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

SOURCE: Frank Walli
1301 Stinson Avenue
Superior, Wisconsin

COMMENTS:

Interviewer:

I: Your name is Frank Walli and were you born in this country?
R: I was born in Finland.
I: You were born in Finland, I see. What village in Finland were you born in?
R: Virjone
I: Un huh, and when did you come to the United States then?
R: April of 1908
I: 1908, you were very young at the time then
R: Two and a half.
I: Two and a half years old. You don't remember coming over than I suppose.
R: No...chuckle
I: Do you know why your parents decided to come?
R: Well, my father came first in 1907. In 1906 or '07.
I: In hum, and where did he come
R: He came to Ironwood
I: He came to Ironwood, un huh. Then he found employment in the mines?
R: No. he was a tailor
I: He was a tailor?
R: Yeah, he was a tailor over in Finland.
I: I see, where did he learn the trade of tailoring?
R: Oh, I imagine over there in Turko or some place else.
I: He didn't learn it in a school...they usually learn as apprentices.
R: No, he was an apprentice. That's the way he started...he was an apprentice.
I: Did he start tailoring shop up in Ironwood then?
R: Well, he got a job right away when he came.
I: Un hum. And do you know why your parents came to the United States
R: Well, I imagine the economic conditions
I: Un huh, poverty in the old country and that sort of thing. Those were kind of bad years in Finland. Those weren't terribly good years in the United States either...1907 was kind of a slow time, wasn't it.
R: Well, he managed to get a job right away there
I: Yeah...and your occupation is...you consider yourself a newspaper editor primarily.
R: Well, I've had a lot of
I: You've had an awful lot of jobs I take it, un huh. And your wife's maiden name was what?
R: Stower
I: Stower...was she a Finn...I see, and where is she from then?
R: She's from Michigan
I: She's from Michigan also, un hum. From your earliest recollections or from things your father told you, was life pretty difficult up in Ironwood back in those days.
R: Well, it wasn't any too good...my relatives were there and with who I went to live after my Mother died. My mother died when I was only...well, I was going on six and my sister wasn't even two yet.
I: What did your uncles do then...did they
R: My uncles worked in the mine but like other miners they finally went over to farming when the slack times came in the mining industry there; and so they had some of these Karulainens there who took farms also.

I: Up in...?

R: Towards Hurley there.

I: Oh yes, un huh.

R: They took farms.

I: Un hum, there were a lot of Finns who did pretty much that.

R: Oh yes.

I: Mining was sort of hit and miss

R: Well, practically all of North Hurley, you know...almost I'd say 99 and 9/10ths percent were Finns.

I: Yeah, un huh.

R: That kind of come there from the mines.

I: What schools did you attend?

R: Oh, I graduated from high school in Ironwood and then I went to business college

I: Un hum...business college in Ironwood?

R: No, Business University in Duluth.

I: In Duluth, I see, un hum

R: Then I had to discontinue that when the first signs of the Depression hit. My dad's income wasn't any too good, so he couldn't afford to pay my tuition and I lost my after-school job. So would have had to pay board and everything then, so I had to discontinue it.

I: What was education like in Ironwood? Did they have a pretty good school system there?

R: Oh yes, they were an accredited school. Naturally when the time I went to school, they didn't have all the various things they have now. After, later on; but now they have more education in the line of music and all the various facilities that they have put into the school system since I graduated. I graduated in '24.

I: Un hum, and it was pretty much basics then, at that time.
R: Just basics.
I: Ironwood had different nationality groups if I can recall that correctly.
R: Oh yes
I: All kinds of them...Slavanians...
R: Slavanians, Italians, Swedish, English...
I: Now thinking back.
R: Irish.
I: Irish, yeah.
R: And Finns and Polish.
I: Yeah, thinking back now to the school days, how did the nationality groups get along in the school.
R: Oh, we didn't have any difficulties there as far as I can recall.
I: Un huh, the kids got along together?
R: Yes, there wasn't any friction...well, maybe an incident here or there, but nothing that was general or anything like that I can recall.
I: Do you recall at all in Ironwood
R: Because it was such a mixture anyway
I: Yeah! Do you recall in Ironwood if the teachers put down the different nationality groups...did they look down on Finns or Italians?
R: No...?
T: So they treated people pretty well equally then.
R: I guess they did in that respect, at least there was hope.
I: Un huh...did Finn kids ever use the words Bohunkle busu'...those kind of things?
R: I know some of them, yes. We used to hear that...Dago and stuff like that.
I: Those were just kid terms or do you think that came from home?
Well, they probably got some from their parents or from their older brothers and sisters. But there wasn't too much of that.

Do you suppose that the nationality groups tended to get along pretty well together because most of the kids' parents and families were all pretty much in the same boat? Life was pretty tough and it was a struggle and well, you're kind of equal there in a sense.

Well, in a way though that the nationality groups tended to congregate into a certain area to live and all that, you know...

R: Yes, Finns would be pretty much in this...well, the Swedes were in the same area; but then again the Italians and that they'd be up and the Slovaks, up in that area...well, there'd be some Finns among them, but as a rule it seemed to be that they settled to be in the neighborhood, you know...the working class people. Then the better class, of course, were...I don't imagine any nationality lines drawn there where the better housings were and that. It all depended on if you were a businessman...if you were a businessman you were a businessman and you lived in a better section.

I: Un hum. Where did you learn to speak English?

R: In the schools.

I: In the school...you spoke Finnish at home entirely.

I: Oh yes, when they came to this country naturally that was the only language I knew until I got into school.

But our father being a tailor picked some English however.

Very little because the tailors were all Finns or wede-Finns. Finn-Swedes, whatever you call them.

I: There was a large Finn-Swede community in Ironwood-Bessemer.

R: Well, quite...yes in Bessemer too.

I: What did your parent think about formal education. Did they push it pretty hard?

R: My dad pushed education...he wanted me to get my education. I can't complain about that.

I: Do you know how much education he had in Finland The usual four years of koulu?

R: I doubt it. He just learned to read and that...his father died.
when he was just a youngster and of course he had to go out...

I: And fend for himself?
R: Fetch for himself, you know, able to help out.

Was he an avid reader?

Oh yes, that's what I can recall...that's about all I can recall he'd read...he read books and everything else and educated himself in his trade. He now only was able to sew, he took measurements, he made patterns, he cut the patterns, he cut everything out...

I: Oh, I see. He was a real tailor.
R: He was a complete tailor. I don't know how he ever learned it because all the textbooks and that he ever read was in English.

I: Is that right, un huh
R: The various notations on the patterns, you know, styles and that...they're at my stepmother's. She was asking me if I wanted them...I said "Well, I'm not interested in this." They're old...out of style. He'd follow those and the directions and that and how he ever did it, I can't figure out because he had no higher education.

I: Un huh...I suppose he was like quite a few of the Finns that came to America, they just worked hard and they learned things.
R: He left home in the dark and it was dark when he came home...long hours because it wasn't any day salary, it was piecework.

I: Un hum
R: You made a coat...you got paid so much for it and you made your trousers, was so much for that...so much for this and so much for that.

Un hum. Do you remember what newspapers, for example, he read? A variety of things or...?
R: He
I: He was...he liked the papers of the labor movement.
R: paper
I: as he a local activist in the laborist movement?
R: No, he wasn't an activist at all. He attended the affairs and that;
but as far as doing anything active in that, he wasn't that. He was a very quiet...

I: Not a joiner-type, huh.

R: Not a pushy type at all. Very quiet...had respect

I: Did you as a young man attend the doings at the local labor organization?

R: Oh yeah.

I: They had quite a large group in Ironwood

R: When...see the Hotel Swallow was dedicated in 1909 I believe...somewhere in my box that I got here is a souvenir album of that...for that dedication but I haven't been able to get out yet. I got so much stuff cluttered in one room there. My daughter's stuff and everything. I gotta get at it someday and find it because I think it's the only one in existence anymore and I want to give it some historical group. It's not a very thick one...it's something like that other souvenir album is.

I: Yes, yeah. You...

R: And I can recall being at a fair...the fairs there while my mother was still living and running...playing Pump-Pump-Halloway with all the other little kids in front of the hall during intermissions and that.

I: Un huh...when you...

R: And then after my mother's death I was on the farm for four years.

I: And you didn't get into town to...

R: And two years with my younger uncle and two years with the older one and then when my sister died in 1919, I returned to stay with my father and he was running another tailor's place and I moved in with him and continued my schooling in Iron and it was in that 1919 then when I had attended the affairs of the hall...the cultural activities. I joined the youth sports group and later on as I got older and got into high school, I joined all the cultural activities then...the band, the orchestra, mixed chorus and men's chorus and naturally the athletic club and the drama group.

I: You were in the drama group too.

R: All the...everything! Any activity at all, I was there.

I: Un huh...that was very much part of your education too then, right.
Well that more or less got me into mass activity and of course the lectures, I attended to all the speakers and discussion groups... educational groups go down there, I'd ask all kinds of questions on cooperative places and buyers education and discussion groups.

Who in your mind were the outstanding speakers who came to Ironwood, well let's say, that impressed you?

R: Well, I don't know if there was any one particular speaker impressed me.

I: Was that when Martin Hendrickson.

I: I don't recall him.

I: You don't recall him, un huh. Who do you recall that...who the big name let's say that came around...well...

R: We had our local speakers that would speak at affairs. So, they were just about all equal as far as the influence over giving any ideas; but then well when the speakers from that paper, when they came in occasionally well I thought they presented things pretty well. There were some of these editors would come in.

T: Some of these editors were well-trained, of course and many of them had university educations and so on. Many of them were very impressive people.

Now the women speakers I can recall...there was Eda Radeo from...she was from Upper Michigan and she later went in the 30's I think she moved to (?). And...what was her first name now...Trast from Minnesota. Those two to my mind were very very good women speakers. Mrs. Trast, she was a farmer's wife but she was very well read...very precise in the explanations she made of any problems of the day.

Somehow I have the impression that the Beemis Movement upheld the place of women. I mean I asked you about speakers you remember, you mentioned two women who were very bright. Does this suggest that...

R: Women were a big part in each cultural and educational movement in this country amongst the Finns. And of course the paper to them was the means of educating themselves, you know, following the world events and national events.

I: Why was it that the Touvari out in Nestoria published the Touvaritar and then here, of course, the Nitse Denveeri (?)...?

R: Yeah, well that the successor to...

I: Successor to Touvaritar. Why did the women have their own special
paper?

R: Well, they saw the necessity for having something that would educate the women on the labor problems and that and on the problems of the women...working-class women; and, of course, they recognized the fact that a paper like the wouldn't be sufficient to handle the problem sufficiently from the women's point of view though they weren't excluded. They were correspondents and all that, but they saw the necessity of having a paper that would appeal not only to women that were all wives of Tremius readers that would be able to reach out to broader masses of women.

I: Ah hum, working women, this sort of thing...the development.

R: Housewives and all...not only those that were working in industry or something like that, but housewives and farmers' wives and that.

Was there a conscious effort then, in your mind, to elevate the position of the woman in the home...

R: Elevate the position of woman in life as a whole. Not only in the home but in the community...the community.

I: Do you think they went as far a Women's Lib in the sense that the woman should think of herself as an equal even?

R: Well yes, they always consider themselves as an equal to the man...they were. But it was a question of sharing everything equally that they had responsibilities and the men...they should be able to express themselves just as well as the men.

I: Un hum. That's rather remarkable because this kind of an attitude was not present so far as I can see among the other Finnish groups in America. The woman was still kind of submissive and put down.

R: That wasn't so in our organization and that. They always wanted to be able to have an equal voice and to be looked up to just as well as the men.

I: Un hum, it's no accident then that the present editor of the is a woman. That kind of follows naturally, doesn't it.

R: Well, she's...she also has come through from...as a youth already been active and everything, so she has a background for that; that's why she was even considered. I mean not just because she was a woman, but because she had the background for it.

Yes, un hum. Now, getting back to the Ironwood organization, during the in 1914, they stayed with the rather than move towards industrialistic.
R: That's right.

I: Do you know anything about why they did that?

R: Well, I can't...I was too young then. At that time I was only nine years old; but I can recall...well, we had affairs in there, at the hall. People...St. Nicholas people, they used to attend our affairs because we were the biggest group there and we had the biggest, best facilities. They had a little hall over there in what's known as Reno there; but I can't remember...they used to have just dances or something there and they'd have there meetings there. But their group was smaller, lot smaller than our group. But still, I don't know, there wasn't too much anamosity as far as our people over there were concerned. They may have individually discussed at homes, you know, argued things; but when it came to having affairs, social affairs and cultural affairs, they were there too. They were in the audience.

I: I see.

R: And it was friendly enough in there

I: So there was less anamosity in Ironwood than there were in a lot of the Iron Range towns here in Northern Minnesota.

R: Yes, and the anamosity even in Bessemer wasn't too bad. They had their hall and our people had their...our people used to have their affairs at what they called the Swede-Finn Hall up there. Then the IWW had their hall just two-three blocks away from there. I think...of course, they didn't agree on...unable to hear because of static on tape...because the anamosity wasn't sharp, I'd say....when I was working in Bessemer there when I was working at the mine. That was the second time I'd worked at the mine. I was working with people that were IWW.

I: They had a Union Local there?

R: Well, naturally they were card carriers; but they weren't doing any recruiting.

I: They weren't successful in developing a strong union.

R: They had no directive and that. They were active more or less at the hall, social meeting like that...

I: In...

R: And putting on programs and that. But as far a doing actually any organizational work amongst the miners, they weren't doing it.

I: So that that really was kind of over by 1919...
...1930 when I got a job there. I'd been unemployed for some time. I'd worked off and on summertimes as a static and wintertimes in the woods and inbetween there there'd be periods of unemployment. Things were tough already then. I was layed off in 1929, I think it was static that's when the first signs of the Depression were beginning to hit the Iron Ranges. I worked a year and a half in Montreal. Things were tough.

In your education in the Movement, were you subjected to a lot of anti-IWW lectures and propaganda?

The discussions I heard in the hall there, you know, when people'd get together...but I can't recall any major debates on the issue at that time.

Did you yourself personally develop a very anti-IWW stand?

No, I never...because I got older and got to understand and began to study the labor movement more. I didn't get impressed by the idea at all. I just couldn't see it.

Why? Was it too short sighted?

To me, it was too narrow.

Un hum.

I never could see...I couldn't inversion a society where you would just control everything from the industrial point...disregard politics at all...because I've always considered everything had to do something with politics.

So, political action is important as far as you're concerned and any organization...

Political action tied up with other type of action. From my point of view, it is the only way that you bring about improvement. Now I believe that even some themselves, as much as they declared themselves...well I experienced in Bessemer because I was already old enough, already involved in the labor movement...and these people who considered themselves IWW, I can recall in later years they participated in politics because they ran for political office.

Is that right

Like John Lind in Bessemer and now Victor Stelnholm from Ironwood, if you knew him.

I...yes, I've heard of him

Well, he was on the Iron City Commission and that.
I: These guys hardly practiced what they preached then did they!

R: Hardly practice what they preach...well, I never had any antipathy towards them. I got along with them...I talked with them like I talk with you.

I: You didn't have any

R: Never got into arguments about it...I figured, well that's their

I: That's their baby and that's their viewpoint.

R: That's their privilege too and I'll hold mine. So, I would try to discuss day affairs...daily affairs with them...them as I discuss it with anyone else. Not argue their...what is a question of which is better either the Industrial Workers of the World or the viewpoint...so called, or the viewpoint of our group.

I: Did you as...apparently when you were Editor of the here you got along with the people, the industrialists...the...

R: I worked for awhile over there

I: h, you did.

R: Well, let's see. During the war I worked...static...and then after that I went to Detroit and worked at Packers and after the war came back to Ironwood and they needed an editor here and they encouraged me to come here to see about it because I wasn't working at the time. I came over here and Leo Mattson was the Editor and Chief at the time, so Leo had me translate an item and I translated it for him and he said, "You're the one that we need." So, I got hired right away and worked here and then I left in 1950, in October, I went to Bruce Crossing to work there. From there I transferred over to Rock, Michigan, to the branch store of the Co-op, community Co-op there. And when we closed the Rock branch, why I moved over to Minnesota, was unemployed and one of the Industrial Editors, Industrialist's Editors...front page, she was going on vacation so they asked me if I would come in and take over while she was gone. Well it wound up that when she came back I was still retained there...

Is that right?

R: ...until then I got a telegram that there was supposed to be a telephone call from in New York wanted me to come and take over and manage the cooperative store over there. So then I left the Industrialists and went back into the cooperative then.

I: Did you stay out of polemics then when you were at the Industrialist's...and you were strictly a newspaper. I mean, you didn't argue...
No, we never had any arguments. was there part of the year and the other part of the year...static

August Wesley?

...he was their principal speaker and that at that time

Un hum

Waapa.

Yes, Waapa, surely.

...department, but I came in at first well there was a Ooinen. We never had no discussions. No, we both did our work and that was it.

You never...for example, if you confronted Industrialistic type...IWW type, how would they ever answer the question or the question or the problem that Industrial unionism was not really classical Marxism. How did they ever answer it? Did they avoid the issue?

We never discussed the question. I just edited my...the front page and the news there and it seemed that everybody was pleased with it because they would...the manager that was there, he was a young fellow, he would have like me to have stayed there; but like I said, I had an offer to go back into the cooperative with a lot better salary and the fact that I didn't have to keep driving so many miles to work and I was living in Cotton(?), the canyon.

Oh yes, un hum

Had a place there.

Before I talk about your work with the Co-ops, I'm wondering how you learned your newspaper work.

Well, in connection with my period in mining and already on the railroad, I began to see the necessity for workers getting together. So, when I was in the mine, there was a group of us that had been discussing this quite a bit every now and then. Finally there was a fellow that came in and got us into what was at that time the National Miners' Union...it was underground work on the QT.

Part of the Trade Union...

Unity League...

Unity League.

Which was at that time Foster was the head...one of the main officials there. This was a group...there were groups...militant groups.
I: Un hum, yes

R: They didn't agree with the reactionary policy of the AFL leadership at the time and as a result, they organized the more militant union organization in textiles, in the coal-mining fields...that's where the National Miners' Union started, in the lumber industry...woods industry, oh, and various...oh the auto industry particularly...that was organized by the militant groups, the Steel Workers.

I: Yes

R: Gus Hall was one of your early people. Well over here in this area, in Upper Michigan and Northern Minnesota and part of Wisconsin, our group began to organize, the miners. And of course I was drawn into it and I became a member of the District Committee and in '32 I got elected to the National Committee of the Union, the combination of Pittsburg and that's when...when I came back from there I was notified that I was no longer needed to work in the mine.

I: You weren't blacklisted, were you? (chuckle)

R: I was blacklisted. But I continued working with them...that very summer I conducted trade union schools in Iron River and Ironwood, on the Miscoabie Range and Eveleth and over in there in Embarass which was named basically from Embarass M. Eley...that was in '32. And during the time that was in the summer ground laying work, we put out shop bulletins and that and I did most...practically everything and anything.

I: I see.

R: Running them on a mimeograph

I: That was your start in writing then.

R: Yes, that was the basic then. We used to put out leaflets and like that.

I: Well, to move from putting out miners' bulletins in the English language, I'm sure, to something as technical and as complex as Finnish, it seems to me that's a big jump. How in the world did you manage that?

R: In that same period, I used to write some articles into Finnish to the and translate some of the basic documents with the Union.

I: Un hum, I see. So you had...in the translation practically, you had to learn good Finnish then.

R: Well, I don't know how good it was at the time, but it was published (chuckle).

I: Un hum.

R: And I'd spoken Finn right along anyway. I never did, you know,
forget the Finnish to that extent because I was always amongst Finns.

I: Un hum, surely.

R: When my Mother died, I went to live with my Uncles and they spoke Finn...nothing but Finn. And my late Aunt, that is my younger Uncle's wife, Ida Hill, she taught me to read Finnish. She had the Verse and the ; and so those were my textbooks.

I: I see, un hum.

R: And then when I came back to town and naturally was reading the , I followed that when I was going to school. So, in that way and then I was participating in Finnish cultural activities, so I had to retain the language...taking part in plays and that I had. well my part was Finnish.

I: The is generally considered as pretty well edited. The Finnish that was used was usually quite correct Finnish and obviously you do practice by continual usage picked up a good quality Finnish. It's apparently very obvious that that's what happened then. I mean, you certainly didn't learn it in school or anything. You learned it by reading and practicing.

R: That's right.

I: Un hum...Okay, tell me something about your work with the cooperatives. You mentioned the cities that you worked in. How did you come about ......?

R: I, well I went to a co-op course here in Superior...the Unity Lions. That was after the split.

I: That was after the split then.

R: The Iron Co-op sent me here...in 1934...ahm, '34 I believe it was; and then I later on...not immediately after that...but later on I got a job as a clerk and truck driver in the Atlantic Co-op.

I: Who ran the school in Superior then?

R: The Unity Co-op...the Lions, Unity Lions.

I: I see, they made a school of it and went along with it.

R: Yes, they had training schools...that went on once a

I: I see, un huh.

R: For about four weeks I guess it was...the training people. And see previous to that the Central Cooperative used to have schools.

I: Un hum, yeah. The ones here in Superior and the one down in
R: Yeah, long ago already that they had those schools.

I: They couldn't keep the cooperative principles properly alive you're suggesting.

R: Well, to tell you the truth, they forsook the cooperative principles during the split already.

I: Un huh, yeah. They moved into the other bourgeois co-ops. and they became

R: That's right...pork and bean disposers

I: Un huh...and they didn't stay true to the working class principles.

R: No, they've just divorced themselves from that completely. They figured they would do better by becoming part of the so-called main stream of American life.

I: Un huh.

R: Well, American life at that time and still is bourgeois.

I: Un hum, un hum and that's ultimately what killed them.

R: Well, that's what's killed them really as a working-class Co-op

I: Yeah, un hum. Do you recall the bitternesses, you know, during the split? Of course, when you started to work at the co-op, you were...

R: Oh yes, I can recall it because at that time each group was vying to get control of the local cooperatives and the battle was quite heavy in Ironwood because followed George Hullman at the time and these other speakers came quite a few times to Ironwood and debated the issues. I listened to them and I, of course, formed the opinion that the cooperative movement has to be a part of the general labor movement in order to succeed...or in order to fulfill its original principles, the Rodale Principles, you know. That was formed during the strike in '32 to take care of the workers. I saw that the cooperative movement had to be part and parcel of the entire labor movement, had to give aid to the workers in their everyday struggles just as well as selling them beans and that at a decent price. And then the fact that I had read some of George Hullman's writings in the monthly books...pamphlets that they issued in regard to the issue and there was one particular article that I used when George came to North Hurley to speak there and some of us from Ironwood came to attend that meeting and listened to him. And after he got through speaking, I had the article in front of me and I had underlined a certain section and I asked, "Which of the
Georges' are we to believe?" Here is George Hullman on such and such a date on such and such an article stating the question this way and tonight he states the question the other way. Which one are we to believe?" And so he took all his papers and that off the table and...

I: and he took off.

R: He and his followers walked out. He got red in the face and he didn't answer. And that was...that was the end of it...the whole affair that night. Well anyway, the feelings ran so high that you could sense that they didn't want to have anything to do with one another then. If you were in one group, you were there and the other group was there. Was very few that were sitting on the fence or weren't too involved in the matter, see. Those that had been very active at the hall, I can recall...I won't mention names...but after the split they didn't want to have anything to do with us. I recall instances where I'd be walking along on Main Street and they were coming towards me, well they'd cross over to the other side of the street to avoid meeting me. And these were people I'd been actively involved in the cultural move and everything and I had very friendly relations with them. I wasn't any rabid person, but I just stuck to my opinions and just...at that one particular meeting...that's the only place that I spoke up. Ever since that, well they just avoided me.

I: In Ironwood then, what happened in terms of the split?

Well, in Ironwood.

I: Ironwood remain with the wholesale?

R: Ironwood...no, Ironwood was...well they remained with the wholesale, but eventually they were kicked out...expelled...

I: were expelled.

R: (Unable to understand)...and that's when Unity Alliance was formed then to serve as a central to furnish materials...you know, goods. In fact, if I do say, we had...for instance the flour, we were the first ones to come out with the unbleached flour.

I: Is that right

I: And everybody...while we were still in the...when I was managing in Bruce's Crossing, for instance, lot of the Settlers' Cooperative people used to come over to our Co-op just to buy the flour.

I: Is that right...un huh.

Because they wanted the Unity Alliance flour because it was unbleached and a very good flour...a very good flour. Well, the same with....anything that we were able to control quality on, we
did it.

I Un hum! Must have been quite a struggle to run your own wholesale

Well, they didn't have...it wasn't no...we didn't have the kind of buildings that the Co-op had. We made contracts with the mills and that or the coffee roasters and that. We had our own particular blend of coffee. And the other stuff, naturally, we bought whenever we got a good price on it. That way they just had small offices in the Building as far as business wise. But we didn't have any big warehouses or that.

Un hum, so I see...so the office here then acted as a kind of median...

Central buying...

Agency...yeah, I see. How are these co-ops serviced today then? For example, the one up in...is it and up in Michigan?

Well, they're buying now on their own.

They buy on their own then, un huh

Like now, for instance, when I was in Rock...in Bruce Crossing and also in Rock. We...the other Mass Co-op...unable to understand.

Just too difficult to transcribe