FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWER:  Paul Jalkanen

INTERVIEWEE:  Mrs. Helen Torkola

DATE:        August 7, 1972

H:  I had a dress that was made out of the wool of our own sheep, that had been sheered, and spun, and they made a going away dress for me. I used to think it was so beautiful, I would go into the drawer, you know, it was covered with newspaper; and look at that dress.

P:  You didn't wear it very often? Just for special occasions?

H:  Oh, no. That was just for going away, you see? And then my brother, Uno, my youngest brother, he was here already in America----and he wrote and he said,"Tell little Helen that when she comes to America, she can eat apples like she eats turnips over there in Finland." And, I thought to myself, "What kind of a place can that be?" Because, we used to get an apple at Christmas time.

P:  Oh, and that would be kind of a great big gift?

H:  Yes, that was a luxury, in those days.

P:  When were you born----the 1890s?

H:  I was born in 1892.

P:  Then you are 80 years old this year.

H:  Well--let me tell you about coming across. Then the boys, my brother the doctor, I will show you his picture. He was the _____ of our whole _____ family. Of course, he died in 1907.

P:  Is that right? Well---he couldn't have very old at all, then.

H:  He was just 37. But, we came across, the rest of us----my mother, and my father, and my sister Rose, and my brother Waino.

P:  All on a boat.

H:  Yes, and I had that dress on and it was June and it was hot. Well----I was a little scallywag----my mother had brought what they call a ___ of butter to have a little snack, and I accidentally sat on it and got a big grease spot. Well----I wandered about on deck there, and the sailors gave me once a handful of
candy. And, I was taught, like all nice little kids, to curtsy. And I would curtsy, you know, and they would laugh. They thought that was so funny, they laughed their heads off. Of course, that scared me away, and I went scampering with my braids----I had real long hair. Well----I would come again and one time they gave me peanuts, I had never seen a peanut or heard of one. You know, they rattle----and I curtsied and they laughed and I ran away. Then, when we got to New York Harbor---my brother, the doctor----I will show you his picture.

P: No, you don't have to stand----why don't you wait, I don't want you to get up and down.

H: No, it is good for me to move. The longer I sit, the stiffer I get. Well---anyhow he came to meet us. I don't know when he graduated from the Rush Medical, in Chicago----that's the University of Illinois now. Well---I'll tell you who went to that school, one of the Mao brothers, because I just read about him. Yes, the Rush Medical. And, he had never seen me----I was born while he was here in America. And, when he saw me with that hot little dress on----long, down to my ankles, he took me and brought me into a department store and told the lady to dress me up in summer clothes. She got a white dress, and I had pretty patent leather slippers, and she even put a ribbon in my hair----and then she lead me in front or allong mirror and told me to look. Well----you know, it was like the butterfly getting out of the cocoon. There I was----and it was right at that time that I fell in love with America----and I have never fallen out.

P: When was that----about 1900? Were you about 7 or 8 years old?

H: No, I was going to be 7 in September when we came in June.

P: About 1898-99 something like that?

H: Yes. And another funny instance was----my father, this was going to be his second trip. He thought he was going to give the boys----Art, Charles, and Oscar----a treat. And, they used to make these____knapsacks made out of strips of birch bark that were woven together. Father thought it was great----he would put a couple of home-cured hams into that, and it was so hot, he had that on his back, you know. That thing started to drip grease, and mother said that my brother, Charles, the doctor, took that whole knapsack, and threw it into the New York Harbor.

P: Why did your dad want to leave, to come to this country? Why come here and live in America, was it just that much better or what? Was there work here?

H: Well---most of the kids were here. And, the older brothers,
they wanted us to come. I want to show you a picture taken in 1882, on Third Street

P: Where did they build a hospital here, I didn't know they did.

H: You didn't----well, that's so long ago. Well, here's yours truly. Me and my friend, and this is one of my brothers.

P: You are the baby of the family?

H: Yes, I am the youngest

P: What kind of work did you dad do in Finland before he came here-----was he a tailor there too?

H: He was a tailor, yes. He never did like that. My father was a man who always had his nose in a book, always had his nose in a book. He read the histories of all of these different countries, and different philosophies. And, my father was a very religious man----and he was, well---a modernist. You see, I don't remember how old I was when this Origin of the Species came out by Darwin. Where he got a hold of it, I don't know----because he didn't read English, but he had read it. As I say, my mother was a fundamentalist, and she used to laugh and she used to scold him. And he would laugh and he would say, "You read the Bible, this is the Jewish version----the version that the Lord came down and made Adam out of clay, and put him to sleep and so on." And, of course, mother believed all that and she would say, "You dare to talk like that in front of Helen." But, my father was a very religious man.

P: He liked to read all those things anyway, though.?

H: Oh, he read anything. He was a self-made man

P: He had retired already when you came to America, quit work and all that?

H: Well----yes. He used to do a little sewing for the boys, fixing their clothes and so on. But, the boys figured this way----that father,-------- Oh, hi! ------ And, then there is a million of these great-grandchildren, and they descend on you, like a pack of locus sometimes, and as sweet as anything, they are cute. And, then Virginia of----that boy right there. He is a pilot of one of those jets. He drives a jet, and right now they flew their little girl to Germany, and the grandmother is minding her there. And, they are over at Yellow Stone, and they are coming here now tomorrow.

P: You were talking about when your father was here, and what your mother was like----you remembered that they were fundamentalists and-----. 
H: Yes, mother was an out and out fundamentalist, and father was a modernist. As I say, he was very religious, but he didn't believe in all the Bible stories. "Well, they were written by all these Jews, you know, their concept of how----you don't necessarily have to----that's you are irreligious if you don't swallow them hook, line,----the whole thing.

P: The whole thing, or the hook, line, and sinker thing. Did he like this country, did you dad like this country?

H: Yes, he liked this country. And, my sister, she was married to one of those, what do you call them, National Church ministers. Well----they were in Lee, South Dakota. My father would go there and he would stay there for hours, and he would come back and he would say, "I have been communing with God."

P: He liked the country and he liked being here, but he said that Finland was a tough life. He must have grown up at a hard time

H: Well----yes, he had a very fond part in his heart for Finland too. But, as I say, the kids all wanted the rest of the family to come here.

P: Your dad was from the Olu area of Finland?

H: He was there for a while, and then----. Father was a great lover of nature, he just loved nature, and he wanted to go on farm, although he was no farmer. Mother used to say that when they had a slaughter, food for the winter,----cows, and sheep, and that----father used to go way on the other side of the farm for the whole day.

P: Then he wouldn't stay around at all?

H: No, he wouldn't stay around at all, he couldn't stand it.

P: You came here and started going to school them. You first of all moved to Ishpeming, you took a train from New York to Ishpeming.

H: Yes, and let me tell you something funny too. My brother, Charles, the doctor, bought us a big bag of assorted fruits----and there were some bananas there. And, we tried those big, long, yellow things----and they had that peculiar flavor and nobody wanted them----and father threw the whole bunch out of the window. But, all the others, like oranges and peaches were ripe and plums----it was wonderful. Because we didn't have to eat, we thought eating these sweet turnips was quite a treat.

P: So, you took the train to Ishpeming----and there you lived for a while?

H: I was there----my sister, my oldest sister contracted TB, and
of course in those days they used to think that a change in climate was just the thing that would cure it. But, then, my brother, the doctor, was practicing here in Calumet and my sister, Ellen,-----.

P: Did your brother work for C&H then, or did he work on his own?

H: No, he never did. I will tell you, it was a great friend of his, who was like his father----it was old Doctor Lava. Maybe you haven't heard of him, but he was a famous doctor at that time. No, he was on his own, and he had his offices, I don't remember if it was in top of the building where Newberrys is,--he had his offices there. And, they took me away from Ishpeming my sister, Ellen, was his housekeeper, so that I wouldn't get TB. I came up here, but I did go to that school, it is still standing there in Ishpeming.

P: Oh a grammar school there?

H: Yes, it was a kindergarten. Poor little green-horn, I couldn't speak the language.

P: You had to start from the beginning.

H: Yes, I had to start from scratch.

P: Did they make fun of you in school like in here in Calumet too?

H: I don't remember that at all. But, one thing I do remember very distinctly. I should have gone bathroom, and I didn't know how to tell my teacher----and I had an accident, and I was so horrified that I don't remember if I went back or not. They couldn't make me go, but then I was taken here.

P: You went to school here then?

H: I went to school here. The first school that I went to was--it has been torn down, the whole Corris Mann School.

P: Did you go through the 12th grade in high school?

H: Oh, sure. Then in those days, if my brother, Charles, had lived he always said that he would have sent me to college. But, he died and in those days, you could take these state examinations and you could teach for a year. So, I went to Toivola and------.

P: When is this, about 1920?

H: It was 1911 and '12 when I was in Toivola.

P: At the teaching school there?
I was teaching school there.

Was your dad still down in Ishpeming then too?

No, my father died in 1909.

Was your mother still alive?

My mother died while I was teaching in Toivola.

Your mother must have been the good-hearted kind?

She was so good-hearted she would have, figureatively, given the shirt off her back. Oh, I could tell you stories about what they call, _______--you know, some of these young people, poor people, would go out because there was a famine in the land, and they would go from place to place asking for food. And, my mother used to give just about everything she had to these, and give them night shelter.

That must have been kind of hard for them to come here, they both elderly then. They were 50 or 60 years old.

My mother didn't live too long, she died when she was 67, and that isn't old according to these standards. But, it was hard. Father was 71. He had quite a severe case of pneumonia and he was recouperating. I remember he used to sit by the Franklin stove, and he always enjoyed----he was a temperance man, but he enjoyed a Rot Tody. I could see the old dad, and that beautifc expression on his face, with that Hot Tody he was drinking. And, at that time too he said, "I'm going to write a story of my life, as far as I can remember, of my forebearers." But, then all of a sudden, his heart gave out. He was 71. Then I, I being the last of the whole tribe----

There's no brothers and sisters alive now, is there?

No, I'm the last of the sources.

Do you remember some of the old home rememdies, when you were a youngster----your mother used to use them?

Well---I'll tell you one thing. You know the Apostolic Church, did you know old Reverand Hayburn? Well----he used to get these certain remedies and they used to go into what they would call . And, then, it was just like a show. My mother never acted like that, sometimes tears would come to her eyes, but I saw these dear old ladies----they were so good and nice----they all smelled of barn or lizard oil. Lizard oil was a great fancy of almost everything. My mother was always so afraid that I would get TB, seeing that it was in the family. And, she used to give me these cold rubs, which I hated.
P: With cloths or something and rub you down?

H: Yes, there was salt in there---cold salt. And, one of the great fantasies was castor oil rubbed right into your throat. I used to do that to my kids, even. That has a lot of medicinal qualities.

P: You went to teach school then. You taught school in Toivola then?

H: Yes, I taught there a year. I certainly---when I look back on that I enjoyed it. And then I went to Ironwood, my sister was married to this Reverand Wiland. He was the minister there in the National Church. And, I taught at the old Central School there—it was two miles. I took a streetcar for a mile and I walked the other mile. I was there for two years.

P: Toivola must not have had very many people when you were there in 1911 and 1912, hey?

H: Well----there was three schools there. The school I taught at was right in the middle of the forest, it burned down. It was right in the center, but it was a beautiful place. And, then there was the Heikinen School, that is there yet. My friend Lil Excell taught there, and then my other friend Ester DePhilpe taught there at the Misery Bay School. There was three schools there. Oh, I like that, I really loved that--------.

P: Do you remember how much money you made when you went down there?

H: Yes. I got 45 dollars, that was my pay and then for janitor purposes I got $7.50.

P: You were a janitor too?

H: No, I used to pay a kid. What was his name----Arvid----I paid him a dollar. It was heated by one of those pot belly stoves, you know. I paid him a dollar to come a little earlier than I to come and get the place warm. And, he loved it. A dollar in those days was a lot of money. And then, of course, the kids were always so happy to help the teacher----wash the blackboards and sweep. Yes, so that's what I got------45 dollars.

P: Did you teach lumbering kids there?

H: Yes, there were farmers, and there was lumbering there.

P: There were a lot of Finnish people down there, weren't there?

H: All of my pupils were Finnish----all of them.

P: Did they speak Finnish in the classroom or did you make them speak English.
H: Oh, no. They still have those kids that come from there, how should I say it,----that twang. You have noticed that. Houses were houses, and golfing was golfing. And then their total voice! Ya, that's what I got and then when I went to------

P: You must have been, 19 or 20 years old?

H: Yes, I was 19 years old

P: And then you went to Ironwood, to teach there. For a couple of years?

H: Yes, well---I'll tell you. I didn't teach quite the two years in Ironwood, because I had an argument with my brother-in-law. I was staying in the ______, which was the minister's house. The friend who I showed you the picture of, we were two hellians. Two girls. Well----we were young, and----

P: Twenty years old----twenty-one years old

H: Yes, and we thought we should have fun. And, we never did anything bad, but he thought----'Oh, to go to a dance, you shouldn't do that'----and then I was going with what they call a _______, a bad baggie, but he was a nice kid. We had a lot of fun. He was a good spender, and he was the most wonderful dancer I ever danced with in all my life, but I wasn't allowed to go with him. And, I insisted and I did. So, we had a big argument, Walter and I, and I got mad, and I went to stay for the rest of the while until Christmas with a friend of mine. And, then I came back to Calumet for the Christmas vacation, to meet Frank, little devil me, I was understanding that Frank and I were going to be married. But, I didn't do anything bad.

P: Well--you had known Frank before you had gone down to Ironwood

Oh, yes----I knew Frank.

P: Did you go to school with him, or----?

H: Yes, he was in high school. Frank was a year younger than I, and then his folks went to Finland and he lost a year of school. I will show you his picture, when he was young and handsome. And, then I met my old superintendent, Mr. Caswell, who was my boss from Toiowola, I accidently met him on the street, and we stopped to talk and he said, "Gee, there's a new school going up behind the poor house, out there towards Livingston way, and I have got to get a teacher." He said, "Can you suggest anybody?" I said, "No." Because I didn't want to go back to Ironwood, I didn't want to go back to my brother-in-law. So, I said, "What will you pay?" I told him where I was teaching and he promised that if I would come and take that school he would give me five dollars a month more. So, I wrote to Mr. Helker, and asked him if he would release me from my job, from my contract. So, I went to teach there for the last five months.
P: Oh, the rest of the school year. From January on.

H: Yes, and then I got married

P: You got married then, what year did you get married?

H: It was 1914. My father could never imagine all these things if only he were living now. There is his grandson, no, his great grandson. This is my dear grandson——oh, he is a sweet boy. Well——what else do you want to—————.

(End of side #1 of the tape)

side #2 of the tape

H: Thirty-five cents a day, thirty-five cents a day, mind you, and he worked ten hours.

P: Well——that wasn't very good.

H: That was terrible! But, then when Ford declared that five hour day, five dollar a day——then they all had to raise, you see?

P: Everybody got more money then?

H: Oh yes.

P: How long did you stay in Detroit then?

H: We were there fifteen years. From 1913 when we came here to about 1930.

P: And you started to work for the state already at that time?

H: We were in this house, and he started to work for his father at the store—but things were so bad, that little store couldn't support two families like that. And, we had three kids. This one that was here——she was fifteen years old when we came here.

P: She was your oldest daughter?

H: Yes, she was the oldest daughter. Tha

P: That was rough. That was right when the Depression just started. So, you left Detroit because the Depression started, and you came up here?

H:
P: What was he doing before the Depression, or just at that time, in 1929, or 1930?

H: Yes, he worked as a guard in the Federal Reserve Bank for a while. And, we lost our house there, like everybody else, they were losing everything. My gramma and grandpa said, "Well, come on up here." Anyhow, we didn't have to pay any rent up here, so we came.

P: So, you were almost flat broke down there?

H: Well---just about. And, I always have nice memories about and we had lots and lots of good times. We really had a lot of good times, we had a lot of friends. You were young and full of pep, now it is an effort for me to dress myself.

P: I suppose with that arthritis it is hard

H: Yes, although I make myself. Then, Frank had a real nice speaking voice, and Francisco was scared, and he asked Frank to speak over the radio on his behalf. And he did, and then when Francisco got in as the sheriff get-in-as he took him in as his deputy. And then we moved to Aldien Street there.

P: In Hancock?

H: In Houghton.

P: Oh, yes----I know where it is.

H: Yes, they don't call it Aldien anymore, they changed it. Well anyway, it was up from where Kirkish used to have his store.

P: Was this in 1930, 1931?

H: Yes.

P: You were lucky to find a job then----all the mines were closed, weren't they?

H: Yes, everything was tight. Well---our very good friend, Mr. Birgh----Fred Birgh----I don't know if you remember him, your father probably does. Fred Birgh, he is dead and gone. Then there was Barney, he was an attorney. And, we lived in Fred Birgh's house. It was a duplex, and we had half. The house is still there, that is where my oldest grandson, Kenneth,---my daughter's oldest son, that is where he was born. Well---we got 90 dollars a month, mind you, 90 dollars a month; and we had to pay 20 a month rent, and we had to have a telephone on account of his job, and then the heat and the lights, and the water. Well----how much was there left? So, we, well----we had to count every nickel. And, then I took in a couple of the boys from the Tech----what's his name----anyway his brother is one of the big shots there, at Tech. He and Harold Johns came and
boarded with me. I got-

P: Did you get 5 dollars a month, or something like that?

H: Five dollars a month-------I got five dollars a week, but they got their food and their room, and I even did their washing and ironing.

P: So, that helped pay for some of your rent then too?

H: A little bit,----a little bit

P: But, then you were feeding them too, and that cost you some money too.

H: Oh, sure. Oh----what's his name---he was such a nice kid. He was very very brilliant. He had a brilliant mathematical mind. Gee----when he would show me some of those gears in his electrical business------ And, kids used to come and pick his brains, because he was so smart.

P: How long did you live there, in Houghton?

H: We lived there for almost three years.

P: To 1934, or so?

H: Yes, and then-

P: It was tough going there, during the Depression

H: Yes, it was tough---it was tough. And, my daughter, Virginia, that one over there, her picture, she was in her last year of high school there, you know. Gosh----there were some that had jobs and business, and these people who had the jobs and were in business, that had business of their own,----they used to have parties, you know, and then they would ask me to pay a quarter. And, they said that I was too stingy. I couldn't afford to go to those parties.

P: Did your daughter get to do much then, I suppose during the Depression it was tough. They didn't have much to do, did they? They didn't go out much?

H: Oh----well, she had a big group of friends. She always remembers those girls from Houghton. She had a good time, she didn't suffer as far as a good time. But, it was scratch, and try to make ends meet. You have never had that experience, have you? No----I was just telling my grand-daughter, Tracy, Tracy Clark---- I was telling her. They have everything. She goes to camp, down by Dollar Bay, I can hardly believe it----a thousand dollars a month.

P: That's terrible
H: So, I was telling her, and I asked her if she would like to try it. And, she said, "No, gramma, I wouldn't."

P: What kind of meals did you make during the Depression?

H: Oh-----we used to, I used to get. Well-----let me show you something. Look at the prices! We had pretty good meals---because those boys of mine liked to stay there.

P: They liked to eat---they didn't mind it, hey?

H: Yes.

P: Is that an old newspaper?

H: This is in 1939, 1939. Human Brother's Market----rolled rib roast, 25¢, leg of lamb 25¢.

P: That's not bad, is it? Lake Superior trout, 23¢ a pound. Hamburger, 29¢, for two pounds. That's not bad, is it?

H: Imagine, and now, now what the prices are.

P: It's over a dollar for everything, it seems.

H: Sure.

P: Is this a Finnish newspaper that came out?

H: Yes, well---that was a. I don't want to bore you----when I go to make coffee, or I'm going to fix you a pot, ice cream sundae. This was published during the Depression, this friend of mine.

P: Oh, in Detroit?

H: Yes, in Detroit. And, he asked me as a favor, sometimes just to write little things for it, and I did.

P: What kind of articles did you write, then. Articles about the Hancock area and the Houghton area?

H: No. Do you want me to fix you a Sunday?

P: No, that's OK, you don't have to do that now.

H: Well----then you could have coffee after, if you like. I will tell you who brought this for me.

Did you get a little bit of money then----a few dollars for doing this?

H: No, I did that all gratis. It was just----he was a very good
friend of ours, he and his wife.

P: You enjoyed writing, then, I see?

H: Well---I wrote. I had a few little things in the Gazette.

P: That's real nice. That's very good on the Northern Lights. You must have enjoyed reading yourself?

H: Well---I admit that one of my favorite past-times is reading

P: You had a lot of Apostolic Churches down around Detroit, too?

H: Oh, yes. We had them. Are you an Apostolic, or what?

P: No, now why don't you give me the names of your brothers. What was your brother's first name---Carl?

H: Charles

P: Charles Sorisen

H: And Oscar J. Larsen

P: They went to see Roosevelt, because there was a famine in Finland?

H: Yes, they went to ask for aid for Finland.

P: They went to Washington, D.C.?

H: They went to Washington, D.C., and they did get aid. And, I was too young to pay much attention to what was sent

P: But, they did send stuff?

H: Yes, they did send stuff

P: You said that Larsen was an attorney?

H: Yes, he was an attorney. He was one of the very prominent attorneys here.

P: Then, you dad and Reverand Heidiman----

H: That old Reverand Heidiman----

P: Were selected to go.

H: Yes, they were selected to go and distribute that stuff.

P: How long was your dad gone then, for a year or so. I suppose he was gone for a while.
H: I don't know----I can't remember.

P: The people must have paid his way to get there, then. The government must have paid them to go and distribute it.

H: Evidently----evidently, yes.

P: Because I am sure that your dad didn't have that much money, to go back again. He probably took some of his savings to get you over here in the first place.

H: Well----he sold the farm, and used that. And, the boys there----oh, my brothers would have been wonderful. Now a days the parents are supposed to do everything for the kids, everything for the kids. Then the kids don't have any responsibility towards their affairs when they get older. I think that is wrong.

P: Well----that's the way it has worked out

H: Yes, that's the way it has worked out. It wasn't like that in my time.

P: Yes, you just took care of yourself.

H: Yes, there was no welfare, or no kind of help. Yes, they did, that is so. That can be proven, if anyone wanted to go and start digging.

P: There are records.

H: In that article there that I cut out. They speak of that in the Finnish language.

P: Then your husband started working for The Internal Revenue, or The Department of State Revenue. In the 1930s?

H: No, first he was working for----who was it, Fitzgerald who was the governor at that time? I think it was. And, we were working for him. Even I ----believe it or not----even I went on the radio. Believe it or not!

P: And they talked, you mean? Like they made political advertisements, you mean?

H: Yes, well----he got a job, then, one of the little, you know, as meat inspector, food inspector.

P: Helping Francisco become sheriff, helped become the meat inspector now.

H: Yes, that's right. And, then when the Democrats got in----who was it who got in----that was a spoiled system, you know----you got kicked out. So, he was out of a job, and that was the
Depression—that was it.

P: '37, '38?

H: Yes, and then he sold scales.

P: Weighing scales?

H: Weighing scales, and all kinds of equipment like that. And, at that time it was hard to sell.

P: I am sure it was—I'm sure it was terrible.

H: Well—I should say. But, then he got back—who was it who, got in then—I think it was Fitzgerald—a Republican got in anyway.

P: And he got another little political job?

H: Yes, he got this revenue—in the sales tax department.

P: And, he kept that one then?

H: Yes, he kept that for 25 years.

P: What happened when there was a Democrat that came in, did they kick him out, or what?

H: No, the Civil Service came in then, and that protected the job

P: He was kind of politically minded then, in the 30s?

H: Oh, yes—I was too. We used to go to all the Republican—but, then, afterwards—he was told, he got a letter,'stay out of politics'—and that is when I quit. I suppose I could have gone on too—I used to go to all the big Republican rallies. We talked on the radio a couple of times, a few times.

P: WHDF?

H: Yes, and I talked at these different Republican rallies, women's organizations. They don't do that any more.

P: Did he have a job up here then? You said he took care of three or four counties, right?

H: Four counties, yes. Well—could——

P: Where did you live when you came up here?
H: We lived right
P: In this house
H: Right in this house
P: Not when he was meat inspector, though?
H: Yes, we lived here when he was meat inspector too.
P: And when he was selling scales?
H: Yes.
P: Didn't have much money when he was selling scales, I suppose?
H: No! (laughter
P: The store was still going at that time, though?
H: Yes, the store was still going.
P: He probably worked there a little bit too, then?
H: Well----gramma and grampa were running that store. And then, when poor old gramps got white fever, and then people would come in with food stamps and everything, and poor gramma couldn't understand that. Then, we took it over. I used to run that store. That was the worst job. You would give credit to people, you know, and------. I used to laugh at gramma, she used to say, "So-and-so owes me 200 dollars, so-and-so, and I asked for some money and they go to ABC. The A&P, then they would go to the ABC. And, that is true. ABC.
P: They got aid for dependent children
H: Not at that time, there wasn't so much aid to dependent children.
P: No, they had that other stuff, WPA and-----
H: Yes, so when he was of this job, it was a nice job, he would go to Iron River, and he would work off of there. I used to always go with him.
P: You would stay over night, then.
H: Yes, we would stay maybe a couple of nights, you know. He would work from there, and I would always go with him.
P: What was he doing----what kind of a job was that?
H: Well----he had to look over their books, you know. See that
they weren't cheating and all that. And he would issue li-
censes for new places.

P: So what he was basically doing was for the business places?

H: Oh, yes----he worked for the business places. And, let's see, he retired in------let's see, he turned 71 when he died, and he retired two years before that. So that was '69'. But, when he used to get his vacation------I think we made eight trips to Florida.

P: In the summers, or did you go in the winter times?

H: We went in the winter time.

P: That was nice.

H:

P: At least when you work for the state you get a pension. A lot of people who work for the company---they have nothing.

H: Well---that pension, it was just started.

P: Oh is that right?

H: It was just started, and the only thing that I got out of it--I didn't get any pension, it was just a few months. That's all I get, is his social security. A part of it, you don't get it all.

P: So you didn't get any pension for on state, either?

H:

P: Even when you worked for 25 years?

H: No.

P: What kind of feelings did they have, or do you have towards the mining companies that appeared? How do you feel about C&H? Your father didn't work for them, you never worked for them, or your husband never had to----you were never depen-
dant on them.

No but let me tell you. I suppose I shouldn't, leave that on

P: You want it off?

H: Turn it off.

P: OK (noise) They did some good things like----well, they had a
hospital, I guess. They helped the school get books, and built some of them. I can't remember what I heard. Oh—-they sold people houses very cheaply, and they didn't have too pay much rent. Like they paid 5 dollars a month rent, or something, and they would buy a house from the company for a couple hundred dollars, or something like that.

H: Well---I don't know if they got it that cheap. But, who was it who made it? It was the poor blue-collared working man.

P: And the Finns never got anything spectacular out of it.

H: Never, never. The story goes, I don't know if it is true or not,—-that they thought more of the mules, that it was a bigger loss to lose a mule, because there was plenty of new hunkies coming in. Whether that is so or not, I don't know. But, I do know about those things that happened.

P: About people getting hurt, and knocking their name around?

H: I always wondered, you know, about what would happen if somebody got killed. I suppose the company would pay the wife or the widow of the party.

H: Well---a friend of mine---a father was killed in a mining shaft, a skipp cable broke, or something, and the skipp went down and they were brought up in baskets. And, the widow was left with five children. Well---I don't know, I don't remember, I used to go over there a lot. I don't remember how they lived, of course they would give the oldest boy a job as a water boy, or something like that. But, they must have given something for it. But, I know these crippled that were hurt like that---before that law of compensation came in.

P: Do you ever remember anyone talking about the 1913 strike? You must have been—you were teaching already then----.

H: Yes, I was in Ironwood.

P: Or, was it still going on when you came back. Was it still going on when you got that job? Was it the Christmas of 1913 when you came back? Christmas of 1914?

H: Christmas of 1914

P: And it was a year before that that that Italian Hall Disaster

H: Yes, somebody hurried fire, and there was no fire at all. Wasn't that terrible.

P: They were just tumbling down the stairs.
Yes, that was terrible.

P: Yes, that was the Christmas before.

Yes,---I was, I don't know about the C&H. But, like one man said, that they had set up, this might be an exaggeration, that they had set up car loads of dividends to people, and who made all that wealth? The poor old devil that was out there working his neck.

P: Yes.

H: You bet

P: The company wasn't owned here, it was owned out in Boston, wasn't it?

H:

P: Other people owned it?

H:

P: I suppose a few around here had some shares, they bought some shares.

H: Oh there is a lot who made money on the C&H stock.

P: It was a loss to go after, some of it

H: Well----yes, but there is a lot of millionaires like in Hancock and Houghton too. Gee, they were made right here.

P: Investing in the mines, and stuff like that?

H: Yes, but the poor old working man, he didn't get much out of it. The one who was producing the wealth, and risking his neck! But, that's the way it goes. Yes, well----I don't know. I don't feel too kindly towards, as I say, they did some good. They had to.

P: They had to to keep the men here.

H: They had to, but they could have done a lot more, and been more humanitarian.

P: Maybe they should have brought in some other kinds of factories, and divided up all the land.

H: Well----I have heard, I don't know whether it is true or not, but C&H didn't want any other type of business here. If it's true or not, I don't know.
P: Well----they owned most of the land around here.

H: Oh, yes. Of course, then when the Depression came along--they sold the C&H houses at 5 dollars a room, which was a good thing. You know, put them cheaply.

P: They were up 30 years before that, probably.

H: Yes they were old

P: There is still a lot of those old houses around here. I have said also that the company really ran these towns. C&H ran them, Quincy helped run Hancock.

H: Yes that's right.

P: They were the powers of these towns.

H: Oh, yes. C&H was the big power here. Now UP OIL holds all the, ----everything.

P: Yes, it has gone kind of down hill.

H: Do you want your ice cream?

P: Yes, well---let's take a break here.

(End of side #2 of the tape)

(End of interview)