

# Anna Åberg Larson Oral History Interview, 1979

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creator</b>	Larson, Anna Åberg
<b>Title</b>	Anna Åberg Larson Oral History Interview
<b>Dates</b>	1979 (inclusive) 1894 1979
<b>Quantity</b>	2 file folders 1 sound cassette 1 compact disc.
<b>Collection Number</b>	t026
<b>Summary</b>	An oral history interview with Anna Åberg Larson, a Swedish immigrant.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">Pacific Lutheran University, Archives and Special Collections</a> Archives and Special Collections Pacific Lutheran University 12180 Park Avenue South Tacoma, Washington 98447 Telephone: 253-535-7586 Fax: 253-535-7315 <a href="mailto:archives@plu.edu">archives@plu.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	The oral history collection is open to all users.
<b>Additional Reference Guides</b>	
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Sponsor</b>	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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## Biographical Note

Anna Larson Åberg was born in the cold area of Aspberg, Norrbotten, Sweden on September 12, 1894. Anna was among twelve children born to her parents, but only seven or eight survived. Her father farmed for a living and raised the family on his own when Anna's mother died. One of Anna's friends encouraged her to move to America when she was 18 years old; Anna took her advice and traveled to the United States in 1912 with several other people, one of whom later became her husband. At first Anna settled in Seattle and worked as a housekeeper while attending night school to learn English. After marrying, Anna and her husband moved to Alaska where he could mine. When a couple of years had passed, they moved to California and then back to Washington, building a house in Tacoma. They had three children--Arthur, Lawrence, and Elroy--whom Anna tried to teach Swedish, but they didn't retain it after starting school. Anna especially loves the Swedish traditions surrounding Christmas, but she has had a hard time preserving all of the customs in the United States. Still, she and her husband were once members of Valhalla, and they returned to Sweden twice to visit relatives.

## Lineage

Maiden Name: Anna Åberg Father: Björn Åberg Mother: Landfors Brothers and Sisters: There were twelve children in the family but only seven or eight survived Spouse: (?) Larson Children: Arthur Larson Lawrence Larson Elroy Larson

## Content Description

The interview was conducted with Anna Larson on April 19, 1979 in Tacoma, Washington. This interview contains information on personal background, emigration, and married life. 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 Anna Larson 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

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## 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	
26, side 1	005/06: FAMILY BACKGROUND Anna Larson was born way up north in Norrbotten province, Sweden, "nice there but cold." Aspberg was a little community nearby. Father's name was Björn Åberg, mother's last name was Landfors (?). She died when Anna was small. Father was a farmer and grew things like potatoes, corn and wheat.
26, side 1	054: There were twelve children born but only seven or eight lived. Three sisters besides Anna came to America, one in Port Angeles and two in Tacoma. She knew her paternal grandparents real well; grandfather was so good to her that she idolized him. His name was Aaberg also. The family name was not from the farm.
26, side 1	086/07: EMIGRATION "I was 18 years old when I came and I was homesick. I used to cry at night so my pillow was all wet in the morning. I wanted to go home." She came with a few other people including the man who would later become her husband. They were married later and lived in Alaska for two years while her husband worked in a mine. But there was a strike and then they moved down to Seattle.
26, side 1	103: Anna had a friend who bugged her about coming to America. Anna finally gave in and decided to come, but her friend changed her mind at the last minute and didn't emigrate. Anna stuck to her decision.
26, side 1	113: TRIP Anna traveled by boat to Norway, England, and then Boston. From Boston they took the train to Seattle. SETTling IN: Anna knew no one in Seattle but she was lucky. The lady for whom she worked was so good to her: "my own mother couldn't have been better. She took me wherever they went; she took me down to night school; she was a doll."

Container(s)	Description
26, side 1	<p>133:            Anna did housework as she couldn't do anything else. She had attended cooking school before leaving Sweden and was good at that. She didn't know English when she left. Went to night school to learn English and then practiced it at night.</p>
26, side 1	<p>154:            The boat trip was rough, big waves, and took about a week. "We used to dance on the boat and we had a heck of a good time." The language was the worst problem but she learned it little by little. Being homesick was also a problem. When Christmas came she thought she couldn't make it because they had such a good time in Sweden at Christmas time.</p>
26, side 1	<p>193/08: HUSBAND AND FAMILY LIFE            She knew her husband from Sweden. He'd been in America and they came with him because he could speak English. She had "nothing to do with him for a long time." She was happy to move back to the Tacoma and Seattle area from Alaska; she liked this region. The first baby was born in Alaska, and the next two boys were born down here. Arthur, Lawrence, and Elroy (?), all live quite close to here and all three are married. There are many grandchildren. The youngest boy had five children, two girls and three boys. She still has the house and property which they built. They lived in California a few years before settling down in Tacoma.</p>
26, side 1	<p>270/09: TRADITIONS            In Sweden they always went to church by sled the first thing on Christmas morning. Christmas baking started two weeks before hand. In Tacoma, they belonged to a Lutheran church where the children were confirmed. They belonged to Valhalla for awhile, but only used it for social purposes, dances and dinners on Saturday nights.</p>
26, side 1	<p>319: RETURN TRIP TO SWEDEN            She has been back to the home place twice. Her sister was 90 (?) and wanted Anna to come celebrate her birthday. But "I hate to go home because I hate to say good-bye to her." She has the one sister left in Sweden and three in America. Anna felt right at home when she returned to Sweden; just didn't like crossing the ocean. "The great big waves, up and down, up and down. I get a stomachache when I think about it." Her husband was seasick from the day of departure from Sweden until arrival in America; she didn't see him at all. The food was good and so were the dances. Both return trips were by boat.</p>
26, side 1	<p>358/10:            Anna still speaks Swedish. People in Valhalla spoke both English and Swedish. Her sons didn't retain much Swedish after they began school. Anna tried to retain much Swedish after they began school. Anna tried to teach the oldest</p>

Container(s)	Description
	one later on, but wasn't too successful. Her own Swedish is not good anymore; she recites "Fader vår..."
26, side 1	408: She doesn't remember about medical care in America in the early days because she was never sick. Has a poster of Sweden on the wall which reminds her of her Swedish home, lots of snow and little red bricks. She has given or thrown away most of her Swedish things.
26, side 1	442: End of tape.

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Emigration and Immigration  
 Family -- Sweden  
 Ocean travel  
 Sweden -- Social conditions -- 1945  
 Swedish-Americans--Northwest,Pacific--Interviews  
 Swedish-Americans--Social life and customs

### Personal Names :

Larson, Anna Åberg--Interviews  
 (creator)  
 Åberg, Anna  
 Åberg, Björn  
 Larson, Anna  
 Larson, Arthur  
 Larson, Elroy  
 Larson, Lawrence

### Corporate Names :

Swedish Order of Valhalla (Tacoma, Wash.)

### Family Names :

Åberg family  
 Landfors family  
 Larson family

### Geographical Names :

Alaska  
 California  
 Norrbotten (Sweden)  
 Seattle (Wash.)  
 Tacoma (Wash.)

### Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

### Occupations :

Farmers  
 Housekeepers

## Miners

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler  
2004