FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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SUBJECT: The Settlement and Ways of Life in Princess Point – immigration, various Finnish "folk sayings", back woods healing remedies and customs

SOURCE: Martin Edward Loukinen (1911 – ), the first "whiteman" born in the Princess Point area. Martin left the area in the thirties to "make a go of it" in Detroit, and returned to retire on the shores of the Portage Canal in what is known as "White City".

I: I understand your father, Edward Loukinen, came to the United States from Finland in 1902. How old was he at the time?

R: He was about nineteen years old at the time.

I: Where did he come from in Finland? Where was his home?

R: His home was in Kittilä...that's in the northern portion of Finland on the border of Lapland.

I: Why did he come here?

R: To seek a fortune, I guess...they all had heard of our America.

I: And the money that could be made here.

R: Yes.

I: Generally those who left were those who did not have it so well in the home country. How did your father's father make a living and what were the conditions of life where he was before he left?

R: Well, my father's father raised reindeer...that was their main stay...but he also did logging and a little farming and he also operated what they called in Finnish a "kestikievari" I understand that would be a sort of a dray service which was one of his activities.

I: Did they travel around with the reindeer herds?

R: Yes, they had to move these reindeer according to seasons from place to place wherever there was feed for them...they carried a quite a large herd...they had hundreds of reindeer at times.

I: Well, how come your father left...it seems as though he was doing quite well there.

R: Yes, he was. I understand that he was considered one of the prosperous families there, or his father was, rather...but like every other youngster they want to seek something new...and he was an ambitious type of a fellow...he wanted to see what he could do on his own.

I: Where did he first come?

R: He first came to Hancock, as I understand, he worked in the old Hancock mine...and from there he traveled through the Range area and worked in those mines and finally back to Hancock into the Quincy mine where he spent the most of his years.

I: What kind of man was your father when he was a young man?

R: Well, he was an aggressive young man...he had a lot of so-called "sisu", guts, in other words...and he wanted to try it on his own and see what he can do in this country.

I: Did he have a future for himself in the old country?
R: Well, as things were there, I guess not... he would have had to build one up and he was too young for that at that time... in 1904 my father married Anna Johnson from Tornio in Sweden

I: ...was also from Finland?

R: She was from Sweden... Ruotsi yli Tornio.

I: I see... and where did your father first come when he came to this country?

R: He came to Hancock to begin with... and he worked there for some time and then he moved around the Range towns and worked in those mines there... and then back to Hancock later on to work in the Quincy mine where he spent the most of his working years.

I: In what shaft was this?

R: No. 2 shaft mostly but he did work in other shafts around the Quincy Hill area.

I: Do you recall at all about how he used to speak about working in the mine... the conditions of life in the mine at the time?

R: Yes, he did... he was very outspoken... and I recall times when some of his friends or associates would sort of condemningly call him socialistic minded... but he wasn't... he believed, though, that a working man should get his share.

I: It was often a strategy used by the mining companies to call anyone who didn't go along with what they wanted a Socialist or some sort of bad name... that happened to be a convenient name to call people at the time.

R: The mining companies were very careful... they selected these that they had any bite on and they used to, as the old-timers would say and still do, I guess, blackball them and oust them from the company for good.

I: Was your father blackballed?

R: Never.

I: What kind of grievances did he talk about?

R: I don't know... now when I said that he was accused of being socialistic minded, actually he was not an agitator of any kind... he was religious... but he was very outspoken and therefore he spoke up for other people besides himself.

I: I mean, what didn't he like about the mines at the time?

R: Well, there was nothing, really, that he didn't like... he liked the mines because there was a livelihood there... but he saw reasons for improvement such as, for instance, if a man carelessly injured a mule or caused it to die, he was fired... and if a mule did die the company would say that they had to buy a mule but a man could be replaced.

I: What were they making at the time?

R: The mining company was mining copper

I: I mean, what kind of wages were the miners making at that time?

R: Oh, I don't recall the wages but I could say... oh, years later... we'll probably later go into that.

I: O. K.... well, then he moved to a place called Princess Point. Where is Princess Point?
Princess Point is on the Portage Canal between Lake Superior and Portage Lake on the south end.

Why is it called Princess Point?

Well, the old legend have it there was a Indian princess buried there and therefore called Princess Point.

Do you remember what Indian tribes lived there?

No, I don't know the original tribes... I think there was a mixture of Indians there during my early boyhood.

Now your father moved to Princess Point... when did he move there?

I believe it was... I am sixty-three years old now and I was not born yet... I was the first white man born in Princess Point and this was the following summer.

So we could say that Martin Loukinen was the first white man born in Princess Point, right?

That has been said, yes... including... or I would like to say Martha Luoma, my neighbor, was the first white girl born there... we were born and raised neighbors.

Now why did your father move out there if he liked the mine and enjoyed it?

Well, I believe that independence was one of the main factors and he already had three children... I was being expected... he probably foresaw a large family and he thought that would be a good place to raise children... that was a part of the old bringing up from the old country.

What do you mean this was part of the bringing up that was carried over from the old country traditions?

Our father was raised, especially out there in the far north and in the country, there was no city there... so they felt that being on the farm or on the land, why that was the only means of living... or at least he certainly intended it for a supplement.

Was there some sort of idea that you could make money in the city but that the only thing you could really depend upon was the land... was that ever said... I've heard that said before.

Well, in those days I don't think there was much city in his mind because he knew very little of city life... he thought that by the sweat of your brow you had to earn your bread and that was ravaging stumps and turning over the ground.

How did he get the land... who did he buy it from?

There was a salesman, a real estate man there, by the name of August Koskela... in fact, I believe he was distantly related... I said I believe, I know he was distantly related to my father and probably one of the reasons why he approached him and why he got there into that area.

August Koskela... was he working for some sort of a land company at the time?

Well, he was selling lands for some kind of a land association... I don't remember what the name of it was... could have been Duluth, South Shore.

O.K., so your father bought the land... how did he move to Princess Point... were there roads from Hancock to Princess Point at the time?
Well, this lighthouse landing is no longer there, is it?

R: No, not as a lighthouse landing, the premises still stand, though.

I: How could someone recognize that spot today?

R: Well, if you don't know from former hearing or seeing, you wouldn't recognize it as such anymore.

I: Well, let me rephrase the question, then...if a stranger were to look for Princess Point, the exact spot that was years and years and years ago designated as Princess Point through this Indian legend, how would he find it?

R: Well, I believe in this case if he would contact George Niskanen because George owns that particular spot now.

I: But if a person were to go there he would have to go by water almost, wouldn't he? To see the Point?

R: Oh, to see the Point, yes, but that is not where the original lighthouse building was George Niskanen owns that property now and the building still stands.

I: Well, what was it like...he moved everything by boat...what was Princess Point like at the time...it has certainly changed since then.

R: Princess Point was nothing but growth, wild growth...there was nothing there but woods...the old pine days had passed by and that's the last movement that had been there.

I: Were there pine stumps in the ground?

R: There were large pine stumps...the old virgin pine timber that used to stand in that area was cleaned up but that's all and that had been a long time previous to this.

I: Were there any French Canadian families living there at the time?

R: In Lake Linden.

I: But not in Princess Point?

R: No, there was no one in Princess Point...father was the first one there outside of the lightkeepers.

I: Well, he started to make a living farming, then?

R: Yes, such as it was.

I: Tell me a little about that.

R: Well, I think it was June month...I remember my mother saying when they moved into that area, or when they took their furniture there, she had three small children as I formerly mentioned, and they moved into an unfinished log house in the dead of the mosquito season and you can just imagine how my mother felt.

I: She was used to better living conditions, wasn't she?
R: Yeah, she came from a town area in Sweden and I do remember her saying that the first thing she did she sat at the end of the table where the table sat and cried.

I: Because it was so miserable?
R: Because everything looked pretty gloomy.
I: Well, things must have improved, though.
R: Gradually...but there was many, many tough, tough years...and she was left there for at least the first...oh, I think I would almost dare say eight-ten winters by herself and the older children...she had an old man stay there with her the first couple years during the winter months to aid her with the wood and few milking cows, couple cows, whatever they had.

I: How old were their oldest children at the time?
R: Well, Art was probably four or five years old at the time.
I: And the other children were younger.
R: Ann and Tillie a year and a half or two younger.
I: So they weren't really much help.
R: They were no help.
I: Where was your father at the time?
R: He had to go back into the mines...he held his job in the mines and he worked there and he made weekend trips to the farm.
I: And he would travel by water in the summer?
R: He would travel by water to Chassell and then whatever means of transportation...the train mostly.
I: Oh, he would take the Duluth-South Shore train into Houghton?
R: Into Hancock...but in the winter time it was skiing over the ice to Chassell or to the bayou, a farmer called Liimatta's where he could get a bus during the winter months which was a distance of about, oh, possibly three miles.
I: So it wasn't until about eight years after he initially bought the property that he began to farm it?
R: Oh, he started in a small sort of way but it took a long time to get much clearing there because like I said he worked in the mines and he didn't have any...the children were too young to do anything.
I: The land had to be cleared, though, right?
R: The land had to be cleared and the livelihood came out of the rocks in the Quincy mine.
I: Did you have a few cows and chickens and things like that?
R: He always had a few cows and a few chickens and fish was quite plentiful especially in the winter time using the old, primitive "rysa" methods for catching them.
I: Were there any game wardens at the time?
R: Yes, there were game wardens but they...the Conservation rules were a little different...and those old-time game wardens they knew that these people had to have something to exist...and they weren't bothered very much...and the fish, the type that they could catch in the winter time, was very plentiful during the seasons, winter seasons...so that was a very big help in feeding the family...those big lawyer livers were real good.

I: What do they call that in Suomenkielen?

R: "Maksa"..."kala maksa ja moukuja"...and they were very rich in oils and I believe that this was very good for the children at that time, although the people at that time didn't really realize the value of cod liver oil or fish oil, for instance.

I: Now if you were to buy that product you would probably spend a great deal for it and you could only buy it at a health food store.

R: Well, I don't know where you could buy a substance of that kind now.

I: I imagine there were also available to you game to hunt and...

R: Oh, yes, the deer were there for the taking...if you wanted venison you didn't have to go very far and you didn't have to spend many hours like I have this fall, for instance, to get something.

I: You mean there really was a difference?

R: There certainly was, there was deer all over...and rabbits...rabbits, partridge, things like that, were very plentiful...we ate a lot of rabbits in the winter time, especially when the kids got old enough to catch them themselves.

I: How did you catch the rabbits?

R: Snaring was a very popular method with the kids.

I: How did they do this?

R: Oh, just buy some picture cord and make snares and set them on the trails in the woods and...I saw six-eight rabbits...I, with my brothers, we used to carry six-eight rabbits home some mornings and so we had a lot of bunny buys...and they were good, too...mother was a good cook and she knew how to prepare them...we usually raised at least one porker for the winter and that, mixed with the rabbit, was really a good dish...plus we used to butcher a beef, sometimes two as the family got larger, for the winter months...so I must say that through all the years that we went through there, as slim as things were, we never were hungry and we always had something to eat.

I: Well, what about this farming...did he make a living at farming?

R: I think that the living entirely off the farm would have been very meager...but like I said father spent most of his years working in the mine, all the winter months at least...in the earlier years...in the very later years he used to work in the woods, especially after the mines closed down, why he worked in the woods...he did some logging on his own...he acquired more timber land later on and he logged it and made extra money that way.

I: Oh, there was some sort of logging operations going on in Princess Point?

R: In later years, yes, after I grew to be probably ten-twelve years old, why since then there was a lot of logging operations there.

I: That would be, then, around 1912 to 1913 according to what you said.
R: Well, starting so, starting about that time, and then through the 20s...probably the late 20s.

I: The logging was the heaviest?

R: Yes

I: Who were some of the early loggers over there?

R: Oh, there was Lantto, Dave Lantto...there was Pete Trombley, Joe Ramm, John Ramm, and oh, many others...Turunen, there was a man by the name of Turunen, Finnish fellow, plus many others, I can't think of the names.

I: Where did the logs go?

R: Most of the logs went to the Stern-Culver Company in Lake Linden.

I: How would they get them there?

R: They would be piled on the shore on our own land there on the lakeshore during the winter months...sleigh-hauled there and then during the summer they were rafted and boomed and and hauled, towed in by tugs into Lake Linden...this was a big operation...I recall some seasons where there was 2,500,000 log feet stored there ready for booming and hauling to Lake Linden in the spring of the year.

I: When would they begin to store them on the lakeshore there?

R: Through the winter, soon as...oh, around the end of December, first of January, they'd start hauling because they had a lot of swamp areas to haul through...they had to freeze the roads...they hauled tremendous loads, iced roads, and they hauled 30-40 logs to a load. unbelievably big loads.

I: And what kind of wood was this?

R: Well, a lot of it was pine, hemlock...they were about the biggest types of wood and then there was...

I: There still was some pine being logged then?

R: Oh, yes, but this wasn't the old primitive pine...this was...

I: Second growth.

R: Well, I don't know, I wouldn't call it second growth...I'd call it virgin in my day...and then there was a lot of good hardwood, curly birch, curly maple, birds-eye and so on.

I: Do all those types of woods float?

R: No, the birds-eye and the birch, maples did not float...they had to be dogged...they'd put a softwood log on each side of a large hardwood log to float it...they'd chain them together or rather, they'd take a big pine or hemlock log and put it in the middle and then dog, what they call dogging, spiking on to this chain...the hardwood...one on each side...and that would float them in the boom to get them to the sawmill.

I: Did you work in any of these early camps?

R: Not till the late 20s.

I: Whose camp did you work for?
R: I worked for a Leclaire.
I: Was he a French Canadian from Lake Linden?
R: He was from Baraga but he was a French Canadian...and I did work for some smaller operators, including my dad.
I: What were these camps like in the 20s?
R: Oh, just log camps and sometimes in later years they hauled rough lumber and they made them out of lumber, too...tarpaper-covered...they were big operations...there was maybe 40-60 men to a lumber camp...they had a cook camp where they cooked for them and they ate there.
I: What sort of ethnic background were the lumberjacks...now were most of these at this time Finnish people?
R: Well, there was a lot of Finns but it seems like the old, the earlier lumberjacks were mostly Frenchmen or French Canadians...they preferred to be called Frenchmen but I know that there was a lot of Canadian and Indian mixed in the earlier Frenchmen over there.
I: How did the Finns and the French Canadians get along...do you recall any stories?
R: I don't think that there was any problems between the French and the Finnish there during my time, but speaking of problems, there used to be problems in the earlier years in the mining areas between the Irish and the Finnish and the English...I think the Irish and the Finnish were the worst of all.
I: Do you recall your father talking about the Irish?
R: Yes, I remember a lot of stories.
I: Could you tell me one or two now?
R: Well, I don't know of any particular story but there were so many little incidents that I heard of...they weren't exactly murders or things like that, but they'd fight, get drunk, and get into brawls and the Irish were Irish and the Finns were Finns like we've always heard in the past.
I: Well, I imagine living way out in Princess Point, so isolated and that, that from the normal services often required for life that there might be some problems, for instance, when someone was sick, real sick, what would happen...do you recall any problems like that...where one of the parents or the children or the neighbors were sick, what would they do?
R: You'd have to take the patient across the lake some way, take her to town, or he, whichever it happened to be, until the road came and then after the road came, why a doctor would come there in an emergency...possibly better than these days because we used to have the old country doctor in those days...and he would come by horse and buggy...I saw old Doc Wilson snowshoe from Chassell many a time to come, especially during the influenza epidemic of 1918, I believe it was, when my father was in delirium for nine days and old Doc Wilson took care of him...and I remember him saying when he came there on one of his final visits that he never thought he would see father pull through because he was so sick...you can imagine nine days in delirium...he must have been sick...and the whole family was sick except one of the girls, Hilda...she, for some reason or other, didn't get sick but was too young to be of any assistance.
I: Can you remember any incidents of this time when your father was so sick and the family was sick?
R: Yes, I remember some incidents...father worked...one thing that stayed in my mind was...father worked in the mines at that time and in his delirium he wanted one of the boys to go and get him some cider...he evidently was parched with...he was drying up with fever and he wanted something to drink...and wherever the cider entered his mind, why he wanted my oldest brother Art to go and get it...well, Art was just a kid and he was sick also.

SIDE TWO

R: I remember this so well because mother was so worried...she knew that if he got outside that would be the end of him...but she couldn't stop him...he was delirious and he was very insistent...he put on his clothes and he was almost completely dressed when he fell on the floor, passed out and we, with mother, had to undress him and drag him back to bed...so he didn't make his cider trip.

I: That would have been the end right there, wouldn't it?

R: That would have been the end of him...but he was a big, robust man at that time, you couldn't handle him no way if he hadn't passed out and wanted to go out...it was a real cold winter month at that time...I think it was in February month...so that would certainly have been the end of him.

I: Your mother died on the farm there, didn't she?

R: Yes, well, this was much later...so that was really a rough winter around there for many a people...they all suffered this influenza and a lot of people died there that winter.

I: Do you remember some who died?

R: Well, yes, I can't think of many names that died at that time but...there were several people...there are other statistics on the deaths of that winter and that influenza.

I: What about this old Doc Wilson...you remember him?

R: Yes, I remember him...he made many a snowshoe trip out in Princess Point to deliver babies and attend other sick people...in fact, that was the only means of help...until the roads came and automobiles and hospitals were available.

I: He was quite a man, eh?

R: Old Doc Wilson he was quite a man, yes.

I: I imagine the people around had considerable respect for him?

R: Very much so.

I: A little different than the attitude toward the medical profession today.

R: Yeah, well, those doctors in those days there, money was very secondary with them...they were out to help the people...they might have got potatoes or a chicken for their efforts in many cases.

I: Snowshoeing from Chassell.

R:

I: Do you think a doctor would snowshoe from Chassell today to Princess Point for a chicken?

R: I don't think in today's medical profession there's very many doctors that would do what those people did those days.
I: Well, I'm sure there must have been some occasions when some sort of health care was needed at the time but doctors simply weren't available...what about giving birth to children on sudden notice...how was that handled?

R: Well, that was handled by means of midwife...there was a few old ladies there...I shouldn't say old, I guess, because they were younger than I am now and I don't think I'm old...but being kids why we thought they were old...but they were quite capable of handling these things and including myself was delivered, brought forth, this way and here I am...I didn't see a doctor.

I: Who were some of these women that handled this?

R: There was one woman that was...her name was Mrs. Tolonen...in fact, she was an old neighbor at one time there...and then there was a Mrs. Kesti, I recall, and a Mrs. Pyhtila, I believe, from Hancock that attended many mothers there in the country.

I: Was this for pay?

R: Well, if they got paid for it it certainly wasn't much...I don't remember their fees but they were probably another bag of potatoes or a chicken...but they were quite good at their profession.

I: Describe a typical occasion where a midwife would come over

R: Well, this was sort of a hush hush thing...the children weren't told much about them until this midwife came to a home...then they naturally the kids got quizzy and wanted to know what was going on so somebody tried to tell them that mother was sick and she was going to have a baby or just how it was done, maybe a stork was going to bring it...and the kettles were boiling, the house was warm, a lot of washing was done and the midwife was busy around and pretty soon we heard a wail and we knew that something had happened...a baby was born...and in many instances these babies were taken care of in this manner, there was no doctors...the midwife, I believe, made a report to some doctor or the Health Department and got them on record on the County books but that was the extent of it...and as for sicknesses and diseases it's miraculous how they escaped all these...when I think of it now there was very seldom a case where a patient or a person had to be brought to a hospital, and in the neighborhood there, there was very seldom anyone dying until old age...we were very fortunate for some reason or other...maybe the diseases weren't known of as much those days...or whatever it might have been, I don't know.

I: Well, what kind of old remedies did they have...old folk remedies that the people themselves used.

R: Well, oh, they had everything...they had a few drops of coal oil or kerosene on a sugar lump...the old Watkins Liniment was an old standby.

I: What's this drop of kerosene on a sugar lump?

R: Well, that was supposed to be good for a sore throat or a throat infection or something like that and likewise this Watkins Liniment which burnt like the deuce...so I don't know if it was a cure but it helped the hurt in the throat because it burned so much you couldn't feel it.

I: It seems like these remedies in particular are just alternative sources of pain that take your mind off the original soreness and leads you to believe that it's therefore gone.

R: Just like...that reminds me of the old story of the white man and the colored man were standing on a corner on a cold winter morning and they were shivering waiting for a bus...so the white man says to the colored man, he said, "I wish I had a drink to warm me up"...he said. "Yeah." he said. "but I don't know if it would warm you up but it would get you.
to where you wouldn't feel the cold... so maybe this was the same thing with these hot
throat treatments... I remember earaches... we used to warm a bag of salts in the oven, in
the wood-burning oven, or a brick and wrap it into some kind of woolen cloth, and lay your
head on that, and that for some reason or other did relieve the earaches at times.

I: What would you do for a cut?

R: We'd bandage it, take care of it the best we could... we'd have a soap, the old American
Family soap poultice, to draw the infections and I believe it worked.

I: Didn't you use any kind of medication?

R: No, not really... I've got some scars on my hands that nowadays you'd send a kid to a hos-
pital for something like that where we took care of them ourselves.

I: Didn't they use pine tar?

R: Pine tar and pitch off of a balsam... if you've ever noticed these little blisters on a
balsam tree that have a fluid in them, a sticky fluid in them, this used to be a remedy
for cuts and sores.

I: What was that called in Suomen...

R: Just balsam pitch, "pihka", it was known as "pihka"... the only bad thing about this was
it would adhere your bandage to the sore... it was really painful taking it off... you had
to try to soak it to get it off the sore to change bandage... but whether it was good or
not, many sores were healed that way.

I: It dried like epoxy glue, didn't it?

R: It sure did, it sure did... but it was a clean-smelling substance and whatever it was it
seemed to work.

I: Do you remember any of the old local characters of Princess Point?

R: Yes, I do, like I mentioned formerly that there was an old man by the name of Manni, I
don't recall his last name... they called him Manni and he was one of the first helpers
there with mother when she was with these little kids... he was a sort of a chore boy... he
was an old man then, just how old I don't know... but a little later on there appeared on
the scene another old man by the name of Vallo, August Vallo... he was a cantankerous old
crank but he also had many good things about him... for one thing he was a fisherman and
he did a lot of fishing out on the near reaches of Lake Superior and in the canals, Por-
tage Lake and so on, and caught different kinds of fish and brought it home to us and to
the other families which were there by this time, two or three other families in Princess
Point... August Turovaara's, Niskanen's, Erick Palo's and so on... these were the original
old timers there as I mentioned and after Vallo there came another man that was known as
Pekka Puusaari, Big Pete they used to call him... he was a good-mannered old man... he
was very good... all the women folks liked him because he was gentle with the kids and I don't
know, he just had a way with those old women... he'd go to town and when he came back he'd
bring a bag of peppermints and he'd spread them over the table for the kids and the old
mothers and he was a nice old man... and he did work... help make wood around the neighbor-
hood, clear land and this sort of thing... he wasn't exactly a mechanic but he was a good
woodman and a good axeman so that came in handy around there.

I: I've noticed there is this tradition in rural Finnish society where old bachelors or old
widowers often moved in with families that are in need, or if they don't formerly move in
they just assume the responsibility for helping those families where there is not a man at
the house to do the heavier work or perhaps where a man is dead and there is a widow there
alone... they would assume the responsibility and do what had to be done.
R: There certainly was much to be said for these old men I mentioned... and then a third man, Otto Venäläinen... he was really an asset to the community... he was a hard man to live with, in fact, he couldn't live with anybody else, he had to build his own shack because he was too stubborn and cantankerous, but he had a heart as big as a moose... and he was a hunter... he would shoot deer, bring meat to the families, he would butcher their animals and he knew how to cut it up and treat it properly... and he aided in many things... I believe that he was a financial assistant in many ways, too... I know that he did see to it in most cases that he got his money back, but when the need was there he was there, too... and I knew that all the oldtimers including myself we still remember these old fellows very fondly... they were good men.

I: There still seems to be this tradition going on today where old men who have no other place to go are taken in by a family, and it's not so much that they contribute to the work on the farm, but it sort of works the other way, too... they are taken care of by the family... it's really sort of a mutual service.

R: Well, yes, this continued for a long time but the families grew large in Princess Point there... there was ten, twelve, up to fourteen children, I believe, in the biggest families so there wasn't much room for outsiders and the older children grew big enough to be of assistance so that they didn't have to have any outside assistance... therefore these old fellows... well, these three that I have mentioned, why they grew old anyway and died and disappeared... when the families grew large enough they were able to take care of their own needs.

I: How did the division of labor work on the farm... I mean, who did what from the children up to the mother... what jobs had to be done and who had to do them?

R: Well, in my home mother's place was in the house... and the boys were outside... the girls in some instances helped in the barn but not too much... it was mostly the boys' job, but in some of the families there that didn't have many boys, they had more girls than boys and the older ones were girls, well, naturally the girls had to do much of the men's work.

I: What kind of work had to be done?

R: Well, there is many different kinds of work, making wood, planting, clearing land first, planting, then harvesting and everything there is in making a living on a small farm especially why there is almost everything imaginable there from shoveling catdoo to eating good bread.

I: O.K., you didn't have all the tools and hardware stores on the next block because you were simply stranded in the woods, yet you had to make do... I've understood that many of the early Finnish settlers, well, yourself included, have, I guess, become what's known as Jack-of-all-tradesmen... can you describe some of the makeshift ways you would put things together and some of the binder twine and bailing wire techniques you had to use.

R: I would like to have the money that was paid for all the bailing wire that I've used for different purposes... it would make a long string of wire... but going back to my father's abilities, he was a good axeman... if he needed something he'd go to the woods, get a piece of wood and hew out whatever he needed... he was a good axeman.

I: Can you remember some of the things he would make?

R: Well, all handles... stone boats, whippletrees, eveners...

I: What were eveners?

R: Well, evener was a thing that you'd attach your whippletrees on to when you hitched a team of horses to it... and these were made out of wood... shaves for sleighs, wagons, different
things, pulls, hayracks, whatever, this kind of things, why they were made, they were improvised, one way or another, at home... all they would buy is the nails, I guess... some bolts at times... but everything was done at home that way in the early years, and there was no means for buying these things... and as for me, there's one thing my father taught me is to make shoepacks... I started this at an early age... I don't know, I believe it was... he must have foreseen in me something that the other kids didn't have because he chose me to help him.

I: What were shoepacks called in Suomenkielen?

R: "Sypäs", or "saapas" in some cases.

I: Can you describe how these are made and what they're made of?

R: Well, they were made out of... we tanned the hides, cow hides... and they were sewn in with two needles, two linen-thread needles, the tips were made, oh, a certain technique was used to feather the ends so that you could get them out of the needle, and you used a two-way needle which I could still do if I had the opportunity... and he would cut out the patterns and I would help him sew them, making mittens, so-called choppers, I've made a lot of them, and finally this became my job... sometimes I would get a day off or a half a day off from the fields or other undesirable work to patch mittens, shoes, boots, whatever, put on new soles and this kind of stuff... and in the later years we did get a sewing machine which was a big help... I mean a cobbler's machine where we could sew uppers, used uppers, onto new bottoms, make swamper's out of them, and different kinds of shoe repairs, heavy clothing...

I: Was a boot ever thrown away like they are today?

R: Not until it was wore out... we didn't throw anything away that could be fixed or used again.

I: But wasn't the leather saved off of a boot?

R: Leather, if there was good leather, it was never thrown away, it was saved for a patch or something else, some other use...

I: A door hinge?

R: Sometimes a hinge, yes... it was used for a hinge in many cases, especially in lighter things, lighter items.

I: Well, how came these early Finnish settlers in Princess Point learned these skills... why did they learn all these...

R: Well, you either do or die... you just had to make it because...

I: Are there any old sayings that the Finns used to use to describe this kind of condition where you just had to come through?

R: Yes, like, for instance, "kylmän ja nälän opettava" which means, "the cold and hunger will teach you"... I imagine in the cold, frozen north why this is where they learned it... you had to do it or else... like we had to where we were... we didn't have means of buying these things or finding them somewhere, we had to make them.

I: Were there any other sayings that had to do with death, either do or die?

R: Well, an old primitive saying used to be, "on käsä kipeä ja maa jäässä"... this means referring to a hog... "a sore snout and a cold frozen ground"... just think, that's kind of rough, isn't it?

I: I don't quite understand that, can you elaborate on that a little?
Well, that's self-explanatory, more or less... you try to root into something with a sore nose that's hard frozen... so this is the way everything had to come there... anything you wanted had to come the hard way... if you wanted to clear a piece of land you had a big pine stump or if it was an oak or a maple stump it was hard to remove... this had to be done by homemade stump pullers or... this was called a "kannonostokone"... for removing these stumps... my father made the first one that I can recall and then in the later years there was some manufactured ones... this old man Venäläinen that I spoke of, he bought the first one that I recall, and it still is in existence somewhere... I think the Kuusisto family has it.

What were these homemade stump pullers look like?

Well, it's pretty hard to explain, I could draw a picture of it, but it was anchored, it was a little instrument with a shaft, vertical shaft, that was twisted around and this long handle on it that would wrap a chain, the pulling chain, around this shaft... therefore causing a puller, and it would pull out some pretty big stumps... but it was slow work... sometimes you'd spend a day on one stump.

But I guess it was worthwhile because that was the only way to remove it outside of dynamite... in the later years we had dynamite, it was available but that cost money and it was rather expensive.

Do you recall any other sayings that had to do with survival and do it or die?

Yes, I do, like, "Tulee semmoinen vieras joka saa olla minä tappan"... my dad used to say this thing if the kids didn't seem to think much of his ideas, of removing a stump or doing some chore that he wanted done... this meant that... translated it would be you could expect a visitor that would say, "I'll kill you"... meaning that this was the only way we could survive is do these things...

Do this or else the visitor of death will get you.

Right... there was another old saying that dad used to say, "Kyllä kissa kynnnet löytä Mo hoppu tulee"... which means a cat will find his claws when he gets scared or into a hurry... so now just how would we explain this so that you know what I'm trying to say.

When you have to fix something in a hurry...

When you have to do it, well, that's about the size of it... when you have to do it you'll find a way, that's all there's to it... you find a way or make one, in other words.

Did this ever happen on the farm in the early days?

No doubt about it, it happened a lot of times, many little incidents and big incidents, but you don't recall all of them at one time.

Because it was just a common everyday thing.

That was a common everyday occurrence.

O.K., why don't you tell us about your father's philosophy of raising the children... did he raise children the way children are raised today?

No, he did not... first, like I mentioned formerly, that father was a religious man, he was a Christian... and he wanted his children to be brought up likewise, and he believed that the children should obey and he had a way of doing this... the children obeyed him... partly fear and probably in many cases largely fear... he would enforce his rules... and he didn't
hesitate to whip one of the children if they had it coming...but I will say this for him...as strict as he was he never whipped anyone unless there was a reason and I never saw my father whip any of the children in anger...he didn't want to do it but he felt it was his duty.

I: It was his job, though, to do the whipping, the physical discipline, right?

R: Yes, outside of a hairshaking or a slap...so on...my mother...but if major punishment was done, father did it.

I: Was there a special strap he used...was it hanging in a certain place?

R: Well, he wore a belt that was removable...and that oftentimes did the job...and there were a lot of switches pretty handy.

I: Where would it go...would it be right on the spot or into the woodshed?

R: Well, it was usually on the spot.

I: In more ways than one, eh?

R: Yes, and one of the toughest things that I recall or comes to mind when we were in school, we had to behave because if he got a report from the teachers that we misbehaved...if it was something that amounted to more than just a giggle or something why he would go to school with you and he'd make you apologise or ask forgiveness from the teacher in front of the audience...and believe me that was tough...the other kids snickering, those that dared...most of them didn't dare because their parents often had their kids do likewise...these people were God-fearing people, they wanted to bring their kids up right.

I: I understand that your father was very instrumental in the founding, or the establishment, of the first Princess Point school...do you recall when this was and what he had to do with the original establishment of this school.

R: Yes, he was...father was one of the founding members, possibly because he had a vocabulary that the other neighbors there did not have...he was capable of expressing himself in English as short as it was but he made himself understood, while the other neighbors there were not...and therefore he was one of the founders of the school district in Princess Point, and the first two or three years of school, as I recall, were held in the old Arthur Leopold Heideman cottage which was used as a cottage during the summer and during the school months from September until June, whatever it may have been, and then later on a new school was built...I attended the...