

# Finding Thora Olsen

By David Bowman

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In a moment of quiet desperation, early one Sunday morning I submitted a question on a website run by a woman named Jean in Minnesota that showcased her family's origins in Norway. I came across the site while randomly Googling about Norwegian genealogy. My question was regarding the birthplace and parents' names of my great-grandmother, Thora Olsen Morkrid, which after two years of looking, I was still unable to find.

Jean called me at home about an hour after I submitted my question to ask a few more questions and then she said she'd be in touch. By the next morning, my new best friend Jean had identified my great-grandmother's place of birth as well as her parents' names and even a picture of Thora's father.

The real value of this story is how she found this information. Jean looked at the information I had regarding Thora's entry into the U.S. (assuming I found the correct Thora Olsen). The border crossing info said Thora's last residence was Arendal and her father's name was Olof Hellagsen (very hard to read). Jean looked for a Thora Olsen leaving Kristiansand (most likely port near Arendal) within the 30 days prior to arriving in the U.S. There were none, so she then traced several of the other passengers listed with Thora on the ship entering the U.S. She found them leaving Kristiansand the same day with a woman named "Thuri Olsen Sandnes".