

Dagmar Elisabeth Lorentsen Riebe Oral History Interview, 1981

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Riebe, Dagmar Elisabeth Lorentsen
Title	Dagmar Elisabeth Lorentsen Riebe Oral History Interview
Dates	1981 (inclusive) 1981 1981
Quantity	3 file folders 3 photographs 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t118
Summary	An oral history interview with Dagmar Elisabeth Lorentsen Riebe, 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

Dagmar Riebe was born on April 4, 1896 in Vik, Helgeland, Norway, which is in the northern part of the country. Her parents were Lorents and Elise Pedersen, and she had five siblings: Kristian, Anna, Signe, and Adolfine, and another brother who died before Dagmar was born. Dagmar's father was a carpenter, and he passed away when Dagmar was seven years old. The family had a small farm with a few cows and sheep, and the girls did much of the farm work after their father died. When Dagmar was seventeen, she began working for a big household, where she cooked, ironed, cleaned, and did the wash. She stayed there for three years and then began cooking at another household. Kristian had immigrated to America in 1911, and in April 1926, Dagmar decided to join him in Minneapolis, MN. She stayed with friends of her brother for a few weeks and then obtained a cooking job for the owners of Crosby Flour Mills. She was one of eight cooks and worked for them for seven years. Dagmar met her husband, Paul Riebe, in St. Paul Minnesota. Paul was a painter and fisherman from Melbu, Norway. The couple moved to Tacoma, WA, and Paul fished during the summers. They also adopted Dagmar's nephew, Ralph Hansen, when he was seven and a half years old. After she was married, Dagmar did

housework and garden work only at her own home and obtained a job at Brown & Haley. Paul passed away in 1978. Through the years, Dagmar maintained Norwegian sewing and cooking traditions and also speaks Norwegian in her home. She was a member of the Daughters of Norway and attended Gloria Dei Lutheran church. She returned to Norway in 1930, 1945, and 1978, and contended that it was not the same country. Dagmar was happy to be both Norwegian and American.

Lineage

Full Name: Dagmar Elisabeth Lorentsen Riebe. Maiden Name: Dagmar Elisabeth Lorentsen. Father: Lorents Pedersen. Mother: Elise Pedersen. Paternal Grandfather: Johanna Pedersen. Maternal Grandmother: Emerentse Lund. Brothers and Sisters: Kristian Lorentsen, Anna Lorentsen, Signe Lorentsen, Adolfine Lorentsen. Spouse: Paul Ingval Riebe. Children: Ralph M. Hansen.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Dagmar Riebe on November 19, 1981 in Tacoma, Washington. It contains information on family background, emigration, employment, marriage, and Norwegian heritage. Also available are a program from the Normanna Male Chorus's 85th Anniversary Concert (November 4, 1973), a photograph of Dagmar's homeplace, two photographs of Dagmar at the time of the interview, and Dagmar's obituary from the Tacoma News Tribune (May 1, 1983). 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 Inger Nygaard Carr 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	
118, side 1	019: Dagmar Elisabeth Riebe. Maiden name is Lorentsen. Born in Vik, Helgeland, Norway in northern Norway.
118, side 1	047: PARENTS Lorents Pedersen, he died when Dagmar was seven years old. Her mother's name was Elise Knutson Pedersen.
118, side 1	091: Parents had a little farm. Father was a carpenter. He had a carpenter shop and built houses. Had a few cows and sheep on the farm.
118, side 1	133: GRANDPARENTS Maternal grandmother's name was Emerentse Lund. Dagmar grew up close to her grandparents. They had a big farm. Her paternal grandparents lived in Velfjord. Johanna Pedersen was Dagmar's grandmother's name.
118, side 1	213: BROTHERS AND SISTERS Three sisters and two brothers. One brother died before she was born. Other brother Kristian married and left for America.
118, side 1	285: CHILDHOOD HOME

Container(s)	Description
	Has not changed any from years ago. Her father built the house. Sister lives there now.
118, side 1	351: CHILDHOOD Always happy. Always working. Doing something outside.
118, side 1	373: SCHOOL There were four rooms in a building. The teachers were nice.
118, side 1	388: CHURCH They went every Sunday. The pastor had only one church.
118, side 1	438: Girls did farm work when their father died. Brother was not around much.
118, side 1	442: CHRISTMAS Had a tree every year. Baked cookies and bread. Sang songs. Ate rice pudding on Christmas Eve.
118, side 1	469: CHRISTMAS DAY Went to church. More Christmas in Norway than in the U.S. The feeling is different in Norway than here.
118, side 1	517: When she was 17, Dagmar worked in a big household in Norway. She did the cooking. Was in charge of things on Sundays, ironing, washing, cleaning, etc. This was the Brontsag's residence. She worked here for three years.
118, side 1	573: They had a fishing business in the winter. Owned a big store with groceries, had boats.
118, side 1	600: Lived with a friend in Norway who taught her cooking. Worked for another household and took over the cooking.
118, side 1	620: REASONS FOR LEAVING NORWAY Wanted to see her brother and wanted to get out. Brother had come to the U.S. in 1911.
118, side 1	643: Came to the U.S. in April 1926. Was cooking in Oslo until she left. Mother did not complain about her coming.
118, side 1	657: TRIP OVER

Container(s)	Description
	Bad weather all the way. Group of twelve stayed together on the boat, had fun. Took 14 days because the weather was so bad. Was 26 when she came over.
118, side 1	703: LANDED IN CANADA AND THEN WENT TO NEW YORK Did not go through Ellis Island. Went second-class.
118, side 1	723: Met a friend in New York, who took care of her. Left for Minneapolis. Knew little English, not much.
118, side 1	742: TRAIN TRIP Rough but fun.
118, side 1	747: FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF U.S. Surprised. Norway looked better, has beauty that no other country has.
118, side 1	762: ARRIVING IN MINNEAPOLIS Stayed with friends of her brother for a few weeks. Got a job with a millionaire as a cook.
118, side 1	801: Worked seven years for the owners of Crosby Flour Mills in Minnesota. Eight cooks in the house. Family had eight children.
118, side 1	826: TRIP TO NORWAY Went in 1930 before she was married to visit her mother.
118, side 1	834: War started in Europe.
118, side 1	838: Met her husband in St. Paul, Minnesota, Paul Riebe. He was from Northern Norway. He was a painter and did fishing.
118, side 1	858: WEDDING Was quiet. Went to the minister's office.
118, side 1	870: Wages at Crosby's was \$100 a month plus room and board.
118, side 1	886: Moved to her brother's for a few weeks. Had an old car that Dagmar and her husband drove to San Diego in 1943 as a wedding trip.
118, side 1	912:

Container(s)	Description
	Danish minister married them. A few friends were there. Had a reception. Wore a blue, velvet dress. Camellias were the flowers.
118, side 1	936: Husband belonged to a Norwegian singing club.
118, side 1	948: Describes driving out to San Diego, California. Terrible snowstorm. Went through Kansas and Texas. Took a trip to Canada to visit in-laws.
118, side 1	991: Lived in Tacoma with a Danish fellow who was a nice old man. He lived on K Street. Husband went fishing in the summer. Lived with Rasmussen for a year or so.
118, side 1	1027: Dagmar took care of her nephew from Minnesota. They adopted him. Ralph M. Hansen, he was seventeen and a half years old. He went to school on K Street.
118, side 1	1082: Moved out of the Rasmussen's and into a house. Had a garden 50 ft. x 100 ft. Dagmar enjoyed gardening. Planted many vegetables. Did freezing of vegetables. Rented a freezer.
118, side 2	042: Spent almost a year in Norway in 1945 after the war. Paul went with her.
118, side 2	080: Lived on Ellen Street for a long time. Did housework and garden work after she was married, only in her own home.
118, side 2	140: Got a job at Brown and Haley in Tacoma and sent \$1000 to her nephew in Norway so he could go to school in Stockholm, Sweden. He has a high job with the Swedish government.
118, side 2	183: Brother from St. Paul came to Tacoma for work. Paul was fishing.
118, side 2	215: TOOK TRIP TO NORWAY Had a nice trip. Good time visiting people. Paul had many children in his family so she spent time visiting them.
118, side 2	266: CHANGES IN NORWAY

Container(s)	Description
	"It isn't the same country." They have more money and modern homes. Church is the same.
118, side 2	308: Ralph, her adopted son is vice-president for a big company in Cincinnati. He lives in Bellevue now. He married Joanne Bentine from Tacoma.
118, side 2	360: Husband died in 1978. He retired from fishing and painting. He had fished between San Diego and Alaska.
118, side 2	394: CHURCH Member at Gloria Dei Lutheran. She is an active member. Pastor Gulhaugen is the minister. Helped in the church.
118, side 2	445: ORGANIZATIONS Daughters of Norway.
118, side 2	460: TRADITIONS MAINTAINED Sewing, cooking, and speaking Norwegian in her home. She still speaks Norwegian.
118, side 2	478: Took a trip to Norway in 1978 when her husband died. Had a nice trip. Stayed with her sister and oldest brother.
118, side 2	538: Brother had a business in Norway, sold groceries.
118, side 2	555: WHAT IT HAS MEANT TO BE NORWEGIAN Nice to be both American and Norwegian. Like both countries.
118, side 2	595: Speaks some Norwegian.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
 Emigration and immigration
 Family--Norway
 Marriage service
 Norway -- Social conditions - 1945
 Norwegian-Americans--Ethnic identity
 Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews

Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs

Ocean travel

Personal Names :

Riebe, Dagmar--Interviews

(creator)

Lund, Emerentse

Pedersen, Johanna

Hansen, Ralph

Pedersen, Elise

Pedersen, Lorents

Riebe, Paul

Corporate Names :

Brown & Haley

Daughters of Norway (U.S.) Embla Lodge #2 (Tacoma, Wash.)

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Hansen family

Lorentsen family

Lund family

Pedersen family

Riebe family

Geographical Names :

Melbu (Norway)

Minneapolis (Minn.)

Tacoma (Wash.)

Vik i Helgeland (Norway)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Domestics

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2004