FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blueberry picking</td>
<td>126-130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The depression</td>
<td>131,152</td>
<td>prices and pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing land</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Jasper</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in the woods</td>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving logs down the river</td>
<td>138</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper Country Strike</td>
<td>140,144</td>
<td>1913-1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Pelkie</td>
<td>143,144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling timber to the mines</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roasting coffee beans</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churning butter</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coop grocery store</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>origination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The creamery</td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cheese factory</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making hay</td>
<td>158-168</td>
<td>story-telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming Equipment</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrashing time</td>
<td>172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peddlers and beggars</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts between nationalities</td>
<td>177</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in the mines</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grist Mill</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid's chores</td>
<td>184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages for working</td>
<td>186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making material</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin woods</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer hunting</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small game</td>
<td>192</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer populations</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf stories</td>
<td>200,203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox trapping</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences with bears</td>
<td>204</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobcats</td>
<td>208</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUBJECTS: Early history of settling, clearing the land, logging around the Grist Mill area. There are two natives being interviewed at the same time, and one seems to excite something in the imagination of the other. In this case, both men are natural story tellers. This provides a good model for multi-party interviewing.

COMMENTS: The interview is carried out in the garage connected to the sauna. Any humming is not the fault of the tape recorder, it is merely a mosquito invasion.

Note: In the following transcript, R is Don Lehto and RR is Ernest Heikkinen.

I: You were talking about blueberry picking years back. What was that like?

R: Well, used to be that you went with horses before the time of cars and you started from here and you spent one night there at either Little Lake or Big Lake, whatever it was, and the people would pick their berries and there was lot of berries because every year they used to burn part of the plains. I remember Ernest's uncle used to say that the Indians were burning the blueberry plains again. Nobody went there to put 'em out.

RR: Well, there was only McMann and...he was the only game warden outside of Wilson, but in the community he was the only one that would be the fire warden, the game warden and everything else. I know we went out there fighting a fire one time with him. Luckily it started to rain when we got there so...but we never got paid for it wasn't dues days...the money matter...that they'd get any money for fighting fires. So, the Indians used to set the fires and they'd be gone...burned the plains and we had berries...lots of berries every year...there's very seldom...well sometimes frost would take 'em, but as a rule there was berries. And see my dad and mother would come back with three hundred quarts...just overnight, staying over there at the same place I went.

R: Yeah, you'd go with tubs.

RR: Well, yeah, yeah, yeah.

R: Even the little kids would have a tub or milk pail that you'd pick in. You didn't pick in these dog gone coffee cans.

RR: Coffee cans...ohhhhh

R: And people that weren't through with hay when the blueberries were ripe, they just quit the hay making and went to pick blueberries because you gotta pick 'em when they're there. You can make hay any other day, you know.

I: You mean blueberry picking came before hay making?

R: Absolutely.
RR: Well, not in all cases.

R: Well, I mean they had made the hay already part way through, but then when the blueberries were ripe they went to pick blueberries. I remember Tarkenens coming over there and they took the shirts off the boys backs and filled even the shirts with blueberries...they ran out of containers.

Yeah, there was a party from...people that bought the place from my dad first, they were in Nisula. Well, when you seen that horse coming around the corner here...this was a sharpe corner then, you knew he was through haying...he was coming to our place and in the morning we be out to the plains getting berries. Mindila (???)...he's been dead since '28.

R: And even before that, the ladies from the road used to go into Krolicks swamp over there in the afternoon, pick a pail of blueberries and come home in time to make supper for the men to come from the woods.

I remember, one time we went there and Mrs. Ranta...you don't remember her, do you?

R: Yeah, yeah, sure.

RR: Do you? But, you remember Bob anyways.

R: Yeah, Bob and Eino.

RR: You couldn't drive all the way, left the horse at Nester's old place, the farm there, then you run out of pails or cans or whatever you had and Bob took the shirt off his back and filled that with berries.

I: But, this was a family deal then...and more of a longer stay in the berry patch, right?

R: Well, usually if there's two days, you went and stayed overnight and picked the next day and came home, see, with the team. Then later when the cars came you went with the cars. I remember the first time I ever went to Silver Mountain was 1920 and Ernest was there too. And we left the car...what is now Joe Putkovitch owns the place...at that time was a Korpi that owned that farm. We left the car there...

You know, Korpi's didn't own that, that was right on the corner where we left them, you know was just a hay barn where we left the cars. Was dad, you...you was along then too, eh?

R: Yeah, I was along

Was Harold?

R: Yeah and.
Mrs. Heinninen was with us and my dad...

I: But, you would go there for a longer period...

R: Nope, just a day.

Just for the day. We went up on top of the mountain and we got thirsty so old man Erickson and Art...Art Erickson still lives but his dad is dead...we went looking for water. And these others went down the mountainside the otherway and got out to there where this red pine there on this...you must have been on that road that goes from the dam over to Silver Mountain...?

I: Yeah

Well, in that territory.

R: That was burned over area then.

Yeah

R: Lot more open than it is now.

I: It's called the Sturgeon Falls Gorge Road now, you know, on the sign.

And the area north of the mountain...

R: They call that the Silver Mountain Plains...they was burned

And, we got a hell of a thunder storm then and we got lost, old man Erickson and Art and I, from the others and I didn't have my lunch. We went across the Silver up to here there was no bridges, we got to the car and the lunch was with my dad and my brother. So, I was starving there and no berries even. I'll never forget that trip.

R: Hell, we ate our lunch on top of the mountain where the tower was, just towards where that dropoff is and I always remember...it bothered me afterwards even I'd hit that dropoff. See, it even come in my dreams why I'd be on the edge of that darn dropoff, see. I was just about six years old at the time.

I: What would you do generally though. You would go out there with a team of horses...would it be the men, the women and the children?

R: Well, at that time.

That was the first year we had a car.

R: 1920

I: But, I mean further back.

R: Yeah, they went with the horses.
RR: Yeah

I: Would you stay out there overnight?

R: Yeah

I: Would you have...

RR: Well, not necessarily my mom, that was usually on the plains over here...Little Lake and we never did go to Big Lake, but we did go to them swamps in between Little Lake and Big Lake on the old road. But, I got a heck of a time finding those roads anymore. There all made new roads in there.

I: And you mentioned something about an Indian. You'd go until you saw an Indian...

RR: Well, ah...you've been to the Little Lake, haven't you?

I: Yeah, I know where it is.

RR: Yeah, well on this side now when you go to it the Indians and on this side the Finns. The Indians stayed there for weeks picking berries. But the Finns used to go there with the horses...oh there was like gypsies (sp) in Finland...many...maybe twenty-five rigs. Have a big bonfire and keep the mosquitoes down and when everybody get tired they just rolled the wagon around and they'd sleep in there with a cover over your head so the mosquitoes wouldn't bother you.

R: Well, usually it was the young fellows that made the noise in the evening and wouldn't let the older guys to sleep and about two o'clock when the young fellows was ready to sleep, the old men would get up and say "nobody's sleeping yet". And they wouldn't let the other go to sleep either.

I: So, you'd stay up all night.

R: Stay up almost all night

RR: Believe it or not, this road was all clay then. Was that thick in August with that fine pulverized clay. The horses come puff...puff...puff just like they were walking in white flour. And there was one team after another in the morning when you got up going towards the plains. In the afternoon you started...the bunch that had gone the day before were coming back. Just like covered wagons going out west. In fact, Santi had a covered wagon...I went up with them one time. Oh that was a lot of fun...kids ain't got that fun today.

I: That was a big operation, eh?

R: It was a big deal everybody looked forward to...going to pick blueberries. And, of course that was one of the things you had all winter...then you had blueberries to eat. Then, of course, you
picked raspberries, too.

RR: Oh yeah, that was everyday deal, raspberry picking season...kids hadda get so much every day then you were free for the rest of the day.

R: You hadda pick your pails full for what your mother canned then in evening you were allowed to pick some for yourself that you ate with cream and sugar.

I: Would you go out for raspberries on this sort of a deal or was that more around the home?

RR: That was right around the home...all you hadda do was go back here.

I: Okay, you said that it's changed a lot...it's not like that anymore in blueberry picking. What's changed about it now?

RR: Well, there's no berries. Few years we get berries and then we don't

R: You never see berries like you used to.

RR: Never like you used to...just handfuls like that. Three years ago we was down there on that gravel road there and a party from Watton, Mrs. Pikkola, she says...and they had gone there and then we followed...we went in there and she says, "this is somethin' like old days, ain't it?" Well, they were nice there...berries were.

I: So, there are no more burnings over there anymore.

RR: No, they don't burn no more

R: See, the reason is the Conservation and DNR doesn't allow burning.

I: How does that effect that?

R: The burnings you get new shoots and that's where you get the new berries...the berries again. When you got all them old bushes they don't produce anymore because of their age. That's how it's done in Maine where they raise blueberries...they burn that area always so they get a new start and they're the ones that produce the next year that produce berries.

I: Who would burn 'em back then?

R: The people would set fires, see. And there was no one to put 'em out.

I: Anyone would, or was it accidental?

R: Oh, I imagine, fifty of one and fifty of the other, but always the talk was that the Indians were burning the Baraga plains...the
the blueberry patches.

There was a lot of naws with the Indians, blueberry picking time.

R: Yeah, they earned money.

RR: Ain't like today, Ruppe gives them money...they don't have to go out pick berries.

I: But, they did earn that.

Yeah, sure, they'd pick berries and sell 'em.

I: What about the depression years? Everyone tells me that this younger generation just doesn't know what it's all about because they didn't see it. Well, you tell me about it.

R: This generation doesn't have the vaguest idea what the depression was about.

Nooooo...

R: It was even all willing you would have been to give a good ten or twelve hour day for fifty cents and you couldn't get the job. There just wasn't any jobs. There were real able-bodied people looking for work.

Do you know what these fellows worked for...it wasn't in the depression anymore...1940 when I built that barn and I let it out to contractor to build it. They furnished their own grub and worked for two dollars a day.

R: Yeah, and we put...like Ernest's barn there...we put one side of the roof in one day.

RR: Yeah

R: In fact, this fellow Reino that was just here, he was there too and his brother and I was there.

The contractor he...the barn what do you think would cost you now? This was in 1940 that I built it for four thousand bucks.

I: What would you think it would cost today? I have no idea...I haven't planned to have a barn built.

RR: Around here few years back...in fact the bank told me it was worth twenty thousand dollars, but...

I: Five times difference...five hundred percent change in the value of the building. But...the cost of labor now.

RR: Just when I built it everything started going up already. Usually
you were lucky you got your boys working...well he didn't have nothing to do anyway...and it was two dollars.

R: Not only that, you gained a little experience.

I: Well, how did the people live then? I mean, if it was...how did they survive?

They didn't live like they do today.

R: No...you didn't have no telephone bill and no gasoline bill to speak of because you didn't drive very much. When I got married in 1940 we made one trip to town a week. That was it. Now we make some days four trips in a day. We got four cars that we're paying insurance on and buying gasoline for and that time we had one and got better mileage with that one than you get with any one of 'em today.

I: What about farming at the time. How were the farmers doing?

RR: Well, ah...

R: The trouble with farming is it was not only that it was poor times but it was dry too.

...for making hay there was nobodys crops to cut

R: Yeah, there was no oats, the hay was so poor that in our barn we didn't even spread once...we just dropped one row in the middle of the barn. That was it.

First year in that barn there, that was in 1941 when I put the first hay in it, it happened to be a dry year and I only got twelve loads I guess, of hay in there. You should go back to...when I came into this community...sixty-five years it'll be on next week.

I: 1907, eh?

'8...my dad didn't have no work to go to anywheres and there was a few head of cattle there on the place when he bout it, but there was no hay...so he hadda buy the hay. I suppose he had a...I don't know, I was five years old, but I suppose he had...I don't know what his bank account was, but anyway he bought from a neighbor, a Polack. He had a little hay and he didn't have no cattle, I guess to amount to anything. There was the Polack and he sold him the hay and he dumped a few pails of water in it when it was in the winter and froze in there...made more weight on it. That's the way he bought it. Believe it or not, that's so. And the income was about a dollar and a quarter a month. You got sugar and coffee with that...and flour.

I: From farming?

Yeah, and they had a few chickens and one time even he didn't even get paid. He sold the eggs to an Indian downtown there when he went with the horse...what eggs he had, well, he would stop at
Such a house on the hill when he was coming back... he says, "I'll give you the money and I'll give you your pail back." And mother had fixed good turkish towels with them eggs so they wouldn't freeze, see. Went into the house and you know what he saw? A gun in his face. "Hey, we don't owe you nothin'." Half-breed French and Indians, I guess, I don't know. That house is gone from there, but it was a small house this side of Elm's store there, a little this way. So, he wasn't gonna argue when he didn't have a gun.

R: So, like starting here, so many of them bought the farm with like two people... there'd be two owners like Ernest's dad and his uncle and before them was Vandelia (???)

Vandelia and dad bought it together first

I: They pitched in together simply because they didn't have enough cash for one guy to buy it. Who would they buy the land from in this area? Who owned it at the time.

My dad bought the place from Fred Swoom... what you call Swoom here, his grandfather. And, him and Vandelia bought it. Well, that little piece of ground that I still got over there, it is the first piece of ground they cleared there. They disagreed over...

I: They cleared it at the time?

Yeah

I: What kind of stumps were on it?

Pine and hemlock and hardwood.

I: Oh, it was mixed stuff

RR: Mixed stuff, you know. Big pine stumps they got left there because they didn't have no ways of getting out. When I bought the place I put a bulldozer and pushed those pine stumps out.

I: Tell me a bit about clearing it. How they cleared it, what kind of work it took, and describe for me how they got those stumps out because that went on all around here.

Yeah, was up until '37 that was all bull work then, land clearing. Horses and sometimes you didn't have no horses... I used to help my dad dig around the stumps and get a pole in there and pry them loose one at a time when was busted up with dynamite first. Everybody... almost everybody... they came from the mines.

R: They all knew how to handle dynamite.

Yeah, because they were miners you know.

R: The farmer... they knew each other. You broke up the stump with
dynamite and they could just about guess how many sticks each stump just by looking at it would take to break it up. They would break it into three pieces or something like that, then with the horses they pulled it out.

Yeah, then when they had a pair of horses, team of horses, well...

I: Did everybody have a team?

R: On this road I think everybody had a team, but many other places they just had single horses.

RR: Yeah, well we went by with a single horse for quite awhile and first when we came down there, I'll tell you when sixty-five years ago when I came into the community, the forest fires were so big, dad couldn't get the town to get us...we got held up in Baraga...Sam Hills, was a week. My mother took sick when she got off the train. So, we stayed there. And then some way or other, I forgot how, he got the buggy horse...just a little black buggy horse, Dolly its name was...to Baraga. And we came...followed Mathis's...did you know the old man?

R: Yeah, yeah

Well, you knewed the boyed anyway, we followed them out to their place. Then they said, "just leave the horse go, and when he stops at the gate, open the gate and that's your place". Of course there wasn't a road from there over here anyway at the time. That's what happened.

Stop in tape.

R: When my dad came here, they came as caretakers for Henry Jasper who owned the farm...he was a real estate man from Hancock. And they had already been caretakers where Ted Sandlin lives now on the Plains Road. And, when that was sold, then they moved here.

I: This Jasper guy was dealing in a lot of land around this area.

R: Yeah, that's right.

He was a real estate man.

R: He was in many businesses...he was a railroad agent and they sold insurance too, I believe, and real estate. Well, my mother had worked for them as a maid, so she knew the family quite well.

I: What did the land go for in the early years? Way back then, what did a forty go for...or a plot of land? Do you have any idea?

R: There was six forties here and four of them had been homesteaded and then they had bought two more forties, and it was six thousand dollars, was the price of it...1911.
I: The land was cleared somewhat?

R: Yeah, there was clearing here

I: About how much?

R: I don't remember how many acres, but therewas some.

RR: I really didn't know what my dad bought, but it seems to me it was two thousand dollars for the two hundred acres that he bought. And then when he come to pay his taxes the first time, it wasn't two hundred acres on the tax roll, so he went to Sam Hill, hesays, "where's my two hundred acres...there's ten acres shy." Well, they bought him ten acres up by Kruicks...used to own the ten acres there down from Mathis's...Sandbush has got it now.

I: As I recall talking to many of the old timers as I have around here, it was pretty tough...paying for the land and the tax payments in the early years.

R: Well, the only way everybody paid their payments was out of their timber that was on the place. You didn't work anywhere else to make the payments.

RR: Dad, I guess, he had the money and bought that place when then the land...he and Grady paid Vandalia off. But then he sold...only undivided one half to his brother, my uncle. And was undivided one from 1909 'til 1946.

I: You say, most of the people worked in the woods?

R: Worked in the woods and

RR: Yeah, if there was any woods work

I: At that time, where was the market for the timber?

R: The market was in Chassell for Wooster Lumber Company and you just hauled it down to the river...you sold just the softwood, like hemlock and pine and cedars and stuff like that...no hardwood; and you just hauled it down and pushed it in the river and it was floated down.

I: Okay, now this was at what time?

R: When I was a little boy.

RR: Yeah...that was in...

R: I think they hauled theirs until about...

RR: Was in '14 - '15 - '16...

R: Yeah, until about 1917.
Well, when did that hardwood market develop when you could start making a little money off hardwood?

RR: Oh, that, I think

R: First world War, I think.

RR: We got pretty good money for hardwood already in '23 and '22.

I: What would you do with it then?

RR: Hauled it to the railroad.

R: Yeah, you hauled it to the railroad over here in Kero

I: In '22? It wasn't until '30 that the Mineral Range came through Pelkie.

R: No, it came earlier

RR: Oh...I heard that

R: In the thirties they discontinued it...discontinued it in the thirties.

I: Oh, I'm sorry, 1900 it came through

R: And then they discontinued it during the depression

I: Yeah, that's right...I'm confused. Now in '22 you say the market began?

RR: Yeah...that days we got...well due to the war, World War I too, the market went pretty good for hardwood.

I: Starting 1917 and '18 it started to develop?

RR: Yeah

I: Who was buying that at the time?

RR: Well, there was Escanaba Veneer buying the birch and...

I: What did they use it for? Furniture?

RR: Yeah, that's what it went for.

I: Who else was buying at the time?

R: Well, they had an Alston Mill.

RR: Alston Mill when they were operating and then in '23 Ford was buying it. Yeah, and L'Anse. They were buying all the hardwood they could
get ahold of.

I: What kind of prices were the farmers here receiving at the time?

RR: For, you mean the timber?

I: Yeah

RR: Used to get eighteen dollars a thousand for Hemlock...banking it at the river. And twenty-three - when Ford was in L'Anse. What hardwood there was on the farm there we cut that and hauled it and loaded it on cars for twenty-three dollars. And birch, veneer birch, I think it was around fifty or sixty dollars a thousand.

I: When you say thousand, you're talking board feet aren't you?

RR: That's right.

I: Okay, about how much is that in terms of a pile of logs oh, let's say a foot in diameter?

RR: Oh, figure about ten-twelve logs to a thousand.

R: Yeah, and if you had real big timber, you had nine logs to a thousand.

RR: Most of the time the hemlock that went into the river, you hardly ever got more than twelve logs. The scalers, I don't know, I guess they had a way of chiseling things.

R: Speaking of scalers, there used to be a scaler that came...you decked your logs in the woods and the scaler would come and scale the logs into the piles. Well, this sauna used to be right over here and when the scaler would come my dad always had a bottle or two waiting for him...he never left that men's camp. Dad would go there and scale them with Ryan from Baraga who was the scaler's helper.

RR: Yeah, Bill Ryan

R: Bill Ryan and they scaled all them log piles and that regular scaler never left that men's camp.

RR: Do you remember his name?

R: No I don't.

RR: Dishnaw...we used to get a bang out of him...he'd be chewing tobacco at the camp and he'd come there and.....I can't do it

I: Spit between his hand?

RR: Yeah...it'd go way out

R: Between his two fingers. And it must have been in the late thirties I was in Baraga one night and this Ryan was there and he starts talking to me and he asked who I was and I told him. He says, "I've
been over to your place many many times scaling logs." And then you're on your honor to haul 'em out to the river, of course they had the option to come over there and check that you had hauled them all. But, of course, you couldn't haul the hardwood because they wouldn't float, see.

I: So, you'd sell 'em before you dumped them in the river then.

R: Yeah, but you had to haul them.

I: To the river and put 'em in?

You get a certain amount of your money the minute you had 'em picked. Those days you started skinning right after August... in September, and haul 'em in the winter unless you hunt logs... like dad went over there across the Clear Creek, he just bought the darn timber before Christmas...in November, so he built the camp and there was all hot logging...skidding and hauling as we went that winter. Oh, they used to buy some stuff that was left from pine days...logs over there...we'd put 'em on deck and they'd buy 'em, but they'd never see Chassell...minute they went in the water they went to the bottom. Lot of hemlock...oh you'd be surprised how much logs is in that river and still that company came out. See, you figure how much they were chiseling the jobbers.

R: And lots of these barns and buildings in that Pelkie area and down the river are built from logs taken out of the river.

I: I heard stories already about a farmer with a rope spying a good log coming down the river...put a rope around it and get a team of horses and next thing you knew that was up in his yard. Once it was in his yard it was his.

R: It was his...well everyone who sold logs to Wooster had a hammer. It was made out of brass and on one end of it was a cloverleaf and on other end was a number and our number was eight and you stamped every log with a number and the cloverleaf. The cloverleaf meant that it belonged to Wooster and then they knew who had shipped it, see.

I still got that sitting on my porch. Found it the other.

R: We pounded ours all up

RR: I know we had a cloverleaf on both sides...all brass

I: Well, what would a farmer do if he pulled it out...just saw the end of it off a little?

Yeah

I: And there was no mark on it and he said that was his log and it went to building his barn, eh?
R: They just sawed them off.
   Yeah, that's what they did along the river.

I: And, of course, the lumber companies never said anything because
   they were chiseling right along and it just broke up more even
   that way, right?

R: And then one year there was no flood and a lotta logs got left.
   And I remember another year there was a big flood and the logs
   came over the banks and got left in the woods and there was not
   a way that they would ever get 'em back into the river.

I: Did a few of those logs make it into barns that year?

R: Yes...his uncle, I remember, skidded a whole pile from the river
   Yeah...I never heard that.

R: Un huh, because Ernie and I went to set some weasel traps down
   there and they was down there. And I remember your uncle Ed was
   saying that they seen a mink there at the log pile and that was
   right about where Grapevine Gardens were, you know, down in that
   area. They had a big pile that they had pulled out of the river.

I never knew that they pulled 'em out. We never did go to...we
   was...

R: Well, there was that trouble of lifting them up the bank...the big
   hill, that's what discouraged you. Because here, the hill is so
   big it hard to...

I: Impossible to get 'em up.

R: Well, he had some kind of a drum deal make on the end of that
   field and he lifted some of them logs up and then the cable went
   off the drum and inbetween and that was the end of it.

Yeah, that was...

R: He gave it up.

He put four logs on a sleigh and he'd tried to pull that up on that
   winch.

R: Yeah, some kind of winch.

Horses'd be turning that winch...and the hill was like this.

I: At the time was it well known that these lumber companies like
   Wooster were scalping the heck out of the jobbers?

Well, yeah, it was known, but say like Henry Pereau says to me one
   time, he was logging for Hilliard, that'd be Albany's now, and
   up here on the Clear Creek, 'cause Henry wasn't making nothing.
   He had all the road built and he says, "I knew I couldn't make it
make ends meet. If I break even I'll be doing good." Sure he says, "I've told Hilliard, how about a little more money?" He says, "You aint married to the job, leave it." That's how they handled the jobbers those days. Course there was jobbers then that I know of that fleeced the company too. When they'd go out there and log like for Wooster Lumber Company up here by the...about where the dam is now up on this side the river...there's a fellow from out here and he seen that he couldn't make a go. So, he got a bunch of black men and...you know what that is?

R: Men that aren't there and they would write out checks for wages for people that weren't there working. There was no such person.

There was not such a person. Why that was played here the other year in this territory, believe it or not. Naturally that ended the ball game for him. Well, what'd they do. He had the money and the company had the logs. Well, I could say the company must have survived it because they were millionaires afterwhile anyway they were then already.

Stop in tape.

R: We'd have a houseful of company...people would come sauna

RR: We had our sauna before that

R: Well, they used to come all the way from Aura to sauna.

RR: Yeah, from over there, but we used to have that sauna...well we had one there when we were living on the old homestead...one of the old shacks there dad and mother had stuck into a sauna right away and then during the Copper Country strike we built the one that was there.

R: Speaking of the Copper Country strike, so many people in this area came from the copper country and their friends during the strike came to visit them and I know our back field over here, four and a half acres, that was cleared by people that didn't have any work during the strike.

Same way over to dad's, that's when we cleared some land and built a chicken coop, they built a sauna...there was two fellows from the Copper Country strike they came over and stayed and dad paid 'em a dollar a day and eats. But, believe it or not, they used to get suckers...three times a day...breakfast, dinner and supper.

I: Suckers from the...river.

Suckers...they had a net in the river and every morning that was a chore to go down there and pull the net up and bring the bag of fish. I don't know how the dickens they could eat that many fish that we used to get.
I: Lot of people have told me that times were rougher then during the Copper Country strike...1913 - 1914...than during the depression for the people here.

R: I don't remember...I was born during the strike

I: Well, you just described a pretty rough scene there.

Yeah, yeah it was rough for the people...that's when lot of the people lived and owed the company...on the farms, but I should think...when my folks came down here...1908...there was no work to be had and used what they got out of the chickens and the cow was pretty rough going the first year...then second year dad went back in the mines to work...worked that winter in the mine and then the third winter the whole family went up to Huron Town and he worked there for the winter. I made that trip twice to Houghton...the first...

I: How long did it take?

All day

R: Yeah...

His dad made it round trip in a day.

R: Yeah, less than a day. Five hours he made round trips with that horse. Two hours there and whatever time he spent over there.

Yeah, that was a driver. I'm talking about a draft horse.

I: Well, it was so rough then, how were things then in terms of people helping one another? We know how they are now, though how were they then?

Well, if a neighbor needed a...something done, they worked together. I guess they shingled the house and go call it the deed. You know what a deed is?

A kokka.

RR: Kokka...yeah.

I: How's that spelled?

You got me.

I: Okay, good enough.

R: K O K K A

I: Okay...and they had a few of those?

RR: O yeah, yeah
I: Do you remember any of them?  

Oh yeah...yes

I: Tell us about one

RR: Well, I'll tell you, this was before your dad even came down here. This here Luxor that was living here then at the time and they were putting the roof on my uncle's house that belongs to what-ya-callet or Libby now, and they got through all go have a keg of beer with the gang. They got loaded and this Luxor that was here, you know...he was a little smot but he was awful ornery son-of-a-gun, and old man Riley was there and your dad...nope your dad wasn't here yet, no...but this Luxor and my dad and uncle...there's quite a few...maybe Sam Ranta...I mean Mike Ranta was here too, well they got feeling pretty good. This here Luxor, he grabbed...old man Riley was there, I didn't remember...remember he always had that...ever since I can remember he had that beard, and he had his ball-peen hammer long side of him and this Luxor grabbed that and hit my dad right in the forehead. He started running, dad after him. Threw him down amongst the stumps and he was ready to hammer him with a club like that when my uncle got ahold of him. Regular fight.

R: There used to be even among the lumberjacks we used to have some - five - six guys working almost the year round. In the spring they started cutting the hemlock and they peeled the hemlock and they hauled it to the railroad station and they used the hemlock bark for tanning. And then in the fall they cut these peeled hemlocks into logs and they skidded them up and got them into great big piles and they hauled 'em down to the river...all them logs that were floated were peeled hemlock. See, they were dried.

I: How would they get this bark to the market?

R: They hauled it in the wagons.

RR: In wagons

I: They hauled it into Pelkie?

R: No, into Kero...where Aro Woorie is.

I: Is that where the siding was?

R: That's where the siding was.

Yeah

I: And where would that hemlock bark go?

R: To the tanning mills.
RR: I can't all remember where they went to. I hauled some bark down there.

I: What kind of price would a man get back then for that bark?

RR: I know this...he'd get a dollar and a half or dollar seventy-five a cord for getting it. I don't recall what the price was.

R: And I remember them high-wheel wagons and you could put two cord on them big wagons and then you had a drum affair, a webbed block...a round block in the back with holes in it and you had pegs in them holes and you would put it tight a binder to hold that bark there and they had little cogs there that every time you got a little tighter, well that cog would get in another notch and that's how they held that load together. Because they'd run away. I can remember those wagons.

RR: In the summertime you'd haul some of these in wintertime, but not in the summertime.

I: What would Pelkie look like way back then...way back? Going into Pelkie, what would you see?

RR: Bunch of horses tied up by the fences...there was fences where...

R: Where Peterson's live in Pelkie now, there used to be a rail there where they tied the horses and of course the Coop was across the road where the Coop is now and then Roua had the store.

RR: Yeah, and Gauthier had that store where Jokkela lives now...

I: And Tom Bond had the saloon where the Post Office is.

R: Yeah

I: What was that like?

R: Not the same building.

I: Did you ever see that?

RR: I seen the tavern but I don't remember Tom Bond.

RR: I'll have to tell you another one of those strike days...long as you mentioned Tomboles, yeah I guess that's what it was.

R: Everybody called Tombole...

RR: Yeah
I: Tombole?

Yeah, kobocca...these fellows were over to our place in the strike days, you know, working. They said well they gotta get together and have a picnic down here by, you know where Fred Fall lives...Old 38 used to go through there...well, down back of his house there in the flat is a nice picnic ground. Used to have Fourth of July picnics there...most always.

I: Is that where the church picnics were too?

No...no they were down by the other end

R: By Emil Johnson's

RR: Yeah, and so they got an idea they should have a keg of beer. So, they all went around...it wasn't very much for the keg of beer, but they put their pennies in the hat...I and I forget who the dickens it was went with me...was on a horse...we went to Tombole and got a keg of beer in one of them wooden kegs. And we got the keg for that sauna for the hot water barrel then from when I made that trip over to Pelkie. They killed that keg that day and in the evening then I suppose finished it off. You see now some of these breweries now advertising on the TV you watch it now...maybe you've seen it already that wooden keg?

I: I haven't.

R: Yeah, they...

You've seen it quite a few times this summer I've seen it...some beer made in Old Milwaukee...the old-time beer, you know, it shows them old kegs and son-of-a-gun I asked Wayne..."did you push that out and burn?" He said, "I never seen that keg in there." So, I think somebody stole it out of there. That was a...oh boy, I'd love to have that son-of-a-gun now.

I: What was the rest of Pelkie like? Let's say in the winter...what would you see in the winter?

RR: Oh boy...place loaded with logs...high flat timber

R: From the Coop towards this way, south, it was one great big pile of logs...just pile after pile after pile and they loaded them on the railroad usually in the spring.

Believe it or not, there were fifty teams hauling into Pelkie at one time.

I: In the winter?

RR: Un huh...farmers.

I: All the farmers?
Farmers hauling for Tourinen.

I: Tourinen and Rouna

RR: Yeah

I: And in later years Ojala ???

Yeah

R: Ojala when he logged on the Prickett Dam Road they hauled one winter, if not two into Pelkie and they had great big piles of logs then.

Big piles of logs.

R: They put 'em on the railroad and shipped them to L'Anse. Of course later then they started shipping them all the way and he had many many trucks hauling them.

Yeah, I remember one time with logs the market went to hell and Tourinen had...

I: Did the market go real low then?

Yeah, and he couldn't sell; and Tourinen had a contract and another party broke the contract for him and got left holding the bag...he owed fifty-thousand dollars on it to his brother but he come out of it and them logs stood all summer there...no sale...hardwood.

I: What year?

RR: I don't recall the year...that was the...

I: Must have been later years, hey?

RR: No....twenty-one or twenty-two, in there.

R: One of those years in there.

I: Okay, in the winter you'd see some logs there and you'd see farmers moving those logs? Is that when they'd be hauling them into Pelkie?

R: They haul them in the winter with sleigh because of the snow.

I: Where would they hang out? Okay, they'd haul 'em in...where would they go to warm up and have a cup of coffee or would they go into Tom Bond?

Oh, come on now. They didn't have a cup of coffee in their hand like they do now. They went unloaded a load if they was on the road could make two trips, fine they got home and got their
dinner went and got another trip and come back. They didn't get no coffee until they got home. The farmers were doing the work where Tourinen had lots of horses of his own too, yeah. That barn was more horses then cows.

R: Like from here, you'd make two trips to Kero siding

RR: It wasn't a long day either.

R: No, usually they were back about five o'clock or even little before...four-thirty, like that...

RR: Oh yeah

R: They didn't have to rush. That's all, you couldn't make three trips.

RR: No...no you couldn't make three trips. Could make two trips nicely and the road...you know where that old reck of a garage of mine is by the road there now, the road went in from there, across where the barn is, across over, you see, where the fields are...was all woods then...cut over there then up towards Edie Aho's place...you know where Edie's place is back of us...then cut over where Ronnie Hakka lives...from there...

R: Follow the valley down and then...

RR: Down where Fabian Maki lives now, I think and Johnson and then over there it crossed...

R: Close to where Wilfred Fernier's shack is down there and then across what's now Wuouri's, at that time Don Rajala owned there, and...

RR: That was winter road. Summer road you had to go up this road up to 38...they used to call that the Ontonagon Road.

I: Ontonagon Trail, yeah.

RR: Then go up to the corner of Hamar then go down, then go back and...

R: Then along the...

RR: Yeah, there was.

I: What would Pelkie look like in the spring years back?

RR: Mud and logs, ties and flat timber.

I: Lumberjacks everywhere?

RR: Yeah, course Rouma...I mean Tourinen had a saw mill there one spring cutting up ties and Wuouri's place, you know where old
Wuwouri lives, a mile this way there was all flat timbers on both sides the road in the spring of the year. Farmers'd be decking them up long side the road.

I: I'm very ignorant of this I must say, when you say flat timber what do you mean? A hewed log?

R: Yeah, hewed on two sides just...

RR: They had 'em in six - seven - eight inch - ten inch and twelve inches.

I: Diameter?

Yeah, thick...they went to the mines

I: What would they use them for in the mines?

To keep the...well they.

R: Rotten flooring, you know,

I: That's some flat timber there?

Yeah, that's some flat timber right there.

I: Okay, I understand now. What would you make for flat timber about that size then?

R: They used them in the mines to...hold up...

To hold up the ceiling.

I: What would a farmer make for, oh say, ten logs like that?

It was so much a foot...seems to me them twelve-inch used to run ...most of them...all small timbers were hemlock too, and spruce and balsam, seems to me then that them twelve inch run about eighteen - twenty cents a foot. But, I wouldn't swear by that.

R: I don't remember the prices.

I: But, there was logs and flat timber and mud.

And ties.

R: See railroad ties and then they had these sharp four-foot ties for the...

RR: Mining ties

R: Mining ties for the rails inside the mine. They made lots of those from the smaller trees, you know, and the tops and stuff like that.

I: So, you had logs. At the time logs were going to the different saw mills they were hauled on the railroads, you had the flat timber for the mines for the ceilings...
'e had some big timber...

R: You had them great big hemlocks.

Yeah, they used to call 'em...they were twenty-four footers out of big hemlock and they were round and use them in the mine for hold up the ceiling. They was all cleaned out of copper and then they didn't care.

I: What about in the summer? What would Pelkie look like? Were the logs gone?

Well, pretty well by first of July they'd be gone. They'd be shipping them right away and when the things dry up and the cars be available, they'd be loading. There were quite a few teams around always loaded. Same way with Kero and Alston and Nisula...all them sidings were the same way. There was...the train used to have one coach of people and the rest were all flat cars loaded with whatever they were shipping out.

R: See, you used to have to cut stakes for the cars and they were about four inches or so in diameter and would be about eight - ten - twelve...what were they...yeah eight feet long and then they'd sharpen them and hit 'em in the sprockets and that held the load and then you hadda tie it with car wire up on top.

Used to...yeah and when you put up an eight-foot log, you hadda tie in between there too.

R: Yeah, unhuh, and weight held the...

RR: And the veneer stuff, they went to Dollas (???)...well, at that time by now they don't anymore, but at that time they did.

R: I remember how they used to load the logs on the sleighs was with a decking line.

RR: Yeah...yeah. A single line and then they come up with a double line and did you ever see them loading flat timber?

R: No...no I didn't.

RR: On the cars?

R: No, I don't remember that

I: What was that like?

RR: Well, you'd put 'em on by hand as high as you could on one side and then you'd put the other stakes on and then had skids going up to the top and you hadda cross-pole on the stakes and then you had your two decking lines coming down and the ends were ties up there and the chain went over the top and down on the
block and the team would be there. The biggest loop you'd put about three or four flat timber into those loops and then put 'em that way. They'd get rolling and sliding and whatever they felt like. If they were good and nice, see, they'd just slide up...chain would...come up.

I: They weren't tied tight. The lines would be coming over they'd be rolling over and over until they were finally up.

RR: Yeah...'til they'd drop in the car and then the fellow up there would straighten them up. And, boy, that used to be a chore of mine to go up there in the afternoon after school...you were going to school already then too. Wait for that damn...

R: Yeah, see if the cars were there.

RR: Yeah, see if they had any cars for you.

R: Dad always laughed...we had a young fellow working here and he'd walk during the evenings and you could hear him on a quiet evening, you could hear him singing on 35 as he was coming back.

RR: Well, we hadda be there most of the time and we begged for the damn cars.

R: Yes, they were hard to get.

RR: They were hard to get 'cause they were short of them.

I: What would it look like in the fall?

RR: Oh, in the fall before the snow came and the sleighing came it would be pretty dead.

I: Because everyone was out in the woods then, eh?

RR: Well, you know, they never used much wagons for hauling. Oh we hauled a few carloads of flat timber in the summertime when we had dry stuff with a wagon one summer, but that wasn't the main thing.

R: Most of the logs were hauled in wintertime on sleighs and here on this same forty that you own now where Wayne got his house they had an ice road going down one winter. That they iced the road and of course all the farmers drove along the same road why it was once you get it going why a good sorta downhill that way. You had one hill going that was (???) Creek this side of Varline's where you hadda go over a little hill there.

RR: Yeah...yeah.

I: What was it like inside the stores then, inside Gauthier's store?

RR: Well, into the cracker barrel store...you know what that
I: Un huh...very small.

You had your crackers in a barrel, your toast in a barrel, you had your sugar in a barrel, everything was waited hand and foot to you. It ain't like today you go and pick out your cart...in old days the clerk would dish out the sugar, fine sugar, cube sugar, your coffee...you could buy some coffee that was packaged, but mostly it was...

R: They ground it right there

They'd grind it right there, yes. And we used to get a little, dad used to get some unroasted coffee...them white beans, you know, and we'd roast it ourselves. Saturday night before they go sauna that was a job to roast the coffee for the week. Did you ever see that done...or heard about it?

I: Never

Well, you know what a popcorn outfit is, well the same thing. Put your coffee in there and go...it'd be a sauna those days, they heated it up and then they let the fire go down...bunch of coals there was ever hot and had this popcorn popper...them old ones...today they got these fancy electric ones, but it had a long handle like that and you'd be...and they'd be poppin in there and hadda get 'em just right if you dare burn 'em, well.

R: It'd be bitter

Well, you got moganshaw (???) when you got in the house."Tell me what you doing burning the coffee, what were you doing sleeping?"

R: But they had those...and everybody they bought the beans and you had a little coffee...

RR: ...grinder home.

R: Yes, at home

RR: Some of them had that one inbetween your legs and some of them had it on the wall and well, we even...we still got an electric grinder ourselves.

R: And the same thing, you churned your butter

RR: Yeah...yeah...turned your separater.

R: Turned the separater and cleaned and washed that darn separater and the first one we had was one where the plates were altogether tied in that you had a real small slot there and you just about made it...

Was that the....
R: No, that Lucta (???) came later...then the plates were separated and you could take 'em all apart and was them individually; but before it was like two...one cone fit inside the other one and it was hard to keep clean.

RR: Oh, I imagine, that kind would be.

R: Oh boy.

RR: We had a...Warren Brothers they hadda store in Baraga or IGA where Elm's is now and they were selling separators there...Neely was the name of it...we didn't keep that very...we got the (???)...

R: Yeah, that was the popular

RR: I still got...a golden anniversary...from 'em

R: We still got our separator up there too

I: What else was in the store for sale? You said the.

RR: Mutkara (???)

R: Well, without refrigeration you couldn't keep meat in the summer.

RR: Salt pork in the summer.

R: Salt pork and you had sausage and you had that salt salmon.

I: Was the salt pork right in a barrel in a brine?

RR: Yep

I: Would you reach down in there or would the clerk?

RR: Clerk would...the customer didn't take anything themselves. No he just give the clerk what he wanted and the clerk'd go and get it and wrap it up and put it on there and then you'd tell 'em what was next and storey you when you get through well either you'd charge it up or pay for it.

R: It wasn't self-serve like it is now.

RR: No...no...no...no.

R: But, the store itself, as I remember, was pretty cluttered. There were just small isle-ways where you could walk, otherwise, it was all full of something.

RR: Right

R: And you had, like the Coop even today of course you could buy
from harness to anything else, the food, the feed...

The general merchandise.

R: Horseshoes, harnesses,...

I: Could you trade...could you barter with them?

Well, yes, they used to take your eggs if you had some eggs, well they never gave you any money, they took the butter, they took it there, but as far as we were concerned, my home, we always sold ours straight to the consumer, our product. Butter, meat, eggs, buttermilk, cream...

I: You were closer to Baraga, right?

We used to go to Baraga and L'Anse.

I: That wasn't possible for some people who were further out.

No...no it wasn't and everybody didn't have the knack for doing that see. We used to butcher cattle...buy 'em and sell 'em.

I: What would the stores give you for eggs?

R: Well, I don't remember what the stores gave, but I do remember during the depression where eggs were twelve cents a dozen... a penny a piece and even in 1933 and 34, when Pete Hiltenen was logging on Section 7, my mother made butter for fifteen cents a pound and they complained that the price was too high. And mother said that if they wasn't gonna pay fifteen, she wasn't gonna make it.

And then Nullus (???) used to go and peddle butter, and we made butter for Nullus into one pound, two pound, five and ten pound crocks. Oh, for several several years. Was back in '23 in through there, we used to buy butter from Pelkie...Matt Oilla's store, and they were in chunks like this...round chunks and I'd pick up a whole barrel of it, you know, cracker barrel or toast barrel, all butter chunks like that and take 'em from house to house and make fifteen cents a pound on 'em. Them days, why boarding house down there, they were wondering how in the hell do they make that butter in different colors, different sizes of chunks, you know, three pound, five pound and ten pound, like that. They never realized that we were buying it from the store and bringing it over there.

R: Well, you had a wooden mold that when you filled that level that was one pound. It had a bottom on it with three...four sides and it had a handle and you pushed the handle up and that bottom came up and you just sliced off that one pound. And it was more or less pretty close to that pound...we had that for years.
Then there was another one too that was like this, you know...

R: And round shaped even.

Yeah, that was round shaped, but I remember ones we had at home they didn't use it because it didn't work worth a darn, you'd put in the butter then squeeze it together and then cut the ends and you had a pound. But that was a sloppy thing. That there one that I used at first, well that was the only one, you'd put it in there and pack it in...

R: Yeah, pack it in.

Then you'd buy this butter wrappers in the store, they were already cut to size, had that there and wrap up that pound.

I: Did that make you feel kind of funny when you walked into the store when the Coop changed and all of a sudden you had to start picking the things off the shelves? Can you remember that?

Yeah...yeah

R: Sort of a gradual deal

Yeah...yeah it was...well Coop didn't have until they came into this store. The other store they didn't have self-service.

R: No, until they built the new store

RR: Yeah

R: They didn't have the room even.

RR: No, and I don't know, that other store was pretty small.

I: Tell me a little bit about how that Coop got started

RR: Well, that was...

I: It was in 1917.

R: My dad was one of the founders. He was also in the creamery

RR: And Ed Pelto, Albert Pelto's father, and...

I: David Erikainen

RR: Not David...John

I: John Erikainen

RR: See, John was secretary...oh I don't know...a whole long time and he was the president for awhile. Then there was Hollerman...
R: Wasn't there a Maki?

There used to be George Maki who was manager there for awhile.

I: Why did the farmers start it?

Why? Why do you start Coop?

I: I don't know, I've never started one.

R: Well, I think they figured they would get things cheaper.

Yeah, there'd be a savings...say a savings on their...like the Coop in Pelkie it was hard for them to get going and finally they got going, well they were doing pretty good. You order stuff.

Start Part II

R: I remember when I was a little boy, Dad used to be on the Board of Directors and he'd go over there and they'd argue 'til the wee hours...

RR: And sometimes he would get left and sleep the night in Tourinen's little men's shack there.

It's gone...that building.

And he'd sleep there and then in the morning he'd come home.

I: Was it that hard just to get it started?

RR: Just to get it started and keep it going...it was the lack of money. In one carload they got a load of feed and they didn't have the money to open up the car, so dad put his money to open up the car and then of course he got his money back when they sold it...the feed. The assets was so small.

I: Was that the only reason? What other problems did they have when they were first getting it going?

R: I don't really remember...I was so small then.

I don't recall any of their problems...I know more about today than I did then. Those days, well we didn't worry about 'em.

R: And I know dad was on the Board of Directors of the creamery and the creamery was where the Fire Department is now.

I: Do you know when that creamery started?

R: No, but in the teens.

Yeah, somewheres in there...I don't recall.
I: The start of the first World War?
R: Somewhere in there.
RR: Somewheres in there, yeah.
R: And people used to separate their milk and bring a five-gallon can of cream over there and make butter out of it.
Yeah, strictly butter, that's all that they made.
R: There was no cheese...
I: Did that help out the dairy farmers around here?
Oh, naturally, there was no other...
R: Couldn't sell it anywhere else.
Yeah, and...
R: Without refrigeration you couldn't keep milk.
No, but like I said a little while ago, that we used to sell ours to the consumer directly, so I don't know...we didn't take too many cans of cream over to Pelkie. We bought more than we brought in there.
R: Well, when I was a little boy, dad always had men working here and we didn't sell very much because lot of the times we had five horses and we only had four cows. We just had enough for ourselves and you made your living out of the woods.
Yeah, well that was the biggest thing.
R: That's how you made the payments on the farm.
I: So very little money actually came in through the farm in the early days.
That's for sure, very little.
I: When did people...when did farming get to the point where you could start making some money off it...making a living from farming?
R: Well, back in the twenties is when farming started to build up...people got little bit bigger fields and started keeping seven - eight and nine cows and then when the cheese factories came in you start selling the milk to the cheese factories, it was a little better, you got a little more money.
I: When did the cheese factories come?
Oh yeah, that was in the thirties.

R: In the thirties, yeah.

I: In the beginning or the end?

RR: Oh, in the beginning.

R: In the beginning of the thirties, yeah...

I: Right after the depression?

RR: No, it started right in the depression.

R: Yeah, where the cheese factory was is where J & H Welding is at.

I: I know where that is.

R: And then there was one in Pelkie...the Coop had a cheese factory and then the one in Baltic...they hauled all the way to Baltic.

In Pelkie they started way after...way after Thebie was over there...and what the dickens was it...

R: Thebie had a cheese factory in Baraga first then he moved here.

Yeah, he moved there in that old school hall.

I: So that made it possible then, for the first time, for farmers to start making a little more money.

Yeah.

I: Up until then they could only sell the cream and now the milk became marketable. And then, what events led to the building up of dairy farming as a way of making a living?

R: One of the reasons was they ran out of timber. You had no more timber to sell because you had logged it all out. You had to do something so you started farming. Some people went to work for Ford either in Pequaming or L'Anse, why they made a living off them.

I: When did the timber start to peter out around here?

R: I would guess around 1927 - '28...they were about the last years. Well, there was some timber still in the 30's but there was no sale for it. People used to cut the beautiful hardwood for wood.

Fire wood

R: Well, you sold lots of it. Well, they chopped...well you had
and Jack Theitala chop for... was it nine dollars an acre?

RR: Six... six dollars and their eats.

R: Yeah, they chopped the brush and an acre is two hundred and eight and five-eighths feet square for six bucks. Well, they'd take several days to chop it and that's how he got his fields chopped. And we had lots of other field jobs during the depression... people from Baraga came and made their wood and they got the wood free long as they piled the brush into good piles.

RR: I remember the time I cut there that old Model T outfit for those Baraga Larsen's and Jackalene's (???) , you know those fellows,

R: Fred England was there and Ed Johnson...

RR: Yeah, we had a hell of a group.

I: You mean the people in Baraga in the town had it much rougher in those years than the people out in the farms, eh.

R: Well, I think as far as food is concerned, yes. The farmers had their meat and their potatoes and that was the two...

RR: And milk.

R: And they had their milk and butter...

I: Plus the gardens... everyone planted a garden, right?

R: We always had a garden when we were kids.

I: Did the kids work in the garden?

R: Yes we did, but we hardly ever raised cabbage 'cause we used to go down to Froberg to Hittikles... my dad was best man at Hittikles wedding so he considered us almost like relatives, and we'd go there every fall and we come back with the back of the car full of cabbage.

RR: Yeah... that was the cabbage country down there.

R: That was cabbage... they shipped out carloads and carloads.

I: What was life like on the farm then... back then the market for hardwood was petering out a bit and the timber was almost gone, how did you farm, how did you milk then?

R: Milked by hand.

I: How many could a man milk by hand?
R: Well, the whole story hinges on how big a field you had did you get the hay for the cows and one of the, like I said earlier, during the depression it wasn't only that there wasn't work but it was so dry that you couldn't get hay or you couldn't get grain so you were in a squeeze in two ways. And then, well in '33 then Ford started logging around here and you got...

RR: Yeah, you got a little bit.

R: Dollar and a half a day or something for a long day from dark to dawn. I remember working for Pete Hiltenen and we'd go out...it was all dark, you'd scratch a match to see whether it was hardwood or softwood because you couldn't put it on the same load. The hardwood went to L'Anse, the softwood went to Pequaming and you're working in the dark skidding logs which now insurance companies wouldn't allow at all.

And one winter I worked on the company team, you hardly ever got home you're towing trucks yet in the dark because it was the company team you hadda be pulling it.

I: Let's go back to farming a bit. How would you make hay in the early years?

RR: Oh, you'd cut it and let it on the swath for awhile then rake it and pile it up.

I: By hand?

By hand

I: Cut it with a scythe.

No...no...no...no...

I: In the early years?

No, we never cut...dad got a mower oh I don't know the first year maybe he cut it and the second year, but after that he got a mower. Well, I'll tell you. My uncle got the mower, my dad got the rake...dump rake...you know what that is?

I: Un huh

And that went that way for awhile.

I: When did they get that?

That was in 1910, I guess, somewheres in there.

I: Now, could one horse pull that outfit?

R: Ah...you hadda three-foot cut for one horse and a five-foot cut for a team.
RR: Yeah, well he used a team mower so he used a...my uncle hadda horse and my dad hadda horse and they'd put 'em together and then when they'd go raking, one would be raking and the other would be picking and loading up the hay and they'd load it on by hand and one man...my uncle used to be on top the load always and my dad would be pitching because he didn't like to make the load up on top...he always wanted to pitch. Ever since I made hay with him too, it would come to loaders and that and then of course he wasn't here anymore when we got the bailer.

I: So you took...made your piles and...

RR: Oh yeah, and then in the morning you hadda go and spread 'em out.

R Spread it out so it would dry

I: What would the women do? Would they help out?

RR: Women would be helping over there too, yes. Spreading it, and if they didn't have too small of a...or if the kids were sleeping, well they'd help. The women pitched in.

R: And the kids as soon as they were able, you hadda be with a rake...one of them loading rakes...raking behind. You didn't leave any on the field.

I: It was so.

R: They were pitching it up why he hadda be there, the kid, raking that up.

RR: It was as clean as a table cleaned after a meal...that field.

I: So scarce was hay.

RR: Well, you didn't have much clearing and you gotta keep as many head of...cause that was your source of living.

I: Okay, then after this method of pitching it, you got the hay loader.

RR: Loader, yeah.

I: How did they operate?

R: There was two types of loaders. One was the conveyor type that picked it up with spring teeth like that and it went between slats like that and pushed it up, and the other one was concush-puck (???) bar type that when you picked it up from the ground it came on a metal platform that leaned up to the top of your load and you had push bar that kept going up and down like this pushing that load up. That's the type we had.

RR: Yeah, I had one of them too. But I had...dad had that other one first.
I: Didn't you need a different kind of a rake to operate that kind of a loader?

R: Yeah

RR: Well, you had that, what do you call it...a side rake like they have now.

I: When did that come in?

RR: Oh, we got our first side rake in '35 or '36.

I: When did the loaders come in.

R: About the same time.

I: They came in together, eh?

R: Yeah, we had our loader first then we got our side rake.

RR: Yeah, because we used the dump rake but it was so uneven anyway that loader we had...that elevator type, well that was a miserable son-of-a-gun, and I found out later what was wrong with it. They put it together wrong.

I: How did the loaders operate? How many men did it take and what...

RR: One man...well two men.

R: Two men really

RR: Well, with horses, well one would have to be driving and helping him then...

R: One using the tractor you know.

RR: He worked in the front and the loader was behind and you drove your wagons over the windrow and it would pick it up from behind and push it up to the back end of your wagon and then there hadda be a man right there spreading it rightaway and he'd pitch it up toward the front and the guy that was driving the team he would be stamping that and leveling that up a little too.

I: So it was a two-man operation?

R: Usually two.

I: The whole thing could be run by two men.

R:
I: What were the women and children doing at this time?

R: Well, then they didn't have to come there.

RR: Well, dad...yeah they didn't...well my wife's been on a load.

R: Well, everybody's wife has been on the load.

RR: That's for sure...yours has been too

I: Was there much raking in them days?

RR: Well, them days already, they forgot the wood raking.

R: They forgot the wood raking...they didn't rake anymore. And if you watched that you made the windrows good, there was very little of it left. You would pick it up.

Yeah, the driver would so...

R: Yeah, the driver oh...my nephews used to come over from Detroit and everyone of them drove the team and then they drove the tractor and if they'd get off that windrow, I'd hollar at 'em.

in tape.

I: When did the tractors come in? In this area?

R: Oh there were tractors before we got ours in 1940, but there was...you hadda Fortson before...

I bought a Fortson in '23 and traded that in in '39 for that Farmall 12...14 and in '41 I got that H and it's still going. Wayne uses it for mowing.

I: Were tractors used when they used the loaders?

R: Well, yes.

RR: Bailers just came in the fifties...'56 or

R: '53 we got our bailer.

I: Well wait, before the bailer wasn't there the sweep rake?

RR: Yeah, well that thing...

R: We never had a sweep rake.

RR: I tried one once...

R: But, lot of 'em had them...and they made their complete hay with sweep rakes and they had a junkhaul...during the depression they made what they call the junkhaul. They had old car engines,
and then you get a rearend from a truck and a transmission and they had twelve speeds ahead or something like that, and they'd make the sweep rake then in front of the junkhaul and they used to push a lot of hay, you know.

Was that also called the joker?

R: Yeah...yeah...jokers.

Yeah...joker.

R: Joker or junkhaul...was the same thing.

How would you get the hay into the barn in the early days?

RR: Oh...you'd pitch it in.

I: By hand?

By hand

I: Holy cow.

Holy cow is right. My mother used to be in the mow and I, when I was a kid, and my dad would be pitching wherever he made a hole in the side of the barn where, so she didn't have to carry it too far in there. And then came the fork and the...

R: Carriage

...carriage and then came the slings.

I: Okay, what about this fork and the carriage now?

R: The fork was a harpoon deal that you pressed into the hay load and you lifted up two arms and two teeth came up at the bottom that held up the load. And if the load was well made, you'd get a good size bundle. And the horses would pull it up and it'd hit the lock up...it'd pull it straight up from the load and when it hit the lock up on the track then it would go forward and you hollar then to the teamster when it was time to stop and you'd trip it.

I: Was there a special knack involved in making that pile?

R: Well, if the load was well tied together...if it wasn't that fork would just come right through there and you got hardly anything up.

I: What do you mean tying it together?

R: By piling the hay on the load like that.
There were some seasons where the hay was so God darn short too...that's the time you could a had a bushel basket to put them into...we did it that way too.

R: Then later came the slings.

RR: Yeah

R: They'd put the sling across your load as you were building your load and you'd just pull up one sling load at a time and trip it.

I: Oh, you'd put the sling right on...the empty sling right on the wagon...

R: Yeah, you'd put one right on the bottom and then as you went up you put another one and that way.

I: How many sling loads could you get to a load then.

I: I had tried it with three, but it was too blame heavy for the tracks...or I put in four one time.

I: Oh, you mean you'd pull them all up at once?

R: No...no...one sling at a time. And then came the graple forks

Yeah

I: After the sling?

R: After the sling.

I: Now this was different than that first fork you mentioned

R: Yeah...the first was a harpoon-type deal and then you had..

These were...four.

R: Four teeth that you could press down in there and it would take up lot better than the harpoon.

Oh yeah...and

I: Do you remember who made these? Who made that harpoon fork?

R: We still got one somewheres.

RR: Oh, I don't know

R: Loudin or somebody

RR: Loudin made one...and James Way and

I: When did that harpoon fork come in?

R: Somewhere in the thirties...later thirties.
I: When did the slings come in?
R: They were in before that.

Well, I put slings in that barn... I built that in '40. That's the first time I used slings.

I: In the forties.
RR: Yeah

I: Okay, what about this graple hook with the four tongs.
RR: Well, they came in the later forties... in early fifties.

I: That would haul in a bigger load?
R: Yeah, it would pick up a bigger load.

RR: Big thing was you didn't have to monkey with the slings out in the field... that's the only benefit you had out of it.

I: Un huh, was that.

If you made your load and your hay was good long hay, maybe if it'd load good well you'd make it pretty good in three - four trips out of there and you'd have it in the barn... on sixteen foot racks.

I: Okay, then in the fifties you said there came an invention called the bailer.

Right

I: Wait a minute, there was an early bailer too... the big bailer that used the wire.

R: Yeah, that was a stationary bailer.

I: Un huh... do you remember that?
R: Yes

RR: Yeah, and I remember the hand bailer too that you.

R: We owned or were part owners of one.

I: What about that hand bailer?

Well, that was made... four sides to it. Was about like this one way and then about... I don't know... five feet the other way.

I: About two and a half by five feet?
RR: Yeah, and the sides were high, see.

I: As high as a man?

RR: Yeah, and the sides were high, see. And you put the wires in there and then they'd start throwing hay and one man'd be tramping it in there.

I: Jumping in it?

RR: Yeah, jumping in there...

I: You'd jump inside that thing?

RR: Inside that churn...inside that barrel there or whatever you wanta call it, and then we'd get it right up to the top, then you'd throw a rack on top of it and a couple of poles and then you'd bring a rope from end of these poles and then you had rachets on both ends that would be pulling it tighter and tighter and tighter 'til you figured was tight enough then you'd tie your wires and release it.

I: What size bale did you get?

RR: About three hundred pound...four hundred pounds. And I was telling you about that Polack...he was making same kind of bales and throwing water in 'em and freezing it.

I: What would you do with those bales? When was this when you had this hand baler?

RR: Oh that was in...

R: I was a little boy.

Yeah, you was a little boy.

R: But I do remember...

That was when Inas was here, then your dad and my uncle and my dad got together and they rebuilt it.

I: Was that in the early years?

RR: Oh, that was in the teens.

I: First World War?

Before that.

I: Even before...thirteen - fourteen, eh.

Yeah, and then they used to make hay out there on the plains,
and they stacked it over there and then in the fall when they'd get the first snow they'd take the bailer down there and bail a load and come back the same day with the horse loaded with hay.

I: Who would use it then?

RR: Oh, use it for the cows, of course

I: Oh, I thought...oh on this stationary baler that was driven by I think...

RR: Oh, when you had some to sell, yeah.

R: But very few people...

I: That was sold in the woods generally.

RR: Sulo Lane's father used to have a...

R: Yeah, he had a bailer...he bailed lots of...

RR: And LeClaire...one fall, my tractor was on the...LeClaire's baler all fall.

R: The logging camps needed hay...

RR: Yeah, those camps had horses...

I: How many men did it take to operate that hand baler? Altogether?

RR: Two...well the hay was too far...

I: Well, there was a man hauling it too.

RR: Two men in the mow and one in the bailer. Gee, too bad there wasn't any cameras around then with those things, eh?

R: Well, they would be real antiques.

RR: Wonder where the heck the rest of that stuff is.

R: I don't know.

RR: You ain't got no idea?

R: No

RR: You ain't got no idea where the scaler is either?

R: We would have saved that, we'd have a great big building full of antiques.
I: Well, in the 50's when the balers came in...the moving balers, the field balers, how did that change the operation? That was a big change, wasn't it?

Yeah, that was a big change, yeah...it was in '53, wasn't it?

R: Well, Richard remembered it was 1953 when we bought our baler. It was a Newhauler, in fact we still have it, and he said that he was up here and I remember we were making hay on this hill right there, and dumped the load and Ester and I went and bought a baler that same day.

RR: Yeah, you got yours the same year I got mine.

R: Richard says it was '53.

I: Did that eliminate a little labor? What jobs did that eliminate?

R: Well, one

Oh it eased up on the hay making, there's no question about that, but you also had to buy an elevator then to put 'em in the mow. The first year, the first loads I didn't have the elevator put together and well, like anything else, something new, spend more money. But, it seems to me that we got those balers...

R: Well, we used graple forks for at least two years, maybe longer with bales and you could pick up several bales, I don't know...six bales or something like that at a time and then trip 'em.

Well, you could fit lot more hay in your barn with bales than loose.

I: Made it possible then to support a bigger dairy herd without getting a new barn, right?

RR: That's right.

I: ???) increasing the herds at that time?

RR: Well yes, they were increasing right along then and...

R: What really started increasing the herds is the bulldozer. When the bulldozer came and you could clear land and get more field, that's when you started getting bigger herds.

RR: Yeah, in '37, my place was the first place that ever seen a bulldozer clear land.

R: Un huh, he was demonstrating there. And we had some cleared across the road...they cleared it contract, fifteen dollars an acre...they pushed all the stumps into piles.
I: That was pretty reasonable too, wasn't it?

R: It sure was.

I: That made it possible to make more money, right?

RR: Right, that meant bigger fields...outside of the five acres I cleared with the horses there...well I shouldn't say the horses, I had that Fulsom tractor and I borrowed a winch from the Ford Motor Company and I pulled...of course then you hadda haul 'em in a pile with the horses, but...

I: Okay, now making hay with these balers, was that a one-man operation then?

R: No

RR: No...no...you still hadda have your family with you.

R: You dropped the bales on the field and after you got through bailing, you went picking up the bales on the row. Then later you started putting the wagons...you bought these four-wheel wagons and you hooked it on behind the baler and it pushed the bales right onto the wagon. Well, that was a real saving. You could make a lot more hay in a day because you didn't have to go there and throw them bales on the wagon again. You saved one hand in there.

I: There are still people that do it the old way though.

R: There are.

Oh, yeah...yeah...some bales left out there.

Well, there's been another change, and a big change and the recent one in dairy agriculture is that the farmers are dropping out of that business as a way of making a living. Not all of them, but many are dropping right out. Why this change? This seems to me to be the biggest change around here and it doesn't go way back.

Well, when did youse get rid of your cows?

R: Seven years ago.

I: Why did you quit?

R: Well, seven years ago...well the thing was we had already decided earlier that if the kids wanted to go to school, we would help 'em. And so far, we've paid for sixteen years of college.
We couldn't build a new barn and put the kids into college... no way... and the state was jumping about our barn being so poor which it was...

I: What do you mean? Did they pass a few laws that you hadda...

R: Yeah, they got stricter with it... you hadda have cement floors and milk houses and...

I: That was in the Milk-House Law, right?

Yeah

I: When did that come in?

RR: Well, your milk... well I built my milk house in the thirties, the first one, because I was selling so much milk and had to have it.

I: State started passing laws. Why else? It seems like there's hardly any farmers anymore around here.

Well, you see, like in his case he had a good job and he was making more... not now he isn't making more money than a farmer would, but it seemed an opportunity to find shorter days and make as much money or more.

R: Well, that was our whole deal. It isn't that I didn't like farming, I liked farming, in fact if I had to do it again, I think I would stay in farming. It isn't that I would get bigger rewards, but you have a certain...

RR: You're happier doing it.

R: ...satisfaction of doing something like when you got through with the spring works and you felt real good. And when you got through hay making you had a feeling of satisfaction which I don't get today. If I come and fill you tank this month and I come and fill your tank next month and I come again the next month, what feeling of satisfaction do you have.

I: You mean, when you look out over those fields and you said, "now they're plowed" that gave you a feeling?

R: Absolutely

RR: And you go for a walk in there after you got 'em planted and they start growing and you walk in there, you enjoy that stuff. I make a trip in my corn field every morning part near.

R: Well I remember one spring we just got through planting the last of the oats and we went to bed and it started to rain. And you hadda real good feeling, you know, you had the grain was in and it starts to rain right away, you know it's gonna
sprout. But, you don't get that working for somebody else.

I: So you get that satisfaction...

RR: You know, we butchered a calf the other day...seven cents a pound...hundred and five pound calf.

R: Holy smokes...and during the depression used to hammer the calf over the head and haul it in the woods.

I: Not enough hay to feed it.

RR: Well, that wasn't the point...there was no money in raising the bulls...bull calf. If you'd take the heffers that you thought were the good ones and the rest knuck 'em on the head and throw them in the gully.

R: Yeah, and if even you skinned 'em, you might get forty-forty-five - fifty cents for the hide. Of course, you got so good at skinning them out why it didn't take many minutes to skin a calf.

I: Well another thing's happening around here. People are stopping farming and another big change is, I've heard, that people used to visit a lot more around here. Do you remember visiting?

R: Yes

RR: Yes sir...yes sir, it didn't bother us a bit to go...start out and walk to visit here or visit over there in the night...in the wintertime. Today you think twice before you get in the car to start out...or is it just because we're older or what.

R: It was, like in Christmas time during the Christmas and New Year's holidays, you visited all of your neighbors and you walked with a lantern or light and this last Christmas we were here at home and I told my wife, "let's walk down to Ernest's" that before we used to visit all the neighbors during Christmas time and my little boy who is seven now didn't believe it that we were gonna walk down until we got on the road and finally said, "yeah I guess we're gonna walk alright", instead of driving down.

I: Well, what's the reason?

RR: I don't know what it is.

R: Well, now you can visit in four counties with the car and the roads are good and before you didn't have the money and you never thought of driving to the neighbor's with the car...you walked.

I: Okay, but you say now it's easier because you've got a car.
Why shouldn't there be more visiting?

RR: Tell me that.

R: Yeah, well during the depression if you didn't have anything else, you had time and you used to visit more and you didn't have a television to sit and watch the boob tube.

RR: Yeah, that's the thing.

R: You didn't have a radio and you visited. You had to do something.

Stop in tape.

I: Okay, now what were you going to say about this visiting? There's been a change.

RR: I can't...I can't...

I: Years ago weren't people sources of entertainment...you know it was really something to go and listen to those stories, I remember.

RR: Right

I: Now there's a different source of entertainment...it's no longer people right in front of you, but it's people on a glass screen. I mean, before you had nothing to do...it was quiet at night, you felt like a little entertainment, and you'd go down and you'd talk and your neighbor was a source of entertainment, right?

R: That's right.

I: Now, the source of entertainment comes from Hollywood or York right into your living room.

RR: Right...right...I don't watch very much of that in the summertime anyway, but you start thinking, whereshould I go tonight. In your mind, you can't face it where you're gonna go. You sit there at home and nobody comes out. I don't know.

R: Well, one of the things that's always entertaining to me is these hunting stories.

RR: Oh yeah...we used to..

R: And they had all kinds of 'em...experiences, of course, if you hunt well several months out of the year, you're gonna have lots of experiences.

RR: Yeah...yeah...yeah
R: There's no two years alike.

RR: Yeah, we used to sit up and listen to them hunters...we used to get lot of hunters over to our place when we were...well even...the first years right away they'd come up on the train and dad and me and mother'd go to the station and get 'em with the horse. Well, huntin season was thirty days...well they used to hunt over near the Silver Mountain and stay out there under the blue sky overnight, several nights.

I: You could get a few deer then on one license, couldn't you?

RR: Two...as I can remember...that was the biggest limit that there was. And, oh we'd listen in the evening 'til we were so tired that we just fell in our tracks and slept on the floor. One fellow from South Range that used to come over, well he'd come in the summer...he didn't come huntin time very much, but he come in the summer - fall...he was selling the newspaper and first was with the bicycle and then he got rich enough to have a car...he had a car when cars became more popular and boy, he came from the same part of Finland as my dad and they had stories from Finland...they had huntin stories and us kids would sit there and listen to him...them two talking...ten - eleven - twelve o'clock at night.

R: These kids watch TV now.

RR:

I: Telling stories was the source of entertainment.

RR: Yeah, right

R: It sure was

I: But, like I myself, knowing what I know about communities and how people live, this seems to be one of the sadder things that's happened here. There's a lot of good things...people still help one another, we know that...not as much as before, and I think one reason that people don't help each other as much as before is because they don't keep in touch as much. They don't visit as much.

RR: Could be, yeah

I: Visiting you find out whether a neighbor needs help.

R: You used to make wood in the thirties...you all made wood...many houses...

RR: Thrashing time...

R: Thrashing time you visited and even later we had a potato digger company deal one year...started from one end of the road and
and the next year he started from the other end of the road.

I: A potato digger... well tell me about that

R: Well, we got a deal... we had a planter and a digger and usually there was teenagers at that time in every house and it was fun going to the next house and you get your meals... it didn't make any difference if you had a half an acre or an acre and a half... nobody...

RR: Nobody complained about it.

R: No, because you worked half a day or day longer...

RR: If you had a acre and your neighbor only half an acre, it didn't make any difference... or if you had a half an acre and he had an acre it's all the same thing.

R: You picked til you were done and it was hauled right in.

I: Oh, you mean it was hand picked and everybody would get together and pick 'em?

RR: Un huh

R: No... with the digger... you'd drive with the digger and you'd get the potatoes on top of the ground, then you picked them from there and bagged 'em.

I: This was a company operation here, eh?

RR: Yeah

I: Did they have the...

RR: There's still a lot of that in some communities in Wisconsin and lower Michigan.

I: Not here though

RR: Not here... no... no... but in some... Wisconsin has got a lot of it yet.

I: That was kind of a good feeling too though, I mean it wasn't just like hard...

RR: You knew more about your neighbor then than you do today.

R: And thrashing was always done that way.

RR: Yeah, always.

I: Did you have a community thrasher right here in Grist Mill area?
RR: No, Rudy Kangas used to come over and Mitchell used to come over or Varlene.

I: Didn't Bomier have one here?

Bomier was the first one

I: Yeah, that's what I thought, yeah.

Yeah, Bomier was the first one, in fact the first place they ever thrashed on this road was my dad's.

Stop in tape

R: I remember once we were thrashing at your dads and they had them old bags and they loaded the darn things with rye...oh gee, they were heavy.

RR: You ain't kidding.

R: Mitchell and (???) were driving that...well one of the Giddings anyway...Ken I think.

Stop in tape.

I: Did you go to one of these one-room schools?

RR: Yeah, I started over there

I: What was the name of it?

R: Grist Mill...Grist Mill School.

RR: Um...I started in school over there, you know where Elsner's place is up here?

I: Yeah

Well, it was there, across the road...across the road oh I'd say about fourteen by twenty, that building...four windows in it, one door, stove in the back corner.

I: What was it like then?

RR: Oh, we had fun there

I: What kind of fun did the kids have back then?

RR: Oh, best hockey we played was on the ice we made in Austerman's yard and we had broomsticks or something and no skates, just our rubbers...wear them out...and first thing in the morning we'd get there about six o'clock and go in the barn with the boys and help 'em do their chores and then we'd go to school, and, by the way, my firstteacher just died here a couple of years ago.
I: And her name was what?
RR: McMillan...Agnes McMillan...she never did get married.
I: Was she kind or rough on those that talked a bit?
RR: No...she used to wonder how can Ernest write and he can't read.
I: And you learned in confirmation school.
RR: And, oh a few years before she died, I met here there in Baraga, there was doings at the school there and she was up...she stayed the winters in Detroit; but she came up here for the summer and I heard that she was around here. So, I went to the school and so I went to talk to her...and I told her who I was. She said, "I often wondered where you...Ernest and Joe were". Then, my last teacher is dead also. But the ones in between...one I don't know...the first one that was here.
I: What was it like to be in the school then?
RR: You had eight grades and three - four kids to a grade...maybe five and some of the classes were five minutes...five minute length and some were ten minutes and like that because they had to get all these grades and all the different classes into one day. And, of course, they tried to push into seventh and eighth grade because you hadda go down to Baraga to take their exams...to pass from seventh to eighth and eighth to...of course through grade school.
I: Did a lot of people not make it.
RR: Not too many that went there...most of them passed...and the state made the test and it was conducted there at the Baraga High School.
RR: I never did go the full seven grades.
I: What about the church back then? There was a split in the Apostolic Church around 1931...over Haidiman...the Haidiman Issue (???). Do you remember anything way back then about that?
RR: Yeah
I: Can you tell me anything about that?
RR: I didn't belong to that church.
R: We didn't either.
I: In the early days there were peddlers that came around, right? Do you remember that?
Yes...yes

I: Do you remember any of those characters?
I don't know them by their names.

R: But, they used to have like...

RR: ...clothes...

R: Mostly clothes and they'd have that kind of suitcase deals with the cover...bottom with the cover that you could press the cover on and you'd tie it up with straps and it was just jam-packed with clothes. Not only that you had the peddlers, but you had beggars. Beggars would come and they'd want to spend the night, see, and get a meal...supper and breakfast. And they'd wander over one house or two houses or three houses and spend the night over there. We had one old fellow...for several winters he'd come here and he so lot of clothes on that when he'd leave...well he'd sleep quite late and he'd have something for breakfast, then he'd start walking for the next house and he would get in the snowbank and he would sleep, he had so lot of clothes on...

I remember that

R: ...he didn't freeze. Then about three o'clock or three-thirty in the afternoon, he'd go....
Go to the next house.

I: Quite a life.

R: Quite a life, yes. Not very much ambition. I don't remember that he even talked very much.

RR: I can just faintly remember him when he...

R: Well, was it that he spoke English or someother language and we spoke Finn and there just wasn't much communication.

This guy wasn't a Finn.

R: I think this guy...fellow was a Polack.

I: Do you remember the word the old folks used to say...this phrase...doisgein (???)

Un huh

I: What did that mean? If a stranger was coming up and the kid said "doisgellin" (???) what would happen? What would be going through the minds of the people?

R: That he was not a Finn...of some other nationality.
I: Were they sort of put on the alert?

RR: No...no I don't think that. "Doisgellin" (???) just that he could be a Polask, he could be a Frenchman or German or Swede or...but it was different than Finn, see.

R: Yeah, that he wasn't a Finn.

I: I know that's what the word means...but I've heard stories that years ago some of these...some kind of swindlers would come around...

RR: Oh no.

I: And the people here were kind of suspect.

RR: Well yeah...maybe in some of these localities they'd think of that as it, but I don't know...we never did.

I: Not out toward here. You ran into more people of different nationalities out here closer to Baraga.

RR: Yeah...yeah.

I: Was there a little friction years back between the Swedes and the Finns? As I recall there was Swede Town and Finn Town and sometimes you had to watch your marbles pretty close if you were walking down Swede town at night.

RR: Ah...I don't think it was in Baraga so much, it was in some other little towns up here like Houghton and Hancock...the Irish and the Finns they didn't get along. They used to have fights and they used to throw fellows overboard in the channel there...over the bridge.

R: And the Italian and Finns too.

RR: The Italians got along pretty good...the Irish and the Cousin Jacks...the Finns and the Cousin Jacks although lot of Finns worked for them and we had Cousin Jack boarders because my folks had a boarding house in Dodgeville...they're the first three settlers in Dodgeville same like the first three settlers here and my mother used to work for the Cousin Jacks...that's where she learned to make the Cousin Jack pastie; but Dad said that "Cousin Jack - he never had much used for them in the mine" he said, "one time he chased one then the other out the other shaft!"...started arguing with him about those little ties that you were talking about and wanted him to cut the rock off and was just too much cut and he said, "why don't you take a piece off the tie and put it on there with the axe...much easier then getting the drill and start drilling that rock off." Although...my dad was really hot-tempered you know and he wouldn't take it. So he grabbed the axe and fixed it up.
and they told the Cousin Jack, he says, "you go" and he chased him too.

I: Do you remember any stories your dad used to tell you about the mines...what it was like working there?

R: Well, my dad liked to work in the mine...he worked eleven years in the mine before he came here on the farm. He came to this country in 1898 to Champion, he worked in the iron mines and then he made a trip to Montana and worked in the copper mines in Bilt...he didn't like it there and he came back and worked in the copper mines in Baltic and Winona.

I: Did he like that?

Ra Yeah, he liked that. Then he injured his eye and the doctor said he's gotta be a year out of the mine...that's how he came on the farm and never did get back to the mines.

I: What about your dad...how did he feel about working in the mines?

RR: He said it was much easier to make a dollar there than it was on the farm. In otherwords, he said it was easier to make your bed out of the rock than it was out of the woods. He enjoyed it but my mother was always worried about because those days they a lot of accidents in the mines. My dad was in No. 1 shaft when it was burning in Huron Town there.

I: It was pretty dangerous there.

RR: Yeah...and two other friends got left and one Polish lad...the guy and his son got just...if they would have waited long enough to get up there where they were intended to go, they would have survived. But, they got smoked. Dad, he took to the ladder road and come up to the surface and my uncle went to No. 2 shaft well, he got saved that way and the rest of the guys. There was a bunch of them come...dad said they caught 'em by the shirt collar when they got to the surface and dragged 'em out but with him they didn't have to...he was a pretty healthy man when he was young. I was only about six-months old.

I: Why did he move out here anyway?

RR: Well, my mother coaxed him..."on the farm...on the farm"...yeah, un huh.

I: She was afraid that someday he might not walk out of that mine?

RR: That's right...he had an opportunity to take over a foreman's job in Isle Royal No. 4 Shaft...he started that one with the first shovelful...In Dodgeville...but he didn't like it, he said, "I'd never be a boss for anybody". So that summer they got bit by a...they had these cats and they were sent to Ann Arbor for
three weeks...they come back from there, well they started looking for a farm. They started traveling around, my dad and my uncle and Vandella and a few of them others and Vandelia and my dad located this place and I don't know how they ever come out there, whether they come out with a horse from Baraga or how.

I: Tell me about the early Grist Mill Operations. This is called Grist Mill and this place, what is called the Grist Mill Road, this is kinda a community of its own, wasn't it? I mean, the people here got to know each other quite well...they saw a lot of each other and didn't go...

R: After...after...but when we first came down there, we didn't know there was anybody living this way. You see, the road ended right here and the others went around the other way and this half a mile there was no road except a road through the woods which I could still tell you...I could walk that way...the route of the old road. It was there for years and years in that woods. And, now of course, it's under field.

I: Well, what about the Grist Mill...the mill?

RR: Well, Peterson's made that. They had a planeing mill...no not a planeing mill, but a sawmill and a shingle mill there.

I: Which Peterson?

RR: Oh, there was Emil and Albert and...

R: Albert was at Walitalo's

RR: Yeah, well so was Emil.

R: And...is.

I: They were Swedes, eh?

R: There was three Peterson's. One at Walitalo's, one here one at Varlane's that homesteaded.

I: But, there were Swedes that were in this area first, hey?

RR: Yeah, right here. There were Polacks over that way.

I: Okay, what about this grist mill? When did they start it?

RR: Well, we wouldn't know when that got going...that far back...was before our time.

I: There was a sawmill there, hey?

RR: Sawmill and shingle mill and the grist mill...that old stone is
still over there in (???) yard if you looked at that gas tank there...the propane tank...

R: The stone's sunk into the ground there.

I: Were they doing a big sawmill operation here?

Oh, they had five or six guys all summer long running the mill. Was customs work, that's all.

R: Steam power...people used to haul the logs in with their teams, but then when the portable mills came, that ended it.

And they had a plant too.

R: Bring a portable mill right up to your house.

Yeah, you'd deck your logs in your yard or in your woods and would saw 'em there instead of hauling them anywhere.

I: Right, you eliminated that operation.

Yeah

I: So, that sawmill didn't last that long.

RR: No, well I don't know how long Peterson's had operated, but it would be closer to a hundred years.

I: Okay, and what about this grist mill?

R: Well, they run that, I think, at first with steam too, but when I remember they had that Folsum tractor that he ground that with. I spent hours and hours in there and all fall, way into winter they were grinding. They brought grain from maybe fifteen - twenty miles, even farther...

RR: Oh yeah, Nisula, Alston, Herman and all those. And we had been talking with different people, you know, older people who used to go there. They used to have a barn there to put the horses in...

R: Yeah, they'd stay overnight there.

I: What was it like? You said that you spent a lot of time there Describe it to me.

R: It was down in the valley, the creek valley, northwest of the present home. First of all there was steam, big steam boilers two of 'em, and two great big stacks like at the Baraga Mill, not as high, but...

I: How big were these boilers? How many feet high...how tall were they?
To me, as a kid, they were about six - eight feet high...it seemed to me, maybe not that high...and had brick on the outside

Yeah, they must have been eight feet high.

What else...tell me more about it.

See, they burned...threw the slabs from the sawmill and they burned them slabs to get the steam. And they had a little bit of a dam there on the creek for the water and they also made oatmeal there at one time. Yeah, they rolled oats.

Then they got a (?) mill from Chassell make regular white flour. You know in Chassell where the Salo Lumber Yard is...used to be a flour mill right there. Not in the present building, but there was a building there.

This was a big operation then here, right?

Yeah...yeah...they used to...well, of course there was four boys, of course Arvo didn't work very much in there, but the others...well Bill was...

Bill was kinda young.

Yeah, but Hino and Emil...then they had...Maki boys were working...Loui Maki was there when I remember...

Donald Varlene...

Elmer Varlene and...

Was that a hangout? Would people gather around there and...

No...well there was Nulou's and was John?

Yeah, John...see they owned it together and then they split up and Walitalo's got this end of the land and Nulou's where they got their house, took the other end of the land.

Did a lot of these early deals where the people would go in together on land, did a lot of them split up?

Yes, I would say almost a hundred percent

Why did they seem to split up? Wasn't this joint ownership...

Well, I'll tell you why they got this way in the first place. They pooled their money together to get this place. Well, then when they got a little better, they divied it out and they went on their own.

Many times they split the land, and one took one side of it, and
they agreed on the price, see. The fellow that had to build
his own home, of course, he got some money from the guy that
got the house.

RR: Well, just like Walitalo's and Nulou's... now Walitalo's paid
John Nulou quite a bit for the mill and that stuff... his share
and then, you know, John was swindled... John Walitalo for John
Nulou to sell him some more of that land. They split it, you
know, but then he bought that... that's about all the field that
Walitalo's have. They never cleared much of that. Of course
he got killed in 1917 and the boys weren't farmers anyway... go
and buy cows was the most.

I: Why did they split up? When did they start to split up?

R: Well, they'd get into agreements.

RR: Well, they didn't really need no argument either, but like I
say, they could buy this if they had... the two parties had
enough money to buy this farm, but to pay off the party of the
first part, that owned it, of course it made them a small
farmer, two small farmers instead of one big one... when they
weren't too big anyway. You know what I mean?

I: Not quite

RR: Well, let's put it this way. You got a thousand dollars and I
got a thousand dollars. Well, I couldn't go and buy that two
thousand farm, those days, with my thousand dollars. But, you
put your thousand and I put my thousand, put it together and
we could buy that place. Then we agree to split that later.
Get it? That way we got our farm.

I: Oh, I was wondering... I thought for awhile you got... they
worked 'em together.

RR: Well, they did at first... sometimes, but that didn't always
work so.

I: Why, that's the question.

RR: Well

R: There probably wasn't enough income for two families and when
you're skimping, every little aggravation gets you, you know.

I: Is that what happened?

R: Well, I would say in lot of instances, yes.

RR: It still happens today, and it happened in those days.

I: Well, I just wondered why, when they bought it together and
started to work it together, that sort of practice sort of petered out and they split apart and they went on their own.

R: Well, it's just like a lot of marriages don't work out. You start doing it together and in a little while you split.

Lots of them today, boy, are splitting.

R: I remember as a youngster, people that were married twenty-five years seemed like a long long time. They seemed like old people.

Right...why is it that you get a feeling when you're young that...my dad was sixty-eight when he died and I thought he was an awful old man; and I'm seventy and I don't think I'm old yet. Huh? I might be, yeah, but I don't feel as old as I thought he felt when he was sixty-eight...course he was sick when he was sixty-eight.

R: Well, they had to work long hard days and like my dad, he started to work when he was eight years old, he had no more home, nothing but work. Well, your body kind of burns out.

I: Yet, that keeps you going too. A lot of these older farmers now, you know that haven't lost their health or that haven't been hurt bad by certain physical conditions, they keep going and I think it's precisely the fact that they keep going that in turn keeps their body going. Like what happens if you don't exercise a work horse?

Dies

I: Doesn't a little of that go...I mean they didn't have medical facilities then, yet most people lived to old ages, sometimes.

R: Well, my dad, when I was a kid, he was hardly ever sick...never had the flu, never had colds, and my mother was sick all the time.

Boy, I'll tell you many time they were looking for the last breath of your mother.

R: Yes, the doctor would go from our place and stop at the neighbor's and said she's not gonna last many hours and she lived to be six weeks short of eighty and my dad died at sixty-two.

I: Who was the doctor?

R: Doctor Buckman.

I: What was he like? He was a pretty famous man around here

RR: Yes, he was...was a bone specialist actually.
I: Do you remember him?

RR: Oh yeah, that's who they took me to the first time with my heart condition...I was a kid...and I was about seven, I guess. We were still living in the old homestead house.

T: What was this Buckman like?

R: He was a short stocky fellow, and little bit...kinda on the rough side. He would stop you on the street if you had a tooth ache and pull his pliers out of his pocket and pull the tooth right there...there was no going to the office or anywhere else, he extracted right there. And he come with his horses, I remember during the flu epidemic he visited us many times because my mother was so sick. My mother had pneumonia about seven different times and that was a kind of a bad disease...it used to be a real killer years ago; and my brother was a kind of a favorite of his...he was here when he was born and he picked him up by the feet and said that he was gonna be a husky boy and it was so true and afterward when we were going to high school even when you'd have to go for a physical for athletics, he'd just hit my brother with his fist on his chest and he says, "I know you're alright". That was the exam right there.

End of Part II

I: It was the kids job to carry the wood.

R: Absolutely

I: Did the kids do their chores then?

R: Absolutely. You know, one of the things, you never bucked your parents. No sir. When they said something...my dad never hit me. I don't ever recall that he hit me, but I didn't buck him. When he said, "shut up", he meant shut up and that's all. I remember him slapping my brother one with a pair of his mits over the head. We were fighting over a broom on the steps...of course my brother was a little different than the other persons. He was about...three years old and my dad had just bought the cedar out there just the other side there used to be a fence around the yard, you know, and he had filled that cedar with oats and he was gonna go plant oats and he came in for a cup of coffee, and my brother went over there...he was throwing that oats...grain all over in the cedar; and my dad ran over there and saw what was going on and little dried piece of apple tree branch had fallen on the ground, he grabbed that and threw it over the fence and Rudy started to run when Rudy saw dad throw that apple tree branch...he turned around and said, "??? (in Finnish) "...try throwing it again". And he was just a little bittie kid and that's the way he's been all his life.
I: But, it was a little different the way parents were toward their children then, right? Like you were saying, have you noticed changes now?

R: Yeah, well I remember my mother used to whip us. I do recall going to the lilac bush and getting my own whip; but she used to have all them sauna switches...all the leaves off the cedar would drop off and you'd have that switch...well that hurt too. And there used to be over here on that trim on the board...and my brother was that kind he'd get one of the workmen to lift him up there and he'd pull that darn switch down and break it up. He wasn't afraid. There was four of us in four years, so the month my brother was born my sister was four years old, so we were all small at the same time and of course then we were all grown up at the same time. And my older sister and my brother and I, of course we raised a lot of hell and my younger sister was real quiet and we used to have a trap door right there going down into the basement, of course there were steps going down, and one day mother was so disgusted with us she was gonna throw us in the basement, you know. And one workman was there and he told mother, "if you put them kids down there, I'll put you down there". Well, he didn't dare.

I: But the kids had to work then, didn't they?

R: Oh yeah. Well, we had to wash the dishes when they were milking and when you got old enough to milk, you went to milk.

I: How old was that?

R: Oh, I don't know...I don't remember what it was...six - seven years old.

RR: Wait, my chore was take care of the horses. When I was able to start driving a team I had a drive team, I drove team in the woods there when I was sixteen...

R: I had to drive team too...my dad didn't like to drive horses. If we worked in the woods, we always had a teamster and there was professional teamsters that didn't like to do anything else but drive team. They wouldn't saw logs unless they couldn't get any other job; but, like my uncle, always liked to drive team.

I: Well, you made out a little better with a team, didn't you?

R: Well, you had a longer day...you got up earlier in the morning, you had a longer day, and of course in the evening you had to go and feed your darn horses too...Sundays and Saturdays, of course you worked Saturdays anyway.

RR: Any of these guys today working in the woods, if they had a drive team in there, they wouldn't do it.
R: No

Hadda get up three o'clock in the morning and you didn't get to bed until nine.

R: I worked for Pete Hiltinen two winters and we got up twenty minutes to four in the morning and went in the horse barn and fed the horses. Then you came in and you hadda cup of coffee then you sat around and then you went back and you harnessed up the horses then you came back in and you hadda breakfast and you went in the woods and you sometimes...I remember in the plains over there, it was a mile and a half to the woods and you were there...it was still pitch dark.

Well, over there, I worked for Hilliard on the Herman Road up there on...Pete Poosh was the foreman...six o'clock he put that door open and you hadda be ready to go. And you didn't get in until five-thirty - six at night.

R: So, it was pitch dark.

Yeah......for a dollar a day and then the doctor took a dollar a month out of that.

R: I was driving company team and I got dollar forty-seven cents a day and my board.

I: When?

R: In 1934 and 35...winter of '34 and '35. And, if you could say, I saved a hundred and thirty dollars that winter...I didn't spend very much. Once in awhile we'd go to the show and I came and I bought a windmill and I paid a hundred and six bucks for that windmill and I gave my mother twenty dollars and I had the rest...four bucks...for the winter's work. But I was so sick and tired of pumping water by hand. You have no idea what kind of a job that was...never ending. And then if that water was easy to get and you had that point in that quicksand...boy my dad put a big axe handle to lengthen the handle on the pump because we were too small to push it down, see. It would just kick back up...boy I cussed that...we'd put, I forget, fifty strokes in, my brother would get fifty strokes and then my turn again and you were out there and the wind was blowing and it was cold and summertime, of course, when it was hot and you hadda pump water, there was no water...in that spindle of course there was water for the cattle. So, I bought that windmill.

Yeah, of course you can't get the kids to do anything like that anymore. Everything is all modern and you got the equipment to get them and you got the ways and means of getting them...

R: I wouldn't want my kids to go through that. And the well was thirty-four feet deep and we took all the open water that was
out there and we'd go down in that well and take the union loose from a piece of pipe and hook it onto the point and it was exactly the right measure and you pushed it over on the ...

and tightened it up again...we could go there in the dark you didn't need no light because we knew every notch to go down there, and you'd go up and down, up and down that darn well. I remember when we had the windmill and sometimes that quicksand would come up from the bottom and it'd hit that bottom of the pipe and it'd pull that sand up into that pipe, and you hadda take all them pipes apart, take all that sand out, and of course we wanted to hunt, so we hunted all day, we cleaned all them pipes at night without no lights.

I: What was hunting like then? You mentioned that now

R: Well, I didn't start hunting until in the thirties. My dad didn't hunt.

RR: He didn't hunt.

R: No...see he, like I said, he started working when he was eight years old...he never had a youth, you know like a lot of other people have, where they hadda home...

RR: Or if you were from Northern Finland, they did more hunting. And my dad worked with his dad on railroad construction.

R: And he'd drive the horse where they had this fill dirt. And as a nine year old, he was a watchman on the railroad where the railroad went through the kind of swampy - lakey area and he used to sink the tracks. And they put a kid like that to watch and he stayed in a little bittle shack watch that railroad track. Now one morning, of course the darn thing had gone down, and he run down about a mile up the railroad track and flagged the train and then they started pouring rock and they hauled rock in there so it wouldn't sink no more. But, they'd drive this one horse, little deal, that they'd shovel the dirt and then they'd drive that one horse and tip that load and you'd go back another load, see.

RR: Had two-wheeled carts.

R: A two-wheel cart and that's what he did then. Then he went to trade school...got out of...was four years in trade school from twelve to sixteen, he was a bricklayer, and they made bricks, they made their glazed tile and they built these baking ovens, and heating stoves out of bricks and these glazed tile, and when he came to this country in '98, never did a days work of that...laying brick.

I: Couldn't use those skills here.

R: Went to work in the mine and just didn't get back to it
RR: This one guy I was talking about in the sauna about his hunting stories from South Range, he was a bricklayer in Finland. He never made any brick in this country at all.

R: See, in Finland you hadda go to trade school if you wanted a trade. If you were a carpenter, I think it was probably another four-year course or if you're a shoemaker or tailor, whatever you were, you hadda go through that tradeschool and when you get through, you were a master performer.

I guess over there where my dad, from the Northern Finland, well they didn't have to, they were all...made their own homes and made their own shoes and made their own skis and everyone in the house except the mother...or the girls. Some of the girls used to make them too.

R: Of course, they used to make their own cloth and have a spinning wheel...

I: Even here?

R: Yeah, mother...don't you still have the spinning wheel?

No...mother sold that...

R: That'd be a real antique too.

Would that ever be

I: You mean the women would actually make their own cloth up here?

R: Absolutely....from wool. You had a bunch of sheep and from the wool they made yarn.

RR: Made our own socks and sweaters and scarfs and mits...right out of the sheeps wool that we raised here.

I: Was that very wide-spread at all...or weren't there many sheep?

RR: There wasn't, no there was just a few...I believe we were the only ones that had any on this road.

R: Yeah, Gibson's had a bunch of them over there where Sepanen's is now. Gibson's used to have in the corner.

RR: Oh yeah, that was later I guess, wasn't it?

R: Yeah, I would say later because I was going to high school.

I: You hadda be pretty handy, you couldn't have your thumb in the middle of your palm in those days.

RR: No...you know where that spinning wheel is? In Los Angeles
Stop in tape.

I: Did men make their own shingles?

R: Yeah, well they had a shingle mill at Walitalo's, but I have made shingles by splitting the cedars and we have made shingles afterward with the machine. Dale Heikkinen and Rudy and I we got nine tier of wood cedar blocks and we made, well we figured we'll have some shingles, we had no idea how much shingles you can get out a tier, well we had enough shingles for our house and for that chicken coop and for the grainery and Dale had for his house.

I: How would you make shingles? Like was that a machine-driven one?

R: Yeah, it was tractor-driven with a blade that lays flat like this and it's got a tilting table that always tilts one shingle heavier end then the other end on the other side and you'd push it into that saw.

I: It'd make a tapered shingle

RR: Yeah

I: Those are pretty durable shingles, aren't they?

RR: Oh yeah.

R: And split shingles are actually more durable

RR: Yeah, when I was out to Washington this spring, I seen a lot of those.

Stop in tape.

I: What is it like to walk through virgin timber.

R: Well, I have been working in the woods many places with virgin timber where it had never been cut before.

RR: Well, this here two forties, your dad cut here, that was all virgin timber. On that side was all virgin timber. Up there...

R: Up here behind the pine, they had taken the pine out and hauled it to Baraga at ten dollars a thousand and when the knots came that was the end of the trees, they just left it there.

But, what was it like to walk through virgin timber. I mean, you can't even see it now. You could hunt differently then, couldn't you?

R: Well, it was a lot more open.
RR: Well, I can take you over here and here's some virgin timber if you want to walk.

I: Sure

R: Well, there must be all kinds of it in that Silvania tract there and...

RR: Yeah, and there's some up here below the Prickett Dam on the hill there's some that ain't been touched yet...a strip of hemlock up there. It's nice walking through there. Beautiful. Used to be trees, no under brush.

R: Few old trees gone down...

RR: Yeah, few old trees gone down, yes.

I: But, like you could see very far...hunting was different. could see a deer a long ways away.

RR: Yeah, like that right here. You know Eddie Aho right there, well that section right there across from his place, that was the first-time logged in '33, well we used to hunt in there... virgin timber, and (???) that was cut later.

R: Later, yeah that was cut later

I: Were there a lot more deer then or was it just that they were easy to see?

RR: No, I wouldn't say there was more deer

R: Well, after the farmers started to log, I think the deer increased, but, of course, farmers used to kill a lot for their own use.

RR: We were brought up on it

I: Everyone was...everyone was around here.

R: Although, like my dad never hunted, but we always had workmen that liked to hunt, and they'd go and hunt. We had, like these cousin or whatever... he worked here that one time and he was like a bloodhound why, he'd say, "there's a deer in the big woods..." these two forties between our place and Walitalo's, and he'd run over there and pretty soon you'd hear a shot and the guys would go over there and help him haul it in. And many times, like workmen from the neighbor like his uncle's place, they'd come visit here in the evening, and when they'd leave they'd tell my dad to go in the woodshed in the morning, they had hung one up in the woodshed. They had more than they needed themselves and they'd go to work with the gun with 'em all the time.

RR: Take this John Nulou that was here, and his father, and those
Ranta boys up there, and Hataja's...well I remember my dad used to use that forest over there...it was their deep freeze...deer hanging all over. They'd go out there with skis in the winter-time and fill the pack sack and come home. Yeah, that's why I really don't care for venison too much. We were raised on it...suckers and venison. Well, what could you do if you wanted to survive, you just hadda take what you could get because there was no dollars.

R: Well, I remember when Haralas' lived over there, old John Harala?

RR:

R: Well, they had about fourteen kids and when they came there they lived that first winter with rabbits and it's unbelievable the amount of rabbits there were.

RR: They used to say, don't go over with a suppass (???)...you know what a suppass is?

I: No

R:

RR: Yeah, that's a Finland shoe made with a bottom just like a leather mit...it isn't got no hard bottom...they used to say that don't go to Harala's with them things on or you can't stand up because there's so many rabbit hides out.

R: Yeah, I know, like when Dave he worked here later doing carpenter work, he said that he remembers...that's all they had was rabbits...they put them damn snares out and they'd catch them rabbits.

RR: Well, we've had lots of rabbits.

I: Well there were more then too.

RR: Oh, well yeah, the woods were full of rabbits.

R: In the summertime you'd walk to the neighbor, you'd see many rabbits along side the road...they'd come along side the road to eat that little grass that was there. And you had trails in the woods that you could walk on...us kids used to walk along the trails.

RR: When dad was alive, over there on the other side of the Clear Creek up there and Harala was there, Jack and the old man and Emil, and Rudy (???), do you remember him?

R: Yes...yes...yes

RR: Well, that old man Harala after supper he'd go and sit on that
log pile over there where he'd bring out some oats in the day-
time, and they come there and thunk 'em and he'd have some meat
to take home Saturday...they didn't go home Friday, they went
home on Saturday.

R: Yeah, he worked Saturday. And partridge...now you start telling
the amount of partridge there were in the woods. Everybody'd
say you were a darn lier. Yeah, but there was lots of birds.
You know when I was going to high school, my uncle bought my
brother a single shot twenty-two; and we were paid eight dollars
a month for going to high school at that time...that's what the
county paid or the township. And, out of that money I would
buy twenty-two shells...shorts. They were nineteen cents for a
box of fifty and we'd shoot them partridge and only in the head
or the neck. And that first year, I was out of high school and
it was real dry and we didn't have enough water in the well, and
I'd chase the cows down to the river and I'd start 'em up the
hill and I'd hunt partridge. And we ate partridge meat all that
fall.

RR: Yeah, well I'll tell you one reason why there isn't so many
partridge, there's no cattle in the woods. They used to keep
these woods roads all cut down and you get that white floor in
the fall and oh boy them partridge...all you have to do is
walk over there and plunk them off...on the highway, everywheres.

R: And in the trees, they'd go in the iron woods after the leaves
fall and they get little buds in the ironwood trees, they go
eat them buds and in the poplars in the wintertime at night...
evenings there'd be partridge up in them poplar trees.

I: There's not that many birds now. You can go in the woods and
not see any.

RR: Well, I heard one the other day when I was picking up the fence
posts in the same place last year there was a covy there...and
bird season came on I couldn't find nothing.

R: Well, I recall one year it was real wet right next to the back
field gate and they didn't plant oats there...it got left a
little piece and dad went therewith some turnip seeds and he
just threw them there and we had turnips that year. And one
day us kids and dad went to the back field, I guess we had oats
there or something, anyway he wanted to go and look at it. And
as we were coming back, starting from the back field gate there
was just dozens of 'em in the field and us kids tried to chase
them and get 'em all off the field to fly in the woods...no sir.
We couldn't get 'em...they'd just fly and land again in the
field.

I: Almost tame

R: There was so lot of them, nd so tame. You know, you start
telling that to people, they say well you're a damn liar... there's never been birds like that, but there has.

I: It's really changed then.

RR: Remember that fall we built the basement over on that house over there, my home; and brother and I had hauled the gravel from Austerman's on that hill there...we had the twenty-two with us and when we said whoa to the horse, the other horses ears started going like when he's gonna hear that bing.

I: The horses knew what was...

RR: Two - three birds every...for every load. There was no game warden, we didn't know what a season was here.

R: No

RR: In the fall we'd start shootin them.

R: Well, I recall like in depression time we'd start shooting them in August and we'd shoot until Christmas.

RR:

R: And it didn't take me no time to clean out a bird...now I don't know...I ain't cleaned one for a long time.

RR: I ain't ate one of Polly's for along time, but now of course I ain't supposed to eat none, but if I get some, I'll eat it

Stop in tape.

I: I heard that there were real deer trails.

R: I have seen, working in the woods, I've seen some pretty heavy trails, like we were working for Pete Hiltinen over there on the edge of the plains, there was big heavy trails. Of course, they'd come to the top where they'd been logging and the deer stayed there. Well, even today you go to somewhere where they're logging why you still see deer in the wintertime.

RR: Well, over there back of my other place, there's a swamp back there on the river...cedar swamp...I went there...this was years ago...in the spring of the year after the snow was all gone from top of the hills, you know, and then down there there was trails this wide solid ice...deer trails.

I: Yard wide.

RR: Yeah

I: Two could run at a time along that.

RR: Yeah...yeah...well that's when the deer were plentiful down there.
R: Well, I remember here...fifteen years ago or so...in the evening we would ride up this mile and a half or as far as Krowlick's two miles and back and just counting them one way, we'd see sixty deer in the spring when the field would melt and the deer would come out in the field and eat in the evening; and now if you can see twelve big deer you're doing real good and probably six is more closer to it.

I: What happened to the deer?

R: Why when they started the doe season...

RR: Yeah, you kill the cows you ain't got no off-spring. That's what happens in your dairy barn too...you start killing your cows off you ain't getting a bigger herd. The same thing with the deer. Somebody told me here a few years ago when they were plentiful there, that they went through there and took pictures and counted a hundred and fifty in that field of ours there in the spring. I remember once I went out there, I had my brother's binoculars, we was coming back from Detroit, and I had the binoculars, that's when they were building that bridge in Mackinaw and I wanted to take them binoculars so I could see that off the boat...and then I didn't leave them at his place I brought 'em here and I went out there to look and that field that goes in like that towards the road that goes down in the gully, that was just cleared but hadn't been plowed or anything, and every knoll you look at there was a deer on there. Just like ants on there. One was way out in the field and I was watching that and moved closer and was stamping his foot, but that corner over there was just loaded with 'em. Was that night when that power line went down there, remember? Them fellows they was so itchie...all those deer and no gun. Beach come along and he thought that...

R: He thought he'd caught a bunch of violators...all these guys up on poles and they were showing lights up there, he figured that somebody with a headlight is gonna go up the road and finally he wised up that they were working on the power line.

RR: But, I had that go through here...well it broke and make

R* Afternoon splash...just before dark Al Salo was there bow hunting and he saw the darn thing come down and he called to the power company.

RR: The Copper Country went black

R* They knew where to come then. They practically stopped there at the gate and wanted to know where it was. Well, I happened...I already knew, the news got around pretty fast, and I knew where it was broke. So, we went up there with them. They drove right up into the field. But I've seen deer in our orchard in the evening in the moonlight, you know, the kids and I used to watch
them and watch them and watch them and one year I found three full sets of antlers that they dropped in the orchard.

Well, I never did run across any antlers here, but the other place we had that garden right on that side the house like now even and we had carrots in there and we were watching out the window in the wintertime, they'd be digging for those carrots in there.

R: My mother one day went into the barn, we were hunting...it was hunting season, and she went in the barn and the dog started barking inside the barn so she figured somebody came in the yard and we had that kind of double door; and she opened up the top part of the door and the deer had walked from the road right through this second gate right into the orchard...broad daylight.

RR: Had one that was pawing on this side the house there...dogs must have chased it from this way and came in the plowing and went ahead of me along the furrow inbetween the chicken coop and the barn and went down...and top it off, once was start cleaning the barn...or I had the cows in already and was gonna do something and opened the back door and here beyond the back door was a small one.

R: Many times I've seen them in with the cows.

Yes, watchacallet used to get a...we were cutting at Soli's the fall before you was there and Gatsummer (???) from Elo was coming, he says, "take a look at them deer over amongst his cows". Were right amongst the cows. Right here when we were coming back from the woods. He says, "they ain't like that in Elo".

R: And I used to put apples in that tree right there in the yard was lot bigger and your winter apples...rotten apples they dropped there...they'd come there and we'd watch them from this window...no light on and you could watch them in the moonlight.

As long as they got antlers the bucks will chase the little ones away. After they drop their antlers, they get up on their hind legs and hit with their front feet. And they're so darn mean they won't let that little one come there.

R: Absolutely not.

They'll chase 'em away.

R: But a deer is so restless, it won't stay long in one place.

RR: No

R: Go...go...they go back in the woods and a little while they're
back in the orchard...back and forth all the time they're so
darn restless and they go and they lay down in the middle of
the orchard for a little while, up they go and away they go.
Can't stay long in one place.

RR: Just so nervous...it seems that way that.

R: And I used to put apples on that tree right up to the bottom
of the steps and they'd come right there to eat them apples...
right there by the cement slab.

RR: I've seen them around our place when they were eating those
carrots too...we just watched them. And over there we used
to watch them...when my dad was living he used to watch them
from the window. And one time he was home alone and it was
in the afternoon and one big buck come there in the orchard
and he had a sixteen-gauge shotgun but it was over there, but
he took that and took a shot at him and said, "I got him"...my
brother happened to go over there and he said, "go look in
the woods". Ah, he went but he didn't go very far...he didn't
see anything, but in the spring my dad he had enough guts, "he
said "sure I must have hit him" and sure enough he found the
hair and the stuff. He had killed it alright, but that day
when he shot it he wasn't well enough to go out in the woods
late in the afternoon, but in the spring in the nice weather
he walked out there.

R: I seen the biggest buck I've ever seen in our orchard one night.
We came from the barn and that orchard was full of deer and
they ran away. We came in and Marahay's were living up here
and they had something doing, the women; so, my wife started
to go to Narhi's and when she got on the veranda she come back
and she said, "the orchard is full of deer again". In that
little while that it took her to wash up and change her clothes
so I rushed back into the bed...up in the bed they went whether
they wanted to or not and I went in the sauna and I had one
window up in the sauna, and I had a blanket hooked over the
window like that and I'd sit on the bench...and I was watching
and I fell asleep on the bench there and I woke up and I lifted
up the corner of that blanket and there was a doe and about a
eight or ten point buck broadside to me, real close and it was
that kind of a night...partly cloudy and one time the moon was
bright and next time it was behind the clouds. And I thought
to myself, "I'm gonna shoot that one right there", you know.
And I had it all padded, you know, if you make the tiniest little
squeak away they go...when they hear that cause it's something
different. And I quietly got my gun ready and from the corner
of my eye I saw this big buck coming across the field. He came
from down here and he jumped into the back of the orchard and
he started eating on the buds of the apple tree and boy did
he have a rack. That's the biggest deer I have ever seen. Well,
I didn't care about that eight or ten pointer there, I'm gonna
get that trophy deer. I shot and then the next day I saw that
I had shot over his back...into a apple tree branch there...
away they went. So, I waited until two o'clock and he started coming in with a doe...that same big deer, and he came again from this way and they went behind the orchard and they got about straight across and the wind was blowing like from the southwest like that and I figured if he goes far enough this way he's gonna smell me. So, I seen a car coming up the road and sure enough in the moonlight they stopped right on the road and they skooted and they spooked that darn buck and that doe and away they went and I never seen it again. And little later then I was at the Grandville and this Pavlik and Kozinar...they owned it then, and he was telling me that I seen the biggest buck I've ever seen in your field one night. I said, "you know, I was watching you too."

Stop in tape.

R: Well, this same big buck would go behind Schwalm's over there and that first Sunday after season or Sunday before Christmas or something like that, they were having coffee...was Sunday afternoon and somebody looked out the window and this buck was right behind the building...that great big buck...boy he had a big rack and a big deer...he was a real trophy buck. And I never heard of anybody shooting him.

Stop in tape.

R: My brother saw it but always before season and my brother spent days looking for it during season but never saw hair nor hide of it. After season then you'd see it again. I went to look for a Christmas tree out along our back field and I got to the back end and I was coming along this south side and a big buck spooked out of that little point that goes down in the steep hill there...he ran right across the field in front of me. Of course, I just had a little hatchet along.

RR: Yeah, well they ain't very plentiful now anyway

I: That's why this is now history.

We seen eight dead one along the road in Pennsylvania coming through.

in tape

R: While working for the gas company, we'd go to Skanee in the wintertime, if you didn't see fifty or sixty deer, it was a poor day. And you can't see thirty deer in a whole year now. They were just like sheep. Every orchard was full of 'em and you'd stop...just like sheep, unbelievable.

RR: One time I was going...Wadaga's was still living there, and I don't know what I went down that way...there was one in the orchard...was the day after season and boy it seen me coming
and so it started out in the woods there and was coming so fast and the road was icy and that bank there...they used to WPA took some sand out of there just on this side the gate...sild right on its side right up against that bank...he couldn't make the bank or he couldn't stay on his feet...oh yes, he was a big buck too.

R: One morning I went to get the cows in the fall from across the road and as I was walking...I could see the cows in the field...I was walking toward the cows, I happened to look towards the south and there was a buck and a doe in the field. And my dog noticed it and he starts running there and they panicked...they could hear the dog coming but they didn't know where it was coming from...and that buck jumped up against that doe and knocked it right on its back and he ran across the road this way and that doe was kicking there for a little while and that dog almost got up to it before it got on its feet and away it went.

RR: Yeah...when that school house was still there when my cousin killed a deer there with a rock.

R: Yeah

RR: Got caught on a fence.

R: 1927

RR: Was that when it was?

R: That was the year it was because we were cutting logs...we were chopping the road that day, my dad, my brother and I and we cut a hundred and eighteen logs and sold it to Musters to build that barn. And we were working out of the woods...the back field gate and your aunt was up on the hill hollaring to my mother to bring a knife. And it was in November...it was deer hunting season...but a beautiful warm day. And your dad and your uncle was somewhere over there by Pine Creek hunting.

I: Well, how did he find it?

R: A doe ran across the road with a fawn and we had a woven fence there and the doe jumped over the fence and the fawn couldn't make it...got tangled in that woven fence and they jumped off the wagon...

RR: No...with the car...he got it with the car.

R: Oh was it Ernie

RR:

R: Yeah, not Alf...and he got caught there and they jumped on it and hit it with a rock over the head and then his aunt ran...
the corner of the field over there yelling for my mother to bring a knife.

I: That was easy venison.

Yeah. I seen one over here by the old Woodlawn Hall over here...it's deer season and a Doe jumped up against the fence and must have broke its neck or must have broke its back or something, and the Giddings boys...I forget which one, either Norm or Kent and Eddie Aho was looking at it there when my wife and I come along. And I says to Eddie, "Well, cut the God darn throat on it". Nice fat Doe. He says, "we gotta report that" I says, "I can report it". I was going up to Houghton and I went and told them, but I guess he must have threw it back in the God darn wagon before the conservation officers got there.

R: One year we were hunting on them pot holes...we made a drive below Silver Mountain there...between Silver Mountain plains and them holes and I was on the drive and there is kind of a little higher ridge then she goes down in the swamp and then you start up the big hill. I was walking along a deer trail along that little flat ridge there...I could see the drivers down in the swamp and I could see they scared up a doe and they made a little horseshoe like that and came up right up that path right up to the ridge and I ran and I met it right on the top of the hill there. Of course it jumped to the side and it was so close that I could just touch it...I surprised it...and when we got done with the drive I told them how close I was to that deer...that you can't get any closer. On the way back right below the second hill from 38 down on the South Ledge Road there was a little buck caught in the fence...same way as in that woven fence and his leg was caught up and it was twisted there...he could no way get loose and we stopped and I put my head...hand on top of his head, I said, "it's a buck...he had little knobs like that and we unhooked that leg and it dropped there and was there little while before he realized that he was free...up he went across the road and over the other fence and through the woods.

I: You didn't take that one, eh?

R: No...no...no deer weren't that hard to get those days...we could get bucks and legal bucks.

This was a long time ago and Boots Hill was the game warden then and dogs had chased one at the head of the bay into the lake.

R: There was one last fall in there.

Yeah?

R: Yeah, and they shot it...not into the lake but when it crossed the railroad tracks.
RR: And...it came...it was all in...it just got to the shore and laid there. We got blankets for it and everything to warm it up and then afternoon in the sun, you know, warm sun and all them blankets, and Bert Kemp he was hauling the men to work from Baraga with his bus and he had some of his bus tickets and we tied one on his ear...we put it but bet it wouldn't stay tied very long...

R: One of those same years when we used to hunt alot around Silver Mountain, opening day the dam was already froze but there was very little snow and there was a doe on the ice and it was hollaring and baa...baa...baa down there and Bill Tourinen and somebody else went over there and they got the doe off the ice and they tied a red handkerchief around its neck and still a couple days later we seen that and it still had that red handkerchief.

h yeah!

R: And there was a buck there caught...he had broke through the ice with the front part up but the legs were dead and froze there and the coyotes had been eating on its side already. They go on the ice and go right through and they can't get back out. Well here...three, no two years ago, I was coming from work one night and two dogs...a big german shepard and a little beagle had chased a deer across right below the Red Rocks onto that thin ice and it broke under the deer but he carried the dogs and boy them dogs wanted to go in there...he went up to...well almost up to...over his back into that water into that lake. Of course in a little while there was about twenty-five cars and Mkleko ran home and got his gun and he shot one of those dogs...they got the beagle but that german shepard ran down the ice towards L'Anse.

Hey...do you remember that time when Charlie McMann and Ray Schultz...

R: Shot a german shepard for a coyote...for a wolf.

For a wolf...oh they got (???) for a wolf. Holy cats. And both of them...there were two of them...one belonged to Lee Henshaw and the other one belonged to Mrs. Fitzpatrick and I think they were brothers...them dogs...they lived in the same house anyways.

R: They thought they were getting a wolf when they shot them.

Yeah, somebody had seen them on the ice. They went back to Baraga...I think it was Perry...the one from L'Anse, and he called up Charlie McMann and said that there's some wolves on the ice over there. They come down with their rifles and shot the two dogs. Lee and Mrs. Patrick...their dogs didn't come home so I know that they were the dogs. But, Joe Drakee is a state trapper for so long and he went to work and skinned
them yet for wolf. Tsk...Tsk..

R: You don't see wolves anymore.

RR: There's one around here yet

R: Remember when we were sitting right here having coffee and my wife said, "look there's a deer out in the field" and we looked out there and it wasn't a deer, it was a wolf. It was sitting there and I started shooting at it and it ran to the edge of the field and run back and forth and I emptied my gun and I loaded it up again...of course it was too far for a thirty-thirty carbine...it's about three hundred and fifty yards, you know. But, it wouldn't jump in the woods...it was running back and forth along the edge of the woods and I kept firing away.

RR: Ah...that thing is around yet. I pertnear shot it last summer. Minute I pulled that trigger I said,"it's that God darn wolf...lucky I missed it."

R: You ain't supposed to shoot them you know

I: You shoot a wolf now and you're in trouble because they're almost extinct around this area.

RR: Yeah

I: But you saw it, eh? What did it look like?

RR: Well...

R: They look almost like a german shepard.

RR: Yeah

R: The first wolf I seen was about in...when did Ted come over here? About 1927?

RR: '27 or '26...one of those years.

R: '26...well I went to get the cows one morning across the road and a wolf was right therewith the cows. That's the first one I've ever seen...and he jumped over the fence just as graceful as a deer...no effort and he'd run a little ways, turn around and look at me then run a little ways, turn around and look at me again and run a little ways, turn around a look at me again. The cows didn't seem to pay much attention.

RR: One time over there at the other farm, it run right in front of us when Martha was driving the tractor...our daughter. She said, "what's that daddy, over there?" And I said, "that's a wolf". And one time I was coming back with a load of hay right on the edge of your field here in the woods part where the woods
is on this side, bugger run right in front of me when I was coming with a load of hay...jumped in there. And once I seen him here and first time I seen him I could've got him then...they were legal to shoot...this was in the forties. I had that side of the field where Breen's house is, that was just stumps and I was cutting wood and I come in for dinner and I was eating in the dining room and I seen this thing going across there and I said, "that's a dog". You had a dog something like that; and the minute he got on the road I said, "nope, that's the gosh darn wolf." And he jumped right across the road...I could've shot him at that time. And, one time I seen him deer season. Was with the cows right by the barn...it was foggy and he'd come right outa there close enough that I could see him from the door. And one time he had killed nine of my roosters in the rain...they were out already and I went with the feed pail for them and the pullets were all in but these roosters were heavy ones and we had 'em out yet...had killed nine of them and he was sitting on a little knoll there with one in his mouth. But, there was no use running back to the house for the gun because he'd be gone anyhow. I've seen that thing so many times and it's still alive...it tops already because last year I didn't see it at all.

R: A year ago last spring I was going with the Baltrik across the Sturgeon Bridge and I looked up the river and there's two in the river and I was going so fast and I stopped...I started going up the other hill and by the time I had the brakes on...one was swimming...they were standing on the sandbar in the middle and they were on that sandbar but they were up to their bellies in water and one was across already and the other was swimming and they climbed this bank on this side. But one year, my nephew Wayne...we were making hay on the other side of the road and it was a real windy day and I was there spreading the real thick hay and some was kind of green so I was spreading it...he was raking it and turning it over with the rake and I was there with the fork, you know, getting the greener stuff to try and get it up on top to dry and a wolf came on the back side of the pile of stumps where woodchucks would be if it'd been pushed with a bulldozer. And this wolf was carrying it's one front leg and he was looking for woodchucks there. And I started running there with my pitchfork and we had electric wire there around the fence and as I jumped over the wire he heard me. He could hear me coming but he didn't know where I was coming from, you know, with that wind blowing really hard. And finally I threw the fork at him, but I didn't hit him and he went into the woods. Well, I figured, I'll never see that thing again, you know. And a little bit later he come right back there. I could of easily come home and got a gun, you know. At that time there was a bounty on them; but I never thought he'd come back there. He was carrying that one front foot.

RR: I shot a fox the other morning...was in the corn field over
there...Wayne's corn field. I seen it earlier in the morning there when she got up and then a little after breakfast she said, "It's out there again coming down the field". I got my gun and one shot I hit it. It was coming down by the pond there and it started going in the corn field and it was cutting like this way and I got him in my scope and got him got it right through here.

R: I saw one one evening coming home from work in Mustner's field... he was heading toward the house at quarter to five.

RR: Yeah...they're getting around again, them buggers. See, there's no bounty on them, nobody cares about trapping.

I: There's a lot of them.

R: There's lots of fox.

I: You can make money off of fox too...they're paying around thirty bucks a skin last winter.

Yeah...yeah, but that's no good now. In the fall.

I: Later

I was gonna trap some last winter, but too many dogs around again

R: One morning I got and was making coffee and looked out the window...that was the time we hauled them calves over the edge of the bank, you know, and sure enough there's a wolf over on the bank over there right on the edge of the woods. And, I loaded up my gun and went on the steps there and I waited and waited...wouldn't come up over the bank because I'd thrown them calves down there. And I finally woke up Ester...was sleeping down here then...and you watch for I'm gonna have coffee before I go in the barn. And he just made one little quick trip up there and he wouldn't come over that bank no more...a wolf.

RR: Oh, a wolf...yeah.

R: And one morning I went to get the cows there was two in the field. That was a lot later...not too many years ago...and I started running as fast as I could...I lost my mits...it was in the fall and it was already frosty you know in the morning, and I went looking for that...where in the heck did my mits get left, you know, I threw them off when I was running home to get the gun and one was laying down and one was sitting there...two big wolves.

Yeah

R: And one night I went to get...look where my heifers were in the back field and I was there and I seen where they went through
to the other side. And I seen a wolf coming from the back end and he was walking around the back end of the back field there. Well, one time I went with my brother and he had one of these records of this wounded rabbit and we went there to the back field and was a moonlight night and we had binoculars and we got out quite a long cord and we put that speaker up quite a ways from the jeep and we were playing that record and I was watching with the binoculars and a big wolf starts from the back end of the field heading right for that noise and Eddie was already...he wasn’t as good as...it took him awhile to get up...he hadda gun...I din’t have no gun. I said, ”here comes one.” And I grabbed the flashlight and Eddie got up and got his gun ready and I started looking for it...I couldn’t find it right away...he’d gone to the right toward the woods. Soon as I put the light on, boy in the woods he went. Just like a fairy story that they’d come for that crying rabbit, you know, that record playing.

I: Is a wolf different than a deer when it comes to a light?

RR: Oh yeah...they won’t look...they won’t look.

R: No, they won’t look.

RR: A deer will look at that.

I: A bear will sometimes too, won’t it?

RR: I don’t know about the bear, I never had one. But, I had an experience when I was pretty young yet with my dad. Got a coyote or a wolf which either it was in the light.

I: Did you ever have a close call with a bear?

R: I’ve had one. We lost some calves and we went to look for them calves and they had gone from my brother-in-laws somewhere into wherever, and Ralph...Sulo’s oldest boy, well they were living next to us and Ralph and I had been looking for them all over. So we went back of Eddie’s down to the river. He had his dog and I had my dog and we went down from the high bank down to the sandbank...and Ralph said he saw a coyote...just as we went down the bank. We went down by the river there and we were talking there and talking and finally we started back. We figured that maybe we would see their tracks there in the sandbank, but there was no calf tracks there, so we got up on the high bank and the dogs were running out of that brush towards us and a great big bear after it. And he was a big one. And the dogs they can just run a little bit faster than the bear that they can just go like this and look back.

I: Dodge him.

R: Yeah, dodge him...well he couldn’t catch ’em and the dogs, of
course, were running towards us, and we didn't have a thing.

I: And the bear behind the dogs

R: And the bear coming as fast as he could behind them two dogs. And I hollered and the bear stopped and he was about thirty feet away or so and he got up on his haunches like that and he put his paws like this and growling real low. We were looking for some kind of weapons, you know, and we found like dead pieces of wood that had fallen down or something and we were pounding the ground with it, you know, and the bear finally went down and started going away and Ralph and I ran after it. ...well we were gonna scare it, see...pounding the ground with the wood. He turned around and made one lunge then he was only about twenty feet away...we didn't try and scare it no more when it was gone again. And he was big. I figured that when he was on his...sittin on his haunches like that, he was taller than I was...he was a big bear. So, there was no where where we could go...there was very little water in the river, there's no point in jumping in there and little bit farther on there's a kind of clear second growth...would have been like a hazel nut bush...where would you ever get in a hazel nut bush? Nowhere. So, we come home and I got my thirty-thirty and we went all over that trash there looking for it, but we never found it. I was telling even Ralph that boy if we ever meet it in this hazel nut bush, it's gonna be what you call in-fighting, boy. He ain't gonna be more than five - six feet away.

I: That would scare me.

R: I seen a smaller bear

RR: We had one cross the field the other week...Wayne was with me.

R: Yeah, Saturday at quarter to twelve...or week before. One day I was cutting pulp on the other side the road and it was in the fall and it was Sunday afternoon I was gonna go and file my saw and I went up there and I had some apples...the apples were ripe and I took them out of my shirt pocket and put 'em on a stump...hemlock stump there. I could hear something and I looked up and there was a little bear oh abouta year and a half old or something like that, and he was going down this little bit of a dip and there was a hemlock tree that had fallen and was rotted already. He stopped right before that log and I took one of them apples and I threw like that and it hit that log and went boooooks...and boy did he take off. He didn't know what it was...he didn't know I was there.

I: What if it made a little squeal?

R: I think he was so old he didn't have a mother. I didn't see the mother. But, was just like a year and a half old.
I: I've heard of a story...a couple of guys from Elo they were hauling some logs...had one of these logging trucks, and they were out on that Donkin - Tapiola Road and they were supposed to go up one of those logging roads, you know...and they didn't know which one...there was a whole bunch of 'em there. And they started walking up one and they got, oh, quarter mile in there and all of a sudden a little bear started running at 'em. You know, they didn't think much about it and then another little bear was running after that one little bear and then they looked. And here come a mother bear, the hugest mother bear they've ever seen and she looked at them and she really started running. And you could see the mud and, you know like those roots and things in those logging roads, they were flying up in the air and that mother bear was coming and those little bears were coming, so they ran and ran and they just got back in that truck. And the little bears when they started running they thought it was a game...they started after them like the dog will, you know. Well, the mother bear didn't think it was any game and so they ran back in the truck. They got there though.

The day we went down the Clear Creek, him and I when we were coming back, there was a nice big track over there on the other place there. Not going down the hill, but there was oz (???)...trail there in the soft mud. Holy cats, he had a big paw.

R: I've never shot a bear. I've had lots of opportunities, but they come in the field, sometimes a mother with two cubs would come there and I'd take my gun and I'd shoot towards 'em and away they go...they don't come back for a long long time.

RR: No, they don't. I...like that one time there was one right therein the Saya (???) field and I said well...this was years ago...I said, "I'm gonna scare that thing so it don't come." By the time I got the gun and shells ready, well it was by my mailbox. So, I seen him there and I shot right over him...I can still see that black ball moving away through the woods. I took another shot and boy that just increased the speed.

I: They can go too.

R: They can

Hasn't been around since...then this...now this summer

R: One day I was driving with the truck in Skanee and there was a doe and a fawn on the road and they were running in front and the doe jumped off the road and the fawn kept going down the road in front of the truck and there was a little bit of a rise like that on the road and already I could see the bear laying in the middle of the road. And that fawn jumped off the road and that bear finally wised up that I was coming
there with the truck...one scoop like that and he was right in the brush. Right off the middle of the road in one leap...that's all. Of course the road wasn't that wide, but even then though you could see the power there.

RR: Wayne was still living over there and in the spring I went to look in the back field down there. Had some straw bales that got left there in the summer before...gee, that one straw bale was moving and I stared and sure enough, Mr. Bear was eating grass...great big fellow; and I walked over to the house and got Wayne's gun and went back there...I was gonna shoot him in the head which would have been a foolish thing anyway...all you do is get a job of burying it and...my eyes watered so...so I just left him have it on the side and I went and looked and I could see those tracks where he took off...the clay and everything else...was down in the gully right over here...but it was on the edge of the hill where the field is.

R: I remember your dad lost a horse one winter and they hauled it to the edge of the field and Carl Heikkinen was working for your dad and set traps there and the bear was caught by one toe and there was a big maple...about that big leaning there and that bear had that trap and he had his paw over that log and Carl was gonna go and kill it with an axe...we wouldn't let him. I said, "well, you can sacrifice one bullet"...he didn't want to waste a bullet...one jerk and he'd a been loose with that one toe.

Yeah, that's the one Jerry went to see too...when she was a kid.

I: In spite of all that, though, there really haven't been any incidents where a bear has actually hurt a human.

R: Not around here. They have...they've killed even.

Yeah, they've been...they used to carry mail from Baraga to Ontonagon...seventy-five - eighty years ago and the fellow carried a shot gun...well he met up with a bear on the road so he never showed back, this fellow and they went to look, and bear had killed him. But he had killed the bear...he shot the bear with a double barreled shotgun, but he didn't die immediately and he didn't get away, I suppose, and the fellow was killed and the bear was killed. Old Mike Silkoski told us that when we were kids.

R: Well, do you remember that story that they had a trap set out for bear at (???) and who else...was Silkoski's too or whoever it was?

Well anyway one night...they'd been drinking cider or some darn thing and they decided to go look at the bear trap...

R: I didn't hear that one.
...and it'd been raining and they slipped and slid right up to the bear that was caught in the trap and they scratched a match and the bear was right there.

R: I never heard that one. Well, the other summer I went with the power saw...I was doing that (???)...and the dogs came with me and I went there with the tractor. I stopped my tractor, I took my power saw and I put...I had already piled the poles there, you know, put out one of them bundles and I was gonna tighten the chain and the dogs started to bark toward pole line and I could hear this rustling in the dry leaves and a coyote come from there and come right in front of me and stopped...he didn't worry about me...he was worried about the dogs and he kept going a little way and he'd turn around and look again and listen to where the dogs were, see...he didn't care about me. I could've...so close that I could've thrown a rock at him.

They're tame. I was plowing over there once...oh quite awhile...Wayne was still living there and was over where the old homestead house used to be where that apple tree is over there in the field. I don't know where he came in front of me...it was going down the furrow ahead of me...I was going towards the woods. So then I...when I come back from the other end I picked up Wayne's gun, but he never showed up anymore.

R: But, the wildest thing, I think, to listen to is the wildcat, the bobcats.

I: You've heard that?

R: Boy I'll tell you when they scream it makes the chills go up and down your back...I seen one this spring even...or just a few weeks ago when we were painting bulk tanks we saw one cross the road in front of the truck.

I: You've heard it in the woods before, though?

R: We've had them right in our orchard

I: Scares you a little?

R: It does...it does, yeah I don't care who it is, it makes the chills go up especially in the dark. One night I was home alone and the scream...we had chickens, see...and they were up in the trees roosting and that darn bobcat come in there and it was screaming away and screaming away and mother...my wife had gone away and I finally went upstairs and I was listening...talking coming up the road...they got up to the gate right there and that cat screamed. Boy oh boy did they get scared...they had a hold of each other and I took my gun but I had no flashlight and I chased it out of the orchard and I chased it across the field and he kept screaming in front of
me but I couldn't see it and of course there's no point going in the woods, you couldn't see it at all...if you couldn't see it in the field. But he kept screaming...I could hear him screaming, screaming, screaming, you know, in front of me.

End of Part III