<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father a miner before homesteading in Pelkie</td>
<td>579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homesteaded about 1898</td>
<td>579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Homestead from the Government</td>
<td>579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to work on the homestead before you were entitled to it</td>
<td>579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestead was in a flood-stage at first</td>
<td>580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No bridge across river - used a raft</td>
<td>580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area was virgin timber</td>
<td>580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large pine that was a landmark</td>
<td>580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A corduroy road</td>
<td>581</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians helped Father build a small shack to live in</td>
<td>581</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the shack</td>
<td>582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrible thunder storms</td>
<td>582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The log cabin</td>
<td>582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stove was carried in parts to the cabin</td>
<td>582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father died when Hilder was ten</td>
<td>582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident - How Mr. &amp; Mrs. Miller crossed the Sturgeon</td>
<td>583</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcupines gnaw on house at night</td>
<td>584</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident with Fire</td>
<td>584</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built the hay barn in the field in case of fire</td>
<td>585</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How forest fires get started</td>
<td>585</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire through Pelkie</td>
<td>585</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting older sister to the hospital</td>
<td>586</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister's baby born prematurely, both die</td>
<td>586</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother and baby were buried together</td>
<td>587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armistice Day</td>
<td>587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication slow</td>
<td>587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only one or two dresses for the school year</td>
<td>587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working and talking with mother</td>
<td>588</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn caught in a bad snow storm</td>
<td>588-89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Larson's shopped at</td>
<td>589</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another incident with fire</td>
<td>590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn lived farthest from school - had the least absences</td>
<td>591</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met at Erickson's house to practice programs</td>
<td>592</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School and School picnics</td>
<td>592-93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only transportation walking and by horse</td>
<td>593</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in chores for girls and boys</td>
<td>594</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone participates in work</td>
<td>594</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone had Sunday off</td>
<td>594</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two incidents about Hilder and her father</td>
<td>595</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Pelkie</td>
<td>595-596</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A description of Pelkie in early days</td>
<td>596</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Pelkie got its name</td>
<td>597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finns come to Pelkie</td>
<td>597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Families in Pelkie</td>
<td>598</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends visiting as children</td>
<td>599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an abundance of fruit, sold it for 10¢ a pail</td>
<td>599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnished the apples for school parties</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading lunches at school</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French used in Lake Linden Schools</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>600-601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First church in Pelkie</td>
<td>601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Services</td>
<td>601-602</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister came from out of town</td>
<td>602</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilder was ten years old for first time in church - Father's funeral</td>
<td>602</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn - only family member that went to High School</td>
<td>602</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School in Baraga - had to board with families</td>
<td>602</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation to and from school on weekends</td>
<td>603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarlet fever hits Baraga - Evelyn unable to go home for six weeks</td>
<td>603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUBJECTS: Hilder and Evelyn tell stories of their experiences during the early days of Pelkie. It reflects a woman's point of view.

SOURCE: Hilder and Evelyn Larson are unmarried sisters living with their bachelor brother on the farm their parents homesteaded. They farm the old way, never giving in to the desire to go into debt to buy the new technology. It is 1974 and they still cook and heat their home with wood fuel. Other folks consider them "old fashioned" and "backward" in their ways. They have very accurate memories and have made excellent interviewees.

Interviewer: Elaine Loukinen

R:
R-1:

I: And how about your parents?
R: Well, Pa was a miner in Calumet and then he wanted some land of his own so then he found this homestead.

I: And when did he homestead here?
R: Oh, I don't know exactly when he did come, but he was on the farm in 1901 and they went to town because I was...you know, they were expecting me, and there was no doctors or nurses or nothing, you know, nobody to help mother, so they went back to town.

I: To Calumet?
R: Laurium...they went to Laurium when they went back. Oh of course they were two towns that were like Hancock and Houghten, you know, they're right together...you don't know which...where one ends and the other starts, you know...like twin cities. And they were there two years before that.

I: Before you were born.
R: Yes, so they must have come here in 1899 or 1898...I don't know, sometime during then. But they were here two years before they went back because I was coming.

I: Did he get this land from the mining company?
R: No, it's a homestead from the government. You had to work on it so long before you were entitled to it and if you didn't do the work on it somebody else could come and get it. And if you didn't, somebody would would you call "jump claim." And then they went back to town and they lived there...I was three when they came back and they must have been there four years.

I: Was he improving this land all that time then...was he coming out here and working?
R: Well, I suppose he came here, but he had already improved
it so it already was his land.

I: Oh, I see.

R: And from then on, this farm has been in operation

R-1: It was always in flood stage when we first lived here there were no bridges and mother came across in the raft.

R: There was no bridge over the river and at that time there were woods around and, she said it was raining all the time and that the river was in flood stage all the time. The woods kept the water, I suppose, and it didn't dry out. See, now it floods in the springtime and then it's over, you know, then it goes down and there's sand bars and everything. But, at that time it was in flood stage all the time...just had to make a raft to go over the river.

R-1: This was all virgin timber at the time.

I: What was it, pine?

R-1: No

R: (???) most of it anyway. I remember there was a pine stump...there was a tree and a rock pile, you know, pushed back over that way, there was a pine though and I guess it took them two days, I think, to saw it down. There was two men and I can remember that when they were sawing it, they would saw from this side because the saw you know, it was so big, the saw wouldn't reach so they could saw back and forth. They'd go on one side and then the other. I was just a little girl I couldn't even talk English at that time, but I was so fascinated because that was so unusual. And when people would get lost they would always get up in some stump or some tree or something to look for this pine because that was a landmark around here.

I: Oh, that was the biggest one around.

R: Yes, they could see that so that was the...that's how they got their directions.

Stop in tape

R-1: I don't know if they were living there at that time. I don't know if (???) was living here at that time when they first came, but there was one down there where Santi's live...there was somebody living there.
I: Pelto's?

R: No, it was way before Pelto's come. There was Carlson's lived there and before that there was Erickson and I really don't know. But then when they came back the second time, then both (?) and (?) lived there because then they had made a road so there was a courduroy in the swamp...what they call a courduroy road made of logs, you know, like on the railroad tracks, and they got stuck there. See, they took a delivery rig from Baraga and they got stuck there.

I: Who got stuck?

R: The delivery rig. See, they didn't have cars around here in those days. You had to hire a horse and wagon or buggy or whatever it was they had, and they got stuck there in that swamp. So they went to (?) and (?) came I could see the horses get free at that time, so he helped them, he got them loose and he said to tell mother afterwards, he would tell mother years afterwards that he never saw a woman so pretty as mother. He'd never seen such a pretty woman before. And he came from Canada...and did he come from Escanaba or where, I don't remember.

I: He was French?

R: No, Scotch.

I: Oh, Scotch. I didn't know that there were any Scotsmen that lived around here.

R: Yeah, he was Scotch and he married a famous lady of the fancy set...she come and she said she was gonna get married. She said she was going to marry somebody who wasn't a Finn so she wouldn't have to go around the country asking people what the information was...you know when they got letters in the mail and it was true to have to go to other people to ask them what it meant, you know...interpret.

I: She wanted an English speaking man, huh?

R: Yeah, so she got him.

R-1: Tell about when mother first came, how they lived in a little shack that had been built by, was it the Indians or surveyors or what?

R: Indians helped Pa build that. It was a little one-room shack...oh it wasn't as big as this kitchen.
I: Was it a log cabin?

I guess it was a log cabin...it had bark for a roof, log and pieces of bark.

I: No kidding.

R: And they were about this wide and there was no floor in the...there was nothing on the floor, it was just ground and when they had the raining and this Mr. Erickson that lived at Santi's farm, he came to visit and in those days when they went to Baraga, they would bring each other's mail and he had brought the mail and when he came in the door and it was muddy and he looked at the floor and he said in Swedish,"oh so the housewife hasn't scrubbed the floor yet today."

R-l: Remember how it rained every day.

R: Oh, it was terrible thunder showers and Pa was so scared of thunder showers and then when the storm came, you know with all that wind, you know, in the trees, and he, one time it was such a bad storm and Pa was so scared that the trees would fall on the shack, you know, because you know it was these big high trees around and he told mother and the children to go outside, that if the tree falls on the cabin or the shack, they won't be hurt. And Ma did that; but she said it was raining so awful outside that she didn't care. She would just as soon be inside here if a tree fell because it was raining so hard.

And then they lived in that little shack until they could get their own cabin made and that was a log cabin. And everything was made out of the wood, the trees that grew around here. The only boards were the casings for the windows and the door. We had one little window and a door. And the floor were logs that were split in half and leveled off, that was the floor. And we lived in there. It was cosy in the wintertime. I wonder, how did they get their stove out there...when they had no bridge.

R: He carried the stove from Otter Lake here

I: He brought your parent's stove. He carried it on his back?

R: Well, I suppose he took it apart at times and I suppose he took the legs in one trip...pieces that would take apart, you know like here, you can take the lids off and I suppose some of these and he could carry them in a sack or something, I don't know. Because I was ten years old when Pa died, I don't remember all those things; but
that's what John Erickson told.

I: And, was there a bridge at that time?

R: There must have been something over the river at that time because I imagine people lived over there. There was some people that lived over there.

I: He brought the stove from Otter Lake?

R: Yeah, if he could get a rig or some kind of conveyance to bring it as far as Otter Lake and then from then on I suppose he put it...they couldn't bring it any farther.

I: They brought it on a raft or a boat to Otter Lake...by water?

R: They brought it around Otter Lake, they didn't cross it they brought it around Otter Lake.

R-1: I suppose they brought it on a horse and wagon.

I: Oh, by land.

R: By land, and then I suppose they couldn't go any farther because I remember this Miller here, he lived down the hill, not on this side the road, but just down the road.

I: At the corner?

R: Yeah, just down the hill and he said that when he lived in Aske~ on Otter Lake over there, and he said he carried his wife over the Sturgeon River, you know, he carried his wife on his back over the river...then he slipped on a stone...the stones, you know, they freeze, and he fell down and his wife landed in the water and she, well you know, said he was full of the dickens and she blamed him that he did it on purpose; but he didn't do it on purpose, he accidently slipped. So I don't suppose there was a boat, you know, they had some kind of raft or conveyance and I suppose it wasn't there at that time when he came.

I: When would that have been now?

R: Oh, he died about five years ago and he was eighty years old then even...he would have been eighty-five now, maybe more and, oh I couldn't say, but I remember that it was pretty long ago because there was one time when my mother was at Erickson's and they had a bridge there and Uncle August, that was Mr. Erickson's half brother, he lived with them, and he looked over the river and he seen some white things and he went to look in the window and he said if it isn't cherry blossoms out, they were coming out early. But it was so unusually early that he couldn't
believe it and Ann Miller said that when he came to
ask the grass was waving in the wind in April, you know,
so that must have been that year, you know, when it was
so very early.

R?: Mother said that there were so many porcupines around
that log cabin that each night they had to have a kettle
of hot water on the stove, that when it got unbearable,
they took the hot water out and threw it on the
porcupines, that was the only way to get rid of them.

I: They were chewing on the cabin, you mean?

R: Yeah, on everything around...I suppose trees and boards
and whatever they could get a hold of.

R-1: Boy that used to be an awful thing when the porcupines
used to come gnawing, see they come for salt and they
start chewing on boards and everything, horses and
everything. Of course here and took them up and killed
them, but in those days there was so many of them that
you couldn't do that very well.

I: Do they make a lot of noise?

Sure, they make a lot of noise.

R: It's annoying to hear that crunching.

Yeah, when they're chewing on boards it makes a funny
noise and they do damage too, of course, if they're
chewing on the porch you're not going to let them do
that or chewing on the threshold...you can't put up
with that. And then there was forest fires here. There
was one time the fires were burning and Pa and Ma they
took the furniture out of the...they were living in this
house at the time...they took the furniture out and
spread it around in the field and when the smoke got so
dense they couldn't stand it any more, they went to the
neighbor up there...and they had sent us kids away to
where Santi's live so that we were safe because there
was fire here by then...on the other side of the woods.
And they got up there...well they were there just a
little while and then it started to rain; and then they
hadda come home and try and get all the furniture back
in again, you know, and mother said she was so tired with
all that worry and excitement and danger, you know, they
were living in, well she said she was so tired; but they
survived when the rain came. She said the smoke was so
dense because the clouds came down, you know, and kept
the smoke down.

I: Why did they move the furniture outside?
R-1: Well, in case the building burned up, they would still have some furniture left, you know, the fire may burn the house but it may not burn out in the field. You know, see the ashes...or the cinders they fly, you know, and they start fires, you know. See the fire doesn't go like this, it does go like this, you know, and burns, but then it throws the sparks, you know, ahead of it and then the wind starts a new fire, you know. So, of course a building is high so when the wind comes with those burning sparks and cinders, well they land on the buildings, you know, and that's how you see all these farms, these old farms, they got a hay barn way off in the field, that's why they built that barn out in the field because...so if they burned the barn, well there they would have food for the animals, you know.

R: Years ago there were a lot of forest fires. People were always clearing land and burning brush piles and they never took care of them and the wind would come up and then it would blow the flames out into the woods and then it became uncontrolled and that's how they started these forest fires. No fire fighting equipment either.

I: Do you remember when the land was burned over?

R: Yes there was many fires that went through Pelkie. One was before Evelyn was born. We had to go down to the river and I remember we had a big wooden box square like this about like that, and they had put clothes in there...they put the clothes in there and they had brought it down to the river and we had gone down to the river and people had come down to the river and the men tried to save the buildings and Dunsmore, they tried to get Dunsmore away from his home, but he wouldn't leave it. And every little while they would go and see if he was alright because the smoke was so terrible. And he had managed to cover his eyes because his eyes were so, you know, burnt from the smoke and then (???) their chicken coop burnt up and the chickens and the new school...there was a new school house built in Pelkie, you know where that old school house is that is vacant?

I: Which one...by Tepsa's?

R: You know that one by Mantila's Road.

I: Oh, was that a school house...that white building?

R: Yeah, that was the school house and there was a new school house had been built and that burnt down...Mrs. Mantila, she was down by the river with her children.
I: Now, which Mantila was this.

R: Ronnie's grandmother.

I: They've been here a long time too.

R: They came in 1906 I think; and when Evelyn was born there was a Mrs. Peterson that came to take care of mother, she was from the Grist Mill Road...they had a grist mill on the Grist Mill Road, that's where the Grist Mill Road's name came from. But there was so much fires around and she got so nervous that she got sick and couldn't stay the full time to take care of mother.

I: Was she going to be a mid-wife?

R: Yeah, she was going to take care of mother when she had her baby...Evelyn.

I: Well, what happened then after she left

R: Well, they got along as best they could.

I: They didn't have anyone here?

R: That's why they went to town when I came because it was worse in those days. And there was my sister, my older sister, she had appendicitis and they had to take her to the hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital in Hancock, and there had been floods in Pelkie so bad that the Pelkie bridge...the railroad bridge over the Sturgeon was damaged so they couldn't bring the train to Pelkie and the train couldn't come for I don't remember how many days, so it happened that time that they had to take my sister by railroad to Hancock. Well, of course, the train couldn't come for her...it wasn't there, so the section boss took her on this hand car, you know that they had when they fixed the railroad; and they had to pump by hand those days, and they took her on there on a cot up to Keweenaw Bay and there they took her on the train to St. Joseph's Hospital and then her baby was born two months ahead of time and she died of blood poison. She was twenty-two years old.

I: Your sister?

R: Yes, and when there was the funeral arrangements that had to be made, there was floods down there by the Sturgeon, that was flooding, so they had to go by delivery rig to the Sturgeon on that side and then they had to go on this side too to get the information or, you know, what ever had to be done. Yeah, that was 1916. Then the baby died. It lived when it was born
but it was (???)...it was just like a real baby, you know, full grown baby; but the only thing was it had black fingernails. And it was such a beautiful sight that the minister could have it...preach the funeral sermon and there was the mother with her little baby on her arm and she had her wedding dress on and it was a nice blue satin dress.

This was signed in 1918 and all the bells were ringing, whistles were blowing, oh there was so much excitement.

I: How old were you then?

I guess I was about ten. We could hear all the whistles blowing. There was a false armistice that occurred a few days prior. I don't know how we got the information that this was the real McCoy...well you could hear the bells and the whistles even up here from Elo all over. That was a big day when that was over. You see, years ago we didn't know all those things as they happened, you know, like they do now. If the newspapers were late in coming, you didn't have transportation and we didn't have radio, so it took a long time to get all that information out. I think we were better off. My mother was a great reader, she loved to read and she used to get her Swedish newspapers once a week, it was either Wednesday or Thursday, I don't recall which day it was; but on the day that she got her newspapers at the Post Office in Pelkie, that day she'd make sure that she had the lamps full of kerosene and the glass-lamp glasses were shiny and that was her night to monopolize the lamp. And she'd sit there with the newspapers, you know, practically around the lamp and she would sit there and oh how she would laugh as she read those stories. And I was sitting...I would sit over there by the stove...I'd let her cackle laugh, it was her night for it, but I was hoping she would tell me the stories so I could laugh too. She'd probably tell me the next day when we were doing the chores in the barn and she would laugh just as much as she did when she was reading it in the papers. She was a great story teller...oh how she could relate stories. She could make you laugh and cry, oh my she really was a story teller. I often times said to her that I wished she could write so she could put all of those things down on paper, it would certainly be something to read in years to come. And, of course, we were poor. Everybody was poor those days...I don't know...at least around here. I don't know that there was anybody that had any wealth. We were all in the same boat. We didn't have a dress that we could...for every day of the week. I had one or two dresses that would take us through the year in school and this particular
summer, Mother didn't have any clothes for me for school; and she was worried, she didn't know what she was going to do. And mother was proud, she wouldn't ask for any assistance from relatives or that, she would go along with her own deficiencies and then one day a big bundle came from Chicago and here were all kinds of clothes. Some that I could wear without even being adjusted. I had an aunt that worked for some wealthy people in Chicago and they had a little girl about my size and she had apparently collected some of these clothes and sent them to me. And mother was so delighted, she didn't know what she was going to do. And yet at the same time she felt so badly to think she had lost faith. So when the bundle came and she'd looked to see what was in it, she went out into the field and she thanked God. She felt that if she was outside that she was closer to God. My mother was a wonderful person. I knew her as well as probably anyone did because I was alone with her so much. Hilder had gone to Chicago and my brothers were out in the woods, they were working at the camps and maybe they'd come home on weekends and there was mother and I alone; and we'd share our joys and our pleasures together and we really enjoyed each other. We had more fun doing things. We grew together and we really had fun.

I: What did the two of you do when you were here alone?

Well, we had to do the chores and I was studying as I was going to school and I had my lessons at night and on Saturday we would have to clean. All the things that happen, you know, in a household, we did them together. The dishes and the cleaning and the washing and the ironing.

I: Were you farming at all?

Oh yes...Mother took care of all of the chores. She was a big woman, she was strong...she was real strong and we did things together, we enjoyed each other so much. She was both a mother and a father to me; and she taught me...oh she'd tell me Bible stories and she'd tell me things in the Bible and she'd tell me the stories that she read and oh we really had a good time together. I recall one day, I was in the eighth grade at school and we were two miles from school and the teacher insisted that we go through the Christmas program from beginning to end. And we were then on Central time and of course it was dark by three - three-thirty - four o'clock, and it was getting on towards four o'clock and there was a snow storm outside; and I wanted to go home because I had the farthestest to go of any of the students. But, she had made up her mind that she was
going to go through that Christmas program from beginning to end and she would not dismiss school until she had gone through the program because I guess within the next day or two we were going to have the real program, you know, for our parents there at the school, so she wanted to go through a rehearsal, a complete rehearsal. So, by the time we were through it seems to me it was around four o'clock and it was almost dark when we left school. And oh how all this snow on the road and of course there was no traffic those days, the only traffic there was was horse and sleds and so we sort of looked after one another and we all started off in a group and about the time I got half a mile from home which was down at the crossroads here, it was really bad and the snow was so deep it was up to my waist and I was all alone to walk that half a mile. And I was floundering in the snow trying to get home. And, of course, it's all uphill so you didn't make much progress. It took me an awfully long time to walk that half a mile. And when I was about a quarter of a mile from home, I could hear my mother calling me and I knew she couldn't hear me, so I thought I'd save the little energy I had and I kept plunging through the deep snow and I got on top of the last hill I could hear my mother out again and then I answered because I knew she could probably hear me and I got home alright and it was after seven o'clock at night. And I was wet...that was in the days before snowsuits and my skirts were ice halfway up my legs. And mother didn't know what she was going to do. Whether she was going to go out and look for me or whether she should stay home and keep the house warm for me. So when she called the first time she was trying to decide what she was going to do and when she didn't hear anything, well she thought she was wondering, well what should I do. But then she decided she would try once again to call and then she heard me. Oh, she was so delighted because she really was upset because it was so late. I'd never been that late coming home from school. I was always the first one in the morning for school. I'd get there long before the janitor would get to the school. And it was the walk all the time...we thought nothing of it. We walked those two miles to school and home again another two miles. On Saturdays we would go out to the store and do our shopping. We'd have to carry home our groceries and we used to sell butter and eggs and we had to carry those out to the store and walk all the way.

I: At that time, was the store in Pelkie?

R-l: Yes

I: Which store was it?
R-1: Well, it was where Jokela's is.

I: Was that the one that Matt Oilla ran?

R: Well, there was different people had it. Gauthier had it first and then there was Funke I think and maybe Oilla got it then after him. Then there was Keevie's Store and then Roua's Store, Keevie's and Roua's had a store on the other side then, then it got to be Roua's store and then George Maki's store. Tell them about the time there was that fire.

R-1: Yeah, that was interesting. This was another episode of fire. It was in May and we were in school and we had the school bell ringing and we had been out playing at noon and I could see that smoke up there on Eilola's hill; but anyway, we stayed in school, but I kept watching it through the door because the door was open. And I could see that smoke was getting bigger and bigger and it was coming toward this way. So, the teacher knew I was worried about how I was going to get home because our house was right in the path of the fire and I was just a little girl then, I don't remember how old I was...eight or nine.

R: I don't know.

R-1: I was very young.

R: I wasn't here that time.

R-1: I was very young; but anyway the teacher let me go home.

R: She asked her if she thought she could make it home. Edward Douquet was then the (???).

R-1: Well, anyway, she let me go home. And I stopped at Erickson's and you could hear the fire along the road it was a farther...about a half a mile or a mile off the road, but you could hear it cracking through the woods, so I thought I could still make it home and I hurried along the road and I got down to the crossroads here and here was Evert, he had been fishing and I don't know why he happened to be at that road at that particular time, but he was. So the two of us, we came as fast as we could up the hill; and as soon as we got home, my mother said that she thought Evert had been at the river fishing with the...right down here and she said, "Evert, where is the fire? Did you see the fire as you crossed the river there?" And he said that he didn't know and just as we were having this little discussion as to where the fire was, the flames shot right up in this field next to ours; and here we were just...my mother, Evert and I,
we didn't know what to do. So, we had some work horses
and Evert and Mother said that I should get on the horse
and ride horseback up to Elo to get some help, see we
had a road through the woods there and I'd never been on
a horse before. And I said, "Well, I don't know how to
ride a horse." I says, "Why don't you go Evert, you can
ride faster than I can." So he was on the horse and he
got ready to go and he just got up to where the edge of
the woods were when there were about, oh I don't know,
maybe about eight or ten men, they were coming. They
were wondering where the fire was, so they were coming
through the woods to see where it was. So, they came to
help us and they poured water on the roofs and watched
in the haybarn, you know, because here was the fire right
right along...right all along here and then it went down
on this side of the hill down over here and here was the
fire throwing sparks around down here. And oh is it ever
horrible when those smoke clouds are pouring right over
your home and your buildings; your eyes burn and you
breath that awful smoke...it's horrible. And the little
rabbits were coming from the woods and running around the
trees and lilac bushes. We didn't know what to do;
whether to move the furniture out or what we should do.
It's very frightening; but somehow or another, the wind
must have died down or something happened because the
fire came just as far as our woods here. It didn't go
out into the woods, you know, where our forest was, it
stopped right there. Then it went down toward the road
and it was just a localized fire; but there was again a
brush pile...somebody clearing land lit a brush pile and
it got out of control and the wind came from the south
and took it directly up here. And the next day mother
would not let me go to school because the fire had burned
on both sides of the road and oh what a horrible sight
that was to see, everything was black on both sides of
the road from that fire. And that was the year the
teacher gave me the prize for being absent and tardy the
least number of times of all of the students we had in
school and I missed two times. Once on account of the
fire and once, I think it was, because of heavy rain. I
think those were the two reasons; and I got a beautiful
satin ribbon. It was too pretty to use and I still have
it folded as it came to me. I was so proud of that
because I had the fartherest of everyone to go and I
was never tardy and I just missed those one or two days
and one of them was on account of that fire.

R: And tell them about that teacher. She was living at
Erickson's at the time, and she couldn't go to bed until
she knew that Evelyn was home safe. She was up until
twelve o'clock that night.

T: That they had the fire?
R: Yes, because she didn't know if Evelyn had gotten home alright.

That was one of the responsibilities that the country school teacher had. The house, remember that teacher, she's still living there. It's Kangas's from Baraga. But we used to go down to Erickson's to practice our programs because Erickson's had a piano. Annie Sangster was our teacher, she lived there and she could play the piano; and I was always...I thought it was so wonderful to see someone play the piano, to think you could move your fingers all over those keys and get music...read notes and get music. Oh, I thought that was the most wonderful thing that could ever happen and was sure that when I grew up, I was going to learn to play the piano and sing. I never did; but I still enjoy piano and I still enjoy singing, but I never was able to accomplish that. But my, I used to watch those fingers move over those keys and I thought that was the most wonderful thing that could happen to anybody because at that time there wasn't any source of any music or anything like that. We had no phonograph or anything like that then at that time yet. We didn't get them 'til about...I think I was in high school; so that was my introduction to music.

I: Did people ever get together and go down to Erickson's just for the purpose of singing and listening to music? No, not that I know of; but we used to meet there to go over our program parts when we had programs at school that required singing and that was how we learned to sing.

R: I remember that time and Nora and her uncle were home alone in the house there, people were coming to the path and in the night they heard the piano going...that is Nora did and they thought there was a madman in the (???). He had a little shack down in Dunsmore's field. He used to come over and he would play with one finger, you know, I don't know had he died yet, and you know in the old days they used to have these Ghost stories...and she was so scared she thought it was him who had come and was playing piano. And here in the morning they found out it was the cat walking on the piano keys.

And we used to have a school picnic at the end of our school year. And that was a big occasion. Everybody came and they brought their parents and you'd have a new dress for that occasion...no picnic like they have now when you go in overalls, those were...you didn't wear those things those days; but that was such a big occasion, it was looked upon as such a wonderful thing
that the girls hadda have new dresses. And oh, they brought their cakes and their sandwiches and made ice cream, they used to swim in the river and oh, what a day that was. They stayed all day. And there was the nicest camp...picnic ground right down by the Otter River by the bridge...oh there was the nicest place for a picnic...that's all gone now, all washed away by the river. We used to have our Sunday School picnic's there too. There was a man by the name of Mr. Olsen who used to conduct Sunday School for the children and that was a wonderful occasion. And then when we were through with our Sunday School classes, we'd have a picnic.

I: Where were the Sunday School classes held?

In the school.

R: And at Erickson's too.

And those picnics were a little more far reaching than the others because you'd have Sunday School classes elsewhere that all of the people from all of the area they had those Sunday School classes would meet and so you saw some different people by going to the Sunday School class.

I: The people from different places would come to Sunday School in Pelkie?

No, but when they had the picnic.

I: Oh, for the picnic.

R-1: Yeah, they would have one big picnic.

R: Yeah, and they would maybe be from the Froberg area. There would be the Pelto's and Estilla's...

R-1: I don't remember who was there now, but I know we used to see different people.

I: So that was probably where you first met some of the people that you know now that live in Pelkie, hum...at the Sunday School picnic.

R-1: Yes, I think so because there were no means of getting around those days...excepting you walked.

R: And by horse.

R-1: By horse, but that was such a long long journey. I remember we had this horse called Bill. He was a farm horse and he was only three years old when we bought him and I remember the day my oldest brother brought
him home and he was beautiful. He was a bay horse with big...

in tape.

I: ...and the kinds of chores that the girls had to do... different from what the boys had to do.

R: Well, the men they usually took care of the horses and the bull if you had a bull and they did the field work and took care of the machinery and things like that. Well, then the women would milk and take care of the milk pails and took care of the butter and picked the eggs and got them ready for market.

And we'd help out in the field too.

R: And we helped out in the field.

Everybody worked at it wherever you could fit in, you all worked together.

R: And mother and my oldest brother would put the fence posts in and put the wire fence and Ma would saw logs with Pa, you know, in the early days and she said she had such rosy cheeks, you know, she was a...they had a crosscut saw in those days and they said that she was very good on the saw, you know, some are heavy on the saw or don't work it right, but she was very good on the saw...crosscut saw.

I: I wonder if she helped build the house.

R: Well, she held the rafters, you know they are like that, well when they put 'em up you have to steady them while they nailed 'em down, well she held the rafters.

'Well, everybody participated. There was no distinction, you know, as far as whether you were physically able to do, you contributed your efforts. If we had to work outside, we worked outside. If we worked inside, that was okay. For one thing we always had Sunday off. We never worked on Sunday...we never have in this household That was one day that we had.

R: Pa would put on his Sunday shirt and he had a hat with a big brim on and he would put that hat on on Sunday and he would walk around, you know, look at the apple trees and all around the garden, you know, or whatever and then he would take me with him and oh, I was so anxious to be with him and go out in the field for a walk. I remember one time Mother didn't have time to help me with my dress, get my dress on, so I dressed myself and I put the dress ...the sleeves in the dress and tied around in front...
you know, I didn't put it over my head and I went out and I was holding Pa's hand, you know, when he was walking around. Here I had the dress in front but nothing in the back.

I: You must have been pretty small.

R: Yeah, and there was one time Pa was cutting a log or something up here by the back porch, and he had a sledge and there were the chips around, you know, there were chips flying around and so I picked up the chips and we had them for kindling, you know, and I went to pick those chips up, you know and I went behind Pa when he was cutting, and he put the sledge down like this, you know, to cut and he hit me in the head with the round part of the sledge and it didn't hurt at all. But when Pa turned around he said, and found that he hit me, he got so scared that he got so white like snow and little as I was I could see that, and when I saw Pa got so scared, I started to holler. It didn't hurt me and he brought me in the house. And by the time I got in the house there was a big lump on my forehead with a hole in the middle and Ma got a cold knife and was putting a cold knife on there. But when I got in the house it hurt, but at first I was stunned or whatever it was.

R-1: Tell her about Pelkie's...you knew them, I didn't.

R: Old Mrs. Pelkie, she was so in love with Mr. Pelkie. Everything he did was the most wonderful thing and he was always planning. They always had visions of doing things. He was going to farm, you know, and be a big farmer and that didn't turn out. And he was going to...oh he had all kinds of plans and you know, that he was going to do...he was going to raise pigs, and he was going to raise chickens, and it happened but it wasn't according to the big plans.

I: The big dreams.

R: And everything that he did was just wonderful...oh he was just wonderful...oh how she adored her husband. And he was a very nice man. He'd laugh, oh how he'd laugh and he was real nice...he was such a nice man, pleasant man, you know, and good man. And he used to come up here and we used to go down there and Mrs. Pelkie she had a sun stroke when her sister got married in Chassell. They had a big blowout, you know, in those days they didn't have, you know, like cake and sandwiches like they do now, they'd have big dinners, you know, and they had big chicken dinners and it was a terribly hot day and she was working...you know, they had to work outside because there wasn't room...the food and all was so big
that they had to do it at the fire outside and she got
sun stroke.

Stop in tape.

R: ...sun strokes, she would get them every once in awhile and finally they came so often that it affected her mind and she had to go in a home or in seclusion.

I: From sun stroke she got epilepsy.

R: Yes, and he lived on the farm for some years then afterwards, but then he sold the farm and he went to live with his daughter down in Detroit; and one day the daughter and her husband had gone out, and Pelkie had gone out, and he was the first one home and when he came home the whole building was in flames, you know, the home was in flames and he dropped dead he got so excited. So that's how he died. But he was French Canadian...and his wife too?

I think she was Irish.

R: And she had such big visions of Pelkie, you know, and when they came here it was just a little settlement at that time and oh she had such visions that that would be a big town, you know. And it used to be a big bustling community, you know, when all these camps were around here...there was so much camps and saw mills and farms and big families, there was so much people in it and all the horses, you know, and you should see Pelkie how decked up with logs...it was so high all over.

And the railroad trip.

R: And the rock train would come from Atlantic Mine or Mass.

Oh, that happened in City...

R: Mass City and it would go to Pelkie every day and the logs would go back and forth and there was a hotel in Pelkie and there was three stores and two saloons...

R-l: And sidewalks.

R: ...and sidewalks inbetween...well where the Post Office is now and there was sidewalk over there and oh what a bustling community it was. There were three stores going and they were just as busy as could be and there was so much horses...there was a blacksmith shop in town and there was such...you know, activity and the schools, there were schools all over...there was the Pelkie School, and the Pine Creek School, and the Wallen School and the Pelto School...there were schools all over that were all
full of kids.

R-1: Tell about how Pelkie received the name of Pelkie.

R: See, Pelkie, it would have been Kingsville...the name would have been Kingsville because he was there before Pelkie, but then there had to be a Post Office, you know, there was such a busy community that you had to have a Post Office and the Post Office had to have a name. So then Michael Wadaga was going to be Post Master...well he borrowed the money from Pelkie to build a house... that's where Rueben Oiila lives now...that grey house over by Jokkela's...the other side of Jokkela's. He built that house and there's where the Post Office was so he named it...gave it the name of Pelkie and, of course Pelkie was related to him. One of the Pelkie daughters married a brother to his wife and that's why.

R-1: The first Post Master was Douquet.

R: Yeah, and Mae Pelkie married Pierre King, that was Mrs. Douquet's brother, so they were related to him and they were related by marriage.

I: Was it different when the French-Canadians were most of your neighbors and then when the Finns moved in?

R-1: They were really friendly people...

I: The French-Canadians.

R-1: And when Pa died the people from Pelkie came here and stayed...you know, they had a week here. There were the Pierre Kings and the Tom Bonds...and I don't know who else. A whole team of horses and a big sleigh of people came and they had the week here.

R: None of the Finns came here.

I: Were they in the area at that time?

R: Oh yes

I: When was that?

R: 1911

I: When did the Finns start moving in?

R: Well, they came when we were at Calumet...I mean Laurium, then they started coming in here, you know, from the mines to Elo and looted all over and then when the French sold out, they sold out to the Finns...all those places were founded by the French...the Kings were French and Tepsa's were French and where Peterson's, that was French and where Paananen's lived, that was French and the neighbors Douquets and they were French and they lived
there in Pelkie and there was Kings and, oh...there was Matheis...I don't know all those French names...Lords and LaFaves.

R-1: They all had large families...they were a very friendly sociable group.

R: And very polite...very very polite.

End of Part I

R: ...the drug stores were Finnish, everything was Finnish...churches were Finnish, everything was Finnish. They didn't have to want.

I: That must have been after the French started moving out. Were there Swedish families around here?

R: Yes, there were Swedish families.

I: In Pelkie...?

R: You know where Santi's...there were Swedes there and across from Jokipiis...Jokipiis were Swedish and you know that vacant farm across from them, there were some there and Jokipiis are Swedish and Erickson's were Swedish and there by, you know, across...where they were hauling hay, there was Swedish there...and...

R-1: They moved away.

R: Those Anders were Swedish, Lundene's were Swedish.

I: Well, there were quite a few Swedish families around here then.

R: Yes.

I: How come they moved?

R: Well, they wanted to go other places.

I: Did you know the Swedish families around, like those that lived up at Froberg, did you know those?

R: Yes...(???) Evelyn's presents when she was born.

I: Who was this?

R: Mrs. Carlson...and the Carlson's they were Laura's Godmother and God-father...she just found it out now when she got her birth certificate for her Social Security. And then there was Danialson's...the St. Germain's from Baraga, they used to go there...Mrs. St. Germain...she
was living at that place across from Jokipii's...and there was the Swedish Settlement.

I: Where was that?

R: Do you know where the airport is on the way to Baraga, there were some Swedish families living around there.

in tape.

R: ...toys and games and we used to go visit the other families and they'd visit here and we'd pick berries together.

R+1: There was a French family, they used to live in Pelkie too...well they were Doquets, and they went to Detroit and one of the girls came back here...well her son and grandchildren were here this summer; but she came and she told me...she said that she remembered how I used to make snickers for her dolls...and I had forgotten about that. But I used to make snikers...I had a little pattern and not out of cloth, I used to make them out of leather. Oh, they used to come up here, they used to love to come up here and play with our dolls and play in the haybarn, you know, slide down the haymows and they'd come to pick raspberries up here and the strawberry season was still on and we'd fill their pails with them, you know Ma'd fill their pails with strawberries...you know from the strawberry field and when they went home the mother was wondering that had they been picking strawberries when they shouldn't without permission or something like that. She was so concerned that they came home with strawberries instead of wild raspberries; so she asked and, you know the children told her that we had filled their pails with strawberries and so she didn't still believe them so she had to ask Mother. So she came down and told Mother about it and Mother said, that Yeah, she hadtold her to fill up her pail with strawberries.

R: My dad loved all kinds of fruit. He had apple trees and cherry trees and plum trees and raspberries and strawberries and gooseberries, he just had everything. We loved all of those things when he was living. We had an abundance of those things when he was alive.

And I used to sell strawberries in Pelkie, go house to house.

I: Not many people had strawberry fields

Well, what was it...ten cents a pail?

R: Yeah, a pail like this...ten cents for it

I wasn't a very good salesperson, I didn't like to go because I was bashful, but I did it. They were nice
and sometimes they'd go and ask somebody else if they wanted the berries.

R: Whenever there was any occasion to furnish apples for any of our school activities, that was always our job to furnish the apples. We had all kinds of nice apples... like at Halloween when they filled a tub with water and float apples on top and we'd try and bob for the apple and hang a string in the doorway and you'd have to try and catch them, and oh everyone they just loved those apples and oh I was so happy when I could trade an apple for some other youngster's food. We didn't appreciate them because we had so many of them.

And when we went to school, we used to trade sandwiches because Mother always made rye bread and then she made coffee bread, you know, that was white bread; but the French they made white bread...you know they made just white bread and it was real salty and oh they were big slices, you know, and we used to love their white bread and they used to love our rye bread because, you know, to them it was a treat to get rye bread and to us it was a treat to get white bread. And sometimes they'd come to school and didn't have butter on their bread, they would lard and sugar on it, you know, because they were poor.

R: And everybody was nice and we used to play French games and songs in school, and it was real nice.

This family, the Douquets that used to be the janitor at the school, they were French; and I don't suppose they used the language very much at their home. Well then they moved from Pelkie, they moved to Lake Linden and we just learned now, just recently...in recent years, that when they moved into Lake Linden that the schools...I mean all the classes were taught in French. And these poor kids had to learn French and then try to get their classes in French. Lake Linden has always been a French community, but they didn't realize that they used the language also in the schools.

R: Well some, you know years ago when there was...we didn't have churches, you know, and the Finnish children were confirmed, well the Catholic children were confirmed in the Finnish confirmation.

I: Were the French Lutheran?

R: No, they were Catholic; but see when there was no church they...

I: They got confirmed in the Lutheran Church.
R: When I was confirmed I went with our neighbor who was Swedish and he was the same age I was; and so Mother told this neighbor lady, "Well, when your boy is ready for confirmation school, remember to include me in the plans." Because we had no way of getting anywhere; so then we went to the Perault Church, and Dick and I had our confirmation lesson in English and we were in the afternoon and all the other children had their confirmation lessons in Finnish and they went in the morning. And when we were confirmed, well I think that was about the only time that we were together. I know since I've been back here so many people have said, "Oh, you were in the same confirmation class with me." Well, I didn't have a chance to meet these kids excepting maybe on the last day when we were confirmed. And all of the services were in Finnish excepting, you know, that we had our lessons in English.

Well, our older sister, she had to go to Calumet for her confirmation... went back and forth on the train.

I: Oh really... because of the language or because there wasn't a church here?

There wasn't a church.

I: When was the first church?

No, I said that wrong... she was confirmed in Baraga at the Methodist church, but she had to go on the train to get there. Now, what did you say?

I: When was the first church here? When you spoke of the Sunday School classes, did they hold church services too? Or was that just for the children?

No, that was just for the children.

R: I don't remember when the Pelkie Church was built. See, there was the one by Tahtinen's on this side of Pelkie, that was the first; but then they separated and some stayed at the old church and some went to the new church.

I: You're talking about the apostolic church.

R: Yes, and then there's that Lutheran church in Perault, I don't know when that was built.

I: I thought there might have been church services before a church was built.

R: Oh, there was cottage services.
I: In houses?

R: Yes, the minister would come around and have services and you would invite the neighbors. The Swedish services would be down there at Erickson's and then there would be the Finnish services, they would be in the cottages up there.

I: And about when was that?

R: Oh, I was a little girl...but I don't remember exactly when.

I: Did the minister live in this community...or was he from...?

R: No, he was from out of town. And when Evelyn was baptised, she was baptised at Art Mantila's by a Finnish minister.

R-1: See, you did things when the occasion presented itself.

R: And (???) was confirmed by Mr. (???)

I: Your Sunday School teacher.

The first time I went to church that I can remember...of course we went to church in town, but I don't remember that...it was at the funeral for Pa and that was the first time that I was inside of a church and the first time I went to town.

I: That was the first time you were in town too?

R: Yes

I: How old were you then?

R: Ten

I was the only one that went to high school from our family and when we went to high school we hadda...we went to Baraga and we hadda live in Baraga. We lived with...families would take care of five - six students, you know, from outlying areas and I was twelve when I started high school and that was quite an experience. You had to manage your own affairs. There was nobody to tell me what to expect when going to high school there. I don't remember how I got to the place where I stayed. I stayed at Stratton's in Baraga. I suppose someone else was staying there and maybe Mother asked if I could stay too...I don't remember how that happened. It was quite an undertaking at that time when you weren't accustomed to being away from home.
I: Did you live in Baraga the whole time you went to high school?

R-1: Yes, the first two years we stayed there and we came home weekends when we were able...many times in the wintertime we would walk home...just to get home. That was a distance of about five miles. Many times I walked back to Baraga all by myself on Sunday afternoon. There was sometimes...it if was bad weather, they would take the train and the train would leave Pelkie around five or six o'clock in the evening and then you'd take it to Mineral Range, Huron Bay and it wouldn't take too long to get there but then we'd have to wait at Keweenaw Bay for the train from the Copper Country and it would get in there around midnight. That short distance took all them hours and then you'd have to walk from the station into where you lived in town. I think that last couple of years we were in town, I mean when we went to high school the people who had cars...they would use a car and then they'd take youngsters and wouldn't charge any money to ride with them...so we would ride along with them...like in the fall and in the spring and we would stay in town in the winter. And there was one time, I think I was either a sophomore or a freshman, I can't remember which it was, but there was scarlet fever and you couldn't stay in a house where there was scarlet fever. (???) moved into our house...although he didn't have the disease he had been exposed to it so I couldn't come home for six weeks and there I was in there...in town...all that time. Oh, that was so terrible...it was alright during the week when all of the other youngsters were at the house, but on the weekends when you were there all by yourself...it was very difficult.

It is impossible to hear anymore of this tape.