FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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Subject Matter: Matt Turunen, logging entrepreneur in Pelkie

Respondent: Reuben Turunen

Comments:

I: September 28, 1974...we're going to get as much information as we can about Reuben's father, Matt Turunen, who was quite a big logger in the Pelkie area. When did Matt Turunen come to America? To your knowledge?

R: Let's see...he was born in, around 1880 so he came here right around 1900.

I: He was about 20 years old.

R: Yeah, 19 or 20.

I: Where was he from in Finland?

R: From...it was called Lappenranta.

I: Lappenranta? Where in the Finnish map is that? Just approximate...

R: In the southern...not too far from Helsinki.

I: What kind of life did they have there? What was his father doing, your grandfather?

R: My dad was an orphan when he was five years old so he went to live at different places, you know, and worked for his food.

I: Had to make a go out of it at five years old.

R: I don't know exactly how old he was but I know when he was a kid that's what he used to do, he'd live on the farm and work.

I: And he'd get board and maybe a little bit of money.

R: Yeah, and he saved just enough money to get to the United States.

I: Do you ever remember talking to him about how he got here? Where did he come first from Finland?

R: He came to Hancock and the first summer he worked on some farm here making hay and then he got a contract to, or he homesteaded a place across the Otter, across the Otter River there in North Laird.

I: Can you pinpoint according to today's roads and farms and that about where the homestead was?

R: You know where Sander Tauriainen's farm is there...just about across the river from there, north of there...and he got that homestead and he was supposed to
work it for so long and then he could have got a deed on it but he started making ties by hand, he worked there a couple of days and he thought that's too hard work so he went to the mining company and he got a big contract for some ties and then he went to all the farmers and got the orders from them.

I: Ah, so he was an entrepreneur. Did he continue to work the homestead or...

R: No.

I: ...did he abandon that as he decided to go into the tie business?

R: Yeah.

I: And probably went to the Quincy and got a contract.

R: Yeah, he couldn't even speak Eng, well, he couldn't speak English at all but he went there and 'course they had, there was quite a few Finns around, interpreters, and he went to all the mining companies and he got all kinds of contracts.

I: Oh, very good, and then he also got employment for the local people here at the same time...I imagine those ties were, were they ones used in the mines?

R: Yeah, but they used for shoring up the shafts.

I: And they were probably cedar?

R: Hardwood.

I: Hardwood ties at that time?

R: Elm, lot of elm they used.

I: When did he marry your mother?

R: Then he was 32 when he got married and my mother was 16...and I remember my mother saying about when they got married the first night he slept, they had to sleep in a bunkhouse, you know, right next to the cook camp and the scaler slept on the top bunk.

I: Oh, so their honeymoon was underneath the scaler, eh? That must have been pretty rough...was he working at the camp at that time, did he have his own camp?

R: Yeah, at that time he did, yeah, that was his own camp.

I: When did he come to the Felkie area as you remember?

R: I wouldn't remember the year but I remember he bought a house in Hancock first, close to the college he owned a big house there...and he was planning on moving there...but then he...that must have been right around the time he got married, then he bought the house in Felkie and they moved here instead.
I: And that was...I've heard that house also called Murto's house.

R: Yeah.

I: Did Murto's live in it afterwards?

R: Yeah, I think so...it was a two-family house, I don't know if they lived in there at the same time or not...there was a barn in the back where they had cows, too.

I: So then this was about 1902 or '03 that he's in Pelkie...couple years after...

R: After he came, no, it must have been later than that....I don't really know where he lived, mostly in the logging camps, I suppose...and in Houghton and Hancock, he lived there maybe for a couple of years.

I: Did he start his logging operations while he was in Pelkie here, this tie business, or did he start that back in Alston when he was living over on that homestead?

R: Yeah, he must have lived around here because that's where he started, right in this area...the farmers would work their horses on the farms in the summertime and then in the wintertime they worked in the woods and that's when they made all these logs.

I: And they put the logs on the railroad and shipped them to the mines. O. K., where did he go to school here?

R: He didn't go to school here at all...he went, they used to go school in Finland about six weeks at a time, he went, I think, about three or four years.

I: Probably during the summer months, I imagine.

R: Yeah.

I: Well, he came here then and he started a family. What persons were in the family, who was born first?

R: My brother, Reino.

I: Reino, and...

R: And then Martha, the one that's living in Alston...and then there was Aili, Eleanor, Sylvia, and then there was a boy, he lived only a couple weeks and he died, and then Eva and myself and Edith...Ralph, he lives in Arnheim, and then Ruth and Beatrice.

I: How many did that total, I lost count.

R: Eleven...there would have been twelve, there was twelve but the one died when he was two weeks old.

I: With that family, then, he moved onto this place, now the Reuben Turunen's
farm. Do you know at all when he started this place? I imagine the King's owned this.

R: Yeah, let's see, that was... when he moved here that was... let's see, six years before I was born so that would be about 1914 or 1915 when he moved here.

I: The railroad had already been in for about 15 years. Did he start farming right away here?

R: Yeah, they had some kind of a, some cows here, but... the time when he lost all his contracts and he had all these logs he had two or three sawmills at the time and he started sawing those logs into lumber and he built this barn so that was in the 19...

I: '30s, about... early '30s.

R: I wonder if, wasn't there some kind of a Depression right after the First World War?

I: In the early '20s there was a Depression.

R: Maybe that was probably the Depression when he lost all those contracts... because I think by the 1930 one they weren't able to break contracts anymore like, you know... 1919 they just said they're not going to take them anymore.

I: So he had these contracts for ties.

R: And for logs, you know, he was logging then.

I: Oh, where was he sending his logs?

R: They were all decked up in Pelkie there and then he had sawmills, he was sawing them into lumber, too, see.

I: Where were his sawmills.

R: There was a sawmill there where Sarja's... that was a big sawmill there... and I don't know, he might have had a sawmill here in Pelkie... and Keweenaw Bay... but...

I: Boy, he was a pretty big operator at the time.

R: Yeah, he had over a hundred men working for him quite a few times.

I: And to have a hundred men working for you and then to all of a sudden have the contract dropped on you, that's not too good.

R: And he used to do all the bookkeeping himself, you know, he'd go from one camp to another, keep track of all the guys' wages and... he couldn't even multiply, you know, he used, the way he multiplied is something like this new math they have... or like you'd multiply on a adding machine, you know, he took these,
added many rows of figures, you know.

I: And he kept the books, he must have done quite well, geez...that's quite an achievement at that time, hundred men working for him...O.K., so the contracts were out, he had to close up his camps momentarily, I imagine, and then as the best as we can get around the early '20s he started to farm, built the barn, the barn is now standing here?

R: Yeah, that was built in the early '21 or '22.

I: And he started building his herd up...gradually then.

R: Yeah, then in 1934 or '35 Matt Ruona had a farm over here, too, he built a barn there about the same time as...and they bought the first registered bull...or did they buy one or two of them and then they traded them off...but there's a plaque in the Pelkie School, it tells you the exact date and who bought those.

I: I see, Ruona, Matt Ruona and Matt Turunen went in together and got this...

R: And I think Matt Oja was in on it, too, you know, they bought these bulls although Matt Oja didn't have a farm but he was already partners with my dad that time...and then they had some partnership with Matt Ruona, too.

I: Oh, so the three Matt's were at varying times partners with one another?

R: Yeah.

I: And with this prize bull, did they lend this bull out then to the other farmers and the herds around here were gradually built up?

R:

I: I've heard that from other farmers...in fact, that was quite an early time to start building herds up in this area at least the herds were built faster and earlier than in some other areas...so when did he go into partnership in logging with Matt Oja?

R: That was after he lost, he lost almost everything there then in...must have been in the '20s...and then he, in order to get started again, well, Matt Oja had, you know, he was more of a bookkeeper and business man and my dad knew the woods part so they got together that way.

I: Matt had capital at the time, your father had lost it

R: Yeah.

I: And Matt supplied the capital and the bookkeeping ingenuity and your dad organized the men and started the show rolling. Were they using horses at this time?

R:

I: As I recall, Matt Oja started...now how long did this partnership last then?
R: Oh, until in the '40s.

I: Were these the Ford contracts?

R: Yeah, then they were logging for Ford...I remember my dad used to, when they were logging for Ford he'd go out and scale some timber, he'd walk over, maybe four forties in a day and then he'd come back and he'd draw a map of that whole forty, he'd tell me to draw the map, see, he showed me where all the creeks went 'cause when he was in the woods, well, he always knew where the forty lines were 'cause he'd start from the corner and it just came naturally to him, see, just like somebody in the city, you know, they can find their way around there, well...he used those forty lines.

I: Could find his way, yeah.

R: So then just from his memory, well, he could, he knew where all the creeks were and then when he showed those maps to the Ford scalers, they had regular maps and those maps that my dad had were more accurate so they used them.

I: That's very interesting...were people from the local area here working for your dad and Matt Oja? In their camps, I mean, were the camps close enough around here?

R: Oh, yes...yeah, they'd stay there a week at a time...then in the late '30s and '40s, well, there wasn't too many staying at the camps anymore, they'd travel...because I remember my dad used to travel, they'd leave home here about 4:30 in the morning and my uncle had a Model A car...pick him up, they took milk from here every morning for the guys that were staying in the camp always.

I: Started his day at 4:30 in the morning.

R: Yeah.

I: And this camp now was...

R: This was up in Silver Mountain someplace where they were.

I: And he got home at night...who ran the farm?

R: We had hired men here then.

I: Took care of the farm, all the children were a little too small at that time.

R: Yeah...well, my oldest brother there was in college, he went into college in, right around the time I started school, 1933 or...'34.

I: What did your father do throughout the '40s then?

R: He was logging with Matt Oja, I think until around...till about '48, I think, then he didn't too much anymore in the woods...but then he was farming, although he didn't...in the spring of the year when they couldn't do much work in the
woods, well, a lot of the guys that worked in the woods would come and work on the farm. Yet, there were quite a few men unemployed and there was no unemployment then so they had to, so they just came to work for their room and board mostly.

I: I imagine that helped clear the land.

R: Clear land, yeah, when they used to clear land, every year they'd clear a certain amount of land...we used to have pictures of that when they used jammers and they'd pile all the stumps and then they'd burn them, put them in great, big, high piles, 30 feet high.

I: These are the pine stumps?

R: Hardwood stumps and pine stumps, too, yeah.

I: These men were experts at that sort of thing, I mean, if you want anyone to clear your land it's good to have those men doing it.

R: They had a stump-puller that you anchor it and it had a cable on it and then the horses would walk around in a circle and that cable would wind up on that spool in the middle and it would pull the stumps out.

I: Without dynamiting they could pull a stump out?

R: Yeah...it was like a big winch, you know, and the horses wound it up by walking in a circle.

I: I see...can you remember any of the lumberjacks that used to work for your father, that used to come here on the farm?

R: Yeah, I remember there was one guy, he had a crooked leg, he used to be a good teamster and he used to stay here and then he'd work on the farm once in a while...but his knee was bent like this, you know, but he could sure get around good...I can't remember what his name is but most of the older people know, remember him.

I: Were these men very good friends of your father, I mean, were they like close to the family?

R: Yeah, we had one man here who worked ten years on the farm here, he's Urho Oja, he just died couple years ago...he came here from Canada and...he worked here, he did just about everything on the farm that time, he was a real good carpenter, did all the repairing...and milking cows.

I: It sounds like your father really never got into farming all that much himself because he was...

R: No, he didn't have, but any time he was home he worked on the farm, you know, like during the spring breakup time or something like that, that's when he was home mostly...but the rest of the time he was gone mostly.

I: And he had hired help managing it until the children were old enough to get
involved with it.

R: That's when I started farming pretty young...ever since I was ten years old
I used to, in fact, I was, when I was all or 12 I used to do all the income
taxes and stuff.

I: For the farm?

R: Yeah, it was real simple them days compared to now...we had to be filed...
and...

I: Did any of your other brothers help on the farm at that time?

R: Well, I was the oldest except for the oldest one who went to college, see...
he worked on the farm then in the summer when he'd...we bought our first
tractor in 19...well, I was five years old, that would be 1934, that was a
Farmall F-20.

I: That's good, we finally have a date on a tractor.

R: Then we got rid of our last horses on the farm in 1940, we bought another
tractor then.

I: How long did your father live, when did he die?

R: He died in 195...December of '51...I was in the service that time in Germany

I: How old was he at the time?

R: Seventy-two.

I: You started working on the farm then when you were ten years old.

R: Yeah, driving tractor and stuff.

I: Where did you go to school?

R: In Pelkie, I went nine years in Pelkie...there was no Kindergarten at all, I
just started in the first grade when I was five years old.

I: They had nine years there. Do you recall any of your teachers? In the Pelkie
School?

R: Oh, yes.

I: Do you recall your first teacher?

R: Yes, Miss Ross, she's Mrs. Payne now in Baraga...then there was Miss Hackett,
she's still in Baraga...and then there was a Miss Holquist...she married the
superintendent there then...she was up here this summer, I saw her...and Marvin
Logerquist...and Mr. Kujansuu was teaching in Pelkie, when he started in this
system he started in Pelkie...he was my teacher there.
I: You went nine grades in Pelkie.

R: Yeah, they had ten grades there, see, and then there was only two in our grade when I was in the ninth grade so when we passed into tenth grade then we went to Baraga.

I: The ninth grade class consisted of two persons?

R: Yes.

I: Who was that, you and.

R: And Karl Kahkonen...the guy that used to have the blacksmith shop, that was his boy, they lived across the road from here, that was their youngest boy.

I: And then you went to Baraga and you completed your high school. What did you do as soon as you graduated from high school?

R: I worked on the farm here for...until I went in the service.

I: When did you go?

R: I was in the service only less than a year and then my dad died and I came back and I've been here since then...that's the only time I've been away is when I was in service...and then even I didn't miss any haymaking, I got my furlough during haymaking and I made hay every day.

I: You didn't get to miss one haymaking season even...so you've been here most of your life then...O. K., now let's go back and talk about your father. I'll talk to her also when I go over there, but what was life like for her when she first married your pa? We've talked a bit about the kinda of work your father had to do, what did she do?

R: Well, she was doing a lot of cooking for the men there in Pelkie, there must have been a lot of guys 'cause I remember she saying that when the men would set snares in the woods and they'd bring rabbits home and she had to cook rabbits and...so she's always had a big crew to cook for...I remember when those, I was just a little, maybe two or three years old, but I remember those truck drivers when they used to come...we had a big table in our kitchen and they had a bell, a wire going, it would ring a cow bell in there when it was time to eat...and they'd come running in the house and if they, sometimes they'd really run fast and they'd jump over the table and my mother would chase them all out and make them walk in.

I: And these were truck drivers that hauled logs?

R: Yeah, see, they were the first trucks, there was nobody around here that could drive trucks so they all came from Wisconsin...to drive the first logging trucks that came here.

I: I see, and these logging trucks were Matt Oja's?

R: Yeah.
I: And your father.

R: ....with Ford.

I: I see, so the contracts were in Matt Oja's name, and your father and Matt Oja had a private partnership...ah, no wonder...your mother was a cook then for lumber camps and for truck drivers...did she work in the farm at all?

R: Oh, yes.

I: In the barn?

R: Yeah, she used to milk cows and washed all the milkers...so she had quite a bit of work.

I: While at the same time caring for a family of 11 children...O.K., here's a question a lot of people find difficult, I'll ask it anyway...what kind of rules and regulations were you brought up to follow, you know, like parents always have some rules and regulations that their children have to follow, and one question I'd like to ask is, you know, what were they then? And people mainly just say, "Oh, they were there"...but can you recall any specific rules that you had to follow as children...that your parents enforced?

R: Well, it was a lot more strict than it is now...well, I know we were never allowed to go...to the neighbors or anything unless we asked permission or else if our parents went, we were never allowed to leave home, you know...like kids go now, you know, they'll just take off, you don't know where they are...

I: So before you could go you had to say, "May I go?"

R: Yeah, and we didn't, very seldom we got any permission to go.

I: Was it generally that way for the neighbor boys and girls, too? To your mind?

R: No, there was some kids that would come here...but we couldn't go to their place...even, I remember when I was old enough to, I had a bicycle...and I had to ask permission before I can go anywhere on the road...and I'd never go if I didn't get permission.

I: You knew better...did they enforce their rules in those days, your parents?

R: Yeah, I don't know how they did it...but we obeyed them, you know...my dad never got mad at us or hollered at us but when he said something, well, we respected it.

I: What about play? When was it the time to play and when was it time to work? How was that set up according to rules?

R: Well, I don't know, it seemed like...well, we did our playing in school when we had a chance to do it there, but it didn't seem like we had much chance to play at home, you know, or the little kids, you know, in the evenings the relatives would come visiting or something, we didn't have a car until 1940...or
1941, yeah, when we got our first car...so we didn't...

I: And what was that?

R: That was a 1940 Ford, we bought it used...and I got my first driver's license when I was 14 years old...we didn't have anybody that could drive, we had to get somebody to drive at first, too, there was no drivers...

I: Your father didn't drive?

R: No, he never drove a car...and so we had to depend on my uncles, they all had cars...to go anywhere...my Uncle Bill, he had a Model A and whenever we had business in town or something, he'd come...drove with him.

I: He lived in Houghton?

R: No, he lived on the farm in Froberg there.

I: This was Bill...

R: Bill Lappala...where Paul Santti lives, on the end of that road there, he had that farm.

I: So your time to play was when you went to school.

R: Yeah...or in the evenings there was always lot of kids, then, when they'd come visit here, well, then we could play...and of course when we got old enough to work on the farm there was no time to play during the day anyway...but, you know, it was just as much fun working then because we could show that we could do things instead of...when you're a kid, well, you enjoy that more than playing anyway.

I: You mean showing that you can do the work of an adult?

R: Yeah.

I: And getting recognition as an adult...I remember that, yeah...what about coordinating the school work with work on the farm, I know that was a problem with many people...a lot of people insisted that their children quit school because there was work on the farm.

R: Well, when I had to go to Baraga, well, they told me that I should quit school then because it was real hard to get help during the war, that was in the '40s, and they said if I get good marks in school I can stay and I got straight As in school, I wanted to go to school...except the last year then I spent so much time working on the farm that I didn't get straight As anymore but anyway I...

I: So that almost happened to you.

R: Yeah, I almost had to quit school.

I: I know, that happened to most people around here.
R: I had three different scholarships to go to college even but I had to stay home to farm.

I: Any regrets on that?

R: No, for a while there I thought I was going to go later but then, I don't know, I think I'm better off probably be living in some smoky city now...

I: That's right, sure... your father didn't value advanced education beyond the value of working on the farm? He thought it was more important that...

R: Yeah, well, he didn't want to give up the farm, you know, he thought that I should, I was the only one of the boys that did any work on the farm, you know, really...

SIDE TWO

R: ...East Lansing.

I: Where is Reino now living?

R: He's a soil conservationist in Rogers City.

I: So you ran the farm then, I see...when you got up in the morning what was the first thing you had to do when you were 15 years old, between ten and 15 years old, soon as you got up what happened? I'm just trying to reconstruct what life was like.

R: Yeah, well, to go straight to the barn.

I: Before breakfast?

R: Yeah...yeah, we still don't have any, there was a time when I used to drink coffee in the morning but that used to take too much time so we'd go straight in the barn, get everything done...and have breakfast afterward...and that's the way we do it now, too.

I: And then you'd go to school.

R: Yeah.

I: And when you'd come back from school?

R: Well, when we were going to the Pelkie School we had to chase the cows home when we came home from school.

I: The cows were over that way?

R: Yeah, by the school in the pasture, we used to chase them along the road.

I: That was convenient.

R: And lot of times we'd chase them to school on the way to school, too.
I: That was a good system.

R: Everybody had fences along the side of the road, then when people started tearing their fences down it was a little harder to keep the cows on the road so then we started chasing them, chasing them across the river and after they learned that, well, then they go there by themselves.

I: What sort of religious training did your parents see to it that you got? Was your father an Evangelical Lutheran?

R: Yeah...and my mother belonged to the church here...but I used to go to church with my dad, we used to walk to church, in the summertime we'd take a short-cut through the field.

I: Can you recall when that church was built, that Evangelical church?

R: I don't remember.

I: It was before your time.

R: Yeah, I think it was built in '32...so I was only about three years old.

I: Would your mother go to the Apostolic church?

R: Yeah.

I: That's very interesting, there's a couple other cases where within the family they had the different church affiliations...would any of the other children go to the Apostolic church with your mother?

R: Yeah, some of the girls would go there...but most of us went to this other church...but I don't know, if you talk to Tepsa's...

I: That's the one I'm thinking of.

R: ...when they split the church, one got left in one and the other one went to the other church.

I: Within the Apostolic church.

R: Yeah.

I: Was this ever reconciled in your own family...between the different...

R: Well, yeah, my mother used to go to this other church once in a while, too... and my dad, he'd go to any church but he belonged to this church...but every Sunday we had to go there.

I: Can you recall at the time, you might be in one of the best positions to talk about this aspect of the history because of your own family situation, can you recall anything about the relations between the different church members at the time? From my own knowledge of Apostolic Lutheranism they tend to seal
...themselves off

R: Yeah, they didn't want anybody else to come into their church if they belonged to another church they didn't like it...but our Sunday Schools were together, you know, we used to go to, in fact, we had Sunday School at the school, Pekkie School, before and they were from these other churches.

I: Oh, you had one big Sunday School?

R: Yeah.

I: So there was a lot of cooperation between the churches at that?

R: Yeah, for Sunday School...I remember when we were little kids and there was this old man Pulkki, he'd smoke and his hands were all yellow, and then we were small and he'd be pointing that book right under our nose and boy, that smelled strong and made me sick...and then we tried to see who could sing the loudest when it was time to sing, there was a bunch of us boys.

I: This was in the Sunday School.

R: Yeah, I wonder what it sounded like...and Mr. Paananen used to pick us up every morning and he'd start blowing the horn way past Tepsa's already and we had to be waiting for him over there or else he'd go by.

I: That was which Paananen?

R: The old man Paananen, what's his name...

I: As long as I know it wasn't Fred or...

R: It wasn't Fred, it was their dad, yeah.

I: Was this thing ever a source of conflict within your own family, the different churches? I don't mean fighting but a source of subtle argument or...

R: Well, it couldn't have been very much 'cause we didn't notice it.

I: And you never felt as though there were a problem as to which church you should attend? "Shall I go to Mommy's church or Daddy's church?"

R: No...well, no, I always went to this church...once in a while when there was something special going on we'd go to the other.

I: Do you recall anything about the split between those churches, even if it's hearsay? I know in the early '30s...in '32 as I recall...

R: '32, that's the church that was built in '32, yeah, this new church right here, I don't know what was that other church built at that time?

I: This one, I think, was 1917. I keep forgetting those dates, I've looked at them.

R: Yeah...that's right, yeah, yeah, that was quite a bit...I remember when this was,
they called it a new church always, yeah.

I: Do you remember the split...from anything your mother used to say or the schism within the Apostolic church?

R: I don't remember too much about it, I was pretty young.

I: I imagine you were.

R: .....one side of the church and the men on the other side.

I: Now that's interesting...all of the women and the girls...

R: Yeah, would sit on the left side and the men on the right side.

I: Now why in the world would that happen?

R: I don't know.

I: Can you recall how long it went on that way?

R: Oh, until about, until I was confirmed there, it used to be pretty close to that time...I remember when sometimes some woman would sit on the other side or a man, well, everybody'd be looking...they thought that was terrible if they'd sit on the wrong side...it gradually, then they gradually mixed up, I know it didn't happen all of a sudden I don't think.

I: I know it'd be a great source of embarrassment for anyone who tried to change that...can you recall and describe to me your confirmation school, was there an intensive period...

R: We went for two weeks just...right after school was out in the spring then we went to confirmation for two weeks.

I: Was that generally the custom, that it would start right after school was out?

R: Yeah...and these other churches had it only one week.

I: Can you recall who your confirmation teacher was at the time?

R: Yes, Reverend Koski.

I: Can you tell me a little bit about him?

R: Or Korhonen was, yeah, Korhonen was our teacher.

I: Can you describe to me about him? What kind of a man was he?

R: Yeah, he was real quiet and he had four daughters, I think, was it four or five daughters, he didn't have any boys at all, all daughters...there was one in my grade in school, she was real tall, the three oldest ones were, yeah, there was four of them, the three oldest ones were real tall and then the youngest one was
short...they were all real good singers...but Reverend Korhonen, he was real quiet, you could hardly hear him, kids had to be quiet.

I: He would speak in English?

R: Yeah, let’s see, we had half of our...our confirmation was in English, he wasn’t very good for speaking English...

I: When he would give sermons they were in Finnish, right?

R: Yeah.

I: Were they translated?

R: No, and when I went to church they were all always Finnish services until... see, we didn’t start having English services until...I think when Pastor Groop came. (DH: Pastors Juntila and Pikkusaari had English services.)

I: That’s what I’ve heard...O.K., there was Korhonen and after Korhonen there was...

R: Koski, I think. (DH: Pastor Vilho Hanninen followed Korhonen.)

I: Can you tell me about him?

R: Yeah, he was a pretty old man when he went into the ministry...I think he must have been, he was quite a bit, close to 50 already and...

I: Physically what was his appearance?

R: Well, he was kind of an old man, he always walked real straight, you know, but he was quite a bit older, let’s see, he must have been around 60 when he was here...he was real strict, you know, you couldn’t talk to him the way you can talk to pastors nowadays, you know...it seemed that way anyway I suppose because, well...they were Finnish, too, it was harder to talk to him...that’s why it was such a big change when we got somebody that couldn’t speak Finnish at all...like Pastor Groop.

I: I imagine, did you have any encounters with Pastor Koski in the way you would speak to him? Do you recall how he perhaps would admonish you or look at you in that fear-provoking gaze that only an old Finnish minister could give?

R: Well, I don’t know, no, he’s the one that married us, he was still here in ’51 when he married us...and he was, they baptized one of our, I don’t know, was it one of our boys or girls here that one night and they had a boy that was epileptic and when they went home from here that night, well, he had drowned in the bathtub. (DH: He means Pastor Pikkusaari’s boy.)

I: Oh, geez, that’s ironic.

R: He was about 16 years old.

I: When did Koski leave? In ’51, did you say?
After that, yeah, oh, it was quite a bit after '51...then Pikkusaari was here. (DH: Junttila came after Koski.)

What was he like?

He was a kind of a...more like a...he should have been an accountant, everything that, he kept about three copies of every letter he wrote...he had a real good filing system.

And his family?

Oh, yeah, Koski left around, boy, I get all mixed up, Koski left around '51 or something, it was Pikkusaari's that had that epileptic boy that died.

That's good, if you would have seen that in the history you would have known. What were Pikkusaari's sermons like? Is there any way you can describe a man's preaching style? Were they all in Finnish?

They were all in, let's see now, Pikkusaari was here we didn't go to church too often, we had five little kids at home and it was real hard to get to church...but we used to go...but after our kids got older, you know, well, then we started going...every Sunday, you know...sometimes we didn't get there maybe once every two months even, when you have five little kids it's pretty hard to...

I imagine so.

But he was real...there was some of those Finnish ministers that could speak English because we had a...let's see, there was a...Juntunen, Reverend Juntunen, he could speak English... (DH: Junttila)

Where did he fit into the sequence?

Probably somewhere between Koski and Pikkusaari, somewhere in there.

What was Juntunen like?

He was a young guy...he was pretty good...but he wasn't here very long...he went to Chassell then or I don't know, did he go from here to California but he had been all over the place and then he was minister in Chassell...I thought he was real good, a good speaker.

A lot younger.

He could speak real good Finnish and English both.

It seems to me that it must have been very difficult for non-Finnish speakers to understand a Finnish sermon.

Yeah.

You don't speak Finn, right?
R: Yeah, I could speak Finnish.

I: Oh, then you could?

R: Yeah.

I: And you could understand the sermons.

R: Oh, yes... well, not as good as I could understand English but... 'cause when I went in the Army I took an exam for the Finnish language... anybody that could speak a European language had to go take an exam. I told them I can speak Finnish so they had a, the guy that was giving these tests, he could speak about 15 different languages and he spoke Finnish real good, he gave me a written test and an oral test and he put down the equivalent of high school graduate although I wasn't that good but I got to go to Europe instead of Korea that time.

I: Darn right.

R: There was five out of a thousand that went to Europe because they passed that test.

I: That was good, who knows, it may have even saved your life... what language did you speak around the home?

R: When we were kids it was always Finnish... except us kids when we talked to each other, but we always spoke Finnish to our parents... or when our parents were around.

I: It was time to shift into the Finnish gear, eh?

R: Yeah.

I: And now you've lost quite a bit of your Finnish?

R: Yeah, when you don't use it, you know, it's... but I mean I could talk to the Finnish people around here, I can talk to them, you know, because it isn't pure Finnish what they speak anyway.

I: And you could understand...

R: Now if I talk to my mother even we always speak in Finnish... but she can understand English... like some of my sisters, they'll talk English to her and she'll talk Finnish back....... there by Alfred Pelto's, he was saying, you know, how they had plowed the snowbanks so far and he drove too far in the ditch and he went in the ditch and Alfred was giving him excuses, you know, trying to agree with him, you know, that it wasn't his fault... if it would have been somebody else they would have probably thought he had been drinking.

I: After Pikkusaari, I guess it was Groop. What kind a person was he? He was before my time.
R: Well, he seemed real young when he came... 'course he was young, it was his first, he was out of college, you know, he came straight here... and it seems so funny, you can talk to him just like any other person, and he'd come to the house, well, he visited here often, he'd stop in any time... and the other ministers, these Finnish ministers, they'd call when they're coming and you had to get everything all ready for them.

I: It was much more formal.

R: Yeah, it was real formal.

I: And he seemed a bit more personable?

R: Yeah.

I: More relaxed and you didn't feel as though there were an authority figure there.

R: Yeah.

I: It probably has a lot to do with age.

R: Yeah, probably.

I: And also into the Finnish language is built a great respect for authority.

R: Yeah, I think so because we always respected the older people... and the older people all spoke Finnish.

I: Have you noticed a difference in the generations on this particular thing? On this respect towards older people? Do the children here...

R: Yeah, yeah, I don't think they respect their elders like we did before, you know, the younger people... he couldn't speak English at all, and there was quite a few 'cause I remember when I was in the second grade there was one kid that came to school and he couldn't speak a word of English.

I: The teacher didn't have much sympathy with them, did she?

R: No, they were supposed to teach them to speak English so they, most of the teachers couldn't speak Finnish and it's a good thing, otherwise they would have never learned English.

I: Right now I sense a current desire, I don't know how strong it is, on the part of younger people to learn Finnish... every now and then you see appearing on these evening adult courses Beginning Finnish and people seem to be taking it... have your children...

R: Yeah, they'd like to learn, one of our daughters took a course there in Alston for a while but... it was pretty hard there because there was quite a few that could speak Finnish already, you know, and they were going too fast for... they should start off with, that nobody could speak Finnish and then it'd be easier for them to learn.
I: It's also very difficult to learn a language one night a week.

R: Oh, yeah, you have to, if you'd, say, taken Latin in high school or something like that then it's easier to learn a language because then you, you know the formation of a language.....building past the Pelkie School there, that used to be...

I: The old Pelkie School, the one-room school, right by Mantila's.

R: Yeah...they had a Christmas program there once and he had to read a poem, that, "I Wish It Was December 25th" and he read it and then he went off the stage and then he stuck his head around the corner and he said, "I wish it was December 26th".

I: That didn't go over too good, did it?

R: I don't imagine but he was a...I guess he was real mean in school...he must have had a hard time when he couldn't speak English at all, you know, when he first started...you know, and if there's other kids in there who could speak English.

I: How did they treat the problem of discipline and order in the school there? What did the teachers do if a person was a bit too rowdy or talking a little too much.

R: Well, we'd get a, they'd hit us across the knuckles with a ruler or else we'd have to stand in the corner...I remember that Miss Ross, boy, she was, I remember she was real crabby 'cause the kids even had a poem about her that, "Miss Ross is cross and she thinks she's the boss".

I: Did she ever give you a rap across the knuckles?

R: Oh, yeah, but I was real quiet in school...you know, when I first started but still I didn't have to do too much over there and you'd get a...or else you'd have to stand in the corner...she had a dunce cap.

I: Were there any friends of yours that spent lot of time in the corner or getting their knuckles rapped?

R: Yeah.

I: Can you remember any...

R: Yeah, Rueben Niemisto was one, he was pretty loud in school.

I: I'll put that in the history, I won't tell him you said it, that's good.

R: I was four years old when I started, I wasn't five until February, I was the youngest one in the class...and I used to, when a teacher would tell us to write on the board, we didn't dare do anything until a teacher, we didn't dare go sit down until she told us to go sit down then...I remember once I fainted, standing there so long I fainted, and there was a little doll house
there and I scratched my head on there and when I came to I was sleeping, there was a cot there and I slept there and a bunch of kids around me and they were saying that I lost a pint of blood and everything...and I believed that and I came home and I said I scratched my head and lost a lot of blood... when I was in the third grade in school she wasn't very smart, she used to sit by me and she'd copy all my work so when we'd go do work on the board I'd see that she was copying I'd put all the wrong answers and then when she wasn't looking I'd put the right ones down.

I: Did she get mad at you for that?

R: Yeah, didn't take her long to catch on to that....there was one kid who was kind of slow in school, he was 16 years old and he was in the third grade... and boy, the teacher had a rough time with him...she got mad at him once and he started running out of the room and she grabbed him by the suspenders and tore his suspenders and she had to start sewing suspenders then.

I: Did the rest of the kids really give him the raspberries or was he older and tougher?

R: He was just older and he'd just goof around, you know, he couldn't learn and just to make the other kids laugh, well, he'd just fool around...he was a nice guy, kid, otherwise but his voice even when he was 16 years old, he had a real low voice already.

I: He probably should have been working already.

R: Yeah...then he had a farm, then he quit school and he farmed for many years... and he got along good...on the farm.

I: Just waiting for you to think of another one.

R: ...when she had a baby our neighbor's wife came here to stay for couple weeks then to do the cooking and stuff and she told us afterwards about the things we used to do and one time somebody in the kitchen dropped a dish on the floor and I came running in the kitchen, I hollered in Finnish, you know, that, "Was it a new one or an old one?"...that's the only time my mother had any help is when for a couple weeks always after she had a baby.

I: That must have been about 24 weeks or 22 weeks.

R: Yeah.

I: Almost half a year...here's a kind of a question, as a person who's lived in Pekie all your life, what are some of the big changes...like historical changes that have taken place here that you really notice...you know, it's kind of hard when you're right in it to see change, generally people who are out of a community for a while come back and notice change but can you notice any changes the community has taken?

R: Yeah, one of the biggest changes from when I was a kid, well, when I was a kid there was on every farm there was somebody living there and they all farmed...
now you have to go a long way before you even find a farm that anybody’s farming even though there’s somebody living on them but they’re doing some other work and they’re not farming anymore...because when they had this cheese factory in Pelkie, boy, there was a lot of people bringing milk there and if they had it there now they just wouldn’t have the volume of milk ‘cause in the summertime they had to run it two shifts there, they were getting so much milk.

I: Is that right.

R: They had milk trucks, they had the open boxes on the milk trucks and they’d stack the milk cans three high in there and some of the trucks would make two or three trips a day even.

I: Cheese factory trucks would go to the farmers and get their milk?

R: No, there were individual farmers that had trucks and they’d pick up from the other farmers, you know...there was this Lepisto’s from North Laird, they had two trucks...then they had on top of the cab, they had a tank where they’d haul whey back for the farmers...they had a big tank over there and you can just run a hose out of there...and they didn’t use to separate that cream out of the whey...so it was pretty good feed for the pigs and everybody had pigs...then they had some old milk cans by the side of the road...then they’d drop off their other cans, well, then they’d, first of all they were hauling the whey back in their milk cans but then they put a stop to that, they couldn’t do that...and so he put that tank on top and he filled some old cans there on the side of the road for them.

I: Do you remember how many people were working in that cheese factory on a shift?

R: No, I don’t remember but there was...

I: Sounds like a really busy operation.

R: Yeah, there was quite a few there.

I: Did you haul your milk to the.

R: Yeah, we had...well, Bernard Tepa used to haul our milk...they had a Model T truck before, he used to haul our milk and I remember he was a real good singer, you could hear him coming a long ways down the road, he’d be singing...see, there was no cab on the truck at all...you could always hear him singing whenever he was outside...and then Parkila’s hauled our milk, he bought a Studebaker pickup...either him or one of the boys would come and pick up...and then in the wintertime they’d haul it with the horses...then when we got our car we got a trailer for that, we hauled milk with that for a while...but mostly it was some of the neighbors that would...

I: You’re talking about the cheese factory now, can you remember when the cheese factory opened? I’ve got many dates on that.

R: I wouldn’t...well, I’d have to just guess at it...but I’m sure that there’s somebody that has the exact date.
I: I heard it shut down for several reasons, one was that there was just competition, other cheese factories.

R:

I: Copper Country?

R: The Copper Country got a new, modern cheese factory there and then they just didn't do anything here to improve this anymore so the inspectors closed it down.

I: It didn't meet health standards, right? Also, weren't there some, toward the very end, some kind of labor problems?

R: Yeah...they tried to get a union in there.

I: Little cheese factory like that to get a union, eh?

R:

I: Half a dozen guys.
Subject Matter: Talking About Pelkie Photographs

Respondent: Reuben Turunen

Comments:

R: I mean, the reason I thought about him, I was about four years old when he died...because I remember when my dad went over there and they came back and they said that he went in the barn and he fell down and he hit his head, but my mother told me later then that he had trouble with mastoids in his ear and he went in the barn and he hung himself, he couldn't stand the pain, see.

I: Did you ever walk in that shop and look around?

R: No, I don't remember this shop, I remember that shop that Emil Pelto had, though.

I: Did you walk inside that ever?

R: Oh, yeah.

I: What did that shop look like?

R: He had a big forge there and...and later on he got a welder there, too, but that was the last few years he was here...and he had...it's probably pretty much the way it is now, have you been in there? It hasn't been changed much, but he used to do a lot of work for us, I remember whenever we had any repairing to do, in fact, one tractor that broke down once I brought it there and he helped me, we tore it all apart and put a new shaft in there 'cause Maki's didn't have time to do it at the time...and that was in 19...I was 12 years old that time, I tore that tractor all apart...we broke the power take-off shaft on it.

I: Emil's a pretty skilled man, isn't he?

R: Yeah, he had a lot of common sense, boy, he was able to fix things, you know...there was just like that Charlie Tahtinen, he was good for fixing...you've heard about him, eh, Charlie Tahtinen? Rudy Tahtinen's dad?

I: Was he in the blacksmith...

R: He was an all-around blacksmith and welder and stuff, he was a little younger guy, though, you know, came later but still he was good...everybody was saying that if it wasn't for him that people wouldn't get anything fixed around here...well, there was only a few people that could do any welding or anything like that.

I: How was Emil Pelto regarded by the older people?

R: Oh, they all knew he was a Communist but still they'd go there when they needed fixing, you know, blacksmith work...my dad would go there and he, I remember
when I was a kid we'd go there and have it fixed and he'd always try to talk
about the Communists to my dad...my dad wasn't the kind who would argue, you
know, he'd most of the time sort of agree with him, or I don't know if he'd
agree but he just...

I: Avoid...

R: Avoid argument.

I: ...conflict, yeah...were there any other outstanding local Communists or
Socialists at the time?

R: The guy that worked here for ten years, he was a Communist then, too, but he
wasn't very strong but he used to get that Communist paper.

I: Tyomies?

R: Yeah...and then Mr. Wayrynen, do you remember him?

I: I know who they called the mayor of Pelkie.

R: Yeah, that was his dad, yeah, he was a Communist, too...I don't know if lot
of them probably didn't know what a Communist really was, you know, 'cause
some of them didn't have a very good education but they were Communists but
I remember him as being one and...oh, there was quite a few...but I remember
talking about anybody that used to get that paper, you know, they were
Communists...and that was something terrible to get that paper.

I: And everyone knew who got the paper.

R: Yeah.

I: In a small community like this one could not get the paper and not...

R: ...also over there he said these guys would come and bother him for money,
you know, 'cause there was three saloons in town...and there was this one
guy that had a saloon that couldn't read or write.

I: Who was that?

R: I don't know who he was but he, it was someplace in the back out here not
too far from where my dad lived so he wanted to put a stop to that so he
just made a note that, "Do not give this man $20" or whatever it was, it
was couple dollars, I guess they didn't need much...he'd make a note like
that, you know, and then when he'd try and collect, well, my dad told him
what that is, you know...but of course he always paid it but he said that
if, you know, that he really wouldn't have to pay it...so he finally got
them to stop doing that, see...or that the guys, he wouldn't take those pa-
pers anymore from the guys...'cause they were, see, the way they used to,
they'd work for a whole year at the logging camp or something and they'd just
keep track of how much they earned and how much they'd take from the store,
they had a store there, you know, they'd take tobacco and whatever they needed
and then once a year then they'd make a settlement, see, and sometimes they
had money coming and sometimes they didn't...'cause this Charlie Tahtinen
worked for the store here in Pelkie for, I think, about eight years before
they made a settlement...he was just taking groceries and working and stuff
like that and then after eight years, well, they made a settlement.

I: Is this the Co-op?

R: No, it was Maki's Store there.

I: Long time in between paychecks if you ask me.

R: But he had a big family and he was getting his groceries and his clothing
and everything he needed so...

I: Do you remember what the streets were like then before they were paved? I
imagine it'd be pretty rough in the spring, wouldn't it?

R: Yeah, this road right here used to get bad, cars used to get stuck and we
used to go and pull them out...I remember when I was a kid about 10, 11
years old and I could drive the tractor and I'd go pull them out and they'd
ask me, "How much?"...I never knew how much to charge, sometimes I'd get $5...
and sometimes I didn't get anything...I asked my dad, he said he didn't care
what I charged...I remember one time I had to get real early in the morning,
when it was around 20 below 0 and I had to pour hot water into the tractor many
times to warm it up and then I had to crank it going and I went out there
and boy, I was frozen, I pulled that guy out of the ditch and he asked me,
"How much?"...I said, "$10 at least"...he said, "Will you take a check?"...I
said, "No"...he dug around, he had a ten dollar bill.

I: Bugger, he would have given you a bad check for sure.

R: Boy, my dad was surprised when I told him I got $10.

I: Do you remember seeing the front of Oja's Store like that, ever see a gas
pump like that?

R: No, I don't remember seeing a gas pump like that...you don't know who this is?

I: No, that's very old, I know...I've never seen a gas pump like that.

R: My dad used to get all his groceries from there...they'd pick up, they had a
mule team here and they'd pick up the groceries once a week from there for the
lumber camps.

I: Well, Oja and Ruona were partners in the store.

R: Yeah.

I: That was Ruona's Store, right?

R: Yeah, I think so, yeah.
I: Emil Pelto said something that I've heard before, there was Matt Ruona and Matt Oja were secret partners...or else...he said that they were secret partners and they had some agreement to keep prices high, to not compete, now I could see from his Communist orientation how he might...

R: Oh, yeah, yeah, he probably thought...maybe that's what he thought.

I: To your memory was there anything like that?

R: No, I don't remember much about Ruona, Matt Ruona, at all, see...just what I've heard, he died pretty young...but I don't think...

I: I took that with a grain of salt...do you remember going in that store?

R: This is Oja's Store, eh?

I: Yeah...were you ever in there?

R: Not that I remember of.

I: Here it is again.

R: I came home from school, we couldn't cross the railroad until the train was gone...and this Reuben Kuivinen...neighbors but he was couple years older than I and he was brave, he'd run under the cars and he'd go home and we had to wait sometimes a long time there.

I: While they were moving?

R: No, the car, when they stopped there, see...the depot was right there so the train would stop right across the road...and he was real brave so he'd run under the car and go home, he'd be home long before...they wouldn't even let us walk all the way around, we had to wait.

I: I think that's wiser than going under the cars.

R: Oh, yeah.

I: That photograph there, No. 7, is 1918, you can see vaguely the date and the.

R: Oh, yeah, that's the Co-op Store and the creamery right there...that Mr. Plough owned the creamery.

I: He owned it?

R: Or he ran it, anyway.

I: He was the head cream-maker.

R: Yeah, that wasn't the Co-op there, no, see, this was the creamery here, the cheese factory was then later.

I: The creamery was always a private...
R: Yeah.
I: ...thing, at no time was it really associated with the Co-op.
R: No....that's why they put the Co-op there then...yeah.
I: I imagine you were in that, right?
R: Yeah.
I: What was it like inside of that?
R: Well, I remember when we used to go to the store, we'd have a list of stuff that we had to get from there...and the clerks would get all your stuff ready for you and then you'd pay...and they were used to, well, a lot of people would come in there and just say what they wanted, you know, but there was this big Tervo boy, he was Rudy Tervo, real big guy, when he saw me coming, see, 'cause I used to faint a lot and I fainted in that store one time waiting, nobody waited on me, I'd just wait and wait until somebody would come and ask me what I want, see...so when he saw me coming in the store he'd put his hand out and got that slip from right away always...who is this?
I: I think that's Emma Maki.
R: Oh.
I: Working in Oja's Store, Maki and Oja's Store.
R: Emma Haro?
I: Waino Maki's wife.
R: Oh, yeah, that's right, and there was an Emma Haro that used to work there, too.
I: Can you tell which one that is?
R: This is probably Emma Maki, yeah.
I: Does it look like...
R: Yeah, it looks like her.
I: That's what people have said...can you remember the layout of that store as it appears in the photograph, at all?
R: This is Maki's Store, eh?
I: I believe so...looks like they had a very big roll of paper there.
R: Yeah.
I: And it looks as though all of the materials, all the products, are behind on
a shelf...not like today's supermarket where...

R: No, yeah, see, they used to put up your order always when you went in there, you couldn't go on the shelf and take anything...I remember when we used to go to school and sometimes we needed something for lunch, well, we'd take a couple eggs from home and trade them for...they had some pie, you know, these small pies...or else something else, whatever we happened to need...

I: You'd grab a few eggs.

R: Yeah, 'cause, I don't know, two eggs were probably worth a nickel or something like that, we can trade it for a pie.

I: And you'd go to the chicken coop and get a few eggs and get a pie, very good.

R: And then they had candy...they used to sell candy in bulk, you know...and we found out that no matter how much, if we had a penny or two or three or four or a nickel we'd always get that little bag of candy full so we always only bought a penny's worth...oh, yeah, that's when...

I: That's Maki's Store...when he first started getting the tractors.

R: Yeah, that's when we bought a tractor, too...that was in 1940...'39 or '40...they bought our second tractor.

I: Here Pelkie's starting to change a bit...it looks like there are still a few fences up...and there are cattle in the background there.

R: We had the, when we built the basement on this house we had a wagon like this but it had those poles on the, did you ever see one of those wagons with the ends rounded off...then we'd haul the, load the sand in there and then when we unloaded it'd just flip all those boards...sand would fall through...it was a little different kind wagon than this but...

I: You didn't have to unload it, it just fell through, yeah...now Pelkie's changing, there's a couple cars on the street.

R: Gas station.

I: Who ran that gas station there? That's right by the Section house.

R: Yeah, I don't remember that, that's right by the railroad, too...there's the creamery there.

I: Did you ever used to hang out there in the evening with the boys, tell stories?

R: Yeah, no, not too much there but on Sunday morning when we'd bring the cows and didn't have to go school we'd come back and stop there for a while...Joe Maki was saying when they used to hang around there, well, there'd be kids coming from Elo with their cars and they'd be counting their pennies and buy as much gas as they had money to buy and then across the street that Rudy Oja lived there, you know, he'd drive up and he'd say, "Fill it up and charge it up to the old man."
I: Oh, yeah, the difference was there...he told me that story...and here's Pelkie, there's quite a jump in time...do you remember, did he have a pop machine there or...inside?

R: Yeah...one time my brother and I were going to school, there was a...one of the Seppanen boys was working there and we were walking along the road and we found a light bulb that had fallen off a car or somebody had dropped it...we went in there and I asked him that, "Is this bulb any good?"...he tested it and it was good, I said, "What is it worth?"...he said, "Oh, 15 cents"...so we took 15 cents worth of candy and I took 10 cents and I gave my brother 5 cents worth...boy, he told me about it afterwards, you know, that he remembers me coming in there with that light bulb to buy candy.

I: You used to trade for that candy.

R: Yeah...1950...oh, yeah, that road used to flood there all the time until they raised it...when we went to school we had to always stop there and wait for a ride across.

I: Because it was flooded? Always?

R: Yeah...and then once in a while this Reuben Kuivinen, he had a raft and he'd give us a ride but that took a half hour, he'd go way back out there...and we'd get off by his house...boy, that was a shaky thing, that raft.

I: Reuben was Eli's father? Reuben Kuivinen? Living right in the corner here?

R: That was one of the boys there, brother to the Eddie Kuivinen that's living there now...he was just a couple years older than I was...he told me one time, he told Karl Kahkonen and I one time that they're giving free color crayons at the Co-op...that there's a big box on the counter...so we went in there and took some color crayons and we were walking out and the manager grabbed us.

I: They weren't free, were they?

R: Boy, he was mean...that's a big pine stump.

I: Yeah, No. 16, that's Vinssiäntti.

R: Oh, yeah.

I: In your father's clearing...evidently he was trying to blow out that stump, they had just dynamited that stump.

R: Yeah, they used to use a lot of dynamite then...and then that stump-puller...I wonder if anybody's got a stump-puller...I remember this place.

I: Looks like a crew of lumberjacks clearing land.

R: Yeah, that was hard work in them days.

I: You bet...did you ever operate a plow like that?
R: No, I never, I didn't have to drive horses much...those horses that we had last were pretty wild so I didn't get to drive them...farm, they had a piece of land back of...you know where Pauline Maki lived...they had a strip of land over there and he'd go out there to work and it'd take him a half a day to get that tractor started and then when he'd get on the road he'd go in low gear and then he'd try and get it into second and boy, you could hear that thing grinding, it took him about an hour to get out of...usually by the time we were coming home from school, well, he was just getting out there...it took him all day to get that thing started...where is this?

I: That's at the Johnson brothers' farm, that was Emil Johnson's farm at the time, 1910...steam-driven thresher machine.

R: My dad had a couple steam engines...this Reuben Michaelson used to operate one...from Elo...when they had to haul it from one camp to another they used to use them for turning sawmills and stuff.

I: What did those hooks look like?

R: These are slings here, see...they were made out of ropes and they had wood cross-members on them and then there was a trip rope, see, he's got a trip rope there and there was hooks where they'd...there was eyes on that one and then a hook would go in there and then when he'd pull that trip rope, well, it'd pull the trip and they'd slip on, it'd open up from the bottom...those were oak strips of wood that they had on there, there was about four ropes on them...I remember that hey had to go like that and then just before it went in the barn he had to turn, see, that rope is twisted there...it got up by the door, well, it had room to turn...then it had to be spread by hand in the barn.

I: Lot of work...how many bales would you say? According to the modern bale?

R: Probably about 30 bales.

I: That took quite a chunk in, then.

R: Yeah, that was, because we hoisted bales up with those afterward...and we used to put about 30 bales at a time...before we got an elevator.....bridge, you know, the ties are pretty wide apart.

I: And when you saw the water going underneath you it felt kind of eerie?

R: Yeah.

I: Did you ever swim off that? Dive off that?

R: No.

I: I heard that some fellas.

R: Yeah, that was real deep water there...they never allowed me to go anywhere like that to swim, we had to swim in the West Branch...that water was ice cold but it was shallow, anyway.....yeah, we were, it was a Sunday morning, we were
eating breakfast there and I was looking that what in the world is that on the bridge, it looked like somebody's old joker, I could see those back wheels there...and we went out to look and I guess the truck that hauls cheese from the Co-op had just gone over that thing and it probably shook the bridge enough so that those timbers slipped off that abutment and when he went with that Model A, well, he went through...and he went right through the windshield and all he did was cut his thumb...and you know how small...

I: That was Fred Panneman, right?

R: Yeah...and you know how small windshields them Model A had, I don't know how he went through there and all he did was get a cut on his thumb...you know, when I was looking at that then I could see him out there...dragging a snow fence there, you know, he wanted to put it across the road so nobody would drive...yeah, that was towards spring of the year...I wonder who those kids are.

I: Yeah, that's No. 60...is that what that was?

R: Yeah, that was a county shovel...and that happened while we were in school 'cause I remember when we walked home we couldn't figure out what was wrong at the bridge there when...that was in the wintertime.

I: That was in 1941 according to Bernard.

R: Oh...yeah, it could be...

I: Does that coincide with...

R: Yeah, about the, 'cause that temporary bridge there was the one that went down with that car, you know, after this went down then they made a temporary bridge...Oscar Hill built that...he had a contract to build that...that's the one there.......our yard one of these plows, Arvo Walitalo was driving one and it was kind of cold weather, he had been drinking a little bit and it broke down and they came with another plow to pull it out and he was motioning for that other guy to back up farther 'cause the chain wouldn't reach...so he didn't hear him so he just hooked it onto the radiator cap and he told him to go and he pulled the radiator cap off....quite some stories he tells, a guy had real long hair one time and they were eating breakfast one Sunday morning and he told Buck to give him a haircut so they took him out on the chopping block and he chopped it off with the axe.

I: He really did?

R: Yeah.

I: Oh, geez...now that...

R: ...make it, they'd press the starter and that would give them just a little power to make it up...

I: They must have been very good on the starters.

R: Yeah.
I: The logs were just too heavy for the tires at the time?
R: Yeah.
I: They were just loaded so...
R: Or else too small tires...and those were pretty light trucks, too.
I: Do you know what, they're Ford trucks, what year they are? Can you tell?
R: Looks like about '35...'34 or '35......drove truck and sometimes if they were around and they had to go to the camp for something, well, I'd go for a ride.
I: What was it like to ride in those?
R: Boy, it was rough riding...you really had to hang on...
I: I imagine.
R: ...you know, when they were empty.
I: And the roads weren't as good as they are now.
R: