Overview of the Collection

Creator       Fredrickson, Hans
Title         Hans Fredrickson Oral History Interview
Dates         1981 (inclusive)
              1981 1981
Quantity      3 file folders
              9 photographs
              2 sound cassettes
Collection Number t092-093
Summary       An oral history interview with Hans Fredrickson, a Swedish immigrant.
Repository    Pacific Lutheran University, Archives and Special Collections
Access Restrictions The oral history collection is open to all users.
Additional Reference Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Hans Fredrickson was born on February 3, 1909 in Småland, Sweden. Two of Hans' sisters died at young ages of whooping cough, but his nine other siblings survived. Hans’ father, Frederick Anderson, was a farmer, and Hans grew up helping him with milking the cows and picking the potatoes. Hans’ mother, Omilia Jonsson, helped in the fields as well, but she also did the baking and washing. For about six years, Hans attended school; his family did not have enough money for him to go beyond the sixth grade. As a child, Hans delighted in the traditional Swedish celebrations of holidays like Christmas, Easter, and Midsummer. Although he loved the Swedish heritage, Hans disliked the work in Sweden and chose to move to America in 1928. He first settled in Chicago, employed in the concrete business. Hans attended school to learn English and picked up the language quickly. After a short time in Chicago, Hans moved to a variety of places like South Dakota, North Dakota, and finally, Tacoma, Washington; he worked on farms, dams, and logging camps. In 1931, Hans met Elsie Danielson, whom he married in 1934. The two of them visited Sweden in 1936, 1959, 1974, and 1980. They had four children, all of whom spoke Swedish until they began attending school. Each one became a National Merit Scholarship winner. Hans enjoys gardening and belongs to the Valhalla Lodge and the Order
of Vasa. He and Elsie still practice Swedish traditions during the holidays and speak the language periodically.

Lineage


Content Description

The interview was conducted with Hans Fredrickson on September 30, 1981 in Tacoma, Washington. This interview contains information on personal background, emigration, settling in, work, family, Swedish heritage, church and community life, and trips back to Sweden. Also available are photographs of Hans at the time of the interview, Hans and his family at his childhood home in Småland, Sweden, Hans and other young men immigrating to America (February 22, 1928), Hans as a concrete worker in Villa Park, Illinois (May 23, 1929), Hans working on threshing crew in the Midwest (July 3, 1929), and harvest work in Småland, Sweden (July 31, 1936). The interview was conducted in English. Also see Sven Fredrickson.

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

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


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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cassette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 92, side 1   | 008: PERSONAL BACKGROUND  
Born Småland, Sweden, February 3, 1909. |
| 92, side 1   | 015: PARENTS  
Frederick and Omelia Anderson. Custom for son to take father's first name for his last name plus son.  
022: Ten brothers and sisters (see previous)  
031: WHOOPING COUGH  
Two sisters dead during epidemic. Many people were victims of disease.  
045: FATHER'S OCCUPATION  
Farmer, when younger, employed on railroad in North Norway.  
048: MOTHER'S MAIDEN  
Jonsson, maternal grandfather employed as builder.  
057: GROWING UP IN SWEDEN  
Work for all, woods backbone of farm, selling timber, taking care of children, housework. Rough life, but a good life, learned discipline.  
076: COWS |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milking, big money worked day &amp; night no matter what/cows grazed in summer, had to herd them in.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 92, side 1  | 113: POTATOES  
Lots of potatoes it took weeks to pick them, kept out of school to pick and sell potatoes. |
| 92, side 1  | 123: PIGS  
Slaughtered for family use, salted meat for preservation and also smoked them. |
| 92, side 1  | 138: MOTHER AND FATHER  
Mother did all baking, washing, etc. and worked in the field. Lived until age 75. Father died in 1946. |
| 92, side 1  | 163: SCHOOL DAYS  
Started at age 7. Learned to read before school days. Lasted for 6 years. Loved school, not much of it. Teacher gave special instruction in arithmetic encouraged studies. After 6th grade you had to pay for school. Speaks of his children's education. |
| 92, side 1  | 228:  
Speaks of birth of grandson. |
| 92, side 1  | 238: CHRISTMAS IN SWEDEN  
Snow. Found tree in the forest, decorating the tree, big breakfast and noon meal. Opening presents. Church on Christmas Day. |
| 92, side 1  | 257: SPECIALITY FOODS  
Dopparedagen - name for Christmas Eve. They dipped boiled pork in juice, homemade sausages, meatballs, ham, lutfisk, & potatoes for breakfast. Evening - rice pudding with almonds - whoever got almond would get married next. Many baked goods. |
| 92, side 1  | 295: CHRISTMAS PRESENTS  
Little money, children bought presents for each other/ knock at friend's door, throw packages and run. |
| 92, side 1  | 307: JULTOMTEN  
Same as Santa Claus here. Christmas lasted almost 2 weeks. |
| 92, side 1  | 339: HOLIDAYS  
<p>| 92, side 1  | 366: CHURCH LIFE |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92, side 1</td>
<td>Bible instruction when child, confirmation, first communion. He was Lutheran.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 92, side 1  | RECEIVED A BIKE  
Really could get places fast. |
| 92, side 1  | FOLK CUSTOMS  
Told troll stories, scared to go to bed after. |
| 92, side 1  | Brother and sister off to U.S. in 1923. Brother employed for Milwaukee Railroad. |
| 92, side 1  | OFF TO CHICAGO, 1928  
Wanted adventure. Tired of work in Sweden. Speaks of brothers and sisters. Parents didn't like to see children go. |
| 92, side 1  | BOAT TRIP  
9-10 days. Borrowed money from brother in Chicago area (Drottningholm) cost of voyage $100. |
| 92, side 1  | LANDED NEW YORK CITY  
Sent telegrams to brothers. Couldn't speak English. TOOK TRAIN TO CHICAGO: Nobody to meet him. |
| 92, side 1  | Didn't go to Ellis Island. Processed by American Council in Sweden. |
| 92, side 1  | FIRST IMPRESSIONS  
Never saw black person before. Couldn't speak English on train, not much food on train trip. |
| 92, side 1  | EMPLOYMENT  
In Chicago, concrete business - basements, steps, mostly foundations. Hard work, but big money 90 cents an hour. |
| 92, side 1  | LEARNING ENGLISH  
Went to school 5 days a week. Mostly worked with Swedish speaking people. North side of Chicago large proportion were Swedish. Picked English up fast. |
| 92, side 2  | SOUTH DAKOTA  
Threshing. Weather not very good. Lived with farmers - moved from farm to farm. Compares weather in Chicago with South Dakota. |
92, side 2 088: ON TO NORTH DAKOTA
Threshing. Talks about work horses. Drove from Chicago in 1924 Buick.
Husked corn - "hard working Swedes."

92, side 2 118: ON TO TACOMA, WASHINGTON
Came at time of fair. Picked apples. Talks of his family living there. UNCLE:
Axel Anderson, 19th & M in Tacoma.

92, side 2 147: LEONARD ANDERSON
Outstanding musician (Tacoma area), played the accordion and piano,
everyone took lessons.

92, side 2 155: EMPLOYED TIDE-WATER SAWMILL
Eventually burned down. Many mills burned down.

92, side 2 164: CUSHMAN DAM
Employed for period of time. Depression: Not bad, got a job through
employment office. Didn't like working on the dam.

92, side 2 191: EMPLOYED FOR PACIFIC NATIONAL RAILROAD
Describes work building RR toward the mountain. Job also working south of
Olympia.

92, side 2 212: Describes improving the saw mill production and work at the smelter.

92, side 2 225: DEPRESSION
No work, hit 1932-33. Various odds and end jobs. Built a cabin in Milton ($200
an acre/ total cost for cabin $17). Friend from Alaska brought salmon and ate
food from the garden.

92, side 2 284: RASPBERRY PICKING
Salary 35 cents a crate. Fired for not working on the Fourth of July.

92, side 2 329: MEETING WIFE
Met at a dance. She from Puyallup. Wife’s name Elsie Danielson. Speaks of
wife’s family, also from Sweden (see 363-II).

92, side 2 355: ALASKA
Gold dredging and life with mosquitoes.

92, side 2 363: Married fall 1934. Three years after meeting (see counter 329-II)

92, side 2 369: EMPLOYED WITH Weyerhauser
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describes his work. Part includes building railroad. Made $15 a day. Laid off, later wanted him back. He describes several logging camps - Weyerhauser good food and treatment. Bordeaux was a bad camp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92, side 2</td>
<td>481: MOVED TO LITTLE ROCK Prices for food cheap, &quot;lived like kings.&quot; Lived in Little Rock because camps had bad food and were expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92, side 2</td>
<td>595: JOB AT TACOMA GRAIN Unloaded wheat, wasn't steady work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92, side 2</td>
<td>604: SAW MILLS Bad strike in 1930's loggers came to strike too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92, side 2</td>
<td>644: EMPLOYED VARIOUS JOBS Work not steady. Employed at a flour mill, worked on tracks switching them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92, side 2</td>
<td>667: VISITING SWEDEN In 1936, Was wonderful. Took bus to New York from there to Sweden by boat (Tape 93 Side I concludes trip back to Sweden). He stopped…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93, side 1</td>
<td>001: In Oklahoma City to visit his brother on the way to New York. CONCLUDES TRIP TO SWEDEN: Not many changes. Returned for another visit in 1974 (see counter I-242).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93, side 1</td>
<td>080: CHILDREN Oldest son, Gary Lee, went to Stanford and became an engineer at Boeing, married and has 2 boys, Erik, who now goes to Dartmouth College and Mark, who is a very ambitious worker. Donald Hans is a doctor in nuclear physics at the University of Washington. Fixes machines for cancer treatments, does wood working and lives in Seattle. Karen Marie is a librarian director at Stanford. Glen Evert is the youngest, father of the third grandchild.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93, side 1</td>
<td>147: CHURCH LIFE Goes mainly at Christmas time, not every Sunday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93, side 1</td>
<td>157: ORGANIZATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongs to Valhalla since 1934 - soon 50-year member, Order of Vasa, treasurer for Swedish Order of Valhalla and plays the accordion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 93, side 1 | 187: EMPLOYED VARIOUS JOBS  
Carpenter after quitting the smelter. Worked for Western Boat until the War was over (in conjunction with Navy). Retired from Puget Sound Plywood Cooperative after 30 years. |
| 93, side 1 | 221: DESCRIBES PRESENT HOUSE  
Added on many times, once was a small house. All children born and raised here. |
| 93, side 1 | 242: TRIPS BACK TO SWEDEN  
1936, 1959 with all children, 1974 & 1980. Prices are high, farm still standing. Some family is still living there. Big family reunions in Sweden and in U.S. (see counter 001-III) |
| 93, side 1 | 287:  
Growing, washing, cooking, eating "wonderful corn". Has a big garden and berries, fruit trees, flowers, everything. |
| 93, side 1 | 305:  
Wife cooks Swedish foods. Continues to have Christmas like in Sweden: meals, trees, church and presents. |
| 93, side 1 | 317:  
Children spoke Swedish, but lost it when they attended school. Son studied in Sweden for awhile; learned to speak and write Swedish and later studied in Munich. |
| 93, side 1 | 373:  
Closes in Swedish. |

**Names and Subjects**

**Subject Terms :**
- Christmas
- Depressions -- 1929
- Education -- Sweden
- Emigration and immigration
- Family -- Sweden
- Ocean travel
- Sweden -- Economic conditions -- 1908-1928
- Swedish-Americans--Social life and customs
- Swedish-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
Personal Names:
Fredrickson, Bert
Fredrickson, Donald Hans
Fredrickson, Gary Lee
Fredrickson, Glen Evert
Fredrickson, Hans--Interviews (creator)
Fredrickson, Helen May
Fredrickson, Karen Marie
Jonsson, Alma Omilia
Jonsson, Kristina
Andersson, Ott Fredrick
Fredrickson, Elsie Marie
Fredrickson, Hans
Fredrickson, Sven Fredrick
Jonsson, Ole
Målsson, Anders

Corporate Names:
Puget Sound Plywood Company (Tacoma, Wash.)
Swedish Order of Valhalla (Tacoma, Wash.)
Vasa Order of America. Lodge No. 233 (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names:
Andersson family
Fredrickson family
Jonsson family
Målsson family

Geographical Names:
Chicago (Ill.)
Milton (Wis.)
North Dakota
Småland (Sweden)
South Dakota

Form or Genre Terms:
Oral histories

Occupations:
Carpenters
Farmers
Loggers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
2004