

Magdalene Førland Underle Oral History Interview, 1981

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Underle, Magdalene Førland
Title	Magdalene Førland Underle Oral History Interview
Dates	1981 (inclusive) 1981 1981
Quantity	3 file folders 1 photographs 1 sound cassette 2 compact discs
Collection Number	t062
Summary	An oral history interview with Magdalene Førland Underle, a Norwegian immigrant.
Repository	Pacific Lutheran University, Archives and Special Collections Archives and Special Collections Pacific Lutheran University 12180 Park Avenue South Tacoma, Washington 98447 Telephone: 253-535-7586 Fax: 253-535-7315 archives@plu.edu
Access Restrictions	The oral history collection is open to all users.
Additional Reference Guides	
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Magdalene Underle was born on December 4, 1887 in Redal, Norway, which is located near Bergen. Her parents were Anders and Maren Førland, and Magdalene was the youngest of eight children. Anders was a sailor and also somewhat of a preacher. At one point, he went to the United States, where he settled in Seattle, WA, but later returned to Norway. In the fall of 1909, Magdalene's brother Ludwig, who was living in Mt. Vernon, WA, sent her a ticket to the United States. She spoke no English and attended Pacific Lutheran College to learn. She also became employed as a housekeeper, and her employer's children helped her with her English as well. In 1910, Magdalene began training at the Swedish Hospital in Seattle, WA and graduated second in her class. During World War I, she went to France as a nurse, and this work enabled her to obtain her American citizenship. After the war, Magdalene visited Norway, and on this trip, she met her husband, Lyder Underle. The couple was married in Mt. Vernon and then went to Draper, SD, where Lyder had a farm. Due to drought, they later moved to Tacoma, WA, where Lyder was a builder contractor and Magdalene worked at Tacoma

General Hospital. In Tacoma, Magdalene began attending the Baptist Church, but was not able to join any Scandinavian organizations. She still keeps her Norwegian heritage alive, however, by maintaining Scandinavian traditions and staying in contact with her relatives in Norway.

Lineage

Full Name: Magdalene Førland Underle. Maiden Name: Magdalene Førland. Father: Anders Førland. Mother: Maren Førland. Paternal Grandfather: Knute Foerland. Paternal Grandmother: Brita Førland. Maternal Grandfather: Anders Redal. Maternal Grandmother: Margrethe Redal. Brothers and Sisters: Karl Førland, Laurens Førland, Anders Førland, Ludvig Førland, Margrethe Førland, Inger Førland, Bertha Førland. Spouse: Lyder Underle.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Magdalene Underle on June 23, 1981 in Seattle, Washington. It contains information on family background, emigration, settling in, her career as a nurse, marriage, and Norwegian heritage. The interview also contains a photograph of Magdalene at PLU's Norwegian Festival (May 2, 1981). The interview was conducted in English.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

There are no restrictions on use.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

The Oral History collection project was started during an experimental course on Scandinavian Women in the Pacific Northwest. Students in the course were encouraged to interview women and learn about their experiences as immigrants to the United States. The project was continued and expanded with support from the president's office and by grants from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, from the Joel E. Ferris Foundation and the Norwegian Emigration Fund of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project was directed by Dr. Janet E. Rasmussen. The collection was transferred to the Archives and Special Collections Department.

Acquisition Information

Related Materials

To search and view Pacific Lutheran University's digitized images, visit our [Digital Assets Website](#)

Processing Note

The interview was conducted by Morrene Nesvig using a cassette recorder. A research copy was also prepared from the original. To further preserve the content of the interview, it is now being transferred to compact disc. We deliberately did not transcribe the entire interview because we want

the researchers to listen to the interviewee's own voice. The transcription index highlights important aspects of the interview and the tape counter numbers noted on the Partial Interview Transcription are meant as approximate finding guides and refer to the location of a subject on the cassette/CD. The recording quality is good

The collection was transcribed by Mary Sue Gee, Julie Peterson and Becky Husby.

Bibliography

Rasmussen, Janet Elaine. *New Land New Lives: Scandinavian Immigrants to the Pacific Northwest* Tacoma, Washington University of Washington Press 1993

Detailed Description of the Collection

The partial interview transcription highlights important aspects of the interview. Numbers may be used as guides to important subjects. Two numbers separated by a slash indicate that the first number is for cassette and the second for CD.

Container(s)	Description
Cassette	
62, side 1	007/06: PERSONAL BACKGROUND Born on December 4, 1887 in Redal, Norway, which is near Bergen.
62, side 1	021: PARENTS Anders Førland was a sailor. Her mother's name was Maren. Her father worked at PLC. He was somewhat of a preacher. Her father went to the U.S.
62, side 1	043: BROTHERS AND SISTERS She had seven siblings. Karl emigrated. Anders stayed in Norway. Ludvig and Laurens also emigrated.
62, side 1	060/07: GRANDPARENTS Her paternal grandfather, Knute Førland was a farmer. Her paternal grandmother's name was Brita. They were from Haugesund.
62, side 1	068: REDAL, NORWAY A farming village. The school was hard to get to.
62, side 1	082: FATHER IN U.S. Mother had her hands full with the children and the farm animals.
62, side 1	087: FØRLAND Means an area with a lot of fir trees.
62, side 1	096: WHY HER FATHER CAME TO THE U.S.

Container(s)	Description
	Times were very hard. He settled in the Seattle area. Worked building and in the woods.
62, side 1	119: WHY SHE CAME TO THE U.S. She was dared to.
62, side 1	131/08: FATHER CAME BACK TO NORWAY Deceased shortly after. Talks about why so many people emigrated.
62, side 1	152: Her brother, Ludvig sent her a ticket to the U.S. She came alone. Ludvig worked in Mt. Vernon clearing and building. His fiancée did housekeeping.
62, side 1	172: FEELING SAD LEAVING NORWAY Sad, but determined. Left from Bergen.
62, side 1	180: INTEREST IN NURSING Sick as a child. Helped deliver babies.
62, side 1	214/09: CROSSING THE ATLANTIC Wasn't very pleasant.
62, side 1	226: ELLIS ISLAND "Went from post to pillar."
62, side 1	235: Arrived in Seattle instead of Vancouver. Talks about the story behind this. Took train to Mt. Vernon and found the place herself because she had a picture of it.
62, side 1	263/10: LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES Spoke no English, her companion spoke English.
62, side 1	274: FIRST IMPRESSIONS New York was big. She was afraid of getting lost. Liked it out west. Impressions of Seattle and Mt. Vernon. Worked in Seattle.
62, side 1	292: Attended the Lutheran College there to learn English. Training in 1910 for nursing. (See counter I-350)
62, side 1	306: ALASKA EXHIBITION Attended the exhibition there was a crowd of people. Had two brothers in Seattle. One was a druggist and the other was a real estate man.
62, side 1	326: EMPLOYED AS A HOUSEKEEPER

Container(s)	Description
	The children taught her English. Her duties included helping the children and the cooking.
62, side 1	365/11: ATTENDED PACIFIC LUTHERAN ACADEMY Lived and worked at school. Learned English. (See counter I-292)
62, side 1	393: TRAINING IN 1910 AT THE SWEDISH HOSPITAL Hospital started in a hotel. She was second in her graduating class.
62, side 1	450/12: SOCIAL LIFE No time, she was busy with classes and work.
62, side 1	466: Hospital conditions in the early days. She became a surgery nurse.
62, side 1	492: REGISTRATION OF NURSES Started the year she graduated. Employed at the Ellensburg Hospital.
62, side 1	520/13: KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH RELATIVES AND WWI Nurse in France during this period. Became a citizen due to this work.
62, side 1	602: DUTIES IN FRANCE (ARMY HOSPITAL) Conditions were terrible.
62, side 1	618/01: TRIP TO NORWAY Went to Norway directly from the war. (See counter II-224) Took a boat from France to England to Bergen and then to Redal.
62, side 2	SIDE II:
62, side 2	029/02: TRIP TO NORWAY Met husband during this trip. Married in the U.S. He had a farm in South Dakota. They were married in Mt. Vernon, Washington.
62, side 2	044: MOVED TO SOUTH DAKOTA AND DEPRESSION Didn't like it, terrible drought. Lost their money in the bank. They lived in Draper, South Dakota between Mitchell and Rapid City.
62, side 2	075/03: COMING WEST No children. Drought brought them out here. Farmhouse near Tacoma, her husband was also a builder contractor. Employed as a nurse at Tacoma General Hospital.
62, side 2	104: DESCRIPTION OF FARM Located outside of the city limits east side of Tacoma.

Container(s)	Description
62, side 2	110: Had contact with Scandinavians. Not able to join the organizations, but sometimes went to the meetings.
62, side 2	120: Not common for women to work in those days. Her life's work, she was needed.
62, side 2	132/04: SCANDINAVIAN TRADITIONS Christmas asked Norwegian friends over for rommegrøt and fattigmand.
62, side 2	146: Women had it harder in Norway. It was more equal in the U.S.
62, side 2	156: CHURCH LIFE Member of the Baptist church in Tacoma.
62, side 2	167: INDIAN HOSPITAL Employed for a while. Present day boys correctional center. A lot of TB. Describes their typical working day.
62, side 2	224/05: SEVERAL TRIPS TO NORWAY Last trip they had a family reunion. Husband deceased about 1943. (See counter I-618, II-029)
62, side 2	256: NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE Still speaks and writes Norwegian. Talks of serving relatives.
62, side 2	274: Relatives visit from Norway. Discusses photographs of the family home.
62, side 2	303/06: NORWEGIAN CUSTOMS Wedding crown, sentre (?) drakt (bunad).
62, side 2	328: PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIV. NORWEGIAN FESTIVAL She attended the festival and wore her cultural dress.
62, side 2	333: HOBBIES Needlework, knitting, and klokkestrand.
62, side 2	357: NORWEGIAN KEEPSAKES Gave most away. Loves Norway and her adopted country. Couldn't think of living in Norway now.
62, side 2	374/07: SPEAKING NORWEGIAN TODAY

Container(s)	Description
	Not much chance to use it. She is living in the center with her brother.
62, side 2	400: CLOSSES WITH A NORWEGIAN SONG Translation - Can you forget old Norway? It is my birthplace and you can never forget it.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Emigration and immigration
 Depressions -- 1929
 Family--Norway
 Norway--Social conditions--1945-
 Norwegian-Americans--Ethnic identity
 Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs
 Ocean travel
 World War, 1914-1918

Personal Names :

Underle, Magdalene--Interviews
 (creator)
 Førland, Brita
 Førland, Knute
 Førland, Ludvig
 Førland, Anders
 Førland, Maren
 Redal, Anders
 Redal, Margrethe
 Underle, Lyder

Corporate Names :

Norwegian Heritage Festival (Tacoma, Wash.)
 Pacific Lutheran Academy (Tacoma, Wash.)
 Tacoma General Hospital (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Førland family
 Redal family
 Underle family

Geographical Names :

Draper (S.D.)
 Haugesund (Norway)
 Mt. Vernon (Wash.)
 Redal (Norway)
 Seattle (Wash.)
 Tacoma (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Domestics
Nurses

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