FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
(Funded in part by the National Endowment For The Humanities)

(Funded in part by the Keweenaw National Historic Park Advisory Commission / U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service)

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The following interview with the retired Henry J. "Winkler, M. D.
took place in the Winkler residence, located at 34 Front Street, L'Anse. The Doctor and his wife, Helen raised the both of their two children in this house, and they presently reside there.

Doctor Henry J. Winkler came to L'Anse on September fourth, 1925. It was at this time he began his practice in the area, employed by the original "Henry Ford" as the company doctor. Within six months after his arrival, Doctor Winkler's practice became established not only as the Ford Company doctor, but as a large private practice.

Doctor Winkler's retirement stemmed the following interview and he will explain the conditions he found here and what he did to correct the problems. Dr. Winkler's recent retirement from the medical profession has brought him much honor, not only from his colleagues, but from educators, legislators, and laymen. The doctor is considered by many, to have become a legend, in his own time because of his efforts within the medical profession, the educational system, and general improvements in the Tri County area.

The Doctor has been an ardent sportsman his entire life, as reflected in the early part of the tape, and even still, the Doctor is in oral and written battle with the Department of Natural Resources over what he feels are violations of future generations rights. The Doctor admits one of the chief reasons he remained in this area after his contract with Ford expired is his great love for the out of doors, not to mention this was the first place where he had ever made any money.
The Doctor advises of the problems he encountered during his first few weeks here in the local area. After arriving here via train, the doctor found the company records sadly neglected, two out of the four local doctors did not get along, the Ford company officials being un-cooperative, and finally the citizens utilizing non company doctors for their treatment. In the tape, the doctor tells of the problems encountered, and of his trials to eliminate them.

Over the years, Henry Ford, and Doctor Winkler became friends, and the Winkler children were educated by Ford at the school located at Pequaming.

Doctor Winkler tells of the small office he used which was located in what is now the Celotex Company Office. There was no hospital in L'Anse then, and most of the doctors work was done in the victims home, unless he was well enough to be transported to the office. The L'Anse Plant was the largest of any of the local Ford Plants, with outlying sawmills located in Baraga, Pequaming, Huron Mountains, Michigamme, and Sidnaw. Many smaller mills were known as camps and were recorded in numerical order. One such trip, to an outlying mill, Doctor Winkler spins some folklore of his own, telling of strangling a wolf with his bare hands, however the story is correctly told to some.

Winter travel is nearly impossible prior to the time a snowblower was invented, and the doctor states he has made numerous house calls utilizing the snowshoe as the only means of transportation.

Due to the shortage of doctors during that time, Doctor Winkler's practice extended far and wide. He was required to go to Calumet, Houghton Hancock, the Huron Mountains, Michigamme, Sidnaw, Baraga or any point between.
The greater portion of the tape is devoted to conditions as they were during the peak of the Ford Lumbering era, and a part of the Ford Company's past has been invaded, by the recollections of what life was like during this time. Doctor Winkler tells of the L'Anse plants having some thirteen hundred fifty employees, while the Pequaming Plant and area contained about three hundred. The chief product was lumber, cut down in the surrounding areas, hauled to the closest plant, sawed to shape, and taken either to L'Anse, or Pequaming where it was made ready to be shipped out by boat. Doctor Winkler recalls both the ships, Benson Ford and the Henry Ford having carried out five million and five and one-half million board feet, respectively on each load.

A shortage of money caused the bills for doctoring to be paid in many unusual ways. Dr. Winkler advises the most unusual payment he ever received was a pair of snowshoes. He had been summoned to a residence located in Herman, performed his service with a miscarriage, returned several times only to receive the used snowshoes as a token for his efforts. Very much travel was with the use of snowshoes, and for 44 of the doctors 49 practising years found him carrying the snowshoes in his vehicle.

Road maintenance caused many problems for the wandering doctor, as well local residents. Doctor Winkler felt the accident ratio is much the same today as when his practise first began. A lack of vehicles offset the accident rate related to the poor or non existent roads.

For many years, Doctor Winkler was the only active physician working in Baraga County and he was instrumental with not only causing the Baraga County Memorial Hospital's construction but to have it staffed with additional doctors. Doctor Winkler's efforts having the hospital built ended the era in
Baraga County for not having a medical facility. Here, the Doctor expounds upon the problem of financing and leads into his contributions made towards the hospital's construction. Without the proper basis presented by Doctor Winkler, Baraga County may well be still without the services of a hospital. At this time, Dr. Winkler was the entire staff of the Baraga County Memorial Hospital and remains that way for some time.

Along the lines of education, many years ago, Doctor Winkler initiated what is presently known as career day. A central point was established for the tri county area, that being Michigan Tech and for years, high schools had the benefit of Dr. Winkler's knowledge and guidance, giving not only of himself, but of his finances, in support of the program.

A student aid fund was established, funded again, by Winkler, allowing the loan to be interest free during school, and a token interest charge assessed one year after graduation, or termination.

The Doctor is responsible for the education of a total of thirty seven nurses, and his influence in the area indirectly caused a total of twenty young people to become licensed doctors. The doctor felt this quite a feat.

At this point, the tape had to be terminated however, undersigned has made provisions to return for shorter taping periods, with more direction being focused on a single point.

[Signature]
Legislators Seek Winkler’s Name For U.P. Medicine School

By Ruth Hubbard

Last Saturday, July 27, at the cognation dinner to honor Dr. J. Winkler’s fifty years of service in medicine, Senator Slot, Rep. Dominick Cobelli and Rep. J. Winkler were accorded many tributes at the event held at the Loit and hosted by the Michigan Medical Society. Bruce Ambrose, Manager of Government Relations of the Michigan Medical Society, read a letter from Gov. Milliken and other state officials commending Dr. Winkler for his many years of service to the community and the state.

Dr. John Strawhofer, representing the Medical Staff of Baraga County Memorial Hospital, Dr. Smith, president of Michigan State University, Sen. Mack, and Rep. Jacobetti, Pat Ellis and Rev. Howard Shaffer each contributed remarks about Dr. Winkler’s achievements.

Mrs. Winkler then presented the assembled colleagues and friends with her remarks on their soon to be celebrated 45 years of marriage. “It doesn’t seem like 45 and then again, it seems forever,” she said in introducing her brief sketch of their life in L’Anse.

Also present for the dinner were the Winklers’ children, Mrs. James Holmberg, her husband and Dr. John Winkler, Jr., a physician in the Detroit area.

Dr. H.J. Winkler crowned Baraga County Fair Queen for 1974, Cathleen Petto of Baraga, last Friday evening. Here the two pose after the coronation.