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

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

CONDITIONS FOR USE OF .PDF TRANSCRIPT:
Finlandia University, formerly Suomi College, holds the exclusive copyright to the entirety of its Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, including this .pdf transcript which is being presented online for research and academic purposes. Any utilization that does not fall under the United States standard of Fair Use (see U.S. Copyright Office or Library of Congress), including unauthorized re-publication, is a violation of Federal Law. For any other use, express written consent must be obtained from the Finnish American Historical Archive: archives@finlandia.edu.

PREFERRED FORMAT FOR CITATION / CREDIT:
“Maki, John”, Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, Finlandia University, Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum.

Note: Should the Finnish American Archive be a resource for publication, please send a copy of the publication to the Archive:

Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum
Finlandia University
601 Quincy St.
Hancock, Michigan 49930 USA
906-487-7347 - fax: 906-487-7557
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family History</td>
<td>2052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip from Finland to America</td>
<td>2052-2054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food on Trip</td>
<td>2053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived at Negaunnee</td>
<td>2054-2055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start School</td>
<td>2055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents start Boarding House</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quits school to help at Home</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Teachers</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for Teachers</td>
<td>2057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking care of the Boarding House</td>
<td>2058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals and Gardens within City Limits</td>
<td>2059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's various Jobs</td>
<td>2060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No aid for widows</td>
<td>2060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers and sisters go to work after High</td>
<td>2061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School to help Mother</td>
<td>2062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers dies April 28, 1918</td>
<td>2062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different jobs</td>
<td>2062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets Husband</td>
<td>2063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's History</td>
<td>2063-2064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband dies - 1959</td>
<td>2065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Lives</td>
<td>2066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Children</td>
<td>2068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Finnish Clerks any more</td>
<td>2069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier for younger generations</td>
<td>2069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUBJECT

SOURCE: Sandra Sarkela, Negaunee, Michigan

COMMENTS:

Interviewer: Elma Ranta

R: My name is Sandra Makele Sarkela and I was born in (?) Finland, in December, 1899.

I: And your parents?

R: My parents' names were Josephine and John Makele and my father came to America when I was only four years and he stayed 'til eight years in Marquette County area and sometimes at Alger County in Michigan, working in lumber camps; but summertime he came to Marquette, Michigan and worked on those ore docks just for the summer months. Then again in the fall he would go to either Eben or Dorsey or even Cooks or some place in Alger County and worked in lumber camps until then in 1911 he finally got enough money saved, I guess, to come to Finland. He came in May or he had left from America on May 28th, really and came to Finland to get us because my mother would never agree to come alone with me here. He had to come to Finland to get us. So he came to Finland was June then by the time because those days those steamships were awfully slow; so it was sometime in June but I don't know the date when they got there.

I: Was just you and your mother there?

R: Un huh...my brother had died. We had a...when my father first came, we had our family up to a girl and a boy, you know, myself and my brother; but he died when he was five years old. And then as I said, my father came to Finland, well then we decided to sell the farm and the furniture and we left in July of 1911 to sail to America; but before we could get our passage or our tickets to that steamship there, my father didn't have any knowledge ahead of time of just when the boats would be leaving from Finland to America. So we had to stay first in a town, Carboli in Finland, that's the nearest railroad station to our home, so we had to stay there four days waiting for that time to pass. And then we went to (?) where the boats actually sailed and from there we had to stay another three or four days in (?), Finland.

I: Do you remember anything about the trip from (?)? Will you tell us about that?

R: Yeah, we took the Finnish boat called Arturus it was called and that's what brought us to Hall, England. It was a small port in England and when we got to there it was evening and we were late from the trains,
so we had to hussle and hussle. They had tables outside instead of these...they weren't even barracks or anything, we had outside some kind of lunch before we could rush to the train then in England. That train would cross all across England to Liverpool where we would get the Atlantic boat then. But I don't remember those days then anymore because then in Liverpool we had to wait some more time there before my father got a... it was called Allen Line. I suppose that would be in English... (?) in Finnish they called it and that was called the Victoria the name of that boat.

I: Do you remember any of the trip then across the Atlantic?

R: Yes, I used to... the younger people they used to have fun there on that top deck. They used to have dances and some would play accordian... they had accordians with them, you know, some Finnish or Italian fellows because then from Liverpool, there came other nationalities to that same boat, you know. That wasn't all Finns anymore. The first boat between Finland and Hall, it was only the Finnish people then; but then we crossed England and there were other nationalities already waiting for us in the Liverpool and get on the same boat as we did then. So there were all kinds of nationalities, so we really couldn't talk with them at all, you know. They had accordians and they danced there and we were able to go to town with my Auntie. My father also took his sister with us to this country. So me and my Auntie would go to Liverpool town every day then while we were there staying in a hotel... the steamship company had a hotel there where the passengers could wait, you know, for the boat to come.

I: Do you remember anything about the trip then from Liverpool? Where did you land here then? Did you come to Canada or to...

R: Yeah, Canada, yeah. I don't remember too much about the boat. There really isn't any kind of enjoyment on a boat... just what like I said, just the younger people did some dancing.

I: What was food like on that boat?

R: It was kind of poor, I didn't like it at all; in fact my mother wouldn't come out of the room even. She just ate what she brought from Finland in her own luggage or some kind of a basket it was called. She had smoked meat what they used to call (?) in Finnish, she had a whole leg of lamb like that, and a whole cheese, a Finnish cheese and also some bread.

I: Many of the people had brought with them.

R: Yes, so she stayed in the room and she ate most of her meals there because she just hated the smell even of the dining room of that boat, you know, she just got kind of a sick feeling. Evidently it was more like sea sickness too probably.

I: Did you get sea sick?

R: No, not at all. We were running around with other... even if we couldn't talk then other nationality kids, but we were running around, Dick and even those higher class people, you know, like we climbed those steps
and nobody chased us out of there. We were allowed to run around like tagging or chase around each other. And that's all I can remember of the boat, just that.

I: And then where did you land?

Yeah, we landed in Quebec, Canada.

I: Do you remember anything about Quebec?

R: That was...no, we weren't allowed to go to town because there was all kinds of...what was...medical examinations of all the passengers; but I was lucky that I didn't have to stay there long; but my Auntie got so nervous and scared that she had to wait for a doctor's checkup because she was a grownup person already; so she was afraid of it or something and so we had to wait for her...that's why we couldn't go to town at all, our family anyway. And I don't think anybody else did. They had like an arrow of pathways, I mean kind of how would you say that. They're like a fence on both sides each aisle that we had to walk into a bigger building that's where we had to...and first when the boat came there, in fact we couldn't land until early in the morning. Had come there in the night; but there was no...the water was too low. How do you call...tide water I guess. Had to wait until morning about nine o'clock and that was August the 11th already. It had taken us so long to come from Finland. We left in July sometime, it was after the 20th sometimes, either the 21st or 22nd of July.

I: But you were lucky that you came in the summertime. You didn't have the storms then.

R: No, we didn't have no storms at all. No, it was beautiful sailing and like I said, I wasn't sick at all. Yeah, well we got into Quebec and then that was August 11th that we got there because I remember my mother had those papers stamped by the doctors and so did my Auntie, so they were marked on the 11th, 1911. So I remember from that. But we stayed all day there at that Quebec before we could catch a train and then that train would take us to Montreal, Canada, and then again in Montreal railroad station we had to wait for three hours or something before some other train came to pick us up to come to Michigan then...Upper Michigan here.

I: Oh, you came to Soo, Canada and across from there?

R: Yeah, we came that way and we had to wait three hours from Quebec to Montreal, we had to wait three hours in Montreal to get this other train that brought us to Soo. In fact, a whole railroad car...they already had Negaunee, Michigan, painted or maybe it was a cloth or something had painted on the car so that everybody that came to Negaunee had to go to that certain railroad car. Was a long...many cars, you know going to different areas, I guess, when they got to Soo, I imagine; but that one was marked Negaunee, Michigan, so we had to go to that car and we came to Negaunee, Michigan.

I: What was your impression of Negaunee when you got to the railroad station?
R: Well, I don't know. We got here in the nighttime too, and it just so happened that at the Soo Locks and all those areas, it was the night. Dark, you know, that we couldn't see the town or locks or anything then though there wasn't those locks like now. But anyway, we didn't see anything of that because it was nighttime and then we got here after midnight, that train again. So then, I don't know...my father had friends, of course, then the people there so then he started asking that instead of going to hotel, he asked one of the men then that we could spend the rest of the night at his house. Well, the man was kind of grumbling, "I don't know whether my wife likes this...me to bring any big gang like you're out." You know, there was four of us, you know, my father and my mother and my aunt and me. But we went anyway and it was a small house, of course, across the Catholic Church in Negaunee. And that's where we spent the rest of that...and we were only sleeping on the floor because they didn't have any extra bedrooms. But the wife was generous enough to let us in anyway and she made coffee for us that night. That's all I can think of. Then the next morning, was on a Sunday then, then we walked to some other families who came from the same area in Finland as we were from, so they were...my father had known them here before he come to Finland to get us. We walked to their house in a Sunday and then we had Sunday dinner at their house and then we had to start looking for a place to stay a longer time, you know. So then we walked again to another location in Negaunee, it used to be called Ann Street in those days...more like a mining location where my father had worked before, you know. So we walked there again that Sunday afternoon and then we stayed there about two weeks, that was a kind of a boarding house called the Emberg's Boarding House, Mrs. Emberg was running the boarding house there, so we stayed there about two weeks before we got any kind of an apartment or house.

I: This was 1911.

R: 1911 in August, yeah. So if you want to interrupt now or.

I: No, now it's going well.

R: We stayed two weeks at Embergs and then we got this apartment downtown close to high school and we lived for one winter there then...then I was able to go to school there. I had to start from...even if I was eleven years old...I had to start from kindygarden. I had to spend a week in kindygarden and another week in the first grade and then they finally put me to second grade when they checked me in the first that I was able to write. Write numbers, you know, my arithmetic I suppose that would be called. So they put me in second grade. That's where I spent the first year then.

I: And you earned to read in second grade then.

R: Yeah, sort of a...yeah, I was building yeah a little bit so then I was able to pick up better. When my sisters arrived...after we arrived we started getting sisters and brothers in this country then, so then when they grew up well they learned English then; but we always used the Finnish language then at home though. My mother couldn't talk any English then, she didn't even want to learn.
I: But there were a lot of Finnish people that she could talk to.

R: There was all...all the stores were Finns, yes, and they all had drugs in Finnish; but I remember then my mother sent me the first week we had our apartment here in downtown and she send me a grocery store. She had heard that there was a Finnish store called close by, you know, so she sent me to get soap. So, I only knew the Finnish name (?) and that clerk didn't know what (?) is. So I had the hardest time. She took me around the shop and I had to point...

I: Was she Finnish girl?

R: She was a Finnish girl, but she was American born. Yeah, she was a (?). But she didn't know what (?)...her mother had never talked that Finnish kind of language.

I: Yeah, so she knew only the English.

R: She only knew soap or (?) something like that as the Finns used those days. But then anyway, a lot of other things like that, you know, I made all those mistakes because my mother didn't want to go to store. She always would send me because I was old enough to go store. But then the next year I had a little sister born and then my mother started having a boarding house too besides that, so I couldn't go to school.

I: Where was your boarding house then?

R: Well first we had it right across from the high school. The house is still there on Pick Street. We moved from that first apartment...that was only three rooms so we couldn't have boarders, so we moved to Pick Street because my father had heard different men, you know, that they were looking for boarding place, new ones always coming from old country, so we had it right there across from Negauamee High School then. But we lived there only about a year and then we moved to Ann Street, the same house where we had spent two weeks, first two weeks in coming here. That woman died, so they needed somebody to give washing and board for them men that were left from Mrs. Embergs time. So that's why we moved to the Embergs house. We had so much more boarders that my mother took care of and so she needed me home to do that.

I: So, you didn't get a chance to go to school.

R: No, not anymore from there then Ann Street, I couldn't go to school anymore then.

I: Do you remember anything about your school experience from that first year? Do you remember anything about the teacher?

R: Yeah, her name was Miss Mackingrew was the kindygarden teacher and Miss Taylor was my first grade teacher and Miss Barney was my second grade teacher. In fact, Miss Barney just died a few years ago and now my daughter even kept daughter dinner in honor of their fiftieth anniversary at my daughter's house, I think that's two years ago that she died. But Miss Barney had been married to Neeley and they were celebrating fiftieth wedding anniversary now. Then I thought about
having a dinner in honor of my old teacher

I: How helpful were the teachers then?

R: Well they could...they really were like Miss Barney said that she had only gone to the summer term of school in order to teach like those low grade...what were they called. They weren't called elementary school then.

I: Primary or

R: Just primary or low grade...small grade teachers, I think that's what they were just called.

I: And she had had only six weeks.

R: Summer school...I think it was eight weeks, she said. But she had to do that every year though then in order to keep her teaching job. She had only gone to...she was a girl from Ishpeming, so was my kindy garden teacher, Miss Mackingrew, she was from Ishpeming and Miss Barney, the second grade, she was an Ishpeming girl. So they had only gone to summer...after high school graduation, they had only gone summer term of school then they were able to teach in town school on it. And the same thing with the...not the Finnish girls that we knew...they went to teach in farm schools where they had to teach five or six grades in one room. And they only had the high school experience and then one summer term in Northern. It was called the Normal School those days and they were able to keep their teaching job in the farm schools even if they didn't go back anymore. Those were the times like that...because one of my friends now later years then, Miss Mattila her name was, Tiny Mattila well she was about my age well she was able to teach in Rock, Michigan, and she never had to come back to summerschool. Once she was hired by Rock School Board, well then she was able to teach without summer school.

I: With that six weeks

R: Un huh...because I always remember then later years when she got married, she wanted to come back to college. She found it too hard then because she had been out of school so long. She just couldn't make it; so she couldn't teach then or now anymore in later years, but she needed a job so she figured she was gonna go back to college and get...aah something renew, but she couldn't do. There were laws at school...rules had changed so much there here...that when she was married, I mean, that she couldn't teach anymore then.

I: So then you and your parents ran a boarding house

Boarding house, yes, and I was like a maid, like my mother settled with them. Yeah, we used to have to get up at four o'clock in the morning.

I: Did you have cows?

R: Yeah, my mother had four cows even later years. First she had two cows yes, and then she had four later years. We had the boarders...it grew that we had more men, you know, so she needed to have more.
I: How many did you have? What was the largest number of boarders?

R: Well, by 1918 my father died, why my mother had twenty-two boarders then because in the meantime we had moved to a bigger house even then to have so many boarders because there wasn't any rooming houses near by you know, so then they expect to be having a room in the same place where they had their meals and also their washing had to be done by hand. No washing machines or nothing... had to be done rubbing on a tub and a rubbing board. My mother and I...

I: So you had to take care of the twenty-two men and all their clothes...

R: All their clothes

I: And make their lunch pails.

R: Yeah, and of course my mother did the cooking, but I did the other kind of help like the ironing... usually 'til midnight we had to do the ironing and after that, of course...

I: You weren't wash 'n wear clothes like now that you don't have to iron.

R: No, and the bedding too... that was the hardest because the mines were so filthy those days that there was no kind of decent wash rooms like there is nowadays. So the bed clothes got so red, you know, that we had to boil them in the boiler and lots of soap in order to get the ore out of them.

I: How did you get them dry then since there were no dryers?

R: Outside... believe it or not in the winter cold even... hang them outside on the lines even if they froze; but hang them outside with the gloves on your hands.

I: And they got white that way too

R: They got white that way too. Then the frozen things were like... how would you say that... they're stiff like, you know.

I: Then you'd bring them in the house.

R: They'd come in the house and thaw out and then we'd somehow try to get them dry more in the house then. I can't remember because we didn't even have no basement to put clothes lines, so I don't remember how my mother used to... I guess she had clothes lines... hooks on over the doors, I guess in the big (?) what we didn't use at nighttime, so that they wouldn't get tangled when people would walk, you know. So I guess when she put that way that some of the bigger things had to be hung on the lines instead of just throwing them over. So she had hooks over the doors from one room to another like.

I: So it was really a lot of work.

R: Oh yes, it was lots of work
I: And you really didn't get much money from each boarder.

R: No, the boarders were twenty dollars a month only, the board, and they got their washing and ironing done and their room and board...twenty dollars a month.

I: Including the lunch that you put in the lunch pail.

R: Yes, including the lunch. That's what she was getting because all of the other boarding houses were charging the same and she couldn't have anymore.

I: And then they might not have been making so much either.

R: No...no, but the food was cheap. I don't remember all the prices of the food, that's really...but I know them meat, you could get lots with a dollar because different days, you know, you have to when you have boarders, they expect things...well you have to change different meats every day.

I: The had to have a lot of meat and potatoes.

Yeah, well that's what the Finnish people, especially had been used to in the old country; so they did always have different kinds of roasts and that stew meat I suppose too, for once a week. Then on a Sunday my mother would have a bigger roast, you know, but she never had cooked chicken. People didn't use the chicken those days, especially the Finns. That would have been cheaper, I suppose, but just didn't. The only thing I remember was that the milk cost five cents a quart only. That I do remember because when my mother's cows would get dry, you know, we had to go buy some from other neighbors then because everybody had cows their own...I didn't hear of anybody that...

I: Right within the city limits of Negaunee?

R: Yeah...yeah, everybody had one or two cows, but then when my mother had so many boarders...twenty-two...she had to have four cows. But then when we had to buy the milk, that I do know was only five cents a quart and that was even extra large quart because it was never measured in a bottle, so it was in a pail; like lard pail...lard pail that we would go get it, you know, so it was always two quarts to the rim of the pail, you know. So that was actually like two and a half quarts if you measured it with a quart bottle or something. But nobody thought about measuring in those days.

I: What about a garden...did you have a garden?

R: No, we didn't have. We had to buy from the farmers. My mother didn't because we were only renting the houses, so there wasn't enough space in nobody's yard what we rented so we didn't have no garden at all until a long time after my father had died. Then my mother moved and she rented from a mine company...mine company was giving garden plots for people near the house where we lived then later and my mother would pay only one dollar a year...just enough to get the lease, you know, and that was a big area then that she was able because by then before my father
died we had six children all together...five were born in America and I was the only one that came from Finland, so we had a bigger family like that, of children. But when my father died, I was eighteen years old then and all those American born sisters and brothers, then they were smaller. They were going to school. Well, two didn't even go to school...they were too small to go to school yet when my father died. So then my mother decided that she wasn't gonna have boarders when there was no man in the house, so she decided that she was gonna get rid of the boarders and they had to move out. But then she rented rooms instead because that was all like upstairs that they could use a different stairway and by the time I got married, that was 1920 that I got married, well then she let us, me and my husband, move upstairs and she put even the roomers away then and she started working for people by the day, you know, to do house cleaning and washing for people. But even by 1920 but those people that she went to wash and they were well to do people, they did not have any electric washers. She had to do all the washing by hand even for those people. The times were really rough for her.

I: And she most likely got very little a day.

R: Yeah, I think...seems to me that was only on a wash days, I think it was only two dollars a day and the same with the house cleaning time. So then in...then she started was sort of massage people besides doing that like extra because she did have five...even though I was married, she did have those five small children at home then and she did not get any from the county then because she was working. They told her that because you're earning, they're all counted. So those days the county did not give her then.

I: And now...your father worked in the mine

H: No, he didn't have no insurance...that's it.

I: But the mining company didn't give anything?

R: No...no...no because he wasn't hurt. He died of they said heart attack so that there was no kind of a law on that in 1918. No, she did not get anything and then when she tried to get shoes or something from the county agent, well Mr. Spurley would say that "because you're earning when you're working out." So she was expected to do just that. So she was every day, but that was so hard on my sisters and brothers when they were small and like five in the house, they were fighting over a piece of bread and when Ma wasn't home to give, you know, orders there around, well it really was hard for her when she was left a widow.

I: And nobody worried about it.

K: No, that's it.

I: They just expected that.

R: They expected that my widow mother would take care of the children, yes. They didn't even...

I: Very different from today.

R: Yes, it sure is, very different. Now they get all kinds of help, but
those days my mother did not get any help without her working so hard.

I: How long did your mother live then? What age?

R: Oh, she lived to be eighty-three years old. She died now sixteen years ago. Yeah, she died 1958 and now it's seventy-four. She died in 1958 in December.

I: So even if she had a lot of work...

R: Yeah, she lived and she worked hard until my brothers got to be old enough then...my older brother when he got sixteen, he quit the school then and he went to work at some camp at AuTrain, so he was home. But my sisters, they were able to finish their high school then, for working and that, so they went to high school and I suppose it was a law then that children had to go to school, so then my two sisters and my two younger brothers went through high school. And then by the time they graduated, well then they got house work at some well to do people. I know my oldest sister, first work was for a family from Chicago who came here for their summer camp and my sister worked for them. He was a professor at that art institute in Chicago and he had a summer camp around Covington...my older sister went to work there then after she was graduated from high school, just for that summer. Then in the wintertime she got a job in Ishpeming for another well to do people, you know, just housework. But by then, the wages were a little bit better. She got twenty-five dollars a month at least. But even at the mines, they paid my father when my father lived, his wages were so small that when they worked ten-hour days in the mine, his check was only less than sixty dollars a month. So I don't know how much that really was a day because there was no proof, I mean, my mother didn't ever save any kind of slips or if they got those due bills as they used to call them...some kind of small slip only they didn't...because there was no like now they have all kinds of records at the mine, but those days there was just some kind of small slip that the man would get that you'd got with the slip now to the office, you know, and get your check from there then. That's all it was; but I always remember that those checks were less than sixty dollars, some just fifty-eight and fifty-six and something like that the check was.

I: And ten-hour days.

R: Ten-hour day, un huh. That's why my mother...well all the boarding houses that's why they couldn't really charge anymore than twenty-dollars a month for board because all the miners were getting so small paydays.

I: And that's why it took your dad so long to get enough money to come to.

R: To come to Finland and bring us back. Of course by selling the farm in Finland he made some money then there, see he sold the little farm he had bought before he came first time to America and he had bought his own place then. When they were first married I guess they had lived with his folks for one winter only, but then my mother didn't have it that he gotta buy a farm.

End of Side 1
R: Well, maybe I'll start...my father died in April, April 26, in fact, of 1918. So then about after a month my mother got some...after that shock or something, she got kind of sickly that she wasn't able to really think straight, you know, so I stayed home about one month after my father's funeral. Then I went looking for work at some house, you know, housework. So I worked two weeks at a family called Barribee, they had a store in Negaunee and I was getting ten dollars a month paid there. And that was the same kind of home, wash by hand. You know, they had a family of eight children, father and mother. So after two weeks I was able to get work at that boarding house in Gwinn, so my mother's friends had heard about an opening in Gwinn boarding house and they were offering twenty-five dollars a month, so naturally then me being young, you know, eighteen years old, twenty-five dollars was so much better than ten dollars. So I quit Barribee's and I went to Gwinn and I worked in a boarding house there and I worked there that summer then...the rest of my summer then after my father had died; but I came home in August then and then I got another job in a lumber camp and I worked that winter in a lumber camp.

I: Where was the lumber camp?

R: In Rock, but they were paying me thirty dollars a month there then, so my mother said that well, maybe you can cook for those guys there that you have that much experience that why don't you take that job instead of working for ten dollars in town here, you know, because I saw they were offering me then even when I came back from Gwinn, you know; but we all...something happened there at the boarding house that the main cook quit from there and went back to Montana where she had come from. So naturally us three younger girls that were working under that cook or well we didn't know beans or peas about cooking for bigger boarding house, so that's why we came to town then too, me and my girlfriend, you know out there. And then in the winter I worked in the lumber camp, but that wasn't until after Christmas. I didn't want to go and spend the Christmas at the woods, you know. So I didn't go until after Christmas and I spent there until March; but I sure came back from there and I didn't go back anymore. So then I got another job in town here, housework too, and then in 1920 there was a great big Finnish boarding house then in Negaunee, there was over eighty boarders, so I went to work there in 1920 and I worked there that summer. They were paying me then already forty dollars when I went to that, times had picked up that much for the girls wages that that boarding house offered me forty dollars a month.

I: Now, what was the name of that boarding house?

R: It was just called (?) because there was no family running it. It was just more or less like a co-op, I guess, or something that men would keep meetings at the end of months count all the bills...

I: Were they mostly Finnish?

R: All Finnish...they were a Finn but there was over eighty of them.

I: And these were all bachelor boys.

R: Yeah, most of them. Some had wives in Finland, but anyway then they counted their all their rent of the building and our girl's wages and
the cooks wages, the cook got more...I don't know just what she made, but I was a cooks' helper in the kitchen, so I got forty dollars. But the waitresses got thirty dollars because they didn't do work in the kitchen and they didn't have to get up that early in the morning as me and the cook, you know. We had to get up early in the morning to make breakfast. Night shift would come like before six o'clock from the mine, they needed breakfast before they went to their rooms and then the day shift would go out, well they had to have breakfast, so we got up four o'clock in the morning to kitchen, the cook and I. And so I worked there that summer and then, of course, I met my future husband at that boarding house then.

I: Oh, he was at that boarding house.

R: Yeah, he was staying there. His name was Nestor Sarkela.

I: And was he from Fir and?

R: He was from Finland. He had come to America too...in fact he came to Marquette in 1906 in September, and he had worked in Marquette at docks and then also lumber camps in winter just like my father had done years ago earlier. My husband had done the same thing, you know, working at the docks.

I: Now, where was your husband from?

R: He was from (?), Finland. He was from different area than from what I came. (?) is near (?), more like south in Finland, and (?) is what... more central?

I: Yes, it's near (?)

R: So anyway, he's from (?)...him and his brother had lived in Marquette but his brother Julius went to Copper Country to work in copper mines soon, so then my husband had stayed in Marquette and then he had...I don't know how to say this in English now...more (?). He wanted to travel more, so he didn't settle in Copper Country or anyplace there, but his brother stayed always there. But my husband had gone with some other young Finnish boys from Marquette, they went to Lower Michigan. I guess they first went to Detroit and they got...I don't know what the other guy got...my husband had worked at some ship building places in the Detroit area and he said he happened to have a real good boss that was teaching him because he was a young man, he could learn. But he didn't stay too long, he went to Ohio and worked in Ohio for awhile and...

I: He wanted to see things.

R: Yeah

I: Adventure

R: Yeah, adventure like, I guess that's what you'd call it. So I guess he had stayed for awhile in Ohio...I remember his friends name was Elias Maki and he lived in Marquette later years, we even knew his wife and the girls in Marquette later, I'll tell you that who he was. Elias Maki
that was the name of that man was my husband traveled with. There must have been...I don't know...it must have been sometimes before 1910...either 1907 or '08, because first my husband had went to Detroit then Ohio and Cleveland and Ashtebula, Ohio, worked there for awhile and guess they went back to Detroit, Michigan, then from there he went to a farm in Gulliva lower Michigan, because he had an uncle who had moved from Deernton in Upper Michigan, his uncle had moved to Gulliva and bought a big farm there in Gulliva where he was planting many thousands of bushels of potatoes that they were harvesting. So he needed help there in the farm and my husband had worked there that one fall anyway and then after that he had come back to Upper Michigan and came to Negaunee and got work at the Cleveland Cliff Iron Mining here in Negaunee and he worked here until 1911 and then he went to Finland...he thought he was gonna just make a quick run to Finland, but instead it stretched so that he didn't come back until next summer in April I guess he had come back and then that time he came to Marquette again and he stayed in Marquette for awhile, I think that summer then, he came in April, 1912, because I remember him talking that was that boat that was sunk Titanic...he came and he was going to get a ticket on that boat, but they were late getting to that place where the boat...how do you call it, embarked or something. He was late in getting there, so there was fifteen of those (?) left in that (?), but they couldn't get a place in that boat. And that was their luck that they weren't in it when that boat sank in Atlantic. So whatever time they got to Marquette, then must have been later than April then I guess...May then I guess it had been.

I: Did he work at the docks then?

R: And then that summer again he worked at the docks like he had done the first time he came to America from Finland well he had worked at the docks and lumber camps. But then, trying to think about those years now...1912, I don't know where he had gone all those different years because I didn't meet him until after the war. He had been in army even in United States World War I, he had...

I: Did he go to France then?

R: Yes, he was in France because he's got it on his discharge paper and I never knew him those days. But he had been in Negaunee sometimes because he said when we were married or going together before, he used to tell me that he remembered visiting our boarding house with some of his friends that were my mother's boarders, but he had known me but he said I was so small that I could hardly reach to wash the dishes in the sink. But I never knew who he was until 1920 then when I was working a boardhouse where he was a boarder and then between that he had been a...in the service, United States Army, he had gone March, 1918, and they shipped him overseas July, 1918, and then he stayed in France and he was in the Engineer Division or whatever they call it where they had to build tracks and same time be like with the infantry too, you know, that they had to carry guns with them too or something. There was a war time that was different than these other wars now, so they had to do some work inbetween to build the tracks and in the meantime if some enemy was in between, they had to know how to use their guns and so when he had come back from France and the war had ended, but he didn't get a chance to get back because there was other men that had been sent earlier, they had first chance to come back home, so my husband had to stay in France
Nazi Germany about three months I think he said, and then from there he was brought back to France and it wasn't until later in the spring of 1919 that he got back to America then. Then he was brought to Camp Custer in Battlecreek area, Lower Michigan, and then from there he had gone to his uncle's farm where he had worked before the war in Guliva Michigan. He stayed at the uncle's farm for a few months before he started looking for work, so he came back to Upper Michigan here to Negaunee but there was no work...he couldn't get work at the mines right then, that there was too many I guess, you know that they didn't hire in those days. So then he had gone to Copper Country where his brother was living in Mohawk, Michigan, and he must have stayed there a few months in copper mines but he didn't like them. So he sometimes had come back to Marquette County again and he had worked on some railroad shop crew from Marquette that used to be making bridges or preparing railroad bridges, I guess.

I: Bridge building.

R: And he was working on that kind of work before 1920. That was in between when he came back from France and 1920 there, so must have been that summer then that he worked on that railroad company because he talked about different friends he made in those farming areas between Copper Country and Marquette there then when he was working.

I: He must have been working on the South Shore then.

R: Yeah, South Shore Company, that's what it had been because I remember him talking about those...

I: Now, and then you met him?

R: Well, 1920, well yeah, he came back here to Negaunee then and in the meantime I guess the mines started hiring more men, so he got to work in the mines here and then we met in April I guess that year then, 1920, and then we were only going together that summer and we got married November the 6th, 1920.

I: And that's today then...it's November 6th again

R: Today is November 6th, 1974, now when I'm talking.

I: Fifty-four years after you were married.

R: Fifty-four years now, if he was living, we would be celebrating fifty-fourth anniversary.

I: Fifty-fourth anniversary

R: If he was living, yeah, but he's been dead now since 195, my husband died.

I: Now, could you tell us something about the children then?

R: Is there room yet?

I: Yes, there's room yet.
R: Yeah, well I have three children. My oldest daughter she graduated from high school and she went to Northern Michigan College those days, to get a teachers' degree and she was first teaching at some farm school here in Negaunee. Then she got married...oh that I don't remember what year she got married...anyway she was teaching here in the Eagle Mills school here for five years. Then like us on that also, he worked after high school graduating he worked for a little more than a year in the mines and then of course the second World War had broken in, in the meantime there, so my son had to go to Army and follow his father's footsteps. In fact he was able to go in the same units in France and Germany as his father had been in World War I. My son was in a lot of those same cities when he had leaves or something. And then when he came back from second World War, my son had to spend over three years...he wasn't that lucky and the war lasted longer, so he had to stay over three years in the service. And when he came back he enrolled in Northern...was it called Northern Michigan College in those days. But I don't remember the year now because I haven't got it...

Right after World War II.

R: Right after the World War II anyway, then in fact I think he started on the spring semester there...would that be February, yes. So he got his degree there...was in, I guess the minor was in history...American History, but I don't know...social work, oh social work. So he was teaching only one year in Mass, Michigan, and he came back and he decided to go for more...oh he got married then between there...and I'm going too fast now.

I: That's fine. He's married

R: Yeah, he got married before he went to Mass to teach and then he didn't like the teaching job, you know, the children he said, he just can't make them obey or do the things like teacher should, you know, he was restless or something like that; so he decided to go to University of Minnesota to get his masters degree in social work and that's what he's doing up to this day then.

I: And what is his job now?

R: He's working for the Mental Health Department of State of Michigan in Lansing, Michigan...I suppose you should say that...Lansing, Michigan. And when he was there a couple years, they gave him some kind of a scholarship to go to that big University in Boston...Harvard. They gave him a scholarship to go to Harvard for one full year to get more education in that field that he was working in then with the Mental Health. So that was...and he spent one year in Boston, well then he was able to come back to Lansing to take over his same work he had and he's been there now nineteen years in Lansing at that one. And then I have a younger girl, the third one now, she has graduated from high school and she went three years of nurses training in Chicago, (?) College of Nursing, and she's been in nursing at different places. She was in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Seattle, Washington, for a couple years, then in Marquette St. Luke's and college, she worked at Northern Michigan College or University then I guess. She worked there five years and now she's in Ishpeming Bell Memorial Hospital nursing and she's living with me. She's not married.
I: So you have someone at home.

R: I've got someone at home, younger girl is staying home.

I: And then you talked about your older daughter, would you give her name, what her name is now?

R: Oh, that's right. I shouldn't have did that...I skipped that, didn't I. My older daughter got married and her husband had been in the second World War six years before he got discharged because he had enlisted right after high school graduation and he was at Pearl Harbor at the time the Japanese were bombing there at that Pearl Harbor area. My son-in-law was there during that bombing time; but he wasn't hit anyway. That was blessed, you know, that he was saved. And then they were corresponding with my daughter already when he was in the service in those islands, Hawaiian Islands and Phillipines and different, but he had to stay in service until the war ended and that came to be a long stretch for him. He hadda stay six years in the Navy before he got his discharge.

I: And his name is?

R: His name is Eino Koski from Palmer and then when he came back, of course he started going with my daughter and then he enrolled in college...

I: Would that be Michigan Tech?

R: Well, anyway they got married in April 26th...but I can't remember what year. That was after the war when he got back...they got married in April anyway in 195-something and then he went to Northern for one year to get a kind of a...you know, he was out of college...school so long... how do you call that...refresher?

I: Refresher course?

R: Something like that, you know, or general course, I think that's what it was called. Eino took a General Course at Northern because he was planning on going to engineering school in Houghton at Tech. So then when he spent the one year in Northern, so then a year after they were married, he enrolled in Houghton Tech and then my daughter go a teaching job and they lived in Hancock apartment, but she was teaching at Doelly School in Baraga County, I think that's called. And she was traveling from Hancock to teach there and they lived in Hancock the whole time Eino was going to college, those four years there. And he graduated...when did he graduate now...he graduated in June, 1950, from Houghton Tech and then Eilie and her husband then moved to Montreal, Wisconsin, because he got an engineering job at some mining company there. And he was there a year, I think, before he got a job at Cleveland Cliff here in Negaunee. He worked as an engineer at Cleveland Cliff in Negaunee for a few years.

I: And didn't they go out west then?

R: Then they went to Seattle, but I don't remember the years. But anyway, I suppose it would be important to know the years.

I: No, it's fine what you're telling me
R: Yeah, well anyway, when he was in Montreal, he worked there about a year at that mining company and Cleveland Cliff offered him better pay and naturally coming home to town too was a...both parents are here, so they came to live here then and when he worked for CCI, you know. Then they got apartment here in Negaunee and their first baby boy was born here in Negaunee and then their second boy was born a couple years later. So they got two boys now and when the boys were small, they moved to Seattle and Eino worked for Boeing Airplane Company there in some kind big plant where he had to be some kind of drafting or drawing or something...designing, that kind of place. But he didn't last...that was getting too boring for him, you know, he didn't like to be by the desk all day long without talking to anybody because after he had worked in the mines and being in the war service with the different people, he didn't like that kind of work to be by himself all day long. So he moved from Seattle to Silver City, New Mexico, to work for a copper company mine there and they lived there about six years and he worked for the copper mine. And then after that, Cleveland Cliff decided to call him back to work here in Negaunee mine and the times had picked up so much better here in Negaunee, they needed new engineers, so they called Eino back from New Mexico. So they moved back to Negaunee and have been living here ever since now.

I: And how many children does your son have?

R: My son has three children and they're all...the older girl is going to University of Boston and she's getting her Masters...supposed to this spring now. Her name is Sandra Sarkela...named after grandma's. And then the younger girl, she's a graduate of college, Brimmer College in Pennsylvania. That's near...twelve miles from Philadelphia. And right now the younger girl is working in Boston at some office at Harvard University. She's not taking any classwork, she's just working in an office now for the time being. But she did graduate from Pennsylvania College. And later she's planning on continuing her college education then when she works for awhile. And then the younger child is a boy, he's just graduated from high school last spring, so now he's going to school in Maine, at a college that is; but I don't remember the name of the college even. But all my grandchildren, my son's children, are in the East...all the three of them. And now Eilie's, my daughter's boys, they a college grad again...I mean the older one in an engineer. He had working at the Cleveland Cliff Mine in Republic now. He worked one year at Silver City, New Mexico, where his father had worked earlier...well my grandson got a job at the same company there after he graduated from Houghton Tech; but now he's working, he's back at Cleveland Cliff and my son-in-law is working in Negaunee at the Cleveland Cliff as a superintendent of mine now. But his son is an engineer at the Republic Mine. And the younger boy is going to Northern. He didn't like mining. Well, he was working at that mine here too, but he didn't like it too well, so he's going to Northern now.

I: But times have changed from the time that you came from Finland.

R: Oh, times have changed lots, yes. They sure have changed.

I: And things in Negaunee have changed.

Oh yes, the things have changed.
I: Less Finnish you hear now.

R: Yes, the stores don’t have to have no Finnish clerks anymore like they used to those days. All the stores were full of Finnish girls and... well in fact, when Negaumee was so Finnish populated that they had to have three and four clerks in all the stores comparing to Italian and some other that they had only one clerk in clothing stores... of Italian nationality; but all the clothing stores in Negaunee there wasn’t three of them... 1912 and ‘13 and ’14. There was three working in all these clothing stores in Negaunee and at Christmas time they had more than that even because the people coming from Finland, they just couldn’t get along without having a Finnish girl wait on them in the stores.

I: And they knew they could get some money out of them.

R: Yeah, I suppose. So that’s the way it was. I don’t know anything else to add on here.

I: But things have changed.

R: Yes, they sure have changed to better, yes. I’ll say they have changed to better. All the mines have so much better now and all kinds of different insurances and medical care at the mines now. At my father’s time there wasn’t any of that.

I: So it’s easier for your children and your grandchildren than it was for you.

R: Yes, that... I do have to say that, it’s much much easier and even my grandchildren and my children already it was easier for them to get the education than it would have been for any of my age people. I mean when we came, we couldn’t think about going to continue anymore than maybe six or eight grades even if they were American born children. They couldn’t... there was very few that graduated from high school those days because they just couldn’t afford to go to school. They had to start working when they were sixteen years old. So now everybody is going to high school that I can think of anyway... everybody is going to high school nowadays... and then college if possible.

I: Well I want to thank you for the good interview. It was Mrs. Sandra Sarkela on November 6th, 1974. And this was your fifty-fourth wedding anniversary today if your husband had lived. And he died in 1959. Thank you.