

Submitted by Dave Moxness

The following is an excerpt from the *Memoirs, 1925-50* of George F. Kennan, who was an eminent authority on Russia in those times. He tells of meeting his soon-to-be inlaws in their home town of Kristiansand, Norway, in 1932 ; the circumstances including his not feeling well, physically, at the time:

“ All this did not prevent my being received into the family from that moment on like a son and brother, and treated thenceforth, over some thirty-five years, with an openhearted warmth and kindness that ignored or accepted my failings and made the most of what was left. This was only the first of many visits to Norway, and I cannot leave it without recording a debt of gratitude to the memory of my wife’s parents: to her mother – a warm, open-hearted person, capable at time of childlike gaiety, but always against a background of a great maternal dignity and purity, a woman from whose lips I never heard an ungenerous or spiteful word, and her father: gaunt, gnarled, and taciturn, an oak root of a man, destined later to endure and survive mistreatment and concentration camp punishment at the hands of the Nazis – a stubborn and difficult person, but one from whom, again, over thirty years I never suffered a discourtesy or unkindness. No one who knew it could fail to love Norway for its nature, but even had the landscape been of the dreariest, one could not have failed to love it for such people. They gave to me in their undemonstrative way not only a second home, but also, over the years, a second country. “

(p.39, cited work)