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)

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### Fred Torma
No date given

**Interviewer not known**
Translated by Heikki Petaisto

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Mining Co. Refuses to be Responsible for Worker's Injuries.
This is a written transcript in the English language of an oral interview conducted and recorded in Finnish.

It is an interview of Mr Fred Törnä, born in 1888 in Parkano, Province of Turku-Pori, Finland, (extreme southwestern portion of the Finnish mainland).

In 1905 he became a United States immigrant, residing first in Duluth, Minnesota very briefly, going from there to various logging and mining communities north and west of Duluth. One the latter, (iron mining town) Nashwauk, Minnesota is where he settled down and spent most of his life. This interview is primarily of his experiences in and near Nashwauk as a carpenter, miner, and "jack of all trades," as well as Mr Törnä's experiences as a political activist.
The name of the interviewer is not known. Throughout the interview capital letters are used to identify contributions of the two participants. The letter I, in the left hand margin and preceding a statement or group of statements identifies what follows as having been contributed by the interviewer. Similarly, the letter R, indicates that the respondent, Mr. Törmä, is the person of the statement that follows. So I = interviewer and R = respondent, Mr. Törmä.

The translation-transcription was done by Heikki Petaisto.
R: Yes

I: And you came from Finland?

R: Yes

I: And from where in Finland did you come?

Parnawa.

Parnawa - and that's it.

R: The province of Turku and Pori (southwest Finland)

I: And your wife came from where in Finland?

R: Alatornio (NW Finland on Swedish border)

I: And her family name was.

R: Family name was Allila. But her home's name was Lempiä because she primarily used that. Though her mother and father - her father's name was Allila - her mother's family name was Pouttu - from Ylistaro (from coastal plain east of Gulf of Bothnia). They (the Pouttus)
had been in Seattle, Washington some four or five
years before moving back to Finland, I guess they
had some kind of an eating there in Seattle.

I: They went to Seattle to earn some money?
(They did)

So that they might buy more land in Finland.
(Yes)

And when did you come from Finland?

R: 1905. On February 3rd I arrived in Duluth (Minn.)

I: And your wife came when?

R: She came in 1908. In August I wasn't here anymore
to remember what day she came but it was in
August anyway.

I: Why did you come to America from Finland?

R: To earn the price of a house (farm)

All left for here.

I: A little (mild) “America-fever” then?

R: Yes, I had it from when I was but a little
boy. I tried to get away already at confirmation
school age. I had just turned 16 when I was confirmed and on January 4th I left for this country.

I: There in Finland you probably had a money shortage? On what?

B: In my home there was no money. One received nothing but poor food for that work. My home was such that we had plenty of land - that wasn’t it - but even at that time when I was young - my home was so far from industry - such that we could send products to foreign markets that - 100 km. (60 miles). We had plenty of forest so that we could have sold some of that. But at that time the log industry didn’t buy great quantities of wood or if they did they deceived those land-owners. But my father was so fortunate that he wasn’t deceived
He had his forest carefully measured and all trees marked that were to be harvested. He then received 5½ markkas per stump. While the log-buying companies did that to many people that they paid 1,000 markkas for harvesting rights but reserved a 1-year time span. This way the forest grew several times what they planted. That is the way they cheated people.

But at least my father had several companies cruise and bid on his forest and 5½ markkas a stump was good money in those days. He got 1,000 markkas and at that time that would purchase all but the best households farm in Finland. Nearly my home Pori city was the best marketplace everything was bought there. Like planks of they were made say some 20 feet long inches thick and inches wide
That brought 2 markkas. And those small Finnish horses could take at most four of those so that was 8 markkas for making the trip which took going on two weeks to make. It didn't pay to go. Everything had to be made at home then.

We worked. At 5 A.M. we began and kept going until 10 at night. For that we got that poor food. This put one to thinking that wouldn't there be easier read somewhere.

I: Exactly. You came to Duluth then?

R: Yes, to Duluth

I: Did you work in Duluth?

R: No. On the next morning - we spent the night at Herriman's boarding house - the next morning we went to the employment office and took (ticket) a ship to the Whiteside Lumber Company camp. They had a Finnish agent (at the employment office).
don't remember his name - but he was called Väärio indistinct (comparable to Crooked John" or "Bill"

He lied to us then yet that it was only 5 miles to the camp. I didn't know any English then and when we got to the station someone pointed out a road that went to the camp) It was 25 miles. (to the camp

I: From Duluth?

R: No, from that station

I: When was the camp then?

R: It was then in the forest

I: How long were you at the camp?

R: Since it was February we didn't have time to stay more than three weeks (because of "spring break-up")

On the way there we were told that it was 50 cents a day (for wages) and we couldn't stay more than three weeks

I: You came from there to Nashwauk?
No, I didn't come then to Nashwauk. It was a center day. That was three dollars a week. My first pay therefore totaled nine dollars. There were a lot of people from my home locality in Finland at the Stevenson Mine. We were there in 1910.

The Stevenson Mine was near the Helbing.

Yes, about a mile or two from Helbing.

And Stevenson was location, mining location.

Yes, there's nothing there now. There was a mine there. There was a cyanide plant on the site now. I came then to the Stevenson Mine from the camp. At that time there was gold in that mine. There was really demand for it. I knew no agenda. My father had taught me to do something. I was a smith, then a carpenter.
Everything was done at home. I was for my father a regular (aid?) Because I was the youngest of ten children it was my good fortune that my parents had learned to raise children. They were so thoughtful that I was never whipped or beaten. If I made a mistake my father took me on his knee and said, "My son has sinned. But you're so young yet that it is not worthwhile whipping you that it'll only give you a bad attitude. Try to be better from now on." I've thought that this gave me a nature that I could control (my temper, feelings, etc.) While on the contrary, those that are whipped and beaten, without the child being told why the punishment is being administered, But father was such that he taught how everything should be done. All of the work he put me doing all kind of work.
I was a smith, a carpenter (and soon)

R: You were then primarily a tradesman?

I: Yes. See, I had all of that skill from early boyhood times already. It's been a very good thing for me.

Regardless of what has confronted me in America, I have been able to (vague) do it. There was an old, original mine at Stevenson Mine. The iron ore began at the surface there. They had began—it was mined with an incline shaft. I don't know what that is in Finnish—but it went into the ground this way. I said that I could shape metal if only someone would speak (for me). The boarding house owner was Finnish also. He asked me if I knew how to do a smith's work. I said I could even make my life's breath (if given a chance) from iron. An old boy (bachelor) has that kind of skill. And I did make—in Finland—logs were floated
ought by my home and I used to make hooks and all sorts (of other utensils) for them. The rope
earning little. And when one is young he
sold. That boarding house owner said that as long
as I knew how to shape metal he would go to the
smith and would come be his helper. We went
there and everything went fine. But in
the spring, water went into the shaft. The super
supervisor came to the shop and explained that
they'd lift the water out with the bucket
but they couldn't get the bucket go under
the water surface. My interlocutor told me about
the problem and a kid of the bucket could be
got near water and on one side
now I would put hole and then put
hinges on the other end. That way when
was pushed in the water it would be open but
it would close as it was lifted. Then one of a
boy got and he knows more than us educated
men of now that... that was a help to them
and remained there for three months but the
because I had to work. 10 kilometers to
work in she was an opening at the Stevens
Mine for carpenter helper woodworker helper
position. But that other the farm... saying house
owner... had learned enough so that he could
stay on that smith job. He was such
little man that there wasn't much some
piece sharpening and such. It was any
so of high demanding work ordinary
smith work.

Where did you go after that then? I work
R. I went then to that Stevens Stevenson? Min.

A new location was being built there at that
time. What would it be called in Finnish?

A residential

I: A mining location is o.k. Where was it?

By Stevenson mine?

R: Yes. The Stevenson Mine. I was & stayed there as a carpenter's helper. I didn't dare try for a carpenter's position because I couldn't speak (English). So I received the lowest wage of all which was $1.60 for a twelve hour day. Out of that one had to pay for his food and lodging. The dwellings weren't of the very best for that day. There were no private rooms.

I: It was a boarding house?

R: A boarding house (yes).

I: Like a dormitory, then.

R: It was more (worse) than a dormitory. The
rooms were ordinarily made so that on the
upper decks there were two or, at most, three
feet on the edges. It was all one room. Beds
were, oh, perhaps 18 inches apart. You see,
when the bed was narrower on one end it
just barely fit under the eave. Then in the
downstairs there was a barrel shaped
stove from whence a warm odor came (to
the sleeping quarters). Living conditions
were wretched at that time. Oh, the laundry (linens?)
was washed all right. But there was such a
shortage (of quarters) that the beds were used
in two shifts. While one worked another
slept in the shared bed. Sometimes - not always.
But (a better) boarding house was rare. Private
rooms were almost non-existent. Two-bed
rooms there were some of.
I: It was just a house. It was no home.

R: It wasn't a home. Then vermin were a great problem. You see, all rooms then weren't of this plaster, they were of ceilings. That made it a good dwelling for lice (? hound). They were impossible to get rid of.

I: When did you come to Nashwauk?

R: I stayed at Stevenson Mine until August in the carpenter crew. Then I left to return the logging camps. I went then to the Canadian border. No, I was in Hibbing for a little while working in an open pit mine. But I didn't like that either.

I: I had to shovel (ore) into a high dump car and I was sixteen years old. That was pretty heavy work.

I: There were no steam shovels there then?
R. Well there was but I was hired the old shovel lifted the ore high into the car but some always fell onto the track. I had to shovel that. And it was dangerous too.
A rock could easily hit one on the head.
I had two brothers in this country. We all quit together in Hibbing and went on the Canadian border.


R. No. We went back to Duluth and were shipped from the employment office. We were brought on a log. We arrived there then. By then we were bold enough to take a sawyers trade to earn a dollar a day. But since it was August and there was no refrigeration all of the meat spoiled.
I had such a poor constitution that
couldn't eat that meat. Even though it was cooked it stunk. For fifteen days I couldn't eat that meat at all. But anyways I said that I'd leave that I was a young man and didn't want to starve to death. Then when we quit we received fifteen dollars. They wouldn't take us to stay on that log car anymore. We had to walk to Virginia 45 miles on the railroad. We came to Virginia. We didn't feel work there. My partners (could also be brothers) were a little partial to spirits so they drank away their pay. I bought a suit of clothes. It didn't cost but two dollars or so, but that took most of my money.
broke there. I bailed my friends (possibly brothers) out of the boarding house. It wasn't many days until we had nothing. We walked to Hibbing to look for work.

I: Did you get work, then, in Hibbing?

R: Yes we did; on some kind of a track crew. We didn't like it - we were there about a week. But it was low pay and poor conditions.

So we went back once again to Duluth. We went to a (logging) camp again. This time I stayed at the camp for 3 months. It was 50 cents a day but after 3 months I had a little money, nevertheless. My (maybe laid off) buddies (brothers) were fired but I was left alone at that camp and remained there three months until spring. I went
back again to the Stevenson Mine and spent that spring doing all kinds of work. I went to all of the towns (cities) here in the Mesabi region looking for that good place. I had this Ty vaen (literally: working people's) hall as a heart matter.

I: Already at that time?

A: Already at that time.

Q: You were just a young man? A boy?

A: About a 6 year old boy. You see I received a socialist upbringing?

I: Where?

A: In Finland

Q: In Finland already?

A: In Finland already.

Q: In Finland already.

I: Where in Finland? At home? Or?

A: At home. My father was that much of a
liberal. At that time even the rural areas began getting speakers of the socialist thought and theory. We had a big workroom (at home). It was thirty-six feet on a side. It was where all of the work was done. We had twelve workers there. The women had looms there - two looms, two carpenters' benches (etc.) All of the work was done there. We men even slept in that shop. Father rented it out. I don't know if he charged any rent actually. But he gave it to those speakers and other travelers (wandering speakers). Maybe he received a markka each time. I wound up being a speaker's assistant there - when they wanted a glass of water or something like that. Then there were wandering magicians too who had reputations of making all sorts of motions with their hands. I was
With them there too, so that I was put into such a small occupation. And I was then 10 years old.

I: Do you remember anything of that teaching?

Was it pure Marxism, or what?

R: It was Marxist doctrine. The original, they kept coming there and I was a helper. My father received a certain education there also. When he got that money - that 3,000 Markkas - he didn’t put it in the bank. He bought various pieces of machinery (implement, tools) to make our work easier. For my sister he bought a Singer Sewing Machine. He bought a mow (hay mower) and a hand turned dicer, tiller, and then, himself, invented a way for it to be turned by a pulling horse so that it would not have to be turned by hand. In
earlier days, grain was dried in a riishi, threshing shed. Then it was beat against the walls and then further separated to assure that all of the grain came (from the chaff.) Then a board was especially made, called a haskali, and thrown from one end of the threshing shed to the other to get the chaff away from the grain. That also was a horrible job. Father invented a iskuri (literally: striker) it was called that the chaff blew (away). That also was a big help. Father was such that he always thought about all things and got reasons for it from somewhere. And I inherited my father's way. In every way. Then four years later we had a workday shorter by four hours.

I: Because of the inventions?

R: Because of the inventions of work shortening.
things. For example in the growing of flax—
you probably don’t know much about it—
but do you want to hear about it? For
example it is such a laborious cultivation.
first the ground is hoed (broken) for one summer
In Finland, where I was from, it was customary
to leave land sit one year in fallow — they were
three plots for each crop. One then was broken as

**END OF TAPE SIDE**

R: and put into good condition and planted with
flax. Then when it was up (out of the ground)
about 2 inches everyone in the household — like
at home we had 12 workers — they went out
and picked away all of the weeds — then could
be no weeds there in a flax plot. It grew then.

Then it was pulled up with the roots and
placed on a so called riivinkauta (“picking board”)
Then it was put into 4 inch thick bundles (bunches). These were put into a lake and left in the water until the stalk softened. After being lifted out of the water and separated (arbitrarily) into dark and light flax makings. The dark intended flax was dried on fences. The white intended flax was put under the snow for the winter. That made it whiter.

This was all terrible work. Once dry they were taken into the threshing shed, and loukutettiiin. (Note: Flax plants have very long stalks. The fiber that is desired is in these. A louku is a wooden implement for crushing these stalks. It consists of a long handle for leverage with jaws on one end. Approximately a giant squeeze type nutcracker - trans. note) Then it was lihtattiiin.

(Note: A lihta is approximately a scaled down, finer working louku. It accomplishes a further fiberization of the bony stalk - trans. note)

Then a häkla (similar to a wool card) was used and the fiber was graded into four types.
All was taken into use. The women then spun it and prepared it. To think what kind of work that was! And then we had twelve people.

All of the underclothes were made from these twelve from that flax and to top that off, the outer garments for the men yet. There was no money to buy.

Another thing: We had to raise sheep to get outer clothes - wool. To think - for twelve people all clothing was sewn by hand at home. There were no tailors at my home - a man came to make the Sunday clothes, and a cobbler to make shoes for Sunday. But father sewed all of the regular work shoes. And when I was only twelve my father cut 'the leather' for picks, a type of boot with a curly toe to fit into a ski strap, and said that a man has to learn how
to make footwear for himself. And he taught us how to do all of the various kinds of work. I'm thankful for that to my father I've never had to.

Exactly. When you came here to strive for the mine. Work in Man Hall and to take up the Working People's cause. Tell us about that little. What did you do here then in Nashwauk?

I already related how I had gone to every town in this area. I searched for proper Working People's Hall. That was already my thought (and intention). I went from town to town. I didn't work in each one but, nevertheless, was in each. I always went to the halls whenever I had the opportunity. There were temperance halls: almost every town. At first I tried to take over these temperance halls for socialist
The first place was at Stevenson Mine—a temperance hall. I tried to join that temperance league. At that time the Finns were very much enslaved by liquor. When the boss went for his morning drink the (working) men followed.

(Actually, Mr. Torma uses isäntä—which is literally a head of the house in contrast to the ordinary man of the house.) That's the way it was. In Finland also the drinking of liquor has been common to some extent. I then joined that temperance league. I began doing organizing work to get members into that temperance league. I was always somewhat successful at that. I got some of those who were tavern slaves to join. Their passion for liquor was so great that bottles were bought on Sundays for "excursions" into the
forest. They forced me to join them then so that I wouldn't "tattle" (inform of the breach). Of course, I went then. I kept a speech telling them to abandon such games. I had to kiss the bottle — I didn't consume anything but touched the bottle (with my lips) as a gesture of being one of them. I didn't stay long before once again leaving Stevenson Mine.

We tried to take over that hall then so that we could also take up Working People matters. But the mining company intervened. They sent representatives (agents) to say that they had provided the money and materials for the hall and it would not be used for any (labor movement) purposes.

I: It was on company land, also?

R: On company land. They gave the materials and the Finns built it by contributory work.
was everybody's. It wasn't (built) by only
the temperance league members. It was for
everybody (all of the Finns). We had to give
up then (the socialist's use of the hall). I
grew all along the (Mesa) Range "drifting
from place to place. Then I settled down in

Aurora. There was also a temperance hall there.

All of us socialists then joined it as members.

voted (through the proposition) that both
of us hold meetings there - temperance league
(and socialists). But there too, the mining company
intervened. They took the matter to court proclaiming
that no such (labor movement) proceedings could
be held.

I: They drove you out? (of the hall)
R: They drove us out. And these things happen in
several places. But I wasn't a participant.
In any but these two. In Aurora then, the company took us to court, it was useless to struggle that way. So we collected money to build...

I: Your own hall. Where in Aurora?

Yes, in Aurora. We built a hall there. That's the way I traveled around. Then in 1906, on May 6, I came to Nashwauck. It was my (good) fortune that the picnics were being held here just then. There were two societies here then. There was a socialist group and there was it was called the Help Organization. It was like...

I: ...a mutual benefit society.

Yes. It was - one could say - an owners' class and while there also was a working class. Then I right away - since they had no meeting place other than outside in conjunction with picnics. Those picnics were held across (the highway) from the
first garage as you come here (into Nashwauk)... now, I was so bold as to right away - at the first meeting - get up and suggest that - since the opportunity was so good - we should establish (found) a socialist hall.

I: To especially build a hall?

R: Yes. I don't know for sure if I said socialist hall but a hall anyway. So that we can develop ourself (the socialist organization) and that the youth can get to know each other. Well, immediately everyone called out that that is what was needed. So we began collecting funds to get a hall. Then I started going to both meetings - the socialist meetings and the Help Organization meetings.

But in my opinion the Help Organization had too old fashioned of a stand. They did indeed collect money (for aid) but, nevertheless, I thought...
it wrong. For example, there was once here someone who had a disturbed mind - well, the collection was to send him to Finland. Those kind of things to think what help would there be for such a person in Finland? When a person gets into that state? Of course, they gave help within their group. Then when I attended the meetings of the socialist group I got feeling that they had a more far-reaching line of thought. I joined that then and we began collecting funds for a hall. We held picnics and so on. They were - on the side - some ministers also - and one Matti Lehtonen - maybe you heard of him?

I: Matti Lehtonen - he was a minister of Finland's Methodist Church

R: Yes. Well, he made himself a socialist. He came to
our meetings and said that he was of like mind
with us. I was strongly opposed to a minister
coming into the group. My intention had been
to give us, the youth, dances and other such
We knew that religion is against that. I tried
to explain to the older members how I felt.
Matti suggested that we establish a "house"
for the people. "People's house," he in that way
fooled the old people into believing that it
was all right to build a "people's house." So we
began gathering a pile of things and kept
a picnic outdoors because we had no hall. We
received $200 in money and chose two men
to select a lot. I skipped ahead a little here.
We held those picnics, then. Going to one picnic
I got to carry a red flag even. I carried
the red flag and Matti carried the American flag.
I. Matil Lehtonen?

R: Yes, I told Mati, then – since that red flag was smaller – that, being the younger man I could carry the bigger flag. Matti said that that wouldn’t be quite fitting for a minister. So we went to the picnic. And the picnics were held, so we eventually gathered $200 and selected two men to purchase the lot. We socialists kept meetings as did others. When we came to the order of new business I hurried to ask in who’s name the lot was purchased.

Matti Lehtonen said that in the name of the Methodist Church, Alexis Watanen, he was chairman of socialist groups; he was chairman there also – pounded his fist on the table and said: “You sneak!” – to the minister – “Our relations are now broken.” And so the relations were
broken. We held a meeting and decided to begin establishing our own hall for ourselves. We decided that each put as he was able so that we could have cash. We already knew that we could, for $1,000, buy an old business building.

I: In town here?

R: Right here in town. Across (the street) from Elano’s (sic?) station. It was an empty building. Some put $5 others $10. Some were already so rich that they put even $25. There were some 600 of us Finns here then. They were such - these miners - that Finns were very desirable for mining work.

I: Because they were good workers?

R: They were hard workers and eager to compete
With other nationalities for workplace (work force) (monopolies). On the basis of that I'm sure that 90% of the miners here were Finns.

1: Before the strike, anyway?

R: Yes, I'll tell you later, where was I now?

1: At the establishing of the building.

R: Oh, yes. On collecting the funds. We got it then - we had to have 1/3 down - something over $300 that little over $300. It was November maybe October when we bought that hall. Then the questionnaire -

How would we pay for it? Since I had learned the carpenter's trade from my father I said I'd lead it - made drawings as best as I was able. The older ones thought we should merely put planks on top
of beer kegs and on top of that I said that no we won’t do that, Alexis Watanen had horses I said let’s take the horses into the forest and bring back the support joists. We’ll build a proper and sturdy platform for plays, performances, speeches etc. But we could only—since it was a small hall—only 12 feet—but even then, with small sections—we could perform on it. That business building had temporarily been converted to a dwelling. It had that kind of ceiling (material) for partition walls. That is where we got our material for our stage. We didn’t have to buy those even. Oh, it didn’t make a real flat, smooth stage but it sufficed so we built the stage. I got the others to help I worked at the mine and didn’t have time.
to be there other than on evenings and Sundays.

The others helped and we made a nice, little stage

when we could act out plays. I remember

t here were many Savoans (people from the

Savo region of south-east and east-central Finland)

ew and so the first play was Savon Kyökkä.

On a Savo Kitchen. The Savoans were a majority.

The next was Kihlaus, (The Engagement) written

by Aleksis Kivi. Then there was a play named

Muiske (no translation for this title) Those I remember.

I've never been an actor, but in that group one had
to try. And the others were no different. I remember

once - I had a girlfriend then already - coming

d home late in the evening. We already had a four

man bachelor's house. I came there once and

there was nobody - no, this is yet ahead in the

story. I came too far ahead. It was later when
we had that bachelors' house. But, anyway, we acted out plays (at the hall). That's how we get our funds. Then in 1910 it was too small - that stage and hall. And also some of the newer arrivals to the community were actors (and actresses) who wanted to continue pursuing this avocation. They began demanding a bigger stage and hall. I drew up plans (for a new hall) as best I could. I went to Duluth to get an idea of what a theater should be like. I went to (unclear proper noun) Theater and went there several times. They had advanced to the point where they built the stage high enough to allow the lifting of the scenes (wings) upon it - by electricity. That's where I got the idea to build our stage so high that we could lift up any scenes - had we had them. It
was a help even tho we never had sufficient funds to make scenes actually - but background scenes we built for it (unable to translate) which were put on the laps then. So we built a stage with future hopes for practicality in mind. But it was always reserved for so many other purposes that those hopes were never realized. But we had real pretty background scenery, nevertheless. And we acted out long (big cost) plays. Once we got the hall enlarged we made economic offices rooms upstairs and dressing rooms downstairs. So that that hall was rather practical after all although it was still rather small. It was 50 (feet?) by 24 (feet?) so that even 250 people could be crammed in there. When the first play was performed - I can't remember it's
Name but it was a big play, anyway. We put admission charges at ten dollars for the first row (section in front) five dollars for the second row (middle section) and three dollars for the third row (narrowest section). And they all were sold. Then the others were $1.50.

certainly everyone had to "buy" a chair for themselves. That's how we got a good start right away. We had the chairs and so we began.

We performed big plays then. From 1910 to 1930 it can be said that we performed one whole evening play and another one or two act plays. Then we held what we called a "Market Evening" - (where) we sold flowers, sometimes food baskets, and had contests with those. That's how we built up funds then for paying for the hall. We
we got an agreement with a lumberyard limiting our compulsory payments to $25 per month instead for it that way that we got rid of our indebtedness we laid even Olga Boortmann and others such plays of co remember their names and pona sta.

Kukasto From About :very Red-lou Kerjäläisnäyttelijä The Regina little ones. They were the biggest plays of then day. They were indeed they were.

There in the Folk (indistinct) history there:

A picture of that when we Nashawaukeans along with the Regina acted out that Mol.

Olga Boortmann: we played that in Regina and other places.

Here in Regina At the Social club Open House.
R: Yes. In the Socialist Opera House. So we advanced. We had our own unindicted hall.

We practiced all sorts of agitation (agitatory activities)

from there. On Monday evenings we held a committee meeting to plan out the week’s activity. We selected committees to order plays and produced them.

And we were so economical that even for big plays we ordered no more than two printed copies. The rest were written as copied.

I: Where did they ordered from? The Työmis

on The Industrialist?

R: We had our. 

END OF TAPE I
Chapter II

The Socialist party itself had a sort of storehouse library of plays from whence they could be rented.

R: Yes. Then the old plays accumulated at the various halls. The plays were sent to the Socialist Party office or library. So that a hall could request our plays even. There was a good supply there of plays. The later Laurens Lembcke was sent plays and ordered from him as well. We had real active members in our chapter.

Q: What else did you do? I've read that you had discussion clubs and debates and all.

R: Yes. The matter was such that at that time everyone had a desire to learn.
(cont.) For example because wages were at the most, $1.00 for a 10-hour day no one could afford to purchase books. So we established a library. Then at the debate clubs that we had one had to be knowledgeable in order to defend one's point of view stand. That also was a reason for our library. Our library grew so big that we had up to 800 bound volume books. It was socialist literature. On there had to be some novels too on the collective so that the women (especially) could read, read the early times, the women did not care for scientific literature, would also mean factual literature especially on the center values we late relate more about the library but now we'll talk about the ball dancing in Monda evenings as we already said we were put a schedule for the week, activities
The on Tusedays evenings were the practice
rehearsals for plays. On Wednesday evenings
were dances. On Thursday evenings again
were play rehearsals. On Friday evenings we
met for debating. On Saturday evenings were
dances again. And on Sunday evenings the plays
were performed.

In Activity. we ...

Every day there was some activity. The tea
was all taken up. Then for example on Monday
evenings when the young wanted to gather
as much as we had different groups go in
for the class. And if some one happened
to be present who played in accordance we held
dance. This was to get the young involved
in raising an idea of fun. We would
no music, we played games including
We invented all sorts of games.

I: Was there other youth work? Such as Sunday school work here in Nashwauk?

R: Yes, we taught the young Finnish. My late wife taught Finnish. And we had a youth league, that acted plays and gave speeches. For example, my own son, from early boyhood on taught himself (or learned or studied) to be a speaker. And my late wife—she was very enthusiastic—in spite of having been raised by Laestadian parents. When we were married I managed to get her into that hall activity. In Finland, already, she had received a slight beginning. She had been a member of Finland’s Youth League. Her teachers had been members of that youth league. She was a good, sound learner.
They took her into the league. She was a secretary and such and had been in plays - so that she had beginnings in mutual workings. Then when we were married we at first had quite (fervent) debates.

1. Ideological?

R. Ideological. She was, however, rather progressive minded and a very active natured person. She had been able to attend and finish (basic) public schooling (in Finland). She had had education then, and from youth on had been attracted toward (socialist) activity. She received the beginning in Finland. Then when we began going together she quickly came to the hall and began participating in the activities there. I believe I've come to the conclusion that the hall's activities were much greater (in influence)
than the church's here in Nashwauck. The majority of the Finns belonged to the hall and socialist groups.

R: Should I have skipped over this hall thing or should I talk about it later on?
I: I'd like to know something about the times of the strike and what you did during the strike and were you a member of the Western Federation of Miners and such?

R: I've belonged to all of them but let's first go through this hall activity.
I: Oh, yes. Fine. Alright O.K.

R: We went through that we had activity there (the foregoing) on every evening. In that it has surfaced (dram apparent) that we had debate meetings and such I don't know if there'd be any more regarding the hall.
I: And what happened in the first split in 1913? And 1914? Did the hall remain with the Työmies faction or did it go with the Socialist and Industrialisti group?

R: Well, about that I have very inspiring tale. You see, I was an agent (not secret) for the Työmies (newspaper). In 1912 I was selected as an agent for the Työmies. I was pretty enthusiastic in that. We received – the Työmies was almost the exclusive newspaper to come here. That was about the time the Socialist was established, that later became the Industrialisti. I didn’t accept its principle(s)

I: Why?

R: Because they had that sabotage.

I: And Anarchism.
and anarchism, I didn't accept that. I began to do, and did everything I could to oppose it. From the standpoint of unionism - I accept that the Industrialist did a lot of good for unions. But I've always been a "middle-of-the-road" and could never condone that sabotage or mischief. I did all I could to oppose it. At that time 105 (copies) of Työmies came to Nashwauk. I went about like a roaring lion debating with those - there were very few supporters of the Industrialists here, but there were some. I recall how at this one boarding house I had to argue (debate) until 2 A.M. to get the boss to buy a Työmies. But I, nevertheless, succeeded in that. I've never been angry at the Industrialists in respect to their unionist activity but neither could
I even accept the sabotage that was done. Such
as to the factors, even they thing that shorten
our work day. If there weren't any of them (the factors)
we'd still have a six hour day. From that
basis the IWW people were to me always a
little. I did indeed work with them on their
behalf, but they were always a little
toward me that they didn't really trust.

For example, perhaps you've heard of
Maurice Johnson. He was a fellow local and a good
friend of mine but a lot of slightly different
ideologies. We debated about that. In
all of this was always for example this
was the learning institutes schools established
here by the Finnish Suomen Opisto (literally
Finnish education Institute now called Finnish
as Suomen yliopisto and Suomen opisto literally,
Working Peoples' Educational Institute or school.

Then we socialists took over that Työväen Opisto - we bought shares in it and even had shares and took control of it for us socialists. But then came another - the Industrialist owners came and took control of it. We thought - at least I did - that there was nothing better in the way agitation places than to have clergy and socialists schooled in the same place. Let them attend school together and debate the issues about which is better. I thought so. But once IWW people took over we had much less to do with the Työväen Opisto.

This group here didn't support the IWW then when it came?

R: No. All of the other halls on the (Mesabi) Range went to the IWW camp but the Washawack
Hall remained until the end on the side of the socialists we never.

In Aha ye The Helsing Hall was worth the IHU
And also the Socialist Opera

All of them All of the Working People's Halls in the area went worth the IHU

The yet with the hall operations how did it go with the second split let me when was it 1900 1901. When the Tyomics accepted the Russian (Bolshevik Revolution)? What happened then? Hey Nashi asks. 

Big things happened here then. For example Vainconpa was manager of the store then. If

was 8 6 he this Vainconpa was one of our best managers of the store he built this big store onto two lots already then we put a coal department in it and
mobile service department with gasoline pumps etc. He was a good store manager. But he was on the board (of directors) of the Työmie. He was selected as the editor of the Uusi Kotimaa, literally New Homeland this Vainionpaa. And Paa... can here Laura Paa to be store manager.

Th was lucky break for us in my opinion. I believe that had Vainionpaa been here I would have been more less to fight. He was pretty much a progressive-minded man. Right but. Of course R... did do a great deed by the overthrow of the Czar. Bolshevik Revolution. But in our opinion it started to go too far sometime. That's what we began to resist. We never been opposed to the cause in Russia. But
there are some things (I've been impressed upon) that I can't accept. Yet, it is hard to know (for certain) for one can't follow it fully.
(keep fully informed with Russian events)
Anyway, when the split came here was this
Passi, a socialist, in his principles and a Co-Op (supporting man - as was Vainionpää) originally a socialist. But he (Vainionpää)
later went with the communists. My thought about communism is this: it is temporary.
I see. That it'll develop
& just as soon as the people in Russia are suc
cessfully taught they will return to socialism.
My opinion has always, throughout my life, been that nothing better than a socialist society has yet been conceived or - invented.
(his correctly applied to everyday life.)
If you are then probably a classical socialist.

More of a parliamentary or "yellow" socialist then, or what?

I'm that kind of a socialist that - (I believe that) -

the society should own everything. It should then give (provide) all people with a mean of making a living. It is all one and the same whatever name it is labeled by - but that is my principle (philosophical basis).

Why does one person need $200,000 per year in income while another receives $2,000? That, of course, is justified that those who do attend schools receive a little somewhat more in wages - so that they can pay for their school. But in future societies - as in Russia - schools are paid for mutually. There are no wage differences there. For example my
nephew (wife's sister's son) is a professor at Moscow University. He is Leslie Kemppainen. His wife is in the electronics field over there. She visited Russia some seven or eight years ago and received much information there. There'd be a lot to tell about that too - but won't do to confuse it with this. We were...

I... at that split time in Waskwauk. So there weren't many communists here either?

R: We didn't let them get into control. There were (communists) here. And more came.

For example: Martti Hendrickson was a communist from... no, he was IWW (supporter).

I: Well, Martti was... (with Raivaja anyway.) I don't recall.

R: No, Martti wasn't (communist). He was
a speaker for IWW. We put him against a
stump, though. Once, we didn't give him (a
speaking turn at) the hall.

I: Probably, then, during this split, the hall
remained in support of the Co-Operative
movement? [Handed]

R: That was our prime objective - the Co-operative
movement. Although socialism was the
main cause but we felt that the Co-Operative
would be a furthering means for it. This
mind of mine gets a little mixed up. What
were we talking about?

I: The split. That there weren't many communists
here either because they did not gain
control.

R: It was such a big movement here (communism)
that they were about to take control of
even our (Co-op) store. They established another store here.

J: In Nashwaunk? That was called the "Red Co-op Store"?

Y: Yes. The Red Co-op Store.

I: Tell us a little about the split here in Nashwaunk. What happened to the Co-op during the (most) critical time - in 1930? This Elanto (et al?)

Co-op remained with The Central Co-operative Wholesale (Inc)?

R: Yes, it did. But they established their own store - They ordered by Didn't they have some sort of a wholesale also?

I: Yes, they did. The Farmer's Co-Operative Unity Alliance

R: Yes. They ordered wares from there but it wasn't of many month's duration. Because
Our (Co-op) store was so large (broad) already then that whatever one wanted could be obtained then.

I: Were you on the board of directors (of the Co-op store)?

When the split came?

R: Yes, yes. I've been on the Co-op store board from its first day on. Except we had a bylaw that said - that selections would be made every three years so that the same ones would not always (serve). But when I was off (of the board) for a year I was selected again. So that I was almost continuously on the board. And I was on the construction committee also.

I: What happened in Nashwauk then? Was there a harsh disagreement within the board?

R: Not on the board (of directors) so much. There weren't many there of the other mind.
I: Oh, I see - the shareholders were...

R: Yes, the shareholders were - we had such a big group among the shareholders that they (the Communists) didn't gain anything regarding our store. Our store didn't suffer at all because of it. On the contrary, it made progress. It was enlarged by half then.

I: Who came here then, on behalf of the Työmies?

Did Kordin (sp?) or Tenhunen? Or did they send men to speak?

R: Yes... there would be more here. Miller was the one who came here. (Long pause) That's what we were going to speak of (should speak at this point - how our store reacted (responded) to the split? We were fully on the side of the Co-op Movement (Central). When Vainionpää had to go to... (place name unclear - sounds...
vaguely like Menishi?) Then Korkani (spelling
unknown because of unclear Finnicized pronun-
ciation of a non-Finnish name - obviously
the same person referred to on preceding
page as Kordi - spelling uncertain - by the
interviewees Tenhunen and Vainionpää
they were on the board of directors of the Central
Co-operative There (at the Central) in the
year 1931 it probably was when they were
"sacked"; kicked out - forced out - Korkani and
Vainionpää and... I was then too - at the time -
as a representative.

I: At that meeting?

R: At that meeting?

I: Oh, you remember that meeting?

R: I remember that meeting (of course) I was then
selected to the Central board in replacement
of Vainionpää. And I was an agent of Työmies.

so the Työmies had it in “horse-high” (tall as a horse)

letters that Jörnän has been chosen on to the (Central)

Co-op) board of directors. Nevertheless, I and my

wife were an agent of (for) the Työmies

That ended that, eh?

I cut off my relations with the Työmies. Not

on ideological grounds but that it went wrong

in doing that - on the basis of that I've never

been of the opinion that the Työmies is undeniably

wrong but that it has taken false steps at

times. For example, when it set off to fight

against the Co-Operative movement - I considered

that wrong if I was chosen to the board, then I

attended meetings and was on that Central

Co-op board for three years. Now you'd want

to ask what we did on that board but I'm going
to try to explain first - when it was first organized - the communist party tried to request from the Central Co-Op that they be given $20,000 for a sort of "play" (make-believe) lawyer in New York. You've heard of this? (assent) I thought then that it was that Otto Ville Kiirinin in New York sending these orders but now I've read that it was his wife.

I: Oh yes. It came from... where was it - Moscow?
R: Yes. I just recently read from a publication that it was her. Then I read on in that article that she had to go to Siberia because of it. Have you read that publication?
I: I've read a little on (the subject) but not that.
It likely was the Amerikan Votiseta (a prominent Finnish-American rather apolitical newspaper — literally: America's News) where there was such a news item. It is not long ago. The situation that developed from all of this was as follows. My wife was a Tyomies agent. She was so enthusiastic in that. As I also was enthusiastic then, but I saw the danger — had we given $20,000 from the Central Co-Op, when we ourselves hadn't the funds I mean when the board had to sign for collateral on loans to operate stores — had we to just give $20,000 or like sums? Then another thing such $20,000 is a paltry sum, anyway, for Russia was against it. This is what developed. I was against it while my wife was for 3-4 months.
a Tyomies agent and distributed the newspaper that blackened (my name) [don't that kind of for ...]. For example, Miller once came here.

End of side 1 of tape.

R: The editors of Tyomies came here to attack and correct me & onto the right track. Miller was the most vociferous (spoke the most) of them here. Once he came here with two lads from the Youth League. My wife fixed him not for them while I argued with Miller. I asked Miller why they hated Ron & and Halone. Hadn’t they done their duty fulfilled their role?

They’re been on the activity initiating committees of the Socialist Unity and other such things. They’re been active member. And especially regarding the 0.5 move out of force accept (planned) the work fully like the said
that when Calvin Coolidge came to the Barre
River Valley, notable in much settlement area
in northwest Wisconsin, he would have organized
a protest demonstration. They would have
born banners saying, 'The sea, Coolidge'
and the rest. Ron, up and Holmen had
stood opposed to (this demonstration) and told
them that 'I remember it the very
members on the actual...initiating committee
that time, could not express anything.
the other agreed upon, unless that they could
show you men yet realize you could
happen with such a demonstration. He said that
as if Coolidge had played on me hence for
begunned not to shoot you, you would have
been shot like rats. He shot those two
Youth League leaders. I had it said that they won
as nan a could be coming to the Range and they ran needed I'll be able to anyway that if I hadn't had so much tolerance wouldn't have moved them out by their necks but my wife was just about to have the food ready and though I had clarified to them in tiny words could have been one of them theirs and that that what he might have supported if ordered the car the bail them They can no he in very horrible condiciones and a good with them line the said something else when a from Finland and that had to been a F loan all have done you been under iragun not something to the side of the things you were done even in Finland he just said as That is the car thing They
did indeed do agitation work and then they tried to take control of our hall. In that too they tried to take control of our hall. You see, they joined as a majority - to the hall - the Communists did. They then voted that we couldn't use the hall.

Q: You were a minority then?

R: We were a minority then - as hall members.

But then I was one of the charter members of the hall. And we incorporated it with that sight that if a court suit is brought up against a department the hall wouldn't be lost. That is, it was a corporation that owned the hall. The corporation members were selected - the hall membership. Then Maintenance came here, a member of the activity initiating committee, to take control of our hall.
for that purpose we, the secretary that came on their side. They put on a notice that a between session meeting could be held at the hall, and there would be a speaker there. Well, I went to the one on the side and got the Do as now. There was a dog. In the A member of the activity sitting on the terrace. He was all the a few people to take control of or hall. Instead of the The All began to select officers of the meeting. They of course selected that one of the officers. Because they had a majority. Then the motion was made that the hall corporation was kind would be deleted if said reading the notice that the was between session meetings and nothing would be chosen here no corporation would. The de
an between-session meeting and nothing else could be handled here except the matter for which it was called. Here (in the notice) nothing is mentioned except Vainttinen’s speech. The chairman (of the meeting) said “Oh, that doesn’t mean anything.” I said, “You have a man here now who should know the rules by which the Socialist Party abides. Ask him if it’s not so.” Vainttinen said “I suppose the rules do say so but I don’t know we harm will come (of breaking them here)” I said “I feel I have drafted a dissertation on protesting. No such things will be done here.” Nevertheless, they began to select the corporate members. They nominated me then too. I said, “I’m on it. And just said that only at a regular meeting would corporate members be selected. You may do what you want...
but it won't be legal (according to the by-laws) to use an attorney named Esken, a famous lawyer. Like they hired a lawyer, naturally. We had to consult an attorney too. It so happened that when we went to an attorney it was in Cleveland, and it happened to be the same as as the other. Without you knowing it. You see, my wife had had the idea of incorporation suspected in because she had connected with the other had taken it into the big stone safe. I knew it was the key to solving the matter we took it along when we went to consult him. Then Esken told us that they had been part of this who had just wanted him to take up the Nash case and he had consented be the attorney.
Then I said, They have no right to it. They have never belonged to the hall corporation. I showed the chart to him, although it was in Finnish. He said, "This is the key to the matter. It can't be worked in another way, minor, and one of the corporate members and draft a written note of a meeting. Then hold the meeting. And whatever they decide on who or not, the hall will be binding. I asked the lawyer in more detail how to do it. He said that there is nothing more to this calling everyone to the hall. There was on the telephone to hear the decision been quoted by an estate ward. They hold a meeting amongst them at the hall. And they may also appeal by power of attorney, the man can send someone instead of oneself.
the matter we studied the matter he offered to take the case. He said that it was "no world and that he had the case on the base of the charter. I happened to think Pass that now the question was how to proceed. I could not understand or the situation. So we did we agreed not to use the money of the firm that corporation they did belong to it.

Did they make the one group he the Nash? The Nash had this company.

Oh well yes they did. But it was the kind of group that I did not have anything to do with. They were those kind of men had the bunchen was the word did.

I'm sure you'll see it. I would like to hear a little more of the times of the story.
here in Nashwauk. What happened here in
the strike? Especially the 1906 or 1907 strike?

R: The 1907 strike was - you see the Finns were
(wanted as miners)
so famous at that time that I'd be almost
sure that 90% (of the workers) in those open-p...-

(?) (mining)
hourly mines were Finns. They were diligent
workers. They weren't even too far when most
mining was contract work - then already.

For example: I'll give one example. There
was established in Kewatin (?) from

can't seem to remember again that name -
the Mississippi Mine. The Mississippi Mine was
established. Then when they began to make the

main drifts the connecting tunnels - they
paid $25 a foot in this hard taconite. Sometime

there'd be poor rock and one could make
money. Taconite is hard. The work was with
hand drills. It was $25 per foot. The Finns were so thoughtless as to work hard enough to make (earn) even $25 a day. Think about it. The companies won't pay that kind of money for long. But the Finns kept doing it until the wage was lowered to $2.50 a foot.

If two and a half dollars a foot?

R: Yes, sure. Then a clause was put that if one doesn't earn that with a contract he'd be paid $2.50 a day. This was a clause for backsliders. But it had no effect on the Finns. They didn't think of it. Had they—then it was common to get $2 at the mine—had they earned $4 that would have been twice as good. They would have received it with ordinary work.

But no. I've had experience with that. I've been
In those situation I always kept a account of contract work. Only half was put up. We had a once English hole of the scale NA of Mine. We were paid $0.50 per inch hole. We could at that earn $0 a day. Some times kept an account. We kept track of our earnings over that $4. The next year the strike kept up. The wage was lowered to $0.50 a day. We got this Mississippi Mine. The strike was because a man's work conditions got so bad that paid $0 for a hour day in the mine. The United Federation of Mine could then to organize the workers and joined it were you not be of it. The United Federation of
k. Yes From the first And I said all I could
to get members into it. And we had all
of the Finns joined at the. We were eager
about all we spoke of demons in the
White House and so forth. We bought union
buttons. For we were known we are young.
We knew nothing of the blacklist system yet.
the We thought we were now doing right work.
The question arose: The was sure
festival in Helsinki. All of the groups went together
yet the Dyke didn't and the was one
driver stable he the with fur or six horses
were not to go to Helsinki. The road was
make in the distance 10 miles. It was hard to
get a foot. Now in radio yet it a 1903 We
got the idea at the race to go to the RR station
and the to go on an extra train we
had by the same men who could speak English

ough. They said if we could guarantee

se tickets they'd provide a special train

we took 200 tickets paid for them and dist-

ibuted them around to give them permission
to sell as many tickets as they wanted to

sell their sick or ailing ones who

wanted it and their child. Many non

Finnish ended up also. They put two passenger
cars or express a and a caboose yet Not

even standing up could we all fit. They had
to add two cars and put all of the young

on those. Then there happened things like I

was a young lad and it ended up sitting

next to an old man in a boxcar. That was thought to be his son. That's why I wasn't

deep into the boxcar. I started to yap in Finnish
the and the coma told a I did know
in English a be quiet or I'd be put
vodka. The hermit named at Killer Lake
the one Latvian he was a practical joker said
let go the hay to the foot. So a took horse
to the broom to tease those bad. The other
at a word. Hilting, Mark, Hendrickson set
he divided upside down to on sides and
said all who support the Työmie
literally Working Man that he can them
The newspaper Työmie had been established
in 1918 in Ely, Minnesota. There was
eight of us had the year to that collection
The core unit of the festival began to
argue that the collection should belong
to the festival some letter while of course
those of us who had contributed felt that it
belonged to what it had been collected for.

When we returned at midnight

Crosby went to work at the

Mine.

They were in a group that was taking action.

Well, all of us had to, of course, leave here then.

II. Where did they go? Those men?

R. All of us went to Duluth. The rest of the lads went to work at a sewer ditch. But I had a few cents of money left, so I thought I'd go on.

I went to Aurora then. You see, the strike hadn't yet begun. I went to Aurora. A new mine was starting at the time. I went to ask for work and was told "Sure" but that men were needed for wet work. I had to have special equipment. You had to have long rubber boots and two oil coats — it was a wet mine. The pay was $3.
a day for 8 hours of work. That was exactly what the union wanted. I was there for a month, some of a second before the strike started. I was so determined to stick to my ideals that I quit and returned to Nashwauk. You see, at that time the Western Federation of Miners had a rule that wherever there was a mine that wasn't putting a product (ore) on to the market even a union man could work there. But he did have to pay the union a certain "ceasement" that was $10 a month. But I was so determined to stick to my ideals that I thought I'd quit and I did and returned to Nashwauk, nevertheless. They already were here, through mining company orders, some Montenegrins—60 of them. I: They were scalps? R: Yes, scalps. They had them above the mine, a long
The strike began at 11 p.m. on March 2nd in the process of 300 men. Just in time, the Tattoo was already had a call for the the hour. We had two of those at Yugoslavia. They left the camp then and say.

I need sounds like Carpathian dance of them to indicate that they were lea. The they had a super tenant and sheriff cut them with the interpret and explain this the that now they were wrong. That they had been hired to work and not strike. So they returned in to the camp. The union persons were treated and took away the the whole of to the Zongerop Mine. The men were all permitted era there with
a long rifle and said, "If you step on company land I'll shoot." - everyone who would. We had a hard, fast rule from the union that no one could carry any kind of weapon - not even knives - that it was no good. One Austrian had taken a revolver and he drew it but the first got it away from him and concealed from the supe's sight - he was inside. Had the revolver been seen it would have become a blood bath. But since we did get it away from him.

Of course, we didn't go on the company land. What good would that have done? to make trouble. We came to the hall and remained there keeping a meeting. After a little while a few days later we were in the hall again when the sheriff came - with 200 guns it was said. He came to the door and shouted that if we
Would it come out he'd shoot the hell into splinters. There's there, one some of those fellows who were old country knife-fighters he said that they wouldn't. They wanted to go out the throat (of the sheriff) which was the 8 year-old & told the that sheriff a year or so before that that I didn't want trouble & begged them to leave peacefully. He would return. We left and they went away. They hoisted the flag above the roof. It wasn't until it was, shied we would go take it down of course since the sheriff had saved it.

Were you put on the blacklist again?

& I was I did near the to get over

Nash wa. When the strike ended I returned to Aurora with my go to the same old club.
I went to another wet place. It was called some bunker shaft and a terribly wet place. I worked there a little while but since it was taken on a foot and a half of quicksand and a fourteen foot steel cylinder was put up to the bedrock. Then they drilled the rock and could shoot with more than a quarter stick (of dynamite) until we got started onto the rock we worked there then until guess it was around Christmas when I quit feeling that every foot was stiff from the contiuo witness we were always and despite the being four inch pipe they always took water out of the shaft and sent on as there was a turn turned in we hash ask.
I see because you were still on the list?

That's right. I didn't even try to find work and then we went to work there. You see, it was 1908 - it was an election year. You see, once people dared to strike all of the miners were phased down to use as little labor as possible. And you remember that for a long while after the strike - every election year was arranged to be a poor (economic) time - to discourage strike for.

And it was as until Roosevelt was elected. But the late Roosevelt (FOR) gave even workers some rights. I also came here to Nashwauck. I began to organize a young miners. There were four of us - both white and black organizing it. Since that black list system was still so fresh in everyone's memory the boarding house owners tried to convince everyone they would be black listed if they lived in a young men's house. Of
Once, they said that they informed the company.

We only got to one then the area changed.

During our conversations, we overheard the echoed
at some locations. It was that wrong.

We had to make sure we met the cost
in expenses for us.

This led me up to us. We ran
also handing prize didn't say.

We will be doing one.

The
R: I guess I was at the point where I left for the Dakotas.
I: Yes.
R: Well, when my money started to run out I thought I'd go to the Dakotas for at least, Board would be less there than here and since I had no hope of finding work. There'd be a long tale to tell about the Dakotas but this is getting to be so long. Out there I wound up being involved in some more peculiar incidence.

Anyway - I'll go through this boarding house incidence now - I went to the Dakotas and stayed there until October 16th when I returned to Nashwauk. I immediately began to organize a young men's house again. I thought that surely by now (people would accept it) since minds must be somewhat clearer. On November 8th.
we dined at our own “young men’s house” that had 15 members. That’s how the “young men’s house” was started. Well, we had to get a treasury to provide for agitation (political) work. We rented a Kumpula named Boarding house - it was one of the smaller boarding houses. We began our young men’s home (operate) that way and tried to further it as inexpensively as possible. We rented it with fur niture and everything. At that time boarding houses had a cow even - so we had to rent the cow too. We were young in every respect then and we fed the cow so much that it died of being overweight. We had to pay for the cow. But in every way we attempted to keep operating costs minimal, like housekeeping work we did it by turns.
And whoever didn't was levied a fine of 50 cents. For 50 cents others were then ready to take (cleaning work) - when you think of the value of (the dollar) then, To think - he had to carry the wood (in?) and act as janitor (uncler) and all out. That was done for cents. And always there were men willing to take that job if someone didn't want to do it. That's how it was begun. Then we had work hard at (political) agitation. Here were Korpela, Virtanen and our landlord Kumpula and also Saarikoski. In addition to that, at least one boader in each boarding house. These were many boarding houses then. Some had 30–40 people men in them as boarders. The living conditions in them were rather primitive of already described
one (in Tape I) - a boarding house of that period. There was raising (?) work to be done.

In the private boarding houses eggs were never put in the men's (lunch?) pails. But in our young men's house we decided that since we were doing our own purchasing we would - the additional cost wouldn't be that large.

I told the cook - dish washer to put five - six eggs in my pail. We dined with the others then. Then at home that set off a great ruckus when some had eggs in their pail and others didn't. The boarders at boarding houses came to the young men's house (as a result) in such numbers that after six months we had to find a bigger boarding (?) house to rent for a young men's house. It grew so quickly - the young men's house. We rented the
bigger boarding house — it belonged to Korpela. We set a rule then that one could (eat) board at the young men’s house but (and still) room elsewhere. There was a nice house (They) for sale here — it still stands — we bought it even if no more fit there than into the other. They did that then about eating at (the young men’s house) while roaming elsewhere. At the best time there were 150 men as members — diners. I guess it’s about two or three years now since it stopped operating.

1. What was it’s name?

R: At first it was ELANTO (literally: Livelihood) But, you see, since they are thoughtless people — it was largely through the young men’s house that the store was established. It had become affluent enough to purchase with cash—
you see there were many of us like me. The next year I wound up a married man. Well we couldn’t go eat at the young men’s house, obviously. So we then got the thought that we should be able to purchase food as inexpensively as the young men’s house did. We went to the young men’s house and suggested that we unite with Tove (literally place of comrades) in Duluth who had a wholesale business place and order goods from him by the sackful and divide it up at the young men’s house among people who wanted to order from them. It was much cheaper at that time about half price. So many people joined up with that idea that the young men’s house got tired of distributing the
waves and said a store had to be established. The young men's house was then the support when there were no (other) sources of funds. We began to sell those shares to establish a Co-Operative store. I too began to sell. Already formerly the Finns around here had had a shareholders union (corporation) - (name unclear English) Stock Company. That stock company was based on that if one were a stockholder and it (the company) went bankrupt, much more would have to be paid. Well, when I went to sell shares in the Co-Op they wouldn't believe that the Co-Op wouldn't have such (a stipulation) all. One puts what (he wants) into it but nothing additional. We were able to sell $250 worth of shares when we established that
Co-op store. We could not even have founded it if that Young Men's House hadn't been clear of debt. And that (young men's house) had been incorporated (under provisions) that would have enabled it to run the United States of America. Next time you come I'll have the by-laws here for you. You'll see then how we could have operated the entire USA. The men of those times had such mines that --. It read that (the young men's house) could (if the situation arose) operate mines and pole operations or whatever. So we did, nevertheless, establish that Co-op store. But those by-laws of the corporation had been drafted already using the name Elanto. - And the young men's house by the same name. Well, what came
of that was that the young men's house gave
it's funds for the store - that entire young
men's house was (insanely) (connected with)
the Co-Op store. We were so thoughtless - What
happened was that a basement was
begun for the young men's house - that
came to cost some thousands of dollars to
the Elanto Co. We decreed that they should
then pay three percent of their (the young
men's house) receipts to the store as rent.
Then when poor times came and there were
few men of course such an arrangement
wasn't comparable to ordinary rent.
Someone at a Co Op meeting said that we
were supporting the young men's house
members those kind of big headed - They
then separated from Elanto and adopted
the name Home Club. It operated separately but was, nevertheless, wise enough to finance that Co-Op store. Allways when we received a car load (of waves) they brought (money) already beforehand. And then since we only had 250 dollars of the money I suggested that us (other) purchasers begin paying beforehand also. We'll put fifty or a hundred dollars - whatever it would be. That way we received over 1,000 dollars - we had about $1,400 to finance the (Co-Op store) We needed a store manager. A man came from Denver, Colorado he had very good penmanship - and said that he had been connected with a Co-Op movement - even the Central Co-Op didn't yet exist, so that there were no managers. We selected (this man from
Denver based on his handwriting since he knew how to write (so well) maybe he'd make a good store manager. I was treasurer to Elanto then and Varonen was chairman. We collected the money and chose one bachelor from the young men's home to go (with us?) to purchase wares. We decided that the value of the purchase could not exceed the amount of money that we had. They went and the wares came. I went (to the store) in the evening once he (? had looked at the wares all day. I asked the man (manager?) that how did the order go or turn out. He said that he had told them to only send $1400 worth of wares— and now they had sent over $3000 worth. I went to talk to Varonen, who was chairman, and told him to call a meeting to find
ord) how were we going to cover the mistake of having $3,000 worth of goods at the (railroad) depot and only $1400 to pay for them (how would we redeem the goods) Vasonen called a meeting for that evening and that generated a lot of noise before everybody got their brains back. The store manager was 'sacked' (fired). At last - I myself had a store here - and there was one married woman who worked at the store. I went and got her to come look at the list of goods. You see, when there was an imbalance it carried over & to the next receipt, and was compounded that way. many times - and he (the store manager) hadn't realized that. There was no more than the ordered amount there after all. But we had already "sacked" our store manager. The family that
had been operating my store was selected as the (C. Op) store management then since I was the treasurer I had to, every evening, go to the C. Op store and check the registers and everything (do accounting work). Take the money to put under my pillow for the night and bring it back to the store in the morning, and the rest (profits, proceeds) to the bank. That went on for 3 months. It was winter time when I told them that I also have to work that I can't keep this up I didn't get anything for it. (Normally) I spent the winter lay-off period doing carpenter work there wasn’t much in it (financially) but And that how skimpy this Elta to C. Op of ours began. We had to be careful, that register tape would never
quite balance out. There were always some discrepancies - never big (vague about time consuming). After 3 months I then said that we have to get a store manager. We selected a man named Nevada (1). They felt that I should still go there and (keep checking). I told them no. This (Nevada) was a very honest man. He had himself had a store formerly in his own home. He became our store manager. And from then we have progressed with Elanto (Co-op).

And our success has been amazing.

I: Tell us then for a finale (?) about the second strike. The one that occurred about 1916.

R: What happened here in Nashwauk?

R: I'll still continue on this a little. When got this Nevada (Nevada?) into the store
we had an honest man. In every way we -
from the first year on - had a gaining operation
(in that Co Op store). We then - I have the book
on this - divided it up in a rebate to our
members that totalled over 200,000 (dollars?).
We paid out the interest on that then. I have
a book on that in another room. Sometimes
when you come (I'll show it to you). This
younger generation became so big headed
that it wanted to enlarge that store - which
was a good idea but they should have used
their brains in carrying it thru. You see,
we discussed it, and I recommended to the
annual meeting that we empower the board
that also
to enlarge the store but we put a limit
of $30,000 on any such projects. We
had that much in shares at the Central
Co Op and we always paid cash in advance on all of our orders. We were on such a good basis that we could afford expansion but it should have been done wisely - with thought. We were able to buy an old business place - there were two of them even then. The other we rented - it was my former place of business but I had sold it. And the other was by the name, Hollander. These two old business places then both belonged Elants. I suggested that let's put them (join them) together and push them into the back alley. We could join them with a steel beam. Both had 12 foot ceilings and so suggested we use them as garages (storage). We could line them with metal and plaster.
inside to reduce their flammability. I obtained blueprints my son had gone to
architects school. He and I drafted the plans. The plan was accepted. My son
and I worked out all of the specifications, since he had gone to architect school.
He didn't have a job yet because that was during the poor times (the Great Depression
of 1929 30) Then the Studebaker Company offered us conditions that if we built a
garage that was acceptable to them we could stock sufficient spare parts, we
would receive 3% on all Studebakers sold between Ely and Grand Rapids. Even if we
didn't sell them and a greater percentage of we did the actual selling, Elanite Corp
accepted the blueprints and the Center
Co-op - who also had an architect - also accepted them. From (concrete block) we would have built a very nice front on it. That would have cost us about $20,000. This younger generation of ours was so big-headed that even though Studebaker and the Central Co-op architect accepted the blueprints so that we would gain those privileges. We had $30,000 in shares in the Central Co-op so that we could have built it with our own money. But they (the younger generation) said let’s tear them down and build a brand new building. I was on the board then as well as the construction committee. Those who were against my plan invited Ryding (?) here to draft the blueprints without letting me know although I was
on the board as well as the construction
committee. Ryder drafted the blueprints.
then I was present when he came with
the picture and it was not at all practical.
He had no practical experience while I
who had been with Elanto from the
very beginning knew what it should
be. His plan was not at all according
to my opinion. He had it planned that
one of the buildings would be torn down
completely while the other would be
placed crossways in the alley. I asked
how much more space that would provide.
The answer was none. I asked (can it be
used as a garage) The answer: No just
as a warehouse. There would be no chance
to use it as a garage. I said that we couldn't.
do it that way once we were building it.

The one that was on the corner would have to become our steelware department and build a new one onto the corner if the annual meeting accepted it. They gave it up for bids — although a decision had already been made not to exceed $30,000 — and this came made $72,000 — the cost for their planned building.

They intended to build it, nevertheless. I told them to first read the by-laws, where it says you may use $30,000 and no more. And if you begin (building) I'll join up with you. They didn't dare do it then. The matter went on into spring.

was brought up at the annual meeting

They announced that they had already ordered so and so many irons and other
things. It should now be built. We discussed it, then, at the annual meeting. I said that "as long as you're so thoughtful that you'll finance it yourself and keep in mind that even if we have men who are capable of running (operating) such a store we don't have any experience (car dealership) in a garage business." On top of that the (special) interior apparatus and furniture came to cost $14,000. That brought our debt to nearly $100,000. They gave them permission the annual meeting did so it was established. And indeed it did raise our sales so that we had 1300 - we had sales of about half a million dollars - but the net was $20,000 of annual loss. That's how it went bankrupt. We didn't lose
anything else in it except our shares I had, myself, several thousands of dollars in it because I trusted that the Elanto Company was on such a basis that it would never lose or bring loss. One could obtain everything a human needs thru the Elanto Co-op. If it didn't have it (in stock) it ordered inexpensively. It was going so well until we went into this garage business without having men who could manage it. We old men were put off of the (controlling element) and these young ones began operating it. They invited a bankrupt garage from Sundvall to manage it and paid him $400 a month in that day's money. He just sat in the office (for it). That is the kind of thing that produces loss. We old men
had been put aside

I: Yes Very well. That is a good history of the Co Op store development. Then for a finale a brief account of that second strike.

R: Well, the second strike was such that you see when the I.W. (line of thought) was never very popular in Nashwauk. We've always clung to the principle that the hall was the place where all workers could gather. Then from [?] they requested a hall wherein to meet. I said that, yes, you may meet. I was then the chairman of the (hall) corporation.

END OF TAPE SIDE

R: I was the corporation chairman. Those corporations were kept sort of secret
that is the identity of a member was concealed

to avoid the blacklist of the mining company.

There was here one man named Johnson - a

Finnish man who was a private merchant.

He brought - I don't know who had collected

them - the names of all of the Nashwauk

merchants regardless of nationality

petitioning that the hall not be given for

(use by) the strikers. Even though it was kept

a little secret they well knew who was

chairman of the corporation (of socialists).

They - he (Johnson) brought it to me. I
told him that the matter had come to such

I'd call a meeting (to discuss it) but the

decision would be that the hall could be

obtained. I let Rewatin know that matters

were such that we didn't know if they
could get to the hall but that the hall doors
would be held open by us for them. But
we didn't know what resistance they might
(have to overcome) if showed them the petition
that we'd received and cautioned that
what may happen is not thru us. They came
then. Isaac Johinen came with the speaker. They
were met at the (train) station by the sheriff
and others. The speaker was arrested. They
got to the hall marching as a procession from
Kewatin to the hall here in Nashwauk. There
was no speaker there. We didn't go there at
that time to get involved. We didn't go
until later. They couldn't accomplish
anything because they had no leadership
(at the hall).

D. You weren't working a mere then?
You yourself didn't participate in that strike?

R: No I had twice been on (mining company) black lists.

I: That was plenty enough.

R: That was plenty enough. You see at that time - you've heard of the slave contract. Have you heard anything about that?

I: No.

R: You see the mining companies put out a postcard saying that if you were hurt while working in the mine, the company was not responsible at all.

I: They had no liability.

R: Right. You see I was at the Post Mine using an ore drum of a certain kind. It was that kind that it took a steel passage in conduct into the taconite with an electric motor.
The (mine) superintendent came with me as my companion. They watched those in control more closely. I became it's first victim (thereby). He came speak to me then telling me to sign this contract and tell the other Finns about it. My daughter was 2½ and my son six years of age. I was 5 minutes without saying a thing. I decided in my thoughts that I wouldn't sell my blood and told him so. He left saying that if I don't understand that post card (postcard?) he'll send Jussi Santt as his agent to explain it to me. I told him, "I've read about it in the papers and am aware of it and it's intent. I won't sign it and won't advise anyone else to either." Two weeks later I was off of the job. I didn't even try anymore.
I went to be a carpenter (private) I had an
acquaintance who was a carpentry contractor
and who was familiar with my carpentership
from the hall construction days I went to ask
him for a job I had no other chance to make
living He said he pay $2.25 a day for 8
hours of work I took it because I had no
other I had made $3.50 at the mine for operating
that machine I thought that things would
get better It didn't take but a month until
he saw that I had an inclination for carpenter
work He my employer then agreed to pay me
$2.50 a day I was with him then for a year and
a little more Then this new company the
Butler Brothers began their building It was
a location that was being built and they
paid $3.00 a day for the best carpenters I
thought that I'd go there. That 80 cents was considered such a lot of money in those days.
I went to ask for work there. He was what was called very demoralized. But that was good at least in way for a superintendent. I asked him if he needed a carpenter. He said that yes he did. I asked him how much he paid out $2.25 $2.50 $2.75 and $3.00. He put great emphasis on that $3.00. I told him not to keep me if I wasn't worth three dollars. He said immediately. Come to work in the morning. I went then. The carpenter boss (foreman) who was there was such that he didn't know anything about carpenter work. He was a Swede, just a swede. We began to this could be a long story too but I'll try to be brief. Those location houses were like boxcars. They could
be put on wheels and pulled away to another town even if wanted. We were building the first of those houses then. That Poole came over there, held Dust by an ear and that is the way one left. I asked, "What kind of a show is that?" I was answered that he had hung a door in the boxcar office and installed the hinge pins upside down so that the door had fallen on top of another, broken, and had had to be fixed. I - he told me to come along for cutting the trusses for the shop. This was a big building, 35 feet wide and 100 feet long. It was fitted with 8" x 8" timbers at 16 foot intervals and 12" planks for roof carriers. Dust said "Let's go cut the shop trusses." He gave
me a poor condition, poor design saw to cut with. I told him, "This won't cut anything. I'll have to fix this saw first. I'll come as soon as I've fixed it." He had carried those timbers and measured them out. We cut them the way he'd laid them out. It can be done like that but he knew nothing about a square. I took a line out of my pocket saying, "Let's measure these to ascertain that they're the same length. One may be longer." One was 3" longer. I said that now we'd cut them both the same length and then go to the timber pile and look for more. But I didn't want to give in. They had to be cut his way—all of the timbers carried there, he said. I told him I'd go home.
before I'd start working like that. I got him convinced then. All the while he was a little cranky thinking he'd get a bad name from that. Then when I had gotten **(after rain)** cut the first **truss**, the end **truss**, and lifted we had to lift the second. You see, there had to be a brace put up to keep the second one up. I told Dust - I knew it already, to be sure, but I wanted to investigate.

"Do you know how high that other end is and how much is this intervening distance?"

I'll cut it down here on the ground. Dust said that that kind of a man couldn't **(exist)** who could do that. It would require a **(unclear for laughter) I told him I'd cut the measure ( intervening distance) anyway.**
happened to fit as if a key into a lock that bracing did. Just had to accept that a plank would be cut like that then. When we came back from there he asked me how to do such a thing. I measured and could get one of those carpenter's tools from a bent piece of iron (the square). I had ordered books and had read them. Well, I stayed for 20 days then before my first work partner came there saying he'd like $5 per day if I'd come back. And then when the first contract would come up I could join into a partnership. Of course, I realized I'd learn more and have a better future there—although I'd have done fine even (at the other place) become a boss. But I was weak in the English language and didn't want...
to take that kind of a risk

TAPE ENDS ABRUPTLY