

Magdalena Haug Krokenes Oral History Interview, 1983

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Krokenes, Magdalena Haug
Title	Magdalena Haug Krokenes Oral History Interview
Dates	1983 (inclusive) 1983 1983
Quantity	3 file folders 3 photographs 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t234
Summary	An oral history interview with Magdalena Haug Krokenes, 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

Magdalena (Haug) Krokenes was born on February 18, 1903 in Samnanger, Hordaland, Norway, which is on the west coast about twenty kilometers northeast of Bergen. Her parents were Ragneel Johan Haug and Magdelee Ragnhilda Drogheda Haug; her father died at the age of 32 from tuberculosis when Magdalena was about 6 years old. She had two sisters, Marget and Sigurda, and her younger brother, Peter, died of pneumonia when he was around a year old, the same year as her father died. Magdelee and the children continued to live on the Haug farm with the paternal grandparents after Ragneel's death, but the mother later moved to Osoyro, a village closer to Bergen, and got a job in a sardine cannery to support her family; Magdalena, who was about ten years old at the time, and her sisters remained with the grandparents and attended school. The girls eventually moved to live with the mother, and Magdalena was confirmed and went to school in Osoyro. After confirmation, she worked for relatives for a year and a half before moving to Bergen, where she worked in the YMCA cafe. She met her husband, Valentine Krokenes, at the restaurant below her mother's apartment while she was at home on vacation from Bergen. While they were engaged, she worked as a domestic maid on a large

estate in Fjoesanger, a small community west of Bergen. They married in a church in Bergen and then returned to Osoyro to live in a rented apartment; Magdalena did not work outside the home in Norway after marriage. Their daughter, Maalfrid, was born around 1924. Norway was suffering a depression at that time and Valentine lost his job. He thought it would be a good idea to immigrate to America, work for a few years, and then be able to make a new start in Norway with his earnings, so he immigrated in 1924, at which time Magdalena and MÅfrid moved in with Magdalena's mother. Valentine got a job logging, first in Cedar Falls, WA and then with Weyerhaeuser. Magdalena immigrated in late June 1928, but she had to leave her daughter with Magdelee because Maalfrid had developed meningitis and was too ill to go. Magdalena traveled to the U.S. with Sam Havik and his new wife; they landed in Quebec, Canada and took the train through Canada to Seattle. She then took a boat to Tacoma, where Valentine met her at the Municipal Dock. Valentine worked in the logging camps six days a week and came home on Saturdays, and Magdalena worked as a domestic maid, first for Louisa Taylor and then the Will family; one winter, she also went to night school to learn reading and writing. MÅfrid died in 1928 at the age of four, and their oldest son, Walter, was born in Tacoma in 1929; they also had two other sons, Raymond and Kim. Her husband was employed as a logger, except when he lost his job during the Depression and when he worked in the shipyards during WWII; he died around 1983-84. Magdalena has been active in the PTA, Cub Scouts, and church; she was a Sunday school teacher for many years and was president of the women's group at Emmanuel Lutheran Church. She also belongs to Daughters of Norway. She and her son Kim took a trip to Norway in 1956, and she visited Norway another time with her sister Marget and Marget's daughter.

Lineage

Full Name: Magdalena Krokenes. Maiden Name: Magdalena Haug. Father: Ragneel Johan Haug. Mother: Magdelee Ranghilda Drogheda. Paternal Grandfather: Per (Peter) Haug. Paternal Grandmother: Magdelee Haug. Maternal Grandfather: Engle Drogheda. Maternal Grandmother: Marte Drogheda. Brothers and Sisters: Marget Lepsoe, Sigurda Aamot, Peter Haug. Spouse: Valentine Krokenes. Children: MÅfrid Krokenes, Walter Krokenes, Raymond Krokenes, Kim Krokenes.

Content Description

This interview was conducted with Magdalena Krokenes on March 7, 1983 in Tacoma, Washington. This interview contains information on family history, childhood, school, life in OsÅy, Christmas traditions, confirmation, work in Norway, meeting spouse, marriage and family life in Norway after marriage, emigration, settling in and life during the Depression, children, community involvement, return trips to Norway, and Norwegian heritage. Also available are photographs of Magdalena Krokenes as a young woman and Magdalena at the time of the interview. The interview was conducted in English. Also see Sigurda Aamot (SPEC T78).

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	
234, side 1	004: FAMILY BACKGROUND Magdalena Krokenes was born Magdalena Haug in Samnanger, Hordaland, Norway on February 18, 1903. Her home was about 20 km northeast of Bergen

Container(s)	Description
	(on the west coast of Norway) towards the farmland up in the mountains surrounding Samnangerfjorden.
234, side 1	<p>060: PARENTS</p> <p>Father was Ragneel Johan Haug and mother was Magdelee Ragnhilda Drogheda Haug. Drogheda is where she was born, a farm by Eikelandsosen (on Eikelandsfjorden), which was a boat stop and had a margarine factory. Her parents names were Engle and Marte Drogheda. Mother had two brothers: Engle and Gitle. Gitle immigrated to America as a young man. The last time they heard from him was around 1900 when he and a German fellow were undertaking a carpentry business.</p>
234, side 1	<p>138:</p> <p>Mother married father and moved to Haug in Samnanger. Father had one sister and two brothers who immigrated to America (farmers in MN and WI). One brother, Aalei (Ole ?) immigrated using her fathers' name. As a cadet in a military school in Norway, he had gotten into a fight. He didn't dare return to school, so he emigrated under an assumed name in order not to be caught.</p>
234, side 1	<p>175:</p> <p>Father died young at the age of 32 from tuberculosis. After returning from a sanatorium, he went out in the fields to help his father and had a fatal hemorrhage. Magdalena was about six years old at the time. Magdelee and the children continued to live on the Haug farm with the paternal grandparents, Peter and Magdelee Haug.</p>
234, side 1	<p>210: BROTHERS AND SISTERS</p> <p>There were four children in the family: Marget, Magdalena, Sigurda and Peter. Peter died of pneumonia at about one year of age - same year as father. Marget married and stayed in Norway, and Sigurda immigrated to America.</p>
234, side 1	<p>233: CHILDHOOD</p> <p>Magdalena loved being on the farm and helped with haying: raking and drying hay on "hesje" (a hay drying rack). Their house was 2 stories: the grandparents lived on the first floor and her family on the second. Both floors had kitchens. But downstairs was the big room that contained the prettiest household items; it was seldom used except for company. The upstairs, besides the kitchen, had the beds and a loft, which contained her mother's loom and spinning wheel.</p>
234, side 1	<p>289:</p> <p>Father left some money and shares in a plant in a village (closer to Bergen) called OsÅ,yro. The plant was a "sardin hermetikk" (sardine cannery) called Peking. Mother got a job there to support herself and the girls, while Magdalena who was about 10 and her two sisters remained with the grandparents and attended school.</p>
234, side 1	335:

Container(s)	Description
	<p>The one-room schoolhouse was about 3-4 miles away and it was tough to walk in the winter with the ice and snow. They wore wooden shoes because they couldn't afford galoshes. But their feet were never cold or wet as they wore heavy wool socks and "labber" (outside wool socks).</p>
234, side 1	<p>369: School days weren't too structured. The teacher often put his feet up on a desk and played the violin for the children. Tells a story about boys finding and bringing dynamite to the school yard. She started school at age seven, later switching schools when they moved to OsÅ,yro.</p>
234, side 1	<p>419: Her paternal grandmother was little and always busy. Her grandfather told them stories about his youth as a sailor to South America. The church was about 30 miles away, across the water and very difficult to attend in winter. On these stay-at-home Sundays, Grandfather read the Bible. The children had to listen attentively, and generally be respectful to the elders, addressing them as "De".</p>
234, side 1	<p>447: As children they had a lot of fun also: skiing and skating. Tells a story how dangerous skiing could be. Her father and his two cousins, Jens and Mons Haug, were caught in an avalanche. Ragneel and Jens dug their way to the surface, but Mons died of suffocation; they found him in the Spring. Jens and Mons were sons of Hans Haug who was Grandma Magdelee's brother. The Haug farm actually belonged to the Haugs, and her grandfather Peter had married into it and adopted the name of the farm.</p>
234, side 1	<p>478: OSOYRO She liked being with her mother again when they moved to OsÅ,yro, but missed the farm. The new school was more strict - first hour was religion and singing hymns - and it was like starting school anew. Both the church and school were close; visible from their apartment house, which was an old converted hotel. She was confirmed in this church.</p>
234, side 1	<p>500: NORWEGIAN TRADITIONS Less traditions in Norway than America - no Santa Claus. They had "julenisser" - little fellows who lived in the barn and took care of the cattle. For Christmas eve dinner they had lutefisk, risengrynsgrøt (rice pudding), flatbrød, and lefse. They had a thicker Hardanger lefse, served with butter and "sirup" (a sugar syrup, thick like honey but darker); they used it on bread for breakfast also. Julekake, oranges and fruit were had at Christmas time; very seldom had fruit like that. Their Christmas tree was decorated with handmade chains of glossy paper and real little candles. Never happened that anyone had a fire; but there were always adults around. They sang and danced around the tree. On Christmas day there was no visiting; everyone stayed home.</p>
234, side 1	562:

Container(s)	Description
	<p>In Osoyro there was a Christmas program a week before Christmas, and they attended church on Christmas day. Church was formal in Norway; the pastor never came down and greeted the people. Magdalena immediately noticed that people and events were more friendly in America.</p>
234, side 1	<p>597: OTHER TRADITIONS Easter, both Sunday and Monday, was a big holiday; those with ski lodges in the mountains went skiing and came back "as brown as a nut". Her family went skiing but didn't have a lodge. Norway has many nice vacations and places to see. She wishes she had been able to travel more.</p>
234, side 1	<p>620: There were stories about "julenisser" and "troll". Her sister Sigurda had a "leikarring" in Tacoma - a group of folk dancers that Magdalena also belonged to. One time they presented a skit, similar to Per Gynt, with trolls living in Jotunheimen. As children, her grandfather told them stories about trolls - a special one called "huldra". She could never fathom that her grandparents believed in huldra. Supposedly a nice girl that like to steal cattle, she stood behind a bush looking at the cattle, but when she turned around she had a tail. This was a legend. In Norway the cattle were kept in a barn in winter. But in Spring/Summer the cattle were let out into the mountainside to find fresh grass and water, and the huldrer were there.</p>
234, side 1	<p>656: CONFIRMATION Went to class from January until October.</p>
234, side 1	<p>666: WORK After confirmation she worked for relatives, the Mons and Bergit Lisse (?) family, with four children: Henrik, Harald, Johannes, and a girl. Mons was a housepainter by trade and had much fun with his children playing music. Mons played the clarinet and Henrik the violin, which he was given at age six. They also had a phonograph and records, which acquainted Magdalena with the John Sousa marches long before she came to America.</p>
234, side 1	<p>698: Her responsibilities were to cook wash and iron clothes, fix beds, etc. She stayed there one and a half years before moving to Bergen where she worked in the YMCA cafe. She and 4 or 5 other girls set the tables and served good food. They lived in a room upstairs and would go out sight-seeing in the evening. Bergen is a nice town when the sun is shining, but a lot of rain there.</p>
234, side 1	<p>718: MEETING SPOUSE When home on vacation from Bergen, she met her future husband, Valentine Krokenes, in the restaurant below their apartment. While they were engaged she worked at Fjoesanger (a little community west of Bergen) on a big estate owned by a man who was a "skipsreder" (ship owner). She was a domestic maid: shined silver, ironed linen, etc. She quit to get married.</p>

Container(s)	Description
234, side 1	<p>746: MARRIAGE AND FAMILY</p> <p>Married at the "domkirke" (cathedral) in Bergen, an old, stone church. Wore a white dress with a veil, gloves, and silk shoes. Had a dinner afterwards at the Rosenkrans Hotel: salmon ("laks") and all the trimmings. Her mother and sisters came; she and Valentine returned to Osoyro to live in a rented apartment. The pastor in Osoyro was on vacation for a month, which is why they were married in Bergen.</p>
234, side 2	<p>025: FAMILY LIFE IN NORWAY</p> <p>After marriage, she did not work as it was not customary for the wife to work. These were depression years, which they called "noeds" time, and Valentine lost his job. His uncle, John Buttke, from Sunnfjord (Valentine also) was home from America on a visit. Her husband thought it was a good idea to immigrate to America, work a few years, and then get a new start with his earnings. The idea sounded good. She actually didn't want to be left that long, but didn't say anything against it. They already had a baby girl, MÅlfrid.</p>
234, side 2	<p>083:</p> <p>Valentine emigrated in 1924. She gave up her apartment and moved in with her mother. He got a job logging, first in Cedar Falls, Washington and then with Weyerhauser. Her little girl (two years) got very sick - "an awful time". The doctor in Osoyro thought she had a cold. But Magdalena realized it was worse and later took MÅlfrid to a specialist in Bergen who believed MÅlfrid had meningitis. Her condition remained basically unchanged - poor. Valentine wrote asking her to come over. She put in her application, but her girl couldn't go because of her health. "It was an awfully hard decision to make." But she went, emigrating in late June 1928 and leaving MÅlfrid with the grandmother.</p>
234, side 2	<p>197: EMIGRATION</p> <p>She traveled with Sam Havik and his new wife. They went by boat from Bergen to England and from Liverpool to Quebec sailing up the St. Lawrence River. The trip to England was bad; it was stormy, and everyone got seasick. She was given seasick pills by another passenger and that helped her. The trip to Quebec was very nice, no storms. The train trip across Canada was long, but she really like the Canadian cities (Winnipeg, Vancouver, etc.) and the big countryside: it was so light, airy and open.</p>
234, side 2	<p>300:</p> <p>There were no problems with English because Sam Havik had lived in America before returning to Norway to marry. They entered America at Blaine where their papers were checked, and from there to Seattle. Caught a boat at Seattle and arrived in Tacoma at the Municipal Dock where Valentine met her.</p>
234, side 2	<p>350:</p> <p>Tacoma reminded her of Bergen: waterfront and hills. They stayed in a hotel for a couple of days, dining with the Sirtunes (?) one evening. This couple helped them find a house (at M and South 53) and helped Magdalena with her English.</p>

Container(s)	Description
	The most difficult thing was that she couldn't read and was so happy to learn English in order to read again.
234, side 2	390: SCHOOL Went to night school one winter to learn reading and writing.
234, side 2	397: SETTLING IN DURING THE DEPRESSION Her husband worked in logging camps six days a week and came home on Saturdays. Then, something sad happened: her daughter died at the age of four in 1928. Her oldest boy, Walter, was born in 1929; he just died last summer - 1982. Walter lived and worked in California, had one daughter. She has two other sons: Raymond and Kim. Kim is a Vietnam War veteran who lives with her and helps her, because she's been sick lately. Raymond is a wood-worker and has two children.
234, side 2	465: WORK After her children were older, she worked many years as a domestic, first for Mrs. Louisa Taylor and then the Will family. She and Walter (the only child at the time) stayed at Mrs. Taylor's during the week, returning home on the weekend. When the children were in school, she did daytime domestic work. Her husband was employed at a logger except during the war years when he worked in the shipyards. Valentine died in 1983-4; they lived in their Stevens St. home since 1931.
234, side 2	515: THE DEPRESSION YEARS Her husband lost his job during this depression also, and they lost the house on 53rd and M. They lived in a little house for \$10 a month - Uncle John's property, and then a house on Proctor for one year before buying the house on Stevens St. By this time Valentine was employed. But before this, the entire family (Valentine, Magdalena, Walter, and her sister Sigurda) spent the summer at the berry fields in Kent - owned by Martin Sirtune (from Norway) along with Ben and Elisabeth Sirtune. It actually was a pretty nice summer, living in a barn and working in the berry fields; it pulled them through the worst time.
234, side 2	576: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES She's been active in PTA, Cub Scouts, and church. She was a Sunday school teacher for many years and president of the women's group at Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Walter was baptized at Zion (on Thompson Ave.) but confirmed at Emmanuel by Milton Nesvig. The other two boys were baptized and confirmed at Emmanuel. She also belongs to Daughters of Norway.
234, side 2	624: RETURN TRIP TO NORWAY She and Kim visited in 1956 with her mother who died in 1970. They flew from Tacoma to New York and took a boat from NY to Kristiansand to Copenhagen to Oslo, then a little plane to Bergen. Bergen is built up more now. People seemed to "know everything and be pretty sure of themselves". (She has also

Container(s)	Description
	visited with her sister Marget and her daughter.) When Magdalena lived in Norway, she read avidly and was always interested in the latest author. But now she thinks the people aren't interested in that.
	689: NORWEGIAN HERITAGE Walter spoke Norwegian until he was six and started school. The teacher sent a slip home requesting that they speak English with Walter at home. She felt so bad that he was having trouble because of the language. The kids know a few phrases now.
	698: FOOD Valentine was a good fisherman, so they had lots of fresh fish. Nobody liked lutefisk. She baked Christmas cookies and lefse.
	714: Snakker litt norsk. Magdalena talks about her visit to Norway in 1956: De kunne ikke frst at Amerika var hennes land n - "Jeg liker Amerika best."
	738: POSTSCRIPT Sigurda Aamot passed away on August 22, 1982. She was Magdalena's sister and began the Leikarring at the Daughters of Norway in 1976. The first dance was held at Bicentennial Hall. [Sigurda's interview is T78.]
	754: End of tape.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
 Confirmation
 Education--Norway
 Emigration and immigration
 Family--Norway
 Marriage service
 Norway--Social conditions--1945-
 Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs
 Ocean travel

Personal Names :

Aamot, Sigurda (Haug)
 Buttke, John
 Drogheda, Magdelee Ragnhilda
 Haug, Jens
 Haug, Magdalena--Interviews
 (creator)

Haug, Mons
Haug, Per (Peter)
Havik, Sam
Krokenes, Valentine
Nesvig, Milton
Sirtune, Ben
Sirtune, Elisabeth
Sirtune, Martin
Taylor, Louisa
Drogheda, Engle
Haug, Magdelee
Haug, Ragneel Johan
Krokenes, Magdalena

Corporate Names :

Daughters of Norway (U.S.) Embla Lodge #2 (Tacoma, Wash.)
Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Aamot family
Drogheda family
Haug family
Krokenes family

Geographical Names :

Bergen (Norway)
Cedar Falls (Wash.)
Fjällsanger (Norway)
OsÅ, yro (Norway)
Samnanger (Norway)
Tacoma (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Domestics
Waitresses

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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