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SUBJECT: First Apostolic Church History in Pelkie

SOURCE: Matt and Lyyli Oja

COMMENTS:

Interviewer: Michael Loukinen

It's December 6th, 1975. This is Mike Loukinen as interviewer and I will be interviewing Matti Oja. Matt lived many years in the community of Pelkie and he is now living in L'Anse, Michigan. We're going to do a very brief family history of Matt Oja and then we're going to concentrate on the church history that Matt remembers.

Matt's father was Menna Oja. He was born in 1873 and died in 1956. He was from Nivila in Olalan, Finland. Matt's mother was Emma Parkila, born in 1874 and she died in 1955 at the age of eighty-one. She was from Haapajarvi, Finland. They were married in Finland and Matt was born in Finland before they came to the United States. Matt was born on January 15th, 1894 in Haapajarvi. Matt's father Menna came several years before to try to find a place to live and a way to make a livelihood. He came to Hancock, Michigan and several years after, Matt's mother Emma and Matt came to Hancock and this was in the year 1900. During the course of her life, Emma gave birth to sixteen children; but sadly, ten died in infancy. As we mentioned, Matt was born in Finland in 1894; followed by Matt was their daughter Hilda born in 1905; Esther born in 1908; Matt's brother George born in 1912; a sister Pearl born in 1914 and the youngest sister Helen born in 1921.

Okay, now that we've got those dates established, did your father work in Hancock for awhile or...

R: Yes he did.

I: So he worked at the Quincy Railroad. I understand this was a railroad used by the mining company.

R: Yeah, used by Quincy.

I: Ahm, what was he doing on the railroad?

R: I guess he was doing everything, I guess
I: Was he repairing track?
R: Yeah, looking after the track and shoveling snow in the wintertime. Lots of snow. Everything had to be shoveled mostly.
I: Oh, so he worked on a section crew.
R: Section, yeah
I: I see
I: All right, he came to Pelkie in 1906 and did he work on the railroad then?
R: Yeah, then he came to work on the railroad, yeah. Mineral Range Railroad from Mass to Keweenaw Bay.
I: I see.
R: Worked in Pelkie then.
I: Any time Mrs. Oja you recall something, just say it. Ahm, did he live in the section house there?
R: Yes, the section house, that's where we went, the section house.
I: Do you recall who used to be on his section crew and what direction he worked? I understand there were two families in the section house.
R: Yeah, and he worked north...from the section house north towards Nisula or Mass, you know, and that other runs towards Keweenaw Bay.
I: Was that Jake Peterson who was...
R: Peterson did work on there, yeah.
I: Do you recall who used to work in your Dad's section crew...the guys?
R: Well, I don't remember too many of them...I think that Nick Niemi was one and John Niemi. He used to work for them. I think there was some fellow by the name of Passanen...John Passanén.
I: Is that Passanen or Pesonen?
R: Passanen...P-a-s-s-a-n-e-n...that was three and then there was a couple more but I don't remember their names.
I: Okay, how many years would you say that your dad worked for the railroad as a section crew foreman?
R: In Pelkie?
I: Yes
R: I just can't remember how many.

Well just remember...would you remember the year he bought the farm? That's when he moved away from section railroad work. What year did he buy the farm?

R: He bought the farm about eight or ten years later, didn't he?
Yeah.

I: So about 1916 or 1918, around there?
R: Yeah, I think so around then.

Before then maybe. Well, it was 1900 you're figuring now...1905 of him moving there...yeah.

R: 1906
And then if it was 1915...could have been during that time that he bought the farm.

I: Okay...and he started farming then. Where did you go to school?
R: I went to school in Pelkie.
I: That was right across the street from your farm, right?
R: Yeah, well it was one year upstairs of the store and there was no school house. And they built the school house and it burnt and they had to build another one.

I: Oh!
R: That second school house stayed then. So that's the way.

When you speak of the store now

R: The store was across the street from the section house.
I: Oh, and who owned this store at the time?
R: It was owned by Gauthier...a French fellow.
I: Right. And they held classes every now and then above the store?
R: They held classes there every day.
I: Do you recall who used to teach above the store there?
R: Yes, Maude Cameron.
I: Maude...?
R: Cameron...
I: Cameron?
R: Yes, Cameron.
I: Where was he from?
R: Baraga
I: ...was from Baraga, that's right. For how many years did they hold classes?
R: Just that one year and then they built the school up there about a half a mile from Pelkie.
I: Ah, and this was the second school.
R: Second school, yeah
I: Was the first school built in the same place?
R: Same place, yeah.
I: How did it burn down?
R: From forest fire going through there
I: I see.
R: See was all woods that time.
R: All woods
I: Do you remember that forest fire?
R: Oh yes
I: Tell me a little about what you remember because no one has told me about that yet.
R: Well, all we knew that they said it was coming from north and it
blowing towards Pelkie

I: From Tapiola?
R: No from Mass...see that's...

That's west then.

R: West, yeah. Well then they got in a hurry and they got a box car and the put all the stuff in the box car from the section house and ready to go because sure as everything was gonna burn. Of course the men were working and trying to hold it back that it wouldn't come very far so that's the way it...

I: Did it burn down the buildings in the town?
R: No, it didn't burn them down, no. They held it back and it didn't burn anything in the town.

I: Do you recall who was helping fight that?
R: Well, there was dad and a lot of the people around there. Not too many because there wasn't too many men around there.

I: Okay, sounds like it's kind of scary. I've never lived through a forest fire.

R: No, we had harder time with the fire. I hadda go to Marquette with Dad afterwards about the fire because then they it that the engines set the fire when it went through and that they had some sparks from out of the chimney and that's the one that set the fire and that was going on for some time. I don't know if they hadda go court about it...I don't think they did. I think it got left that way.

T: It was never finally established, the cause of the fire?
R: No, I don't think so.

I: But some people believed it was the Mineral Range.
R: Yeah, that the engine went through and a spark flew when the engine was going up.

I: Okay, what was it like going to school in the upstairs?
R: (Chuckle)...it was all right, I guess. There wasn't too many children.

I: Do you remember some of the children?
R: Well, let's see...I don't remember many of them.
Okay, do you remember going to school then in the new Pelkie School?

R: Yeah, I went the new Pelkie School...was something new.

Do you recall who was teaching there?

R: I think...

Was it Tebold? Was there a Tebold there?

R: Yeah, Mrs. Tebold...what was her first name...Tebold. She was from Baraga too.

I: Okay. And your father at this time was farming.

R: No, he was on the railroad yet.

I: I see

R: Yes he was.

I: Okay, can you tell me a little bit about his farming operation?

R: Farming?

I: Yeah.

R: Well, I don't know. He wasn't doing much farming at first, but we rented the farm from Mr. Oja and another fellow; but we rented it...they were farming...they were living there.

His father was a blacksmith also by trade.

I: Oh, Menna Oja was a blacksmith?

Yeah, blacksmith, yeah.

I: Was he practicing his trade in Pelkie?

Yes, and afterward even he worked in lumbercamps, didn't he?

R: Yeah, he...

Yeah, in his old age after he went on Social Security. Wasn't he about the first one that ever went on Social Security?

Yeah, he was the first one that went on Social Security from here...Pelkie in 19 (?). He hadda go to Marquette that time.

Rl: So he practiced that blacksmithing mostly in his life because he had a blacksmith shop on his farm.
I: Do you remember anything else about him in his farming?

R1: I just know that they farmed over there. His family grew up there, girls went school and Matt would work in the store. You were first working in a section, wasn't it, when you were fifteen years old or what...weren't you?

R: Yeah.

And then he went to work in the store.

I: Who owned the store that you worked in?

R: Gauthier.

Gauthier...Gauthier's store.

I: What were you doing at the time there?

R: I was doing everything, you know, and the Post Office was there and Gauthier was the Post Master...no, Douquette was the Post Master.

Yeah, at first, yeah

R: Douquette, the fellow that lived in the house right across in Pelkie where I live now or where I own the house now and Rueben lives there.

The Post Office was there first.

R: The Post Office was there, yeah.

I: I see...and Douquette was the Post Master.

R: He was the Post Master.

I: Well, can you tell me a little bit about this store? Now I know the stores look a lot different than they did in those days.

R: Yeah, it was general store and had everything there...everything you could think of.

R1: Everything from clothing to groceries and feed and that big potbellied stove was right in the middle of the floor like they had in olden times. Post Office was in the corner there. That's that big white house now you see that's finished off, that's the store that time.

I: Now you're talking about the house the Jokela's live in.

R: Yeah.
I: Well, this was quite a few years later now that you're talking about this store, right?

Yeah, that's the store that I'm talking about...when it was a store.

I: Okay

See we moved...my folks moved in 1907...no...no...no, 1913 my folks moved on the farm, but what I'm talking of before is what Grandma has said and Matt, you know. Yeah, but that was...you went to work in there in that store whatever year, you'd have to remember that yourself; but that's what the store was like, you know. I remember it too.

I: Okay, and then gradually you started your own store or you became the owner then.

Rl: Well yes, that's then another story. See, 1962...in 1962 Ruona built a store across the road.

I: No, not '62

Rl: Sixty-two years ago

I: That's better, okay.

Rl: Sixty-two years ago Ruona built a store...that's the fall when we moved.

I: That would be 1913.

'13...that was the fall of '13, that was just the fall when we moved here, you know, sixty-two years ago.

I: And your father's name was...?

Pulki

T: Pulki...and his first name was...?

Pulki. And then that fall when we moved sixty-two years ago and that Ruona's store was built and then did Gauthier quit running the store...Parki had it then, didn't he?

R: Yeah, and then he was...

Rl: And then the Post Office was moved into the Ruona store, wasn't it.

R: Yeah after but not that right away yet.
Well, not right away but anyway, then Parki had it and then anyway later that Post Office was moved in the Ruona store and you worked in the Ruona store then; but you'll have to remember why.

I: Is that where you...well, then you were a clerk in two stores first in the Gauthier store and then afterwards...

R: In the Ruona store

I: ...in the Runoa store. Well, at one time there must have been two stores. Gauthier's store and across the street Ruona's store.

Oh yes, oh yes there were.

T: There must have been a lot of competition there.

And then they built the Co-op store there besides and there were three stores at one time then.

I: Okay, well let's let Matt tell us about...okay, there were two stores there at one time.

R: Yeah

I: Now, did Ruona get most of the business...is that why Gauthier left? Because it seems like two stores is a large number of stores in a small community.

R: Well, I'm trying to remember now what happened there. When I moved across to Ruona's, I was Post Master then see; and Mr. Douquette had resigned and I took his place and I went with the Post Office across the street to Ruona's store. That used to be Keevie's store to start with.

I: Keevie's store?

R: N, Keevie and Company and then they had it for a year or two and then they found out that it wasn't going good, so they sold the thing to Ruona and I went to the Post Office across the road to Ruona's store. Matt Ruona was running the store and he had some other fellow working there too by the name of Silvala was his name.

I: Ed Silvala?

R: We used to call him Buck Silvala....Buck Silvala. So he worked for Ruona too then so it seems that Ruona must have had the business then.

I: What kinds of products do you remember in the store. Surely there were some products that you just can't buy today. Are there any of those things you remember?

R: Well, in the way that they were bought, you know. Like now they bought toast was sold right from a barrel, you know; and you know they'd have a big barrel for toast. Somebody would buy even...
you know, would buy them in a big bag, but I bet somebody almost bought a barrel even; and then that's the way hardtack was sold... a big barrel in the corner and soda crackers were sold in big wooden boxes and lemon crackers and lard was sold from a great big tub in a kind of a little wafer-like thing. You get so many pounds you ask for and they'd scoop it there.

R: It was all weighed

Rl: Yeah.

I: People would come with their own containers too.

No...no.

I: No?

No, they had those kind little wooden containers...they were just like little boats like that thin thin wood, you know, for lard even and they'd put it in there then. But they scoop it from a great big container, you know. And butter was bought...farmers made butter and...

R: They brought it to the store.

Rl: They brought it there and then you could buy it from there then and they'd cut pieces from there. And there wasn't pound of butter like butter here.

R: Nobody's buying butter.

Rl: Well see, they were farming, see; but that's the way if there was any butter bought. But that's the way lard was bought, I remember and mostly everything was in big containers and then sold from them you know. Coffee they would buy in big pails, you know...ten-pound pails even.

I: What brand of coffee did they have?

One was called Giant brand, one was called Peaberry...that was one.

I: P-e-a-b-e-r-r-y?

Yeah.

R: Yeah, was the same place as the Giant came from.

Yeah, I think it was.

R: Duluth.

Rl: Yeah, we used to say Peaberry coffee and of course there was different ones like in the packages like Arbuckle...that was an
...that was an old, I don't know if Pelkie had it. I think it was in the Copper Country. But there was Kaleva coffee and Whitehorse House coffee and there was many different brands of those that were packages, paper packages like on the shelf, you know, pound packages. But there was that Peaberry I remember was in those big containers even.

I: What about old medicines? I'm sure you even.

Oh yeah.

I: A little drug store too?

R: Sodergren had a drug store.

Yeah, Sodergren had a medicine cabinet right in the store.

I: How is that spelled, this Sodergren?

Rl: S-o-d-e-r-g-r-e-n and he was from Minnesota, wasn't he

R: Yes, from Minneapolis

Rl: Minneapolis, yeah

I: You knew this man?

R: Yeah, sure.

Rl: Oh yeah, he'd come and refill the shelves.

R: Every year he'd refill them then collect for what was sold.

Rl: Yeah, see it was a glass door in front and...had his own cupboard there, you know, and they'd sell the patent medicines from right there. There'd be ridabalsame (?) and what was that tar like...all those old kinds. I suppose castor oils and castoria and...oh I suppose...

I: Linament?

Yeah, linament yeah...different linaments, yeah.

I: What kind of linaments were there?

R: White linament.

Yeah, and camphor linament.

I: Farmers were great believers in linament in those days.

Oh yeah, oh yeah.
I: I don't even think it's sold anymore

R: I don't think so either.

I: I don't think it's any good for anything...maybe keeps the flies away.

They used to smear their chests with them and those camphorated linament, that was really for cold and white linament was a more heavier stuff.

How did they take care of colds?

With those linaments and then they take those...what was that one especially that drops that they...ricabalsame and then they'd take ti by drops, you know.

R: Put it on sugar

Rl: A lump of sugar, yeah.

R: Was it a cough medicine?

Rl: Cough...well it was cough medicine, yeah

R: Everything! (chuckle

Rl: Yeah, everything.

R: It was strong stuff.

A cure for all. Yeah, but that's important that kind of care, you know. There was no doctors those days to be had.

I: Well, there was a Dr. Buckland.

Rl: In Baraga, but you get him in the mid-winter...when they never got him for colds or anything. They tried to cure them themselves and him for more emergencies, you know.

R: And some people went there, you know.

Rl: Yeah, for broken bones or anything, well then they take them to Baraga. I had a brother that broke his leg as a little boy and they took him with a horse and sleigh to Baraga and that's where he slept all night when the doctor was called out and wait until morning.

I: Matt, can you tell me how you came to start your own business in Pelkie? How that started? Okay, right now we're going back to where you were you were a clerk for Ruona.
R: Yeah, yeah, well I was clerk for Ruona, yeah and Gauthier, well he rented this business for Funke... just rented the business. Funke bought all the stuff in the store except the store then he rented the building. He was running that store across there and then I was working for Ruona. Well, I got started when Gauthier used to come up to the store there and he'd sit around and wanted to talk to me and he said that he wanted me to take over the store, that pay as you go... that if I got money I can keep paying it little by little, just take it over. I said, "No, I wouldn't take it." But anyway then I made up my mind and I got some money from my dad and somebody else gave me some money... who was it that borrowed me some money? But I had enough money to pay him off, see... pay him off to get a hold of the building.

I: Oh, so you bought the building.

R: I bought the building, yeah.

I: Were you and Ruona partners of some sort in this?

R: I think I was at first, but I didn't have enough money to go.

R1: Ruona helped you financially.

R: Yeah, he helped me, yeah he did, yeah.

I: Well that seems kind of strange for him to help you financially when he had the store across the street. Can you explain this a bit?

R: I don't know, he helped me. Yeah, Ruona helped me a lot because I didn't have any money at that time.

R1: You got some... did you get some money from the bank in Hancock?

R: Well yeah, I got a loan from there but he helped me with the money to get started too, Ruona did.

I: Well that... did he have rocks in his head?

R: I don't know.

R1: Well like... it must have been like a partnership then that as the interest grew, well his grew too that money what he had put in there. Whatever money he put that time but that if make business and grew, his money grew in there too, see.

R: Yeah.

I: Oh, so he sort of had...

R1: It was sort of like a partnership, see
I: I see.

R: I think it was first.

But Matt had the whole run of it, you know. He didn't...it was just that his money grew as the store went up, you know, ahead.

R: Yeah, I suppose.

I: Then Matt Ruona died kind of suddenly, didn't he.

R: Yeah, he died...

It was an accident

R: He was delivering groceries to Toivola's...had a camp up there and that's where he died on the way.

Do you recall when that was? I have it someplace else, but about when?

About when...well I could say that I wouldn't average my age on that about seventeen years because they had a girl my age...it seems to me she was about seventeen and you take that seventeen from sixty-eight...well how much would that be?

I: 1941?

R: See, I never put years in my memory...dates that way, anyway...

I: About 1941, so when did you take over the store from Gauthier?

About what year?

R: Let's see now when did I take the store over

Well, you had it before then

R: I can't remember...well.

Stop in tape.

I: Well, originally the Post Office was in Gauthier's store and Douquette was Post Master; then in approximately 1916, the Post Office was moved over to Matt Ruona's store which is now where the Pelkie Co-op lumber supply warehouse is; and then after a few years, we don't know exactly, it was moved across the street again to Gauthier's store; but this time Matt Oja became owner of the store. While the Post Office was over at Ruona's, Matti was the Post Master and he retained his Post Mastership when he became owner of Gauthier's store and we don't have the date for that. We're trying to figure that out.

What was it like running a Post Office in those very early days?

R: It was hardly nothing because there was hardly nothing to figure because there was hardly no people.
Rl: That was a fourth-class Post Office

R: It was fourth-class.

I: And there were very few people

R: Yeah.

I: And they didn't have the volume of mail in billing that they do today.

R: No, mail came in once a day, that was it. Just sort the mail that was it.

I: Okay, let's now talk about the church history. On the cornerstone of the Apostolic church on the north side of Pelkie...the larger building and the one that was first built...the cornerstone says 1918. I've heard also that it really wasn't built then but it was not completed until 1920 or so. Do you recall the building of that church.

R: If it's the north side, that's over there by the old church.

I: Pelto, yeah

R: Pelto, yeah.

I: Do you recall when they built that?

R: Yeah.

I: Who was working on that?

R: There was lot of people there.

Rl: The whole congregation that time...of the church.

I: Can you remember the people who worked that day...kind of just describe how that went.

Rl: That worked on it...well it was all the different...all who were in that congregation. There was...well, there was my dad and there was...

I: And that's Pulki

Rl: Pulki, Paul Pulki and there was...well, they must have been that time...see, they were together...they speak then afterward on publications. But you want me to both sides...

I: Just who built the church

Rl: Doesn't make any difference which side, eh?
Well there was the Andrew Tepsa and there was Bill Kakkonen and
must have been John Lytikainen and Matt Laho and Matt Ruona was
living, yes, he was still there. I don't know if he did actual
labor there, but he was...

Yeah, he was connected.

Your dad must have been that time too, eh.

Yeah

That's Menna Oja.

Menna Oja and...

August Parkila

Koivanen, Alec Koivanen and William Pannanen and Isaac Pervonen
and Jacob Davallo...no I don't know if they were here yet farming
yet that time.

Hakkola...Charlie Hakkola

No, he wasn't yet. He was in the congregation yet that time. Not
that time...hard to remember these old timers...Matt Mantilla was
it evidently that time and Bill Korvanen.

That's Matti Mantila, right?

Matti Mantila and this here happened there and...

and Pete Tauriainen...I don't know about Heike Taurainen. No,
he wasn't yet that time.

Emil?

Emil must have been there, yeah, they must have been family
already then. See, a lot of them moved afterwards there; but they
joined the congregation.

Well I understand even before the congregation was built, there
were sermons often held in homes and in schools.

Oh yes.

Can you tell me a bit about these...we'll call these pre-church
gatherings. Can you tell me...

Well they had...well see we moved here sixty-two years ago and
I remember from then on we belonged to that church. My folks
belonged to that church and they kept services at the different
homes like I remember out at Kemppainen's and even Jolgren's were with us then that time. Jolgren's and...

I: Which Jolgren?

That was...they're dead now.

R: Michael

Rl: Michael Jolgren...they're dead and gone; but they had services.

I: Who would speak at these services in the homes?

Well they had Rev. Heideman used to come here...father Heideman, you know...

I: Arthur

Rl: Arthur Heideman, yeah...and they had and there used to be those years an Abel Johnson and Halvarie probably came...he was from Atlantic Mine; and there was from Humbolt was some...what was that one man that was partly blind, you know.

R: Mattila.

I: Evert Mattila also came from Hancock

Yeah, and Evert was converted after us...into the congregation later. He wasn't yet those days. It was much later there was this church already then built, you know. But I know that Rev. Heideman's been here seventy years ago preaching already and over...and oh, there was a Jacob Pakkola those years too...he was an old...(?)...it's the truth anyway. Jacob Pakkola, he's an old timer and in fact, he's the first man that's buried in the Pelkie cemetery even. He was an old Christian man. And in fact I know that seventy years ago...let's see, Mrs. Ruona will be sixty-nine now in January, and she asked for her birth certificate and she was baptised over here by Rev. Arthur Heideman.

I: So Heideman.

Was come here already

I: The Old Man Heideman...

Rl: Yeah

I: ...was already involved in 1905.

Rl: You could say, yeah. We could say seventy years ago because he was coming around here.
I: Tell me a little bit about what you remember about the old man. Very few people remember him and we understand that you used to know him.

He was a...oh, I knew him well. He was a well educated man, very broad minded man, very well posted with the Gospel spiritually with the Bible...I can tell all that about him.

I: As a person though, I understand he would come into Pelkie on Saturday night and he would...

Rl: Yes because he hadda come by train, yeah.

I: By train, and where would he stay?

Rl: Now what I'm talking of is way seventy years ago and that's before my time but I know, you know. Well he used to stay at this Jacob Pakkola...he must have stayed there because he was an old timer in those days, you know; and let me see, where else would he have stayed those days? Can you think of anybody real old? Of those days?

I: He was quite a hunter wasn't he.

Rl: Yes

I: Sportsman.

Yes, he was a great sportsman

I: And he was also in his personal life kind of a joker or a humorous man.

Yes, very humorous...very humorous.

I Do you remember any humorous pranks or stories involving him? I'm trying to collect a few.

Rl: I suppose if I would have time to think I probably could remember some, you know, come to some, you know; but I could tell one thing...one that happened in the Copper Country that's been related to me when he was...he had been in the sauna with some fellows, you know, he didn't know who some of them were and this one man had been whole while calling him down...you know, they didn't know each other. Whole time there were in the sauna calling Arthur Heideman down, you know.

R: He didn't know he was with him

I: Not knowing this guy next to him was Heideman?

Rl: No...no, not knowing it was Heideman; and Heideman was admitting
it, you know, that so and so, you know that's the kind he is, you
know and he kept it up, you know all evening in the sauna. That's
the kind of guy he was...didn't hurt him if he was called down or
anything, you know. It didn't bother him at all. He'd just admit
it, you know, that's the kind of guy that Arthur Heideman is, you
know and of course, he's speaking, you know.

I: And then afterwards he let this guy know who he was?

Yeah, I suppose or else somebody else did, you know, maybe, you
know.

R: That guy felt this big! (Laughter)

Yeah, that was one thing I could just offhand...many other things,
you know; but that was one thing I've always remembered then.

I: I also heard that he wasn't pretentious with regard to his
appearance.

R1: No, no he wasn't that.

R: Very common ordinary man

Yeah, very...as highly

R: Very intelligent.

As highly educated as he was and just/the very very plain life, you
know.

He didn't try to be above the other people.

No, no he didn't put on airs; but one thing that I remember about
him, he wore his minister's coat quite a bit. You know, he didn't
wear the whatchacallit, you know like they have.

I: The collar?

R1: No, the collars, but he did come to church many a time with that
minister's coat on, you know. You know with the open from the
back, you know. That I remember as a young girl, you know, that
he did use. I suppose he honored that, you know.

I: He also came a couple times with his hunting coat

R1: Oh yeah, that was nothing when he was out hunting. Of course the
people over here were at that time were very very, you know, nobody was pretentious, you know. They loved him and they didn't
look down upon, you know, or expect, you know, this outward show
at all. It was what he spoke, you know, and everyone was like
that too, you know, the farmers and if they'd come to church just
you know, they didn't have suits on and neckties, you know, like nowadays mostly have. They had good clean clothes, but nobody put on airs as it was so it was just natural for him to be there also.

I: He may also have been even respected by the local people for this too.

Oh yes, they didn't look down upon him because see like those years people were poor and they didn't have much, you know, like in the line of clothes and like that. They couldn't put on airs themselves anyway, you know, especially the farmers. They were all just starting in their farming business.

I: Okay, can you tell me a little bit now about what you remember of some of the other lay speakers that used to be around this area. Very few people remember them. You mentioned Abel Johnson.

Yeah, there used to be Abel Johnson. He used to just come and keep services here too. I remember him.

I: What was he like? What do you remember?

Rl: Well, he was just a common ordinary man. I couldn't say anything. He came and had services.

I: Was he a farmer somewhere?

Rl: I don't know what his line was.

R: He was a farmer in Liminga country.

Rl: Liminga country, yeah. But he just kept his sermons and went his way as far as I know. I can't remember that...and anything humorous about him specially or anything, you know, that he was...he kept the services and that's about all I can tell about him.

I: And he would come around to homes and to...when they had it in the Pelkie school he would?

Rl: Oh yes, wherever the services were, yeah

R: In the Pelkie school.

Rl: Oh yeah, that's right too. They used to keep services in the homes and the school houses, yeah in all these different schools...Walled School, Pelkie School, all these different schools in Pelkie they'd keep services. Yeah, he kept...I been services as a young girl when Abel Johnson used to keep services at the school houses even, and I been sometimes at some homes visiting when he's been there;
but of course I was young, you know, that time just teenager, you know. But he died long ago already.

I: What about Matti Heinonen? I understand that he was a farmer around...from around Negaunee and he was Adrian Heinonen's grandfather and he would sometimes come traveling through the area and giving sermons.

Him I don't remember at all.

I: He spoke all the way from Negaunee to the Copper Country

No, I don't think he's ever been around.

R: No

I don't think he's ever been around Pelkie

R: No.

R1: No, I don't think so

I: Oh, I may have been misinformed here

R1: I've never heard that name and I know practically everyone beginning you know, who has been here preaching because Pelkie isn't too old, you know, as it is.

I: I'm glad you corrected me on that. I may have been mislead there.

I never heard of a Matt Heinonen.

Okay, you mentioned that Dakkalo...

Yeah, Jacob Dakkalo.

I: Was also a lay speaker?

No, he wasn't a lay speaker, but he was a Charter member of the Pelkie congregation because he was before our time. In fact, he had passed away when we moved here, when my folks moved here, sixty two years ago.

I: Are there records of the Charter members in that...would you know where one could go to find out who the Charter members were and the people on the various Councils and Committee's of the church?

R1: Where would they be now?

R: Get that from Heideman's or

I: Michaelson would have those?
R: No, Heideman would have those.

RL: No, but our church...our congregation church books. You mean Pelkie just...you're talking Pelkie. You're not talking of Copper Country.

I: I'm talking about both of the physical churches in Pelkie.

RL: In Pelkie, yes un huh. Yeah, that was...see they were altogether that time at first time when I'm talking of Abel Johnson time and then everybody was together and this congregation hadn't split then yet that time.

I: Can you remember any of the other lay speakers? You mentioned them and they've slipped my...

RL: Well there was Halavarie...
I: What was this Halvarie...
RL: Jacob Halvarie, he was from Atlantic Mine, yeah, he was a very gifted speaker.
I: Was he a trained.

No, he was a lay preacher and there was Olaf Paulson from (?), he lived there. He used to come and preach here. And Lassila Paul Lassila come sometimes, maybe once or twice, from Fulton.

I: Fulton?

RL: Michigan, yeah back of Calumet.
I: Okay.
RL: And...

I: These are all lay speakers.

They are all lay speakers...the ordained ones that used to speak were those days were the Heidemans and then Mattila was an ordained minister and then maybe some others that came, you know, that came from other states, you know; but these mostly all the rest were lay preachers.

I: Okay.

I'd remember quite a few, but they just don't into my mind now because...

I: In those days people would travel from quite a distance to attend services in Pelkie, right. I mean...

Oh yea.
I: ...I mean from Tapiola

Rl: Oh yes.

I: ...and Alston...Baraga even?

Rl: Yeah, there wasn't much of our...

R: No...

Rl: ...congregation in Baraga, but close to Baraga, on the road to Baraga, you know. But Tapiola they would come and Nisula and they belonged in the same congregation, you know. I think in the early years they were altogether; but then Tapiola formed another congregation, you know, the same but I mean that in Faith, but they built their own church there too, you know, as there was more people moving in that time here.

End of Side 1

All right, as the split started, I've been told that the actual split was sometime around 1932 because it says 1932 in the Heideman First Apostolic Church on that corner stone; but I've been told that before that time in the congregation, they were meeting separately. Can you tell me about when they started meeting separately, you know, on other Sundays?

Rl: Yeah, they split, the congregation split but they still used the same church, you know, that first church even if the congregation went into...I remember that but I don't remember the exact year now.

I: Could you come pretty close to telling me when?

Rl: Well, that could have been...that could have been in the late 1920's, you know.

I: '26 - '27?

Rl: Yeah, about that, yeah, I remember when that happened; but I'd have to think back, you know.

I: But even though there was disagreement, they were still using the same building.

Rl: They used the same church, but they were separated. Each one had their own ministers and they'd come on their own Sundays...like Heideman's were on this...Heideman and this Paulson that I mentioned, Halvarie and where they stayed on where they were; and then Matila and Abel Johnson and different ones, then they went...were on the other side; but the services, they kept their own services and had their own congregations. You know, who had gone with them on the other side, well they had their services and we had our services.
I: And this lasted for awhile

It must have been a few years.

I: Was there one...I don't know what you'd call it - a church council but even though they were meeting at separate times, was there... would they come together...

No, oh no, they separated entirely; yes, they were separated entirely.

I: Do you recall what doctrinal reasons may have been involved in this departure?

Yeah, see our understanding of Christianity is that we are saved by faith through the forgiveness of our sins and that we have to have our sins forgiven on this earth and through the grace of God...nothing through our own merit or good. You know, it is all because of the great grace of God that we can even have our sins forgiven or have our sins forgiven. That God has done the perfect and Jesus has done the perfect work for our salvation. That is the base, you know. Where they...they started speaking of law...Moses law that we have to do this and we have to do that in order to attain salvation. Not through the utter grace of God and ours is that it's all through utter grace of God our salvation...nothing that we can do ourselves. Sure as Christians we want to do good and good works, but not that we attain any salvation with that. No, it doesn't do a thing for our salvation because that's from utter grace of God through the redemption work of Jesus...through the redemption work of Jesus, you know, when he died on the cross and shed his blood to the last drop to wash away our sins and all he asks of us is to believe...believe this and have our sins forgiven in the name and blood of Jesus and believe it and stay in that faith. That's our faith.

I: And that is as your church believes it how one goes about getting salvation; but the Gil(?)...we'll call itGil(?)...they felt that repentance was necessary though.

Rl: Yeah, we believe in repentance too.

I: I mean, I know you do

Rl: Yeah

I: But they also believed in repentance too

Rl: They believed in repentance and even also in this here that to have your sins forgiven; but they brought the law of Moses. See, as big as the Bible is, there's only two things in it, the law and the Gospel and we know that we are not under the Moses law when our sins are forgiven us; but they still wanted to bring that law
of Moses.

I: Which corresponds to the Old Testament.

Rl: Old Testament, yeah, un huh. They wanted to bring the law of Moses to the Christians. The law of Moses we understand and know belongs to the unbeliever who is still in the world and not believing their sins forgiven. It belongs to the unbeliever to call them to repentance and forgiveness of sins; but not to the Christian. We're under the law of Jesus only through our conscience...our conscience tells us what is right and what is wrong; but they couldn't put themselves wholly under their conscience. We had to still follow the law of Moses even as Christians.

I: Okay, now when you say they were emphasizing the law, what were they talking about specifically...things that people, members had to do, in order to get salvation. Yeah, I mean sort of specifics with regard to how they interpreted the law.

Yeah, well all kinds of good works, you know. They were always looking with a bright eye at each other and they were ready to condemn them if somebody did something that was just, you know, against them that they didn't quite think the same way and of course it has gone in many ways...in clothing and some would look at others, younger people I suppose, they dressed more modern than the old ones, you know; and when some of them older ones, they would condemn because of their clothes and every little petty thing, you know, that they saw wrong...that they thought was wrong. Sometimes it was even jewelry and it was hairdressing and...

I: Was it mainly things they were emphasizing that members had to stay away from?

Yes yes, that they must stay away from

I: Now you're talking about Gil?) was stressing this.

Rl: Yeah, yeah un huh.

I: Laying very strong emphasis upon...

Yeah, putting so much emphasis on the law of Moses, you know, yeah for the Christians see. Where we don't...we know that the law of Moses does not belong to the Christian; but if they fall in unbelief again, then they're under the law of Moses again. But they were condemning people because of their simple acts, you know. Unless we understand it, we sin every day. We're always sinning, you know; we're not perfect. This dress doesn't come perfect; but they were looking for perfection in the flesh but we understand and know that flesh never gets perfect, you know.

I: What other things were they specifically pointing to? Was any mention at the time made of the way women wore their hair?
Yes yes, that's what I said that dress and hair and...

I: They...people on the Gil(?) side thought that women should not curl their hair or what...spend time combing their hair...

Yeah yeah, that's is, yeah.

I: But they should probably have it just in a bun, and wear it like that.

Yeah, that's the way.

I: Was mentioned at the time...were curtains in homes..

Yes, there used to be that law. When my folks lived way in Fulton there was already that people that, you know, it was even more strict than the Gil(?). That was already another one that they called that one that's already before the Gil(?) that just came about this curtain business. You hadda have short curtains, you couldn't have flowers.

I: Is that what they called the Essecoison

R1: Essecoison yeah, Fulton they had that already and they were condemning people because of it...their curtains and they couldn't have flowers; but Gil(?) didn't go that far.

I: Oh, but they were of the same kind of law that you were talking about only even more extreme.

R1: More extreme

R: More extreme

R1: And they already...and they left

I: I finally understand those

Yeah, they left Christianity already about in the turn of the century this here what you're talking, Essecoison and they were all law.

I: Around 1900.

Yeah, un hum, exactly.

What other kinds of law things, we've mentioned now hair style stuff, curtains...did they feel that because many of the people were poor at the time, many couldn't afford curtains, that if one woman were to have curtains in the house it would be kind of trying to be pretentious or showy.
Rl: Well I suppose...that it's a sin.

I: Was that what they were thinking?

Rl: It's just a sin...that it's a sin to have them that we should put on an act of poverty, I suppose, all the time and sinfullness in everything, you know, and simplicity. See that was their point that we should live...anything that looked nice you would have was a sin...anything.

I: Can you recall anyother kinds of...I don't even know what types of avoidences...

Rl: Well there's one that they couldn't wear a hat. You know, ladies couldn't wear a hat. They wore those black weavies, you know...

R: Laughter!

Rl: They go to church with that on and I'll tell you a happening that was just told me by another friend of mine, you know, from another community and she said that she remembers when she was in Calumet and this one lady was going to church, you know, showing off because she had a weavie on her head and another one was going to Heideman church with a hat on, you know. And I suppose she was kind of looking down on this Heideman...this woman going to Heideman's church with a hat on, you know. And this here...she must have kind of condemned her, you know, and preached the sinfullness of it and this lady with the hat on put her hand on top of the lady like this over the weavie and said that..."Do you know that there has been just as much sin down under this weavie as there has been done under this hat. That you're just as sinful, you under that weavie, as I am under this hat." See, that's was how was condemning, you know. That's just a happening.

I: I understand. Can you recall any other things...just really specific things. I know they changed through time, but like now some people are concerned over perhaps length of hair or television and things; but teleavision didn't even exist then.

Rl: No, that come afterward

I: Anyother things that you could remember that that they considered a sin?

Rl: Well I said about this here...like you couldn't have a necklace, that was a sin, you know...that if anybody...they looked down upon their Christianity right away, you know, that they were ready to condemn them out of Christianity somebody wore a necklace or those lavaliers like they used to wear or like I said they couldn't have houseplants. That's Esseconen...Gil(?) never went bad. And this here pictures on the walls and curtains and...
I: Wait...pictures on the walls?

R1

I: Did Gil(?) have that?

R1: No, no that was...no they didn't.

I: What about mirrors?

R1: That I haven't heard much about mirrors.

I: Yeah, Essecoison didn't want mirrors.

R1: Not Gil(?)...Gil(?) was already more modern, you know, that they were preaching...

I: Kind of hard shaving with those old razors without a mirror.

R1: Yeah

I: What about photographs?

R1: No, that was condemned

I: By Gil(?)

R1: Well, I don't know about Gil(?) that...but they were already having lot of pictures and cameras those days; but the olden time, you know...it waslike condemned. It does even say in the Bible that we shouldn't leave any image of ourself or something like that, so that really...you couldn't hardly condemn them for it, you know; and like I said, we're all sinners...we still aren't perfect, you know, that they have gone way overboard the people.

I: Right. Well, you've really clarified...see, I've heard many people talking about the law; but it wasn't until you pointed out to me these things that I finally understand it. Okay, this happened then, I understand, somewhere around 1931 and '32 there was a church election.

R1: Un hum.

I: And it was at this election when...although the Heideman followers were in the vast majority, they didn't come out and attend this election for some reason.

R1: Well because they were separated already even, you know. You know, it was our split in our church had happened already then before that already. That was already that split had happened in the Christianity already when that election was kept.
I: Oh, and the Heideman people didn't attend the election because they felt that...
   It was all over with already. They had left already, you know.
   But some Heideman people did attend
   Oh that might be, yeah...that could be that some of them
I: And as I recall, there was an election and they voted on whether there would be one minister or two.
   You mean in Pelkie?
I: Yeah.
Il: Yeah, that was.
R: In Pelkie?
Rl: Yeah, that meeting was at the Pelkie church, yeah.
I: Do you remember that meeting?
Rl: Yeah, I remember
   Can you tell me about that meeting?
   Well, Matt was at that meeting even. I wasn't...see, like I said I was a teenager yet that time. But my folks were, yes; they did vote on that, you know, that...you know more about that, you went to the meeting.
I: Tell me Matt, I wasn't around then.
Rl: Yeah, there was a meeting at the church, you know, it was their annual meeting or did they have a special meeting, yeah.
I: Do you remember what year it was? Was it '31 or '32
R: '3
Rl: Yeah, was about 1930 maybe because this new church was built in 1932, see.
R: Oh yeah
Rl: So, it was in the later 1920's because like I said we kept the church together for many years.
I: Okay, and what happened at this meeting Matt?
Well, they voted on either to have two ministers come or have one minister come and of course, our side...we say our side, we all voted for one minister...we didn't want the two ministers I guess. We didn't care for Mattila coming or who else was coming?

Abel Johnson?

Yeah

Was there another one coming too?

There could have been some others

There could have been...we just wanted the one minister and we lost out that vote that they wanted the two ministers. That's the side that won so then they kept the church and we had to built the new church.

No, you're wrong now.

That's not quite right, it's almost right.

No see, they walked out of the church. Our congregation walked out of the church.

And I heard that Andrew Wanttaja led.

Yes, un huh.

Can you describe what happened?

Well, he was that time the...he was that time the president of our congregation. I didn't remember him, you know, he's an old timer. Yeah, he was the president. I don't know of anything special happening that they just walked out, you know, from him and the congregation walked out of that meeting because they would not go back to Mattila or, you know, whoever those others were that they wanted, you know. They walked out; but then that's where that came that split and then they kept their own minister and then the Gil(?) kept their own Mattila, see.

Okay.

For a few years

I heard also that there was a padlocking of the door.

Yeah, un hum, I remember that well.

What was that about?

Well, I'll tell you then when they were using this church, you
know, these two congregations were using the same church, you know. But they were always doing something but they wouldn't let...well it was like a partnership now after all still, you know, and the church was both of their property.

This was before this election we just talked about.

No, after...after.

Oh, even afterwards?

Yeah, after the congregation has split, see, the two congregations were using that one church; but after all, the church belonged to the whole congregation. You know, they were charter members, you know, on the both sides, you know. They were all just as good owners every one. And this here other party when they started doing that kind that they even put a new roof on the church but they wouldn't tell our side anything. See, they were just like...trying to get the church for themselves...it would make you feel that way that why didn't they come honestly and say "That we're gonna put a roof on the church, that don't you want to go half and half with it." After all, they were all owners of the church. But instead of telling our side, they went and put the roof on the church, you know, themselves and did things like that that made it seem that in time they're gonna take the whole building. That was only the building, you know, then. Well then our side, of course, they decided also that let us do something too, you know, for the church, you know that this side...we could almost say today that was childishness...you and me, we could say. But they were old timers, you know.

But that was very serious at the time.

Yeah, serious because they had put their last pennies...those people were poor that time who built that church, you know, all of them, you know, they had been built with their last pennies, you know, just about. I remember my father too, you know, so he put his...it was hard money that he ever put in that church too you know, and work and I don't know did he work, but then the money. But anyway, they decided that we'll paint the basement floor for, you know, on our part and they went and bought paint and they painted the floor. That was our...I'll call it our side, you know. And they went and painted the floor. And there still is a little joke about it that my father was the last one that come out of there and he came backward, you know, through the back stairs because the whole basement was painted and he was the last one in there painting the last part of it and they even...to this day they joke about it my father came backward the last time out of that church. You know, he painted that and the back steps, you know, out, you know. And that night, the other side, they went and put a padlock on the door.
I: After that painting.

Yeah, after that painting.

I: Because they didn't want you to do anymore.

No.

I: Because if you would do more, then you would have more of a claim to the church.

RL: Yeah, they would have more to the claim if they kept on doing everything and they didn't like...they got so angry because they went and painted that basement floor; so that night they put up a padlock on the door and that was...Mr. Aho, he's dead now, he lived in Calumet and put that...he used to be my former Sunday School teacher. So I said when I got to be grown up after being his Sunday School pupil, he put a padlock on the door...don't come no more! That was a joke too, you know. And then all night...see this was during Depression and there were lots of young folks, you know, over here that time. You know, they had come from the cities back to farms to their homes, you know. And all evening long they were going just like a caravan back and forth, back and forth...the youngsters, it was such an awful thing to them and a wonder, you know, for all people...you know, not our church but everybody to see a padlock on the church door, you know.

I: Were people gathered around talking about it and looking at it?

Not so much, they were more just drive back and forth, you know, they were all just wondering about it. And then they...our church people never went there then anymore.

I: After that padlocking.

No, no there was Ruona's...that big house that's almost across the church, you know, that's just about coming down. Well, Mrs. Ruona, Bill Ruona's mother lived there and it was beautiful house that time; and she kept the next services the following Sunday when I think it must have been Heideman, I guess. Well, the services were kept at her house the following Sunday then because they didn't go there anymore after the padlock was put on the door they never went then and they started keeping church meetings at the schools...that Pelkie School, that old school building that you see...

R: And then they had confirmation at the Kero Church.

RL: Yeah, next summer they had...the following summer they had confirmation at that Pelkie church and then they...

I: Which is the Evangelical Church.
No...no, not the church. It was that old Pelkie school they kept the confirmation and they rented for the Sunday that Evangelical Lutheran Church the following Sunday for confirmation. That was then the following summer. This happened in September...this padlocking of the door.

I: Okay September of what year?

Now, we can't get that, you know.

Stop in tape.

In that September I think they had the dedication of the new church that it was just during that year that they had to have at the schools and their services. Then they had that summertime...

I: So, the padlocking occurred in 1930.

It had to be in 1930 that was.

I: And what time of the year...spring...summer...fall, or...

Rl: No, it was in September and it was following year in September they had already this church. So it had to be happening in '31

I: That the padlocking...

Yeah, because the new church was the following September finished... it was dedicated already in September the following year.

I: Okay, and they were building the new church next to Ruona's house during that year while they were having services in the Pelkie school and that summer when...

When they had confirmation there and they hada rent the Evangelical Lutheran Church for the confirmation. That was then, yeah, that summer.

I: So, after that meeting when the Gil(?) side voted to have two ministers and Andrew Wanttaja who was quite upset about this walked out, both separate congregations still for awhile used the church at different times.

Rl: Oh yes, yes...until they put the padlock on the door.

I: Okay.

Rl: Up to the time that they put the padlock on the door.

I: 'as there ever at any time anything like putting tar on the pews.

Rl: No.

I: Okay, I had heard that, but it may have been a rumor.
Okay, tell me a little bit about the building of the new church. Who built that? What...okay wait, first before we get to that, who was on what side? As I heard this, this was just a very painful times. Everyone was talking about it. It was the subject that was on the tip of everyone's tongue.

Yes, it was a sad fate, it was very sad, you know, times, you know, yeah.

Can you tell me about what happened to the community then. How the whole community felt this?

Well I suppose like Evangelical Church and like that, they didn't have anything...they're quite a big congregation or were at that time, you know, in Kero...and Pelkie, they didn't mix up at all, you know, they were their own, you know. It was just in between these two that split, you know. And like I said, we have never had Essecoinen's in Pelkie, you know that. We have only had these Gil(?) and it used to be so clear before, they were altogether, all; but then when there came this split, well then there was this...our congregation was split and then well see, this was during Depression...like I said there was lot of youngsters home and each one had lot of youngsters right at home with hardly nothing to do. Well they felt so bad then when their fathers and mothers lost their church and the folks wanted a church and they then the folks decided to buy this piece of land from Ruona, that's where the church is...or did Mrs. Ruona give it?

I think Old Lady Ruona owned that land where Bill's house is now too.

She charged something for that.

Yeah, she charged something for that, yah.

But it was very little.

Yeah, it was very little.

Ahm, what was Mrs. Ruona's name? Do you remember?

Aaisa Ruona.

A-a-i-s-a

Okay.

And she...they bought this piece of land what was very little and
these youngsters...there was Bill Koivanen, this Kate Koivanen's husband, he was...they had a big family too and he took...Matt donated...see, Matt donated the woods...that was some part of his logging (chuckle)

Yes

Matt donated the woods over there west way up towards (?) over there...donated the timber and these youngsters...and Bill Koivanen had a sawmill and these youngsters went out in the woods over there, that's the youngsters from our church, our side, you know, they went out in the woods and they put up a sawmill and sawed the lumber for the new church. Remember there was no money...when it split, when the split came naturally the treasury went in too and half then they got all the money, you know, what little money there was in the treasury.

I The Gil(?) side kept the money?

Yeah, kept the money...kept the communion sheets and everything that went and they had nothing.

But it wasn't much money.

There wasn't so much money involved because it was hard times, you know, and the people were poor; but I remember the first collection. My father was put treasurer then that time when this happened and the first collection...

I: That's Paul Pulki

Rl: Paul Pulki...and that was twelve dollars something was the first collection it seems to me.

I For the new Heideman church.

For the new Heideman church. That's the first collection...that's what they started from. They hadda get all their ledger and their monthly collectionbooks and everything, you know, then start right from new like from the bottom because all was left over there.

I Oka' who were these youngsters that were...

Well, there was this Koivanen, there were my brothers two that were active.

I: Can you mention your brothers' names?

There was Arvid was here from Covington, happened that spring, you know, visiting here and there was brother Wilbert and brother Paul. Wilbert's the one in Baraga now, you know; and brother Paul he
lived here in L'Anse but he's dead now. And well then there was a lot of...

R: Koivanen boys.
Well, you'll have to just get the Koivanen's and the Pulkki's, you know what I mean.

I: Mutkala's?
Yes, Mutkala's.

I: Heinonen's?
Heinonen's, right, were left with us, un huh.

I: I heard that Otto Heinonen designed that church.
Yeah...yeah.

I: He made the blueprints for that church and there were quite a few good carpenters who happened to go on that side.

Rl: Yeah, Wanttaja was a carpenter, Heinonen was a carpenter...well anyway, they put this sawmill up and they sawed all this stuff there and then when there came early spring...see they had the lumber for nothing, see, and labor was nothing...they didn't have to charge for labor.

I: They were unemployed anyway.

Rl: They were unemployed anyway, so labor...they would never have been able to build a church, you know, at that time otherwise. And labor and then in the spring they had to get sand and rock for the basement. They started digging the basement then and built the basement then early in the spring, you know.

I: Where did they get the sand and.

Over there at the Papin Hill. That's the best part of it when my brother Arvid happened to be visiting here and my brother Paul, and they went that first morning when they went to collect rocks, and Arvid, my brother, bragged that we're the first ones that ever took the first ground for that church, you know, turned over the first rock. And so they got the rock and the sand from the Papin Hill and they hauled it free labor there but they needed cement then, you know. And there was an old old timer, an old Christian man, Jurmu...Zachary Jurmu...

I: Ahm, first name?

Rl: Z-a-k-a-r-i Jurmu. Yeah, and see he traveled from his home up
clear across our place to Pelkie, you know, shortcut instead of going like that, you know. So he'd stop at our house going and coming to the church.

I: Where did he live? Where was his home?

Rl: He lived in Kero.

I: Okay.

Rl: Yeah...and then he'd come along from there and cut across, you know, just a shortcut. So he'd stop at our place and he sat there at our place, and he said, "Well, God has blessed us rocks and sand. If he would only bless us cement." You know, he believed so strong in God, you know, that that was his faith in God, you know. Well, of course, that struck at my brothers kind of funny and so after he left, my brother Arvid said that...and Paul said, "Yes, of course the rocks and sand are blessed because you can get them free of charge over there; but the cement asks for money," you know. That he was waiting for God...was he gonna drop it from the sky? You know, kind of kidding and it so happened...there was no money, we must remember, you know, there wasn't and it so happened that they were just building that Pelkie School that time and the contractor had some how made a terrible mistake, you know cement wasn't expensive either then; but they had made a terrible mistake that he ordered much more cement than they ever needed for that school and they sold that for a song for the Pelkie Church.

I: Do you happen to know the name of that contractor?

I wouldn't know that

I: Okay.

I wouldn't know that. Matt claims there was never any bill put for that cement even.

R: Yeah, I was the treasurer then.

Yeah, Matt said that there was never no bill

R: Never a check made for it

Never even asked...God blessed the cement. First the rocks, then the sand...and then I remember when my brothers were so dumbfounded and that and my mother told them that "Now you know that Zakari Jurmu's faith isn't going for nothing either....That strong faith or hope anyway, that God would bless the cement, and now it's blessed." So they got to working...we had the cement and the rocks and the sand and they started making the basement...free
labor. Ladies used to go over there...it was all woods behind that church yet, you know, there and we used to go there and cook coffee...keep the coffee pot going all day for them and coffee breads and free labor. Who wanted to come well they just came there and worked and by September they had the dedication of that church.

R: Yeah, on...

Heinonen and Wattaja were carpenters, you know, and so they...they all were carpenters after a fashion, but they were the ones that designed the church and Heinonen actually designed it, you know. So they didn't make it that old-fashioned straight thing like the other one was made. He made it different shaped...wanted it a different shape.

I: Can you describe what the women did...how they would chip in. Were there kids there too?

R1: Well, yeah.

I: Was everyone helping?

Well sure, when your folks were working there...I was just a teenager at home and I'd go there and you know, my day of cooking was. Ivy Ruona, Bill's sister, she was a single girl then, she lives I don't know where now you know.

I: You mean two women would take turns cooking?

Cooking, yeah.

I: Where would you cook?

R1: Over there...they must have had something...some kind of a stove, old fashioned stove over there where we could cook and boil water there and cook the coffee and then there was a make-shift table and the men would just come there and drink, you know.

E: Yeah.

R1: And I remember there was another happening of this here...this was way back when the old church was being built, well they didn't have money then either...that was done with the last pennies and I can always remember this here...my mother and Mrs. 'Tepsa went out to collect money with a horse and buggy, you know, they went from house to house to the congregation; but we were altogether that time. That was, you know, everybody was in together that time and they went collecting. They got enough money to get the communion dishes, you know. And I remember how tified they were in the evening when they had been drinking so much coffee when they came to
Tepsa's...I was there. They were all in, you know. But they got the money for the communion dishes. That was the first church, now not this one...not the second one, you know. But this is just a story from way back. And I can always remember that. And then now the communion dishes went with the church too, of course, just like everything else and I can always remember this Lossie Peterson, he went with the Gil(?), you know, and they had the communion dishes...you know, somebody had to take them to wash them and bring them...they didn't do them at the church, you know. And I always remember when I used to be right across the road when I saw them walk in...go to church with those communion dishes, you know, because I remember how tired my mother and Mrs. Tepsa were when they collected the money for that...for those communion dishes, you know...that was years back, you know.

I: Sure

Rl: But they bought communion dishes for our church then when this new church was built, you know.

I: Okay, can you name...first name the people who went...

Stop in tape.

I: Name those people that you can recall that went to the Gil(?)

Rl: Well, there's August Parkila, he was one of the singers, and the Andrew Tepsa but his wife didn't go...she stayed with us. And Charlie Hakkola's and William Hannonen's...isn't it funny how your mind goes blank...I can't remember too many of them.

I: Ed Pelto?

Ed Pelto went but August, now his brother didn't go. Ed Pelto went but August didn't go. August stayed with us. Do you remember any names, would you know any?

I: Ahm...

Heinonen stayed with us.

I: Mutkala...

Rl: Mutkala didn't go. Pesonen's didn't go.

I: What about Erikainen?

Rl: Erikainen? Erikainen wasn't in the church

I: Wasn't a part of that.

Rl: No, untun.

I: Pesonen...John Pesonen went with the Heideman?
With the Heideman, yeah.

I: Ah, Laho's?

RI: Matt Laho did not go, stayed with the Heideman's; but John Laho went. John Laho's went. There was two Laho's.

I: Ahm, Jacob Maki

Jacob Maki's went and the Waisanen's went too...you were just talking about.

I: Un hum.

Yeah, the Waisanen's went...Jacob Maki's went and Heike Kemppainen went, you were talking about.

I: But the other Kemppainen...Emil Kemppainen went to Heideman's.

Yeah, they stayed with Heideman's. Joel wasn't...Joel went that time to the Evangelical Lutheran Church; but afterward he belonged to ours.

What about Andrew?

No, Andrew didn't go.

I: Andrew went to the Heideman.

Yeah, Heideman, yeah. And Mrs. Mantila stayed with the Heideman.

I: What about...oh, also did Matti Mantila go to the Heideman?

Yeah, Heideman, yeah Matti Mantila and John Mantila was dead I guess already then. His wife stayed with the Heideman. Laminga (?) stayed with the Heideman...Laminga(?) was dead but his wife stayed; (? - unable to hear) and Jurmu from Elo stayed with the Heideman; but the Kehus's...the two Kehus's from Tapiola went...

To the Gir(?)?

Yeah

I: How do spell that last name?

K-e-h-u-s...Kehus...there was a Matt Kehus. No, the other Kehus didn't go, Heike Kehus didn't go. Heike Kehus didn't go. Matt Kehus went, yeah.

I: What about Martilla?

Martilla stayed.
I: What was his first name?
R1: Arthur.
R: Arthur.
R1: Arthur Martilla.
I: He went with...?
R1: Heideman...and Jokipii's went with Heideman and Herman Niemisto's and...
R: Jokipii's
R1: I just said Jokipii and...Poyhonen's went to the Heideman.
I: What's Poyhonen's first name?
R1: Isaac
I: How do you spell that last name?
R1: I-s-a-a-c
I: I mean last name.
R1: Poyhonen...P-o-y-h-o-n-e-n
I: Okay.
R1: And Koivanen stayed.
I: That's Bill Koivanen
R1: Bill Koivan's folks, yeah.
I: Oh, his parents? Both Bill and his parents?
R1: Yeah, Bill and
I: What was his parents' name?
R1: Bill didn't belong to anything but he was just helping out the parents, you know. His parents were Alex Koivanen...yeah, Alex Koivanen.
I: Well, a lot of the...it seems that a lot of the community...
R1: And a Matt Kemppainen, our neighbor, went with the Heideman's
I: Of course Pulkki...Paul Pulkki's went with the Heideman's.
Rl: Yeah, un huh, yeah

I: A lot of the community that belonged to the Evangelical Church were kind of sympathetic with the Heideman's, weren't they?

Yes, yes.

I: Because of this business of being locked out

Rl: Yeah, yes.

I: And so even though they didn't share the same beliefs, they helped you out a bit sometimes.

Yeah see, well they didn't approve of anything like that of locking a church door...that's unbelievable, you know, I mean uncalled for that that doesn't happen very often that they lock a church door on somebody, you know. No, they were sympathetic that way. They never...

I: Well, there was also a court case, wasn't there...or there was about to become a...

Rl: There was about to be, but they left it there. It got left there. They did go see some lawyers or something, but then they dropped it. They didn't make no case of it.

I: Was that at the request of Elders in Finland?

Rl: No...no, no special request. They just found their own were excited...excited, you know, losing their property and all that there; so they were just going...went to talk to a lawyer. But it never became a case, you know.

I: And the man who put the padlock on the door, you said, was an Aho from...

Rl: Yeah, it was a...what was his first name? Adolph Aho...

I: From Chassell.

Rl: He lived in Elo but then he moved to Laurium where he died then, yeah.

I: And he was the one who locked it.

Rl: Yeah, he was the one who put the padlock...he was a carpenter, you know, after a fashion.

I: The other side, the Gil(?) has said that the Heideman side said that they were going to take some things of the church that
belonged to them. Maybe it may have been the communion dishes or something.

Rl: Well that was just they would have to try...of course if you do something like that, you kind of got to get co-op with the other one; but all that and then that part what you said about the tar on the benches and all that, that's...

I: Rumor?

Rl: ...just rumor, yeah.

I: Okay. All right, well some families really had it rough like the Tepsa's. Imagine the father with the Gil side...

Rl: Yeah, and the mother on our side, yeah.

I: Right.

Rl: Oh, they had it rough.

I: Do you remember anything about the pain and the sorrow that that family felt?

Rl: Well, it was that.

I: Can you describe that kind of.

Friction in the home, yeah. There was friction in the home because of that there happening, you know.

I: Do you recall going over to visit the Tepsa's at the time?

Yes, we used to visit Tepsa's. They didn't live too far from my folks place and we used to visit them and, you know, I mean because of her, you know...and he never really raved at us or anything, you know, there was none of that. He was otherwise a nice man, that kind man that like someday their temper flares up so; but I can't ever remember of any special...anything special. He kept his views and he said that what his views are and that was that, you know.

I: Okay, so then the church was...the First Apostolic Church was completed in September 1932.

Rl: Un huh.

I: Do you remember the exact date that it was dedicated?

Rl: Well it was...I think it was just the first days of September...

I: In early September.
Yeah, in early September.

R: You talking about this first one or the second one?

No... no... no, that church... when that church was built in '32.

I: Your church

Yeah, our church.

R: That was dedicated on Labor Day.

Was it Labor Day?

R: Yeah, oh well then

I: Which was September 4th, right

Rl: Yeah, must have been something like that... the first Monday of September.

I: Okay, who spoke at that?

We had a minister traveling here from Finland, Kalle Makela was traveling, you know.

I: Which is Karli...

Let's see... K-a-l-l-e and then Makela, M-a-k-e-l-a.

I: Alright, from Finland.

From Finland, from Helsinki he was... his home was in Helsinki.

I: Did he come especially for this or was he in the country?

No, he was as a missionary traveling around.

R: Just happened to be here.

That summer, yeah he was traveling as a missionary that summer

I: Un hum, can you remember that occasion? That dedication? That must have really been of a peak experience...

Rl: Oh yes.

I: After... see it's entirely different when people get together and build a church with their own hands.

Rl: Yeah, un hum.
I: And watch it go up and actually participate in the building of it as opposed to if you hire someone else to do it.

Yeah, just yeah.

I: So that must have really been a...

Rl: Yeah, it was.

I: ...very holy day, you know

Rl: Yeah, and we always have to remember that there was the money situation too...how they got the rocks and the sand and the cement.

R: And they had the church outside...

Well never mind that...you're going a little bit too fast. Yeah well sure, it was a big thing and lot of people oh, attended that, you know. I remember those first services and we have a balcony...that church is bigger and has a balcony and always all that winter even when they had services there, well I remember that it was for long time after, the church was just packed, you know...I mean not packed, but full, you know, with the balcony and all, you know. Attendance was good because they were so happy because they got a church, you know.

I: And then Heideman would come and speak.

Yes.

I: Paul Heideman at this time.

And we had Durrula, yeah...he was voted as the other...there was two.

This was Peter?

Peter's father, Walter.

I: Walter.

Yeah, see they spoke for many years like that...Heideman and Durrula would come by turns and have a our keep our services plus the missionaries that traveled from Finland and then if there was any traveling from the other states, you know.

I: Well, tell me bit about Paul Heideman. Now you know him better.

Oh yeah, un hum

I: Tell me a little bit about him. You told me something about his
father...we haven't said anything about him.

Rl: Well, he was a...he was just...he was educated...he was born in Calumet and educated over there through high school in Calumet.

I: I have that

Rl: Then he went to Finland to Seminary in Helsinki. He was ordained as a minister...he went to minister's school in Helsinki and he was ordained over there and then he came here and he started preaching with his father.

I: Did he speak the same way? I know he believed the same things...

Rl: Yes, very same things.

I: 'as his speaking style even the same?

Rl: Well, he was a very very reserved natured man, you know. He wasn't as humorous...he was humorous, but not as humorous as his father was...not so, you know, he was a quieter man, you know, otherwise. But a great hunter...

I: Oh, he was also a hunter?

Rl: Oh yes, he used to come hunting up our place, you know, with Matt. They were since young...since they were young they were buddies, you know, together they'd come to Pelkie for years and years and hunt. They'd stay at our house, you know. Yeah, I was confirmed by him yet while we were in that old church.

End of tape.

Rl: Yeah, see the Evangelical Lutheran Church already had finished in 1914, I guess, it was built. And they had already had confirmations; but our church, the first confirmation of that was...the Apostolic Lutheran was kept in the old...in the first church then that was built and that was the first class...I was in the first class and Heideman was that time a minister and he was just about thirty-one years old then I think that time.

I: Do you remember when the Old Man died? Old Man Heideman?

Rl: Yes, I remember.

I: What year? Can you pinpoint that? And can you tell me happened...I understand he was on a fishing trip.

Rl: Yes

I: Describe to me what happened.

Rl: Yeah, he was over there in harbor...was it...it wasn't that Cat Harbor.
R: Cat Harbor.

Cat Harbor over there close to Eagle Harbor over there...that real rocky shore there you know when you go to Eagle Harbor over there. And it was evening...this is the way it was told to me...and he was a great fisherman and hunter and he was...it was real stormy night and these people or I mean he was so anxious to go fishing and he was asking one another to go fishing and finally his daughter, one daughter, said that she'd go with the father, you know there, and they went fishing.

I: Was he an old man already?

Yeah, he was over sixty...somewheres over sixty.

R: Yeah, he was over sixty.

Yeah, and their boat must have...it was real stormy or a storm came on and the waves were bad so I guess their boat capsized, you know, and of course he had all them heavy clothes on, you know, and he would have probably drowned then and there but that girl was a real real good swimmer and she brought the father, I guess, to some of those rocks; but see he had time to get real cold. It was in November.

R: November, yeah.

Yeah, real cold and he got exposure and he died of pneumonia then.

I: Oh, he was left out on those rocks for awhile?

R1: Yeah...I don't know.

I: Were the rocks right next to the shore.

R1: Yeah, right next to the shore...the rocks right next to the shore, yeah.

I: So they weren't too far out...they were probably coming in.

R1: Yeah, they were coming in...trying to get in but I suppose something happened there on the rocks there and she got him to the rock there.

I: Did she then go for help?

R1: I don't think...I don't know no more about it; but I know he was exposed too much to the cold that he got pneumonia and he died of pneumonia.

I: Shortly afterwards
Shortly afterwards.

I: Okay, and you don't know what year that was or can you?

I could get the year sometimes I guess from someone, but I couldn't
tell you offhand, you know.

I: Okay.

But that was in the 20's because I was single yet at home and
that.

I: If you had to guess at the year, what would you say?

Rl: What year would you think that Rev. Heideman...would you remember
that...that he died?

R: Was about '29.

I: Was it about at the time that this split was taking place?

Heideman was dead when the split took place, wasn't he?

R: Yeah.

I think let's say '25 or '24 - '25.

I: Okay, around that area.

Yeah, un huh, yeah.

I: Okay, so then the church was built and Paul Heideman would come
every now and then. How often would he come here?

Oh, every month anyway.

I: Once a month?

Yeah, un huh.

I: And then...

Rl: Durrela...

I: Walter Durrela and other lay preachers.

Rl: Yes.

I: Were there some lay preachers who spoke frequently there?

Rl: Yes, there was...well it was the same ones I suppose, Paulson
and some of them who were...you remember some of them that
of course it was like I said these Finland missionaries.

R: Yeah, they were around then but they don't come around now...

Never mind...never mind...yeah, not this here, there was the...was
it the following summer that we had services then at this church.
Like I said, we had very good attendance and following summer,
Rev. Jussila...Olaf Jussila from Finland was missionary.

I: How do you spell that last name?

J-u-s-s-i-l-a...and he was going around as a missionary and you
know that they didn't fit in the church. We had to keep the
services outside of this church.

I: Oh, so no one was inside.

Nobody was inside...afternoon services because in the morning
services we had him all day there, see and in the morning services
so many people got left outside and we didn't have those days
loud speakers like we have now, you know and as so many people
had to be outside and they served meals at the church...the meal
at the church; so the afternoon services were kept outside
because the people couldn't fit in that church there was so good
attendance we used to have, you know.

I: Well, the Heideman church in Pelkie had many more people than
Gil(?) in Pelkie, right?

RL: Oh yes, yeah un hum

I: Would you say what percentage of the people living in Pelkie
would you guess were in Heideman?

Well I would say much more than a half. See, I guess that
voting even wasn't so very legal according what I...I wasn't
there so I...they had to even put some away because they weren't
paying members that were voting. You know, that's why they won
because the Gil(?) took even that were paying members, you know,
into vote, you know, see.

I: And the By-Laws of the church said that you had to be a paying
member in order to vote?

RL: Yeah, un huh...and of the same faith, you know...and that's what
they claim...the old people used to claim that they...it was so
close that...you know, when that...but that they, that Gil(?)
won there that time.

I: So it must have been fairly...if it was close, it must have been
almost fifty-fifty

Yeah, it was fifty-fifty or close to that.

I: But with just a few more perhaps on the Heideman side

Yeah...yeah, un huh, yeah.

I: Okay...

...to begin with but then it just dwindled...that Gil (?) just dwindled and dwindled, you know, that first years they kept confirmation in even there where we had, of course, always in Pelkie you know. And...but it dwindled...they couldn't keep Sunday School for years and years and hardly at all even because the congregation dwindled, you know and there is no congregation now as far as I know.

I: Of course, there are many reasons for the dwindling which you and I are well aware of but one other reason was that there were also these congregations...these churches built in Tapiola and Alston.

Yeah...yeah.

I: Yeah, so you know, they don't come all the way to Pelkie.

Yeah, Tapiola went...joined that church then.

I: There was no split in Tapiola and in Alston.

No, they were Gil (?) built their church...that church in Tapiola and in Alston too was the Gil (?) that put up that church.

I: Un huh, so there were no Heideman people.

No...no, not in the Tapiola church or

I: That's funny that there weren't Heideman people out around that area.

Rl: There was in Tapiola, wasn't there?

R: I don't remember.

Rl: Yeah, because Neva's and Erkas and...there was so few of them that the majority was way Gil (?) in Tapiola, yeah.

R: Oh yeah.

I: Tapiola and Alston were Gil (?) country.
R: Yeah, un huh. Yeah, Alston was all Gil(?) Heideman has never been there.

I: Okay, the Heideman church then progressed. It was having good attendance immediately after and well now we're in about the year, let's say, 1933-34. What happened up until the present if you can collapse that into a nutshell.

Well, they just kept on having services and like I've said, we've had pretty good attendance...that's during the years we lived in Pelkie, see, and that's when all those years then, you know. See, I was married in thirty-three...the church was opened in '32 and I was married then in 19...in March and the church opened in September of '32 and we were married March 4th...so that was just a few months later so I lived all that time in Pelkie, you know. And of course our house was like a parsonage there...we had a great big house, you know. They were all ministers in and out there...Finland one and all those through here. There was good attendance and peace and love, you know.

I: Where was your house in Pelkie?

That big house where (?) lives.

I: Oh, you're talking about after you were married.

Yeah, yeah.

I: All right, then in more recent years there has been a split in the Heideman church.

Yeah, oh that was now...yeah, that was just a few years ago, you know.

I: Oh, that didn't start earlier.

Rl: No, no

I: There was...then from 1932 up until just a few years ago, there was unity and harmony in the church.

Yes, un huh.

I: What happened up until two years ago?

Well, this same thing. Certain people start preaching the law to the Christians.

I: Oh, that same sort of...

Yeah, same thing. They were of our church, but they started
preaching and they were curly hair and all this, you know. They had, I suppose, always been, you know...it was in them, you know, that law, you know. They started the same thing. Yeah, and that split then again, you know, see...they weren't saved by grace.

I: Some people were condemning curly hair?

Yeah, un hum.

I: Yeah, but these were the people that were preaching the law again.

Yeah, un hum.

I: Oh, I see. Okay, when did this start? Or when did you think the beginnings of this started? Surely it didn't start all at once.

No, well I suppose like this here, the leader for this thing right now is in Minnesota...this fellow that is, you know; and there's always been a root, you know...like there's been a living root, you know, like there's been those kind preachers like there's a Ruonavaara that they call in Copper Country.

I: Is that

Rl: Nathan Ruonavaara, young fellow. And he was always, you know, they didn't pay too much attention to him and they just had him preaching, you know, because they knew that what...

I: Well, when would you say these roots stressing the law...if I can say it that way, started to grow in the Church in Pelkie? Or they were always there?

Rl: They were always there like there was this but they were together...they were together just the same, you know; but the roots of certain ones are right there, you know, that you can tell, about you know.

I: Well, when did they start to become noticeable?

Just a few years ago...a few years ago these here Ruonavaara went to Finland. See, this comes from Finland.

I: Oh, this latest split actually came from Finland?

Yeah.

R: Yeah.

I: What about the split in '32?

R: No, that came among here, you know.
I: In America

Rl: In America between the...yeah.

I: Okay, tell me about this one and how it came from Finland

Rl: Well, there's in Finland...see, in Finland years ago, about the turn of the century already they had...they call it a Rauhan Yhdistys, you know, it's a mission.

Can you please spell that?

R-a-u-h-a-n, Rauhan and Yhdistys, that's like association... Yhdistys, you know.

I: Spell that.

Y-h-d-i-s-t-y-s.

I: Okay

Isn't it Yhdistys...that's how you spell it?

R: Yeah

And they have, over there they have lots of ministers, lay preachers and see then they're ruled by this here Rauhan Yhdistys, you know.

I: Where is it located in Finland?

In Finland, I think in Olwarbe would be the main place for that, you know. And is through them, you know, they been sending ministers here and, you know, for missionary work and the America, we have our Rauhan Yhdistys in Calumet too, see.

I: Where in Calumet?

Right in Calumet...

I: Right on Pine Street at the Heideman Church?

Yeah, at the Heideman Church we have ours too, you know and between the two of them they send ministers, you know, not so much from here because we don't have them to send, but from there they'd always send missionaries every summer to travel and sometimes two even at a time. And that's been going on. But in Finland they started doing this...I would say this was now eighteen years ago when we were in Finland, eh? When they invited us to a big banquet at Durrala when we were in Finland with Durrala and Durrala's wife and they invited us to a big banquet there and they brought up the subject that when there's
so few of you in America and so many of us in Finland, well can't it be adjusted that we'll run America's Christianity, you know... take over, you know...

I: What year was this then?

Rl: It'll be eighteen years next spring when we were in Finland.

I: Okay.

Rl: This dates way back there, yeah, un huh. See, we were traveling just as tourists.

I: 1958.

Yeah, yeah it would be.

I: And that was the first time this was mentioned?

Yeah, first time it was mentioned. Of course, we didn't say or bring it up over here...we wouldn't go against the Finland rule (?)...we can rule our own. We wouldn't go but they wanted to get Matt and Durrala, you know, to join with them to start ruling and then let them rule America, see. Christianity...

I: And who were the principal proponents of this attempt to try to rule American Christianity from Finland?

Oh, there was different ones. At that meeting there was...who was that main man now over there, tell me that.

R: Kindemaki

There was a Kinpimaki and there were ministers.

I: What was his first name?

Rl: What was Kinpimaki's first name?

R: I can't remember his first name.

I: How was his last name spelled?

Rl: K-i-n-p-i...

I: ...m-a-k-i

Yeah

I: Okay.

He's been/America after that here at our place even. And there was a Kaupinen at that banquet. I'm just naming...

I: Was that K-a-u...
...i-n-e-n, yeah.

I: Okay

Un huh, he's been in America and we know him well. But I'm trying to get that head fellow there now and I can't get it now. Anyway, they kept this banquet and, of course, right away you know that something's wrong. We wouldn't go for that at all; but when we came back here, we kept it quiet...we never spoke about it.

I: Weren't you just vacationing in Finland?

Vacationing, yeah

I: Or were you delegates

RL: Un um, no delegates, just on our own vacationing and Burrula was not on a preaching tour, just as a tourist too; but they knew us.

I: Was this Walter or Peter now?

Walter...and see these people had all been in America, these ministers that kept that banquet and they knew us. They used to spend quite a week at our place in Pelkie already from 1932 on and up to 1955, you know.

I: So they were using this as an attempt to try to put this over.

Yes, right. That's it exactly, un huh, they tried. And so we, can I say that word, you know, that we smelled a rat right away you know.

Laughter!

I: Or you smelled something in the wind.

Yeah, yeah, un hum, yeah. So, we knew that things weren't okay now, you know, in Finland that they're trying to do something, you know. So, we just didn't bring it to America before the congregation.

I: You just said nothing.

Nothing...nothing!

I: You didn't condemn them or anything, just said nothing.

RL: No, nothing, yeah. But then they started going others there and then there went this Alajoki from Minnesota and...

R: Ruonavaara...
And this Ruonavaara made a trip too. And this here...

I: What's Alajoki's first name?

Elmer

I: Elmer?

RL: Elmer, un huh

I: Alajoki...A-l-a-j-o-k-i?

RL: Un hum and...

I: And Nathan Ruonavaara...R-u-o-n-a-v-a-a-r-a.

RL: Well, he did go the next year...it was. He went on his own, but he just went without telling the Christians over there. But he was, you know, for them anyway.

I: There was one other one that you just mentioned that I interrupted you.

RL: Wuollet, yeah Raymond was it...wasn't his name Ray...wasn't he Ray Wuollet?

R: Ray Wuollet, yeah.

And Alajoki and Nordstrom, Peter Nordstrom. They're now...Wuollet died but Alajoki is the head over here now and Peter Nordstrom.

I: So they knew what was going on in Finland. Someone had written them?

No, I don't know if they knew; but they were easy prey when they brought...when they went to Finland the thing before them and well they were easy prey and they took it up because Alajoki all his lifetime has been, like I said, there was roots about that law.

He had a tendency to that law

He had that tendency all that time; yeah, and so they were easy prey. So they brought it to America and they got the crowd going over here then, you know.

R: It's almost five o'clock. We have to go to sauna.

I: Okay, well this is so important, please let me get this.

RL: Yeah.
R: We have time yet, go ahead.

They brought it to America then and they got the people going.

I: Okay, and now this is a couple years after you were in Finland.

Yes.

I: So, this must have been in the early 60's.

Yes, un huh. Yeah, and they worked on it, you know, then over here and got their own congregations, you know.

I: Kept pushing the law.

Pushing the law, yeah.

I: Okay, who was pushing the law in Pelkie?

Well that these different ministers. See, we never had an ordained minister in Pelkie, you know...we had our ministers come from all over, you know.

I: Ah, okay.

Yes, we had our ministers come; of course Getto has been our speaker in Pelkie like we have kept him like our speaker, but Ghetto never really was this here law speaker like Alajoki and them Ghetto is...well I never could understand him, if I tell it what he was, you know; but I wouldn't say that. Ghetto was such a strict law speaker about curly hair and all that stuff, you know. Yeah, but whatever he was, he's with them anyway.

I: Okay, so those people you mentioned were the people who would speak at Pelkie and when did the split then occur?

Well see then, they joined the SRK...S is for Finland...SRK they joined with them, you know.

I: When did they?

Now just this last few years.

R: Last few years...about a year ago.

R1: Three years ago this fall, hey?

I: Fall of '73?

R1: Yeah, yeah about...or '72.

R: '73?

R1: Yeah, in Pelkie I'm talking about.

I: Okay, fall of '72?
Rl: Yeah, that's about right...see lived here in L'Anse, we still belong to the Pelkie church, you know, and Matt was the president for, oh after my father died, you know; so he had been long long time.

I: Your father, Paul Pulkki was president was president for.

Rl: All the time after Wanttaja died in Pelkie church

I: Okay, when did Andrew Wanttaja die?

Rl: Oh, he died soon after that church was built in about 1934 maybe.

And then Paul Pulkki was president until.

Rl: Until then he got kind of tired, you know, and then Matt, his son-in-law was put in.

I: When did you assume presidency?

Rl: Oh, you must have been there about the last twenty years even.

R: I was president for nine years I guess.

Rl: Oh, you were longer than that.

R: Probably, I don't know.

Rl: I'd say about, yeah it would have...I'd say about twenty years

I: Can we get that date? Twenty years would make it 1955 that.

R: No, it wasn't.

Rl: You were already president in 1955 because we moved here in 1955 and you were president when we were in Pelkie already.

I: Oh', so it's a couple years before even '55?

Rl: Yeah, anyway, un huh.

I: You would say in the early 50's.

Rl: Yes, early 50's yeah.

I: But not yet in the 40's.

Rl: No, maybe not, un huh.

I: Okay, all right then...

Rl: But then it's three years ago this fall when they had their annual meeting and of course they...
I: Where was the annual meeting?

RL: Pelkie...Pelkie church.

I: Okay.

And we went there too...we went there too but we knew that it was...air was heavy, you know. It was just...but we went because we were with them, you know, and everything. We kept our Sunday School there...we kept our Sunday School there for years.

I: But by this time, though, meetings were very rare in Pelkie already by this time, right? I mean they weren't meeting every Sunday.

No, no they didn't.

I: Once a month?

Yeah, once a month maybe, yeah. And then the old people had died already that built that church, you know, the charter members...my folks and all these different ones that I named, they were dead already then.

I: Well, where would you go to church then if it was only once a month in Pelkie?

RL: Well, we don't go to church. Well, we go all over...we go Calumet and Houghton...

I: Oh!

We go all over...we go Mass and Painsdale and Ishpeming.

I: Oh, so that you can go.

Oh yeah, we have church.

R: We have church there once a month.

RL: In L'Anse, we have every first Thursday of the month.

I: I see, and what building is that held in?

RL: That's the Town Hall, we rent that.

Okay, now I understand.

R: Yeah, we have our...but the last congregation, that was here already before we moved here but we kept on belonging to the Pelkie congregation.
Yeah, we pay dues for the L'Anse congregation and help them out...

I: But you were in both.

We were...we belong to Pelkie until that three years ago at that meeting, they put Matt out of the...they voted when the meeting came, well they voted Matt out of President, you know, and we knew how terrible the feeling was.

I: Because you objected to the excessive preaching of the law.

Yes, exactly...exactly. So then they voted Matt out; so then we left the Pelkie congregation and we are with L'Anse.

But by this time now there are very few people who actually live in Pelkie that go the church building we are talking about in Pelkie.

Yeah

I: Even before this split.

Yeah. Well, there's no congregation there anymore hardly. I: There was...like the only person I know who lives in Pelkie who would go to that church is maybe Emil Pelto.

Rl: Yeah, Emil Pelto would be there...

I: Because Carol even lives in Alston.

Rj: Yeah, he's Carol's right hand.

Rl: Yeah, he got Emil talking. Carol is to blame for Emil being there today. It's Carol's kept him going going on all the time preaching the law.

I: So Carol was involved with the law.

Oh yes, yeah.

I: But I thought you said just a little while ago, he wasn't

But see, he joined them, that SRK though. He went with the SRK

I: What's SRK?

R: That's that Finland stuff.

You know, that Finland. Like see

I: What is SRK...those are letters.

Rl: Yeah, letters...yes S is Suomi, Finland...is shortened. See, like I said, they went for that SRK in Finland that let them rule
us and they're letting SRK rule them now see, they brought it in America and they're letting...SRK is ruling them.

R: Yeah.

They gotta do what SRK tells them. They're under their rule, see.

I: Okay, now who ended up with the church building?

They did...is like other people...people who wanted to go to the other church, they took the other.

I: They did.

I'm only sixty-eight years old and I have...there's two churches that my father built...helped build, not built, but helped build in Pelkie that we have been kicked out.

I: Okay, who went on what side in this latest one?

Well, there wasn't so many over there to go on the other side; but Ghetto went and Emil Pelto went and John Pelto and his wife, that's Emil's brother and sister.

I: But they don't live in Pelkie, do they.

They live on the Froberg Hill, yeah

I: Oh, up on the hill.

Yeah.

I: Oh, he's also called Jack Pelto, right?

Rl: No, Jack is their son.

I: Okay.

Rl: John is the father. John Pelto's went and Lempi Ranta lived on M-38 and Sandlin's...Ted Sandlin's went and different ones, but not too many. That's about it.

I: Can you think of any more?

R: Elsie Lytikainen

Rl: Elsie Lytikainen and...there's very few.

R: That's not all.

Rl: Well there are others, but we just can't remember
I: Well, who are the ones that did not go? That were kind of excluded?

Well like I said that we walked out...we had left already, you know, we left the church and we came to just join L'Anse here now.

I: But were there others then.

Yeah, but then I'll tell you this meeting was three years ago in October and now then, of course we never...we were still ________, we haven't changed but then there was few of them left like Pesonen's, Mrs. Pesonen...her husband was gone already and Mrs. John Koivanen, she's a widow that lives on the Baraga hill and Mrs. Pesola, Arvo Pesola from Elo and there's a...well they weren't happy because the ministers got left anyway that Durralla and them, you know...there was a Haavala here even in Atlantic Mine that time. And they weren't happy so they kept and extra meeting, congregation kept an extra meeting in December and they voted and they voted our ministers out... Durralla and Heideman...

I: What December? December 72?

Yeah, that same fall...from October to December.

I: Okay, we decided that was '72, right.

Must have been, yeah. Well, three years ago...it's one...two... three, yeah this is the third winter off now since that. I know by that Sunday School thing because we are Sunday School...so, I was counting. It was three years ago...this is the fourth year going now, yeah, isn't it.

I: Well, are those people that you just mentioned then the only ones who...

Well, I'll tell you then they had this meeting to vote...that what they wanted to get our ministers out, that was their point. That's by the truth they're working through SRK, of course, I suppose and the Alajoki is the head of them over here and he's the one I mentioned awhile ago and he's the head of it all; and they voted then for the ministers and there was only Mrs. Pesola and this Mrs. Pesonen and Mrs. John Koivanen that voted for our ministers then when they had this meeting in December...this extra meeting.

I: But many had already left after.

R1: Yeah...yeah.

I: It was a very small congregation

R1: But there isn't hardly any left yet.
But even at that point, most of the old people had died and a lot of the younger people didn't seem to care or carry on in that church.

Yeah, they don't, yeah.

Lot of them seem to have gone into the Evangelical church.

See, there wasn't many...there wasn't many so there wouldn't... wasn't many to split even; but then like I said, there isn't many left there now; but those were the three that...

How many families would you say were in there before the split?

I wouldn't know.

It sounded like there were only about a dozen

Maybe a dozen, that's all. And then these ladies, when they were only three left then on Heideman's side, you know, the SRK part won, well they left the church then. So there isn't any of our side at that church.

And it sounds like there's about a half a dozen families

Yeah...yeah

...in that church only.

Yeah, that's all...that's all there is.

Like thirty people?

Yeah, un huh. Martila got left there but he died already

Which Martila was that?

That Arthur Martila from Baraga that we mentioned awhile ago. Yeah, he got left but he died last week. So he was a follower of Ghetto.

I blame Ghetto for this...he's been...

Well, it seems to me that it was so small already that to split, I mean it's like...

It's a sad stage.

End of tape.