

Henny Pauline Marie Johannessen Hale Oral History Interview, 1982

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Hale, Henny Pauline Marie Johannessen
Title	Henny Pauline Marie Johannessen Hale Oral History Interview
Dates	1982 (inclusive) 1982 1982
Quantity	3 file folders 3 photographs 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t146
Summary	An oral history interview with Henny Pauline Marie Johannessen Hale, 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

Henny Hale was born in Eidet, Vesteraalen, Norway on April 15, 1903. She was one of six children by Harold Johannessen and Petra Nilson. Her mother died when Henny was 12 years old, at age 36, which left Henny and her older sister Mary to do the work and raise the rest of the children. Her father remarried Amanda Freeberg, with whom he had two sons and two daughters. Henny was confirmed at age 15 and left home when she was 17, after which she did housework at a neighboring farm for two years. She then worked as an aid for her schoolteacher. Henny left for America on October 10, 1923, originally planning on staying only five years. After reaching Ellis Island, she took a five-day train ride from New York to Tacoma, WA where her uncle, George Johnson, and aunt met her. She did housework for Scott Henderson, a lawyer in Gravelly Lake, but soon found another job.

She started going to Normanna Hall, where she met her husband Louis Hale, who was a gardener at the time, in 1926. She went to night school and lived in Seattle for a year but then moved back to Tacoma. She was married by Pastor Edwards (no date given) on 12th and 'I' Street. Louis worked at

Atlas Foundry until he was sick, and then as a school janitor for a while. They had two children: Phyllis June, born on April 15, 1929, and Anita Lorraine, born on February 3, 1934; both were born in Tacoma, WA. Phyllis married Herman McDowell and remarried Irvin Schmit, and works as a secretary for the County Commissioners. Anita has five children and lives in Oregon. Henny has ten grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren. She took trips to Norway in 1977 and 1979, and had another planned for the summer of 1982. She has always been with the Mt. Zion Lutheran Church and used to be very actively involved with Scandinavian organizations, though not as much by 1982.

Lineage

Full Name: Henny Pauline Marie Hale. Maiden Name: Henny Pauline Marie Johannessen. Father: Harold Peder Johan Johannessen. Mother: Petra Oluffa Nilsen. Paternal Grandfather: Johannes Ludvik Madsen. Paternal Grandmother: Jensine Dreier Madsen. Maternal Grandfather: Nils Johnsen. Maternal Grandmother: Mekkelene Johnsen. Brothers and Sisters: Mary Kristufa Johannessen, Hjordis Josie Johannessen, Bergljot Elvine Johannessen, Merthon Norberg Johannessen, Ethel Juliett Johannessen. Spouse: Lars (Louis) Olaf Sigurd Hale. Children: Phyllis June Hale, Anita Lorraine Hale.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Henny Hale on February 17, 1982 in Tacoma, Washington. This interview provides information about life in Norway, church experiences, Norwegian Christmas traditions, oral tradition within the culture, dealing with Norwegian winters, reasons for coming to America, voyage to America and Tacoma, settling into a new country, life in Tacoma, marriage, trips to Norway and the changes there, maintaining Norwegian traditions, and pride in Norwegian heritage. The interview also contains an early photograph of Henny Hale and her husband Louis and two photographs of Henny at the time of the interview. The interview was conducted in English with some Norwegian at the end 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	
146, side 1	020: HENNY PAULINE MARIA HALE Maiden name Johannessen. Born in Eidet, Vesteraalen, Norway, above the Arctic Circle, north of Bodø, April 15, 1903.
146, side 1	048: PARENTS Harold Peder Johan Johannessen and Petra Oluffa Nilsen. They were neighbors. Father was a fisherman and a farmer.
146, side 1	072: Father fished up in Finnmarken in the summertime, in the winter he went to the Lofoten Islands for torsk. He was gone quite a bit.
146, side 1	092: Lived on a little farm. Mother died when she was 36 leaving six children, she was a hard worker. Henny was 12 years old when she died.

Container(s)	Description
146, side 1	<p>125: BROTHERS AND SISTERS</p> <p>Mary stayed with the home place until father married again. He married Amanda Freeberg. Mary worked in Bodo at the asylum. She came to America and married a fisherman, Axel Brandwik. Mary did housework when she came over to America. Helped her to learn the language. Hjördis married and had two daughters. She also came to America. Bea came to America and lived on Pacific Avenue in Tacoma. She married Rader Nilson they were second cousins. Merthon, her only full brother. She had not seen him from when she left until 1976. He was a farmer and fisherman in Norway.</p>
146, side 1	<p>269:</p> <p>Father had two boys and two girls with his new wife; they also adopted a girl who did not have a family.</p>
146, side 1	<p>286:</p> <p>Ethyl, youngest sister, married and settled in Norway. She has four children.</p>
146, side 1	<p>321: HALF-CHILDREN</p> <p>Petra, Solveg, Harold, and Arnolf.</p>
146, side 1	<p>328: GRANDPARENTS</p> <p>Maternal, Nils and Mekkelene Nilson. Paternal, Johannes and Jensine. They were farmers. Jensine was the daughter of one of the big farmers in Henny's home area. She was disinherited when she married Johannes. Paternal grandparents' last name was Madsen.</p>
146, side 1	<p>413:</p> <p>Took a trip back to Norway in 1979 for a reunion stemming from her grandfather's father.</p>
146, side 1	<p>424: CHILDHOOD HOME</p> <p>Little. Children lived downstairs and grandparents lived upstairs. Father built a new house next to the old one. This one much bigger, three bedrooms, living room, kitchen, back porch. Burned down when it was three years old. Describes what happened in more detail.</p>
146, side 1	<p>473:</p> <p>Home place has not been properly cared for. Her birthplace is still standing.</p>
146, side 1	<p>494:</p> <p>Used peat for heat. Father used to cut peat squares and children would slice the squares into six pieces. Had a baking oven in the kitchen.</p>
146, side 1	<p>551: MOTHER'S BEDSPREAD</p> <p>Henny has found a pattern the same as her mother's spread. She has been working on it for two years. Mother used to make many things in the house.</p>

Container(s)	Description
	She was a seamstress and sewed for other people. Processed all the wool. Henny and her sisters took over all her mother's tasks when she died. She tells more about this.
146, side 1	606: CHRISTMAS They were very poor. Did not fuss much. Sister and her did a lot of baking. Lots of snow outside. Father made her a pair of skis one Christmas. She was so proud of them.
146, side 1	646: Henny had lots of fun with her father. She was a tomboy. Played ball with the boys, swam in the river, and went fishing with her father when he was home during the summer.
146, side 1	690: CHRISTMAS FOODS Lutefisk and risngrynsgrøt on Christmas Eve. Also ate lefse. Had lamb or beef on Christmas day. Went to church took an hour to walk, quicker to row. Eidet Kirke.
146, side 1	740: Church is now an annex, services every other Sunday. Not as many people going to church.
146, side 1	768: SCHOOL Had six grades. She did well in school. Had some high school subjects in grade school.
146, side 1	790: Left home when she was 17, confirmed at 15.
146, side 1	797: Mother made vadmal, heavy black wool. Was for her father's suit. Mother did all the farm work.
146, side 1	839: Went to church every Sunday. Remembers confirmation class when they were confirmed. Liked to sing in church. Names a few of her favorite hymns.
146, side 1	867: LIVED ON STORIES Older folks always told the kids stories. Uncle and father would get together and share stories. Troll stories left their mark. Put out food for the julenissen. Afraid of trolls.
146, side 1	904: Went to a neighboring farm and did housework after school for two years. Then went to work for her schoolteacher. In the winter the students stayed at school

Container(s)	Description
	because it was hard to travel in the cold weather. Had school on Saturday. Henny worked as an aid to the teacher and her family.
146, side 1	950: WHY GO TO AMERICA? Maybe it was born in me, because my dad wanted to go to America when he was a young man. He used to talk to Henny about it. Thought America was lined in gold. Had relatives over in America. They would send packages from America. She wanted to see more of the world. Stood on a hill by her house and decided to go to America.
146, side 1	983: Wrote to uncle, George Johnson, in Tacoma to see if he could send her a ticket. Father was glad. She was 20 when she came over.
146, side 1	995: Left October 10, 1923 on Stavangerfjord. Took a boat to a city to get her papers in order. First time she saw an electric light.
146, side 1	1019: FEELING ABOUT LEAVING She just wanted out. Her little brother went with her to the boat. Kissed father good-bye before she left.
146, side 1	1053: So much of the population died on the sea in Northern Norway. Tells of a friend who never returned from the sea.
146, side 1	1071: Henny planned on staying only for five years in America.
146, side 1	1074: TRIP Sailed from Eidet to Bodoe to see her sister for a few minutes. Went by train from Bergen to Oslo. Met some people on the train who were also going to America. One girl from Finnmarken named Turid Johanson. Took a tour of Karl Johan in Oslo. Bought a green silk hat for 30 kroner.
146, side 1	1113: Took Stavangerfjord. It was a marvelous trip. Many were sick.
146, side 2	024: TRAIN TRIP Got on a train in New York. Did not talk to anybody on the train. There was a lady who looked after her. Took five days on the train. Ate food from a box. Met a man who could speak Swedish. Met by her uncle and aunt in Tacoma.
146, side 2	131: THINGS BROUGHT FROM NORWAY

Container(s)	Description
	Clothes, blue pleated skirt and red silk blouse. Blue wool dress she had made for her.
146, side 2	172: Most difficult thing was being lonely. She started working on Gravelly Lake for Scott Henderson, a lawyer. Did housework. Lonely because she could not speak English well and had a hard time getting into town.
146, side 2	217: She did cooking, cleaning. Learned to swim at the lake. Talks about when her friend from Norway died in Norway, shocked her.
146, side 2	247: She bought a newspaper and found herself another job.
146, side 2	264: Started going to Normanna Hall and met friends, then she was on easy street.
146, side 2	269: NIGHT SCHOOL Went to night school. Talks about this some. Went to Seattle with the people she worked for and lived there for a year. Then back to Tacoma.
146, side 2	289: MEETING HUSBAND Met husband at Normanna Hall, Louis Hale. He was a gardener when they met. He was from Sikeldun (?). They met in 1926. Louis had come to her uncle's house with her cousin. Went to movies together, Normanna Hall.
146, side 2	360: WEDDING Married on 12th and 'I' Street. Small wedding, Pastor Edwards. She quit working.
146, side 2	377: Bought a house. Husband worked at Atlas Foundry until he was sick. Worked at the schools' as a janitor for a while. Lived at 49th and 'G'.
146, side 2	411: CHILDREN Phyllis is a secretary for the County Commissioners. Was married to Herman McDowell. She is remarried to Irvin Schmit. Anita had five children, she lives in Oregon. Henny has ten grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren.
146, side 2	446: Get together every now and then with all the family. Daughter, Anita is a Jehovah's Witness.
146, side 2	475: CHURCH

Container(s)	Description
	Has always been with the church Mt. Zion Lutheran.
146, side 2	486: SCANDINAVIAN ORGANIZATIONS : Used to be very actively involved, not so much anymore.
146, side 2	486: MAINTAINING TRADITIONS : Embroidery, speak the language. Make Norwegian things, sweaters, pillows, etc. Cooking, especially around Christmas time.
146, side 2	560: TRIPS BACK TO NORWAY 1977 and 1979. Took her daughter with her in 1979 for the family reunion. Talks about this some. Sister visited her here. Had other relatives come to visit. Going summer 1982, describes her trip.
146, side 2	669: CHANGES IN NORWAY All the hills looked smaller. River where she used to swim was a trickle. People are marvelous people.
146, side 2	715: PROUD TO BE A NORWEGIAN Her family was a good family. They were good people. Poor people but happy. Hard workers. Had God fearing parents.
146, side 2	760: Gives an account of her father's love for his children.
146, side 2	808: Speaks a bit in Norwegian, tells a brief story.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Emigration and immigration
 Family--Norway
 Norway--Social conditions--1945-
 Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs
 Railroad travel

Personal Names :

Hale, Henny Pauline Marie--Interviews
 (creator)
 Freeberg, Amanda
 Hale, Lars (Louis) Olaf Sigurd
 Madsen, Johannes Ludvik
 Nilsen, Petra Oluffa
 Hale, Anita Lorraine

Hale, Phyllis June
Johannessen, Harold Peder Johan
Johannessen, Henny Pauline Marie
Madsen, Jensine Dreier

Corporate Names :

Ellis Island (N.J. and N.Y.)
Mount Zion Lutheran Church (Tacoma, Wash.)
Normanna Hall (Tacoma, Wash.)
Stavangerfjord (Steamship)

Family Names :

Hale family
Johannessen family
Johnsen family
Madsen family
Nilsen family

Geographical Names :

Eidet, Vesterålen (Norway)
Seattle (Wash.)
Tacoma (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Domestics
Dressmakers
Janitors
Weavers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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