

Anna Linnea Beck Lundbeck Oral History Interview, 1982

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Lundbeck, Anna Linnea Beck
Title	Anna Linnea Beck Lundbeck Oral History Interview
Dates	1982 (inclusive) 1899 1982
Quantity	3 file folders 4 photographs 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t139
Summary	An oral history interview with Anna Linnea Beck Lundbeck, a Swedish 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

Anna Linnea Beck Lundbeck, known as Linnea, was born on May 27, 1899 in Siknäs, Kalix, Sweden. The Beck family, which included eight children, lived on a small farm provided for them since Linnea's father, Johan Beck, was a soldier. Sadly, Johan died at an early age after falling off a barge. The children worked a great deal to support the family. Linnea attended school for six years and then was confirmed. Her family celebrated Christmas in a traditional way, but they did not attend church as is customary because their farm was too far away. Linnea worked as a housekeeper for a while before she moved to America. Her brothers encouraged her to come, so she moved when she was 28 years old. Linnea took a ship called the Gripsholm and then took a train to Tacoma to meet one of her brothers. Soon Linnea found several jobs as a housekeeper. In Tacoma she met her future husband, Emil Lundbeck. They lived in Seattle for a brief period of time and then returned to Tacoma; Linnea and Emil had one son named Floyd. Shortly thereafter, Linnea attained her United States citizenship. She has returned to Sweden once, and while Linnea enjoys living in America, she maintains several Swedish customs. For instance, she still speaks the language and prepares traditional Swedish food,

especially during the Christmas season. Linnea also treasures some of the Swedish keepsakes that she has brought over from Sweden.

Lineage

Maiden Name: Anna Linnea Beck. Father: Johan Peter Johanson Beck. Mother: Maria Emelia Rönkvist. Paternal Grandfather: Johan Peter Johanson. Paternal Grandmother: Margareta Josefsdotter. Maternal Grandfather: Gustav Erik Anderson Rönkvist. Maternal Grandmother: Anna Erika Rokström. Brothers and Sisters: Elin Josefina Åström, Jenny Margreta Eriksson, Johan Edgard Beck, Petrus Beck, Arvid Heikel, Ester Maria Jacobsson, Astrid Johansson, Petrus Beck, Johan Beck. Spouse: Emil Lundbeck. Children: Floyd Lundbeck.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Anna Linnea Lundbeck on February 5, 1982 in Tacoma, Washington. This interview contains information on personal background, employment, emigration, church and community life, family, travel, and Swedish heritage. It also provides photographs of Linnea's home in Sweden, Linnea as a young woman, and Linnea and her husband Emil at the time of the interview. The interview was conducted in English. Also see Emil Lundbeck (SPEC T138).

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	
139, side 1	004: Anna Linnea Lundbeck Maiden name was Beck. Father's name Johanson but he took Beck when he was a soldier because it was shorter. Born in Siknäs, Kalix, Sweden. This is in the northern part of Sweden.
139, side 1	024: PARENTS Johan Peter Johanson Beck & Maria Emelia Rönnkvist. Father was a soldier so had to serve time in the army. He also worked in a sawmill. Father drowned when he fell off a barge while working. He was young when he died, little over 40.
139, side 1	054: Lived on a little farm, had 2 cows. This land was given to him because he was a soldier. There were other soldiers living close to them: Vaas, Beck, Stor, and Sik, who were all farmers. Farmers provided land for soldiers. Linnea's father eventually bought his land from the farmer.
139, side 1	078: BROTHERS & SISTERS 8 children, 2 died when they were small. 2 oldest sisters were working when their dad died, oldest brother was getting confirmed.
139, side 1	084:

Container(s)	Description
	Mother raised the children alone after he husbands death. Having the farm helped. Had milk, picked berries in the fall. Mother worked loading boats and baked bread for people. The children helped out.
139, side 1	100: Linnea's brother worked at a sawmill a long ways away. In winter he skied to work. In summer he walked and rowed to work.
139, side 1	105: Linnea and her mother worked on the boat. Loaded lumber. Cut grass in the summer time on the farm. Carried wood home for a fire.
139, side 1	126: BROTHERS & SISTERS Elin and Jenny, 2 oldest sisters, worked and supported themselves, did housework. They both stayed in Sweden. Arvid worked in the sawmill. He lived in Tacoma. All the children learned to work hard. It was a struggle but they got by. Did not learn a trade. Ester did housework. She had problems with her lungs and lived in a sanatorium for awhile. Astrid lives in Sweden. Did housework.
139, side 1	168: GRANDPARENTS Remembers paternal grandmother, Margareta Josefsdotter. She lived in a little shack in Siknäs. She had some tough times.
139, side 1	192: Linnea's grandmother was from Töre, which is close to Siknäs. Her parents died when she was young. Her father worked in a sawmill.
139, side 1	205: CHILDHOOD HOME Remembers a big kitchen. Had a baking oven. Mother put in an ordinary stove when her husband died. She then went to the neighbors to bake bread. Took out the baking stove because the new stove was more modern. Old ovens were dirty and left dust all over.
139, side 1	228: Had a bedroom where the children slept in bunkbeds. Everyone had a bed because someone was always away working.
139, side 1	244: Describes when her mother rowed with a casket to Kalix where her children were buried because Töre did not have a graveyard or church. Father was in the service and did not come home when his children died.
139, side 1	250: CHURCH Did not get to church much. There were homes that a pastor came to preach to once and awhile. Went to church in Töre when it was built. It was one Swedish

Container(s)	Description
	mile away. Father read from the Bible at home, had to sit still. Went to Sunday school.
139, side 1	271: SCHOOL Many families had 10-13 kids. Lots of kids in school. Had three schools with about 40 kids in each school. Went to school for six years and then had confirmation.
139, side 1	296: CHRISTMAS Cooked and baked extra food. Bought little presents for each other. Sent home presents when they began working.
139, side 1	310: Always had a tree. Did lots of cleaning. "Everything was spic and span." Made decorations for the tree. Had candles on the tree.
139, side 1	332: SPECIAL CHRISTMAS Had rice mush and lutfisk for Christmas Eve. Baked rye bread. Made sausage from the inside of the butchered cows.
139, side 1	365: Did not go to church Christmas Day because it was too far to travel in the winter. Sometimes went to meetings in homes or in the schoolhouse.
139, side 1	386: Were told stories of trolls. Mentions the bäckebrus (?). Did not really believe these stories but did read troll stories.
139, side 1	400: Linnea did housework in Sweden after school in the area around Liknäs. Lived with the people she worked for. Worked a few years before coming to America.
139, side 1	429: Linnea's brothers John and Arvid were in the U.S., John told her "you can come and work whatever you are, you can dress better here than in Sweden." Her younger brother sent her money for the fare. Linnea's mother died right before she came to the U.S.
139, side 1	445: Linnea decided to come to the U.S. when she was 28. "Wanted to get out and see the world."
139, side 1	453: TRIP OVER March 1928. Sailed from Göteborg. Boat was called Gripsholm. A nice boat with lots of people. Many were sick. Linnea was sick one day. Dancing, games

Container(s)	Description
	for entertainment. She knew one fellow on the boat from a place where she had worked.
139, side 1	492: Landed in New York. Had a physical in Stockholm before she left. Her sister Jenny saw her off in Sweden. Did not bother her leaving Sweden.
139, side 1	515: FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF NEW YORK "It was big, people were made up and we had fun at how they put lipstick on." Had one day to watch people before they left New York on the train. Saw black people. Had seen a few in Sweden. "Didn't make much difference to me."
139, side 1	540: Did not speak English. Got by on the train. People helped her. Ordered steak but it was so rare that they could not eat it. One fellow on the train was studying some English so that he could order some food.
139, side 1	585: Had a good time on the train. Cooks had a good time too. A whole bunch came out to the west coast. She was the only one coming to Tacoma. Met by her brother and sister-in-law. Also friends from the old country Sven Swanson (?) met her. She stayed with them for awhile.
139, side 1	627: Went to National with her brother and sister-in-law for 2-3 weeks. Got a job in an old boarding house in Tacoma. Was not good pay, but it helped her learn the language. Mrs. Green got her this job. Paid \$35 a month. She did not always get her money because Mrs. Green did not have it.
139, side 1	673: Went to LaGasa. He was a doctor in Tacoma. Did housework and cooking for them. Learned some new ways to cook, no trouble learning this.
139, side 2	009: Never had to wear any special uniform when working. Working conditions were good. Did not like the doctor's. She describes this.
139, side 2	040: Went to two other places and worked here.
139, side 2	045: SCANDINAVIAN LODGES Played cards, had dances and parties. Had a good time. Met friends at places like Valhalla. Lots of Swedes in the area.
139, side 2	062: MOST EXCITING THING ABOUT COMING TO AMERICA

Container(s)	Description
	"nothing special, nice to work, buy your own clothes, things like that."
139, side 2	064: Never belonged to many lodges or anything because she did not want to have to work extra. Linnea belonged to a Scandinavian fraternity in Tacoma. She thought the Swedes were cranky at parties and such. When she moved she never joined another lodge.
139, side 2	078: Has never belonged to a particular church.
139, side 2	081: Met her husband in Tacoma after she came to Tacoma. He was staying at her friends, the Swanson's, house.
139, side 2	092: Moved to Seattle. She wanted something different. Was angry about a black woman coming to work where she was.
139, side 2	104: Times were bad so it was hard to make much money. Did housework in Seattle. Went to San Francisco for a year and worked with a friend. Came back to Tacoma because her fiancée was there.
139, side 2	127: Lived in Seattle after they were married. Emil was in longshoring. Lived there until they bought into the Plywood Co. in Tacoma and then they moved to Tacoma. Son born in Seattle at Swedish Hospital.
139, side 2	143: TRIPS BACK TO SWEDEN Took boat to Sweden the first time. Had to fly home because of a boating accident on the Atlantic.
139, side 2	152: BOATING ACCIDENT The "Andreas," an Italian boat, sank after it collided with the "Stockholm." The "Stockholm" was being repaired so they flew home through Iceland and Canada. This was in 1956.
139, side 2	166: CHANGES IN SWEDEN Lots of change in living. Have fancy beds and bedrooms. More modern. People more pleasant. Have changed for the better.
139, side 2	177: People used to think they were so big if they were a farmer's daughter, etc. People are more equal now.

Container(s)	Description
139, side 2	183: Landscape has changed a great deal. Farms are overgrown with vegetation. In 1972, took a car from Stockholm and drove up north. Stayed at Emil's home place for awhile. Linnea's sister came to the U.S. and visited for 8 months.
139, side 2	209: CITIZENSHIP Received this after Floyd was born. Did not have any difficulty, went to school a few times.
139, side 2	218: SWEDISH CUSTOMS MAINTAINED Language, some cooking. Make special food for Christmas Eve, korsilta (?), pressylta, potato sausage. Still have lutefisk for Christmas Eve. Make rye bread, pickled fish, hardtack, and bake cookies.
139, side 2	256: Speaks in Swedish.
139, side 2	265: Used to do lots of handiwork. Does not do much now. Mother processed wool and weaved in Sweden.
139, side 2	280: Had brought some keepsakes over from Sweden. Pillows, towels, linen. Mentions some of the things she has.
139, side 2	332: Floyd spoke only Swedish when he entered school. Learned English quickly when he went to school.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
Emigration and immigration
Ocean travel
Swedish-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
Swedish-Americans---Social life and customs

Personal Names :

Andersson, Gustav Erik
Beck, Johan Peter Johanson
Lundbeck, Anna Linnea Beck--Interviews
(creator)
Lundbeck, Emil
Lundbeck, Floyd
Rönnkvist, Maria Emelia

Beck, Anna Linnea
Johansson, Johan Peter
Josefsdotter, Margreta
Lundbeck, Anna Linnea
Rokström, Anna Erika

Corporate Names :

Andreas (Steamship)
Gripsholm (Steamship)
North Pacific Plywood Company (Tacoma, Wash.)
Stockholm (Steamship)

Family Names :

Beck family
Johansson Family
Lundbeck family
Rokström Family
Rönnkvist family

Geographical Names :

Liknäs (Sweden)
Seattle (Wash.)
Siknäs, (Sweden)
Tacoma (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Domestics
Farmers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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