

## Autobiographical note on Kristoffer F. Paulson

My father was a patriotic American, a Norwegian nationalist and a charter member of the Norwegian-American Historical Association in 1925. He gave his sons names like Kristoffer, Frimann and Jon Rieber, which meant a lifetime of other people never getting our names straight. “You mean it’s Kris, not Chris, ff, not ph and that’s Freeman, right?” My brother had it even tougher. Pastors, teachers, secretaries and a host of clerks seemed compelled to spell his name John Reiber. But we survived.

Fairy tales are fairy tales, fish stories are fish stories and the truth is the truth. It was not once upon a time, but in the summer of 1955 that I was introduced to Norway, the Oslo Summer School and Ulvik in Hardanger. During a week’s break from the Summer School, I arranged to go to Ulvik to visit my relatives. I met lots of relatives and discovered I was probably related, however distantly, to half of the town. I met Sjur Lindebrekke, Herr Tveito, Unn Rødlund and Tina Helene Solberg and many more. We all had a marvelous time. Thus began a week of visiting my relatives in Ulvik, a beginning to my own Norwegian saga and a life-time adventure with the people, the language and the folk tales of Norway. That week also brought into focus a recognition of my own Norwegian heritage, both in Norway and America.

All of these stories began with stories I told my children, and retold to adults and other children. I look forward to grandchildren, because the stories are absolutely true and really good.

Kris Paulson