

# Sulo John Rinne Oral History Interview, 1981

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creator</b>	Rinne, Sulo John
<b>Title</b>	Sulo John Rinne Oral History Interview
<b>Dates</b>	1981 (inclusive) 1981 1981
<b>Quantity</b>	3 file folders 1 photographs 1 sound cassette
<b>Collection Number</b>	t082
<b>Summary</b>	An oral history interview with Sulo John Rinne, a Finnish 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

Sulo Rinne was born on March 12, 1896 in Pirkkala, Finland to John Rinne and Hilma Lehtinen. Sulo was one of ten children. In 1902, Sulo's father immigrated to the United States, eventually settling in Astoria, OR, where he worked in the logging camps. When Sulo was sixteen years old, his father sent him a ticket to America. Sulo lived with his father in Astoria and found work at a logging camp. The language differences initially caused many difficulties for Sulo, but he attended a one-room schoolhouse to learn the English language. Sulo met his wife, Esther, in Astoria and built a home for them in Gearhart, OR, near Astoria. Sulo began fishing in the summer and working at the sawmills during the winter. He also joined Peace Lutheran Church in Astoria and the Finnish Brotherhood. He has returned to Finland three times, but by his last trip, everything had changed. Sulo has no special feelings about his Finnish heritage.

### Lineage

Full Name: Sulo John Rinne. Father: John Rinne. Mother: Hilma Lehtinen. Paternal Grandfather: John Stull. Spouse: Esther Wiirre Rinne. Children: One son killed in World War II.

## Content Description

This interview was conducted with Sulo Rinne on August 26, 1981. It provides information on family background, emigration, employment, marriage, and return trips to Finland. The interview also contains a newspaper clipping from The Daily Astorian, which includes a photograph of Sulo at Hillcrest School in 1913 and a picture of Sulo at the time of the interview. Also see Esther Wiirre Rinne. 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

## 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
<b>Cassette</b>	
82, side 1	005: PERSONAL BACKGROUND Born 1896 in Pirkkala, Finland.
82, side 1	017: PARENTS Father - John Rinne employed as bricklayer. Mother - Hilma Lehtinen.
82, side 1	029: GRANDPARENTS Father's parents died in famine of 1866. Father had to work hard at age 5. Brother and sister separated, met accidentally much later and realized that they related.
82, side 1	069: Father spent some time in the Army.
82, side 1	082: CHILDHOOD worked on a farm.
82, side 1	090: BROTHERS AND SISTERS 1 brother, 8 sisters.
82, side 1	097: Father came to U.S. in 1902 when Sulo was 6.
82, side 1	098: SCHOOL DAYS attended until age 16, father sent him a ticket to America then.
82, side 1	106: Father immigrated to Michigan - employed in the mines. Later father and brother moved to Astoria, Oregon and worked in logging camps.
82, side 1	114: TRIP OVER

Container(s)	Description
	felt lonely in America. Was put off train in US because he had only Finnish money.
82, side 1	146: Arrived Svensen, Oregon which is 15 miles east of Astoria. Father had land and had built a log cabin there.
82, side 1	168: Mother sent him with a suitcase of hardtack. Man on the train shared his pork and beans. Very hungry when he arrived.
82, side 1	194: DESCRIBES LOG CABIN No floor, wood stove, rats came in at night.
82, side 1	201: EMPLOYED AT LOGGING CAMP Built Columbia Highway 1913 for a few months.
82, side 1	205: ENGLISH DIFFICULTIES Didn't speak any English - caused many difficulties. Learned English in a one-room schoolhouse.
82, side 1	242: GILL-NET FISHING Describes experience. 2 men, 1 captain and 1 putter. 28ft. long boat. Lunch was a 5 gallon can. Stayed out about 3 days or until lunch was gone. Fish 6 cent a pound. Fished mostly in summer and worked at saw mills during the winter.
82, side 1	335: MOVED TO GEARHART, ORE. Built a home. Worked in saw mill. Met wife in a restaurant. Worked in logging camp and went home on Sundays.
82, side 1	348: CITIZENSHIP Received it in 1939.
82, side 1	353: FIRST IMPRESSION OF U.S. didn't like it here felt like home after a while.
82, side 1	360: CHURCH LIFE Belongs to church in Astoria.
82, side 1	362: FINNISH BROTHERHOOD Meetings once a month. Helped the immigrants. Had sick benefits. At one time 1600 members, now 500.
82, side 1	385: TRIPS BACK TO FINLAND

Container(s)	Description
	3 times. 1948 - same was when he left. 15 years later everything was different. Two sisters still in Finland and still correspond.
82, side 1	406: FINNISH HERITAGE Doesn't feel any difference. No Special feeling.
82, side 1	421: CHRISTMAS Similar to US. Here they have a tree a month before, in Finland the day before and homemade decorations.
82, side 1	437: Father returned to Finland for 1 visit. Later died in Astoria. Farmed until his death.

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Emigration and immigration  
 Family--Finland  
 Finnish-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews  
 Finnish-Americans--Social life and customs

### Personal Names :

Rinne, Esther Wiirre  
 Rinne, Sulo--Interviews  
 (creator)  
 Lehtinen, Hilma  
 Rinne, John  
 Stull, John

### Corporate Names :

Finnish Brotherhood (Astoria, Or.)  
 Peace Lutheran Church (Astoria, Or.)

### Family Names :

Lehtinen family  
 Rinne family  
 Stull family  
 Wiirre family

### Geographical Names :

Astoria (Or.)  
 Pirkkala, Finland

### Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

### Occupations :

Loggers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler  
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