FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
(Funded in part by the National Endowment For The Humanities)

(Funded in part by the Keweenaw National Historic Park Advisory Commission / U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service)

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INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWER: Paul Jalkanen

INTERVIEWEE: James MacDonald

DATE: July 24, 1972

P: We are here with Mr. James MacDonald of Calumet on July 24th, 1972, and done by Mr. Paul Jalkanen. Mr. MacDonald, could you tell me where, in what area, you were brought up, and what your childhood was like?

J: Well---I was born in a log house in Ramble Town, on Lodge Street. There were not any hospitals here at the time, so my mother went home to her mothers at the time. The first place that I lived is where the prominent Bank is today-----upstairs, an apartment, that's where I was born.

P: So, a midwife came in?

J: Yes, I imagine so.

P: Midwives came in just about all the time, didn't they?

J: Oh, yes-----they were for years, I think the C&H Hospital was probably going at that time-----but, my dad did not work for the C&H Hospital. He and MacCord started a livery business right here in Calumet. Right behind where that building is today.

P: When were you born, in the 1890s?

J: 1897

What kind of recollections do you have about----let's see, you told me you went to school until you were 16, was it?

J: In 1916 my class graduated.

P: What kind of recollections do you have about your childhood up until that age, up until you were 16, 18, 17 years old at that time?

J: Ah, I started to go to school down in Calumet Village. I went to Kindergarten down there, where the Morrison School is today----on that same property. I was transferred out to New Town. There were so many schools here in every section. The mining company built all of the schools. And, from New Town I went out to the Hamilton, and Woodier Schools. They were two school right off —
US-41 now. Right where that billboard is. And, from there I went to the John Duntan School, from Ramble Town where my grandmother got sick and my mother went out to live with them, in Ramble Town. I went to John Duntan School from Ramble Town, because we had lived in Laurium for a while where the hospital is today, and we were going to that school when we moved to Ramble Town---so, I kept it up in the wintertime. I remember being up to my armpits in snow walking to school—the John Lennon School there in Laurium. And, from there we moved over here on Rockland Street, the corner of Depot and Rockland. I was 6 or 7 years old at that time. Oh, I was about 8 years old. And, I went to the Depot School over here, where the Faith Lutheran Church is today. And, from there I started with the Sacred Heart Grade School, so I finished the 10th year of school there. Then I went to work and I worked for Captain Jim Pulpsen at the time. He lived in Laurium and that was a summer and one winter that I worked there. They had a home in Beverly Hills, California, and they took their car out there. A Pierless Car one year, we shipped in on the box-car and the chauffeur went along with him. And, then they would come back in the summer. But, that year I worked for them the whole year.

P: Did you live at home then?—When you were working for them?

J: Oh, yes. I just had the garden work because there was a chauffeur there and two maids besides.

P: Oh, you just made a few dollars then, a couple dollars you could contribute to the house, to your parents at that time to live at home.

J: Yes, and then I left to get a job. I got a job with the Millerine Railroad in Laurium. I was assisting the station agent there. He was called Mr. Gibson, he was a one-armed man. He had lost his arm on the railroad. That station was right across from the [insert missing word] in Laurium. I was transferred to the Calumet Metal Range. There I worked for both the Metal Range and the Lousa Shore Railroad, in the freight depot.

P: Were you about 17 or 18 years old now?

J: Yes, that's about it

P: This is during World War I, now?

J: World War I hadn't started yet. In 1917, then World War I was started. I took a [insert missing word] of mine's place in the general office here. At the Mining Company for Calumet and Hecala—that's when I first started, in September of 1917.

P: You retired when?

May of 1962
P: Do you remember---

You can only work for 65 years when you are in a supervisory position. We had a pension, which wasn't very much, but it was a little bit, anyway.

P: Do you remember the feelings of the people when we got into the war? How they felt about getting into World War I?

J: They were all for it. I started from there on the Desograph Machine, making out the payrolls, names and that, and putting the names and that on the checks and that on the stubs. And, from that I was made the payroll clerk of the C&H. I think it was 1920, I was there until then when I think the Depression came and they transferred me over here, over where the barns were, under Mr. Fellan, as his time-keeper.

P: How much money did you make for that job as ----?

J: We got good pay.

P: I was just wondering----if you don't mind saying.

J: I got 88 dollars as a pay clerk for the Calumet and Hecala. And, I was on their 25,000 dollar bond. And, when I was transferred over here to the surface, I got a 2 dollar raise. Ninety dollars a month.

P: Was that considered pretty good money at that time?

J: Yes.

P: And, were you still living at home at this time?

J: Well----you see, my father went away when I was 6 years old. I had a good uncle that took care of us.

P: Well----that's the reason that you felt you had to go out when you ----go out and work when you were the oldest child.

J: Yes.

P: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

J: I had one sister and two brothers, and I am the only one of the family that is living today. I lost a brother about two weeks before my wife died. He dropped dead right in front of his house. He was in charge of the Civil Engineering Department. Another brother of mine, the younger brother, dropped dead in '56 or something like that. And, my sister, who was a teacher. She was--all those years under Mr. Dailey, and Mr. Cocus, and she was principal of the Mohawk School there, Ameke School. She taught over 30 years. She died then.
P: Was your mother strict with you?

J: Yes, and I am glad of it. Because in those days, they didn't have the temptations. Gosh, if you go out at night it is so dark around here. When we lived in the woods, after my grand-mother moved down here, and after I started working for C&H I moved from Rockland Street to the middle of the block here on Depot Street, and from that place to the corner of Depot and Calumet Avenue. The old Morrison house—the first mass of Calumet was celebrated in that house. I don't know if it was Johnny or Eine's father who lived in that house and was a mining captain here—he lived in that house at the time. That has been brought out in history, and I know that to be perfect. So, I lived in that house there until 1968 when I put up this house.

P: What year did you get married?

J: 1932.

P: Did you live at home then, up until that time?

J: Yes, and my mother and my sister, and one brother. The other brother was married, the one that was an engineer.

P: You all kept up the house, and helped with your salaries, depending on how much you made?

J: Oh, yes. When I moved over here on Depot Street and Calumet Avenue, I was paying 10 dollars a month rent for that 14 room house, and 7 dollars a month for my heat from the central heating plant of the Calumet and Hecala. And, 10 months of the year there was heat and hot water that was for. There was heat and hot water all the year around. That's with the Calumet and Hecala, and anything you did to the house—it was done by the carpenters, the painters—no matter what it was—the plumbers and that. We never paid anything for it.

P: You just paid your ten dollars a month and that was it? How long did that ten dollars a month last?

J: Well—when they sold it. I think it was '38 that they sold the houses to us, until then.

P: Oh I see—then you bought it from them

J: I don't want to say how much I paid for it because if you shut it off a minute, I will tell you. And, those houses were a little more. But, they didn't run more than a 100-125 dollars.

P: The company really gave the people a good deal, then?

J: They put a furnace, a stoker, they put another chimney on the
house, which I had to have a chimney because there was a fire-
place in there. Before the houses were sold to us, and there
was a, I know my house had a 750 dollar installation, before
they sold the houses to the people. These 42 houses, I think
it was. In my house there was one of the Red Flash furnaces.
There was 6 of us in the big houses that had the Red Flash
furnaces, and our stoker was a 500 pound one.

P: What else can you remember about the 1913 strike?

J: Well----I was going to school, and I was passing the Calumet
News at that time. Of course we lived right on Rockland Street
and we used to see the parades with Big Annie leading the par-
ade. Every morning, they took the dinner pills away from her,
and I saw Mother Jones. I took a priest that came here to
negotiate between the strikers and the mining company, whe-"e-
the-head-of-the-Knights-of-Columbus-at-the-time. My uncle, who
was the head of the Knights of Columbus at the time, got this
Father Deets here from Milwaukee. He used to go all over the
United States. And, I took him to the Calumet Theater where he
met, or down through Dunne's Hall---that's where it was. And,
I remember that I left him at the Calumet Theater because I
was only a kid, I only pointed to where the hall was.

P: He was going to met the workers there?

J: Yes, and he met with the mining companies., the officials

P: What kind of feelings do you have about the 1913 strike? I
know it is long past, but were you a part of the company at
the time?

J: I wasn't working for them at the time at that time, you see. But,
I was living in a company house. I think that was the start of
the down-grading of the----oh, this section of Calumet of here
where a lot of people left at that time and went to Houghton, Mon-
tana, and they started going down to Detroit. It wasn't as
popular as it was later on, in the First World War. After that,
the people moved down to Detroit.

P: Did you ever hear of any old Finns going back to Russia or Fin-
land after the war?

J: No, I can't remember any. I had quite a few Finnish people
working for me, when I had the circus. They were good men, good
hearty men, and strong. And, they were the majority group up
here and through the Houghton County. They could push themselves,
right up to everything.

P: Did you have anything else to say about the 1913 strike? I
think I interrupted you.

J: Well---I remember the night I was in the Italian Hall. I was
bringing my papers through Laurium, I used to pass on Hecala
Street, and Third Street down to the south end, pass Lake Linden
J: Yes, and the union was kicked out of here.

P: And, it never came in again until when was it 1940?

J: No, when they started to organize here----yes, it could have been in the 40's. I can't remember the exact time. I couldn't join the union myself, because I was a supervisor, you see.

P: Yes, I think it was just at the beginning of the war, World War II, I think.

J: Yes, it was around there. Cathy said, "You might as well live, than fight them."

P: Yes it was too late now. They were pretty well organized.

J: Yes, that's when the unions were coming in. There were a lot of good unions, and a lot of them had their bad points.

P: Do you remember from your school days any particular teacher? One that inspired you, or-----?

J: The music teacher that I had. I girl, Donna played the organ out in the Congregational Church in Hancock. Norley, Mrs. Norley-----she was the music teacher in the public school. And, I remember her, and I remember Miss MacField, who was the principal over in the Depot School. And, there was a Miss Dewey who was out at the New Town School. Oh, I can't think of all their names.

P: I don't need them all, I just thought that there might have been a couple special ones that stood out in your mind.

J: Yes, well-----I do. When I went to the Calumet-----I went in the 5th grade there up in Calumet, and I remember that when I got into the high school. "Boys will be men!", which was written in one of the books and was written by one of the teachers when I was going to school here. And, she was called Sister Carafes. She has been back here, and she has had charge of the schools. After she left here she went back to the mother house in Milwaukee----and, from there she went across to Europe and she was teaching over there. And, when she came back the second time---oh, The Chamber of Commerce had her talking to them, and she would be able to judge people by their handwriting. And, she kept the school going. She was very, very bright and I remember when we used to make some kind of sarcastic, smart remarks in school she always said, "I didn't have to be a sister and come and teach you guys. My parents were very wealthy!" And, they were. They were called Paul, and we know that here in Calumet. But, there were some brilliant teachers in that school.

P: How did the students get along with the different backgrounds? The Scottish, the Irish, the Finnish? 
J: There was never much trouble that I can remember, between any of us. And, this was the melting pot of the world at one time, during those years from 1900 up.

P: Yes, but sometimes the fathers fought. The fathers would end up in the saloons.

J: Yes, they used to say if they went through Ramble Town, the Irish would be throwing rocks at them. The Irish wanted to throw rocks at the others, if they knew they were from Osceola or something. When we lived on Lodge Street with my grandmother, my grandfather worked nights in the Hecala drill shop here, the blacksmith shop. And, I heard my grandmother say that the Indians were around here too. And she said that they would come and rap at her door. And, there was a Lock Street, there still is, but there isn't as many houses on it anymore. And, they wanted to know where the saloon was. She said she would go out with the candle in her hand and shake when she was trying to keep them away from the saloon and show them where the saloon was. It was in a house, one of the houses.

P: What kind of good times do you remember when you were a boy, when you were 10 or 12 years old? Can you remember back then?

J: I was supposed to have the first bicycle in the Calumet Village. We lived where the bank is now, upstairs there, and there were wooden sidewalks there in Calumet Village. And, that's when they said we were up to over 40,000 in population around here that time. Now, in the township here, we are down to around 9,000. That is taking in the three villages.

P: What other old stories do you remember from the days before you became involved in C&H? Before 1917—or 1920, you said you came with the C&H.

J: Well---I remember all these trains coming in here, passenger trains, and then all the rock trains that used to come up. They were coming up when I still worked for the Metal Range. They were hauling the rock from Centennial and those places, and down to the mills that belonged to those mining companies. And, there was the Metal Range, the Duluth and South Shore Railroad—one was a branch of the other. The Metal Range was practically owned by the Calumet and Hecala, at that time. And, then the Northwestern came in here, and the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul passenger trains came in here. Also, the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul passenger trains came into Laurium, and to the Calumet people around the Copper Range.

P: They came into each town individually, then?

J: Yes, at different times of the day.

P: There were 3 or 4 passenger trains coming in every day, then?
J: Yes. And, then when the Keeweenaw Central was put up, which went down from the Copper Range depot here in Calumet to Keeweenaw. And, they had Crest View Park, and Dance Hall, and it used to go down on that.

P: They had the streetcars then in between?--?

J: Not any further than Mohawk, between Mohawk and out to Houghton.

P: Yes, all the way down the hill. Did it follow the road, the road that is the highway now?

J: Not too much, no. Although, it did come up on Hecala Street in Laurium, and turn down Lake Linden Avenue to go to Lake Linden. And, then the Carbide was down there on the Florida borderline, of Laurium and Florida Location. And, then one car would go to Houghton, and the other one would go to Lake Linden--as far as Hubbell.

P: How many times a day did the streetcar come up here?

J: They were running pretty good. It seemed to me that there was this one car that would go to Lake Linden and he would meet another one. They would cross and this one would be coming up. Then they would transfer the car, the people that would want to go to Houghton from Lake Linden. Or else, the people coming from Houghton, they would also be in more than one car. And, then they had a car-barn in Houghton too, and Hancock. Thortons' used it for building---I don't know what street that is, but when you come down the curve, I think they called it Sullivan's Curve at one time, across the street from Santoris'--it was that street, and that's where the old car-barn was, for the Houghton end.

P: When did the streetcars stop running? Do you have any idea?

J: I have a friend who would know that because his brother worked down there.

P: I just wondered if you remembered off-hand.

J: No, I just don't remember off-hand. When the cars starting to come in, and of course we had buses running here---through Calumet and Laurium and that. When the first buses started to come out, then they were open---buses with a canopy on the top, and you would put side-curtains on when it was raining.

P: Could you ride them in the wintertime?

No, not those, I don't think.

(End of side #1 of Tape #1)
P: We were talking about the streetcars, and the buslines. Is there anything else that you want to finish on that?

J: Now that I remember, there was the big streetcar strike that we had here too.

P: Oh did you? When was that?

J: Yes I can't remember what year

P: After World War I? Just after it?

J: Yes, it was after. The streetcars were running up until the 30s, I think. The streetcar strike was another kind of bad strike. A fellow that I knew very well was shot. He was wounded. He was a conductor. But, he lived a long time after that. He used to live right over there on Hecala Street, Hecala Street was over from Rockland Street-the next street over.

P: What, you were telling me a few minutes ago, that you started to work for the C&H in the late 19 teens, and then you started about 1920. Then you told me about the job you had, I can't remember what it was.

J: I was a clerk on the surface.

P: Oh, yes— you were keeping the— then you went to the pay clerk, and then you went to——.

J: Yes, because they were laying off all the pay clerks at that time, and cutting down on the office force, and even cutting down on the men.

P: This is right after the war, when there was a little Depression came?

J: Yes, the Depression came—— it was kind of a big Depression. Yes, and that's when they started on the surface, and then from there in 1932— Mr. Belden was retired, and I was made the superintendent on the surface, and I was that until 1962 when I retired. But, we had at that time, we had a mine at South Hecala, we had a fire station there. We had a sea-barn here, at Hecala, and a fire station here, right down on Roccliff Road— right by the Machine Shop. We had two, three barns at the Calumet end, off of Stable Street there— and the Calumet fire station. Then as you went down the line; Kearsarge and those places, they had their fire stations. They had their ambulances. The first motor ambulance came into my department of the Calumet and Hecala Hospital.
P: That was your job, then---to take care of all that stuff?

J: Besides taking care of it----a lot of times I went out and drove the ambulance myself when they couldn't find the ambulance driver at night.

P: So, you would be working at any time?

J: When we had the teams, the horses,----we had men 24 hours a day. The legal weights started working the First World War again, on the Calumet Avenue side----the middle weight would go right up. You can see one shaft that caved in over there, and one by the curve, that's 14, ----13 is out in south Ramble Town. And, this was 15 over here by Dion's'. The one by the hospital was 16. And, 17 was up on the corner of Pine Street and Calumet Avenue----US-41. And then 18 was down on the west side of US-41, pas the streetcar station, which still is as a store down there. And, then they switched over to the 19 shaft which was back in the field there. And, 20 and 21 was out here by the border line of Laurium. And, all the conglomorate shafts were running, and we had teams in every shaft hauling logs every day. The timber went down on the ground.

P: And you would be checking that all the time?

J: I had to move the teams out and that, and then when there were break-downs and that we had to help. The ropes had to be changed at the mines, and all of that stuff. The surface men had to help on everything that was going on here.

P: You were sort of running the whole up and above level?

J: About 33 yarn, yes

P: How many men?

J: When they started to cut down the men, that's when there was the trouble.

P: Oh, that was in 1932, 1933 when the Depression came?

J: No, it was when they started to work again. The Depression was still on, but then they hired men back when they started to work. I know the only time I was laid off was for about 12 days and that's when I was time-keeper. And, then they came after me right away. I think we worked the first relief around here. We started at the Aggie Park, we put that in at that time, and also we put in the pipe-line from----we came from out in Tamarrack, and the pipe-line led right down to Keeweenaw on the north side of the Calumet Dam there. And, they started furnishing water as far as Mohawk.

P: What other type of feelings do you have about the Depression? I mean in the 1929, 1930 Depression. C&H closed for a time
J: During that time—1930, 1931.

J: We didn't need the copper as much after the war, you see. That's the trouble with the one industry up here.

P: Yes, it was a one industry town. A lot of people had left by this time already—1930, '31. The town was depressed already. But, where did people go—you said to Detroit?

J: Yes, and a lot went out west—Montana, Arizona, and different places.

P: Opened big copper mines?

J: Yes, and some of the young fellows, they went on some of these tunnels they were building. They were making big money on those tunnels, you know.

P: What about the 30s, then for C&H. What were they like, from the time you took over as superintendent. World War II started.

J: It was going down, but during World War I, I remember the men all buying liberty bonds and stuff like that. We were taking so much a month off, I was on payroll at that time, with a policy to buy bonds. Boy, those fellows—there were a lot of those Armenians that came in here to work there, too, and the way they went after those liberty bonds! Of course the stores were doing the same thing. I don't know how the schools handled it, the teachers and that. But, there were the payroll deductions, which came in at that time.

P: What do you remember about the 1930s? Were they very tough? You were married, you got married in 1933, '32?

J: Yes, '32. It wasn't too bad, we got along alright, on small wages.

P: Your wages went down too?

J: No, when I got back—I wasn't laid off, only when I was a time-keeper in the first depression, 1921. But, we did a lot of work ourselves—in order to help out because we didn't have the men. So, they started to come back again and work. But, like I started talking about—the Agesie Park and the Tamarack Water Works Line—that was put in for the extension down to Keeweenaw. We used to use men on there, for the land lease and stuff like that—and they would work it out that way, the miners. And I remember picking up 200-300 men every couple of weeks. That was when I was time-keeper, that I used to have to take care of that. We were doing the search, the digging, and then there was another group of men that would be putting the pipes together and stuff like that. They were all soldered joints.

P: What about other strikes in the 1940s and '30s?
J: Well---during the other strike that came on a little after the union was formed here. We didn't have trouble like they had in that first one. They would stop men from going to work ---they would picket, you know, the different places. The fellows were pretty good, and they didn't get to beating up people and stuff like that----like we had earlier.

P: How do you defend a company----or can you defend a company when people generally say that the company was at fault----that it C&H who was tough on the men? They controlled the men, that it was a company town----the company ran the stores, and the company collected the money for the houses----and there were company houses.

J: They were their own houses. They are still on leased land today. This house is on leased land.

P: Oh, is it?

J: Yes, and Universal Oil is trying to get some way----well, they have to go through the State Plack Division, and that would get these lands. They have to be measured out again, no matter how long it would take----60,70 years, which I don't think is right--the sewers, the waterlines, the street, everything that has to come under a plack has been here for years. And, yet they have to go through and number every lot, every block here, and the people will have to pay for this in the long run, in order to buy these lots.

P: So, Universal Oil does want to get rid of them, or doesn't want to?

J: Well---they have to go according to the state. They have still been on this flat axe, and Hellman has been trying to get some deal down on it that would help the people a little, but I don't know how much it is going to help.

P: What do you do when a worker comes and tells you that a man that you have known for many years in Calumet----and comes and bitches to you that C&H didn't mean anything! They didn't help me one bit! That I worked for them for 20 years, and let's say that he retired in 1960, or 1955! What do you say to that man? And, here you have been part of the company because you were

J: I still am bandied about by certain people in this county----that I am still a C&H man. The C&H doesn't owe me a thing, I don't owe them. I did my work for the amount of money that I was given at the time. I didn't kick, maybe I was getting a little more than the ordinary working man, but I know that my men, when they worked overtime, they got more money than I did. And, I would stay with them----24 hours a day sometime. We used to help the conservation department when there were bush fires. I would loan them my trucks and that----they would even take the men when
having that big leap work around here. I belonged to the Conservation Department, besides. I was one of the deputies so they could get our pumps and I could go and pull men off, who were on the bush fire when they were making the airport in Laurium and stuff like that.

P: Why are men so critical of the mining company, then? When it has really been their whole livelihood, there would be no way for them to live up here, nothing!

J: I think that is the younger group, myself

P: Not my grandfather, like the people who have lived since 1930 or so?

J: Yes, it is their children. I know my son, he got his college education because he was given a job every summer. Otherwise, I couldn't keep two of them in college at the same time. There was just a year between them. And, the company was good enough to give them jobs. And, one of my sons—during one of the strikes, he was working in the office, and he went down to be a watchman down at the Metal Mine. He was all by himself there. He was going to college at the time, and he took that and he went down. My other son, he worked for the Ameke, and then he was on the security for the C&H during the summer because he was taking up police administration at Michigan State. That's the one that is in the army.

P: Why do people stay up here? What made them stick together? What made them stick it out during the Depression? It was quite rough for some of them, they were on WPA.

J: I think it was a good place, even if we did have bad winters and that. Of course, the older we get, the less we could stand that. Myself, I am talking about because I used to be out all the time in winter. But, now I am so old that I can't take it anymore. But, I think that the people were closer together. There were so many churches here, and now they are cutting down the churches because the people had left here—and, yet they are coming back, every year. People are trying for land up here. Land to buy so they can come back as soon as they retire out of the cities. They want to get out of the cities. As much as they used to talk about 'we dam fools who are staying here', and they were down making the big wages. Now they are making the big pensions which we aren't getting up here too. But, they come up here and they expect to get the same dealings as the poor people that have lived here all their lives, and all these years.

P: There is something close about the Copper Country.

J: Yes, there is. It has always been that way. I don't care where you go, you will find it out west too. There is more closeness of the people, they get along good—they get along fine, until
some rough-neck gets started and kind of tears the place up. But, you can't—I met so many people, that just come up here on vacation time, and they that they have never met people like they do in the Copper Country. They will take them in, you know—to their own homes and everything. And, sometimes I wonder if the local people that stayed here are not dam fools sometimes. Some of these people are not worth taking them in. You run into some bad ones. But, not as a whc)le, I wouldn't say that. They always have given this place credit for being more socialable to outsiders than anybody else.

P: What kind of things do you think the Copper Country needs, in the future. What kind of predictions, next year, tomorrow, from now on? What kind of predictions do you have?

J: Well—I have always been fighting to get more industry in here, but now it seems that they are going to get the industry out, at the airport. But, you can't run these places, they talk about Copper Town USA—I might be criticized for what I am going to say, but I told some of these men on the mining commissions that you can't make a tourism town out of Calumet Village or Laurium Village and expect the business people to live on that all year round. They have tried, they have tried to get wonder doings up here. One of these days they may get it, but, My God, how are the people going to get up here—they have to fly up here, they don't have any trains up here anymore, which was a big boom for this place when they had it, the trains.

P: They need some kind of work year-round—they can't just work in the summer, hey?

J: Yes, you have to have something year-round. But, the element now, the—it they don't want to work.

P: What kind of feelings do you have about the mine reopening here?

J: The old mines will never be opened anymore.

P: Maybe the newer ones?

J: Yes, the ones that they left standing. I would like to see this new chemical process of Home State—I can't see it because we are such a hard rock mine here. But, I would pray to God that they would find something that they could do something. Even if they would only hire 146 men or that. It is something.

P: There is a lot of copper down below the ground

J: Oh, I have been down in the mines! When the prices are up and that in the copper—it was the time of the war. And, of course lately before Universal Oil ever got through with this place. They were delivering all the copper that was over here, they were bringing it over in tubes and that, and they weren't getting the top prices for their copper because they were thumbing it in
through their own companies, which was kind of bad

P: Copper prices have been depressed for quite a time now

J: Yes, I know---the copper prices themselves have been going up. They have been going down a little now, but I understand not even---when I was out in the Adiconda, it is going to be two years this September. And, I saw this big open-pit mine and that was out there tipping the town. I had been Buke a couple of times before when I was younger. And, now I understand that this year they are starting to pry out there. In Buke, in the Adâconda. Of course, they are like some of these other mines, the Adiconda, and the Kennicotte, and South Dodge and them, they are in the South American countries where these Communists are in control of the government. Now, they can't even get their price that they were agreed upon to get when they were starting these places, and raking these people in and everything.

Can you remember the first time you voted for a United States' President?

J: Who was it---he was a Republican, because I never voted for anyone else.

P: That must have been 1920-1924, something like that.? IN that time of Coolidge.

J: Yes, Coolidge and Hearting.

P: Yes, Hearting, maybe in 1920 or something?

J:

P: Did you vote for Teddy Roosevelt, or------?

J: No, but I admire him. He is the man they should have today

P: Yes, he was quite a president

You bet. I saw him, he came here. Oh, yes, he came into Calumet And, he went down to the Polestra. The Polestra is in the Marquette Mines. Of course, I guess they are building a new wing there. I was just a young fellow, I wasn't voting then, I wasn't old enough. But, he past our corner, he was in the night. I don't know if it was in that same week, or the following week that he was shot in Milwaukee. He was wounded there.

P: Do you feel that the politics of the town were controlled completely by the company?

J: Yes, they always said, But, nobody ever told me who to vote for.

P: They never told you. Did the workers ever think that they had to vote for someone special?
J: No, I don't think so. I don't think so at all. Not as they got more--maybe in the 1900s--1912s and up through there. That's what they always used to say. But, when they became more educated, or their children became more so---I don't think you could tell any man, what to do. I will say that because I have been in the political game for a good many years, either on the county committee. I was the county treasurer for the Republican Party, for quite a few years. They still say today that some of these people come in here and they and they---want to raise a little trouble for the people who had worked for the C&H. They practically made this place----helped make it I should say. They are still acquainted with the C&H, and I get blamed for that. And, you can see with these tax associations that are in Hancock and Houghton----when they put these pieces in the paper, they run us down. They tell the people not to vote for us. They also tell the people not to pay their taxes. Who do they think is going to keep up this county? The people aren't taxed bad up here. And, they are taxed for what they vote in. If you vote so much for the schools, you have to pay it. If you vote so much for the county hospital out there, for medicare, which is one of the best things that was put up----you have got to pay for it, you have to help. You are getting help from the state too. You are voting for welfare, you have to pay for part of that, the state pays part of it. Now, if this guy that is the Democratic nominee, if he gets in there, nobody will have to work. If he gets out his welfare like he--what a man! I suppose I shouldn't be saying this on that. That is my own personal feelings, I will say it outside. And, this country is going to go down in the dirt if there ever was a chance of it going down. Because, you never saw the people who are behind the people in the television cameras. You saw the poor element. Why are they poor? They didn't want to work, they don't want to work today. Give them 6500 dollars a year, you will have nobody working! You have got the same thing right here, they are getting the welfare in ADC. Why the hell should they work, they make more than I made when I was superintendent! That's right----that's the truth! Welfare is ruining this country! Some people need it, some people can't work and they need it. But, they are making such a game out of it, and I think that Nixon was right when he said, "Make them work!" Anybody who can work, make them work. But, in a political year, you can't do anything but give away anything. And, that's what they are doing. But, for that to go down in Heritage----I would swear to it, on a Bible. That's the trouble with this country today. The young people, there are darn good young people, and there are some that don't want to work.

P: How did the Republican Party view in this area in the 1930s, when F.D.R. was President? And when welfare started, and when WPA started?

J: I don't think they lost out until F.D.R. got in. That is, county-wise. They have always been trying to get this Calumet township.
And I know that one of the fellows who is running is a Demo-
crat. The other fellow is a Republican. They are running for my office. They may get their foot in the door, but that's all they will get.

P: For a short time, you mean?

J: Yes, we can't do anything. The rest of the board is all Repub-
lican.

P Well----thank you very much for your time, Mr. MacDonald.

(End of side #2 of tape #1)

side #1 of tape #2

P: Mr. MacDonald, could you tell me some of the stories of how the Finnish population reacted to you being the boss? What kind of people were they? What kind of things were they interested in?

J: Well----they were hard working men. Of course when the company started giving them coffee breaks and that, they were kind of---wherever they were working, they would get together and the Finnish people would talk in their native language. And, of course the younger fellows would say something to me about it, when I would come along. And, I would say, because I could understand a couple of words in Finn----I would say, "Come on, quit talking about me, Heiki, or Auto, or somebody!" And, then they would say, "We aint talking about you!" And I would say, "Don't forget that I can understand a little bit of Finnish!" That's the way I used to pass it off, and the other guys, they used to laugh a little bit. There was no hard feelings or anything about it. And, I wasn't only Finnish people, the Italians would do the same darn thing, if there were four or five of them in a group, in one of the working parties.

P: The ethnic groups sort of stuck together, didn't they? The Finns, and the Italians, and Irish, and whatever might be---the Armenians. (Yes) Did you have a good relationship with most of the different groups and that here? The ones that worked for you?

J: Yes, they all seemed to like me. I didn't have any trouble with them, with any of the groups. Then, finally when the mines started going down, I used to have to take men from Lake Linden's Division and that because we had more work. And, the mills and that didn't have it, you see? They weren't getting the copper. And, then, finally in the end-----heck, I was taking clear down to Keeweenaw. The surface work and that with my men. And, down into Lake Linden. I used to have to go down there with my men. They worked all over, and that's why I say they were hard working men. And, good men----they were really good men. I couldn't.
say enough for the fellows at that time. Because, regardless of what they were—Irish, Scottish, of course most of Irish and Scotch, we couldn't talk the Galic language like my grandmother used to be able to do. My mother was pretty good, she could talk Galic, and German, and Polish—just from being mixed up with those people. She could talk pretty good. But, I couldn't. I used to kid these fellows that I had worked with when I was working for Captain Jim Bosen with two Finnish girls they had working down there as maids, a cooking maid. I would come along and they would say something and I would say, "Ah!" And, they would say, "(Finnish)___." Well—I was younger than they were, and I was just more of a kid.

P: So, you didn't have any particular problems with any of your groups as far as having to fire men. Did you fire men more of certain groups than others? Were some more ornery than others?

J: No, that was one thing. You had to be doing something very bad before Calumet and Hecala would ever fire YOU, in the old days. Of course, when you start getting this other bunch in here, when they made that survey—I can't remember what the name of that company was. That's another thing that hurt the company here. They had a survey made by people who knew the stuff in the factories and such—but, they didn't know a damn thing about the mining! And, we could see them, they suggested that we—.

P: Was that a survey taken by, for the company—for Universal Oil?

J: No, no, Universal Oil has never thought of taking off—just taking things back.

P: By Wolverine too?

J: Well—they had Wolverine too, they had Alabama and those places down there—-it was a survey of the whole thing.

P: What capabilities the mine had and so on?

J: Yes, and what they could do suggesting how the better, to do this work. Well—heck, when we were going to school half of the time we were supervisors for the Calumet and Hecala. We used to have fellows come in from Tech. And, they would come in here, and we would go to school after work, at night. And, then they had another set-up that if we went to school for two weeks steady—-all day.

P: Down at Tech?

No, we went through the mines, and we went through the shops. We got a little bit of everything. And, men were brought in here from the Metal Department and that—outsiders, that brought this stuff up. Personel

P: What happened in 1968, '69? You weren't a part of the C&H any
longer, at that time. What was wrong, what—was there just
too much bitterness on each side?

J: No, I don't think there was too much on each side. When Tionca—they got the best offer that was ever given up here. The best wages, and the best pension offer that was ever given up here. And, they were just going to show the Western Mine they could stay out longer than the—the Western Mines had been out 7 months, I believe. They were just going to show them, they belonged to—the same union—just show them that they could stay out longer here. They got to two years, and then they were full up. And, I don't know who you can blame, but when the International Union got the fellows out of their building down here and sold the building—they sold them out. They took the keys away from everything. One side must have been—.

P: Did the men vote—their voting power over—?

J: They were never able to.

P: They never voted—what happened. The mine men controlled it or something, didn't they?

J: A certain group.

P: The men never got to vote on it at all.

J: They had the votes out one day, and they asked me for some booths for Sunday. They printed the votes, and then they brought it out at the Calumet Theater. This is what I got, I wasn't there, but, I know they asked me for the booths. They were going to have a secret ballot. And, a couple of them got up and said that we should vote. And, I think that the ballots were just printed as a camouflage. Because you could see that they had the ballots there, but the men didn't want them. Because, if anybody would say anything they were booted down by the group that was standing up, around that back of it.

P: What kind of attitude did people have towards, oh, let's say in the early 1900s, and 1920s, towards the local sherrif? Towards law?

Well—they were questioned. The sherrifs were pulled in when there was a strike here, and in the early days there, when we had the bad strike, they got implicated pretty much. But, then you side would say that so-and-so was in with the company, and some of the law enforcement people were in with the unions, you see. Of course, I was never mixed up in those strikes, I was used to working. I used to have to get out and work myself, and I used to work because I had the pump stations before they were brought in to Northern Michigan Water Company. All the sewers, waterlines, and everything. And, in fact, I took the
worst job of the bunch and let these other foremen go into the pumps, the pump stations. I used to go out at 6 and 16 and move the gates everyday, twice a day. A sewer farm, I had that too on my hands, which now they have renovated because they are bringing Laurium and Florida Location into that sewer system down there. That's the best built purification system—natural, in the whole United States, right out there.

P: What other kind of things can you remember about the good old days, as they used to call them? And, were they so good? You know, people always talk about the good old days, some things are better today, aren't they?

J: Yes, oh—I think some things that we have which are better today are the things that are ruining us. These kids that don't want to work, their folks are giving them too much dam money, and giving them cars. You see them running around with cars, where do they get the money? And, in the good old days, we had to walk or ride a bicycle, which a lot of them are doing now for health conditions, and bringing down their weight and that. In the old days, I rode a bicycle all around this surface, out to the pastures and everything else, to pick up the time on the men, and the boys that used to work in the pastures. I was in here as timekeeper when most of these places were outhouses. We used to have to have the contractor come in once a year, take a contract, and clean all these outhouses. And, that was still in the 30s. And, I used to have to go out at night and watch those fellows, and then they would quit. They would start at night, early about 6 or 7 o'clock. They had what they used to call honey-carts. The stuff was put in those, and there was a big handle where the horses pulled those things. They weren't done by trucks in those days. And, they would pull them out to Swede Town and different places where they were working. And, then this all had to be plowed into the ground before they quit in the morning. The contractor had to take care of that. He spilled them on the ground, yes.

P: But, C&H would contract them out?

J: Yes, I think they did it before I got there. They used to do that themselves when most people were working for the company at the time—when more people were working for the company, I suppose I should say. And, well—I know this to be a fact, we even built barns for the people and we painted. And, in the summer time we made jobs for the lads who were in high school to paint all the fences. Then, finally when they took the fences down, they bought all the Japanese Barbe bushes and put them along. Now, they are mostly pulled out—they are some across the street here yet—that were put in when they were making the C&H Park, when they had this landscape architect from Boston—Mr. Manning. They started that Agesie Park, and he brought in all those Popular trees from Virginia.
P: What other recollections do you have of your past 70, 78 years?

J: Well—I'm 75 now, so I don't remember too much, too darn much in my early days. I remember when my father owned the livery stable. I used to kind of hang around there. And, one day somebody heard me say something that wasn't just right, and I was only about 6 years old. And, he told my dad, and I was warned never to go up in that livery stable anymore. I said something about the manure on the roads, which I didn't say manure. I just heard these fellows that worked for my father, you see. But, I used to go up there, and one man would sleep all night in the barn because the horses were out all night and day. And, they used to hide me in a bed when my dad would come in. And, I was always told by my dad that I would get the first nickel that Pete Sauer—you never heard of him, but he was the richest man here, and he lived right on Fifth Street.

P: Pete Sauer?

J: Yes, he had all his C&H stock then, and he had a saloon. And, do you know where Tony Kowasick's Studio is now? That was part of his building, the building next to it where Ray Riley had his jewelry shop—that was the home of the Sauer's. And, the Sauer family, they knew me pretty good, and I guess my dad was a pretty good beer drinker in those days. (laughter) And, he didn't drive so much himself, but he had these fellows who would bring these drummers in—what they call these old fellows who were salesmen. They were salesmen, and they would have these big trunks, and they would come in by train, and they had to be brought to the Arlington Hotel, or brought up to where Pete Sauer had a show room there. And, he had a saloon on the other side. And, he was claimed to be the richest man. Well—I met his nephew, or his grandchildren—some boys, and they were Doctor Sauer's sons. And, they used to come up in the summertime, and stay with their aunts—that was after the old man died—I was just a young fellow. I know there was plenty of money there. My father used to always say that I got the first nickel that Pete Sauer gave out to anybody. He was a robbed one time going through what is the Agemie Park now. There used to be all the log piles, all the log piles used to be in there. Right from the Red Jacket Road right clean up to Pine Street with all the mines. Each mine had its own log pile, big high log piles—that they used to put for underground timber. And, he was walking through there one night, and somebody tried to rob him—I don't know who—there was more than one fellow who was trying to rob him. And, he pretty near murdered them. They didn't get anything out of him, they said, "My God, what would he have done if he had had five dollars on his person that might—He would have killed them! So, that was always a story too. But, I remember when the big conventions used to be here, when they used to deck the streets of Calumet, which was called Red Jacket at the time. They had big arches down to the depot. Where the depot is, or was—it still is, but it is all boarded
up. And, the Elks and the Mesonic Lodges, and the Knights and Tempors used to come up here and have their conventions here. This was one of the best towns there was to come to. And, the carnivals—when I was a young fellow I used to work at these carnivals—for the Legion and them. I was taking tickets, you see? And, these big carnivals used to come here, either to Calumet or Laurium. In the later days we used to have them down in the Laurium Drive-In Park, where the first airport was, because they said that this was the best 4th of July town in the whole country—no matter where they traveled. They always came, and they always had the biggest carnivals up here.

P: What kind of things did the people do on the 4th of July?

Oh, they had everything going from day to night, and then they had the biggest fireworks that you have ever seen. You don't see those things anymore.

P: Did men have that day off, or were some still working on that day?

J: Yes, 4th of July. Of course, in the mines there was always somebody who had to take the shift, even for watching and that. And, for the pumps and that, because there was so much pumping that had to be done.

P: To get the water out.

J: Yes. In fact, I was working at the mines when we were closing them up. And, I worked with my men again when they put this pump shaft out there in Number 5, Tamarack.

P: What kind of social problems did the people have? Was there a lot of drinking?

J: Well—there were a lot of saloons in the old days. They used to say that on 5th Street alone there were 42 saloons!

P: So, there must have been something going

J: Yes, and you know, the saloon-keepers were the best donators to anything that ever went on around here. They donated more money than anyone else, the saloon-keepers, for the 4th of July celebration—no matter what was going on they would donate, charities or anything. They were given that much credit, I know that. I remember that as a kid.

P: People must have frequented the saloons, though, on Saturday night?!

J: Well—-they used to have free lunches in the saloon. What you pay today for 5 dollars you could get that free with a nickel glass of beer. If you got a pail of beer and brought it home...
the family, there was always------. I used to here of the big
dinner pails they used to have. When I chummed with these fel-
lows, they were different fellows that worked in the mine, we
would go over and get a pail of beer. And, they were always
told before they left for home to put a little piece of lard in
the bottom of the pail so it wouldn't get so much foam in it.

P: Oh, is that right! A little bit of lard!

J: A little bit of lard in the bottom of the pail.

P: Then you wouldn't get foam on the top?

J: You wouldn't get so much foam. You would get more beer, than
you would foam. But, if you wanted the foam again, you could
just shake it up a little bit, then.

P: What about during the Prohibition? Saloons closed down, and
people stopped drinking, or did they?

J: This was one of the biggest what-do-you-call-it-towns, well----
this county was, for moonshining. Oh, I remember, because I
know, because that was the first time I took a drink.

P: During the Prohibition?

J: Yes. A lot of people made money, in those corners. Their kids
would get the benefit of it. They bought bonds and stuff, you
see?!

P: Oh, I see. They made money off of the brew! And, then they
bought things afterwards with the money they made during that
time!

J: This place was given credit to having the best moonshine that
there was. At the Edge Water Beach Hotel in Chicago, Raymbault
Rye was one of their main what-you-calls.

P: Made from up here! Well---what did the local authorities do-
the sherrif?

J: Oh, they used to catch them, some of them.

P: Put them in jail for a spell---?

J: Oh, the Federal agents!

P: Did they come up here?

J: Oh, did they come up here! They caught a lot of fellows who
had to go down to the Federal Prison, you know. Old man Roda,
I can't think of them all----that's the one that comes to my
mind. He went down there. There was people in every town that
I knew—there was a woman out there that used to say, we used to go out there and get some wine on Saturday night before we would go to the Colosseum, the dance, and we used to lead the doctors out there. I used to say—she had this red tablecloth on the table, and I used to always say that all she does is wet this tablecloth and squeeze it, and you would get Bago Red. (laughter) I know the whole dam family—there's one boy living yet, one of the boys. He is up in his age.

P: Yes, there was a lot of drinking during the Prohabitation, though?
J: Yes, that was the worst thing they ever put!

P: That was right at the end of the war, starting around 1920?
J: Yes.

P: And, it lasted until '33.
J: Yes, around that time.

P: I can't remember exactly.

J: And, there was a boat that came to Houghton from Canada, to a certain lodge. It was Fort Arthur, or one of those places. It was just to sort of inter-change—this boat load came in and they would get off at the dock at Houghton—in fact, I belonged to that lodge. And, that's the day that Warren Harding died. That was a Sunday—he died either on a Saturday or a Sunday. I know he was laying dead at that time. So, we had a big banquet at the Empress Room, for these people. Of course we all went on the boat, and there used to be ice, and beer, and bottles of whiskey—everything! No Federal men or county men went on the boats, you see. And, all the boats would come into Lake Linden, from Canada, or wherever they came from. Across the ocean they used to come with these Pebble Boats, and that, you know. There was always places where the big shots around here brought in stuff.

P: Brought in liequor probably.

J: Yes, by those boats. They weren't moonshine, that was the real stuff—that was Canada, you see. These other countries, they weren't on Prohabition.

P: There was a lot of bootlegging! Was there any of those bars—did they ever stay open? What do they call them, I don't know—they were like hidden bars, like they had in some of the cities and that. Did they have some of those up here?

J: Yes, they had them. A lot of times what they did have here, in those days—they came into that near-beer stuff, you know.
they used to sell that. And, then they got this stuff where the fellows used to make their own beer. I know that some of the big fellows that I worked with in the office, they made beer. Another man, a very very prominent man, I worked with in the office—I used to help him out on Sunday. There was a drug store close down town, and he went down and he bought every bit of happy medicine that was 90% alcohol. He used to get that dam stuff!

P: That would be a little hard on the stomach, after a while!

J: And, he was—he was one of the most wonderful, dam fellows that C&H ever had!

P: Any other recollections from the period—personal feelings, good feelings about the period?

J: Oh, I knew these fellows, like Juras Gip, I knew him real well. And, Hart Anderson, and those fellows who had the great football teams here. And, O.J. Larson—Gip, and Cursey Wilcox later for Notre Dame. And, Larry Damon was later yet. He was one of the stars here, and he played for Notre Dame, he played football. And, Nick Barrow—he was captain of Notre Dame. I think, I think Jury played football for Notre Dame too, with McGeene, and of course Mesner just died now. So, he would be a partner now.

P: Well—I want to thank you for your time, and we will take a break.

(End of side #1 of tape #2)
(No side #2)
(End of interview)
Suomi salutes the people who make this area

Suomi College
Folklore Album

Father
a. Alexander
b. Lake Wild
b. Hotel operator

Mother
a. Elizabeth
b. Calumet

Father
a. Opal
b. Tamara

Mother
a. Sibyl
b. Cape

Mother
a. Margaret
b. Dorothy

Father
a. James
b. Calumet

Mother
a. Dorothy Opal
b. Tamara

Child
a. Donald
b. Phil

Child
a. John
b. Mary

Child
a. Ed
b. etc.

Child
a. etc.

Child
a. etc.

Child
a. etc.
Supervisor's post
his second career

CALUMET — James A. Mac-
Donald of here can look back
on two careers that combined
spanned over 50 years.

MacDonald retired recently
as supervisor of Calumet
Township, a position he held
for nine years, and which he
was elected to after 45 years
with the Calumet & Hecla
Mining Company.

MacDonald won the sup-
ervisor’s post in his first bid in
1952 and continued to win re-
election until stepping down at
the close of his last term in
past December.

Fulltime supervisor
Because he was retired
MacDonald was the first full-
time supervisor of the town-
ship, keeping regular office
hours Monday through Friday
and “answering the phone at
home all weekend.” During
almost all of his tenure town-
ship supervisors served on
the county board of super-
visors, which meant double
duty. This was especially true
for MacDonald, who was also
appointed to many of the
committees since he was able
to devote more time to them.

He was assistant chairman
and then chairman of the
community formed for the
construction of the new county
court, was chairman of the
county board’s airport com-
mittee, which helped form the
private airport authority
served as an honorary chair-
man of the finance
committee and helped “fight
for the medical care facil-
ity,” he recalled.

Township responsibilities
kept him equally busy, he said,
and was during his adminis-
tration that all streets in the
township were paved with
vapor lighting installed and
repaired and improvements to
courts made a primary and
ongoing project.

Housing commission head
He was president of the
senior citizens housing com-
mission, which erected the 69-
unit senior citizens apartment
building in Calumet; and in
1963, he served as co-chairman
with the late Ed Crowley for
the township’s centennial
celebration.

Besides overseeing the larg-
est township in the county
MacDonald had an additional
burden in that the largest por-
tion of the mining company’s
properties were situated in his
township. He said he took
“a lot of abuse” from some who
felt his valuations of some of
these properties were too low
and points out, with some
amusement, that he is now
named in a suit by the prop-
erty’s present owner, Universal
Oil Products, which is contesting the valuations he
made as being too high.

Man of the year
In 1954 he was presented a
Man of the Year Award by the
den Calumet-Keweenaw
Chamber of Commerce. To his
knowledge, he is the only
person ever to be so honored
by the organization.

MacDonald became a
widower in 1971 after 52 years
of marriage. He has two sons,
one a lieutenant colonel in the
army and the other a vice
president with Penn Mutual.

He is spending much of his
time “keeping busy, taking care of my health,” he
has suffered with emphysema
for the past 14 years and is
on medication from the Mayo
Clinic. On the suggestion of
doctors there he will be leaving
soon for Arizona, where he
is hoping to spend at least two
months.