

Astrid Jerney Sørene Tomsli Oral History Interview, 1981

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Tomsli, Astrid Jerney Sørene
Title	Astrid Jerney Sørene Tomsli Oral History Interview
Dates	1981 (inclusive) 1981 1981
Quantity	2 file folders 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t090
Summary	An oral history interview with Astrid Jerney Sørene Tomsli , 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

Astrid Tomsli was born in 1904 in Vik, Helgeland, Norway to Helge and Signe Sørene. Astrid's father was a fisherman, and her mother did weaving at home. Including Astrid, there were six children in the family. In 1924, Astrid married Olaf Tomsli, and their wedding lasted for several days. Three years later, the couple decided to immigrate to America. They came over on the Stavangerfjord and took a train from Quebec to Seattle, WA, where they were met by Astrid's uncle, Ole Pederson, and his son. From Seattle, they drove to Westport, OR and took a boat to Puget Island on the Columbia River. Olaf obtained a job at a sawmill, and Astrid became a housewife. When they first moved to the island, it was mostly a Norwegian community, and Astrid was very active in the Norse Hall. Astrid and Olaf had three children: Orville, Sonja, and Reier. All of the children can speak some Norwegian and have visited Norway. Astrid herself has also made return trips, her first in 1952. She did not recognize her home place and got better acquainted with her siblings.

Lineage

Full Name: Astrid Jerney Sørene Tomsli. Maiden Name: Astrid Jerney Sørene. Father: Helge Sørene. Mother: Signe Sørene. Brothers and Sisters: Arthur Sørene, Magnhild Sørene, Gudrun Sørene, Hjørdis Sørene, Sverre Sørene. Spouse: Olaf Tomsli. Children: Orville Tomsli, Sonja Tomsli, Reier Tomsli.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Astrid Tomsli on September 29, 1981 in Cathlamet, Washington. It contains information on family background, emigration, marriage and family, community activities, and return trips to Norway. 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 Donna Mallonee 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

Astrid Jerney Sørene Tomsli Oral History Interview, 1981
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv61220>

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	
90, side 1	012: Astrid Jerney Sørene Tomsli. Born in 1904 in Vik i Helgeland, Norway. This is located in the middle of Norway near Brønnøysund.
90, side 1	030: PARENTS Signe and Helge Sørene. They used the name of the place they lived for their name. Her father was a fisherman and worked on the Coast Guard Wards. Their name before they took the place name was Edwardson.
90, side 1	041: BROTHERS AND SISTERS Two brothers and four sisters, Arthur, Magnhild, Gudrun, and Hjørdis. Her nephew was one of the family as his parents had passed away.
90, side 1	050: GRANDPARENTS Paternal grandfather was an old man. He played for Astrid's wedding. He was always smoking cigars.
90, side 1	061: Maternal grandmother died when Astrid's mother was small. She was a hard worker. Se sewed late at night to make money. Grandfather was a farmer.
90, side 1	068: CHILDHOOD HOME Five windows, pretty curtains. Had 12 runners to cover the floor. Her mother did weaving, spinning, and carding of wool. Astrid also learned to work with wool. They raised their own sheep, cattle, horses, and chickens. They had a garden.
90, side 1	104: CHRISTMAS Lots of snow. No cars, had to walk or go by sled. Couldn't see the tree until Christmas morning. Mother did baking, biscuits for all.
90, side 1	131: Astrid did not know her brothers and sisters very well until she returned to Norway in 1952. Now they are reacquainted.

Container(s)	Description
90, side 1	141: SCHOOL Hard sometimes. Close by their home. She went through the 8th grade. She took a course for 6 months studying English.
90, side 1	154: Astrid was 24 when she came to America. Met her husband in Norway and was married there. He worked for people in the woods.
90, side 1	168: WEDDING Was in the church where she was baptized and confirmed. They had a fancy carriage. Wedding lasted for a few days. Lots of food, cake. Dancing in the evenings. Grandpa played the violin and another fellow played the accordion.
90, side 1	199: Came to America in 1927. Married in 1924. Came to America because "it was meant to be." They came over alone.
90, side 1	209: TRIP OVER Come on the Stavangerfjord. Husband made it over perfectly. Landed in Quebec, took the train to Seattle.
90, side 1	217: Met by Ole Pederson and his son, Astrid's uncle and son in Seattle. They had a fancy car, a 1927 Nash. They drove to Westport, Oregon. Took a boat to the island on the Columbia River.
90, side 1	228: FIRST IMPRESSIONS Did not think much about it. Had family here. Her grandfather had come to America.
90, side 1	239: THINGS ASTRID BROUGHT TO AMERICA Her wedding dress. Could not bring much with them.
90, side 1	250: ENGLISH She could say "I Love You." She did not have any language difficulties. They lived with her relatives. Husband got work in the sawmill. He was working to pay back money they had borrowed for their trip over.
90, side 1	263: Astrid did not work in America, she was a housewife. Husband worked on the Oregon side of the Columbia River, now owned by Crown Zellerbach.
90, side 1	272: CHILDREN Orville, Sonja, and Reier. Husband worked for Walnut (?) Bradwood, and Westport sawmill in Oregon.

Container(s)	Description
90, side 1	287: They built a bridge to the island in the 1930s. Mostly Norwegians on the island years ago.
90, side 1	295: Astrid was active in the Norse Hall on the island. They had dinners, banquets, and made lefse.
90, side 1	309: Astrid does not belong to a church although there is a church on the island.
90, side 1	314: TRIPS TO NORWAY First time she went was after 25 years away. She noticed many changes. Did not recognize her hometown of Sørene. Her parents were still living. Sister had taken over the home place. They rode in a new car, a real treat for her parents.
90, side 1	359: Her children visited in Norway. They all live close by to Astrid now. She had eight grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.
90, side 1	372: Her children can speak some Norwegian. Many of her grandchildren have been to Norway. Many in Norway speak English.
90, side 1	394: FEELINGS ABOUT NORWEGIANS They are working people, good people. Has been away for 54 years. Things have changed some.
90, side 1	402: Have always had Norwegian friends. Husband passed away 10 years ago. Astrid is content to live on the island as long as she can.
90, side 1	423: Still speaks Norwegian, speaks a few words.
90, side 1	440: Astrid told her children to be good. Children today seem to get away with more. Orville went to school on the island before the school program was cut, so did Sonja and Reier for a while.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :
Christmas

Education--Norway
Emigration and immigration
Family--Norway
Marriage service
Norway--Social conditions--1945-
Norwegian-Americans--Ethnic identity
Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs

Personal Names :

Tomsli, Astrid--Interviews
(creator)

Pederson, Ole

Tomsli, Olaf

Tomsli, Reier

Sørene, Heige

Sørene, Signe

Tomsli, Orville

Tomsli, Sonja

Corporate Names :

Stavangerfjord (Steamship)

Family Names :

Sørene family

Tomsli family

Geographical Names :

Vik i Helgeland (Norway)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Housewives

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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