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>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father Cuts Timber for Mines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Settlement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Otter Lake Was Discovered</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Life</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauna</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wizzard Oil</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting Mosquitos</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwife and Childbirth</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War I</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Ceremony</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School as Civic Center</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming and Selling Procedure</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining at Isle Royale</td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness in Lumber Camps</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Activities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Rearing Philosophy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression Days, WPA</td>
<td>21-23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland Cooperative</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Changes in Past 15 Years - TV</td>
<td>25-26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy on Life</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We'd like to begin by asking you, Matt, about your father, Peter, and your mother, Helena; you said they came to this country in 1890; where did they settle when they arrived in America?

Matt: They settled near Dollar Bay

An area near Dollar Bay?

Matt: an area near Dollar Bay

Did your dad farm there?

Matt: No, he was a woodworker

Oh, he worked in the woods?

Matt: He worked in the woods

Did he work in a lumber camp?

Matt: No.

Art: He went from home, lived at home and did his work in the woods.

Matt: Ya.

Art: What type of—was he cutting timber for the mines or what was he doing?

Matt: I guess so. He cut timbers for the mines.

And he was there for—up to that time until he came here to Otter Lake?

Matt: Yes

When was it then that the family moved to Otter Lake?

Family moved—father came here first, alone. I was about 2 years old

In that time—when he first came here, I suppose to survey the situation, and brought the family, did he and several other men put up some kind of houses for you and for the rest of the people?

Matt: Yes. There was—2 men came first. And they put houses for each of them.

One first form and then they

Art: Were these all log houses, cut by axe?

Matt: All log houses.

Art: Do you recall, were they pretty well put together?

Matt: Oh, yes

Art: No draft in the wintertime?

Matt: No

Hilja: They knew their job. They knew. I suppose they had learned that in Finland.
We call them "puu seppa" then? Is a carpenter a "puu seppa"?

Hilja: Ya, carpenter is a "puu seppa".

So he had learned that trade then in Finland?

Matt: Yes, they know how to build houses.

Did they build any other buildings besides just houses?

Matt: Oh, yes, barns for the cows.

How did the families get here? How did they bring you here from Dollar Bay?

Hilja: By boat.

Matt: By boat.

And did you have cows on the boat, too, then?

Matt: No, cows had to walk.

Art: The cows walked here.

Matt: Yes

You had cows in the settlement in the very beginning then?

Matt: Yes

Art: Where did they--you had pasture land, by the lake, for them too?

Matt: No, nothing but bush.

They had to eat the leaves off the bushes?

Matt: Yeh.

Hilja: They cut that kind of leaves from the trees; they gave those for the cows.

Art: What else did your family have to eat besides dairy products?

Hilja: Deer.

Matt: Oh, we had great deer, deer meat

Hilja: and fish

There were a lot of deer here at that time.

Matt: All the time, there was lot

Hilja: and Otter Lake was full of fish

Matt: We were living right by the lake and in the summertime there was deer no matter where you look in the lake some place there was deer running thru there.

Hilja: There has been all kinds of them.

How did your folks catch the fish? Did they have nets or did they have lines or
how did it happen?

Nets

They netted the fish. What kind of fish were they? Were they

There's mostly pike and suckers.

Did the Finns have a special way of preparing those fish when they caught them?
Did you have kala mojakka or fish fillets or how did they--

Kala mojakka

Hilja: Kala mojakka and smoked fish and fried fish

How did you keep the meat from the deer from spoiling when you got it?

Hilja: Salt

Matt: Salt,

You salted it so that--there was no refrigerator in those days.

Did your folks and the other people, grow some crops too, then?

Matt: They did later on but not at first

Hilja: At first there was no where to plant them, they had to first make the fields, cut

the trees down.

Had to pull out all the stumps? Did they have horses

Hilja: They didn't pull out the stumps

Art: The stumps stayed, huh?

Hilja: Yes. Stumps stayed, maybe, some they could pull out but it used to be stumpy

field first, because they were in a hurry to get some field.

Did you have some horses then?

Matt: Yes, we had horse, one horse

One horse, and he was a horse for everybody. Everybody depended upon that horse?

Matt: Yeh. Mostly all of them had a horse

Hilja: Mostly every family had a horse.

Let me ask this question: why did your folks want to leave Dollar Bay and that area
which was pretty settled and come out here into the bush country? It was bush at that
time.

Hilja: They wanted a place of their own

Matt: They liked to work out

Hilja: and that lake--Otter Lake, reminded them of Finland.
Oh, it reminded them of Finland. Who first discovered the lake?

My father and a neighbor, he discovered it.

Were they timber cruisers, cruising for timber?

Hilja: They were looking around for a place to live

Art: Oh, they were looking for a place to live and they came across

they heard about this lake

Hilja: so they came to see it

they came with a boat and they didn't know they had crossed over to the

lake, they took the Sturgeon River up and went miles and miles up and after two days

they started back and then when they get about across they get

I bet they were very happy and surprised when they came into the lake

Oh, yes

Did your dad ever tell you about that time when he first came into the lake?

Matt: Oh, yes, many times

What did he say about it?

Hilja: It's just the thing, I 'spose.

Matt: 

Hilja: He can't speak very well because he's had a stroke and his one side is

Would it be better if he spoke Finnish?

Hilja: I don't know

Why don't we just work together at it and it can come slowly, that's quite alright.
When the settlement first got started, when you and your folks were here and the
other families, what was the toughest problem that the community faced? What were the
problems? Just keeping alive, huh?

Matt: I was very young

Hilja: He was just a tiny tot, so he doesn't know much about the beginning of it

Art: Let's move on a bit now to your childhood when you were starting to grow up. What
did you do as a child with your friends? Did they have a school here? Did you trap?
Did you hunt and fish?

Matt: No school
Hilja: There was no school
Matt: but they could fish and play and hunt

Did your mother or father take the Aapinen and teach you how to read?

Matt: Oh, yes. We had to learn to read. Yes
Art: All of the settlers in the community were Finnish, weren't they, or were they any other nationalities?

Matt: There was only one German fella.

How did he get along with all the Finns?

Matt: He got along good, yes

Art: And did he have a farm of his own, too?

Matt: Yes

Art: How many—let's see, there were 4 boys and 4 girls, and did everybody have certain chores that they had to do?

Matt: No—yes, they have

Hilja: bigger ones

Matt: bigger ones

Hilja: but he was the youngest

Matt: they had their work in the bush and clear land

How about the religious life—did any pastors come in from the outside or were there any lay preachers in your settlement?

Matt: Not at first for many years, but then they started coming.

Hilja: Then there was this Olaf Savela, he was a preacher.

Was he a member of the community?

Matt: Yes, he came then later

And did you have Sunday school then in the community?

Matt: We had Sunday school then.

who was

Hilja: the homes

oh, you went from home to home to have Sunday school; did the parents teach you then? And what did you have for your Sunday school lesson, did you use the Bible or catechism?

Matt: Catechism.
Art: Catechism, I see. And did you sing Finnish hymns?

Matt: (Chuckle)...yes.

Were there any musicians in the settlement? Did anybody play an accordion or guitar or...?

Hilja: I don't think they believed in that. Their parents...they were Apostolic Lutherans.

Art: Oh, I see, so they were opposed to the music

Hilja: Yeah, un hum

Art: What...let me ask you this question. What did the...there was a lot of hard work to keep the community going. What did the people like to do for a good time? What did you do besides berry picking and fishing?

Hilja: Hunt squirrels and, oh I guess they found their enjoyment.

Matt: Oh, we boys, we used to go hunting even deer and we even got...and when we were younger they gave us within distances we could go out in the bush and we get deer.

Art: Do you remember the first deer that you shot?

Matt: No, I don't.

You must have shot quite a few

Laughter!

Yeah many, maybe hundreds

Did you have a sauna in the community?

Matt: Yes

Hilja: That was about the first thing they had

Almost at every house they had a sauna

Every sauna had a house. When was the sauna heated...on Saturday night or other times too?

Matt: Saturday nights mostly.

Art: Um huh.

Matt: Sometimes.

Hilja: ...during the week too.
Matt: ...during the week too.

And would people get together with one family on Saturday night for a sauna bath and then guffia?

Matt: Yes...yes. We used to have a neighbor...an old man and an old woman who didn't have no children...they had children but they were all grown and not home anymore. They used to come every Saturday night anyway they were at our house and they had coffee.

Hilja: They used to have singing. I suppose they used to have singspirations and...

Oh yes. From what you say, this was a pretty strict community in terms of how they believed. Was there any strong drinking in the community at all? Any?

No, none

Hilja: Not at first.

But that came in later on as the community grew, I suppose.

Hilja: Yes

So, was there ever a cuppaca here in Otter Lake area?

Matt: No.

But a grocery store. Well, when the community first was built, how often did the people go to Dollar Bay or Chassell or Houghton and Hancock? Was that very often?

Hilja: To get food.

Matt: We used to go pretty often for food

Art: Once a week? Once a month?

Matt: No, we made like once in two weeks.

Once in two weeks...and how did you go...by boat or overland...?

Matt: By boat and sometimes overland we used to go with the horse.

Art: Being so far away from the town, what did the people in the area do if one of the children got sick or something like...or one of the grownups got sick? What did you do?

Hilja: (Chuckle) They gave them wizzard oil

Laughter!

Art: Wizzard oil...that was the home remedy, huh.
Hilja:
Art: Was that a pretty good cure?
Matt: (Chuckle)...I don't know.
Hilja: Anyway they thought it was.
Matt: I don't know if it cured. There was one man, he was looking for that
wizzard oil because he used to take that. He was looking for that
and after he found a bottle and he took a drink and he fell down,
that's all. He was dead.
Art: Oh my, um huh.
Matt: Yeah.
Art: Did you lose very many of the original settlers because of death...
did many of them die?
Hilja: Surprising, I don't think so many of them died until their old
age.
Matt: Old age
Art: Old age!
Hilja: Yes, they really weathered it.
Art: It was a pretty hearty group of people then that came.
Matt:
Hilja: There wasn't any contagious disease or anything like that, you know,
at first. There hasn't been not that we know of.
Art: Were the mosquitoes bad?
Matt: Oh yes!
Art: How did you get rid...take care of those?
Matt: They had a big fire outside
Art: All the time or...?
Matt: Most of the time they did.
Hilja: Anyway during mosquito time.
Matt:
Art: And what did you put on...green wood on there so you got a lot of
smoke or...?
Hilja: Yeah.

Matt: Lot of smoke

Hilja: That's the way they got along.

Art: Was there any bears there coming around?

Matt: Oh yes.

Art: Did you ever shoot a bear and have a bear skin for your house?

Matt: I never did shoot one.

Art: Did anybody?

Hilja: No, maybe some did maybe...

Matt: They didn't kill them at first then. Now, my brother shot quite a few.

Art: Well, this is very interesting to find out, you know, a little bit about that life in the early settlement. Now, were you a member of the community too Hilja?

Hilja: Well, I wasn't born until, you know, the community was already built up, you know, so I didn't see all this. I've heard about them.

Art: Yeah, well were you born here in the community?

Hilja: Yes, I was born in Askell.

Art: Did...let me ask you this. Was there a doctor present or midwife?

Hilja: No, no doctor...just a midwife. And all my mother's children were born by a midwife and all my children have been born by a midwife.

Art: And evidently...

Hilja: His mother was a midwife.

Art: Oh, is that right!

Hilja: And oh, she was the best one there could be. She was so patient and gentle. She really was like an angel I'll have to say. She was really good.

Art: The midwives had almost a special feeling for another woman.

Hilja: Yes, I suppose. Not all the midwives I don't think, but she...his
mother was something else. She was really so wonderful.

Art: Did she give you any kind of medicine during childbirth?

Hilja: No.

Art: It was just natural childbirth.

Hilja: No, natural childbirth, yes. She stayed, sometimes she stayed even oh about twelve, thirteen hours even at a place, you know, when she was called to come. I know she stayed at our house, even, you know, she stayed quite a long while always and she waited until it came naturally.

Art: Un hum, how long would a mother have to be...stay in bed, you know, before she got up and around again?

Hilja: Oh about...those days they believed that she should be in bed anyway a week and maybe more even sometimes. But I don't think I ever stayed more than a week in bed. And then later on and later on, well I didn't stay that long even. But after I heard that you don't have to.

Here we're having you deliver children already and I should ask you, when did you two get married?

Hilja: We got married in 1921

Art: 1921...so that was after World War I was over already.

Hilja: Un hum

Art: Did any of the young men from the community go into World War I to fight in the Army?

Matt: Oh yes.

Hilja: Sure.

Matt: World War I?

Yeah, that's the one...World War I. Did

Matt: I went in World War

Hilja: He was...he was in World War I. We weren't married yet then.

I see. Where did you register for the draft then?

I didn't register...I just went in.

Art: Oh, you went and enlisted then.
Matt: Yeah.

I see. Did you serve overseas?

Hilja: Yes, he was in Germany

Matt: Yes, Germany.

Well that was quite a change of pace to go here from the nice surroundings around Otter Lake and fight in World War I.

Hilja: Yes

Art: Were you in several battles as well?

Matt: No.

Hilja: No, the war was just ending.

Art: The war was just ending when you went in.

Hilja: Yeah

Matt: Yeah.

Hilja: Luckily!

Art: Were there other Finns in your Company when you went over or were you pretty much alone?

Matt: I was alone.

And then after you were discharged, you came directly back to.

Hilja: Back to Askeland...and it was a little after that then when we got married.

Had you two known each other, could you say like were you going together before you went to World War I?

Matt: No, I don't think we did go. I knew her.

You knew her.

Hilja: This is our fiftieth anniversary here.

Oh, isn't that nice.

Hilja: We had last summer, fiftieth anniversary.

Oh, that is very very nice. It's a beautiful picture.

Hilja: It's taken from the...we had pictures taken.
Oh yes. Now, where was the wedding held? Where were you married?

Hilja: Oh, we were married...we went to Houghton, didn't we?

Hancock

Hilja: Hancock to get married, yes

And who was the minister? Who officiated?

Hilja: Ahm, Maanogerbi, eh?

Maanogerbi

Hilja: Yeah, Maanogerbi...Rev. Maanogerbi.

Un hum, and where was the pastor at that time, in Hancock

Hilja: In Hancock, yes

The service was held in Finnish or English?

Hilja: In Finnish, of course

Art: Did either of you speak English at that time?

Hilja: Oh yes, I had gone through eight grades already...before we got married.

Art: You had gone through eight grades here at the school?

Hilja: Yes, at this Askel‡ school and then I went a half a year of high school, but then I got married.

Art: Were you in one of the first classes then at the Askel‡ School or were there others before you?

Hilja: Oh, there were others already before me I guess

Do you have any recollections of how the school got started?

Hilja: I think some of the people, some of the mothers and fathers, they decided that there's got to be a school, you know, and they went to talk to these, you know, superintendent then in Houghton and...

Matt: Had the school here for ten years and...

Hilja: Yeah, they kept school in the houses first and then they went to talk to the superintendent and asked him if it would be possible to build a school.
Art: I suppose that school became a center for all kinds of activities.
Hilja: Oh yes, church services and everything we had at the school.
Art: Was it a polling place for voting too?
Hilja: No, they went to vote...they didn't vote here at Askelia.
Matt: No, they went to Tapiola.
Hilja: Tapiola
Art: Do you remember what year it was or who was running for President the year that you first voted?
Matt: (Laughter)...I don't think I knew about them, I didn't care...who got in, so
Art: Did you vote before World War I or after?
Matt: Oh before World War I.
Art: Before, un hum
Hilja: But they didn't have voting for women. Didn't have this women voting until later on.
Art: And so you didn't start voting until after World War
Hilja: No, after...after.
Art: How did you get mail, you know, like letters and newspapers and stuff like that? Was there a Post Office here?
Hilja: Was a mail carrier
Matt: There was a Post Office in Gay.
Hilja: Yeah but then also my father carried mail first before there was a Post Office or even after there was a Post Office.
Matt: Was after, long after
Hilja: Yeah, for a long time he carried. He walked and he carried the mail to Arnheim. You know where Arnheim is?
Art: Yes...yes. Did you get any Finnish newspapers in your home?
Matt: Yeah.
Art: What did you read? Which newspapers?
Matt: What was that?

Hilja: Suomitar

Matt: Suomitar, yes.

Art: Did you get any of the Apostolic newspapers?

Hilja: Yeah, we got this...what was that paper...that

Art: Was it Volvoiaa?

Hilja: Volvoiaa, Volvoiaa too.

Well, when you came back from the war and you got married, did where did you settle? Did you settle here in the community?

Hilja: We settled in this house.

Oh, is that right!

Hilja: Yeah.

So you've been here all your married life.

Hilja: Yes. One year we stayed elsewhere while he was building this and then ever since we've been here. We've been here fifty years.

Oh! Then as soon as you got here, you started farming?

Hilja: Yeah, cleaning land...clearing land and got cows, chickens and what every farmer has.

Matt: Pigs

Hilja: Pigs and...

Art: Now this produce from the farm, it was used for more than just feeding yourselves, this was your living. Where did you sell your produce?

Hilja: No, we didn't have so much produce...well sometimes potatoes you could say we could sell.

Matt: Milk sometimes.

Hilja: We sold milk...we had more cows. We had about seventy-eight cows, the most, you know; but other than that he had to go to work elsewhere to...

...make ends meet.

Hilja: Yeah, big family, you know.
Art: Yes, where did you work then?
Matt: I work in the mine.
Art: Which mine was that?
Matt: Isle Royale
Art: Un huh! And how many years did you work there?
Hilja: Off and on...for off and on he worked many times...many different times. He quit, you know, and then do farm work, you know, and he'd go back again and they took him back.
Art: How did the mining company feel about having someone who would work for just a time and then go back to the farm?
Hilja: They knew he was a farmer, so they didn't mind.
Matt: Oh, I know...they knew I could work and they took me every time I went back there.
Art: I see.
Hilja: Yeah, that's true too.
Art: What type of work did you do in the mine?
Hilja: Tramming.
Matt: Mostly tramming.
Art: That's a pretty tough job, isn't it?
Hilja: Yes, sure is.
Art: Had to push the car, didn't you?
Matt:
Hilja: And then he used to work in the woods too, you know, making logs.
Art: Un hum. So now, let me see if I get this straight. In the summertime you farmed and in the wintertime you worked in the mine?
Hilja: Even summertimes sometimes he worked in the mines.
End of Side 1
Art: Let's see, we were talking about...when did you work in the woods? Was that a wintertime job or...
Matt: Yeah, mostly...sometimes even in the summertime too.

Art: And what were the trees used for that you cut down? Were they used in the mine then or were they shipped out of there for other uses?

Matt: I don't know...it was used in the mine too.

Art: Do you remember what you got for a shift?

Matt: I remember the last time when I went to work in the mine, that only that was eighty cents a day.

Art: On my! Was that an eight-hour day or ten hours?

Matt: That was ten hours.

Art: Ten hours.

Matt: Yes.

Hilja: And then besides back and forth.

Art: How far is it from here to the mine?

Matt: That's about twenty miles

Art: And how did you get there?

Hilja: Some kind of an old car.

Matt: Old car

Laughter

Art: Did you go by yourself or were there others who went with you?

Matt: There was some other guys too sometimes...sometimes not.

Hilja: And that helped a little bit, you know, if they gave something.

Matt: Sometimes car broke on the way and we never got there...had to lose a day.

Art: Yeah. I suppose the roads weren't the best in the world either.

Hilja: They weren't, no. I'll tell you, they weren't.

Art: So, in the Isle Royale Mine did they...did the mine workers ever try to form a union?

Hilja: Not those days.
Hilja: Yes, before even when he was a kid even I suppose, or you know, growing up, you know, he learned English.

Looking back, you said you got married in the early 20's, those first ten years of married life...were they really...they were good years in the sense that you two were married and starting a family.

Hilja: Yes

but were they also hard years?

Hilja: They were hard years...about the hardest

Happy life!

Art: The marriage was happy but..

Hilja: The marriage was happy but it was a hard life

Like what made it hard, for example?

Hilja: Because he had to sometimes be away weeks...he would be working in the woods somewhere...he had to be in camp, lumber camps. He was weeks away and I had to be all by myself, you know, and take care of the children and all that, you know, and the cows and everything, you know. So, it wasn't an easy life.

Art: Sounds very lonely and you had...

Hilja: Lonely, too, yes.

Art: ...and you had a lot of responsibility too.

Hilja: That's for sure.

What did you do when one of the children became ill?

Hilja: Well, there was nothing else to do but try to make the best of it, you know. And luckily, they were never so badly, you know, they weren't ill so bad that we would have to get a doctor or anything.

Hum. Did a doctor ever come into the community?

Hilja: Yes he did, you know, sometimes if it was a case of life or death.

Hilja: ....life or death

Where would the doctor come from?

Hilja: From Houghton...wasn't it Houghton, hey?
Matt: Houghton, yes.

Art: Do you remember who the doctor was?

Hilja: Let's see now, what was the doctor that came out to our house? Once anyway...

Matt: I can't remember who he was then.

Hilja: I can't remember his name.

Matt: He used to come here sometimes, our house, without asking.

Hilja: Without asking, yeah.

Art: Just to see how you were doing.

Hilja: Yeah.

Art: Did he come to give you and the children inoculations for diseases?

Hilja: No, we had to go to...and sometimes they would do it down at the school...a doctor came to the school.

Art: Oh, that was one of the services provided at the school.

Hilja: At the school, yeah. But he didn't really come, you know, to the houses for inoculations.

Art: Was dental care provided through the school too, or.

Hilja: No.

Art: People

Hilja: No, you had to go yourself but I really haven't had much dental care.

Art: What did you do with your children for a good time?

Hilja: Oh, they had their...I don't know how they had their good times, but they seemed to like it.

Matt: Yeah...they had a swing.

Hilja: Swing...he fixed a swing for them and he fixed that kind of things up that they could play with. There were wagons and things like that. He was good for doing all those things.

Art: Was there any kind of organized activity in the community?

Hilja: Well, they used to keep church services and things like that at the
school

Art: Oh yes, now were they...you had a Finnish minister come in

Hilja: Yeah, a Finnish minister.

Who was the minister when you were raising your...bringing your children up? Or were there several?

Hilja: Oh, let's see now.

Matt: Oh, there were a bunch of them.

Hilja: Oh yeah, that one later became, you know, and there was several others that came.

Art: Did you have Drifficolla there then?

Hilja: Out here.

Children would have to go in the summertime into town?

Hilja: Yes, they'd have to go...or either then, you know, the Apostolic Lutherans had, you know, they had...oh, they had to go to town too at first, didn't they, for confirmation.

Matt: No.

Hilja: Didn't they?

Matt: No.

Hilja: Oh, that's right, there was Olaf Saavola. He wasn't a regular minister, but he was a lay minister.

Art: Oh, I see. Do you think that the people's faith helped them through the hard times here?

Hilja: Oh, I think so. I'm sure that if I even didn't have faith, I'm sure we would have never gotten through and him also.

Art: There were long hours being apart and long hours at work...

Hilja: Oh yes, sure.

Art: How did you...how can I phrase the question...what kind of philosophy did you have about bringing up your children? Were you strict with them or how...

Hilja: We were anyway partially strict with them. We thought that they should be...you know, if they did something, you know, well they had to be punished for it...you know, something that was wrong...
really wrong. We didn't actually hit them all the time, but I mean that sometimes we had to.

Art: Spare the rod and spoil the child.

Hilja: Yes, that's right. That's what we believe in. And I'd like to tell you that our children are real nice people...after they've grown up again now.

You always felt that they had a respect for you then.

Hilja: Yes, un huh. And they say now even, they say that they don't think that was bad, you know, and I think they used that themselves even.

Art: Was this the same way that your parents were with you too?

Hilja: Yes, um huh. I remember I got many a whippings. I had to get the switches myself and my mother would switch me. I didn't put it against her because I knew what was right because if I did wrong, well I knew that I had to be punished.

Matt: Boy married and then his wife there.

Hilja: Yeah, only one of our boys is married.

Oh!

Hilja: And that's his wife.

And do you have any grandchildren yet?

Hilja: Oh yeah, we have...how many do we have? We have how many already?

Matt: All the girls...

Hilja: All the girls are married and they have several.

Art: With twelve children, I'm sure there a lot of them.

Hilja: There sure is.

Art: Let me ask you about that time in the 30's that has been called the Depression. Do you have any rememberances about the Depression days?

Hilja: Oh, those were the days.

Were any of them men working on WPA at that time?

Hilja: Un huh, he worked on it.
Matt: No, not then.

Hilja: It was later.

Art: When did the union come into the Isle Royale...was it after World War II or before?

Hilja: After I guess

Matt: After

Did that help the wages a little bit then?

Matt: I don't think so

Hilja: Not at first, but I guess then later on they were paying more.

The men that you worked with in the mine, were there a lot of Finns or did you work with other nationalities too?

Matt: Yes, some of them not Finns too. Lots of them too.

Art: Like.

Hilja: What nationalities?

Art: Yes, what nationalities?

Matt: Mostly English.

Oh! And how did the Finns get along with the Cornishmen...English miners?

Matt: Oh good...they get along real good. Never had any trouble.

Art: No, no trouble. Was your shift boss an Englishman?

Matt: He was an Englishman.

Un huh, do you remember his name? Of course, you must have had several over the years.

Matt: Yes

Did he...you had to know some English, I suppose, to speak with him, or did he learn some Finnish?

Hilja: Sure, he knew how to talk English, you know

Yeah.

Art: Had to learn that in World War I or before even, I suppose.
Art: You worked on WPA?
Matt: Yes
Art: What type of work did they have you do?
Hilja: Roadwork mostly
Matt: Roadwork mostly
Where were you building roads?
Matt: At the...all around
Um hum.
Hilja: And Askell here. At least the roads got a little better
Art: And how did you get that work? Did you go to the supervisor or.
Matt: No, they come to us.
Art: And who is they now?
Hilja: Let's see now, who was the supervisor then? Or who was the one
that...what you call it, the men?
Art: Was it AAA or...no WPA?
Matt: WPA
Art: They came and got you and you went to work.
Matt: Yeah, I was a foreman.
Oh, you were a foreman!
Matt: Yeah (laughter)...I worked how many years as foreman?
Hilja: Yeah, I know, was several years.
Matt: Foreman for WPA.
Art: Un huh. Did the men that worked for you, were they pretty hard
workers or did they kind of lean up against the shovel?
Matt: Good workers.
Hilja: Some of them, I guess.
Matt: Some.
Hilja: Some worked and some didn't like to.
Matt: There was only one man (laughter)

Hilja: To get after, eh?

Matt: Yeah.

Art: Were most of these men who worked for you then married men with families?

Matt: Mostly, yeah. I never had any trouble them, just one man. He was a...I don't know what he was...he wouldn't work...and he wouldn't work.

Hilja: Maybe he was tired.

Matt: And I had to send him home.

Art: Oh, I see, yeah. Well that WPA work then, is that what pulled you through besides all of your...

Hilja: Yes

Art: ...garden, vegetables, and what not.

Hilja: Yeah, and the cows. Milk from the cows and we sold some milk too. Those days we had lots of cows and so we sent milk.

Art: Did the men hunt in the woods too at that time?

Hilja: Oh yes, they did. But we never were much for deer meat. I don't know why, we never had much deer meat.

Art: Was there...were there any game laws at that time or could people pretty much take what they wanted?

Hilja: Yes, I think there were game laws, but I don't think they...

Art: ...enforced them.

Hilja: ...enforced them too much because I suppose they figured that people are poor and they need something to eat.

Art: Did...I've run across in some of the people I've talked to that during the 30's there were some Finns who really got disgruntled by the living conditions in this country and they decided to go back to either Finland or to Russia. Were there any from this area that went, or did most pretty much stay?

Hilja: Well, most of them were just church-going people. Maybe there were one or two of that kind...different kind.

Art: Yeah, but none of them left or anything.
Hilja: No, they didn't leave anyway

In later years now, in the 30's and 40's, did the community still remain basically Finnish or did other nationalities enter in?

Hilja: I guess it's still basically Finnish. There isn't very much... ahm not very many... not on this side. Maybe in Tapiola there is, but not here in Otter Lake there isn't very many.

And the interest of the people has remained pretty much the same? People are still farming parttime and doing other types of work?

Hilja: Yes, um huh. Yeah, they are. Some have quit farming, you know, some are older already, you know, so we aren't farming; but still they do some.

Did you ever start a cooperative store here?

Hilja: There is one in Tapiola

Yes, I remember... that's the Midland Cooperative now. But originally it was a...

Hilja: Yes, it was a cooperative

Art: Was it part of the Central Cooperative Wholesale then at one time?

Hilja: I think it was, yeah.

Art: Did you or your neighbors ever belong to that then?

Hilja: No, we didn't belong to that, but we had to buy the stuff from there, you know, but we weren't a member, no.

Have the prices been pretty fair there?

Hilja: Well...

Comparable say to the prices in Houghton and Hancock?

Hilja: I don't think they're any different. Sometimes I think they're a little bit higher maybe because they have to get extra stuff.

Art: Make a go of it now.

Hilja: Yeah, and they have to bring the stuff a lot further on.

Art: Matt, have you ever worked... after WPA, did you continue to work then on the farm and did you go in the mine yet too?

Hilja: After WPA you went to the mine, didn't you.

Matt: Yes. I did.
Art: Yeah, you were in the Isle Royale Mine?

Hilja: Isle Royale Mine, yes

Art: And

Hilja: But then he got sick and he had to go for an operation and I don't think after that he didn't go to the mines.

It wasn't an illness that was brought on by your mining work, was it?

Hilja: I don't know what caused it. It could have been caused by that.

Art: Well, let's think a little bit now about more recent times. We've been talking about the Depression days and the 40's. What has been the biggest change that you've noticed in this area, say in the last ten to fifteen years?

Matt: Biggest thing?

Yeah, what have been the changes that have taken place?

Hilja: Well now we get Social Security and he gets a Government pension and we're sitting pretty now.

Lots of people just sitting. They don't have to go to work anymore like before.

Hilja: Some of them, yes, they whatchacallem...farms, you know.

Art: Do you remember when the first TV came in this area?

Hilja: Oh yes.

Art: Who had the first TV?

Hilja: Let's see now, who had it?

Matt: First TV?

Hilja: Yeah, who had the first TV?

Matt: Oh, I don't know.

Well, did TV catch on pretty quickly here?

Hilja: Oh yes, it did.

Do you think that's had much of a change on the lives of the families?

Hilja: Well, I don't know. It could have...I don't know.
Matt: Maybe some, yes.

Hilja: Yes, I guess so.

Art: Do you follow what is happening, you know, on the national scene on the TV or do you read it in the newspapers?

Hilja: We have newspapers...we have Finnish newspaper and the Gazette. And also we listen to the news, you know.

Art: To the radio?

Hilja: Yeah

Art: Let's try and think a little bit ahead now. What do you think the life is going to be like here in this area, say ten years from now? Think it will be pretty much the same?

Hilja: I don't know.

Matt: I bet it's going to be pretty much the same.

Hilja: I don't think there is very much, you know, that could change it.

Art: What about when some of the older people are no longer here? Will the younger ones continue to live here, do you think?

Hilja: That's very hard to tell.

Matt:

Art: Part of that answer will depend upon jobs?

Hilja: Oh a lot of them want to come back...I know one of my daughters already picked up a place, you know, where she's gonna live when she retires.

Art: Oh, so some of the sons and daughters who have gone away are when they are of retirement age...

Hilja: They're gonna come back.

Art: ...they're gonna come back, right?

Hilja: Oh yes, and another one has a place at the back there, too you know, that they're gonna put up a trailer there and come back. Sure, so I guess some of them are coming back.

Art: Well, so the tradition will continue.

Hilja: Why sure
Looking back on your life together, how...what is your feeling about life today if you could sum it up in a few words? Your philosophy or your belief about life?

Hilja: Well, I think we had a good life even if we were poor...we had a good life. We love each other and we work together.

If there was anything to do differently, would you do it or would you pretty much have kept it the same?

Hilja: Well, there was nothing we could do about the life, you know, that we've lived already. Maybe we would have wanted it better, but still I think it was a good life.

How about you Matt? How do you feel about the life that you've shared?

Matt: Oh, I couldn't do much about it and that is true unable to understand). I can't do much now.

Art: Well, I can't think of...is there anything in this conversation that we've missed that we should mention? We started off with your childhood and brought you right up to the present.

Hilja: Well, there isn't much else. Our life hasn't been so very.

Well, I think it's been a very productive life.

Hilja: Well, we had all these twelve children. That's a productive life. And, I think it was a good life. I'll have to say that it was a good life.

Matt: One run away from home and said it's rotten.

Hilja: Yeah, one boy is home.

Matt: One boy is home. All the other boys are gone and they're making good wherever they are.

Hilja: Yea.

And I don't know what that boy is doing that's got that girl.

Hilja: Well naturally he's just gotten married.

Yeah, he's married, but what is he doing?

Hilja: Oh, he works in an office.

Matt: I know. He works in an office.

Hilja: He's at Fort Wayne, Indiana...he's in an office down there.
Suomi salutes the people who make this area great

Father
a. Peter
b. Peter (Dubla Louis)
c. Farmer, Minor

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Mother
a. Helena
b. Pauline

c.

Father
a. Henry Heikin
b. Pauline

c.

Mother
a. Wolfert Heikin
b. Seamus Heikin

c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.