

Anne Schmidt Hansen Oral History Interview, 1983

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Hansen, Anne Schmidt
Title	Anne Schmidt Hansen Oral History Interview
Dates	1983 (inclusive) 1983 1983
Quantity	3 file folders 1 photograph 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t251
Summary	An oral history interview with Anne Schmidt Hansen, a Danish 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

Anne Hansen was born on November 15, 1888 in Aastrup, Denmark, which is located on Jylland (Jutland). Anne's parents were Peder Jessen Schmidt and Olena Andersen, and Anne was one of twelve children. Peder was a farmer, and all of the children had to work on the farm. Anne's mother died of cancer when Anne was fifteen, and Anne then began living on other people's farms. While working for a butcher from Fyn, Denmark, Anne met her husband, Holger Hansen. Holger had been living with relatives in Minnesota, and when he came to visit from America, Anne wanted to go back with him. Anne was twenty years old at the time, and they were married in Albert Lea, Minnesota. They then went to Stratford, Washington, near Moses Lake, and got a homestead from somebody who had to give it up to the government. The homestead was a wheat farm, and they also raised potatoes and onions for their own use. Holger worked in the harvest fields, and in the winter, he trapped coyote and sold the fur. Anne and Holger had three children: Henry (Hank), Charlie, and Linda. Anne and Holger spoke Danish in their home, so all of the children can understand the language. Holger passed away in 1968, and Anne continued to live on the homestead for as long as she could. Charlie then took over

the farm, raising cattle and sweet corn. Anne is proud of her Danish heritage, but she also feels she is a "true American."

Lineage

Full Name: Anne Kirstine Hansen. Maiden Name: Anne Kirstine Schmidt. Father: Peder Jessen Schmidt. Mother: Olena Andersen. Brothers and Sisters: Mikel Schmidt, Anders Schmidt, Ingeborg Marie Schmidt, Kirsten Marie Schmidt, Mette Marie Schmidt, Petrine Olena Schmidt, Mikelina Schmidt, Jess Schmidt, Three other brothers died when young. Spouse: Holger Hansen. Children: Henry (Hank) Hansen, Charlie Hansen, Linda Hansen.

Content Description

This interview was conducted with Anne Schmidt Hansen on July 16, 1983 in Ephrata, Washington. It contains information about family background, emigration, marriage and family, homesteading, and Danish heritage. Also available is a black and white photograph of Anne at the time of the interview. 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 Janet Rasmussen 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	
251, side 1	051: ANNE KIRSTINE SCHMIDT Maiden name was German. Her parents lived near the German border. Anne thinks they might have changed their name to a German name so they could get along better. Anne was born in Aastrup, Denmark on November 15, 1888. Aastrup is located on Jylland (Jutland).
251, side 1	138: PARENTS Peder Jessen Schmidt and Olena Andersen.
251, side 1	160: BROTHERS AND SISTERS six boys and six girls in the family. Anne is the youngest and the only one still living. Ingeborg Marie, Mikel, Anders, Marie, Kirsten, Mette, Petrine, Anne, and three younger than Anne. Mette came to America and lived near Anne.
251, side 1	211: FATHER'S OCCUPATION Farmer. He was a "gårdmand." He had his own farm. Quite a bit of land. They had dairy cattle. They all had to work on the farm. The buildings on their farm were shaped in an angle. Building on bigger farms often formed a square.
251, side 1	319: SCHOOL Had to go half a Danish mile to go to school. If they came late, they'd have to stay after school. Anne started school when six years old. Finished when fourteen years old. Anne's mother was sick for three years. Anne was allowed to stay home from school when helping her mother, but generally, the rule was that a student would pay 3 øre the first day he missed and 6 øre the next.

Container(s)	Description
251, side 1	<p>369: MOTHER'S ILLNESS</p> <p>Mother had cancer. Suffered awfully. Died before Anne turned fifteen. Had already been confirmed by this time.</p>
251, side 1	<p>412: WORK</p> <p>Worked in the fields. They raised beets for the cows. She could outwork anybody in the fields. Lived on other people's farms. Sometimes paid by the month and sometimes by the year. One of Anne's older sisters worked for a neighbor for 180 Dkr per month. She didn't want to work for them so Anne got the job. They didn't pay Anne as much because she was just a kid out of school. Anne did this kind of work until she was twenty. She came to America then.</p>
251, side 1	<p>463: REASONS FOR COMING TO AMERICA</p> <p>The man who was to become her husband came home from America. Anne wanted to come to America so he took her.</p>
251, side 1	<p>471: MEETING SPOUSE</p> <p>Anne was working for a butcher from Fyn, Denmark when she met her husband. Holger Hansen was also from Fyn. He was two years older than Anne. Holger had brothers and sisters in Minnesota. He went to stay with relatives in Minnesota before he was grown up. Eventually, he settled in Stratford, Washington, near Moses Lake. Anne and Holger's homestead is still there. They were given 160 acres and later were allowed to take additional land. Holger settled in central Washington because his brother was there. His brother, Hans raised wild horses. Anne's sister, Mette came to America after Anne and married Hans.</p>
251, side 1	<p>580: MARRIAGE</p> <p>Anne and Holger got married in Albert Lea, Minnesota. Holger had an uncle there. Anne was 20 years old then.</p>
251, side 1	<p>587: TRIP TO AMERICA</p> <p>Wonderful, a chance to travel. Took a boat from Esbjerg, Denmark across the North Sea. Landed in Liverpool, England. Took the Lusitania across the Atlantic. Lusitania owned by the same company that owned the Titanic. Left home on May 5, 1908. Arrived in Minnesota on May 17, 1908.</p>
251, side 1	<p>628: NEW YORK</p> <p>No problems with immigration. Her husband spoke English. Traveled by train to Minnesota.</p>
251, side 1	<p>645: LEARNING ENGLISH</p> <p>Learned from hearing other people speak English. Could have learned better English but she was by herself a lot on their homestead. Holger had to work to make a living. HOMESTEADING: Gathered sagebrush in the fall and stacked it</p>

Container(s)	Description
	up by the house. Lasted all winter. Got water from neighbors who had an open well. Had to carry the water they needed. Holger would haul water in barrels for washing when he was home on Sundays. Eventually they had a well drilled on their place. They lived in their two-room house for eighteen years. They got their homestead from somebody who'd to give it up to the government. The homestead already had a little barn.
251, side 1	788: HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION Worked in the harvest fields. In the winter trapped coyote and sold the fur.
251, side 1	797: CLIMATE Wasn't a hindrance. "I guess I was a tough old egg, always."
251, side 1	807: CHILDREN Always had good help. Never had to have doctors when the babies were born. Anne's three children were all born at home. She still had her two boys. Her daughter died of cancer when in her early thirties. Eldest son, Henry lives in Ephrata. He's an electrician and a handyman. Also makes jewelry out of rocks. Charlie, the youngest son, runs the family farm. Raises cattle and grows sweet corn. Daughter's name was Linda.
251, side 1	838: DANISH LANGUAGE Anne and her husband spoke Danish at home. Linda could speak it. Could also read the letters they received from Denmark. Anne doesn't hear from Denmark anymore. The boys understand Danish but they feel foolish when they speak it. Somebody from Denmark came to visit once. Charlie could understand him and speak to him but he felt foolish.
251, side 1	868: FARMING ON THE HOMESTEAD (See also I-655) Didn't have much. Raised dry land potatoes and onions in a little place. Otherwise it was a wheat farm. In Denmark, they harvested wheat and rye with a scythe and then tied the bundles. Anne used to tie the bundles. They had to use different methods in America. Farming was smaller in Denmark.
251, side 1	900: TRIPS INTO TOWN Didn't go to town very often. Walking was their only means of transportation. Once they were established they got their own horses. They would raise potatoes and haul them into town in the fall. They would then buy supplies like flour and sugar.
251, side 1	916: NEIGHBORS Knew her neighbors then much better than she knows her neighbors now. She hardly knows her neighbors across the street now. Before she knew all of her neighbors for miles around. Some of her Norwegian neighbors, such as Greta

Container(s)	Description
	Odegard, were her best neighbors. There weren't many Scandinavians in the area.
251, side 1	937: CUSTOMS Anne used to make dark rye bread and white bread. Baked Danish pastries too. Daughter doesn't bake pastries because she doesn't like to eat sugar. They eat a lot of beef now because her son raises beef cattle.
251, side 1	985: TRIPS BACK TO DENMARK Has never been back to Denmark. Would have liked to visit Denmark when younger but couldn't afford it then. Sister never went back either. Couldn't afford it. Anne's sister never liked it here in the US. Anne made herself like it here. She couldn't make much money but she could make friends. The Norwegians she met were wonderful people. Like her own people.
251, side 1	1012: METTE'S FAMILY Got along with Anne's family. Anne and Mette spoke Danish with each other most of the time.
251, side 1	1024: AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP Became a citizen by marriage her husband who was an American citizen.
251, side 1	1034: MARRIAGE Didn't really have a Danish wedding. They didn't have much money. She didn't get a ring until their 50th wedding anniversary. At the time they got married, all of their money went into their homestead. Anne's husband passed away 15 years ago.
251, side 1	1076: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE DANISH "I'm not ashamed of being Danish, but if they tell me I'm not American, that hurt my feelings because I'm a true American...I've lived to see that my kids didn't have to struggle."
251, side 1	1098: HOMESTEAD (See also I-655, I-868) Lived on the homestead until she could no longer live alone. Their land had the best soil. They raised berries and vegetables.
251, side 2	084: CHILDREN (see also I-807) Gave birth to her children at home. A neighbor helped with the first one. Tells about a neighbor, Ellen, who Anne helped gave birth. A doctor was there too. They had to take Ellen to Ephrata. Ellen gave birth while in their car. Anna cut the cord with the doctor's pocketknife. Most women didn't call for doctors when giving birth in those days. Women gave birth at home. Anna was all alone when she gave birth to her last child. Her two boys were age 8 and 6. Henry was in school and Holger was with the cattle. Anne sent Charlie out to get Holger.

Container(s)	Description
251, side 2	304: LIFE CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVED Her son, Charlie now has 200 new calves on the homestead.
251, side 2	336: KEEPSAKES FROM DENMARK Couldn't bring anything with her when she came.
251, side 2	350: HANDWORK Has made apple dolls. Has done lace work and crocheted to pass the time.
251, side 2	375: ENTERTAINMENT They had school programs.
251, side 2	388: POETRY "Ode of the Dried Apple Dolls," a poem Anne has written is read by the interviewer. Anne wrote this poem after she started making apple dolls. She could never get anything out of the story of Johnny Appleseed so she wrote her own poem about the apple dolls. She started making apple dolls when 80 years old.
251, side 2	492: Speaks in Danish.
251, side 2	558: Anne's father got the highest honor that a soldier could get, dannebrogsmænd, from the war he fought in 1848-50.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Danish-Americans--Ethnic identity
 Danish-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Danish-Americans--Social life and customs
 Emigration and immigration
 Family--Denmark
 Naturalization
 Poetry

Personal Names :

Hansen, Anne Schmidt--Interviews
 (creator)
 Hansen, Henry (Hank)
 Hansen, Holger
 Hansen, Linda
 Schmidt, Peder Jessen
 Andersen, Olena
 Hansen, Charlie

Corporate Names :

Lusitania (Steamship)

Family Names :

Andersen family

Hansen family

Schmidt family

Geographical Names :

Aastrup (Denmark)

Fyn (Denmark)

Stratford (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Farmers

Trappers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
2004