

Anna Myklebust Tobiason Oral History, 1981

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Tobiason, Anna Myklebust
Title	Anna Myklebust Tobiason Oral History
Dates	1981 (inclusive) 1981 1981
Quantity	3 file folders 8 photographs 2 sound cassette
Collection Number	t116-117
Summary	An oral history interview with Anna Myklebust Tobiason, 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

Anna Myklebust was born on January 6, 1893 in Uskedalen, Norway to Tormod and Soinneva Myklebust. She had seven siblings, and the family lived on a dairy farm, where they also raised grain, oats, barley, rye, and potatoes. Anna's mother's managed the farm, and her father was a Christian leader, who gave lectures and sent Evangelists to various communities. Tormod died when Anna was only five and half years old. Anna worked for her sister after she finished school and was confirmed. When she was twenty-one, she immigrated to America to help her brother Knute take care of his children while his wife was ill. Knute lived in Rosalia, WA, where he owned a department store with their brother Tormod. The families and business later moved to Moscow, ID, where Anna worked in the store and did housework for a prosperous family in town. Anna met her husband, John Raymond Tobiason (Ray), while working in the store. He was her sister-in-law's brother and also worked in the store. When Knute eventually moved to Longview, WA, Anna and Ray went with him. Ray and Anna were married in Longview on June 14, 1927, and a year later, their son John Raymond Tobiason Jr. (Ray) was born. Anna and Ray owned a grocery store in Longview and lived there for twenty-nine years. After that, they moved to Tacoma, WA and opened a variety store. They eventually sold this store, and Ray took a job at a factory in Portland, in which he traveled throughout Idaho and

Washington taking orders. Anna traveled with him for six years. Through the years, Anna has not had time for Scandinavian organizations, but she has been very active in church life. She was a charter member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Longview, where she has served as President, Superintendent, and President of Northwest District, ALC. Since 1955, she has been a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Tacoma. Anna is very proud of her Christian upbringing and Norwegian heritage. She has continued to cook traditional Norwegian dishes and remains in contact with her relatives still in Norway.

Lineage

Full Name: Anna Myklebust Tobiason. Maiden Name: Anna Myklebust. Father: Tormod Amundson Myklebust. Mother: Soinneva Myklebust. Paternal Grandfather: Amund Torekoven (Aslakson). Paternal Grandmother: Anna Løyning. Maternal Grandfather: Knute Myklebust. Maternal Grandmother: Brita Mussland. Brothers and Sisters: Brita Myklebust Vaagen, Knute (K.T.) Myklebust, Tormod (T.A.) Myklebust, Amund Andreason Myklebust, Albert Helmar Myklebust, Soinneva Hustoft, Olav Bernard Myklebust. Spouse: John Raymond Tobiason. Children: John Raymond Tobiason Jr.

Content Description

This interview was conducted with Anna Tobiason on November 19, 1981 in Tacoma, Washington. It contains information on family background, emigration, employment, marriage and family, church involvement, and Norwegian heritage. The interview also provides a letter from President Eastvold and photographs of Anna in traditional Scandinavian dress, Anna and her siblings Olav and Soinneva, inside the Myklebust family home, Anna and her brother's wife, Meja Myklebust (ca. 1916), Anna and Mrs. Munson, Mrs. A.W. Ramstad, and Mrs. M.T. Hokenstad (all former presidents of Pacific District Women's Missionary Federation of former Evangelical Lutheran Church), and Anna 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

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	
116, side 1	005: Anna Myklebust Tobiason. Born in Uskedalen, Norway on the beginning of the Hardanger fjord. Born on January 6, 1893.
116, side 1	012: PARENTS Tormod Amundson Myklebust. Myklebust was mother's maiden name. It means "many people live there." Had the largest farm and house in the valley.
116, side 1	027: Father was born in Odda Hardanger. His father's name was Amund Aslakson. Father had nine brothers and sisters. His mother's name was Anna Loynning. They were farmers.
116, side 1	040: Mother's parents were Knute Myklebust and Brita Mussland.
116, side 1	050:

Container(s)	Description
	Father's father lived to be almost 100 years old. Father grew up in a Christian family. Father's father was a progressive farmer. Used new methods of farming.
116, side 1	062: There are many Myklebust's. They are not all blood related. They lived and worked on Anna's grandfather's farm
116, side 1	072: Grandfather was a Christian leader in the community. Went to church in Vaagen, Rosendal, when she was a little girl.
116, side 1	079: Father was educated to be a schoolteacher. He bought a ship and transported produce to Bergen.
116, side 1	085: Describes how her mother and father met in a church.
116, side 1	098: BROTHERS AND SISTERS Three girls and five boys. Brita married Olav, he was a skipper. Knute traveled to the U.S. and met Carol Holta (?) from Trondheim and wed her. He was a merchant in the U.S. Tormod traveled to the U.S. and became a merchant with his brother. Had the Myklebust Department Store. He married Inga Myklebust. Anna married Inga's brother.
116, side 1	119: Had a department store in Rosalia, Washington. This is where Anna first came to in the U.S.
116, side 1	121: Amund took over the family farm. Albert was in the U.S. for a while. Went into full service for the Lord in Norway. He died during a flu epidemic.
116, side 1	136: Anna talks about going to the U.S. to care for her brother, Knute's children.
116, side 1	149: Sister, Soinneva married Pastor Ole Hustoft in the U.S. She was an RN. They had one son.
116, side 1	160: Olav Bernard came to the U.S. when Anna came over. He married Clara Benner (?). All of the family members were business oriented.
116, side 1	171: CHILDHOOD

Container(s)	Description
	Father died when he was 59. He was a Christian leader. Had a group to send out evangelists to different communities. He did lectures. Father had rheumatism.
116, side 1	191: Mother was a good manager of the farm. Good Christian. "Happy home life." She was joyous.
116, side 1	213: SCHOOL One room schoolhouse, one teacher. There were eight grades in the school. Most studies were done at home with lots of memorization.
116, side 1	227: School under government and church of Norway, so she had religious instruction, Bible History, Hymns, Church History, etc.
116, side 1	237: CONFIRMATION Read for the pastor in Rosendal. Went by horse and buggy or rowed. Was age 14 or 15.
116, side 1	255: CHRISTMAS Started preparing early. In the summer used berries for sauces to be used at Christmas.
116, side 1	260: Had a big orchard on the farm, apples, pears, cherries, plums, and berries. Sold fruit to Bergen. Put up preserves. Had lingonberries. Stored apples for the winter. When they butchered mutton they saved some for Christmas. Butchered a pig for Christmas.
116, side 1	293: CLOTHES Had to have new clothes for Christmas. Everything had to be clean and new. Symbolic because when Jesus came everything was new. Had new shoes and clothes made.
116, side 1	305: Baking done the day before Christmas, fattigmand, krumkake, lefse, and julekake. Cleaned the house.
116, side 1	312: CHRISTMAS EVE Bells rang at 5pm. The green tree represented Christ. A big dinner was served, lutefisk, lefse and rice. The Christmas gospel was read and a prayer said before the meal. Opened their gifts after dinner.
116, side 1	337:

Container(s)	Description
	Always had oranges, grapes, and nuts at Christmas. Walked around the tree singing carols.
116, side 1	343: CHRISTMAS DAY Went to church. Had a big dinner. Read Christmas magazines. No visiting. Spareribs for dinner.
116, side 1	358: SECOND DAY OF CHRISTMAS Could go out visiting. Had company in third day they went to her aunt's. Had a Christmas program at the schoolhouse. Young and old sang around the tree.
116, side 1	379: When the weather was bad they could not go to church. A sermon was read at home. Had to be silent.
116, side 1	397: Anna's father died when she was only five and a half years old. She remembers him some. Describes when her father died. Looking at the casket.
116, side 1	436: Mother had two hired maids on the farm. Helped her milk the cows, weave, spin, knit, and cook.
116, side 1	450: FARM Dairy farm. Raised grain, oats, barley, rye, and lots of potatoes. Sold milk and eggs. Had a mill in the early days to grind grain.
116, side 1	466: During the harvest women came in to make Hardanger lefse and flatbread. Used 100 sacks of flour.
116, side 1	477: Anna worked for her sister some when the children worked at the sardine factory. Strung sardines on steel rods and hung them in the smoke room. Picked fruit in the summer. Each child had their own cherry tree, and sold the cherries off their tree.
116, side 1	495: SCHOOL Eight grades. Took weaving in the school basement. Had a large loom at home. Her mother was a good weaver. She made some special weavings with certain patterns and colors
116, side 1	530: Anna had brought some weaving tools with her from Norway. She left behind her big loom.

Container(s)	Description
116, side 1	554: Anna's mother kept going to conventions after her husband died. She participated in the speaking and meetings.
116, side 1	569: Anna was 21 when she came to the U.S. She came to help her brother, Knute take care of his children because his wife was sick. Her brother, Olav also went to the U.S. All her brothers and sisters came to the U.S. except for Brita. Mother was 61 when Anna left. She died the year after Anna went to the U.S.
116, side 1	606: Anna planned on going back to Norway. She did go back for seven years at one time.
116, side 1	615: LEAVING NORWAY Went to Bergen, stayed at the Mission Hotel. Her mother wanted the best for her children, she said "Anna don't lose Jesus or it will be an expensive trip for you."
116, side 1	635: TRIP OVER Beautiful, good weather. Went on a Norwegian liner. Left Bergen in August 1914.
116, side 2	005: MOTHER Talk of her mother. She was loved and respected in the community. She did nursing in the town. Baptized babies.
116, side 2	018: Anna came to Rosalia, Washington, when she first came to the U.S.
116, side 2	020: BOAT RIDE Nice, smooth. Brother was on second class, the immigrants were on third class. Difference in the food and sleeping quarters.
116, side 2	032: ELLIS ISLAND Did not stay long. Brother came and got them.
116, side 2	038: TRAIN RIDE Good service.
116, side 2	046: Rosalia was the home of Anna's brothers, Tormod and Knute. They had a department store.
116, side 2	049: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Container(s)	Description
	Anna learned the English language in her brother's home where she worked for the first year. Rosalia only had three Norwegian families. Went to the Congregational church. Took communion like the Lutherans.
116, side 2	061: Moved families and business to Moscow, Idaho. Anna worked some in the store and she worked six months for a family in Moscow that owned a six-story department store. She worked in their home doing housework.
116, side 2	074: WORK Describes her job, systematic housekeeping. Learned to bake Boston Brown bread.
116, side 2	089: SPOUSE John Ray Tobiason, fiancée went into the service. Her was a brother of her sister-in-law. He worked in the store.
116, side 2	106: Store in Troy, Idaho. Sold hardware, furniture, food, etc.
116, side 2	114: Tormod moved to Lacrosse, Washington and bought a store. Knute moved to Longview, Washington because of his wife's heart condition. Anna and Ray went to Longview and worked in the store. Ray was in the service at Fort Lewis. Did not go overseas. Got out in 1919.
116, side 2	149: TRIP BACK TO NORWAY Four and a half years after she had gotten to America. Her mother and brother, Albert were both gone. Had intentions of staying in Norway, things had changed.
116, side 2	179: Sister, Soineva came back to the U.S. with Anna in 1919. Very rough seas. They had seasickness. Soineva went to Spokane College and St. Luke's Nursing Program.
116, side 2	197: MARRIAGE No wedding. No parents on either side. Dr. Nase in Tacoma married them on June 14, 1927. They had a big dinner.
116, side 2	220: Brother Tormod in Lacrosse did not know that she was getting married. He sent a telegram saying "I hope that your future is as quiet as your wedding."
116, side 2	230:

Container(s)	Description
	They rented a house in Longview. It was a stucco house. Anna worked for a year after she was married. Son was born on November 9, 1928, John Ray Tobiason Jr. They lived in Longview for 29 years.
116, side 2	267: SON Son graduated from high school in 1947. Graduated from PLU in 1951. Met his wife at PLU, Phyllis Brynestad.
116, side 2	308: Anna's granddaughter, Julie was born in 1951.
116, side 2	312: Anna and her husband had their own grocery store in Longview.
116, side 2	324: Son took a teaching job in Puyallup after graduation.
116, side 2	343: DEPRESSION People laid off work, salary was cut for many. Anna and her husband kept going, had faith in God.
116, side 2	388: Opened a variety store on Steilacoom Blvd. in Tacoma. Never open on Sundays. Sold it to the grocery store owner in the same building.
116, side 2	425: Husband took a job at a factory in Portland. He traveled in the states of Idaho and Washington. He took orders for the factory. They handled picture frames. Anna and her husband traveled together.
116, side 2	455: GRANDCHILDREN Julie, Janice, and Jim. Julie married Steve Vekland, he's an engineer with Boeing. They have three children, Christine, Marie, and Brent Steven.
116, side 2	508: SON Anna's son, Ray had been in the Puyallup School system since he graduated from PLU. He has been a business manager in the main office, principal, and superintendent. Has been Phi Beta Kappa Vice President and President Elect. Now is the International President. Does lots of traveling. There are 120,000 members. Ray was awarded the "Distinguished Alumni Award" in 1981.
116, side 2	576: Janice married Frank Washburn who was from Hawaii. They graduated from PLU. Janice is teaching in the University Place District. Frank teaches in Kent.
116, side 2	593:

Container(s)	Description
	Jim married Ricky (?) Powers. Jim teaches in Port Orchard. His wife teaches in a Christian school.
116, side 2	640: Describes her great-grandchildren some. Enjoys being a grandma.
116, side 2	649: No time to be involved in Scandinavian Organizations.
117, side 1	002: CHURCH Charter member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Longview. Very involved with the church. Anna helped establish the Sunday school.
117, side 1	016: EMMANUEL LUTHERAN Has been the president, superintendent, president of the Northwest District, ALC, elected in 1953 for four years. Have had four conventions at PLU. Also on the National Board for the ALC.
117, side 1	029: Went to Alaska to visit the churches. Traveled all around, lists the places she went. Church built in Nome, Alaska.
117, side 1	042: Exciting talking to the Eskimos, telling them about the gospels.
117, side 1	055: Anna still has contact with people in Norway. Writes at Christmas.
117, side 1	064: Anna's granddaughter, Julie went to Norway and got a job at the Mission Hotel in Oslo. Julie spent Christmas in Anna's childhood home.
117, side 1	078: Anna did not speak Norwegian with her husband. He did not know the language. Ray's parents were from Fredrickstad, Norway. Ray's father had a lumber company in Moscow, Idaho. Ray's grandfather was a parochial school teacher.
117, side 1	101: "Our family has a great Christian heritage to pass on to our children."
117, side 1	105: WHAT IT'S MEANT TO BE NORWEGIAN Very proud because of what Norway stands for, independent, proud people, and Christian country.
117, side 1	116: PROUD OF THE NORWEGIANS IN THE U.S.

Container(s)	Description
	Anna's brother, Tormod is the National President for the Lutheran Brotherhood. Knute is on the National Mission Board for the church and is District President for Lutheran Brotherhood.
117, side 1	125: Anna gave her Hardanger dråkt to her granddaughter.
117, side 1	130: Many relatives have come to visit from Norway. Anna loves America. American flag most beautiful.
117, side 1	140: CITIZENSHIP Got this in Longview. Went to school at the YMCA in the evenings. No problems. Took test in the Kelso Courthouse.
117, side 1	148: CUSTOMS MAINTAINED Lutefisk and lefse for Christmas. Granddaughters make lefse with their grandma. Anna has taught women in the church how to make lefse. She still makes julekake for the family at Christmas. Gospel is still read on Christmas Eve.
117, side 1	175: Bakes Christmas cookies. Was in the Longview paper once with pictures and recipes of cookies.
117, side 1	185: CHURCH Members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Tacoma since 1955. Member still of the spiritual life committee. Drove car until age 85.
117, side 1	198: Anna has a young couple from the church that take her to church and watch over her.
117, side 1	213: Says a Table Prayer in Norwegian. Attended Scandinavian Days in Tacoma. Much of her family went. Met Dr. Rasmussen from PLU.
117, side 1	244: SCHOOL Lutheran Church oversees the schools.
117, side 1	256: Anna's brother, Knute lived until he was 98, mind was clear to the last.
117, side 1	259: HOME FARM

Container(s)	Description
	Sixth generation is living on the farm. Tormod Myklebust and his son, Knut Olav, who is the seventh generation are living on the farm. The farm is twice as large now, bought neighbors farm.
117, side 1	270: Ray and Phyllis have been very good to Anna. Went fishing with them last year at age 88.
117, side 1	283: Closes with the "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
 Confirmation
 Depressions--1929
 Education--Norway
 Emigration and immigration
 Family--Norway
 Marriage service
 Naturalization
 Norwegian-Americans--Ethnic identity
 Norwegian-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
 Norwegian-Americans--Social life and customs
 Ocean travel

Personal Names :

Mussland, Brita
 Myklebust, Knute
 Myklebust, Knute
 Myklebust, Tormod (Tom)
 Tobiason, John Raymond Jr.
 Tobiason, Anna--Interviews
 (creator)
 Loynning, Anna
 Myklebust, Soinneva
 Myklebust, Tormod
 Tobiason, John Raymond
 Torekoven, Amund

Corporate Names :

Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Longview, Wash.)
 St. Mark's Lutheran Church (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Aslakson family
 Løyning family
 Mussland family
 Myklebust family

Tobiason family

Torekoven family

Geographical Names :

Longview (Wash.)

Moscow (Idaho)

Rosalia (Wash.)

Tacoma (Wash.)

Uskedalen (Norway)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Domestics

Farmers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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