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

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INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWER: Art Puotinen

INTERVIEWEE: Fr. Charles Reinhart

DATE: July 11, 1973

A: We're here in the living room and we are going to begin by asking Father Reinhart--When were you born, and Where was your childhood home.

F: Well---it is a coincidence, but today is my birthday. I was born July 11, 1914 in Marinette, Wisconsin. And, I lived there through high school. Then I went away to St. John's University in Collegeville, then St. Norbert College at West DePere, then St. Francis Seminary at Milwaukee.

A: So, you had a well rounded educational experience starting with childhood. When did you first consider becoming a priest?

F: Well---that's hard to figure because I think I was quite young, but in those days you had to pay your own way, there wasn't any help from the outside. So, I would have liked to have gone, but I never thought that it would be possible. Sometimes you see miracles happen without any big boom of thunder, things fall into place. So, year by year it worked out.

A: Could I ask you a question or two about your own parents? Did they---were they native Americans, or did they come from---?

F: Yes, on my mother's side---her folks came over from Europe, it was an area near the Belgian border, but they considered themselves French because Belgium was not a country at that time. It became a country in about 1830. The nearest I can figure out is that it was near Reines, France. And, they had sort of a half-way house between and Paris. And, when Napoleon was running up and down the roads there, causing trouble, he said to get out, and somehow through some connections in the United States they bought some land up around what they call Red Banks, just north of Green Bay on the Sturgeon Bay Peninsula. It was around the area that Juliet had landed some many years before. And the farm they planted, some of the relatives still own land in that area. I don't know exactly, it was on my mother's side---her name was Miller, sometimes called Maximum, it was changed back in 4th. Then my mother's maiden name was Marshan, they came a little later into that area. My father's side---my grandfather, I really know very little about my grandfather on my father's side. He came from Chicago. His father had come from Germany from around Batun, and he was a professional baker in Chicago, and he came up to run a boarding house for the Stevenson Company in Marinette about 1860, when
he came up. And, then he married my grandmother, and his first family was in Chicago, his wife had died and his children were adopted out. And he came up and he married my grandmother who was about 20 years his junior. And, then he started raising another family and he died suddenly. So, I think we lost connection with the Chicago group. Actually in his background are many stories that I never heard, my dad didn't seem to know a great deal either because he was young when his father died. So, we figured it out that when all the relatives on my grandmother's side and my grandfather's side, on both sides of the family, we always used to say that there are 7 countries in Europe that have the doubtful distinction of being the sources from which our family came.

A: In your boyhood home, were a lot of the nationality or ethnic traditions maintained and preserved?

F: Not a great deal in my time anymore, but I think it had been quite strong a generation before---when they used to have their various organizations. It had already died out in those times when I was a child. I don't recall any particular societies. I lived in a Swedish neighborhood. There were a lot that did not speak English. They kept up some of their traditions, but there was also a lot of Bohemian people, we call them Chech today, and I say that there were various nationality groups, but none of them were strong enough, or had enough background to have anything of their own. They mixed, pretty much, with everyone else. So, the real old people are at home yet, maybe they kept up their own language. Hearing of the generation before---many times they had their own halls, and they had their own societies, but that had gradually disappeared by the time I had known about it.

A: I see. Well---let's move on a little bit, ahead now. Let's ask you about your first call. Where was the first parish you served---and?

F: Well---after I left St. Francis' Seminary in Milwaukee, I was ordained in Marquette, Michigan by Bishop Bagner, who himself had just been consecrated a bishop. And, then my first assignment was at St. Paul's in Negaumee, and I was in charge of the high school plus being an assistant at the parish. I was there for roughly a year and a half.

A: About what time was this?

F: This was in 1941. I was ordained on June 7, 1941, and I left there in September of 1942. Then I went to Bessemer, and I was there from September of '42 until Christmas of '43. And, then I moved to Newberry from Christmas of '43 until June of '46. Then I went to Meran, before this time I was always the assistant to the parishes. Then, I got my own parish in Meran, which consisted of Meran, Trout Lake, and Grocap---the three places---plus a half a dozen other stations that were along the
line. Little places where lumbering had been, you know, where there were still four or five families. And, then I moved to Nama in 1949, and I was there 2 years. That was right around the time that the mill shut down, and of course the future of the town was uncertain. Then I went to Watersmeet, and I moved there in '51, and I was there until '52—a little less than a year. Then I was assigned to Gwin, and I was at Gwin for 14 years, and then I was assigned to St. Joseph's—St. Patrick's in Hancock where I still reside.

A: Well---very good. I would like to go back with you and review some of the developments in each of these working opportunities. At Negaunee, for example, you came there right in the midst of the Second World War.

F: It was just before. You see, the war started on December 7th, but mining had already started to develop there. Negaunee, when I came there—it was just before the war, I was signed about the end of June, and the war started in December. But, the mines were becoming a little more active at the time, because they were all practically shut down during the Depression. And, there wasn’t too much activity really, as the real movement of the mines came later. They were still operating some of the older mines, and really getting them going at the time.

A: In the parish in which you served, was it composed of one single nationality group, or several?

F: In Negaunee?

A: Yes

F: Negaunee was a mother parish. It was strange like with a lot of these mining towns. The early group, many times were a lot of the people were the Irish—they came up with the railroads. And, a lot of the early settlers were then later on the French and the Italian came. I would say, of the parish, a lot of the Irish died off. It was characteristic of some of the old Irish families—there would be 15 in the family, but nobody ever got married—so that way when the family died off——that's true around here too, that's true around Negaunee too. The old families died off, the Irish families, but what was left there of our people would be mostly French and Italian. There was very little German, or any other nationality that I can remember. I can't remember any Polish names, or much in the line of Slavic people there.

A: That is very curious—the pattern you mentioned regarding the Irish family. Have you developed an explanation for this?

F: No, I think that there was a great family security—I have asked different ones. They said that the Irish were always taught, the boys were always taught to have a great respect for women. Maybe because they had such great respect for them, they
never married them. (laughter) That is the explanation that I got from one of them. But, I think too, that many times they had grown up in adversity, and they formed sort of a family group. And, they all contributed to the family. They had a great love for their family, and many of them never thought of leaving it, to establish their own families. And, that is true around this area also. Like on the hill at one time there were many big Irish families. Right now the remnants of them are just dying out. But, it could be true of other nationalities too, but I have noticed it more among them.

A: In some of the larger cities like Chicago and New York—of course the Irish constitute a pretty substantial political block in some of the neighborhoods. Have the Irish been as active in politics, say in Negaunee, or here in Hancock?

F: I think in Hancock, this would be more the case. You see, the Irish that came up in Negaunee—as I say they were another era as far as I was concerned—but, all I saw was more or less the remnants. But, I never heard of them being too active in politics, or making a league. Maybe there weren't enough of them. But, in Hancock—that's excluding the Hancock Irish, as they would call them. But, I think that there was more power here in the old days. I noticed that many of them got into state politics. Many of them were appointed to state jobs, from Hancock. There was a MacJack, who is not Irish, but he was some relation. He was warden of the prison coon. There was a coon, from Hancock, that was working at the Marquette prison. And, then I have heard, I can't remember the exact names, but many times they had liquor commissions, and different things which were drawn from this area. There seemed to be some power here of control.

A: Was there any particular party that the Irish seemed to gravitate to?

F: Well—I imagine that most of them were Democrats. Well—I don't know for sure, I wasn't around here. But, I would suspect that many times they were Democrat. Well—I think too that most of the time they weren't the—when you get into mining country, the mining companies and lumbering companies many times were Republican, and many times the workers went to the other side, figuring that it was the working party. I have been in areas where the companies tried to tell the people how to vote. Sometimes the bosses, or the bosses' wives would hold sessions, and dictate to the people how they have to vote. Of course, that didn't really turn them on too much either.

A: Was it simply informal persuasion, or were there any kinds of means to put pressure on them? For example, Murdoch, in Boom Copper, mentions a story about the miners who would come to the polling place, and the ballots were, I believe, Republican was red and Democrat was another color—and if they voted for the
straight party, they would have to ask for that ballot. So, when they would go to the polling place, where the election official was a Republican, he would have to ask Red, please—for the certain type of ballot, and then there was that type of a check that could be maintained upon the people.

F: I have heard stories of that, but I never heard anybody first-hand that ran into that. But, I wouldn't doubt—all I have know is that there was more persuasion as far as trying to tell them. But, when they got to the voting booth, they voted to suit themselves. But, up in the copper mines here—this was a much bigger operation than any other town had that I have been in. A lot of things could have gone on, but as I said, I don't know anything first-hand.

A: Yes, that is sort of part of the lore that has come down, those types of stories.

F: Yes, I have heard those types of stories, though. But, I think there was an individual mining boss that might have tried to influence that.

A: What you're saying is that there was nothing illegal about this persuasion. It was good electionary—sort of done.

F: Well— it was sort of dictorial. In other words, if you work for this company, you have to vote a certain way. And, of course that way you had the meeting and they kept their mouths shut—-but, then they voted to suit themselves.

A: OK, fine. Let's go back to the World War II period. You mentioned that the mines were beginning to start up. You had two charges during that period, Negaunee and Bessemer. Do you recall any incidents, such as mining accidents, strikes, or events like this that suggest drama in the local mining industry?

F: No, there were not, like in Negaunee I remember that there were industrial accidents there that do happen in mines. I know in one case, a man was buried under a rock slide. Another was just an industrial accident, men were blown off the ladder, in fact 2 or 3 were blown off of the ladder. There was a defective air vent there, and they couldn't figure out what was causing these men to fall, even the boss was killed doing that. But, was I say, these were sort of run of the mill accidents, that could happen in any industry. In one case, a man was suffocated just running off yardage—-getting up in a pocket where there was methane gas, which they didn't realize. That was from the old timbering. But, in Bessemer, the mining was at a very low ebb when I came. Later on—-Bessemer, itself, had no mines operating, except Anville was operating, and that was in Bessemer township. That was part of our mission. There was a mine at Palms, which was a part of Bessemer also. Later on, during my time there, of course I was only there a year and a half, they started to get the Yale Mine ready for opening, and that did
open after my time there. But, the demand for ore gradually picked up, but there wasn't anything they could do dramatically fast. Of course there was a shortage of manpower too, at that time. A lot of the young men were taken in the service, and some of the older men were, they were miners, but they needed—there wasn't any crash program. Because, sometimes they needed subsidies to get those mines going, some of them hadn't been pumped for a long time and they had to repair everything before they could start mining. But, I don't recall any big accidents whereby many men were involved.

A: What were your specific duties in these early parishes. You mentioned that you were an assistant. What did the assistant priest do?

F: Well—the old joke of the of dyacists (sp) was that the assistant had only one right, and that was a Christian burial. (laughter)

Well—usually, it has changed a little today. They call them associate pastors now. But, you were there, when we were ordained, we were ordained for the service of the bishop. And, so you were sent to serve a parish, in whatever capacity the parish needed. In Negaunee, there was a high school there, and they felt that they needed somebody more in the high school. The pastor had been ill for a time, Father LaMothe, originally from Hubbell—he was the assistant there, and he was trying to do most of the parish work, and take care of the high school at the same time. That was a little bit too much, and so I was sent as a second assistant and I spent a lot of my time at the school. And, I helped out in any capacity. In the first place, I was supposed to be the disciplinarian, which I don't think that I was a very good one. But, we turned around a program, we tried to get a dramatic society going, and I did a lot of work on the stage there. We tried to get a fuller program of movies, and things to fill in with. Audio-visual helps were something sort of new in 1941—there weren't too many on the market at the time. I remember film strips and thing like this. But, as I say, the nuns were in charge of the program—and I didn't try to interfere with the academic program. But, I think that it was a good high school at the time. But, then of course, we also had our parish work, as far as the weddings, and funerals, and sick calls, and things like that. Sometimes a parish is well built up, and a man can go there and sort of ride because of the previous fact that has been built up. It shows up in a hurry, you are always doing a little missionary work. A lot of European groups, many times they were quite good in their own country, or sometimes they were neglected in their own country—and then they would come over here in different situations. Many of these people had come from very rough situations in Europe, and some of them were even a little anti-clerical because they felt that the church in their country was on the side of the royalty, and in some places I suppose it was true. And, the royalty was sometimes used as an excuse, and sometimes you had to get to know them—know where they came from before you could understand them. And, it is not a problem so
much anymore of the newer generations. But, I say, like in Italy, for example, you had many conditions with the northern Italians——many times they were very poor. The boys went up to work in Switzerland and Germany in the mines. They went up sometimes when they were only 12-13 years old. They worked in labor gangs, and I know one man was telling me that when he would go back to the boarding house he would sit on the floor to make sure he wouldn't fall off the chairs. He was so tired, and they had to wait for shifts. I think each man was allowed eight hours in the bed, so he had to wait for the other guy to get up before he could go to bed. And, those people got away from their families, they got away from their religion, they got away from a lot of things. They were not very well organized in society anymore, and it took a while for a period of adjustment to get back as ordinary people in a society. I know that many of the men that came over from the Slavic countries, in the woods, also mentioned that they had a very nice home life where they were. But, then they got into the lumber camps in the United States, and I remember that one old fellow told me that they were just like animals. He said that they didn't know Sunday from Tuesday. Apparently there was a little lack of the apostolite there that seemed to take care of those men. They lost connection with society when they worked in the lumber camps. That's why when the lumberjacks got their pay, they went in and blew it in, because that was the only thing that they knew, to have some fun. So, they went back to the camp broke.

A: When you refered to an anticlerical attitude, do you recall any specific incidents where you, yourself, sort of encountered this from people?

F: Not directly, so much. But, in asking their backgrounds, some of these people had changed their ideas. For example, there was one fellow in Neguane, he used to always give the talk on Columbus Day. He was an Italian, and he would always raise his arms at the same time he would shout Columbus, but he always prided himself on being an Italian Protestant. Actually, he was of no religion, but he wasn't Catholic, that was the only thing he knew. (laughter) And, so getting to know some of the younger members, I never got to talk to him too much, but getting to know some of the younger members of the family, afterwards. His grandson married a girl from my parish when I was in Gwin. So, I am always interested, in how Grandfather Julius prided himself in being a Non-Catholic. So, he didn't know the story, so he asked his dad, and he found out that in the War of Unification, in 1870, in the time of Garibaldi, some of them fought for the Unification, and of course they took over the Papal states. And, there was a conflict there when they were fighting against the Papal states, they figured that they were fighting against the Pope——so, that put they outside of the pail, somehow! (laughter) There were a few who had some somewhat anticlerical ideas, as far as the church being alive with the big shots, as they would say. But, they had no specific reason for saying it in this country, but I think that that was a carry-over from Europe. And——
knowing some of the good people, I could see where many times
the structure over there was not good. It was found too much
in high places. There was not enough in the villages. And,
I know from when I would visit people, they would say, "Well,
over there we never see the priest. He is way up there, on
the top of the hill there, in a big castle." Here it was dif-
ferent. Of course, a lot of times too, the anticlericalism
was a reluctance of the pocketbook—to do their share!—
(laughter)

(End of side #1 of tape #1)

A: I would like to ask you whether or not the parish sort of
served as a community center? Not only in terms of meeting
the spiritual needs, but recreational, social, and a variety
of functions—so it almost became like a second home for
the families in the parish.

F: Well—we tried—every area is a little different. Like in
Negaunee, we had a good school there, so we had many activities
at the school that sort of took in the whole parish. But, on
the other hand, there are many groups that, like the older
groups, some of which didn't speak English very well. They
would sometimes shy away from many of these things. But, I
think that there was an attempt. There is always the ideal—
as far as I am concerned, that is the ideal parish. You
take in the whole community, and you take in all the needs of
the people, not just church on Sunday. But, you try to accom-
plish that as much as you can, but you don't always succeed,
fully on that.

A: You moved from Bessemer to Newberry, and were there for a per-
iod of several years. Did your ministry there at all take in
the state home?

F: Yes, in fact I was in charge. Well—p—I mean the parish was
responsible for it, but I did practically all the visiting.
And, I think that was really the thing that I enjoyed the most
about Newberry. Although, I loved the town. Newberry was sort
of an isolated town, we were about 60-70 miles from any other
town. Sometimes I think that that is an advantage. The people
get interested in their own town, and they are not always go-
ing to some other place—for their entertainment and their
activities. And, I think there was a lot of town spirit there.
The hospital did bring in a lot of good people, where as I think
the educational level of Newberry was fairly high, because of
the nurses and doctors, and so in the hospital. They did help
the town. But, the work at the hospital I found most rewarding.
Frankly, I don't think that there is a great deal of difference
in our medical care facilities now—they are about the same
type of people. They were not all, as you call, mental cases. In fact, there were a lot of people who had chronic illnesses, whereby there was no place to keep them in a regular hospital, and they would wiggle it somehow, and they got them into the state hospital and the state would take care of them. So, you have people with bad backs, heart conditions, and people who just couldn't function well by themselves—and they were put in the state hospital. But, a lot of them had very fine minds. You had a lot of cases of multiple sclerosis, where the mind was perfect—only the physical. Then of course, you had a lot of the deteriorates of various reasons—sometimes there was a whole group there—this was told to me—there was a lot of syphilis in the lumberjack days. And, the shufflers, you didn't have much communication with that group. As I say, there were. I don't recall, I think there was about 1600 patients, as I recall, at that time. Then they had the children's unit. That was fairly interesting. They had a very fine staff. Of course, in a state institution you always have those who are looking for an inside job and they don't contribute very much to the place—but, then you had your very dedicated people. You had excellent people, that I think were more important to the institution than the doctors were. Although, the doctors were fine, but I think that these people had more contact with them, with the patients. The doctor only saw the patient once in a great while. But, Doctor Campbell was there, he has been there 45 years—he was of the old school, and he ran more of a custodial institution than he did a sharp state hospital. But, the advances in medical treatment, or mental health treatment were not as advanced at that time either. At that time it was only electrical shock and things like that, now the medication means an awful lot. They made big advances. As I say, I enjoyed it—there were a lot of very fine people there, and sometimes, I know of one incident there—I was having trouble, the rear end of my car—I had stripped the gears, and I tried sending it to the garage there, and they never could get it right—it howled and howled and howled. Finally one old man there had been a mechanic. He had run a quarry. He told me how to set it up—and I had to go back to the garage and give them the information! (laughter) So, sometimes there was more knowledge in there than there was in town. But, then I had the missions too. I built a church up in White Fish Point, and in those days you had to go by way of Eckerman, and first we used to say Mass, but Tom Brown's place, right at the point. And, then later on when we got the church built at Paradise, we used that. And then I also had Halbert, that was a place on the way. We used to say mass at a house there. In the summer time we used to come to church at MacMillian. There were various little places like Soo Junction, there were people in MacMillian, we also took care of MacMillian.

A: So, you were really a circuit-rider, almost?

F: Well—it was. The people of MacMillian came into church at
Newberry. We didn't have too many out that way, but as that country developed, like Winter's Point—there was nothing too much along that road at that time. There were people coming, but now it is quite well developed out there. That is still a mission of Newberry.

A: In some of these mission points which you established and which subsequently became growing parishes on their own—when the group built their church was it often done by volunteer labor?

F: During my time, like at White Fish Point, we would have liked to, but there was so few people up there at that time—they were all busy. Everybody was hacking out an existence the hard way up there, and they didn't have a great deal of time to give. Although, we got donations sometimes of a truck or something of that sort. But, I wasn't too successful at that particular time—I mean, people have to have a little time on their hands before they can donate labor. I noticed that some of the other groups, the Baptists—they built a place up there and they used pretty much voluntary labor, but they imported them from down around Newberry to work on that. But, as I say, our people were so scattered, and most of them were pretty well tied up. We did hire along, there was a good old fellow by the name of Charlie Spicer. Charlie had just come out of Marquette prison, but he was a good man. He could do anything. He was not a criminal of any sort, it was just an unfortunate situation. Charlie was a very good worker, and he could do anything—remember, there wasn't any electricity up there, you had to do everything with hand tools. But, that is true in some areas. I know the church, rather the house at Gwin, was put up with volunteer labor. And, sometimes I think it is a mistake. The people that are not carpenters, they should be at least bossed by a good carpenter! (laughter) Then, the church could be put up with some volunteer labor. I have had labor gangs, like volunteer labor sometimes—they fixed up the church basement in Gwin, that was all volunteer. But, I had talent there. When you get a bunch of miners, they are pretty talented men, they are men that like to work with their hands, and they build their own homes. There were a lot of them that were good carpenters, tile layers. Of course, Gwin was a little bigger area, it wasn't so scattered, it was more populated. Sometimes your men are your best apostles, they will get the other guys off to work. Sometimes they used rough language to do it, but they—

A: They would get it done! You mentioned that the Baptists were quite active in building their own structures. How would you assess the relationship between—well, let me put it differently. What were the attitudes of different Protestant groups in the communities that you served towards the Catholic families? Were there good feelings, animosity—?

F: I never discovered too much animosity. The last thing you were talking about, the Baptists, you see, in the woods work, up
towards Newberry and north there---the iron company had brought in a lot of people from Kentucky, and from the south to cut wood. And, that's where a lot of your Baptists---it was for that group that they were building a church. Well---they would set themselves apart, of course, they are called hillbillies; but that is a general term. They came from all over the south. And, they kept to themselves, somewhat, so we didn't get to know them too well and they were scattered, there were no great groups of them. There were more little pockets of them here and there. But, I found, getting to know some of them, I found them to be very generous people as far as helping out. Like I know we had---when they dedicated the Cut River Bridge, the group from Trout Lake put on a dinner out there, and they served the people. And, the best workmen we had, a fellow by the name of Mills, and he was a real hillbilly from the south. And, his truck was available all the time, and they hauled in those real rough characters, but they worked harder than heck, you know. I think that a lot of those people who come out of adversity learn to help one another and are always willing. But, as far as prejudice---I never found, oh, there was a little. Say, in Negaunee, I found just an individual, individual cases. Sometimes a person in cooperation with the schools, or something. You will find one member of the school board who definitely, generally we got along pretty well. The superintendent of schools there in Negaunee, at my time----I met him in later years, Mr. Doolittle, he was very cooperative, and very good relations. So, any place that I have been, I don't think that they---you find sometimes a little working against, a little prejudice. Times when they find out that they might benefit somebody in their group. But, I think that that is rapidly disappearing. I never found anything that was really too severe.

A: You mentioned Gwin---this was your parish just before this one, and you spent a number of years there. If I am not mistaken, isn't it Gwin that is a town that was designed by a mining company---as sort of a model city?

W: Yes, the first settlements around there, the first mining was out in Princeton. In the early days, Princeton was a town of big boarding houses and a lot of homes. A lot of that has disappeared now, though. And, then the mining company decided that they needed more housing for people, and so they layed out a plan for, in fact, it is still called Model Town. And, the original plan, I think was beautiful. They took a piece of land in sort of a big triangle, within the rivers there. And, they always said that you couldn't leave Gwin without crossing a river. That is a fact, you have to cross a river to get out of Gwin. They had surveyed it out that there was no iron ore under that area, that was sort of formed by the rivers there. And, they wanted to make a beautiful town out of it there, but they started out very well---but, then there was a little gold-bricking between Boston and the area. And, the mining men were bringing their families all the way to Gwin just to measure the clubhouse for springs, or something and they were spending
all summer up there. And, the mining company's headquarters
got a little impatient and they put it into the hands of one
person. His name was Victor Carlson. They gave him so much
a home to put up the rest of the homes in a hurry. So, Victor
did put them up in a hurry, and that's why they had all these
double houses that were not really well put up. They have been
sold since, and they have been repaired and remodeled. And,
they have become quite good homes, now. But, there always
was fairly good town's spirit there. Since the mining, the min-
ing has closed, they closed around 1946----and there is still
a lot of iron ore around there, and they had a lot of water
problems because of the rivers, and today they could sell those.
The ore has a high content of sulfur, but I think in time that
might be acceptable again. They get new methods. But, there
was a stage route that came from the northwestern----. Gwin,
not just Gwin and New Swansie is right out of town there. And,
then there is Austin and Princeton----and then there were many
other locations that have disappeared since. But, there used
to be a place right out on the northwestern tracks, right near
where the air base is now--called Swansie. And, then later on
they built on the edge of Gwin and they called it New Swansie.
It was the warehouses and stores where the stages would pick
up the materials and bring them to the mines and the stores in
Princeton. And, up until recently there were still some of
the old stage drivers that were still around, and maybe there
are some left there yet, but the ones that I have known have
past away. But, Gwin was built starting around 1907, and it
was completed maybe about 1911, or so.

A: Which mining company was primarily responsible for this?

F: Oh, it was mostly Cleve and Cliffs----they owned the mines down
there. I think in the beginning, that there were several min-
ing companies----but, they were gradually taken over by Cleevlen
Cliff. In that whole range, Clewlen Cliff was the----it had
a little over towards Michigami, but I don't think it had any-
think down in that area. At one time there were fourteen mines
there. Gwin went through many cycles. When I first came there
it was a sort of low ebb----mining was going down because----
you see the difficulty with iron ore----Cleevlen Cliff was just
a mining company and they had nothing to do with steel mills.
They had perhaps some little connection, but not enough to
swing any weight. And, when the demand for iron ore was low,
they had a hard time selling their iron ore because had to go
down to market in the south. Then, later on, with this plant
in Palmer there, they got the big steel companies interested,
and they invested their money in it----so, that way they had ready
made customers and they were able to put up the Empire Mine in
Palmer, which is the same range there. And, now they are starting
the Tilden. But, that came gradually. The economy of the whole
country there really depends on that. In fact that is helping
Marquette, Ishpeming, Negaunee. The Gwin area is growing beau-
tifully.
A: Well----we spent about 14 years there, and that was your longest tenure up until that time. Looking back at that period of ministry, what single thing do you remember as perhaps your greatest accomplishment, or the effort to which you really extended yourself?

P: Well---sometimes when you look back, you figure that you wasted some of your time. Well---as I say, it went through a lot of periods there. I came there in '52, in September, as I say, mining was going down. But, then in September of '53 an announcement was made that we were going to have an air force base at Kai Sawyer. But, things didn't get going for really a couple of years, the beginning was only brush cutting and starting to level off the land there. But, that did bring in later on it brought in construction workers, and it brought in air men. And, in the beginning there was very little housing out on the base, we were sort of over-crowded, in Gwin. But, parish-wise, it didn't help us a great deal, there was a great deal of missionary work to be done among those people. We didn't always get the best from the air men, and many of the better ones were living on base. The ones that we got were the ones that were living in the trailers, and living scattered. But, they still had to be taken care of. So, we had numbers there to take care of----there were a lot of marriage problems, there were a lot of other things----until the base really got activated. Now they have trailer courts right near the base, they are no longer so much in town. But, as I say, perhaps the looking back, the greatest thing was simply the missionary work that I did among those people to try to get them in among the community. As I say, the growth was gradual. The base did not really help the parish any, let's say financially. They had chaplins as soon as they got activated, out at the base, Catholic chaplins---plus there was a lot of Protestant chaplins. So, these people, even if they lived in town, they figured that that was their church out at the base. They had everything provided, you have the base----they built the chapel, chapel number two is a beautiful thing. So, most of their activities were centered out there. They said that the ones who were not connected out there I had. There were a lot of problems and things like this, but sometimes in your problems you accomplish the most. Then we found that it was necessary to have a larger church, so we started a building fund, which started rapidly growing. I didn't get to build the church, it was built after my time there. They have a very fine church there now. But, I don't know, a lot of times you would like to build a big monument to yourself, or you would like to do something that shows up. I would say that the biggest accomplishment was getting to know those people throughly, getting them back----a lot of them had strayed. And, we didn't do it by any particular big movement or anything. I always found that this approach is the best----go out and take care of the old people who are home and can't come to church anymore. And, through the old people, if you can get to the old people, you can attract the attention of the young people. A
lot of times we judge people too fast. But, I found a great deal of charity among those people, there was a great family spirit, even though they weren't-----a lot of them were related. But, there was a great community spirit, if anybody needed something they were there to do it, without questions. They were all neighbors, they had grown up together. They were practically all one family. I remember that one of the last funerals that I had there. It was of a Mrs. Peziolie, she was up around 89 and her history was quite interesting. They were a well organized family. But, she had her family organized well enough that if anyone was sick she could leave her family and go and take care of the sick. So, at her funeral, at the funeral home and so forth, I was talking to people and I found out that she had delivered about a half to three quarters of the babies in Princeton. In those days they only had company doctors, and they had a hospital up in Ishpeming. They had a hospital for a while up in Gwin there, but then later on they removed that. And, back in the old days, when everything was at Ishpeming, the doctors trusted her that she could take care of the patients----they would assist her when they could. But, when anybody was sick, she went out, and she was a self-made nurse, through doctors help of course, and things. Her family was pretty well scattered at the time of her death, one daughter was there. But, she has one daughter that became a nurse through the example of her mother. And, she travels with a diplomatic family----she spends most of her time in Washington. But, she was a very outstanding nurse. So, as far as your apostolate among those people----I never believed in a big movement----sometimes a little more efficient---you would get people in the spirit of things. But, there still has to be this day by day, person to person contact---before you will accomplish anything. You will never accomplish everything that you would like. I did have the satisfaction of seeing----it wasn't just the air base that brought in the people. We had practically all of our people going to church and participating in the church. It was a great parish for----they would like to get together, dinners and pot luck and things like this. That's why I found the necessity of having bigger quarters.

A: It sounds like you had a very good ministry there.

F: I like the place. I would never have left, only this place, Hancock, was open---and the mission was getting panicky----he had been turned down many times before and he wasn't going to be turned down any more. And, then you start questioning yourself too. Maybe a guy can be in a place too long. You get convenient there, you get comfortable, you get your own friends, things are working well for you----well, maybe a new man could suit the quarters better than you.

A: Well---it sounds as if the parish in Hancock represented quite a challenge then for whoever would come.

F: Well----that's true. There are wonderful people here and every-
thing, but to be very frank about it—a great deal of our quality, not all, but I would say a great deal of our quality here is elderly. And, now since I have been here—in six years I have buried close to 200 people. Not all of these were living here, part of the parish—but, even if half of them were—that represents a net loss of a lot of people of the parish. The younger people, not all of them—we have a lot of fine young people—they do not always want to take on a responsibility in the parish. Your older people grew up with it, and actually, per person, I have never found such quality anywhere. As I say, I think the Copper Country had more resources, they had more of a culture—than, in any of the places that I have been. A real culture. Like Gwin—they were a fine, fine bunch of people, but they were purely growing up in the mines. And, in the early days, very few of them were getting a college education, or many times not finishing high school. That was common. I know that the high school was very small, but now it is very large, mostly because of the base. I would say that parish-wise the greatest asset of the base was this—it built up the school system there. We have a lot of very fine school teachers working there, and it did help that way. But, here—when I first came we were running a school—and running a school takes a lot of material work, being able to pay for things—although we had no struggle.

Enc of side #2 of tape #1

F: The first organized venture we had up here in this area was at the L'Anse mission—which is now a synod. And, then from there the Bishop Barage, from the Yaker—would come up to Houghton and then he would row across, in a canoe, over to Hancock—as a missionary. And, in 1861 he established a parish building in—a Rector Parish—and it was called St. Annes. It stood where the bank, where the Superior National Bank was, is now. And, that served for about 25 years, or so—I understand that it was only a log building. I have never seen a real picture of it. And, then at that time, around 1885, they were getting so many people here that they had to expand. And, so they decided to expand it into two parishes. And, so the French and German—they were mostly French. I have a roster of the parish in 1904, which shows that there were about three quarters French here. The French and German came over and they established St. Josephs here, which is the present church. And, then in 1889, St. Patricks rebuilt from St. Annes—and they had a much larger church. And that stood exactly where the bank is now. And, they established a school, and also a high school. They had a very fine high school. In fact, there was an awful lot of secretaries, and different ones came—and sometimes they even graduated from Houghton High School—they would come over to St. Patricks and get their commercial course. Then, that continued.
of course it suffered a great deal during the Depression. Then
right in the middle of the Depression, in 1937, it burned down.
But, there weren't too many children in school at the time,
the grade school were absorbed over here at St. Joseph. And,
it continued as two separate parishes for a time using St.
Joseph. Finally it was put together and that's how you get the
name St. Joseph-St. Patrick. And, for the number of people
that are here now, the one parish is sufficient for them.

A: It seems that the, you mentioned that the big for the parish
obcured in 1885.

F: Well---that was the beginning of the boom. Of course, the big
boom in the Copper Country was mostly, where you saw the material
evidence of it----was around 1885 to 1915. You find the nice
buildings, you don't always see----prosperity comes and they
don't always get their plans ready. And, you will find that
the nicest buildings of the Copper Country came after the turn
of the century----like your church buildings. For example, St.
Ignatius, in Houghton, was built around 1907. That was a real
structure. If you look at any pictures of Hancock in 1885, you
will find that nothing real substantial was built. Sts---for example, was just a whole series of shacks---going all the
way down to the water front. And, I have watched buildings
being torn down that were built in that era, and you find that
there was very cheap lumber put it, rough sawed lumber---it
seems that they didn't have any good planeing mills, or high
class lumbering---only if they brought it in from a distance.
And, everything was built with tin on the outside, and very
poorly before that. Around 1900, Germania Hall they called it.
It was a German Aid Society that built that hall in 1898. That
was a very well built building. And, that burnt, in fact, the
first Sunday that I arrived in town here, in 1966. But, you
see, that was one of the more substantial buildings of Hancock.
That was built in 1898. Then, I noticed in Calumet, for example,
the churches in Calumet----at one time we had six large Catholic
churches there. And, St. Paul the Apostle, it used to be St.
Josephs---if you look at that structure. It is a beautiful
structure, I think it was built in 1903. But, they were using
the sand stone from Jacobsville, and everything was more prosper-
ous. And, I think all the finer buildings came around the turn
of the century----in the Copper Country. Before that it was
sort of a mining camp. But, that's why I say that this was
never a real----of course this structure was built small. It
was a small congregation in the beginning, and then they enlar-
ged it and sort of spoiled the looks of it from the outside.
And, they pushed the walls out----that's the first time I ever
saw that done to a church. Although, the structure is sound,
the walls have never spread. It is a sounder structure than
St. Patricks was----they had trouble with the walls spreading
and that. They had it all repaired and refurbished about six
months before the fire, and the fire e wiped it all out. And,
the Irish haven't forgiven God yet. (laughter)
A: Yes, I was noticing here, there is reference made to the growth in 1885. And, also, there is passing reference made to the Copper Strike in 1913.

F: Well---of course that would play a part, I suppose, in the---it would play a part in the growth of the Copper Country generally.

A: Have you come across persons, either in the parish, or in the community, who had recollections of that strike? Because it really was a key event?

F: Yes, of course remember that that is 60 years ago, and I imagine that they all know about it. You see, they were all fairly young at the time. A lot of times, a kid,---just like I went through the Depression as a kid, and we took it as sort of normal times. Because everybody was in the same boat. But, to name any names of anyone who was seriously involved, I think you would find more around Calumet, that would know.

A: Well---there is perhaps a more recent labor dispute that would come in mind. Let's see, you came here in '66? (yes) There was a strike here in '67, or '68.

F: Yes, well---that is the one that closed the mines. You see, in Hancock here you didn't have very many miners. On the hill you had some. And, for the ones that I have talked to, they never felt that they had a great deal to say in the strike.

A: This is the '68 one?

F: Yes. The Copper Country has had an old bitterness against mining companies, and it goes back, I would say to 1913 and beyond. And, names like McNaughton as still brought up, and mining bosses. But, I don't think that, of course that is brought up a lot in the bar talk. But, I think the people were a little confused. I don't think they knew exactly what, entirely the strike was about. It was a matter of, like a routine strike like the auto industry has. They figured that they would have to get more benefits. As the economy expands and the inflation goes up, you have got to meet it. So, they were all interested in getting more for themselves, which is natural. But, as far as, I think, too much power, the way they realized later. Too much power put into the hands of Gene Saurri, who led the strike. He was using it more as a personal vendetta, than for the benefit of the miners. They never really had a vote in that. So, I think there was---you see, there weren't too many in town that were affected. There were a few on the hill, miners up on Mount Carmel---I know John Caravich was mentioned, but he is dead now. But, the miners were more in Calumet.

A: Is this the pattern that has been pretty general for the whole history of the parish---that miners and mining families have been in the minority, and the constituency has been shopkeepers?
I would say, I think of Hancock, I can't say way back. At one
time when Quincy was running, I imagine that there were many
people down here that worked up in the mines. A lot of the old-
timers, that I have talked to here, they didn't always live
here. A lot of times they lived on the hill. We had a lot of
people in town that were originally living up in Quincy and
all those locations. Of course they were all miners. And, how
many of the Hancock people, of course at one time there was a
Hancock Mine also. But, I would say that a great deal of the
people of Hancock worked at other things than just mining. Like
up the hill, that's about all, but you worked in the company
store or something. You were a miner, and that was the only
other industry around. But, Hancock had their other businesses.
You had more of the school teachers, you had the storemen, and
you had the wholesale houses, and so forth——like Libmans,
they were the grocery distributors. Then you had sometimes sup-
porting——like Exleys' big machine shop in Baraga, the blacksmith
shop, and those things were sort of supporting the works of the
mines. But, I think there were members of every family that
did work in the mine. The background of a lot of the people
here, except if they came from the hill, was mostly something else
except mining. Because, at one time the ships played a part
here too. Along where the naval reserve is now they had a lot
of wharfs there, and the boats used to come in. That's how a
lot of the people arrived when they came to Hancock. Ester
Ojala was saying that her, I think it was her grandfather came
as a lay preacher, or had been lay preaching in Europe——but I
think he came under the same capacity. And, going up to Seeego
Street, they had nothing and the wife was complaining, "Why did
we come to this country?" So, it was uncertain, and there was
a package lying on the road, and he picked it up and there was
a loaf of bread. He said, "See, God is taking care of us al-
ready!" That man had a lot of faith. He certainly has some
very fine descendents here. I think the old-timers, I guess
it was by necessity too——they had to make their way and they
had real values. They built their homes, some of them lived in
mining companies' homes——a lot of them built their own. You
see, a lot of these came and they lived on farms. These farms
have been abandoned since, discontinued. But, even when they
had their homes, they would find a plot of land someplace where
they could have a garden. If they couldn't have one in their
backyard, they had one in some other place. They all kept a
cow, and they made their own salami, and they made their own types
of other sausages. They kept pigs, and the fall of the year
was a common time to make sausage all together. I know some
of the kids have said that their job was tying the sausage, they
had to learn how to tie them. And, there was among the commu-
nity, they would get together, the same way with making wine.
Every time they would get together to make their wine. That was
part of their living. I don't think that there was any real
abuse of that wine, it was part of their food, you know. And,
for celebration too.
A: I guess times have changed, earlier you mentioned the change in architecture, from the more modest buildings to the better constructed. I guess there were certain changes in the early years. In the early years there were a number of saloons, and saloon-life was very strong.

F: Well—that's true. I only hear second-hand stories of, oh, what was it—was it Ryan's Saloon. A woman down at the Midway Bar, she married a Ryan—that was supposed to be one of the big ones here. Then the Coff, I think that was—you know, an interesting part, an interesting think in Hancock—if you trace the history of the Coff family. I think it is K-o-u-t-h, or K-u-t-h-, or something. Did you ever go out in east Hancock here, and that big home with the pillers—that was the Kouth home. And, I have heard many stories, they are all true. But, I think way back, that Kauth had a very large saloon here, and he seemed to have had a lot of money. And, his daughter, he had a daughter and a son—and she helped out by making the lunches and things, and he always kept her close to home by showering on her anything she wanted. I understand that there was even a Goedenburg Bible when they closed the estate in there. He had gotten it as a present, and they were offered a hundred thousand for it right off, but——. Her brother, I was told that he was quite a character. He had a lot of stock certificates, and he would come down and cash them at the bank, and put them in an envelope and write on it. Then he would go home and put that in the safe. When he died, that safe was just loaded with those little envelopes. He never put it in the bank, and the bank had to count all of that. And, I think there was 65 thousand dollars, or something like that—all in little amounts that way. And then I understand that the relatives, a group of the heirs, they were from Calumet someplace. And, from the old grandfather's day yet, there was a wealth of rare liquors from all over the world. And, they took them out in the backyard, and they systematically smashed them against that back wall. (laughter) Whenever I tell that story, some of these people, their tongues hang out, like that. (laughter) But, Kauth must have been a substantial man. I think you will find in every community like this, men that were big businessmen.

F: Did any of the immigrant groups associated with this parish start their own cooperative stores?

A: No, not that I remember. The cooperatives seemed to be more of a Scandinavian. I have very little experience with cooperatives,
except what I have seen. But, I know in Marinette, they came
around trying to sell shares in cooperative stores. They had
one there for a time. But, there were mostly the Swedish peo-
ple down there, we didn't have any Finnish people in Marinette.
Maybe one of the other, but very, very few. But, we had a lot
of Swedish people. And, they seemed to have been very interest-
ed in co-op. And then I found in the Upper Peninsula, it is
generally in the Finnish communities that you had your co-op.
You would seldom find them outside of that. So, it seems that
those people are more minded along that line than the other
nationalities. Maybe it is because they had more experience
with that. But, I haven't ever experienced it among the other
nationalities at all. The only other experience other than the
Finnish people was the Swedish people.

A: Last time we visited you were kind enough to give me a memento
of the earlier, I think it was a German society. And, was this
typical of the various ethnic groups, like the Italians, the
Germans----.

F: I think it was more true in the Copper Country. See, I had an
old housekeeper, she is dead now. She was born, she would be
95 years old if she were living. She died about four years ago.
And, she was born here in Hancock in 1878. And, from her, of
course observing the scene from the time she was young. Her
dad ran a big butcher shop here. His last butcher shop was down
around where Joe Pynne's stor is---where that warehouse is,
next to Joe Pynne. Margaret lives upstairs there. And, her
recollections, say, of all the societies---it seems that you had
a great number of ethnic groups and they had culture. And, each
one would try to outdo the other as far as----well, if there
would be a 4th of July parade or something---they each had their
own bands, they each had their own uniforms. You had your Hi-
bernians, the Irish; you had your German Aid Society, they had
their headquarters over---during the First World War they changed
the name to Lincoln Hall because there was pressure on them.
And, those were the only two that I knew of that were organized
in Hancock. And the German society---I think in the parish here
there were two main groups---the French and the German. And,
frankly, I don't even know the history of the society, when it
was started or anything. But, it must have been sort of what
they call a verine, or a little union, or something. But, many
times they were organized as a sort of an aid. Now I have found
that true with the Italians too. They had a---their societies
were mostly for---burial society, when a person died there would
be so much money for their burial and so much money for the fam-
ily. Most of them were based on sort of internal groups of aid.
Mostly with the eye of having a decent funeral, or not to leave
a family stranded in case a father was killed. In those days
there wasn't any compensation for the mines, if a man was killed
in a mine or any other industry. I think, in talking about
mining, a lot of people here worked down in the smelts, like in
Ripley too. They were engaged in mining more on the productive
end of it—the smelts and all this. You can see a big slag pile down there, that was the big smelter there. So, I think people lived closer to their work, they had to live close to their work. They couldn't travel long distances to go to work in those days. But, that's the way I understand most of those societies were principally founded—to be sort of like an insurance. To be sort of like an insurance society. To make sure the families were taken care of in case of a tragedy in the family, or anything of the sort. Then, of course to keep the spirit going they had their halls many times, and they had their celebrations. They put on dramas. I found upstairs, an old postcard, I never could identify it—it looked a bon rally in the First World War. They had a lot of flags around the stage. They had it over here in the Germania Hall. But, with the way the stage was set up with all the flags, it looked like something very patriotic. But, I think that basis of it. I know the Italian societies—that was their basis. On badges it would say, in other words, 'Mutual Health Societies!' I think it was really a necessity in those days, if a tragedy happened, there was no government help, there was no company help, so the people had to help. So, we have gotten away from a lot of that now because of social security, and there isn't that panic, usually if something happens in the family. That is the only one that I know of. There was a St. Anne's Society which still sort of exists, but it is more on the social level than anything else. But, I think that there is a little compensation when a person dies—very small. Then, of course, you had your Foresters. I have some momentos of the Foresters here too. That was sort of a little insurance society mostly. Then they helped also in cases of necessity. But, I think knowing the stories of some of the tragedies—well, there was a lot of tragedy not only in the mines—it seems that there were a lot of drownings. There were a lot of men killed, say if a horse ran away, or if they had been kicked by a horse. Life was more rough. Sometimes with the railroad men the trestle would give away, and then a bunch of railroad men would be killed. Things—As I say, there was a lot more tragedy in those days. You had a lot of widows. Today we have a lot of widows, but that is mostly because the women are outliving the men. In those days, it was mostly because of tragedy. Some remarried, but many of them had many of them had small families and there seemed to be a difficulty in even thinking of remarrying. Sometimes I think they just remarried out of convenience to be able to support their families. I know the old compensation, even later on in the mines, in the newer days was only 600 dollars if a man was killed. And, that was ten dollars a week, for 60 weeks. By that time, they figured that they could get married again. (laughter) But, as I say—I think that is what really helped those people, that they did depend on each other a lot, and I think they were much closer to each other than the people are today. Because, they took it for granted that they would help each other. Of course, now when we have everything so computerized, and streamlined, and everybody with their own interests. Then too—well, look at the crowds that used to go over to the Amapa Groove. If anything was going
on over there, the hockey and everything. In those days, the local team was important, it was something to do on a Sunday afternoon. Now you have professional football, and you can go out to lakes. In those days they were limited. It was just a thing to do, they were looking for entertainment on a Sunday afternoon. And now it would be a little bit hard to get them out. They are scattered out in cottages, they do boating. But, I think they made their own entertainment too. The families got together. I think there was a lot of talent, like musical talent years ago. They had family orchestras, I have known that more among the Slavic people. The Germans—they had a great love for music, and seeing to it that the children learned music. Because I know in the early days with our parochial schools the nuns were in great demand from everybody to give music lessons. I know in Marinette they gave music lessons for all religions and everything else because they were the only ones qualified at the time to do it, especially piano and violin. But, I think that was part of it because I have known many families down there who had whole family orchestras. Of course they had 16 member families, and they could always use 8 of those for an orchestra. (laughter) Well—I don't know, sometimes it is hard to judge which were the best times. I don't think the people of today would want to go through the. Well, you see—I'm old enough to know the Depression. I can remember Depression times where conditions were rough. Like, my dad worked for the sawmill all his life. He lived in town first, and then they went out and they homesteaded a farm out of Marinette. This must have been around 1890, and then they farmed for quite a while. My dad got married in 1906, and then he came back into the town in 1907, and then---

(End of side #1 of tape #2)

side #2 of tape #2

F: There was a little bit of anticlericalism, or anti-church, you might say. Many times the societies got into the hands of those who were opposed to religion generally, or at least the formality of religion. And, they would hold their meetings sometimes on Sunday morning, almost purposely to keep their members from going to church. And, that always became the source of irritation there between some of the societies and the church. But, it was done deliberately. And, then of course the society had a lot of sociability with it, and that's why it had an appeal. They used to have their social events on other nights, but they would have their official meetings on Sunday mornings.

A: Now, were they leftists, or socialists?

F: No, not that I know of. I think they were pretty much of a mixed group.

A: I mean the anticlerical folk.
Well----I imagine that some of the leaders. You see, a lot of times nationality was so strong among those people that some of the leaders could sway the people. Because it offered them a chance—they were kind of a home-sick bunch maybe, coming from Europe. It gave them a chance to be among their own. They provided a hall, and so they bought a society, and their was some kind of mutual help. But, I think there was among some of the leaders, they were sort of maybe a socialist group. Maybe that was one of the reasons for forming the hall. But, the hall was used more for their social activities. They would get together—everything was held at the Italian Hall. But, there wasn’t anything real open about it. But, I say, as far as the older people—the women, the women didn’t have a chance. They had so much to do. They were working all the time. As far as going to church sometimes, they really didn’t have a chance. They got to be like Christmas and Easter goers, and things like this. But, I say when you look at the whole picture, you can’t criticize them too much, because living under the conditions that they did, you can see the reasons for some of their actions. But, generally, they were good at heart. I mean, the common people were always good. Sometimes the leaders were a little bit—I think that was true among some of your other groups too. Like different places where I have been, you have Finnish groups that were considered communist. Some of them were, but I think it wasn’t a matter of loving communism, it was a matter of having a hall of their own. And, maybe a few of their leaders had communist leanings, but after—I know in some areas where they would get into a Lion's Club or something like this, well—then the communists disappeared altogether. As soon as they found an outlet for sociability, they forgot about the other hall.

A: Socialability was a------

F: Yes, I think it was kind of a lonsomeness of all these. We put tags on different ones, you know—if they were communists, socialists, or something else. Of course, those are wide names, and it all depends what you mean by them. But, I think sometimes a few leaders would have certain tendencies, and the rest would follow and use the hall, or be members because it gave them a chance to be altogether and have some fun—have a beer now and then. But, as I say, the younger group now—they have gotten away from any of those things. Like Rock, Michigan—that was always, I think the Lion's Club down there is one of the best Lion's Clubs I have ever ran into. We had a good one in Gwin too. And, they were a good hardy bunch, and if there was a project to be carried, they were all willing to work. They really enjoyed getting together at the hall. I used to stop down there now and then.

A: The Lion's Club in Rockland? No

F: The Lion's Club in Rock, yes. Frankly, I think Lions' Clubs
are much more of a value in small communities than they are in the big cities. In the big cities they get to be a luncheon thing, and many times they do token work—that's my experience with them. They will do token work, like for the blind and all of that, which is fine. But, I think they become much more a part of the community in the small communities, whereby everybody pitches in to do something. It was great! They bought two ambulances for the town, you see, we had no hospital there. And, we fixed up a garage for the ambulances, and we had volunteer drivers in the beginning, but later they got a regular driver. And, it was a matter of everybody getting together. They would put on big barbeques to pay for these things. It was sort of a community affair. So, it was really a community group—the Lion's Club. Then, having a Lions' with a national organization sort of keeps them on their toes about certain things, which helps out, I think. But, when you get them in the bigger cities, take the Elks, here—I haven't had any experience with Elks otherwise. They have a very fine clubhouse, and they do some good and everything, but it seems to be more or less not a community thing. It is not for the community, it is more for themselves. They have the entertainment center for themselves. But, I think in the small communities—I know in Gwin we had a much more active Lion's Club, and Rock was very good too. But, in Marquette, they met every Monday and they had luncheon together and it was very formal, and it sounded very nice and all of that. But, I don't think that the guys got much good out of it. It was the same group all of the time. I never joined down here, I didn't feel that their was enough of a community affair. Of course, maybe in a bigger town you are split up a little more into various things. But, what I found is this—there are people, I will be very frank about it, there are Finnish people—they are a little hard to get to know. I think there is among the old-timers, there was a little bit of a prejudice from Europe and they distrust anything that has a collar on. I mean, once you get to know them, I found them to be very open. If they oppose you, they throw you right out, but once you got to know them and you became their friend, they were good friends than any of them wishy-washy ones. And, I have noticed, sometimes we have a few in our church here, they are wonderful, outstanding—because, I think it is a discipline that they had. But, I think with all nationalities they have. I think a lot of times they came over as a minority and they clustered together, and they distrusted anything on the outside that was different than they. And, they figured everybody was out to get them, and maybe they were. You know, we always criticize a lot of clannishness among people, but in the beginning they were driven to it. And, I think gradually that a lot of this will disappear. Yet, it is kind of sad, that it all disappears—cultures and things. But, getting back to what we were talking about—the Copper Country. The Copper Country is known for its various groups—each one being independent and each one out-doing the other—as far as showing off what they could do. And, they had a pride in their various groups. I don't think you will find quite so much in other areas. Down
in Escanaba you had quite a French group because there were so many French people around there. And, then you had a lot of these people around Garden. So, whenever you had St. John the Baptist Day, the 24th of June—they came by train from all over. They would start out religiously, and then they would end of with about 25 barrels of beer on the market. (laughter)

A: There must have been quite a bit of tale-spinning, and stories told on those St. John's Days.

F: Yes, I suppose. I was a chance for people to get together that didn't see each other. Well—you take around Nama in the 20s, the only means of transportation they had was to go by boat—into Escanaba. There was a boat that left Escanaba, it left in the morning, there was that left at Manistique in the morning. Then they would cross each other. And, they would stop all the way along, like even on Stonega Peninsula, Maywood Peninsula Point, and over at Nama, and then Vance Harbor and Garden, Fruit and Fairport, and over to Manistique. Maybe one place between there. And, if a person had to go to town, if he had a bunch of chickens to sell—well, he took them right on board the boat. You could take anything aboard the boat. And then they had to stay over-night. In Escanaba they always had friends and relatives to stay with, and some of them stayed at the hotel. Then they came back the next day, on the boat. And, they would do their purchasing in the mean time. But, that was the only road they had—it was a sand road. With a horse and a sand road it takes you all day to go to town, so, the boat was much more comfortable. But, that was their main artery. The history of the whole Upper Peninsula is pretty much a history of the seaports, the little ships. We don't hear about the little ships, but they played quite an important part of people going from one town to the other. But, you can't blanket any criticism on any group. They were different, but, I say they all got to be different by the circumstances under which they lived.

A: Do you think there is any interest in sort of rekindling those ethnic traditions, customs, today? Or has the Copper Country been pretty much Americanized, or a total assimilation has taken place?

F: I think among your young people there would be very little interest in where their ancestors came from. Well—of course, maybe it has never been tried. You see, among some of your real old-timers, the older people, there would be still an interest. But, those are getting pretty far down the line as far as age and being able to do anything. But, I don't really believe the younger people would. Of course we have been taught school and all of that to some new nationality. And, all the way down the line. In other words, they knocked out all the old languages. If a kid came to school and spoke a word in his
own language they laughed at him. He was supposed to be American, he wasn't supposed to anything but American. And, so it was almost considered treason to be some other nationality, but American. And, I think we have gotten to that point. I know in the Copper Country in the First World War---this again is just a story. There was a big attempt to down-grade the Germans, which were quite a part of the Copper Country because they were the natural critics of the First World War---for our getting into the war. Of course the mines were run pretty much by the English background, and they would purposely squelch any kind of say,---German organization at that time. Well---they had the public burning of books, of German books---they used to teach German in schools. Well---in many places, and I think in the Copper Country too. They would take all of their books out of the library and they would have a big bon-fire, and they would burn them. That was part of patriotism at the time. So, I think a lot of nationalities have almost hide their nationality for a long time because of different pressures and our involvements in wars. It is just like communism---for a while it is popular, and for a while it depends on the mood of the country. Right now President Nixon is kind of buddy-buddy. It doesn't change communism any way.

A: Well---I think we ought to stop here. It is getting on and I want to thank you very much for.

F: Well---I am glad you came. Actually I am---

(End of side #2 of tape #2
   (End of interview)