

Carl Omundson Tveiten Oral History Interview, 1982

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Tveiten, Carl Omundson
Title	Carl Omundson Tveiten Oral History Interview
Dates	1982 (inclusive) 1982 1982
Quantity	3 file folders 3 photographs 2 sound cassette
Collection Number	t129-130
Summary	An oral history interview with Carl Omundson Tveiten, 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

Carl Tveiten was born on June 12, 1909 in Deming, Washington. His parents were Omund Tveiten and Pauline Liland, and he was the eldest of eight children, including Martha (Handeland), Oscar, Anna (Hopen), Alma, Bertha, Jørgen, and Thor. Carl's father first came to America from Tveiten, Sirdal, Norway in 1897-1898, and made three trips back and forth before settling in Tacoma, WA. In Tacoma, Omund met Pauline Liland, who had emigrated from Liland, Sirdal, Norway in 1905. They were married in 1908 and then moved to Deming. In 1920, Carl's parents decided to go back to Sirdal, Norway, where Omund became a chauffeur and the family lived and worked on a small farm belonging to Carl's uncle. In Norway, Carl attended "omskole," summarized high school, and trapped birds, harvested hay, and helped his uncle with cattle trading to make money. After seven years, Carl decided to return to America with his sister Martha. They stayed with an aunt and uncle in Tacoma, WA for one year, and Carl worked in a local sawmill. Carl later began working in logging camps, and then did trapping and mining in Alaska. While mining, Carl was caught in a dynamite blast, and had to have surgery to save his eyes. Nevertheless, he still lost much of his eyesight. After the accident, Carl went back to Tacoma

and began working for a plywood company. He also built a house for himself despite his poor eyesight. Carl has not participated much in Scandinavian organizations but does belong to Gloria Dei Church. He appreciates his Norwegian heritage and has taken two trips back to Norway.

Lineage

Full Name: Carl Omundson Tveiten. Father: Omund Karlson Tveiten. Mother: Pauline Omundsdatter Tveiten. Paternal Grandfather: Carl Person Tveiten. Paternal Grandmother: Marte Jørgensdatter Lunde. Maternal Grandfather: Omund Pearson Hampland Liland. Maternal Grandmother: Anne Malena Jonsdatter Espeveit. Brothers and Sisters: Martha Handeland, Oscar Tveiten, Anna Hopen, Alma Johanna Tveiten, Bertha Berg Jørgen Tveiten, Thor Bernard Tveiten.

Content Description

This interview was conducted with Carl Tveiten on January 25, 1982 in Tacoma, WA. It contains information on family background, return to Norway, emigration, occupation, and Norwegian heritage. The interview also contains an article from a Norwegian publication, which includes a photograph of Carl, and photographs of a painting of the Tveiten home in Norway and Carl at the time of the interview. Also see Martha Handeland and Anna Hopen. 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

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	
129, side 1	005: Carl Omundson Tveiten Father's name was Omund. Name goes way back hundreds of years. Born in Deming, Washington on June 12, 1909.
129, side 1	012: PARENTS Omund Karlson Tveiten and Pauline Omundsdatter Liland. They lived in Deming, Washington. There was an old cedar camp across the Nooksack River where many Norwegians settled. Many people from Sirdal lived here. Carl's parents had a contract for doing the cooking. Carl was born in this logging camp.
129, side 1	024: Parents were born in Norway. Came over the first time in 1897-98. Father made three trips back and forth before he settled in the U.S.
129, side 1	034: Father's first trip was to Wisconsin and Minnesota. He did harvesting in the Dakotas and made good money. Second trip was to the West Coast. He worked at different logging camps. Went on one of his first trips to Nome, Alaska when it was discovered. He worked for a family up in Nome who was from Sirdal.
129, side 1	045: Lots of mining going on in Nome. Knew a family named Loman who ended up having a big store. Carl's dad was up there for a summer.
129, side 1	050:

Container(s)	Description
	Mentions molte or lowbush cranberries in Alaska. People thought they were poisonous. Father did mining in the gold mines in Alaska. He did shooting into various mines looking for different ores.
129, side 1	065: Sirdal, Norway, most southern river that runs in Norway. Sirdal is between Stavanger and Flekkefjord.
129, side 1	070: Mother came over to the U.S. by herself in 1905. Father worked in camps. Worked on the earliest streetcars and cable cars in town. They were married in 1908. They met and were married in Tacoma.
129, side 1	084: Parents settled in Tacoma for 11-12 years after a few years in Deming.
129, side 1	089: BROTHERS AND SISTERS Carl was the oldest. Martha (previously interviewed) was born at University Place. Oscar now lives in Alaska where he's gold mining. He married a Swedish girl name Irene Johnson. Anna Hopen (previously interviewed). Alma is a sister that died. Bertha Berg's husband worked with plywood. Jørgen was born when the family returned to Norway in 1922. He was a Navy man. Was at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese struck. He worked for various radio stations. Worked for Keyport Government Agency. Wife's name is Irma, she has a Swedish background. Bernard was born in Sirdal. He is in the Navy. Worked on the ship, "Enterprise" during WWII. Has done mining most of his life in Alaska. He married a Norwegian girl named Elisabeth Malering from Stavanger.
129, side 1	137: GRANDPARENTS Paternal were Carl Pearson Tveiten who married Marte Jorgensdatter Lunde. Lived close to Sirdal. Grandfather had the old farm.
129, side 1	147: MATERNAL Omund Pearson Hampland Liland and Anne Malena Jonsdatter Espetveit. They were farmers, terrifically self-sufficient in this village. Lots of water, hills, land for crops. Oats and barley were the two main grains.
129, side 1	175: Carl's grandmother's (Marte) grandfather brought the first spuds into Sirdal in the early 1800's. It became the chief food supply in Sirdal.
129, side 1	182: History of the potato. First came from South America, Europe, Norway, France, and England.
129, side 1	188:

Container(s)	Description
	People in Sirdal never had to work for anyone because they all raised what they needed. Had sheep and cattle. Once a year they went to town for supplies, salt, gunpowder and iron. Did not have sugar. Did not bake bread because they did not have wheat. Had a mill to grind oat and barley.
129, side 1	209: History of barley, 26,000 varieties. Grown from the tropics to the Artic.
129, side 1	217: People in Sirdal very much up on ecology. Have been for hundreds of years. Took care of the land.
129, side 1	224: Mentions things belonging to the Vikings that were found in Sirdal. These things are now in Oslo.
129, side 1	230: Parents decided to go back to Norway. Father became a chauffeur in Norway. Lived and worked on a little farm which belonged to his uncle.
129, side 1	253: Carl was eleven when he came to Norway. He could understand Norwegian but spoke English at home. Good schools in Norway.
129, side 1	277: Carl went to omskole (?), summarized high school, six days a week. He did a lot of reading. School was in Sirdal. Teacher traveled from community to community.
129, side 1	298: Carl went to the University of Alaska one winter, took mining classes. He always enjoyed learning. Math was his hobby.
129, side 1	313: Stayed in Norway for seven years. Wonderful life in Norway. Everything with the church.
129, side 1	320: Bedehus is a place where many came to speak and share their views.
129, side 1	332: Young people got together to build an ungodmshus, had dances and skits.
129, side 1	341: CHRISTMAS

Container(s)	Description
	Big festivals in school and church. Got sleigh out with bells, rode down to church 4-5 miles.
129, side 1	359: SKIING Very mountainous country. Everyone skied.
129, side 1	366: In the winter he snared ptarmigan (rupe) a snow-white bird and shipped them to England. This was a real delicacy. Mentions a few other birds in Norway. Birds made a good living for people in Sirdal.
129, side 1	388: Carl caught birds during the winter for cash, and cut hay in the summer stored it in the hay sheds. Hauled hay into the farm during winter.
129, side 1	415: Carl worked at home a great deal. Worked some on the telephone line. Carried two winters, 35 miles round trip, hardest work he has ever done. Took a full day. Being a mailman he knew all the people in the upper and lower valley.
129, side 1	454: Carl had an uncle who did cattle trading in the area "utstilling", showed off sheep and cattle. They took the animals up the valley, into the mountains, went to Hoenedal rough rocky valley to Dirdalta, Sirdal where they were taken to be sent to Stavanger and taken to a slaughterhouse. Describes this experience with more detail.
129, side 1	513: Tells a story about the oldest street in Stavanger called Kirkegate, cobblestone. An old bull was on the loose. Carl had to chase the bull down the street and bring him back.
129, side 1	534: Times were getting tough in Norway, was born in America and had "a dream of America" so had to come back to the U.S.
129, side 1	545: Martha and Carl came back to the U.S. together. Left Norway in May 1928.
129, side 1	555: Took a small boat from Stavanger to Newcastle, then a train to London, onto Southampton. Took the ship, McGanty (?) of the Cunard Line and landed in Quebec. It was cheaper. Took 7-8 days to cross the ocean.
129, side 1	577:

Container(s)	Description
	Enjoyed England could speak the language "right at home." Money was awkward with the shilling.
129, side 1	582: Went to Vancouver B.C. They were already U.S. citizens. Did not have birth certificates but baptismal certificate was valid proof of citizenship.
129, side 1	598: Stayed with Tom and Bertha Olson and aunt and uncle in University Place in Tacoma, Washington. This was their mother's sister. Stayed with them for one year. Worked in a sawmill.
129, side 1	611: FEELINGS ABOUT BEING BACK Awkward at first. Carl had to be responsible for the family since he was the oldest child. He was careful with his money.
129, side 1	622: Uncle was a foreman at a logging camp, Cedar Falls, Seattle Watershed. 20-30 men were employed falling and bucking trees. Made \$200 a month, good money in those days.
129, side 1	639: WORKING CONDITIONS Good food, clean beds, and sheets. Hard work.
129, side 2	008: Describes working in the cedar camp.
129, side 2	023: Went to Portland, Oregon. Remembers Burnside Avenue, "people milling around by the thousands looking for work, 1930s. People sat in the movies to stay warm. Mood of the people against Hoover."
129, side 2	044: Carl slipped \$20 to the man at the employment office, which he got him, a job right away. Worked at a place outside Independence called Valseth's. Small logging town. Recalls this in vivid detail. Some trees were 300 ft. tall. Stayed there for a month.
129, side 2	081: Went north to Alaska during the Depression.
129, side 2	087: Mother and father came back to the U.S. as times were real hard in Norway. Father worked in the woods in the U.S. when he returned.
129, side 2	096: ALASKA

Container(s)	Description
	Cost \$39 to go to Valdez. Wanted to go to Fairbanks and do gold mining.
129, side 2	108: VALDEZ Two story house, the front door was halfway up the house because the snow was deep in the winter.
129, side 2	117: Carl set out foot with a few belongings. Got to Thompson Pass, reminded him of Sirdal, ptarmigan up there. No road because of the snow. Tonsina glacier, describes how he crossed the glacier. Made sapling birch ropes, made make shift skis. Went across on his knees
129, side 2	160: Very few people or villages in Alaska. Abandoned camps.
129, side 2	165: COPPER RIVER COUNTRY A roadhouse. Paid \$1 for a full meal. At another camp paid \$1 for room and board.
129, side 2	173: ALASKA RANGE Had to cross this, 300-400 miles. 'The Big Delta' where the Alcan Highway joins the Richardson highway which he was walking on.
129, side 2	180: At Big Delta, a Swedish woman had a roadhouse and she needed a helper. She paid \$100 a month plus room and board. Carl met many old timers at this place, miners, traders, prospectors, and Indians. The Indians did not understand much English.
129, side 2	218: Went trapping during the Alaska. An old, big Norwegian man, founder of Petersburg, Louie Grimsmore (?). He was from Nordfjord or Normyr (?). He helped Carl out a lot.
129, side 2	233: Louie operated ferry across the Tanana River because there was not any bridge. They had a high cable in the winter where you cranked yourself across the river.
129, side 2	266: One summer Carl worked in the mines. In the winter he went to the University of Alaska, took mining courses.
129, side 2	278:

Container(s)	Description
	Was a prospector out on the mountains, lots of creeks. He saw places no man, not even Indians had ever seen.
129, side 2	283: Could tell if the Indians had been in an area by the way they chopped down the trees. Worked with some people in the mining camp, 100 miles from Fairbanks by air. Put up their own mines. Five partners. His brother, a man named Tibbets, Chris Ellington, Dr. Kripe (?). Carl's brother came up to Alaska the year after Carl arrived there. He came up with a cousin on the coal car. They almost froze to death.
129, side 2	330: Free and easy country. Could always find work. Ate birds that you caught. Anyone could make it in Alaska.
129, side 2	337: Worked on the mine for two years, did a lot of tunnel work. Had other men working for them. They were paid for \$7 a day plus room and board. Supplies were all flown in. Many of the bush pilots work for big airlines now. When they left the mine they took out the tractors and sled but a lot of the machinery is still sitting up there. They lived in tents above the timberline, cold winters.
129, side 2	375: President of the University of Alaska, Dean Patty hired Carl to work for him with the Canadian Co., looking for ore shoot.
129, side 2	390: MINING ACCIDENT Took 20 caps, a case of dynamite, every time they moved ahead in the tunnel. Carl was caught in a mining blast. He fired two shots to get someone to help him. They had an old ham radio but he was the only one that could run it. A young fellow drove the tractor to the airfield. A doctor from Fairbanks came to take care of him. He lost much of his eyesight.
129, side 2	479: Carl could chose any doctor in the U.S. to help him. He chose the Mayo Clinic. The weather was bad which caused some problems leaving Juneau.
129, side 2	511: MAYO CLINIC Saved both of eyes with surgery, has had cataract surgery. At Stanford, a doctor did some special surgery. Carl was 30 years old when this happened.
129, side 2	534: Carl worked in a plywood company in Tacoma. Bought 50 acres for \$40 an acre. Have a 100 acres that he has been selling.
129, side 2	548: TRIPS TO NORWAY

Container(s)	Description
	In 1962, flew to England, up to Stavanger. Visited relatives.
129, side 2	557: CHANGES Style of living. People leaving the small communities for work in the cities. Times are so different now.
129, side 2	578: SIRDAL Lots of power plants, water used for power. Ruined the valley. Tunnels built around the lakes. Everything more modern like America.
129, side 2	613: Took a trip in 1970s, more changes. People are not the same, "ethics and so forth." More religious in the past, honesty, integrity, and health of the old days.
129, side 2	640: CHURCHES Went to one church in Norway and watched a confirmation ceremony. The pastor asked tough questions. People do not go to church as much in the summer as in the winter.
130, side 1	002: Talks about the black plague. Sirdal effected tremendously. People wiped out.
130, side 1	012: Road in Sirdal was built in 1850. People had walked and hiked previously. In the old times people were more hardy and tough. People walked for hundreds of miles.
130, side 1	024: In the 1960s, the lakes in Norway were polluted. Fish could not spawn anymore. Had acid rain. Sirdal the first place to have this in Norway.
130, side 1	050: Tweiten has ten lakes in the mountains.
130, side 1	053: Carl is not sorry he left Norway, he likes both countries. People in Sirdal were sort of the hillbillies of Norway because of their language. This is an old language of Norway. Carl speaks in the Sirdal dialect. A good example of the language.
130, side 1	075: Many words in Sirdal come from Scotland and England. Many villages end with the word land, the first part describes the village. Many town names the same as in Scotland and England. Many words in various languages are the same as they have been for many years.

Container(s)	Description
130, side 1	100: Likes the Norwegian ancestry. In Sirdal had strong, hardy, healthy people. "All people and places are equally interesting." Carl has never catered more to the Norwegians than other nationalities.
130, side 1	122: In Carl's family they were all brought up the same but they are all different.
130, side 1	132: Mentions stories told about America by the Norwegians long ago. It was a rougher place. "Rougher type of women."
130, side 1	140: Tells a story about a group of Norwegian men who came to Squamish B.C. to work in the logging camp because times were tough in Norway.
130, side 1	170: Landing in Quebec when Carl arrived in Canada. Had to go through a room. Checked over medically.
130, side 1	175: SCANDINAVIAN ORGANIZATIONS Has not participated much. Avoids crowds because of his eyesight.
130, side 1	180: CHURCH Belongs to Gloria Dei. Has done much reading on religious philosophies. Has always liked the ethics and code of the church.
130, side 1	199: Carl has many stories. Always did hunting and prospecting. Did not kill bears because they were dangerous. Was doing silver prospecting. Billions of mosquitoes. Bear one trapped on his tent. 6-8 feet away, had two yearling cubs with her.
130, side 1	245: Old timers had told him that bears never heard a metallic sound so Carl took a pan and hit it with a tin utensil, he hollered loudly. The bear pulled down the tent upon him and then walked away. Carl took a shot at him.
130, side 1	262: Tells another story about a confrontation with a grizzly. He killed it with a shot.
130, side 1	300: Another story. An old Irishman, Pat Dorely from Butte, Montana who went with one of the first surveying parties down the McKenzie looking for gold and silver. Also met a big bear in camp. The Irishman climbed a tree. Carl shot the bear.

Container(s)	Description
130, side 1	350: Saw a herd of wolves one time when prospecting. They killed many moose. Hard for the moose to get away.
130, side 1	372: Nature through the ages has held a balance on it. Enough wolves and moose.
130, side 1	376: Carl built the house that he is in now. Had a small mill. Contracted out the cement, electrical and sheet rock work. He could not see well but got by fine. Describes this.
130, side 1	418: Carl has done a lot for himself. You keep going when you have to. People are tough.
130, side 1	435: Continues talking about the house.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
 Education--Norway
 Emigration and immigration
 Family--Norway
 Logging Camps
 Mining camps -- Alaska
 Norway -- Social conditions - 1945-
 Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs
 Ocean travel
 Storytelling

Personal Names :

Lunde, Marte
 Tweiten, Carl Pearson
 Tweiten, Carl Omundson--Interviews
 (creator)
 Espetveit, Anne
 Liland, Omund
 Liland, Pauline
 Tweiten, Omund

Corporate Names :

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (Tacoma, Wash.)
 McGanty (Steamship)
 Puget Sound Plywood Company (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Espetveit family

Liland family

Tweiten family

Geographical Names :

Alaska

Deming (Wash.)

Sirdal (Norway)

Tacoma (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Farmers

Loggers

Miners

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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