Subject Matter: A Woman's Life on a Farm in Pelkie

Respondent: Gladys Narhi

Comments:

I: ...an oral history interview taken in Pelkie, Michigan, on September 30, 1974, with Gladys Narhi...it's in her home on a kind of a cold day, we had a snowfall today and many of the trees with beautiful color were covered by snow...we're going to talk about Gladys's life about when she came to Pelkie and about her life here in Pelkie...where were you born, Gladys?

R: Minneapolis, Minnesota.

I: Minnesota...when was this?


I: 

R: January 20th.

I: What were your parents' names?

R: Colin and Anna Campbell.

I: What nationality were your folks?

R: My father was a Scotchean, my mother was a Norwegian.

I: And when did your parents come to Minnesota, were their parents in Minnesota?

R: No, my mother was from a farm in Kiroy, Wisconsin, and my dad was from Hadensville.

I: Where is that?

R: Near Washington, D. C., there.

I: So your folks have been in America...they were born in America.

R: Yes, they both are born but their parents weren't.

I: When did you come to the Pelkie area?

R: 1946.

I: In 1946.

R: Let's see, that's right, now, yeah, '46.

I: I just ask those questions to get kind of a time perspective. Where did you
go to school, right in Minneapolis?

R: No, we moved from Minneapolis when I was about five years old, when I was six I started school in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

I: And how many grades did you complete there?

R: Completed high school there.

I: You're one of the few people around this area that have. And then what did you do?

R: I went to Chicago... and I took up nursing... and then I was a nurse until I came up here.

I: Where were you working there?

R: At Franklin Boulevard Hospital, it's a small hospital on Franklin Boulevard.

I: Well, why in the world did you come here.

R: I met Arvid.

I: How did you happen to meet Arvid, your husband now?

R: I was just introduced to him in Chicago there and we got to going together and he had some, he was home on, he wasn't home on a furlough, he came to see his godmother in Chicago there and I met him then.

I: And then you got married in Chicago, was it?

R: We were married in Chicago, yes.

I: When were you married?

R: Ah, let's see... it was in January of '46.

I: Oh, so you came shortly after you were married, then.

R: Right away after we were married... well, I finished up a job that I was working on, I had to give notice and things so I stayed there, and then he came back after me.

I: Was this the family farm?

R: Yes.

I: Arvid's family farm? What was his father's name?

R: Henry.

I: Henry Narhi... and...
R: We didn't move right here.

I: Oh.

R: Well, we did move here, we stayed with Arvid's folks for, oh, a couple of
months until we got a farm of our own over on Grist Mill Road, which we still
own.

I: I know where that is.

R: And then after Arvid's mother passed away, his dad took over for a, kept go-
ing here for a little while and then he saw he couldn't anymore so then we
took it over...and took care of him until he passed away.

I: And he was living here right on the farm.

R: Until he passed away.

I: Until he died...well, in 1946 what was it like living out on the Grist Mill
area? How many acres did you have there?

R: Well, we had enough acreage, I guess, for that time, we started off with 11
cows over there...and let's see, acreage was, we had two eighties or four
forties, 160 acres.

I: How were you milking the cows back then?

R: By hand...and I knew nothing of milking by hand...then we got one Surge...so
then I just done the odd chores and Arvid milked.

I: Had you very much farm experience up until this time?

R: None.

I: You were totally green as far as farming was concerned.

R: Right.

I: Try to tell me a little bit about what you thought when you first started this
farming business.

R: Well, did you ever read the story, "The Egg and I"...well, if you ever read
that story and they tell about the old stove and things like that, that was
just about like me...I came up here, I started out on a wood stove which I
knew nothing about and everybody else was baking beautiful cakes and stuff on
their wood stove but...mine would always burn or something because I had been
from the city, of course, and we used gas...and there was no bathroom...the
well wasn't put in the house yet, there was an old windmill, and if the wind
would blow you'd get a little water in the house...that was over on Grist Mill
Road now...and sometimes the wind wouldn't blow and he'd have to pump and pump
and pump and pump for them cows...to get water to them...oh, let me see, what
else.
I: What were your chores like, your barn chores like, that you had to do at first?

R: Well, I don't know, you just went out and milked by hand and as far as making hay and things like that, we had that old-fashioned hay-loader on the back of a wagon, you know...you loaded the hay on and then you pitched it on.

I: You had a windrow and didn't that just go over the windrow and pick it up, most of it up, automatically?

R: Yeah, you drove but the tractor and this loader would load it on to the wagon but you'd have to be on the wagon making the load even around, you know, so it wouldn't topple over.

I: I see, and was that one of your jobs?

R: That was, we made most of the hay ourselves, the two of us...and then, of course, after we had Sally, I had her...

I: Who is your oldest.

R: Yeah, my oldest daughter.

I: When did you have her?

R: That was two years after, I'd been here two years.

I: About 1948.

R: Then we left her, I'd drive and he'd work on the back whatchacall and I had Sally on the front with me, and when she'd go to sleep I'd put her in the buggy at the end of the rows, I can remember of doing that...but, of course, as time went on, why, we got a few other things, other equipment, and I got my nephew up to help us a little bit in the summertime so that all...

I: You got your nephew to help?

R: So he came up, of course he's from the city, too...but he liked it real well and he had a ball, he was 15 years old and he went from one thing around the house he found some old carbide lights that they used to use, you know, they'd light them up for alongside of the road.

I: So your nephew really loved it on the farm.

R: And he started to hunt squirrels...and then he got interested in 4-H and bringing animals to Dairy Day...which he won first prize that first year he was here.

I: So he lived here during the summer.

R: It was just during the summer...and, of course, we just had a ball with him 'cause, well, he came the first year we were up here so we didn't have any children so we just had a ball with him.
I: How was he related?

R: He was my brother's son.

I: And it was a chance for a city kid from Chicago to...

R: No, he wasn't from Chicago, he was from Eau Claire, see, I went to Chicago.

I: From Eau Claire.

R: But he was from Eau Claire, yeah, my family's all in Eau Claire yet.

I: Were there any times during this period when you wish you'd go back to Chicago and start nursing again, were there any...I mean, it sounds like a really sharp transition in life, you know, one heck of a change.

R: It was...but there was so many things to change and so much to do all the time that it just kept me rolling...so that I didn't have any chance to think of even what I used to do in Chicago...I liked it, I liked it real well...we didn't live right in the city in Eau Claire, anyway, we lived, I guess you'd call it the suburbs, it wasn't, didn't have those kind of things...just outside the city limits we...but it wasn't on a farm...we just had a lot like anybody else, it was a row of houses.

I: What did you dislike most when you first came to work on the farm? Surely, you know, when there's a sharp change like that some things you'd really dislike that you weren't used to or...what was the hardest for you to get used to?

R: Being without any transportation, we didn't have a car or anything over there, and I can remember one night Arvid came up, came to the steps of the house with the tractor and got me to go visiting over to one of the neighbors as if we had a Cadillac coming up to my door...and taking me over to the neighbors, we just did silly things like that and managed to get along.

I: And what other children have you had? I've met Sally before.

R: I've had four children, two boys and two girls.

I: And they are all gone from home now?

R: Well, no, I still have one in high school.

I: How did the farm operate when the children were still going to school and at home, you know, what work tasks did each have to do? I'm just trying to re-capture what a family farm amounted to in terms of work and chores and things like that.

R: Well, the boys were mostly outside and I guess the girls were in here, in fact, the girls did most of the things and especially the cooking because I had to be outside in the barn and things like that helping out there...but I don't think there's anything different about it.
I: When the children were very young what kinds of chores did they have to do?

R: Well, our children were quite far apart...and the oldest one naturally was a girl so she took towards the house, she didn't care too much about the barn, however she took animals to Dairy Day and things like that...and the next one was a boy, well, he helped Arvid more or less...but when it came to like haying and stuff, why, they learned to drive tractor when they were quite small, they could do that.

I: The girls, too?

R: They all drove tractor.

I: And they all worked during the haymaking season...doing whatever they could.

R: Whatever they could, there was a lot of things they couldn't do, of course, and as the bigger machines came, why, then they couldn't, they drove tractor but I mean they couldn't operate some of the machines, the boys learned later to operate the bigger machines, and the mower, we were always kind of careful to keep the kids away from the mower because we've had accidents and stuff so...

I: Well, if your ethnic background is Scotch and Norwegian, how did it feel moving into a rather solid Finnish community?

R: Well, at home here Arvid never talked anything but English, and that kind of disappointed me because I thought the children should learn a little Finn as long as we were up in this neighborhood, but he never did...we moved over here and even Grandpa was trying to talk English, he talked Finn mixed with English, you know, but never a Finn that the kids could learn...and all the children ever learned was, oh, funny little sayings, you know, that they say in Finn...that's about all.

I: But I mean like along with the ethnic composition of a community there's a certain way of life, certain customs, certain ways of socializing with people and that, did you feel as though you were in a very different setting when you first came here, do you remember some of the, what I'm trying to do is try to remind you of any experiences that you might have had with becoming adjusted to a new way of life that was somehow more Finnish.

R: Well, when I first came up here, like when I went to church, it was all Finn and I can remember the minister's wife used to arrange it so that they had one song in English so that I'd have something to do during the church program, and then what always made me feel kind of silly and I still don't realize why they did it but they put me serving coffee sometimes, pouring coffee, all these people lined up and they were all Finns...and I look so much like a Finn that the old ladies and everybody else would come up to me and rattle off a bunch of Finn, I'd smile and they'd go on and they thought I knew everything they said but I didn't understand a word of it.

I: You can get by in situations like that by nodding and smiling...and they probably were just exchanging some pleasant greeting like, "How are you today?"

R: Probably.
I: What about other things such as making Finnish foods, I know women around here pride themselves on their baking skills, and there are certain kinds of things that they bake, and this sort of thing, you know, women are evaluated on these sorts of things, can you...

R: When I came up here I knew nothing of cooking or baking...and that's what I say, when I came to this big stove, wood stove, and didn't know how to even regulate that, and then trying to bake a cake that I never knew anything about and there was no box cakes much, that I can't remember of using any...and there'd be flops and there'd be ups and downs but I finally got so I could bake a cake, but I think that that was the thing that embarrassed me most up here is that I couldn't put a cake on the table when somebody came in, I'd always have a little bag of cookies someplace that I could put on that was from the store...until I got...then after that I was doubling a double batch of cookies before long.

I: That's one of the features, of course, of the customs in this community when people visit, it's generally followed by coffee which isn't just coffee, as you know...and it's expected and necessary and the woman visitor gains an impression of the woman host by how she throws out a table...can you describe any situations, kind of if you can get back to specifics in detail and when you may have felt embarrassed or so...this is just in order to get the information about adjustment to a new culture...any time when someone came over and...

R: I don't quite get what you mean, I don't know of any time that I really pulled a boner...I mean, I always had something else to put on the table, you know, other than what I had baked, but I sure tried....that baking deal

I: Who was this first minister that you encountered that spoke only in Finnish, can you recall the person?

R: I think his name was Hanninen.

I: Yeah, there was one named Hanninen. Can you describe the man as you recall?

R: Well, I really didn't get very close to him, I got closer to his wife than to him, she could talk English very well, but, of course, she could always talk Finn, too, but I don't think I can ever remember any close conversation that I ever had with him...we weren't married up here, we were married in Chicago.

I: Was that a problem with you in talking to neighbors and things like that?

R: No, because the neighbors could all talk English, we moved over on Grist Mill Road and Jokela's and Lehto's, they could all talk English over there...so it really wasn't such a problem, it was....the older generation that talked all the Finn, it seemed like, and my mother came up here the first year and I told her about going to church and just sitting there and not getting anything out of the service but I was there, and she said, "Well, now, listen, Gladys, you just wait, in a few years I'll betcha there won't be anything but English spoke in this church"....and do you know as years have gone by that just took
that change, you know, you don't have any Finnish services in church now except, oh, separate Sunday afternoons or something like that, sometime they have...

I: Once a month or even less than that.

R: ...less than that, just for the older people.

I: Who are dying out now.

R: There aren't very many left now that can't talk English.

I: Your mother saw that....what are your feelings on the school system as it has changed since you've been here...now you've had four children, have they all gone to the Pelkie School?

R: Yes, they all went to Pelkie School, they've all had about the same teachers except now Mrs. Fitzpatrick isn't teaching anymore.

I: What are your thoughts on that, on the adequacy or inadequacies, what areas do you think that they were helped and hurt, looking at it on kind of a historical point of view.

R: Well, Pelkie's a small place and then they had many classes in one room at that time and I guess they still have, yeah...and they probably got a lot out of it and what I miss most now that I think these kids are missing a lot is Mrs. Fitzpatrick's Christmas programs she used to put on...I think they got an awful lot out of that...she had at Christmas-time, people used to come from all over to see this program, have you ever heard about that program?

I: No, please tell me.

R: Oh, it was just out of this world, the kids started, oh, soon after they started school, you know, in the fall...and the mothers would all get together and make costumes, she would supervise always, of course, and have everything the way she wanted it, you know, but they would have little soldiers and fairies and everything else all lined up and they'd have Mrs. Santa Claus and Mr. Santa Claus and everything that goes with it...and everybody just went out of their way so much for this program and when they presented it that night, it was something that the kids will never forget, our kids still remember, you know, which will still talk about that Christmas program, I think that was what Pelkie School meant to them.

I: That's very good...would the auditorium be filled with people?

R: Oh, yes, it would be, everybody around here was there whether they had kids there or not, it was something that if you went someplace else you'd pay a big price for...but this was our kids and didn't cost anything and we just enjoyed it, of course it was lots of work for Mrs. Fitzpatrick, she really put herself out but...and the teachers were there, too, of course.

I: You mentioned that you had four children...what was your philosophy on raising them?
R: Well, I'm a bit old-fashioned, I didn't believe in babysitters and all this kind of stuff that people have today, we liked to go places where we could take our children or else stay home and enjoy them...our whole life was our kids and it still is even though they are older, we make a big fuss over them when they come home but we figure home is home.

I: What special advantages and disadvantages do you think there has been in the raising of children in this area, you know, right here in Pelkie?

R: Well, in the first place Pelkie thinks all their kids is pretty special...and I don't know, no matter who you talk to or what it is they're all pretty proud of any kid from Pelkie...so they've all been raised at Pelkie School, they've all been friends and they all have the same, you know, fun and stuff that they've had around here, I don't know, the disadvantage of living on a farm is that the kids don't get around as much, you have to take them...but then there is an advantage to that, too, because parents are included more in their children's affairs, they have to take them there and they have to get them back home whereas in the city you just let the kids go, you know, down the street or wherever they're going to go, but here if they have a little party someplace you have to take them there, you are concerned, more or less, with children, I think, on the farm.

I: Yeah, if children are to have activities with one another the parents necessarily must be involved in them...I never thought of that, why, sure, and that's due to the fact that the farms are more physically isolated and further apart.

R: And usually when kids go out they don't go just to play, there probably were a few neighbors down here that the kids went, played with, but it was usually like at a 4-H meeting or some meeting someplace or some event that they went to, there were a lot of them.

I: You've mentioned 4-H several times, did you participate in this as some sort of parent advisor?

R: No, I didn't, well, we kind of went along with the 4-H leaders and helped wherever we could in that way but we were never leaders...I guess Arvid belonged to the Council for a while.

I: You seemed to think, the way you have spoken of this, you seem to think it has some value.

R: 4-H has a lot of value...our oldest daughter went through high school kind of wondering what she was going to be and she didn't exactly know what to take up when finally she decided she wanted to be a Home Ec teacher and that was through 4-H, sewing and cooking that they took up...and she went on and of course now she's a Home Ec teacher.

I: And she graduated from Michigan State University in the Home Economics Department and now she's teaching Home Ec and it was through 4-H that she got that.

R: And then she had that trip to Taiwan that she got through 4-H...and now the youngest one just got back from Washington, D. C. where she met the president and was all excited about that.
I: Very good.

R: It was all 4-H stuff.

I: To tie in the idea of raising children and living on a farm, what seems to be happening is that farms are declining, that people just aren't doing enough, and this spells out the loss of a certain way of life that involves very much the family...how would you describe that way of life? The family together on the farm.

R: Children in the city start out on their own a lot sooner than they do on the farm because you have to bring them on a farm wherever they go they have to be brought...so you're with them longer...and they get that feeling of,"Well, my parents are still important to me because they're doing this with me and that with me and the other thing"...whereas in the city they come home to eat and away they go...where in the country that they have to have...

I: What about working together?

R: Well, there's always that together working like in 4-H I can remember of staying up here until midnight helping them with posters and things that they had to do...but as long as they enjoyed it I enjoyed it, too.

I: I mean also on the farm.

R: Well, yes, the haying time and everything... then there would be a little treat afterwards or something, you know, that the whole family would enjoy.

I: What would your treat be? Describe a typical haymaking day, O. K., as it was on your farm with your family.

R: Well, I don't understand quite what you mean, they were always out there cutting hay, one would be cutting and the next one would be raking the hay, and then they would start baling, the one that they had done the day before...you mean what each chore for each child?

I: Yeah, and then the treat afterwards.

R: Well, at what age would this be? When they were older or younger?

I: Younger.

R: When they were younger, what age would that be?

I: Oh, seven...six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

R: Well, when when we'd be taking hay in, the younger ones would like to ride on the hay load, of course, that was always the big thrill of that...and the one that could drive the tractor would be driving the tractor, and then the older ones would be throwing the hay on the load...so we'd all be out there together, and like I say when you get the whole gang there there's always something bound to happen, sometimes the hayload would tip over, of course, and instead of getting angry everybody would just laugh 'cause the kids thought that
was a bang, you know, and we'd have to pile it all back on and after being outside like that all day and pulling in hay and of course we didn't have any elevators or anything at that time, you had that pulley in the barn that pulled the hay up.

I: In the sling?

R: Yeah...so there was work until pretty near dark...but then in the evening, of course, there was always cookies and ice cream and usually root beer, they always liked root beer.

I: You'd crack out the root beer and the ice cream.

R: And of course they'd go sauna, we always had sauna in the evening.

I: Oh, whether it was Saturday or not?

R: Oh, yeah, and we still have it all summer long in the evenings here...so anybody can go sauna, usually, any night just about, unless it's a cool night or something, you know, or we're going out or something, but when we're here we usually, we've always had a big family so they might just as well go out there and clean up 'cause we only have one bathroom...so it helped that way, too.

I: I see, this was during haymaking that the sauna would be...

R: Well, most of the summer we had it going because we have a lot of visitors here, too, especially over weekends...they come from, oh, we have two, three families here every Sunday, and now we're building that roof out there on the barn, did you see it when you came?

I: Yeah, I saw some of it.

SIDE TWO

R: ...barn roof going up so...

I: You mean you had a work bee on Sundays?

R: No, we have some relatives that come from Hubbell, and then when they come, why, they bring their whole families...the men work out there and the women are in here, and then, of course, we all start the sauna before they go in the evening, when everybody's done, go sauna, and they all go home clean.

I: There used to be a lot of that sort of thing, large group activity, and it's declined a lot, it was the older generation that did it, and, of course, the older generation, most of them are too old to do that sort of thing, and it hasn't been something that the younger generation have learned to do.

R: That's right, they don't work with their neighbor very often...there's very little working with your neighbor anymore...in comparison to what the older folks used to do.

I: Did you experience some of that when you first came here like in '46?
Oh, yes, like everybody, when it came wood, everybody had wood stoves, you know, at that time...and we used to get together and have big woodcutting bees, you know, they'd go to one farm and cut all that wood and then they'd go to the next farm and cut all that wood, several farms together...so they'd have the wood for the winter...you see, each one would cut down the trees and they'd have them all skidded, well, then it takes more than one man to put them on a saw, you know, and saw them up, well, several farmers would get together and then they'd saw up that wood.

And a portable sawmill would be taken around to...

Well, mostly everybody had their own at that time...it's connected onto the tractor, you know, they had that big, we have one yet, of course we still burn wood...we have a wood furnace yet...and now he just laughs when they say that there's a shortage of oil because when other people have to go home he just shoves another piece of wood in the furnace.

That's right...and you burn wood, heat for the whole house all these years.

That's all we've ever had...we have an electric cooking stove but...as far as heat for the house we used wood and we saved our old wood stove up here, of course it has a electric connected to it, too.

So do you fire up that in the winter?

Oh, yeah...oh, yes, when it gets cold we get that going so the kitchen here is warmer...we almost always live in the kitchen here...and so we get that going so it's a little bit extra warm.

There's something special about the wood stove, isn't it, I mean the kind of heat that comes out.

I would like to burn it more but I guess I'm getting like everybody else, it's so easy to turn on the electric that you do that, but it's kind of nice to have a tea kettle whistling on the back of the stove, you know, you always have that tea kettle and hot water and it just seems like home when you hear that boiling away back there.

And the smell of the wood...and it feels much nicer than...

You get that quick heat when you just start that stove up, you know, it's just right here in the kitchen, it isn't all over the house but you get the quick heat where you need it in the morning, especially.

There's something special about that wood stove heat on a cold winter morning, it's so cozy that you almost want to crawl in behind the stove and, you know, rest there for a while.

There's a lot of work to getting the wood in, though...but we don't do it quite like other people do anymore 'cause of course Arvid works out, he brings a lot of culls home and we've been burning them because...

What are culls, I'm sorry, I don't...
R: Well, in the sawmill they always have certain part of a log that gets wasted or thrown away or something, and he just throws them in the back of the pickup then, they give it to him, you know...and he brings that home and if you keep doing that, you know, you get quite a pile of wood after a while...and that's the way we've been getting our wood now rather than cutting so much of it because when you work out and run a farm too you don't have time for that wood-cutting...but this year they made that new road down here, we got a lot of wood that they cut alongside of the road...so he's got to saw that up.

I: How has your family traditionally made wood when you had the children here?

R: Well, as I say, the other, what do you mean?

I: Before Arvid started working at the sawmill.

R: He goes out and he cuts the trees down and trims them off and then they haul them home here and then we have to saw them up, you know, with a buzz saw.

I: And everyone would chip in on that?

R: Well, we like to keep the kids kind of away from the saw...but they would hand things to him or something like that, be in the background, but they wouldn't do too much of it, 'course piling the wood and stuff like that they've all had, but as far as cutting it, you know, it's a vicious thing to have a kid around.

I: Sure...when did this wood bee practice start to phase out, could you...

R: When everybody started to burn oil...well, I think people all started, more or less, working away from, the small farmer, you know, has had to get a little help from someplace so they'd go out and get a little job...and then, of course, this prevented them from having the time for making wood...and then they went to oil so then that took that out, there aren't very many wood burners around, of course last winter I think that they started to go back to the wood...but Arvid always laughs and says, well, when everybody else was paying their fuel bill at the end of the year he doesn't have any so...

I: And you'll always have wood

R: Yeah, there's plenty of wood back here, we've got an awful lot of woods.

I: Were there any other ways that, when you first came in '46, that the farmers used to help one another? I'm interested in this, how relations between neighbors and that have changed through the years.

R: Oh, let me see, if you were putting in a load of hay and it was starting to get dark and your neighbor was, you could see your neighbor and he knew you was out there working he'd come over and help you throw on that last load or something like that, they did that.

I: Or, I suppose, if a rain were...

R: Was coming, if they, of course everybody has their own to look after, too...so
you can't let yourself go out for somebody else, either...but there wasn't, the wood making was about the thing that at that time of the year it could wait until you got around to the other person...and like combining and things like that, they didn't do any threshing when I first came up here they started to do, I mean everybody was combining so those big threshing bees that you hear about, they're from a little bit before that.

I: What if you were putting up that barn roof in '46? Think there would have been more of...

R: Well, things would have been a whole lot different, you could have got the material earlier and we wouldn't have been putting it up at this time of the year, I'll tell you that...he had a hard time getting the material and now you have a hard time getting a carpenter, even...and I think people don't take the chances that they used to, either...when you stop to think of a guy getting on to a tall roof like, you kind of get a headache...but nowadays they don't want to take those chances where years ago they wanted, they were proud of what they did, you know, I think people, more or less, even, I'm not saying just one person but I think the whole generation's kind of, well, shall we call it getting kind of lazy...I think like myself even, I mean, I wouldn't do some of the things that probably Grandma did, you know what I mean...but we're just changing, machinery and things have changed all that...you can get a carpenter to come in and do some work inside someplace, you know, usually...'course the material is still hard to get but like to climb on top of a high roof like that, it's hard...he called many different people.

I: I know, I'm no good for that sort of thing, I think, though years ago you would find young men demonstrating their bravery and ability to work...and that opportunity to demonstrate their manliness would motivate many of them up.

R: And now it's how you can get along without working...if you can do, you know, if you can get along without working, well, why work...I think that's the trend to everything, I mean it's just like you or I, if I had to walk down to the corner after the mail or get it out here, you'd want it out here 'cause it isn't so much work.

I: But we end up doing other work.

R: Well, I think, well, I don't know...but lot of other things we used to do like when the mail box was down there, when I think of it now, when the mail box was still way down at the corner there...it did something for me because I would put the baby in the crib to sleep and I would get off by myself just long enough to go down and get that mail and come back, now that did me a whole lot of good, see...where now if I just had to run out here, I wouldn't have that little time to think and get out by myself.

I: Did you enjoy those walks to the corner?

R: Oh, yes, Mike, a lot of people were talking about getting dryers in their homes for their diapers and things, you know, so they wouldn't have to go out and hang them on the line...and I said, "Oh, why would I want a dryer," I said, "that's the only nice, quiet time I have is when I'm out there hanging those diapers"...'cause the kids were in here, of course, and I could hear every
little thing they did...or else they were sleeping or something, but that was quiet with everything gone, I was alone for those few minutes.

I: And that walk to the mail box was a chance for you to relax and think by yourself and...

R: I still go out and, see, we have Arvid's brother's two children here now and, well, one of them is nine and the other one is fourteen now...but they sit here and watch TV and I'll go out in the garden just to be out by myself, I'm getting interested in a few raspberries and strawberries and things like this that before I never had time for, and in the evenings I go out there just to be alone for a little while...and that they know where I am, they can get me any second, you know, and they're interested in the TV and I'm there enjoying the fresh air.

I: So you enjoy gardening not so much just because of the fact that you get the wholesome fresh vegetables but you like the quiet?

R: Yeah...it's just nice being out there alone for a little while

I: That's very interesting, have you always had a garden?

R: Well, not too much because I was so busy, you know, when the kids were young and stuff you're so busy in the house that the weeds and stuff take it and you get kind of discouraged, but...I always said when I got older that that's what I wanted to putter with, I call that just putter work, that's just fun...and go out there and putter away...

I: But you get a lot of benefits from it.

R: Oh, sure, well, I don't know about these raspberries now, I won't get anything till next summer, I planted them this year...and let's see, I planted three grape vines, only one came up, I don't know what that's going to amount to, but that's just a year old, I mean that we won't get anything probably, I don't know how many years it takes for that, and then I planted five apple trees and a cherry tree, next spring I want to plant two pear trees, I'm just doing this for a little hobby or something, then the kids will have it some day.

I: Have you canned before?

R: Before I came up here? Yeah, I can now, yeah

I: Do you get enough to feed your family?

R: Well, now, of course, it's gone to freezing, we froze an awful lot of string beans and peas and things like that, yeah...made a lot of pickles, lot of jams.

I: Do your daughters come home and you do that together?

R: Yeah, in fact, Sally brought the cucumbers from down state real early because she was afraid that we wouldn't have enough and she wanted to help make the cucumbers, the pickles, before she went back...so then I had my enough for another batch, I mean, another run of pickles after she left, of course she came, oh, let's see, when was it...sometime in June...then she brought those pickles
and a bunch of onions and we've got so many onions we don't know what to do with them all here.

I: She comes home every summer?

R: Well, for a certain length of time, not always for all summer, she's usually doing something, she likes to travel and then she takes courses at Michigan State yet...she's still going to school.

I: Had you at any time thought that you'd rather raise children in the city?

R: No, no, no. I think in the city you're sharing your kids with too many people and I'm a little bit selfish, I like to have my kids myself for a little while when they're little, anyway, I don't mind them running out but I think home is a place where children are taught and there should be a certain amount of time in the home, even I don't specially approve of nursery schools and things like that, I think mothers should be with their children when they're young...maybe I'm old-fashioned, I don't know.

I: How have you tried to get your children religious training? Did they all go to Sunday School?

R: Yeah, they just started in Sunday School, went through, confirmation, everything.

I: All in the Pelkie church here?

R: (Yes.)

I: You have always felt that that is one of the, well, let's do it this way, what do you think are the most important things a mother should do for her children?

R: Well, there's so many things, first of all it's a mother's love and then it's the... teaching them to do things for themselves and then, of course, their religious training and then following up on their educational programs, each one develops differently and you have to go along with what they decide, not what you want.

I: It's pretty hard at times.

R: Well, I don't know, I haven't told any of our children what they should be, in fact, one's a senior in high school now, doesn't exactly know what she wants, she says it's something to do with children, she likes children...but they've all kind of looked around...and sometimes when you're too demanding with children they won't do it anyway...if you go along with them, it's something they want, it's something that they're interested in.

I: So you haven't suggested any careers to any of your children?

R: No, I don't think I have, not one definite one, you know, but I think they should be teaching.

I: Do you plan to retire here in the Pelkie area and stay in the Pelkie area?
R: Well, I was hoping that one of the children would take over the farm...and you see that little summer kitchen out there that Evert is living in...I want to get that under push-button control...for myself when I get old and I can just take care of everything...and I just want to go outside and putter around and do all the little things that I didn't have time for before, the things I figure I missed.

I: Putter a lot more in the garden.

R: Yeah...like I say, I have learned to amuse myself around here...and I just want to stay here and do little things around that I didn't do before, I have no interest in going out into the world, you know, like some women do or some older folks do, do a lot of traveling, that doesn't seem within, you know, what I want to do...I just, what I like to do best of all is to plan for my kids coming home...when they come home, why, then it's all them...they go back, then I start planning for the next time they come home...so I mean there's no, it isn't for me to go away when I have them coming home.

I: And there's enough right here, there's more than enough right here...

R: For me, yes.

I: ...for you to do, in fact, you don't even have time to do what you want to here.

R: That's right, yeah...there's church we go to and this we go to and that, you know, anniversaries and stuff, that's enough for me...not to go way out traveling...like Sally, she'd go crazy, she's got to go clear out someplace all the time...long-distance telephone calls coming here all the time when she's home.

I: How has Falke changed since you've been here? If you were to say what the biggest changes have been around this area...like we said, there have been so many.

R: Well, the biggest change, of course, is all the change-over from farmers to city people 'cause they've all left, lot of people have left their farms or if they live on their farms they're working out, they're not farming anymore, so...people are doing different things entirely than they used to do...the visiting isn't quite as much, I don't think, as it used to be.

I: You have noticed that?

R: We have a lot of visitors here, though, like from the city they come to the farm...they all like to do that, they always have, I think from way back, I know I used to when I was a kid like to go to the farm...but...

I: Does that place a great burden on you in the summer with your work and having...

R: Oh, there's a lot of work, there's somebody here all the time just about...Arvid has six brothers and sisters...and I only have two brothers but they have families, too, and then they all come...we've had two house trailers out here, you know, I mean not house trailers but trailers for the car...and they come and park out here, there isn't even room in the house for them, we've put up 21 extra people here overnight sometimes...with the bunkhouse and everything
everybody has a good time...yet I don't, like some of the people that come, they come from, oh, homes that are, they have everything and they have this and that, and when they come here they don't have to always wipe off their feet at the door, you know, and come in and they just enjoy themself...what I mean is...I don't know, you don't have to set the table just every little stitch in time...you put on what you have and everybody just has a ball, and that's what I like about it.

I: Do they chip in and help with the work?

R: Yeah, they'll help with the dishes and things like that...but I never think of meals as too much for anybody, I have always had to fix for the family and I think just putting a little bigger roast in the oven is no more work than putting in a small roast for just your family, throwing in a couple extra potatoes, why, it's all the same.

I: I bet the children of these summer visitors really love it up here, don't they?

R: Oh, they have a ball...they really do, they have a ball...kids always like to come.

I: Do you notice anything about city children that make them different than the children up here?

R: Well, the minute you let them out of the car they go wild because they're not used to all this area to run and play and everything, that's the biggest thing, boy, they can, they are so tired when they go home they can hardly see, where ours are used to it now, you know, they run to a certain extent but everythings you know, they've been here, they know all the crooks and corners of everything and they don't run quite so much, you know, they don't get so tired, but, boy, when they come from the city they up into everything in the haymows and on top of the barn roofs and everything else out there...used to kind of worry about them.

I: I imagine that's very good, I was one of those city boys who would come and spend the summers on my uncle's farm, I did that every summer.

R: Well, did you feel a sense of freedom then when you came?

I: Oh, yeah, I hated to leave...do they cry when they leave?

R: Oh, yes, many of them do...this nephew of mine that was helping us out over at the other farm there, he sure hated to go back...he wanted to stay right there...yeah, and we put him on the bus, we didn't have time to, we were going to take him home but decided that, well, we put him on the bus and then his mother and dad wrote, went, to the bus to meet him and they stopped someplace to get something to eat and, of course, he was talking and telling them all about the farm and she wrote back, no, she called back, she was telling me how he was telling about how he caught the greasy pig over at the Felkie Fair and she said the guy in the next booth had reached his head over and said, "Hey, kid, you must have really had a ball, eh?"...he was listening to it all, he was getting as big a kick out of it as his parents were.
I: Do you notice anything different about the adults that come from the city as compared to the people who live up here? Having to do with way of life and how they react when they're suddenly in the country?

R: Oh, well, sometimes I think some of them are bored because they figure there's nothing to do... now, it's just the way you look at it... our son, Terry, brought home a kid from college, he's from the city, he'd never been on a farm... and his family is quite a well-to-do family... and he came in here and with a smile on his face and he was just as friendly as could be and Terry threw his suitcase in the other room so he threw his suitcase in, too, and they were going to go outside and so I said, "Well, here's, you better not wear those clothes out in the barn..." so I threw him some of Terry's old clothes, he put them on and they went out and, well, while he was here he found a calf out in the woods, a cow had freshened... and I tell you if there was ever a calf that had any photographs taken it was that one... he carried that calf all the way home and then he'd stand it up and he'd take a picture of it from this side and that side and the other side, he was going to show the whole world about that calf he found out in the woods... he was only supposed to stay three days, I mean, that's what he figured... and Terry was going to stay ten days, I think it was... and so he was planning, he was supposed to go back with somebody from Ontonagon so he started to talk about going back, I said, "Are you going back already?"... and he said, yeah, he's going back, and I said, "Oh, I didn't know you were going back so soon" or something like that, and so he just sat there and pretty soon he came to me and he said, "Say, Mrs. Narhi, did you think I was going to stay until Terry went back?" and I said, "Yeah"... he said, "Do you care if I do?" and I said, "No, you can stay" and he just, his eyes just popped, he was so thrilled about staying a little longer, you know, up here, yeah, he hated to go back.

I: But the older people are different, you say that at times they feel bored.

R: Well...

I: At some times.

R: Sometimes... they're just not used to the kind of home life that they have here, well, I don't know...

I: I know what you mean. I've heard some people say that there's nothing to do when the opposite has always been the problem, for me there are too many things to do and not enough time, it always makes me mad that I don't have time to do what I... 

R: It's kind of hard to say... some of them would never be contented on a farm... where they so far away from everything.

I: When did Arvid, you were talking about a big change here being people have dropped out of farming and started to work out, when did Arvid start to work out?

R: Let me see, he's worked out now since... let's see if I can associate it with one of the kids... oh, more than ten years now, I think, he's been working on and off out.
That must have made it far more difficult for you, then, because there's, you're in charge, then, at home, eh?

R: That's O.K.

I: He works at the sawmill, where was it, out toward Michigamme somewhere?

R: Yeah.

I: That's 80 miles one way?

R: No, I don't think it's 80 miles, it's about 40, isn't it?

I: Oh, yeah, I'm confused, 40 miles one way...so you have the farm, you're in charge here.

R: Yes, like in the evening now, see, he went, oh, about 1:30, well, he really doesn't have to be to work until 3...but he picks up stuff on the way to the mill and...so he's foreman now...

I: Oh, afternoon shift, I see.

R: And then he doesn't get home until the middle of the night...so I have completely the whole evening milking to myself...old Evert comes out there and tells me what to do, but...

I: Is he a relative?

R: No, no, he works for us when he was younger and he just stayed right here, just kept on staying, so...

I: He's been here all his life?

R: Not all his life...let's see, we've been here about 20 years, he's been, oh, about 18 years he's been with us.

I: Just helping out and it's a place for him to stay...a family of sorts for him, he lives alone?

R: He's got that little shack out there, he always eats with us...and he comes in here for watch TV and stuff, and when he wants to be by myself he's got his own little shack out there, he can be, he's got TV and a radio there, too, so...

I: Well, that's very good

R: He can get away from the kids, then, because he's getting older now, they kind of get on his...

I: Has this been a source of strain for Arvid, trying to...you know, those are two pretty big irons in the fire.

R: Well, it's more of a strain for anybody to watch him than it is for him to do it, I guess...he is just as peppy as can be, and he says people sleep too much,
his few hours of sleep that he gets is just enough for him, he said...and I
can't see it and nobody else can see how he can get along with so little sleep
at night because he gets up for morning milking...he gets home about...I ima-
gine it's about 1 o'clock...and 1:30...then he gets up about 6:30...and then
he lays down probably for a half hour before he goes to work...he just laughs
at everybody else...he says everybody else is dying off from bad hearts and
cancer and this and that, and he says they didn't do half the work that he
does...so he likes this job that he's got, he really does.

I: Well, good...he probably works so hard and moves so fast the germs don't have
a chance to catch him.

R: I don't know, but he seems to enjoy it...but he won't give up his cows.

I: He's pretty attached to the cows?

R: Oh, if there's any giving up cows he has a fit...he'll say, well, look at this
one now, this one gave up his cows, and this, that and the other thing.

I: What does he see as the chief disadvantage of giving up the cows? Or why...