

Ralph Strom Oral History, 1896-1982

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Strom, Ralph
Title	Ralph Strom Oral History
Dates	1896-1982 (inclusive) 1896 1982
Quantity	3 file folders, 6 photographs, 1 sound cassette, 0 compact discs.
Collection Number	t167
Summary	An oral history interview with Ralph Strom, 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

Ralph Strom was born Carl Rudolph Wickström on March 19, 1896 in a farming village called Alvik near Luleå, Sweden. Ralph's father, Carl Nyström, moved to America when Ralph was born and never returned. Ralph's mother, Emma Wikström, remarried and had six more children. When Ralph's stepfather won a lottery, the family bought a new home in a neighboring village. Ralph and his family were poor, but even in difficult times they were happy and had festive holiday celebrations. Ralph's community was quite religious, so a lot of the activities centered on the church.

Ralph went to school for four years and then spent most of his time working. He started working in a sawmill when he was ten years old, having convinced his employers that he was twelve. As the family grew, Ralph's mother encouraged him to move to America, even though he was only sixteen years old. A local woman lent Ralph the money for the trip, and he departed in June of 1912. On his trip out West, Ralph met three film stars-Dustin Farnum, William Farnum, and Catheryn Williams-on their way to Montana to shoot a movie. Ralph traveled with a neighbor from Sweden named William Simon who helped him a great deal during the move. Ralph also had help available from his mother's cousin, John Nordstrom. Mr. Nordstrom had made quite a bit of money during the gold rush in Alaska and had started a shoe store, which is now the successful Nordstrom department store. Since Ralph was familiar with logging, he moved to Arlington, Washington and found a job in a camp called Carbon Hill. The conditions were bad, and Ralph's situation got even worse when a depression in Seattle made

work scarce, leaving Ralph with little food and money. Fortunately, Ralph became acquainted with a German boilermaker who gave him an apprenticeship. He learned the trade while working other odd jobs to make more money.

Due to his valuable boilermaker skills, Ralph was in high demand at the shipyards during World War I. He worked in the shipyards until 1920. In 1922, Ralph married Edith Holmquist in Everett, Washington. Edith had an unfortunate accident before they met in which she broke two of her vertebrae; she could not work full days because of the pain. Ralph moved to Alaska where he worked as a boilermaker for the railroad, and Edith joined him shortly thereafter. Ralph quit the railroad when he got gold fever, finally settling in a job working for US Smelting, Mining & Refining Company until 1959. In 1939, while he worked for the mining company, Ralph assisted author Kathryn Winslow as she researched for her book called *The Big Pan-Out*. After living in Alaska, Ralph and Edith returned to Seattle. Ralph is the oldest member of the Boilermakers Union, and he also participates in the Swedish Club. He has taken two trips back to Sweden and still speaks the language. Ralph is proud of his heritage, but he maintains that Swedes and Americans are equal.

Lineage

Full Name: Ralph (Carl Rudolph) Wickström Strom. Father: Carl Nyström. Step-father: Oscar Lundkvist. Mother: Emma Wickström. Maternal Grandfather: Agust Wickström. Maternal Grandmother: Anna Lena Wickström. Brothers and Sisters: Torsten Lundkvist, Allan Lundkvist, Astrid Larson, Märta Lundgren. Spouse: Edith Maria Holmquist.

Content Description

The interview was conducted with Ralph Strom on April 23, 1982 in Seattle, Washington. This interview contains information on personal background, emigration, employment, family, church and community life, a connection with author Kathryn Winslow, and Swedish heritage. It also provides photographs of Ralph Strom's home in Sweden, Ralph as a young man (Christmas 1912), Ralph with the Lake McMurray logging crew (1913), Ralph and his wife Edith (1922), and Ralph 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	
167, side 1	020: PERSONAL BACKGROUND His name is now Ralph Strom. Before he became a citizen his name was Carl Rudolph Wickström. He changed his name because there were so many Wickströms, but then there got to be more Stroms than Wickströms. Was born March 19, 1896 in a farming village outside of the city of Luleå. The village was called Alvik. This is in the northern part of Sweden in the provinces, which is called Norrbotten. Later they moved.
167, side 1	075: PARENTS Raised by his mother. Ralph's father went to America about the time that he was born and never returned. His name was Carl Nyström. He went to Colorado. Mother Emma Wickström was a good caterer. Mother got married

Container(s)	Description
	when he was 11 years old. He got four half-sisters and two half-brothers. She married Oscar Lundkvist. He was a laborer at different places, steel mill.
167, side 1	140: NEW FAMILY HOME Step-father won a lottery and it was enough to buy a house. So they bought another house and moved to the neighboring village.
167, side 1	160: CHILDHOOD Raised in farming country, but they didn't have a farm. Started working in the sawmill when he was 10 years old.
167, side 1	178: GRANDPARENTS Paternal grandfather was the governor of the province for a number of years. His name was possibly Carl Nyström. He lived to be 105 years old. Maternal grandfather, Agust Wickström had about six brothers and sisters so Ralph had lots of aunts and uncles. Agust worked in the woods all his life. He was somewhat of a carpenter too. Maternal grandmother died when his mother was 9 or 10. Her name was Anna Lena Wickström.
167, side 1	263: BROTHERS AND SISTERS Torsten was a carpenter in Luleå. He was also a very good long distance skier. Allan came to the U.S. to visit Ralph and stayed for about three months. Three weeks after his return to Sweden he died of a heart attack. He worked in the steel mill.
167, side 1	300: SISTERS All of his sisters who are alive have been to the U.S. to visit him. Oldest sister visited him last summer for about four months (Astrid). His other two sisters have been to visit too, Märta Lundgren and Ebba Thyr. They are all married and live in Sweden.
167, side 1	340: SCHOOL IN SWEDEN Had about five years of grade school. He went to work when he was ten years old. He was large for his age so he passed for 12, which was how old he was supposed to be to work at the sawmill.
167, side 1	355: WORK AT AGE 10 Worked in the sawmill. There were men who cut boards by hand. They didn't have dry kilns so they had large stacks of lumber to air dry. There were men who would cut off the ends of the boards with hand saws then the kids would come and pick up these pieces. He made 75 Swedish cents a day. He gave his mother the money.
167, side 1	405: CHILDHOOD Had a nice childhood. His mother was nice. The people were poor. He remembers the general strike they had in Sweden in 1909.

Container(s)	Description
167, side 1	<p>420: WHY SWEDEN WAS POOR</p> <p>When Bernadotte became King of Sweden he signed over a 99 year lease that England would get the steel industry and Germany the lumber industry. The Swedish people were more like serfs to these countries. All the profits left Sweden. In 1936 the lease ended. The working people lost the strike.</p>
167, side 1	<p>455: MIGRATION TO BRAZIL</p> <p>Many workers in the iron mines in northern Sweden went to Brazil to settle down. The climate didn't agree with them and they died. This was more evident of the labor unrest in Sweden during this time period.</p>
167, side 1	<p>485: CHRISTMAS</p> <p>No matter how poor they were they had fun at Christmas time. They had Christmas trees and there were lots of festivals.</p>
167, side 1	<p>493: CHURCH LIFE IN SWEDEN</p> <p>The people were very religious. He went to church as a child. People had cottages built around the church and would go and stay for about a week at Christmas, Easter and New Years. This was at the same church he was confirmed in. He believes that this church was built by Catholics. The name of it was Gamla Stadens Kyrka (the old town church).</p>
167, side 1	<p>649: CHRISTMAS FOODS</p> <p>Lutfisk, frukt soppa, various cookies and sometimes an apple. The food was cooked and then taken to the village where they had their celebration in Missionshuset (the Mission house). The preacher would come to this place and give sermons.</p>
167, side 1	<p>688: COTTAGES AROUND THE CHURCH</p> <p>(See counter I-493) The was about twelve miles from where he lived. Each farmer had his own cottage. Ralph's mother didn't have one. The only time Ralph was in these cottages was for confirmation. It took two weeks to be confirmed. He was 14 when he was confirmed.</p>
167, side 1	<p>717: SCHOOL</p> <p>He hadn't quit school but had gotten ahead one year. He learned fast. Kindergarten was supposed to be for two years, but he only went for one. Then he went three years to the regular school. He had four years of school when he should have had five.</p>
167, side 1	<p>747: FOLK STORIES</p> <p>There were quite a few stories, but he never paid too much attention.</p>
167, side 1	766:

Container(s)	Description
	Worked in the sawmill every summer until he was 16 and left for America. The last two years at the sawmill he got a raise in pay to 1 Krone and 25 Swedish cents. He was stacking lumber for ten hours a day.
167, side 1	787: REASONS FOR EMIGRATION He was always figuring on leaving to better his conditions. There was a lot of talk about emigration then and so many had left.
167, side 1	797: EMIGRATION MONEY Mother had worked at a wholesale grocery business and she borrowed the money (600 kroner) from the lady there.
167, side 1	820: MOTHER'S FEELINGS ON HIS EMIGRATION The family was growing and the house was small. He would have had to leave soon anyway. She didn't want him to leave so early, but she thought it was the best because he was so set on it.
167, side 1	824: EMIGRATION Left in June of 1912. The lady from the wholesale grocery business gave him the money and he promised to pay it back.
167, side 1	835: WORK IN THE U.S. He knew how to handle an ax because his grandfather had taught him. He came to Seattle, Washington and got a job in Arlington, Washington in a logging camp called Carbon Hill (?).
167, side 1	840: SHIP TRAVEL Came on the Lusitania in about six days. He went from home to Gothenburg (Goetoborg), Sweden to Hull, England, and then across England by train to Southampton, England where they boarded the Lusitania. They stopped one day in Queenstown, Ireland to take on immigrants there. The North Sea was rough and Ralph got sick.
167, side 1	873: ENGLAND Stayed in the immigrants hotels. He was surprised how differently people lived in England than in Sweden. He remembers kids' shining shoes on the street.
167, side 1	894: TRIP OVER THE OCEAN It was beautiful. The Lusitania was a big ship. The ship was segregated by ethnic background, Poles, Scandinavians, and Greeks. They had a mess house where you got your meals. The food was alright, but it was different than he was used to.
167, side 1	910: FOOD IN SWEDEN Lived on milk a lot. Didn't have soup with spices in it. They had meat about once a month. The food was spicy on the boat.

Container(s)	Description
167, side 1	<p>940: TRAIN TRAVEL</p> <p>Went from New York central to Minneapolis. When they got to Minneapolis, they took the Chicago - Milwaukee and went through the Dakotas to Montana and then into Seattle, Washington. When they got to the Dakotas a moving picture outfit got on the train. Dustin Farnum, William Farnum and Catheryn Williams were going to go to Montana to make a film. There was a drunk on the train. Some of the girls started making fun of his Swedish style clothes, but Catheryn Williams befriended him. She sat by him, they couldn't speak to each other, but his travel companion could.</p>
167, side 1	<p>975: TRAVEL COMPANION</p> <p>Came with William Simon, a neighbor from Sweden who had been here before. He had been on a visit back to Sweden and was now returning to Seattle, Washington. This man had tried real hard to get on the Titanic. This was the same year that it sunk. This man was a big help.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1004:</p> <p>He remembers how the actress complemented him on his good complexion. He attributed it to the Swedish climate. She was a help to him also on the trip.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1017: IMPRESSIONS OF USA</p> <p>Everything seemed big.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1021: TRAIN RIDE</p> <p>Tiresome and hot. This was in July. It was smoky because there were forest fires in the Cascade mountains.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1032: NORDSTROMS</p> <p>Should have gone to work at Nordstrom's Shoe Store. His mother and Mr. John Nordstrom, who started Nordstrom's stores, were cousins. They were born in the same village in Sweden. Mr. Nordstrom made his money up in Alaska during the Gold Rush. He made enough money to start a shoe store at the public market with his partner, Whalen (?) who made shoes. This was in 1905. His mother asked Mr. Nordstrom if he wouldn't kind of look after Ralph until he found something to do. He didn't go to the Nordstrom's except to say "Hello" and that he was going to work in a logging camp.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1060: LOGGING CAMP WORK</p> <p>Got the job through his traveling companion. He did pretty well and paid back the lady he had borrowed his traveling money from after the first four months.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1070: SEATTLE</p> <p>Went to a hotel. The lady at the hotel told Ralph's companion that he should not let Ralph run around in the clothes he had. Ralph didn't have any money so she took him down to Lipman's and bought him a suit. He used to visit her. Her name was Kitty Martin. From her he got a good impression. She paid \$16</p>

Container(s)	Description
	for the suit and that was a lot. Stayed in Seattle for Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and on Monday he went to the logging camp and went right to work. During his days in Seattle he visited people that he knew from the "old country."
167, side 1	<p>1128: LOGGING CAMP</p> <p>Called Carbon Hill. It was seven miles from Arlington, Washington. Stayed there until Christmas. They had to supply their own blankets. The bunks were three stories high. They had straw for mattresses. There were lots of bedbugs. He learned to count to 21 the first night he was there because the man below him lay in bed with a hammer killing bedbugs and counting them. There were 24 men in each bunkhouse. The conditions and the food were poor. He got paid \$2.50 per day which was bad and paid \$5.50 a week for board and room. The fallers got \$3.50-\$4.00 a day and the buckers for \$3.00 a day. Ralph was a swamper and had to cut down the trees to make room to bring in the chokers and haul the trees out.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1170: DEPRESSION IN SEATTLE 1914</p> <p>He had no money. They stayed in an old abandoned warehouse they call the Hotel DeGink (?). The loggers had their own bedding so they would go to this warehouse to sleep. In the daytime they would leave their blankets with the saloonkeepers so they wouldn't be stolen. Ralph did this for about two months. He had a little money for food. They would get a meal once and awhile from the Salvation Army.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1195: FEELINGS ON AMERICA NOW</p> <p>Still wasn't ready to go back to Sweden. He knew he wouldn't live that way forever.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1200: BOILERMAKER WORK</p> <p>Got acquainted with a German boilermaker. (In the meantime he had worked in the woods off and on.) This boilermaker got him into the Commercial Boiler Works as an apprentice boilermaker. Had a room at the Union Hotel, which he paid \$6 a month for. It was small room with a washstand and a bed. This was cheap rent. Ralph was making only 16 cents an hour 10 hours a day. This was fine until his clothes started wearing out.</p>
167, side 1	<p>1225: SECOND JOB</p> <p>Told the man in the boiler shop that he wanted a month off to go and visit his mother. He hadn't seen her in over a year. But he didn't go home, he had a job lined up with the City of Seattle to help log off the watershed at Cedar River. So he got in a month's work there.</p>
167, side 2	<p>018: SECOND JOB</p> <p>He got this second job in order to make enough money to buy some clothes. He earned \$65 as a bucker. Then he returned to learn how to become a boilermaker. He wanted to learn this trade.</p>

Container(s)	Description
167, side 2	045: RAN OUT OF CLOTHES AGAIN This time the Lord came with a snowstorm and Ralph and friends got jobs shoveling snow from roofs. There was 6 feet of snow. Ralph got \$60 from one building and made about \$200 in all by shoveling snow in 1916.
167, side 2	063: WAR During WWI Ralph worked in the shipyards.
167, side 2	068: Bought clothes with the money he made shoveling snow. Then he went back to work for the boilermaker and served out his three years of apprenticeship. He didn't quite make the three years because the war started he had to go work in the shipyards.
167, side 2	083: SHIPYARD Worked during WWI at Skinner and Eddy shipyard and J.F. Duthie shipyard both of Seattle, Washington. Didn't have to go into the service because he was working in the shipyard. Was made a riveter foreman at the Duthie shipyard at the age of 21. This was 1918. They had to register for the draft in 1917. He had so much experience from boiler making that he was needed at the shipyard.
167, side 2	140: CO-WORKERS Many people of different ethnic backgrounds. Didn't work with Swedes all the time. The people who immigrated at that time were all good people. Ralph had a lot of Greek friends. There were Czechoslovakians, Russians, and people from all over the world. There weren't many blacks in Seattle at that time.
167, side 2	176: FIRST BLACK PERSON Saw him in Gothenburg (Göteborg), Sweden.
167, side 2	195: LANGUAGE Started to pick it up right away. Read the papers and learned from other people. Didn't go to school. Wasn't able to lose his Swedish accent.
167, side 2	213: Felt at home right away in the U.S. He was young and people were good to him. He worked hard and lived right and no one abused him in any way.
167, side 2	233: SHIPYARDS Stayed there until they were closed down in 1920 or 1919.
167, side 2	245: RIVETING Was a riveter on the telephone building and a medical building.
167, side 2	250: ALASKA

Container(s)	Description
	<p>Was hired out as a boilermaker for the Alaska railroad. Went up there in 1921 and stayed there until 1959. Was in Fairbanks, Alaska. Was in Anchorage, Alaska first and was then transferred to Nenana, Alaska. When the bridge was built across the Yukon River the house they were living in was moved up to Fairbanks and they were all laid off.</p>
167, side 2	<p>277: GOLD FEVER Started working for the miners up there. Then Ralph got the gold fever and didn't go back to the railroad. He started prospecting. He and some other fellows got together and took a large lease on some mining property. They didn't make any money but they got lots of experience.</p>
167, side 2	<p>291: U.S. SMELTING, MINING, AND REFINING CO. They came into Fairbanks and the manager, Norman C. Stines (?) offered him a job because he heard what a hard worker Ralph was and all the experience and skills he had. Ralph went to work for him from 1924 to 1959. He got vacations in the wintertime to come out here. The wages were pretty good. He never lost a day of work during the Depression.</p>
167, side 2	<p>328: SPOUSE Married in 1922 in Everett, Washington. His wife lived up in Alaska with him. He met her in Seattle, Washington. Her name was Edith Holmquist. She was born in Sweden and raised in Norway and came to Seattle when she was about 8 years with her mother. Her father was an alcoholic and her parents were divorced. That was something that you didn't do in Sweden in those days. Her father stayed in Sweden. Her mother came from the middle part of Sweden, Västmanland. His wife's grandmother came from the town of Arboga, Sweden, which is one of the oldest cities in Sweden. Edith's father came from the province of Hälsingland, Sweden. When they lived n Norway they were in Hammerfest, which is the northern most city in the world.</p>
167, side 2	<p>387: REASONS FOR EMIGRATION (WIFE'S FAMILY) Her mother thought they would have a better chance here. Edith's mother was an expert cook.</p>
167, side 2	<p>399: MEETING SPOUSE they met in Seattle at her mother's home. Her mother kept boarders in a pretty good-sized boardinghouse. Ralph never stayed there but he would go there and have a good home cooked meal once and awhile.</p>
167, side 2	<p>414: WIFE'S WORK She was very unfortunate. She worked sorting laundry in the Washington Laundry on Lake Union. While she was working she slipped on the cement steps, fell, broke two vertebra below her shoulder blades. There wasn't much knowledge in treating this at that time so they just bundled her up. After that she could never work a full eight hours under any circumstances because her back bothered her so bad. This happened before they met.</p>

Container(s)	Description
167, side 2	<p>445: WEDDING</p> <p>Beautiful marriage, but no children. He felt lucky enough that he had steady work. She could only work in short intervals. Ralph went to Fairbanks, Alaska in 1921 and when he returned in 1922 they got married. They were married in Everett, Washington. Ralph returned to Alaska and then she came later. They lived out on the Creek Station (?).</p>
167, side 2	<p>495: MEDICAL CARE</p> <p>Wasn't easy to come by in Alaska.</p>
167, side 2	<p>504: HOME</p> <p>Built a 12 by 14 foot log cabin.</p>
167, side 2	<p>512: WEDDING</p> <p>(See also II-365) They were married at some friends' home near Arlington, Washington</p>
167, side 2	<p>519: CHURCH LIFE IN ALASKA</p> <p>There was no chance. He was living out on the Creeks (?).</p>
167, side 2	<p>526: WORK IN ALASKA</p> <p>After awhile he moved into a company house after they were married and he became a winch man on the dredger. Later he became a dredge master. He did that for 18 years. He lived in the company house where they got free housing, lights, fuel, and a pick-up. This was a nice place to live. He now gets a pension from them. He worked there from 1924 to 1959 except for five years during the war when they couldn't get enough steel to run the dredges.</p>
167, side 2	<p>574: ASSOCIATED SHIPYARD, SEATTLE</p> <p>Worked here when the Alaska job closed down. Was riveting foreman for five years here during the Second World War.</p>
167, side 2	<p>584: SWEDISH TRADITIONS</p> <p>Wife did Swedish cooking. She made lutefisk.</p>
167, side 2	<p>593: LOG CABIN IN ALASKA</p> <p>His friends told him that when his wife saw that log cabin she would go straight back to Seattle, Washington. There wasn't even a bedroom. When she came she said that she had always wanted to have a dollhouse and now she could live in one.</p>
167, side 2	<p>613: TRANSPORTATION IN ALASKA</p> <p>Ralph got her a dog and a sled so she could go wherever she wanted to . She was used to the cold weather after being raised in Norway.</p>
167, side 2	<p>627: KATHRYN WINSLOW</p>

Container(s)	Description
	<p>She was a writer from Chicago who had had a relative in the Klondike and was very interested in the old Klondike. She came to Fairbanks, Alaska and was referred to Ralph since he knew some of the old timers. In about 1936 she wrote the book, "The Big Pan-Out." Ralph introduced her to several people to get information for the book. Talks about Charlie Andersen and the stories that had been told about him losing his money. The book was a hit. He got a first edition copy from her, but he lost the trunk with his books in it.</p>
167, side 2	<p>700: BOOK COLLECTIONS Ralph's wife collected first editions. She had some by Jack London, Rex Beach, Mark Twain and others. They did a lot of reading. They lost them all in the trunk on the Alaska Steamship.</p>
167, side 2	<p>723: CO-WORKERS IN ALASKA He had Eskimos working for him. He says Eskimos are the finest people in the world because they are honest, reliable, and good workers. They have good characters. He had some that would come to work every year and leave to hunt seal in the fall. They are good to their children and their children are well behaved.</p>
167, side 2	<p>750: WORKING CONDITIONS Can't compare the conditions between here and Sweden because he worked so little there.</p>
167, side 2	<p>770: CONDITIONS FOR HIM IN AMERICA "Can't say nothing but the best." He talks about how people say that you go bad as a result of a bad environment, but he doesn't feel anyone could have had a worse environment than he had. When he lived at the Union Hotel, there were gambling houses on Washington Street. He used to go in and "rubber neck." He had no money to play himself. He even got shot in the leg in one place when it was held up. He spent four days in the Seattle General Hospital. It was up to the man himself how his conditions turn out. He was among the worst gamblers and prostitutes and had no home life.</p>
167, side 2	<p>800: RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND He was raised a good Christian. His mother was very religious and he remembers what she had told him. He had no use for crooked stuff.</p>
167, side 2	<p>810: CHURCH LIFE Doesn't go to church. There wasn't a church in Alaska within thirty miles and he was working so much.</p>
167, side 2	<p>828: ORGANIZATIONS Belonged to the Masonic group in Alaska. Belongs to the Swedish Club now. (Remembers now that it was the Waldorf Hotel that he stayed in in Seattle during the war. He belongs to the Boilermakers Union and is the oldest</p>

Container(s)	Description
	member in Seattle. He joined in 1916. He belongs to the Retired Boilermakers Club too.
167, side 2	870: VISITS TO SWEDEN Has been back two times. Four years ago he went and stayed five months. The first time was in 1948 when his mother was sick. He got a letter from his brother telling him of her illness so he left Alaska and stayed in Sweden for twenty days. His mother didn't believe he was coming. They met on the road, but didn't now each other. Another man on the road had to tell him that he had passed her.
167, side 2	936: CHANGES IN SWEDEN They are living good now. The people who didn't have anything when he was a kid are living good now. He believes people are more religious in Sweden than here.
167, side 2	958: EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON SWEDEN Maybe financially they felt the effects of the war.
167, side 2	962: SWEDEN'S RAW MATERIALS They are short of oil and coal.
167, side 2	971: SECOND TRIP TO SWEDEN That was when he really got to see the country. He stayed for five months. Had a friend that had come to the U.S. and then returned to Sweden that showed him around. This man worked for Volvo in Sweden, for Boeing in the U.S. and then returned to Volvo in Sweden. He drove Ralph all around Sweden. He took him to Maelaren, which is where Swedish civilization first started, Gripsholms Castle, and many of the old places that he had read about when he was in school. Maelaren lake goes from Gothenburg (Goeteborg) to Stockholm.
167, side 2	1014: HERITAGE Never thought too much about it. We are all somewhat proud of our heritage. There are good and bad Swedes. Swedes are not better than Americans. They are equal.
167, side 2	1035: SWEDISH LANGUAGE Still speaks the language.
167, side 2	1037: SPOKEN SWEDISH Tells about how he can still speak the language.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
Depressions -- 1929
Emigration and immigration
Family -- Sweden
Marriage service
Railroad travel
Sweden -- Social conditions -- 1945
Swedish-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
Swedish-Americans--Social life and customs
World War, 1914-1915

Personal Names :

Holmquist, Edith Maria
Nordstrom, John
Thyr, Ebba
Lundkvist, Oscar
Nyström Carl
Strom, Ralph
Wickström, Agust
Wickström, Anna Lena
Wickström, Carl Rudolph --Interviews
(creator)
Wickström, Emma
Winslow, Kathryn

Corporate Names :

Carbon Hill Logging Camp (Arlington, Wash.)
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers
Lusitania (Steamship)
Skinner and Eddy Shipyard (Seattle, Wash.)

Family Names :

Lundvist family
Nyström family
Strom family
Wickström family

Geographical Names :

Alvik (Sweden)
Antnäs (Sweden)
Järnboås (Sweden)
Luleå (Sweden)
Sångenäs (Sweden)
Seattle (Wash.)
Sunderby (Sweden)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Loggers
Miners
Sawmill workers

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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