

Hanna Hekkala Sippala Oral History Interview, 1981

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Sippala, Hanna Hekkala
Title	Hanna Hekkala Sippala Oral History Interview
Dates	1981 (inclusive) 1897 1981
Quantity	3 file folders 1 photograph 1 sound cassette
Collection Number	t087
Summary	An oral history interview with Hanna Hekkala Sippala, a Finnish 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

Hanna Sippala was born on December 15, 1897 in Kello, Finland, which is located in northern Finland, near Oulu. Her parents were Juho Jaakko Hekkala and Kristina Teppo Hekkala, and Hanna had a half-brother and half-sister from her father's first marriage as well as a brother and sister from her parents' marriage. When Hanna finished school, she got "America fever" and convinced her parents to let her go. Hanna traveled to New York and found a housekeeping job with a minister's family. She was paid \$10 a month at first but then got a \$2 raise every month, as her English improved. Hanna's sister came to America thirteen months after Hanna, and Hanna found another housekeeping job, giving her previous job to her sister. In 1919, Hanna and her sister moved to Astoria, OR, where Hanna's sister's boyfriend lived. In Astoria, Hanna found more housekeeping jobs and met her husband, who was also from Finland. Hanna's husband was a logger but began working as a longshoreman when their daughter, Violet, was born in 1922. From 1929-1931, Hanna and her husband managed boardinghouses, and Hanna also worked in the canneries for twenty years, starting in 1939. Hanna

belongs to the Finnish Brotherhood and has made one trip back to Finland. She remains in contact with her relatives there but would never want to move back to Finland herself.

Lineage

Full Name: Hanna Kristiina Sippala. Maiden Name: Hanna Kristiina Hekkala. Father: Juho Jaakko Hekkala. Mother: Kristiina Teppo Hekkala. Paternal Grandfather: Janne Hekkala. Paternal Grandmother: Hilma Maria Hekkala. Maternal Grandfather: Jaakko Heikki Hekkala. Maternal Grandmother: Helmi Helena Kari. Brothers and Sisters: Helme Hekkala, Heikki Hekkala, half-brother and sister: Jan Hekkala, Hilma Hekkala. Spouse: (?) Sippala. Children: Violet Paulson.

Content Description

This interview was conducted with Hanna Sippala on August 28, 1981 in Astoria, Oregon. It provides information on family background, emigration, employment, marriage and family, and Finnish heritage. The interview also includes a photograph of Hanna's homeplace in Finland. 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 Donna Mallonee 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	
87, side 1	012: HANNA KRISTIINA SIPPALA Born in Kello, Finland on December 15, 1897. Kello is in northern Finland, near Oulu.
87, side 1	044: PARENTS Father - Juho Jaakko Hekkala. Mother - Kristiina Teppo Hekkala. Father was a farmer. Fished on the ice in the winter. They moved to Raahe when she was 9 years old. About 100 miles from Kello.
87, side 1	118: BROTHERS AND SISTERS a brother and a sister from father's first marriage. She has a brother and sister from father's second marriage.
87, side 1	134: HALF-BROTHER AND SISTER FROM FIRST MARRIAGE Jan and Hilma
87, side 1	144: BROTHER AND SISTER FROM SECOND MARRIAGE Helme and Heikki.
87, side 1	153: CHILDHOOD Tells about when her youngest brother was born. Hanna had been the youngest before. She shows a picture of the house.
87, side 1	194: GRANDPARENTS

Container(s)	Description
	Never knew her grandparents. Hanna's maternal grandparents died when her mother was very young.
87, side 1	216: FAMILY NAME Her dad wanted to take the Petiole name as his brothers did, but when they moved from Kello to Raahe, he took the name Hekkala, which was the name of the farm in Kello.
87, side 1	253: SCHOOL When Hanna was through with school, some of her teachers wanted her to go to teacher's college. Father said no. He needed help on the farm.
87, side 1	280: After Hanna was through with school she got "America fever." Parents didn't want her to go. Hanna said to them, "I lay down on bed and you can feed me here if you don't let me go to America." Her father said, "We don't want to feed grown people there. Let her go." Her mother said she'd let her die before she'd let her go to America. Parents gave her money to go and come back.
87, side 1	328: Hanna helped pay the fare of some other Finnish girls who didn't have money. They were separated at Ellis Island. Didn't see them again.
87, side 1	352: Brought only a suitcase of clothes with her. A girl friend in Jersey City, N.J. met Hanna at Ellis Island.
87, side 1	361: FEELINGS ABOUT LEAVING FINLAND Happy when she left. She wanted to go. After she got here, she almost went back.
87, side 1	376: Stayed with her brother in Kello, Finland for 3 days while waiting for her passport. Traveled by train to Kristiania (Oslo), Norway. Hanna left her home in Raahe on July 25, 1916 and arrived on Ellis Island on August 25, 1916. Waited three days in Kristiania (Oslo) for the boat.
87, side 1	398: The boat trip took two weeks. There was war in Europe then. The US wasn't in the war yet. Mines were in the water, so the boat had to move carefully. All of the Finnish girls were in the same room. They tried to have fun.
87, side 1	426: Worked as a maid and lived with a family when she first got here. People liked to have Finnish girls work for them because they worked hard. First worked

Container(s)	Description
	for a minister's family. Hanna's sister came 13 months later. Hanna worked at another place and her sister worked...
87, side 1	481: Hanna liked New York. She went to Astoria in 1919 because her sister's boyfriend was there. He wanted Hanna's sister to come to Astoria, Oregon but she didn't want to go alone so Hanna went too.
87, side 1	496: TRIP TO ASTORIA Another girl came with them. They stayed with a family for a week. Then put ads in the paper to work for families as maids.
87, side 1	533: LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES Didn't speak English when she came to America. Had to learn English at her first job. In Astoria, she got \$45 a month. Before she got married, she got a housecleaning job across the Columbia River in McGowan, Washington which paid \$50 a month.
87, side 1	555: MEETING SPOUSE Met her husband when she first came to Astoria with her sister. Some Finnish boys heard that some Finnish girls were coming to Astoria so they came to visit. Hanna's husband's birthplace was close to Raahe. Finland. They were married in 1921.
87, side 1	570: They have one daughter. She grew up in Astoria.
87, side 1	574: HUSBAND'S WORK First worked in a logging camp. When daughter was born, he started longshoring. He wanted to stay home. When he worked in logging camps, he could only come home on Sundays. He worked as a faller in the logging camps. They used long saws, one man on each end.
87, side 1	599: Liked Astoria when she first came, but thought it was small after being in New York.
87, side 1	611: Became an American citizen.
87, side 1	613: Learned English from working. Didn't take classes.
87, side 1	618: Always lived in Astoria after they were married. In 1929, they rented two boardinghouses in Uppertown and managed them for 2 years. Bought their

Container(s)	Description
	own house in 1931. Built the house Hanna lives in now in 1941. They managed Henrikson boardinghouse from 1929-1931.
87, side 1	654: Started working in canneries in 1939. Filleted fish for 20 years. Salmon, tuna, etc.
87, side 1	668: Belonged to the Finnish Brotherhood.
87, side 1	673: One trip back to Finland. Some things are the same. It seems so small. Nice to visit. Wouldn't want to live there. Still keeps in touch with relatives.
87, side 1	692: Finnish heritage has been important.
87, side 1	712: HOLIDAYS Christmas as a child in Finland - Had to guess who presents were from. Midsummer - Juhannus - was a big holiday. Bon fire and dancing.
87, side 1	748: NEW YEARS EVE Melt tin. Put it in water. The shape of the tin would predict what the New Year would bring.
87, side 1	761: FINNISH FOOD Laxlåda, a salmon and potato casserole. Rice pudding.
87, side 1	774: Reads in Finnish.
87, side 1	793: DESCRIBES HER CHILDHOOD HOME Painted red, 3 rooms. They had a sauna. They had 8 cows. Sold milk to families.
87, side 1	826: Hanna is glad she came to America.
87, side 1	834: Three grandchildren. Two great-grandchildren.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Christmas
Emigration and immigration
Family--Finland
Finnish-Americans--Ethnic identity
Finnish-Americans--Northwest, Pacific--Interviews
Finnish-Americans--Social life and customs
World War, 1939-1945

Personal Names :

Paulson, Violet (Sippala)
Hekkala, Juho Jaakko
Hekkala, Kristina Teppo
Sippala, Hanna--Interviews
(creator)

Corporate Names :

Finnish Brotherhood (Tacoma, Wash.)

Family Names :

Hekkala family
Paulson family
Sippala family
Teppo family

Geographical Names :

Astoria (Or.)
Kello (Finland)
Oulu (Finland)
Raahe (Finland)

Form or Genre Terms :

Oral histories

Occupations :

Cannery workers
Domestics
Loggers
Stevedores

Finding aid prepared by Kerstin Ringdahl and Amity Smetzler
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