

Carl Hans Malus Carlson Lien Oral History Interview, 1982

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Lien, Carl Hans Malus Carlson
Title	Carl Hans Malus Carlson Lien Oral History Interview
Dates	1982 (inclusive) 1982 1982
Quantity	3 file folders 2 photographs 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t150
Summary	An oral history interview with Carl Hans Malus Carlson Lien, 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

Carl Hans Malus Carlson Lien was born on January 4, 1896 in Lien, Saltdal, Norway, which is near Bodø. He was one of eleven children by Carl Mattsen and Martha Johansen; Carl Sr. was a carpenter and built houses in Sulitjelma, and Martha died when Carl Jr. was eleven years old. Carl went to school and was confirmed in 1910; right after confirmation, he fished in Lofoten and then worked in Sulitjelma from 1913 to 1923. He met his wife, Tora Johanson, at a dance in Sulitjelma; she was working in a motel in Sulitjelma at the time. They dated for five years and married on December 14, 1919 in Skjerstad, Tora's hometown; their daughter, Carlene, was born on April 15, 1920. Carl had three brothers living in Superior, WI, and he left Norway aboard the Bergensfjord on Easter Day 1923; he entered the U.S. at Ellis Island. He lived in Superior with his brother until his wife and daughter emigrated one and half years later and then bought a house close to his brother. Carl worked for Morton Salt in Superior for five years and worked on the ore docks for five years; he also helped his brother with carpentry work in Chicago for three to four months and did longshoring on Lake Superior. He moved to the West Coast in 1945 and worked for Buffelen on the flats in Tacoma, WA and at a

cannery in Seattle. He worked on a fishing boat in Anchorage, AK and returned to Wisconsin for three months before working as a school groundskeeper for Julius Tollefson. He and Julius were laid off, and they went to Elma, WA to work on the construction of a new plywood plant. Carl's wife came to Washington in 1948, and Carlene married a Polish man in Michigan. Carl moved to Tacoma in 1964 and commuted to work in Elma until he retired in 1967 at age 71, after working for the plywood plant for sixteen years. He became a citizen in 1935 and belongs to Sons of Norway, Nordlandslaget, and St. Mark's Church in Tacoma. He visited Norway in 1968.

Lineage

Full Name: Carl Hans Malus Carlson Lien. Father: Carl Mattsen. Mother: Martha Johansen. Paternal Grandfather: Mans Knutson. Brothers and Sisters: Dina Lien, Berntine Lien, Magda Lien, Carolthe Lien, Anna Lien, Cristian Lien, Johan Lien, Carl Lien, Magnus Lien. Spouse: Tora Elisa Henriette Johanson Lien. Children: Carlene Lien.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Carl Lien on March 16, 1982 in Tacoma, Washington. This interview contains information on family history, childhood home, school, work in Norway, Christmas traditions, meeting spouse and marriage, emigration, work in the Midwest, move to the West Coast, work in Washington State, fishing in Alaska, language difficulties, citizenship, church, Scandinavian organizations, trips to Norway, changes in Norway, and maintenance of Norwegian traditions. The interview also provides two photographs of Carl Lien at the time of the interview.

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	
150, side 1	022: Carl Lien was Carl Hans Malus Carlson Lien. Born in Saltdal, Norway, near Bodø. Born on January 4, 1896.
150, side 1	062: PARENTS Carl Mattson. Name Lien comes from a place they lived. All brothers took the name Lien except for one. Mother's name was Martha Johanson. Parents came from the same place. Mother died when Carl was 11. Father was a carpenter, built houses in Sulitjelma.
150, side 1	132: Father worked away from home a great deal. He had to, so he could support the large family.
150, side 1	139: They lived on a farm. Raised cows. Lots of hard work. Raised potatoes.
150, side 1	179: BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Container(s)	Description
	Eleven children. Cris was a fisherman, he came to America. Johan was a fisherman and carpenter. He came to America. Magnus is in Chicago. He worked for Candy Factory.
150, side 1	240: GRANDPARENTS Paternal grandfather, Mans Knutson. He was a carpenter. Did not know much of his mother's relation.
150, side 1	295: CHILDHOOD HOME Not too big, there was room for all the kids. Log cabin children slept upstairs in a big loft.
150, side 1	334: Dad was out working most of the time so the kids had to do the work. Did plowing, broke in the horse on the plow. Went to the woods to get wood to burn.
150, side 1	360: SCHOOL Had to cross the river to get to school. Took a boat. Difficult to cross at times of the year. Recalls one incident specifically. Went to school and then confirmation. Confirmed in 1910. There was a church in Saltdal.
150, side 1	423: After confirmation went to Sulitjelma to work. Describes the job he did. Lived away from home. Did fishing right after confirmation up in Lofoten. Young when he left home.
150, side 1	480: Mother died when Carl was young. Oldest sister took over. Mother died of breast cancer. No treatment for her like there is today.
150, side 1	512: Carl really liked his father. He was so good to the kids.
150, side 1	543: CHRISTMAS Father read from the Bible and they all sang. Went to church early in the morning. Took a sleigh to church it was a ways to go. In the winter they drove to church on the river, which was ice.
150, side 1	598: CHRISTMAS FOODS Fattigmand, lefse, and rullepølse. Ate risengrynsgrøt on Christmas Eve. Always had it pretty good even though there were so many kids in the family.
150, side 1	620:

Container(s)	Description
	Mother made all their clothes. She spun, carded, and wove the material for their clothes. Sisters also helped with this.
150, side 1	637: Always hung something outside for the birds on Christmas. Believed in the Julenissen put food out for him.
150, side 1	650: Juleaften: Went around to the neighbors and got cookies and bread. Put their goodies in a box and how long they could keep the goodies.
150, side 1	675: Carl spent lots of time in the woods with his father. It was scary for his father. Logging could be a dangerous job.
150, side 1	708: After working in Sulitjelma, Carl was ready to come to America. His three brothers were already here in Superior, Wisconsin.
150, side 1	720: MEETING SPOUSE Met wife in Sulitjelma. She worked there too, she worked in a motel. Her name is Tora Elisa Henriette Johanson. From Skjerstad, not far from Carl's hometown. Met at a dance. Dated for five years before they were married. Carl worked in Sulitjelma from 1913-1923.
150, side 1	767: Carl talks about the various jobs he did in that 10 years. Wife went after they were married.
150, side 1	778: WEDDING In Skjerstad in a church there. Had a big wedding, dancing. Married on December 14, 1919. Wife had a white dress.
150, side 1	803: Carl's father encouraged him to go to America. Times were poor in Norway at this time. Brother had left him money. A neighbor also was going. About sixty young people left this area in 1923.
150, side 1	850: Wife did not come until one and half years later. Daughter was born in Norway, she was four years old when she came to America.
150, side 1	863: TRIP OVER Nice trip. Easter Day sailed from Norway in 1923. Took three weeks. Came on the Bergensfjord.

Container(s)	Description
150, side 1	880: Lots of snow in Superior, Wisconsin. Went through Ellis Island.
150, side 1	893: Could not speak English. Always managed to get along. People always helped. Got on the train and stayed in Chicago for one day. People told them not to go too far because it was a bad place.
150, side 1	928: Lived in Superior with his brother until his wife came. They bought a house close to his brother. Wife had a rough trip over on the boat.
150, side 1	946: WORK Worked for Morton Salt in Superior, loading cars. Describes another job he had with his brother, hard work. Learned English on this job because they were all Americans that he was working with. Paid about \$4.50 a day, \$1.15 for board. Went home every weekend.
150, side 1	1006: Worked on the ore docks for five years, where they load the boats. Describes this job in more detail. Not paid that well.
150, side 1	1040: Went to Chicago and helped his brother with carpentry work. Stayed for only 3-4 months. Worked for Morton Salt for five years. Loaded salt blocks for the cows. Not much pay, good to be home. Did not like the water in Chicago. Morton Salt moved to Michigan.
150, side 1	1072: Did longshoring back east on Lake Superior.
150, side 1	1082: Came out west in 1945. In Norway, Carl had seen movie pictures of fishing in Alaska, he told himself he would go there before he died. Wife did not want to go out west. Carl came looking for work. Worked for Buffelen on the flats in Tacoma, Washington. Was working with a neighbor of his from Norway who lived next to him in Superior.
150, side 1	1130: Went to Seattle to work in the cannery.
150, side 2	034: Hired right away in Seattle to work in Alaska. This was always a dream of his. Worked in Anchorage. Fixed up the nets. Worked on the traps for seven weeks. Was on Kalgin Island between Anchorage and Seldovia, caught lots of fish,

Container(s)	Description
	125,000. The fish went to canneries in Anchorage and Seldovia. Carl really liked it here. Talks about the similarities between Norway and Alaska.
150, side 2	165: Julius Tollefson offered Carl a job working for him. Carl had to go back to Wisconsin. Was back in Wisconsin for three weeks and then came back and worked for Julius Tollefson at the school. Cutting trees and grass. Worked at several different schools.
150, side 2	224: Went to Elma, Washington with Julius Tollefson to work on building a new plant. They had been both laid off at the schools. Describes his work some.
150, side 2	251: Wife came in 1948. Carl was here for three years before she came. Many friends were coming to the west coast. Daughter, Carlene was married. She married a Polish fellow in Michigan. She taught school in Wisconsin. They had two children, Linda and Mike.
150, side 2	332: Daughter went back to Wisconsin with her husband because he did not like it in Tacoma.
150, side 2	362: Stayed in Elma until he retired. Worked there for 16 years. Worked until he was 71, quit in 1967.
150, side 2	412: Hardest thing about coming to America was learning the language. Wife learned the language rather fast. She has had a stroke and now can only speak Norwegian but understands English.
150, side 2	444: CITIZENSHIP Both are citizens. Carl became a citizen in 1935 and his wife a citizen in 1946/47. Went to school for it.
150, side 2	461: CHURCH Belongs to St. Marks in Tacoma. Have been active but it is harder now with wife being sick.
150, side 2	485: SCANDINAVIAN ORGANIZATIONS Belongs to the Sons of Norway, Nordlandslaget. Belonged to the Sons of Norway in Wisconsin because there was a large Norwegian community and it was fun to be with other Norwegians.
150, side 2	523: TRIPS BACK TO NORWAY

Container(s)	Description
	Went in 1968. Could have been home in nine hours flying from Vancouver to Bodø.
150, side 2	538: CHANGES IN NORWAY Lots of new houses. Old family house is gone. Talks about fishing when he was home visiting. The people talk different even in the area he was from. Went to his old church.
150, side 2	615: MAINTAINING NORWEGIAN TRADITIONS Have kept up the cooking and speaking of Norwegian. Daughter can speak some Norwegian.
150, side 2	640: SPEAKS NORWEGIAN Talks about his trip back a bit. Mentions burning they used to do on the 21st of June, Midsummer.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
 Education--Norway
 Emigration and immigration
 Family--Economic aspects--Norway
 Family--Norway
 Fishing
 Marriage service
 Naturalization
 Norway--Social conditions--1945-
 Norwegian-Americans--Ethnic identity
 Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs
 Ocean travel

Personal Names :

Lien, Carl Hans Malus Carlson--Interviews
 (creator)
 Tollefson, Julius
 Johansen, Martha
 Lien, Carlene
 Lien, Tora Elisa Henriette (Johanson)
 Mattsen, Carl

Corporate Names :

Bergensfjord (Steamship)
 Morton Salt Company
 Nordlandslaget Nordlyset (Tacoma, Wash.)
 St. Mark's Lutheran Church (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Johansen family
Johanson family
Knutson family
Lien family
Mattsen family

Geographical Names :

Anchorage (Alaska)
Bodø (Norway)
Chicago (Ill.)
Elma (Wash.)
Saltdal herad (Norway)
Seattle (Wash.)
Skjerstad (Norway)
Sulitjelma (Norway)
Superior (Wisc.)
Tacoma (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Carpenters
Stevedores

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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