

Elsa Anna Maria Nelsson Molund Oral History Interview, 1983

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Molund, Elsa Anna Maria Nelsson
Title	Elsa Anna Maria Nelsson Molund Oral History Interview
Dates	1983 (inclusive) 1983 1983
Quantity	3 file folders 4 photographs 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t229
Summary	An oral history interview with Elsa Anna Maria Nelsson Molund, a Swedish 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, Swedish
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Elsa Anna Maria (Nelsson) Molund was born on April 11, 1894 in Resmo, Å#land, Sweden. The Nelsson family, including Elsa's three brothers, lived in Mossebo, a town near Kalmar. After Elsa, known as Elsie, went to school and was confirmed, she began working in Kalmar at her uncle's store. Her family celebrated Christmas in the traditional way with a decorated tree, customary food, dancing, and a special morning church service. As Elsie grew up in Mossebo, she worked as a housekeeper and worked in a hardware store. She met her future husband, Erik Molund, in school, but he moved to America for several years. They kept in contact through letters, and when he returned to Sweden, they got married. Erik wanted to move back to America, so the two of them left in May of 1922. They settled in Iowa for a short time and then moved to Tacoma, Washington. Erik worked in construction while Elsie cleaned for a store in town. Elsie and Erik had three children-Elmer, Inga, and Dorothy. Elsie says the hardest thing about moving to America was learning the language. She returned on a ship to Sweden for a visit in 1957. Elsie retains her Swedish heritage by participating in Vasa, helping in the

Lutheran church, and cooking Swedish food. Her son Elmer has taken a particular interest in Sweden and has visited several times.

Lineage

Maiden Name: Elsa Anna Maria Nelsson. Father: Karl Nelsson. Mother: Ida SÃ¶derman Nelsson. Paternal Grandfather: Edwin Nelsson. Maternal Grandfather: Edward SÃ¶derman. Maternal Grandmother: Venla SÃ¶derman. Brothers and Sisters: Erik Karlsson, Bernard Karlsson, Sture Karlsson. Spouse: Erik Wilhelm Molund. Children: Elmer William Molund, Inga Marie Molund, Dorothy Bernice Molund.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Elsa Molund on February 28, 1983 in Tacoma, Washington. This interview contains information on personal background, employment, marriage, emigration, adjustment, church and community life, and heritage. The interview also includes photographs of Elsa Molund as a young woman, Elsa at her uncle's store in Kalmar, Sweden, Elsa's aunt and uncle (October 26, 1916), and Elsa at the time of the interview. The interview was conducted in English with some Swedish throughout the interview. Also see Erik Molund.

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 CHECK NAME 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	
229, side 1	015: Elsa Anna Maria Nelsson Molund was born on Å#land, Sweden, an island not far from Kalmar, on April 11, 1984.
229, side 1	062: PARENTS Karl and Ida Nelsson. Father was born in Å#land. Mother was born in Mossebo, a town near Kalmar, on the mainland. Elsie's father took care of the pastor's place. They lived there as well until her mother became sick. Then they moved to Mossebo with mother's parents.
229, side 1	133: BROTHERS Had three brother, Erik, Bernard, and Sture. They all went to school in Mossebo. Father stayed in the farm in Å#land. Oldest brother was a sailor. He drowned. The second brother helped out on the farm. The youngest brother stayed with Elsie at their maternal grandmother's home. All of her brothers stayed in Sweden.
229, side 1	208: CHILDHOOD Didn't have far to go to school in Mossebo. The church was a little farther away.
229, side 1	225: GRANDPARENTS Maternal, Edward and Venla SÅ¶derman. Venla's daughter, Marie (Elsie's aunt) raised Elsie and Sture. Marie was married to a man who'd been in America. He had a store in Kalmar. Elsie worked there when she got older.

Container(s)	Description
	Paternal, doesn't remember them. Elise left Åland and moved to Mossebo when her mother died. Mother died of tuberculosis when Elsa was 9 years old.
229, side 1	316: SCHOOL There was a little school not far from where her grandmother lived. One teacher took care of the whole class. The older students would help the younger students.
229, side 1	353: CHURCH Had to go to Visby to get confirmed. Sometimes had to walk to confirmation class. Had a friend who had a horse. Sometimes Elsie would get a ride to confirmation class.
229, side 1	373: After confirmation, Elsie went to Kalmar to work in her aunt's husband's store.
229, side 1	390: CHRISTMAS Had a Christmas tree. Had risgrynsgr�tt on Christmas Eve. Had cookies, pepparkakor, spritz, coffee bread. Baked bread in brick ovens. Elsie describes how they did this. They had kroppkakor, mashed potatoes filled with pork and then cooked them in salt water. They also had lutfisk. They put presents under the tree. Made decorations for the tree. Danced around it. Went to church by horse and sleigh early Christmas morning. The sleigh bells sounded pretty. After church, they had friends over for coffee. They had a sm�rg�sbord on Christmas day. Kept the tree up for a month. Did a lot of visiting.
229, side 1	533: OTHER SWEDISH TRADITIONS Had to learn to knit and sew. Aunt was a seamstress.
229, side 1	553: Father remarried but quite some time after Elsie's mother's death. Married someone who had been to America. He had a little farm on Åland that he took care of. Helped other farmers too. Elsie didn't spend much time with her father.
229, side 1	586: WORK (See also I-373) Worked in a store in Kalmar. Sold sugar loaves (sockertopp). Had to chop it into pieces with an ax. Had to weigh the pieces. Had to cut butter into pieces too. Syrup came in barrels. Had to open a spout for the syrup to come out. She left it open one time. When she came back into the room there was syrup all over the floor. Worked there for 2-3 years. Worked as a housekeeper for a family in Stockholm. She worked in a hardware store in Stockholm after she quit her job as a housekeeper.
229, side 1	698: MEETING SPOUSE They went to the same school in Mossebo. Elsie did not like Erik at that time. He went to America when he was young. He wrote her letters. She worked for 1 year. He came to Stockholm when she was 28 years old. Brought her

Container(s)	Description
	<p>home. His parents were living in FÄrrÅsa. The man who had the store in Kalmar bought a place in Borgholm on Åland. Elsie and Erik got married in Slottskyrkan in Kalmar. "Slott" means castle. There's a big castle in Kalmar. Elsie stayed with her aunt in Kalmar before getting married.</p>
229, side 1	<p>780: WEDDING Wore a dark blue dress. Had her aunt and a friend stand with her at her wedding. After the wedding they went to her grandmother's. They took the train there. They had a party for them at her grandmother's house. Somebody who'd come from America brought corn flakes to the party. It was something they'd never seen before. They ate them at the wedding dinner. After the dinner, the danced to accordion music. Many farmers from Mossebo came to the dance. They had lots of cookies and kroppkakor.</p>
229, side 1	<p>849: REASONS FOR EMIGRATION Erik wanted to go back. Elsie wasn't too excited about it, but she didn't have much family left. They had their tickets ready before they got married. Left in May 1922.</p>
229, side 1	<p>890: TRIP TO AMERICA Sailed from GÄtteborg (Gothenburg). Nice trip, but got seasick. Had false teeth. Lost them when she got sick. When they got to New York, she went to a dentist. He couldn't help her (the reason is unclear). A dentist in Tacoma, Wash. fixed her teeth and she hasn't had any problems since then. Elsie was only sick once during the trip. Everybody was nice. There was entertainment on the boat. Erik and Elsie had birthday parties on the boat. The trip took nine days. The name of the boat was the "Stockholm." Didn't have to go through Ellis Island.</p>
229, side 1	<p>962: ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK Thought it was a big city. Took a train from New York to Iowa. Erik had a brother living there. Erik had a job putting tile on roofs. Elsie thought Iowa was terribly hot. The thunder and rain were terrible.</p>
229, side 1	<p>982: MOVE TO TACOMA, WASHINGTON Didn't stay in Iowa very long. Erik had relatives in Tacoma so they moved to the West Coast. They traveled by train. This was during the fall after they'd come to America. Mrs. Sandin met them at the train station. They stayed with her for a while. Erik got a job doing construction work. They moved from the Sandin's when they bought the house they live in now.</p>
229, side 1	<p>1021: WORK (See also I-373, I-586) Worked a little. Got a job cleaning a store in the Washington building.</p>
229, side 1	<p>1033: ADJUSTING TO LIFE IN AMERICA</p>

Container(s)	Description
	The language was the most difficult.
229, side 1	1039: CHILDREN Elmer is farming. He is married and has three daughters. He served in the Navy during WWII. Dorothy teaches school. She's married and has three children. Inga died when she was 38 years old. She had been married and had four children. Dorothy is married to Stan Pederman. He works for Tacoma Plywood.
229, side 1	1101: TRIPS TO SWEDEN Went back in 1957. Nice trip. Went on the boat. Entertainment on the boat. Celebrated their birthdays on the boat. Saw childhood home. Many changes. Visited brothers Stureâ#i (tape abruptly ends).

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
 Education -- Sweden
 Emigration and immigration
 Family -- Sweden
 Marriage service
 Ocean travel
 Sweden -- Social conditions -- 1945
 Swedish-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Swedish-Americans--Social life and customs

Personal Names :

Molund, Dorothy Bernice
 Molund, Elmer William
 S  nderman, Ida
 S  nderman, Venla
 Molund, Elsa Anna Maria
 Molund, Elsa Anna Maria Nelsson--Interviews
 (creator)
 Molund, Erik Wilhelm
 Molund, Inga Marie
 Nelsson, Edwin
 Nelsson, Elsa Anna Maria
 Nelsson, Karl
 S  nderman, Edward

Corporate Names :

Stockholm (Steamship)
 Vasa Order of America. Lodge Number 233 (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Karlsson family
 Molund family
 Nelsson family

SÃ¶derman family

Geographical Names :

Ã#land (Sweden)

Iowa

Mossebo(Sweden)

Resmo (Sweden)

Tacoma (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Domestics

Farmers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler

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