

Turi Mikkelsen Drage Oral History Interview, 1983

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Drage, Turi Mikkelsen
Title	Turi Mikkelsen Drage Oral History Interview
Dates	1983 (inclusive) 1983 1983
Quantity	3 file folders 4 photographs 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t226
Summary	An oral history interview with Turi Mikkelsen Drage, 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

Turi Ingeborg Mikkelsen was born on August 29, 1909 in Bergen, Norway. Her father was a shoemaker and died when Turi was one year old, and her mother ran a boarding house. Turi's mother died of a stroke when Turi was twelve. Following her mother's death, Turi lived at an aunt's house while she finished school. At the age of eighteen, she attended school in Bergen for another year and became a "jordmor" (midwife-maternity nurse). Two years before World War II, Turi traveled to England for a year and cared for the daughter of a wealthy English family. Once back in Norway, World War II brought hard times for the country; food was scarce. In 1947, Turi's older sister Clara, who had been living in Everett, Washington, visited Norway for six months and invited Turi to come work in America.

Turi immigrated in March - April 1948. She traveled on a new merchant marine ship, and the trip took twenty-one days. After travelling through the Panama Canal, Turi landed in California, where she had arranged to meet a friend's sister. Turi then moved to Everett, WA but due to her poor English, she was unable to find a job and returned to San Pedro, California. She met her husband, Arne Drage, when his

Seattle-based fishing fleet docked there. Arne was also born in Norway and had emigrated in 1920. On April 9, 1949, they were married, and Turi moved back to Everett while he fished. Turi was a member of the Sons of Norway while living in Everett and was also active in church. Arne and Turi later built a house in Seattle. The couple had no children.

Lineage

Full Name: Turi Ingeborg Drage. Maiden Name: Turi Ingeborg Mikkelsen. Father: Rasmus Mikkelsen. Mother: Johanne Myklebust Mikkelsen. Paternal Grandfather: Mikkel Monsen. Paternal Grandmother: Karen Monsen. Maternal Grandfather: Johan Myklebust. Maternal Grandmother: Jâ#°rgine ? Myklebust. Brothers and Sisters: Jenny Lunong Mikkelsen, Arnolf Mikkelsen, Clara Ervik Mikkelsen, Hjä#°ris Magnusson Mikkelsen. Spouse: Arne Drage. Children: None.

Content Description

This interview was conducted with Turi Drage in Seattle, Washington on January 28, 1983. It contains information on family background, life in Norway, World War II in Norway, emigration, cultural differences, and Norwegian heritage. Also available are a photograph of Turi on her confirmation day and snapshots of Turi 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 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	
226, side 1	004: FAMILY BACKGROUND Born Turi Ingeborg Mikkelsen in Bergen on August 29, 1909.
226, side 1	032: PARENTS Father was Rasmus Mikkelsen who died when Turi was one year old. Her mother was Johanne Myklebust who died at age 50. There were five "søsken", four sisters and one brother: Jenny, Arnolf, Clara, Turi, and Hjøldis. Both Jenny and Hjøldis stayed in Norway. The other three immigrated to the US: Clara to Everett, Washington in 1925, Turi to Everett in 1948, and Arnolf to New York where he painted houses.
226, side 1	084: Father was a shoemaker in Bergen. Mother had a three "etasjer" (floors) boarding house in Bergen and rented out rooms to 20-25 single men. She had a maid and a cook to help her.
226, side 1	125: Turi attended school in Bergen, a seven-minute walk. Church was fairly close - 10 minute walk; she was confirmed there. Turi didn't have to work at home in the Mikkelsen Boarding House after school because her mother had hired help. Ladies also came in to mend clothes and house furnishings.
226, side 1	160: CHRISTMAS IN NORWAY Christmas Eve started at 4 pm with some cake if visitors came. If not, it officially began at 8 pm with the main dinner of "pinnekjøtt", "surkaal", etc. This was

Container(s)	Description
	followed by viewing the Christmas tree, opening the presents, and attending church at midnight. On Christmas Day, company came for dinner of "svinesteik" and "surkaal" followed by apricot cream for dessert. Mother did a lot of baking before Christmas because the men (boarders) liked to eat. Christmas lasted a long time. It was their tradition to take the tree down on her oldest sister's birthday, January 12. (This is in conflict with the family background sheet.)
226, side 1	250: Between Christmas and the 12th, there was visiting and parties. On New Year's Day they had a big Christmas party - like Halloween here. They went to one house and received cookies and cake.
226, side 1	280: Turi tells about her mother's death. Her mother had gone to the country in July to visit a "fetter" (cousin) and had taken one child with - Turi. They were sitting outside in the yard after dinner at 8 pm when her mother complained of bug bites. Convinced that a spider had bitten her, a doctor was sent for. He determined she had a stroke, and she died in four hours. "So I opplevedd (lived through) the stroke." As they were quite distant from Bergen, they phoned her oldest (20 years) sister Jenny who fainted.
226, side 1	335: Turi, 12 years old, returned home to Bergen. Her sister had just married, so she and a reluctant husband took over the boarding house and made it into small apartments - even the portion of the third floor that was to be Turi's. Jenny had one child already, so she hired a cook and maid to help with the house.
226, side 1	360: Turi lived at an aunt's house while she finished school.
226, side 1	370: SCHOOL AND WORK IN NORWAY When she was 18, Turi attended school for one year at the Bergen Hospital becoming a "jordmor" (midwife-maternity nurse). Her brother, Arnolf, spent six months sailing and the other six at the boarding house. When she was 18, Clara went to America to some of father's cousins, Sivert and Helene Sivertson in Everett, Washington.
226, side 1	432: When Turi attended the jordmor school, she lived at the hospital. Her first job was caring for a little girl in a family's home. It was the Depression, and jobs were hard to obtain. After a year, she got her own room-apartment and worked as a jordmor until she emigrated at age 39 in 1948 after the Second World War.
226, side 1	499: WORLD WAR II IN NORWAY "That was terrible. I don't like that - to tell that." The Germans came in and took everything. "Ja. I was thinking I was going to forget it. But - it was terrible. The five years were just like many years to me." Most of the other "jordmÃ¸dre" and

Container(s)	Description
	<p>"pleiersker" (nurses) had to return to their parental homes, but as she didn't have a parental home, she stayed and worked as a jordmor for five years. "I had plenty of work. I was tired."</p>
226, side 1	<p>522: None of her family was killed. Only Jenny, Turi, and Hjørdis were left in Norway; Arnolf was out sailing. Most of her cousins were younger and living back in the country, so they weren't as involved. It was hard to get food, especially the last year of the war. The Germans took all the meat, not the fish; they confiscated five of her aunt's six cows. Then that last year, the Germans took the fish, too. Everyone lost weight due to lack of food. "We didn't get much. Nei. In the country, der de could find litt better." In town they had cards, which allowed them to buy only certain foods. If the market didn't have the food, the person didn't get it, nor did they receive a substitute food.</p>
226, side 1	<p>593: It was great when the war was over. The Germans were put in a truck. The Norwegians didn't say anything to them, although they thought about it. They just celebrated by dancing all night. The food supply was slow to recover. By 1948 there was still mainly fish. Turi liked "okselever" (beef liver) really well, so she asked the butcher to "skaffe" (obtain) liver for her because she was going to America and having a party.</p>
226, side 1	<p>632: EMIGRATION Her sister visited Norway in February 1947 for six months. She invited Turi to come to America and work. Turi was not married and had no marriage prospects, so she decided to get ready, have a party, and come. She took little with her, just clothes and a few presents.</p>
226, side 1	<p>671: She sailed in March-April 1948 from Bergen on a new merchant marine ship, which carried only 12 passengers. It was a wonderful trip. She became acquainted with the other people who were traveling to Los Angeles, San Francisco, etc. The boat picked up fruit in South America: oranges, bananas, avocados, and fruits that Turi had never seen before. She had her first taste of avocado, which she liked right off. The boat passed through the Panama Canal. Everyone debarked in San Francisco.</p>
226, side 1	<p>728: ARRIVAL IN AMERICA A sister of Turi's girlfriend lived and worked as a grade school principal near San Pedro; she met Turi as arranged in correspondence with her sister.</p>
226, side 1	<p>741: Turi knew very little English, although she had worked a year in England and had English one year with a teacher.</p>
226, side 1	<p>746: THE YEAR IN ENGLAND</p>

Container(s)	Description
	Turi and another girl had traveled to England two years before the war. Turi worked for a wealthy London family, caring for their little girl. The man was a minister (government ?) and had many vacations; the family (including Turi) spent many vacations in Brighton on the sea and in Holland and Belgium where his mother owned a factory.
226, side 2	020 : Continues talking about the English family and traveling to Holland and Belgium.
226, side 2	050: Turi immigrated to her sister's (Clara Ervik) home in Everett, Washigton.
226, side 2	199: She readied her papers and went through the Panama Canal. Took the merchant marine boat because it was very hard to find room on any boat. This boat went into many ports; trip took 21 days. The first three days in the North Sea were the roughest; there was a hurricane off Florida but it moved in front of them.
226, side 2	248: The trip cost (?) dollars, and the food was wonderful.
226, side 2	296: SETTLING IN Work and marriage. Turi debarked from the "Katka"(?) and was met by her girlfriend's sister with whom she stayed three weeks because the Columbia River was flooded. When Turi settled into Everett, she could find no nursing jobs; she couldn't work in a hospital because her English was minimal. ³⁵⁶ She returned to San Pedro and worked one year for the girlfriend's sister who had an acute case of eczema. She met her husband there when his Seattle-based fishing fleet arrived in town. Arne Drage was born in Norway and emigrated in 1920; "he was a bachelor and I was a bachelorette". There was eight years difference in age. (This does not agree with the family background sheet.)
226, side 2	386: They were married April 9, 1949 in a small wedding at the Norwegian Community Church (?) in San Pedro. Afterwards they had a nice dinner at the hotel in San Pedro.
226, side 2	420: RETURN TRIPS TO NORWAY She moved back to Everett while he was halibut fishing in Alaska. In 1952 they returned home to Norway for a visit to Bergen and his home?, north of Bergen on the water. The second trip was in 1960.
226, side 2	472:

Container(s)	Description
	In 1953 they built a house in Seattle. While he fished in Alaska, she worked; had three jobs where she accompanied mother and baby home from the hospital.
226, side 2	488: On their return trips to Norway, they noticed the rebuilding. Her husband's farm home was burned; actually, the entire place had been burned by the Germans when they had searched for the king. By 1960, all was built up again.
226, side 2	509: REPEATED MATERIAL Why Turi immigrated to America, because her sister was here working.
226, side 2	519: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NORWAY AND US Not too many, except for the wartime.
226, side 2	534: WORK IN AMERICA Turi worked for Scandinavians and other nationalities. Repeated conversations on her year in England and taking a year of English in Norway before emigration.
226, side 2	553: HERITAGE She was a member of the Sons of Norway when she lived in Everett.
226, side 2	567: CHURCH Turi was active in church or Seamen's Center (Church?). (Difficult to follow interview because of tape quality.) It was small compared to San Pedro's.
226, side 2	602: NORWEGIAN FOODS Her cooking has changed somewhat to accommodate differences in meals and foods. Breakfast is different here; she was accustomed to eggs and smâ#rbrâ#d as open-faced sandwiches. It doesn't matter because she's used to the American way now.
226, side 2	621: SPEAKING NORWEGIAN In their home Turi spoke Norwegian to Arne and he answered her in English. When they first met, he spoke English because of his work, so she had to speak English also.
226, side 2	635: In Norwegian, Turi chats about food in Norway, England, and US, "I Bergen..."

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas

Turi Mikkelsen Drage Oral History Interview, 1983
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv74217>

Emigration and immigration
Family--Norway
Norway--History--German occupation, 1940-1945
Norway--Social conditions--1945-
Norwegian-Americans--Ethnic identity
Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs
World War, 1939-1945

Personal Names :

Drage, Turi--Interviews
(creator)
Ervik, Clara
Mikkelsen, Hjørdis
Myklebust, Jørgine
Drage, Arne
Mikkelsen, Arnolf
Mikkelsen, Jenny
Mikkelsen, Johanne Myklebust
Mikkelsen, Rasmus
Monsen, Karen
Monsen, Mikkel
Myklebust, Johan

Corporate Names :

Katka (Steamship)
Sons of Norway (U.S.) Normanna Lodge No. 3 (Everett, Wash.)

Family Names :

Drage family
Ervik family
Mikkelsen family
Monsen family
Myklebust family

Geographical Names :

Bergen (Norway)
Everett (Wash.)
Los Angeles (Calif.)
Seattle (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Midwives
Nurses
Shoemakers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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