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**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)*

**F.F.S.C.G.L.M.R. DIGITIZATION PROJECT 2010-2011**

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

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"Maki, John", Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, Finlandia University, Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum.

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Santini's Bar/Anderson, Annie & Leon

Randy Maki

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Monetary Worth of Bar		

SUBJECT:

SOURCE: Santini's Bar  
Annie and Leon Anderson

COMMENTS:

Legend: R: Leon Anderson  
R1: Annie Anderson

Interviewer: Randy Maki

I: This is an interview with Annie and Leon Anderson from Santini's Hotel and Bar in Hurley, Wisconsin, and the purpose of this interview is to find out how Hurley was in its so-called wild years. First of all, how long have you been here?

R: Forty years I've been here.

R1: Forty years in this same building

I: And how long have you been here?

R1: Oh, well I've been in town about twenty years in this building but he worked in this building for forty years.

I: You both have been bar tending since you got married?

Yeah he has, but I have twenty years. We've been married close to forty years.

I: And did you live in Hurley all your lives?

R: No, I'm from Frazier, Minnesota...southern Minnesota.

And I'm northern from Iron Range, Virginia.

I: So when exactly...can you remember what year you first came to Hurley?

R: Think it was about '31.

I: 1931?

R: That's right, '30 or '31.

R1: Well, I've been here the 39 years we've been married so you figure that out.

I: I don't know if this question will put you on the spot, but what is the most strange experience you ever had behind this bar?

R: Oh, I wouldn't know.

Well, exactly you wouldn't say strange...well anyhow, nothing real strange or anything happened.

I: Well, what about a person like more or less. A person like a character that maybe used to come in here all the time...be a regular?

R1: Unable to transcribe...garbled.

I: What about the lumberjacks?

R1: Well they were all very very nice

I: They were?

R1: Very very nice.

I: Ever give you any trouble?

R1: No, but they spent...if they had a dollar everybody drank. They stayed in the woods for about three or four months and get their pay and then they'd all come in and they wouldn't leave until the money was all gone.

I: Spend their paycheck.

Yes, like I said. If they had a dollar, there wasn't a person that was left out that didn't have any drink or whatever they usually had. They had these nicknames...oh they used to call him Blackman.

I: Blackman?

R1: Yeah, I guess they called him Blackman because when he was always... never washed or anything so his hands were really black; and that's no kidding. And Jonny Handgren, he was one of those that used to (?) the lumberjacks. He'd peddle food., you know, he used to take the streetcars from here, go to Ironwood and he'd make his own sandwiches and hot dogs and pasties and he died not too many years ago. If he was living right now, he'd be close to ninety. And Oh, I don't know. There used to be Olie Johnson and his brother. I can't think of all that stuff now. Ask me questions.

I: Was this bar always this big? There's a backroom to it now?

No, there's no backroom...there's just...

I: Back bar..

No...no, there's just this one bar.

I: It's always been this size?

Yes, it's been here since...well it was built in 1925.

I: Since 1925.

- R1: Yes, it's been here but they estimate the back bar close to a hundred years old...it originally came from the Copper Country...someplace up Houghton way or Calumet.
- I: For some of the background on this bar...do you know what you call that?
- What do you call that? What kind of wood is that back bar?
- R: Oak
- Oak...and that looks like an Indian design or faces, I don't know what you'd call that exactly.
- I: So this whole place is about a hundred years old.
- R1: Not the building, the back bar. The building was built in 1925, but the fixtures came in here in 1925.
- I: Did you ever have any gambling?
- Down in the basement, yeah.
- I: What kind?
- R1: I guess they had everything...roulette...
- I: This was before you were here?
- R1: No, he was here...not when we took over, that was when he was here
- I: Was that legally or illegally?
- R: It was legal then
- I: It was legal?
- R1: Yeah, they had roulette, blackjack, craps, slot machines...oh those were nice slot machines for back thirty-five years ago.
- I: What was big money for winning down here?
- R1: Oh goodness, would you know?
- I: A good sized sum.
- R: Money?
- I: Money wise for gambling...for one person to gamble?
- R: Four or five thousand dollars, I guess
- R1: Well then I think there was a few others in town too, like there used to be across the street. Yeah, when we had the Burton House, that was a gambling place and Sangti's down in the basement this was and

across the street Francis' place.

I: Jimmy Francis?

Yeah, and then they had like the best...what they claim was...gambler around was Emil Robart and just a few years ago he passed away.

I: From here?

Originally from here

I: He was supposed to be a good gambler

One of the best, they claim and that's around here; and just a few years ago he passed away...not even a year ago and I think he was close to eighty years old then; but he was what they always said, what you call a millionaire gambler. In his time he went through millions...he used to take these trips, him and his wife, to Sweden where he was born a couple of times a year. I wish he was here. He had that kind of a Swedish brogue but he was very very interesting because he could tell you everything.

I: Did they say he used to cheat and that?

No, unt un...well they never told me that if he did. No, I think he was honest.

I: Were most of the gamblers area people or did they come from outside?

R1: No, from out.

I: Out-of-town people?

R1: Out-of-town..

R: From Minnesota and the range ?)

R1: Yeah, some from Minnesota and then when they came they made their home here as long as there was gambling and everything...they could make money and they stayed here.

I: I've heard stories that Hurley was <sup>more like a...</sup> /not like a ganster town, but you know what I mean, don't you?

R1: Yeah, I know what you mean.

I: Is <sup>any of</sup> /that true? Rough people?

R1: No, you mean like

I: No, I don't mean killing really, you know, but a lot of illegal things going on especially during the Depression let's say?

R1: No, I wouldn't say they really...

I mean

I: I mean after when alcohol...when/Prohibition?

R1: Oh yeah, before then yeah. That's when everybody used to make their money, isn't it? Right, that's when they all made their money because nothing was taxed...none of your liquor...there was no tax or anything.

I: There was a lot of that...was there a lot of that going on around here?

R1: Oh yeah.

I: How was that?

R1: I guess they got away with it 'til the State stepped in to tax everything, you know, when it was legal. It was legal always.

I: I thought it was illegal.

R1: Was it illegal, Leo?

R: Before they repealed that.

R1: Well that moonshine did...yeah, that's right.

R: That was even illegal then.

R1: Yeah, but to me...they got away with it

R: That was before liquor and beer came back.

R1: Oh, well see, that's about forty some years ago...oh that's about forty years ago, more than that.

R: 1932 -'33

R1: '32 -'33. Yeah, well most of those old lumberjacks are dead. Very few that are left that I know of around here out of Minnesota. And like I said which is true, when they came into town...they were...I don't think very many of them were married. They were all lonesome that's why spend their money the way they did...easy come...really spend it. Well, like I said, two three days.

I: They used to come in here after...

R1: No, when they went to camp, somebody'd give them a ride back to camp and they'd take a bottle with them and maybe you wouldn't see them for three months again or for all the season. But I know they were all very kind.

I: They were?

R1: Well, like I said years ago, they didn't use any cuss words or anything like that.

I: Was there ever in this building a fight in here, a fist fight?

R1: Oh, I imagine there was

I: I mean while you've kept bar?

No, never.

I: Never?

No, unt un...never had a fight in twenty years. We never have no trouble here. That's what I said before, I don't (?)...I imagine there were arguments and that while there was gambling but see my brother-in-law, Ken Slate, he never did have anything to do with the basement. He rented that out always. Somebody else was always the head one. But the real gambling spot was the old Burton House. That burnt down...was netted...that burnt down. How many years ago did the Burton House burn, Leo?

I: Was it liquor and gambling?

Rl: No, it was food and gambling and liquor...just a tavern. (?.....?)

I: What about this guy that died a little while ago that they said was related to Al Capone or something from Hurley's Old People's Home?

R: Ralph

Yeah, Old Ralph

I: Do you know anything about him?

Well, according to him he wasn't anything like Ralph? He was really...

I: Was he related to Al Capone?

R: Brother

Rl: Yeah, he was a brother but only thing there is, I don't think Ralph was ever connected with like Al was, you know, for gangsters and stuff. He was always legal. They all say that he just got the name through his brother, you know.

I: Do you know what he did for a living? Did he work for a living or what?

(?)...he run the Rex Hotel for quite a few years, he's been there.

I: That's still operating, isn't it?

Yeah, that still is, yeah, and his wife is still there...she's one of the old timers. He just passed away about a week ago or so.

I: Yeah, I know.

Rl: What was he...eighty...eighty some years.

I: Wasn't there some story though that they said that he held his brother up...I mean he let his brother stay in his house once when the police

were gonna catch him or whatever?

R: That could be.

R1: Yeah, that could...but I mean the only time the papers said that he got tangled with the law is income tax and that's quite a few years back. He never was like Al, you know, picked up for mob killing or whatever...they used to hire these gangsters to do stuff.

I: Was he always from around here?

R1: No, originally from Chicago until he moved up this way.

I: When did he move, like Al Capone never was...around here.

R1: No he never had...was...not that I recall. I don't think Al...

R: No, Al never came.

R1: No, I don't think he ever...

I: Didn't one of them...was it Little Bohemien or something?

R1: Oh, that was Dillinger. That's when Dillinger was in Little Bohemien that they had that shooting...what was that place there they called? What was that fellow's name?

R: Wynetteka (?)

R1: Wynetteka, yeah he ran that. That's quite a few years ago; but that was Dillinger that they shot there.

I: They shot him...they didn't shoot him, they shot at him.

R1: At him, yeah. He was staying there, I don't know how the connection was there either; but as far as Capone, no.

I: They just never really know though if they came that close...they could have...

R1: Yeah, that's right, could have been in the bar, who knows.

I: About how many people lived in Hurley, that you can remember...the largest population? Like what was the largest population in Hurley? What is it now...?

R: I think there's a little over three thousand.

R1: It averaged maybe a couple thousand...maybe even a couple hundred either one way or the other most...

I: You mean it's always been about the same size as now?

R1: No, I think quite a few hundred before.

R: Quite a few.

Yeah, say maybe four hundred more...not four thousand. I mean still you know, you think of the mines were going...

I: Most people moved out after that.

R1: Yeah, like I said, Hurley had a name but it never was as bad as they said it was.

I: Yeah, I know people always think that...even right now.

R: I worked in Saginaw and we said we were from Hurley, people would look at you like they were scared of you.

Well, that's no kidding. I was talking about these old lumberjacks, they were good...remember those old days, you could not beat 'em. I said noone was hungry or dry when they were around.

I: What other kinds of customers used to come in here a lot besides lumberjacks?

Well, your regular...

R: Miners

Miners, your outsiders, tourists...of course there's more tourists now than there ever was. But in the old days with the ski hills and stuff like that going and oh, I don't know, years ago people used to come to Hurley just to...because they heard so much about it...like they do, you go to Las Vegas or something, you know, figuring to get some...

I: They'd come here looking for women.

R1: Yeah, women.

Was that ever true...was any of that true?

R1: Oh yeah, that was true.

I: Tell us about that.

Well, I don't know too much about that really because after all, you know (?) in the paper and there isn't anything like that anymore because the last time they come at it and really cleaned Hurley.

Oh, you're talking about...

Yeah, down the street here.

I: Club Carnival.

No...no...no, Club Carnival never...

I: The owner of it.

No...no, he never had girls there. He always had them in this other town he stayed at.

I: I don't understand that.

Well, I mean he never had girls, entertainers but they weren't called prostitutes.

R: Metrella?

R1: Metrella, yeah. No...no, he always had entertainers...those weren't prostitutes, those were entertainers...strippers or whatever you call them. Oh you mean down the street they had prostitutes here.

I: Yeah, that's what I was just wondering. Years ago was it like that?

R1: Yeah, they did years ago, yeah

Unable to transcribe...garbled

I: What was this?

R1: A Mayor of town; but he never interferred.

R: He never interferred but he kept the town clean and the State never bothered him...(?....)? until they cleaned their own doorstep up there first.

R1: In Madison, yeah.

I: Like were they houses?

Yeah, house of ill-fame, yeah.

I: How many?

I think maybe years ago there was how many...maybe ten - twelve fourteen...this never was...this was always a straight bar.

I: I didn't mean here

Yeah, well there's so many building burned down that used to be up this block. This block had some and the (?) block always had them just every place; but now you can...unable to transcribe - garbled.

I: Those owners must have made a lot of money

Well, they made it they'd spend it...(?)...of course years ago your liquor wasn't as high either so the call girls weren't that high either like they are now. You read in the paper, you know, these call girls a hundred dollars or fifty or twenty-five...I'm just reading an article now about that.

I: About what year was this when they had the ten houses?

Well see, it's got to be thirty-five years ago or better when Hurley was...it got to be...

I: In the forties

Yeah well, we had a few here until the last four or five years; but

really when they had them years ago, that was lumberjack days...say thirty...it's got to be that...I mean that they had quite a few of them around not like the last few years. Now there isn't any.

I: So Hurley really was kind of exciting then.

R1: Yeah

I: Up until about when, 1940...I mean when it was really

R: I'd say up until about 1943 or '44.

R1: Yeah, they took away all the gambling...well, took everything away from Hurley or just about everything outside now what you see. Every other building is empty...the out of state.

I: People came in and rented them or whatever?

R1: Yeah, the State Police, they give the orders usually...they're the ones that do that. Madison State...steps in and they clamp down on anything like that.

I: What about these Francis people you were talking about?

R1: Oh, they're still in town. They always ran a tavern, I mean a tavern like...

I: Isn't there a different story behind his father...you're talking about the guy that cooks at the Cottage Club...Jimmy Francis?

R1: Oh yeah, Jimmy is a nice fellow

I: Yeah...people at work used to always say something about his father...I can't remember what it was.

R1: Oh, his father...his father was very seldom in the...Mr. Francis, he was very seldom...Jimmy took over the bar. The parents they used to have a place at Harbor Lights there. The old man, Mr. Francis, was very seldom in it, that I recall. Was he ever a gambler?

R: No

R1: No...

R: They used to have that tavern across the way.

R1: Yeah, they had that and then Jimmy took that over and that years ago used to be called Pellham Club, remember. They used to have really nice shows there. Not strippers or anything, real...and you could take your Mother and your wife their anytime. It was like the Bowery too when Johnny Carlie had this old Bowery here on the corner where they tore down, that was really...that you see on TV, you know, with that old player piano and the girls were dressed in...and they even had the bartenders here with these little shirts and this garters or what ever you call 'em on their arm, I remember that. That was

really...and that was many years ago that they had that. And I said, men never bothered Hurley years ago for girls...

I: But they knew it was going on but they didn't...

R1: Well, I guess so, but I don't know what happened after.

I: Can anybody remember approximately how many open bars there were in the 30's?

R1: Well they claim how many, Leo?

R: Well, there was one time there was eighty-six

I: Open bars?

R1: Open bars

R: Now..there's seventy-four or seventy-six or something like that.

R1: Now we're lucky if there's forty.

I: That's still a lot of bars for this small area.

R1: Well, every other building, like I said, was a tavern. And we a show up there, a theatre up the block.

I: Oh yeah?

R1: Yeah, that's right. That's many years ago too...well that's about twenty-five years ago...that must be down twenty-five years or so.

R: More than that.

R1: Oh yeah, that's right because...thirty-three years ago? But like I said, it was all taverns going, eighty-seven.

I: I suppose they were mostly right here on Main Street

R1: Yeah, well like I said, this block is torn down way up the street.

I: Is that why they call this Silver Street by any chance?

X: No, the ones going this way are wood and the ones going this way are metal...the next street is Copper.

R1: Well, they still call it Silver Street. Well like I said that years ago everything was going full blast, you know like it wasn't dark like it is now. Every building was lit up I mean with electric lights.

I: How would you compare it with Ironwood?

R1: Oh, Ironwood was always kind of dead.

I: Like say in the thirties.

R1: Ironwood's always because they just allowed so many taverns like they do now. I don't think Ironwoods got twelve taverns. Ironwood just was Ironwood.

I: So the people from Ironwood have always come over here to...

Well, whenever anything is mentioned that happened in Hurley, they always said Ironwood, Michigan instead of Hurley, Wisconsin. You know, I mean, anything happened like she said too and Toivo said when you say you're from Hurley everybody things, "Oh, my God," you know, "it must be awful". Yeah, yeah that's what they thought. I think years ago they used to have a little Maffia.

I: Here?

Yeah, like forty-five years ago I think they say there was certain ones.

I: Maffia people in Hurley?

Yeah...there were a few here. I think that gotta be before my time, before I was here.

I: Was there any bad killings or anything?

No, I don't think there was really, attempted murders but never made much of it. It didn't last very long.

I: Did you ever hear any stories about the Maffia being in here?

No, that's what I heard.

I: Did anybody ever say what happened?

No, not here. I don't know, just a few fellows that must have been from Chicago or something and they tried to organize...

I: To organize crime...

R1: But it didn't go through.

I: Leon, do you remember any of this?

I remember that as it was told to me, you know, we were talking and I remember that. But it never went through.

Unable to transcribe...garbled.

I: Getting back to the bar now, how much did you say that background would cost? Didn't somebody offer you so much for it?

Well, when a couple two three carpenters were here and they estimated ...the older carpentry...at least fifty thousand dollars. You couldn't make it...I mean put the work in, let's put it htat way

I: (???)

R1: No, I've got a card of it...I've got some cards there I'll let you take home.

I: Of this inside part here?

R1: Of the whole thing, yeah.

I: What did they say was worth fifty thousand, the whole..

R1: Just the back bar

R: To make it.

R1: Yeah, to make it right now.

I: Oh, to make it right now would cost that.

R1: See, this is all hand carved. That's what he said, one carpenter from Gould, he's an older fellow and he was here, a mess of people from Wakefield brought him in here and a couple other ones. Well, everybody says that before...I don't know what my brother-in-law paid for it, I have no idea what he paid for it. I don't think he paid...they didn't even know the value of it then. Because they say there's one in Minokwa, but it doesn't compare with this one... and this fellow in Minokwa he got his backbar from some place northern Michigan...somebody was gonna let me know where he got it in northern Michigan too out of the Copper Country. Now I don't recall where he got it. But maybe it was shipped in...maybe one of the taverns someplace in Houghton because around Escanaba and that because that was quite wild towns years ago too.

I: Escanaba, Michigan?

R1: Yeah, that area, yeah. I mean they had the lumberjack days around there too, so maybe it was shipped from there. But where it came from there to there, I don't know because maybe my brother-in-law would know, but I never asked him.

I: Have you ever had any offers for this?

R1: Oh yes, plenty.

I: Have they all been...

R1: Well, really they just asked about the building.

I: You mean they wanted to take the business over?

R1: Well yeah, there was a couple from Chicago that wanted it, that was quite a while ago. He just asked when we're ready to sell, to let Johnny Philasardo know. So I don't even recall...I don't remember his whole name. Every day somebody wants a door or they want that old novelty box in the back...somebody wants to buy.

I: Where did the old swinging doors come from, the same place?

R1: Must be...all together. Yeah, was bought all in the same clique.  
Yeah, those are valuable now too cause that's all leaded glass.

Looks like an old time (?)

R1: Yeah, that's what it is, that's where they should have it in Las Vegas  
...oh I wish somebody from out that direction would come.

I: Well, I guess that's good enough for my interview. Thank you very  
much.

This previous tape ends as indicated but the tape continues with what may be some kind of report. Therefore, I did not type this information. Tape is stopped on Side A where this report begins on the tape.