FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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The following pages represent approximately eight and one-half hours of taped interviews, photos and comments.

The family interviewed was a first generation Finnish family of the Upper Peninsula.

RESPONDENT:

August Helsten:
Age: 68
Born: 1909
Occupation: Semi-retired
Wife: Ellen Helsten
Age: 59
Born: 1919
Occupation: Housewife

The parents of the respondent immigrated to the United States in 1900. The respondent's father worked in the mines and after several years was able to purchase a small farm. While continuing to work the mines he raised the family food supply on the farm. There were twelve children, one of which did not survive the year of birth. As the children matured they moved off of the property but remained within the same area. The male respondent, born in 1909, purchased the farm from his mother and was able to support his family with the sale of farm products. The daughters grew, he found it was necessary to supplement his income with another job. Now living alone in the same house he was born, they continue to work the farm in a semi-retire fashion.
R1: Vaasa, yes my Grandmother was born in Vaasa. And R2's folks were in Kurikka. All the people that I know are from what they call the central western area of Finland. They call this the Ostrobothnia...... which means the South of the Northland. Etlapohjanmaa is the Finnish word.

I: The South of the Northland...........

R1: Yes, and then there a lot of people from this section........

"Note" She is showing me a map of Finland.

I: It was in 1939 that the Russians took over this area...

R1: Did you ask R2?

I: Yes, I did, but he just doesn't seem to remember too much, all I know is R2's Father's name was John Victor but they called him Victor. And he married Maria.........he had no family......they say he was illegitimate but the family doesn't want to bring that out too much. There are others tho' because I know that there is a brother in Ohio and one in New Hampshire......most likely his Mother did marry then and he does have half brothers and half sisters, but they always just called them brothers and sisters R2's Mother said.......I guess she had never discussed that with her kids or something, but she did tell me so evidently, his mother did marry.......somehow his family just lived apart........now I should tell you my Father and his three brothers as they got to be teenagers they were, more or less, farmed out to big estates and do you know that each took the name of the estate......they didn't keep their Father's name.......they were of that household....... and this is true of so many Finnish families ....they are brothers and sisters and they all have separate names........

"Note" I detect she wishes not to discuss the illegitimate at this point!

I: Do you have any idea when this was?

R1: That would be around........let's see, my Father was born in 1879.......that would be early 1890's........my Mother was born in 1886. But R2's mother.......let's see we'll put the dates down for their births...R2's father was born in 1879.......and his mother was born in 1880. They were married in 1900.......very soon after they were married R2's father immigrated by himself because if he would have stayed he would have been constricted into the Russian army.......see Finland belonged to Russia at the time.......Finland didn't get it's independence until World War I in 1916. They had belonged to Russia for 140 years but for the pre-
and board.

I: How do say this area again?

R1: It's really what they call a town or a......weren't really cities
they were small.......they would just have ac church and I
suppose and things like that.

I: You don't have any idea of the size and that?
At that time (looking at a map)....I doubt if it would be any bigger
than National Mine.

I: I see 500 or 600 people.
Yes, that's about all. And there were so many because travel was
difficult, they had these little towns....there were quite a few be-
cause you couldn't travel very far to go to buy what you needed. I
should say that they were almost self-sufficient, they raised their own
wool, my mother talks when they would weave their own cloth, raise
their flax to spin.......  

I: They were farmers, then?

R1: Yes, that whole country was basically agricultural, outside of fish-
ing industries.....

I: I thought lumbering.......  
Well, now it is. It was to a certain extent but nothing like now.
That's their biggest exploit now is lumbering. It only goes for their
own use they don't raise any.......they raise pigs and chickens now...
but they still have to import......

I: The farming that they did, did they do it to sell or was it just for
self-sustaining.......  

R1: Mostly to sustain and to trade. Maybe they traded, I really don't
remember that. But they were going to the market and everyone would
bring their produce to a central place and they would buy what they
needed and sell what they had to sell.

I: Where did they go from there?

R1: Well, I think they would go to Seinajoki, that is a bigger city. But
very rarely too far away.......if my grandfather would go to Vaasa,
and he would be gone for a week or more. They'd go with the horses
and the wagon. It was basically agricultural and small industries,
home industries, weaving and coppering to make things that everybody
needed.......There were small industries of these types.

"Note" She shows me the towns on the map and
regularly refers to it.
I: Were you from the same area?
R1: My mother came from pretty close to the same area...Kurikka.
I: It appears to be close.
R1: Now they are, but in those days they were really quite small. My mother divorced my father when I was maybe two years old so I know very little about my father.
I: Do you have any idea how the original marriage took place?
R1: My father's? No...my mother and father were married in this country, of course...My grandparents on my mother's side....I know about them.
I: You see, the reason I am asking is on this map it looks like twenty miles.
R1: Well, you mean, let's see....my mother was born in Kurikka and when they were little they moved to Ilmajoki.....Joki means river. There were these landed estates, real big estates that really farmed in a big way.....cattle and grain......mostly grain......grain was the...in fact the Finnish word for grain is synonymous for the word life.
I: That's pretty interesting......you could hardly live without it.
R1: So grain was the big thing. I have an original painting from Finland right there and that shows the grain fields as they are coming forth in the spring......everything is planted in grain.

"Note" She appears to be very proud of it. The painting is done in pastels..water color
I: Is this something that you recently brought back?
R1: Yes, that one and the only time that I have been to Finland which was eight years ago.
I: Are you going again?
R1: Well, Betty keeps saying, "Ma, we just have to go again." She is the one that paid my way. I had been writing to my cousins, I have several cousins and at that time I had an aunt too, and I write to them allot and they keep saying, "When are you coming back?" I always said that is one thing that I won't ever be able to do. That was when Betty was little and Betty would say, "Mom, when I grow up and I am earning money, I'll take you. And we used to just laugh at her, but by golly, she did! We visited seven other countries too......I have a cousin in Sweden too.
I: I guess all the little towns were along the river.

"Note" Still looking at the map.
R1: Yes, because that was their origin means of transport

I: Do they still use the river?

No, not as much. Even my mother's time the railroad came thru.
It was a great big feat. Everybody piles the kids into their
wagons and went to the railroad station to see this marvelous new
thing. A steam engine going along on the tracks. It was a days
holiday to go a few miles to see it.

I: It looks like about twenty miles....

R1: Yes, but of course these are marked in kilometers and they are less
than a mile....
It looks like about twenty kilometers.

R1: As you know that is what we are going to before long. I'm so confused
about it. A person should start learning about it.

I: Now you said that a father had brothers and sisters.

I: Yes there are some but they never kept in touch. It was after he was
gone that Aili, the oldest girl's husband somehow got in touch with one
at a church convention or something. They accidently found each
other. Aili was born in Finland, he has been gone for years. Donald,
Carol Jean, Evelyn and Doris are Aili's oldest sister's children. See,
they were married in 1900 and then R2's father left to come to the United
States and then in the spring of the next year Aili was born. I think
it was two years before he was able to earn enough money to send for
his family.

I: You said he originally left to avoid....

R1: He left to avoid constriction....

I: What were the policies of the Russian army with letting the family leave

R1: They didn't try too. Who was it Nicholas II or was it Alexander II, he
was the Czar and he was quite lenient. It wasn't until the Communists took
over that they became strict. I think the Russian people were living un
der complete. A king or Czar, but he had such complete con

trol. The people were used to that. There was no uprising until I
think the turmoil started and it could have gone either way in Russia
during World War I. There was such a fine line that they could have
become a democracy as well. But Finland had a pretty good idea of how
a democracy works. Immediately they gave women suffrage. They gave them
the same status. They could even property...it still
isn't that way in France.
I: Apparently you have done a lot of reading....

R1: Well, I suppose because I have all of these relatives which we would like to communicate with....I was there and I was able to communicate with them in person so a little bit gets left in your head, you know how it is.

I: Do the relatives that are there presently, do they have any ideas of coming to the states?

No, there is a quota system now, and as many as possible come from Finland.....but you see the United States has a quota system and the quota system is full for five years.

I: But they would still like to come?

My relatives, one of them has mentioned this to me...but there were, like your generation were wanting to immigrate if they can't come to the United States...the second place they want to go is to Canada....if they can't get to Canada they would like to go to Australia. But there are an awful lot of young people who still would like to leave. They are great for education, they are just the greatest readers in the world, but you know, I'd say about two-thirds of the educated young people, college graduates, are out of work. They are still doing menial jobs even tho' they have spent all of these years studying and spent all this money.....Finland cannot account, they just do not have enough industry, no way to expand on any type of industry or big business. A lot of them have migrated to Sweden, Germany has been a place the Finns have always like to go...German was a language they all wanted to learn but it isn't any more......when they needed a second language in school was always the one to study aside from Finnish and Swedish.

I: Never Russian?

R1: Oh, no.......Never Russian.....when the war was over in 1939 the Finns had to pay the war debt to Russia and it took them until 1952. Every year they had to supply Russia with so many ships and Finland didn't even have a shipyard that they could make these big ships that they had to give to Russia. Right from there, the very scratch, Finland had to build shipyards with which to build these ships that they had to give to Russia.....as a war payment. They say it was a blessing in disguise because now they have these beautiful big shipyards and they are making ships for all of countries all over the world. They make
R1: very very good ships and if they hadn't had to do that under stress and strain, it might never had happened. Their building is still going very very strong in Finland right now, very very heavy because they needed new schools, and they needed new roads, they needed new everything, because the war really got them down to nothing. But they say they don't care as long as they are able to keep their independence. Naturally, with a big power right next to them they have to tread on a tightrope...they can't do everything they want to do. But they say they don't mind that because they are still independent. But alot of the young people think that that is just not going to last so that is why so many of them want to leave. They say that anything that happens Russia will use that as a pretext to take over the country.

I: There is an amazing amount of water there isn't there?

R1: Yes, that's what they call Finland, the land of ten thousand lakes, but they really have more than that. It is just emerging from the ice age, it still is emerging from the ice age.....the land is still steadily rising every year and the lakes are getting more shallow. It is a gradual process but it is still land that was really pushed down by the vast glacier.

I: Is fishing a big part of their life?

R1: Yes, fishing is very big along all the coast especially. I don't know how good the fishing is in these inland lakes. It is not as good as the ocean fishing. A great part of the fishing industry died because so much fish is available. But it seems to me they were all ocean fish and of course, visiting Helsinki, fish is a real mainstay in their diet. ....it is very easy to supply.

I: Is beef a........

R1: No, beef is very small. They don't even have any beef cattle all they have is dairy cattle, and when she is too old for anything else they will make sausage out of her....sausage, and of course they do raise pigs, sausage is another mainstay in their life. I think in the days of our father most people were self-sufficient....they would slaughter calves....they had a lot of veal...pigs were raised.....and do you know that they raised chickens but there was never chicken available in a restaurant. I still don't know about this but they must do something with those chickens when they get too old to lay eggs....they must eat
R1: them but nobody ever mentioned chicken and no restaurant ever had any chicken on their menus.....So I never found out what they did with the chickens.

I: Does anybody know what they do with their chickens?

R1: Yes, because we never were served any and we never saw it on the menu or in the stores. They can't imagine the abundance of things that we have. They live well but it still isn't........

I: What do you mean well? You don't mean financially well........

R1: No, they have sufficient foods, shelter, but.....

I: Let us go back to R2's father.......it seems like the family ties were not too important....

R1: It seems that young people left home so early there just wasn't land for them, that they would go out to work very young. Fortunately Finnish people came to this country.....the language is totally different than the Scandanavian language....Swedish and Norweigan...for them it was very easy....because there were similarities in the language it was easy for them to learn the English language....the written look of it is very similar....but the Finnish is totally different. There is not one similarity between the Swedish and the Finnish.

I: How many letters in the alphabet?

R1: There is 26...no 28....each letter has its own sound and after the z there is an a and an o with the dots on. When one letter has more than one sound they added it to the end and put the two dots on it....and where it is accented in a word they use double letters like two a's, two l's....it isn't hard to learn.

I: Are there many different dialects?

R1: Yes, very ....thats almost as bad as this country and it is such a small country. Like if somebody comes from the Eastern area they clip their words so close....they don't put the long sounds to any of the words....they clip the words so it would be a while for you to know what they are talking about.

I: Could you give me an example?

R1: Well, I can only speak this one way, but I have heard people speak this short way....they drop a substantial part of a word......they told me I spoke such good Finnish...it is so old-fashioned! My mother came to this country in 1902, so I speak in the sort of Finnish that was spoken
R1: There than.....So.....old-fashioned, they said!
I: But you apparently know a little more about your family then....
R1: Yes, I do....
I: Are they still living in the same area?
R1: Yes, my cousins....I only have cousins.....I have one in Vaasa....they live on a farm, they have chickens.......
I: Do they eat their chickens?....?
That is what I never found out.....you know they don't know anything about apple pies, they had apples out there falling on the ground and I promised to make them a pie and we were going to the store to buy some cinnamon for the pie but that never happened so we didn't get a pie.
I: How did your cousins accept you?
R1: Oh, they treated us like royalty.......
I: All of them?.......
R1: Yes, all of them....and they had newspapers come to interview us...each one of them wanted to keep us a little longer....they would always say to go tomorrow, each wanted to keep us a little longer than other cousins there was real competition among them.....they did everything possible for us. My cousins range from very well to do to poor....
"Note" She shows me a newspaper clipping with her picture and a rather long article.
I: They are living in the same area?
R1: Yes, they are living in the same general area.....
I: Those that were well to do, what kind of....
R1: He worked with metals, he bought and traded metals....scrap dealer?.....he had people do it.....he was very well to do.....in fact, he wanted to call R2.....but I said he would think that we had an accident or something.....and the time difference was so great.....
I: Did you discuss any of the history with them?
Not too much....they discussed some of their war experiences with me, this last war, but.....
I: "Note" She shows me pictures of her relatives
They had beautiful textiles.....
I: If they are of such meager means do they make their own?
R1: Yes, they made their own, you know girls would be dressed to the T....and they would go out and ride a bicycle.....I could never get over that.....because you know we go out and ride bikes around here and wear
R1: the most casual clothes... but there they cannot afford the cars so they go on bikes or buses...

I: What kind of cars do they have there?

R1: They have small, oh this is what I want to tell you, they have mostly Swedish made cars and alot of German made cars...Volkswagons....as a part of the deal when the war ended, Russia said Finland had to buy so many Russian Made cars...every year they demanded that the... and my cousins said that those cars sit on the dock and rust away... and those people who do buy them...because they are quite cheap, at that time...in 1968, a Russian car would cost about $800.00....anybody who buys them is looked down upon....there is an animosity there.....

I: Where did R2's father come when he came to the United States...right here?

R1: He came right to Ishpeming.

I: Did he get off a boat?

R1: He got off the boat in New York, I think the railroad service was quite good by that time....I know when my mother came from the east coast she travelled by rail.....we did travel on the lakes for a while.....

I: So he must have had some relatives here....

R1: He had some, I think he had some, I don't know how close, but there was somebody here, either a close friend or a relative....that I don't remember, this is what I have not been able to find out in the family.... the mining companies.....the government would put posters around to tell the people that jobs were available in such and such an area...like that is what the copper mining people did, jobs were available and land was available.....and times were so bad that people for economic reasons even if they didn't say they wanted to leave they almost had to....and this was the place to go because this is where there was room and jobs...some of them worked terribly hard in the mines, they were mostly farmers and they did not farm but went to the mines to work.....

I: Did R2's father work in the mines before?

R1: No, there were no mines in that area.

I: He hadn't migrated to Germany to work in the mines there?

R1: No, or Sweden or anything...no..... I think there were some people, maybe the first people that came had worked in mines in Sweden or something.....yes, that they had experience in mining or something but as far as all of my relatives and R2's relatives none of them were miners...
there were maybe a few mines way up there somewhere (Northern Finland). I don't even know for certain. They even had to ditch this area, they would have long narrow fields and they would build them up in the center so they would slope to each side. so there would be ditches and my mother said that was the hardest work that anybody ever had to do was to build those ditches. and all the fields had to be ditched for more drainage. otherwise the fields wouldn't grow anything and do you know that when those farmers came here they thought they had to do the very same thing. they were going to start digging ditches here until somebody told them that there was no need to do that, that there was natural drainage here, they didn't have to ditch their fields.

You know it is kind of interesting too, why would R2's father come here to work in a mine as opposed to starting a farm?

Well, this is what all the miners did as soon as they were able too, they got a farm. but only a farm big enough to support their family...after so many years they had accumulated enough money to buy this farm...even if they lived in a location they had little plots of land, even if they lived in a location they had a plot of land to raise some potatoes, to raise their own food...they still basically like that. that is what they say in the Copper Country too. that men worked for the mines only long enough to accumulate enough to buy some land...their lives were really rough too. short seasons, but this is still what they wanted to do.

Did your family come to the states too?

My mother came and she was just 16 years old and she came to Ishpeming.

Did she have any children then?

No, she was unmarried, only a young woman of age 16, she came with a neighbor woman...she was allowed to come because the neighbor woman had been here before and this lady said she would sponsor her and she immediately got jobs in this famous boarding house, I think in Princeton, also she would help Finnish families that had a large family and these people would hire these girls from the old country for practically nothing...room and board and only a couple of dollars a month, that is about all they gave them.

What was your mother's name?

My mother's name was Hilja.
And my mother married my Dad and his name was Samuel.....I think one was the family name but that was never used because he went to a Swedish estate and took their name.....and his oldest brother Mike lived in Wakefield.....I got to see him.....once my mother and father got divorced, my mother kept me away from my dad's family, well not really, he had visiting rights.....my father lived in Vermont and each weekend, on Friday nights my father would come and get me with a car, that was the only means.....

Where was it that you were living then?

My mother and I were living in New Hampshire, that is where I was born, they were married in Massachusetts, and my mother divorced him....she was in her thirties and my father was in his forties when they got married.....they just never got along....she claimed that my father was a drinking man. She worked and she claimed that after he drank up his paycheck he drank up hers.....so she put an end to that and I was an only child. She said she could get along with me, she just wanted to get rid of him.....but he would come and take me to his brother's farmland and my mother would come by train to pick me up....but I did have contact with my father as long as we were living out east. Once we came back to Michigan where she was as a young lady.

Now just so I get this, when she came from Finland she came right to Ishpeming, then apparently she married......

No, she worked in this area for about ten years and she went back to Finland for awhile, one year's visit......

Her original intention was only for a visit....

Yes, to go back to Finland.....yes she came to this country to live and to work and when she had lived and worked here for ten years, she went back to Finland for one years visit and then when she came back she stayed out east.....and then she worked out east, because like I say she was about thirty years old when she got married.....there were factories in the east, they were textile factories, mostly and the pay was so much better than what she had been getting as a house maid or working in a boarding house.....the pay was fabulous compared to what she had been getting just working in homes or boarding houses... she stayed there and worked in a factory.....

How long did she stay there?
Well, she married my father, I think in the early part of 1916, and she came back to the United States from Finland in, I think 1913, so she was back about three years before. She married my father and then I was born in the middle of 1917. My father and my mother decided they were going to come back to Michigan because my father's brother Michael was living in Wakefield, they claimed they had a job for my father as a woodsman. But the two of them just never did get along. So she went back with me, out east, but then he came back too, when I was 7 my mother brought back her. . .

I: You were seven?
R1: Yes, I was seven, the last time I saw my father, not quite seven. . .
I: Your mother remarried then?
Well, she remarried when she was quite old but she divorced that man too. And when she divorced my father, she took her maiden name back legally. People do that now a days but it was almost unheard of then. She didn't want support, she was strong and she could manage. Anyway the year I was married, she got notice that my father had died, and she said she knew why, he was drunk and fell outdoors or something. She never forgave him for his drinking. When I got back from Finland the first thing R2 asked me was, "Were the Finns like his mother, old fashioned and pious?" He also wanted to know if there were a lot of drunks in Finland. I said the Finns are a hard drinking lot alright, they are a moody and a melancholy people.

I: Well, your mother's family. She came alone, nobody else? . .
R1: Nobody else came, her two brothers came later, but they didn't stay they went back to Finland. . .
I: They came. . . do you have any idea when they came?
R1: Yes, they came in 1904 and 1906.
I: They came independently then? . .
R1: Yes, yes they did. . .
I: How long did they stay?
R1: They stayed until 1909 and one stayed until 1912, or was it, I would have to check my mother's correspondence to find out for certain. They went back to Finland and married and stayed there. There was 12 children.
in the family and only about \( \frac{1}{2} \) of them survived to adult. In those
days, tuberculosis was a real bad threat. It seems to me that half the
people in their late teens and early twenties died of tuberculosis, be-
cause in the winter time people lived in one big room, it was like a
family room, they had bunks along the walls, and everybody was just too
close...it was to conserve heat and in the winter time there was
no day just like in the summer time there is no night in that part of
the world.

I: The rest of the family, they didn't come to the states, did they go
anywhere else?

R1: No, they all stayed in a very very close area.

I: Did they look down on your mother?

R1: Oh, no, no, they didn't. They thought that she was quite a girl to
do that, to come by herself at 16. But to tell you the truth, my
family did not seem to be too......I think they were kind of cold,
cold to each other, or were they just so reserved....or what was it?
There were never any words of endearment, it seemed they weren't too
interested in each other's well being.....

I: Why do you suppose that was?

R1: I don't know was it the severity of their life?

I: It wasn't any difference in their political ideas?

R1: No, I can't...I doubt it very much....they were very pious people,
church going people. There were big flat rocks, this is where they
stopped......they went down to the river, there they washed their feet,
put on their shoes and stockings and that was also that was the place
they did the...ha..ha.... you know behind the bushes....they would go
to church, then on the way back stop at the big flat rock again, and
take off their shoes. They weren't going to wear out their shoes walk-
ing. Ha..ha.....

I: How far was the church?

R1: I would say it was about 5 kilometers at least, so that would be about
three miles and they would walk. And in ancient times this is when they
would have this river boat that would hold up to two dozen people, that
was already in the 1300's.

"Note" We are looking at photographs of family
in Finland as well as her trip in 1968.
She has many albums readily at hand.
This is a sauna.

Yes, I knew that but still...

Still, yes; they have enough lakes, don't they?

Every sauna out Perch Lake is the lake too.

He likes a sauna but he doesn't care if he has one or not.

But, my goodness those Finns over there would absolutely die if they couldn't have a sauna.

I think I am against saunas because when I was a kid that was all we had to do was on a Saturday put wood in a sauna and then you to let it eat it for all a day. It was a smoke sauna. The smoke would come in and then you would have to let the air out to clear the smoke out of there. You had to heat that... there was no fire in there when you were taking a bath like it is now days. You just heated it up to the point where the water was boiling... on the rocks, there would be a towel atop of the rocks... there was a heck of a big outfit like that.

You probably know that in Finland when a child is about to be born, it was the sauna where the mother to be and the midwife, where they always went.

No, I didn't know that.

Yes, all the children were born in the saunas...

The children were born in the saunas.
R I: Yes that was the one clean antiseptic place and
couldn't have picked a better place because it was
absolutely heated to the point here a germ wouldn't
have a chance to live in there. And then away from
the rest of the family.... That was a part of the
system that you couldn't have everybody around for
that. There wasn't enough.... houses were built in
such a way, the rooms were mostly communal rooms, no
private room really to go to that was the place where
they would always go when children were born. My
other said that when her sisters were born there were
twins that she was three years old and somebody
was taking care of her.... she knew her mother was in the
sauna.... and she would have gone there except that there
was a horse laying on the path so she didn't dare to go
there. But she was bound and determined that she would
have gone in that sauna.

Well do they have bathtubs too or anything like that?
No, well-to-do homes have them now tho... regular bath
rooms, ye really fancy. Mostly still like out in the...
I shouldn't say sticks, because it really isn't, but
in the small towns it still mostly saunas. It's just
so a part of their life that you don't separate Finnish
people and their sauna. An what's more, a lot of
times they would undress in the house and just put a
bathrobe on, an o in the sauna and come back with just
a bathrobe on. They didn't even bother to take their
I: That's kind of like the Orient. I wasn't aware of that.

RII: Well, do you realize a lot of things in Finland very closely related to the Orient especially in Northern Europe.

I: Why would you say that is?

RII: You know what they used to tell us in school when I was a younger... that all Finns are Mongolians. Well you just had to look at us, every one of us blond and blue-eyed and white, white skin and they were telling "You're a Mongolian." You're a Mongolian. Well, you see the Laplanders; I think the Laplanders were the people who originally lived in this part of the Far East Finns there is that certain amount of Asian blood darkness and smallness but mainly the western Finns at least are very definitely Scandinavian. The truth is that a lot of the Oriental type of things and foods and crops and I didn't realize until I was in Finland. The Finns that came to America so very quickly they try to become Americanized even though it took them a long time to learn English. Still they took on the accent of this land. Then the I'd heard th here is an old oriental overlay in a lot of. So evidently the migrants of these sorts are east to the west. Big soft boots were made of leather tied around the leg and straw as usec inside for n lat n.
don't sound right.

Yes, doesn't sound right. It couldn't be the state of preservation if they did. Cedar is a huge, huge here we would say (Finnish word hey...that is really here, we could say som'ords mixed with English and if you would go to Finland and say the the cords say, "what in the hell"? It sounds a corpse...a body is a roomus...a dead person is roomus.

I: What's the ord in Finnish for room?

R I: Rooma. They designate it as sleeping or a living room or whatever. Ola would mean family room...Ola means just to with...of course, the kitchen is called a place here cooking me. A sitting room. I listened to someone...like on that program Finnish Calling, he or I live from Finland...I enjoy tenin, to that real Finnish...I keep wishing was as acute...at I'm not.

Did R2 ever want to go to Finland?

R I: I didn't tell you that did I that he is not gun-ho about anything Finnish at all...like they have these things at church...like these seminars...and some of my friends do, all are enthusiastic about it. I say that maybe it is something to do with the fact when he was real young and the kid's started going to school around here, they claim that the Cousin Jacks and the Swedes looked
down on them. You could try to ride our Finness.

I: I think that has something to do with it...the name.

I: The idea that a Finnish sounding name was no good to

I: Your name as a Finnish tho', right?

R1: Yes, there's a Swedish name but...

I: Prior to that you said...

R1: Well, I don't know about 2's family...

R2: But I heard... I don't know if he was illegitimate...anyway, he had his mother's name.

R1: But then he had a brother and sister didn't he? I was told not about those. Well, you had the name, it is another they have taken is other's name. I think his other didn't have that many out-of-wedlock kids. It is R2's family too. I was thinking maybe one other didn't marry another en and the other is that, don't really keep in touch because they had an eldest brother and sister. That he never are to keep in touch with her at all.

I: The name R2?

R1: It's a Swedish name or a Norwegian name. A Scandinavian name. So as your name.

I: It should be spelled the same way.

R1: Yes, very Scandinavian spelling.

R2: One guy told me that it means...flat rock.

R1: You know! Almost all the Finnish names are name of things like piiri. Ii ourenmaa is like
land...Keto is a field...

I: Keto is a field....

RI: Yes...

I: And there is a Keto living around here....

RI: Yes, a lot of Ketos....

I: Are they Finnish?

RI: Yes...and Maki is a hill, of course....

R2: A lot of people were Makis and they changed their name to Hill....

I: Ah ha ha....

RI: Yes, Maki means hill in Finn...and usually there would be a preceding word, you know, meaning a high or low or the other one...

I: Some kind of hill?

RI: Yes, some kind of hill, and there was usually a word saying what kind of hill, like our friends, Katjamaki's... a juniper tree...say, that would be a juniper hill.

I: Isn't that something, isn't that kind of Oriental too? Naming things after....maybe that was done up there too.

RI: Yes, that's very true....

I: You know how the Orient kind of names after flowers?

RI: All natural things, like a ..... 

I: Nature was really a part of their lives....

RI: This is from, I imagine even the pagan days too...it wasn't until in the 1200's that the Swedes converted the Finns to Christianity....that late....and of course,
eastern inland, a bit percentage of them a part
Swedish really, and I course the area a lot of
families still living there so are really tr uly
living that way.

R2: Like years ago, you oul' never see Finn supporting a
Swede i an ion...there wa

RI: ell, see it in nan di ong o Sweden, Swedes
always re Finns second clas citizens
immediately that was changed and Swedish was going be the secondary
language and inr h was going to be the language of
government... efore e ha o le Swe in the
schools cau wa necessary... hen inn was the
first language to be taught in schools...

I: Your folks ere orhouth ar

RI: Yes. It tre qu difficult economically, their
life s sofic t...an ey e th there could be
no orse... he fel if the di e here it couldnot
e anyn

I have one some of 10 and ever during the periods
of after the durin the depression in the states
even he ill Finnish ere coming.

RI Yes, con mes rough here to... all, now I
have a ked. e to. have come the recent years
from inla an ask them occasi al "would you want
to go back"? They al ays say "no", they do not want to
ack. They say they had stayed in Finland they would probably be satisfied, but now, hey would not be satisfied after being in this country, even though they have made it good...not everyone...some are still struggling even up here, but they still feel that they no want to go back.

R2 Those that have come here in the last 20 years are...there are...the really know how to manage for themselves here.

R1 Did they bring a lot of money with them?

R1 I doubt very much the idea.

I: Tight man-meat to money...use to living economically.

R1 Yes really illing to itch and really work.

I: lot of fight em

R1 Yes that! That like about the Finns, sisu...special Finnish word, it means determination, courage, stick to it: you no there's whole number of their words that you could pick...

R2 Look it up in there....

Note She ha a Finnish English dictionary

R1 I'll look it up! KIRJA But now I Finland there are an awful lot of words, especially modern, new technical that are used to by the Finns, like the word atom and atom bomb...an when my cou e e talking about
I: What did they do for work?........when your father came to this country was he a miner immediately?

R2: As far as I know he was.......a miner all of the time.....he worked in different mines of course.....

I: But were they always in this city?

R2: Well, they lived in Palmer...........

I: Palmer?

R2: Palmer and here, that is all that I remember.

I: Do you know why he left Palmer to come here? Or was it the other way around?

R2: I think they lived here first and then they went to Palmer, maybe they couldn't get a place to live....... When R2's mother came from Finland this is where she lived ..in National Mine.....

I: In this house?

R1& 2: No....not in this house.......

R1: In the location and then I think at some time later they moved to Palmer but they came back to National Mine and it was still later that they finally bought this place.

I: The whole time that they were moving around, was it with the idea that they were looking for a piece of property?

R2: It could have been.....

R1: It could have been that he went to work at the Cascade Mine in Palmer....

R2: No, I don't think he ever.......he must have worked there.....

R1: The only reason that they moved in the old days was that transportation was not at all what it is now......you had to live close to your work.... so that must have been the reason.....

R2: I don't think they lived there very long.....it was only months I think

I: Did he live on a farm?

R1: No, just in a location...this is the first farm they lived on......

I: Do you know off hand, is there any time that he lived in a house before he got to the farm that maybe he had a milk cow tied behind......

They lived in a little house across from the old post office....there was a house across there between there and the road and the tracks....and there was no place there that they could have kept a cow or anything, that I know of.....there was no room there for a barn or anything so I don't think
R2: they ever had a cow there.

"Note" The old post office is in the National Mine location.

I: Was he an underground miner or a surface miner?

R2: Underground.

I: Do you happen to know off hand how much he made? like per hour or per day?

R2: No, a dollar or so a day to begin with, I don't think it was much more. well maybe the miners made a little bit more but the labor wasn't much more than a dollar a day.

I: This book that I have been reading tells about the mines up in the Keweenaw Peninsula area.....

R1: That is the copper mines.....

Yes, and they had numerous problems......we are talking in the area of 1885 and 1905.......and in 1905 they had been on strike for 6 days and they managed to cut their time down by two hours so they were only working ten hours a day instead of twelve and they were getting a $1.60 a day.

R2: Now I think that was good pay, that was about the best pay.

And they worked six days a week........

I: They worked six days a week and they worked for $1.60 a day but somehow they were confined to twenty days a month...

R2: Not the whole six days because I remember that Saturday was always a church day....

R1: But you weren't there in 1885.....

R2: Oh well, maybe than but......I remember when my dad was working in the mine there was always a short shift on Saturday and they used to come home if they were night shift they would come home at midnight.....

R1: That would be in the late teens and the early twenties, that you are remembering...

R2: They used to call it the small shift

I: Did your mother work?

R2: No, she worked at home....

R1: See, she came to this country, they had been married in Finland and she came to this country with a child...

I: Two years after......right?

R1: Yes, and she had a child so it was pretty hard for her to.....
About every two years....
Yes, he has the list there.....

I: What I was curious about was, maybe she didn't have a job out of the
house but did she take in washing and ironing or something like that?

R2: No, no she never worked, she never had time for that because we always
had cows and that here that she had to take care of.
See, he was the first one born here, they moved, and he doesn't re-
member the time before he moved here.

R2: I never heard them say or anything..

R1: He remembers how it was here.

I: You say she didn't work but at the time there was a sauna, did she have
anything to do with that?

R1: Here, yes.......

She collected the money, they always paid her....
The boys and the father made the wood and you are the one that kept it...
The boys made the wood......

R1: Oh yes, your father was too busy, the boys made the wood and kept the
sauna going.....who built it?

R2: My dad built it...he built it before my time, I can't remember when it
was built at all.

I: Did she do any clean up or anything like that in there?

R1: Oh, yes, but still this is only a once a week deal.

I: You mean you couldn't come and take a sauna just any time you wanted to?

R1: It was only ......the boys started it up in the morning and beginning
Saturday afternoon all the way into the evening, people could come.

I: At that time was your dad still working in the mine and working here too?

R2: Yes, that was rough.

R1: There are so many Finnish men here and in the Copper Country too, the
first chance they had they would buy land in order to farm and grow their
own food, have their own cows and still keep working in the mines. So
that work usually fell on the woman of the house and the children, the
bulk of the farm work fell on the children.

I: Did your mother do that too, like milk the cows, help with cutting hay
and all those kinds of things?

R1 & R2: Yes, all of those things, making hay....

R1: That's standard for the old Finnish women....
She really did work.....

Yes, having such a large family too... the Finnish men did not milk cows that was an absolute no-no!

That's the question I wanted to ask..... what did they consider women's work and what was considered men's work...... women's work was definitely milking the cows.....

Milking the cows and taking care of the milk, the cream and the butter.

Of course, we helped, we had to learn to milk too, you know. Then in your generation it was no longer considered just men's work... but the old time Finn would not touch...... and that was true of all the old time European men, they thought it was just beneath their dignity. in Finland it was like that too, the women... even in the large dairies..

There were exceptions to it too, because these people who kept lots of cows like ten or a dozen had to milk..... especially if they didn't have any kids.

And especially if the dairy farm was their living, then the men would... then it was considered a man's work if his living was dependent on it.

When your dad, you know being on the farm, he had farming food, hay, he had cows that he kept, they were dairy cattle at that time, or beef?

Yes, they were just dairy cattle but we always butchered the steer and the bulls but a.......

And calves too.....

Yes, and calves....

Chickens?

Yes, we had some chickens not too many.

Did you eat the chickens or did you just use them for eggs?

Well, we did both, we ate them.

Well, he had the sauna too, so it appears that there was a number of sources of revenue that he had going on at the time. How was your family considered economically?...... were you above the middle or.....

No, we were in the poor class I guess, but to me I never considered myself poor, I thought.....

Everyone was kind of in the same boat, they all had large families, the men were doing the same type of work and everyone was pretty well on the
same level.....

R2: You would never see anything any better...
I: No way to compare it ..... 
R2: No.....

R1: But I'll go back to this revenue....there was no revenue from the milk no revenue from the eggs, very little eggs sold, with a big family it was consumed at home and she might be able to sell a pound of butter not and then but that was about it.....no the income from her cows or her chickens. Or how about did your father our family sell potatoes or was that strictly home?

R2: Once in a while, if there was a surplus..... 
I: But the potatoes again weren't raised for the purpose of selling, they were just case you had a good crop you were able to sell a few bushels...
I: That is an interesting point, the actual farming that went on was not done for the purpose of selling, regardless of how large the farm was, it was done and expanded on the basis of the family size.

R1: Yes,
To feed the family....

R1: Yes, that is all.......several people would and ask us to help us nick potatoes so that they could get their winter supplies say three or four bushels.

R2: That wasn't too long ago, that was about 1938.....

I: Looking forward it seem lik a lon tim looking back it seems like yesterday.....

R1: Yes, especially for old timers.....
I: One of the things I am curious about is.....let's just assume that some body did take money for picking potatoes or they had money, would they beable to buy potatoes with it? I mean there were people that had surplus potatoes.....

R2: Yes, this here what you are talking about I when I was farming, not my dad's... I was making some money in this place, I wasn't farming just to keep my family fed. I was selling milk and eggs.....

R1: We didn't make it clear to you but R2 didn't work out until 20 years after we were married.....all those years when our girls were growing up we
made our living on this farm.....

Your family was smaller; that apparently was a

Yes, but we sold milk from door to door, and the eggs from door to
door.....

How did you deliver them....in a delivery truck?

No, just a little old car....

It started off with a little old Overland.....Overland truck....

Yes, then we had a Model A........

That was an ancient truck at that time even......what year did we start?

Thirty-eight.....

Thirty-eight we started delivering......

You were delivering here in National Mine in a few places, but you didn't

start delivering......but you really went out and got yourself a bunch

of customers......all the way to Junction, I guess before.....

Then I bought and old Model A....then I bought a 1937 Chevrolet, you

know one of them with a hump in the back.....they were just cars we

delivered with, that's all.....

We bought a refrigerator in 1940 because we went into it in a little

bigger way......I suppose it was in 1940 that you started your deliveries

in the Junction location........and we still have the same refrigerator,

it purrs away, it looks terrible.....Well, we were married in 1935...

At that time was there any other work that was considered just women's

work?

Outside of what is considered women's work now?.......

Yes, I mean would the man ever stoop as low as washing the dishes?

No, unheard of........

Even today, huh?......ha.ha...

Oh, my dad used to hold the lantern while my mother split the wood....

Now that is an old fable, don't believe that, that is just a fib....

Like jumping in the snow after a sauna?

Well that has been done, but his has never been done. Tho' one man

claimed this is what another man told him, "I help my wife," this man

said, "I hold the lantern while she splits the wood." So he is applying

it to his dad and mother now.

No, he didn't do that....but I had never seen him wash dishes tho'.

The housework and everyday things to do with the cows and the milking
R1: and that, except of course, the hay making, was done by the man every- would help and get into the act, I guess.

I: Was there any work that was beyond a woman that a man would think that a woman just could not do?

Oh, not too much, I'll tell you in Finland when they used to hire young people to come to work, men and women were out in the fields working together, that was in Finland, I am not certain about here.

R2: Yes, it used to be here too.

The woman was able to.....except digging ditches....

Lots of times we had some of the neighbor women would come to here to help us when us kids were small.....

R1: Like I told you, in Finland they were forever ditching because it was so soggy the ground, each field had to be ditched......and they would do some of that here in the swampy lands. And I guess here they did not expect a woman to go and dig a ditch but in Finland the women did. In Finland the women did help dig the ditches......but here the women never did that, or chop wood at all, they would not......outside of your joke about the lantern, the women did not have anything to do with getting the wood supply.....and of course, that was the main source of heat...there were very few fireplaces to give you light from wood.....

I: How old is this house? ........a hundred years old?

Oh, more than that.....

I: And no fireplace in here.......

No; no fireplace in here. I know in Finland all of the homes had fire- places, takka was the Finnish word for fireplace, it had the firebox above it.

They used to cook on them. Wasn't it built up off the ground?

Yes, some of them were.....they were built almost separately in to corner of the house.....the women that came from Finland, the first thing they had to learn was how to cook on an American range.....Finnish women found it hard to work with.....

I: Was that a status symbol?

R1: Well, no it was the standard thing, it was very standard, the kitchen range in America was a standard thing.....there was an old type of fire- places that they used for cooking in Finland.....it was almost all fire- place cooking in Finland......and they were not used of that....especially the earlier immigrants......
I: Did your dad ever want to put a fireplace in?
No. o.o...........
R1: He won't have one.....I have wanted a fireplace for years, he says he
won't have one in his house....
I: Why is that?
He says it takes all of the heat up.....he doesn't know that there are
dampers you can close......
Guys that have had them told me that.....
I: How did Santa Claus get in?
R2: I don't know he came down the chimney...but that's what we used to won-
der how could he fit through that little hole.....
R1: Remember I told you that in Finland there was this little church that
was built in the early 1300's, of course before-Protestantism, well this
is the picture of that church....it is very well kept up, they have speci-

al people to fix it.....
"Note" She is showing more pictures...many
of old churches in Finland...
I: What is that, is that cedar on the front?
R1: I.....no, it isn't metal.....it is wood shingle but I don't know for cer-
tain what wood it would be.....
I: Looks like cedar tho' doesn't it?
R1: The stain...this is the picture of the town and here is the church, her is
that ancient church right there.....this is the place where the church
boats used to come along......all along that river they would pick up the
church goers in that huge boat.....well, they would hold about 24 people
you know....
I: Are they recent?
R1: Yes, these are recent......when I was in Finland........
I: They look like neat neat areas, don't they........
R*: Yes, this is the big church...........This is a modern day picture of
the castle in Finland........this is a postcard of it that my mother
bought in 1912 or 1913......the same area..........all the building going
on there in that time....
I: Why would there be alot of building going on there in that period?
R1: In 1912 or 1913?........
I: Is that when they were under Russian control...was it Russian building?
R1: Yes. .....well, it was a sea coast town.......(looking for the postcard)
R1: Here is where my mother grew up......
I: That one there almost looks like a Moorish dome......
Well that is a Russian Orthodox type of......this is that old old picture of that castle......do you know that in Finnish the word Linna means castle, jail or fort......it means any tight enclosure...
I: Fortification......
R1: Or fort really where you could go and see and in case of trouble to get out of danger........
I: Aren't there people with that same name?
R1: Oh yes, Linna......Pastor Linna in Crystal Falls......it means mostly castle but it can also mean jail......and it can also mean fort where you are protected......
I: If you heard a Finnish name and it was Linnamaki......and Maki is a hill, right?
R1: Yes, that would be a castle hill then......or fort hill......I haven't heard that name......but it is possible you know......a very famous Finnish architect, his name is Elmer Aalto, designed this church and it is called the Cross of the Plains......and that is the outside view......and this is the inside view......
I: Interesting......... What is different in that picture?....... I see that the prayer books are in the front of the church......
R1: In stead of the back......I never even thought of that......people go to the front instead.....
I: You know in churches, traditionally in the states, a part of the job of the ushers is to move the prayer books to the front to entice people to move up to the front......and here they are all visible in the front......
R1: Maybe the ushers brought them in the front too......ha ha......
I: No, they are just scattered out......
R1: Yes, and the same Elmer Aalto designed the town, the town hall......and various other buildings......
I: And is he an architect......a Finnish one......
R1: A very famous one......and this is R2's favorite area......
I: How old is this picture?
R1: Oh, I would say it is in the last twenty years......and a friend of my cousins in Sweden gave me that......can you believe that......I was visiting my cousin in Sweden and her friend came down to meet us and we were talking about where R2's folks were from and she said wait a minute and she
R1: Yes....

R2: And the keya has to fit the lock too....

I: Yes, both of them would have had to have the cross and whether or not there was some sort of security by having a lock and a cross together... Yes, it was blessed.......

I: This cross.....is blessed?

R1: I am certain of that because I am certain that was the intent....the sign of the cross was a blessing and a protection....and like some man said that if somebody could come back from that year, two hundred years ago, and they would come back now and see how religion is no longer a great part of our life.....they wouldn't say anything about our advancements... every single facet of their life was touched by religion.

I: Was that that true of life here on the farm too?

Well, already it was waning somewhat then....it was already waning by 1900.

R2: We were Christians alright, but it was a....

R1: In Finland the only records that were kept were kept by the churches, your birth and your christening date were there.... It was like the head of your home....

Yes, it was the base of every activity....there were not any civil records kept....the church had kept records for oh....hundreds of years before the civil officials started keeping them.....and do I not be-lieve that half of the country people of Finland would have learned to read if it wasn't that they had to pass their confirmation lesson..... at the time when my mother was young they did not have required schooling ....you could take it or leave it.....it was soon after that tho' that it was no longer voluntary, your attendence was required.....but when my mother was young she said it was up to the individual if they wanted to go or not..... she wouldn't go to school....she was a smart lady really, I don't understand why she didn't want to, but she would not go to school ....she learned to read and write very well but that was because she had to....in order to be confirmed she had to be able to read the catechism and able to read the Bible....oh, they had to pass a real strict test....

I: How is it the two got together?....the two of you....

R1: We met somewhere along the way....I came to National Mine because my Mother were....
Met her by the bridge by Annala's store

R1: I was working for Annala's over there and used to come by the store every day.

I: The old store over there?
Yes

The only thing remember about Finland is the way they made their hay barns....not so much on this place, but even down by the Powder Mill location....every field had a hay loft where they stored their hay....They were left open so that the air could circulate....

"Note" He draws a picture on a scrap of paper.

R2: They were built this way, they were narrow down here.....no the back and the front were straight but the sides were like that....that is the only thing that I know of that came thru as far as the building was concerned.

I think most of the Finnish people wanted to become Americanized as soon as possible....they wanted to follow the American customs.

I: Was there any group activities outside of the church?
R2: You mean for us kids or for the grown ups too? Well...not in National Mine here.....

R1: I'll tell you what was a group activity for the Finns...a real big celebration was Midsummers Day....on the 24th of June it was held....that is the Finnish Midsummers Day...Juhannus is how you say it....We celebrated John the Baptist's birth......

Yes, it was his day.......

I: John the Baptist, huh?
R2: Here they called it Midsummers Day.....

R1: Well, it is only two or three days after the Midsummers day, but that was oh, the biggest picnic, and the bands....it was really a Finnish get together to end all Finnish get togethers.....really a celebrating....and little by little it has just gone by the boards and it is no longer done.

R2: We used to have our picnic up there.....do you know where Trebilcocks' house is....there was a stand up there....like a bandstand and we used to sit up in there and then there was tables.....they were there all the time...big long tables and they had an old stove sitting up there.....
What do you want....it is not going to bother us one bit....there is
one member of my family....you know my uncles and aunts that some of
their children or wife or somebody did not die of tuberculois....she was
always called Sofia but her Christian name was Alma Josephenia, but she
was always called Sofia.....so these are the twins here.....she was
widowed quite young....she made her living by setting up a bakery....she
was always called Tilda....but of course Matilda is Tilda....she
never told me why she fell away from the church....no. specific reason
but still...still she expected me to live by the rules and she did too..
but I guess what you learn at your mothers' knee kind of stays with
you forever.....

I: As far as schooling, did she insist that you went to school?
R1: Oh, yes, very much so....... 
I: You started a regular...... 
R1: I started a regular kindergarten and I graduated....it was quite a great
hardship for her to get me all the way thru high school, it would have
been easier for her to tell me to quit school and get pay.....but she did
sacrifice so that I could go thru high school....
I: Do you know about R2's family?
Well, only the youngest children graduated from high school...Paul, Eleanor
and Martha....
I: I am not quite sure yet......when we talked about your mother she came here
.....and she was here almost ten years, right? Okay, then she went back
to Finland for a year and then she came back, okay.....she was married
two years after she came back, okay...then her and her husband came here?
R1: They did stay in the east for a couple of years, I mean they were both
living out east at the time they were married.....
I: But his brother promised him a job in logging and then your mother went
back....
R1: They both came back to Wakefield, in fact because my fathers' brother
.....two of them were living in Wakefield and they came and I do not re-
member how long it would have been that my mother stayed here and helped
at the logging camp. She helped her sister-in-law to cook and clean for
the men and everything.....and she helped her sister-in-law.....the brothers
were sort of in a partnership....but what happened and exactly why she
just carted me off back here again....to New Hampshire.....
I: Okay, now I got that part but I am not sure how you got back here again?
R1: My dad followed her back there and then they finally decided on a divorce and my father stayed out east but then when I was seven years old my mother decided that working in the textile mills was just too hard work for her and she came back to Michigan... we were here when I was about two, she left from Wakefield and went out east... my father followed her... she stayed out in Vermont and my mother stayed out east for a few years too, but then when I was just about seven we left New Hampshire and came to Michigan again..... and then she went back into working for families and being a house keeper or a Mother's helper....
I: Did she have the job set up before she got here?
R1: No... wait a minute.... that is wrong... she did have the job before she left.... it was a widowed man with several children.... and she was able to find this work thru a newspaper ad....
I: Now this is unlikely that a widowed man would have advertised out on the east coast......
R1: It was in a Finnish newspaper.....
I: You don't think it was one that somebody sent her?
R1: It is possible, it could have been....there were several Finnish Newspapers being printed in the Hancock area and I do think that the Finns subscribed to all the Finnish papers they possibly could..... big readers you know...... it is possible that this man could have advertised out in the Finnish papers out in Massachusetts but I still think the focal place of Finnish newspapers being published was in the Copper Country area... and I think that all the Finnish people in the United States subscribed to those papers.
I: Well it is not likely or unlikely I mean... because there was more Finns here because of the mining companies.... it is just funny that as hard as it was for the people here.... that he would have found someone from around here.... that would have filled the position, I mean they obviously they had to communicate by letter, right?
R1: Yes.....
I: There were no telephones right?
R1: No......
I: So the job was held open by the time she had written him and she had answered and then she had to make arrangements to get out there it had to have been several months.......
Oh, definitely. I think she first wrote at Christmas time and it was the following May that we finally came when school was over. I was always in the first grade so she didn't want to leave until school was out. But this I have to tell you now, my Mother was never satisfied. I have lived in so many places like in this place that she came to work for this family. We stayed there until the end of September, I think, and then she high-tailed off to Minnesota, but she didn't have a job in Minnesota, she did have friends in Minnesota and we went and we moved in with these old friends until she found a job. A similar job. Taking care of a family. Where the mother had died then after that we were living with a family that the mother was living but she had just too many children to contend to so my mother worked, took care of the children and helped. This is the kind of things she did all the years I was growing up but never staying very long in one place always looking. I still don't know what she was looking or hoping to find. It took me twenty schools to get thru from the first grade thru the eighth grade. Twenty different schools I attended. But only two high schools, she finally settled enough so that I didn't have to be.

I: She never did remarry?

R1: She married briefly when I was already married. She married a man.

I: But not during that period?

R1: No, not during that period, and she didn't get along with him either.

Oh, I don't know. She almost always found her jobs thru newspaper ads. And she kept changing. Freshman and sophomore years in Owen, Michigan and the junior and senior years in Mass high school.

I: And this is primarily simply because your mother?

R1: Yes, she just moved around so much. My father used to write to me. And he would write to me pretty often. He never sent me money. But he would send me clothes, and my mother used to say, "Oh, why can't he send some money" when she divorced him she did not ask for any child support which she should have done but she was too proud. I am strong and young and I can take care of one child, you know. He said, "What's the matter with that mother of yours, she is hauling you around like a Salvation Army" and was my mother mad, of course she read the letters he would send to me, I was just a little bit of a kid.
keeper was $25.00 a month.

I: That was he best she had ever made?

RI: That was the best that I ever remember that she made was $25.00 a month, of course, it included room and board for both of us.

I: I think we have answered most of the questions that I had... if there is anything you just want to...

RI: Of course I wrote about y Uncle Victor... about when he came to the United States, that kind of work he did and he went back and he established an Inn for travelers... a very handsome looking place... I seen pictures of it... I think he was already married when he came here but instead of getting his family here with that money, he went back to Finland and I don't know if it was the general depression or what, or as it because of the war, most likely because of the war... he had to sell it at a loss. I think it was because of the war... there was just no traveling during the war.

Let's see if we can pick up... here at the farm... what you can remember?

RI: Well, we... I haven't been here... I have only been here since I married August... 4 years ago... well it's over that... almost 42 years...

How was life starting out here?

RI: Well, we really... that was the deepest depression.

1935... really deep depression.

I: What was he doing?
I. We're on the farm her no

R2: Now stick to that... don't start towering pictures of

R1: No... mind is oing fa ter than tongue can keep up
ith it.

Keep in mind that really is a disadvantage because
most people, their tongue goes faster than their mind.
It is an obvious probl ell we do just
before... you left for a while tho'

R1: No, no, I came re.
ere ou al a s on the farm... I th ght yo had a job
between....

R2: No, not after we re marri d

I: No, but before you e married....

R2: Yes, I nt 2 months in the Copper Mine, in the
Copper Country

I: Why did you go there?

R2: To work because ever body a unemp ed here.... there
was a bunch of us lads from around here.... my sister
lived up ther see, ived here in Laurium and we
went to bo d over hou

I: Did you to pay her?

R2: Yes, e paid her for it but I forget hat it was

R1: Was Erkki or kin in the line up ther too?

R2: Yes...
R 2: They weren't interested but they have been interested after that...they wished they had a little place of their own...

I: Has any other members of the family tried to buy it?

R 2: No....

R 1: Oh no, once it was sold to us they signed it....

I: I mean, they never wanted to buy it back from you....

R 1: Oh no...because none of them really were farmers like R2 is, not a one...they would like to live out here now because this is nice and private...but they wouldn't farm..

R 2: We didn't have much when we started....in fact, I paid for this place with milk and eggs...

I: How many gallons of milk and how many....

R 2: We got a list...we were just looking at that the other day...

I: You actually paid for your farm with milk and eggs?

R 2: Yes, well potatoes and stuff like that...anything that we had to sell that she wanted...that was the deal...

I: In the contract, was it specified how many potatoes or eggs....

R 1: Just the value, in fact, our bill of sale is down at the lawyer's office...right now, we are putting this place into joint ownership...that is what her boss has recommended, I guess...talking about making wills and stuff...well he said first put it in joint ownership and then decide....

R 2: Along with the bill-of-sale is a list of every month...every month's amount....
said that there had been a house behind the barn and that
would be almost directly below that spring...so I thought
maybe that is why that house was built...as many times as
he plows those fields over there, he always comes up with a
piece of crockery and the most beautiful bits of china...
you know they really had some beautiful china dishes that they
must have just thrown away when they broke, of course....

I: You never got a piece that had a name on it or anything, like
Austria?

R1: No, that is it...... I can get big enough pieces to see
that it is real china...I was collecting them by the bushels,
I think....there nothing I could ever piece together to find
out...but you know how the English people love their lovely
china. Our water had to be tested when we started to sell
milk....

I: How many cows did you have then?

R2: 10 or 12

R1: Then, about 5 years later we did get a milking machine...

We started delivering milk in 1938...we separated the morn-
ings milk and we sold the cream and we bottled the evenings
milk and delivered it immediately because we had no refrigera-
tor, we didn't have a refrigerator until 1939 or 1940.

I: Did you have a root cellar?

R1: Yes...

I: That's where you kept the potatoes and things like that?

Were you still farming at that time too?
We used to say....gee we wish our parents had picked a place with a river running through....yes they had their choice, why didn't they....think that they had their choice

Where?.....

In this area....there was at that time....I know there is not now...but at that time there was...at least even Green Creek

2: Where is there a place out Green Creek.....a farm that has running water through it? There isn't, there are very few.....most of those rivers are in those swamps and between the hills and there are no farms around them or nothing....

I: Were there any other groups.....I hear alot about co-ops you know....

R1: Co-ops were a little bit tainted they were.....people around here considered them to be communist dominated....so they weren't very popular at all.....

I: All co-ops?

R1: No, at first, it seemed that way, the Finnish people in this area distrusted co-ops.....they felt they were too Socialistic or something.

R2: That changed tho'..

I: Was there any

R1: The people finally earned that it really was

R2: It seems to me that if you belonged to a co-op that the church people thought it was communistic tainted at first.....think it was communist tainted at first for a while, but......

R1: You know there was a big Communist movement among the Finnish people.

Yes, there were alot of Ishpeming people that belonged to the churches looked down on you as a communist, you know......at first.....think it was communist tainted at first for a while, but......

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R2: That changed tho'..

I: Coming Nation Hall....is it still there?

R1: No, that was torn down....it was a communistic group that built that and that is where they held their meetings and the, used to have dances there on Saturday nights and of course everyone went to those dances....you didn't care communistic or not....but that sort of faded away now....at least they don't have any specific group anything that would admit that now.....

Was there people in this area who would admit t being communist?