on which local mining shares were traded were adjusted so that participants could attend the ceremony.¹⁹¹

Mining Interests

Alaska

Olaus was not afraid to travel afar in search of riches. In May, 1900, just over a year after he left Rosslund, he was boarding a ship in Seattle, with his brother Andrew,^{hh} heading for Nome, Alaska.¹⁹² They were part of the herd of prospectors rushing to northern Alaska following the discovery of gold in the Nome area about 1898. They did not stay long. In August the Seattle Times reported that "O. Jeldness, Nome Alaska," was a guest at the Northern Hotel. He was on his way home to Spokane. I presume that Andrew returned to his family at the same time.

Olaus may have had another "near Alaska" adventure. In 1951 it was reported that the Atlin-Ruffner mine had been refinanced and would reopen and that the early work on the mine had been done by, among other Spokane mining men, Olaus Jeldness, but no other information about this event was provided.¹⁹³ This mine was in the far northwest corner of British Columbia, almost in the Yukon and very close to the Alaska panhandle. I have been unable to confirm the report about Olaus' early work on this mine and I don't know when it was supposed to have occurred.

Spitsbergen

Another journey followed, even farther afield. One of the most curious events in Jeldness' post-Rosslund life was his involvement with a coal mining venture on Spitsbergen Island in the high arctic, northwest of Norway. It had the usual Jeldness elements; mining (although, not copper, gold or silver) and the hazarding someone else's money in the expectation of untold riches for all involved (including Olaus). However, it also had a bizarre feature. Thus, Whittaker tells us that

^{hh} Andrew had the distinction of being recorded twice in the census of 1900. He was recorded as living in Portland when the census taker called on June 1, then he was on the steamer Senator on June 13 for the census of Alaska. Apparently, the census takers took the passenger list from the ship, probably never meeting the people, and included them as part of Alaska's population, recording their names but no other information [United States (1900a). "Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900". Retrieved February 27, 2011, from <http://search.ancestry.com/>].

*... he had been born ... 29 years before and ... he had already had the signal, if somewhat unusual, honour of erecting the stars and stripes on the island of Spitsbergen and claiming some land for Uncle Sam in the name of the Arctic Coal Company of Boston.*¹⁹⁴

As with so much of the Jeldness legend, this story contains a central element of truth, but some of the details are in error. The most blatant error is the timing. Olaus was in his late forties when the events occurred -- but perhaps Whittaker was just a little careless in his writing.ⁱⁱ

In 1901 Olaus received a letter from a friend in Norway telling him about undeveloped iron ore deposits of exceptional quality in the far north of Norway.¹⁹⁵ Olaus was intrigued. He reported the information to William D. Munroe, a Michigan mining engineer, suggesting that they invite some capitalists to form a syndicate to exploit the ore body. I don't know how Olaus knew Munroe or anything about Munroe's mining background, but he was also intrigued. He contacted a cousin, John M. Longyear, a wealthy industrialist who divided his time between Michigan and Boston. Longyear was also intrigued with the proposal and combined with another Boston capitalist, Frederick Ayer, to fund an exploratory mission to Norway. Munroe and Olaus were sent to investigate.¹⁹⁶

The preliminary investigation was disappointing. The iron ore deposits in question were under claim by a Norwegian company that demanded a very high price for its rights and careful assessment showed that the quality of the ore was not at all exceptional. However, in the process of negotiating and talking to people Olaus and Munroe learned of very high quality coal deposits on Spitsbergen Island. Spitsbergen is the largest of a group of islands, now collectively called Svalbard, above the Arctic Circle, approximately half way between Norway and the North Pole (between 74 and 81 degrees north latitude). About 560 kilometres of the Barents Sea separates Spitsbergen from the northern coast of Norway. From October to May the island is ice bound and in the short summer navigation is faced with the hazard of drifting ice. With the technology of the turn of the twentieth century, climatically it was a very inhospitable place.

Longyear, who had visited Spitsbergen on a recent family vacation, decided to accompany Olaus and Munroe on an exploratory visit to the island. They spent 36 hours prospecting and collecting specimens which, on his return to the United States, Munroe took to the Michigan School of Mines for analysis. That analysis was very encouraging -- some of the coal was indeed of a very high quality. Negotiations began in earnest and, using money provided by Longyear and Ayer, Olaus obtained an option on the coal on behalf of the capitalists. The Arctic Coal Company was incorporated to own and operate the mines.

As they made plans to mine and market the coal, Olaus suddenly announced that he was returning to the United States. Munroe tried to persuade him to stay, stating that "there would be work enough for both of us."¹⁹⁷ According to Dole's exhaustive work on the enterprise, which was based on the Longyear

ⁱⁱ The complete sentence in Whittaker is: "He had been born at Stangvik, Norway, 29 years before and had worked up to the position of superintendent of a silver mine in Colorado during the years between his 16th and 22nd birthdays and he had already had the signal, if somewhat unusual, honour of erecting the stars and stripes on the island of Spitzbergen and claiming some land for Uncle Sam in the name of the Arctic Coal Mining Company of Boston." [Whittaker, L. H. (1949). Rossland The Golden City. Rossland, Rossland Miner.

records, Olaus told Munroe "that he could not afford the time."¹⁹⁸ That is a puzzling explanation. It would be interesting to have Olaus' side of the story, but that is not available. There must have been much more to his decision to depart. It is possible that personal relations between Munroe and Olaus were not good. Alternatively, perhaps it was just another manifestation of his restless spirit -- he did not want to be tied down to the routine operation of a producing mine. Other ventures beckoned and he soon moved on to other mining activities in a promising new area in Nevada (see below, p. 45). Perhaps the real problem was that, after Montana, Olaus could not contemplate another long winter in barren isolation, this time on a bitterly cold island in the high Arctic. The island was locked in by ice for perhaps eight months of the year. Olaus was then 49 years old, with a wife and three children. Sigrid was in Norway with him (but not the children) and she may have been a strong voice pulling him away. In any case, Olaus and Sigrid left Norway and sailed into New York harbour aboard the *United States* on June 26, 1905.¹⁹⁹ That was the end of Olaus' Arctic adventure.

What about the flag story? First we should understand that at that time Spitsbergen was legally "*terra nullius*" -- land that belonged to no one.²⁰⁰ Historically, various nations had passing economic interests in Spitsbergen (primarily fishing and whaling, but including some extraction of coal) but no country had occupied the island and established sovereignty over it. Apparently there was no indigenous population. One immediate consequence was considerable uncertainty about ownership rights to any coal mines that might be established. What government could confer such rights? Who would protect them? With the investment of large sums of money involved, these were very serious questions for the Arctic Coal Company.

In an attempt to resolve the situation, Longyear sought the opinion of the United States' State Department as to what country had sovereignty over Spitsbergen.²⁰¹ The State Department offered the opinion that Russia had sovereignty. However, similar enquiries, by Olaus, of the Swedish and Norwegian governments led to denials that Russia was sovereign, a statement that was confirmed by the Russian government. He was also assured that there was an "understanding" among Norway, Sweden and Russia that the island was *terra nullius*, but that under long standing conventions appropriately developed claims of ownership of specific sites, accompanied by occupation and working of the mines, would be respected by all interested states. The various states with economic interests in the island (Norway, Sweden, Russia, the United Kingdom) had a long history of protecting the interests of their nationals in whatever activities they were engaged in Spitsbergen and respecting the rights of the nationals of other countries.²⁰² On the basis of these assurances the enterprise went forward.

The company did fly a large (15 foot) American flag over its operations, along with the Norwegian flag.²⁰³ Did Olaus personally hoist the flag? I don't know, but it certainly is possible. It is clear that Olaus thought that the United States should annex Spitsbergen²⁰⁴ (see below, p. 61) and it is possible that he thought that that was what was happening when the flag was raised. If so, he was soon disabused and he later made it clear that the purpose of the flag was not to claim sovereignty over the island for the

United States, or even over a part of the island.²⁰⁵ Thus, in an interview with the *Spokesman Review* Olaus is quoted as saying,

*Now a 15 foot American flag, made to order in Norway, is floating over our possessions. Not in the sense of annexation, but as a warning to others to keep off of that part of it which we have discovered and located.*ⁱⁱ ²⁰⁶

In other words, the flag was a bold announcement that the company was American and in some vague sense its operations were under the protection of the United States government even though no such assurance had been given. In later years, until the business was sold in 1916, Longyear engaged in political lobbying in Washington in an attempt to ensure such protection of their property rights.²⁰⁷

The question of sovereignty over Spitsbergen was not resolved until 1920.²⁰⁸ In the peace treaty between Germany and Russia in 1918 it was agreed to divide Spitsbergen between the two powers, both of which had commercial interests on the island. Alarmed, the British government sent troops to occupy the island at the beginning of October, 1918. They destroyed a German wireless station and other installations, including coal mines, and hoisted the British flag.²⁰⁹ After the war the island reverted to no man's land status until the Treaty of Spitsbergen, an accompaniment to the Peace Treaty, awarded it to Norway, but with strong protections for the right of access by nationals of the other signatory countries. In 1925 Spitsbergen was formally absorbed into the Kingdom of Norway.

Olaus' days in Spitsbergen ended when he and Sigrid returned to the United States in 1905, but not without controversy. Longyear and Ayer were annoyed at the "ebullition of egotism" that Olaus displayed in an interview that he gave to the *Spokesman Review*, the primary newspaper of Spokane, in which "he claimed the whole credit of the expedition"²¹⁰ It is easy to understand why they were upset. The article led off with the statement "Through the efforts of Olaus Jeldness of Spokane the Stars and Stripes now float over the arctic island ..." It went on to identify the venture as "His expedition" and referred to the "two wealthy Boston men" (no names mentioned) as "associated with him."²¹¹ The engineer Munroe was not mentioned by name or attributed any role in the genesis of the project, only alluded to as an anonymous "American engineer" who was left in charge of the project. The capitalists responded. Asserting that Olaus had done insufficient work on the project and so had broken the terms of his contract with them, they denied that he was entitled to his full share in the venture, but they made a financial settlement "that was satisfactory to him."²¹² I don't know the details of that settlement.

There is a Canadian footnote to Olaus' Spitsbergen adventure. In September, 1941, allied troops attacked and temporarily occupied Spitsbergen.²¹³ There were no German soldiers on the island, only Norwegian and Russian miners and their families, and the allied troops met no resistance. Given Olaus' Canadian connection, it is paradoxical that the landing force, a mixture of Canadian, British and Norwegian soldiers, was commanded by a Canadian, Brigadier General Arthur E. Potts, and it was

ⁱⁱ "Located" was a prospector's term for a mining claim that had been legally staked and registered with the relevant government authority. In this case, he must have had a more general meaning in mind.

generally considered to be a Canadian expedition. The raiders were nicknamed "Potts Polar Pirates."²¹⁴ Because the island was not permanently occupied, it is not clear what long term strategic advantage was gained. Part of the purpose was a training exercise for the restless Canadian army, until then largely confined to Britain, but the main objective was to deprive the Germans, at least for an extended time, of the massive deposits of high grade coal with which they were already experimenting for conversion to synthetic oil and gasoline.²¹⁵ The island was occupied for some days, the wireless station was destroyed, mines were blown up, mining equipment was removed to Britain, and stocks of coal and fuel oil were burned in conflagrations that were described as "like a great blowtorch ... the greatest fires this correspondent has ever seen."^{kk} The Norwegian inhabitants were evacuated to Britain^{ll} and a Russian ship evacuated Russian miners and families, but not before a team of Norwegian miners defeated one of Canadian soldiers, 6 -1, in a friendly game of soccer. Among the mines disabled by the Canadian sappers must have been those whose early development was under the direction of Olaus Jeldness and William Munroe.

Ely

Next to Spitsbergen, probably Olaus Jeldness' biggest post-Rossland mining venture was at Ely, in eastern Nevada, near the Utah border. He must have gone to Ely soon after his return from Spitsbergen, perhaps in the late summer or autumn of 1905. In any case, he was early on the scene of what was to be a significant copper mining boom and so was able to stake or acquire claims that he deemed "worthy of the most thorough exploration"²¹⁶ -- claims that were called by a Salt Lake City newspaper "the Jeldness group." In October 1906 a new mining company, Ely Consolidated Mining Company, was formed, funded and controlled by a group of Utah mining men.²¹⁷ Olaus, who was one of the original shareholders and a founding director, sold some of his "worthy" properties to the company and was hired as the first manager, mandated to open the mine and develop it to the point of proving its worth.²¹⁸ It was said that he was hired because he knew the prospect better than anyone and because he was "a practical mine operator of long experience and ability trained in the school of experience."²¹⁹

His family remained in Spokane and when, in December, 1906, Olaus took a month's leave to visit home, he had been away for eleven months.²²⁰ His mining ventures must have been hard on Sigrid, raising three children between the ages of 7 and 16, with a peripatetic Olaus frequently away at one mine or another, often for extended periods. Fortunately, she had her sister, Marie Hendrickson, living with her, providing companionship and assistance. In May, 1907, Olaus resigned his position as manager of the mine, informing the management that, as promised, he had "demonstrated your properties to possess

^{kk} The correspondent in question was the famous Canadian war correspondent Ross Munro [Globe (1941c). Mines equipment taken to Britain; Poilus are rescued. Globe and Mail (September 10, 1941). Toronto.].

^{ll} There was also a group of French soldiers who had escaped from the Germans, made it to the Russian lines and were brought to Spitsbergen by the Russians for evacuation to Britain where they were to join the Free French forces of General de Gaulle [ibid.

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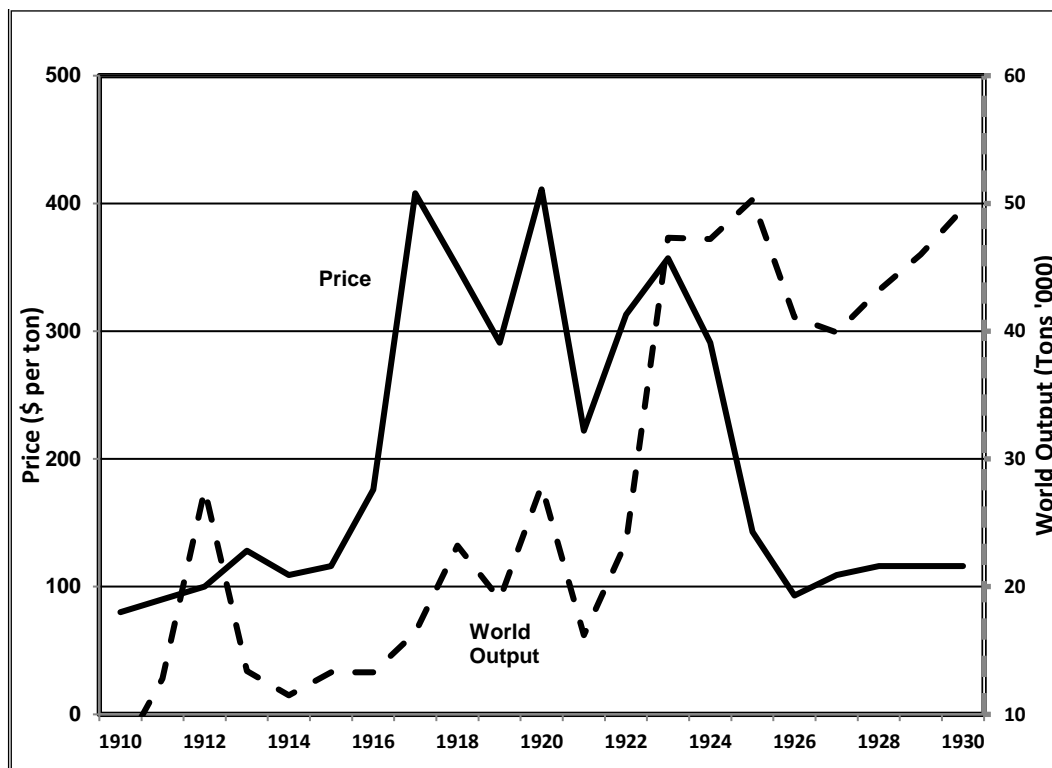
substantial merit, and to give great promise as future wealth producers."²²¹ However, he did not intend to retire to Spokane. He planned to devote his time to the development of other properties that he owned in the Ely area.²²² Sigrid and the children took second place to exploration and development.

The copper boom continued at Ely and production at Ely Consolidated occurred much as Olaus had forecast. I have not discovered whether he actually developed his other properties in the camp, but he visited Ely in 1907, "looking after his interests."²²³

Apex Mining Company

The Apex mine case demonstrates another side of Olaus' involvement in the mining industry. The Apex mine, together with a collection of similar mines owned by the same company, was high in the mountains north and east of Seattle, Washington.²²⁴ The terrain was rugged and both access and shipment were difficult. A railway had been constructed to the vicinity, but not all the way to the mine; an aerial tram carried ore to the railhead, several hundred feet below. Lacking a concentrator, the operators of the mine had to sort the ore by hand, ship the best and store the rest. Gold and silver were the primary outputs, but the ore contained a considerable concentration of arsenic. Under normal circumstances, the presence of a high concentration of arsenic was a detriment in a gold-silver mine. Few smelters were equipped to handle such ore. However, the nearby Tacoma smelter was an exception and it showed interest in smelting the Apex ore. Arsenic had various uses, but in the years after World War I it was increasingly employed as an insecticide, particularly for cotton but also for other crops. In the late teens and early twenties the expanding demand for arsenic created a shortage; the price jumped from \$109 a ton in 1914 to \$408 a ton in 1917 (Figure 2). It then fluctuated between \$222 and \$411 per ton between 1918 and 1924.

Figure 2
Arsenic: US Price and World Output, 1910-1930



Opened in 1889, the Apex mine had been struggling in its difficult physical environment. Beginning in 1915 the Apex Mining Company was under the management of a part owner, William J. Priestley, who apparently invested a considerable sum of his own funds in developing the mine, with little return. Then, in the postwar years, as a result of the jump in the price of arsenic, the mine suddenly became an interesting property. The owners began to dream of the fortune that could be made if the property was properly equipped, but that would take money, lots of money.

There may have been a struggle for control of the company between Priestley and another part owner, H. W. C. Jackson, of Spokane (see below, Appendix 5, p. 105).²²⁵ This was the same Jackson who had been associated with Olaus in organizing Rosslund's first winter carnivals. He had subsequently moved to Spokane where he alternated between newspaper work with the Spokesman Review and a mining brokerage business. In August, 1922, Jackson tried to persuade Olaus to buy the company from its present owners, keep Jackson as a partner and Priestley, temporarily, as mine manager, raise the necessary money and equip the mines with a concentrator. Olaus had already inspected the mine, was clearly interested and was preparing for a second inspection visit.

The details of what happened next are obscure, but it is clear that Olaus approached someone in Spokane for \$35,000. The potential lender sent his own experts to examine the mine, which took time and money, and to the dismay of all concerned, they submitted less than enthusiastic reports. The

funding was refused. Olaus, who had formed his own (favourable) opinion of the mine, determined not to have decisions affecting the future of the mine rest on what he regarded as the superficial opinions of less well informed and less competent outside experts. His word on the quality of the property should be sufficient. The initial venture having failed, Olaus then somehow eased Jackson out of the picture^{mm} and allied himself with Priestley to develop the mine. An agreement was drawn up under which Olaus would receive a large portion of the shares in the business (and the position of Secretary-Treasurer) if he went to New York and raised \$100,000 to install a "reduction plant" (i.e., a smelter) to produce a marketable arsenic compound that could be sold directly to cotton farmers or to a chemical company. In March, 1923, Olaus made the pilgrimage to New York and other eastern financial centres to persuade capitalists to part with a significant fortune, on the basis of his word about the merits of the property. Mindful of what had happened earlier, he rejected the notion of further independent assessments of the mine. He knew its merits, other assessments would be expensive, would take too long and the result would be unpredictable. The file on the Apex Mine stops at this point in the story. However, between 1922 and 1923 world arsenic output, reacting to the higher price, took a very large jump upward. The capitalists would have been well aware of this and of its implication. The world market was flooded; the price fell sharply to pre-war levels (see Figure 2, p. 47).²²⁶ Olaus' effort came too late and he failed in his mission as a mine promoter. He did not raise the funds required, did not receive the large allocation of shares and did not become secretary-treasurer of the company. At his death in 1937, Olaus held no shares in the Apex Mining Company.

The Apex mine never did get its reduction plant, although a concentrator was finally installed in 1936 and upgraded in 1938. However, the mill seems to have produced little. The Apex mine was closed in 1941 as a non-essential industry, and the company was dissolved in 1943. The mine is now officially classified as "inactive."²²⁷

Champion (Oregon)

Olaus had a deep involvement in the management of at least one other mining company. Champion Consolidated Mining Company was a Spokane company but its operations were in Lane County, in west-central Oregon.²²⁸ It had 47 claims on 800 acres of land on the western edge of the Cascade Mountains, east of Eugene. In 1917 Olaus Jeldness was president of the company. It was then dissolved and a new, more substantially financed company, Champion Mines Corporation, took its place, working the same properties. Jeldness was no longer president, but he remained a director of the new company. The company's operations in Oregon were short lived. Sometime in 1917 the mines were taken over by a new Portland-based company, West Coast Mines. I know nothing about the subsequent story of Champion Mines, but at Olaus' death he still held 300,000 shares in the company. The announced capitalization was \$3,000,000 with each share having a par value of \$1. In other words, Olaus held 10%

^{mm} In a letter to Jeldness, dated January 1, 1923, Priestley commented "You sure drove a good bargain with Jackson. He must be very hard up indeed."

of the nominal share capital. At the time his estate went through probate, the value of these shares was assessed at "nil."

Other Mining Projects

I do not have a complete catalogue of other mining projects that Olaus was involved with, but there seem to have been many. A few notes in newspapers provide a flavour.

In the early years he seems to have favoured the development of mining prospects in which he had an ownership interest -- and perhaps that he had prospected. The Ely episode is the prime example, but it was followed by another one. The so-called Gold Circle district was in Nevada, not far from Ely, and its development boom came hard on the heels of the Ely boom. It was reported that Olaus Jeldness was "among the first to enter Gold Circle,"²²⁹ and that he acquired extensive property in the mining camp.

*Olaus Jeldness ... (is)... well known as one of the most thorough and conservative practical mining men in the west. Mr. Jeldness was in the city yesterday on the way to his home in Spokane after having been the last two months in Gold Circle, prospecting, acquiring interests and attending to development work. That he has acquired property in the camp and expects to take over more will be to those who know him one of the best endorsements the camp could receive.*²³⁰

He was eloquent about the prospects for the camp, which "is sure to make good ... turning out lots of gold and silver."²³¹ I have no further information about Olaus' mining properties in Gold Circle or how they developed.

The Tulameen district of British Columbia attracted his attention in 1912 when he purchased the claims of a deceased prospector.²³² It was reported that he was "planning to work a small force continuing the development during the winter," but I have been unable to discover if he carried out his plan. In 1915 it was reported that he went to Turk, Washington -- a place in Stevens county north of Spokane -- to inspect a mine and a smelter.²³³ The name of the mine and the result of the inspection were not reported. The Lone Pine Surprise Consolidated Mining Co was a Spokane-based company with operations at Republic, Washington, where it owned the Last Chance Mine. Olaus was listed as a director in 1918.²³⁴ As with Champion Mines, his shares in this company were also worthless when he died. In mid-1919, he was reported to be "the engineer in charge of development" of the Leflour Mountain Copper Company's property near Danville, in Northern Washington, close to the Canadian border, just south of Grand Forks.²³⁵ Also in 1919, at a mine in northern Stevens County, the Big Bonanza at Bossburg, where a rich deposit of lead-silver ore was being mined in 1919, it was reported that "O. Jeldness of Spokane is in charge."²³⁶ Similarly, in 1928 he inspected the Bobby Anderson lead-silver mine in the Coeur d'Alenes district of Idaho.²³⁷ The mine had recently been reopened under new owners. He visited a silver strike at Republic Washington in 1928²³⁸ and in November, 1934, just five months before he died, Olaus was part of a team that inspected the Morning Glory silver mine in Montana.²³⁹ He was said to have "studied the mine geologically." At another mining property in Montana in 1933 it was reported "O. Jeldness of Spokane is geologist."²⁴⁰ In the same year he was quoted commenting on the

prospects of the Golden Gate mine in Montana, a company controlled in Spokane.²⁴¹ However, the nature of his interest in the company is not made clear.

Olaus was active in the Northwest Mining Association, a trade association with its headquarters in Spokane. He was treasurer in 1928²⁴² and he gave talks to luncheon meetings on various occasions. Sometimes his talks concerned mining matters, but he also addressed other issues. For example, in March, 1934, he spoke about "Changing Continents and the Evolution of Life," variously entitled "Ancient Rivers, Oceans and Changing Continents."²⁴³

Clearly, a quiet, comfortable retirement in his wonderful Spokane home did not suit Olaus Jeldness' temperament or fit into his plans for his elder years.

Petroleum

The Flathead Petroleum Bubble.

In the spring of 1914, Spokane was abuzz with news that oil and gas had been struck at the Dingman well, a short distance west of Calgary, Alberta.²⁴⁴ Although the well was disappointing and full development was delayed, this was the start of Alberta's first real oil boom and the harbinger of the famous Turner Valley oil field. It was asserted that the same geological formation extended south to the Spokane area and particularly to the Flathead River region of southeastern British Columbia, 100 miles due south of the Dingman well. There, oil seepage on the surface was well known and some drilling was underway with results that were said to be highly encouraging.²⁴⁵ Indeed, one company claimed to have "two producing wells."²⁴⁶ It was predicted that an oil pipeline would be built from the Flathead area into Spokane "within another year," and that "it is not unlikely that Spokane will soon be the center of an oil interest as great, if not greater, than that of Calgary."²⁴⁷ It was in this context that Olaus strayed from his field of expertise in hard rock mining and got involved in petroleum exploration.

The Flathead Petroleum Company was organized in Spokane in May or June, 1914. If Olaus was not one of the founders, he was recruited at the outset of the company and became deeply involved in its affairs, not on the ground as a petroleum geologist, but as an investor, director and vice-president²⁴⁸ -- and, whether intentionally or not, as a stock promoter. In an advertisement for the newly organized company, he was quoted as saying that he "has been studying into the oil business and has made some very successful oil investments (and that) the oil business is far ahead of any other kind of mining."²⁴⁹ At the time, the company's major property was on Sage Creek, a tributary of the North Fork of the Flathead River in southeastern British Columbia. The company also held drilling rights in the contiguous section of Montana, but was not active there.

The Flathead Petroleum Company had petroleum geologists on staff, so Olaus' geological knowledge was not vital. Undoubtedly, what was important was his status and prestige in the mining and financial communities of Spokane -- his professional reputation as a mining engineer and geologist and his personal reputation for honesty and square-dealing. I am sure that the company wanted his involvement

to persuade people to invest in the company's shares. He approached this project with his usual vigour. He made a trip to the Flathead field and then reported in an interview with the *Spokesman Review* that "I am convinced that the Flathead valley is the most promising oil field in the northwest and one of the best in the world."²⁵⁰ I am sure he believed what he said, but I am also sure that he came to regret this public pronouncement.

Apart from the basic issue of whether there was oil in commercial quantities under the ground in the Flathead region of British Columbia, there was another serious problem -- access. Although the oil camp was a short distance from the Crows Nest Pass in British Columbia and its railway connections east and west, the country was rugged and there were no Canadian access roads. Indeed, as late as 1950, the only feasible access route was from Montana, over what was described as a 75 mile "canyon road" along the Flathead River.²⁵¹ One investor who went to the camp in 1914 to see it for himself described the trip as "one of the most unpleasant experiences of my life. It required four days to get in"²⁵² Despite the rigours of the trip, the investor was enthusiastic about what he saw. However, hauling drilling and pumping equipment in (and hopefully petroleum out) was extremely difficult and expensive. The Flathead company asserted that the Chicago and Milwaukee Railway would build a line into the area, "as soon as production is assured,"²⁵³ but in early 1914 that was just a promoter's fantasy (as was the suggested pipeline to Spokane). The access problems were aggravated when the drilling team hit very hard rock and was forced to abandon its first well. Two more wells were started. Faced with the likelihood of long delays in completing a well and perhaps finding oil and hence in the effective development of the field, in late 1915 Flathead Petroleum switched its attention to the new Greybull field in southern Wyoming, where it acquired drilling rights, sunk some wells and became a small-scale producer.²⁵⁴ Much money was spent on the Sage Creek project, but although the company promised to resume operations, by November, 1915, it had been effectively abandoned.²⁵⁵

From the outset, Flathead Petroleum mounted a very aggressive campaign to sell shares, with full-page display advertisements in local newspapers that featured opinions of experts (including Olaus). The company targeted small investors, touting itself as "The People's Company ... whose officers and directors have a good name."²⁵⁶ In one ad it emphasized that the public, not a group of insiders, controlled the company -- "2,000 people now own control."²⁵⁷ Wild, unsubstantiated claims were made, including predictions of future share prices. The nominal par value of the shares was 5¢ but they seem to have been issued at 10¢. During the Flathead phase, when the share price had been talked up to 25¢ the broker predicted that the price "will advance to 50¢ or better in a few days." The price did not rise above 25¢ and in a few months it had fallen to 12¢ and then to 7.5¢. During the Greybull phase, as some oil was found, the price was again talked up to a peak of 50¢ before it again tumbled to a new low of 4.5¢. It is probably because of the heavy losses in the Flathead valley, the evident dubious information fed to the public and the wild gyrations in the share price that the president and stockbroker for the company were indicted by a grand jury in 1918.²⁵⁸ I have not discovered a public report on either the nature of the charges or the outcome of the case, so I suspect that eventually the charges were dropped. The

company had lost a lot of investors' money, but was still a going concern, under new management and with other promising properties. Although Olaus had associated himself with a project of doubtful merit, I have no evidence that he had any personal legal difficulties as a result of his involvement.

I don't know when Olaus gave up his administrative association with Flathead Petroleum. In 1915 he was no longer vice president, but remained a director.²⁵⁹ By 1923 he was no longer on the directorate,²⁶⁰ but the change in administration must have occurred some years earlier, probably in 1918 or 1919. Olaus continued to hold his Flathead shares. He had also invested in the shares of several other petroleum-related companies, some of which were controlled in Spokane or had a strong Spokane connection and most of which were involved in drilling for oil in the Flathead region on both sides of the border (Crows Nest Oil, Flathead Petroleum, Macdonald Syndicate). He also had shares in Pacific States Petroleum Company, which was active in the Coalinga area of California. I could not establish if it had a Spokane connection but some of the senior people in the Flathead Petroleum Company had previously been active in California and may have persuaded Olaus of the merits of the investment. At probate, all of Olaus' petroleum shares were deemed worthless or of nominal value (see below, Annex 1, p. 93).

The Flathead valley remained an enigma for the petroleum community for many years. Attempts were made by other groups to drill producing wells in the 1920s,²⁶¹ 1930s²⁶² and 1950s²⁶³, with some encouraging showings, but no sustained production. In recent years, the area has been a focus of environmental controversy. In the face of new development proposals, an attempt has been made to establish a protected wilderness area in the region and in 2010 the British Columbia government made a tentative concession in that direction by imposing a moratorium on oil and gas development in the Flathead valley.²⁶⁴ However, the debate goes on. Will Olaus' prediction be verified in the long run?

The Spokane Petroleum Bubble.

The Flathead episode must have bruised Olaus, but it did not weaken his belief that petroleum of commercial grade and quantity would be found in the Pacific Northwest or deter him from expressing his professional opinion. In mid-1921 a debate raged in the Spokane area about whether the city itself was sitting over a pool of petroleum, deep underground. Olaus waded in. At a meeting of the Northwest Mining Association he gave a talk on the potential for petroleum in the Spokane area, asserting that based on his knowledge of its geology "... there is no reason why oil cannot be found in this region in commercial quantities."ⁿⁿ Interviewed at the same time, a driller who had a contract with the Eastern Washington Oil Company to drill for oil at a site within the city limits predicted that oil would be found and that the impact on Spokane would be profound; "Spokane might easily double its population in 18

ⁿⁿ [Anon (2) Science sees oil; drills will tell [Clipping from unidentified newspaper; unknown date](#), Morgan Family Papers.] The clipping in the Morgan Family Papers is undated. However, the content indicates that the talk probably occurred in mid-June, 1921. A comment is included from W.W. Edwards who had the drilling contract for Eastern Washington Oil Company. The company was not formed until May or early June, 1921. It appears that drilling had not then begun; that happened later in June.

months." With his interests in Spokane real estate, I am sure Olaus would have been pleased at the prospect.

The Eastern Washington Oil Company was organized by Alfred l'Ecuyer, a homeowner in whose basement persistent oil seepage had occurred for several years.²⁶⁵ The creation of the company to explore the site created a stir in the Spokane community. l'Ecuyer's house at Southeast Boulevard and 10th Avenue was torn down and an oil derrick put in its place. There were soon other derricks, of other companies, across the street and at other places in the neighbourhood as well as at various locations outside the city. At one point, when drilling was interrupted for lack of funds, the l'Ecuyer drill hole spontaneously filled with oil.²⁶⁶ A sample of this oil was sent to the US Department of Mines for analysis. The report was damning, asserting that the oil was not petroleum but "a mixture of some fatty oil of animal or vegetable origin."²⁶⁷ Geologists from the United States Geological Survey (and some from Washington State College and the University of Idaho) vigorously disputed the geological analysis presented in Olaus' talk to the Northwest Mining Association. They concluded that "there is no geological basis for any expectation of oil in commercial quantities in this part of the country."²⁶⁸ However, geologists from Gonzaga University supported Olaus' theory. Fraud was suspected and the Better Business Bureau conducted an investigation. The Bureau strongly recommended that charges be laid against the l'Ecuyers, but a hearing concluded that the basement seepage was genuine and that there was no evidence of fraud. However, the results of the drilling were not encouraging. Soon after the hearing, the various rigs were dismantled and the drilling companies moved on to other fields. By 1923 Spokane's intense petroleum boom was over.

It seems unlikely that Olaus' talk to the Northwest Mining Association was an important contributor to Spokane's petroleum bubble of 1921-23. That was fuelled by the physical evidence of petroleum on the ground. Olaus' supportive effect would have been marginal at most. However, as events turned out, he was on the wrong side of a technical debate among geologists. Oil was not found in "commercial quantities." I have found no evidence that he again essayed into the field of petroleum geology or participated in the exploration for petroleum.

Spokane Real Estate

I don't know the full extent of Olaus' real estate acquisitions and sales in Spokane. However, as in Rossland, apart from his residence, Olaus seems to have concentrated on properties in the downtown business district. According to his obituary, "At one time he owned the Rex Theater building and much other downtown Spokane property."²⁶⁹ It is difficult to know what "much other" means, but taken literally it seems implausible and I find no evidence to support it. That he owned the theatre from its inception is confirmed by maps published in 1908 showing the ownership of properties in downtown Spokane.²⁷⁰ They show a lot at 326 Riverside Avenue, between Bernard and Washington Streets, owned by Olaus, the only such property that I could find on the map. In that year the Empire Theatre opened on that lot, presenting moving pictures and vaudeville. The theatre was managed by someone called Victor Grover,

not by Olaus.²⁷¹ Presumably, operating a theatre was outside the range of his interests, experience or abilities; he was the landlord. In May, 1912, management of the Empire changed and the theatre was reopened as the Rex Theatre ("Admission 5¢").^{oo} The theatre was reported to have been "lavish," costing \$20,000 (about \$446,000 today) and seating 250 in a 120 foot long hall, but apparently the theatre was uncomfortably narrow and the stage was very shallow limiting its usefulness for performances other than moving pictures. It is reported that at the time the neighbourhood had "half a dozen little movie houses," but as the years passed most of them were torn down or converted to other uses as "the neighbourhood slid into decrepitude."²⁷²

In the 1920s and early 1930s, the Rex offered second run movies; later it began featuring pornographic films. The theatre's revenues must have fallen and rents not paid to the landlord. Caught in a financial bind, Olaus lost the Rex Theatre on May 11, 1933 -- at the depth of the depression -- for failure to pay taxes and the interest on the mortgage held by a Mrs. Mathilda Ambs, who assumed ownership.²⁷³ He was given the option to repurchase the property for \$34,260, by then far beyond his means.²⁷⁴ Of course, the option was never exercised and expired on May 1, 1936, about a year after his death. The Rex was gone forever, but the probate of Olaus' will had a curious feature. An invoice from the local electrical utility was presented to the court for three months of electrical service (power and light) through July 1935, "furnished Clarence A. Chartland, W. 326 Riverside Avenue at the request of Olaus Jeldness."²⁷⁵ W. 326 Riverside was the address of the Rex Theater and Chartland was then the manager. If Olaus no longer owned the Rex why he would have continued to pay for electricity for the theatre? Despite his own difficult financial situation, was he being charitable to the operator of the theatre, who may have been a friend? Or, was he attempting to keep the theatre open, to prevent it from becoming derelict and so protecting the value of his former property in hopes of reacquiring it?

I know little about Olaus' other downtown real estate investments. Although they were said by his obituarist to be extensive, I have only found evidence of two other holdings, both in the same block on Riverside as the Rex Theatre. In 1905 it was reported that he sold a lot with a two story building for \$14,000²⁷⁶ (about \$335,000 today) and when he lost the Rex Theatre in 1933 he also lost ownership of the Crown Bar, for the same reason.²⁷⁷ The Crown was located in the same block, separated from the Rex by a barber shop and a beauty supply company. No real estate other than his house was listed in

^{oo} The advertisement announcing the "Grand Opening Today" of the new Rex Theatre appeared in the *Spokesman Review* of May 12, 1912. An industry magazine reported that the opening occurred a day earlier, May 11 [Anon. "Spokane's Rex Theater opens on May 11, 1912." Retrieved April, 2011, from [http://www.washington.historylink.org.](http://www.washington.historylink.org/), MP World (1913a). Rex Theater, Spokane, Wash. The Motion Picture World (July 5, 1913).]. Olaus Jeldness' connection to the Rex is not mentioned in any of the small literature about the theatre that I have discovered. The Rex was opened by one Boyd W. Copeland, a man with long involvement in the theatrical business and who may have managed the Rex for some years. However, by the early 1930s it seems to have been operated by Clarence Chartland, an Iowa-born man of Norwegian descent. The Rex was not one of the premier theatres of Spokane and as a result attracts little attention in histories of theatre in that city. It went through many incarnations (including a stint as a porno theatre) before it was torn down, probably in the late 1980s. Reports on its seating capacity vary. The outlier suggests 500. Something in the 200 range seems more plausible. W. 326 Riverside is now a parking lot.

his estate at probate; if other real estate assets existed, he must have disposed of them well before his death.

The Jeldness home in Spokane was at 2029 West 2nd Avenue, in what was called Browne's addition, an upscale residential area that has been described as

*... Spokane's first prestigious address. Notable for its array of old mansions built by Spokane's early elite, in ... early American Craftsman styles....*²⁷⁸

It is perhaps an index of the importance of people living in Browne's addition that in 1919

This addition is the only residential section where all the streets are paved -- where all improvements are in -- water, sewer, gas and electricity.²⁷⁹

The Jeldness house was built in 1897²⁸⁰ while Olaus was still in Rosslund. I don't know if he purchased the land and had a house built before he left Rosslund, or if he acquired an already built house after he moved to Spokane. However, the first direct evidence that I have that the Jeldness family was living there is in the 1901 Spokane City Directory, the data for which may have been compiled sometime in late 1900.²⁸¹ The following year Marie Hendrickson, Sigrid's sister, joined them. When the 1910 census was taken, the family also had a Swedish house servant.²⁸² A servant did not appear in later censuses, but Marie was still living there when Olaus died, in 1935. The house sits on two lots at the corner of two tree-lined streets and across the street from a large, well-used park. At the time it must have been a lovely, quiet neighbourhood. I made a search in the 1910 census for the occupants of nearby properties. They were almost all professional people, lawyers, doctors, accountants, merchants, real estate brokers, etc., with the occasional farmer, probably the owner of a large ranch, and a couple of "mining men" like Olaus. Today, the neighbourhood has changed and moved down the social ladder, but is still charming, with well-kept houses on streets lined with large, leafy trees (I visited the area in May, 2011). The Jeldness house, like most of the big houses in the neighbourhood, has been subdivided into rental units, a transformation initiated by Agnes during World War II (see below, p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). It has eight rooms and four bathrooms on two floors.²⁸³ I don't know what Olaus paid for the property, but in 1937, following the collapse of real estate prices in the great depression, it was valued at only \$3,500 (about \$54,000 in today's dollars). In 2012 it had an assessed value of \$329,300.²⁸⁴

Time Out? A Publishing Interlude

The Spokane City Directory consistently showed Olaus Jeldness' occupation as "miner" or simply "mining", except from 1911-1914 when it was announced (in bold type in 1911) that he was vice-president of the American Scandinavian Publishing and Printing Company. This company was the publishing arm of the Scandinavian Brotherhood, a fraternal organization, established about 1894 and based in Spokane, whose purpose was to promote the interests and well-being of people of Scandinavian descent. Beginning in 1908, the Brotherhood, published a magazine, the *American Scandinavian*. I don't know the extent or intensity of Olaus' involvement with the Brotherhood, but in 1909 or 1910 he published an article in the magazine in praise of his favourite activity, entitled "Skiing: Royal Sport of the

Northlands."²⁸⁵ Only five volumes of the magazine were published, the last in 1912. Then the Scandinavian Brotherhood was absorbed by a larger, nationwide organization, the Scandinavian Fraternity of America, based in Chicago.²⁸⁶ In addition, in 1913 a new foundation, the American Scandinavian Foundation, based on New York, began publishing another magazine, the American Scandinavian Review. There was no longer a role for the Spokane-based magazine.

About the same time as the Brotherhood was being absorbed, the printing company seems to have undergone an ambitious expansion. It acquired a modern printing plant and began to undertake large scale printing jobs, including the printing and binding of Polk's Directory of the City of Spokane, a very large volume indeed. I don't know Olaus' role in the company and its change of direction, but as vice-president he must have been central to its affairs. Had publishing and printing become a full time occupation for him? Apparently not. As noted earlier, it was reported in 1912 that he acquired some claims in the Tulameen area of British Columbia that he planned to develop and he became deeply involved in a company exploring for petroleum in the Flathead region of British Columbia and in Wyoming.

In 1915, the American Scandinavian Company disappeared from the Directory. Had the printing company failed? Were its operations moved elsewhere? Olaus Jeldness' listing in the Spokane Directory reverted to "mining."

Skiing

When Olaus moved to Spokane he left Red Mountain behind -- but he did not leave skiing behind. I know nothing about his personal adventures on skis after he moved to Spokane, but I would be surprised if he was not active skiing in and around the city when conditions permitted and on his travels in the Pacific Northwest and in Norway. In any case, he was a vigorous promoter of skiing in the Spokane area. Indeed, after his death, one veteran skier noted that he was known in Spokane as "the grand old man of skiing" and proposed that the local ski area be named "Jeldness Ski Land" to honour his legacy.²⁸⁷ It didn't happen.

He was a publicist for the sport. When the local press wanted someone to explain skiing to the uninitiated, they called on Olaus Jeldness. For example, in 1908 the Spokesman Review published a long interview with him on ski jumping and ski running, in which he described skiing as "a recreation or sport (that) has probably no superior" -- a non-combative, non-violent sport, devoid of "the noisy and vulgar quarrels witnessed at every championship baseball and football game where limb and life are often brutally sacrificed."²⁸⁸ He repeated this argument in a 1910 article, "Skiing, the Royal Sport of the Northlands," in the *American Scandinavian*, a locally published but widely circulated magazine for the Scandinavian community.²⁸⁹ But, perhaps more to the point, he also acted as a skiing entrepreneur in Spokane.

A school mate of Torgel Noren, Ole Larsen, emigrated to the United States in 1907, passed through Minnesota (where he picked up a wife, Grace) and Wisconsin, before settling in Spokane in 1909. He

was employed briefly by the McGoldrick Lumber Company and then longer-term by the Washington Mill Company, a producer of lumber, sashes, doors and furniture, where he was variously described as a machine operator, carpenter and cabinet maker. Larsen was a skier of some repute in Norway and while he was in the mid-west he set a hill record at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, jumping 131 feet. Olaus read a report and saw pictures of Larson's record setting jump and raved about it in a letter to the chairman of Rosslund's winter carnival.²⁹⁰

The Norwegian community in Spokane seems to have been very close-knit. Olaus must have met Larsen and known that he was the Ole Larsen who had set the jumping record at Eau Claire. Why he waited so long to develop a plan to have Larsen capture Canadian championship and the Jeldness trophy for Spokane at the Rosslund winter carnival is a mystery. However, in 1913, in concert with J. J. Browne, the real estate man who had developed the section of Spokane in which the Jeldnesses lived, he located a hill -- Silver Hill -- on which a suitable jump could be built for Larsen to practice and sharpen his skills. Silver Hill was on the land of the Browne family in a suburb, Moran Prairie, several miles southeast of the city. Conveniently, Moran was on a railway line which Browne and his son probably used to commute to their real estate business in downtown Spokane.

Olaus built a jump on Silver Hill and announced a jumping exhibition for mid-January, 1913 -- said by the *Spokesman Review* to be "the first ... in the history of sports in this section of the country."²⁹¹ The hill was not large or notably steep, but it was accessible, a short railway ride from Spokane, and Olaus and Browne arranged for two special trains on the day of the exhibition. Spokane is not in a heavy snow belt, but in January, 1913, the area experienced unusually heavy snow falls. Some roads were blocked and some schools closed. Conditions for skiing would seldom be better.

Then, serendipity! Olaus was surprised at his good fortune when Engwald Engen^{PP} showed up at the jump hill, prepared to jump.²⁹² Engen, the Canadian champion from Rosslund's winter carnival the previous year, was in Spokane for other reasons, saw the announcement of the jumping exhibition and spontaneously went out to Moran to join in. Engen's presence gave the exhibition two star jumpers and a type of friendly competition that added an edge to the event. Both jumpers cleared over 100 feet to thrill the crowd, said to be about 100.²⁹³ As an added treat, Engen and Larsen jumped together, clearing 80 feet as a team, adding a very popular desert to the day's main course. Olaus regarded the event as a notable success. He planned a follow up, but this time an actual tournament rather than an exhibition.

A ski club was organized, with, of course, Olaus Jeldness as president.²⁹⁴ The club worked to improve the jump and the hill²⁹⁵ and the tournament was announced for the following weekend, including both ski

^{PP} Engwald Engen was another Norwegian-immigrant skier. He arrived in the United States in 1903 and in Grand Forks, British Columbia, in 1907, settling in the mountain-top, mining town, Phoenix, where he became the star of the skiing community and where he was living when he visited Spokane in 1913. Engen dominated skiing at the Rosslund winter carnival for several years. In 1917, when the mines of Phoenix were giving out, he moved to Princeton and then to Penticton, developing skiing in both places. Along with another outstanding Norwegian skier, Nels Nelson of Revelstoke, he also promoted skiing in the West Kootenays in the early 1930s. Engen died in Penticton in 1943.

jumping and ski running down Silver Hill. Both Larsen and Engen were present. Three special trains ran out from Spokane and the reported attendance swelled to "fully 500 people."²⁹⁶ This, however, was probably an exaggeration as only 382 train tickets were purchased -- still a notable crowd.²⁹⁷ Olaus was delighted, predicting "some great ski jumping and ski running."

Unfortunately, while conditions for the jumping exhibition had been perfect, by late January melting had set in. Despite all of the work that had been done, the hill was not in good condition for the tournament. To add to Olaus' woes, Engen sprained his ankle in practice -- but he jumped anyway. On the first jump the two stars tied, each clearing 78 feet. On a tie breaker, Larsen out jumped Engen, 81 feet to 78 feet, which must have thrilled Spokaners, who were encouraged to regard Larsen as one of their own. Of course, if there was a Jeldness sponsored jumping tournament, there had to be a championship. Larsen was declared the first "Champion of the Inland Empire" and was awarded a trophy that had been donated for the occasion.²⁹⁸

Another exhibition was announced for the following Sunday. More work was undertaken on the hill, smoothing the landing and lengthening the run-in by moving the jump down the hill, giving the jumpers more speed as they approached the jump, thus permitting longer jumps.²⁹⁹ Olaus confidently predicted jumps in excess of 100 feet. He also announced a mass ski race (50 entrants were anticipated) down the mountain in which he and Mr. Browne would participate "and you can say for us that we won't be the last to finish."³⁰⁰ Engen had returned to his home at Phoenix, but Larson was on hand along with another well-known jumper from Wallace, Idaho, and several locals. Again, there were special trains from Spokane, carrying about 300 spectators. Larsen won, but with a strong wind in his face, despite six attempts, he could not exceed 80 feet.³⁰¹ He also won the downhill race, but whether Olaus and Browne actually skied in the race was not reported.

Larsen went to Rosslund for the 1913 carnival, but did not bring back the Jeldness trophy. Instead of entering the amateur Canadian championship jumping competition, he was seduced by the money and entered the professional jump. That Olaus' protégé entered the professional competition is paradoxical, given Olaus' opposition to professionalism in the sport and the purpose of the preparation and the trip to Rosslund, i.e., to win the Jeldness trophy. Larsen won the first prize of \$50 with a leap of 90 feet -- but then, he was the only contestant. He also entered the downhill race, and came second -- but then, there were only two contestants. In a sense it was a successful visit, but a hollow one -- what must have been an unrewarding experience for a competitive athlete, even though he collected what was, for the day, a substantial cash prize. Olaus' ambition was not achieved; his trophy was not brought to Spokane. Although he continued to live in Spokane, Larsen did not return to compete at the Rosslund carnival.

Olaus sponsored a second exhibition of jumping two years later, in early February, 1915, at the same spot. Conditions were good and jumps of up to 109 feet were made. Again, Larsen was proclaimed "Champion the Inland Empire," although he did not make the longest jump of the day. He won on form.

However, Olaus must have been disappointed at the turnout. The crowd was estimated at only 75 people. This seems to have been the end of Olaus Jeldness' career as skiing entrepreneur in Spokane.

It is impossible to know what effect Olaus' essays, exhibitions and tournaments had on the subsequent development of skiing in Spokane, but, undoubtedly partly because of his efforts, many people were attracted to the sport, both as participants and as spectators. They continued to ski on Silver Hill or nearby places in the hills southeast Spokane until 1932.³⁰² That year, following poor snow conditions for a winter carnival at a small ski hill outside Freeman, a southeastern suburb of Spokane, the ski club announced that it would not sponsor another winter carnival until they had a better ski hill, in particular a location on Mount Spokane.³⁰³ A lease was arranged and the main site for skiing shifted to the lower reaches of Mount Spokane, north-east of the city, at a site called "Wanderers." A sizable log cabin was built, ski runs were cleared and the all important jump was built.³⁰⁴ By then there was a sizable cadre of skiers in the area. Olaus was well into his 70s, probably happy to have passed the organizational role on to a new generation, but still active and a member of the ski club. He attended the annual meeting and banquet in March, 1932, and proposed a toast.³⁰⁵ Sam Wormington speculated that few, if any, of the attendees knew who Olaus Jeldness was or of his role in the encouragement of skiing in Spokane in earlier days.³⁰⁶ I hope Sam was wrong.

In 1932 an annual jumping tournament was announced at the Wanderers hill. The age of widespread automobile ownership had arrived and publicity for the first tournament in January, 1933 included directions for driving and parking (at the golf course at the base of the hill). Despite the preparatory work, there was a massive traffic jam when an estimated 22,000 people attended, mostly by automobile.³⁰⁷ Olaus would have been astounded at the number, but delighted (I am sure he was one of them). Although Olaus does not seem to have been involved as an official or organizer, the role of old timers and the connection to Rossland-Trail were not completely forgotten. For the second tournament in 1934, Engwald Engen was invited as a judge³⁰⁸ and among the participants were Trygve Nora, Bert Bothun and Bob Lynbourne of the Trail-Rossland Ski Club.³⁰⁹ The new hill was not immune to the risks of inadequate snow. To make the tournament possible, a train load of snow was hauled from the Cascade mountains and dumped on the ski hill.³¹⁰ In later years, in search of reliable snow and steeper terrain, skiing moved higher up on the mountain. Mount Spokane developed as one of the major ski areas in the region.

Olaus Jeldness was the father of skiing in Spokane -- as he had been in Rossland -- but, not surprisingly, by the 1930s skiing at Spokane had moved beyond him. By then, Olaus was a respected "old timer", offering toasts at banquets but not competing, grooming putative champions, or organizing skiing and jumping tournaments.

One other skiing honour for Olaus should be noted. In 1915 a world fair was held at San Francisco, the Panama Pacific Exposition, to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal. The Jeldness trophy was part of the display at the Canadian pavilion. Engwald Engen, who then held it, sent the cup to Spokane from Phoenix so that Olaus could "convey the cup personally to the exposition."³¹¹

A CONTEMPLATIVE MAN

Olaus usually identified himself as a mining man and he was also an exceptional athlete. However, he does not fit the stereotypes of either the grizzled prospector, rambling through the hills, almost deliberately ignorant of the wider world, or the gifted athlete who distains intellectual activity in the single minded pursuit of distinction in his sport. Olaus had an active and fertile mind and it was not totally absorbed with mining and making money. He read widely and thought deeply about contemporary social, political and philosophical issues.

On Politics

Local Politics.

Given his involvement with the Scandinavian Brotherhood and his role in the publication of the *American Scandinavian Magazine*, Olaus must have had a deep concern for the well being of his fellow Scandinavian immigrants and the perpetuation of the Nordic culture in his adopted country. Beyond such social issues, as his obituarist noted, he was also a keen student of local, national and international politics. This interest led him, while then working for wages as an ordinary miner, to active participation in Montana's so called "war of the capitals" (1892-94).³¹² The immediate issue was the location of Montana's state capital. Should it be at Helena or at Anaconda? But at root was a struggle for dominance in Montana politics between two mining magnates, W. A. Clark of the Amalgamated Copper Company and Marcus Daly of the Anaconda Mining Company. Helena was the temporary capital, the location favoured by Clark, while Anaconda was the contender, promoted by Daly. The issue was to be settled by popular vote.

In 1894, following his aborted joint venture with Jonathan Bourne in Montana (see above, p. 18), Olaus was unemployed, but eventually got a job as a miner in one of Daly's mines in the Bull River, Montana, camp. It is reported³¹³ that as a Sunday diversion -- an entertainment for the miners -- a friendly debate on the location of the capital was proposed. Someone stepped forward to take the Anaconda side, the location favoured by the miners' employer. Olaus was pressured into taking the side of Helena, the location strenuously opposed by their employer. He was assured that there would be no repercussions because the debate was merely for entertainment. Perhaps it is an indicator of his effectiveness that he was fired anyway. When he was cashing his last pay cheque, the banker, impressed by reports of his performance in the debate, offered him \$6 a day to work for the Helena side in the rest of the campaign. This was almost double what he would have been earning as a miner. Needing the money, Olaus reluctantly agreed and began a speaking tour through the mining camps of Montana. Apparently, he was a very successful speaker and debater, attracting much attention wherever he went. One day, on a train between engagements, he met two wealthy friends who were supporters of the Anaconda side. For some reason they asked him to introduce them as speakers at meeting in the next town. He agreed and gave them enthusiastic introductions. Afterwards, when quizzed about his

willingness to do the introductions for his opponents, Olaus replied simply, "I would do anything for a friend." The friends then offered him \$20 a day if he would switch sides and work for the Anaconda campaign. Olaus refused; he was already committed to the Helena campaign. They then offered him \$20 a day if he would simply "go away. Go out in the hills and prospect. Hide out in the hills until this is over." Again, Olaus refused because "I have a few more speeches to make." In the end, with Olaus' help, the Helena side won -- but Olaus was again unemployed.

How much of this story is true, I don't know -- but there is an afternote of significance to Rossland. Soon after the election, Olaus received an anonymous envelope containing \$200. The source was never revealed, but Olaus strongly suspected that it was his friends on the losing side as a "tribute to his principle of loyalty." It is even more plausible, of course, that it came from the winning side, grateful for his help. In any case, the gift provided the funds that permitted him to re-establish himself in Rossland.

There is also another interesting and revealing after note. In a fascinating letter to Bourne, Olaus described how before this incident he had had great pride in being an American citizen and strongly praised what he called "equal suffrage," -- one man, one vote (no votes for women, of course). However, he was having deep doubts:

*In the last campaign I happened to take an active part in the election of state and county officers as well as on the capital issue and my experience in the fight has caused me to change my views on American citizenship materially. I now doubt if equal suffrage is beneficial for a great people. I have found that the average voter, native or foreign born, is reckless with his right of franchise, it is for sale and I have found that the noble American office seeker is ready to sacrifice self respect, honor and manhood for the sake of obtaining votes. The ancient Greeks and Romans and the Norse Vikings during the Viking age were much manlier than the average American Citizen of today. This is not because the human race is degenerating, I believe otherwise. I believe in the upward and onward march of the race, but the present social system has created conditions which in turn has produced that class of men spoken of above. This system has erected the God of wealth at whose shrine we all worship. The standard by which men are measured today is gold, this standard will in time be changed and men will be measured by their personal worth -- by honor, by goodness, by intellectual attainment and then it will be immeasurably better for the human race. I or you may not see the dawning of this better day, the glories of the golden age may be denied to us, but the time will surely come."*³¹⁴

This thoughtful assessment of the "war of the capitals" and its aftermath reveals a side of Olaus that is not described in the standard literature about him.

Geo-Politics.

There is another example of his thoughtful assessment of political issues. In a letter to Munroe about the Spitsbergen venture he addressed global geo-political issues affecting the island.³¹⁵ Concerned about the political situation in Asia, and particularly relations between Russia and Japan, he predicted that war was inevitable and that the United States could be drawn in. He saw Spitsbergen as a strategic location that would provide Russia with a long desired port on the Atlantic Ocean for naval if not commercial purposes (and, of course, there was the coal) and he strongly advocated American annexation of the island to prevent the Russian advance. War soon erupted between Russia and Japan,

but the United States was not drawn in and Russia did not move to annex Spitsbergen -- but Olaus' scenario was plausible (although Spitsbergen, ice bound through much of the year, would not have been much of a port). In a later interview with the *Spokesman Review*, Olaus reiterated the importance of American annexation of the island and asserted that, based on interviews with Norwegian officials, "The Norwegian ministry would welcome the entrance of Uncle Sam ... for it would relieve Norway of the fear that Russia might snatch Spitzbergen and use it as a seat of hostilities if the long dreaded war between Russia and Norway should break forth."³¹⁶ The American government, however, was of the opinion that Spitsbergen was Russian territory and would not consider annexation.

Of course, Olaus also had another, non-intellectual, interest in American annexation of Spitsbergen -- the protection of the mining company's property rights in the coal fields.

Norwegian Politics.

Norway had long been in a loose federation with Sweden, under the Swedish king. On June 7, 1905, just before Olaus left Norway (June 15)³¹⁷ following the Spitsbergen adventure, an increasingly restive Norwegian parliament declared the union to be dissolved over a contrived constitutional issue. Although there was some threat of war between the two nations, the Norwegian people were elated (they later voted 99.95% in favour of the dissolution in a referendum held at the insistence of the king). Soon after his return to Spokane, the *Spokesman Review* interviewed Olaus about the situation in Norway.³¹⁸ Olaus presented a clear and concise history of Norway-Sweden relations and the reasons for the unilateral dissolution. He concluded that the Norwegian economy had suffered considerably through the dominance of Sweden in the union and offered his support for the Norwegian actions. He doubted that hostilities would occur. The only war-like rumblings were from Swedish aristocrats, mentally living in the deep past of Swedish glories. A democratic Norway would never attack Sweden but would be fully prepared to defend itself. It is a sign of the weight that the newspaper accorded to Olaus' opinions that it printed a long story on the interview.

Olaus made another, somewhat surprising, foray into Norwegian affairs. On December 14, 1911, an expedition led by the Norwegian explorer and adventurer, Roald Amundsen, reached the South Pole. The expedition had overspent its resources. An international plan was developed to raise funds to cover the financial shortfall. Rather than contributing to the fund, Olaus was incensed. From the tone of his letter to the *Spokesman Review*, it is clear that he regarded the international fund raising as a major slight on Norwegian national honour. The Norwegian parliament could and would deal with the problem of the deficit without outside intervention, thank you.

On Religion

Olaus Jeldness was not a religious man -- at least in the conventional sense of one who adhered to a Christian (or any other) faith that maintained, as a matter of doctrine, belief in a supreme deity. Nonetheless, as one of his great grandchildren insisted, Olaus was deeply spiritual. He and Sigrid

belonged to a church, the First Unitarian Association of Spokane, but this was a church in the Unitarian-Universalist tradition -- a place of worship based on the principle that

*... each person is free to search for his or her own personal truth on issues, such as the existence, nature, and meaning of life, deities, creation, and afterlife ...(and congregants could)... come from any religious background, and hold beliefs and adhere to morals from a variety of cultures or religions.*³¹⁹

In this vein, the program for the Sunday services at the Spokane church that the Jeldnesses attended announced

*You bring your own creed when you come into this service. Sincerity, Generosity, Sympathy, Tolerance and Usefulness. These we hold to be the real values.*³²⁰

These were also the values that Olaus Jeldness espoused.

Olaus was an acknowledged agnostic⁹⁹ -- perhaps an atheist -- who was deeply moved by the spiritual essence of the great outdoors and the forces of nature and a true believer in the perfectibility of man, not through religious rituals, prayer, bible study, or Calvinist lifestyle proscriptions, but through the application of science, reason and compassion. He was a committed opponent of all forms of unfounded superstition, including what he saw as the institutionalized myths propagated by churches. He saw man evolving erratically from rude beginnings, dominated by witchcraft, superstition and religious institutions and doctrines, through a phase in which science developed and reason led many to challenge established religious beliefs and institutions that were rooted in faith, toward a "golden age" in which life's decisions would be based on compassion, science and reason, with "honour", "goodness" and "intellectual attainment" widely celebrated as the true measures of "manhood." This social evolution was well underway, but the "golden age" was far from achieved. Christian churches still had a far too pervasive an influence on, and in some cases control over, attitudes and behaviour.

Olaus' beliefs reflected the philosophy of what was called the "free thought" movement. If Olaus had a personal creed to bring to the Unitarian church service it was that of the "free thinker," a refusal to be bound by any doctrine that did not emanate from science, reason and compassion. Where did this life-view come from?

A.J. Pritchard and the Liberal League

I don't know when or where Olaus encountered and became captivated by the philosophy of free thought. The earliest direct manifestation of his convictions that I have found is in his testament, "My Sincere Thoughts," written to his sister from Portland in 1888 (see below, p. 67). By that time he had

⁹⁹ In his "open letter" to his sister, Randi, Olaus stated:

When I mention God or Gods in this letter, I do not mean those described in the Bible or other mythologies. Whether there is a being under whose wings all worlds float, and whether all thoughts are glittering stars is to me totally unknown and I simply say that I do not know [Jeldness, O. (1888a). An open letter to Mrs. Randi Husbye from her brother Olaus Jeldness. Jeldness Papers, Morgan Family Collection (Diana Morgan). Roberts Creek, B. C.

However, the testament is in substance a denial of the existence of such a god.

read widely, his thought was well developed and he had an extensive library on the subject. Clearly, his initial exposure must have been some years earlier.

I have no evidence of a free thought movement in the mining camps of Colorado, but there was one in the mining camps of the Coeur d'Alene region in northern Idaho, from 1884-1886. The Coeur d'Alene gold/silver rush was set off by A.J. Pritchard, who had come to the area with the intention of establishing a religious community based on free thought principles³²¹ when he stumbled on a promising outcropping of silver-lead ore. He soon discovered a deposit of free gold, filled a pouch with the metal and visited Spokane. Word of his find leaked out, setting off a rush to the area.³²² The rush of prospectors and their effects on the area must have derailed his plans for a quiet religious colony, but Pritchard remained a strong presence in the area for several years. It is reported that Olaus went to Murray, Idaho, in 1884 and it is highly likely that he met Pritchard at that time. I doubt that Olaus had any intention of joining a religious community, but he may well have absorbed the principles espoused by Pritchard.

Pritchard was a member of the Liberal League of America, an organization of free thinkers who, among other things, opposed the influence of organized religion, advocated revision of the American constitution to strengthen the separation of church and state and vigorously supported taxation of church property.³²³ These were all themes espoused by Olaus Jeldness. I don't know if Olaus joined the Liberal League, but some years later he was a member of the Oregon branch of the Secular Union, an organization that evolved from the disintegration of the Liberal League (see below, p. 67). That it was Pritchard who converted Olaus is speculative, but it is highly likely that he got caught up in the free thought movement about the time that he was in Idaho.

Ingersoll and the Principle of "Free Thought."

The free thought movement had a long history,³²⁴ but by the time that Olaus was settling in Spokane it was drawing inspiration from the speeches and writings of Robert C. Ingersoll and was propagated nationally through the magazine *The Truth Seeker* and a collection of secular unions, national and local, and some "secular churches." Olaus was effectively a disciple of Ingersoll, a long-time subscriber and "occasional correspondent" of the *Truth Seeker* and a member of a church that some would have regarded as "secular."³²⁵

Ingersoll was raised in a strict Puritanical family (his father was a Congregational minister and sometime revivalist), so he was steeped in Calvinist principles, rituals and biblical interpretations.³²⁶ When he finished school, he had a brief stint as a teacher before he qualified as a lawyer. A very distinguished career in the law followed, involving roles as corporate, prosecution and defence attorneys and including some complex, highly controversial and important cases that set legal precedents. During the war between the states, he raised a cavalry regiment (the 11th Illinois) which he led with distinction at the

³²¹ The material in this and the following two paragraphs is derived primarily from [Larson, O. (1962; 1993). *American Infidel: Robert G. Ingersoll*. New York, Freedom From Religion Foundation.]. See also [Greeley, R. E. (1983). *The Best of Robert Ingersoll, Immortal Infidel*. New York, Prometheus Books.].

battle of Shiloh and other engagements before he was captured by the South and forced out of the war "on parole." His military rank was colonel and he carried the title Colonel Ingersoll throughout the rest of his life, although in the newspapers he was often referred to simply as Bob Ingersoll. In the postwar years he experienced the frustrations of party politics on the national level, supporting his brother (a congressman) and seeking, but not winning, high office for himself. Concluding that for him high political office was not to be, he fell back on his remarkable oratorical skills to become involved in the political process at a different level. A dedicated Republican -- a fervent adherent to the party of Lincoln, "the crusading instrument of human liberty"³²⁶ -- he was much in demand as the lead speaker at nominating conventions, other political events and on the campaign trail. His support was at times seen as critical to the election of candidates at the highest level in the country and as a result he became a person of considerable influence in the party and the nation and a confidante of Republican presidents. He was originally based in Illinois, but in 1878 he moved to Washington to be near the centre of political power. Later, as his political influence waned, his legal business drew him to New York. He mixed with -- in some cases, like Andrew Carnegie, was close friends with -- the financial, industrial, artistic and cultural elites. Robert Ingersoll was a force to contend with in national affairs.

Along the way, as he developed his legal and political careers, Robert Ingersoll abandoned the church of his upbringing and rejected the teachings of fundamentalist Christianity and the harsh discipline that his father, among others, used to induce conformity with its teachings. He used his remarkable talent as an orator not only to political effect but also to supplement his earnings from his legal practice to make a much more than comfortable living. His lectures -- better, his orations -- became a popular form of public entertainment. They included a wide variety of topics, literary, cultural and historical, but, paradoxically, in a staunchly Christian society, the main drawing card was his patented attack on religious institutions, doctrines and practices. He denounced the teachings of all religions as "myths" and "superstitions" and commended the constitution of the United States because, among other things, it created a secular society and forbade the establishment of any church as the state church, with special powers over citizens. He had particular disdain for the social evils perpetuated by churches and clergy through all history, but, although he was anti-religious -- the "great infidel" to editorial writers -- he did not promote immorality. Rather, he prized honesty, had a deep sense of right and wrong and was strongly opposed to doctrines such as those of free love exponents and to the circulation of obscene materials (but was bitterly opposed to any concept of obscenity that included blasphemy against church doctrines). He opposed drunkenness, but not the moderate consumption of alcohol, and was not opposed to gambling, at least in the form of friendly card games, as a form of recreation. Socialism and anarchism were anathema. His family life was exemplary and he was a strong advocate of what today we might call "family values," provided that concept is stripped of its current political and religious overtones. To Ingersoll, "the real temple is home," with a family that is "happy, gracious and cultured."³²⁷ In his family life, he practiced what he preached.

It was churches and their powers that were his bête noire. To Ingersoll, churches and religions should have no coercive power over people:

*Religion should have the influence upon mankind that its goodness, that its morality, its justice, its charity, its reason, and its argument give it, and no more.*³²⁸

Ingersoll denied the primacy of Christianity among the world's religions, arguing that all Christian tenets had cognates or precursors among other belief systems. He severely criticized the rigid doctrines of many fundamentalist sects and championed social causes like the taxation of church property, equality of races, strictly secular education, with religion in all forms banned from the classroom, the rights of women and kinder, gentler styles of raising children. Ingersoll was a forceful and persuasive orator and a charismatic figure. Olaus Jeldness was captivated.

Did Olaus Jeldness actually hear the great man speak? I don't know, but it is possible. Ingersoll lectured primarily in the cities of the east and mid-west, but he also made trips to the west. On his first western jaunt, in 1877, he visited mining areas in Nevada en route to California. He stopped in Reno and went down a mine shaft in Virginia City, but he does not seem to have lectured in either place.³²⁹ However, he did lecture in Salt Lake City in mid-July, 1877. At this time Olaus was an ordinary miner, learning his trade, high in the mountains of south-western Colorado. Although Salt Lake City was the commercial and financial centre for mining in nearby states, including parts of Colorado, it seems unlikely that Olaus was in Salt Lake City to hear Ingersoll speak on "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child." On a second western trip, in August of 1884, Ingersoll gave three stirring lectures in Portland, the first to an audience of 600-700, the second to about 1200, and the third to a still larger assembly.³³⁰ ^{ss} Was Olaus one of the multitude? He was in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, in 1884, but I know little about the details of his life at this time. He could have visited Portland, which, with its cluster of mining financiers, later became one of his regular stops. He may well have been there at the time of Ingersoll lectures, but again, I have no evidence. In any case, although Olaus may not have heard him speak, Ingersoll's lectures were printed and widely circulated. If Olaus did not hear Ingersoll -- or even if he did -- he certainly had some of the great orator's works in his personal library. Ingersoll died in July, 1899, as Olaus was settling into his new home in Spokane.

One way or the other, Olaus was a convert to Ingersoll's Free Thought movement. What is the evidence?

^{ss} On the same trip, despite attempts to prevent the lecture by having the fire commissioner declare the building unsafe for such a crowd unless there was another door (some members of the audience responded by taking axes to the wall and creating the necessary opening), Ingersoll lectured in Victoria in a rare visit to Canada [Larson, O. (1962; 1993). American Infidel: Robert G. Ingersoll. New York, Freedom From Religion Foundation.]

Olaus' Religious Testament

That Olaus had become a dedicated convert to the Ingersoll cause by 1888 was made clear when he set out his religious beliefs in an "open letter" to his sister Randi Husby, then in Norway.^t Apparently, Olaus' letter was a response to her letters to him, as he wandered through the tough mining camps and frontier settlements on a distant continent, with all their sinful temptations. She implored him to accept the doctrines of fundamentalist Christianity and the dictates of "Christianity's Lawmakers" as his guide through the wilderness.³³¹ Olaus' letter, effectively his religious testament, is a remarkable document. It does not reveal original insights into the religious issues of the day, but it shows that Olaus was captivated by the philosophy of Ingersoll. The arguments in the letter are the arguments of Ingersoll. However, the testament also reflects intense reading and thinking on a subject far from his immediate concerns about assays, prospect development and survival in the wilderness. Like his hero, Olaus denied the originality of Christianity, portrayed the doctrines of the churches as unsubstantiated, non-scientific and unreasonable myths and superstitions. Churches practiced intellectual slavery; "(t)hey cannot understand the higher theory of intellectual freedom." To Olaus it was it was traits like compassion, honesty and honour that were the measure of a man, and he tried to follow the path that these virtues dictated. Olaus' testament echoes most of the major themes in Ingersoll's lectures and writings.

Oregon State Secular Union.

A year later, in 1889, an organization intended to propagate ideas in the spirit of Ingersoll, the Oregon State Secular Union, held its founding convention in Silverton, Oregon, just east of Salem. Olaus, whose residence was given as Portland, was there and must have played an important role in the convention because he was appointed to the Finance Committee of the organization.³³² The next year, he also attended the second convention held in Portland. The newspaper did not list committee members, but the *Oregonian* reported that "Olaus Geldness" (sic) was one of the 140 delegates who were designated "vice presidents" of the Union (any supporter who wanted an office in the Union was made a vice president).^{333 uu} In his 1894 history of Free Thought in America, Samuel Putnam, one of the gurus of the

^t Olaus' "open letter" was written in Norwegian, but I don't know if it was in fact published in Norway or simply sent to his sister. It was translated into English much later (1986), probably at the instigation of Randi's grandson, Terje Husby, who did genealogical work on the Gjeldnes family. An English typescript of the letter is in the Morgan family papers.

^{uu} There is no evidence that Olaus had a continuing attachment to the Oregon State Secular Union. Indeed, I doubt that such an inchoate, fractious organization would have been to his taste. The Union was riven by divergent ideologies, ranging from run-of-the-mill agnosticism, through atheism, spiritualism, advocacy of free love to anarchism. As one historian noted, because free thought lacked a basic unifying philosophy, an *organization* of free thinkers was in essence an oxymoron [Brandt, P. (1986). "Organized free thought in Oregon: The Oregon State Secular Union." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 87(Summer, 1986): 167-204. The Oregon Union split into factions, with the associated struggle for control. It established the "Liberal University of Oregon" in Silverton in 1897. The university operated with a small faculty and student body for several years, but fund raising was difficult. It closed its doors in 1902 and moved to Kansas City, but did not reopen [ibid.]. There was also a Secular Union in Washington State, centred in Walla Walla and Seattle [Putnam, S. P. (1894). *400 Years of Free Thought*. New York, The Truth Seeker Company], but there is no evidence that Olaus belonged to it.

movement and a speaker at the convention, included an incomplete list of "vice presidents and supporters." "O Jeldness" (correctly spelled) was among the luminaries.³³⁴ He must have been a participant of some standing.

Jeldness and Free Thought.

Olaus Jeldness was not just a passive supporter of the Free Thought movement. He was an aggressive defender of the cause, of its intellectual master and of its issues.

When, in a 1922 reminiscence, a confidant of many Republican presidents asserted that at the 1888 Republican nominating convention, Ingersoll had nominated Walter Q. Gresham for president and had been booed and hissed off the stage because of his disparaging comments about Christianity, Olaus erupted in defence of his hero. In a letter to the Portland *Oregonian*, reprinted in the *Truth Seeker*, he used a contemporary newspaper report to show that Ingersoll had not nominated Gresham at that convention, had not disparaged Christianity on that occasion and instead of being booed and hissed, when he spoke to the convention, he was received with rousing ovations.³³⁵

Olaus was only partially correct. Ingersoll did not nominate Gresham, but he had been invited to speak at the convention. When the convention unexpectedly adjourned one day, he was asked to speak at an informal session involving members from various candidates' camps, subject to the condition that he not offer support for any particular candidate. As Jeldness said, Ingersoll's speech was inspirational, did not disparage Christianity and was received with wild enthusiasm -- until he slipped and offered words in support of Gresham. Having violated the understanding, he was hissed and booed until he retired from the platform.³³⁶ Although the original reminiscence was faulty, Olaus' reprise of the event was selective.

Billy Sunday, the wildly popular but controversial revivalist, held a camp meeting in an enormous tent in Spokane in late 1908 and early 1909, sponsored by a local association of protestant ministers. Despite the bitterly cold weather it was highly successful, not only in terms of attendance and funds raised through donations, but also in terms of the number of "converts" to born again Christianity. Sunday's rambling sermons were laced with earthy language -- perhaps one of the keys to his rousing success among ordinary working people. In July, 1912, incited by an editorial in the *Spokesman Review*, Olaus fulminated against revivalists in general, and Billy Sunday in particular, and against the hypocrisy of the Spokane ministers "who applauded to the echo the language and sentiments expressed, although not one of them would have dared to repeat such language and sentiments from the pulpit." On Billy Sunday, Olaus concluded that his "discourses were not only indecent in thought and language, but were false in philosophy, false in morality and false historically."³³⁷ Ingersoll would have agreed whole heartedly.

In 1910, the ministers of most of Spokane's churches campaigned successfully to have the magazine *The Truth Seeker* banned from the public library because of its "tone." Olaus denounced their hypocrisy. He noted that the ministers had recently sponsored Billy Sunday's camp meeting in Spokane and had

enthusiastically sat through his obscenity laden sermons, without complaint. He challenged "the whole ministerial association, together with the library board, to a comparison of "tone" and "literary excellence or general decency" in Billy Sunday's sermons (of which he had a file) and in the *Truth Seeker*. Of course, the deeper issue was the magazine's "column of the clergy's misdeeds as chronicled by the daily press of the country."³³⁸ That he maintained a file of Billy Sunday's sermons at this stage in his life suggests that he had an obsession with the failings of organized religion.

Like Ingersoll, Olaus was in favour of taxation of all church property. In a letter to the *Spokesman Review* he invoked the authority of President Grant concerning the vast accumulation of property held by churches tax free.³³⁹ Without citing a source, he reported estimates of the value of tax-exempt church property at \$5 billion, and concluded "The accumulation of these enormous holdings by exempt religious bodies constitutes an acute problem and the churches if patriotic should come forward and pay taxes." One particular problem could be solved -- the funding of bonuses promised to World War I soldiers, but by then not paid.

When a leading clergyman, William Hicks, Dean of the Episcopalian cathedral in Spokane, announced his resignation with the intention of studying Sociology and pursuing "useful service,"³⁴⁰ Olaus wrote a letter, almost gloating in tone, to the *Spokesman Review* expressing his pleasure that such an eminent exponent of the "medieval creed" should "see the light" and adopt an Ingersollian approach to life: "This is the only life we are living and life eternal is here and now." Olaus concluded that "It is ... gratifying to those who gained the heights of mental freedom and left superstition below, through the influence of this incomparable man (Robert Ingersoll), to see Christian ministers with large numbers of their congregation go over to his camp."³⁴¹

In 1912 the pastor of the Presbyterian church in Spokane delivered a sermon to boys and girls of the congregation on "Superstition," which he criticized severely, concluding that "Superstition has no effect on God's plan. His plan will be carried out and in every instance it is for the best."³⁴² The *Spokesman Review* picked up the theme in an editorial that distinguished between "belief" and "faith" (belief is the substance of the shield; faith is the belief reasoned out") on the one hand and "superstition" ("excess of unreasoning and unintelligent belief") on the other.³⁴³ Olaus responded with a letter in the Ingersoll tradition.

(A)s an example of the power and value of faith you mention ... Columbus discovering America. You neglected to mention, however, that those who advised him not to go also had faith -- faith in the correctness of a certain holy book which states that the earth is flat. Which was faith and which was superstition in this case?³⁴⁴

In a subsequent letter,³⁴⁵ L. Anderson disputed Olaus' statement that the bible asserts that the world is flat (the Bible contains "nothing that could by the most exquisite methods be tortured into even squinting in that direction") and challenged him to produce "authority ... beyond dispute" that Columbus ever said anything like what Olaus attributed to him, i.e., that

I have seen the shadow of the earth upon the moon and I have more faith in a shadow even

than I have in your book.

In response Olaus cited three passages in the bible that could be interpreted as implying that the world is flat and, without a specific reference, enjoined Anderson to read a scholarly biography of Columbus.³⁴⁶ If nothing else, the interchange with his critic suggested that Olaus had more than a passing knowledge of the bible. He ended his second letter with the resounding rhetorical question,

Is it not a fact that the multitudinous errors of this book have retarded human civilization at least a thousand years?³⁴⁷

Pure Ingersoll!

At Olaus' funeral, in the place of readings from the scriptures they had readings from the works of Robert Ingersoll.³⁴⁸

This is not to argue that Olaus Jeldness was a profound moral philosopher. However, he was deeply aware of the world around him, of the social forces regulating the lives of ordinary people and of the influence of organized religion on people's beliefs and behaviour. His understanding went well beyond what we might expect of a practical mining man, often confined to the solitary life of an isolated cabin on the mine site. He was mining man and a skier, but also an intelligent man who read widely and thought deeply. He was not wholly absorbed in mining, finance and skiing.

On The Environment

Olaus Jeldness was a mining man and we do not associate mining men with serious concern for the environment. True to form, I have found no evidence of Olaus expressing concern about the degrading effects of mining on the landscape and on water supplies. However, he was also an ardent outdoorsman, with a deep love for the wilderness experience. It would be surprising if he was not concerned about environmental degradation in a broader context -- perhaps offering support for Theodore Roosevelt's initiatives to establish protected areas as national parks, or Gifford Pinchot's early crusade for forest conservation.³⁴⁹ Surprisingly, I have found no evidence of him supporting either of these contemporary national campaigns -- but I have found two examples of Olaus addressing environmental issues, one very personal and local and the other on a grander scale, in a sense complementary to Pinchot's efforts.

The parochial issue concerned the development of the river bank in Spokane. Olaus was featured in a story under a bold headline in a Spokane newspaper when he joined a group promoting development of parkways along both banks of the Spokane River.³⁵⁰ He was quoted as objecting vehemently to the dumping of gravel in a way that would despoil the river bank and decrying the potential loss of "the most magnificent section of the river with its cataracts and falls ... to commercial unsightliness." The issue was narrow, but locally important. Quite apart from the substance of the story, it again highlights Olaus stature in the Spokane community. That he joined the Spokane Parkway Association was thought to be of sufficient importance to merit not only a report in the newspaper, but also a bold headline.

The grander issue concerned the conservation of old growth forests. Reacting to a story in the *Spokesman Review* that compared tall Redwood trees and tall Douglas fir trees, in a letter to the editor Olaus described an incident that he had witnessed the felling of a 425 foot fir tree in northwest Oregon. He was appalled. Similarly, reflecting on the large stumps in Stanley Park in Vancouver, British Columbia, he expressed deep regret that the immense trees that once stood on them had been destroyed years previously.

It is deplorable that the destruction of these wonderful forests goes merrily on and without much profit to the owners and against public opinion. There are still groves of these giant trees left along the coast. They are the largest and finest trees growing on this globe. It has taken nature centuries to produce them. To destroy them is a crime. They should be preserved for future generations to admire and enjoy.³⁵¹

Today's conservationists would add concerns about the habitat that the old growth forests provide for various animal species and a number of other issues, but would otherwise cheer Olaus' epistle.

In 1932 he was one of three members of a committee of the Northwest Miners Association charged with presenting to Congress "the association's position on government work this summer in western forests."³⁵² Unfortunately, the nature of "the association's position" was not revealed in the story. I don't know if it was consistent with conservation measures or not.

Clearly, Olaus was capable of concern for the natural environment. However, there is no evidence that he was a budding environmentalist. He was, after all, fundamentally a "mining man".

OLAUS DEATH AND ESTATE

Olaus Jeldness died in a Spokane hospital on April 24, 1935, a victim of double pneumonia in the age before penicillin. He had experienced a severe financial setback in the depression of the 1930s such that when he died, although he was not impoverished, he was no longer a wealthy man. At probate, in 1937, his estate was valued at \$12,093 (see Annex 1, p. 93), about \$186,000 in today's dollars. His main assets were his house (\$3,500 or 27% of the gross assets), a life insurance policy (\$1,000 or 8%) and shares in four mining companies (\$8,362 or 64%). The portfolio also included shares in 14 other mining or petroleum companies that were assessed to be either worthless or of nominal value, some of which he had been active in management (see Annex 2, p. 95). It is possible that he received some of these shares in payment for services rendered to the companies, rather than having purchased them as investments. Most were small, Spokane-based companies whose shares may have been almost unmarketable from the outset. There were also debts to be paid, including the electricity bill discussed earlier (see above, p. 54). Thus, his asset portfolio reflected the essence of the man himself -- recklessly speculative, singularly focused on mining. He had not diversified his portfolio beyond mining, and within the mining sector he tended to hold securities of companies with a Spokane connection. He did not hold shares or bonds of the large mining enterprises of the day and did not attempt to protect his wealth by holding some portion in so-called gilt-edged securities. Apart from a life insurance policy, his

portfolio did not contain a safe refuge against the sort of market collapse that occurred in the 1930s. He pursued wealth assiduously and honestly (see Annex 3, p. 97), but recklessly, and ended his quest at a low point on his speculative roller coaster.

Olaus' will had another interesting feature. He left specific financial legacies to his sister-in-law, Marie Hendrickson (\$3,000), and to his grandson, Joseph Morgan (\$1,000 in addition to his skiing trophies and medals). The balance of the estate was left to his surviving daughter, Agnes Hersloff. However, there was a condition on the bequest to Marie Hendrickson:

It is my desire that my Executors shall not sell any of my property summarily or at forced sale in order to meet this bequest, but that it shall be paid only as and when in the judgment of said Executors they may reasonably do so without sacrificing my estate.

Interestingly, the same condition was not applied to the smaller legacy to Joseph Morgan, who, in 1937, was the son of a prosperous logging equipment merchant in Vancouver and a student at the University of Washington. Olaus executed his will in 1931, with the depression well underway and deepening. Real estate values and share prices were tumbling. Clearly, he was concerned that there might be no recovery of the economy in his remaining lifetime -- and he dearly loved his wonderful house and wanted to ensure that his surviving daughter had a place to live.

The valuation placed on the real estate must have been based on a professional assessment, but in the economic conditions of 1937, real estate markets were depressed. I don't know if the executors had tested the market, but it would not be surprising if the property could only be sold well below the assessed value. It is also likely that the values ascribed to the shares in mining companies, while based on market quotations, were in a sense purely nominal. If the shares were actually sold they might bring much less than their assessed value. Clearly, the rather vague condition created a serious problem for the executors (who were also the beneficiaries). Of course, we do not know what kind of deliberations went on among them, but in the end both Marie Hendrickson and Joseph formally waived their rights to their financial legacies. Apart from the skiing medals and trophy, the entire estate was settled on the daughter, Agnes Hersloff. The inheritance did not provide her with a comfortable existence for the remainder of her life. As noted below (p. 85), she went to work and rented out apartments in the Second Avenue house. It remained the Jeldness house, but its character had changed.

THE JELDNESS FAMILY

Olaus' Own Family

Sigrid.

Olaus married Sigrid Hendricksen (variously spelled Hendriksen or Hendrickson) in Spokane on June 12, 1890.³⁵³ I have discovered very little about Sigrid. She was born and raised in the same region of Norway as Olaus and in 1880³⁵⁴ or 1882³⁵⁵ her father, Martinus (Martinus, Martinis) Hendricksen,³⁵⁶ brought his family to America settling in the northwestern corner of the lower peninsula of Michigan, in or

near the town of Frankfort. I have not found the Hendricksens in any of the available censuses of the United States,^v but there is other evidence that they were in Michigan in the 1890s and later. When Olaus first went to Rosslund, in 1894, Sigrid and their baby did not accompany him but went "east" where they stayed with relatives for 10 months (see above, p. 24). Where in the east was not specified, but in 1917 Sigrid went to New York to visit with her daughter, Agnes, while her sister, Marie, went to Frankfort, Michigan, to visit relatives.³⁵⁷ Sigrid also visited in Michigan on her way home. When Sigrid died, it was noted that she had "her mother, a brother and two sisters in Michigan."³⁵⁸ These were undoubtedly the relatives visited in 1917. A picture of Sigrid and Marie now in the Morgan family papers was taken in a photographer's studio in Frankfort. It seems likely that it was taken on the 1917 trip. It is also worth noting that there was also a Jeldness family (actually Gjeldnes), on a farm at Sutton Bay, in the same general part of Michigan as Frankfort.³⁵⁹ I have no evidence, but they were probably relatives of Olaus. Given the tendency of national groups to meet and support each other, it seems likely that the Hendrickson's and Gjeldneses were acquainted.

I don't know where Olaus and Sigrid met. It may have been in Norway, as children, or perhaps in Michigan if Olaus visited the Gjeldnes family there. In any case, Olaus and Sigrid met somewhere, courted, got married in Spokane in 1890 and had three daughters:

Randie, born in Spokane on May 29, 1891;
Agnes Marie, born in Rosslund on May 18, 1896;
Margaret, born in Spokane on September 20, 1899.

The children attended schools in Spokane and were very active and popular socially.

The Jeldness house on West Second Avenue was in Browne's Addition, one of Spokane premier neighbourhoods (see above, p. 55). Sigrid's much younger (by 15 years), unmarried sister, Marie Hendricksen, lived with them until long after Olaus' death, providing company and help for Sigrid when Olaus was away on his many (often extended) mining trips and later for Agnes when she was otherwise alone in the house. The Jeldnesses were Unitarians and so did not belong to any of the major churches in Spokane with their large congregations and extensive social networks. Nonetheless, it is clear that they were well known, well connected, very popular and judging from reports in the "Society" columns of the Spokane Chronicle, socially active. The women of the family were invited to many events and the Jeldness house was often a centre of social activity, particularly, but not exclusively, involving the girls.

In addition to the house in Browne's addition the Jeldnesses may have had another residential property in another section of Spokane, the Altamont district.³⁶⁰ For how long they held it, I don't know, but it was not among Olaus' assets when the will was probated. They also had a summer cottage on

^v There was another Hendricksen family, that of Thomas Hendricksen, living at Au Sable, on the other side of the Michigan peninsula from Frankfort [United States (1900b). "Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Denver City, Colorado". Retrieved October 2, 2012, 2012, from <http://search.ancestry.com/>]. I don't know if they were related to Marie and Sigrid, but it is possible. Thomas Hendrickson immigrated from Norway in 1871, eleven years before Martinus. Perhaps they were the original Hendricksens in Michigan and their success induced the others to follow.

Upper Twin Lake, about 70 miles west of Spokane, in the vicinity of Davenport. I don't know when they acquired the cottage or how long they owned it, but I have found two reports of the family spending the summer there, one in 1910³⁶¹ and the other in 1923.³⁶² I suspect that sometime after that, when the children were no longer at home, the cottage was sold. It was not among the assets when Olaus' will was probated.

Timber and Stone Land. Sigrid was involved in another, somewhat mysterious, property transaction. She and Marie purchased adjacent quarter sections (160 acres) of unsettled federal government land on the east side of Baker County, Oregon. Baker County is in the northeast corner of Oregon -- and a long way from Spokane. The land, called "timber and stone land," sold for \$2.50 per acre, so Marie and Sigrid would each have paid \$400 (plus filing fees), in cash, a not insignificant sum at the time. Records of the Bureau of Land Management of the US Department of the Interior state that title to the land was granted on March 19, 1906.³⁶³ However, effective ownership must have occurred somewhat earlier, because Sigrid and Marie are listed in the *Directory of Baker City* as tax payers in Baker County in 1905,³⁶⁴ although they did not appear in the Directory as residents of the county. A 1903 letter from the Department of the Interior to Sigrid's sister, Marie, in the possession of the Morgan family, suggests that the process of acquiring the land began even earlier, in 1903.^{ww} Adding to the mystery is that two other Jeldnesses also purchased 160 acres of timber and stone land in the same township but a different section -- Ildri, the wife of Olaus' oldest brother, Halvor, and Ole, another of his brothers.^{365 xx} Why would three women and Ole purchase land in a relatively remote location that was not valuable for recreational, agricultural or mining purposes? This was not agricultural land, so they were not planning to set up a Jeldness farming colony in Baker County.

The Timber and Stone Land Act was very controversial. It was part of a package of mid-nineteenth century legislation designed to dispose of federal lands in the west in a way that would promote settlement and prevent the land from falling into the hands of a few wealthy individuals or large corporations. Most famous was the Homestead Act for the disposal of agricultural land, the centerpiece of the package. The Timber and Stone Act complemented the Homestead Act, dealing with the disposal of land that was not valuable in its present state (i.e., with the forest cover) for agriculture or for mining, but was valuable for harvesting timber or quarrying stone.³⁶⁶ The regulations for the sale of timber and

^{ww} The letter concerns the return to her of "the certificate of naturalization of your father, Martinus Hendrickson," that she had submitted in connection with the purchase of the timber and stone land in Oregon [United States (1903a). Letter to Miss Marie Hendricksen (December 24, 1903) G. L. O. F. G. Department of the Interior. Washington DC, Morgan Family Papers.]. Presumably, the certificate was submitted by Marie to prove that she was an American citizen through the naturalization of her father, one of the requirements for eligibility for timber and stone land. Apparently Marie began the process of acquiring the Baker County land in 1903, but the Act was suspended for much of 1903 so the application process probably effectively began in 1904 [Pullman Herald (1904a). Get patents now. *Pullman Herald (January 2, 1904)*. Pullman, Washington Library of Congress -- Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>). 2011.]. The sisters are not listed as Baker County taxpayers in the 1903 Baker County Directory and no Directory was published for 1904 Polk (1903a). *R.L. Polk & Co., Directory of Baker City, etc., No. 2, 1903*. Portland, R.L. Polk & Co.]

^{xx} There were two Ole Jeldnesses, the brother and Halvor's son. However, the son was not of age when the application for the land was filed. An applicant had to be 21 years old.

stone land were designed to disperse ownership among many individuals, each with a small tract. Each applicant or "entryman" had to be an American citizen (or be eligible for naturalization and have officially declared his or her intention of becoming a citizen) aged at least 21 years, could acquire no more than 160 acres under any of the Acts, had to sign an affidavit that the land was for his or her own use and had to personally inspect the land and the timber thereon. Although the objective was to prevent concentrated ownership of valuable timber land, of course once title was obtained, the land, like any other property, could be sold or otherwise transferred to another individual or company.

Establish a regulation and someone will find a way around it. The process of applying for and occupying the land was called making an entry. Companies would select large tracts of timber land, find what were called "bogus entrymen" to submit applications for 160 acres each, provide the cash to finance the purchase, transport the applicants to the scene for the required personal inspection and when title was received, take possession of the land, with some compensation to the applicant.³⁶⁷ The New York Times offered a picturesque depiction of such events, presumably not entirely fictional:

In many instances people have gone to the Pacific Coast States from the States further east to enter lands under the timber and stone law The arrival of (railroad) carloads at a time has been reported, and many of the members of these parties were women.

In one or two cases during the vacation period of last Summer, entire carloads of female school teachers hailing from the Middle Western States, made tours to the coast and all located lands. In other cases entire families of four or five persons each have come in from the outside and have made entry of lands.³⁶⁸

It would appear that the Jeldnesses were such a family "from the outside," bogus entrymen purchasing valuable timber land.

Such transactions were clearly contrary to the spirit of the legislation and possibly illegal. However, although some people were indicted and some convicted, the fact that the land had been transferred to someone other than the applicant soon after the initial purchase was not sufficient evidence to prove fraud. There had to be evidence that there was a prior intention and agreement to subvert the regulations and defraud the government and that the applicant was aware that the transaction was fraudulent. It was extremely difficult to obtain conclusive evidence and convictions. Following an intensive examination by a Commission struck by the Department of the Interior, President Theodore Roosevelt asked Congress to repeal the law.³⁶⁹ He failed. The vehement opponents of repeal were not people concerned with settlement of the west, but the large timber companies and their Congressional allies.

Marie, Sigrid and Ole were bogus entrymen in the sense that they obtained public land for the benefit of a logging enterprise, not their own. However, they acted not for a large, impersonal logging company, but for a small-scale, extended-family venture, organized and operated by Halvor Jeldness, at least in part in conjunction with another man named John B. Perry. The Halvor Jeldness in question, however, was not Olaus' brother, but a cousin of the same name, a farmer in Baker County, who lived in the vicinity

of the timber and stone land purchased by the Jeldness siblings.^{yy} That he was immersed in the lumber business is apparent in the ship's manifest during a 1909 trip to Norway. He stated his occupation as "lumberman" not as "farmer."³⁷⁰ Moreover, when he returned to Baker County, although he continued to live on the farm, it was only as a home. He had turned over the operation of the farm to a German family while he concentrated on lumbering.³⁷¹ John B. Perry was from Halvor's neighbourhood in eastern Baker County and was identified in the 1900 and 1910 censuses as involved in sawmilling and lumbering.^{zz} He presumably had experience, skills and perhaps contacts that complemented those of Halvor.

Marie, Sigrid, Ildri and Ole each paid county taxes of \$200 in 1905, half the original cost of the land. Directories for the intervening years are not available, but by 1908 the taxes had jumped: Marie's, to \$720; Ildri's, to \$640; Ole's, to \$665; and Sigrid's, to \$720. I don't know what the tax rate was, but under any conceivable tax rate the county's assessment of the value of the land as productive timber land vastly exceeded the valuation placed on it by the Timber and Stone Land Act. The incentive to engage in bogus-entryman transactions is obvious and powerful. The federal government could have received much more revenue by auctioning the land, but, of course, the resulting pattern of ownership would have been quite different. Halvor Jeldness paid \$2210 in taxes in 1903, the first year for which a Directory with such data was published. This shows that he was the first Jeldness into the business in Baker County and that before the others received their allotments, he already had large holdings of timber land.^{aaa} By 1905, Perry had joined in the venture; Jeldness paid \$1305 and the joint enterprise "Jeldness, H. and J. B. Perry" paid \$500 in county taxes. By 1912, Marie, Sigrid, Ildri and Ole were out of the picture,

^{yy} The Astoria Halvor was considerably older, born in 1848 or 1849 as opposed to 1857 or 1858 for the Baker County Halvor. That the Astoria Halvor was also interested in federal timber and stone land is indicated in a story published in the Astoria newspaper in 1889 about a near encounter with a family of cougars while he and a friend were "looking for timber land" in the Cascade mountains [Astorian (1889c). The cougars made them stop. *Daily Morning Astorian* (August 21, 1889). Astoria, Oregon.] He was not eligible to purchase Baker County timber and stone land because he had earlier purchased a quarter section of federal land in southwestern Washington State [United States, D. o. t. I. (2012a). "Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records. ." Retrieved April 4, 2012, from [http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/.](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/)]

That the Baker County Halvor was a cousin of the Astoria Halvor, and hence of Olaus, is strongly suggested by the involvement of Marie, Sigrid, Ildri and Ole in the venture. Perhaps more telling is that the Jeldnesses all came from the same small area of Norway. As noted elsewhere, Olaus and his brothers were born in Stangvik. Baker County Halvor reported his last permanent residence in Norway was Todalen, a village close to Stangvik, where his brother John Jeldnes lived and where he was probably born. Halvor was single, with no children to inherit his property. In 1909 he made a trip to Norway and returned with a nephew, Edvard (Edward) and his wife Dordi. The young couple lived in a house close to Halvor and Edward worked on Halvor's farm and was presumably destined to inherit the land. By 1930 Edward and Dordi had taken over the farm and Halvor was living with them, retired. In 1926 Edward and Dordi made a trip to Norway. They were still not American citizens, so on the ship's manifest they had to list their last permanent address in Norway. It was Stangvik. Similarly, on his declaration of intention to be naturalized, Edward stated his last residence in Norway as Todalen, Stangvik. Edward and Dordi eventually returned to Norway where they died in 1962 and 1963 and were buried in Surnadal, the modern name of the community that includes Stangvik. Edvard named his father as John Jeldnes, Halvor's brother. Halvor died in Baker County in July, 1936.

^{zz} Missouri-born John Perry was listed in the 1900 census in Union County, Oregon, where he was a "Day laborer, Mill." In 1910 he was in Baker County and said to be a "Lumberman, Sawmill." By 1920 he had taken his earnings and given up lumbering, transforming into the cashier (manager) of a bank. I don't know what happened to his banking career, but by 1930 he had moved out of Baker County to Eugene, Oregon, where he was the manager of a garage.

^{aaa} That he was paying taxes on timber lands and not farm lands is apparent from the sums involved. When he returned to farming his name disappears from the list of tax payers.

presumably having disposed of the land to Halvor and John Perry. They had been nominal owners for sufficiently long that no one could have accused them of defrauding the government. That year on the consolidated holding, Halvor paid taxes of \$10,220, Jeldness and Perry, \$5,360 and Perry alone \$2,500. It must have been a booming business. What financial return Sigrid and Marie received from their venture is not known.

The next available Directory is 1925. By that time, Halvor and Perry were out of the logging business, presumably having sold to a larger logging company. The Jeldness' episode as timber barons was over. It is interesting to note that Olaus was not involved. He may have disapproved of the whole enterprise, but his nonparticipation was probably coincidental. He was in Norway and Spitsbergen during much of the time that the original purchases were evolving. If he had been involved, I wonder if he would have been a passive entryman like Marie and Sigrid or have taken an active role in the management of the enterprise.

Unitarian Church. The only other thing that I have discovered about Sigrid's life in Spokane is that she was active in the Unitarian Church. Indeed, in announcing her death to the congregation, the Minister described Sigrid as

*... one of the most earnest and active workers in our Society and a pillar of strength in the Women's Alliance, ... a woman of rare spirit, kindly, strong and always to be depended upon.*³⁷²

She had to be all of that - strong and resourceful. She raised three children, sometimes in difficult circumstances in rough mining camps, but most of the time in her lovely home in Spokane, often with her husband off on an extended prospecting venture or inspecting or developing a mine in some remote location. The life of the wife of an active "mining man" could be very lonely. That she had Marie with her must have been a blessing.

It must have been particularly sad for Olaus when his lifetime companion, Sigrid, died in Spokane on January 11, 1929, at age 64.³⁷³ The cause of death was not reported.

Randie.

Randie, was the oldest of the three girls. Like her sisters, she had an active social life in high school and beyond. Indeed, when her engagement was announced, she was referred to in one Spokane newspaper as a "local society girl."³⁷⁴ Following that pattern, after completion of high school in Spokane, she enrolled in Capen School in Northampton, Mass.,³⁷⁵ a school for young women that prepared them for life and perhaps to attend a college.^{bbb} I know nothing about the curriculum at Capen School, but after the college closed two of the teachers established a new school to carry on Capen's educational mission,

^{bbb} Capen School was established in the early 1900s by one Bessie Capen, as part of an emerging movement to provide educational opportunities to young women. It was located on what is now the campus of Smith College and two of the original buildings are still in use by the college. Capen School was in effect, a sophisticated high school, dominated by its founder and principal. When Bessie Capen died in 1920, the school was closed, but two teachers from the school then established the Williston-Northampton School nearby, which still thrives.

with a program "that combined academic excellence with social simplicity."³⁷⁶ I assume that the emphasis on "social simplicity" as well as academics also characterized the Capen School.

After a year at Capen School, Randie enrolled in Emma Willard College in Troy, New York, from which she graduated. Emma Willard College was established in 1821 as the Troy Seminary for Women, by Emma Willard, one of the foremost pioneers of post-secondary education for women in the United States. The use of the word "seminary" did not have a religious connotation. It was then a commonly used synonym for "school." Although she had given up active management of the school in 1838, Emma Willard continued to campaign vigorously for improved higher education for women, and in 1895, 25 years after she died, the school was rebranded as Emma Willard College in her honour. She had a strong belief that the curricula of colleges for women should not mimic those of colleges for men, but should be "as different from those appropriated to the other sex as the female character and duties are from the male."³⁷⁷ "(O)ur first object and mission has ever been to make it a model-school for teaching the broad sphere of woman's duties and accomplishments."³⁷⁸ However, the school should be much more than just a finishing school that focused on the social graces. The curriculum should include academic subjects like mathematics, philosophy, geography, history, and science that were generally thought to be unsuitable for female students.³⁷⁹ I don't know the details of the program of studies that Randie followed at Emma Willard College, but if Emma Willard's preferences are any guide, it must have had a strong emphasis on broad, liberal arts. However, the flavour of the school around the time when Randie attended is suggested by a remark of the principal at a 1912 meeting of the Emma Willard Association, a fund-raising adjunct of the college. Faced with the vigorous endorsement of the women's suffrage movement by the featured speaker, the (male) chancellor of New York University, she did not applaud, but simply observed "I believe that women have as much influence without the ballot as they will have with it."³⁸⁰ Apparently, the college, while emphasizing classical liberal arts, was not a hotbed of radical, even mildly progressive, thought. When Randie returned to Spokane in 1911, she must have been well versed in the ways of eastern society.

But there was another side to Randie. She must have had the same independent spirit, strong personality characteristics and love of the outdoors as her father and must have been particularly close to him. When she returned to Spokane from the east at age 20, she went on a trip with her father to the Slocan region of British Columbia.³⁸¹ They began in Nelson, went on to Kaslo and then into the high mountains of the Slocan, hiking along prospectors' trails to visit mines and prospects, including a climb to an 8500 foot peak. Randie was exhilarated. They ended up at New Denver where they attended a meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute. When interviewed, Randie announced what was for the times a decidedly unfeminine ambition "to become a mining engineer under the ...(tutelage)... of her father, Olaus Jeldness." The story was so startling -- but perhaps also so amusing to a male dominated profession in

a male dominated society -- that it was picked up and published by newspapers across the west, mid-west and south of the United States and at least one in Canada.^{ccc}

Thus, despite her genteel Emma Willard education Randie expressed ambitions to be a woman before her times. Was she serious, or was this just a whim -- an emotional reaction to an exhilarating outdoor experience with her father? I don't know, but in the event she did not pursue the unconventional career. Instead, in 1912 she enrolled at the University of Washington.³⁸² In the university calendar she was listed as a freshman, but a newspaper story said she was enrolled in a "special program."³⁸³ I don't know the nature of that program, but it was probably in Home Economics -- she was active in the Home Economics Club.³⁸⁴ As soon as she enrolled at Washington she joined the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority^{ddd} and through it, as well as through the Home Economics Club, she had a very active social life.^{eee} In the process, she met Joseph Morgan, a Forestry student, quit university at the end of the 1912-13 year (or was her program completed?), got engaged in May, 1914, and married in Spokane on June 30, 1914.³⁸⁵ In other words, after a brilliant social whirl at university, she ended up pursuing a very conventional woman's career -- wife and mother.

Joseph George Gregory Morgan was born at Plainfield, Indiana, on July 4, 1889.³⁸⁶ His father and mother were both born in the US (Indiana and Michigan), but back a generation there were immigrants from England. However, on his mother's side, Joseph could trace a strand of his forebears back to one Jesse Angell, an ensign in the Rhode Island militia during the American war of independence. Clearly

^{ccc} I don't know how many newspapers printed the story, but searches on the websites archives.com, newspaperarchive.com and googlenewsarchive.com, which reproduce many but far from all American papers of the day, showed that it appeared in newspapers in Emporia, Kansas; Checotah, Oklahoma; Des Moines, Iowa; Racine, Wisconsin; Anaconda, Montana; Logansport, Indiana; Tipton, Indiana; Stevens Point, Wisconsin; Sumner, Iowa; Kempton, Indiana; Rolla, North Dakota; New Orleans, Louisiana; Phoenix, British Columbia.

^{ddd} This information is courtesy Noreen A. Young, Staff Archivist of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and [Seattle Times (1912b). Ninety-two girls pledge faith with eleven sororities. [Seattle Times \(September 29, 1912\)](#). Seattle.]. In 1913, Randie was one of many external delegates participating in the installation of a new chapter of the sorority at Washington State University [Pullman Herald (1913a). Thetas install local sorority. [Pullman Herald](#). Pullman, Washington (November 14, 1913), Library of Congress - Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>).]

^{eee} Of course, I have no way of knowing the full extent of her social engagements, but six were noted in the Seattle Times. In December, 1912, she attended the Varsity Ball -- "the big annual event socially" -- attired in a gown of "black crepe de chine with jet trimmings." In February, 1913, she was at a formal dance sponsored by the Delta Tau Delta fraternity, of which Joseph Morgan was a member. Did she meet him on that occasion, or had they already met and was she his date? In March, 1913, she was at the Home Economics Club dance, which she helped to organize. In April, 1913, she attended a formal dance sponsored by Sigma Chi fraternity and a dinner party held by Delta Upsilon fraternity. Finally, in May, 1913, there was a picnic luncheon with dancing again put on by Joe Morgan's fraternity, Delta Tau Delta [Seattle Times (1912a). Society. [Seattle Times \(December 14, 1912\)](#). Seattle.

, Seattle Times (1913a). Society. [Seattle Times \(February 23, 1913\)](#). Seattle.

, Seattle Times (1913b). University news. [Seattle Times \(February 23, 1913\)](#). Seattle.

, Seattle Times (1913c). University news. [Seattle Times \(March 30, 1913\)](#). Seattle.

, Seattle Times (1913d). University news. [Seattle Times \(April 6, 1913\)](#). Seattle.

, Seattle Times (1913e). Society. [Seattle Times \(April 25, 1913\)](#). Seattle.

, Seattle Times (1913f). Society. [Seattle Times \(May 22, 1913\)](#). Seattle.

proud of his American heritage, in 1925 Joseph applied for membership in the "Sons of the American Revolution," a society of those whose lineage included soldiers in the revolutionary war. His credentials were solid; he was accepted.³⁸⁷

In 1907-08 Joseph was a freshman in Arts at the University of Washington,³⁸⁸ living with his uncle. Joseph Gregory, whose name he bore. He was again listed as a freshman in 1908-09, suggesting that he had to repeat the year.³⁸⁹ In September, 1909, he entered a four year program in Forestry.³⁹⁰ There were several courses of study in the College of Forestry, including one designated the "Lumberman's Group," "designed to meet the needs of young men preparing to take charge of logging and milling operations or wishing to enter on a business career in some phase of the lumber industry."³⁹¹ Given his subsequent career, I am sure that this is the program that Joseph pursued. He graduated in 1913 with a Bachelor of Forestry degree.³⁹²

During his years at the university, Joseph was very active on campus. It is reported that he played varsity football in his first year,³⁹³ but he must have been on what was called the "second team" because he is not listed on that year's university squad.³⁹⁴ In the following years, rather than football he concentrated on rowing. He rowed for his class in inter-mural competitions and on the university crew. His rowing exploits earned him membership in the "Big 'W' Club," the athletic honour society, entitling him to wear a special sweater emblazoned the a large capital "W" -- a coveted mark of athletic accomplishment.

He also had artistic pretensions. In his sophomore year he played the comic role of Bardolph in "The Tavern Scene from Henry IV, Part I," an excerpt from the famous Shakespeare play put on in the university auditorium by the English Department as part of a three-play program.³⁹⁵ He also appeared in a minstrel show, presumably in black face, a popular form of entertainment at the time.³⁹⁶ The show was to raise funds to send the rowing crew to Wisconsin for a competition. He was on the committee to plan the senior informal dance and he was selected to write the introduction to the Forestry section of the 1912 Yearbook.³⁹⁷ Joseph Morgan was a very accomplished young man who had a busy and interesting, undergraduate career.

His senior year should have been 1911-12 and had he then graduated he would have missed meeting Randie. However, having transferred from Arts to Forestry he required another year to complete that program. It must have been in his final year, 1912-13, possibly at a fraternity-sorority party, that he met Randie Jeldness, who had enrolled in the university that fall. His fraternity, Delta Tau Delta, entertained members of her sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, on at least two occasions.³⁹⁸

Later, when he was living in Seattle, Joseph described himself as a "logging engineer" or simply as an "engineer" and in the 1913 Directory he noted that his employer was the US Forest Service.³⁹⁹ He was still a student, although substantially finished his program. As part of their training, Forestry students were encouraged to spend time working in their field, often in a National Forest under the guidance and supervision of members of the US Forest Service. On his marriage registration he listed his occupation

as "contractor," but I have no information about that nature of his contract. Sometime thereafter he was employed by a private logging company as superintendent of a logging camp, somewhere in the Seattle area.⁴⁰⁰ Joseph and Randie lived in Seattle for about five years, with their son Joseph, born August 20, 1915, and their daughter, Margaret Agnes, born December 8, 1919. Then, sometime in 1920, they moved to the lumbering community of Hoquiam on the southwestern coast of the Olympic Peninsula where Joseph was again superintendent of a logging camp. It was in Hoquiam that tragedy struck. Their little girl Margaret contracted sleeping sickness and died on October 8, 1925.⁴⁰¹ She had not yet reached her sixth birthday.

Joseph and Randie immigrated to Canada in 1926 and settled in Vancouver. The reason for such a radical move, across the national boundary, is not explained. Had he, or Randie, tired of what originally sounded like a romantic life in a remote, rough-and-ready logging camp (much like the life of a mining engineer and family in a remote mining camp)? Perhaps they had not counted on the rain-soaked condition of their existence -- on average Hoquiam gets over 1750 mm of rain in a year -- or, they may have been attempting to distance themselves from the sad memories of Margaret, wondering if the little girl would have survived had they been in a larger city with better medical care. However, perhaps Joseph was simply ready for a career change and an opportunity was open in Vancouver.

They crossed the border on December 2, 1926. On the immigration form, Joseph gave his occupation not as "logging engineer," but as "salesman." This suggests that he had already made arrangements with a manufacturer to establish an agency in Vancouver. Indeed, almost as soon as he arrived in Vancouver, he set up a business, Morgan and Co., selling specialized braking equipment for logging machinery, including brake linings for heavy trucks.^{fff} He was also associated with Clyde Iron Works, the Vancouver agency for an American manufacturer of "steam, diesel and gasoline logging machinery, roller bearing logging blocks."⁴⁰² The two companies shared the same office and telephone number, but, until 1928, Clyde had a different manager. Joseph then took over. Both companies were new; neither had been listed in the 1926 directory. Finally, in 1940 or 1941 Joseph acquired a long-established business, the Vancouver Equipment Company, which dealt in a much broader range of logging and building equipment. Joseph was developing something of a logging equipment conglomerate. He had become an important player in the local market for logging equipment.

Joseph prospered in Vancouver, but tragedy stalked the family. In the prime of her life, Randie contracted pulmonary tuberculosis. She died at the provincial sanatorium at Tranquille on February 24, 1930.⁴⁰³ It must have been a terrible blow to Olaus as well as to Joseph.

Following Randie's death, Joseph continued to operate his businesses in Vancouver, where, I am told, he was a popular member of the "golf club set." Apparently they met at a golf club affair in Vancouver

^{fff} In the BC Directory the business was described as "Friction lock Mfrs. 'Emsco' heavy truck brake linings." [Wrigley (1927a). Wrigley's British Columbia Directory, 1927. Vancouver Wrigley Directories Limited.]. The company office was at 816 Standard Bank Building. Where the manufacturing facility was I don't know.

and in May, 1934, he married Frances Leach at a ceremony in Bellingham, Washington.⁹⁹⁹ Frances was a Vancouver native, born Frances Thompson in 1904, daughter of an engineer, named Ross Thompson -- but not the Ross Thompson who had founded Rossland. Frances had trained as a nurse and then moved to Santa Barbara, California, where she met another engineer, Don Leach, who had been born and raised there. They married at her family home in Vancouver in 1929, but returned to Santa Barbara where their only son, Donn, was born. I don't know what became of Don Leach -- whether they were divorced or Don died -- but at the time of her marriage to Joseph, Frances stated her home not as Santa Barbara, but as Burlingame, California, across the peninsula from San Francisco. Her son Donn seems to have been adopted by Joseph and he changed his name to Donn Morgan. Donn became a chartered accountant in North Vancouver.

Joseph sold his logging equipment businesses in 1956 and then managed Major Aluminum Products, Ltd., for a couple of years before retiring to West Vancouver. After a prolonged illness, he died there in 1977, at the ripe old age of 88. Frances died two years later.

For his education, apart from the choice of law rather than forestry, the younger Joseph followed in his father's footsteps.^{hhh} How much of his high school education was in Seattle, I don't know, but he graduated from Garfield High School in central Seattle and then went on to the University of Washington where he enrolled in the Faculty of Arts. Like his father he joined the Delta Tau Delta fraternity, but he does not seem to have engaged in the same broad range of student activities as did his father -- at least, if he did, his activities were not reported. He received his AB degree in 1938, entered law school and received his Bachelor of Laws degree in June, 1940. In September, 1941, Joseph passed the bar examination and received his license to practice law in Washington State.

While a student, Joseph met Doris Lake, daughter of a prominent physician in Seattle. She was also a student at the University of Washington, a year behind Joseph, graduating in June, 1939 while Joseph was in law school. They may have attended some classes together, or they may have met through fraternity-sorority functions (she was a member of the Alpha Chi Omega sorority). I don't know what she did after graduating, but Joseph and Doris were married in Seattle on June 27, 1941. They settled in Seattle where they had five children. When they later moved to British Columbia they had two more.

After graduation, equipped with his law degree, Joseph worked as an adjuster for an insurance company in 1941 and 1942. His career was then interrupted by the war, during which he served in the Coast Guard. Sometime after his discharge he entered a legal partnership, Koch, Morgan and Paul, in Seattle. That partnership was dissolved in 1954. Adolph Koch and Frederick Paul went their separate ways, setting up legal practices in Seattle while Joseph and his family moved to Vancouver. However,

⁹⁹⁹ There were some oddities on the marriage registration. Although his home was still in Vancouver, for some reason Joseph gave his residence as Portland, Oregon. Frances gave the birthplace of her father as Brazil -- both her parents were born in Ireland. It is almost as though they didn't take the wedding formalities seriously.

^{hhh} Much of the material in the following paragraphs is from University of Washington Calendars and Yearbooks and city directories for Vancouver and Seattle.

Joseph did not return to the practice law. Rather, he worked for his father as assistant controller of Vancouver Equipment. When the elder Joseph sold his logging equipment businesses in 1956, Joseph left the firm and the logging equipment business. He worked for a couple of years as an appraiser for the General Appraisal company, but then sold his Laurier Street house and, sometime in 1959, the Morgan family returned to Seattle.

The family settled into life in Seattle. Joseph had a passionate interest in flowers and gardening and belonged to several horticultural societies -- a passion that he passed on to some of his children. Reflecting this interest, when he first returned to Seattle he was employed briefly by a florist and gardening firm.⁴⁰⁴ However, he soon returned to the legal profession, taking up a position as a lawyer for Veterans Affairs before again switching to an insurance company. Doris and Joseph parted company in the late 1960s and Joseph took his specialized legal talents to Everett, joining the Everett Abstract and Title Company. He died in Everett on June 14, 1973.

During the years of protests and disruptions during the Viet Nam war, most of the younger members of the Morgan family became disenchanted with the situation in the United States. In 1970, led by the oldest brother, Robert, who, with a friend went ahead to find a suitable place on the Sunshine coast of British Columbia where they could learn to live off the land, six of the seven moved north. Ross remained in Seattle where he had a distinguished career with Seattle Power and Light Company. The land on the Sunshine Coast became effectively a homestead where several of the Morgans initially camped while they built houses, developed an organic farm and nourished families. Eventually, they were joined by Doris, who made a new life for herself in Sechelt and Vancouver, travelling extensively with a new partner. Doris died in 2004 at age 88.

The Olaus and Sigrid stream of the Jeldness family was severely diminished by family tragedies. By the 1930s only one member of the second generation survived, Randie's son, Joseph. He and Doris, however, regenerated the family. It is somehow fitting, given the province's importance in the Olaus Jeldness saga, that most of their children settled in British Columbia. Six of the seven children married and multiplied, providing a strong presence of the Jeldness genome in the province. Indeed, one of Randie's granddaughters settled in Nelson, close to Rossland and Olaus' beloved Red Mountain. Of course, there remain substantial colonies of Jeldnesses in Washington State and Oregon, including Ross and his family and the descendants of the brothers Halvor, Ole and Andrew.

Margaret.

The youngest daughter, Margaret, was a social livewire. As a 4 year old child she attracted the attention of the society editor of the Spokane Chronicle when she greeted guests at the door at a posh tea party at a neighbour's house.⁴⁰⁵ In high school she was on the staff of the school newspaper, as circulation manager (1914) and alumni affairs editor (1916) and was secretary of the sophomore class (1914) and vice president of the graduating class (1917). She was regularly invited to fashionable parties and sponsored parties of her own, including one that was described as "one of the most pretentious

society events of the week."⁴⁰⁶ It had a wartime theme, with a miniature battlefield laid out on the piano, complete with a zeppelin and a monoplane overhead, and on the dining room table a fortress of red roses, canons with miniature gunners and chocolate-covered cherries as ammunition and a Red Cross encampment.⁴⁰⁷ I suppose the purpose was to encourage the guests to reflect on the international situation while celebrating a friend's departure on an eastern visit (at the time, tensions between the United States and Germany had escalated, but war had not yet been declared). On another occasion, she went to Portland to be a bridesmaid at "one of the largest and most fashionable weddings in Portland this season."⁴⁰⁸ Margaret was a social animal, moving in the highest social circles of Spokane. She was reported to have had a strong contralto voice and was planning to study music in New York.⁴⁰⁹

Olaus saw more than his share of family tragedies, but Margaret's death at such a young age must have been the most bitter. She died suddenly on June 15, 1917, from complications following an operation for appendicitis.⁴¹⁰ She was only 17, popular and talented with a promising life ahead of her. Her death must have been a devastating blow to the whole family.

Agnes.

Olaus' middle daughter, Agnes, survived him, but an important aspect of her life was very unhappy and must have troubled Olaus deeply.

Agnes completed high school in Spokane, then, in September, 1915, she went to New York to study art and design leading to a career in interior decorating.⁴¹¹ I don't know which college she attended or if she worked in New York after completing her program, but she was still in New York in 1917 when her mother visited her. Agnes went from New York to Seattle in 1918 or 1919, where she had positions with two major department stores, first Frederick and Nelson and then McDougal-Southwick. In the *Seattle City Directory* for 1919⁴¹² she is identified ambiguously as a clerk, but in the 1920 census she gave her occupation as an interior designer for the store.⁴¹³ She remained in Seattle at least until 1922,⁴¹⁴ but by 1924 she held a similar position with a store in Spokane while living at the family home.⁴¹⁵

On August 5, 1925, Agnes married Nils B Hersloff, Jr., a physician and son of a prominent New Jersey family.⁴¹⁶ They must have met while Agnes was a student in New York and somehow kept a long distance romance going while Nils practiced in New York and Agnes lived and worked in Seattle and Spokane. After their Spokane marriage, Agnes and Nils settled in New York, where he enrolled in the medical school of Columbia University to train as a psychiatrist, graduating in 1930. This was followed by an internship in psychiatry at a New York hospital and post graduate studies in Vienna.⁴¹⁷

The marriage was far from happy. Nils told Agnes that he wanted to be alone for a time, so she made a trip west to visit Randie who was so very ill (this must have been in late 1929 or early 1930).ⁱⁱⁱ Evidence

ⁱⁱⁱ The 1930 census suggests that Nils and Agnes were together in New York in 1930 [United States (1930a). Fifteenth Census of the United States, Washington, Bureau of the Census.]. However, that may have been an incorrect report by Nils.

presented at the divorce hearing showed that Nils sent letters telling Agnes not to return to New York. Although she attempted reconciliation, the estrangement was complete. Divorce proceedings were not contested by Hersloff and negotiations between lawyers in New York and Spokane resulted in an agreement by Hersloff to pay monthly alimony of \$250 (about \$3400 in 2011 dollars), for life or until she remarried. Agnes did not remarry.^{jjj} If actually paid, this was a substantial stipend for the times. An interlocutory decree of divorce was granted in a Spokane court in August, 1931,⁴¹⁸ and the final decree in February, 1932.

Agnes continued to live in the family home on West 2nd Avenue in Spokane with Olaus and her aunt, Marie Hendrickson, and inherited it, mortgage free, when Olaus died. She lived there comfortably for several years, but early in World War II she began to experience financial stringency.^{kkk} Her inheritance produced little income and it is possible that the alimony payments stopped after Hersloff gave up his lucrative private practice and entered the army. Early in the war the Army Air Corps built a vast facility for "air supply and repair" west of Spokane, then called the Spokane Air Depot and later renamed Fairchild Air Force Base.⁴¹⁹ In June, 1942, Agnes went to work at the downtown office the Air Depot and in July she mortgaged her house. There must have been substantial unanticipated extra expenses because her Aunt Marie required surgery to remove a cancerous breast (April, 1943). Agnes remortgaged the house in June, 1943, (for \$2,000) and then leased it to the government. Agnes and Marie found temporary accommodation while the government renovated the house, converting it into apartment units, two of which were occupied by Agnes and Marie. The rest were rented to married members of the armed forces. The surplus Jeldness furniture was auctioned, netting Agnes \$310.

While working for the Air Force, Agnes completed a night school course as a comptometer operator. A comptometer was a mechanical calculator, in widespread use in business for accounting and many other purposes. Upon completion of the course she resigned from Air Force (November, 1944) and went to work for Montgomery Ward, then a bakery and finally one of Spokane's largest lumber companies. By 1949 she was a book keeper for the same company, a position she held until she retired in 1956. The government must have given up the lease on the house about 1959 and Agnes began to rent exclusively

^{jjj} Hersloff remarried, but Agnes did not. I have not found a report of Nils' second wedding, but by the summer of 1936 he was married to a woman named Margaret (last name not reported), with whom he travelled to Sweden, his father's birthplace (a honeymoon?) [New York Times (1936a). Ocean travellers. New York Times (July 9, 1936). New York.]. In 1941, that marriage also ended in divorce [Reno Gazette (1941a). Decrees Granted: Margaret T. Hersloff from Nils B. Hersloff, jr. Reno Evening Gazette, (December 13, 1941.) Reno, Nevada.]. He later married a woman named Alden Adams. Nils served in the medical corps during World War II and was overseas in the Mediterranean sector. After the war he made a career administering Veterans Affairs hospitals and charitable institutions in New York State. While he was director of a mental hospital in upstate New York there was a scandal involving abuse of patients [New York Times (1950c). Brutality inquiry ends. New York Times (September 13, 1950). New York.] He does not seem to have been directly implicated, but soon after an enquiry ended, he resigned. Hersloff died of a heart attack in New York in 1956 at age 55 [New York Times (1956a). Dr. Nils Hersloff, a psychiatrist, 55. New York Times (October 27, 1956). New York., United States (1956a). Social Security Death Index. Washington.].

^{kkk} Beginning in 1941 Agnes began keeping a sketchy journal that is now in the possession of David Morgan. The following information about Agnes is from that journal and from various issues of the *Spokane City Directory*.

to older women, usually widows. Then, in 1961 or 1962, she sold the house and went to live in a home for retired people where she died in January, 1973.⁴²⁰ She had no children. Marie had died in 1950.⁴²¹

Another Family?

The opening line of one newspaper story about Olaus and his daughter Randie begins "Because he had no son" This assertion may be factually incorrect. Terje Husby, the great grandson of Olaus' sister Randi Husby, compiled a family tree for the Gjeldnes family, a copy of which is in the Rossland Archives.⁴²² It shows that Olaus had a relationship with a woman in Norway, Eli Jonsdatter Storbraten, and that they had a son, Edvard Olausen Storbraten, born in 1884. Olaus was in Norway in 1882-83,⁴²³ developing a silver mine, so such a relationship was possible, although there is not the slightest hint of it in the North American material on Olaus. Is the story true? As a relative, Terje Husby is a persuasive source, as is the boy's second name, "Olausen" (i.e., son of Olaus). However, I have been unable to establish independent verification, and if the story is true I do not know if Edvard Storbraten had descendants that would have given rise to another Jeldness family in Norway.

Brothers

Olaus had three brothers who also immigrated to the United States. Two were older: Halvor (or Halvard), born in 1848⁴²⁴ or 1850,⁴²⁵ and Ole, born about 1855⁴²⁶. They immigrated to the United States in 1872, started mining careers in Michigan, where a year later they were joined by Olaus. The three brothers went from mining camp to mining camp, part way across the continent to Colorado where they were joined by a fourth brother, Anders (or Andrew), born in 1862. After Colorado the brothers' paths diverged, but eventually all four ended up in the Pacific Northwest. Halvor and Ole gave up their dreams of making a fortune in mining and found other occupations, while Olaus and Andrew continued the search for the ever elusive gold or silver bonanza.

As noted above, following the visit with their father in Norway, Olaus remained in Norway to manage a silver mine while Halvor, Ole and Andrew returned to North America (date uncertain, but probably 1882). Astoria, Oregon, at the mouth of the Columbia River, was the magnet that attracted the three brothers, although the ever-restless Andrew's stay there was brief. Astoria had a substantial Scandinavian population, including many Norwegians, many of them fishermen.⁴²⁷ Indeed, in 1888 it was estimated that a quarter of the city's population was Scandinavian and "among ... well known Scandinavians can be mentioned ... (the) ... Jeldness brothers."⁴²⁸ It is interesting that Halvor and Ole were sufficiently prominent in the community to be singled out for mention.

Halvor

Halvor was the merchant of the family. He married a Norwegian woman called Ildrid (Ildri or Ildi) Broske in Astoria, Oregon, on October 17, 1883.⁴²⁹ Ildrid was the sister of the woman whom Ole had married in Missouri earlier in the year. The Broske sisters came from Stangvik,⁴³⁰ which was also the

family home of the Jeldness brothers, so they knew each other as children. Perhaps the romance began many years before; perhaps it began (or was rekindled) during the Jeldness brothers visit to Stangvik in 1881. In any case, Ildrid immigrated to the United States soon after, in May, 1882, listing her occupation as "servant."⁴³¹ Did she go directly to Astoria? Probably, but I don't know.

Halvor started his mercantile career in the liquor business. An application for a liquor license was considered by city council in 1884,⁴³² but apparently the outcome was not favourable. He applied again in 1889 when the license was approved⁴³³ and he began to operate a saloon.⁴³⁴ Halvor became a naturalized American citizen later the same year.⁴³⁵ By 1902 he had changed from a liquor to a cigar and tobacco business, operated at the same address at which the family lived.⁴³⁶ By 1904, the business was again transformed to men's clothing and furnishings. When he died, he was operating the business with his son, Ole.⁴³⁷ After his death, the family continued to operate the store as H. Jeldness & Sons for several years.

Halvor and Ildri had three sons. I have found little additional information about Halvor, except that he died on February 25, 1907, in Astoria.⁴³⁸

Ole

I have not found a record of the immigration of Ildrid's sister, Ingebord, but according to one report she also crossed the Atlantic in 1882.⁴³⁹ In January, 1883, she married Halvor's brother, Ole, in Jackson County, Missouri.⁴⁴⁰ Why they married in Missouri, I don't know, but there were other Broskes in Missouri, perhaps relatives. Where they went after the marriage, is a mystery, but in 1889 they were in Astoria, Oregon, where Ole was working as a "helper" in an iron works.⁴⁴¹ He had given up mining and was learning to be a blacksmith and by 1900 (probably earlier) he was working as a blacksmith in Astoria.⁴⁴² By 1914 Ole and Ingebord had moved across the Columbia River to Ilwaco, Washington, where they owned a dairy farm.⁴⁴³

Ole and Ingebord had six children, two of whom died in infancy.⁴⁴⁴ Ole died in Ilwaco, Washington, on May 18, 1942, at age 87.⁴⁴⁵ Ingebord had pre-deceased him, in 1931 at age 77.⁴⁴⁶

Andrew

The fourth and youngest immigrant brother, Anders (who Anglicized his name to Andrew), was born on October 15, 1862 and came to North America in October, 1879,⁴⁴⁷ meeting up with his brothers in Colorado. Like his brothers, Andrew seems to have touched down in Astoria on his return to North America, but he only paused there briefly before resuming his quest for wealth through mining. He moved about frequently.

I don't know when or where they met and married -- perhaps in Norway on the visit to the Jeldness father, perhaps in the United States -- but sometime, somewhere, Andrew married a woman named Ida

Johnson.⁴⁴⁸ They were in Astoria, Oregon, in December, 1882, when their first child, Otto, was born.^{III449} In 1887 Andrew was in Albina, a suburb of Portland, working as a labourer, but this must have been a temporary stop-gap because he was in the Okanagan area in the late 1880s (did he precede, accompany or follow Olaus, or, indeed, was he Olaus' partner in the Arlington claim?) where he had a claim that bordered on one of Bourne's mines. They had a boundary dispute that got ugly and caused Olaus considerable stress.⁴⁵⁰ Olaus intervened in an attempt to ameliorate the effects of an intemperate letter from his brother to Bourne, asserting that the problem was that Andrew's imperfect command of English led him to say things that he didn't mean. The Bourne-Andrew correspondence has not survived so I don't know the details of the dispute, or the outcome. It is also reported that in 1896 Andrew located a mine called the Flora in the vicinity of Republic, Washington, for someone in Spokane.⁴⁵¹ Whether this was the mine involved in the dispute with Bourne, I don't know. I can't document all of his subsequent moves, but two more children were born, Etta (1891) and Flora (1894) somewhere in Washington,⁴⁵² probably in the Okanagan region. Andrew and family then went to Spokane where Ida remained while Andrew was prospecting in British Columbia (1896 and 1897).⁴⁵³ He was said to be a resident of Grand Forks, although this must have been a temporary residence because Ida and his family were in Spokane where she had become seriously ill with tuberculosis. She was not thought to be critical, but just before Christmas, 1897, she unexpectedly died of a pulmonary haemorrhage (bleeding from the lungs).⁴⁵⁴

Soon after Ida's death, Andrew moved from Spokane to Portland, Oregon, where he was living in early 1898 when he entered the ski race at the Rosslund Winter Carnival.⁴⁵⁵ He was still living in Portland when the 1900 census was taken and he gave his occupation as "miner."⁴⁵⁶ Where he was working is not reported, but he may have been idle because he was soon on a ship to Alaska, with Olaus (see above, p. 41). He was then a widower with three children to care for. Sometime in 1897 a niece, Berta Jeldness, had come out from Norway,⁴⁵⁷ presumably to help with the children while Ida was incapacitated by her illness. Berta went to Portland with Anders where she looked after the house and children.⁴⁵⁸ I have found no further trace of her in the United States. Possibly, she returned to Norway when Andrew remarried.

In 1902 Andrew went south, to prospect in Jackson County and the adjacent part of California. Olaus' financial journal reveals that in 1902 he had combined with Peter Larson, the financier with whom he had been involved in the sale of the Number 1 mine in Rosslund, to provide a "grubstake" for Andrew to go prospecting somewhere in Nevada.⁴⁵⁹ The three were to divide returns from the prospecting venture equally. They must have changed their minds about Andrew's destination because he went to southern Oregon instead, supported by regular grubstake payments until late 1904. Thus began the Jeldness involvement in Jackson County, Oregon, that lasted the rest of Andrew's life and beyond. Although based

^{III} As an adult, in Medford, Oregon, Otto was said to be "an ardent sportsman." As was befitting of a Jeldness it was reported that "He and the late Walter Bowne were the first two men to go to Crater Lake on skis, starting from Prospect." As was also befitting of a Jeldness, apparently, his skis were homemade [Medford Tribune (1952a). Obituary: Otto Jeldness. Medford Mail Tribune (April 8, 1952). Medford Oregon Rogue Valley Genealogical Society Obituaries from Newspapers, Miscellaneous Years, Volume 3.].

in Oregon, Andrew was working a claim, the Bloomfield, in the Blue Ledge mining camp, just across the border, high in the Siskiyou Mountains of northern California. Olaus made at least three inspection trips to southern Oregon, before the grubstake money stopped in 1904. Andrew continued to work the Bloomfield for many years (he was still digging there in 1910),⁴⁶⁰ but I don't know what output he produced or what returns Olaus and Larson made on their investment in him. According to one report, the Bloomfield was owned by Andrew, Larson and someone named Hamilton.⁴⁶¹ There was no mention of Olaus. Had he sold his share to Hamilton?

Gertrude (Gertie) Lygresten, a 27-year-old Norwegian woman, was a cook in the home of James Steel, a bookkeeper, in Portland in 1900. Steel lived at 265 6th street in Portland, a few blocks away from Andrew and Berta, at 1061 7th Street. It seems likely that somehow Gertie and Berta met and became friends and that Gertie found the Jeldness a happy island of Norwegian speech in the sea of English that was her daily life. Andrew and Gertie developed a mutual attraction and in early 1903 Andrew returned from the south to marry her in Vancouver, Washington.⁴⁶² In 1905 Andrew and Gertie were reported to be living in Portland,⁴⁶³ which is probably where their son, Arthur, was born that June. Where they went then I don't know, but they were not listed in the Portland Directories for 1906 and 1907. They had returned to Portland in 1909⁴⁶⁴ and then moved south again, making their home primarily in Jackson County, Oregon, but they may have lived at Blue Ledge in northern California from time to time.⁴⁶⁵ At census time in 1920 they were in Medford⁴⁶⁶ and in 1930 at a place called Watkins on the Applegate River, south of the town of Jacksonville.⁴⁶⁷ They were living in Medford when Olaus died in 1935⁴⁶⁸ and somewhere in Jackson County when Andrew died in 1956⁴⁶⁹ and Gertie in 1965.⁴⁷⁰ Otto died in Medford in 1952 and Arthur in 1987.

Apart from the observation that Etta was working as a manicurist in Portland in 1905⁴⁷¹ (she would have been only 14 years old), the only information that I have found for the two girls, Etta and Flora, is in the 1900 census. They then vanish from the records available to me. Interestingly, they are not mentioned as living relatives in the obituary of their older brother, Otto.⁴⁷² Had they predeceased him? If so, where are the records? Had they gone to Norway, to Berta?

Sisters

Olaus had three sisters, all of whom also immigrated to the United States.

Maria (Mary) Nilsdatter

The oldest sister, Maria, was born in January 1852. She accompanied Halvor and Ole when they left Norway on May 9 1872 for Michigan.⁴⁷³ She then accompanied her brothers when they went from Michigan to Missouri, where she married William Donald Meyer in Joplin on January 12, 1878.⁴⁷⁴ At various times, for unknown reasons, Meyer was known as Donald W. Meyer and David W. Meyer.^{mmm}

^{mmm} That David and Donald were the same person is suggested by the fact that they had the same birthdate. Of course, they might have been twin brothers. I have not found records of his birth other than those provided by the census [United States (1900b). "Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Denver City, Colorado".

They had three children, Minnie, born in August 1882 in Missouri, Arthur, born on June 4, 1885, also in Missouri, and Alma M (Almeda) in December, 1886, in Kansas.⁴⁷⁵ Sometime thereafter they moved to Denver, Colorado, where Donald was a clerk in a railway office. I have not found a record of Mary's death.

Guro Nilsdatter

Guro (Gurie) was born in January, 1853. She emigrated with Olaus on May 29, 1873, initially settling in Port Huron Michigan, then following the Jeldness brothers to Missouri. She seems to have remained in Missouri when the brothers moved on to Dakota and Colorado. I don't know when or where she met and married Johan (John) August Overland, a Norwegian machinist and blacksmith who had immigrated in 1866, but it was probably in Missouri. In any case, they had two children, both born in Kansas City, Missouri, Olise (Alice) in September, 1884, and Olaf in 1885. At some time after this they moved to Portland, Oregon, where John worked as a blacksmith for the Union Pacific Railway. John died in Portland on March 12, 1926, and Gurie on November 3, 1928.

Randi Nilsdatter

The youngest sister, Randi, born on February 20, 1859, was the one to whom Olaus wrote the letter that set out his religious beliefs (see above, p. 67). Unlike her sisters she remained in Stangvik where she married a farmer, Erik Pederson Husby, in 1879. They had a large family, nine children, all born in Norway between 1881 and 1903. In 1906 the family immigrated to the United States, initially to Portland Oregon, but eventually to a farm near Stanwood in northwestern Snohomish County, Washington (between Mount Vernon and Everett). A rich agricultural area, Stanwood had a thriving Norwegian population, which actively recruited other Norwegians, like the Husbys, to the area.⁴⁷⁶ Randi died on May 29, 1938 and Erik on December 1, 1952.

WHO WAS OLAUS JELDNESS?

Olaus Jeldness was a very colourful and complex person. He was a superb athlete, a champion on the ski hill, whether running downhill or jumping. He also took an interest in indoor ice-sports, although there is no evidence that he was ever an active participant. However, he did support the construction and operation of an arena in Rosslund and provided financial assistance to the Spokane hockey team entered in the Rosslund Winter Carnival. But skiing was his true love, and his commitment to skiing continued long after he was an active participant. He provided two expensive and elaborate trophies for competition at the winter carnival, was on the organizing committee for the first carnivals, in some years served as patron, and frequently acted as a judge of the ski jumping events. He also promoted skiing, particularly

Retrieved October 2, 2012, 2012, from <http://search.ancestry.com/> , United States (1910b). "Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Denver City, Colorado." Retrieved October 2, 2012, 2012, from <http://search.ancestry.com/>].

ski jumping, at Spokane and one year he brought what he hoped would be a championship jumper from Spokane to the Rossland Carnival.

However, at root Olaus Jeldness was a mining man. Throughout his adult life, he rode a financial rollercoaster with exhilarating highs and devastating lows, in many of the mining camps of the western United States and British Columbia -- and, indeed, in Norway. It is not apparent that he had ever accumulated a fortune prior to coming to Rossland, but he confessed to a deep, life-long longing for the riches that would give him "paradise on earth." In Rossland he discovered the Velvet and other related gold-copper mines on the west side of Sophie Mountain. Although they were relatively minor mines, not of particular importance in Rossland's history, he sold them to English investors at inflated prices near the peak of the Rossland gold mining boom. Together with at least one other sale, the Sophie properties made him a wealthy man -- not fabulously rich but much more than comfortable. He soon left Rossland with his personal bonanza and settled in Spokane. However, he did not retire to passively enjoy his wealth.

In Spokane Olaus Jeldness was no longer just a miner and prospector. In his mature years, he became a highly regarded professional in many aspects of the mining business. He was much sought after for the assessment of prospects and the early development of new mines, but he eschewed the more routine task of operating developed mines. Although he was essentially self-taught, he was frequently retained as a consultant on mine development or as a geologist and while lacking the formal education was widely regarded as a mining engineer. Where his record was less than sterling was in the field of petroleum geology, which again he studied without benefit of formal education. On two occasions -- one during World War I in southeastern British Columbia and the other in the early 1920s in his home turf in Spokane -- he went far out on a limb of doubtful soundness predicting the spectacular development of large oil fields, both of which fizzled. In the first one he was both a heavy investor and a senior officer of a company that pursued a stock promotion campaign that at the most charitable has to be described as dubious. To my knowledge, after his second venture, predicting the development of an oil field in Spokane itself, he abandoned soft rock in favour of his proven mastery of hard rock geology.

As an investor -- as in life -- Olaus Jeldness was a risk taker, a speculator. He did not balance his asset portfolio with relative safe securities that had a national market. Rather he concentrated his holdings in shares of regional, copper-based mining companies of which he had intimate knowledge through his development or consulting work. Convinced that petroleum would be found in the Pacific Northwest, he added some petroleum related shares, and, to capitalize on the continued growth of Spokane as the commercial and financial hub for the regional mining industries, some urban real estate. They were all tied in to success in the extraction of underground resources in the Pacific Northwest. As his life came to an end, most of his investments, both in mines and in real estate, were failures. However, interpreting his failure as an investor choosing his investments is confounded by the onset of the depression of the 1930s, which had a devastating effect on his beloved industry, on Spokane and on

Spokane real estate. Whatever the reason, poor choices or unanticipated depression, when Olaus Jeldness died he had fallen from the status of moderately wealthy resident of the most prestigious neighbourhood in Spokane, to possessor of a lovely house that was declining in value and of a broken portfolio of mostly worthless mining securities.

There was also another side to Olaus Jeldness that is not widely recognized. He was a thinker -- a student of politics and of moral philosophy. He was concerned with, and occasionally involved in, a wide range of political issues, local, national and international. On the moral philosophy side he was a devoted humanist, a vigorous and enthusiastic member of the Free Thought movement which carried on a much disparaged battle against the pervasive influence of the Christian church in American politics and society. In this he was a devoted disciple of Robert Ingersoll, the so-called "great infidel" of late nineteenth century United States. Olaus did not hide his devotion to the cause, but vigorously defended it in the pages of the major local newspaper.

This is not to argue that Olaus Jeldness was a profound, original political analyst or moral philosopher. There is no evidence for such a conclusion. However, he read deeply and widely, was acutely aware of the world around him and of the political forces shaping events well beyond what we might expect of a practical mining man who routinely got his hands dirty down in the pits. He was a highly intelligent student of affairs, who was not wholly absorbed in mining, real estate, finance and skiing.

I was a young boy when he died, but I would like to have met and been friends with Olaus Jeldness -- and perhaps have shared a run or two on skis, down Red Mountain.

AFTERNOTE: MOUNT JELDNESS

There is a fitting afternote. In 1967, the British Columbia Geographical Names Office changed the unfortunately named "Nigger Mountain" to "Mount Jeldness." Mount Jeldness is across Big Sheep Creek Valley from the Velvet Mine.⁴⁷⁷ This means that a metaphorical Jeldness will forever look across the valley at what is left of the mine that made his fortune.

**ANNEX 1
OLAUS JELDNESS ESTATE, AT PROBATE:**

**Superior Court Of The State Of Washington, Spokane County, Spokane
Washington, March 1937**

| <u>EXHIBIT "A"</u> | |
|---|------------------------|
| <u>Assets per Inventory</u> | <u>Appraised Value</u> |
| Household Furniture and Equipment, | \$100.00 |
| <u>OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY</u> | |
| 16,650 shares Butte Highlands Mining Co. stock, | 4168.50 |
| 10,150 shares Virginia City Gold Mining Company stock | 1200.00 |
| 2,000 shares Liberty Gold Mining Company stock | Nil |
| 2,000 shares Lincoln Mining Company shares | Nil |
| 1,000 shares Morning Glory Mines, Inc. stock | 2250.00 |
| 100 shares Crows Nest Oils Ltd. stock | 10.00 |
| 5,000 shares Blaine-Republic Company stock | 50.00 |
| 5,000 shares Eldorado Gold Placer Mines stock | 750.00 |
| 5,600 shares Golden Rod Mining Company stock | 1.00 |
| 55 shares Ostland Development Corporation stock | Nil |
| 6 1/2 units Cody Drilling Syndicate | Nil |
| 1,000 shares Pacific States Petroleum Company stock | Nil |
| 300,000 shares Champion Mines Corporation stock | Nil |
| 15 shares Roseland Skating and Curling Rink, Ltd. stock | Nil |
| 43,650 shares Lone Pine Surprise Cons. Mining Co. stock | Nil |
| 2,000 shares Associated Mines Corp. Ltd. stock | Nil |
| (All or a part of this stock sold on Apr. 11, 1931, to pay delinquent assessments) | |
| 38,875 shares Flathead Petroleum Company stock | 1.00 |
| 20,000 shares Rebate Gold Mining Company stock | Nil |
| 3 units Macdonald Syndicate | 1.00 |
| 2 shares Spokane Interstate Fair stock | 1.50 |
| Option to purchase Lot 8 in Block 17 of Resurvey and Addition to the City of Spokane Falls (now Spokane), Spokane County, State of Washington, as per map thereof recorded in Book "A" of Plats, at page 1 thereof, in the office of the Auditor of said County, together with the appurtenances and hereditaments thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining, for the sum of \$34,250.19, on or before May 1, 1938, said option having been signed by Mathilda Amba, a widow, on May 11, 1933, | Nil |
| June 1935 Dividend on 5000 shares Eldorado Gold Placer Mines stock, | 100.00 |
| Cash proceeds on New York Life Insurance Company Policy No. 721988A3, | 1004.20 |
| <u>REAL ESTATE:</u> | |
| Lots 5 and 6 in Block 29, Browne's Addition to Spokane, Washington. | 3500.00 |
| | <u>\$ 13,131.20</u> |
| <u>LESS DISBURSEMENTS as follows:</u> | |
| Clerk's fees, filing Petition - - - - - | \$ 5.00 |
| Certified copies Will and Letters - - - - - | 1.50 |
| Publication, Notice to Creditors - - - - - | 5.43 |
| Appraisers' fees - - - - - | 20.00 |
| | <u>41.93</u> |
| Claim of Washington Water Power Company - | 112.22 |
| Claim of Agnes M. Hensloff - - - - - | 384.01 |
| | <u>1038.15</u> |
| | <u>\$12,093.04</u> |

EXHIBIT "A" (CONT'D.)

RECAPITULATION:

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Assets on hand: | |
| Household Furniture and Equipment - - - - - | \$ 100.00 |
| Stocks and units as shown above - - - - - | 8,427.00 |
| Lots 5 and 6 in Block 29, Browne's Addition to Spokane, Washington - - - - - | 3,500.00 |
| Cash - - - - - | 68.04 |
| | <u>12,095.04</u> |

ANNEX 2 NOTES ON THE MINING SHARES IN OLAUS JELDNESS' ESTATE

The standard reference books, the *Mines Handbook*, published every second year, and the one-off *Northwest Mines Handbook*, provide some information about some of the mining companies in which Olaus Jeldness held shares, but not about all of them. Additional information is available in some cases from newspaper stories.

Companies Whose Shares Had Value in 1937

Blaine Republic Company

Incorporated September, 1929, in Washington State. Head office in Seattle. In 1931 the company held seven old properties in the vicinity of Republic, Washington. By 1937 it had leased its mines to another company. Olaus Jeldness was active in the Republic area at various times, but I have found no evidence of his involvement with the Blaine Republic Company other than as a shareholder.

Butte Highlands Mining Company

This was a large gold mining company with mines in the mountains about 13 miles south of Butte, Montana. It was one of the largest producers of gold in the state for several years. Although incorporated in Delaware in 1929 to take over existing mines, it was said to be controlled by "mining and professional men of Butte and Spokane,"⁴⁷⁸ but its head office was in Butte. I have not discovered any direct link to Olaus Jeldness, either in management or in the development of its properties. In 1937 Butte Highlands shares were the most valuable of his mining stocks. Clippings in the family scrap book show that he, or his daughter, Agnes, followed the fortunes of Butte Highlands assiduously.

Morning Glory Mines, Inc.

Incorporated in October, 1932, in Montana, it had its head office in Spokane and leased eight mines near Basin, Montana. In 1937 it was an operating mine, employing 44 men. It was reported in 1934 that an inspection party included "Olaus Jeldness, who has studied the mine geologically."⁴⁷⁹ It is not clear if he was visiting as a geological consultant or an investor.

Eldorado Gold Placer Mines

Incorporated in 1932 in Montana and registered in Colorado, with head offices in Spokane. The company's directors were all from Spokane. It had mines in Montana, just west of Helena, and in 1937 acquired mines in Colorado. I have not discovered any direct link to Olaus Jeldness, either in management or in the development of its properties.

Virginia City Gold Mining Company

Incorporated in 1932 in Washington State, it had its head office in Spokane and operating mines and mill near Virginia City, Montana. Olaus Jeldness was elected a director in 1934.⁴⁸⁰

Companies Whose Shares Had Little or no Value in 1937

Associated Mines Corp.

An Idaho company, incorporated in 1918, with mines in Camas County, in southern Idaho. I found no further information. There were many mining companies with similar names. I may not have identified the correct one.

Champion Mines Corporation

Jeldness had been president of a Spokane company, Champion Consolidated Mining Company, incorporated in 1916 to acquire 47 claims in the Bohemia District, on the western edge of the Cascade Mountains, east of Eugene, Oregon. These were old mines, first discovered in 1858, that had produced a large amount of gold. In 1917 the company was dissolved in favour of a new, more substantially financed company, Champion Mines Corporation.⁴⁸¹ Jeldness was no longer president, but he remained a director. This company was soon bought out by another new company, West Coast Mines company, based in Portland. There is no evidence that Jeldness was involved with West Coast Mines.

Golden Rod Mining Company.

The company was controlled by Spokane interests and its head office was in Spokane, although its mine was in Madison County, south-eastern Montana. It produced and shipped gold concentrates to a smelter in Butte. It was reported in 1933 that "O. Jeldness of Spokane is geologist."⁴⁸²

Liberty Gold Mining Company

This was a Washington company, with head office in Spokane and a gold mine in Idaho. In 1931 it was reported that mail addressed to the president was returned and that the company "was probably dead."⁴⁸³ I have found no evidence that Olaus Jeldness was connected to this company other than as a shareholder.

Lincoln Mining Company

The Lincoln Mining Company was an old company, incorporated in Utah in 1892,⁴⁸⁴ but with mines in Idaho. It seems to have been an active producer in the 1930s,⁴⁸⁵ so the assessors evaluation of the shares as valueless may be in error. I have found no evidence that Olaus Jeldness was directly involved with the Lincoln Mining Company.

Lone Pine Surprise Consolidated Mining Co.

A Washington corporation with head offices in Spokane and mines near Republic, Washington. Olaus Jeldness was on the Board of Directors.⁴⁸⁶ A 1926 report stated that it had been a steady producer of gold and silver ore, but had been dormant since June 1, 1924.⁴⁸⁷ I have found no later information.

Macdonald Syndicate

Drilled for oil in south-western Alberta and northern Montana.

Rebate Gold Mining Co.

No information

Ostend Development Corporation.

No information

ANNEX 3 SOME LESS FAMILIAR JELDNESS ANECDOTES

Jefferson Lewis and the Mysteries of Foreign Exchange

In 1913, Rossland's winter carnival included a meeting and banquet for old timers. Olaus Jeldness was there and gave a speech, reminiscing about the old days. To climax his remembrances he told a story about a nameless partner (almost certainly Jefferson Lewis) who was skilled at the art of prospecting and claim development, but largely innocent of the ways of commerce and finance. They had sold a property (the Velvet?) to an English company and, upon receipt of the proceeds, had to pay a commission to a Mr. Smith and a Mr. Brown, agents who had assisted in the deal, and exchange to the bank for conversion of the sterling funds to dollars. He quoted his partner as saying " he understood about Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown, but declared that he did not understand why Mr. Exchange was paid anything..."⁴⁸⁸ The story amused the assembled old timers, but it is had a sad sequel. Jefferson Lewis (who was not at the reunion) was not as clever in handling money as was Jeldness. He appears to have squandered his fortune, became estranged from his wife⁴⁸⁹ and ended his life alone and in poverty in a Spokane hotel room in 1923.⁴⁹⁰

Olaus' Honesty

Leading the story with the statement that "Olaus Jeldness could have added \$30,000 to his fortune if he had wanted to, but he didn't," a Nevada news paper went on to extol his honesty. The story was picked up and reprinted in several newspapers of the area. Apparently an eastern financier had obtained an option and an expert opinion on a group of mining claims owned by Olaus. The expert had reported that there were surface indications of copper-bearing sulphide ores. The financier went east to recommend to a syndicate that the claims be purchased for \$30,000. Willard Snyder, a member of the syndicate and head of the Ely Consolidated Company for which Olaus was working, as a precaution, wired Olaus for his opinion on the claim. Olaus wired back "No development work, consequently no sulphides. Surface indications unpromising. Porphyry scarce. Has speculative value only." The syndicate backed off and, as the paper noted, Olaus lost "a tempting prize of thousands ... by absolute frankness." The newspaper concluded that the incident added to Olaus' reputation that he "could be depended upon to make a thoroughly reliable report upon any question put to him ... even when his own interests are involved"⁴⁹¹

High Jinks On Skis in Colorado .

As a Sunday recreation in the winter of 1878-79 the miners at the Poughkeepsie Gulch, San Juan County, Colorado, mining camp were holding a ski jumping contest. Olaus and Andrew were spectators. They had only one pair of skis between them. Eventually, watching the sometimes pathetic efforts of the skiers got the best of them. As Olaus described what happened:

...with a warning whoop to clear the track we started down the mountain slope each on one skee (sic), clearing the jump with the ease attained only by the few used to the fliers from boyhood.

Olaus' drilling partner was furious with him. If he had hidden his ability on skis they could have made a fortune betting on the outcome of a contest; "you ain't got the sense to go in out of the rain. You could have broke the whole godforsaken country." The Spokesman Review treated the story as another example of Olaus' honesty. Perhaps Olaus own characterization is better -- their "youthful enthusiasm and confidence in (their) superiority" simply overcame them.⁴⁹²

Olaus' Physical Strength

It is reported that when Jeldness and Bourne were developing the Iron King mine in Montana they wanted to acquire an adjoining claim that was owned by a prize fighter. The shaft of the Iron King was down 25 feet and men and material were hoisted in and out of the shaft with a hand-cranked windlass --

a hoist with a small-diameter, horizontal barrel around which a rope wound as the crank was turned, by hand, and the bucket at the end of the line was slowly lowered into or lifted out of the shaft. Given a long-handled crank and a small-diameter barrel, the person doing the lifting had considerable mechanical advantage, with the bucket rising very little with each turn. Nonetheless, working a windlass took considerable strength. One day, when Olaus was cranking on the windlass with one arm, hauling up a bucket, the prize fighter came by. When asked what he wanted for his claim the prize fighter said \$45,000, a price that Olaus declared "preposterous." Olaus offered to wrestle the man for it. If the prize fighter threw Olaus he would be paid the \$45,000; if Olaus threw him, Olaus would get the claim for nothing. The prize fighter, noting that Olaus was not a large man -- he was perhaps 5' 9" or 5' 10" -- was about to accept the offer when the bucket that Olaus was hoisting reached the top. Out stepped a six-foot man with a rock. "The eyes of the fighter roved from the hoisted miner and rock to the man who had hoisted them with one hand. 'I'll think it over.' He hesitated, 'and let you know tomorrow.' But he was not seen again." ⁴⁹³

Look Ma, No Hands!

In 1900 the City constructed a toboggan slide that ran from Columbia Avenue down Washington Street, over the bridge that then spanned the railroad tracks to the valley below, where there was a run-out up the hillside on the lower reaches of Deer Park mountain. It was a long, very steep hill, said to be 1258 feet long with a drop of 243 feet, an average grade of almost 20%⁴⁹⁴ -- and the toboggans went very fast. Tobogganers were equipped with a long pole to serve as a brake and a rudder for turning. One afternoon the skiers took time off from practicing for their races to have some recreation on the toboggan slide. According to the *Miner*:

With the exception of Mr. Jeldness, all the performers fell before the foot of the slide was reached; Mr. Jeldness, however, not only went down the hill and partly up the ascent on the south side without a spill, but did so without using his long steering pole once, for the most part holding it up above his head as he flew down the hill, to the delight of a crowd of onlookers who vigorously declared that "Olaus" was very much "all right."⁴⁹⁵

Always the showman!

On Ski Jumping and Ski Running

In commenting on a ski jumping competition at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, in 1909, at which Ole Larsen set a hill record, Olaus wrote:

It was conceded by the 15,000 spectators present, not one of whom left the ground till the last run had been made, that ski jumping has no equal in the world of athletic sports, where undaunted courage and skill are required. Unlike the favorite games of baseball and football, there are no wrangles with the referees, there are no "rooters" and no jealousies whatever connected with the ski sport. Every one of the contestants simply wishes to be along with the others to drink of the "wine of the wind," as they speed over the hills and the exhilarating intoxication derived therefrom precludes the thought of championship cup and medals. In contrast to the noisy and vulgar quarrels witnessed at every championship baseball and football game where limb and life are often brutally sacrificed, there was not even an hurrah from the 15,000 awe-struck and admiring spectators who witnessed the wonderful feats of the ski runners in Eau Claire a few days ago.⁴⁹⁶

I wonder if Olaus would have the same rosy view of competitive skiing today.

In an interview with the *Spokesman Review*, Olaus also expressed his captivation with ski running:

Skee running as a recreation or sport has probably no superior. It is exhilarating in the extreme. There is absolutely nothing vicious about it, and still it calls for and develops courage of a high order. Think of standing on the crest of a mountain many thousands of feet in height and miles of slope, and contemplate that you will glide down its steep and rugged side, sometimes at the rate of a mile a minute, dodging and leaping cliffs and corners and sailing through space for long distances and you will understand that brain and muscle

must work in perfect accord.⁴⁹⁷

Good skees are made of strong but light hardwood, and for an adult should be about nine and a half feet long and three and three-quarter inches wide, with thickness of one inch in the center, tapering to a quarter of an inch at the ends. The front is turned up like a skate and a groove three quarters of an inch wide and a quarter of an inch deep should be plowed in the center of the bottom. This has the tendency to keep the skee steady when traveling. A coat of oil, polished off with beeswax, makes the skee as slippery as ice, A leather strap, fastened in the center to fit the boot of the runner, completes the skee.⁴⁹⁸

ANNEX 4

THOMAS WALSH AND OLAUS JELDNESS

Olaus related the story about ski jumping in Colorado (Annex 3, p. 97) in a letter to the *Spokesman Review*.⁴⁹⁹ He said that it was inspired by a picture in the newspaper of Mrs. E. R. McLean and her infant son, reputed to be "the richest boy in the world." The picture brought back happy memories of times gone by. The boy's maternal grandfather was Thomas F. Walsh, who, according to Olaus, was his "drilling partner in the Alaska Mine, Poughkeepsie Gulch, San Juan County, Colorado" in the "later seventies."

Who was Thomas Walsh?

Like Olaus, Thomas Walsh was a young immigrant to the United States. Born in 1850 to a moderately successful farm family, near Clonmel, in southern County Tipperary, Ireland, he left school at age 12 to be apprenticed to a millwright.⁵⁰⁰ At a time and place where much industrial machinery was still made of wood, a millwright was a specialized and highly skilled carpenter. Thus, unlike Olaus, Walsh had a trade that was much in demand and served him well when he reached the western American mining frontier where many wooden structures, including instant towns, were to be built.. He did not need to be a miner, drilling, blasting and digging in other people's tunnels, to make a more than comfortable living.

Faced with few attractive opportunities at home, in 1869, having completed his apprenticeship, Walsh immigrated to the United States, four years before Olaus left Norway. Landing in Boston he went to live with an aunt in Worcester, Massachusetts. Starting as a labourer, he eventually had some success as a contractor and, having accumulated a small nest egg, headed west to Colorado to seek his fortune (1871).⁵⁰¹ There he built bridges for the Colorado Central Railway and continued to add to his purse.⁵⁰² One did well, but did not get truly rich in late nineteenth century Colorado by working as a carpenter. For that, one became a *successful* prospector and mine developer. However, he had to learn the game.

From Colorado, in 1875 Walsh was drawn to the gold rush in the Black Hills of Dakota Territory, slowly travelling there in a wagon train with experienced miners from whom he absorbed useful information about geology, prospecting and mining.⁵⁰³ He settled in Deadwood where he again plied his trade as a carpenter, building buildings and doing other odd carpentry jobs. Competent, trained carpenters were in short supply; Walsh did well financially and again accumulated funds. He used some of his money to grubstake promising prospectors and in his spare time he continued to study geology, prospecting and mining and made some tentative stabs at prospecting himself. When some of his prospectors struck pay dirt, Walsh received a share in the claims. It is also reported that on the advice of his miner friends Walsh

declined the opportunity to become a partner in what became a very rich mine.ⁿⁿⁿ His miner friends stated emphatically that serious gold deposits could not be found in the type of geological formation in which the claim was located.⁵⁰⁴ They were wrong. From this experience, Walsh learned to distrust conventional wisdom in the mining field. Despite missing out on a share in a rich property, Walsh accumulated considerable wealth in Deadwood and learned much about prospecting for and mining of precious metals.

The following year Walsh returned to Colorado, part of the rush of prospectors to the new bonanza, Leadville. In Leadville, Walsh used his funds to acquire a hotel that he operated successfully and profitably for several years while he continued his practice of grubstaking prospectors, with some small successes and some failures.⁵⁰⁵ He continued to study geology and mining from books and from discussions with miners and prospectors, and again did some prospecting. Eventually he came to accept a theory, roundly rejected by the mining community, that gold could be found in deep veins high in the mountains in the Ouray region of San Juan County, not far from Poughkeepsie Gulch.⁵⁰⁶ His hunch paid off with the fabulously productive Camp Bird collection of mines.⁵⁰⁷ He sold the mines to British interests and became a very wealthy man -- but not as wealthy as contemporary rumours asserted. His wealth was estimated to be as high as \$100 million (about \$4.2 billion in today's dollars), but when his estate was probated the total was more modest \$6.5 million (about \$150 million today).⁵⁰⁸ In 1898 he settled in Washington D.C. where, as a committed Republican during a period of Republican administrations, he moved in the highest governmental and social circles. Thomas Walsh died in April, 1910, perhaps of a heart attack, perhaps of lung cancer, perhaps of a combination.⁵⁰⁹

I can well believe that Olaus and Walsh would have become friends if they met up in the 1870s. They had much in common. Both were highly intelligent young men, with strong intellectual interests, not only in geology and mining, but also in broader affairs, cast together in the rough, crude society of early mining camps. Both may have been religious sceptics. As discussed earlier, Olaus later became explicitly and publicly an agnostic, a member of the Free Thought movement. Walsh grew up as a Catholic and later in life he made donations to Catholic churches and hospitals including an organ to a small, local Catholic church in Washington.⁵¹⁰ However, these were the only outward signs that he had any affection for the Catholic Church and they may as well have been simply acts of philanthropy or gestures of remembrance to his family. Indeed, his daughter referred to him as a "Catholic apostate" -- as one who had renounced the faith. He was married in the protestant church at which his wife-to-be was the featured singer in the choir. When he died, at his own insistence his funeral was a small, private ceremony, for family only, conducted not by a Catholic priest or protestant minister but by an official of the Masonic Order. At that

ⁿⁿⁿ It was widely reported that the claim in question became the fabulous Homestake mine that produced gold for decades and was the foundation of the Hearst family fortune. Walsh spoke publicly about the incident, deriding himself as a "dumb Irishman" for having turned it down. However, Walsh's biographer, John Stewart, adduces evidence that the claim could not have been the Homestake, but may have been an adjacent, lesser property that was eventually incorporated into the Homestake [Stewart, J. (2007a). Thomas Walsh: Progressive Businessmand and Colorado Mining Tycoon. Boulder, Colorado, University Press of Colorado.]. Nonetheless, it was a rich property.

time, Freemasonry was anathema to the Catholic Church and, indeed, not long after Walsh's death membership in the Masons invited automatic excommunication. Shortly before his death, his daughter and her husband received instruction for conversion to Catholicism, showing that she had not been raised in the church.⁵¹¹ However, all of this may be irrelevant. There is no direct evidence that either Olaus' or Walsh had similar sceptical views about religion at the early stage in both men's lives when they might have been together in Deadwood or Leadville.

Whereas, apart from geology and mining, Olaus' intellectual interests ran strongly to social and moral affairs, Walsh's tended to be in science and its practical applications. As a youngster at school he had already shown a fascination with minerals and metallurgy.⁵¹² In Leadville he was active promoting and attempting to establish a new type of furnace to smelt low grade sulphide ores, the so-called pyritic furnace that burned sulphide in the ore to provide the heat necessary for smelting, saving on fuel costs. The Leadville smelter was not successful; the ore contained too much zinc, making it inappropriate for the process.⁵¹³ When he became successful in Colorado, Walsh developed elaborate plans for the harnessing of Colorado rivers for the generation of electricity and was the founding president of a national irrigation commission concerned with the use of mountain rivers to provide water for agriculture, industry and personal consumption in the western dry lands and hence to encourage western settlement. The development of the then young field of aviation also attracted his attention and he became an active member (and president) of the Washington Aero club. Government recognition followed. He was appointed United States' commissioner for the Paris exposition of 1900 and as a result of that he developed a close friendship with the King of Belgium (who provided a golden crib for his first grandchild) and became a member of the American Chambers of Commerce in Paris, Naples and New York. He was a member of several scientific societies, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Association of Mining Engineers and the National Geographic Society. But, like Olaus, he also had a strong social conscience. He was well known for his generosity and his philanthropy and for his support of the higher education that life had denied to him. In addition to supporting students and research at the Colorado School of Mines, he provided a prize for the best essay on some aspect of Irish history to George Washington University.⁵¹⁴

In all of these respects Walsh's accomplishments vastly exceeded those of Olaus Jeldness -- but then they were achieved from a platform of very considerable wealth and political influence that Olaus had never achieved.

What about the Alaska mine story? Olaus' assertion that he and Thomas Walsh were drilling partners in the Alaska mine in the "late seventies" is problematic. In the "later seventies" (and the early eighties) Thomas Walsh was based in Leadville, some 200 kilometres north of Poughkeepsie Gulch as the crow flies (and much farther by land, through the mountains). He operated a busy, successful hotel until he sold it in 1880, and he prospected and developed mining properties in the Leadville vicinity for several years thereafter. There is no record of him at Poughkeepsie Gulch. In any case, given Walsh's financial

successes, why would he have been pounding steel in the walls of the Alaska Mine with Olaus, employed as a common miner? Walsh had not fallen on hard times and if he was trying to learn the silver mining trade at first hand why would he not have done so closer to home? The puzzle is magnified by the observation of another reporter that "... contrary to general belief, (Thomas Walsh) is said never to have been a miner himself."⁵¹⁵ Of course, not all newspaper stories are to be accepted at face value. But, wherein lays the truth? In Olaus' story? In the Walsh historiography?

I don't doubt that Olaus and Thomas Walsh were acquainted and probably for a time, were friends. There were many opportunities for this to occur. They could have met in the Black Hills where they both were at about the same time. Had Walsh befriended the Jeldness boys as he had so many other seekers after gold? Or, did they meet in Leadville where again they both were at about the same time (although Olaus stay there was brief)? I have found no evidence to answer these questions, but it is possible that they met up in Deadwood and went together to Leadville.

In any case, it appears that in his letter to the *Spokesman Review*, Olaus misremembered the venue of his encounter with Walsh. I strongly doubt that the mining partner in the Alaska mine was Thomas Walsh; it must have been someone else. However, if among his friends and acquaintances there was ever someone whom Olaus would have wanted to be, I am sure that someone would have been Thomas Walsh. Walsh had achieved the success in mining and the riches that flowed from it, to which Olaus aspired all his life. Did his longing distort his memory?

ANNEX 5

SOME BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

On Some of the People (Non-Family) Associated with Olaus Jeldness

George and Mathilda Ambs

George G Ambs was part owner of a saloon and a rooming house in Spokane around the turn of the 20th century, and for a time served on the City Council. On the birth registration of his first child he listed his occupation as "capitalist"; he was a wealthy financier. Apparently he lent money to Olaus, secured by a mortgage on the Rex, which was held by his widow, Mathilda Ambs, of Riverside, California, after his death. It was because of default this mortgage as well as on taxes that Olaus lost the Rex Theatre in the middle of the depression of the 1930s.

Jonathan Bourne

Born in Massachusetts in 1855 and educated at Harvard, Jonathan Bourne settled in Portland, Oregon, in 1878 where he studied law. Called to the bar in 1881, he then practiced law in Portland. As a politician, he served briefly in the Oregon House of Representatives (1885-86) and for one term in the United States Senate (1907-1913). However, it was his activities as a businessman and financier, particularly in the mining industry, that he intersected with Olaus Jeldness. He owned or funded mining ventures in the Okanagan, Montana and elsewhere that involved Olaus. Not surprisingly, given his interests in silver mines, he was a devoted member of the silver lobby that attempted (unsuccessfully) to have the United States re-monetize silver in the late nineteenth century and thus increase its price. Late in life he entered the newspaper business in Washington D. C., where he died in 1940.

Arthur Clabon

Arthur Clabon had a real estate and security brokerage in Rossland in the late 1890s and was active in politics in the provincial election of 1898 as the lead man in an "opposition committee," organized to oppose the Turner government. However, his primary interest was in mining, primarily as a promoter, and like so many mining men he was peripatetic, following the latest boom. He left Rossland just after the turn of the century and became involved in mining in the Boundary and Similkameen areas. He played a major role in one of the mines at Hedley. He then went east to the booming Cobalt district of Ontario, before returning to settle in Vancouver. In Vancouver he was one of the prime movers of the Mining Men's Club and a Board of Trade committee on mining. He died in an accident near Revelstoke in October, 1918.

Engwald Engen

Engwald Engen was a Norwegian-immigrant skier. He was born in Norway in 1886, but when he was very young, his family immigrated to Ishpeming, an iron-mining town that became the skiing capital of Michigan, where he spent some years and learned to ski before returning to Norway and more skiing. He returned to the United States in 1903, joined the substantial Norwegian community in Minneapolis where he had relatives, found employment in a mill and helped develop skiing in the area. He moved to Grand Forks, British Columbia, in 1907 before settling in the mountain-top, mining town, Phoenix, where he became the star of the skiing community and where he was living when he visited Spokane in 1913. Engen dominated skiing at the Rossland winter carnival for several years. In 1917, when the mines of Phoenix were giving out, he moved to Princeton and then to Penticton, founding ski clubs and developing skiing in both places. Along with another outstanding Norwegian skier, Nels

Nelson of Revelstoke, he also promoted skiing in the West Kootenays in the early 1930s. Engen died in Penticton in 1943.

Arthur Goodeve

There were two Goodeve brothers in the druggist business in Rossland, Arthur Samuel and William Henry. William seems to have tended the store while Arthur had larger ambitions. Known as a brilliant orator, Arthur was a successful politician at all levels. He served as alderman (1898) and mayor of Rossland (1899 and 1900) then as a provincial cabinet member before being elected as Conservative MP for the Kootenay district (1908). He won re-election in the 1911 Macdonald sweep of the Laurier regime and held a minor position in the new government. In 1912 he resigned his seat in parliament when he was appointed to the Board of Railway Commissioners. He died of heart failure, in Toronto, in 1923.

Robert Ingersoll⁵¹⁶

Robert Ingersoll was born in the rural village of Dresden in upstate New York, on August 11, 1833. His father was a Presbyterian minister who maintained a strict Christian household while vigorously preaching abolition of slavery. His abolitionist stance got him into trouble with parish after parish and as a result the Ingersoll family had an itinerant existence, including a period when the elder Ingersoll was a travelling camp-meeting revivalist preacher. Eventually, the intolerance of parishioners ended his preaching career. After completing his schooling, Robert tried teaching for a time and then, with his brother, studied law. The brothers were called to the bar in Illinois in 1854, after an amazingly brief period of study, and began their practice there. He had fabulous oratorical talents and must have been a formidable presence in the courtroom. A committed abolitionist, during the Civil War he organized a cavalry regiment (the Eleventh Illinois) that, as its colonel, he led with distinction at the battle of Shiloh in April, 1862. He was captured and sat out the rest of the war on parole. As his legal career blossomed, he dabbled in politics and soon became the darling of the Republican party. He moved to the centres of power, in Washington and then New York. He had some notable legal triumphs, but it was his oratorical talent that made his name a household word throughout the country. His orations, on topics from history, literature and public affairs, but most notably on the evils of organized religion, were a popular form of entertainment. He made speaking tours across the country (including a foray into Victoria, British Columbia), the fees from, which, together with his law practice earnings, made him a wealthy man. Known widely as "the Great Infidel," he died in July 1899 at age 65.

H W C Jackson

Hugh William Cother Jackson was born in Lochgilphead, Ayrshire, Scotland in 1865.⁵¹⁷ I have discovered nothing about his life in Scotland, but I suspect that he was employed by a newspaper or magazine. He immigrated to Canada in 1894. I don't know when he arrived in Rossland. However, he married a woman, Margaret, who was born in Ontario and I have found no record of the marriage in British Columbia genealogical records. It is possible that he stopped in Ontario and got married before he continued on to Rossland. In any case, he became part owner of the *Rossland Miner* in 1896.⁵¹⁸ His tenure there was brief; the newspaper was sold to representatives of F. A. Heinze, who owned the Trail smelter, in August, 1897.⁵¹⁹ Jackson then became the secretary of the Rossland Board of Trade.⁵²⁰ He was also involved in mining, at various times described as a mine operator and a mining broker.⁵²¹ In September, 1904, he left Rossland for Spokane⁵²² where he engaged in both his previous occupations. At times he was the assistant editor, sporting news, or a reporter for the *Spokesman Review* and at times a mining broker.⁵²³ In the latter capacity he was associated with Olaus Jeldness in his early involvement with the Apex Mine (see above, p. 46) and I suspect the in his former capacity he was largely responsible for the extensive publicity given to Olaus' skiing ventures on Silver Hill, in Spokane (see above, p. 56).

Jackson died in Spokane in 1937.⁵²⁴

Ole Larsen

Another skier of some repute in Norway, Ole Larsen emigrated to the United States in 1907, passed through Minnesota (where he picked up a wife, Grace) and Wisconsin. While he was in the mid-west he set a hill record at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, jumping 131 feet. Larsen settled in Spokane in 1909 where he was employed briefly by the McGoldrick Lumber Company and then longer-term by the Washington Mill Company, a producer of lumber, sashes, doors and furniture. He was variously described as a machine operator, carpenter and cabinet maker. Olaus read a report and saw pictures of Larson's record setting jump at Eau Claire and raved about it in a letter to the chairman of Rosslund's winter carnival. He found a suitable hill near Spokane, built a jump and trained Larsen in the hopes that he would win the Jeldness Trophy at the Rosslund Winter Carnival. In the event, Larsen won the professional jump but did not compete for the Jeldness Trophy.

A.J. Pritchard⁵²⁵

Andrew J Pritchard was born in Connecticut in 1830 but raised in Ohio. He served in Missouri units in the Union army during the Civil War, then, after the war, like many other young men of the time, he drifted around the plains and western states. Among other occupations that he tried were prospecting and placer mining. At some time he became captivated by the principles of the National Liberal League and went to the Coeur d'Alene region of northern Idaho (1878) on a combined mission to find a place for a religious colony based on Liberal League principles and to prospect for gold and silver. His silver and gold discoveries set off a rush to the area (1882) that, two years later, included Olaus Jeldness.

ANNEX 6

JELDNESS FAMILY TREE

The information for the Jeldness family tree is from various sources. Much of it was found through Ancestry.com, but the digital archives of Washington and Oregon were also important. For Olaus' direct descendants I have supplemented public sources with interviews and correspondence with some of them.

For the Norwegian roots of Olaus' family, I have drawn heavily on a family tree prepared by T. Husby, grandson of Randi Gjeldnes, the second youngest of Olaus' siblings,⁵²⁶ and on a book by Magne Holten on Norwegian emigration to America.⁵²⁷ A copy of the Husby family tree is in the Rosslund Archives.

With a few exceptions, for Olaus' brothers and sisters I have not attempted to list their descendants beyond their immediate offspring. The family tree prepared by T. Husby does not trace the Gjeldnes family back any farther than Nils Gjeldnes, Olaus' father. That is where this family tree starts also.

1. Nils Hallvardsen GJELDNESS (b.1812-Stangvik,Norway d.1893-Stangvik,Norway)

- sp: Asbjorg Olsdatter STRUPSTAD (b.1826-Alvundeid,Surnadal,Norway m.1848 d.1878-Stangvik,Surnadal,Norway)
- 2. Hallvard (Halvor) Nilsen JELDNESS (b.1848-Stanvik,Norway d.1907-Astoria,Oregon)
 - sp: Ildrid (Ildie) Olsdatter BROSKE (b.1857-Stangvik,Norway m.1884 d.1947-Astoria,Oregon)
 - 3. Ole Emil JELDNESS (b.1885-Astoria,Oregon d.Astoria,Oregon)
 - 3. Nels (Nelson?) Arthur JELDNESS (b.1887-Astoria,Oregon)
 - sp: Signa LARSON (b.1887-Sweden m.1928)
 - 3. Henry Egbert JELDNESS (b.1894-Astoria,Oregon)
 - sp: Mernie G HAY (b.1895-Oregon m.1910 d.1943-Oregon)
 - 4. Benjamin H JELDNESS (b.1916-Astoria,Oregon d.1987-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Evalee
 - 4. Zala JELDNESS (b.1924-Astoria,Oregon)
- 2. Maria Nilsdatter GJELDNESS (b.1852-Norway)
 - sp: William Donald MEYER (b.1856-Missouri,USA m.1878)
 - 3. Minnie C MEYER (b.1882-Missouri,USA)
 - 3. Arthur F MEYER (b.1885-Missouri,USA)
 - 3. Alma M (Almeda May) MEYER (b.1886-Kansas,USA)
- 2. Gura Nilsdatter GJELDNESS (b.1853-Norway d.1928-Portland,Oregon,USA)
 - sp: Johan (John) August OVERLAND (b.1846-Norway d.1926-Portland,Oregon,USA)
 - 3. Olise (Alice) OVERLAND (b.1884-Missouri,USA)
 - 3. Olaf OVERLAND (b.1885-Missouri,USA)
- 2. Ola (Ole) Nilsen JELDNESS (b.1854-Stangvik,Surnadal,Norway d.1942-Ilwaco,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Ingabord Olsdatter BROSKE (b.1854-Stangvik,Surnadal,Norway m.1883 d.1931-Ilwaco,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - 3. Nils Olaus JELDNESS (b.1884-Clatsop County,Oregon,USA d.1960-Clasop County,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Laura Lou (b.1889 d.1974-Clasop County,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - 3. Elfryda Olympia JELDNESS (b.1887-Astoria,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Chesley D (or Charles?) SMITH (m.1905)
 - 3. Ole Albert JELDNESS (b.1890-Astoria,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Lorraine Jane HESS (d.1954-Astoria,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - 4. Beverly JELDNESS (b.1919)
 - 3. Alva Eva JELDNESS (b.1891-Astoria,Oregon)
 - sp: Joseph EGGER (m.1935 d.1956)
 - 3. Henry Edward JELDNESS (b.1894 d.1980)
 - sp: Mernie Genevieve HAY (b.1895 m.1915 d.1943)
 - 4. Benjamin H JELDNESS (b.1916 d.1943)
 - 3. Elba JELDNESS
- 2. Olaus JELDNESS (b.1856-Stangvik,Norway d.1935-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Sigrid HENDRICKSON (b.1864-Norway m.1890 d.1929-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A.)
 - 3. Randie JELDNESS (b.1891-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A. d.1930-Tranquille,B. C.,Canada)
 - sp: Joseph George Gregory MORGAN (b.1889-Plainfield,Indiana,USA m.1914 d.1977-West Vancouver,B. C.,Canada)
 - 4. Joseph Jeldness MORGAN (b.1915-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A. d.1973-Everett,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Doris Ellen LAKE (b.1916-Washington,D.C.,U.S.A. m.1941(div) d.2004-Roberts Creek,B. C.,Canada)
 - 5. Robert Joseph MORGAN (b.1942-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Yvonne
 - 6. Veronica Scarlet MORGAN
 - sp: Dave MCKENZIE
 - 7. Violet MCKENZIE
 - 7. Sasha MCKENZIE
 - 5. Richard Lake MORGAN (b.1944-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Penelope Opal GILLAND (b.1947-Port Angeles,Washington,USA m.1968 d.2005)
 - 6. Melia April MORGAN (b.1969-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: LEWIS
 - 7. Adam Ray LEWIS (b.1985-Seattle,Wa.,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Andrea DAVIS (m.(div))
 - 8. Alanna Ray LEWIS (b.2005-Silverdale,Wa.,USA)
 - sp: WALTON
 - 7. Heidi May WALTON (b.1989-Seattle,Wa.,U.S.A.)



- sp: Brennan EDWARDS (m.2011)
 - 8. Ezekiel Magnus EDWARDS (b.2011-Junction City,Kansas,USA)
- 7. Daniel David WALTON (b.1991-Bremerton,Wa.,USA)
 - sp: Jared BROCK (b.1976 m.1994)
- 6. Fawn Richene MORGAN (b.1970-Seattle,Wa.,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Freddy MUSIC (b.1967-Bremerton,Wa.,USA m.1993)
 - 7. Morgan Melody MUSIC (b.1995-Bremerton,Wa.,USA)
 - 7. Molly Melody MUSIC (b.1997-Bremerton,Wa.,USA)
 - 7. Marley Melody MUSIC (b.1999-Bremerton,Wa.,USA)
 - 7. Magen Melody MUSIC (b.2001-Silverdale,Wa. USA)
 - sp: Jennifer Lynne HUDSON (b.1944-Shropshire,Eng. m.1987)
- 5. Ross Gregory MORGAN (b.1946-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Cheryl Lynn HOLDER (b.1949-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A. m.1969(div))
 - 6. Kimberley Ann MORGAN
 - sp: Stan KOTT
 - 7. Morgan KOTT
 - 6. Shelly MORGAN
 - sp: ? ?
 - sp: Joni M STRABLE (b.1947-California,USA m.1977)
- 5. Diana Frances MORGAN (b.1948-Seattle, Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Michael MORSE
 - 6. Galadriel Joy (b.1969-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: William R BORAGNO (m.(div))
 - 6. Heather Blossom BORAGNO (b.1972)
 - sp: Robert C ZORNES (m.(div))
 - 6. Joseph Samson ZORNES (b.1976)
- 5. Randie Margaret MORGAN (b.1951-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Tracy W TAME (m.(div))
 - 6. Amanda Josephine TAME
 - sp: Richard PRICE
 - 6. Laura Lillian PRICE
- 5. David John MORGAN (b.1954-Vancouver,BC)
 - sp: Kathy TIERNEY
 - 6. Holly Mae MORGAN (b.1974)
- 5. Alan Chandler MORGAN (b.1958-Vancouver,BC)
- 4. Margaret Agnes MORGAN (b.1919-Seattle,Washington,U.S.A. d.1925-Hoquiam,Washington,U.S.A.)
- 3. Agnes JELDNESS (b.1896-Rosslaand,B. C.,Canada d.1973-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Nils B. Jr. HERSLOFF (b.1901-Montclair,New Jersey m.1925(div) d.1956-Cossakle,New York)
- 3. Margaret JELDNESS (b.1899-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A. d.1917-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A.)
- 2. Randi Nilsdatter GJELDNESS (b.1859-Norway d.1938-Stanwood,Washington,USA)
 - sp: Erik (Erick) Pederson HUSBY (b.1854-Norway m.1879 d.1952-Mount Vernon,Washington,USA)
 - 3. Asbjorg HUSBY (b.1881-Norway)
 - 3. Nils HUSBY (b.1883-Norway)
 - 3. Magnus HUSBY (b.1885-Norway)
 - 3. Olaus HUSBY (b.1887-Norway)
 - 3. Gunnar HUSBY (b.1887-Norway)
 - 3. Magnhild HUSBY (b.1892-Norway)
 - 3. Ragna HUSBY (b.1895-Norway)
 - 3. Henrik HUSBY (b.1899-Norway)
 - 3. Gunvor HUSBY (b.1903-Norway)
- 2. Anders (Andrew) JELDNESS (b.1861-Norway d.1956-Jackson County,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Ida JOHNSON (b.1862-Norway m.1882 d.1897-Spokane,Wash.,U.S.A.)
 - 3. Otto Andrew JELDNESS (b.1882-Oregon)
 - sp: Beulah Bel (b.1888-Minnesota,USA d.1976-Jackson County,Oregon,USA)
 - 3. Etta JELDNESS (b.1891)
 - 3. Flora JELDNESS (b.1894)
 - sp: Gertrude (Gertie) LYGRESTEN (b.1872-Norway m.1903 d.1965-Jackson County,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - 3. Arthur JELDNESS (b.1905 d.1987-Jackson County,Oregon,U.S.A.)
 - sp: Zella R (b.1913 d.1991-Washington State)

ANNEX 7
SOME JELDNESS FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS



Olaus and Friend

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Olaus and Ski Trophies,

Spokane Circa 1900

Courtesy Morgan Family



The Jeldness Brothers

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Olaus

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Sigrid

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Olaus and girls

Date unknown. Probably 1902

Courtesy Morgan family



Sigrid and girls

Date unknown. Probably 1902

Courtesy Morgan family



Marie Hendriksen and Sigrid Hendriksen Jeldness

Michigan, 1917

Courtesy Morgan family



Margaret as a Child

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Margaret

Probably 1917

Courtesy Morgan family



Jeldness House

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Jeldness House

2011



On the steps of the Jeldness House,

1929

Olaus, centre of back row. Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, famous Norwegian explorer who led the first expedition to cross Greenland in 1888, centre of front row

Courtesy Morgan family



Randie

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Agnes

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family



Randie and Joseph

Date unknown

Courtesy Morgan family

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